

BEING AS BELONGINGNESS IN AFRICAN METAPHYSICS CRITICAL SCHOLARS' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

African Metaphysics, is a major practical branch of African Philosophy within the African philosophical tradition. Viewed from different perspectives with regard to contemporary issues, African Metaphysics is appreciated as such as systematic studies of African realities within the bounds of love of African wisdom. The researcher, using the method of critical analysis and theoretical appreciation finds that there are special selected perspectives that makes African Philosophy significantly enduring within African Philosophical enterprise.

Keywords: Philosophy, African philosophy, being, belongingness.

Introduction

In this paper, there are selected thematic concepts within the boundaries of African metaphysical concepts. These thematic perspectives are products of strong appreciable efforts by some astute African Philosophers and scholars in a bid to facilitate and consolidate the coming to be of African Philosophy and African metaphysical realities beyond mere collection of wise sayings from the Sage, regional philosophies like ethno-philosophy and mere knowledgeable innuendoes of the conversational schools. This against the backdrop that African philosophy is mere cultural philosophy or mere critical smartness. However, these perspectives border on critical issues like having a proper appreciation of being in our African context.

There is a growing reflection of, and an expanding literature on Africa philosophy, African concepts and African realities. In African philosophical traditions, there are some concepts that contrast or even explain Western philosophical traditions and concepts. One of such concepts is belongingness. However, there are many expressions of belongingness either in a strict sense or in a large sense, by implication or otherwise by many African thinkers of repute. Some of these African philosophers, in trying to posit their philosophies ended up directly or indirectly buttressing the fact of belongingness as a fundamental fact of being. Being, moreover, remains the foundation of belongingness; and belongingness depicts an ongoing process, a form of continuum. Therefore, there is no end to belongingness. It continues. It goes on and on. It simply belongs. It is in this sense that belongingness is the propulsion of being towards self-realization. This is why belongingness remains a process towards, a way of becoming, and as well, an activity of being.

Many African philosophers and authors indirectly dealt with the prospects and principle of belongingness in their pursuit for an African identity, the socio-economic and political well-being of Africans. The philosophical engagements of some of these philosophers are on different levels. In the ideological - political scene, we encounter

philosophical thoughts like *African brotherhood* or *Ujamaa* (Nyerere), *Negritude* (Senghor), *Consciencism* (Nkrumah) and other authors. What of the philosophical writings of Placide Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy* and John Mbiti's *African Religions and Philosophy*. Others are the theories of African personality to recover and build on the identity of the African (Edward Wilmot Blyden), *Pan-Africanism* for the entire African in or out, the *African humanism* that preaches that traditional Africans were humane and communal, with a spirit of "*Ubuntu*" – humanness.

Another area that is gaining prominence in modern African philosophy is the hermeneutical approach. This is the attempt to interpret African concepts like belongingness and other *philosophemes* (Theophilus I. Okere), and cultural data with the methodological tool of hermeneutics. Some regard the western tool as essentially definitional and of course, interpretative of philosophy. T. I. Okere, O. Nkombe, and N. Tshiamalenga and others like B. C. Okolo form part of this African philosophical hermeneutics that questioned and treated some contemporary problems.

These philosophers with some of their development oriented philosophical works, the ideological-political thinkers and leaders developed their thoughts on the then specific cultural and historical situations of Africa as victim of Western imperialism, enslavement, individualism, colonialism and neo-colonialism as a response. And often, as a reaction to these, African philosophers propounded thesis for building a united front where Africans belong against further foreign interference, degradation and possible reparation.

Placide Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy*

Through his book, *Bantu Philosophy*, Placide Tempels though referred to by critics as *ethno-philosopher*, is known as the father of modern and contemporary African philosophy. He gave his African appreciation of being as *vital force* and as well tries to outline basic philosophical understanding and assumptions that guide African life. Therefore, *Bantu Philosophy* is the ontology organized around a basic concept which the author designates as *vital force*. His hierarchy of beings (ranging from God, animate and inanimate objects) is linked by simple fact of the possession of *vital force*. Tempels developed the idea that *Bantu Philosophy* is different from the European one in that it is founded on the notion of *force vitale* (vital force). According to him, "force is being and being is force," that is, force is the essence of being. In the hierarchy of beings, therefore, there are different degrees of *vital force* each possesses and these necessitate a kind of integration of force or being through the Bantu's laws of vital causality. This form of relationship is as well expressed in every facets of belongingness which is regarded by some African thinkers as a definite principle in African communalism. Moreover, this interaction of vital forces, with the laws of vital causality as well, expresses indirectly the very dynamics of belongingness. Another concept under consideration is the *Negritude* of Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal.

Mogobe B. Ramose and the Concept of *Ubuntu* Ontology

Another current concept used by some African authors is *Ubuntu*. It is an attempt at the 21st century to study ontology in the categories of African languages. In Ramose's

attempt the notion of being is articulated around the concept of *Ubuntu*. With this concept of *Ubuntu*, as an African ethnic or humanist philosophy, there is a way of life that is focused on people's allegiance and community interaction and relation with each other. Of course, *Ubuntu* has its origin in Bantu language of Southern Africa. It means, "I am what I am because of who we are". The concept of *Ubuntu* is an impression of relationship, governed by this idea of *we* that makes one to be open and available to others. Thus, a person with *Ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, from a proper self- assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished, when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed.

With the philosophy of *Ubuntu* no one can exist in isolation of others. It speaks of our interconnectedness. It depicts belongingness. It is seen as the essence of being human since according to *Ubuntu* philosophy, "You can't be human all by yourself." Therefore, you need others to be. You need to belong with others and identify with them. It is a philosophy that sustains all within a community. This idea and understanding of *ubuntu* therefore depicts everything about the content of belongingness. In Malawi as well, this philosophy is called *uMunthu* meaning, "I am because we are". Commenting on this, Thomas Msusa says that, "...the African worldview is about living as one family belonging to God."

Emmanuel P. Edeh's *Ife di or Idi*

M. P. Edeh in his work, *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics*, tries to restore this true metaphysical idea of being. Edeh, M. P. tried courageously to articulate a people's theory of being. He posits the Igbo notion of being from Igbo language and Igbo notion of human being. According to him, being from Igbo language may not have an exact equivalent linguistic concept. He, however, chooses the concepts of *Onye* and *Ife*. *Onye* translates 'who' applied to human beings and spiritual beings as one questions (*Onye no ebe ahu?*), or asserts, *Onye Okike* (Creator). The *Onye* (who) directly excludes non-personal spiritual beings and incorporates personal and spiritual beings, in its comprehensive interpretation and understanding. He thereafter analyses these contrasting questions and facts, consequently rejecting *Onye* as standing for the concept of being. *Ife*, which is the alternative literary stands for thing. This can be material or immaterial. As a prefix on different Igbo concepts, it assumes a substantive independent meaning. Thus, *Ife-di* means what is, being, in existence. Therefore, Edeh's being based on the literary understanding or linguistic conceptualization and understanding of Igbo language is coined around these factual understanding. So, from this Igbo language understanding, being can be appreciated as *Ifedi* (*ifedinu* or *ifediadi*).

Another locus of understanding of being in M. P. Edeh's *Igbo Metaphysics* is the primary meaning of human beings from two root words of: *mma* (goodness, the good) and *di* (is, already exist). Human being literarily means *mmadu* (or *mmadi*). However, in the end, Edeh, M. P. subscribed to this fact of *Mmadu* (good that exists). This good, that defines man, in Edeh, M. P.'s interpretation, however, is not but only a

participated goodness. He showed, however, that God is the good as some Igbo names would show thus: *Chidimma* (God is good), *Chimdimma* (my God is good). To this extent, other beings, in his hierarchy of beings also creatively participate in this fundamental or general goodness. Thus for Edeh, M. P. (1985:102) in positing his Igbo concept of being accepts *good that is* as a generic term that universally applies to all beings thus he writes: “Something is good, that is, respects that which makes each object a being and yet it can be applied to any object, and this application is possible on the basis that all things are created by God, and hence the notion of good that is can be attributed to them”.

Edeh, M. P. made a sincere attempt at getting a generic term that will be universally acceptable and applicable to all beings from his cultural lived experience and concepts. This he did by positing the Igbo notion of being from dual loci of Igbo language *Ifedi* and Igbo notion of human beings *Mmadi* or *Madu*. Nze, B.C. (1994, 29) on his part, later gives an expanded and succinct explanation of such concept of human being, thus: “Everyone is related to everyone else... we are all related in a sort of way. We are all people, human beings a collection of humans – ‘*Ma-du*’ or ‘*Mu-du*’ that is, I exist.

In the end, Edeh, M. P. accepts the latter as the most appropriate alternative concept with a stand point on Igbo world view on the proper understanding of being. However, Edeh, M. P. has a lot of critiques based on his method which was empirical, and which as we know, is experimental used in natural science as against our metaphysical engagement alongside analysis and interpretation as he announced. But the work suffered a lot of methodological disabilities knowing full well that according to Onebunne, J. I. (2019D, 1) *no method, no philosophy*. Based on the content of his work especially his conceptual understanding and alternative for being, Iroegbu, P. I. (1995, 322) critically asserts: “The conclusion is that the descriptive metaphysics as Edeh, M. P. mainly does in his book is no metaphysics, even if at times it carries some critical tinges. It is nevertheless a description, not a *mis-en-cause*, a critical inquiry, a serious reflection on the African reality. On these counts, Edeh, M. P.’s work can be accurately described as ethno- metaphysics and not Igbo philosophy”. Iroegbu, P. I. (1995, 322) later strongly noted that:

Paradoxically, Edeh’s work provides a clear case of what serious philosophizing should be and what it should not be. It has the merit of providing impetus for more serious rational and systematic reflection on the Igbo person’s conception of reality.

Theophilus Okere’s Uwa

Monsignor Theophilus Okere was ordained a Priest of the then Diocese of Owerri in 1962. The same year, he proceeded to Ireland where he read for a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English at the University College, Dublin, graduating with honours in 1965. He then studied Philosophy at the prestigious Catholic University of Louvain, obtaining a PhD in Philosophy in 1972, the first Nigerian to do so. His PhD

dissertation, “Can there be an African philosophy”: A Hermeneutical inquiry into the condition of its possibility” was seminal. It set the stage for later researches in African philosophy, having demonstrated definitely that philosophy, any philosophy and therefore African Philosophy, can be itself, only as a hermeneutics or interpretation of its culture. And since his own culture is Igbo, the logic of his thesis has placed him as one of the foremost Igbo thinkers. His commitment to and familiarity with Igbo culture manifest in his conversations, writings, lectures and sermons to the extent that he has once been dubbed “an unrepentant native”. Hundreds of these men of the cloth adoringly greet him with *Okere wu Agbara* (Okere is Deity) as a tribute to what they perceive as his versatility and his encyclopaedic wealth of knowledge.

Philosophy as love of wisdom dwells more on the world-view of the people especially the culture of the people. Philosophy is wondering on the reality and the world-view of the people in question. Omoregbe (in Boudorin, 1985, 1) asserts that “human experience is the source of the reflective activity known as philosophy”. It is by this singular human exercise of interpreting realities and reflecting on the peoples’ world-view and symbolic cultures that one attains the level of wondering for the love of wisdom which is *philosophia*. Hence, Paul Riceouer (in Okere, 1983, 18) asserts: “one can philosophize from culture, or at least from those elements of culture that can be called symbols”. Okere (1983,18) buttressing further remarks: “symbols are pregnant with meaning...philosophical discourse is, therefore, a hermeneutical development of the symbols, these enigmas which precede and nourish it”. Therefore, Okere, T. (1983, 120) writes: “We assert, however, that in black Africa there exists a reservoir of cultural *philosophemes* from which any future philosopher can inspire himself or borrow his share of philosophical raw material. In such a culture a philosopher can plant his roots and from inside it, and as forming part of it, develop a philosophy with his culture as non-philosophical background”.

Onebunne, J. (2019a, 23) rightly affirms that many African literatures gave credence to Okere’s work on African Philosophy as *an avante guard* in the application of hermeneutics of culture as philosophizing per excellence. Oguejifor, J.O & Onah, G.I. (eds) (2005: x) interpreting Okere, T. further writes “taking inspiration from some European hermeneutic philosophers, Okere, T. argues that philosophy, every philosophy, is essentially a hermeneutics of culture (in the fullest meaning of the term culture)”. Okere, T. (1983, i) asserts greatly of the possibility of African philosophy and its ultimate source thus: “But designating what is African Philosophy needs some criteria. Philosophy is a unique cultural form and, despite affinities, is not to be confused with other forms such as myth, *weltanschauung* and religion. But it grows out of a cultural background and depends on it”.

Philosophical excursus is a product of critical cultural symbolism; that is a kind of reflection on the symbols of his culture, amidst implications it embodies. Philosophy ipso facto, as a human enterprise is a reflection on symbols which are pregnant with sense and meaning. However, the unique relationship of culture to Philosophy is explained in the natural constitution and traditional understanding of man as *animal culturalis* and *homo cogitans*. African cultures being symbolically structured are laden

with vital and significant meaning. Hence, a critical reflection on these symbols trying to make the inherent and underlying meanings open and explicit would give credence to what constitutes African Philosophy.

African Philosophy is *scientia rerum per ultima causas* within African reality. Therefore, from onset, African Philosophy has been a discipline and a movement. It was more of a movement as it tries to reclaim its position as a discipline within the world philosophical heritage. Hence, as a discipline, African Philosophy is a critical cursory look into the inherent problematiques and prospects of Africa as part of the world philosophical heritage. As a movement, African Philosophy searched for the authentic knowledge that is Philosophy and African within the African cultural world-view. Therefore, a definitive thoughtful interpretation and critical analysis of the symbols of African cultures would be African philosophy *qua tale*. More so, a reflection with profound application of criticality, analyticity and originality on African thoughts and cultures give credence to Philosophy and rightly put, African Philosophy. However, such profundity in the critical appreciation of African cultural world-views make of them, veritable moments for African philosophy. With the methodological moment of proper hermeneutics, one can dependably and realistically infer that African Philosophy is Philosophy with African source and is nourished from African culture as its cultural reservoir and primary critical nourishment. Okere, T. (1983, 58-79) was the *primus inter pares* in asserting authoritatively that culture is the foundation of Philosophy by hermeneutically engaging Paul Ricoeur extensively on the existing relationship between culture and philosophy: “It is by interpreting the symbols of a culture that one can arrive at reflexion, philosophy. Ricoeur defines reflexion as the connection between the comprehension of signs or symbols and self-comprehension”.

Hence, Paul Ricoeur (in Okere, T. 1983, 18) asserts: “one can philosophize from culture, or at least from those elements of culture that can be called symbols”. Okere (1983, 18) buttressing further remarks: “symbols are pregnant with meaning...philosophical discourse is, therefore, a hermeneutical development of the symbols, these enigmas which precede and nourish it”. Therefore, Okere, T. (1983, 120) writes: “We assert, however, that in black Africa there exists a reservoir of cultural *philosophemes* from which any future philosopher can inspire himself or borrow his share of philosophical raw material. In such a culture a philosopher can plant his roots and from inside it, and as forming part of it, develop a philosophy with his culture as non”. Okere, T. however was very apt in trying to give the concept of being within his conditions for the possibility of African Philosophy thus:

As the Welmers put it, “English ‘be’ corresponds to three quite different Igbo verbs in the sentences – ‘It is a pot’ (identification); ‘He is here’ (location and specifically for inanimate beings) and ‘It is not’ (description). And in countless cases ‘be’ plus an adjective is expressed by a verb or a verb noun phrase in Igbo which has nothing to do with an equivalent of ‘be’ as such.”¹⁰ As for the substantive, there is no connection between any of these Igbo verbs and the equivalent of *Ens* as substantive; the Igbo word

Ihe means “thing” as specifically inanimate and is never used for persons. Persons and things can never be brought under a common denomination in Igbo. Thus, the all-inclusive term of Being, *Esse*, *Sein*, *être* which seems to determine the very essence of philosophy would not be able to play the same identical role for the Igbo and seems not to be so relevant here. If philosophy is to be auto-generated from a culture, if it is to represent an articulated self-expression of man within his culture, one has to look for a different metacategory, more pertinent to Igbo culture than Being. Perhaps the notion of life, perhaps even the Igbo conception of **Uwa** (literally the world, but really en-globing both the cosmos, nature, and destiny), could take over the role of Being. This need not imply that an Igbo cannot understand the notion of Being or a philosophy based on this notion. It means, however, that a philosophy original to this culture would not take its orientation from a concept so strange to it.

Iroegbus Uwa Ontology

Iroegbu, P.O. remains one of the greatest Contemporary African Philosophers of the twentieth century A.D. He is an Igbo of the South-Eastern Region, precisely from Umueze-Umunumo, Ehime Mbano, Imo State, Nigeria. Iroegbu had his primary education at St. Charles’ School Umunumo (1959-1965). Later, he gained admission into Immaculate Conception Seminary, Umuahia, Abia State, where he sat for and got his Ordinary Level (O’level) and Advanced Level (A’ level) in General Certificate Examinations. He proceeded to Bigard Memorial Seminary, Enugu (1973-1980) for his Diploma in Philosophical Studies and Bachelor’s of Theology with resounding first class honours. Iroegbu having been ordained Catholic priest in 1980 was sent for further studies to the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. There, he bagged masters in Philosophy and Ecclesiastical Sciences with corresponding double doctorate degrees within an unprecedented time. However, his doctoral dissertations were titled: Communalism: A Theory of Justice for Contemporary African Communities (Philosophy) and Theology and Community: Through Narrative Theology to an African Ecclesiology (Theology). These works, exuding complete exercise in afocentricism, were upheld as original contributions to African philosophico-theological Studies. With his academic background deeply rooted in African realities (thoughts and culture) and as a very prolific writer, a sound academician with accolades of academic laurels, an avowed original thinker and novel theorist, Iroegbu while serving as a lecturer in Seat of Wisdom Seminary Owerri (an affiliate of Urbanian Universitas, Rome as well as Imo State University, Owerri) and later in Major Seminary of All Saints, Uhiele, Ekpoma (an Affiliate of University of Benin), developed and manifested his great interest in African Philosophy and African Studies when many of his contemporaries were pessimistically branding African Philosophy mere cultural-philosophy, philosophical sagacity, nationalist ideological philosophy with all sorts of negative nomenclatures and approaches, doubting or probably negotiating on the possibility of African Philosophy.

Iroegbu, P. O. was a student of Okere T. I. at St. Joseph's Major Seminary Ikot-Ekpene, Nigeria and later to same University where Okere was trained in Louvain. Iroegbu, however, has contributed immensely to African Philosophy by his astute critical engagement with African *weltanschauung* and *Philosophemes* in all his philosophical discourse knowing very well that for every Philosophy to worth the salt, it ought to be relatively cultural, appropriately traditional and ethno-philosophically founded. Furthermore, alluding to this view, Iroegbu, P. (1994, 122) was vehemently bent on this general understanding of Philosophy as the global participation of all realities and entities in the general fact and understanding of being as being whether in African, Asian or Western Philosophy. Hence, his critical engagement reflecting his cultural milieu and continental world-view made him to propound few famous indigenous philosophical and theological theories as *Enwisdomization Theory*, *Hermeholiontic Theory* (for proving the existence of God). Among his other philosophical discourses that reflect ethnophilosophical coinages are: *Uwa Ontology*, *Belongingness* (as the African Metaphysics of *To Be*), *Communalism: Kpim of Politics* and *Metaphysics: Kpim of Philosophy*, *The Kpim of Time: Eternity* with rigorous introduction of other philosophical neologisms into philosophical lexicon like *Umuna Ecclesiology*, *Ohacracy*, *Nkuziology*, *Omenalism*, *Afroxiology*, etc. The entire gamut of Iroegbu's rich intellectual tradition in philosophical enterprise or what one may refer to as Iroegbu's legendary literary legacy is not only African oriented but ethnophilosophically rooted and based, in line with what Theophilus Okere (an erudite scholar and one time teacher of Iroegbu) was very foremost to refer as *philosophemes* (that is a cultural reservoir of philosophical raw material within one's world-view, that is, deposit of conceptual data or realities for philosophical enterprise). Iroegbu, however, died in 2006 leaving behind many literal works of repute while trying to complete a work on Time titled: *African Concept of Time*.

Iroegbu, P. was very *premier* in giving this succinct definition. In this definition one can read a *kind* of defence as regards African philosophy. This is why for Iroegbu, P., African philosophy is a *philo-sophia*, a quest for African wisdom. However, Iroegbu was academically astute enough to reiterate that "African philosophy is philosophy done in an African context...the different aspects and complexities of existence that challenge him as an African person. In this respect, every philosophy is contextual philosophy". For Iroegbu, P, therefore, these philosophical concepts alone "are what we generally call the African philosophical *philosophemes*: raw materials for philosophical reflection, questioning, responses, analysis and eventual synthesis". In this statement of fact, Iroegbu, P. continue to echo his teacher Okere Theophilus who had earlier conceived the idea of *philosophemes* as deposit of conceptual data or realities for philosophical enterprise.

However, Iroegbu (1994, 116) an optimistic contemporary philosopher was very apt in defining African philosophy as: "The reflective inquiry into the marvels and problematic that confront one in African world, in view of producing systematic explanation and sustained responses to them. It is an inquiry with two aspects: *philosophical* and *African*".

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Iroegbu, P. in his philosophical excursions posited his master’s view of *Uwa* now as *Uwa* ontology in his *Gini* and *Kpim* of things? They were his attempt at explaining being and its mode of operation. Iroegbu has different connotations of being and concepts of *Uwa*. Iroegbu’s concept of being is enshrined in his concept of *Uwa*. The *Uwa* has a direct and simple translative comprehension of world (English), *le monde* (French) and *Die Welt* (German). And to Iroegbu, *Uwa* has a more comprehensive meaning than the English translation. This deeper meaning of the concept of *Uwa* is summed-up in his connotations of *Uwa*. The term, *Uwa*, is not just a material but something much more than the physical world. Hence, Iroegbu, P. (1995, 336) posited some connotations of *Uwa* as the “Totality. This is the abstract, unqualified subject of all speech and prediction. *Uwa* in this totalitarian or universal sense is, as pointed out above, all englobing. It is the most universal concept in Igbo language and culture. Whatever is, in so far as it exists, is *Uwa*”.

Equally, Iroegbu, P. had six zones of *Uwa* and their relationships. Iroegbu, P. had spatio-geographically divided the *Uwa* into zones. We must know and maintain the singularity of *Uwa* as a concept. From the concrete perspective, however, considering the other aspects of *Uwa*, we have six zones: **Uwa anyi**: Cosmos; the Divine-world is the world of Supreme Being who is *Chukwu*, the great or High God; *Ala* is the world of the powerful spirits (as well as *Anyanwu*, *Amadioha* etc) who govern the world. *Good- spirit world* is the spiritual area where the (beings) spirits of the dead dwell and from where they operate. Bad spirit world is the abode of the inimical spirits of the dead. Here the living – dead, called Ancestors (*Ndi Ichie*), operate and care for their Ancestral world, families still living here in *Uwa anyi*. These were ancestors who have graduated into spirits because of the loss of world probably due to act of their living members and concrete kith and kin relation with their families.

It is the synthesis of the connotations and zonal concepts of *Uwa* that is well expressed more in the community-individuality of being and things in the world of existence of which *Uwa* ontology seeks to define properly. We must note that African community which necessitates African experience has different understanding of community-individuality form of relationship. This community-individual relationship is basic in

finding the definitional matching concept of being as the community relationship is very fundamental. And the individual in a community is very foundational. The relationship between them is very strong in African experience and African ontology. Iroegbu, P. (1995, 346) observes:

In the community to which I have been born, we have shared needs and expectations, one way, even if varied in details in various places, of religious beliefs and expression. We have shared customs and a solidarity of communal actions and interactions. Indubitably, I realize that that which dominates the entire life and world is not the individual just there, but the community, society or group to which he/she belongs.

It is therefore a patently obvious truth that the community determines a lot of what life is, of what the individual makes of it, and the values that each individual adopts and realizes. The decisive factors of achievement are community-determined. To this effect, Iroegbu, P. is seen gradually shifting from identifying being as solely *Uwa* in African experience. This being or *Uwa* is not to be understood in a general sense without reclining to something still to this effect, we have come to the fundamental fact of this reality known as belongingness. The community, undoubtedly, determines a lot about living and existence. In African experience and ontology, the community gives the individual his existence and meaning to such existence. J.S. Mbiti has classically proverbialized this community-determined role of a person in the popular cultural statement of *I am because we are*. And because *we are*, therefore *I am*.

Iroegbu, P. fundamentally asserts that that being however belongs. Belongingness, for Iroegbu, P. then becomes an “arrangement of the fundamental structure of society (laws, duties, privileges, positions, jobs, offices, advantages and incumbents of the community), such that it incarnates and manifests the commonness of origin, of history and of general destiny of all the members of the community. Belongingness is *Umunna* concretized. Commenting on this, Abanuka, B. (1994, 46) says: Iroegbu sees ‘Belongingness’ as constituting the most important mode in which being expresses itself. Although he holds that ‘Belongingness is an abstract term, an ontological one that specifies that a thing is, because it belongs’, he articulates the idea of ‘Belongingness’ within the context of the problematic idea of ‘communalism’.

Iroegbu, P. in developing this fundamental character of being in belongingness, initially defines belongingness as a definitive principle of African communalism. He used belongingness in a technical sense. It is, thus, for him, a principle of membership applied to a given community. By this belongingness implies the basic commonness that makes a community a community, in our context, what makes a given African community as such. Iroegbu, P. shows that communalism makes belongingness an indispensable conceptual starting point for communal existence. According to him, one native expression of belongingness is the term, *Umunna*. In this sense, *Umunna*, a basic community, transcends the nuclear family to mean, by extension, people of common lineage as well as commonness of origin. Belonging, however, is the human need to be an accepted member of a group. Abraham Maslow suggested that the need

to belong was a major source of human motivation. And since *no man is an island*, the need to belong to and with one another becomes a basic demand for man's existence and co-existence. This will take us to Iroegbu's popular usage of an Igbo expression of the real ideal synthesis of community – individuality in the old but famous proverb: *Egbe bere, Ugo bere, nke si ibe ya ebela, nku kwaa ya*. (Let the Kite perch, let the Eagle perch, if one says that the other should not perch, let that one's wings break.)"

We must acknowledge that this proverb is primarily a principle of justice. Nevertheless, Iroegbu's analysis of this proverb points to the fact of belongingness that entails not only being but a fundamental relational activity as well. *Bere* (perching) here connotes being as a way of belonging. Therefore, in African communal ontological existence, the *Egbe* and *Ugo*, represent different individuals and the act of perching that presupposes a locus of operation form a relationship that fundamentally starts with belonging as perching; a form of contact with the other; a contact that spells belonging. The concept of contact is a backdrop of a person's realization of his belonging as a being immersed in one's community. This is summarized in the saying, *I am because we are*. This is a communitarian view that places being on belongingness. Iroegbu, P. re-establishes his stand on belongingness with his writing on the political significance of belongingness: "Belongingness holds that our existence as human beings, as well as our integral participation in the society in which we find ourselves, are to be defined by our being given sense and substance of belonging. There should be solidarity of belonging and a belonging of solidarity in the way and manner in which we are to live and relate to one another as fellow citizens of the world. This sense of belonging or belongingness has two basic aspects: Being tuned-on...Being 'on-going'... Thus, if we belong, we are. If we don't belong, then we are not".

Asouzu's *Ibuanyidanda* Metaphysics

Metaphysics as the main branch of African Philosophy is the science of ontology that investigates being as being with regard to its models, structure and relationships. However, Aristotle's Ontology maintains a thin line between substance or essence and accidents of being. Substance nevertheless remains a definitive quality of being while Accidents remains an essential nature in the analysis of being. Indeed, it is a matter of fact, substance subsists without accident while the vice versa is not possible.

Innocent Asouzu's *Ibuanyidanda* is an African complementary ontology and perspective theory of being. According to Asouzu, I. that "being is that on account of which anything that exists serves a missing link of reality" (Asouzu, I., 2011, 41). The idea *Ibuanyidanda* comes from the Igbo language. The idea of *Ibuanyidanda* connotes complementarity. This idea of complementarity has its equivalent as *njiko-ka* (togetherness is strength) and *igwe-bu-ike* (strength is togetherness). *Ibuanyidanda* is compound word as *Ibu* (load), *Anyi* (not impossible) and *Danda* (a workaholic Ant) hence *Ibuanyidanda* literally means no task is insurmountable for *danda*. This denotes an idea of mutual dependence and interdependence in complementarity. It shows a kind of mutual support for each other outside which there is no reality as an achievement.

As a matter of fact, *ibu anyi danda* is literally translated “load can never surmount danda” or just a maxim means, “no load or burden is beyond the capacity of a certain species of gregarious ants to bear”. According to Chimakonam, J., “Asouzu gleans inspiration from the organisation and complementary attitude of this species of ant to construct a philosophy for all of humanity. He, however, distinguishes *ibu anyi danda* as a descriptive hypothetical injunction from his system *Ibuanyidanda* - written as one word - which he elevates to a categorical imperative”.

Ibuanyidanda however transcends the static, *dichotomous ontological* framework propounded by Aristotle into a complementary consciousness where every reality exists in a network of mutual complementarity. Hence,

Asouzu therefore holds that reality is not consisted of irreconcilable extremes, as Aristotle's framework makes it appear. *Ibuanyidanda* as an alternative veritable framework bespeaks of a dynamic theory of ontology as against the static Aristotelian ontology, which has become the blue-print of Western metaphysics. In the *Ibuanyidanda* ontology, some of the challenges which vitiate ontological inquiries are: *ihe-mkpuchi anya* (phenomenon of concealment) which blindfolds us into seeing reality as twines of conflicting opposites; unintended ethnocentric commitments which commit us to elevate the “self over and above the “other”; misinterpretation of the act of existing as the capacity to be alone leading to such negative maxims as *ka so mu di* (that I may be alone); introduction of undue rivalry in the scientific community which often leads inquirers into drawing a line between the superior and the inferior, etc. (Asouzu, I., 2011, 16-32).

Kanu's Igwebuike Metaphysics

Igwebuike is a modal action of a being in African world-view and understanding. It is an Igbo word, which is a combination of three Igbo words: Kanu (2017:23) in explaining *Igwe-bu-ike* writes thus.

‘To be’ in Igbo ontology is *idi*. However, the modality of being is *Igwebuike*. It is an Igbo word, which is a combination of three words. Thus, it can be understood as a word and as a sentence: as a word, it is written thus, *Igwebuike*, and as a sentence, it is written as, *Igwe bu ike*, with the component words enjoying some independence in terms of space. Let us try to understand the three words involved: *Igwe* is a noun which means number or population, usually a large number or population. *Bu* is a verb, which means is. *Ike* is a noun, which means

strength or power. Put together, it means ‘number is strength’ or ‘number is power’, that is, when human beings come together in solidarity and complementarity, they are powerful or can constitute an insurmountable force. At this level, no task is beyond their collective capability.

The three words involved: *Igwe* is a noun which means number or population, usually a huge number or population. It nevertheless means sky or King depending on the pronunciation and the syllable stressed. *Bu* is a verb, which means *is* or *that which is*. *Ike* is another noun, which means strength or power and as a noun it means buttocks or even as a verb, it means to create or to share.. Thus, put together, *Igwebuike* literally means *number is power* or *strength is power*. Put it other way round, it means ‘Number is strength’. Number here refers to a group of beings, population of persons or people or reality. It refers to a congregation or multitude of human beings, animals or any reality that is capable of activity or to be precise. You cannot gather for nothing, The *Igwe* (in the sense of masses or assemblage) gathers for action to be replicated or exerted. It is presupposed that the crowd or cluster of persons or any reality will exert enough might or vigour as well as force and supremacy or control for an end or activity to be achieved. Onebunne (2018:65) refers that *Igwebuike* “as employed by Igbo traditional philosophers as a theory based on an illustrative statement to teach that when human beings come together in solidarity and complementarity, they are powerful or can constitute an insurmountable force, and more so, to express their world of relationship, harmony, continuity and complementarity”. At this level, no task is beyond collective capability. This provides an ontological horizon that presents being as that which possesses a relational character of mutual relations. As an ideology, *Igwebuike* argues that ‘to be’ is to live in solidarity and complementarity, and to live outside the parameters of solidarity and complementarity is to suffer alienation. ‘*To be*’ is ‘to be with the other’ in a community of beings. This is based on the African sense of community, which is the underlying principle and unity of African philosophy

This work suggests that *Igwebuike* as the key to understanding African philosophy. While being in Igbo philosophy is ‘*Idi*’, that is, to be, *Igwebuike* is the modality of being. It is an Igbo word, which is a combination of three words. Therefore, it can be employed as a word or used as a sentence: as a word, it is written as *Igwebuike*, and as a sentence, it is written as, *Igwebuike*, with the component words enjoying some independence in terms of space. As an ideology, *Igwebuike* postulates that ‘to be’ is to live in solidarity and complementarity, and to live outside the parameters of solidarity and complementarity is to suffer alienation. ‘To be’ is ‘To be with the other’, in a community of beings. Such being with others is guaranteed by such others. That means one belongs with others strengthening their existence. This is based on the African sense of community, which is the underlying principle and unity of African philosophy

Igwebuike literally means *number is power* or *strength is power*. Kanu, A. (2017, 43), the apostle of *Igwebuike*, defines it as “the expressive modality of being in Igbo Ontology”. For him, *Igwebuike*, which according to Asouzu, I. (2007, 11) is literally

strength in togetherness, is the locus of meeting of beings in Igbo communalist metaphysic with special reference to existentialism and leadership. Kanu, A. (2017, 34), however, opines strongly on the concept of *Igwebuike* thus:

Igwebuike provides an ontological horizon that presents being as that which possesses a relational character of mutual relations. As an ideology, *Igwebuike* rests on the African principles of solidarity and complementarity. It argues that ‘to be’ is to live in solidarity and complementarity and to live outside the parameters of solidarity and complementarity is to suffer alienation. ‘To be’ is ‘to be with the other’, in a community of beings. This is based on the African philosophy of community, which is the underlying principle and unity of African Traditional Religious and philosophical experience.

Igwebuike, however, complements belongingness in our communalist metaphysics. In developing this fundamental character of being as belongingness, Iroegbu, P. (1998, 45) initially defines belongingness as *a definitive principle in African communalism*. He used belongingness in a technical sense. It is, thus, for him, a principle of membership applied to a given community. This membership is not mere identification but a kind of belonging that is security assured. By this belongingness implies the basic commonness that makes a community a community, in our context, what makes a given African community as such. Iroegbu, P. shows that communalism makes belongingness an indispensable conceptual starting point for communal existence. Accordingly, Iroegbu, P. explains thus: one native expression of belongingness is the term, *Umunna*. In this sense, *Umunna*, a basic community, transcends the nuclear family to mean, by extension, people of common lineage as well as commonness of origin. Belonging, however, is the human need to be an accepted member of a group. Abraham Maslow suggested that the need to belong was a major source of human motivation. And since *no man is an island*, the need to belong to and with one another becomes a basic demand for man’s existence and co-existence. In belonging, people form a community of togetherness an strengthened by such togetherness, many activities are possible. Some theories in life have also focused on the need to belong as a fundamental psychological motivation. We belong to a group with which we have commonalities. This feeling of belonging is a basic need and a unique term in the dynamics of living and existence.

Hence, Iroegbu, P. (1995, 19) asserts that “belongingness makes sure that all belong and none is marginalized, both contributively (duties and responsibilities) and distributively (sharing of communal cake)”. This is the locus of *Igwebuike* at play. One does not necessarily belongs. One is ever conscious of where one is putting or belonging. The importance of communal existence is a rational provision aimed at a better understanding and appreciation of man, not as a discrete individual but as a being-with properly expressed in Belongingness as *Igwebuike* This understanding has provided an enduring manner of attending to man as being with an inalienable interconnectivity with the rest of men. And so, the idea of coexistence as bedrock of

caring and concern (sympathy) is highly significant in Africa as a whole. Hence, the Igbo people normally talk of power as belong to the multitude (*Igwe-bu-Ike*) especially when they cohabit or live together as in extended family system, a form of *onyeaghana nwanneya*!. In fact, the very concept of the multitude is in itself understood as a source of power and authority.

The question of being as *what is* or *that which exists* is very central and fundamental in Igbo Ontology and it's very proper to the area of Metaphysics. Igbo Ontology is simply Igbo being. Ontology, therefore, studies the structure, meaning and principle of whatever is in so far as it exists. Metaphysics, however, studies and investigates the network as well as the nexus of interrelatedness of realities as such in their deepest ontological sense. From the verb *to be*, a kind of activity the nomenclature *being* presents itself as something knowable. If man knows being at all, he knows Being as such.

Igwebuiké is the modality of being in Igbo Ontology. *Igwebuiké* is an Igbo word, which is a combination of three words. Thus, it can be understood as a word and as a sentence: as a word, it is written thus, *Igwebuiké*, and as a sentence, it is written as, *Igwe bu ike*, with the component words enjoying some independence in terms of space. For kanu, *Igwe* is a noun which means number or population, usually a large number or population. *Bu* is a verb, which means *is*. *Ike* is a noun, which means *strength* or *power*. Put together, it means 'number is strength' or 'number is power', that is, when human beings come together in solidarity and complementarity, they are powerful or can constitute an insurmountable force. At this level, no task is beyond this collective capability. To this point there is an ontological perspective that presents being as that which possesses a relational character of mutual relations.

Kanu, A. specifically identifies *Igwebuiké* as a being-with. *Igwebuiké* means "there is strength in unity", it believes in the harnessing of the group or community effort. There is no isolation of being from the other, it is a form of being-with, a form of belongingness, a form of *sharedness* otherwise there is alienation. Equally, the Igbo people normally talk of power as something that belongs to the multitude (*Igwe-bu-Ike*). In fact, the very concept of the multitude is in itself understood as a source of power and authority.

Kanu, A. strongly articulates in many writes-up that *Igwebuiké* rests on the African principles of solidarity and complementarity. It argues that 'to be' is to live in solidarity and complementarity, and to live outside the parameters of solidarity and complementarity is to suffer alienation. 'To be' is 'to be with the other', in a community of beings, that is, Igbo being. It is a kind of communalism, which is an African philosophy of community underlying the principle and unity of African thought and culture.

Kanu, A. to properly situate his *Igwebuiké and Being* in Igbo-African Ontology, delved into and through many philosophical works of great African Philosophico-Historical figures like Placide Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy*, Alexis Kagame's *Ntu*,

Emmanuel Edeh's attempt at *Igbo Metaphysics*, the *Chi* of Okere, T., Abanuka, B., and Njoku, F.O., and Panteleon Iroegbu's *Belongingness*. Kanu, A.'s review of these philosophico-Historical heavyweights' thoughts showed that their positions and postulations have introduced more problems to the proper appreciation of being in Igbo-African Philosophy. Kanu, A., however, opined that the appropriate concept of being in Igbo-African Metaphysics is *Idi*. In a very particular and strict sense, the western appreciation of being as *what is* has over the time, in line with Igbo world-view and development in African Philosophical tradition and African philosophical enterprise undergone the needed and expected nomenclature-translational appreciation in line with Igbo-African awareness and understanding of reality as such.

Igwebuiké as *belongingness* is an African metaphysics of communalist existence. It is an Ideology. It is the modality of Igbo being. It is very central and at the heart of African Philosophy as a movement and as a discipline. *Igwebuiké* shows the existential interaction and interrelatedness in Igbo-African community. Being as whatever is, is in one way or the other, that reality that simply belongs. Being, therefore, belongs and this is what one understands as the modality of being. And this form of modality is *belongingness*.

Kanu, A. an astute thinker and prolific-philosophical writer through his *categorization of being* summarily showed *Igwebuiké* as an ideology is the manner, the way, the style or the modality of being, that is, being in relation to the other. Aesthetically, Kanu definitively appreciates *Igwebuiké* as the *uzo* (modality) of *idi* (being). *Igwebuiké* as the modality of being is at the heart of African Philosophical enterprise.

Umeogu's *Ohazurume*¹ Metaphysics

Ohazurume literally means collective will of the people, that is, communal will of the people. It is the labyrinth of communal existence and being. It is expressed within the popular phrases: *the people have spoken, the people have agreed together*. It is the network of peoples voice as one as power belongs to the people. *Ohazurume* nonetheless spells out the consensus action of the people. *Ohazurume*, notwithstanding, is the *microcosm* of any styled leadership within the *macrocosm* of any society that shares power with full awareness that leadership is based on consensus.

Belongingness² is a principle of membership established on the conceptual idea of *Ohazurume*. Jean-Paul Sartre, shares this popular idea that there is no being which is not the being of a certain mode of belonging, a certain mode of existence. *Ohazurume* is one of such existential mode. Being, in other to actualize itself, makes effort to belong; it must flow out. And this is what belongingness is all about. It is a principle that makes one a member in a given community. It is, therefore, a synthesis of the

¹ This section deals with Bonachristus Umeogu's provoking thoughts and articulation with regard to *Ohazurume* Metaphysics.

² Belongingness is a concept that equally shows the modality of African Metaphysics of To Be as exposed in Iroegbu, P.O. work *Metaphysics: Kpim of Philosophy and later in Onebunne, J.I. work Being as Belongingness: A Hermeneutic Interpretation in African Metaphysics*

reality and experience of belonging. To belong is to be part of being. According to Iroegbu, P. (1996, 78-87), "...belongingness is derived from the basic sense of unity (community) that exists among the members of the given political community.

Belongingness is a principle of membership applied to a given political community. It is what moulds a community's cultural, historical, and traditional values. According to Iroegbu, P. it is both *a terminus a quo* and *a terminus ad quem*. That means that it is very fundamental such that we cannot speak of social justice in Africa without it. *Ohazurume* as Belongingness makes all members real and participating members of the community. It gives all a sense of belonging. Belongingness, therefore, is a synthesis of reality and experience of belonging. Irrespective of the limitation of belongingness, there is always an appreciation of it as if to say that belongingness is not limited to only a political community; belongingness can be extended to outside such community. To belong is to be a part of being. In Iroegbu, P.'s usage, *to be is to belong and to belong is to be*. It is in *belongingness* that one affirms one's *beingness* and that is, showing one's action. It is by belonging that one is active, that is, one is not dead. Therefore, to belong is to participate and in that, one is real and of course, active through belongingness. Belongingness, therefore, constitutes the nature of being. Belongingness is, therefore, a fundamental quality in understanding whatever is. Everything is defined by a relation, that is, a thing or being is in relation to something, or with an attribute of engaging in something. This form of relationship defines *Ohazurume*. And this fact of *Ohazurume* or *beingness* which is a form of relation is a form of belonging to, belonging with, and belonging in. relation, therefore, becomes a kind of state by which people realize themselves among others.

Ohazurume is the mode and operative nature of being expressed in hermeneutics of belongingness as an in depth quest for knowledge, and thus, an effective solution in understanding every reality on the onto-relational level. In this, there should be, as Iroegbu, P. (1994, 374-380) opines, solidarity of belongingness in *whatever is* in the manner in which we exist and relate in the reality of living and interacting. Belongingness, as such, is the ontological value of living. By belongingness, being is related to other beings by relationship of what it is or does. Hence, in this write-up, we shall concentrate on the Belongingness holds that our existence as human beings, as well as our integral participation in the society in which we find ourselves, are to be defined by our being given the sense and substance of belonging. This is the nexus of *Ohazurume* metaphysics

Ohazurume as belongingness is rooted in communalism. Hence, *Ohazurume* is a total involvement of every member of the society in existential reality. This is equally reflected in "*Igwe-bu-ike*," meaning unity is strength. This can also be seen in the work "*Njiko ka mma*" meaning staying together is better than being alone which is the theory of communalism as well. *Ohazurume* is the philosophy of communal consensus. Umeogu, B. generally identifies *Ohazurume* as a being-with others. *Ohazurume* means *community agreement*. *Ohazurume* is the theory of collective thoughts, words and actions governing individual life and being. It is a theory of

corporate ontology that determines the life and being of individuals in a community. There is no isolation of being from the other, it is a form of being-with, a form of belongingness, a form of *sharedness*, it is a form of *Igwebuike*, *Njikoka*, *Ibuanyidanda* otherwise there is alienation. Equally, the Igbo people normally talk of community effort where everyone contributes accordingly. One acknowledges the fact that the concept of being in Igbo-African Metaphysics as *Idi* is still debatable. However many African Philosophers have tried to appreciate an African understanding of being or reality as *Force Vitale* (Tempels), *Uwa* (Okere-Pantaleon)..

Ohazurume like *belongingness* is an African metaphysics of communalist existential interaction and interrelatedness. *Ohazurume* as a political Ideology is equally the modality of Igbo being. *Ohazurume* as the modality of being is at the heart of African Metaphysical enterprise. *Ohazurume* however rests on the African principles of community effort properly expressed in solidarity and complementarity. *Ohazurume* argues that ‘to be’ is to live in communion and solidarity and complementarity with others properly situated in Igbo-African Ontology. That is a being-with-others. ‘To be’ is ‘to be with the other’, in a community of beings, that is, Igbo being. *Ohazurume*, therefore, is a kind of communality shown in communalism and communitarianism. These are within the African philosophy of community-bound act underlying the principle and unity of African thought and culture.

By principle of etymo-analysis, the multi-vocal word *Ohazurume*³ came from three terms, namely: *Oha*, *zuru* and *me*. *Oha* means *people* or *public*, *zuru* means full, “sufficient”, “complete”, etc., and “me” means “do”, “accomplish”, “carry out”, etc. So, *Ohazurume* means: It is the people that acts with sufficient reason. Communal action is complete. It is the people that decide. Consensus of action belongs to the people. Communalist accomplishment is complete. To carry out any action to the full, the people must be involved. Public administration is the end of management of men and resources. Etc.

The way I have shaped my mouth to talk about *Ohazurume* shows that it is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept and theory and, even, a practice. To be sure *Ohazurume* is Igbo multi-modal ideology. At any rate *Ohazurume* involves Igbo communication decision making; it connotes Igbo consensus building; Igbo consensus community and Igbo consensus; it involves Igbo communal spirit; it denotes Igbo commonwealth ideology; it involves Igbo commensalist sovereignty; it depicts the undivided unity of the spirit of *Igboness*; it involves the microcosmic quintessence of Igbo macro-cosmic world. To be sure, OHAZURUME is that deposit and expression from where the Igbo Spirit emerges to possess the people.

³ In a brochure produced and used by The Directorate of Igbo Village and Centre for African Civilisation (IVACA) for the 2021 celebration of the Hybrid Conference (Physical & Virtual) on the theme *Ohazurume: Celebrating Igbo Democracy* Bona Christus umeogu has a paper titled **Ohazurume: A Prolegomenon To Igbo Oharcitic Democracy**, pp.21-22, where he dwelt into the nitty-gritty explanation of *Ohazurume*. All on this section is culled from his work as referred above.

Yet, if we pose this searching question: what is it to ask, what this thing, *Ohazurume*, is? However way we go or come in answering that question, it must be made clear that, *Ohazurume* guarantees the eternity of the Igbo people (*Ohagwu*). it establishes the united agreement of the spirit of Igbo people (*Ohajekwu*). It underlines the prevailing courage and power of Igbo people (*Ohagbaoso*). It underscores the Oracle status of the people (*Onu Oha bu Onu Chukwu*). It establishes that the oracle of the people cannot be destroyed (*Iyiegbuoha*). It makes it clear that in the Igbo thought and culture kingship belongs to the people, to be sure, it is only the people that can know and select the king (*Ohameze, Ohamadike, Ohamaraze*). So the controversial proposition of opposition in Igbo life and being : *Igbo enwe eze*, means this: *Oha bu Eze Igbo*. This is my interpretation. That is that.

In omnibus, I must say that without *Oha* there will be no people, not in the sense of saying that the word *Oha* and the word “ people” are the same, but in the sense of the fact, without origin, without identity, without culture, without life. To be precise, without *Oha* in the Igbo world-view, the people will live in a world of lies where anything is, but what is not; and what already is nothing, cannot become something. To be sure then, OHA is a consensus and /or consensus of individuals that constitute the people or the community. Yet, in *Oha* the community or the people cannot swallow the individuals. In what has just been said can be seen the mysterious nature of *Ohazurume*. That is, that once *Ohazurume* is *Ohazurume*, with its theory and practice, the individual(s), the people and the community are just three sides of the reality, and can never swallow each other. It is in this sense that I earlier now used the phrase “Igbo Spirit” concerning the detonation and /or connotation of *Oha*. In this understanding, *Oha* represents the spirit of *Igboness* or Igbo spirit or the spirit of Igbo people, both living, dead and unborn (*Oha Mmuo na Oha Mmadu*). That is the reason why any time OHA is sovereignized or made representative, we can no longer talk of the will of an individual but of the corporate will of people, without the distinction again of whether they are alive or dead or unborn.

Pro hac vice, it must at last be said that the *Oha*⁴ factor in *Ohazurume* has a mysterious and paradoxical origin. To be sure the *Oha* factor is born of the *Oha* or *Ora* in *Afa* Phenomenological Structural types. While some scholars say that there is there is no connection between the *Oha* and *Oha* or *Ora* in *Afa* sense and meaning, others hold that there is a strong connection and relationship of detonation and/ or connotation between them. I will say, that, even though there is some degree of

⁴ Umeogu further explains in Odimegwu, I (ed), *Ohazurume: A Philosophical Definition of Communalism as the Typology of Igbo Being* in Perspectives on African Communalism, Uk: Trafford Publications, 2007, pp.107-112 thus: *Oha* means community, it means life. It means unity. It means being. *Ohazurume* is the theory of integral community unit, life, being and action. In *Ohazurume* metaphysics of life, being and action, the meaningfulness of the individual and that of the community meet at the plane of being. Being is the nature of the Igbo individual and Igbo community. But the being of the Igbo individual and the Igbo community has the typology of communalism. That is to say, that the reality of the Igbo being is a function of integrated essence of unique individuals in a communalistic identity of belongingness. That is to say, at length that the typology of Igbo being is belongingness.

difference of sense and reference in their various meanings, at the base, they two can be traced to each other; with the *Oha* in OHAZURUME originating from *Oha* or *Ora* in Afa topographical Mystical Zero. It has to be, after all it is not by coincidence that they are of the same spelling, because your preference of *Oha* or *Ora* is dependent on your dialect. Even if you shift from the spelling factor involved, to the pronunciation factor, the connection, which is more or less the same, is dependent on your own most authority and specialization.

In toto, whether you spell or pronounce or denote or connote or mean or demean *Oha* for *Ora* and/or *Ora* for *Oha*, with reference to Afa Phenomenological Topology, *Oha/Ora* will always signify the planet of life and kinship ties. So, in the sense of *Ohazurume*, *Oha/Ora* will always stand for the universe of people with life, that is the domain of people who are alive; that is alive in the sense of the people connecting with and are connected by life (that is to say again, the people who are always relevant to life: whether living or dead or unborn). That is why in reference to *Akwu Astrophysics* *Oha/Ora* maintains a closed planet, but whenever the same *Oha/Ora* enters into *Obi/Ogbi Astrophysics* it maintains three open planets. At any rate, with reference to the Afa Mystical Zero of the Phenomenological Structural types of *Akwu* and *Obi/Ogbi*, whether open and/or closed, *Oha/Ora* must integrate or differentiate a life Calculus of Order and Progress that will ever yet and evermore give meaning to all-three-is. That is that.

Having come this far in the study, only a few things remain for me to do, to give the definition and analysis of the basic terms and expressions of this study; and then to plunge directly into the discussion of *Ohazurume* wherein I will philosophically define the typology of Igbo being as communalism. At last, I will go ahead to give my critical studies and conclusion.

Umeogu's Appreciation of Igbo Being⁵

Umeogu, B. (2007, 108), defines Igbo being as totality of Igbo reality. It means identity. It means Igbo space. It means Igbo time. It means Igbo people. To be precise, Igbo being means everything or any place or any person at all. Igbo being in a very strict sense is a concrete reality, a spatial reality and temporal reality that belongs. That means Igbo being means everything is implied or implicated therein, Igbo being is, by that very fact, described even if not defined. However, Igbo being does not just identify Igbo reality, it also expresses the fact that the "Igbo" is, that is, that "what is Igbo" exists. Further, it points out the the vocation of the Igbo life is being. Being at any rate, becomes a function of Igbo cultural reality.

⁵Umeogu succinctly alludes to what he calls Igbo being in line with ohazurume. In Igbo being communalism defines being as the reality of both the individual and the group or community, so much so that the individual. Hence, the philosophy of ohazurume is a total involvement of realities in reality, the total involvement of peoples in people, the total involvement of places in place, the total involvement of languages in language, the total involvement of actions in action. Ohazurume is a total involvement because as communalism, it has unifying strength.

Ohazurume as a function of reality typifies the organic integrality whose significance lies in the univocality. Such a function of reality typologizes a being whose definition cannot be communalism. Communalism ideologizes a community being that has integrated individual beings in such a way that no individual reality, either in whole or in parts, is an island entire of itself. Every individual reality, either in whole or in parts, is an island entire of itself. Every individual reality, either in whole or in parts, is related to the community being to every individual reality. It looks like a paradox, but only the Igbo being can make such a reconciliation. Reality defined in terms of communalism is invariably, such that integrally organizes the meanings of persons, places or things, by unit- functional relations of such persons, places or things.

Onebunne's *One-bu-nne* Metaphysics

A nameless thing may not exist if namelessness is not even a name itself. Therefore name is profoundly ontological to existence and living. Philosophy of a name is properly understood within the metaphysics of a name as a concept. The four cardinal and fundamental questions of philosophy as who, what, when and where point at and border much on a name as a nomenclature. Name as such resolves all interrogatives that question our being and more all existential realities. That is, name and naming answer every crucial question that borders much on existential realities. This is why any attempt to respond to existential realities defines reality ontically with a particular name as identity. Therefore, as a fundamental concept of existential human operation, name is *ontosophical* as it provides the quidity and or way of the being of things, rediscovering and defining a *being-there*. This is why a name is not just a label for the sake of identity. This is thrust of analytic and linguistic philosophers as philosophers of language.

One-bu-nne, as a proper name, was the celebrated-welcoming name given to my grandfather at his eventful birth. According to Laurence Goldstein (2010:84) proper names are names of individual persons, places and things and they are designed for the purpose of making reference to particulars. My great grandfather had 6 issues who died immediately after birth. So, for nearly 12 years the couple had no issue and then comes my grandfather. The birth of my grandfather as the 7th issue, therefore, necessitated the name *One-bu-nne*, that is, which one is true, literally meaning *nkea obu eziokwu na o ga-adiri*, literally understood as: *will this one survive*. It was a kind of curious and inquisitive expressing of fear gladdened with hope on the survival of a child that was born after series of successive deaths of his siblings. *One-bu-nne* as a name simply doubts and questions the possibility of an expected survival. However, the name *One-bu-nne* was simply questioning the obvious as well as appreciating hopefully the reality before them.

However, name as we know is ontological to the person-bearer and the being in question, if you like, the reality of the person being named. *One-bu-nne* given to my grandfather was his proper and his peculiar name, albeit, they were questioning whether my grandfather will actually survive knowing full well that all other issues before him died immediately after birth. *One-bu-nne* as a nomenclature questions reality and truth before them. *One-bu-nne* is a kind of doubt-expression as result of

past experience. So, *One-bu-nne* was like questioning *a reality before them* probably with every doubtful-possibility as a result of their past experience of course.

One-bu-nne has been a proper name that has garnered over decade of years the status of a family name. *One-bu-nne* is a concept of three words (*One-bu-nne*) directly questioning the veracity of a reality before questioner (interrogator). However, *One-bu-nne* literally asks: *one bu eziokwu?* That is, which one is true? Using the method hermeneutics the researcher tries to show that the concept *One-bu-nne* is an effort in questioning and at the same time appreciating reality-there as true within the birth circumstance of a child whom the parents have grievous fear that he might die as other six siblings before him. Nevertheless *Onebunne* survive very apt and true to his name. *Onebunne's* survival was a positive response to the positive question of *nkea o ga-abu nne?*

One-bu-nne or *One-bunne* is a compound word that is synonymous with *Olewunne* as well as *Olebunne*. That is, the *ole* or *one* is a matter of linguistic-dialect depending who may be speaking. And it literally questions: *How many?* It is a matter of number or figure of calculation. It demands the numerical strength as such. But in a special sense, *one* or *ole* here demands rather than smacks of numerical value remains a question of identity. It tries to single out the reality and its existential possibility. *Bu* or *wu* is translated *is*. It is the verb to be. Equally, *bu-nne* or *wu-nne* is as result of same linguistic-dialect differences that questions: *Is it true?* *Bu-nne* or *Wu-nne* questions directly the reality at how with much confidence and necessary doubt of course. In the case at hand they know that either child dies or the child lives. The question of course tolerates every possibility related to the survival or demise of the child. Some people mistook *Onebunne* as relating to motherhood: *How many are mothers*. Far from it. *Nne* in the context of *Onebunne* connotes *truth*. Hence, one can question: *O nne!* that is, *Is it True!* In African Metaphysics, *One-bu-nne* questions reality as it searches for truth in reality as reality. Truth is a concept that cuts across every facet of reality that is life and living as such. Truth seems to be sought in every human endeavour. This complemented Aristotle's classical correspondence view thus "to say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true". As a human enterprise truth connects every reality with each other. This is why the truth of life is not different from truth of science and logical endeavours.

Human Person as a *Being in Belongingness*

The human person remains the central focus, the primary, the revolving object and the subject matter in the understanding of African communalism and its defining principles. Other things are secondary and are decisively indirect of human beings in the theory of African communalism. This human person in question has different degrees of constitution ranging from relational to absolute constitution and understanding. However, Iroegbu synthesizes the constitutional elements of a human person as "substantiality, relationality and transcendence." Substantiality is defined as "...the *it-self* dimension that is self-imposing, autonomous and incommunicable." Here lies the person's autonomy, knowledge and freedom- the core of the personality

of a human person. Iroegbu's constitutional elements of a human person are understood in line with their operations.

Relationality operates on the level of others-oriented, a communicable part of the human person. This is important in defining a person's real personality. Self-transcendence has to do with one's ability to abstract within the community's reality and beyond as a result of the interplay between substantiality and relationality. "Self-transcendence implies that there is a self that tries to transcend to fullest self." The person that belongs to a community is conceptually understood as sharing in the community related issues. And in our treatise, belongingness is to be understood as a defining principle in African communalism with human person, and his elemental constitutions that are very central. African communalism, therefore, rests on the bedrock of interaction of human persons in a community. Hence, "the personal being in its ultimatum tends necessarily towards communion as its natural fulfilment. This is self-transcendence. In the operation of self-transcendence, the total self is realized."⁶⁴ Every bit of this operational realization or integration of human person, which is (apt in) belonging is within a community. A human person in this socio-relational and transcendental understanding remains within the nexus of relational abilities that is "the meeting point of the physical and the metaphysical." By this expression, this scholar essayed his best to show that there is a nexus amongst the physical, psychological and spiritual constitution with regard to human constitution.

This human person in question that has belongingness as his or her definitive principle in African communalism, however, finds his or her meaning, that is his *kpim*, on the basis of relationship between self (selfhood), community (umunna) and transcendence. This is the *kpim* of the human person. Iroegbu, P. (2000, 37) stressed on this network of relationship thus,

We can synthesize the relationship among the three elements of the human person thus: the communal element in the take-off of the being of the person, immediately, its other side is the self-hood... In the communal and self-hood there is what we can describe as a being-with and a being-apart.

Conclusion

It is no more disputable whether African scholars or philosophers existed earlier or within the time of their Western counterparts. Most of their books contain and dwell on concepts that are related to and can be re-interpreted in a large sense to mean being in African studies and appreciation. Most of these texts and philosophical writings, while dealing with different African concepts relating to being or belongingness, reiterate that philosophical enterprise existed hundreds of years before the first known and popularly acknowledged Greek philosopher, Alexander Thales of 700 BC (However, we must acknowledge with every sense of academic humility, that, there was a twist in the history of philosophy with regard to who is the first philosopher and where did formal philosophy first start. The texts in consideration solve the dilemma

whether it was Thales or someone else, T. Obenga's work buttressed this fact). Of course, he might have been recognized as the first historical dignity of all Western philosophers" in their chronology but never can he be regarded as the first world historic-philosophical figure. History attests to these facts. Going through philosophical and historical epochs, the question and engagements were different manifestations and relations of being. Whether such was obvious in the Greek or Western philosophers' enterprise and latent in the African philosophers remains a big question. But we must recall that the formal object of metaphysics is being, that is whatever is, in so far as it exists. And this being question or ontology preoccupied most of those African philosophers in their different perspectives.

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