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PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NOTION OF THE SELF FOR THE IGBO AND THE WORLD

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ABSTRACT

With the world ever growing into a one-mega global village, it has become necessary for each of the cultural units constituting the global cultural entity to furnish the rest of the world with the proper knowledge of itself, reflecting its own unique cultural perspective. Part of this knowledge would reveal something about the people's identity. To understand a people in this way will definitely impact positively on the unity of the human family. Linguistic expressions in a culture are a gateway to reality as they lay bare their compositions; provide various interpretations, senses, nuances and understandings of a given concept. This has helped to solving the problem of discussing selfhood in Igbo ontology in isolation from Onweonye and other seemingly coeval and cognate terms. Thus, it belongs to the people per se to tell the story of their own uniqueness and identity; when people come to real self-awareness of who they are, such knowledge could become a yardstick against which their self-worth could be determined and how they should related generally. This paper, therefore, hands out the philosophical reflections on the implications of the notion of the self for the Igbo of Southeast Nigeria and the world at large.

Keywords: Self Identity, Philosophical Reflections, Implications, Human Person, Igbo Worldview.

Introduction

The human person is unique in many ways. The discipline of philosophical anthropology focused primarily on the study of man. Such a study has helped to shed some light on the mystery of human personality. The central place given to the human person amidst other entities in the temporal order is important, because the way a human person is understood will definitely define man's destiny and his world. In contrast to animal life, human life is something higher. Thus, any enquiry into human personality would fall short were such a study to concentrate only on the physical aspects of man without adequate consideration for his inner makeup. The physical aspects of man, though necessary, remain something extrinsic and may be subject to alteration. Man's inner constitution remains the core, the fundament upon which his physical aspects are safely anchored. It is the human self that forms the substratum of all physical manifestations in man. There is something intrinsic and spiritual about human personality. This intrinsic, indestructible spiritual entity embodies an element of mystery. Man has a unique plural nature. It is this plurality nature that forms the bedrock of what constitutes the self. For instance, any study along cultural line is important, but may not exhaustively determine the very essence of human personality. The same could be said about the social and the moral considerations. The social aspect places great premium on

human relationships. To be a human person is to have the capacity to relate. This relationship cuts across the human, the temporal and divine levels of communication. The moral dimension of human personality would take the question of human relationship a step further by emphasizing the decorum in which this relationship is to be exercised, and this would demand the performance of responsible human actions. Whereas the political harps on responsible governance for the well being of a political community under the rule of law, the economic would stress equal access to the material conditions of life. However the human self must be protected against any notion that falsely assumes that the self is reducible to any of these aspects relative to man. Over and above the aforementioned aspects in the study of self, the religious dimension essentially stands out. The religious aspect brings out clearly man's inner being or self. It points up man's special relationship with his creator. This is considered a major predisposing factor with respect to man's openness to transcendence. The point of all this is to stress that there would likely follow some serious consequences were the religious aspect to be neglected. Hence our paper on the 'Philosophical Reflections on the implications of the notion of the self for the Igbo' is a wake-up call to the central place of the human person as a being of great value, and oriented toward an end. To start with, we shall examine the concepts of onwe and onweonye as they relate to the self, in brief how the Igbo conceive of the self, this will be followed by the consideration of the various implications of the self for the Igbo. The envisaged implications will be tailored along cultural, social, moral, political, economic, and religious lines. Then we shall cap it up with the conclusion. Let us expatiate on these in turns.

What is the self for the Igbo?

In discussing on what constitutes the self for the Igbo, we shall limit ourselves principally to two Igbo concepts, namely, Onwe and Onweonye. Our approach shall follow the method of hermeneutics. First, we begin with Onwe.

Onwe: Onwe is the Igbo equivalent word for the self. It derives from the Igbo verb, 'nwe' meaning 'to own.' Put in a possessive form: 'onwe m', means my-self. The combination of the two designates the self as a self-owner. Which is to say 'I own myself', and by extension you own yourself, they own themselves. Thus onwe cannot be owned or possessed. Onwe remains an ontological and a metaphysical reality. And it is a free and independent entity. To designate onwe as an ontological and a metaphysical reality means that it is fundamentally an abstract reality and can neither be described nor predicated of other things. Its power of independence means that it can assert itself, its autonomy and freedom. However onwe does not command absolute freedom. It must recognize the freedom of other selves, which implies that it must respect the social and moral boundaries. Summarily put, the Igbo present a self that is ontological and metaphysical, but which is characterized by the features of sociality, communality, and morality.

Onweonye/Personhood: The word that stands for the selfhood-personhood in Igbo ontology is Onweonye. The concept Onweonye is one word but can be broken down into Onwe (selfhood) and onye (personhood) for didactic purposes. Onye usually goes with a question mark. Onye? Meaning who? An ordinary encounter tells this. When someone knocks at the door of the house, the question that readily comes is, 'who is there?' Or as expressed in Igbo, 'Onye nu ebe ahu?' No one would ask a dog, for instance, 'who is there?' This literal meaning of Onweonye can be put in a sentence form, 'the self is a who.' With reason we can say that

personhood is the proper locus for any meaningful discussion of the self in Igbo ontology. Put differently, the ontology of the self is grounded in personhood. Okpalike (2020, 99) reveals what Onweonye is, and how it should be distinguished from the Western thought.
He writes:

... personhood and selfhood could be treated in isolation of each other in western thought. On the other hand, in the integral/profound expression of individuality in Igbo, Onwe and Onye cannot exist in isolation in Igbo understanding of "Mmadụ" (human being). Both together constitute the integral/profound expression of "Mmadụ" as an individual in the universe of other entities. Therefore, Onweonye is the integral/profound expression of the essence of the Igbo existential being. Onweonye is a concept which encompasses the pivotal idea in the understanding of Igbo attitude towards life and living. Onweonye has no corresponding transliteration in English.

The author is explicit in saying that Onwe and onye can never exist in isolation. Which means that Onweonye is not a couplet. By implication the selfhood is not a derivative concept from personhood. The same is true for the individual human being in Igbo ontology. An individual human being in Igbo ontology is captured by the concept, Mmadu. Just like Onweonye, Mmadu is also one word. It may be broken down for teaching purposes. According to Ezedike (2019) in his Journal contribution on ''The concept of human person in African ontology: A Reflection on the Igbo notion of man,'' Mmadu is broken down to Mma and Du respectively meaning 'let there be goodness' or 'let goodness be.' He gives the meaning of Mma as goodness, order, beauty and peace. For 'Du' he designates as the imperative of De or Du meaning to be. He likens Mmadu to Shakespeare's description of man as the paragon of beauty. His conclusion is that man as the summit of creation, that is, gifted with the faculties of intellect and will remains an end in itself, and never a means to an end, and, therefore, should be enabled to achieve happiness and perfection as befits his nature. Essentially, the Igbo capture the human person in its material and immaterial compositions: body and soul or spirit, a duality. It is said that man is part human and part spirit. The spiritual part in the composition of man is especially important. Destiny is involved in Igbo discussion of Personhood. To account for this, the Igbo invoke personal god or chi. Chi is the principle of individualism in Igbo cosmology.

Selfhood in Igbo ontology discussions fall short without this all important Dimension. Although chi or god fixes destiny, one can get round one's destiny either by the performance of some ritual or by conducting a good moral life as may please one's chi or god. It is pertinent to state here that neither the community nor God nor Chi/ god can frustrate the autonomy and freedom of the self. What else can we say about the Igbo notion of the self? Or what emerges from our reflections on Onwe and Onweonye with regard to what constitutes the self for the Igbo? Our response is no other than that offered by Okoro (2020, 129) in his well articulated and argued article ''On the Unity of Conceptual Strands of the self in Igbo ontology:''

... the self's proper sphere of operation is the communo- divine context, where the communal entails the social and moral. And where the moral is deemed 'cooperate,' involving the living, the dead, the unborn and the whole of nature. The divine context depicts self's transcendence, which indicates the self's association with God or god as its essence. So, the selfhood that

perfectly suits Igbo ontology, therefore, is a ''synthetically structured communitarian self,'' but whose ontology remains untouchable.

This offers a holistic approach to any meaningful conception of the self that may be deemed truly Igbo. Truly, the various aspects of the self when properly examined have far-reaching implications for the Igbo and the rest of humanity.

Cultural Implications

Culture remains a strong base for all philosophizing project. Man makes culture and is to a large extent its product. Culture, by which the totality of man's life is expressed, partly contributes to man's identity and offers adequate direction to his destiny. On the international level culture impacts heavily on people of different nationalities, especially when they come together, live and work for a long time. Such Interaktion generates new influences and is productive of new personalities. This occasions the emergence of what is now called 'transcultural self'. According to Murray (1991, 338-339) The notion of 'transcultural self' captures the transformation or change the multinationals undergo as a result of having lived long outside the shores of their own cultures, and which now makes them feel somewhat estranged. The generation of Igbo slaves (wherever they are scattered on the globe) may be suffering from this cultural crisis. Culture encapsulates the totality of a people's way of life according to Kwame Wiredu (1996, 28) and comprises social forms and customary beliefs and practices, and which depend on the existence of language, knowledge, communication, interaction and methods of transmitting knowledge to the born and the unborn. Culture expresses as well the people's religious beliefs and art. Owing to the uniqueness of every culture, Postmodernists are agreed that the conception of the self must remain a subject matter for any given culture. This speaks of equal merit and respect accorded to every culture. This automatically creates a platform that promotes dialogue between peoples, enhances understanding and appreciation of other cultures across continental borders. Thus it renders any argument in favor of rational superiority of one culture over another baseless. Rationality, rightly understood, is a quality of all humans irrespective of cultures. There exist different ways of logical thinking that largely depend on and reflect the realities in a given culture. A crucial factor is the people's unique modes of accessing and interpreting these realities. A culture mediated self is not within the purview of ethno-philosophy. The conception of the self must not involve only one perspective such as ontology, but should embrace other perspectives such as metaphysics, sociology, religion, psychology and morality. This portrays the self as a multifaceted concept, and which, reflects the nature of the culture that informs its conception. It engenders certain level of consciousness that calls for respect for every culture as well as an appreciation of other people's outlook on life, dignity and worth. Great emphasis must then be placed on the need to promote intercultural dialogue, understanding and harmony between nations. There should be a stop to racial discrimination as a way of healing the battered self-image of the Igbo during the slave trade, which is a condition generated by imperialism and colonialism, but tactically sustained by neo-colonialism. Anything to the contrary would be branded cultural inhumanity that prizes one culture over another. It is a cultural inhumanity because different yardsticks are employed in judging different cultures and nationalities. A situation whereby one culture is prized highly than the other will negatively affect human relations and engender mistrust between peoples.

Social Implications

There is no gainsaying the fact that sociality is central to Igbo conception of the self. The question is, 'can sociality alone stand as an independent conception?' Sociality is all about human relationships. It begins in the nuclear family and blossoms in the larger society. Given the influential nature of human relations, the term 'social' is considered an important factor in understanding human self. The following philosophers (C. Okolo (2007:127), Rukungah (1993: 53), and p'Bitek (1998: 73) argue in favor of an independent relational selfhood. They all agree that human freedom remains a sacrificial victim, and that all that matters is the relationship between persons in society. But some others are opposed to a relational selfhood. The writer of this article does not subscribe to sociality as the main category for selfhood. However he recognizes sociality as an important aspect in the consideration of the self. The major reason for not accepting sociality as the main category for selfhood is because the social category lacks a conceptual framework, and, hence, cannot capture the reality of the self, which is intrinsic. Its shortcoming derives from the fact that it takes the self as something extrinsic by anchoring it on something external, human relationships. Thus, it denies ontology and freedom to the self. However Philosophers of ontology of the self such as T. Okere and K. Gyekye recognize that freedom and autonomy properly belong to the self. But they also admit that to ascribe a relational capacity to the human self is not entirely out of place. The self as an ontological entity has a relational capacity. Sociality is an important feature in human life. At least it reduces the weight of human selfishness. To have nothing to do with others would mean to declare one's autonomy and self-sufficiency and celebrate human selfishness on a large scale. The underlying belief by the Igbo is that God created a community of persons whose life is characterized by mutual dependence and interdependence. Central to the creation's sense is the doctrine of complementary duality that responds to the needs of others in mutual reciprocity. The ability to relate expresses the capacity of the self to enter into dialogue, to reason together, and to resolve conflicts that may arise due to miscommunications that are often at the root of our broken relationships and world. To this end, it becomes wise to integrate sociality in the conception of the self, as this will, help dethrone human selfishness and enthrone self- commitment to the good of the generality. To give credence to a relational selfhood, I. Asouzu (2003, 121) extols the opposite other as being indispensable in determining the self's healthy relationship with the totality of the world. This, according to him becomes instrumental to subjectively humanize the world in respect of overcoming all forms of ambivalence. This agrees perfectly well with his project of complementarity that finds expression also in human relationships. Paramount in a complementary relationship is the cooperation and collaboration between the individual and the community. The individual knows that he cannot do without the community, and the community knows also that it cannot be what it ought to be without the individual. This understanding will definitely promote good rapport between individuals and communities, and thus engender peaceful co-existence considered a conditio sine qua non for societal progress. The contrary would breed unhappiness. The reason according to Asouzu (2003, 122) is that solipsism and self- interest contradict ''complementary dynamism'' ''that reinvigorates and renews things,'' and that ''transforms energy provided by we-consciousness.''

Moral Implications

Some philosophers of moral persuasion insist on a moral self. But the problem with this position is not that the self is moral, but that it gives condition for stating who qualifies for selfhood. In this respect selfhood is culturally determined. The proponents of this view hold

that a human being below the age of exercising a responsible action is yet to attain personhood or selfhood. Thus, it becomes a must for one to undergo this process of ritual incorporation in order to attain personhood or selfhood. This means that children below the age of reason are without selfhood until at a time they must have undergone this process. Viewed in this light, the moral conception of selfhood suffers some limitations. Personhood or selfhood cannot be tied to a process that would require ritual incorporation. The self in Igbo ontology is not like the Freudian psychological procedural self. Western philosophical tradition may have relied on such psychological or evolutionary theories that look at rationality as a major factor in constituting selfhood, and which they deny to children, and for which reason they legislate abortion and champion other anti-human policies. No doubt such policies must have given secularism an added impetus. The Igbo cosmological world is not secular. It is a spirit filled world. It understands selfhood as being connatural with being human. At no stage can it be said that a human being is without personhood or selfhood. This is even the view of some moderate defenders of a communitarian self like Kwame Gyekye. When we say that morality is akin to sociality, it is a way of saying that neither the social nor moral category is capable of satisfying the conditions for establishing an ontological selfhood. To its credit, morality cares for a refinement of behavior in human relationships that extends beyond the frontiers of the community to God as the creator of the universe, and the whole of nature. Graham (1991, 80) captures this sense thus:

The search for the place of the person in society is therefore a search for a means, not an end. To find the place of the person in society is to find a means to progress toward union with others. To find authority in the culture and traditions of one's society is one of a series of steps forward, the inescapable stage of the traditional self, which is one of several states of human development that mark off the inevitable search for self-realization. It is a search that leads to finding authority in natural law.

The passage is clear on its emphasis on the moral self's search to attain union with others in society. It is a search that is firmly rooted in the natural law, but with an aim at self-realization. Thus, the project of self-realization is supported by natural law. In order to realize this, there must be harmony, which precludes the maintenance of a delicate balance between humans, God and nature; thus affirming according to Graham (1991, 165-199) the vision of a 'cosmic relational self' to harmonize all the forces in the universe with all the working tools of love, sympathy, understanding, solidarity and cooperation. Gyekye (1997, 76) makes the same point in his Tradition and Modernity where he sees the communitarian self as an embodiment of reciprocity and mutuality. He considers mutual cooperation, aid and interdependence as ''very rewarding and fulfilling'' and necessary for peaceful co-existence among individual members in a multicultural society. This will be most rewarding as well in our diverse cultures and ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. For this to come true, we must see ourselves as incomplete relational beings, who must need one another to achieve the 'happiness-goal' for all. Omi and Anyanwu (1984, 98-99) reveal that 'African moral and doctrines follow necessarily from the theory of life-force and its interactions.' And that there is equally an ''ontological relationship between self and material things of living forces.'' These relationships and interactions of living forces that bear on moral life portray wrongful use of life force, as when it is employed to affect the soul or spirit, intelligence, or will or conscience negatively. But when life force is rightly employed, it conduces to generating good moral results in personal conduct and behavior. Be that as it may, the appropriate terminology that is specific to the Igbo in driving

and regulating morality is not vital force, but the virtues of truth and justice as paths to righteousness and meaningful progress.

Thus, Okoro (2020, 135) argues as follows:
... what is unique to the Igbo is not vital force. But if we are looking for the Igbo alternative to the Tempelsian vital force of the Bantu, it is this: the Igbo conception of selfhood is constitutive of onwe and chi, which respectively mean to own and guardian Angel. Thus, whereas onwe supplies the will, it is the chi that supplies the vision. However the end to which the vision leads is best captured by the Igbo concept of Ikenga. Compositionally, Ikenga comprises ike (force) and nga (motif). The combination of the two concepts gives the meaning of ikenga as the driving force. Because of the presence of chi that supplies the vision, it makes the end or value to which the vision leads to be implicitly something spiritual. This 'spiritual end' indicates the self's vocation to pursue righteousness. Thus the Igbo identify truth and justice as what constitutes this righteousness. Far from being vital force, the driving force of every Igbo lay in the values of truth and justice.

What vital force does for the Bantu people in terms of serving as the driving force, `truth and justice` does for the Igbo. It is these moral virtues of truth and justice that give texture and quality to the life and character of every Igbo. These conduce to social cohesion and peaceful progress. But truth telling may require prudence and tact for its expressions, especially in politics.

Political Implications
The right to self-determination belongs to the essence of selfhood. This is particularly true in politics. It is in politics that people take their destiny in hand so to speak, and thus chart the course of their lives in quest for meaningfulness. Thus, any system of government that imposes itself on the people against their will is not only illegitimate but also remains unacceptable. Therefore no particular culture or individuals belonging to any one particular culture should claim any privilege to rule over the other based on possessing any special endowment, say, for instance, rationality. Human reason has the power to accept or reject a proposition. This may have some political influence but may not satisfy the claim to any privilege to rule over another political community. Steinvorth (2009, 6) is explicit on this:
Reason and the power of saying both yes and no to a proposition (that is, a possible action or a thought) can indeed rule both individuals and societies but is unfit for supporting any privilege for ruling.

The contrary view betrayed the colonialists' assumption of racial superiority. Thus they prided themselves on possessing special endowment of rationality as an edge to govern foreign lands. The presumed higher intellect or rationality literally gave them the morale to deal with their subjects in any way they deemed fit, without any consideration whatsoever. This shines forth in slave trade where relations between peoples traded on factors of superior/inferior, and master/slave divide. The power to govern lies with the people, especially to give expression to their self or personality in political affairs. Failure to do this would have serious consequences on their individual and collective destinies. The Igbo political structure is rich in content in terms of its egalitarian framework that makes no distinctions between persons constituting the political community. It is a society where all have a political voice, and where all express their thoughts in a republican way with a

consensus spirit at base. The principal stakeholders: the elders and the title-holders, like the Ichies are reputed men who embody in themselves the ideal virtues treasured by the community. The Ichie is an Igbo name with strong roots in the divine or god. An Ichie is a divinized person or immortal. Because he is partly divine, the Ichie must endeavor to live selflessly and give expression to divine goodness in his person, life and conduct. Hence the expectation is that the self must both in private and in the open command integrity of life, uphold justice and peace, considered as ingredients for righteousness. Thus, the self must eschew any form of bigotry in any political set-up.

Economic Implications

The terms of homo economicus designate man as an entity whose nature relatively revolves around or is defined by economics, that is, the material conditions of life in terms of wealth accumulation generally. In its extreme form of capitalism, this wealth is often pursued without thought for moral rectitude. Practically, every economic pursuit for Steinvorth (2009, 76-77) may support the conversion of 'vices into virtues' for the purposes of making of profit. The marketing of vices as egoism, lavishness, exploitation, pride and aggressiveness, self-love and self-interest as means of amassing wealth top priority list, and, is often carried out without regard for altruism and modesty. But it must be stated that life is more than its material conditions. According to Kamalu (1990, 135-137), the ascription of freedom to man distinguishes him from automaton, and hence any attempt at denying human freedom to man would amount to a devaluation of his humanity. Thus, the purported sociality or morality of the self as the main category should be rejected because of its denial of human freedom. To be rejected also are all such conceptions and ideologies that have tendencies to reduce man to the level of automaton, that see man's relevance in purely productive terms. The same is true for all forms of materialism and capitalism. This is one shortcoming in the materialistic ideology of Marx whereby man is seen in raw economic light. This way of looking at man designates the human person as an instrument of cheap labor, which reigned supreme in the exploitative slave trade of yester years. Hence Kamalu (1990, 139) laments that colonialism destroyed the systems that enabled the traditional means of livelihood to thrive, with the consequence that Africa has no means of survival other than through the sale of his/ her labour to the prevailing, inherently anti-ecological, capitalist system. Unfortunately, this slavish trend is continuing in today's so-called `Japa Syndrome` where the most talented are involved. To treat the human person as an instrument of labor loses sight of proper distinctions between persons and things. Or as Carol Wotyla (1981, 23) would remark:

A person differs from a thing in structure and degree of perfection. The structure of a person belongs to an 'interior' in which we find the elements of a spiritual life and it is this that compels us to knowledge, the spiritual nature of human soul, and peculiar perfectibility of the human person this determines the value of the person.

Certainly, the author writes against the backdrop of the sacredness of human life as a being created in the image and likeness of God. The dignity accorded to human life cuts across all human stages of development: from the cradle to the evening of one's life. Hence the socio-economic inequality should be deplored in whichever form it takes, whether by way of discrimination between persons or in matters pertaining to food, shelter or moral needs like freedom of choice, security, happiness, appreciation of persons and their rights. Anything to

the contrary would breed sentiments of alienation and neglect. K. Gyekye (1997, 91) puts it poignantly:

Members of a component group may be able, legally, to share in the economic benefits that accrue to the state; yet, if they have reason to feel that their dignity is constantly lacerated because of their membership in a particular ethnic or cultural group, the assault on their sense of dignity will derogate from their sentiments of fully belonging to or being part of the state.

No doubt, a functional society will be one that trades as its essential commodity on the pre-eminent value of justice. It is also a society that guarantees the 'capability to be happy', considered a major component of human freedom. The author's sense here is better understood against the backdrop of the relevance of the common good for all in society. The idea of common good is important, for what is good for the goose is also good for the gander. The idea of common good evokes self-commitment to the societal good by all. Thus, when the community members contribute their quota (each according to his ability), and equitably share in the essential goods of life, then the society would have realized and/or is on the path to its collective goal or pursuit of happiness. However the author may have missed out an important point in his presentation. He believes that all will be well for the society if all are imbued with the sense of the reality of God as the creator of all. There is here a kind of presumption on the part of our author for taking the question of philosophical atheism for granted. Pertinent is to ask, 'Do all persons see themselves as children of God?' This question scarcely received any attention by the author. A good many pay lip service to the God question. Even among those who believe in God understand and interpret his revelations differently, and even conduct themselves often in a way that reflects ant- life and humanity. Some others are pretentious about such belief, and clearly promote in the name of political correctness all such forms of degrading human policies as abortion, gay marriages, euthanasia, genocide and unjust wars. Worst of all, some of these policies are forced on the poor and developing countries as a condition for offering them some grants or aid. By and large, the author's proposal remains a blueprint that will address many a problem besetting society: problems ranging from social inequality to economic ones such as unjust distribution of material resources, unequal job opportunities, nepotism, and uneven distribution of infrastructural facilities across ethnic nationalities.

Religious Implications

The religious factor is important in any discussion of the self in Igbo selfhood. It is religion that tells of man's relationship with God as one of total dependence both in the order of creation and of action. The concept of imago Dei takes the origin of man's dignity back to his creator. Nma-ndu is the equivalent Igbo word for Imago Dei. The word named expresses the fact that God is all beauty and all goodness, and that he imparts this beauty in some measure to the human species at creation. The concept of beauty evokes a philosophical interest. Human beauty per se does not lie on the surface skin but underneath. It is something spiritual or divine. The God question in the discussion of personhood in Igbo anthropology brings out clearly the element of mystery in human nature. It gives concrete expression that a person is partly human and partly divine. According to Rukungah (1993, 60-61), the Bantus express the same thought that God is the archetype in human personality, with 'selfhood' understood as God within. The concept of chi or god in Igbo cosmology is considered the principle of individualism. It is an individualism that has communality as its defining feature, but in which the individual does not cease to be unique. Achebe (1998, 70) speaks about the

inconceivability of ascribing absolutism to an individual in Igbo cosmology where the same is denied to his chi. Similarly, the concept of mmuo (the word for spirit) in Igbo cosmology refers to that spiritual part in human constitution. The belief is that when a person dies it is his or her mmuo or spirit that leaves the body. The spiritual aspirations of man are equally traceable to this same spiritual component. As a being that traces its origin in God, and that will eventually return to God at death, the human person has a teleos and values to which he aspires with all his being. He must be free to pursue these values that include peace and happiness among others.

Conclusion

Our discussion on the philosophical reflections on the implications of the notion of the self for the Igbo and the world at large has broadened our horizon of understanding on the mystery we call man. Man is a being of many parts. He is partly human and partly divine. These two aspects highlight his richly physical and spiritual nature. Which is to say that the appellations for which we designate man: a cultural animal, a rational animal, economic and religious animal, social and political animal, moral and so on, taken singly cannot exhaust the meaning or essence of man. There is more in a person that meets the eye. Thus, any search for the very nature of the human person or self must go beyond his physical endowments. Knowledge is not only perspectival, but also complementary. It is this complementary search that has deepened and enriched our horizon on the subject of the ontology of the self. The danger of our time is expressed in terms of relativism and secularism that puts everything at risk of loosing its value. Most things of great value are usually identified to the taste of a supposedly more superior race or culture, as if to say, that the term of 'humanity' has degrees of perfection, and which suggests, perhaps, different species of human beings. This cannot be. To think in this way, however, betrays a humanity laboring under the weight of a pathological disease of the nature of a truncated psycho-somatism. And this portends a grave danger for the whole human family. In order to preserve our humanity from going into extinction, a healthy balanced view that promotes its wellbeing must be collectively defended.

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