

## **AFRICAN RELATIONAL METAPHYSICS AS A CATALYST FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN NIGERIA**

**Gabriel Asuquo**

College of Social and Management Sciences

Achievers University, Owo

Gabrielmarcel76@yahoo.com/asuquogabriel@achievers.edu.ng

**and**

**Musa Augustine Ibrahim**

Department of Philosophy

Good Shepherd Major Seminary, Kaduna

Minelradiographer023@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

This paper seeks to argue that African relational metaphysics can serve as a catalyst to sustainable peace in Nigeria. Over the years, Nigeria has been confronted with a lot of hydra-headed problems ranging from violent conflicts to kidnappings, banditry, cultism, and insurgencies, etc, which have rendered Nigeria somewhat unsafe both for her citizens and foreigners; simply put, there is an absence of peace. Nigeria, like other African countries faced with a similar reality, has been in search of the means of recovering and establishing its own cultural- historical existence almost 70 years after colonial rule. This, however, is yet to yield the desired fruit. Therefore, for Nigeria to achieve sustainable peace, there is an urgent need to revisit her understanding and applicability of our African metaphysical preconditioning which influences our outlook on life, human person, and even the entire community, that enable our forebears to uphold high ethical values. This becomes germane because contemporary Nigeria is suffering from the concomitant effect of western colonial metaphysical orientation that is monistic, fixative, exclusive, antagonizing, and oppositional, which have created a bifurcated, dichotomized, and marginalized social ontology. The impact of all these is the precarious situation Nigerians

have found themselves in. Therefore, using the analytical and expository method of philosophical research, the paper makes a case that Nigerians need to recover, critique, and apply African relational metaphysics as a catalyst for more sustainable peace in Nigeria. The import of this finding is that African relational metaphysics is inclusive, integrative, and complementary. It upholds the values of social solidarity, good relation, and the sacredness of life. These are what contemporary Nigeria needs to unify the various centrifugal elements that make its society. However, on a critical note, the paper suggests that Nigeria needs to find a way to combine the best lessons that African relational metaphysics has to offer, with progressive modern norms and standards (especially for the protection of human rights) to pursue sustainable peace in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Metaphysics, African, Catalyst, Peace, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

Over the years, Nigeria has been confronted with a lot of hydra-headed problems ranging from violent conflicts to kidnappings, banditry, cultism and insurgencies, militancy, to mention but a few, which have rendered Nigeria somewhat unsafe both for her citizens and foreigners; simply put, there is absence of peace. It is easier to say that the nation is at a near state of collapse, since it seems all the machineries put in place to safeguard the lives of the Nigerian citizenry and restore peace and order are not working optimally. History has it that there has not been and cannot be any meaningful development of any nation entrapped within the shackles of conflicts and insecurity. While some will swiftly attribute the blame to colonization and neo-colonization of the people, others will safely link it to loss of our traditional and cultural values and sense of metaphysical realities and interventions on which anchors the peace Nigeria<sup>1</sup> has enjoyed even before the colonial masters pitched their tent on the Nigerian soil. Nonetheless, having realized the necessity of peace, and in this time more than ever- sustainable peace, as the sine qua non for meaningful development, Nigeria like other African countries faced with

---

<sup>1</sup>. Nigeria is conceived here as separate independent entities that existed before the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorate

similar reality, has been in search of the means of recovering and establishing its own cultural- historical existence, almost 70 years after colonial rule. This however is yet to yield the desired fruit.

Africa has a living tradition, which is enviably rich, full of inspiration and vitality, but remains a treasure largely unexplored in her continued quest for integration and ceaseless drive towards nationhood and sustainable peace-building. That valuable and precious wealth of her metaphysical realities, and the proper balancing and blending of all its ingredients towards proper functioning of nature and society, is also seemingly unknown to the contemporary African society.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, for Nigeria to achieve sustainable peace, there is an urgent need to revisit her understanding and applicability of our African metaphysical preconditioning that informs our understanding of life, human person, and even the entire community, which influences our lives and character greatly. This will be possible by first, identifying this metaphysical preconditioning or orientation, analyze them, and then contextualize them into the framework of the contemporary Nigerian situation. In other words, Nigeria needs to discover and recover her existential phenomenology which is relational in outlook. Thus, it is in this regard that this paper, using the analytic and expository research method, seeks to argue for African relational metaphysics as catalyst for sustainable peace in Nigeria.

### **Nature and Content of African Metaphysics**

African philosophy has often been interpreted as that philosophy of the black-skinned people of Africa, which Celestine Mbaegbu identifies as the inhabitants of the South of the Sahara.<sup>3</sup> So, in the context of this paper, African metaphysics is referred to the metaphysical treatises peculiar to the tribes in Africa whose inhabitants are black-skinned. In other words, the notion of 'African metaphysics' refers to the doctrines, worldviews,

---

<sup>2</sup>. Francis Etim, "African Metaphysics" *Journal of Asian Scientific Research* 3, no. 1, (2013): 16

<sup>3</sup>. Celestine Mbaegbu, "Currents of African Philosophy and Praxis" *Journal of the Nigerian Philosophical Association* no. 4 (2008), 77

and belief system that characterizes the unique way that Africans in the south of the Sahara sees reality or being.<sup>4</sup>

Fundamentally, the nature of African metaphysics is ontologically hierarchical. The African man sees everything in the hierarchy of beings. At the apex is the creator, Supreme Being known as *Abasi Ibom* among the Ibibio/Efik, *Oludumare* by the Yoruba, *Chineke* or *Chukwu* in Igbo and *Ubangiji* among the Hausa.<sup>5,6</sup> Next are the deities and divinities, then ancestors, human beings and other beings. This categorization, according to Iroegbu, is vertical and not pyramidal.<sup>7</sup> While Ayoade's description of Yoruba ontology conforms to the above mentioned hierarchy, he however situates God at the top of the hierarchy but at the same time presents *Orunmila*(the god of divination) as the intermediary between human beings and the spiritual world.<sup>8</sup> Also, Edeh's *Igbo Metaphysics* presents being in two worlds: the cosmic world and the spirit-world. These worlds underscore his categories of reality.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Iroegbu's *Uwa Ontology* talks about the connotations of *Uwa*, namely, life (existence), cosmos, field of action (world of hunters), time and space, destiny, (Good world of good destination, fate (Bad-world), condition (world of difficulties), Tragedy (tragic lite), Age; limit (children's world), nature (the worlds of trees, rivers and stars), persons (people, children of the world), Nation (the world with people we deal with), Earth (land or universe), and *Uwa* (Totality).<sup>10</sup> Looking at the hierarchical structure of beings as Etim observes, man appears the dominant spirit among the created visible spirits. God is the source and the highest vital

<sup>4</sup>. Asuquo Gabriel, "Juxtaposition of Western, Oriental and African Metaphysical Orientations", *Aquinos - Journal of Philosophy*, 1, No. 3 (2021)

<sup>5</sup>. Etim, "African Metaphysics," 13

<sup>6</sup>. Alex Nenge, "Names of God in Hausa language and their meanings" Read more: <https://www.legit.ng/1184912-names-god-hausa-language-meanings.html>

<sup>7</sup>. Pantaleon Iroegbu, *Enwisdomization and African Philosophy* (Owerri: International Universities Press, 1994), 298

<sup>8</sup>. John A Ayoade, "Time in Yoruba Thought" *In African Philosophy: An Introduction* Richard Wright ed. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Lanham University Press of America, 1984), 304

<sup>9</sup>. Emmanuel Edeh, *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), 69-91

<sup>10</sup>. Iroegbu, *Enwisdomization*, 339-340

force followed by the divinities and ancestors (the living dead,) in the invisible realm.<sup>11</sup> The Africans also give room to the physical but only as a secondary consequence. No being, however, exists in isolation but ontologically in connection and interaction with other beings (both animate and inanimate). Hence, for Africans, as demonstrated by recent studies in African metaphysics, being is not necessarily 'whatever is' as a solitary entity but as being in a web of mutual intrinsic complementary, interconnected and interdependent relationship.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Concept of Relation in African Metaphysics**

The idea of relation in African metaphysics is based on the fact that beings are all connected and interrelated, and not solitary substances. This is what Molefe called “holism,” a view that construed all reality as interrelated and interconnected.<sup>13</sup> In this light, Bujo observes that “Africans do not think in 'either/or', but rather in 'both/and' categories”.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, Verhoef, an American scholar, observes that in the African tradition, “Everything: God, ancestors, humans, animals, plants and inanimate objects, are connected, interdependent, interpenetrate, and interrelated.”<sup>15</sup> On this ontological system, reality is understood essentially in relational terms: things live and thrive only in relationships. For Maurier, relation is the fundamental category that defines African metaphysics. This implies that relatedness is an axiomatic and definitive feature of African metaphysics. As a necessary axiomatic pre-condition of definition, relatedness creates little or no logical room for a polarizing or dichotomous exclusivity without interconnectivity. The reality of African metaphysics is that the system, in a holistic sense, considers 'multiplicities' as 'one' which is inseparably

---

<sup>11.</sup> Etim, “African Metaphysics,” 15

<sup>12.</sup> See Innocent Asuozu, Ibuyidanda: New Complementary Ontology

<sup>13.</sup> Motsamai Molefe, “African Metaphysics and Religious Ethics” *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 7, No. 3. (2018), 23

<sup>14.</sup> Benezet Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic: Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), 3

<sup>15.</sup> Verhoef And Michel 1997, 395 cited in Motsamai Molefe, “African Metaphysics and Religious Ethics” *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 7, No. 3. (2018), 23

linked together. Thus, 'everything' that 'is', serves as a missing link that must complement in relational manner, otherwise, it is nothingness.<sup>16</sup> From the hierarchical system to the cosmos, the world is linked together. To further buttress the inter-relational nature of African metaphysics, Anyanwu points out clearly the harmonious interdependence between the self and the world. According to him,

The African has the feeling of dependence: on family, community, friends and groups. He realizes that his dependence on them is incomplete or embodies some uncertainties because none of these dependent forces can satisfy all the expectations of the individual. Only through faith in God or dependence on Him can he be free of disappointment. Living in a community, the African believes that there are mysterious forces surrounding him.<sup>17</sup>

These mysterious forces lay credence to the mutual connections between being and thought, the physical and the spiritual, the ideal and the real. For the Africans, these are not mutually excluded but they interpenetrate and are interdependent on the other.

More so, Esen avers that “the mind that thinks in hierarchical modes and categories rather than in single, isolated individualistic phenomenon, the mind that perceives relationship between things and analyze situation in terms of cause and effect, balance and conflict must be scientific, logical and analytic.”<sup>18</sup> This relational metaphysical orientation or preconditioning which was fully at home in pristine African Society is what informs Africans' understanding of nature, life, the human person and the community.

---

<sup>16.</sup> See Asuozu, *Ibuanyidanda*

<sup>17.</sup> E. A. Ruch and K. C. Anyanwu, *African Philosophy. An Introduction to the main philosophical trends in contemporary Africa*, (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1981), 163

<sup>18.</sup> Esen, A.J.A., *Ibibio Profile* (Calabar. Pacific Press, 1982), 94

## **African Relational Metaphysics and African Understanding of Life, Human Person and the Community**

### ***African Understanding of Life***

It is very interesting to note that the African understanding of life is quite different from that of the western world. Whereas the western concept of life is embedded in their respect for individualism, the African lives life as a community (with others in a group, tribe or clan). There is no individualism or privacy accepted in the community. Another obvious aspect of African view of life is the concept of human life in relation to time presented by Mbiti. This concept sees life as a rhythm or cycle which includes birth, puberty, initiation, marriage, procreation, old age, death, entry into the community of the departed and finally entry into the company of the spirits, which is been reborn into the world of humans (Reincarnation).<sup>19</sup> This implies that God created man with the potentialities of passing through these stages of life. Every human being must go through them, although they vary according to cultures and time. For the African (in his community or village), human life is sacred and must be preserved, defended, supported and enhanced as a matter of priority above everything else.<sup>20</sup>

It is important to note that the sanctity of human life is based on the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Waruta makes this comment about the *imago Dei*: “Human beings are created in God's image, and that, whenever human life is undermined or destroyed, God seeks ways of restoring it within the village”.<sup>21</sup> In other words, those who engage in the task of restoring the wholeness of human life are co-workers with God in the primary task of perfecting divine creation. By contrast, Kobia emphasizes that “the fullness of life shared by all created things is experienced in the harmony of the interdependence, and in their common

---

<sup>19</sup>. John Mbiti, *African Religions And Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969),24

<sup>20</sup>. Make Masango, "The African concept of caring for life." (HTS 63) (2005), 916

<sup>21</sup>. D. W Waruta, & W.H Kinoti, *Pastoral Care in African Christianity: Challenging Essays in Pastoral Theology* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers.2000),16

dependence on God, the ground of all being”.<sup>22</sup> Another vital understanding of life by Africans is that summarized by Njoku in four points as follows: First, God is the originator of life, the creator of man, the universe and the sustainer of creation. Second, the ancestors play an important role in the communal life. They are not cut off from the living, for they may still reveal themselves in dreams or appear to their living relatives to guide or correct them. Third, life is a communal affair. It involves a relationship and communion between man, God, ancestors, divinities, other men and the land. This relationship must be based on certain rules and regulations for it to succeed.<sup>23</sup>

### ***African Understanding of Human Person***

The African understanding of personhood revolves predominantly around a communalistic understanding of the self. Since the colonial era, there has been a consistent elaboration of the “we existence” ontology of person which trumps the primacy and subjectivity of the ego as against the western liberal individualism.<sup>24</sup> As Mboya observes, “A person is an individual only to the extent that he is a member of a clan, a community or a family.”<sup>25</sup> What this implies is that there are no real individuals without others, a community or a group. This buttresses the fact that the community is an unavoidable criterion for the existence of the individuals and the notion of man as essentially a social category, a being in community, a man with others. Little wonder Mbiti posit that “*The individual can only say: 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am'. This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man*”.<sup>26</sup> In fact, Kuckertz puts it like this: “African

<sup>22</sup> Kobia, Samuel. *The Courage to Hope: The Roots for a New Vision and the Calling of the Church in Africa*. Geneva: World Council of Churches. Vol. 218 pages. (Geneva: : WCC Publications, 2003), 9

<sup>23</sup> Francis Njoku, *Essays in African Philosophy, Thought and Theology* . (Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy, 2002): 167 – 168

<sup>24</sup> Pual Nnodim “The Concept of Person in African Philosophy” In Eberhard Guhe and Stephan Gratzel, *Life, Body, Person and Self: A Reconsideration of Core Concepts in Bioethics from an Intercultural Perspective* (Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber, 2016), 83

<sup>25</sup> Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After* (London: Andre Deutsche, 1963), 164-165

<sup>26</sup> Mbiti, *African Religion*, 108

thought and philosophy on personhood and self is that the “I” belongs to the I-You-correspondence as a stream of lived experience without which it could not be thought and would not exist.”<sup>27</sup> This I-You or I-We relationship is intrinsic within the African understanding of the self and the other. The self is conscious because of the other and the other is made meaningful by the self. It is a symbiotic relationship that exists within a framework of mutuality, reciprocity and accommodation.

Placid Tempels believes that man is a social being because he is of the view that “the Bantu cannot be a lone-being; it is not a good enough synonym for them to say that he is a social being. No, he feels and knows himself to be vital force, at this very time to be in intimate and personal relationship with other forces acting above him and below him in the hierarchy of forces”.<sup>28</sup> In short, for him, “The living Muntu is in relation of being to being with God, with his clan brethren, with his family and with his descendants. He is in a similar ontological relationship with his patrimony, his land with all that it contains or produces, with all that grows or lives on it”.<sup>29</sup> This can be summed up by saying that human person, in the African understanding, is therefore a social being, a community being, a being with others and not a solitary being or a lone-ranger.

Another important general understanding of the human person in African metaphysics is the position that the human person has both material and immaterial aspects. However, Abakedi has observed that, as to the constituents of the human nature, there are disparities. For instance, Gyekye talks about soul (Okra), *Sunsun* (Spirit) and *Honhom*(body); Kwasi Wiredu identifies five different elements: soul (Okra), *Sunsun* (character), body (*Nipadua*), genes from the father (Mom) and blood from the mother (*Mogya*) to become ghost at death. For Edeh, it is simply body (*ahu*) and soul which is regarded either as *Mkpulaobi* (nut or seed of

---

<sup>27</sup> H. Kuckertz, “Selfhood and its Reason to Be” In P.H Malherbbe (ed.) *Decolonizing the Mind*, Proceedings from the Second colloquium of African Philosophy (Pretoria, Department of Philosophy, Unisa, 1996), 62

<sup>28</sup> Placid Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy* (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1959), 103

<sup>29</sup> Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 103

the heart) and *Muo* (the unseen, immaterial man).<sup>30</sup> It was More, who perhaps shows the way out of this difficulty. According to him (at least in the case of Sotho people), the spiritual is not thought of as 'some inner force, a mysterious or ghost-like inner power or hidden operations of an occult power which governs the individual's various general behavior.' His interpretation is behaviouristic in nature, not the postulation of entities in terms of metaphysical speculation, but what concepts refer to in actual communication.<sup>31</sup> While, the human person may be seen from a tripartite perspective or a dual perspective, one thing that is fundamental is that these parts so identified by Edeh, Gyekye and Wiredu are not mutually exclusive. They are the integrated parts that make up the human person as a 'composite whole'. The material parts connect the human person to the material world while the immaterial (vital force) connect it to the transcendental realm. Therefore, the material and the immaterial interpenetrate and the human person is the embodiment of this relationship.<sup>32</sup>

### ***African Understanding of Community***

We have established earlier that the human person is a social being, a being in community, a man with others. It suffices to say that community serves as the foundation upon which the individual is built and gives the individual the framework, indeed the only framework in which he/she exists. In short, Mboya states it clearly: "A person is an individual only to the extent that he is a member of a clan, a community or a family".<sup>33</sup> What this implies is that there are no real individuals, without others, a community or a group. Community in the light of African people is a united group of people that work collectively in order to construct an

---

<sup>30.</sup> Dominic E. Abakedi, "African Metaphysics: General Traits" In A.F Uduigwomen (Ed.), *Metaphysics: A Book of Readings* (Calabar: Ultimate Index, 2012), 400

<sup>31.</sup> M.P More "Review of A. Shutte, *Philosophy in Africa*" *South African Journal of Philosophy* 15, No. 4, (1996), 153

<sup>32.</sup> Asuquo Gabriel, "African Value and Institutional Reform for sustainable development in Africa". *International Journal of Humanities and Innovation (IJHI)* Vol. 2 No. 4, 2019 p. 142

<sup>33.</sup> Tom Mboya, *Freedom and After* (London: Andre Deutsche, 1963), 164-165

interdependent society living together in harmony.<sup>34</sup> These communities are very important to African society because they allow the different people to interact and assist one another in times of need. In Africa, community is the essence of life; community gives definition and value. The community was the centre of focus and its interest paramount, compared to the individual. Although, Ugwu and Asuquo opine that the individual still has a place in the African community and it is a fundamental part of the community.<sup>35</sup>

An individual in the traditional African context cannot exist alone without the community, and as a result, a community becomes necessary for a person to function in an all-inclusive manner. The history of a person's life is the story of his/her transaction with the community's material and moral worlds, which in effect, is the story of his/her relations with particular sets of social goods.<sup>36</sup> An African person is therefore a collective being in the community and is thus dependent on the community. It is from the community that a person acquires values and ethics at a young age in order for them to be responsible and active members of society in future. One important thing worthy of note is that the African people have no place for rugged individualism but communally tend to support each other especially in hard times such as the death of a community member. This is a classical expression of Ubuntu: "a person is a person through other persons" or Mbiti's "I am because we are, since we are, therefore I am". For instance, when a person passes on in a traditional African culture, the whole community becomes affected and subsequently finds ways to support with the burial by assisting the family in consoling and providing financial support. This explains the fact that the whole life of the African people is communalistic; everything is done together and for the general good of the people.

---

<sup>34</sup>. Ifeany Menkiti *Person and Community in African traditional thought* (1984), 180

<sup>35</sup>. Anayochukwu Kingsley Ugwu and Gabriel Asuquo, "The Challenges of African Communitarianism in the 21 Century: An Igbo Perspective". *NAJOP: Nasara Journal of Philosophy Vol. 7, No.1 pp.82-85*

<sup>36</sup>. Pieter H. Coetzee, (ed.) "Morality in African Thought" In *The African Philosophy Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 274

## **African Relational Metaphysics as a Catalyst for Sustainable Peace in Nigeria**

Having perused through the connections of African metaphysical preconditions and how they influence Africans' relational outlook on life, human person, and the community, it is necessary to explore how these can serve as a catalyst for sustainable peace in Nigeria. This becomes pertinent since some or most of the modern machineries put in place for this mission are proving fruitless. Before we proceed into that, it is important we have a sense of what is making contemporary Nigeria prone to violence, chaos, and sociopolitical unrest. Though many scholars have attributed Nigeria's sociopolitical unrest to many factors. Some have submitted that it is due to our colonial situation,<sup>37</sup> religion and ethnicity,<sup>38</sup> youth unemployment,<sup>39</sup> and mono-economy.<sup>40</sup> These factors are symptomatic of a more profound metaphysical disconnection of the Nigerian from his pristine metaphysical orientations. The metaphysical orientation that is operational in Nigeria is colonial and western, which is rooted in the bifurcation and dichotomization of the binary of reality. It is rooted in an oppositional understanding of the binary. Things grow to the extents they are fit to negate their opposites, as such, this metaphysical orientation is fixative, exclusive, monistic and antagonistic in outlook.<sup>41</sup> This western metaphysical orientation that contemporary Nigeria have imbibed is what is responsible for all the sociopolitical unrest because it gives rise to an exclusivist and adversarial social ontology. Therefore, Nigerians need to recover, critique and apply their African metaphysical

---

<sup>37.</sup> Peter P. Ekeh, "Colonialism and Social Structure" - An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan on Thursday, 5 June 1980. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1983

<sup>38.</sup> Amobi P. Chiamogu and Uchechukwu P. Chiamogu, "Ethnicity, Religion and Governance in Africa: Analyzing the Nigerian Situation". *Global Scientific Journal: Volume 8, Issue 8*, August 2020

<sup>39.</sup> Ngozi Nwogwugwu, and Godwin Ndubuisi Irechukwu, "Socio-Political Implications of Youth Unemployment on Nigeria's Economic Development", *IOSR Journal of Economics and Finance (IOSR-JEF)* 6, no. 4, (2015), 27-34

<sup>40.</sup> Julius-Adeoye Rantimi Jays, "Nigerian Economy, Social Unrest and the Nation's Popular Drama". *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences* Volume 2, No. 2.3 Quarter III 2011

<sup>41.</sup> Jim Unah, *Even Nothing is Something* (Lagos: University of Lagos Press. 2006)

preconditioning in order to navigate their pathway in the context of modernity. This implies that Nigerians need to embrace their African relational metaphysical preconditioning with its attendant outlook on life, the human person and the community for sustainable peace.

### **Community as a Catalyst for Sustainable Peace**

It was John Kennedy in his inaugural speech of 1961 who told Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.<sup>42</sup> What he was asking of the Americans is actually what was peculiar with and imbedded in the traditional African community. In a typical African community, an individual right from his earliest age, is made aware not only of his reliance on his community but also of the need to make his own contribution to the group to which he owes much.<sup>43</sup> In fact, as Okere observes, in Africa, the individual cannot achieve much in life without the support of other members of society.<sup>44</sup> Nigeria needs to revisit the nature of her African community which is a social structure where all individuals formed a community with their fellow men and women and their actions were conditioned by this fact. So, the need for community arises from a number of reasons. Apart from helping to give the individual the needed sense of security, “it enables economic life to be more efficiently organized; it helps promote national unity, and allows for inequalities to be countered.”<sup>45</sup> In other words, society (i.e. community) exists to further individual interests and social wellbeing. The African community is an integrated community where everybody belongs and contributes to the general wellbeing of the community. In fact, Ihuah states that:

This idea of communal living prevalent in Africa has intrinsic value; it is a product of African humanism which is concerned

---

<sup>42</sup> John F. Kennedy, “Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You” Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961, Accessed May 12, 2022, at <https://www.ushistory.org/documents/ask-not.htm>

<sup>43</sup> Christopher Agulanna, “Community and Human Well-being In an African Culture” *TRAMES* 14, no.3 (2010) 290

<sup>44</sup> Theophilus Okere, *Philosophy, Culture and Society in Africa* (Nsukka: Afro-Orbis Publications, 2005), 3

<sup>45</sup> Andrew Heywood, *Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 135-136

with the preservation of life because life is his or her ultimate concern, and that life more meaningfully grows in solidarity with other members of the community... Therefore, African personhood exudes an ethic of existence that is organically embodied in a series of associations and activities that portrays life as fully valuable only in those close ties.<sup>46</sup>

Elucidating the intrinsic value of African community living as a tie that assures solidarity for human flourishing, Achebe highlights that “we come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so.”<sup>47</sup> So, a core African harmonizes both the individual and the communal life for authentic living. Nigerians need this type of integration to achieve a collective sustainable peace. The society must look inward toward integrating her members in the “spirit of the community,” a kind of spirit that seeks to add meaning, essence and growth to the community. It is a kind of “force” in which individual interest is subsumed in the interest of the community. In the African communal ways, those within it are allowed to feel at peace and at ease in their lives. For many, their home communities are the only ones they have known or will ever know. They have their space, place, and voice within those communities, and they know how to relate to the others within them. Most individuals within the African community recognize their place and responsibility. They realize the importance of their tasks and they work hard to accomplish them. A woman may be responsible for gathering food and preparing it for the family, a child may gather water each day, a young boy may take care of the cattle, or a man may work in the fields. Each job is equally important to the community. As each member of the community carries out their tasks, the community stays united.

## Conclusion

Peace is not just the absence of war but also the presence of social

---

<sup>46</sup>. Ihuah, S.A. “Interrogating the Concept of Personhood in African Thought: Beyond the Communitarian Debate” *Thought and Action Journal of Philosophy*, 1, no.1, (2022), 10

<sup>47</sup>. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*. (William Heinemann Publishers, 1959), 55

solidarity. African relational metaphysics emphasizes the interconnectedness of individual members of the community because it is inclusive and integrative in outlook. It promotes a social ontology that places premium on social solidarity. This social solidarity of the community is the substratum that has kept traditional African society moving before the colonial era. This, as explained above, is presented in the notion of the human person, nature of life, and the community. Nigeria is almost at the brink of collapse due to a large number of violence, hatred, misunderstanding and even marginalization. There seems to be no peace. This work has however, shown that African relational metaphysics has a lot to offer in salvaging Nigeria from this state of comatose, by serving as a catalyst for sustainable peace. It has the capacity to revolutionize our consciousness with a concomitant effect that will result to national healing and reconciliation, which creates the basis for reestablishing social solidarity for peaceful coexistence among the various elements that make up the Nigerian society. There is the need therefore, for Nigeria to find a way to combine the best lessons that tradition and relational metaphysics has to offer with progressive modern norms and standards (especially for the protection of human rights) to pursue sustainable peace in Nigeria. Progressive cultural principles which promote human dignity and the well-being of the individual and society can provide valuable insights into how Nigeria can be peacefully reconstructed by using its own indigenous value systems which emphasize promoting social solidarity. In sum, promoting social solidarity means confronting corruption and promoting power sharing, and peaceful coexistence in Nigeria.

### **Bibliography**

- Abakedi, Dominic E. "African Metaphysics: General Traits" In A.F Uduigwomen(Ed.), *Metaphysics: A Book of Readings*. Calabar: Ultimate Index, 2012.
- Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. William Heinemann Publishers, 1959.
- Agulanna, Christopher. "Community and Human Well-being in an African Culture" *TRAMES* 14, no.3 (2010): 282–298

- Amobi, P. Chiamogu and Uchechukwu P. Chiamogu, "Ethnicity, Religion and Governance in Africa: Analyzing the Nigerian Situation". *Global Scientific Journal* 8, no. 8, (2020)
- Anayochukwu, Kingsley Ugwu and Asuquo, Gabriel, "The Challenges of African Communitarianism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: An Igbo Perspective". *NAJOP: Nasara Journal of Philosophy* 7, no.1, (2022)
- Asouzu, I, *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology Beyond World-Immanentism, Ethnocentric Reduction and Impositions*. Calabar: University of Calabar Press, 2007
- Asuquo, Gabriel, "Juxtaposition of Western, Oriental and African Metaphysical Orientations", *Aquinos - Journal of Philosophy* 1, no. 3, (2021).
- Asuquo, Gabriel, "African Value and Institutional Reform for sustainable development in Africa". *International Journal of Humanities and Innovation (IJHI)* 2, no. 4, (2019).
- Ayoade, John A. "Time in Yoruba Thought" In *African Philosophy: An Introduction* Richard Wright ed. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Lanham University Press of America, 1984.
- Blocker, Gene "African Philosophy", [Readings in African Philosophy], S. B. Oluwole (ed). Mastech. Publisher: Lagos. Paperback, 1991.
- Bujo, Benezet. *Foundations of an African Ethic: Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001.
- Coetzee, Pieter H. (ed.) "Morality in African Thought" In *The African Philosophy Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Edeh, Emmanuel. *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985.
- Etim, Francis "African Metaphysics" *Journal of Asian Scientific Research* 3, no. 1, (2013): 11-17.
- Ekeh, Peter P. "Colonialism and Social Structure" - An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan on Thursday, 5 June 1980. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, Nigeria, 1983
- Gratzel, Stephen and Guhe, Eberhard. *Life, Body, Person and Self: A Reconsideration of Core Concepts in Bioethics*. Verlag Karl Alber,

2016

- Guhe, Eberhard and Gratzel, Stephan. *Life, Body, Person and Self: A Reconsideration of Core Concepts in Bioethics from an Intercultural Perspective*. Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber, 2016.
- Heywood, Andrew. *Politics*. London: Macmillan, 1977.
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African>
- Ihuah, S.A. "Interrogating the Concept of Personhood in African Thought: Beyond the Communitarian Debate" *Thought and Action Journal of Philosophy*, 1, no.1, (2022): 10-16.
- Iroegbu, Pantaleon. *Enwisdomization and African Philosophy*. Owerri: International Universities Press, 1994.
- Kennedy, John F. "Ask Not What Your Country Can Do for You" Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961, Accessed May 12, 2022, at <https://www.ushistory.org/documents/ask-not.htm>
- Kuckertz, H. "Selfhood and its Reason to Be" In P.H Malherbbe (ed.) *Decolonizing the Mind*, Proceedings from the Second colloquium of African Philosophy. Pretoria, Department of Philosophy, Unisa, 1996.
- Kuckertz, H. "Selfhood and its Reason to Be" In P.H Malherbbe (ed.) *Decolonizing the Mind*, Proceedings from the Second colloquium of African Philosophy. Pretoria, Department of Philosophy, Unisa, 1996.
- Masango, Make. "The African concept of caring for life." (HTS 63) 2005.
- Mbaegbu, Celestine. "Currents of African *Philosophy and Praxis*" *Journal of the Nigerian Philosophical Association* no. 4, (2008): 67-92.
- Mbiti, John. *African Religions And Philosophy*. London: Heinemann, 1969.
- Mboya, Tom. *Freedom and after*. London: Andre Deutsche, 1963.
- Menkiti, Ifeanyi. *Person and Community in African Traditional Thought*In R.A. Wright (ed). *African Philosophy: An Introduction* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York University Press of America, 1984.
- "Metaphysics" Microsoft Encarta 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008. "Peace" *Online Etymology*

*Dictionary* Accessed May 5, 2022, at <https://www.etymonline.com/word/peace>

Molefe, Motsamai. "African Metaphysics and Religious Ethics" *FilosofiaTheoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 7, no. 3 (2018).

Murithi, Tim. A Pepper Presented at the International Conference on Strategies for Peace with Development in Africa: The Role of Education, Training and Research on *African Approaches to Building Peace and Social Solidarity* Addis Ababa, University for Peace and African Union, 12-14th of June, 2006.

Njoku, Francis. *Essays in African Philosophy, Thought and Theology*. Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy, 2002.

Nnodim, Pual. "The Concept of Person in African Philosophy" In Eberhard Guhe and Stephan Gratzel, *Life, Body, Person and Self: A Reconsideration of Core Concepts in Bioethics from an Intercultural Perspective* (Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber, 2016

Nwogwugwu, Ngozi and Irechukwu, Godwin Ndubuisi "Socio-Political Implications of Youth Unemployment on Nigeria's Economic Development", *IOSR Journal of Economics and Finance (IOSR-JEF)* 6, no. 4.(2015): 27-34

Okere, Theophilus. *Philosophy, Culture and Society in Africa*. Nsukka: Afro-Orbis Publications, 2005.

Rantimi Jays, Julius-Adeoye "Nigerian Economy, Social Unrest and the Nation's Popular Drama". *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences* 2, no. 2 (2011).

Ruch, E. A. and Anyanwu, K. C. *African Philosophy: An Introduction to the Main Philosophical Trends in Contemporary Africa*. Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1981.

Rummel, R. J. "What is Peace?" In *Understanding Conflict and War*: vol. 5: The Just Peace. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1981.

Shutte, A. "Philosophy in Africa" *South African Journal of Philosophy* 15, No. 4, 1996.

Tempels, Placid. *Bantu Philosophy*. Paris: Presence Africaine, 1959.

Tutu, Desmond. *No Future Without Forgiveness*. London: Pinter, 1999.

Unah, Jim, *Even Nothing is Something*. Lagos. University of Lagos

Press. 2006.

Waruta, D. W & Kinoti, W.H. *Pastoral Care in African Christianity: Challenging Essays in Pastoral Theology* Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2000.

World Health Organization (WHO), “Suicide in the World: Global Health Estimate” (2019) cited in Rebecca Akinreme, “Nigeria has highest suicide rate in Africa, sixth globally” *International Center for Investigative Reporting* (9 September, 2019) at <https://www.icirnigeria.org/nigeria-has-highest-suicide-rate-in-africa-sixth-globally/>