

An Igbo Dualistic Conception of The Human Being: A Discourse

Anayochukwu KingsleyUgwu

Philosophy Department,
Faculty of the Social Sciences,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

anayochukwujp@gmail.com or
anayochukwu.kingsley.pg82208@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

The conception of the human being remains a philosophical controversial discourse among scholars even of Igbo extraction. The discourse has taken many dimensions describable as social, ontological, aesthetic, theologico-anthropological and even normative, but the loophole is that none appears all-inclusive to inhere a negative conception. Consequent upon that, each conception influences the components of the human being according to each conceiver. But what is truly the nature of the human being? Is s/he entirely made up of only physical or spiritual or both components? Thus, as a contribution, this paper upholds an ontological dualistic human conception by the Umuoka people that presents the human being as Maadjvuru 'survived-sustained-spirit' and that influences the numerous components of the human being. That is, a metaphysics on the human nature that presents the human being as a spirit that is socio-ontologically sustained in the community. The expectation from this paper is therefore a defence of a metaphysical presentation of the human being as a manifestation of the spirit, a concretized-spirit with complex physical and spiritual components whose sustenance is both social and ontological, and whose existential experiences underpin the complexity and reality of his/her nature. Taking a critical and analytic design, this paper shall adopt hermeneutical approaches.

Keyword: Human Being, Survived-Sustained-Spirit, Umuoko, Igbo, Soul.

Introduction

The metaphysics of the human nature has taken various dimensions to include aesthetics, anthropology, metaphysics, biology, the theocentric creation account, etc. But the inherent problem with them is that none seems to accept a negative conception of the human being. By this, they extricate from seeming acceptance of evil as natural. Hence the objective of this paper is to present a holistic metaphysics of the human being that expresses the real nature of the human being and proves that the concepts of good and bad are inherent in the human nature as human existential experiences express.

It is based on this that the paper raises questions as to what truly is the human being composed of? Is s/he constituted with only physical, or only spiritual or both components? Is the human nature identified as only good, or only bad or both qualities? In this light, the thesis this paper defends is that the human being is *Maadjvuru* 'survived-sustained-spirit' and that this conception influences the numerous components of the human being. That is, the position that the human being is a spirit that is not only ontologically or divinely, but also socially or humanly sustained in the community. It shall, in furtherance, defend the view that the ideas of good and bad are natural, hence the expression in human existential experiences.

In addressing the issues surrounding this discourse, this paper takes a critical and analytic design, in adopting the hermeneutical and phenomenological approaches. It is expected from this paper to present an Igbo metaphysics of the human nature that conceives the human being as a concretized spirit socio-ontologically sustained in the community, and equally proves that evil is inherently part of the human nature and that explains why the sense of evil is innate in humans as human experiences show. By this, it explains human as a being naturally

conditioned to live and sustain within the community, and finally portrays him/her as the being whose existence explains his/her nature.

This paper is divided into sections to include the 'abstract' that contains a succinct but concise summary of the paper. An 'introduction' that elaborates more the abstract. An argument on the 'soul' concept so as to prove how there is no such concept in the Igbo ontology, hence it is a Christian imposed concept and then make clear the position of this paper on the soul concept. A follow up section deals on expository and analytical discussion on the components of the human being. Finally there is a brief section of evaluation and conclusion on the discourse.

An Analysis of The Components of The Human Being

For the Igbo, in the Umuokan scheme of thought, *mmadu* (or *maadjvu(ru)*) is basically a composite of two main 'existential phenomena/spheres': *Physical and Metaphysical*. The Physical existential phenomenon/sphere comprises of the presence of *Ahu* (Body). In the bodily existential sphere, there are *Mkpuru-Obi* (Heart), *Uburu/Uvuru* (Brain), *Akpukpo Anu-Ahu* (Skin), *Aji* (Hairs), *Obara* (Blood), *Okpukpo* (Bones), *Akwara* (Veins), *Anu* (Flesh/muscle), *Mmiri* (Waters including the sex cells and all the moisture-contents) and *Ihe-Mmehiga* (Wastes). The Metaphysical existential phenomenon/sphere comprises of the presence of *Mmuo* (Spirit), *Onwe* (Self), *Uche* (Mind/Intellect), *Echiche* (Thought), *Ako* (Wisdom), *Onyinyo* (Shadow), *Nghota* (Understanding), *Ume* (Breath), *Oyime* (Ghost), *Ehihe* (the Doubleness of Man), *Agwa* (Attitude), *Obi/Mmuo-Ikpe* (Conscience), *Onatara Chi* (Natural Talent/Skill) and *Chi*. At this, it is seen that the human being is such a complex being that almost every aspect of the human life is a component of him/herself in the Igbo thought. Reincarnation as an outstanding belief of the Igbo is manifestable from both the physical and metaphysical components. In

this regard, among these components, the foremost components that are centrally active vis-à-vis the reincarnation belief include *Anu-Ahu* (Skin), *Mmuo* (Spirit) *Onwe* (Self), *Ako* (Wisdom), *Nghota* (Understanding), *Agwa* (Character/Attitude), *Onatara Chi* (Natural Talent/Skill) and *Chi*. Questions on reincarnation always and mostly revolve around these human components. At this juncture, the paper begins the analysis of the components of *mmadu* (maadjvuru) from the *Physical Sphere* to the *Metaphysical Sphere*.

Ahu (Body): The term *Ah?* could be etymological dissected as *A* (an affixation) and *h?* implying 'see, to see, seeing (*ih?*)'. The *A* is affixed to *hu* to make it an activity, an on-going phenomenon (seeing, or to be seen). So, *Ah?* implies a phenomenon to be seen, condemned to be seen. But *Ah?* as a term could be used in reference to 'sickness' whose effects could be visibly seen on the sick individual. Again, it could equally be applied to refer to somebody with small stature. It could also be used to refer to the (endearness) pleasantness of a child to parents when used in name/naming like *Ahunne* or *Ahunna*. It could equally be used to show the depth of feeling/emotion in somebody at the sight/hearing of a shocking/breaking news- *ometutara ya n'ahu*. Okere made a more elaborate attempt on this.¹ However, by *Ahu*, the Igbo literally means 'muscle/flesh (as covered by the skin),' but whose philosophical discourse and complexity extends to the hairs, blood, veins, bones, waters, flesh and other physical (both wastes, sex cells and moisture-contents) constituents of man. Extensively, the Heart and Brain imply in *Ahu* concept as physical components, but we will separate their discourse due to their sensitivity and essentiality in human life. Thus, *Ahu* is used to designate the 'physicalities' of man but with its own critical

¹. Theophilus Okere, "The Structure of the Self in Igbo Thought," Theophilus Okere (ed.), *Identity and Change: Nigerian Philosophical Studies*, 1, (Washington DC, Paideia, 1995), 154. www.crvp.org/book/series02/11-3/chapterixhtm

and complex issues lying in the blood and human sex sells *cum* genes through which traits, attitudes and mysterious diseases from without to within are transmitted. It extensively comprises of 'physicalities' through which non-physical elements get into and out of the body—the physicality of the human being.

Mkpuru-Obi (Heart): *Mkpuru* means 'seed' while *Obi* means 'chest' on this context. As has been rightly pointed out earlier, *Mkpuru-obi* therefore, literarily means 'the fruit of the chest', by this, it refers to the 'seed-like thing/structure/part/organ' located at the thorax region (chest). However, *Obi* broadly connotes dual meanings: materially speaking *Obi* means *chest, the thorax region*; and ideally speaking, *Obi* could mean the following: First, *Obi* could ordinarily refer to 'thought, opinion, intention or suggestion' in an issue. Expressing this, the Igbo would ask a fellow: *gini bukwanu obi gi?* meaning 'what is then your mind/opinion or intention or take' in a particular issue? Second, it could refer to guts/audacity/courage or in a losed tone 'mind' to do something—in this sense, the Igbo would say *inwere obi ime m ihe a?* (so you have the mind/guts/audercity to do this to me?)—probably the act is so bad that the actor is thought by the action-receiver to have the mind to kill. Third, though an extension of the second, gesture or the attitudinal disposition of doing either good or bad—such that when one does good to you, you can say *o nwere obi-oma ebe m no* (he/she has a good heart towards me) while otherwise speaks also volume of having same *obi* (attitudinal disposition) negative one now, towards one. Fourth, it means *conscience*, and that is why the Igbo would say: *obi ya n'ata ya uta* (his/her conscience is pricking/blaming him/her).

However, we think that for a proper defense of *Obi* as 'conscience', some sort of affixation should be done with *Obi* so as to properly picture conscience as a concept. That will be done when analyzing conscience as

a concept that composite the metaphysical components of human beings. The term *Obi* in the second leg of its etymological meaning and linguistic implication thus acquires a metaphysical status, implying a metaphysical concept that is very essential in the ideal components of human beings. Be that as it may be, fundamentally, *Mkpuru-Obi* does count in the composition of a human but it is purely physical and biologically highly influential in a human. But the *Mkpuru-Obi* which others term the *Soul* does not exist in the Igbo ontology vis-à-vis the metaphysics of the human nature, hence for the Igbo, there is no *Soul*, rather there is *Mmuo* (Spirit). However, the paper designates the foreign 'soul' concept with the term *Mmuo* or *Mkpuru nke Chukwuna Mmadu* (God's Spirit or Fruit in man) or even *Chukwu-na-Mmadu* (God-in-Man) in accordance with the biblical creation account and principle of deduction from the biblical influence.

At this, it is necessary to introduce the 'soul' argument, because in the final analysis, the materialist *Mkupu-Obi* (Heart) means and implies 'soul'. The concept of the 'Soul' is European and could be traced to the Hebrew word *Ruach* (literarily 'breath' which symbolizes 'living'). 'Breath' signifies 'living' and as such, anything breathing possesses the principle of living which soul stands for; and for the Greek, the person possesse *Pneuma* which translates to 'Spirit'. Breath therefore expresses the reality of the 'Soul' or 'Spirit' in the body, and that is 'living'; and so, the absence of the 'Soul' or 'Spirit' in the body signifies death. By this, the immaterial expressed by breath has now parted with, or withdrawn from the material in which it expresses its presence.²

Nevertheless, following Western Missionary influence, Igbo people still refer to the 'soul' as *Mkpuru-Obi*—a word etymologically formed by the

². Jerome A. Shaffer, *Philosophy of Mind* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 2-3.

conjunction of two Igbo words: *Mkpuru* and *Obi*. *Mkpuru* literarily and simply means 'Fruit or Seed' and *Obi* on this context refers to 'Chest, i.e the thorax region'. Suffice it to say then that *Mkpuru-Obi* as a word, now refers to that 'fruit-like-organ' we see in the chest (thorax region) when it is opened; and that is no other thing than the 'Heart'. From this, it is clear that *Mkpuru-Obi* does not truly and literarily mean the 'Soul' rather it realistically and literarily means the 'Heart'—the fruit/seed-like of the chest or located at the thorax region. How then does it come to mean soul? The term is used to designate the concept of the *Christian Soul* when Missionaries came and tried to explain what the Soul is to the Igbo-Africans. But due to inadequacy in language and random and grounded understanding of the concept 'Soul', the Igbo presumed it to be the 'Heart'. A reason for this presumption follows from the vitality of the Heart in man's life, coupling with its significant stoppage when a human being dies. For the Igbo, at this, life has gone physically for its vibration/expression (breath) has stopped (in death), and the Spirit (not any phenomenon like soul) as the principle of life would then leave the body. But the missionaries convinced and confused the Igbo that when a human being dies, the 'Soul' leaves the body and goes back to God who puts it in the human during creation, for judgments. All these were attempts made to understand the Christian concept of 'Soul' as taught by the Missionaries. But now from experience, when a human being dies, the 'Heart' significantly stops beating and the body becomes lifeless (the assumption that the 'Soul' has left the body), and so, the Igbo consequently mistook the 'Soul' for the 'Heart' and thoughtfully and functionally links it to the 'Heart', meaning now that the force of the seed/fruit-like organ which beats in the chest (*Mkpuru-Obi*) has left the body because the sound/beat is no more there. This is an expression of the Western philosophy in their religion so as to create a dual avenue for the existence of the material and immaterial as the holism of reality.

Seeing the same problem but misfired is Amaechi³ who is of the opinion that the precise Igbo word for soul appropriation is *Chidi* not *Obi* for “to express the soul as *Obi* like the biological heart will be outrightly rejected by the philosophical empiricists as it is scientifically unverifiable.” He argues that the word *Obi* could variously mean the soul, the mind, the heart, rest house or even digger; and following this imprecision, the word disqualifies from appropriate representation of the soul. The representation is too poor following his conception of the soul as the “*De anima* of the scholastics, *De persona* of the humanists, the *ens qua ens* and the *quiditas* of metaphysical existentialists expressed as the being.” The *Chidi* proposed by Amaechi to appropriately represent the Christian 'soul' is an Igbo word which Njoku⁴ interprets as 'God in me'. But that is wrong, for 'God in me' means 'Chi/Chukwu n'ime m'. At this, one may wonder what could be the functional implications of the conscience, mind, etc., in humans. But he dare to describe the conscience and says that the “conscience is the spirit of God in man.” Furthering his argument he asserts that “the operations of the soul in man is the voice of conscience. From the above, both soul and conscience are synonymous and psycho-spiritual principles.” He has been heavily criticized.⁵

Uburu/Uvuru(Brain): This is a very essential part of man which is physical but functionally appears or extends to the domains of non-

³. Oliver N. C. Amaechi, “Let Igbo word for Soul be *Chidi* not *Obi*” in *The Leader*, (October, 2005), 8.

⁴. Francis Onyeugwuem C. Njoku, *Ana-Atutu: Igbo Philosophy, A Study in the Public of Identity and Conflict Resolution* (Owerri: Goldline & Jacobs Publishers, 2009), 62

⁵. Anayochukwu Kingsley Ugwu, “The African (Igbo) Concept of Akara Aka: A Philosophical Reassessment,” *IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 5(3), (June, 2019), 55-60 <https://www.nigerianjournalsonline.com>. Cf. Anayochukwu K. Ugwu, “An Igbo Understanding of the Human Being: A Philosophical Approach,” *Conatus Journal of Philosophy*, 7(1), (June 2022), 151-78. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12681/cjp.25223>

physical. A serious damage on it causes an intrinsic malfunctioning of the human person even mentally. Its unique way and pattern of functioning makes many materialists—Gilbert Ryle, the Atomists, Chinese Room Argument Participants, among others—to believe that man is entirely mechanical and physical/material-composited, thereby denying the 'possibility' of elements of spiritual-composition of the man. It works in mental realm which is ideal even though the effects are measured physically, and this may have informed Descartes' conviction/belief that the body-mind interaction takes place in the central region of the brain—Pineal Gland. It functions with the intellect, and all the intrinsic and internal human instincts ranging from memory, emotion, cognition, interpretation, etc and as gathered from the empirical/physical background/sphere. Just like the sex cells, it remains a mystery about the human person, existence and well-being.

Onwe (Self): *Onwe* stands as the principle of the individual self, and in the light of reflexive pronoun, noun-in-apposition. The self is spiritual but distinct and specific to individuals. It is a universal existential quality to every man but differs among individuals as a principle of individuation. As a component of the human being, it is the internal part of man. It is the internality of a man, and it functionally associates with other metaphysical faculties and constituents of man like the mentality and the whole activities of the mind, the psychological ability to comport the body as a whole, and also character. Basically, *Onwe* ideally has a functional link with *Azu Abuo*. In expression, the Igbo can say, *onwe ya na-agba ya ntaka* (he is internally disorganized, restive). *Onwe ya* (him/herself) here does not point only to the 'physical person as a whole', but also his/her 'internal' person—his/her 'internal self' which could be so-linked to the person's 'spiritual affair', 'mental affair/state', or any other 'internal make-up or component' of the physical human as a whole.

Mmuo (Spirit): Primarily, the term *Mmuo* refers to 'spirit'. But it could, in the Igbo ordinary linguistic expression, mean 'conscience', and this is expressed when the Igbo admits his fault and says *Mmuo m n'atazi m uta* (my conscience is now pricking me). So far, we can see how, on contexts, *Mmuo* and *Obi* could mean 'conscience'. On this context, it is very wrong to apply *Mmuo* to mean 'spirit' when you refer to conscience-related-issue. However, more emphasis on this leg of discussion as it relates and expresses the concept 'conscience' would resurface under the discussion on 'conscience'. That said, we must note that metaphysically speaking, *Mmuo* is that part that goes out when man dies. It is that which “has travelled at death to the *Ala-Mmuo*, the spirit-world, to sojourn with the ancestors. From there it will return... in reincarnation.” For Iroegbu, what is reincarnated is the Spirit of the *Departed-living*,⁶ or as Iroegbu insists, ancestors; and reincarnation, by this becomes “an expression of the ontological longing of man to *live on*.”⁷ *Mmuo* is a general quality of every man. It is that means-to-journey-back to joining the dead, among whom are the Saints—Departed-living—and whom many scholars⁸ called different names—living-dead, ancestors, etc., in the spirit world. It symbolically manifests itself in breathing in a more biological experience. It can go out from the body but can return later (as in the case of coma, trance, etc.).

At this juncture, to elaborate more on these two phenomena—*Mm??* and *Onwe*, humans approach fellow with/through the 'self' to form the aggregate of 'selves', and so, from *onwe m* (myself) to *onwe anyi* (ourselves); but *mm??* (spirit) to approach the invisible in the other

⁶. Ugwu, “An Igbo Understanding of the Human Being,” 162

⁷. Iroegbu, *Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy*, 354.

⁸. John Samuel Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1969), 107; Emmanuel Mathew P. Edeh, *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics* (Enugu: Our Saviour Press, 1999 rep), 75-6; Bartholomew Abanuka, *A New Essay on African Philosophy* (Nsukka: Spiritan Publications, 1994), 37.

existential sphere/world. The 'self' is spiritual but expresses the experiences within the 'physical existence of man', but the 'spirit' shares with the 'invisible beings in the other existential sphere/world'. Both are in the metaphysical realms of human beings, but while *onwe* (self) is 'particular' and associates with the 'human affairs here and every time', *mm??* (spirit) associates with the affairs 'there in the invisible world'. The 'self' does not go to answer for judgment at the last day and be rewarded (if there is any, or according to the Christian Doctrine), it is the spirit that does. The metaphysical realm of communication in man therefore passes through *onwe* (self) to *mm??* (spirit) and then finally to the 'invisible beings' including the Supreme Deity at the apex. Thus, African communality is rooted in *onwe* (self) because it is through 'self' that the other 'selves' have sameness of experiences that encourage the emergence of *onwe anyi* (ourselves) and community-formation.

Oyime (Ghost): The experience explained above gives rise to the question of *Oyime*. *Oyime* goes out first, before death proper, and ends immediately death occurs. It is seen by spiritual eyes and the strong-minded. From testimonies, it is skeletal in nature, disappears, does not touch the ground, many a times, very difficult to describe and can be chaotic in nature depending on the nature of the person's spiritual state of a dying person which could draw from his/her *azu-abuo* (man's-animal-part). Thus, *oyime*, though still in a very serious realm of metaphysics, expresses to an extent, the beingness of a person's *Ehihe* (the person's doubleness). Somebody's *Oyime* can even visit the relatives of the person about to die, and this does not go without experiences like sleeplessness, ants' disturbance, unusual animal cries and in a very ungodly hours for some days, constant experience and visibility of unusual animals, strange sight and behaviour of certain animals, etc. In fact, the *oyime* of an ? z? differs from the *oyime* of a non-? z? . Different still, is their duration of happening and manner of happening also tells a lot as to which

category of person is about to die. It can even express itself in things other than animals like *ero/eru* (mushroom), etc. This explains why a man would, in the state and regarding the level of filial love and endearness existing between him and his relative, tell him: *aga madara gi ero/eru ma ob? an?* (I will provide mushroom or meat (animal) for you). This goes to point out that *oyime* can be expressed by a strange behaviour of an animal. A dear one could equally be promised a gift which could finally be fulfilled by an unknown person. To fulfill this, the relative could be provided with amazing mushroom where the person may have passed by yesterday and did not see anything like mushroom growth there, or being granted luck with an animal to kill and eat, that on a normal ground, he/she could not kill, among other mysterious signs. At this, he/she would be told *e gbugoro gi ya na mmuo* ('they' have killed it (the animal) for you in the spirit). The 'they' who have killed it for the person in quote here, is this ontological influence by the dying person, spiritually, on the animal. Such is an expression of love to relatives; but when it concerns to anything edible, it may not be giving that real taste of that edible unlike when it is ordinarily got. *Oyime* can be seen/experienced personally or communally and can be havoc or peaceful depending on the spiritual state of the dying person, his *az?-ab??*, perhaps. When it is havoc, it creates violent scenes. A story is still today told of a woman whom, when she was about to die, her *oyime* came out physically and pursued a group of women performing a traditional rite while she was yet among the women folk performing the traditional ritual, and she ran for her own dear life as well like others. She did not know it was her *oyime* in the form of violent women who would sparkle light and violently move towards the folk and all would run. No one recognized the face or could say it resembled this or that person/thing. It was only those who could see spiritual knew it was the women, and in the night, she fell sick, and the next day, she died. The simple implication of this is that she was an *gbanje*- a possessed woman, and that she

expressed through being violent. That does not imply that her doubleness was directly *?gbanje* for *?gbanje* is a state of being, not an animal, but *?gbanjew* which is inherently negative, stands for violence-nature of her animal-part.

Ehihe (The 'Doubleness' of Man): *Ehihe* has no English equivalence; however, it could also be called *az?-ab??mmad?*. In fact, it is from this otherwise reference (*az?-ab?? mmad?*) that it takes its appropriated English equivalence (the 'doubleness' of man). Hence, *Ehihe* is believed to be the *az?-ab?? mmad?* (the 'doubleness' (or better still, primarily 'animal-part') of man). The simple implication of this is that it is the animal-in-apposition to every physical man. Basically, *Ehihe* is believed to be only in animal kingdom, most prevalently, wild animals, not domestic animals. A significant deductible point here is that as man takes the existential position of higher animal, his *Ehihe* takes the existential position of lower animal. Again, while man takes the habitat position of domestics, his *Ehihe* counterpart takes the habitat position of wildness/non-domestics. *Ehihe* is not believed to be in any other kingdom of reality like tree, water, etc. However, *Ehihe* can be found in human form, but only when the person is at the verge or threshold of death. At this point of transcendence, it could be termed *Oyime* (ghost), no more *azu-abuo* because it has taken another existential form and would transcend from a sphere of existence into the invisible realm of existence. At this point, it becomes the leaving, though still living person, and after this point of transubstantiation, death becomes the next available inescapable occurrence with immediacy—perhaps not more than *izu* (traditional Igbo week—four days- *Eke, Orie, Afo, Nkwo*). Only human beings have *Ehihe*, spirits, trees, animals, etc do not have.

Comparatively, to some Umuokans, *Oyime* and *Ehihe* are the same. But they are not. *Ehihe*-concept begins with the existence of a person, while

Oyime-concept begins only in regards to the person's death. In other words, *Ehihe* is linked with a person's beginning of existence but *Oyime* begins at the tap by the person's *mm??*, serving as a signal that the person has begun the process of dying. This explains why *Oyime* as a procedural phenomenon/existential experience can take a long time before death proper. However, *Ehihe* has a lot of implications in and with *Oyime* for these two concepts can both be expressed in many forms. Perhaps, this may explain why the European holds that the African believes that souls abode on the trees, stones, waters, etc. Nonetheless, all are expressions of the *Mm???*

Uche (Mind/Intellect):The term *Uche* in a loosed sense could imply 'intention, wish, opinion'. This explains why the Igbo could tell a neighbour: *kwuo uche gi*, that is, 'say your mind; or express yourself—in terms of opinion or wish' on a particular matter at hand. Importantly, we must recognize that this 'expression' is still an act of voicing out what the mind thinks/says about the matter in quote. However, from a relative sense to this work, *Uche* is the thinking faculty of the human being. It exercises in the mentality of human. It functionally links to the brain, right state of the individual's health or psyche or memory, etc. But can be lost or appear malfunctioning when a serious damage is inflicted on certain sensitive organs of the body like the brain, etc. Too much thinking, worries, over stress, mental instability or imbalance or insanity can very clearly bring about its malfunctioning. That is why sometimes the Igbo says *Uche ya anoghizi ya* or *onarago ya Uche* that is, (he has lost his mind) due to one of the factors listed above.

Echiche (Thinking):*Echiche* is the thinking (activity) that *Uche* does. A man's way and manner of thinking go a long way to truly define him and show his personality. It depicts the presence of *Uche* in human but the quiddity of his *Echiche* through *Uche* is greatly influenced by *Ako*. It

shows the level of the human wisdom. It is not wisdom but serves as a way through which wisdom is demonstrated. In all, it is so inclined to *Uche* and *Ako*.

Ako (Wisdom): *Ako* is wisdom. Wisdom is *Onatara Chi* (God's gift or Nature-bestowed). *Ako* brings out the beauty and effectiveness of proper state and functioning or essence of *Uche cum Echiche*. It is not learnt though its percentage is incomplete without proper formal education. It can informally lead the human being, but not formally, for certain ingredients *mmuta* (knowing/understanding) are enjoyed with *Ako* so as to create a solid intellectual balance. In its informality, it is limited and imbalanced.

Nghota (Understanding): The expression of *Nghota* shows the effectiveness of *Uche*, the level of its essence (*Echiche*) and is the way through which *Ako* is manifested. It defines the personality of man. Its balance and flexibility enhance communal living, accommodation and tolerance.

To give a comparative but brief emphasis on this point, when the physical constituents- say the eye, ear, etc, beholds a phenomenon, ***Echiche*** occurs and descends on it through the natural phenomenon ***Uche***- the faculty of thinking so as to necessitate ***Nghota*** which is facilitated qualitatively and quantitatively by ***Ako***. This functional link especially between *Ako* and *Uche* makes some Umuokans, Igbo to say *Ako-na-Uche* to mean one humanly constituted phenomenon. But in a strict though thin sense, they are different phenomena.

Onyinyo (Shadow): *Onyinyo* is one of the components of man that is mysterious even though science may not see it so. For the Igbo, it portrays the presence of the metaphysical composition of man. It stands

as a symbol of the reality of *azu abuo mmadu* (the doubleness of man). It equally depicts the principle of individuality thereby portraying the saying that *onweghi onye ga agbanari onyinyo ya n'oso* (nobody will run faster than his shadow—(Individuality Principle)). It is sometimes seen as a symbol of the presence of man's *Chior* Guarding Angel or even life of the being. Among the Igbo, it is equally believed that through a being's shadow, the being can be hurt.

Ume (Breath): *Ume* is a significant sign of the proper functioning of the heart, lungs, and other mechanical composite organs in the body. Ideally, it proves that life is still in the body and by implication, the presence of *mmuo* as the principle of life. It is a product of the invisible but expressed visibly through the activity of *mkpuru-obi* (heart). It can be ceased for some times, yet life which symbolizes the presence of *mmuo* is still in the person

Agwa (Character/Attitude): *Agwa* is the defining character/exhibition of an individual. It explains the traces of genes from the parents that make up the attitudinal temperaments of an individual. It is also a principle of individuality of siblings which defines their diverse personalities even though they are of same parents. Onunwa⁹ places more significance on *Agwa* and insists that it is the beauty of an individual, and can mar or grace him.

Obi-Ikpe (Conscience): *Obi-Ikpe* literarily means 'the heart that judges or the judging-heart' where 'heart' here refers to 'that voice of reason, voice of moral consciousness, voice of the heart that judges man as to whether what he has thought, done or said is right or wrong'. However, to

⁹. Udobata Onunwa, "Humanistic Basis for African Traditional Religious Theology and Ethics: A Challenge to the Church in Nigeria," *Filosofia Theoretica: An African Journal of Invention and Ideas*, 1(1) (2011), 46.

give a proper or best correspondence to the English meaningful equivalence of the term 'conscience' as "a person's moral sense of right and wrong" or "the part of your mind that tells you whether your actions are right or wrong", which connotes the idea/facticity of the sense of moral judgment, the term *Ikpe* becomes imperative to be affixed to the term *Obi*. That combination will detach it from wearing entirely an empathy/emotion-status which centrally revolves around the functionality of *Obi* and then mediate its rationality-involvement and situate it within a mild range between sympathy and rationality-exercise. *Obi-Ikpe* (conscience) could also be represented with the term ***Mmuo-Ikpe***. *Mmuo* literally means 'spirit', hence *Mmuo-Ikpe* literally means 'the spirit that judges or the judging spirit' where 'spirit' here implicates 'that spiritual part of man that judges him as to whether what he has thought, done or said is right or wrong'. The ontological function of the term *Ikpe* to *mmuo* on this context gears towards sense of morality as to what is right and what is wrong. In the concept as a metaphysical concept and component of the human being according to the Igbo, 'conscience' inheres (1) that sense of moral judgment (2) that sense of empathy emanating from the ends of morality of the judgment (3) of course to ensure a plausible moral judgment, elements of rationality are involved so as to ensure a balance between empathy and rationality hence rationality equally features.

Finally, it is very pertinent to note that somebody's *obi-ikpe* or *mmuo-ikpe* can be consciously suppressed, bluntly ignored.

***Onatara Chi* (Nature-Given Gifts/Talents):** *Onatara Chi* literally means 'received from Chi (God)' or 'God/Nature-given'. It connotes the idea of 'inborn' and as such, it is equally of the class of individuality. It is that defining talent found in each sibling which distinctly differentiates him from fellows. It is a personal endowment bestowed on humans to

help them succeed in life if they can identify and maximize it. But importantly, *onatara Chi* becomes effective and existentially useful when constantly renewed/regenerated/rejuvenated. This is why this paper would not like to term it *akara aka* because there is no *akara aka*, but a serious determination towards exploration of human tendencies/capabilities to give essence to life/existence.¹⁰

Chi: *Chi* has variously been translated and interpreted. It is a serious concept employed to explain reality as perceived. *Chi* has its root and basic sense from God as *Chi-ukwu* (Great God) or *Chi- n'eke* (Creating-God). However, primarily it depicts God/god, or god-hood—in this, it could be God, (personal) god, guarding angel, spiritual being/element/entity. That is why it has also been seen as an individual's Guiding and Guarding god/Angel, associated with individual's principle of luck, fortune, misfortune, failure and success. Again, it has been superlatively interpreted as the root-word to 'god' as in the Supreme Being— *Chi* in *Chi-ukwu*. The adjective *ukwu* (great) is added to differentiate Him from *Chi-ness* or god-hood of other beings, man even included as is expressed thus, *mmadu bu chi ibe ya* (human being is his fellow's *chi*). In this sense, man becomes the material medium through which the Supreme *Chi* manifests His saving-aid to men. For the Igbo, it could equally connote 'Akara Aka concept' (Predestination).¹¹ Abanuka¹² makes an extra effort to explore more on the concept and informs us that “it means day or daylight” as in *Chi efoo* and *Chi ejiee* (Day has broken and night has fallen). I would like to however deepen more to inform us

^{10.} Ugwu, “The African,” 61-81.

^{11.} Ugwu, “The African,” 61-81; Anayochukwu Kingsley Ugwu and Leo Chigozie Ozoemena, *African Philosophy, Cultural Conceptions and Experiences: A Collection of Essays* (Mauritius-Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2019), 87-102.

^{12.} Bartholomew, Abanuka, *Further Critical Studies on the Igbo World* (Onitsha: Spiritan Publications, 2009), 40.

that *Chi* could as well be perceived as the *principle of existence*, that is, the beginning or emergence of something that has never been; as in *Chi-ta ya* (bring it—make it emerge here), *Chi-a* (laugh—emerge laughter) *Chi-zie* or *Chi-saa ya* (dress or scatter it—let the dressing or scattering emerge), *Chi-wazie anyi* (now lead us—emerge the leadership for it has never been). In attributing creation to God, we say *Chi-oke*, in as much as *oke* implies several things, we shall pick two implications, *oke* as it relates to 'creation', and *oke* as it relates to 'destiny', that is, 'your own *oke*—portion—which has been designed for you *abniti*'. By extension, the 'creation' implication could be more simplified as (*Chi-Okike*)—the *Chi* through whom creation emerged—the principle/beginner/bringer of creation, or *Chi* of creation, or God whose nature is creation, or *Chi-eke*—the *Chi* who owns/ has or carries *eke* (creation) in Himself that wherever he is behold, creation emerges/begins or is given. By this, His nature as the defiler of barrenness of all sorts is portrayed. Hence, *Chi* concept is an essential constituent of man. The 'destiny' implication could be more expressed as *Chi-Oke*— the God of/who is incharge of destiny apportioning.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted postulating and analyzing the components of the human being. From the presentation made here, the human being is a mystery, an enigma whose existence can never be holistically and humanly comprehended following the human components. Critically speaking, these analyzed components prove that the human being exists from the physical stage to a para-physical or quasi-material stage considering the presence and manifestation of his/her 'doubleness' and when s/he exists as a ghost then to a final stage of death when s/he becomes entirely a spirit and the body left lifeless and to rot. Again, it may be impossible to explain if truly every human does/performs the *Oyime* before death especially when it has to do with sudden death like

accident, or killing of a human person. This is because *Oyime* could appear and be experienced in the human, animal, etc, forms, or in uncoordinated, unusual drastic behavioural change in a human person. Finally, it could be said to be difficult to explain if truly the *Oyime* is part of the human being or an existential stage through which the human being experiences/passes before finally giving up the host. It must be noted that the physical is necessary for the manifestation of the spiritual as to the human components analyzed here. However, the spiritual stands as the primary domain of reality which must pass through the physical periphery of existence to descend to the primary domain; and this is the cycle of the existence of the human being.

Be that as it may, this paper has analyzed, to an extent, the components of the human being. It has equally dealt with the soul concept to a reasonable extent maintaining the position that there is *Mmuo*(Spirit) and not Soul in the Igbo ontology.

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