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## **THE ‘NEW’ FILOSOFIA THEORETICA: AFRICAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY, CULTURE AND RELIGION**

Formerly published under the title *Filosofia Theoretica: African Journal of Invention and Ideas*, by the Graduate Research Unit (GRU), Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar, Nigeria and edited by Prof. G.O. Ozumba, has now been adopted by Congress on African Philosophy and Religion (CAPAR) and edited by Dr. Jonathan Okeke Chimakonam. The website has also moved from [www.platojournal.com](http://www.platojournal.com) to [www.africanphilcongress.com](http://www.africanphilcongress.com) the former site which hosted the journal has been disabled.

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### **Editorial**

The issues concerning African studies addressed in this volume are quite diverse and original. As we continue to develop, propagate and promote a new phase of African philosophy, culture, history and religion where creative originality perfectly blends with established traditional resources, the frontiers of our knowledge are extended in many useful ways. In keeping with our vision and reputation as the most original academic resource in African studies, we present a cache of interesting articles for the researchers and general readers.

Chimakonam further develops his African numeric theory. In it he shows just how unique African number system is following the uniqueness of African thought system. His presentation of it falls under the category of group identity akin also to the structure of African ontology. In this interestingly original work the author presents a design of African basic numerals, a set of other mathematical/logical signs and the idea of the African conception of infinite number. Adopting and implementing some of these would no doubt reposition Africa.

From Benue State, Ada Agada writes about the future of African philosophy with immense passion and a call for originality. He asks if any progress has been made and if any is being made. His observation across the history of African philosophy is that just a little progress has been made following the dearth of originality, individuality and creativity among African philosophers. In this instigating paper, he argues that much of what has been done is ethno-philosophy constitutes backward-looking. A few philosophers like Senghor and recently Asouzu are leading the pack in a forward construction of African philosophy. To develop African philosophy, actors must rationally engage in new

constructions albeit, from African perspectives. This, the author calls his theory of Consolationism which operates with the doctrine of mood. Thus for him, African philosophy has progressed from the rhythm of Senghor to the joy of being of Asouzu and now to consolationism which is the radicalization of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda philosophy. Readers will find issues treated in this paper highly inspiring.

From the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Kanu writes about the need to push forward the development of African philosophy through his theory of eclectism. Various schools in African philosophy are not to be castigated for their lack of philosophical perfection. Much academic energy for him is wasted in this endeavour. Actors should seek an eclectic means of sifting and welding together the best part of these schools for a consummate understanding of the focus of African philosophy. By unifying the ancient and the modern, the universalist and the particularist, African philosophy takes shape. It is at the point of this romance, the author says, that authentic African philosophy is realized. Scholars of African philosophy are enjoined to take the thesis of this paper seriously.

Obiajulu writes from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and discusses the popular African theory of forces from the Igbo metaphysics. The theses of his paper include: confirmation of much of Tempelsian observation in the Bantu and further systematization of the Igbo-African metaphysics. With great passion and creativity, Obiajulu excavates philosophical resources from the original Igbo-African worldview and in an incredible intellectual somersault blends them into a metaphysically pact theory in African philosophy. Charms, ike, ogwu, etc., are some of the concepts he worked with. His, obviously charts a new course for African philosophers and philosophy.

From the University of Calabar, Inameti writes about the administration of Justice in pre-colonial Efik land. Dwelling on the



original jurisprudence of the Efik people of Eastern Nigeria, Inameti laments the erosion of a credible legal system which offered true justice as against the porous system imposed by the colonialist where the ability to argue well determines the direction justice swings in the court as against the true condition of things. Tapping into African thought system, Inameti explains various ways native Africans may Efik determine justice more efficiently. His paper makes a passionate proposal for a “judi-cultural renaissance” as a pivot for a new social orientation and justice delivery system in Africa may Efik land.

Back to the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Kanu investigates the sources of a true African philosophy. African philosophy, if it is to be, must have sources different from that of the West. It is the originality of such sources that speaks volume about the uniqueness of African philosophy. Reeking with great passion, the author seeks to discover some of such sources which include: African Historical Experience, African Traditional Prayers, Songs, Symbols, Languages, Artistic Expressions, African Names, Myth, Folk Tales, and Proverbs. He focuses on the ability of the African philosopher to filter philosophy from these sources and tap into their relevance for the present and future societal demands.

Ideyi Nwabuiro writes from Ebonyi State University and looks at the tense issue of ethnic and religious crises in Nigeria. Philosophy aims at making men better who in turn make their society better. But where men have degenerated into bigots and tribalists, philosophy becomes helpless at developing the society. Ideyi laments the situation in Nigeria where men have abandoned philosophy for religion as the source of their redemption in this existential world. Part of the problem that results in the case of Nigeria are religious bigotry and tribal sentiments which are inimical to society’s development. Ultimately, he argues that a desire for the realization of man’s existential well-being is the mother of all his desires in the world- the first and last rung on the ladder of his existence. And it is not religious bigotry that can

achieve that for him rather, it is a sane philosophical orientation that he needs.

From Imo State University, Egwutuorah makes a case for African communalism following Asouzu's theory of Ibuanyidanda ontology. The individual he says, is not self sufficient but has many needs which he cannot supply to himself. Hence, human beings agreed to submit voluntarily to a system and were bound to live in unison and solidarity. This is like a form of social contract that established the original African societies. The efficiency of this could be demonstrated in Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda as a result this innovative paper seeks to modernize African communalism by modeling it after the highly regarded Igbo-philosophy of complementarity as systematized by Asouzu. The author skillfully knits together a brand of communalism that would suffice for modern African societies. In the event of the massive failure of liberal democracy in much of Africa, Egwutuorah's thesis becomes highly recommended.

In concluding this issue, C. B. Nze writing from Madonna University produces an efficient review of the scintillating classic by J. O. Chimakonam entitled *Introducing African Science: Systematic and Philosophical Approach*. He says that this book presents African science from the philosophical perspective. Theorizing under this subject, he says that Chimakonam maps out African thought system for the first time and systematizes African logic on top of which he laid the bricks of African science. In his accolades the author declares: "Only history and posterity would probably come to understand what invaluable impact this noble project would make to the life and story of the black man wherever he is in the world. Indeed, this is a book right on time but ahead of its time!"

As the African proverb says "whatever dance that comes along in your generation, dance it for that makes you a member of your generation", it is the dance of the present generation of Africa's

intellectuals to chart a new course for African philosophy, history, culture and religion. We applaud all the scholars who use our journal's platform to lend their voices to the future of Africa. They are the champions of our time and the makers of the new Africa. Through the creativity in their pens, they seek to inaugurate a better and progressive Africa. *Hakuna Matata!*

**Editor -in- Chief**

## IDEA OF AFRICAN NUMERIC SYSTEM

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### 1. Numbering in African Thought

In Africa, sometimes we number our gain and try to ignore our loss not because they cannot be numbered but because in African thought, numbering is not just a question of signs but strictly, it is a question of things. We also number our debt because they are things although belonging to other people. From origin, man has always had a sense of numbering. The ancient Chinese, Indians numbered by group difference; the Persians numbered by group identity. The Greeks and the Romans developed a numeric system of individual identity and worked out the symbols I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X as their numerals. It was the Arabians who gave the world a much more flexible symbol of individual identity; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

In all of this period, the African man had his sense of numbering based on group identity whose symbols consisted of lines I, II, III, IIII, IIIII, IIIIII, IIIIIII, IIIIIIII, IIIIIIIII. In this way, he numbered his flocks, his wives, his children, his wealth, his assets, his credits, his debt and even his age. One year was a period between the beginning of one rainy season and another. The African drew these lines in the red earth walls of his inner chamber. Up until the coming of western civilization, the African retained his system of group identity because it offered a clear expression of his idea of number. He also has idea of bundle, five IIIII is half a bundle; ten IIIIIIIII is a bundle and so on, bound by a horizontal bar in the middle or two horizontal bars on top and below as in tying with rope. Numbers for the African are not just

abstract accretions but representations of things. For example the number ten is not an individual sign, it consists of ten signs; it is not a concept, they are signs representing ten things. It could be ten tubers of yam, ten baskets of oranges or ten kegs of oil. The bottom line is that it is ten things. The concept ten is abstract, such abstraction does not make empirical sense to the African, and it is empty. This shows that for the African, numbers are adjectival in nature. They are not names! They merely qualify quantitative things in African thought system.

As a result of this radical conceptual difference between the African and the western/Arabian numeric systems, Africans encounter problems with the system introduced during colonialism.

- a. As a child in school, arithmetic becomes a meaningless subject.
- b. He crams the signs and memorizes the structures without understanding.
- c. In businesses and transactions he labours to remind himself that ten Cedi or Rand note is Cedi or Rand numbered into ten.
- d. The individual identity numeric system becomes a complicated puzzle.
- e. Numbers are detached from their ideas; this makes it difficult for the African to think within the system.
- f. Any numbers say 1000 is meaningless and is therefore difficult to think with.
- g. To make sense of any number say 1000, an African must first integrate the empty sign with the idea of one thousand things. This slows down his thinking.
- h. It is not easy for the African to be taught to see numbers as sign plus ideas because the Arabian signs were not generated from his system of group identity.

For all the reasons enumerated above, and also for the fact that the signs of group identity Africans use in the olden days would not

suffice for modern demands in arithmetic and business transactions, we develop here a new numeric system generated from the system of group identity. This new system we hope would denote in the mind of the African number plus its idea, such that when an African employs the sign , he knows in his mind without difficulties that it means three things. In this way, it is hoped that the new signs would become flexible for him to think with unlike the empty Arabian numerals and the cumbersome group identity signs.

There are eleven basic numbers in the new African numerals known as the toqala. These toqala numbers are generated with sign language and technical intensions such that each evokes a certain image of something at least and as such they are the foundation of the African numeric structure.

Additional considerations have been made in order to make them mathematically convenient. Some of those considerations include forming the unit in single digit, the tens in double digits and the hundreds in triplets, etc., just like in the Arabian numerals. In fact the fundamental reason for forming the African numerals is the creation of an image-driven figure structure. The Arabian numerals do not provide that to the African mind.

All humanity thinks mathematically i.e. in shapes and sizes, in angles and points, in figures, ratios, fractions and in percentages but the African additionally, must correlate these with images. A ratio has an image-the image of the ratio of ... without this, the ratio makes no meaning to the African. Until it is ratio of or fraction of, it is ratio or fraction of nothing and is therefore not worth talking about. What we wish to portray here is that abstraction is not a veritable reasoning process for Africans. Consider the table of numeric meaning below:

**Table. a : Table of numeric meaning**

| <b>N/O<br/>(Arabian)</b> | <b>MEANING</b> | <b>N/O(African<br/>) tɔɔala</b> | <b>MEANING</b> |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1                        | One            | ↑                               | One thing      |
| 2                        | Two            | ∩                               | Two things     |
| 3                        | Three          | ⋈                               | Three things   |
| 4                        | Four           | 4                               | Four things    |
| 5                        | Five           | ∫                               | Five things    |
| 6                        | Six            | ∩                               | Six things     |
| 7                        | Seven          | ∩                               | Seven things   |
| 8                        | Eight          | ∩                               | Eight things   |
| 9                        | Nine           | ∩                               | Nine things    |
| 10                       | Ten            | ↑∅                              | Ten things     |
| 0                        | Nought/zero    | ∅                               | All things     |

This image-driven conception of numbers in African thought system can be further explained by the interpretation of the eleven basic numbers. We understand that numbers for the African have meanings and these characterize the images they reflect on the mind.

Let us consider the interpretation of the *toqala* numbers in the table above. We notice that the eleven African basic numerals can be grouped into three categories, the number “one” which is singular, the “all” number which is all encompassing and the rest which are plurals. The number one is called *Ume-ezu* (defective and imperfect), the all number is called *Ezumezu* (perfect number) while the rest are called *Izumezu* (imperfect numbers).

The number one is defective because when multiplied or divided by another one yields no new result and it is imperfect because like the rest of the imperfect numbers it contains no other numbers apart from itself. The latter has sufficed for the explanation of imperfect members. Then the perfect number is so-called because it is the all-number, it contains every other number in itself. In African numeric system, it is not called zero or naught but the all-number. It not only contains every number but every number is reducible to it, this shows it contains itself as well.

There are also a set of numbers called *Njikoka* numbers and *Nmekoka* numbers. An integer is an *Nmekoka* if it is formed by progressive increase of single digit numbers from two to nine. The *Njikoka* numbers are the various permutations of integers from double-digits to multi-digits. The first *Njikoka* number is ten whereas the first *Nmekoka* number is two. In an earlier paper, it was wrongly captioned that the first ...integrativist whole number is two, one remains fractional until it is added to another one or any other number<sup>1</sup>. The question of abstraction raised earlier also needs further explanation. It is not that Africans are not capable of abstract reasoning such found in individual identity of Arabian numeric system but that to adopt such rivals their already

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Okeke Chimakonam, “Toward Integrative and Eliminative Epistemologies: From Facts to Fancies” *Integrative Humanism Journal* (2.1) p.164. This stands corrected here, two is the first complementary whole number and not the first Integrativist whole number.





|                         |    |  |
|-------------------------|----|--|
| complementary / Nmekoka | 1  | $1 \succ \langle 1 \leftrightarrow 4 \times 3 \leftrightarrow 1/4 \leftrightarrow 3 \succ 3 \leftrightarrow 0 : \cdot 1 \leftrightarrow 0$   |
| Imperfect               | 2  | $2 \succ \langle 2 \leftrightarrow 1 \times 9 \leftrightarrow 5/2 \rightarrow 9 \succ 9 \rightarrow 0 : \cdot 2 \leftrightarrow 0$           |
| Imperfect               | 4  | $4 \succ \langle 4 \leftrightarrow 2 \times 11 \leftrightarrow 9/2 \rightarrow 11 \succ 11 \rightarrow 4 \rightarrow 0$                      |
| Imperfect               | 5  | $5 \succ \langle 5 \leftrightarrow 10 \times 15 \leftrightarrow 150/10 \rightarrow 15 \succ 15 \rightarrow 0 : \cdot 5 \rightarrow 0$        |
| Imperfect               | 3  | $3 \succ \langle 3 \leftrightarrow 11 \times 12 \leftrightarrow 110/13 \rightarrow 12 \succ 12 \rightarrow 0 : \cdot 3 \rightarrow 0$        |
| Imperfect               | 7  | $7 \succ \langle 7 \leftrightarrow 14 \times 11 \leftrightarrow 154/14 \rightarrow 11 \succ 11 \rightarrow 0 : \cdot 7 \rightarrow 0$        |
| Imperfect               | 2  | $2 \succ \langle 2 \leftrightarrow 13 \times 14 \leftrightarrow 182/13 \leftrightarrow 14 \succ 14 \rightarrow 0 : \cdot 2 \rightarrow 0$    |
| Imperfect               | 9  | $9 \succ \langle 9 \leftrightarrow 12 \times 11 \leftrightarrow 132/12 \leftrightarrow 11 \succ 11 \rightarrow 0 : \cdot 9 \rightarrow 0$    |
| Integrative/ Njikoka    | 10 | $10 \succ \langle 10 \leftrightarrow 10 \times 10 \leftrightarrow 100/10 \leftrightarrow 10 \succ 10 \rightarrow 0 : \cdot 10 \rightarrow 0$ |
| Perfect                 | 0  | $0 \succ \langle 0 \leftrightarrow 0 \times 0 \leftrightarrow 0/0 \rightarrow 0 \succ 0 \rightarrow 0 : \cdot 0 \rightarrow 0$               |

The above analysis is interpreted for example one plus one equals two times the sum of two and one which is three, equals six divided by the remote preceding number two equals three minus the remote preceding number three equals the all-number, therefore one equals zero. In the same way, the rest could be read (see the section on mathematical signs).

We find in the above table that number ten is a Njikoka or integrative number; integrative, because it contains two numbers or that it is more than one digit. If a single digit number is more than one it is an Nmekoka or complementary number e.g. two to nine. Other double or multi digit numbers that are identical such

as 11 44 etc., are called *jiga* number i.e. equal integration. All numbers that are more than one are called a *Jiko* or (double or multi-digit number). Number ten is the first integrative number while number two is the first complementary number in the range. But number  $\emptyset$  is a complementary number because it contains all possible numbers belonging to different categories; it is therefore the most complemented number.

According to the group identity thesis in African philosophy of mathematics, the number one does not exist ontologically. Every being exists in relation to another or others therefore one, cannot possibly exist since it stands alone. Yet if one is added to another one or subtracted from another one, it becomes a meaningful number. If on the other hand, one is multiplied or divided by another one, it remains meaningless and non-existent. One plus one is two; one minus one is zero, these are meaningful numbers in the integrativist theory but one times one is one; and one divided by one is also one. The integrativist ontology holds that being exists only in relation to another. No reality that is isolated exists and since African mathematical thought holds that mathematical truths describe the features of experience, one ( $\uparrow$ ) which does not describe anything in the network of experience does not exist. On this count also, we substantiate the position that the number  $\uparrow$  is defective. This is also a point of debate between the two schools of thought in African philosophy of mathematics i.e. the integrativists and the complementarists. While the former views the number one as meaningful only when it is in a network of other numbers constituting a *necessary link* of. The latter sees it as meaningful outside a networking of other numbers because any network of numbers without the number one is incomplete. In this way, the number one serves or constitutes a *missing link* of reality. Note the expressions *necessary link and missing link of reality* the present

author has adumbrated this in the forthcoming book co-authored with Prof. Godfrey Ozumba<sup>3</sup>.

On the whole, what the above table shows through the algorithm of quadcheck analysis is that every number is reducible to the all number which makes the all-number the only perfect number comprising of every other number whereas the number one is not only imperfect but defective. Let us consider a simplified quadcheck analysis for two selected numbers:

$$\begin{aligned}
 (1) \quad 1 \times 1 &\leftrightarrow \underline{1}, 1/1 \leftrightarrow \underline{1}, 1 > 1 \leftrightarrow \underline{1}, 1 < 1 \leftrightarrow \underline{1} \\
 (2) \quad 1 \times 1 &\leftrightarrow \underline{4}, 1/1 \leftrightarrow \underline{1}, 1 > 1 \leftrightarrow \underline{1}, 1 < 1 \leftrightarrow \underline{1}
 \end{aligned}$$

We can readily observe that in the analysis of number 1, two of the four yield 1 as their results, whereas in the analysis of number 1, none yields 1 as its result which shows an adequate capacity of flexibility and interaction with other numbers in the network.

The negative numbers are not often reflected in African numeric system because they represent realities that no longer exist. The present author makes this case in his treatment of the Idea of Igbo thermometer:

You may have also noticed that the Igbo thermometer does not read in negative numbers e.g. -5,-10, -20 etc., this is because such integers do not form standard mathematical expressions in Igbo thought system. We do not say by implication that the mathematical sign of subtraction does not exist

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<sup>3</sup> G. O. Ozumba and J. O. Chimakonam, *Njikoka Amaka: Further Discussions on the Theory of Integrative Humanism. (A Contribution to African Philosophy)*. Forthcoming

in Igbo thought, what we wish to emphasize is the image created when we make such expressions -5 in Igbo thought does not make reference to 5 objects that do not exist but to 5 objects that existed, so it becomes trivial and sometimes misleading to add the minus sign '-'. The important difference marker here is 'time' such that when we talk of 5 objects that existed we do not look out for the sign '-' but to the time indicator which conveys the accurate image.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, in African numeric system, negative numbers are not functionally represented due to concerns for confusion.

## **2. Some Signs in African Mathematics/Logic**

In African numeric system, signs are not just empty symbols, they are prognostics. There are two main technical reasons why we choose to create some new signs rather than adopt all of the signs of classical mathematics and they are: (a) to create image-driven signs and (b) to give the mind of the learner a new configuration in order to avoid a possible confusion with already popular western mathematical principles. If Africans are to think in original way, then there must not be confusion between their mathematical framework and the already popular classical framework such that mastering the newly articulated African mathematical framework does not in any direct form become reducible to learning the classical mathematics. If the reducibility theory survives in the operational discourse of the newly articulated African mathematical principles, then the goals of this construction have

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<sup>4</sup> Jonathan O. Chimakonam. "Metric System In Igbo Thought Long Before the Arrival of the Europeans: A Systematization". Paper presented at The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Igbo Studies Association on "Ohaka: The Community is Supreme" Held at Modotel, Enugu, Nigeria June 27-29, 2013.

come to nullity. As a result, the study of African mathematics must be non-reducible at least directly to the study of classical mathematics. The learner must therefore, come upon this subject with a mind similar to the Lockean tabular rasa i.e. setting aside anything he must have learned in classical mathematics. His two reference points are to be this note and his natural African thought system. The table below shows some signs and their interpretations.

**Table. c : Table of signs**

| S/N | SIGN               | ORIGINAL NAME       | ENGLISH TRANSLATION   |
|-----|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1   |                    | ngukọ               | Multiplication        |
| 2   |                    | mgbakọ              | Addition              |
| 3   |                    | Nwepu               | Subtraction           |
| 4   | $\rightarrow$      | Bukarija            | Greater than          |
| 5   | $\leftarrow$       | Pekarija            | Less than             |
| 6   |                    | Bukarija<br>mọ'hara | Greater or equal to   |
| 7   |                    | Pekarija<br>mọ'hara | Less than or equal to |
| 8   | $\leftrightarrow$  | Hara/ Hara-<br>onu  | Equality/identity     |
| 9   | $\nleftrightarrow$ | Ahaghi              | Not equal             |

|    |                      |           |                         |
|----|----------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| 10 | /                    | Kebie     | Division                |
| 11 | ( )                  | Mkpoko    | Parenthesis             |
| 11 | [ ]                  | Nchiko    | Square bracket          |
| 14 | { }                  | Nkwako    | Braces                  |
| 14 | .                    | kpom      | Point/period            |
| 15 | =                    | Nkeji     | Ratio                   |
| 16 | $\Leftrightarrow$    | Bu-out    | Equivalence             |
| 17 | $\vdash$             | Site-na   | Wedged-implication      |
| 18 | $\leftarrow$         | Sitelu-na | Wedged-reduction        |
| 19 | $\vee/\wedge$        | Ma-ọbu/Na | Disjunction/conjunction |
| 10 | $\sim$               | Ọbughị    | Negation                |
| 11 | $\updownarrow$ (iff) | Belu-so   | If and only if          |
| 11 | $\vdash$             | Detuo     | Provable/derivable      |
| 14 | $\vDash$             | Mezuo     | Satisfiability          |
| 14 | $\not\equiv$         | Anoghi    | Opposition              |
| 15 | $\neq$               | Esoghi    | Inconsistency           |
| 16 | $\not\vdash$         | Emezughị  | Not satisfiable         |
| 17 | $\equiv$             | Isoghi    | Contraries              |

|                 |           |          |                        |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|------------------------|
| $\frac{10}{10}$ | $\neq$    | Edetughi | Not Provable/derivable |
| $\frac{10}{10}$ | $\vdash$  | Zutuo    | Deducible              |
| $\frac{10}{10}$ | $\nVdash$ | Ezutughi | Not deducible          |

**3. Agusi- Agusi (Agukata -Agba – Awaa) : The Idea of Infinity in African Number System**

Once upon a time in the Ibo country, the moon was dim and the stars lit up the sky in great numbers; an elder spoke to a youth “son, look up into the sky, can you see the stars? And when the youth answered yes, he asked him to number them. Thus the youth began, otu, abuo, ato, ano, ise, isii, asaa, asato, itenani, iri, ...otu naari, puku abuo, nde-ato, ijeri-ano, nzeri-ise...nzeri – nzeri- nzeri ... the youth stopped and the elder asked: are you finished? When the youth answered yes, the elder asked again; how many are they? And the youth responded, “agukata-agba-awaa” which literarily means “counting till the jaw breaks” and figuratively “numerable-innumerability” or “countably –uncountable” hence the concept of agusi-agusi. These explain the idea of infinity in African numeric system. It is not that imaginary number series which is endless or limitless or unknown; on the contrary, the infinite for Africans is that idea of numbers which though countable in itself cannot possibly be counted by man. So it is in itself countable but which no man can count. Any man who attempts such a project would surely fail because his jaw would break thereby preventing him from completing the project. The analogy above shows two things that the stars are countable but that man cannot do this.

The Western idea of infinity which translates to the concept of agwu-agwu (endlessly endless) is different from agusi-agusi (countably uncountable) which depicts the African idea of infinity. In African thought, numbers are not different from the things they are predicated upon. All the numbers in existence are in one-to-one



correspondence with all the things in existence. In other words, numbers have equal cardinality with things. This is to say that for the set whose elements are all the known numbers and the set whose elements are all the known things; the elements of the two sets can be paired off without remainders. So it is not the case that one set has the next cardinality greater than the other. We may have the set whose elements are unknown numbers, and the set whose elements are unknown things, yet the two are necessarily of equal cardinality.

From the forgoing, we arrive at four different sets, two for numbers and two for things. Out of these, one of the two sets of numbers and things is known while the other is unknown. The question that arises here is; does the set of known numbers for example have equal cardinality with the set of unknown things? The answer is no! But this does not mean as it should be in the Western idea of infinity that the set of unknown things has the next cardinality greater than the set of known numbers. In African thought, this could go either way; as a matter of fact, there is no way of knowing which has the greater cardinality, we may tag this “the problem of cardinal indeterminacy”. What this also shows is that the two sets could possibly have equal cardinality-this is also against the idea of infinity in western thought.

It is important to explain here that even the unknown sets are countable. The fact that it is not known to man does not change anything. Numbers do not exist if there are no things to predicate them upon. Numbers in African thought are numbers of things. The only set that cannot be numbered is the empty set, but the empty set does not exist in African thought because there are always things<sup>5</sup>. We cannot even imagine it because we cannot imagine nothingness!

There is a way Africans express infinity that is strict. For example they do not say “there are infinite properties” to depict the attribute

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<sup>5</sup> cf. Jonathan Chimakonam Okeke. “An Investigation into the Nature of Mathematical Meaning”. *Filosofia Theoretica...*1.1, 2011. P. 2 - 4

of agwụ-agwụ (endlessly endless) as it is in Western thought; this is called categorimatic expression of infinity. Africans however say, “there are infinitely many properties”, to depict the attribute of agụsị-agụsị (countably uncountable), this is called syncategorimatic expression of infinity. In the latter idea, the set of unknown things is perfectly countable in itself even though it is uncountable to the man who does not know it. If a man named Madume fills up a sack with kolanuts which he has carefully counted, the set of kolanuts in the sack would be unknown to say, Emenike who has not counted it. However, that it is unknown to Emenike does not mean that the set of kolanuts in the sack is (a) infinite (b) innumerable (c) has no equal cardinality with the set of any known numbers.

On the contrary what it means is that (a) it is uncountable to Emenike who does not know the set of kolanuts in the sack. In this work we have chosen to call this anti-categorimatic (relative) expression of infinity where what is countable to one man is relatively uncountable to another man. We call another expression of infinity possible or non-categorimatic (absolute) if there exists a set of unknown things which are uncountable to the set of all men but countable to the set of all non-men. The idea here is that if a set of things exists but which is unknown to all men, it is nonetheless countable to entities other than men in-so-far as it exists. So such a set of unknown things may be possibly infinite to men but not actually so in itself. Thus the non-categorimatic (absolute) is an inferential extension drawn from the anti-categorimatic (relative) expression of infinity.

In African thought we also say:

$1 \leftrightarrow 1$  thing

$1 \leftrightarrow 1$  things

$\neq \leftrightarrow \neq$  things

... $n \leftrightarrow n$  things, where the unknown number  $n$  has equal cardinality with unknown things, called  $n$  things. This shows that the set of

unknown things is in one-to-one correspondence with the set of unknown numbers. Thus, for every unknown thing in the set, there corresponds an unknown number in the other set. In this way, it is possible to pair off every element in the set of unknown things with the elements in the set of unknown numbers without remainders. In other words, none of the two unknown sets could possibly have greater credibility than the other.

## IS AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY PROGRESSING?

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### **Abstract**

Any attempt at writing the history of African philosophy is doomed to be frustrated by the glaring absence of originality, individuality, and creativity in the body of works that come under the heading of African philosophy. In the first place, most of what is called African philosophy is in fact ethno-philosophy, consisting chiefly of researches into the traditional worldviews of various African tribes in the light of Western philosophy. In this intellectually instigating paper I attempted the question whether African philosophy is progressing by showing that there has been some progress, albeit a slow one. I demonstrated this by tracing the development of a genuine African rationalism from Senghor's famous idea of negritude to Asouzu's recent notion of complementary reflection, which finds culmination in the emergent synthesis of consolationism. In the latter rationalism, veiled in Senghor's metaphysical vision and liberated in Asouzu's robust individualism, aspires to a completion never before seen in African philosophical thought. I concluded by saying that the time has come for African thinkers to make African philosophy a tradition that will command universal respect by the radicalization of individual initiative with ethno-philosophy serving only as the foundation of our 21st century inspiration.

Keywords: African Philosophy, History, Schools, consolationism, Asouzu

### **1. Introduction**

African philosophy has failed to make remarkable progress or gain universal recognition in the four to five decades it has existed as a

philosophical tradition for reasons ranging from poor attitude towards research, preference for Western philosophy on the part of African philosophical scholars, the seeming absence of original thinkers, among others. While M.A. Makinde avers that African philosophical scholars ignore African philosophy in the belief that it is not worth being taught in schools and D.A. Masolo thinks that African philosophy is caught up in a crisis of identity, Innocent Asouzu asserts pointedly that the main problem with African philosophy is ethno-philosophical commitment and fixation.<sup>1</sup> Lamenting the obstacles in the way of the growth of African philosophy (which have in fact made the endeavor of producing a history of African philosophy a ridiculous exercise), Oguejiofor notes that “while African philosophy claims equal standing with other philosophic traditions, while it demands the same attention and respect accorded to many other traditions, it is pertinent to note this lacuna [the absence of creativity] that is no longer found in many regional philosophies.”<sup>2</sup> It is beyond dispute that the Europeans have European philosophy while the Americans have American philosophy. The Indians have Indian philosophy and the Chinese have Chinese philosophy. Yet any reference to African philosophy brings an expression of amazement to the faces of non-Africans while Africans look away from their fellow Africans in guilt. This guilt of the Africans arises from the knowledge that there is very little creativity and originality in the minds of African philosophical thinkers. We have produced professors instead of thinkers. In the absence of the kind of creativity and originality that animate ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary Western philosophy, trying to write a history of African philosophy is like putting the cart before the horse.

It is true that ethno-philosophy (which encompasses communal and traditional African thought, and the scholarly endeavor of their systematization in the light of Western philosophy) marked one tremendous leap for African philosophy, but it is only a stage, a foundational level, of African philosophy.

We are confronted with the naked fact that African philosophy has remained synonymous with ethno-philosophy long after its conception. Here the real failure lies in the inability to note the true status of ethno-philosophy as the foundation of African philosophy and nothing more. We have failed over the years to build on this foundation laid by Tempels, Mbiti, Wiredu, Gbadegesin, Makinde, Sodipo, etc. We have so far failed to initiate the movement from the particular-particular through the particular-universal to the universal-universal, which last stage is the glorious stage of the African mind unveiled before the world as the mind of man, a revelation of humanity. Can we really count the achievements of African philosophy outside the dominant school of ethno-philosophy? Senghor's negritude and Nyerere's *ujamaa*, for instance, which are often touted as fine examples of sophisticated political philosophy, belong in reality to ethno-philosophy and political science while the socialist ideas of Nkrumah belong to Marxism.

In response to Wiredu's call for the decolonization of African philosophy, a project geared at entrenching the uniqueness of African philosophy by eliminating or at least diluting Western philosophical influences, ethno-philosophers have generally emphasized African traditional worldviews at the expense of incisive thinking. The decolonization project taken to its extreme in the elevation of ethno-philosophy to the status of the definitive African philosophy (that is, identifying ethno-philosophy with African philosophy itself) is contradictory because the idea of an absolutely unique African philosophy is a myth. African scholars have all (without a single exception) systematized the traditional thoughts of their ethnic groups in the light of Western thought, a heritage of their Western education and a testimony to the futility of any extreme interpretation of Wiredu's call for the decolonization of African philosophy.<sup>3</sup> Decolonization may be good, but it is in itself not sufficient. Creativity and originality can accomplish this decolonization without our even noticing it, as we

can already see in complementary reflection and the emergent synthetic philosophy of consolationism. Indeed, consolationism is precisely the fulfillment of Wiredu's call for a 'decolonized' African philosophy.<sup>4</sup> If it is correct to interpret Wiredu's call for the decolonization of African philosophy as a demand for a level of originality and creativity sufficient to distinguish African philosophy from Western philosophy, then consolationism fulfills Wiredu's demand since it insists on a way of philosophizing that traces its inspiration to African traditional thought and the African experience rather than ancient Greece while committing itself to creativity and intellectual rigor.

We cannot understand or seek to understand Western philosophy if we have nothing to learn from that tradition. What is required of us is to be creative and original. Perhaps it is good for us to remember what some scholars say about the African origin of Greek philosophy<sup>5</sup> even if we cannot help agreeing with Agbakoba that it is simplistic and ultimately futile trying to trace the origin of philosophy in general to a particular society or culture when the question of man – his origin, his beginning – remains essentially unanswered.<sup>6</sup> A 'pure' tradition is impossible. We must frown at all exaggerated claims to uniqueness in African philosophy, and, indeed, every other philosophy. If we subscribe to the school of thought which holds that "reality evinces itself complementarily ... in full consideration of all possible relation,"<sup>7</sup> then we will realize that cross-cultural fertilization of ideas does not demean the value of the philosophy a particular culture produces. All philosophies arise from the human existential condition and have the same concerns. This worthy cause destined to take African thought to the next level and earn worldwide respect for the African mind finds some sympathy in Aja who has called for a shift away from unproductive polemic to a culture that honors diversity and creativity, virile enough to support scientific thinking and profound enough to retain a distinct African identity in spite of the influence

of foreign traditions.<sup>8</sup> And Derrida is insistent on the untenability of all exaggerated claims to uniqueness:

Philosophy does not have one sole memory. Under its Greek name and in its European memory, it has always been bastard, hybrid, grafted, multilinear and polyglot. We must adjust our practice of the history of philosophy, our practice of history and of philosophy, to this reality which was also a chance and more than ever remains a chance.<sup>9</sup>

Philosophy essentially is an investigation of the nature of reality. Since reality is ultimately one the answers to the fundamental questions of philosophy available to philosophical investigators across cultural divides are identical. With this in mind, Derrida can assert that Western philosophy is not a unique or pure tradition. In the course of its development it has borrowed ideas from the thought systems of alien cultures like ancient Egypt, as Afrocentric thinkers never tire to point out. It is therefore no embarrassment for African philosophy to borrow ideas from Western philosophy.

Western philosophers cannot do the fertile thinking which alone can save African philosophy. Our destiny is in our hands. Two developments have taken place in African thought with Nigeria as the focal point which must help take away the shame of the black intellect and comfort concerned intellectuals. The first development, significant for putting forward the bold claim of a system independent of ethno-philosophy, is the coming of complementary reflection as a philosophical current. Asouzu is the brain behind this movement. In its sheer originality, complementary reflection has no rival in African thought outside the sphere of ethno-philosophy which we insist is a foundation which alone cannot earn African philosophy international prestige. Yet, while the independence and originality of Asouzu is commendable, his thought retains the essentially polemical character of the works of those philosophers who wasted decades



in unproductive controversies. Asouzu's works, far from being profoundly constructive, are essentially methodological. The pathfinder is still obsessed with showing us how African philosophy should be conducted. This tendency in Asouzu betrays the powerful impact of the controversies over the existence of African philosophy on the master. It is a tendency at once positive and negative. It is positive because it is a promise of future constructive thinking. It is negative because it is very much polemical. For African philosophy Asouzu is a critical Kant without the constructive genius of the Königsberg colossus.

The second development which is going to be a fuller realization of the constructive promise of Asouzu is the emergence of consolationism which acknowledges its solidarity with existentialism and the rationalist tradition of Europe.

Hence, this bold work seeks to answer the question: Is African philosophy progressing? We feel that there has been a progress, but a progress so slow, so meager, that it may count as stagnation given the fact that we are talking about the tradition of an entire continent, a whole race. The valuable legacy is that a foundation has been laid, on which we emergent African thinkers can build, taking our inspiration from the example of Asouzu. Thus we shall trace the little progress made so far in four movements. The first movement will take us from the worldviews of the tribe to the foundation school of ethno-philosophy. The second and third movements will take us from the vision of Senghor to the rationalism of Asouzu. The fourth movement will terminate in the emergent synthesis of consolationism.

## **2. Transition from the Worldviews of the Tribe to the Higher Comprehension of Ethno-philosophy**

No one can disagree with Mbiti who asserts that philosophy of one kind or another supports the thought and practice of every people.<sup>10</sup> This rule of life is applicable to the tribes of Black Africa,

some of whom lacked a tradition of writing before the coming of the West. The African tribe, like all pre-critical tribes in other continents, developed simple explanations of animate and inanimate phenomena as the human mind struggled to make a meaning of the complex totality that is existence. These explanations are what we may call worldviews. They come out strongly in the speech of the community, in dance, proverbs, wise sayings, religious ceremonies, rites of passage, creation myths, myths about human destiny, etc.<sup>11</sup> The Idoma tribe to which this writer belongs never produced thinkers who wrote formal works on the soul's immortality, but the problems associated with the mind and the fate of consciousness appear in Idoma worldviews. The practice of offering sacrifices to the ancestors during difficult times and calling for their intercession are indications of belief in the soul's immortality. Not only are the dead still in existence in the spiritual realm, but they may also return to the physical world as new-born babies.

The present author's meditation on the Idoma notion of *otu* has led him to a greater, infinitely sublime, appreciation of Senghor's famous assertion about the emotionality of the African and the rationality of the European. *Otu* literally means 'mind' in Idoma, but the term holds more meaning for the philosophy of mind. On the one hand, *otu* can be understood as the mind and on the other hand as the brain. It can also refer to the bodily organ called the heart. But then this latter reference stands only to the extent that the heart is the symbol of emotion, or as it is symbolized as the seat of emotion. It is the brain and not the heart which coordinates our emotional responses to environmental stimuli. The heart as an organ pumps blood and supplies oxygen to all parts of the body. The brain on the other hand is the centre of the complex neuronal processes that produce mental phenomena such as thoughts and feelings. The identification of the heart with emotion is a universal human prejudice. The Idoma do not escape this prejudice. The 'heart' identified with *otu* is in reality the brain or the mind in its

physical moment. In its pure moment *otu* is simply *mind*, an immaterial thing. *Otu* as mind is not the same as *otu* as brain, hence a duality is posited. Yet this duality must accommodate a certain kind of interactionism, a degree of physicalism, since the mind and the brain connect.<sup>12</sup> Ultimately mind and brain are one in their origin in something more primitive. We see at once that the tribe's worldview carries the complexities of the mind-body problem. Here as in other places, the subject matter of African philosophy and Western philosophy agree. It may be true that as soon as the Western-trained African philosopher tries to comprehend the worldview of the tribe his Western education colors his thinking and leads him to Western categories or instigates the desire to bring the original African inspiration in a forced agreement with Western thought.

Since most parts of Africa never had a tradition of writing before the age of colonialism we are never going to have a philosophical tradition devoid of the influences of Western philosophy. Indeed, purity in philosophy is impossible as Derrida has so eloquently noted. Thus we return to the concept of *otu* which the tribe presents variously as mind, brain, and heart. The ethno-philosopher easily rules out the heart as an authentic meaning of *otu*, for the heart is only a metaphor in this context. The mind is the seat of emotion as subjective experience, although emotion seems to have a bodily foundation in the brain. The consolationist thinker transcends the comprehension of the ethno-philosopher and notes the proper meaning of *otu* which is consciousness. For the term consciousness tends towards the reconciliation of mind and body since it approaches the great problem in the philosophy of mind from a monistic standpoint. Thus we put the great problem of the soul's immortality simply: *Can consciousness survive the disintegration of the body?*

Clearly, philosophy lies brooding in the worldviews of the tribe. The ethno-philosophers have struggled to extract a higher meaning, a greater systematization, a more complete vision, from

the worldviews of the tribe. In this regard we can say ethno-philosophy marked the first progress in African philosophy, a progress that promised much for the future, and yet a promise betrayed by the scandalous indolence of African thinkers who are content hopping around in the shadow of the Western intellect. This leads to intellectual dependence on the West and the stunted growth of African philosophy.

### **3. Countdown to the Philosophy of Consolation: Transition from the Foundation of Ethno-philosophy to the Metaphysical Vision of Senghor**

Ethno-philosophy is also called traditional African philosophy because it gathers worldviews of particular ethnic or tribal groups (the ideology of the tribe which negatively transforms into tribalism) into a thought system made coherent by critical examination, always in the light of Western philosophical thought. The criticism of ethno-philosophy that it presents raw culture as philosophy overlooks the fact that the march of African philosophy must see it progressing from the ideology of the tribe to the philosophy of the tribe (which positively transforms into humanity). The criticism also overlooks the fact that ethno-philosophical commitment remained for a long time the only beacon of originality in the whole of African philosophy. For in ethno-philosophy alone was any original metaphysics to be found before the coming of Asouzu.

That there is philosophy in the worldviews of the tribe we have become convinced. The consolationist thinker, the investigator of the philosophical current of consolationism, is convinced more than anyone else. And so he is in solidarity with ethno-philosophy, seeing in the achievement of ethno-philosophy the promise of consolation philosophy, formerly the promise of the future but now the realization of the present. Thus we disagree with the generally harsh criticism of Hountondji<sup>13</sup> and see in ethno-philosophy the merit not of quantity but of early originality and the merit of being

the foundation of the philosophical thought of the black people of the world. Ethno-philosophy as the key to the future points at limitless intellectual possibilities for Black Africa. In this context we see the metaphysical vision of Senghor as the first indicator of progress in African philosophy.

The notion of negritude was an intellectual struggle to transform the ideology of the tribe into the philosophy of humanity, the urgency of a movement of thought from the mythology that veils concepts to the rationalism of the independent thinker. Negritude was a struggle to broaden the horizon of the tribe, which broadened space might become fit for humanity to occupy. Senghor saw the vision of the philosophy of consolation but lacked the philosophical tools to clarify this vision theoretically. The task before Senghor was one too great for a poet and a politician.

In Senghor's statement about African emotionality and European rationality we see the seed of consolationism. When we sneer at Senghor's inspiration we forget that it carries the truth about the origin and destiny of *mood*, precisely the universe and everything in it. We also forget that Europeans have said of themselves what Senghor said of Africa and Europe. The English are reputed to think and calculate while the Spanish and Portuguese feel and intuit.<sup>14</sup> What is important here is that we have rediscovered Senghor's unity and are ready to complete it. In Senghor we see the shadow of the doctrine of *mood*. Senghor made the statement that emotion predated reason, that the superiority of reason is only a seeming superiority because reason is merely a refinement of the emotion. Whatever reason realizes is only a development of the impulses active or latent in emotion. Reason has no special existence outside emotion, which is basic. Reason is a term given to emotion that has become conscious of itself, of its own *fatality*, also the fatality of emotion. Hence, we say despair torments the intellect and inclines it to pessimism. Therefore the world is *mood*. As possessing the character of emotion, *mood* is the mind of the world.

Hear what Senghor says of negritude, which he conceives as the totality of African values,

essentially informed by intuitive reason, because this sentient reason ... expresses itself emotionally, through that self-surrender, that coalescence of subject and object, through myths, by which I mean the archetypal images of the collective soul, synchronized with those of the cosmos ... the sense of communion, the gift of myth-making, the gift of rhythm ... the essential elements of *Negritude*, which you will find indelibly stamped on all the works and activities of the black man.<sup>15</sup>

To Black Africa he assigns the *reasoning-embrace*, the sympathetic reason:

Negro-African speech does not mould the object into rigid categories and concepts without touching it; it polishes things and restores their original, with their texture, sound and perfume; it perforates them with its luminous rays to reach the essential surreality in its innate humidity – it would be more accurate to speak of sub-reality. European reasoning is analytical, discursive by utilization; Negro-African reasoning is intuitive by participation.<sup>16</sup>

By assigning analytical genius to the Western mind and intuitive genius to the African mind, Senghor is not really saying that the one is intellectual without further qualification and the other emotional without further qualification. Senghor's goal is much more ambitious. His ambition is one on a grand scale, a universal scale. It is an ambition far beyond the capacity of ethnophilosophy. Senghor continues to think within the sphere of mythology and so is unequal to the task before him. As an attack on the dogmatic claims of the intellect, Senghor tells us what

Hume says in *Treatise of Human Nature*, Kant in *Critique of Pure Reason*, Rousseau in *Emile*, Bergson in *Creative Evolution*, de Chardin in *The Phenomenon of Man*, and Unamuno in *Tragic Sense of Life*. Yet this is not the big news. For us Senghor is truly great because he tried to tell the world in the infancy of African philosophy that intellect and emotion have their roots in what we may call *mood* or primitive mind, the focus of our serrated monism. The rationality of man must follow from his emotionality. The excellence of human reason derives its validity from human emotion. Without the emotion there is no mind and without mind there is no life. Discursive reason as the power of critical analysis is lifeless and useless without the conviction that supports it, the conviction that, although human life appears pointless, it actually has a value which reveals itself as *consolation*.

This conviction is the participatory intuition Senghor held in such high esteem that he erroneously thought it is exclusive to the black mind. All peoples – black, white, yellow, mixed – share in this hope that the world has value independent of human consciousness. It is not an African peculiarity. By erecting an artificial barrier between the African mind and the non-African mind, the humanism of negritude lost the will to transform itself into a philosophy of human existence. Senghor had the grandiose aspiration of a philosopher, for he acknowledged that negritude is a humanism, in the same way that Sartre proclaimed existentialism a humanism. But need he be ashamed of his inability to give the world Africa's first original system of independent philosophical thought? No. For Senghor was never surpassed by the academic and professional philosophers who crave analysis where there is no synthesis, thus operating mills with no grains in them. It is not for nothing that Sodipo pays tribute to Senghor thus:

Whatever fault one might find with the articulation and content he gave to the conception it is in my view to Leopold Senghor's eternal credit that he boldly even if poetically asserted the existence of a

distinctively African conception of the universe and of a mode of existence founded upon that conception.<sup>17</sup>

Can we radicalize Senghor by deepening the cause of negritude? Is there any way we can show that Senghor was a promise of a universal philosophy now ripe for the 21st century? If we can radicalize Senghor, then we can show that he saw our day. This can only mean that African philosophy can be traced from the foundation of ethno-philosophy to the dawn of consolation philosophy. In so doing, we must present the philosophy of consolation as the revelation of the melancholy man, not Senghor's emotional 'negro'. The melancholy man is the universal man, the man we see in all the continents of the world, who may be black, white, yellow, or mixed. Man is for us a melancholy being because he strives under the burden of despair and hope to reconcile his mind with nature. We must now run away from our root in ethno-philosophy for a while, still looking back all the time, not in fear but in homage to the works of those who came before us. As we run, as we march into the 21st century, the ideology of the tribe will lose its particular identity as a universal doctrine from Africa. We must be ready, and we are ready, to meet the universal at the level of the universal. Before we declare consolationism a metaphysics of terror and a morality of consolation, let us see how our research has identified a man whose work we have recognized as a link in the transition of African philosophical thought from the age of communal inspiration to the age of individual synthesis, the man Asouzu who we dare anoint the father of modern African philosophy.

#### 4. **Transition from the Metaphysical Vision of Senghor to the Rationalism of Asouzu**

It is not Asouzu's rather harsh criticism of ethno-philosophy that interests us. We are interested in the Catholic priest because he has taken what he himself calls a "critical personal stand."<sup>18</sup> He saw



the futility of scholarship in the absence of creativity and made a case for the rationalist who, though inspired by his roots in the community, insists on standing on his feet and looking at the world through his own prism. In replacing the myth with the concept, in substituting poetry with thought, Asouzu advances the ideology of negritude. Yet the core of negritude remains in Asouzu's complementary reflection. This is the idea of the emotionality of reason and indeed the emotionality of existence, the emotionality that validates rationality. Thus while Senghor rhapsodizes about the African's gift of myth-making, the gift of rhythm, and the sense of communion (ever dear to the Black African), Asouzu talks about missing links of reality and the joy of being. Listen to what these men are saying. At bottom their inspirations are one in solidarity. The rhythm of Senghor is not different from the joy of being of Asouzu. These ideas speak of optimism. But can we make any sense of optimism if there is nothing like pessimism? If the answer is no, then rhythm and joy point at the consolatory value of existence.

Man then is the melancholy man. We therefore succeed in establishing a link between Senghor and Asouzu and between these two great men and the emergent philosophy of consolation. Senghor heralded the age of the independent thinker without reaching the promise land. Asouzu reached the promise land through the tortuous road of rationalism but did not arrive with the great synthesis much awaited. We hope to fulfill the last requirement and record a victory for African rationalism.

The main idea of Asouzu's philosophy is the view of the universe as a totality in solidarity with all its parts, and these parts, therefore, as missing links in the grand unity. Human consciousness, according to Asouzu, in its totalizing moments, is able to grasp the complementary character of the various links of reality – things, ideas, thoughts, etc. Like Hegel he insists fragmentation cannot give us a complete or more complete picture of reality, the whole. Unlike Hegel, Asouzu is not dogmatic about

any absolute, although he insists we can only begin to talk about an absolute if we realize that links are scattered and diverse. The mind can comprehend the unity of this diversity as it naturally totalizes. This comprehension comes to the human mind, the mind of man, not the isolated black or white or yellow mind. The complementary reflection of Asouzu endorses the African experience while at the same time acknowledging the Western experience and indeed the experience of all races committed to this monumental drama of life. Every philosophy of every people is a contribution to the universal pool as a theoretical understanding of consolation or the joy of being. This theoretical understanding is intimate with practice.

Dismissing ethno-philosophy, Asouzu writes:

Contrary to the pretensions of ethno-philosophic inspired method of investigation that the essence of philosophy lies solely on documentation of differences, all philosophies resemble themselves in the point where the philosopher is a bridge between reality, in its most sublime form, and humanity, as this becomes evident even in given localities.<sup>19</sup>

The above accusation hardly touches Senghor who saw a great vision and was eloquent, even if poetic, in its clarification. Bringing epistemology and metaphysics closer, Asouzu notes:

Thus complementary reflection explores the conditions for the validation of our claims and assertions which it understands as being fundamentally rooted in the sense of the acquisition of a complementary, unified, emancipated and transcendental mindset. This is the dispositional precondition for ratiocination as it enables the philosopher to attain the full consciousness of himself or herself as a typical instance of being

seeking full and comprehensive actualization in history irrespective of local constraints.<sup>20</sup>

For Asouzu we can talk about hybridity, eclecticism, parallelism and symbiosis only because everything in existence serves as a missing link of the whole. A monism is implied here, but pluralism is not denied. Commonality is at the root of Asouzu's monism and shows itself in instances of association and expansion. There is therefore a revelation of complementarity in moments in which events, though differentiated, seek their common destiny, their common origin. He writes:

This structural constitution is characteristic of universal human experience of reality, as relative subjects, everywhere and every time. It is along this line that the mind always seeks to capture reality in complementary contraries ... day and night, male and female, being and non-being, truth and falsehood, good and evil, up and down, etc.<sup>21</sup>

One may ask what exactly Asouzu's missing links are. They are

finite beings and their different modes of expression in history in so far [as] they are fragments that cannot be conceptualized except in complementary relationship to each other ... finite beings in their diverse modes of expression and the categories of such beings ... the mind can grasp and intuit as missing links units and units of units, things and things of things, ideas and ideas of ideas, thoughts and thoughts of thoughts.<sup>22</sup>

Missing links, then, will include the animate and the inanimate, language, and cultures of diverse peoples – man and all that makes his life what it is. Two vital principles follow from Asouzu's thought on universal solidarity. The first is what he calls the

metaphysical principle of integration. It states that *anything that exists serves a missing link of reality within the framework of the totality*. The second principle is the practical principle of progressive transformation which states that *all forms of human action aim towards the joy of being*. With a Kantian love of architectonics, Asouzu asserts the imperative of complementary reflection thus: *Allow the limitations of being to be the cause of your joy*.

The notion of the joy of being re-echoes Senghor's inspiration of rhythm and equilibrium. Yet Asouzu has not given adequate content to this pivotal concept. It is pivotal not only as the link with Senghor but (more importantly) also as the pillar of Asouzu's optimistic philosophy. Let us return now to our earlier criticism of Asouzu. His system, radical and original as it is, remains very much polemical. The little space granted construction by polemics is taken up by methodological discourse. His emphasis on method makes his works appear like one long prolegomena to any future African philosophy. Can it be that the pathfinder has left the work of constructing a more complete metaphysics to a younger generation after showing with great care that no philosophy can exist in isolation from philosophies of other regions? Hear this: "For African philosophy to progress, more works of more broad-based systematic methodological type need to be done."<sup>23</sup> We noted earlier that African philosophy is full of dry polemic and quite barren in terms of content. This barrenness is undoubtedly due to the scarcity of original thinkers. Many a scholar in a philosophy department of an African University thinks it is all right to be simply familiar with Western philosophy. He thinks this familiarity is all he needs to be respected as an African philosopher. This is, of course, not true. Being a scholar of Western philosophy is one thing and being an African philosopher is another thing. This means that there are just a handful of African philosophers. Those who qualify automatically as African philosophers are the ethno-philosophers, for they are in a sense

original. But their originality cannot earn African philosophy international acclaim in a thousand years.

We cannot boast about the achievements of Western philosophical genius and expect the West to be impressed. Everyone knows his father's house! Asouzu has now shown us the right way to take. His inspiration has made us ever more jealous for the place of African philosophy in world philosophy. We dare say that we are now on the right path.

##### **5. Transition from the Rationalism of Asouzu to the Doctrine of *Mood* as the Synthesis of the Philosophy of Consolationism**

Our consolationism is the doctrine of *mood*. By mood we mean thought shadowed by the primitive emotion of existence and of human life. Thus we say that African philosophy has progressed from the rhythm of Senghor to the joy of being of Asouzu and now to consolationism. Senghor's myth was the veiled concept held by ethno-philosophy. In Asouzu the concept became free. Consolationism is an even more radical break with ethno-philosophy. For while Asouzu repeatedly appeals to his Igbo collective, consolationism has distilled fully into the concept and rejects undue interference from the worldviews of the tribe. Having received its first and greatest inspiration from precolonial Africa (not Greece), it presses on to reveal not only the African mind but indeed the mind of the melancholy man who we can recognize as the 21st century man. The melancholy man is the universal man, the black man, the white man, the yellow man, the red man. Consolationism is the radicalization of complementarity.

In consolationism the optimism of Senghor and Asouzu answers to an ontological pessimism as its foundation. Thus consolationism is a *fatalism*. All is not well with the world, but all may still be well with it. We begin our philosophical endeavor by identifying man as a creature of mood, as the being whose entire life is

characterized by sadness and joy. These moods are magnified and diminished by fear and hope. This may appear simplistic; yet it is true that beyond sadness and joy human life has no meaning. Our science, religion, philosophy, and all practices are instruments of our joy. But joy cannot be isolated from sadness. Man's joy measures his sadness. Since man is a creature of mood we call him the melancholy man. So far we have an immanent philosophy. One notes from the very beginning the similarity of our philosophy to Western existentialism. This is certainly true. But while Heidegger and Sartre appealed to Greece for inspiration, we appealed to the African community, to precolonial Africa, through Asouzu, Senghor, and the ethno-philosophical thinkers. Thus instead of a doctrine of being, we talk about the doctrine of *mood* and instead of talking about non-being we talk about *silence*, the silence of eternity. Whether non-being or silence, one thing we admit: the eternity of *mood*.

Silence is that state of *mood* not yet conscious of itself. It is sadness at a sub-conscious level. When we talk about the silence of the vast space through which the heavenly bodies move without conscious beings to observe all that motion we mean precisely this sadness. We are not merely projecting human subjectivity into the vastness of the universe. After all, we have called our system a monism, a serrated monism. Man's subjectivity, his mind and the thoughts harbored there, has its foundation in primordial mood in which matter too participate. If the inanimate cannot feel joy or sadness, this is to be attributed to the very low level of consciousness, not its total absence. For the inanimate, say, the sun, *yearns*. This yearning is expressed in the laws that are supposed to govern the motions of heavenly bodies. The sadness of the universe is the brooding activity of *mood*. Fear characterizes this activity. You ask, why fear? A universe that exists as a fatality, whose only reason for existing appears a non-reason, cannot but be a universe of terror. The terror of our fatalistic universe lies in its mood. It pulsates in everything conscious, reaching its highest

awareness as pain in man's mind. The terror lives in man's reason and torments his intellect, in his despair. All actions and all thoughts that work to diminish man's terror increase his joy. The actions and thoughts that magnify his terror increase his sadness. Our celebrated rationality, our intellect or reason, is born in grief, like the world which exists for a purpose we do not really know but which we approximate to consolation. Anything that yearns must exist as a consolation. From the beginning perfection is denied it, to the end it is denied it. A beginning that is yearning must have an end that is consolation.

Thus, starting from the grounds of immanence, from the human sphere, we are compelled to move up to the transcendental. From the humble task of analyzing the smile of a pretty woman and the tears of a poverty-stricken old widow we are compelled to carry the burden of clarifying the relation between the mood of man and the mood of the world. Our task becomes much more ambitious and we are tempted to become dogmatic. Yet we cannot be dogmatic because our philosophy, like every other philosophy, is a vision of the world, a way of understanding it to meet man's consolatory need. If science cannot overleap the bounds of probability, there is no reason for us to claim that we have arrived at certainty. We are presenting consolationism as an African philosophical hypothesis. Since our task has become more burdensome, it is only reasonable that the analysis of human joy and sadness should take us into a territory already visited by Western philosophy,

Let us take a hard look at man. He comes into the world blessed with a developed consciousness. As the baby grows its physical and mental powers are enlarged. The baby becomes a man or woman and realizes there is something called moral evil, a fearful capacity of thought. But before he thinks more deeply about the problem of evil he realizes that competition is the rule of earthly life and that he so easily despairs. He is not yet aware that his despair merely reflects the terror of the universe. His peace is

completely shattered when it dawns on him that becoming old enough to marry means he is becoming old enough to die. Later he is horrified that inanimate nature too shares in his impotence, in his grief. He is horrified to know that his solar system is also bound for death. Stricken by grief, he looks out of the window to reassure himself that the external world has not passed away, leaving him to confront his eternal solitude. The world is still there all right but no God is visible. A car pulls into the drive and he sees his wife getting out of the car. In the meantime the woman replaces God and the man rejoices as he hurries out of the house. This is love, the love of the intellect. It is not the presence of the car, a product of *mood* according to the specification of science, that has diminished this man's terror and increased his joy but the proximity of *mood* itself.

The foregoing captures the kernel of consolationism in very simple words. The following questions naturally arise:

1. Is human life worthwhile?
2. What is the relation between emotion and reason?
3. How does man stand in relation to the world?
4. If we agree that man creates value, can we not also insist there is value in the world?
5. How can we show that the universe is not pointless?
6. Can we find a place for God in a universe of terror?
7. What is the meaning of evil?
8. Why must life always be the hope and burden of advanced consciousness?

Consolationism discovered as mere immanence, man's practice in his joy and sadness, leads us to a much more ambitious



rationalism, so that we see most clearly the need to root the doctrine of *mood* in a comprehensive metaphysics of terror. This metaphysics of terror will see us tackling such existentialist themes as despair, anxiety, freedom and determinism, futility, human agony, responsibility, terror, etc. The metaphysics of terror will terminate in the ethics of consolation after we may have shown that morality is not man-made but is part of the resources of the universe which *mood* dominates. In the process of clarifying our philosophy we will give the problems of the reality of evil and the existence of God a distinctly African formulation. Our method is existential, analytical, and rationalistic. With this method we hope to at once kill and resurrect idealism. Our deep-rooted pessimism destroys idealism while the optimism that rises from this pessimism restores idealism. Our serrated monism is not a denial of diversity nor its destruction but the unification of diversity in its origin in the primordial mood. We speak here of a serrated monism because we do not go with an absolute monism. We do not assert that mind and matter are one and the same thing. Rather we think that mind and matter have their foundation in primordial mood. We do not know what exactly the nature of this primordial mood is, but we hypothesize that it is an emotional essence at the bottom of mind and matter.

If anyone objects that there seems to be a little bit of mysticism in our philosophy our response will be that as the logic of existence mysticism of one kind or the other is the pillar of the logic of the intellect. This much development in quantum physics, with its seeming irrationality, has shown. A universe which is the manifestation of the mythopoeic must remain an enigma, in the same way that God the majesty of the mythopoeic must remain a mystery to the prying intellect.

It is not our intention to pour out the content of consolationism in this paper. Not only is consolationism still a work in progress, but, also, our main aim in this paper is to trace the small progress so far recorded by African philosophy. The present author's research has

shown clearly the debt he owes Asouzu and Senghor in particular and the school of ethno-philosophy in general. The results recorded by Asouzu and Senghor are of course different from my own result. The consolationist sketch I have just presented does not promise an optimistic philosophy. Neither is it the outline of a full-blown pessimistic philosophy in the tradition of a Schopenhauer. Joy and sadness as primal elements of the mood of man have their epistemic correlates in optimism and pessimism. The malaise of man if adequately understood throws light on the tragedy of existence and the necessity of consolation. The malaise is deeper still. Man caught it from the unconscious world. This is our monism, the convergence of essences. Can man conquer his despair and realize his joy so completely that he may become happy and overcome his existential malaise? Here the question of God and our developing theodicy comes in. God is almighty not because he is absolute perfection but because he is the being who has conquered fear in Himself and overcome the malaise of existence. Thus God cannot be the originator of evil. Man cannot overcome his despair. His destiny is the destiny of consolation, not happiness. Therefore man can never be free. The notions of freedom and determinism are wishes that dissolve in the notion of fatalism. Our fatalism is not the belief that human beings can do nothing about their situation on account of some eternal decree. Our fatalism is rather the prior knowledge of the inevitability of events, whichever way they go, the necessity of their positive or negative occurrence. Fatalism does not preclude struggle. The resignation of consolationism is the resignation of ethical struggle.

Fatalism is extended to that mode of existence defined as *yearning*. It is a doctrine inspired by the existence which seems to have no reason for existing, outside the fact that it is *yearning*. Our universe is a fatalistic existence, hence its imperfection and the reality of evil. It is not a value-neutral universe. It is value-laden and indestructible. It is a fatality. Here we have found the key to the solution of the problem of evil in the world. If pessimism

comes to human consciousness as the knowledge, however hazy, of the tragedy of an existence whose eternal silence is sadness, then all is not well with universal existence. But if a being has emerged who has overcome cosmic fear (and we think such a being has emerged), then all may still be well. Man has aspired to be precisely this being that conquers despair and pessimism and becomes qualified to be honored as the glorious and powerful rather than the omniscient and omnipotent (the latter categories are applicable only in a perfect universe). It is indisputable that man has failed woefully to be transformed into God. Thus he comforts himself with a science that cannot create living forms, a religion that has not uncovered God, a philosophy that cannot refute the claims of mysticism because it is itself a consolation, an art that seeks to imitate philosophy – in other words, a practice that cannot succeed. What is this success? It is the realization of happiness.

With the doctrine of *mood* we intend to trace the existential cycle of the melancholy man of the 21st century. The melancholy man is the transformation of Senghor's emotional black man to the universal man who measures the value of his life in terms of human joy and sadness. We are of course not going to be satisfied with a purely immanent philosophy. Our metaphysics of terror will seek to capture a God of consolation, a God closer to Unamuno's personal deity than Aristotle's impersonal principle. It is monstrous for the human intellect born in the emotion of sadness to seek to imagine a God who is a mere principle of the world, an empty name. The doctrine of *mood* is in support of religion and in solidarity with science.

## **6. The Philosophy of Consolation in Relation to Science**

What the theory of evolution, the intensely metaphysical, and, perhaps mystical, claims of quantum physics, and the findings of astronomical physics show without doubt is the interconnectedness of the universe, of animate and inanimate phenomena. The holism of modern science finds no opposition in our serrated monism.

This undeniable holism challenges established notions of mechanicism. Need we frown too deeply that consolationism is a fatalistic philosophy? No. Our fatalism is the reconciliation of freedom and necessity in the notion of *yearning*. We preserve ethics by preserving *liberty* while discarding *freedom*. Consolationist fatalism is the peace of pessimism with optimism. Science itself has revealed to us a deeply pessimistic picture of the last moments of the last men on earth, when life will die with the sun. Dolmage raises the following very touching elegy for man and the earth in the name of science:

The mere idea of the decay and death of the solar system almost brings to one a cold shudder. All that sun's light and heat, which means so much to us, entirely a thing of the past. A dark, cold ball rushing along in space, accompanied by several dark, cold balls circling ceaselessly around it. One of these a mere cemetery, in which there would be no longer any recollection of the mighty empires, the loves and hates, and all that teeming play of life which we call History. Tombstones of men and of deeds, whirling along forgotten in the darkness and silence. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*<sup>24</sup>

However, consolationism is neither a scientific philosophy nor a scientifically oriented philosophy. A system that calls itself "the consolation" must be a philosophy of human existence.

## **7. The Philosophy of Consolation in Relation to Religion**

Consolationism as a serrated monistic conception of the universe favors theism. This position agrees with the idea of God in monotheistic religions. Here we are particularly concerned with the Christian religion which conceives God as omniscient and omnipotent. But we are suspicious of the categories of omniscience and omnipotence which bring into question the goodness of God in

relation to the undeniable evil in the world. Ours is not a perfect universe but a yearning universe. The outline of our new African synthesis shows clearly the basis of rationality in emotionality. A universe such as ours is characterized in terms of consolation, not perfection. The doctrine of *mood* as the dialectic of pessimism and optimism prefers to speak of God in terms of a being of power and glory. This will set the stage for our passionate engagement with the problem of evil in the world which has cast a slur on the purity of the conception of God.

### **8. The Philosophy of Consolation in Relation to Western Philosophy**

Our inspiration has its foundation in the African worldview. Yet we have seen the points of convergence of some of our ideas with Western philosophy. Ancient Greek philosophy endorses the idea of the eternity of matter. We prefer the idea of the eternity of *mood*. We are at a loss about how matter can precede mind. Therefore we prefer to ground both mind and matter in mood, a primitive mind, the silence which is the foundation of being and which Western philosophy identifies with non-being.

Is it possible for any philosopher in the 21st century to attempt the clarification of a metaphysical system without first digesting the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Prolegomena* of Kant? It is foolhardy ignoring that giant of thought. Kant writes:

Metaphysics is properly concerned with synthetic propositions *a priori*, and that these alone constitutes its purpose, but that, in addition to this, it requires frequent dissections of its conceptions, or analytic judgments, the procedure in this respect being only the same as in other departments of knowledge, where conceptions are sought to be made plain by analysis.<sup>25</sup>

Kant's philosophy rests on the distinction between phenomenon and noumenon. He thus distinguishes between transcendental logic which is adequate to his project and general logic.<sup>26</sup> The project of Critical Philosophy, the transcendental deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding and their application, however, "does not by any means exclude such things (noumena), but rather limits the principles of aesthetics, in so far that these should not be extended to all things, whereby everything would be changed into mere appearance but that they would only be valid of objects of a possible experience".<sup>27</sup>

Kant's demand for a body of metaphysical knowledge resting on absolutely certain grounds is too great a demand. His firm confidence in the transcendental deduction is unwarranted. Kant's dualistic philosophy seems to grant little to 'nature' by way of nature possessing value in itself. Once we have defined the universe and everything in it as *yearning* it becomes obvious that nature has a value in its own right independent of human reason, with which human reason should be in solidarity. Little wonder, then, that coming shortly after Kant, Hegel asserted that reality in its parts is contradictory.<sup>28</sup> Hence his choice of the dialectical method to reconcile the parts with the perfect whole.<sup>29</sup> While we agree with the kernel of Hegel's dialectic we do not think the total equates perfection.

Let us pass on to existentialism. The existentialist thinkers from Kierkegaard to Unamuno and from Heidegger to Sartre and Marcel all saw that the so-called rationality of the universe can only be true if this rationality is founded on emotionality. Thus they paid much attention to the notion of anxiety which according to Heidegger reveals nothingness,<sup>30</sup> the veil of being – the same concept which according to Sartre inspires *nausea* by reason of the realization that freedom means nothingness, that it reveals the complete impotence of the *in-itself* and the absence of any transcendental support for the *for-itself*.<sup>31</sup> The concept of anxiety is close to us too, but we conceive it somewhat differently from the Western existentialists. For us anxiety leads man away from the

despair pessimism animates towards the love of the intellect (solidarity with all things as they make for our consolation) and optimism (joy). This joy celebrated by Senghor and Asouzu is never far from sadness. For the consolationist, anxiety is a sign of man's impossible apotheosis and the foundation of his peace in the concept of God.

## **9. Conclusion**

It is clear by now that we have a very ambitious project in hand. We have discovered the philosophical unity that eluded Senghor and are now ready to continue from where Asouzu stopped. We have seen how our philosophy stands in relation to science, religion, and, most importantly, the Western philosophical tradition, though more work remains to be done to see how our system stands in relation to Oriental philosophies. But since philosophies of all peoples and regions are outpourings of the human mind seeking consolation, we are confident consolationism will not clash with the fundamental ideas of Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and the rest. Borrowing from Asouzu, we say consolationism is African philosophy beyond African philosophy. It is a doctrine of man and for man in the 21st century of techno-emotivism, the century of terrorism and bigotry, of religious and political fundamentalism side by side with the loss of faith in God, of continuing scientific progress and persistent despair. Emotion seems to have drowned intellect in our techno-emotive century. This is a disaster. We have an explanation for this upsurge of primitive emotion. In understanding the emotional root of reason, we will better appreciate rationality in all its dimensions. Our life being what it is – consolatory existence – we cannot pretend to make a philosophy of cold logic, for logic springs into life as the balance of emotion.

Since it is the burden of philosophy to find a balance between the all-conquering emotional demand of human life and the striving of logic for balance and coherence and in agreeing with Plato's

Socrates who says in the *Phaedo* that philosophy is the highest music, we present consolationism as the intellectual music of *melancholy*.

African thinkers in the field of philosophy should no longer be proud of their knowledge of Western philosophy. They should be ashamed of themselves each time they enter lecture halls to teach their students the ideas of those mighty men that made Western philosophy mankind's greatest intellectual achievement. They should lower their voices and hang their heads because they are living off the heritage of a people who believe in hard work and merit. Can our Nigerian universities burdened by an inexplicable anti-intellectualism and the philosophy departments filled with mediocre thinkers kick-start Africa's intellectual revolution? Surely a pragmatic rationalism in philosophy will positively affect all fields of knowledge in Africa and beyond. Western philosophy is as great as it is today because Western thinkers worked hard to create their mighty tradition. Africa must wake up from the intellectual slumber of decades. Plato's ideas may be universal, but Plato himself is a Western man. No Western man can think for his African counterpart.

The time has come for individual initiative to dignify the African intellect. The road is now open to creativity and rationalism. We can now shift emphasis from tribal worldviews to individual formulations that will engage both the tribe and humanity.<sup>32</sup> It may be true that analysis has replaced systematic philosophizing in Western philosophy. But then Western thinkers have thought systems created by their past philosophers which they can analyze for ever. We in Africa are not in the same position. We must build our thought systems first before settling down to mere analysis. The last original Western thinker died, perhaps, with Jean-Paul Sartre. The world will hardly see a Plato, an Aristotle, and a Kant again; and the West may not again be able to produce original thinkers like Plotinus, Spinoza, Descartes, Hume, Berkeley, Spencer, Mill, Husserl, Unamuno, Bergson, James, Heidegger, Whitehead, Russell, Marcel, Sartre, etc, but Africa can because we



have not exhausted our creative energies. We have not even begun to exploit the resources locked up in our minds. But we can start now.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See M.A. Makinde, “Teaching Philosophy in Africa,” *Teaching Philosophy*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (September 1987): 235–36; D.A. Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of an Identity* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994); Innocent Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology Beyond World-Immanentism, Ethnocentric Reduction and Impositions* (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2007), 176f.

<sup>2</sup> J. Obi, Oguejiofor, “Historiography of African Philosophy: The Journey so Far” (paper presented at the 2008 Biennial Conference and Meeting of the Nigerian Philosophical Association held at the University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria, from October 8 – 11, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> See Olusegun Oladipo, *Philosophy and the African Experience: The Contributions of Kwasi Wiredu* (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 1996), 19.

<sup>4</sup> Consolation philosophy is still very much the unknown system of a young Nigerian thinker. It is a system of constructive philosophy priding itself as a serrated monism in solidarity with the existentialist, rationalist, and analytical traditions of the West in which all African philosophers are educated. Consolation philosophy is a highly original and individual system. Intense work is ongoing in the systematization and thorough elucidation of this philosophy in my book *Existence and Consolation*. So far my research has been undertaken independent of institutional support. For raw information about consolationism, see my article “Towards the 21st Century Globalization of African Philosophy,” *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, Vol. 7, No 2 (2010): 99 – 106.

Another helpful paper “The Consolationist Manifesto and the New Testament from Africa” is available at [http://evans-experientialism.freewebspace.com/agada\\_consolationist\\_manifesto.htm](http://evans-experientialism.freewebspace.com/agada_consolationist_manifesto.htm).

<sup>5</sup> See Innocent Onyewuenyi, *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism*. (Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press, 1993). Onyewuenyi presents an interesting but polemical investigation of the link between Egyptian thought and such Greek thinkers as Pythagoras, Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle.

<sup>6</sup> J. C. A. Agbakoba, “On the African Origin of Philosophy,” *Uche*, Vol. 10 (2004): 61 – 67. For Agbakoba, cultures borrow from one another, the later from the earlier, until the picture becomes unclear. He also thinks the Greeks contributed originally and immensely to philosophy. Paying homage to Greek analytical genius, he pleads for the triumph of scholarship over polemics. Agbakoba is in fact indicting African philosophy for its barrenness and rejecting any attempt to escape into a fool’s paradise in the guise of looking back to a past glory whose trace we cannot find today.

<sup>7</sup> Innocent Asouzu, *Ibuaru: The Heavy Burden of Philosophy Beyond African Philosophy* (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2007), 53.

<sup>8</sup> Egbeke Aja, “African Philosophy: Conceptions and Problems,” *Nsukka Journal of the Humanities*, No 10 (1999): 105.

<sup>9</sup> Jacques Derrida, “Of the Humanities and Philosophical Discipline: The Right to Philosophy from the Cosmopolitan Point of View (the Example of an International Institution),” *Surfaces*, Vol. IV, 310, Folio 1 (1994) <http://pum12.pum.umontreal.ca/revues/surfaces/vol4/deridaa.html> (accessed June 23, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 1ff.

<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, the Yoruba myth of creation. This myth tells us that God sent Obatala with a calabash full of earth and a chicken to create the world. Alas Obatala got drunk on his way from heaven and Oduduwa took the creation tools from him and continued the journey alone. The earth was formless, being mere water. Oduduwa sprinkled earth on the water and the chicken scattered the earth in all directions with its feet. Thus the earth came to be. This story of the creation of the world and its infancy is not in conflict with the creation stories of monotheistic religions (e.g., Christianity) and science. It is also not in conflict with the idea of the eternity of the world. For more comments on this myth and other African creation myths, see Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Macmillan, 1963); J. S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (London: SPCK, 1975). The ethno-philosopher analyzes these myths and digs out hidden notions of the eternity of matter, creation out of nothing, evil, necessity, etc, in the light of Western philosophy. The task before the consolationist thinker and all other original African thinkers is the universalization of particulars in a manner so original that this universalization at once disengages from, and yet engages, Western philosophy.

<sup>12</sup> Many African scholars tend to agree that the mind is conceived both dualistically and in a quasi-materialistic sense and rarely materialistically in African traditional thought. The mind interacts with the body though distinct from it. To escape the Cartesian problem of interaction the notion of quasi-materialism or quasi-physicalism is postulated by scholars like Wiredu. See Kwasi Wiredu, “The Concept of Mind with Particular Reference to the Language and Thought of the Akans,” in *Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey*, ed. Guttorm Floistad (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 160 – 63; Kwame Gyekye, “The Concept of a Person,” in *Philosophy and Choice*, ed. Kit R.

Christenson (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1999), 215 – 25; M. P. Edeh, *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics* (Chicago, Illinois: Loyola University Press, 1999), 83; B. Hallen and O. Sodipo, *Knowledge, Beliefs and Witchcraft: Analytical Experiments in African Philosophy* (London: Ethnographica, 1986), 105; M. W. Anshi, “The Concept of the Person in Tiv Philosophy” (paper presented at the Biennial Conference and Meeting of the Nigerian Philosophical Association held at the University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria, from October 8 – 11, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> See Paulin Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).

<sup>14</sup> Miguel de. Unamuno, *Tragic Sense of Life*, trans. J. E. Crawford Fritch (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1954), Conclusion, <http://manybooks.net/categories/phi> (accessed September 6, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> See F. O. C. Njoku, *Essays in African Philosophy, Thought & Theology* (Nekede, Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy, 2002), 49.

<sup>16</sup> Njoku, *Essays*, 49 – 50.

<sup>17</sup> J.O. Sodipo, “Philosophy in Africa Today,” *Thought and Practice*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1975): 117.

<sup>18</sup> Innocent Asouzu, *Ibuaru: The Heavy Burden of Philosophy Beyond African Philosophy* (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2007), 48.

<sup>19</sup> Innocent Asouzu, “The Complementary Comprehensive Noetic Alternative,” <http://frasouzu.com/Issues and Papers/Asouzu - The complementary comprehensive noetic alternative.htm> (accessed September 22, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Asouzu, “The Complementary Comprehensive Noetic Alternative.”

<sup>21</sup> Asouzu, “The Complementary Comprehensive Noetic Alternative.”

<sup>22</sup>Innocent Asouzu, “The Complementary Comprehensive Noetic Alternative,” <http://frasouzu.com/Issues and Papers/Asouzu - The complementary comprehensive noetic alternative.htm> (accessed September 22, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Innocent Asouzu, *Ibuaru: The Heavy Burden of Philosophy Beyond African Philosophy* (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2007), 59.

<sup>24</sup> Cecil G. Dolmage, *Astronomy of Today*, 3rd edition (London: Seeley and Co. Ltd, 1910) <http://manybooks.net/categories/phi> (accessed September 22, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena*, in *Prolegomena and Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Sciences*, 3rd edition, trans. Ernest Belfort Bax (London: George Bell and Sons, 1891), Sect 4, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/361.html> (accessed August 13, 2011).

<sup>26</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 2nd ed., trans. F. Max Müller (New York: Macmillan, 1922), Division 1, Bk II, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/1442.html> (accessed August 13, 2011). Bk II of the first division is concerned with the “Analytics of Principles.” See chapter two of the second book of the second division for “The Antinomy of Pure Reason.” These books throw light on Kant’s idea of the valid and invalid use of reason.

<sup>27</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena*, in *Prolegomena and Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Sciences*, 3rd edition, trans. Ernest Belfort Bax (London: George Bell and Sons, 1891), Sect 32, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/title/361.html> (accessed August 13, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> F. G. W. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. J. B. Baillie and C. J. Freyler, in *The Philosophy of Hegel*, ed. C. J. Friedrich (New York: Random House, 1953), 399 – 439.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 214 – 49.

<sup>30</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), Part 1, Division 1, VI, 225 – 42.

<sup>31</sup> J-P Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Pocket Books, 1966), Part 4, Ch 1, III, 707 – 711.

<sup>32</sup> See Kwasi Wiredu, “Toward Decolonizing African Philosophy and Religion,” *African Studies Quarterly*, Vol 1, Issue 4 (1998) <http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v1/4/3.htm> (accessed November 23, 2011).

## TRENDS IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY: A CASE FOR ECLECTISM

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### 1. Introduction

In the contention of Oladipo (2006), the debate on the idea of African philosophy which has been divided into trends or schools, dates back to the 1960's and 70's, which constitute the modern epoch of African philosophy, when some African thinkers began to question the perspective that traditional African beliefs and worldviews, as embedded in pre-colonial African cultures, constituted African philosophy. This question bordering on the parameters of African philosophy sprang from and was weaved around the idea, promoted by both western and African thinkers that Africans do not have a philosophy. And if they do have, who are they? And if there are, what ideas from within their community of thought constitute African philosophy? As significant as this enquiry might have been in the historical evolution of African philosophy, with the work of Makinde (2010) on *African Philosophy: The Demise of a Controversy*, African Philosophy has moved beyond the question of whether there is an African philosophy or not. When Onyewuenyi (1994) wrote on *The African origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentricism* he gives African philosophy an age, such that to question the existence of African philosophy is to negate the being of western philosophy. This piece goes beyond the question of whether there is an African philosophy or not, to study the development of the different trends that have emerged from the study of the history of African philosophy. It moves beyond the conventional limits of the study of the trends or

schools of African philosophy tied to the 1960's and 70s to the contemporary developments in the study of African philosophy.

## **2. The Schools of African Philosophy**

In this study, the concepts: trends and schools are used interchangeably. As such, when trends is used, it signifies schools and vice versa. The schools or trends to be discussed in this piece have been grouped into the Universalist, Particularist, Eclectic, National-Ideological, Sage philosophy, Literal/Artistic philosophy and the Hermeneutic school.

### **a. Universalist/Professional Trend of African Philosophy**

The universalist or professional school of African philosophy was promoted by scholars such as Peter O. Bodunrin, Kwasi Wiredu, Odera Oruka and Paulin Hountondji. Their thought is grouped into a school because they share fundamental positions and assumptions. As a school, what is their argument? They argue that philosophy is the same everywhere and uses the same methodology, and thus African philosophy should be critical and not a descriptive record of Africa beliefs. Bodunrin (cited by Uduigwomen, 1995), a leading figure in the universalist trend brought out the basic features of this school. These include:

- i. They agree with Jenny (1999), that philosophy deals with problems which are ultimate, abstract and very general. These problems cut across geographical and cultural divides. Bodunrin (cited by Uduigwomen, 1995) wrote, "Philosophical systems are built up by systematic examination of specific features of the world out of the relationships that are perceived to obtain between them" (p. 3). It is therefore not surprising that when Sodipo (cited by Uduigwomen, 1995) describes the idea of cause and chance in Yoruba ontology, Bodunrin (cited by Uduigwomen, 1995) would reject it as philosophy on the



grounds that it only allows scholars to see how the Yoruba concept of cause and chance fits into the Yoruba traditional system of thought and not in the general or universal corpus of literature called philosophy.

- ii. If any literature must be categorized as philosophical, it must contain within itself the energies of criticism and argument. In this case, to put out traditional ideas that have not been criticised or cannot be argued, or ideas that are not logical in its presentation and scientific in nature, cannot be regarded as philosophy. Thus, when logic, science, criticism and argumentation are not the hallmark of a body of thought, they cannot be regarded as philosophical.
- iii. For a body of thought to be philosophy, this school also argues that it must follow the analytic or dialectical pedagogy of enquiry. In this process of presentation, one's ideas must be well and clearly articulated, so that your audience would know what they are invited to believe. In this process, the thinker must show how his theory addresses the problem at stake more than other theories. Like the dialectics of Hegel, ideas to constitute philosophy become an antithesis to an already existing thesis, to give birth to a new thesis.

While it is true that philosophy needs to have universal relevance as the professional approach insists, Uduigwomen, (1995) criticizes it on the grounds that philosophical problems will remain plain and in the abstract except it is made to have local and concrete relevance. For instance, the problem of reincarnation will not have any relevance to the African until it is discussed with a focus on the categories that underlie his worldview. From the perspective of Uduigwomen, one can argue that contextualization is what makes African philosophy to have a cultural dimension, arising from the special problem and unique experience of the African people. Any

attempt to detach philosophy from particular contexts would make philosophy a rarefied thing.

**b. Ethno-philosophy or Particularist Trend of African Philosophy**

The proponents of this trend include Tempels (1959), Mbiti (1970) and Senghor (1964; 1973). They argue that the different African worldviews properly constitute what could be regarded as African philosophy. They would define African Philosophy as the philosophical thought of Africans as could be sifted from their various worldviews, myths, proverbs, etc. In this sense, it is the philosophy indigenous to Africans, untainted by foreign ideas. It places little or no emphasis on scientificity, logic, criticism and argumentation and makes more emphases on local relevance or context. This does not in any way mean that this trend undermines the significance of scientificity, logic, criticism and argumentation.

This perspective was expressed in Placid Tempels' work, *La Philosophie Bantou* and John Mbiti's piece, *African Religions and Philosophy*. Segun (1991), criticised this perspective when he argued that Tempels' primary motivation was not to define African philosophy, but to help European missionaries understand the thought pattern or worldview of the Bantu people. This he believed would make the work of evangelization easier for the European missionaries. Segun's criticism does not suffice here, because that a man has not set out to do something but still does, does not mean that what he has done is not worth it. If we move beyond Tempels to Mbiti, his purpose is clear. Mbiti (1970) wrote that the primary motivation for documenting his work was to put down the:

Philosophical understanding of African peoples concerning different issues of life. Philosophy of one kind or another is behind the thinking and acting of every people, and a study of traditional religions brings us into those areas of African life

where, through word and action, we may be able to discern the philosophy behind. (p. 1).

On these grounds, Hounntondji (cited by Segun, 1995) would insist that ethno-philosophy is no philosophy because it is a communal and collective thought and it is not written down. Even here, the criticism of Hountondji that is based on the idea of oral tradition cannot be sustained. Philosophy is not philosophy because it has been written down; it is philosophy because it is first an idea. This would question the *philosophiness* of the ideas of Socrates who never wrote down his thought, but were later put down by his disciple Plato. Writing is not the only way of transmitting information, oral tradition is another. As has already been done by Tempels and Mbiti, professionals can collect the African wealth of ideas and critically analyse them, especially for the enlightenment of many traditional Africans who are yet to be persuaded on the distinction between philosophy, religion, mysticism and telepathy.

Segun (1995) had also criticized this view on the basis of its definition of African philosophy in terms that are traditional. He argues that it would follow that contemporary African philosophy is not philosophy. African philosophy evolves and cannot be traditional all the time. If philosophy addresses issues at all times, it then should be creative, dynamic and not static. He further criticises this view on the grounds that it takes a position that assumes that once we have identified these authentic traditional ideas, we need only report them without criticism. Even here again Segun's arguments cannot be sustained. There is no piece in which the particularist school have said that philosophy is traditional thoughts reported without criticism. Segun takes on the emphasis of the particularist school as though it were all they have said. Worthy of note is that the idea of traditional often used by the particularist school is not limited to myths, proverbs, legend, lore, folklores, etc., of the African people; it also implies a philosophical style passed from one generation to another. In this case, Segun's argument that modern African philosophy cannot be regarded as African philosophy because of the

new context it address, is not true; for even though they were not reflecting on African myths, proverbs, legend, folklores, they carried with them the *Igwebuike* underlining principle of African philosophy, which emphasizes the significance of the one among the many.

**c. National-Ideological Trend of African Philosophy**

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a fulsome energy swept across the African continent bringing about the political emancipation of many African states. And so in 1957, Ghana became independent, in 1960 Nigeria became independent, in 1989 Namibia became independent and in the early 1990's South Africa got her independence from the apartheid regime. This energy was ignited by some Africans through their manifestos, pamphlets, political works, etc. These nationalists include, Azikiwe, Awolowo, Nkrumah, Nyerere and Senghor. Azikiwe (1937; 1965; 1964; 1978; 1981) developed his ideology later described as Zikism by some commentators, which was a philosophy for the political regeneration of Africa, economically, politically, culturally and otherwise. Leopold (1964; 1973) developed the African philosophy of negritude which affirmed the beauty of the black race. Nkrumah (1962; 1963; 1964) developed a philosophical Consciencism so as to help sustain the African identity. Nyerere (1968; 1985) developed the Ujamaa Socialism. The discourse of these African political thinkers was the theoretical offshoot of the African anti-colonial struggle, and the grounding point of departure of African philosophical engagement.

**d. Sage Philosophy**

Sage Philosophy was Henry Odera Oruka (1944–1995), the Kenyan philosopher's contribution to the development of African Philosophy. Through interviews with sages from traditional groups, he identified philosophical sages in different cultures who were more of the repositories of cultural wisdom. He divided them into two groups; the first he called Folk Sages, who embodied community

wisdom; the second he called Philosophical Sages, who held a critical stand towards that wisdom. From his findings, especially as to philosophical sages, he concluded that the West and Hountondji were wrong in saying that Africa has no philosophy, for his research showed that philosophy existed in traditional Africa. Oruka (1991) engaged in this investigation so as to counter three claims that undermined the *philosophiness* of African philosophy. These claims include:

- i. that while the Greek sages use reason, African sages do not engage in philosophic thought.
- ii. African sages are part of an oral tradition, whereas philosophic thought requires literacy. This was also targeted at undermining African thought as unphilosophical.
- iii. African traditions encourage unanimity regarding beliefs and values and discourage individual critical thought.

Oruka's responses to these views shaped what is today called Sage Philosophy. What then is Sage Philosophy? Oruka (1991), defines Sage Philosophy thus:

...the expressed thoughts of wise men and women in any given community and is a way of thinking and explaining the world that fluctuates between popular wisdom (well known communal maxims, aphorisms and general common sense truths) and didactic wisdom, an expounded wisdom and a rational thought of some given individuals within a community. (p. 28)

According to Masolo (2006), Oruka had very definite ideas about who qualifies as a philosophic sage and how such persons are to be distinguished from other sages. These qualifications are as follows:

- i. The tendency to express dissatisfaction with the status quo belief system of their communities is an important critical component and a criterion Oruka used to identify sages as philosophical. Dissatisfaction sometimes motivates the philosophic sage to advance the knowledge that everyone has by subjecting it to scrutiny in order to determine its validity and worth.
- ii. While philosophic sages may still share with others some customary practices and beliefs, or aspects of them, unlike other members of their community, they emphasize rational explanations and justifications of courses of action. They owe greater loyalty to reason than to custom for its own sake. As a result, not only are sages often a source of new knowledge, but they are also a catalyst to change within their communities.

e. **Literary/Artistic Philosophy**

The literary or artistic school of African philosophy focuses on African thinkers who through their literary or artistic works made reflections that are philosophical. These artists include: Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Okot p'Bitek, Taban lo Liyong, etc. For instance, in the *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, he reflected on the Igbo-African philosophy of life, kinship, death, the afterlife, ancestors, etc. For instance, in Achebe's work on the *Things Fall Apart*, the essence of the Igbo-African philosophy of belongingness comes to light:

We do not ask for wealth because he that has health and children will also have wealth. We do not pray to have more money but to have more kinsmen. We are better than animals because we have kinsmen. An animal rubs its itching flank against a tree, a man asks his kinsman to scratch him. (p. 132)

After the feast, when one of the eldest men of the *umunna* rose to thank Okonkwo, the foundation of the Igbo-African philosophy of belongingness is unveiled:

A man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to save them from starving. They all have food in their own homes. When we gather together in the moonlit village ground it is not because of the moon. Everyman can see it in his own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so. (p. 133)

Excerpts like these contain germs of Igbo thoughts on ethics, epistemology and metaphysics.

f. **Hermeneutic Philosophy**

From the name, this school understands African philosophy as interpretation. And here, the works of philosophers like Okere, Barry Hallen, J. O. Sodipo find their relevance. In this school, African philosophy is understood within the context of analysing African languages, texts, proverbs, sayings, etc., with the hope of extracting from them the philosophy of the African people through interpretation. For instance, the interpretation of the Igbo proverb *Ngwere ghara ukwu osisi, aka akpara ya* (If a lizard stays off from the tree, it would be caught by man), helps you to understand the Igbo-African social philosophy.

3. **A Case for Eclectic Trend in African Philosophy**

The Eclectic school of African philosophy would define African Philosophy as the combination of the universalist and particularist approaches to African philosophy. This would involve sifting the philosophical thought of Africans as could be gotten from their various world views, myths, proverbs, etc., and reflecting on them by professionally trained African philosophers. They believe that at the point of this romance between the professional and

unprofessional, authentic African philosophy is realized. It argues that schools are already doing African philosophy, but that they will do better if they join heads together. Uduigwomen, (1995) describes the eclectic interplay between the two schools as follows:

The universalist approach will provide the necessary analytic and conceptual framework for the particularist school. Since this framework cannot thrive in a vacuum, the particularist approach will supply the raw material or data needed by the universalist approach. Thus, it will deliver the universalist approach from mere logic-chopping and abstractness. There will be a fruitful exchange of categories and concepts. (p. 6).

The eclectic school prefers to take a central position. It holds the promise of transforming the conception and practise of contemporary African philosophy. In the African world view every position has a stake. A thousand flowers are allowed to bloom. Obele azu kpata obele nku, nnukwu azu kpata nnukwu nku which translates to let the small fish fetch small bunch of fire wood and let the big fish fetch a big bunch. Two emerging and prominent eclectic theories in African philosophy include: Ibuanyidanda and Njikoka ontologies credited to I. I. Asouzu and G. O. Ozumba respectively. Theories of this kind are able to capture the originality and viability of African thought system.

#### **4. Conclusion**

From the foregoing, this piece has studied the schools of African philosophy in such a way that it goes beyond the conventional limits of the study of these trends traditionally tied to the 1960's and 70s, to the contemporary developments in the study of African philosophy. This study moves further to include the literary and hermeneutic schools as trends in the historical development of African philosophy. The researcher adopts the eclectic school of African philosophy as the most credible and productive school of African philosophy and considers any form of particularization as



a philosophical pride, which must be avoided in every sincere philosophical enquiry. The eclectic trend spoken of here by the researcher moves beyond the conventional eclectic trend which harbours only the universalist and particularist schools, to include all the schools of African philosophy as relevant ends in every African philosophical reflection.

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## **THE THEORY OF FORCES AS CONCEIVED BY IGBO-AFRICANS**

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### **1. Introduction**

In addition to the Bantu conception of vital force as it influences human behavior; there are also other aspects of African life where the further conception of forces can be detected. This work will concentrate on force (ike) as conceived by Igbo Africans. Some of them, any way, are already contained in the Bantu notion of forces. They are:

- (i) Force as given by ancestors
- (ii) Force from charms and magic
- (iii) Force obtainable from sacrifices
- (iv) Force in prayer, sacred objects and places

There is a conception of the Supreme Being as he who gives life, or he who gives force to other beings that are subordinate. Not only in Africa, all over the world, people have the belief that gods have power, force or energy (ike) over things that men cannot control or understand. These beliefs teach that gods are responsible for the creation of the world and the continuation of life in it, and that they control important events such as birth, death, disease and success. Gods, unlike men, do not die; they live forever and restore force to created things that lost theirs.

Man as force itself manipulates these forces; good or bad. C. B. Nze says: "ravaged by constant fears of insecurity in the face of forces of which man is one, the African (Igbo) resort to the making and creation of yet other forces in the form of charms for the purpose of controlling, checking and preventing the excesses of

malignant forces<sup>1</sup>”. On the whole, Africans believe in the existence of spirits in general, good and evil ones.

The good spirits are prominent and known and worshipped by a clan or community. It is usually localized and enshrined in a particular place where sacrifices are made for safety, blessing and good luck etc. These spirits are believed to have the force to receive from the Almighty what the community under its protection requests. The good spirits are merciful and will never allow any of the members of the community to get lost.

The second are the spirits whose names are not known. Often they are the wicked spirits or bad spirits of kindred. Sacrifices to them are often placed on the road sides, often on the forked road because they are believed to be wandering spirits, having the force, (energy or capacity) of coming through many roads – and when they do, they would eventually meet the sacrifice<sup>2</sup>.

## **2. Deities and spirit forces**

The power (the force) of the deities and spirits as spiritual beings are found evident in Igbo proverbs. Their power far exceeds man. Men cannot afford to quarrel with them, nor can man undo what they have done. They can see even the most hidden things. This is why the Igbo say ... “Okenye ji abali eri oke, mmadu ahughi ya mmuo huru ya”. Both deities and spirits can strengthen, by way of giving long life, good health, prosperity and enhance social status<sup>3</sup>. Both spirits can also bring death, understood as the denial of one or

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<sup>1</sup> Nze, C. I., “Logic in African Charm Medicine in the *Nigeria Journal of Social Studies*” Vol. 4 No. 1, P. 23. Further discussions on the constitution of forces in African thought could be seen in J. O. Chimakonam *Introducing African Science: Systematic and Philosophical Approach*, Bloomington Indiana: Authorhouse, 2012, 96-97

<sup>2</sup> Onwubiko, O. A. *Wisdan Lecturers on African Thought and Culture*. (Nigeria: Toten Publishers Ltd, 1988) P. 55

<sup>3</sup> Metuh, I., *African Religion in Western Conceptual Schemes The Problems of Interpretation* (Ibadan: Claverianum Press, 1985), p. 30

all these aspects of life. Sacrifices are offered to spirits to give life. The spirit that received man's offering is bound to pay him back with life. This is why the Igbo people say: Mmuo riri ife onye, ji ndu akwu ya ugwo<sup>4</sup>.

The spirits can also punish, they can kill, whereas the deities are believed to punish or kill for correction or as a retribution for misconducts. The spirit forces are hedged around for a number of taboos, once any of these is infringed, even inadvertently, their reaction is automatic<sup>5</sup>. The Arusi... are spiritual forces in nature which until when they are discovered by man, remains inactive. They become active once man discovers and begins to worship them. It is an instrumentality through which evil forces are controlled, their forces enfeebled. The real meaning of Arusi is Aru kwusi (evil must stop) which is abbreviated as Aru-si. Thus the deities essentially are activated to help man guard against evil in the society.

The more offering these deities receive the more powerful they become and the more powers they have to bring fortunes or misfortunes. So too the less offerings they receive the weaker their powers become. Hence, if a community decides to stop all offering made to an Arusi, its power would be gone, and it would become inactive. Hence the proverb that if an Arusi becomes destructive it would be shown the tree from which it was made<sup>6</sup>.

Making an Arusi to be less potent is dangerous as it portends calamity befalling the community responsible. Yes, Arusi can be destructive if all sacrifices due to it are withdrawn. Actually, the destruction is not caused by Arusi itself, but the absence of it which automatically brings to zero, its functional relation with the people it is meant to protect. The above suggests that Igbo regard

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

sacrifice as a process of restituting vital force<sup>7</sup>. Also, C. B. Nze comments “Constant efforts to maintain existing balance in the community and in the individual necessitate the offering of sacrifices<sup>8</sup>.” This means that the vital force which has also being likened to ikenga is responsible for maintaining this necessary balance by ordering the composite life forces (ijele)<sup>9</sup>.

Man, ‘mmadu’ is best seen as a composite of life-forces interacting with other life-forces in the universe. He is endowed with different principles or selves which link and allow him to interact with other beings in the world. For example, Chi links him with the entire universe of forces<sup>10</sup>.

Obi, as a life force, is capable of growth, diminution and death. By maintaining a harmonious relationship through rituals, man contributes to the strengthening or bonding of his life-forces. Man can further strengthen himself with charms and medicines<sup>11</sup>. In this way, it should be understood that the disintegration of man’s composite forces means death so also with other beings; injuries and diseases are also signs of partial disintegration. Scholarly attempts have been made to explain this using the instrumentality of African logic<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, the strength of man’s life forces is made manifest in his general well being, good health, large family, prosperity and good status in society<sup>13</sup>.

A person’s life force may be the object of attack by witches, sorcerers, unappeased deities, or evil spirits.<sup>14</sup> Man is a microcosm

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<sup>7</sup> Note of course, J. O. Chimakonam’s explanations on the difference between force (ike) power; vital force (ikenga) power to cause...often animated or embodied as in Aruṣi; and life force (ijele) tiny life giving molecules. Op Cit

<sup>8</sup> Nze, C. B., Aspects of African Communal 2 sm p. 63

<sup>9</sup> J. O. Chimakonam Op Cit P.

<sup>10</sup> Metuh. I. Op cit 98

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> J. O. Chimakonam Op Cit P. 2

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

of forces. Above all beings or forces is Chukwu (Great God), spirit or creator. He gives existence, power of survival and increase to all other forces. After him come the deities, and the founding ancestors (father) of different clans. These, though are one time human beings, dispose of great powers and influence because they were the first to whom God communicated his vital force, with the power of exercising influence on posterity. They constitute the most important chain binding men to God.<sup>15</sup> After them come the Ancestors and the other living dead of the family and tribe. Then come the living in order of primogeniture. Then under man and subordinate to him are the physical forces in the universe such as animals, plants and minerals.<sup>16</sup>

### **3. The Interaction of Forces**

The universe is like a spider's web in which all beings are linked together by a network of relationship and interact upon one another<sup>17</sup>. Harmonious relationships or interaction lead to the strengthening of forces of beings, while pernicious influences lead to diminution of being or disintegration of composite forces.

#### **Illustration**

This belief is illustrated by an incident which happened at Ozubulu, a town at the central part of Igbo land some years ago. The catechist of a Christian group, who had cut and sawed up an 'Iroko' tree to get some money to marry a wife for his son suddenly died one morning while working in his barn. While his church members prayed for the repose of his soul in the church, his relatives in the village consulted oracle which attributed his death to his failure to placate the spirit in the tree (vital force). (This incident occurred in 1979; his wife was later said to have died in a similar mysterious way). If he had acted fast by performing rituals

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<sup>15</sup> Tempels P., *Bantu Philosophy* (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1969) p. 61

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Ibid



and sacrifice on recommendation, as Igbo metaphysical opinion would have it, his life would have been saved and equilibrium of forces restored.

The oracles ordered a series of rituals to restore the harmony to avoid more of such deaths, thus, all life forces and vital forces can influence one another for good or for evil. Harmonious relationships ensure stronger bonding of the life-forces of man. Greater part of Igbo religion consists of rituals and sacrifices to maintain or restore this harmony.

#### **4. Sacrifice as Restitution of Vital Force among the Igbo**

Sacrifices are offered to the invisible spirits, deities and ancestors to obtain favors or to avert dangers. This activity is appreciated by the Igbo on the predicate that man, not only an Igbo man, is not the master of the universe even though he is central in the world. According to Arinze Francis (a Roman Catholic Cardinal) the Igbo man offers sacrifices for four reasons: “the various ends of Ibo sacrifices can be grouped under four headings; (a) expiation (b) sacrifice to ward off molestation from unknown spirits (c) petition (d) thanksgiving<sup>18</sup>”. In his own view C. B. Nze sees sacrifice as a means of maintaining existing balances in a given community<sup>19</sup>. The idea behind the maintenance of balance is predicated on the understanding that imbalance or disharmony could have a spiritual cause, straining the relation between the living and the dead.

The Igbo conceive man as a force as he is dynamic. The vital force- – power is identical with man. So the idea of vital force is ontologically inseparable from man, hence the Igbo say, “*mmadu bu mmụọ*”- man is a deity or (spirit in this context). There can be increase or decrease in vital force. There can also be a loss in vital

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<sup>18</sup> Arinze, F., *Sacrifice in Igbo Religion* (Ibadan, University Press, 1970). Pp 2 - 21

<sup>19</sup> C. B. Nze. Op Cit p. 63

force and this loss can also be restored by certain happenings around us.

Man is a being capable of growth and diminution, he is a force that can exercise a direct influence on some other forces; and other forces can also have their influences on man. By positive or negative deeds he can increase, decrease and restore the vital force of other beings. By harmonious relationship he increases his vital force as well as that of others; and by pernicious relation he diminishes either his or the other's vital force.

For the continued existence of the Igbo man, for instance, restoration or restitution of force is very vital. The only way certain of coding this is by sacrifice. Sacrifice therefore, becomes an inevitable tool for this revitalization. It also forms one of the commonest but most important demonstrations of religious worship and belief system among the Igbo people. Sacrifices are made for the protection of life and safety of property. For the guarantee of this protection, the Igbo people offer the sacrifices to the beings with potency of offering protection. This position is supported by Amaury when he said;

Only a clever 'Dibia' can make strong 'Ogwu' when he gives it to a man he tells him to make a certain sacrifices, example: a fowl to it weekly, otherwise the 'Ogwu' will die ...<sup>20</sup>

The Igbo believe certain ingredients are specifically potent for specific actions. Also, there is a belief that time, place, day, week are specific for certain kinds of sacrifice. This belief is hinged on force and their gradation. This belief made explicit in the proverb: "Obu si na ike di n' awaja n' awaja" or "Ovu si na ike di n'osua" very much depends on the dialect one is expressing the reality. To corroborate the above, Onwubiko Oliver succinctly puts it, "For

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<sup>20</sup> Amaury, P. *The People of Southern Nigeria*, Vol. 11 (Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. 1969), P. 168

sacrifices to be efficacious and to achieve their purpose, the African believe that they must be offered at particular place, at a particular time of the day, week or year as the case may<sup>21</sup>.” Sacrifice therefore, is a sign that man is not a necessary being. He acknowledges the being of other vital forces; hence his need to seek external help.

The Igbo belief in sacrifices and their efficacy in the restitution of vital force cement their unmistakable belief in and acceptance of the reality of occult (hidden or latent) power, operation and engineering in Igbo Cosmo-ontology. C. B. Nze makes it clear thus: “Indeed, the Igbo man becomes a technician using sacrifices for the strengthening, maintenance and protection of man. If he is of this sort, he is in perpetual readiness to achieve a refill or else the engine would stall.”<sup>22</sup>

The operation or manipulation of occult powers lies heavily upon the fact that the Igbo generally, as for some other Africans, believe that the universe is like spider’s web in which all things are linked together by a network of relationship and they interact upon one another<sup>23</sup>”

Pernicious relationship leads to the diminution of forces while the harmonious relation leads to the strengthening of forces. Where forces are diminished or annihilated and there is a great need for their restitution, sacrifices are resorted to achieving this.

Sacrifices, depending on its very nature and the intention for which it is carried out, can also diminish or annihilate a vital force. The

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<sup>21</sup> Onwubiko, O. A., *African Thought Religion and Culture* (Enugu Snapp Press Ltd. 1991) p. 62.

<sup>22</sup> Nze, C. B. Op. Cit, P. 71

<sup>23</sup> Tempels, P. Op Cit\_p. 61

use of sacrifice is Plausible following the oration of the ‘metaphysical principles’<sup>24</sup>.

Following the metaphysico-ontological principles in which beings operate, it is worthwhile that we go to explain the different levels or degrees of beings there are. In African cosmo-ontology “there is a belief that a cobweb-like relationship exists between men and the spirits and in the events of strains in the relationships, sacrifices must be offered to re-establish and stabilize balances as “constant efforts to maintain existence in the individuals necessitate the offering of sacrifices.”<sup>25</sup>

There are different degrees of beings. We have terrestrials, vegetative, minerals, in addition to spiritual, otherwise referred to as noumenal entities in Kant’s terminology. These noumenals are super, supra or praeter natural and precisely so their activities resemble their nature and degree of existence. Still among the supernatural or the terrestrial there is hierarchy but this is outside our purview.

Among these degrees of beings, none is more privileged and pre-eminent following the third metaphysico-ontological principles – the principle of proportionality which says “The ontological perfections are common to all beings, to each according to each degree”<sup>26</sup>. If the above holds true the forces generated by all beings must never be equal “Ike di na dabam dabam”, “Nke onye ji eke abughị ya ka ibe ya ji eke” there is hierarchy of forces and relativity in strength.

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<sup>24</sup> Donceal, J. F. *Philosophical Anthropology* (USA, Sheed and World Inc 1967) pp. 14 – 15.

<sup>25</sup> Nze, C. B. Op. Cit, P. 63

<sup>26</sup> Shine, D. J., *An Interior Metaphysics* (Western Mass, Weston, College Press), p. 51

Seeing that each being is ontologically perfect (Nke onye diri ya), the perfection of each is native to each. Owing to this nativity therefore, the forces generated by all beings must never be equal. But because man is the only being that makes this enquiry about other beings, this ontological privilege makes him have an edge over every other being. This ontological 'gratia' is thoroughly appreciated by an Igbo-African and so he becomes well equipped to delve into any discussion of beings in Igbo or African cosmology. In this way, Igbo man's world view or being-in-the-world becomes homocentric or anthropocentric.

It is the man who makes the sacrifices. It is the man who prescribes the type of sacrifices to be made following the principle "like causes produce like effects". It is the man who knows the materials or objects or ingredients suitable for a particular sacrifice that can appease the spirit or deity that has been injured.

With sacrifice man controls the forces or activities of the spirit. Man even directs the spirit as a driver does a car. Man compels spirit to comply.

It is the belief of the Igbo that spirits are responsible for some of the events that happen in man's life, but some men are specially endowed with the understanding of this operation and can manipulate. Either prevent or suspend the powers of these spirits as soon as such reports are made to them.

The man is endowed with different principles of selves capable of strengthening his vital energy. These different selves in one are different forces in one (multi in parvu). With these principles of selves, the Bantu Africans for example hold that:

The Living Muntu (man) is in a relation of being to being with God, with his clan brethren, with his family and with his descendants. He is in a similar ontological relationship with his patrimony (his land with all that it contains or produces, with all that grows or lives in it). All acquisition brings an increase in vital

force in Bantu eyes: Everything which breaks into this patrimony causes it to deteriorate, or destroys it.<sup>27</sup>

The traditional Igbo man retrieves the power of the spirit, hidden powers as a scientist retrieves data from the computer. The Igbo belief in sacrifices, rituals and their efficacy are evidence of their unmistakable belief in occult realities.

When sacrifices of food items are given to the spirits, we do not expect that the spirits eat them as men do. They consume by appreciation and acknowledgement and finally abstract their essences. Thus to eat on the cosmos of spirits is in fact to appreciate. This understanding extends to our churches. When an item is offered to God, we know actually that God does not eat nor use money. But we believe God accepts our offering, tangible or intangible. It is therefore, stupefying to say that the dogs consumed an offertory meant for God; therefore the offertory was not appreciated.

In support, Kristensen mentioned types of sacrifices and the purposes. He puts them into two broad categories:

Those of positive aim of actualizing in nature and among men abiding and self subsistent divine life, and those with negative aim like atoning sacrifices or peace offering to ward off dangerous spirits and thus cause the illness to cease<sup>28</sup>.

The above classification was made along the lines of aims or goals. Similarly Evans Prichard refers to broad categories of sacrifices, namely (a) Piacular (b) Confirmatory. The former is designed to ward off any danger hanging over the people for any misfortune or grave danger as a sign of spiritual activity. No wonder he said

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<sup>27</sup> Tempels, P., Op. Cit., P. 100

<sup>28</sup> Kristensen, W. B., *The Meaning of Religion*, Translate by Carman, J. Martinus Nijhoff (The Hague, 1960) p. 445

ideas of propitiation of the spirit of expiation of faults (to placate the spirits against impending danger).<sup>29</sup> The latter are sacrifices which accompany social activities. Other authors like Hubert and Mauss say confirmatory sacrifices can be called sacrifices of sacralization which make the profane sacred; whereas piacular sacrifices of desacrification make the sacred profane.<sup>30</sup>

Onwubiko A. O. outlines three kinds of sacrifices namely: expiatory, petitive and thanksgiving<sup>31</sup> according to their aims: to ward off evil spirits or placate enraged deity, to ask for a favor or blessing, and for blessings and favors received<sup>32</sup>. In his “Aspects of African Communalism” C. B. Nze named four types of sacrifices, expiation or atonement, thanksgiving, to ward off molestation, to harm others, or sacrifice made to kill somebody, that is, mortuary sacrifice.<sup>33</sup> With the above, it is clear that our belief in the efficacy of sacrifice and its utilitarian, pragmatic purpose are anchored on the reality of force as understood by Igbo-Africans.

However, whether these sacrifices themselves create any effect to the point that is empirically verifiable is outside the scope of this work. We have every excuse to defend the phenomenon as it touches all human religion, values and thoughts and none has been defended empirically. It is a belief system and precisely so, we have no option than to subscribe to the force of that belief which universally hold men together, the Igbo cannot be exempted in this.

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<sup>29</sup> Pritchard, E., *Nuer Religion*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1956) p. 198.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Onwubiko, A. O. *African Thought and Culture* (Owerri Totan Pub. Ltd. 1988) p. 56

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Nze, C. B. Op. Cit., P. 67 – 68

## 5. Charms: Externalization of Igbo African Belief in Force

The Africans, especially the Igbo-Africans, believe in the potency of charms and amulets. This belief also facilitates their belief in Christian sacramentals as both have trajectory functions of affecting an object not in close contact with them. The ability of the Igbo to employ charms to cause manifestations without physical contact has been explained scientifically. This was articulated in Chimakonam's discussions on the laws of African science typical of which is the one he branded the law of *egwueji* or law of the means<sup>34</sup>. Thus, it is feasible that through charms and amulets somebody's vital force may be enfeebled according to the intent of the user with regards to influence other people.

Chukwuemeka Ikeh in his *The Naked Gods* says:

Charms are believed to bring to realization, the power of the spirit ancestors. Yet it is believed that through the use of charm, obnoxious and implacable spirits and ancestors are controlled, driven away, or blind folded, such that their evil machination and punishment of the living are minimized and controlled<sup>35</sup>.

The Webster's Universal English Dictionary gives a workable definition of Charm as that which has "an alluring quality, a magic verse or formula: something thought to possess occult power. An object bringing luck; a trinket on a bracelet"<sup>36</sup>. For C. B. Nze on another hand, "Charms have magical powers or effects ... produce effects or control events or supposed as spells to govern certain natural or supernatural force"<sup>37</sup>. Since like causes produce like

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<sup>34</sup> J. O. Chimakonam. *Op Cit.* P.82-84

<sup>35</sup> Ikeh, C., *The Naked Gods*

<sup>36</sup> Geddes & Grosset. *Webster's Universal English Dictionary* (Canada, 2005)  
p. 53

<sup>37</sup> Nze, C. B. "Logic in African Charm Medicine" *The Nigeria Journal of Social Studies*, Vol. 4 No. 1, p. 23



effects the metaphysical operation of charms function in accordance with this law. Scientifically, this has been branded *iwuniri-onwe* or the law of uniformity and states thus: given any two things, if they are sufficiently similar then, they share some common properties. The reason according to Chimakonam is that by nature's pre-arrangement a good number of things fall into uniformity<sup>38</sup>. A better exposition of this idea is done at the chapter on the methods of African science<sup>39</sup>. Here, the author discusses among others, methods known as *akọ-nyiri-onwe* (sem-science) and *akọ-nso-n'azụ* (causal science). These two methods variously describe how the idea that likes follow from likes dominate enquiries in Igbo African world-view.

Sometimes, preparation of charm follows the ontological principle of cause and effect, conaturality (*agree sequitur esse*). Charms are prepared with the materials which are inherently capable of producing effects that resembled them very much. Once the effect is produced there must be resemblance or similitude. The logic of "like effects follow like causes" is seen in the behavior of the materials used and the result achieved. The forces of the materials are inherent on their behavior. It is the natural behavior that manifests to the practitioner the actual effect which is capable of being achieved by it. In C. B. Nze's "Logic in African Charm Medicine", we can see that the logic that the principles as above mentioned follow is explicit in the ingredients concocted. Protective charm, for instance, is prepared by those things in nature whose actions are protective such as strong bulwarks, nails of a strong man, body parts of lion, leopards, tigers or other strong animals<sup>40</sup>.

Protective charms are used to invigorate, restore, and fortify one's vital force. On the other hand, love charm preparation demands the use of attractive objects and good natured ingredients. For instance

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<sup>38</sup>J. O. Chimakonam Op Cit., p. 85

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 52-63

<sup>40</sup> Ibid

it may be necessary to use hearts of chickens pounded to smooth paste, beautiful and attractive leaves. This is because love attracts and so the ingredients are bound to be of ontological similitude.

That objects of nature speak language to the hearing of medicine man implies that the importance of any object is ontologically inseparable from the nature of the object. It is not by chance that we have sweet roots and herbs as well as bitter leaf and herbs. The sweetness or bitterness of leaf or root portends its importance and its usefulness, its effect when applied in a way nature requires.

Igbo Africans believe that the world is a forest symbols. Everything has a purpose there is sufficient reason for the existence of everything in everything. There are many indices in the natural objects when studied and observed closely. A Botanist or Zoologist will be better equipped to prescribe root, herbs, plants or animals that can be used to achieve certain effects. Some who are endowed by the ability to relate these functions look like “Onatara ndi mmụọ n’aka” or those who received these directly from the gods: For wrestling charm, forces can be tapped from cat or frog. Cat, for its agility and frog, for its flexibility, so that the Wrestler will be agile and flexibility before his opponent.

Also, prestigious charm would make the holder appear intimidating and powerful to his colleagues. C. B. Nze quoted Ezeabasili Nwankwo as suggesting:

The skull of a buffalo, the paw of leopard, one ram, the red feather of a parrot, the feather of an eagle, three quills of hedge hog, three whiskers of leopard and two cocks.<sup>41</sup>

These are objects which emit force inducing fear and respect. They are awe-inspiring by nature and so will behave accordingly

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<sup>41</sup> Ezeabasili, No. *African Science – Myth or Reality*, (Vantage Press, 1977) p. 10. Quoted in Nze C. B., *Loc. Cit.* p. 26

following the principle “actions follow its being” or “everything acts according to its nature” “*agere sequitur esse*”. The behavior of objects of charm, the manifestation of their forces (ike) or being (ihe/ike) , here being is identical with force, is facilitated by adequate words proclaimed over them at least to reactivate the dormant forces. It is commonly observed that no African medicine man ever prepares any charm medicine without pronouncing the appropriate words over it. Solemnly calling each item used by its name<sup>42</sup>. The author quoted above argues that the word has itself the force of freeing the forces inherent in object of charm and makes them effective. The objects need to be conjured in order to release their energy.

No ‘medicine’ talisman, magic, horns. No, not even poisons are effective without the word. If they are not conjured, they are of no use in themselves. They have no activity at all. Only the intelligence of the word frees these forces and makes them effective. All substances, animals, juices are only vessels of the word of the Nommo<sup>43</sup>.

Other forms of charm too many to mention in this paper follows the same pattern of preparation. Francis Arinze holds that a charm is an object which by some mysterious, immanent and unconscious power, is believed to preserve from evil, disease, bullets or motor accidents or to make one succeed in trade, in love affair, in fishing, in catching thieves, in passing examinations<sup>44</sup>. This shows there are as many forms of charms as there are activities of men. Arinze only pointed out the most prominent and common among them that receive patronage.

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<sup>42</sup> Nze. C. B. Loc., Cit, p. 27

<sup>43</sup> Munty, J. J., *An Outline of the New African Culture* (N. M. Grove Press Inc. 1961). P. 133 quoted by Nze, C. B., Loc Cit, p. 27

<sup>44</sup> Arinze, F., *Sacrifice in Igbo Religion* (Ibadan, University Press, 1970) pp. 20 - 21

Belief in the potency and force of charms and amulets is one of the practical aspects of African traditional religion and philosophy. An amulet is an object generally inscribed with mysterious formulae and used by pagans as a protection against various maladies, as well as witchcraft. Charms seem to be synonymous with amulets and do not have a consensus definition.

Oxford dictionary defines amulet as: “Anything worn about the person as a charm or preventive against evil, mischief, disease, witchcraft, etc ..., it applies to all medicines whether internal or external, whose virtue or manner or operation is occult, it is a preservative, protective or charm.”<sup>45</sup>

Charms and amulets have functional relation and similitude. Both are believed to have trajectory power hence their action without physical contact is prominent. Charms are also believed to bring to realization, the power of the spirits and ancestors. Charms and amulets are sought by some African Igbo as means of warding off obnoxious and implacable spirits and ancestors such that their evil machinations and punishment of the living are minimized or averted.<sup>46</sup> This belief in charms and amulets is informed by their subscription to supernatural forces.

In the words of Ogbalu:

A number of popular beliefs are that man can cause sunshine or draught, harmattan, dryness, rainfall, thunder and lightning. Killing of opponents or enemies from far distance without contact or material weapons, that some families have special talent of turning into animals like leopard, hawk,

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<sup>45</sup> James, A. A. M. and Bradley, H., *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Vol. 1. (Lond: OUP, 1933)

<sup>46</sup> Onwubiko, O. A., Loc. Cit.

kite etc. That witches exist, that children suffer because of the misdeeds of their parents.<sup>47</sup>

From the above arises such question as to what extent can charms work? What is the rational for believing in them?

## 6. Philosophy of Charms and Amulets

The Igbo African metaphysician is struck with awe at the vital forces in nature. He discovered there are various inherent forces and power in different realities. There are gradations of power and varieties which explain the Igbo adage attributed to a bird called Obu. '*Obu si na Ike di n'awaja n'aweja, Obu ji egbu agwọ, ma agwọ na-atụ mmadụ.*' "*Ka ima nkea, ima nke ọzọ*".

These varieties of forces they discover in mountains and hills, caves, rivers, plants, birds and animals. Such birds like owl and parrot exhibit acts that are only possible or even hard for man. The strangeness of these birds expresses already strangeness of forces ontologized in them. From initial observation man could analyze the possibility of using or tapping some parts of plants and animals for healing and preventive purposes. These vital and mysterious forces can be observed in many realities that we may not be able to exhaust. For the purpose of this paper we mention a few.

### Anụny-Ebe

This is a special tree that is not very common but often found in the thick forests of Western and Eastern Nigeria, this tree has such ontological mysterious power that living objectives are not found within some specified radius near it. All its part radiate enormous radioactive power that sends shocks to or scotches whatever comes around it. It has repulsive tendency it is a natural charm, natural amulet wherever it is located.

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<sup>47</sup> Ogbalu, F. C., *Igbo Institutions and Customs*, (Onitsha, 1973) pp. 55 – 57.

## **Akwụ Ojukwu**

This is a unique species of palm-tree or palm nuts. It has potency for treating various ailments. It is believed to have a neutralizing ingredient with which to destroy bad charms (ajọ ọgwụ) and ward off evil spirits. It is a natural sacramental, a 'holy water' of the Igbo people.

## **Orodo**

Our people say "Ọkọchị egbu Orodo". Orodo is a kind of Lily flower that survives more in dry season. There is a force in it that makes it survive the scotching effect of sunshine. 'Orodo' can be used as an antidote against poison, physical or spiritual. Wherever it is planted around the house, it repels impending poison and renders impotent anyone brought within a particular radius of the house. It has psychogenetic effect on evil signals. Raymon Arazu confirmed seriously the potency of some natural objects charged with power. He referred to "the leaves, barks and roots of ... trees and plants ... known in Igbo esotericism as particularly potent against evil of all sorts."<sup>48</sup> "Arazu further commented: We have used the "Sacred" plants or parts thereof-to produce what we have named; (a) magic drug (b) Anti Witchcraft powder (AWP) and (c) Ojukwu oil."<sup>49</sup>

There is nothing wrong in self defence. God gave man the instinct of self defence, the instinct of specie preservation. Man defending himself against witchcraft, wicked forces in nature by amicable forces is not in any way wrong. There is nothing good in the world except good will. Good intention is the watch word. African traditional medicine is never complete without the knowledge and practice of esoteric self defence which has come to us as mantras

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<sup>48</sup> Arazu, R. C., *The Witchcraft Scourge: Ourselves Defence* (Awka: C. Martins Publishers, 2003), p. 6

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

(Nommo), objects charged with power, drugs, potions and even rituals.<sup>50</sup>

## 7. Evaluation and Conclusion

Igbo-Africans believe that from visible to invisible one can infer Igbo people look at external features and characteristics of an object because they are revealing. The attractiveness of a tree is seen in and through its reality, which is value-oriented.

When the African discovers the value of a being, perceives the forces inherent in it, sees its relation to other beings, then he employs his own power and the power of his words to harness the forces of these beings and sets them to work for his own goods<sup>51</sup>.

In order to vindicate the above facts C. B. Nze said that:

The Igbo of Africa have a sense and practice of observation. They observe things that are that is, realities that exist, their natures or essences. They form concepts and have ideas of what is<sup>52</sup>.

Elizabeth Isichei lamented the devastating blow, an inferiority complex introduced by missionary propagandists with their condemnation of our cultural practices as ‘joo joo’ that is, toy, when referring to our charms and amulets.

Our contact with missionaries has done a world of damage to our religious practices with which our physical security was inseparably associated: it has rubbed us of spiritual science without giving us an equally effective substitute we seem to go sheepishly in the ocean of vicissitudes in the world

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<sup>50</sup> Arazu, R. c. Op. Cit p. 5

<sup>51</sup> Nze C. B., “Logic in African Charm Medicine” In *The Clan Medicine in The Nigerian Journal of Social Studies*, Vol. 4. No. 1 P. 30

<sup>52</sup> Nze, C. B., “Uncovering Logic in Igbo Language and Thought” *West African Journal of Philosophical Studies*. Vol. I. No. 1. Sept. (1998). P. 126.

without something concrete on which to rely our safeguard<sup>53</sup>.

The Igbo of Africa believe in the functional utility of charms and amulets and their empirical immediacy of their effect underlies the feeling that Christianity, with its accent on the ‘patiently waiting for God’s time’, does not seem to have all the answers. It becomes feasible for these Igbo to believe that Christian faith needs to be reinforced with charms and amulets. In traditional Igbo religion charms and amulets are revered because they represent symbolic presence of supernatural protection against misfortunes or evil spirits. They are also signs of assurance of security, blessing and progress. The salient point in charms and amulets consist in the fact that the mystical power accredited to them is contained therein. Their efficacy is manipulated according to strict guiding rules and principles. The sacraments which are recommended as substitutes to the new converts are seen as symbols, visual aids that induce confidence in the blessing, protection, power and presence of God. The efficacy of sacramentals depends solely on the will of God, the Church’s intercession and the faith of the individual who make use of them.

The Igbo of Africa have tendency to practical results in life. Their beliefs in vital force accentuate this fact. Sacramentals do not seem to be result oriented as its effect is not recorded within empirical immediacy. So they use charms, amulets in conjunction with sacramental or use sacramentals as if they are charms. This attitude is anchored on the belief that “Nwoke adighi agbaba onwe ya aka” – man does not stay without certain protection. Nature for him abhors a vacuum.

The force as conceived by Africans, Igbo in particular is not an exclusive experience. The forces of the ancestors are also integral

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<sup>53</sup> Isichei, E., “Seven Varieties of Ambiguity Some Patterns of Igbo Response to Christian Mission”. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. Vol. III, (London E. J., Brill, 1970) p. 220



observances of the church. The Christians believe in the communion of the saints just as the Igbo Africans believe in the communion of ancestors. The ancestors like the Christian saints have the force of bringing blessings to the living. The venerated ancestors and the Christian saints are believed to be powerful intercessors. Both obtain favour, blessing, protection from evil spirits, healing for sickness, graces for prosperity and ultimate victory over the vicissitudes of life. This is confirmed in Roman Missal:

... in communion with them (saints) you give us their friendship. In their prayer for the Church you give us strength and protection. This great company of witnesses spurs us on to victory, to share their prize of everlasting glory.<sup>54</sup>

Goodness is like a perfume whose aroma cannot be restricted, but rather spreads in all directions ... so it is with the ancestors. There are inherent Christian practices in Igbo African belief. The Igbo Africans are respecters of nature and so use nature to their advantage. During the blessing of water during Eastertide the priest says:

... you made water an instrument of your mercy, for through it you freed your people from slavery and relieved their thirst in the desert. It was through water you announced ... the new covenant which you were to offer man...<sup>55</sup>.

The water is a natural object; the efficacy of it is reactivated by proclamation of adequate words. Natural things behave when words are appropriately used over them. In the same vein, among Igbo Africans, this realization was commonly known before the

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<sup>54</sup> The Week Day Catholic Missal (London: Collins, 1975), See the 1<sup>st</sup> preface of the holy men and women, p. 67

<sup>55</sup> St. Mathews Daily Missal, Goddlife Neale, Acester and (Dublin, 1974), P. 1690

advent of colonialists, missionaries. The theory of vital force among Igbo Africans was as old as the Igbo nation. The documentation of this theory can be credited to the colonialist enterprise and the good things that came along side.

Through Prophet Elisha God commanded salt to be cast into water to make the foul water wholesome. God himself acknowledge the force in natural things otherwise being Almighty he could bring about the wholesomeness of water without using salt. In these way natural things, physical realities are indices, symbols for the really real. No wonder life is full of symbols. The world is a forest of symbols. Everything is a pointer to something unless undiscovered. If Igbo African used salt to prepare 'holy water' to ward off attack of the devils, it would be called charm, but when the same matter and form is used by the priest, it is now called sacramental.

There is, therefore, as we can see from the foregoing, no functional difference between charm and sacramentals. The difference is only seen in the officiating minister. This realization is brought to bear on the fact that many priest and pastors today continue the use of amulet, charm and sacramentals based on their understanding of forces to minister to people.

Father Raymond Arazu is already Ojenamụ – Ojenamadụ in this practice, Late Father Gilbert Hilary Ohai, the Pentecostal Pastors in their miracle handkerchief to mention but few. Human nature is the same. Psychometric, psychokinetic experience, are native to human nature. What many lack is the force of the energy to translate their basic experiences in life so as to penetrate the core of reality.

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## **THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN PRE-COLONIAL EFIK LAND**

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### **1. Introduction**

The major task of this paper is to do an overview of Administration of Justice in the Pre-colonial Efik as well as the Efik judicial system in particular. Its intention is to show how the emergence of the British Colonial Administration on the Efik land alongside its justice delivery system with passion for litigation (Ukot Ikpe Ke Esop) as a modus for attaining justice help to stratify negatively the society it came to build and/or develop. To drive home our point, the processes of obtaining justice in the Efik world-view would be exposed. In doing this we shall trace the pre-colonial administration of justice in Efik land from dynasty to dynasty. We shall also show how developed the Efik Judicial system was long before colonialism. This strong traditional system would be shown to have been greatly undermined by the colonial system. After which a proposal for a “judi-cultural renaissance” as a pivot for a new social orientation and justice delivery would be put forward.

### **2. Administration of Justice in Pre-Colonial Efik**

Justice among the Efiks is the moral resolution of issues which involves punishment, reward and restitution. In considering the concept of justice among the Efiks, the need to appropriately react to some of the questions that often characterized a study of this nature need not be overstressed, such as – Is there an African jurisprudence nay the Efik Jurisprudence? If there is, what are its components? What are its modes of operations? And so on. It is our hope that the attempt to respond appropriately to either of these

questions will assist in establishing whether or not there is “An African jurisprudence nay Efik jurisprudence?”

On this note, one of the ways to an adequate articulation of an African Jurisprudence is to conduct enquiry into certain traditional African values, which may include certain states of affairs, types of behaviour, attitudes and patterns which the traditional African considers as ideal or good and worth pursuing. As a follow up, we also need to consider the mode of application of laws in the settlement of disputes in the African setting. However, for the purpose of this study we shall be concerned with just some of the highly cherished values of the traditional African life, to include: The value of religion and the sacred; the value of truth and justice; the value of responsibility; and the value of high moral standards and good character.

(i) **The value of religion and the sacred**

Several authors have highlighted the importance and influence of religion in traditional African society nay the Efik kingdom. J. S. Mbiti in his phenomenal work on *African Religions and Philosophy* posits that “Africans are notoriously religious. Religion permeates all the departments of their life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it” (Mbiti, 1). Innocent Asouzu’s, *Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and beyond African Philosophy* affirms that. African religion was not a pass time affair neither was it a part-time preoccupation but a till time personal encounter with the Divine” (Asouzu, 253). The above statement though was made with specific reference to the Igbo people of Nigeria, but the statement is true of most traditional African societies.

Each African people have its own cultural values with some common bonds with others. Religion is a part of this cultural value in addition to being the far richest aspect of the African heritage. Religion permeates every parts of the traditional African life nay, the Efik people who clearly identify with this popular maxim

“Abasi do” meaning “There is God.” It dominates the thinking of the African people to such an extent that it shapes their culture, their social life, their political organization, the economic activities and of course, their traditional legal system and jurisprudence.

**(ii) The value of truth and Justice**

Following from the value of religion and the sacred is the value of truth and justice. The place of truth in the traditional African setting was primarily moral and not cognitive or epistemological as with the Western Philosophy. In the African culture, God who is the creator of all things, who also knows all things, and who is the one who decrees morality, is the one who knows the truth of things. Many African societies, the Efik Nation inclusive have names for God that describe God as truth, or Doer of truth “Abasi anam akpaniko” or knower of truth “Abasi ofiok akpaniko.” Hence the saying in the African setting that things that are true are effects from the creative being God. In other words, the value of truth derives from the African value of religion, which involves the fear of God for the African.

Majority if not all of traditional African societies believe that God metes out justice. Justice also stems from the social nature of the human personality and governs his interactions, obliging him to give others their due and ensuring that he receives his due. Francis Arinze rightly observed, concerning the Igbo that it is justice that rules the relation between man and man, and further more that justice concerns giving each man his due, and also consider the varied relations men have with one another, then the different facets of justice becomes clear. These include: Justice of piety or respect and obedience, retributive justice or justice for inflicting of punishments, invocation of curses, justice for oath-taking or the establishment of truth and so on.

In conclusion, the point made from the foregoing is that the value of truth and justice, in the traditional African setting flows from the

value of religion and the sacred. In other words, truth and justice are valued because they derived from the nature of God Himself who is concerned about the moral order and harmony of the society.

**(iii) The Value of responsibility**

The African world is a world shared with other individuals and beings to include: the Supreme being, local deities, divinities, ancestors, spirits as well as numerous abstract forces in an ordered manner. There is the belief in the existence of order and interaction among all beings, to the extent that disorder is seen as the result of some improper conduct on the part of any of the beings, most especially, the human being. To safeguard and ensure this cosmic and social order in traditional African societies rights, duties and obligation on one hand and prohibitions, taboos, and sanctions on the other hand were devised and enforced through various means such as, flogging, fines, suspension, withdrawal of chieftaincy title and so on. Thus the system places the responsibility to maintain law and order on every person in the community.

Consequently, responsibility was considered as an esteemed, virtue and held as core value in traditional African experience of values. For instance, when people break moral laws, they suffer shame in the sight of the society and so on.

**(iv) The value of high moral standards and good character**

The African traditional ethics placed very emphatic value on the maintenance of high moral standards which must be reflected in the goodness of character of men and women. According to Joseph Omeregbe in his assertion on the understanding of God and His relationship with men, explains why

In African traditional ethics it is futile for anybody to think that he can commit a crime in secret and go



scot-free, for God who sees whatever is done in secret will always ensure justice by punishing such an evil doer, sooner or later, in this life or in his next (reincarnated) life (Iroegbu and Echekwube, 39).

Following from the above assertion, it can be deduced why Africans traditionally placed emphatic value on the maintenance of high moral standards and the promotion of good character.

In summary, from the foregoing, is the fact that in traditional African philosophical jurisprudence nay the Efik jurisprudence, the thinking was that matters of truth, justice, reward, vengeance, decisions about right and wrong, good and evil are matters that in many instances, transcend the control of mere mortals such that any transgressions or meritorious acts that escapes the attention of mortals are still capable of being punished or rewarded as a result of the natural mutual complimentarily of the interacting forces which bind all missing links of reality.

Following from this summation, we can proceed on our next line of study the Efik concept of justice in its entirety.

According to, E.U. Aye, the story of the Efik people has been created by historical accidents that expressed itself on the people in various facets– occasionally unpleasant, undesirable, damaging and sometimes destructive note. (Aye, iii). He went on to further asserts that these various facets of misfortune, which were the lots of the people to bear, created their own situations including the dispensation of justice. More so was the fact that each of these situations came along with its diverse scenes, though each of these scenes was pregnant with its own vicissitudes which occasionally changed from good to bad and bad to good in the life of the people. However, these diverse scenes and experiences added richness to the tales of their

adventures of migrations and sojourns among their host nations. Worthy of note is their strong belief in the true dispensation of justice, in addition to their fanatic attachment to their indigenous culture, their native names, and what they felt they stood for, that proved to be their saving grace as a people throughout those years of trials.

In exposing the concept of justice amongst the Efiks, attention was given to the following sub-themes-Who are the Efiks? On who are the Efiks according to late Etubom Ukorebi Asuquo, a renowned Ethno-Historian of Efik descent “the question of Efik Origin and who they are have been very sophisticated nowadays. The augments are no longer traditional history; they are now sophisticated theories and hypotheses, and very sophisticated discussion and analysis.” (Inameti, 26). From this assertion, Ukorebi is of the thought that there are many schools with regards to tracing who the Efiks are, such as the Etymological and Ethnographical school; The Oriental school; the Palestinian school. Precisely, Etubom Ukorebi Asuquo, represents the Etymological and Ethnographical school, late Dr. Eyo Okon Akak represents the Palestinian or Hebrew school; while Elder Effiong Ukon Aye, represents the oriental school. However, irrespective of the schools of thought and their respective claims, for the purpose or intent of our investigation, we shall conclude thus, that the Efiks are a people who occupy parts of Eastern Nigeria and are mainly traders, merchants, fishermen and farmers. Worthy of note, is that the Efiks had a prolonged interaction in terms of tradition with the Portuguese, Dutch, French as well as the British Merchants which helped to put them in the world map as a “ treaty nation” with a treaty king as the “Obong of Calabar” as far back as the fifteen century. What constitutes their thought system which includes law of cause and effect; law of retribution, reward system; the idea of Supreme God is the focus of this work. Others includes the potency of curses; Efik names or naming pattern among the Efiks, marriage; life After Death; language; The Efik house system; land

ownership/tenureship and Drama have been well attended to in this study.

The concept of justice among the Efiks was given deserved attention as well. The concept of justice amongst the Efiks is often intermingled with the concept of right. Put differently, both concepts are used interchangeable with one or the other. The concept of justice amongst the Efiks is tied to the universal assertion of giving one his due “interpreted in Efik as “edino owo si dide unen esie.” In other words, the notion of justice and rights amongst the Efiks mean the same thing. Even though the end of every justice pursuits or delivery is to enable one attain or benefit from the enjoyment of some fundamental rights; whereas they both mean different things in the western jurisprudence. This is in addition to delineating its (justice) elements to include – Shrines and native courts; administration of Oath; marriage and payment of dowry; invocation of Ekpe Decrees/injunctions; uspension/banishment of erring citizens; pronouncement of curses in culprits.

However, as we have done with Western School of Thought on their Notions of Justice. We shall attempt an outline of some Efik Kings and Chiefs on how the notion of Justice was viewed and dispensed in their time.

The Great Duke Ephraim IV (1814 – 1834), he ascended the throne during the period of transition from slave trade to palm oil trade. He was rated to be in the category of those rulers that believed that “Might is Right” as posited by Thrasymachus, and that “Injustice Pays.” It was recorded that in spite of his influence in both men and material, Great Duke’s ambition for sovereignty in all things seemed insatiable. Even though there was really no serious threat to his ambition except for the rivalry of his elderly friend Eyo Nsa. To dispose of this “nuisance” Duke was reported to have used his position as Inyamba Ekpe Efik to bring up a false charge against his friend, Eyo. For the Great Duke, it was his hour of triumph for

Eyo was found guilty and fined to such a degree that he was totally ruined.

King Eyamba V (1834-1847), he is another influential Efik King, popularly known to his Liverpool friends as Johnny Young, and to the Efiks as Edem Ekpenyong Offiong Okoho. He conceived justice in the sense of “International Military Diplomacy” or relation. On this note, it is a common occurrence to see bigger and influential nations coming to the aid of the smaller ones whom they have some things in common with. It is on record in one such occasion that King Eyamba V, devised a strategy to ensure that the way was clear for his people to trade with the Cross River Region in 1846. When news reached him (King Eyamba) that the people of Umon, under their King Abiakari I, had treacherously attacked and plundered the Agwagunes who were allies of the Efiks he was distraught. As at the time of hearing the news, about one hundred and seventy people were said to have been killed by the Umons, and Eyamba felt obliged to avenge the attack. Similar cases in his time on the throne earned him the reputation as a king that believes in justice as retributive and punitive. On this note, King Eyamba V, could be said to have also conceived justice as one fighting against “Domination and Servitude” as enunciated in Hegel’s Dialectics of Master-slave relationship. Though, Hegel never treated same under the notion of justice, but under the Phenomenology of self consciousness.

King Archibong I (1849 – 1852), was the founder of the Archibong dynasty. He also conceived justice as a means for fighting against all manner of oppression in the land including the insurgences from much revered Ekpe Confraternity. He (King Archibong I) achieved this by joining the company of other free men in Duke Town and the Blood men for their own ends. The “Blood Men” (NKA IYIP) are the conglomerates of fugitives and runaway slaves who in a bid to escape from the atrocities of the Ekpe Confraternity, band themselves together by a covenant blood for mutual protection. Hence, according to Hope Waddell, this was

the origin of the Blood Society which attained much strength as to rival the Egbo association (Waddell, 476).

King Archibong II (1859 – 1872), belonged to the same generation as Archibong I. His concept of justice was prominent in his fight against “Economic Domination and Subjugation” by the European traders on Efik Shores. This he did by successfully countering the pressure of the European traders by opposing all their machinations. It is on record in April 1862 when the European traders attempted to reduce the price of oil in Calabar on the grounds that English oil market was falling, Archibong, along with Eyo IV of Creek Town disagreed, using traditional methods possibly Ekpe or Mbiam, that is, juju concoction, to suspended trade in the river and permitted no oil to be sold to any ship at the reduced price offered by the European traders. However, this matter and ensuing controversies were later resolved amicably.

King Archibong III (1872 – 1879), conceives justice in terms of loyalty to the state. This was clearly expressed via his resentment and the immediate problem of containing the excesses of “Sierra Leonians” and “Accra Men” who styled themselves “British Africans” and holding “free immigration papers” issued to them by the consul. Armed with these papers they (British Africans) began a movement to rid themselves of the King’s control. Their continued defiance of authority by these people resulted in a build-up of resentment against them as well as the moves to eject them from Calabar. By 1876 many of them had left Calabar because the Efik threatened to Massacre them. This led King Archibong to make the following proclamations –

In no wise have any African Born British subjects in my country who will not abide by the law of my country with the exception of the Hulk and Cask house dwellers. I therefore implore the court to inform the said British subjects dwelling in Old Calabar Towns under my control that those who

will not abide by my country law must leave my country entirely or abide in one of the Hulk in my river if they choose. (Archibong III).

Loyalty to the king and the laws of the land were imperative for justice to reign. His position is similar to Plato's conception of Justice where justice ensues from the proper dispositions of duties of individuals to the state.

King Eyo Honesty II (1835 – 1858), exploits in the dispensation of justice could be seen, this time by playing a direct mediating role. Sometime, in the course of his reign, the Ikoneto community was placed under the Ekpe ban. And when they could not bear it, they appealed to King Eyo Honesty II for mediation. It was said that an Ikot Offiong man had sent an Ekpe official to collect a debt from another man in Ikoneto. When the debt was not forthcoming, the man's children were seized in the name of Ekpe by the tying of the sacred yellow band on their arms as hostages. The Ikoneto people appealed to Duke Town which took up their cause and together they proceeded to plunder Ikot Offiong which resisted the combined force and prevented them from landing. Following the resistance by the Ikot Offiong people, Duke Town returned home to prepare seriously for war while the Ikot Offiong people appealed to King Eyo for peaceful intervention. The King prevented the war by calling a Grand Ekpe meeting to settle the misunderstanding. This singular act by King Eyo enabled him to gain the confidence of virtually the whole of Calabar. Many more of such marked him as a king whose idea of justice includes freedom from oppression and tyranny.

Chief Magnus Adam Duke (1842-1899), was one of the influential chiefs in Efik land. As a Prince of the Efik land, who studied law in England, on returned home, he became deeply involved in local political affairs. To this end, he had serious confrontations with King Duke IX in whose court he served as "Scriba Municipii" or

Secretary. He felt that the King was trying to subdue many old Calabar Houses under his control, especially, the King wanted to exert what he (Magnus) termed “Domino Tyrannus” or tyrannical rule over his own Adam Duke House. His resentment was manifested in a petition which he sent to then consul Annesley, to intervene on his behalf. This petition narrated how the King had tried to force him to take “Mbiam Oath” or “juju concoction” that he was not his slave, an entreaty Magnus Duke refused to submit to because according to him taking mbiam oath whether of one’s free will or not, was a sign of making one a slave. However, the controversy between the two men (King Duke IX and Chief Magnus Duke) was resolved by Consul Annesley by admonishing them on the need to ensure equity, justice, good government and peace in the administration of Efik House System.

The exposition of both the Western and Efik concepts of justice gives us the impetus to undertake a comparative analysis of the two schools of thoughts.

### **3. Justice in Efik Legal Statutes**

We shall focus on the administration of justice itself from established legal tradition. In as much as the ends of administration of justice is justice itself. We shall as well give attention to the structures set up, manned and operated for the settlement of disputes or enforcing the law of the land such that good conscience, fairness, equity and the rule of law permeate every aspects of the society. In addition, the structures for the administration of justice presuppose an inherent ability and power to dispose justice in a cause or matter that is justifiable in a court of law. Even though, it is understandable that not all causes and matters are justifiable in the court of law, hence the need to seek for an alternative means or ways of resolving disputes such as arbitration.

In considering the court system/ judicial structure both executive and judicial functions are exercised by the Obong-in-Council at the

apex of the authority with a trickling down of the same authority to subjects under him to include – the Etuboms or Clan Heads, Village Heads and family Heads or subsidiary chiefs at the foot of the pyramid.

In an attempt to juxtapose between the practice of judicial precedent in the Efik judicial system though there is a provision for hierarchical court system in her native laws and custom, the notion of judicial precedent is not strictly adhered to. In other words, there is provision for the notion of judicial precedent in the Efik judicial system drawing from one of the popular maxim among the people “Owo isihkede adana eset” meaning “don’t shift the ancient landmark.” But the only difference is that, it lacks strict adherence to the extent that, room is given to emotions, circumstances and sentiments, especially when the accused is rich and well connected in the land. A typical example is in the process of choosing the Obong of Calabar. It is mandatory, according to the Efik native laws and customs, that the successor to the throne of Obong of Calabar must attain the highest Ekpe grade “The Eyamba,” in addition to other qualifications. But in 2000, there was a shift from this established norms in the sense that the choice of Obongship, which was originally zoned to western Calabar was re-assigned to the central Calabar from which the deceased Obong of Calabar, His eminence, Edidem (Prof.) Nta Elijah Henshaw III came. This action generated a lot of heat among the two Efik zones, as it was seen as a breach of the 1970 accord between the two zones in selecting the next Obong in the event of death.

On the exercise of discretionary power in the Efik land, during the process of adjudication, especially when faced with the problem of indecision over any matter, the Obong-in-Council can use the discretionary power given him to dispense justice. A case in view was in 1447 decision by King Eyo Honesty II, when he ordered the banishment of all masters of divination (Abia-Idiong) from his kingdom, following the exposure of the futility of the sect by personally hiding a “magic lantern” and asking the most powerful



one amongst them (the Abia Idiong) to find out who the thief was. In this case, the spell of the *Abia Idiong* fell on an innocent person, after which the King ordered that the magic lantern be brought from where it was hidden. The next step of action was for King Eyo Honesty II to banish all the Abia idiong from his kingdom to safeguard further damage and injustice in the land.

The Efik judicial system also has the process of adjournment and makes provision and application for such with the following reasons for its justification:

- (i) To enable relevant witnesses appear in the case as well as give testimony;
- (ii) To enable the sitting judge(s) to verify the facts of claims in the case in question, for example, land disputes.

The term “adjournment” could best be described with the following usages amongst the Efiks – “edi sio nim” or “editre kana.” It is commonly employed when there is a serious dispute, or when there are no witnesses (ntie-nse) to testify to the fact on ground. The judge depending on who is at the helm of affairs such as the village Head, Clan Head or the Obong-in-Council could call for adjournment of the matter to a later date.

In the case of offences that could lead to meting out punishments the Efik have provisions for them in their moral code. These punishments are either retributive or deterrent depending on the nature of the offence. For instance, in Efik land, if the punishment is retributive, it is referred to as “Isop” or “fine,” but when it is deterrent; it is referred to as “Ntuno” or “rough handling.” Punishment or *ufen* in Efik land serves as a veritable weapon for the preservation of the societal moral values from flagrant disregard and decay. Moreover, in the Efik traditional society, “mme ewuho obio” (custom or moral code of the land) provides sanctions against those who violated it and those considered to be dangerous to the entire community. Though the standard of

conduct amongst the Efiks was expressed in unwritten form, but the forbidden acts were recognized and punished as transgression according to native laws and customs of the people.

Thus for punishment in the Efik judicial system, the standard of conduct was expressed in unwritten form but the forbidden acts were recognized and punished as transgression according to the native law and customs of people (Aye 17).

Just as it was with the concept of punishment the Efiks juridical system contains the application of bails/injunctions. For bail, the purpose is either of the following:

- To secure the freedom of the accused or;
- In case the accused fail to appear for trial by court.

Whereas, injunction is a remedy in form of court order addressed to a particular person that either prohibits him from doing or continuing to do a certain act, (i.e. a prohibitory injunction) or orders him to carry out a certain act, that is, (a mandatory injunction). It is necessary to note that this remedy is discretionary and will be granted only if the court considers it just and convenient to do so; it will not be granted if damages would be a sufficient remedy. Also, injunctions are often needed urgently by plaintiffs urgently as a remedy (Martin and Law 274).

In the Efik judicial system, bail is commonly referred to as “Ubion.” Hence the following usages in Efik communities such as “edibo ke ubion”, meaning “to take on bail”, “tie ubion no,” meaning “stand in for bail,” “fak enye sio ke ubion,” meaning “rescue by bail.” Consequently, in the community when the need for one to be bailed becomes necessary especially in the Obong royal court, any of the following questions may be asked – “ndi enyene owo eke edibo de enye ke ubion?” meaning “Is there anyone to take him on bail?”, or “ndi ameyene nkpo ndi nim nte nkpo ubion?” meaning “Do you have anything to present as collateral for bail?” This may include landed property, money or

some physical items. Injunction in Efik land is identified by the following terms. “Ukpan” meaning “command” while “ewuho.” Meaning “order.”

In Efikland, almost all the injunctions effected in the land are instituted by the Ekpe conclave via its unequivocal proclamations. Though with the advent of the British colonial administration in Efikland, the Ekpe fraternity has progressively lost its bearing, rather what obtains now are mere sophistries.

Concerning the implementation of appeal processes the Efik judicial systems has legal provisions. The appeal process (unim ebene) starts from the family structure (Ekpuk ufok) up to the Obong of Calabar royal court (Esa Obon). In other words, the pursuit of redress could go beyond the internal husband and wife disagreement up to the larger family (Ekpuk Ufok) presided over by the family head (Ibuot Ufok) and so on.

In respect of policing and prison authority, the institutions were not properly defined in the Efikland as they were in the West. For instance, in Efikland her policing system includes: “Nka” or “age group” and “Nka –Ukpotio” or “able bodied men”, whose functions were as follows: arresting of any violator of the native law; ensuring that the proclamations or decrees (mbet) of the paramount chiefs are judiciously obeyed. The known prisons or confinement in the then Efik land were “Nkobi ntem”, which was a temporary cell where stubborn persons were kept until he or she is bailed out. The other one is, “Ebuka,” that is the prison proper. This was primarily made for stubborn slaves (Ifin) or fugitives. One such prison was built in the palace of King Archibong III in 1875.

#### **4. Evaluation and Conclusion**

The fact that morality is a product of social context makes any serious violation of the moral order to have a social aspect, leading to serious social consequences. Moreover, prior to the emergence

of the British colonial masters on her shore (Efik) “arbitration” was much preferred alternative to “litigation” in settling disputes. Why arbitration? It was because the approach engendered mutual trust and confidence in the society where social solidarity, communalism, mutual dependence and complementarity were highly cherished traditional values. Arbitration, otherwise known as “Alternative Disputes Resolution” (ADR) as the term implies, is one of the wide range of processes that encouraged dispute resolution primarily by agreement of the parties as against a binding decision in litigation. This method of adjudication (ADR) offers a number of advantages and benefits to its adherents including – privacy, speedy resolution of disputes, less costs, improved future relationship among the parties, mutual satisfaction of parties’ interests and so on. However, the choice of arbitration by the Efik judicial system does not in any way place arbitration at a vantage position over litigation, because in resolution spectrum, no one process, be it litigation or arbitration is in all respect superior to the other. Rather, the effectiveness of any process is usually determined by the facts and circumstances of the particular case. But the fact remains that ADR plays an integral part in the Efik judicial system. Hence the common usage – “Yak nke tot nno Ibuot Ufok,” meaning “Let me go and report to the family Head,” this is contrary to the language of litigation (Ukot Ikpe ke esop) meaning “sue him to the court.” But when an aggrieved Efik man seeks to report his brethren to either the family head or the community leader, it is done with a view to ensuring peaceful future co-existence. When the dispute is insolvable the presiding officer through the agreement of the parties in disputes may resort to spiritual dimensions or consulting deities, which usually takes the form of swearing on some juju otherwise known as “Uta unwono” or “uta mbiam” meaning “oath taking” (Elias et al 188).

Corroborating the Efik jurisprudential choice of arbitration over litigation, innocent Asouzu sees the traditional African preference of arbitration over litigation as a consequence of her realization of

the “transcendent complementary unity of consciousness.” This, according to Asouzu is the “highest form of actualization of communal experience as shared experience (Asouzu 106). In relation to judicial procedure, Asouzu submits that:

The traditional African society was deeply committed to the idea of efficacy of retribution arising from non-commitment of the demands of the experience of transcendent complementary unity of consciousness. This mutual experience makes arbitration a viable alternative towards checking excesses and tension in society. (Asouzu 188)

Beyond the assertion made via Asouzu’s “transcendent complementary unity of consciousness” is also the need for African and indeed the Efik nation to embark on “cultural renaissance” that would help project her much cherished values and virtues of life. A situation that drew support from T.O. Elias thus, “They had administered their brand of justice in their own way, but this new system came in with something different something that tended to encourage, rather than check evil”(Elias et al, 189). This points to the failure of Western styled judicial system introduced in much of Africa since colonial times.

The need for a “judi-cultural renaissance” of the Nigerian experience need not be overemphasized at this point. This is because a lost culture leads to a lost society in addition to loss of invaluable knowledge. And being conscious of the fact that the greatest fault with our administration of justice today is the lack of the will power to articulate laws that reflects our native jurisprudence which will invariably help to stem the dangers of judi-cultural atrophy which has since eroded the possibility of attaining such feat.

Finally, the following have been suggested as means of boosting the growth and development of “Judi-cultural renaissance” of the native Efik jurisprudence:

- a. That the on-going legal reforms in the country should extend to the native jurisprudence, even though, there are customary courts already in existence as provided for by the Nigerian constitution. But the courts (customary courts) are not as effective as they were, when local or native arbitration process was directly in the hands of chiefs, Etuboms and Obong-in-Council. In some occasion, when matters brought before the village assembly or court are beyond human comprehension, there is room to follow spiritual dimension via the ordeal of “Uta-Mbiam” or Uduk Afia” as means of ascertaining the truth of the matter in addition to saving time and costs;
- b. That our judicial and law officers, legal practitioners and law teachers should henceforth adjust their minds to the evolvement of original legal thought particularly suited to the needs and ends of the Nigerians as well as the native Efik society;
- c. That regular workshops and training on native jurisprudential principles and practice should be conducted for our local chiefs and traditional rulers. However, this workshop must be conducted in such a way as not to be seen as trying to impose the Western judicial system on the native or local jurists rather it should help to boost their capacity in the administration of justice.
- d. That the mode of the application of law in the settlement of disputes in the African setting should be re-visited. A good example is the case of one caught in the act of committing adultery with somebody else’s wife or husband in Efikland. Instead of the parties concerned resorting to litigation in the English court of law, it would be advisable for them to seek vindication of the culprit via the ordeal of “Ekpo Nka Owo”, which takes little or no time in exposing the truth of the matter (Udo 165).
- e. That a thorough observation of the principle of judicial precedent among the practitioners of legal justice in the

native African jurisprudence should be highly encouraged. This is because flexibility in adhering to the principle of judicial precedent if not properly checked may lead to uncertainty and adverse consequences. For instance, due to the flexibility in adhering to the principle, an accused who is rich and properly connected can get justice though pervasion of justice. For example, the current Obongship tussle in Efik Land between the incumbent Obong of Calabar, Edidem Ekpo Okon Abasi Otu V and Chief Anthony Ani. That the use of discretionary power in an African setting like the Native Efik jurisprudence must be applied with caution to safeguard abuse, since there is no statutory provision for that in the customary or traditional norm as it is inherent in the Western jurisprudence. This is because unlike the English judge, personal interest, politics and other cultural considerations may colour the process of transparent judgment via the use of discretionary power.

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## ON THE SOURCES OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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### **1. Introduction**

Gbadegesin (1991) observed that there are four lines of thought as regards what African Philosophy constitutes: the universalist, particularist, eclectic and national-ideological perspectives. However, for the sake of this piece on the sources of African philosophy, the perspectives of the universalist and particularist schools would be entertained:

- i. The particularist school understands African Philosophy as the philosophical thought of Africans as could be sifted from their various world views, myths, proverbs, etc. In this sense, it is the philosophy indigenous to Africans, and untainted by foreign ideas.
- ii. The second group understands African philosophy as the philosophical reflection on, and analysis of, African conceptual systems and social realities as undertaken by contemporary professional philosophers. This reduces African Philosophy to reflections by professionally trained philosophers who operate in collaboration with traditional thinkers.

The basic question looming at the horizon of this piece is: “what are the sources of the ideas categorized as African Philosophy?” This speaks of the raw materials from which African philosophy is realized. A cursory glance at the two definitions of African philosophy sets the pace for this investigation. Drawing from the above definitions, the sources of African philosophy would include African proverbs, African folk tales, African myths, African languages, African symbols, African historical experience or social

realities and African artistic expressions. This piece would be concerned with investigating the contributions of these sources to African philosophy.

## 2. African Proverbs

There is no clear and exact definition of a proverb. However, according to the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, *proverbs are vegetables for eating speech*. They further define proverbs as *the palm oil with which words are eaten*. Because of the centrality of proverbs to the Igbo people, they say that *a child who knows how to use proverbs have justified the dowry paid on his mother's head*. According to the Zulus, *without proverbs, language would be but a skeleton without flesh, a body without a soul*. According to the Yoruba of Western Nigeria, *proverbs are horses for chasing missing words*. These notwithstanding, generally, proverbs from the African context are the wisdom and experience of the African people, usually of several ages gathered and summed up in one expression. They spring from the people and represent the voice of the people and express the interpretation of their belief, principles of life and conduct. It expresses the moral attitudes of a given culture, and it reflects the hopes, achievements and failings of a people (Kanu, 2013a).

Proverb is an integral element of the African culture and undoubtedly a strong base in African traditional system, and as such it can be a living stream where the philosophy and religion of the African people is preserved. The centrality of proverbs in African oral tradition is manifested in the frequency of its use by Africans in conversations, speeches, instructions, judgment, drama, arguments, storytelling, in fun making and name them; and this is based on the fact that the African regards proverbs as an essential vehicle through which a message can be adequately transmitted. Kofi (1978) further avers that:

Proverbs may serve as prescriptions for action or act as judgment in times of moral lapses. Often a proverb, cited at an appropriate time during an argument can settle the dispute instantly, for the proverbs are believed to have been handed down by the ancestors and predecessors to whom we owe our communal experience and wisdom. (p. 158)

In the contention of Ambrose (1986),

A proverb can be used as a language of diplomacy to avoid giving direct answers to direct questions. With a proverb, one can reveal a secret without being committed. A proverb is also a very simple shorthand of sending message. It is therefore a time saving device, and helps to avoid unnecessary repetitions. (p. 41)

In African traditional society, a proverb on God is a serious talk. It embodies a profound reflection on God, such that when unravelled in theological terms would file into volumes of books. Below is a list of African proverbs on God from the Igbo-African cultural background, which expresses the Igbo native wisdom and philosophy of God.

- The same God created the rich man and the poor man.
- God drives away flies for a tailless cow.
- God has both the knife and the yam; only to those whom he gives may eat.
- God always gives each person a hook to draw things with.
- May God who gave the coconut its milk give us life and where withal to sustain life.
- Whoever wants to do an evil against another person does not remember God.
- When man is thinking, God is also thinking.
- If God is not in the plot death cannot kill a man.

- God knows whom he will give but he whom he will give to does not know.

These proverbs give us a great deal of information about how the African conceive God, and from here, the philosophy of African religion begins to emerge.

### **3. African Folk Tales**

According to Brosnan (1976), the African form of education was never by definition or the use of abstract terminology as in the West. Apart from the African system of education which are tied to role such as farming, hunting, firewood gathering or adult roles, the African got much more instruction also, and this was in the main moral instruction. This was usually given at night after the evening meal. Those to be instructed sat on logs within the compound and instruction was given by the elders or the head of the household. If the head of the household is not well or is absent, it is normal for the next senior to take his place. There are times when the boy sat with the father differently and the daughters with the mother, while the father told stories about war, the mother told stories that would help the girls fulfil their roles as mothers. Shorter (1973) further observes that instructions during this period were usually given in the form of stories. Elders also use stories when judging cases in village courts. They tell them in such a way that people are able to pick up their meanings without any explanation. According to Zani (1972), Africans are parable and story telling people. From their childhood they are used to listening to different kinds of stories: true or made-up fables, just like those of Jesus.

African stories are mainly of two types: one about animals, others about people, and sometimes involving spirits or the gods, and always with a moral lesson.

#### **i. The Thieving Grass cutter**

Gwahaka had a field of groundnuts. He had a friend- Mr. Grass cutter. His good friend Mr. Grass cutter usually went to the

groundnut field by night and removed some without the knowledge of Gwahaka. And as the Grass cutter goes to his friend's house, Gwahaka tells him about the removal of his groundnuts. The hare tells him that it is the eagle because eagles eat so much of groundnuts. So one day, Gwahaka moulded a mud statue and made it very gummy and placed it in the farm with delicious variety of food around it. One day, the Grass cutter went as usual to steal his friend's groundnuts. As he reached the farm, he saw the beautiful lady in the farm. He decided to go and speak to the lady. He said to her "Lady how are you?" There was no response. So the hare was angry and used one hand to slap the lady, and the hand gummed to her. He used a second hand and the other hand stuck there. He decided to use his two feet and the two stuck there as well. He used his forehead to hit her and it remained there. There was no remedy until the friend caught him, and said, "So you are the thief?"

### **Lesson**

Stealing does not pay. The thief may escape for some time, but eventually, he will be caught.

### **ii. The Brave Man**

In a certain village called Kpanke near the forest of Olumedia, a lion tormented the life of the people: it killed many, injured many and left the living in fear of attack. This continued until a brave man rose up from among the people. His braveness was signed in the peculiar nature of his birth and straight forward kind of life. He was believed to have been sent by the gods to redeem the people. When he grew into a man, he fought the lion and killed it. But in the battle, he was fatally injured. This marked the redemption and freedom of the people of Kpanke.

### **Lesson**

God will always redeem his people.

These stories unveil the beliefs and worldview of the African people.

#### **4. African Myths**

Investigating the nature and origin of the universe: the origin of the national god, origin of the world, the origin of humanity, its place in creation, the deity that governs the land, the temple, the cult, etc., have been the objects of human reflection right from the ancient times. The outcome of this investigation is usually preserved in myths. They are thus, the outcome of the human attempts to explain historical institutions and developments by appeal to non-historical factors and forces. The African myth thus exposes the pattern of behaviour of the African people. It is a veritable mine of materials on African philosophy (Kanu, 2013b).

According Marshall (1988):

The word 'myth' is used to refer to stories that are fictional, and hence, it has come to have a pejorative sense. Traditionally, it refers to invented stories about the gods in which they behave like human beings with superhuman powers. Closely associated with this sense of the word is its usage to refer to the stories which may accompany and allegedly form the basis of religious rituals. (p. 449)

Gunkel (1901), corroborating Marshall, define myth as "Stories of the gods in contradistinction with legends (better, sages) in which the actors are men" (p. 14). Esposito, Easching and Lewis (2006), explain that the word "myth" comes from the Greek "mythos", which means "story". Myths are symbolic stories about the origins and destiny of human beings and their world. They relate human beings to whatever powers they believe ultimately govern their destiny, and explain to them what those powers expect of them. Unlike the contemporary English use of myth to indicate an untrue

story or a misunderstanding based on ignorance, in every religious tradition, myth conveys the eventual truths of life.

**i. The Nri Myth**

The Nri hegemony and its influence on Igbo history cannot be over emphasized. It is in this regard that Madubuko (1994) observes that the story of the Igbo people, no matter how briefly considered, would be incomplete if one omits the Eri-Nri contribution. Afigbo (1981) shows Eri clan as originating from the regions of Anambra River, at Aguleri; from there they fanned eastward and established various communities. According to Uzuoku (1988), Eri is the father of all Nri; and tradition says that he came from Chukwu. It is reported that the earth was not firm when he came to the world. To solve the problem of flood, he employed blacksmiths from Awka to use their bellows to dry the flooded land. There was no food as well for the people. To provide food, he prayed to God and He demanded that he should sacrifice his first son and daughter to him. After the sacrifice and burial of his son and daughter, as though all were lost, yam and palm tree began to grow out of the place where he buried his first son while vegetables and cocoyam grew out of the place where he buried his daughter. If yam germinated from where Eri's first son was buried, it means that yam is the resurrected son of Eri, and since it was given to man to sustain life, it is regarded as life itself. This myth reveals so much about Igbo life and value system, which is equally relevant in our Christological considerations.

Madu (2004) observes a cosmological drama in the whole myth. It reveals the dynamics of the cosmic drama between god, man, land and crops. Eri, the civilization hero enjoys a special relationship with Chukwu, and through Eri's sacrifice, humanity now enjoy a special relationship with the land which offers food for his sustenance. The ritual act performed by Eri established a covenant between Eri, his descendants and Chukwu. From the sacrifice of Eri, we come to discover why yam is very prominent in Igbo



sacrifice and life, a situation which warrants its annual elaborate festival throughout Igbo land. The growing of yam from the spot where Eri's first son was buried accounts for the respect given to *okpara* (first son) in Igbo life, he is in fact considered to be closer to the ancestors.

## ii. Lugbara Myth

The Lugbara are a Sudanic-speaking people and are members of the Moru-Madi sub-group of the Eastern Sudanic group (Tucker, 1940). They believe that *Adronga*, the Supreme Being created the world. He created *Gborogboro* (male being) and *Meme* (female being). *Adronga* is conceived in two ways: as God in the sky, remote from mankind and good (*Onyiru*); and as God in the streams, close to mankind and bad (*Onzi*). He is the ultimate fountain head of all power and authority, of all sanctions and order relations among human beings. His power may be manifested in lightening. Although the Supreme Being is the head of all power and authority, according to Middleton (1960), the ancestors composed customs, rules, rights and duties operative in the society. They are the words of the ancestors. Mountains are also the abode of God and the two hero ancestors: *Gborogboro* and *Meme*, who are common to all Lugbara people; they lived before the formation of the Lugbara society and were close to God (Kayode, 1984).

## 5. African Names of God and Persons

The names of God and persons are significant sources of African philosophy. For instance, among the Igbos, he is called: *Chineke* (the God who creates), *Chukwu* (the great God), *Osebuluwa* (the sustainer of the universe), *Ekekereuwa* (he who created the world), *Chi-oke* (God that apportions lots), *Nna-di-Ebube* (the awe-inspiring father), *Odogwu-nagha* (victorious warrior), *Ome Mgbeogharike* (actor in times of difficulty). These names reveal that God is the absolute controller of the universe. The names

given to people could also be a source of African philosophy. Names such as:

*Chi-nyere ndu*: God gave life  
*Nke-chi-yere*: the one God has given  
*Chi-n'eye ndu*: God gives life  
*Chi-di-ogo*: God is generous  
*Chi-nwe- ndu*: God owns life  
*Chi-ekwe*: God has agreed  
*Chi-ji-ndu*: God owns life

*Chi-nyere ndu*: God gave life  
*Nke-chi-yere*: the one God has given  
*Chi-n'eye ndu*: God gives life  
*Chi-di-ogo*: God is generous  
*Chi-nwe- ndu*: God owns life  
*Chi-ekwe*: God has agreed  
*Chi-ji- ndu*: God owns life

These names speak of the various things God can do, especially as it relates to his relationship with human beings.

## **6. African Artistic Expressions**

Another source of African philosophy is African artistic expressions or artefacts. Africans have a lot of Artefacts that speak of the divine and the relationship of the human with the divine. They express the African's belief in God, divinities and the ancestors. For instance, during worship, the Priest uses the *Ofọ*, which is an insignia of authority among the Igbo. It is obtained

from a specific sacred tree. It is also used by every man who has a family and indeed kindred (*Umunna*). It is usually portable so that it can be carried in a goat skin bag by elders. It symbolizes justice and a clear mind. Thus, in the Igbo world, nothing important can be done without the invocation of the *Ọfọ*. Through it, the righteous dead, good spirits are invoked to uphold justice, decisions and settle disputes. During covenants, the *Ọfọ* is knocked on the ground so as to seal the event. It is carried around by priests, elders and heads of the *umunna*. It grants them the authority to offer prayers for people. It gives them the authority to decide cases and settle disputes. As such, African artistic expressions of this kind speak volumes of African philosophy.

## 7. African Languages

Language is any one of the thousands of various tongues that have developed historically among populations of human beings, and have been used for everyday purposes. It could be Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, English, Latin, French, just to mention a few. While these might be grouped as natural languages, there are artificial languages, as invented by mathematicians, logicians, computer scientists or even criminals (William, 1999). This notwithstanding, whether artificial or natural, language is an instrument of communication.

As regards African philosophy, language is a fundamental source. Its interpretation could lead to a stream of materials. According to Abanuka (2011), an analysis of words and their meanings will lead to a better grasp of the reality which they seek to express. The analysis of *Chi* by Ezewugo (1987), as having three connotations in Igbo ontology have led philosophers like Okere (1983), Abanuka (2003) and Njoku (2010) to develop an African concept of being as *Chi*: in its narrow and primary sense, it applies to the Supreme Being and carries here the force of a proper name. Second, it denotes any being, human or divine that is acting solely in the name and authority of the Supreme Being: *onye kwado ije*

*chi ya akwadobe* (if a person gets ready to go on a journey, his *Chi* gets ready too); *chi ya edulugoya naba* (His *Chi* has taken him home with him). Human agents could also be called *Chi* if he or she has acted as an agent of providence to a fellow human being, like saving the life of a person who wants to commit suicide: *chi nwayi bu diya* (a woman's *chi* is her husband); *ogō bu chi onye* (one's father in-law is one's *chi*). *Chi* also has an abstract and impersonal reference to providence. In this case, it refers to a divine decree or fate. The Igbo believe that before a child is born, his life course has been charted by his *Chi*: *onye ajọ chi kpatalu nku ewa ta ya*. An interpretation and understanding of African languages leads to a better understanding and appreciation of African Traditional Religion.

## 8. African Symbols

The Dictionary of Sociology and Related Science (1965), describes a symbol thus:

That which stands for something else particularly a relatively concrete explicit representation of a more generalized, diffuse, intangible object or group of objects. A very large part of social processes is caused on by use of symbols such as words, money, certificates and pictures. A true symbol excites reactions similar to, though perhaps not quite as intense as those created by the original object. (p. 314)

It is from the above perspective that Madu (2011) avers that symbolism implies the practice of using acts, sounds, objects or other means which are not of importance in themselves for directing attention to something that is considered important; it is the substitution of a symbol with the thing symbolized. For instance, Kola nut: It is a symbol of life, and that is why during the formal introduction of the Kola nut ritual, it is said: *onye wetara oji wetara ndu* (he that brings the kola brings life). The kola is also a symbol of peace and good will. This is why the first thing an

Igbo man offers a guest is the Kola to indicate that the guest is welcome. It is sometimes an indispensable element when sacrifices are offered to the gods. It is also a sign of communion, not just among the living, but also between the living and the dead. It could be referred to, in a traditional sense as the Igbo sacramental communion, specially presented, broken, shared and partaken of. During the breaking of the kola, heaven and earth comes together. And this is seen in the invocation of God (*Chukwu Abiama bia taa oji*), the heavens and the earth (*elu na ala bia ta oji*), the deities (*amadioha bia ta oji*), and the dead ancestors (*nnam... bia taa oji*). It speaks so much about the Igbo-African philosophy.

## 9. African Songs

According to Quarcoopome (1987), among Africans:

Singing generates the avenue for expressing certain sentiments or truths, and in the context of rituals they demonstrate the faith of the worshipper from the heart- faith in God, belief in and about divinities, assurance and hope about the present and with reference to the hereafter. (p. 37)

There are times when these songs, even outside liturgical celebrations mirror the power of God and the African philosophy of causality. For instance,

Onye Kugbulu nwankelu?: who killed nwankelu?  
 Kerere Nwankelu (reframe)  
 ukwa kugbulu nwankelu: the bread fruit killed nwankelu  
 Kerere Nwankelu  
 Gini mere ukwa ahụ?: What happened to the bread fruit?  
 Kerere Nwankelu  
 Obi mara ukwa ahụ: a digger pierced the breadfruit  
 Kerere Nwankelu  
 Gini mere obi ahụ?: What happened to the digger?

Kerere Nwankelu

Akika kp ọrọ obi ahụ.: The digger was infested by a termite.

Kerere Nwankelu

Gịni mere akika ahụ?: What happened to the termite?

Kerere Nwankelu

ọkọkọ t ụga akika ahụ: A cock was eating the termite.

Kerere Nwankelu

Gịni mere ọkọkọ ahụ?: What happened to the cock?

Kerere Nwankelu

ufu chuga ọkọkọ ahụ: a hyena was pursuing the cock

Kerere Nwankelu

Gịni mere ufu ahụ?: what happened to the hyena?

Kerere Nwankelu

Mmadu chuga ufu ahụ: a man was pursuing the hyena.

Kerere Nwankelu

Gịni mere mmadu ahụ?: what happened to the man?

Kerere Nwankelu

Chukwu kere mmadu ahụ: God created the man.

Kerere Nwankelu

Gịni kere Chukwu ahụ?: what made God?

Kerere Nwankelu

Anyị amaghị ihe kpuru Chukwu, Chukwu kpuru mmadu, mmadu chuga ufu, ufu chuga ọkọkọ, ọkọkọ chuga akika, akika turu obi, obi mara ukwa, ukwa kugbulu nwankelu- Kerere Nwankelu.: (we do not know what made God, who made man, man was in pursuit of the hyena, the hyena that was going after a cock, the cock that was eating termite, the termite that infested the digger, the digger that pierced the bread fruit, the bread fruit that eventually fell and killed nwankelu- Kerere Nwankelu). This song speaks of the African philosophy that traces every cause to God.

## 10. African Historical Experience

The historical experience of the African people is also one of the basic sources of African Philosophy; it provides materials for this African philosophy and further shapes it. It is like the rallying

ground of other sources of African philosophy, for it is only within a context that they find great meaning. Thus African philosophy is concerned with a lived experience (Kanu, 2012). The daily experience of the African continues to shape his philosophical reflections, and in fact the content of that reflection. And the different seasons in the historical evolution of Africa philosophy testifies to this. For instance, during the modern period of African philosophy, Nationalistic tendencies dominated in response to the spirit of the time. Thus, as a philosophy, African philosophy is creative, dynamic and not static. This is very much expressed in the works of Azikiwe (1937; 1965; 1964; 1978; 1981), Leopold (1964; 1973), Nkrumah (1962; 1963; 1964), Nyerere (1968; 1985) etc.

### 11. African Traditional Prayers

African traditional prayers also reveal so much about the African traditional philosophy of religion, especially about the relationship between the human and the divine. In many African prayers, God is approached as a Dependable Being, Friend and as Benevolent. The general format is usually the giving of praise to God, then the needs of the worshipper is put forward, and such needs include protection, procreation and prosperity. From these prayers, we come to learn about the names of God and the divinities that serve as the dean of the Supreme Being. For instance, in a prayer offered during sacrifice for marriage traditional rites:

*Chineke kere mmady:* God created man

*Nee okuko nkea:* behold this fowl

*Chineke kere mmady:* God created man

*Nee ugwuaku nwam:* behold *ugwuaku* my child

*Chekwabara m ya:* protect her for me

*Ihe kasị ihe n' uwa bu nwa:* offspring is the main thing in the world

*Chukwu, gin a-eme ka osiri masị gị:* God you act as you have designed

*Nye ya ụmụaka:* give her children

*Debe nwa okorobia nkea:* preserve this young man

*Ga-abụ diya:* her husband to be

*Nye ya akụ n' ụba:* give him the means

*Ka owe nye m ihe m ga-eri:* of giving me wealth to eat

*Ọburu na ọmụa nwa nwayi:* if she gives birth to a female child

*Ọ ga-dị:* it will live

*Ọburu nwa nwoke, ọ ga-adị:* if a male, it will live

*Ka ọ ghara inwe nsogbu ọbụla n'imụ nwa:* may she not have difficulty at childbirth

*Ka o nwee aru ike:* may her health be good

*Ka diya nwee aru ike:* may the health of her husband be good

*Ekpere dire na be mụọ:* prayer obtains among the spirits

*Na be mmadu:* and among men

*Chukwu mete m mma:* God treat me well

*Ihe ọma ka m nayo:* I am asking for goodness

*Ka ọgom n' enye m:* my son-in-law shall give me

*Ihe m ga-eri:* things and I will eat

*Ihunaya ga-adi n' etiti anyi:* love will exist between us

*Chineke, nkea bu ihe m na-ayo:* God this is what I ask for

*Ala, mụọ nine nke iha, Eze Chitoke:* Spirit of Ihe, God the creator

*Ekene m unu:* I thank you.

*Ekwusigo m:* I have finished.

This prayer reveals the holistic and totalitarian character of African traditional prayers. It covers not just the human world, but also the spirit world, which interacts with the human world. As the prayer is said, it also reflects the corporate personality in African traditional prayer: the subject who prays embodies the sentiments, the hope, faith and expected values of all and not just himself. It is a prayer for the community and not the individual.



## **12. Conclusion**

This piece, from the foregoing has studied the sources of African philosophy. On the one hand, as sources, they relate to philosophy in two ways. First, they provide raw materials for philosophical reflection. Second, they are embodiments of African philosophy. The philosophical dimension of these sources of African philosophy is usually observed when reflection goes beyond the literal and textual meanings of these sources to the meaning behind the text or words used; a kind of a move from the literal to the allegorical. Furthermore, on the other hand, philosophy relates with these sources at the level of investigating their reasonableness, not whether it really happened, but whether it does reasonably answer the questions looming at the horizon of the human heart. This is because myths, folklores, proverbs, etc., are not so much concerned about truth or falsity, but appeal to the accent of the mind by giving hints.

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## **ETHNICISM AND RELIGIOUS CRISIS IN NIGERIA: A STUMBLING BLOCK TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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### **1. Introduction**

Man arrived in the world without pre-notice by his creator who knows him and where he is in the world and his purpose in it. As man became conscious of himself, the world and his place in it, he has been ever curious to understand the purpose of his being in the world and how to make a success story of that purpose. In his efforts toward that end, he has arrived at the conclusion that an invisible hand that rules his affairs anytime and anywhere in the world is his well-being. A desire for the realization of his well-being is the mother of all his desires in the world- the first and last rung on the ladder of his existence.

What is man's well-being? The concept man's well being is a nebulous concept which calls for down-to-earth explanation in order to leave no one in doubt. Man's well-being is a network of his existential needs. What he seeks to acquire- to have at his beck and call in order to live well and die happy in the world. These needs are legion and among them are: adequate food, shelter, clothing, functional education and health systems; effective communication system; an atmosphere of peace, harmony and progress, security of lives and property; freedoms of thought, speech, assembly, association, rights to privacy, recreation and rest; opportunities to work, save and invest, rule of law and justice, self and collective fulfillment, etc. Man's activities, policies, organizations, institutions, etc, are judged good if they facilitate the attainment of these needs, and bad if they hinder their attainment.

As it is, positive or desirable changes taking place in these needs are regarded as development. That is to say the purpose of development is man's well-being. Through developmental strategies, man strives to harness all resources at his disposal with which to enhance, improve, promote, advance and preserve his well-being. Attainment of this, flowers in the chief goal of life universally acknowledged as happiness, courtesy of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle – the world legendary philosophers (Omoregbe, 2003:93-116). Thus, man's pre-occupation is development because he wants to make a success story of his being in the world. All generations of humanity desire and work to live well and die happy in the world and as well to leave it better than they found it.

Nigerians at the dawn of their country's independence on October 1, 1960 were faced with challenges of development arising from their dreams about the kind of nation they wanted to nurse and nurture to maturity. These dreams served as materials with which to draw national goals for Nigerian citizens to pursue. These national goals or objectives (section 1, sub-section 3) are for building: "a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens", (Ocho, 2005: 412-413).

Nigerians' poor performance in their efforts to actualize these national goals has attracted several descriptions to Nigeria from the views of concerned Nigerian citizens who are not happy the way the only country they can legitimately call theirs is wobbling in the realm of development. For this reason some people see Nigeria as a giant in size but a Lilliputian in worth; a country abundant wealth of resources cannot develop; a country that is a mere geographical expression; a country that is a marriage of inconvenience; a country with both citizens and supplicants as Nigerians; country its unity begins and ends in paper; a country holding a gold medal in corruption. While others see Nigeria as a country where wealth and poverty are sharing the same premises; where justice is for sale;

where democracy is seating in a wheelchair; where law is a respecter of persons; where money and power are pursued at all costs; where corruption is almost a norm; where a rogue in one part of the country is celebrated as a hero in another part; where ethnic loyalty has overshadowed national loyalty, etc. These soul – sapping descriptions of Nigeria are what confront any person interested in the plights of the nation and who insists that a spade must have no other name.

Many factors have contributed to this sorry situation of Nigeria but the paper is only concerned with how ethnicism and religious crisis have contributed to it. Leaning on the creative guidance of common sense, knowledge and wisdom and as well standing on the shoulder of history, the paper seeks to discover the causes and effects of these obstacles to Nigeria's efforts at development and suggests a way out.

## **2. Explanation of Terms**

**Ethnicism:** The term ethnicism is derived from another term ethnicity. The adjectival form of ethnicity is ethnic. The term ethnic as an adjective is used to describe a national, racial or tribal group of people that live in a particular territory under one government. It also refers to characteristics or traits of behaviour or mannerism peculiar to a group or groups of people which could be a nation, race or tribe. Ethnic group usually has common history, language, origin, culture, aspirations, and so on.

From this explanation of ethnicity, the term ethnicism is therefore seen as a network of ideas, dreams, notions, beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviours peculiar to a given ethnic group which determine actions and reactions of its members in their interactions with members of other ethnic groups within a polity whether national or international. When the members of an ethnic group are so much attached to their views and activities constituting this network, very much proud of them and strive to set them as standards for themselves and for other ethnic groups to imitate as



well as when the members see themselves as competitors with members of other ethnic groups over the available resources in their political society, ethnicity or ethnicism degenerates to ethnocentrism. When it is so, members of the ethnic group become ethnic fans, extremists and malignants who see the world events from their ethnic lenses and in their interactions with members of other ethnic groups always see their actions as right and actions of others in conflict with theirs as wrong. For them anything done by a member of their ethnic group against a member or members of different ethnic groups, no matter how immoral, wicked and reprehensible it is, he or she is right and must be defended against and protected from outside complaints and attacks. The heartbeat of ethnocentrism is segregation and the attitude of its supporters in relation to the members of other ethnic groups is always malignant.

### **3. Religion**

What is religion? In order to proffer a genuine answer to this question, it is very proper to trace the root of the term religion. Religion is derived from three Latin words: 'Ligare' meaning to bind, 'Relegere' meaning to unite or to link, and 'Religio' meaning relationship. Thus, the meaning of religion from its root shows that it is a link or an established relationship between two beings human being and a divine being believed to exist. In their relationship the former sees his existence and survival in the world as the handwork of the latter. For that the human being must believe in the divine being (the Supreme Being), worship him and live his life in the world according to the will of his creator.

Some scholars have tried to explain the meaning of religion. Charles M. Ezekwugo in his own explanation says:

Man originally started to seek for aid in spiritual forces because of problems. Such problems were the ones that defied human solutions. Thus man remained helpless in the hands of evil forces. The evil forces were considered inferior to or not

sufficiently powerful to hold man to ransom. Man thus conceived the idea that a higher force existed. This higher force could, if appeased, atone or propitiate, nullify whatever maledictions, taboos or malicious intention of man's malignant enemy, the devil and his cohorts. And so was born a body of knowledge and a way of life known as religion. Religion simply defined, means "a way to God". (1992:77)

In other words, religion is recognition of and belief in a higher force or being called God by man which has supreme power over everything including problems or evil forces man is facing. For that if man leads his life according to God's will, God is ever ready to use his power to assist him to get rid of his problems or evil forces in whatever form they appear.

For Haralembos, paraphrased by Kingsley N. Okoro, "Religion is a global socio-spiritual phenomenon, which binds human beings to their god or ultimate reality and their fellow human beings. Religion is also considered as a system of belief and practices by which a group of people struggle with the ultimate problems of life" (Uka, Okoro and Kanu, 2010:324).

For William James religion is "the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they comprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine", cited by S.A. Ekanem and A.E. Asira in (Uduigwomen). For Max Muller "Religion is a mental faculty of disposition which is independent of sense or reason, which enables man to apprehend the infinite under different names and varying guides" and for A.C. Bocquet religion is "... a fixed relationship between the human self and some non-human entity, the sacred, the supernatural, the self-existent, the absolute or simply, God" – all cited by S.A. Ekanem and A E. Asia in (Uduigwomen, 2006: 57).

These views from these scholars are attempts to explain or define religion. But whatever angle one looks at religion, the truth is that religion is recognition of the existence of a Supreme Being or Higher Being and an acknowledgement that this Supreme Being created him and has power over him and hence man is dependent upon Him for his survival in the world. For man to worship this Higher Being and do His will at all times and in all places is the first and last teaching of religion to man.

#### **4. God**

The Supreme Being who created both heaven and earth and everything in them is called different names by different tongues among which are God, Allah, Chineke, Jehovah, etc. But in this paper the term God is used. A part from being the Supreme Creator of all things animate and inanimate what other attributes does God possess as perceived by man? According to Jim Unah,

Aristotle and Aquinas have both furnished a static conception of God. Aristotle calls God the Unmoved Mover, the Uncaused cause or the pure act without potency. According to him, God is a self-thinking thought who is eternally the same and endlessly contemplating himself. The only object of God's concern is his own person. He has created the world and has since forgotten it. Following Aristotle, Aquinas has said that God is all-powerful, all knowing, immutable and eternal. The substance of Aristotle's and Aquinas' thinking is that God is a fossilized Being who is unaffected by what we do, (1995:58).

According to Joseph I. Omoregbe some later metaphysicians have stated some other attributes of God in addition to the ones pointed out by Aristotle. Deduction from those attributes shows that:

He is eternal (i.e. he has no beginning), omniscient, omnipotent, incorporeal, spiritual, simple, infinite, etc. He is not wise, but wisdom itself, not only good, but goodness itself, life itself, etc. To say that God possesses these qualities would imply that he derived them from another source, but he is himself the source of all these qualities and they are identical with his being. (2003:148)

For Jim Unah all believers in God are agreed that he is "... eminently good, perfectly just ... who listens to prayers, who grants requests, who can reward or punish, who gets angry, who, however, is merciful, kind and living. He is the maker and sustainer of the universe. He is providence par excellence", (Unah, 1995: 42-43).

In summary God is the Self-created Being, the uncaused cause, the Unmoved Mover and the source of every other being in existence; He is omnipresent because he is everywhere and every time; omnipotent because he has supreme power over everything animate and inanimate and omniscient because he is all-knowing and knows every being right from conception. From the moral perspective, God is love, goodness, truth, kindness, justice, mercy, forgiveness, patience, honesty, freedom, reward, punishment and all other positive values. For example, it is because of his love and mercy for man that God continues to endure man's transgressions right from the Garden of Eden-man the only being that made God regret to have created him. Also it is because God is punishment that any being that breaks any of the laws controlling the entire universe is punished accordingly.

As it has been seen, the world together with everything in it is not a product of an accident but of purpose. For that it behooves upon man to discover the purpose of his being in the world and live his life in accordance with that purpose. To do that is to comply with the will of God. And the beacon light that will help man to attain

this end is to observe these moral maxims: (a) Treat others as you would like them to treat you; (b) Love your neighbour as you love yourself; (c) Leave the world better than you found it.

Unless one strictly observes these moral maxims, one's dream to discover and attain the purpose of one's existence in the world and one's wish to do God's will, without mincing words, will begin and terminate as dream and wish. When that is the case, one becomes a disappointment to God, a malice to humanity, a misery to oneself, a virus to one's friends, a laughing stock to one's enemies, a relic to history, a problem to philosophy, a demon to religion, a social misfit to sociology, a crippled mind to psychology, a reject to science and a proverb to future generations. Adolf Hitler was a good example of this disaster. But when the opposite is the case, one becomes a crown to God, a lord of creation, a light to humanity, happiness to oneself, a miracle to one's enemies and a reference point to all intellectual disciplines in matters of development anyway and anytime in the world. Thomas Jefferson one time American president was a good example of this boost to humanity.

## **5. Development**

The term development is very popular among human beings to the extent that everything they do be it setting up a family, nursing and nurturing a child, setting up schools, governing states, establishing markets, enacting peace treaties, preparing for wars, searching for knowledge, building houses, cultivating friendships, creating religions and religious sects, establishing industries, etc, they have that thought at the back of their minds. Why is it so? This is because: first, that the thought for development is innate in man. For ever since man became aware of his presence in the world, to improve and continue to improve his conditions of living has been his first and last project. Second, because the purpose of development is peoples' well- being. Third, because man's claim of rationality as his natural endowment which gives him an edge

over other animals is considered true if he continues to make the purpose of development a success story in the world.

As experience – the best teacher- has shown, the popularity of development among human beings has equally resulted in distortion and misunderstanding of its meaning and purpose. Since nobody knowingly and willingly does wrong which means that every wrong done is as a result of ignorance, according to Socrates the great philosopher of all time, it means that distortion and misunderstanding of meaning and purpose of development is due to peoples' ignorance of what development means and connotes in all its ramifications. For that reason, leaning on human nature, experience, philosophy and history the paper seeks to explain the origin, meaning, purpose and nature of development.

Concerning the origin of development, man arrived in the world without pre-notice and also unaware of his presence in the world. As he became aware of his presence and as well conscious of his environment, he became curious about his being in the world. His curiosity led him to asking series of questions such as: who is responsible for his being in the world? Where was he before his journey into the world? What is his mission in the world? How does he relate with his fellow human beings and other beings? Why the phenomenon of death? Where does he go after life? His attempts to resolve these questions gave birth to development.

In his attempts to resolve the first question he discovered that he was brought into existence by the Supreme Being called God; the second that he was with God; the third, that his mission is to do God's will and also attain the ultimate goal of life-happiness; the fourth that he is to play the role of light for his fellow humans to find their way to the ultimate goal and as well to leave the world better than they found it; the fifth so that man will comply with law of nature which says every living thing must grow and die; and the sixth that where he leaves to after here is a matter to be decided by

his Creator based on what he has made of his existence in the world.

From these efforts by man to resolve these fundamental questions about his being in the world, it is obvious that development as far as man is concerned means recognition and acknowledgement of God as his creator and sustainer in the world. It also means all positive ideas, dreams, thoughts and activities entrained and embarked upon by man with a view to doing God's will and as well enhancing, improving, promoting, protecting and advancing the well-being of mankind as a whole which flowers in happiness—the ultimate goal of life. Fortunately for man all the resources he needs to make a success story of his life journey in the world by actualizing his ultimate goal are at his disposal.

As already hinted the purpose of development is peoples' well-being. The people's well-being is a network of their needs. These needs include among other things adequate food, shelter, clothing, access to education, functional health system, sound economic system, opportunities for employment, savings and investment, security of lives and properties, rule of law, freedoms of speech, association, assembly, thought; atmosphere of peace, harmony and progress, good governance, observance of moral values, etc.

Actualization of these needs has been what people all over the world have been dreaming of and as well the goal they have been pursuing with religious zeal since their life journey in the world. Persons, institutions, ideas, theories and practices that contribute to their attainment are considered good and those that do not are considered bad. If it is persons that are faltering, they are advised to change their minds and thus turn a new leaf. If it is institutions, ideas, theories, etc, they are improved upon so as to be relevant and supportive to peoples' efforts to attain their needs.

Some scholars have contributed to the clarification of meaning and purpose of development. Since development is as large as life-

meaning it has different dimensions which correspond with different spheres of human existence. Scholars more often than not, conceive the meaning of development from the sphere or aspect of human existence they are interested in. For instance, scholars like W. Arthur Lewis, Fei John and Constur, paraphrased by Monday L. Igbafen, conceive development from economic perspective. For them,

... a developed human society is one which the Gross National (sic) Product (GDP) or per capita income experiences sustained growth. What this implies is that development is an increase in the GDP of nation states. This is, however, the classical economist perception of development which until recently has dominated the discourse of development. (2003:1)

Joseph I. Omoregbe, acknowledges the importance of other dimensions of development in human society, but emphasises the importance of moral dimension of development as the bedrock upon which other dimensions can stand and make meaningful and positive impacts on the people's well-being. In his words:

Moral development and maturity on the part of the citizens of a country are pre-requisites for the development of that country. Indeed, moral development is the most important aspect of national development, for there can be no development of a country if its citizens are morally undeveloped and immature. Moral development on the part of the citizens is therefore *a condition-sine-qua-non* for development of any nation. It must precede the economic development through modern technology. Neither science nor technology can develop a country if its citizens are not morally developed. How can there be development in which



public funds are embezzled by those who control them and who are supposed to use them for developmental projects? How can there be development in a country in which self-interest is the dominant rule? Nor can the economy of any country develop if its citizens lack a moral sense of duty, the right attitude to work and a sense of moral responsibility to the society (2003:197).

Sure, man is the measure of all things, courtesy of Protagoras, and for that reason human or moral development should be at the centre of all development. For it is only morally developed citizens of any country will see, understand and appreciate with their eyes and hearts the fact presented by Habu Dawaki that: “The world is getting smaller everyday. We need each other to survive. We must learn to live together and win the race of life together (2005: 125-shake Hands...).

While Adebayo Adedeji, cited by S.K.B. Asante, supports the views of Omoregbe and Dawaki about development. In his words:

... we need to set in motion a development process that put individual at the very centre of the development effort; a development process that is both human and humane without necessarily softening the discipline that goes with development but which enhances man’s personality; a development process that does not alienate man from his society and culture but rather develops his self-confidence in himself and identifies his interest with those of his society and thereby develop his ability and willingness for self-reliance. (Omimode and Synge, 1995:6)

In other words any development process that is worthy of its name should focus on human persons; should help them to see and

harness what they have and show them how to use what they have to achieve their individual and collective goals in the atmosphere of peace, harmony, love, justice and co-operation in the interest of all.

Lawrence Ocho in his own contribution holds the view that development should be about people- their moral upbringing; and for that reason education which is an effective tool to actualize the purpose of development is a necessity. Thus in his words “Education is the process through which individuals are made participating members of their society... it is a process through which man realizes his potentialities and used them for self-fulfillment in the services of himself and others (2005:66).

Concerning the goal of development, the world development Report (1972:34) says: “Development is about improving the well-being of people. Raising living standard and improving education, health and equality of opportunity... Ensuring political and civic rights is a broader development goals”. In support of this view Christopher Uroh holds that the common item on the agenda of all human deliberations as regards development “...is the fact that the human person is taken, not as a means to an end but as an end itself. The central concern of any development project, therefore, is how to make human beings lead a better life (1998:3)

## **6. National development**

The word ‘national’ is an adjective derived from the word ‘nation’. A nation according to the Advanced Learner’s Dictionary is “large community of people usually sharing a common history, language, etc, and living in a particular territory under one government”. Some scholars see a nation as the same thing as a tribe. The only difference is that while a nation is a large community of people, a tribe is a smaller community of people but they all, according to Bodern Heimer cited by Jim Unah, refer to (a) people with common language, custom and mores; (b) with common historical, socio-psychological and political background; (c) a sense of

belonging; and may or may not occupy a definite territory. For instance, before the creation of a state of Israel in 1948, the Jews had no territory (1993:3).

An obvious impression from these explanations about a nation or a tribe is that there is a sense of unity among the constituting people and they pursue their individual and collective goals of life with due respect to that sense. If quarrel occurs as it is bound to happen among people in their daily interactions, their sense of unity enables them to settle the quarrel quickly at the table dialogue and this allows peace, harmony and progress to reign.

In this work a nation is understood and used as a country. Nigeria is country and it is composed of 36 states and the federal capital territory Abuja. Sometimes Nigeria is discussed from the angles of its spheres of activities engaged in by its citizens such as politics, education, health, religion, economy, social relations, communication, etc. Development, that is, positive or desirable changes are expected to be taking place in these spheres in all the 36 states including federal capital territory. When that is the case national development is said to be occurring. Thus, national development can be defined as an aggregate of development indices going on in every part of Nigeria. If for any reason any state is lagging behind in the development indices, the national development is compromised and Nigeria as a whole suffers setbacks.

Throwing more light on national development, B.O. Elugbe, paraphrased by Godspower N. Omorodion says that "... national development relates to the growth of the nation in terms of unity, education, economic wellbeing, mass participation government, patriotism and so an" (Udosen, 2006:26). While Joseph I. Omoregbe in his own contribution says that:

A nation is a living organization with many parts  
each with a distinct function and a distinct

contribution to make toward the well being of the whole. Each part needs to be developed; hence national development is the development of all the parts of the living organism which a nation is. (2003:194)

In other words, each part is as important as any other part and the end results are positive thoughts, actions and activities taking places in each of them which constitute what is called national development. Therefore, national development is a network of desirable activities in all spheres of a nation geared towards improvement of the well-being of its entire citizens

#### **7. Causes of Ethnicism and Religious Crisis in Nigeria**

As already stated, ethnicism and religious crisis are, among the problems which have messed up Nigerians' efforts in development at all levels especially at national level. To the extent that Nigeria is now a history, a proverb, a byword as a country abundant wealth of resources- human and material – at its disposal cannot develop. Concerning ethnicism and religious crisis certain factors have been identified as responsible among them are:

First is abuse of these natural endowments in man: self-interest and social (group) interest. On the authority of the best teacher in the world, experience, no man is ready to dedicate himself to, remain active on his duty post and play out his best on any project his personal interest is not included. His self-interest is held in a high esteem to the extent that he regards its recognition, acknowledgement, promotion and preservation as the first law. He as well acknowledges the importance of his social interest as he is a social being who needs attention, concern and support of his fellow humans to attain his goals in the world.

A positive use of self- interest and social interest as a great enhancement of human relations, results in making every man to see himself as his brothers' keeper, a social bridge builder, a peace

maker, a problem solver, an agent of progress, an advocate of justice and unity and as well his brothers' promotion or demotion, joys or pains, etc, as his own. While negative use of self-interest makes it to degenerate to selfishness which is a moral disease, falsehood, stealing, violence, wickedness, etc, which have inflicted upon mankind all kinds of suffering. Also negative use of social or group interest makes it fall from grace to grass of ethnicism- a social concern which has given birth to group pride, arrogance, vanity, conceit, complacency, malignancy, etc, which have served as bricks used by victims to build social walls between them and opponent groups in their social interactions in a polity.

Nigerians are a byword of abuse of both self and social interests. The result is a continuous emphasis on personal or group interests at the expense of others' interest. Thus ethnic groups that make up Nigeria have been struggling over the resources of the country. The more one corners the nations' resource for oneself or one's group, the more one is noticed, heralded, esteemed and celebrated as a hero by the members of his ethnic group. Thus 'might is right'; "end justifies the means", etc, become the language of the strong; and 'live and let live', "love your neighbour as you love yourself", "treat others as you will like them treat you", etc, become the language of the weak.

Second is the advent of colonialism in Nigeria. Colonialism is a foreign rule exercised by one country over another country without the consent of the latter. This kind of rule was imposed on Nigeria by Britain who doubled as a slave master as well as a colonial master to some African countries in which Nigeria was among for so many years.

During the Colonial administration British representatives in Nigeria never hid the fact that the economic interest of their home country was the overruling hand that initiated, prescribed and determined all their thoughts, actions and activities in Nigeria. For that reason a view that supported their economic interest no matter

how destructive it was to the natives was welcomed; and one opposed to it no matter how good it was to the natives was rejected.

For this reason conglomeration of empires, kingdoms and states with their teeming tribes or ethnic groups exhibiting different cultures now called Nigeria, courtesy of Miss Flora Shaw who later became the wife of Sir Lord Frederick Lugard the first Governor General of Nigeria, found themselves in the marriage of inconvenience with their hands joined together in the amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914.

For the fear of solidarity among these ethnic groups against them, the colonialists on the surface operated through the Indirect Rule System which involved the use of traditional rulers accountable to them in running the public affairs of different regions in which the country was divided. While beyond the surface, was the Divide – and- Rule System which emphasized the differences among the ethnic groups and thus making it impossible for them to see themselves as one and thus unite and fight their cause on the platform of solidarity. Even though the constituting ethnic groups of Nigeria later ignored their differences and united to fight against colonial rule which resulted in their country's independence on October 1 1960, these perceptions of their differences re-surfaced in the post independence and their burning flames have been alive up till today, courtesy of ethnic fans and religious fanatics.

Third is ethnic politics. Politics is an art of governance which involves a contest for positions of power. As an art it has rules which govern the contest and all other activities taking place in it which all actors in political realm must observe. Its end is to harness, enhance, promote, advance and distribute available resources in a nation in such a way that all interests- individual, group and national- are recognized and conciliated in a manner that promote the well – being of the entire citizenry. Those occupying positions of power are under obligation to see to it that politics

attends its sole aim. Olusegun Oladipo in his own contribution says:

Politics, ordinarily and in the best traditions is a noble art, primarily concerned with the conciliation of interests in a society in a rule-governed manner. It is not an end in itself. Rather, it is a means to the achievement in any human community of a condition of freedom in which the people are able to perform their duties to their society and pursue their interests in a manner that promote the growth and development of the society. (1999:29)

This is the aim of politics about which all human societies strive day in day out to achieve. But in Nigeria the efforts of Nigerians towards that end have always been thwarted, wrecked and aborted due to ethnic politics. Ethnic politics is a struggle among the constituting ethnic groups in Nigeria over the available national resources. Each group strives to corner the lion share of the resources for its members. In the process politics has become a do – or- die affair, erecting walls between ethnic groups and individuals, letting loose thought- provoking contumelies among the people and regarding national unity as a relic of history which has no place in the present scheme of things.

Abubakar Dangiwa Umar, the conscience of the nation, highly disturbed by the widening gap which the annulment of the June 12, 1993 general election had caused among the ethnic groups in the country, writes to the head of state Sani Abacha to do something about the matter so as to save the nation from disintegration. In his view, paraphrased by John Okwoeze Odey, “The divisions that had arisen among the various ethnic groups in the country had become so deep and so devastating that they have become a simmering volcanic discontent waiting for the slightest opportunity to explode,” (2004:30). Odey equally observes that: “In Nigeria people generally try to protect the interests of those who come

from the same ethnic divide with them whether those whose interests they defend are right or wrong” (2004:42).

Ethnic politics among the ethnic groups in Nigeria has resulted in many explosive crises which one of them saw Nigerians engaged in civil war which lasted thirty months starting from 1966 when the military took over power. This ethnic politics has let loose among Nigerians especially the rich and powerful corruption, greed, robbery and violence which have made Nigeria’s abundant resources scarce in the interest of a few individuals and some ethnic groups at the expense of teeming number of individuals and ethnic groups, and nation’s co-operate existence. As far back as sixties when Nigerians won their country’s independence, ethnic politics has been bulldozing political terrain of Nigeria to the detriment of the country’s dreams of a great nation where one lives for all and all live for one in atmosphere of peace, harmony, love, justice, progress, co-operation and development. This ugly situation made Alhaji Tafawa Balewa who later became the first prime Minister of Nigeria according to J. Osutokun to lament in 1947 that “Since the amalgamation of Southern and Northern provinces in 1914, Nigeria has existed as one country only on paper .... It is still far from being united” (Akinyemi, et al, 1980:99).

Fourth is slave trade. Before the advent of colonialists in Nigeria there was already a phenomenon of slavery and its victims were called slaves. These were usually people captured during a war between one tribe or ethnic group and another. The captives (slaves) were distributed among the elders of the victorious tribe and the former lived with the latter serving them. The obedient and hardworking slaves often regained their freedom and thus enjoyed the rights of free people.

This was the kind of slavery practised in Nigeria before the advent of the foreigners who came and changed slavery into a business venture. Slaves became goods to be sold to those who needed them



at a high price. Slave traders from foreign lands met with some Nigerian chiefs and provided to them valuable goods in exchange of slaves which they carried to their home countries for sale. These chiefs never sold their own people, their tribal people but rather sent warriors to go to neighbouring tribes and captured people to be sold as slaves. This action brought serious and deep quarrels among the tribes which made them not to see eye to eye on any issue. Each saw nothing good in the other except potential slaves and for that they were always at daggers drawn at each other peeping through the windows in the thick walls of sentiments separating them.

Nothing is permanent in the world except change says a Greek philosopher Heraclitus. Therefore, with time both slavery and slave trade were stopped and the tribal groups found themselves united as one country called Nigeria through amalgamation of 1914 under the directive of Lord Frederick Lugard, the British chief representative then in Nigeria. While the constituting ethnic groups were trying to see good in each other and outlive the injuries of the past occasioned by slavery and slave trade, their foreign rulers, conscious of their economic interests felt that solidarity among these natives was likely to raise political questions against their rule over them.

For that reason they introduced “the divide- and- rule system” though unofficial but was a platform upon which they continued their administration. The motive of this system was to prevent the ethnic groups from uniting their forces against them. So, it sowed the seed of segregation in their midst, nursed and nurtured it to maturity by emphasising their differences and undermining their similarities. They at first succeeded partially and later failed completely as Nigerians regained their freedom and secured the independence of their country in 1960. That notwithstanding the divide- and- rule was revived by neocolonial Nigerian leaders who perpetuated it then and still doing it through ethnic politics to the present time.

Fifth is religious bigotry. Religion is among the greatest virtues ever happened to man in the world. Good deeds it has done to man are so many. Among them are: it has helped man to understand, acknowledge and appreciate the fact that he and the rest of the universe are creation of another being – the Supreme Being. It has also helped man to understand who, whom, what, why and where he is in the realm of existence and how he can use knowledge and skills arising from this exposure to make a success story of his journey in the world. Also it has as well left man with no iota of doubt that he is in the world to do the will of his creator. The will of his creator is expressed in these three universal moral maxims: Love-love your neighbour as you love yourself; the Golden Rule-treat others as you will like them treat you; development- strive to be positive change you wish to see in the world and as well leave the world better than you found it.

If man observes these moral maxims, God, Jehovah, Allah, Chineke, Oludumare or what ever name the Supreme Being is called, will be happy with him and man himself will be surprised to notice that earth is a version of God's kingdom. But if abused due to ignorance, pride, arrogance, selfishness, haughtiness, greed, malignancy, etc., man will discover he has made a hellhole of earth, and thus becomes a disappointment to God. Man is guilty of the latter; hence God regretted to have created him, to have adorned his head with a cap of creative thinking.

In Nigeria this abuse of moral maxims has let loose all manners of moral vices in religious realm. Religion which is supposed to be what it is a universal canopy providing hope, security, peace, harmony, positive attitude and development has been privatized, ill-directed and segregated to the extent that the adherents of one religion will see adherents of other religions as malignant competitors, opponents and enemies. For instance in Nigeria the three major religions are: Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam. Adherents of Traditional Religion are tolerant of Christianity and Islam while Christians and Muslims do not

tolerant each other and the both dismiss adherents of traditional religion as pagans and non-issues often directed by Satan, believed to be the chief cause of problems in the world.

For this reason, hatred, malice, disagreement, quarrel and war have become common features in relationships between Christians and Muslims who are fated to live together in one country, to share dreams of their country and to join minds and hands together to actualize the dreams of their country among which are: “a free and democratic society; (b) a just and egalitarian society...” (Ocho, 2005; 4 12). In other words, every Nigerian is free to choose any religion he or she likes to worship the same creator. But Christians and Muslims observe this in paper and not in practice. That is why each group are making efforts to force the other to accept their own faith as new converts or quit existence being a misnomer in the world. They see nothing wrong in these their thoughts and actions. No wonder Blaise Pascal, commenting on the tragedy of intolerance among the different religious adherents, says: “Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction” (Dawaki, 2005: 37 Shake Hands...) Religious bigots from both faiths consider it a big and unpardonable sin to tolerate and deal with each other for whatever reason.

Sixth is discrepancy in development. Discrepancy in development among the constituent ethnic groups is one of the thought provoking issues in Nigeria. For due to ethnic politics which gives birth to ethnic leaders occupying national positions, the country's amenities are not evenly distributed among the constituent units of the country. The ethnic leaders in positions of power at national level usually use the opportunity to provide a lot of amenities such as good roads, functional health system, well-equipped schools, employment opportunities, appointments, etc, to their areas at the expense of other areas whose sons and daughters are not among those in the positions of power. The creator and distributor of country's amenities is political power and this power has remained

for too long in one part of the country – the Northern part as if other parts are just appendages to Nigeria.

This lack of power shift was recognized by Abubakar Dangiwa Umar as a serious threat to the unity of our country Nigeria as he felt it has made Nigeria seem to belong to the people of the North alone. He pointed out that when Nigeria was 38 years old as an independent country the North had ruled Nigeria for 35 years. So when Sani Abacha told the people that he had come to pull the nation out of the precipice, Umar says the “people thought there was going to be power-shift and there was that opportunity to have power shift to the south, so that at least we can reassure people that the country belongs to everybody” (Odey, 2004:41). So at the time Nigeria celebrated the golden jubilee of its independence anniversary- 50 years old, power shifted to South but once which lasted 8 years under the former President Olusegun Obasanjo. So out of 50 years Nigeria has lasted the North has ruled the country for 39 year and the South 11 years. The power has again shifted to South – South under President Goodluck E. A. Jonathan.

Thus, the concentration of power in one part of the country has caused uneven distribution of country’s amenities among the Nigerian people. And this has made the affected people to feel marginalized and sad over their unjust treatment. This heightens ethnic loyalty at the expense of national unity. The Niger Delta in the South is a good example where the lion share of the resources that sustain the entire nation come from and yet the area is a sorry sight to behold when compared to some other areas like kano, Kaduna, Plateau, Lagos, etc, in the country in terms of development. This has given rise to the Nigeria Delta crisis which has advertised Nigeria the world over as a place where justice is seating in a wheelchair, the hands that feed the nation are bitten and wealth and poverty are sharing the same space.

## **8. The Effects of Ethnicism and Religious Crisis on the National Development.**

The preceding discourses have shown that ethnicism and religious crisis in the country have been a serious setback to Nigerians in their dreams, efforts and aspirations to develop the only country they have like other developed countries in the world. Their dreams, sad to say, have remained mere dreams, their efforts unproductive and their aspirations barren due to the negative activities of ethnic fans and religious bigots which have disfigured the face of the nation from beauty to ugliness, wealth to poverty, the pride of Africa to the shame of Africa, from unity to disunity, etc. The adverse effects of these roadblocks on the national development are legion but only a few will be discoursed here.

First is a threat to the country's unity. Ethnic and religious conflicts promote ethnic loyalty among the ethnic or tribal groups in the country and undermine national loyalty. The undermining of national loyalty has reduced the unity of the country to paper unity which begins and ends in the constitution of our dear country as it is never observed in reality. For this reason some leaders, if not all, at national level are national leaders in name but personal and ethnic leaders in reality as they are more concerned with their personal and ethnic group interests and ready to do anything to enhance both at the expense of national interest.

No event that demonstrates this more clearly than a reaction of one of the so-called national leaders in the person of Olusegun Obasanjo when he was the president of Nigeria to some Muslim fanatics' protests in kano on October 12, 2000 against America's reprisal mission on Afghanistan believed to be harbouring Osama bin Laden the main target of their attack which caused a lot of damages in the country resulting in death of not less than 200 Nigerians and destruction of a lot of properties. It happened that the president was in Paris, France attending a UNESCO conference. When he came back and saw losses inflicted on Nigerians by the protesters, his reaction was less than what was expected of a national leader as nothing was done to the wreckers

of the havocs. John Okwoeze Odey commenting on his reaction says:

When he came back, he visited the city of Kano and after seeing the extent of the damage done there, he declared as usual: “we won’t tolerate the destruction of lives and property. Just using an excuse whatever to start breaking into shops, destroying buildings and causing disaffection is not the best”. Once more, and as usual, the president promised that he would dig to the root of the matter. Having made that empty and deceitful promise, he directed his attention then to work by hook, by crook and by intrigue to ensure his second term in office. He achieved that goal through the madness called election 2003. Till today, almost three years after, he is yet to keep his promise of digging into the root of Kano’s religious intolerance and consequent bloodshed. (2004:22)

His unfulfilled promise was a delay tactics to calm the nerves of the concerned Nigerians, the relations of those killed and those whose properties were destroyed in the disastrous event who wanted to pay these wreckers of lives and properties in their own coins. What was uppermost in his mind was his second term in office. For that he did not want to mar his chance by bringing the protesters cum destroyers to book nor did he want to create the impression in the minds of those Nigerians who were disturbed by what happened that he was not going to do something about it for the safety and security of lives and properties in Nigeria. He pursued his selfish interest and succeeded and thus allowed his promise to remain a mere promise until he left the office. The events like this are as many as the number of Nigerian leaders. Hence the main problem of Nigeria is selfish leaders who are primarily concerned with their personal or ethnic interests to the

detriment of the nation's growth, stability, development, democracy, unity, peace, security and survival.

Second, is abuse of human values among Nigerians. Human values are those values which have made man's existence in the world meaningful. Among them are fear of God, respect for human life, love, peace, tolerance, forbearance, forgiveness, kindness, patience, faithfulness, devotion to duty, meekness, self-control, humility, knowledge, truth, honesty and so on. But the value of all values is fear of God (since man is in the world solely to do God's will), followed by respect for human life (since human life is wearing the image and likeness of God). These values are ends themselves while other values serve as means to attain them.

But these highly esteemed human values have been so much abused in the hands of ethnic fans and warriors, and religious fanatics. In any event of disagreements between them and their fellow Nigerians, they usually ignore these life sustaining values and quickly initiate and execute mayhem meant to bring about bloodshed of some innocent Nigerians and destruction of their hard earned properties. For example kano in December 1980 was bloodbath when Maitatsine and his group of fanatics struck and killed 4177 people at one fell swoop" Newswatch, 1987: 6 (cited in Odey, 2004: 76). All other states in the Northern part of the country especially Boronu, kaduna, Bauchi and Plateau have witnessed several losses of lives and properties due to religious crises. If fear of God can be so ignored and human life so wasted despite the fact that they are the value of all values, then what become of other values such as love, truth, justice, honesty, etc; are better imagined than described. It is for this reason an embezzler of public funds at national level is treated as a rogue by other Nigerians while members of his ethnic group and his religious faith treat him as a hero.

Third is lack of trust and fellow-feeling among the ethnic groups and adherents of different religious faiths in Nigeria. Trust is belief

by a person in the goodness, strength and ability of others. It is confidence he or she has in others because he or she considers them as reliable, trustworthy, honest, etc, in their attitudes to life. A person's interaction with others is based on this trust and continues as long as the trust is intact with its flame of confidence. The interaction stops when doubt comes up in the mind of an interacting person and takes the place of his trust. While fellow feeling is a positive attitude of concern a person has for others. He is happy with them and celebrates with them over their joys and successes and as well sympathies with them over their pains and failures. Thus without trust and fellow-feeling human interactions and co-operation in the adventure of life will be unproductive and life itself will be destitute of sustaining ingredients.

But it is sad to observe that trust and fellow-feeling are among the first casualties in the hands of ethnic fans and religious fanatics who have developed a mindset which positions them to see people outside their narrow ethnic groups and religious faiths as unhealthy competitors, evil-agents and as a mirage and dismissed them with a wave of hand. People are agents of development and no development can take place among these people living in the same country but who do not trust one another; who do not interact in atmosphere of mutual support; who do not share goals of the nation and exchange views concerning how to realize them using strategies collectively adopted as good.

Fourth, is bad leadership. A leader of any group be it a family, a peer group, a community, an organization, an association, a religion, a state or a country is held by his followers as a role model and they look up to him for direction in every sphere of life. His ideas, thoughts, actions and mannerisms are highly respected and imitated by his followers. A good leader inspires his followers to a great height and thus enables them to focus their attention, energy, time and other resources on things and ways of living that will enhance, promote, improve and advance their well-being. If the leader happens to be a bad one his bad ideas, thoughts, actions



and mannerisms are equally imitated especially by the unwary people among his followers who regard him as God's or Allah's representative on earth.

This way of looking up to a leader has caused a lot of setbacks to Nigerians' efforts at development. Some leaders- spiritual and secular- drunk with their positions become careless with their thoughts, utterances and activities which have many times ignited the fire of ethnic and religious flames with its devastating consequences on co-existence, peace, unity and development of Nigeria. For instance, Sheikh Abubakar Mohammed Gumi, in 1987, was quoted as saying:

If we want Nigeria to be a good country, to join hands, we have to follow one faith (Islam). If we follow one faith we will be a good country ..... Nigerian unity, if I am to do my best, is to try to convert Christians and non- Moslems as much as possible. Until the other religious become minority and they will not affect our society. (Odey, 2003: 29 – 30)

So, for him Nigeria is not a good country and cannot become one unless all Christians and non – Moslems in Nigeria become Moslems by discarding their own faiths and embracing Islamic faith. He should not stop there but go further to say that before Nigeria will become a good country every Nigerian whether male or female should discard his or her name and adopt his name being the only name recognized by Allah.

If a leader of Sheikh Gumi's position could intentionally make such a statement it becomes so obvious that religion in the hands of shortsighted leaders is a dangerous weapon, in fact, more dangerous than any deadly poison. And if gold can rust what becomes of iron is anybody's guess. In another occasion, Sheikh Gumi was quoted as saying: "Christianity is nothing" (Soyinka,

1999: 6). The former president of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo “a Christian” by religious faith was also quoted to have said: “CAN my foot” (Odey, 2004: 42) in his reaction to question put to him by the Chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria, Rev. Yakubu Pam concerning ethnic, religious and political crises in Plateau State which had resulted in declaration of state of emergency in the state.

These types of antagonistic statements which cause segregation among Nigerians, which destroy instead of build the nation and which have made Nigeria to remain a Gant in size but a Lilliputian in moral worth are common among most of our leaders. The first rug on the ladder of nation building is cooperation among the people. This all important rug is missing due to the activities of our leaders. As neo-colonial leaders they may forget any other thing they learnt from our former colonial masters but not “the divide-and – rule” Nigeria applied during the colonial era and inherited by our present leaders who are always alert to ensure that any hint of solidarity among the people are destroyed at the incubate stage. For there is nothing tyrannical leaders fear so more than people’s solidarity as history has shown no tyrant the world over has ever faced its devastating flames without being consumed. This lack of solidarity among the people has been a big stumbling block to Nigerians’ efforts at national development.

#### **9. The way out**

Nigerians, sad to observe, are at the sea of problems, concerning their existence on this portion of God’s province called Nigeria, sailing without a landing point in view. All their efforts as regards solving their numerous problems such as bad leadership, apathy of the masses, ethnicism, religious crises, political manipulation, poverty, corruption, ignorance, etc, have been one step forward and two steps backward. The reason for their predicaments among others is because they are a part of their problems to be solved. This is a fact they must accept and ready themselves to accept truth

about which history is owing to mankind as a whole and them in particular.

First, is that all the ethnic groups that constitute a sovereign state known as Nigeria should accept the fact that Nigeria belongs to all of them. For that they should join hands together to work for the realization of their country's dreams: (a) a free and democratic society; (b) a just and egalitarian society; (c) a united, strong and self-reliant nation; (d) a great and dynamic economy; (e) a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (Ocho, 2005: 413), which they have all accepted as worthy to be pursued and sustained with all the resources at their disposal.

Nigeria's population is large, about 140 million. But this number is far less than the population of the countries like India which is about 700 million and China which is about 2 billion and all the ethnic or tribal groups that constitute each of the countries still live together in peace and work together for the enhancement, promotion and advancement of their individual and collective well-being. Both China and India like Nigeria had experiences of colonialism, but unlike Nigeria, they have outlived the negative aspects of it and improved and expanded the positive aspects of it and continue to improve on them using their creative resources. Hence as today the both countries are industrialized and the resulting positive impacts on their citizens and the humanity as a whole have earned them a place in the comity of developed nations of the world. Therefore Nigerians should outlive their illusive differences and unite as one body which they are and pursue the actualization of the dreams of their country which is only possible in the atmosphere of peace, unity and cooperation.

Second is good leadership. No nation can find its way and experience positive development in all spheres of its endeavour without the light of good leadership. A good leader comes from the people, lives his entire life for the people and dies for the people. A good leader is the chief servant of the nation and his dreams, ideas,

thoughts and activities always zero in on how to enhance, improve, promote, protect and advance the well-being of citizens as a whole irrespective of their ethnic groups and religious faiths. A good leader is a role model and an inspirer and people look up to him as a holder of light for them to find their ways to their individual and collective destinations. A good leader in Nigerian political terrain, smeared by citizens' fears of insecurity, pains of inflicted injuries, worries about the next target of suicide bombers- courtesy of Boko Haram, weaknesses of the moral life of their leaders, sorrows about the killing of innocent Nigerians, devastating poverty , etc, caused by frequent political, ethnic, social and religious crises in the country, should know that Nigerians as a whole need love, care, trust, justice, understanding , recognition, encouragement, feeling of belonging and atmosphere of peace, freedom and creative thinking to play out their best in the areas of their callings in the field of development.

Thus, given this situation, Nigeria needs a leader or leaders who "... should be custodians of truth. They should be men and women who build trust, inspire commitment, and generate confidence in others by a positively influencing them through their life": (Dawaki 2005: 95- Shake hands-). So exemplary leaders are what the country needs to run its affairs. Leaders who know that ..."nation building can never be wished into existence, it has to be worked for by men and women who are not only God's conscious , but those whose honesty and truthfulness is the core of their being, the essence of their thought life and the integral part of their lifestyle" (Dawaki, 200595-Shake Hand-). These types of leaders must be the change they wish to see in their country, work for the change and seen by their followers to be working for the change. That is to say, they should use their own life to demonstrate the change they wish to bring about in their country. What they preach must be what they do both in their public and private life. They are never shortsighted leaders. Unlike politicians who are so much worried about what is going to be their fate in the next election,

they are highly esteemed statesmen whose concern and focus is what is going to be the character of the next generation. Nigerians need these kinds of leaders having suffered so much under the activities of their opposites.

Third is enlightenment of Nigerian masses. The Nigerian messes are those Nigerians who are everywhere in the country except where decisions that affect their lives either for good or for bad are been taken and executed without thinking about them let alone seeking their consent. The thought provoking sorry conditions of these Nigerians made one of the gadflies of the country, Olusegun Oladipo to divide Nigeria into two: the Nigeria of the rich whose members are called citizens, who have at their disposal everything that makes life comfortable and worth living such as money, wealth, health, privilege, etc. The Nigeria of the poor whose members are called supplicants who daily wish they had died a stillbirth than to live and experience everything that dehumanizes life such as hunger, poverty, slavery, disease, deprivation, ignorance and so on. In his words:

It is no longer a revelation. It is a reality we confront everyday that we have two Nigeria- one for the rich and the other for the poor. In the Nigeria for the rich, everything is in place; money, comfort, health, privilege, power, access to opportunities, patronage... name it. In the other Nigeria, however, the story is different even though they are many things too. In this Nigeria, you have want hunger, deprivation, lack of access to opportunities, ignorance and what else? Of course, you have disease, poverty, lack of personality, in fact. All things that go with human degradation. (1999:39)

What an ugly, sad-provoking, soul-sapping but true picture of Nigeria is this? The only country both the citizens and supplicants can call theirs in the world is now a proverb. A country wealth

cannot develop due to evil machinations of some men and women. Nigeria has been made a heaven for the former and a hell for the latter.

But all hope is not lost. Since “where there is will, there is way” is a saying whose truth has been confirmed by common sense, supported by knowledge and approved by wisdom. There is hope for the Nigerian masses and for the entire citizens to build a country of their dream- a great nation. But Nigerians as whole and Nigerian masses in particular have to think, strive and work to realize their hope by becoming positive changes they wish to see in this God’s providence called Nigeria. They have to rise as one body and say NO to injustice and its perpetrators in whatever language they will understand and obey.

The tool and only tool Nigerian masses need to actualize their hope is enlightenment, otherwise, called knowledge. This great virtue, in fact, virtue of all virtues, according to Socrates, if they embrace it and submit themselves to its guidance, they will realize who they are, where they are, what they are and why they are in the world. After helping them to know all these phases of their existence, it will equally help them to discover to their utter surprise that all they need to actualize the purpose of their mission in the world and the dreams of their nation are at their disposal and among them is creative and positive thought. This is in-built in every human being and every good edifice in the world is a handiwork of this kind of thought. Through it they will understand their birth in Nigeria was not by accident but by intention of the Supreme Being who assigns them goals and wants them to discover their individual and collective goals and attain them and as well leave the world stage better than they found it. That they are not appendages to Nigeria for that their human rights must be respected and seen by all to be respected.

Through it they will understand that democracy is the only hope for Nigeria to develop politically, economically, socially,

educationally, morally, culturally, etc, and become a country where peoples' votes count, human rights respected, constitution obeyed, jobs opportunities created and accessible to all and moral rules observed by all. Where one lives for all and all live for one. This is because democracy is government of the people, by the people and for the people, courtesy of Abraham Lincoln a great friend of humanity and a man of all ages. Through it they will understand that the fertile soil in which a seed of dictatorship gets planted, germinates and grows to maturity and begins to lord it over the helpless masses is apathy of the masses. This truth is conveyed to mankind by Frederick Douglas as follows:

If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favour freedom and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crop without ploughing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Men may not get all they pay for in the world, but they must certainly pay for all they get. The limits of tyrants are determined by the endurances of those whom they oppress. (Bennethe, 1984:160-161)

In other words, nothing good in the world be it human right, freedom, development, good governance, democracy, access to opportunities or equal treatment – name it, can be had on the platter of gold, that is, without struggle. So, Nigerians have to demand from themselves and from their leaders through consistent purpose-oriented efforts what they want in their country. Through it among other things not stated here, the Nigerian masses will understand that what tyrants or dictators in the name of leaders fear so much and do not risk confrontation with it is the solidarity of the masses. Hence they are ever ready to do anything to make sure

that people do not unite among themselves. This is the reason why a divide – and – rule system was introduced by our erstwhile colonial masters and inherited by our neocolonial leaders who have been using it to ignite the inflames of ethnic and religious crises which have kept the people divided, many lives and properties destroyed in the interest of the beneficiaries (the leaders and their sycophants) and at the expense of the Nigerian masses.

Fourth is strict observance of the three universal moral maxims- Love; the Golden Rule and Development. These moral maxims, courtesy of enlightenment, are tools needed by mankind to understand and appreciate the world and its teeming resources and use them to improve their conditions of living in the world. With strict observance of these moral maxims the world as a whole and Nigeria in particular will be transformed into heaven we have been longing for; and abuse of them will change Nigeria into hell which we dread.

What is this priceless concept called love? Love is heaven on earth; kindness in action; truth in settlement of disputes; enlightenment in a situation of ignorance; patience in difficult times; forgiveness in the face of insult; sympathy in the scene of injuries; justice in distribution of resources; protest in the scene of injustice; mercy in the scene of guilt caused by sincere ignorance; respect for and recognition of dignity and sacredness of human life. Love is also living in fear of God by doing his will. It is being your brothers' or sisters' keeper. It is celebrating with them over their successes or weeping with them over their failures. It is foresight which sees a man in a boy, a woman in a girl, a king in a servant, a possibility of peace in a crisis-redden state, knowledge in ignorance, beauty in ugliness, development in backwardness; a professor in a student, etc. It is because of all these things made possible by love that it is highly esteemed as a builder of good human relations in the world and hope for the establishment of the Universal Brotherhood.



No wonder Habu Dawaki and Norman Vincent Peale describe love as follows: For Dawaki:

Where there is love, insecurity vanishes, envy is crippled, jealousy suffocates, hatred is drowned, malice and the wanton destruction of life and property become extinct. For love thinks always in terms of other persons' good. It seeks to unite and knit souls together. Love speaks out on behalf of the voiceless. It sees potential and worth in every human being. It sees beyond the weaknesses, shortcomings, limitations and failures of others. It is neither prejudiced or color blind. It does not see people as statistics or numbers but as persons. (2005: 125-126- Shake Hands)

For Peale,

Love is well termed the greatest of all virtues, because of its remarkably curative properties. Love is always a symptom of self-forgetfulness and when you love people enough to forget your own miseries and take their troubles to heart, then you lose your misery and your depression is dissipated. This is why the Bible is constantly urging us to love one another. (1980: 215)

So love is the key that can open the door of gold mines of human and material resources in Nigeria and a ticket every Nigerian must have in order to make a success story of his or her life journey in Nigeria irrespective of ethnic group and religion he or she belongs.

Another one is the Golden rule. The golden rule as a moral maxim says that everybody must treat others as he or she would like them treat him or her. It says what belongs to all must be shared by all. Nigeria as a country belongs to all Nigerians no matter the tribe of

a person's birth or a person's peculiar culture and his religious faith. For that it is wrong to treat some Nigerians as citizens and others as supplicants as we all have the same legitimate right of citizenship of Nigeria. We all are carrying the same burdens on our heads- the burdens of actualizing the dreams of our country. These dreams have remained as dreams since 1960 when the founding fathers of our country won the independence of our country Nigeria.

They are not happy where they are when they see the seeds of a great country they sowed in the early sixties are still in the nursery stage. They are equally enveloped in tears when they see that the fault is put to the doors of those who received the baton of leadership from them. To wipe out their tears Nigerians both the leaders and the led must tread on the right path which leads to the promised land of greatness which is observance of the stated universal moral maxims. It has been tested by common sense, verified by knowledge, confirmed by wisdom and approved by the teacher of all teachers experience as attitudes Nigerians need to cultivate in order to secure a place in the sun and a place for their country in the comity of developed nations live well and die happy in the world.

Another one is development. Development is an innate desire in man that makes him improve his conditions of living in the world. For this reason man is always striving to leave his present better than it was in the past and as well his future better than his present. In his own contribution to explain what development is all about S.A Ekanem holds the view that "... development involves a systematic and conscious process of change, progress which is innovation and advancement. It indicates an improvement, on what was to what is..."(Uduigwomen, 2006:28). While Chinua Achebe and Ade Ajayi in their merit award lectures, as paraphrased by Olusegun Oladipo, argue that: "Development is not a linear activity in which the old is replaced by the new in a mechanical manner. Nor is it simply an economic activity in which only the

experts can participate. Rather, it is a comprehensive activity whose goal is human well-being” (1999:121-12). So, development, given the views of the cited scholars, is not a product of chance, not a thing to be had on a platter of gold, not a manna expected to fall from heaven or an outcome of a miracle. But rather it is an outcome of conscious efforts directed towards attaining a certain goal usually the people’s well-being.

Nigerians are in a dire need of development in all sectors of their endeavour- education, economy, religion, health, social relations, morality, etc. Fortunately, they are well blessed with resources- human and material- needed to bring about their development. Where the problem lies is management of the available resources in the interest of all Nigerians. Solution to the problem is just this: Nigerians to be the change they desire to see in Nigeria- to be the agents of development in all facets of their living. God provided food for birds but He did not put it in their nest. Authors provided knowledge in their books but they did not put it in the heads of their readers. So Nigerians have to creatively and positively use the resources God has provided for them to achieve their goals.

Fifth is right use of religion. Religion is a universal phenomenon- a fact of human life. Its influences on mankind ever since they discovered where and why they are in the world are tremendous. Through it we understand that we are beings of another being called the Supreme Being. Through it we understand that our first and last task in the world lies in doing His will and his will is expressed in the three universal moral maxims: (1) Love you neighbour as you love your self.;(2) Treat others as you will like them treat you; and (3) Be the change you wish to see in the world. As it is seen, it is doing God’s will that mankind as a whole and Nigerians in particular can fulfill themselves in the world. Religion should be an acknowledgement of God’s good deeds to humanity which should begin with gratitude and end with gratitude. It should be a bridge between human beings and their Creator, and between individuals and their fellows.

So the role of religion, whether Christianity, Islam, Africa traditional religion, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism or the like is to help its adherents to do and continue to do God's will. But as experience has shown, religion has lost its essence in the hands of the adherents of the preceding forms of religion in that regard. Hence religious realms have witnessed a lot of crises and wars among the adherents. It is for this reason religion is now being described as a mixed blessing. It is for the same reason that Karl Marx describes it as the opium (the sleeping tablet) of the people. Religion, having fallen from grace to grace, whatever good it has done to humanity it has equally rendered to them its opposite. It is now a canopy of virtues and vices. The adherents love as well hate; build as well destroy, initiate peace move and as well ignite machine of wars, worship God and as well listen to Satan ( Satan correctly described as man's selfishness ), etc.

Objective observers of religious activities in the world irrespective of robes they are wearing-theism, atheism, animism, deism, pantheism, etc- all agree that this is a true picture of religious activities in the contemporary world. Lives and properties lost in Nigeria, for example, as a result of religious crises are better imagined than described. Yet all these lives and properties were destroyed by people who claim to be worshiping God or Allah. And no earthly father let alone a spiritual father the Supreme Being would like his children and their hard and justly earned properties be so destroyed. It is written in the Bible: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you. And pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew, 5: 44). Yet they ignore it and do these havocs with conviction that God is with them.

So, for Nigerians to experience national development through the perspective of religion, they have to embrace the virtues of religion – love, truth, justice, peace, fellow feeling, kindness, patience, hope, etc. and shun fanaticism, malignancy, bigotry, hatred, segregation, lying, violence, war, etc. These vices are anti-religion

and anybody who indulges in them is far from the canopy of God let alone doing His will.

### **10. Conclusion**

In the preceding discourse, attempts have been made to identify factors responsible for ethnic and religious crises in Nigeria and their adverse effects on Nigerians' efforts at national development. Some of these factors include selfishness, neocolonialism and ethnic politics with their do-or-die activities, religious bigotry, slavery, discrimination and segregation. These stumbling blocks to nation building found in every part of the country have been perpetuated by ethnic fans and religious fanatics with common malignant intention to commit any crime in deference to their ethnic loyalty and in the name of "God" or "Allah" or the likes.

The adverse effects of these crises in all the spheres of the country are such that even a person with a stone heart cannot avoid weeping for Nigeria. The unity of the country has been reduced to nothing as people are more interested in ethnic unity than national unity. Life which is the value of all values, treated as an end in a civilized society, is treated as an object by ethnic and religious warriors provided it is a life of an opponent. Trust and fellow-feeling are dead in Nigeria as ethnic fans and religious fanatics see people from other ethnic groups and religious faith as enemies and for that not ready to have any dealings with them let alone having trust in them or sharing fellow – feelings with them. Also bad leadership has equally inflicted a lot of havocs on the nation to the extent that it is now a common knowledge that, according to Chinua Achebe, "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership .... The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership" (1983: 1).

Since every problem has a solution so it is with Nigeria's problems. Once there is will, there is way. Ethnic fans and religious fanatics should hear what Martin Luther King (Jr) says about the contemporary world. In his words: "The world is changing, and anyone who thinks he can live alone is sleeping through a revolution ...we must learn to live together as brothers or we will perish together as fools" (Dawaki, 2005:123). Nigerian leaders have to lead by example, observe the stated universal moral maxims, insist on the rule of law, believe in one Nigeria one nation, in the adage: united we stand and divided we fall, carry every Nigerian along by giving him or her a sense of belonging and leaves no one in doubt that one's life, humanity and citizenship are recognized and respected.

The Nigerian masses knowing quite well that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, according to Lord Acton, should be interested in public affairs and always alert to use their power of solidarity which corrupt leaders fear so much to check any abuse of power by them. Democracy depends on the masses to thrive; for that they have to be alert and wary on their duty post so as to stop in time any attempt by erring leaders to abuse peoples' rule which is what democracy is both in theory and practice. So Nigerians use your lives to demonstrate changes you wish to see in Nigeria. The only people that can stop you from achieving the goals of your well-being are the people enveloped in your apathy, thinking your negative thoughts, doubting the power of your solidarity, seeing yourselves as puppets in the hands of the leaders, leaving to God what is within your power to accomplish and leaving till tomorrow what can be attained today. Nigerians should be grateful to God that all the resources they need-human and material- to enhance, promote, advance and preserve their well-being in Nigeria are at their disposal, although at potential state, but theirs for the creative asking.

In case they fail to play the agents of positive changes they wish to see in their own part of the world, they should not blame God or

Satan or leadership of the country. But rather should blame themselves who have preferred to sleep through a revolution; to remain dumb in the scene of injustice; to sing praises of corrupt leaders for the sake of picking crumbs falling from their table; to complain about the wrongs going on in the country in the safety of their different houses; to fan the flames of both ethnic and religious crises in the country initiated and sustained by the leaders by influencing them through the use of money to support the divide – and- rule system meant to destroy peoples' solidarity. Nigerians it is left for us to make our country a paradise or a hell. The ball is now in our court- the court is our awareness of the goings-on in the country and our application of non-violent resistance to stop those events and practices that are against our nation' s dreams. History is watching us on the stage.

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## **IGBO COMMUNALISM: AN APPRAISAL OF ASOUZU'S IBUANYIDANDA PHILOSOPHY**

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### **1. Introduction**

The individual is not self sufficient but has many needs which he cannot supply to himself. Hence, human beings agreed to submit voluntarily to a system and were bound to live in unison and solidarity. Through deep experiences as creatures, human beings realized their insufficiency and dependency. They discovered that they need each other to live a contented life. These experiences of life gave recourse to the idea of complementarity as a measure to survive the challenges posed by other vicissitudes of life. Inter dependency, inter-relationship, collectivism and mutual co-existence form the basis for Igbo life pattern as expressed in *Ibuanyidanda*; an aspect of Igbo- communalism.

Igbo communalism is expressed in living together and sharing responsibilities. The traditional Igbo society has a great asset in its practice of a mode of life called communalism. This used to be the bedrock and the result of the wonderful relationship prevalent in the Igbo- African community as well as the purpose of the existence of the Igbo community in particular and of the Africans in general. In the light of the above and in recognition of the ontological and trajectory relationship of living together and sharing responsibilities, Asouzu developed the *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as an authentic traditional Igbo life pattern which has survived till today. "The concept *Ibuanyidanda* is drawn from the Igbo language and has as its nearest English equivalent the idea complementarity in the sense of *njikọka* (togetherness is greatest) *Igwe bu ike* (strength in togetherness)."<sup>1</sup> J. O. Chimakonam in his

etymological grand-standing has argued that the Igbo concept *nmekọka* better interprets complementarity than *njikọka*. *Njikọka* he went on, better interprets a closely related theory integrativity or integrative humanism associated with G. O. Ozumba<sup>2</sup>.

The central issue here is the ontological explanation for the acceptance and practice of communalism as *Ibuanyidanda* by Igbo communities. The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to highlight aspects of Igbo communitarian outlook. In other words, an attempt will be made to evaluate the purport of communalism within the context of *Ibuanyidanda*, its sense and meanings as well as its influence on different aspects of Igbo life. The idea of *Ibuanyidanda* as an aspect of Igbo communalism developed as a result of the fact that man is a social being who necessarily lives in the company of other human beings. “The Igbo sees this social collaboration as a natural legacy which ought to be lived, recognized at all times and therefore developed and preserved as a treasure”<sup>3</sup> developing and preserving communalism as a treasure within the context of *Ibuanyidanda* which implies that authentic Igbo communalism is not racial or tribal rather, it is realized within the *umunna* (kindred) and (*Ogbe*) village levels. Communalism implies group spirit. The concept “*Ibuanyidanda*” was expounded by I. I. Asouzu to clear a ground and draw a demarcation in the misconception of communalism. Thus he says;

In most contemporary African countries, what is understood as communalism, when carefully considered are diverse brands of tribal social arrangements designed to protect private and group interest against all forms of outside intrusion.<sup>4</sup>

The proper understanding of original practice of communalism in the pre-colonial African world is what we intent to buttress using the theory of *ibuanyidanda*.

## 2. Explication of Concepts

The terms to be explicated include; Igbo, communalism and *Ibuanyidanda*. Some Igbo scholars bend to two traditions for the explanation of the origin of the Igbo. The places associated with these origins are viewed as Igbo culture centres. These places are connected with the cultural traditions of non migration and migration. Nwala observes that;

The Igbo form one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. Like their neighbours, they belong to the Negro race in Africa, and speak a language that belongs to the Kwa group of languages found in west and central Africa. Their language is Igbo with many local dialects<sup>5</sup>

The Igbo developed independently like other indigenous African peoples. The Igbo language is not spoken by any other peoples in the world. The Igbo is situated in South-Eastern Nigeria. The concentration of Igbo homeland is the whole table land east of the River Niger and West of the cross River. The whole area of Igbo homeland is bounded in the South by the delta and shares boundary in that area with the Ijaw and the Ogoni. The Igbo has boundary with the Idoma, Igala and Ogoja people in the North. The Western neighbours are the Bini and Warri people.

The River Niger divides Igbo land into two unequal parts, the western part and the eastern part. The people dwelling in these two areas are conveniently and respectively referred to as the western Igbo and the eastern Igbo. The western Igbo live in Delta State and constitute only about one –tenth of Igbo population. The eastern Igbo live in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States and they constitute eight-tenths of the population. The rest of the Igbo are in diasporas found in *Ahoda* and *Ikwere* in Rivers State and at *Igbanke* in Edo State. The most distinguishing characteristic of the Igbo is its social fragmentation and decentralization of authority. Green observes this fact thus;

This great people are broken up into hundreds of small, more or less independent social units, the largest being, in many cases what we may call the village group. This is a collection of villages bound together by certain ties, but each one at any rate in the district with which we are concerned largely managing its own affairs<sup>6</sup>

The view of Green above, explains the popular Igbo saying- *Igbo Enweghi-Eze*. The Igbo have no king. This is a very important fact about the Igbo which does not have to be disregarded in the study of social and political organization of the Igbo. Decentralization of authority and social fragmentation notwithstanding, the Igbo achieves a high degree of peace and order, unity and solidarity in their traditional society. The reason must be sought in their philosophy and thought pattern, namely; communalism and complementarity (*Ibuanyidanda*).

### **Communalism: as a Concept**

Communalism is a mode of social relationship which is marked by the intimate feeling of belongingness which all members share with each other and which they reciprocate. Communalism expresses egalitarianism and being brothers' keeper. The writings of some African scholars such as Nkrumah's Consciencism and Nyerere's Ujamaa socialism as well as Azikiwe's Neo-welfarism Point to communalism. It is a political and an economic arrangement that emphasizes collectivity. Communalism allows the community to co-operate and come together to harness their resources together for the good of every body. In a communal society, oneness and the love for one another exist among the community. Communalism is simply, the return to traditional political and economic practices and the rejection of the unsuitable aspects of alien culture. In this system, every body was part of government and no need for political parties which create divisions in the lives of the people. In traditional Igbo societies says Asouzu;

The community constitutes the point of orientation for almost all human activities and determines human life even if these societies were committed to the insight of mutual complementary relationship between units within any given framework, we see them tending towards extreme measures in view of undermining this commitment<sup>7</sup>

From the above, it is seen that what actually energizes communalism are the concepts of extended family (*Ime-nne*) kindred (*Umunna*) village (*Ogbe*) and clan, because at these levels, people live together and share responsibilities. Communalism is not tribal, it is not racial, rather there is the spirit of collectivism, egalitarianism and being brothers' keeper. It is not primarily for the individual, but rather for the community of which the individual is an infinitesimal part. Writing on communalism, Mbiti sees the existence of the individual as subsumed in the collectiveness of the community, thus, he said; "I am, because we are, and since we are, therefore, I am"<sup>8</sup> this expresses clearly the Igbo belief that a tree cannot make a forest - *Otu Osisi anaghi emebe ohia!* Commenting on communalism, Steve Biko writes;

We regard our living together not as an unfortunate mishap warranting endless competition among us but as a deliberate act of God to make us a community of brothers and sisters jointly involved in the varied problems of life... Hence, all our action is usually joint community oriented action rather than the individualism<sup>9</sup>

Communalism is opposed to individualism, for example, for individualism, the individual is paramount and the community is a consequent. According to Nze, "the relationship existing between the society and the individual in a communalistic society is analogous to that existing between a mother and her embryo, each is connected with the other through the Umbilical cord"<sup>10</sup> what this

means is that the individual cannot separate himself from the community. Thus, as he tries and strives to satisfy his personal needs and develop his abilities, he sees all his efforts and aspirations as aimed at maintaining and sustaining his relationship with other members of the community of which he is a part. Communalism is fraternal in the sense that it symbolizes a form of life of a people whose different members are held together by some parental link. Nobody can detach himself from his community because the community is the vehicle through which all activities are accomplished. Hence, solitary individual is an absurdity in Igbo communalism.

### **Ibuanyidanda as a Concept**

The concept *Ibuanyidanda* is a theory formulated to overcome the shortcomings inherent in communalism. Prior to Asouzu's conceptualization of *Ibuanyidanda* as the philosophy of collectivism, the concept had existed as part and parcel of Igbo vocabulary without any logico-philosophic interpretation. *Ibuanyidanda* is analogous and literally means that no load is insurmountable for *danda*. (a specie of ant) according to Asouzu;

The concept *Ibuanyidanda* draws its inspiration from the teachings of traditional Igbo philosophers of the complementary system of thought. For these Igbo philosophers, the idea of complementarity is inferred from observing a species of ants called *danda*. These ants (*danda*) have the capacity to carry loads that appear bigger and heavier than themselves. What this implies is that they can surmount very difficult tasks when they are mutually dependent on each other in the complementation of their efforts<sup>11</sup>

This simply shows the mutual dependence and inter-dependence in carrying out projects among the Igbo. *Ibuanyidanda* as an Igbo concept is an aspect of Igbo communalism, and can properly be



understood by pointing out some credible sources that tell something about its nature. Many African scholars of the modern and contemporary thought have said something concerning this concept either directly or indirectly. For many, *Ibuanyidanda* is the principle of (*Aka nri kwoo aka ekpe, aka ekpe akwoo aka nri*) reciprocity and collectivism. Iwe, for instance, used the term “collective egoism to express the inseparable relationship that exists between the individual and the community”<sup>12</sup> writing on the nature of Igbo social life, Nwala, implicitly expressed this concept when he maintains that

Igbo world view implies two basic beliefs (1) the unity of all things and (2) an ordered relationship among all beings in the universe. Consequently, there is a belief in the existence of order and interaction among all beings... Man’s nature is such that he acts first and foremost in accordance with those things which agree with or are in harmony with his feelings and desires, his comfort and well being... and are only meaningful in a situation of social relationship<sup>13</sup>

The view of Nwala expresses mutual reciprocal relationship which is the hallmark of *Ibuanyidanda* as a concept in particular and of Igbo communalism in general. *Ibuanyidanda* as an Igbo work song expressing unity and strength is echoed in this phrase;

Our husbandsmen were singing and as they sang, they reaped, they were singing in chorus and reaping in unison. Their voices and their gestures were all harmonious; and in harmony, they were one, united by the same task, united by the same song. They were bound to one another. United by the same soul; each and everyone was tasting the

delight. Savouring the common pleasure of accomplishing a common task<sup>14</sup>

*Ibuanyidanda* is a living principle of which the basic ideology is community identity. It produces and presents the individual as community centred. In his book, *African thought and culture*, Onwubiko unconsciously expressed *Ibuanyidanda* as;

The intra-community relationship based on interpersonal relationship realized in a definite community, among its members, to express the practical traditional ... concept of human living<sup>15</sup>

In the above sense, individuals recognize their worth as human beings and what they can do for each other. Helping one another collectively without demanding for immediate remuneration since everyone is mindful of the fact that each person has something to contribute to the welfare of the community at one time or another.

### **3. Communalism: A Reflection on Traditional Igbo Social Life – Ibuanyidanda**

The permanent feature or behaviour pattern of Igbo social life is based on a logical system of thought and a complete positive philosophy – (*Ibuanyidanda*). The fact that the world is incomplete (*Uwa ezu-oke*) and nobody is perfect (*Onweghi onye ozuru*) necessitates collectivism in action. Asouzu describes Igbo social life as complementarity which is a concretely lived experience of every day life. According to him;

This idea derives from the general and fundamental human feeling of insufficiency and experience of relativity and fragmentation of historical process. From here arise the human fundamental inclination to solidarity, togetherness and community. In the same way arises all tendencies guiding such ideas as

mutual co-existence, co-dependability, co-responsibility ... etc<sup>16</sup>

The essential nature of traditional Igbo social life is conveniently expressed in the above quote. It emerged as a result of the realization that the community is better able to wrest on themselves, the means of developing, sustaining and re-producing themselves. *Ibuanyidanda* in this context is fundamentally a social relation of production. It is the act of doing things together; the spirit of corporate existence, mutual assistance in work by all and the spirit of collective effort found among traditional Igbo people. The life of the Igbo is group participation in which each individual participates according to his natural ability. This explains the complementarity. There are some Igbo metaphors that express this complementarity. Such as: gradual picking fills the basket (*ntutu ntutu ntutu juo ukpa*) Bigger fish to supply bigger firewood and smaller fish to supply smaller firewood (*Nnukwu azu kpata nnukwu nku, obere azu kpata obere nku*). For the traditional Igbo, says Asouzu:

Without complementarity, human life would be unbearable isolated struggles that easily lead to self abandonment. We can now understand why the traditional Igbo never cease to sound the clarion call to complementarity and solidarity in times of crisis<sup>17</sup>

There are factors which tie or bound the people in complementarity, such as blood relation. In fact, a community in Igbo land means “people of one blood” kinsmen, or brethren *Umunna*. Other factors that favour complementarity include territorial location (habitation) and physical proximity of members of the community which bring them into personal face-to-face relation. These factors that favour complementarity illustrate vividly the Igbo belief that (*Agbata-obi onye bu nwanne ya*) one’s neighbor is his relation.

#### 4. Limitations to *Ibuanyidanda* Vis-à-vis Modernity

The present individualistic life style of the Igbo is a deviant life. It is a perverted life brought about by the relegation to the background of the Igbo belief system. Today, the Igbo are no longer united by the same work. Neither is harmony still a part of their work atmosphere. In trying to bring back this traditional Igbo spirit, *Asouzu* has proposed the *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy; which in the literal sense means: no load is insurmountable for danda which implies complementarity or community spirit.

The advancement in education, science and technology has made many of our people to ostracize themselves from their communities and there by kill the community spirit. The entire Igbo world has relapsed into chaos and disorder arising from individualism. The sense of unity, oneness, dependency, interdependency, and mutual co-existence has been eroded. Commenting on the depreciation of the authentic Igbo values as contained in the *Ibuanyidanda* concept, Ekwuru writes:

As the situation stands now, one does not need the expert analysis of a social scientist nor the rigorous sample survey of an ethnoscientist or cultural anthropologist to size up the situation of Igbo societal malaise. For one who wants to be downright traditional in his analysis of the situation, the present period is seething with such kinds of events that evoke the proverbial sense of abnormality. Most of the present occurrences defy any reasonable explanation as they go contrary to every traditional canon of sense and sensibility<sup>18</sup>

The complementary community spirit that characterized the traditional Igbo society is today questionable due to the break through in world civilization as contributed by science and technology. The intimate face-to-face personal and humane relationship, interdependency, dependency, co-existence and co-responsibility that marked the community spirit is today opposed

by the technocratic society in which members of the modern Igbo community work out of tempo with nature and tries to meet up with the tempo of the science (machine). Consequently, depersonalizing, and individualizing the people and introducing *Ibu-nyiri-danda*. (Load unable to be surmounted by danda). The oil bean tree (*Ukpaka*) and the Egu (a species of centipede) is analogous to the Modern Igbo community. The oil bean seed before maturity is bonded and united but after maturity they scatter and disperse across the bush. The *Egu* on the other hand holds strongly on a tree branch while young and becomes weak at maturity.

Prior to colonialism, *Ibuanyidanda* as an authentic existential philosophy was practicable among the Igbo. In the post colonial era, the attendant proliferation of churches, materialism, modernization and other sources have put great questions to *Ibuanyidanda* as a complementary philosophy of existence.

## **5. Conclusion**

Notwithstanding the effects of civilization on the modern society, one notices that Asouzu's attempt to identify *Ibuanyidanda* with Igbo communalism is a fruitful effort, apt and interesting. He contends that *Ibuanyidanda* is inevitable and will be very useful in understanding Igbo communalism. *Ibuanyidanda* as a concept accepts traditional socialism and recalls the humanitarianism and egalitarianism of the traditional Igbo society. It accepts libertarianism ingrained in some of the ideologies of the western societies.

Furthermore, its success as a uniting ideology of not only the Igbo, but also of all Africans, suggest the possibility of its success as a salvaging social philosophy. *Ibuanyidanda* as a philosophical concept must be embraced and lived by all Igbo communities because, in it lies the future of Igbo development and through it, authentic existence is realized.

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**BOOK REVIEW**

**Title:** *INTRODUCING AFRICAN SCIENCE: SYSTEMATIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH<sup>i</sup>*

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This book *Introducing African Science: Systematic and Philosophical Approach* Authored by Dr. Jonathan O. Chimakonam and published by AuthorHouse, Bloomington Indiana USA in 2012 is, without doubt, unique, valuable and captivating. To introduce African Science is an audacious venture: it is a pre-supposition of the existence of a science that can be said to be African. To indicate that it can be systematically and philosophically approached is another audacious statement. Asi Okuko na nke obu n'onu ebuka owerekwa ukwu n'abota ozo. But Dr. Chimakonam is not an idiot: he knows the difference between Confucius and confusion. Go through the book and observe a display of originality, dexterity, skill, learning and knowledge therein contained.



In this one hundred and sixty seven (167) page book, a truly *Multus in parvo*, Dr. Chimakonam sets out tactfully and thoughtfully to establish that “Africa has a peculiar thought system” which undergirds a peculiar logic and science. The author maps out the African logic as three-valued different from the three-valued logical creation in the West. This, I think forms the foundation of the entire work. For without this logical difference, it would have been vain to talk about African science. People are apt to ask: why African science? What would be the focus and utility of African science? Understanding the need and direction of the logic of this work provides immediate answers to these questions. To me the chief value of this work and of course, its greatest intellectual value lies in the formulation of this unique logic. Thinking of this magnitude has been lacking among African intellectuals. Logic lies at the foundation of everything, once it is established, every other form of theorizing takes shape. Aristotle was the man to do it in the Western tradition, creating the foundation upon which theorists of different inclination can build their thought. Logic therefore is the foundation of thought. We cannot correctly do African philosophy, mathematics, science, etc., without first laying a logical foundation for such. The practice which has grown uncontrolled since the colonial times in which African intellectuals seek to construct native African theories upon the logical foundation of the West are simply misguided. Western intellectuals read such works and toss it aside because they see nothing different in it from what they have since accomplished.

What this author has done therefore, is like unveiling an Africa the world never knew existed. By first mapping out African thought system and systematizing its unique logic, he sets the stage for others to follow and build other theories of African nativity. In this work, he systematizes and strengthens Africa’s age long scientific practices; a magnificent rebirth of old knowledge and a torrential gift of fresh discovery. Only history and posterity would probably come to understand what invaluable impact this noble project

would make to the life and story of the black man wherever he is in the world. Indeed, this is a book right on time but ahead of its time!

In writing this ground breaking book, Dr. Chimakonam in his own words, “gave a historical and metaphysical background to the theory of African science and offered a justification for the project”, this consists in the question: why African science? His justifications can be summarized in three points: (i) the need for Africa to re-enter history and contribute to world civilization (ii) the need for an alternative science to augment Western science and cushion some of its defects such as ecological concerns and threats of all kinds (iii) the need for a science that can offer safe and adequate energy to the world. Everyone who is in tune with the developments in Western science and our world today would agree with Chimakonam that an alternative science is long overdue.

In the page thirteen, he began describing and mapping out the logic of “our science”. It consists of two opposite values of truth and falsehood and a go-between value (third) called ezumezu or the complemented. Further, he stresses that the two conventional values are contraries in African logic rather than contradictories of Western orientation. This enables the two to hold at the same time. In his words:

T represents truth, F represents falsehood, the C represents complemented, and so instead of seeing C as neither true nor false, African logicians see it as both true and false. This is because African logic does not recognize the law of non-contradiction but that of complementarity. By this law of complementarity two different realities are seen as contraries and can cohabit. What happens however is that at their point of complementation, both realities lose their identities within the complementary mode. And they are treated as a full being, complete and not fragmented. So one cannot

say of the “complemented” it is true or it is false or even it is neither true nor false but that it is both true and false. (22)

One clearly notices the genius in this man’s formulation and of course, its reality in our day to day reasoning as Africans. As Africans, we do not strictly hold to views. There is always a mid point where two seemingly opposed variables can be reconciled. And in my view, this logic would usher in a better science. This was what Aristotle did in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C when he studies the thought system of the Western people and came up with a logic that models it. Now, it is called universal almost in opposition to any other possible logic. Every logic naturally, if it holds merit at all, should be capable of universal applicability but this does not negate its nativity. Like Aristotle’s logic, Chimakonian logic has a universal applicability or as it is said, the character of topic-neutrality (29).

It is based upon this logical framework that Chimakonam constructed the theory of African science. He produces the hermeneutical understanding of some fundamental scientific terms like space, matter, anti-matter and energy all of which gives ribs to African science. In one word, this attempt is the first of its kind in the known history of African studies. The author progresses to discuss nature, time, motion, thought and extension hoping to use explanations extracted to crust the work. To further fortify the sinews of African science, special methodology of African science, its laws, theories, criteria and other principles including African logic and the principle of deniability are treated. Halfway through the book, there is an outpouring of intellectuality, a milling out of Igbo African scientific terms and terminologies and a practicalization of African science.

The criteria for African science consisted in nine principles he discussed that must be in place before one can be said to be doing African science. These are: (i) Usoro (process) (ii) Njiko Ala-

mmụọ na Ala-mmadu (confluence of the natural and the sub-natural worlds) (iii) Mmeputa isiokwu (articulation of research problem) (iv) Mmeputa achọba (formulation of hypothesis) (v) Icho-uzọ (experiment) (vi) Omenala (theory) (vii) Icha-uzọ (setting aside) (viii) Iwu (law) (ix) Inabata na iju Achọba (asserting and denying of hypothesis). These criteria helps in his systematization to draw a line between what qualifies as African science from the residue of unscientific practices. But from the items on this list, one readily sees the presence of African logic and the uniqueness of African science. The criterion numbered (ii) above shows the effect of the complementarity of the two contrary values in African logic. Also implied is the necessity of the metaphysical in African science. African scientists see metaphysics as a necessary part of scientific discourse. “Its position is entrenched and as such it cannot be wished away. They see the sub-particles as metaphysical realities and know that they have crossed into mainstream metaphysics when they conduct experiments with these sub-particles. Hence, metaphysics is not a bad sign for the African scientists” (97). In page (94) he observes, “However, even after this systematization, metaphysics looks quite hard to wish away from the main stream practice of African science”. And in (66) he notes “African science recognizes that an adequate scientific exercise must connect elements from the two worlds. Nka-mmuta (scientific knowledge) is never produced in Ala-mmadu outside Ije (motion) and the source of Ije is Ala-mmụọ. In fact there can be no science without the two being pulled together”. The worlds referred to are the empirical and the metaphysical. He has also employed the terms natural and sub-natural as their synonyms (40-44).

The author also discussed the methods of African science to include: (i) Akọ-nwalee (Trial and error) (ii) Akọ-iju-ase (Interscience) (iii) Akọ-ime-obi (Introspection) (iv) Akọ-nyiri-onwe (Semiscience) (v) Akọ-nso-n’azụ (causal science). One could see the delicate systematization of procedures of old African scientific practices here which sets it apart from those of the West. In his

words:

Unlike Western science which captures nature and employs different means to force scientific knowledge out of her, African science approaches nature with equanimity, like a man approaching a maiden he wishes to marry, curious but gentle. This is because the scientist is not different from nature neither are his instruments. A man stitching own wound is likely to be gentle. This gentility in conducting scientific enquiries crystallizes in the observance of *Iwu-nyiri-onwe* (the law of uniformity). This law ensures that as far as experiments could be taken that there is a thin membrane which must not be crossed. This thin line is called in African science udo-ntupo (UDN) or the dotted single helix. (52-53)

These accentuate some of the justifications the author offers at the beginning of the work that an alternative science which can engender safe science is needed.

Further, the author discusses some of the theories in African science. They are (i) Uwa-ezu-oke (ii) Odiḅendi (iii) Amasi-amasi (iv) Ifeomimi. These give wide ideas and confirmation of the existence of scientific practices in Ancient Africa. Without any need for greater proof, a typical African reading this section sees those normal, regular practices in his everyday life as the author has ably re-articulated them in scientific terms.

His discussions on some laws of African science are equally stellar. They are as follows: (i) Egwueji (The Law of the Means) (ii) Iwuibe (Law of magnetism) (iii) iwundiiche (Law of discordance) (iv) Iwu-nyiri-onwe (Law of Uniformity). You could see the application of some of these which Chimakonam has elevated to the status of laws in the everyday activities of the

African. It is so stunning that what was seamlessly done by Africans have scientific undertone.

The author's discussion of the Schools of African Science is most captivating. There are two rival schools in African Science namely, the transcendentalists and the mechanists. The transcendentalists hold that the goal of science is to provide a true description of a certain part of the world namely, the material and the anti-material worlds. They hold that the non-material world, the source of motion and scientific inspiration cannot be adequately described by science since to do so, scientific knowledge must not only precede but also be independent of the non-material world. Since this is not the case, the transcendentalists prefer to treat claims about the non-material world as *Ifeomimi* (mystery). On their side, the mechanists hold that the goal of science is to provide a true description of the world as a whole (92). And this includes the natural and the sub-natural.

In the section on explanation in African science, the author pulled resources from the theories of I. I. Asouzu, G. O. Ozumba and C. O. Ijiomah to offer a veritable explanation to Africa's scientific practices. Some of such models of explanation he developed include: (i) Ozumba's Integrative Humanism Model (IHM) (ii) Ijiomah's Model of Harmony of Contraries (IMHC) (iii) Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Model (AIM) (iv) Model of Causal Explanation (MCE). The value of this section hinges on the models which the author developed to explain the non-empirical aspect of African science. In his words: "It is Western science's own bogus claim that all there is (reality) can be explained using the principle of empirical, testable, demonstrable protocol. The implication is that anything which cannot be explained by science does not form part of the gamut of reality"(98). The author clearly shows how the non-empirical can be explained within the ambit of African science.

On the whole, this work by Dr. Chimakonam is not without some lapses. There is no academic work without lapses. It behooves an objective reader to see the true lapses and point them out for correction. For me, I think the greatest challenge this work has is that it is set ahead of its time. For this, this work spells of some great controversies. My modest advice to the intending reader is to first set aside his convictions about science. I promise you this work would brazenly decimate them if you don't. And in this, Western scholars would be tempted to discredit it. African scholars too, who are not conscious of the strangle-hold of Western thought system and logic in their lives would be tempted to discredit it as well. But this would be highly unfair and intellectually myopic. One great thing about this work is that it laid its logical foundation strongly, that if one should endeavour as little as to grasp that, every other seemingly controversial claim would come up clear and dissolved. Any further issue that would be left at all would be a matter of possibility of practice and not merit. The merit of this work for me is not in doubt. Its originality is praiseworthy. Its significance for the African intellectual and for Africa is tremendous. I have no greater problem with this work besides normal academic disagreement and an insistence for improvement. This however, is a common responsibility of all African scholars to seek ways of improving this proposal of African science. Indeed, if most African scholars should begin to write in this form rather than the annoying commentaries we produce, issues like racism which has its fundamental roots in the doubt of the African's intellectual ability would die sooner rather than later.

I reproduce here three golden paragraphs from the postscript of the work which I believe is a food for thought for all African intellectuals:

Alright, let us assume that in these sketchy paragraphs we have systematized a section of African experience and it could now be called science at least by our modest African standards; but what then would be the challenges of this new discipline? Are schools

and universities likely to introduce courses in it? Is there a need for a unique African science? What difference would it make? Would the laboratories of this science be different from those of the Western science? How do we raise technologies for this science? How do we create awareness and promotion for this science? Who are the African scientists?

I shall attempt to answer these questions although am not sure I can fully answer the whys, the whats, the hows, and the wheres but I know that I believe in the uniqueness and viability of this science. “Believe”, because I do not have greater proof beyond what I have written here. In these particularly difficult times where African scholars do not see any need for this exercise, they ask: what can African brand of science offer that the Western science could not offer better? Can any section of African experience be properly called scientific? Is it not a waste of time, energy and resources to raise a new science where we already have a viable one? Indeed, it does not make any sense for a typical African intellectual to moot the idea of a unique African science and by an even greater conviction, there is no need!

However, a tricky question looms large? Why have Western trained African scientists not been able to invent at least in the same ratio with their Western counterparts? A litany of excuses could be produced in a flash of light – a terrible window dressing! They would blame lack of funding, lack of enabling environment; lack of public and corporate motivation, lack of governmental support etc., but what of lack of talent? In the days of soviet socialism many hopeless men blamed governmental restrictions for their inability to utilize their talents. When however the Soviet Union collapsed and they secured their freedom, it came to light that they did not have talents. A Western trained African scientist who lost his natural African thought system has lost the use of his talent. Talent is something that springs naturally when one thinks within his native thought system. Losing one’s thought system is



tantamount to losing one's talent. A great legion of Western trained African scientists have successfully emigrated to the Western worlds where they met the diner set on the bed for them, and in working in the same environment with their Western counterparts have still not excelled. They become programmers, lab assistants, research assistants but never inventors. If we exclude a handful like Philip Emeagwali the rest are but men who adopted the Western thought system but who found out they could not think within it. Like the Igbo would say, they become like a man separated from his chi, walking around a mere living dead. A Western trained African scientist who also gave up his African thought system (as most do) and adopted a Western thought system is like a Jew in Babylonish captivity, how can he sing his native song in a strange land? God who made us Africans and gave us unique cultures and system of thought obviously intended those frameworks to be our working tools. How can the African fare better than the European in his native dance? Nor can the European outdo the Asian in his native ways? How else can the African contribute to the world civilization if he did not do so from his native ways, like the European and the Asian do from theirs. Western trained African scientists are like strangers in their land and so cannot sing their native songs in a strange land. Highly educated but lost and essentially useless to the world except of course we choose to call them technicians rather than scientists! We have the foreign legion and then the home legion but in all, there are but an insignificant number who knew this fact and retained their native thought system. Philip Emeagwali the man who invented the internet is one such African. Recall that Bill Clinton a onetime American president remarked that if Nigeria had as few as four scientists who think like Philip Emeagwali, that Nigeria would be on course to becoming a technological super power. This probably summarizes our point here. In a country of over 150 million people with millions of scientists yet not up to four of them, possibly no one of them could think like Philip Emeagwali! Not that the millions of scientists in Nigeria cannot or

do not think, they can and they do but only within Western thought system. And as this is not naturally genial to them, they simply cannot produce within it. With this I hope I have made my point that there is a need for a unique African science fit with African thought system where the African scientist looks at nature from his own native ways (117-119).

Dr. Jonathan O. Chimakonam not only explores in detail and successfully, the theories of Igbo African science but goes on to give critics who question Africa's intellectual ability, a big lie. He shapes the way we shall begin to see and do not only African science but every intellectual project by getting a handle on Igbo-African logical thought and science. No wonder he has been hailed as the father of African science and as one of the continent's brightest minds. This book would remain a great reference on African science/studies for all time to come as it is a reference for all of us today!

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<sup>i</sup> An abridged version of this review was published in *South East Star*. March 20<sup>th</sup> 2013 vol. 01. No. 09. P. 14