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# The Paradox of Igbo Individualism

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## **Abstract**

The Igbo society was once a revered society. But somewhere along the line, the reverence that this society commanded fizzled out. A spotlight, by way of analysis, is made of the essential elements of what used to be the Igbo world-view, how it was threatened and lost, thereby creating a vacuum. The vacuum is considered to have made possible certain unpalatable consequences which have rendered the Igbo inconsequential in the larger Nigerian and African societies. This is why an Igbo person is less reckoned, if not totally neglected in the scheme of things, especially politics, in Nigeria. Secondly, the Igbo person no longer believes in himself as he would be complacent to upholding extraneous cultures and influences to his.

**Key Words:** Igbo, individualism, philosophy, Igbo-Philosophy, Africa, socialism

## **Introduction**

Fighting and losing a civil war against the rest of Nigeria significantly altered the Igbo mind-set. Hitherto, the Igbo had a high sense of purpose and could possibly speak with one voice, despite the warped claim that “*Igbo enweghi Eze*”. Added to this is the high sense of morality and justice prevalent amongst the Igbo, which makes them hold tenaciously on *Egbe bere*, *Ugo bere* (live and let live) philosophy. However, after the war things changed and the Igbo could live a ‘real’ world of individualism, an independent existence that almost bothers on the Hobbesian state of nature. Thus, values and the derivable ideals were exposed to all manner of influences. Consequently, the Igbo were devoid of framework for perceiving, feeling and transforming reality from the *Umunna* (communitarian) perspective.

My intention here is to spotlight by way of qualitative analysis the essential elements of the Igbo world-view, how they were compromised, and the vacuum they created. This vacuum can be construed to be the festering of individualism. But the concept of individualism about the Igbo, we claim here, is a conundrum as it’s a paradoxical to talk of Igbo in individualistic terms.

## **Conceptual Framework**

African socialism in its humanistic manifestation, firmly believes that African liberation finds meaning in the pursuit of a common social purpose as defined by social harmony and human dignity for all. Nyerere, for instance, had thought Africa could transform the benefits of European

individualism for the sole aim of benefiting Africa. The central themes in Nyerere's discourse are community, equality, unity and participation. But for affectivity, these goals remain unachievable in the presence of the forces of greed and violence in the society. It is for this reason that Achebe (1990) describes Descartes as "the cause of a gigantic philosophical accident". Then as a remedy, there is need for the "ethic of social responsibility, which will serve as a common point of reference for individuals and social action" (p. 50). This is indicative of the question of what values, what set of priorities should guide and direct our actions, and how choices are arrived at. These are fundamental.

Achebe (1990) describes Rene Descartes as "the father of Western philosophy" on the one hand, and "the cause of a gigantic philosophical accident" (pp. 50-51). In a very precise and specific manner, he rejects the narrowness and egocentrism of the Cartesian thought or the famous *cogito ergo sum*, which in his thinking functions as a defining aspect of contemporary life. For Achebe, therefore, and given the above fact, such philosophy could only be the historical site of an enormous "ontological accident". So, "the African community life" as described in *Things Fall Apart*, would be more appealing to some of the 'Ancestors' of philosophy in the persons of Socrates, Plato, and Augustine should they find their way again into the human orbit, rather than the Western individualism of the Cartesian type. Socrates, Plato and Augustine, were, according to Achebe, concerned with architectural designs of a better world as can be seen in the following remarks:

*The Republic* ... was after all a grand design for the ordering of men in society; and *The City of God* a Christian reordering of society.... In other words, philosophy for Plato and Augustine, historically equidistant from Christ, was concerned with architectural designs for a better world (p. 51).

Commenting on this, Christopher Wise contends that Achebe prefers this Augustinian notion of social being defined as "other-centred fulfilment", or as a potentially benign "presence limiting the space in which the self can roam uninhibited", to the recent Western literature and theory which has encouraged us to think of contemporary social existence as life within a prison house (Wise, p. 1051). Wise's contention is that Augustine as employed by Achebe, offers an astonishing vision of a better world that is of utopic standard and through which earthly and corrupt cities may be measured. Augustine, for him, did this through the instrumentality of Plato's *Republic* and was able to come up with his own new "republic". Achebe was able to employ this Augustinian-Platonic model and came up not with any utopian scheme but an alternative universe or reality which makes possible a community life that deliberately and creatively restricts the freedom of individuals, albeit non-oppressively, because, according to Asouzu, any talk of unity is immediately suspected to imply a negation of human freedom (p. 51). Asouzu, consequently, advocated through his philosophy of complementarity, a philosophy of mean between extreme relativity and absolutism. For him, this "seeks to inquire into the conditions needed for the coexistence of all stake holders, notwithstanding their diverse credentials" (Asouzu, p. 194). Obedient to Achebe, this philosophy disconnects with Western philosophies that hinge mostly on neo-liberal theories of democratic humanism that believe in the disavowal between philosophy and system building (Asouzu, p. 195). The implication is that individual subjects would resort to seeking autonomy outside of the framework provided by the whole, it is in this that complementary reflection, according to Asouzu tends to restore a balance in human reason that seeks for such autonomy. The imbalance, to which a solution is being sought, is consequent upon excessive urge

for selfishness grounded in the passion for self-preservation.

### **Retrospecting the Igbo world-view**

What is a worldview? A worldview can be visualized as a general picture of the world and the place of humankind in it. The primary function of any worldview is to provide a frame work for perceiving, feeling, and transforming reality (Oladipo, 2002, p. 155) by a people. To this end, a worldview could either be communal, or individualistic, implicit or explicit. It captures a people's perception of reality and how perception addresses their particular existential needs.

The ontological story of the traditional Igbo society hinges on their conception of a Supreme Being as the highest in the hierarchy of existences that has both divine and human attributes. In such hierarchical arrangement, *Chukwu* composed of two root words of *chi* and *ukwu*, which literally translates as 'the biggest' of all the gods and so, remains at the apex of the hierarchy. He is the Supreme Being (God) since he is believed to superintend over every other forces, including other gods or divine beings, as well as human beings. It is believed that all the other existences derive their being (existences) from Him. He also doubles as the *Chineke* – the creator God. He creates since none of the minor gods is endowed with such enormous attribute and power. He also bears the name *Osebuluwa* – the Sustainer on whose strength the world is suspended. "As Spirit – gods in the underworld, they share more fully in the omnipresence of *Chukwu* and his messenger, the goddess of morality, *Ala*".

The next in this hierarchy is *Ala*. *Ala* is the earth goddess and the custodian of the Igbo morality. *Ala* is the archetypal quintessential maternal being symbolizing love originating from her fecund womb of motherliness. *Ala* also symbolizes the common spirit, common agreement and the unified mind of the people. That is why *Ala* is beckoned against anyone who goes contrary to societal norms and values; hence the saying "*Ala anaghị echekwa onye ojoo*". The belief is that *Ala* is a spatio-temporal entity and so, is omnipresent and bears a collective conscience that oversees all actions, both private and public (Alumona, 1988, p. 23). *Ala* also bears an added attribute of being the source of human subsistence and ultimate consumer of all the departed both the noble and the wretched. Because of these, *Ala* is deified and worshipped. So, while *Chukwu*, who is absolutely divine, oversees what happens in the human world (*Ala mmadu*) and Spiritual World (*Ala mmuo*) (Otakpor, p. 146), *Ala* is the subordinate of *Chukwu* that oversees the affairs of the human world. Both *Chukwu* and *Ala* are believed by the Igbo to be ready to punish any wrong or evil doer. *Chukwu* does that through the instrumentality of *ofo*. *Ofo* is the Igbo symbol of justice and fairness. At the invocation of *Chukwu* through the *ofo*, justice would be adequately believed to be done. At such instance, *Chukwu* would mandate *Ala* to act since *Ala* does not safe-guard (*chekwa*) any criminal. Thus in collaboration with *Chukwu*, *Ala* visits the offender with instant punishment. But *Ala* also maintains a certain level of leniency for a moral offender so long as the one will be willing to appease and offer propitiation to *Ala* (*ikwa-ala*). "Before the shrine of *Ala*, anyone found guilty of injuring the collective conscience of society, goes to confess and renounce his/her sins promising at the same time to be of good behaviour henceforth" (Alumona, p. 25). *Ikwaala* is an outward sign of inner remorse and repentance. Moral sins can be appeased because, as Ilogu (1988) noted, far from being just a rebellion against the deity or deities, is often times, a departure from the prescribed norms or *omenani* over which the earth goddess presides (p. 137). So, Asouzu (2007) quoting Abanuka would opine that "if oaths and covenants are made in the name of ... '*Ala*', such oaths and covenants 'must be fulfilled'"... violations of such covenants or oaths are supposed to attract very severe punishments, including even the ultimate punishment, which is the

death of the transgressor” (p. 207).

In punishment, other minor deities are reckoned with in the Igbo pantheon. Prominent among these and directly useful for our purpose here is *Amadiḡha*, the god of thunder and lightning. *Amadiḡha* is a deity in the service of *Chukwu*. He visits the wrath of *Chukwu* on any human offender who offends *Chukwu*, *Ala* or even the human race. *Amadiḡha* swings into action, it is believed, once an offender commits any crime that bears directly on the relationship between *Chukwu* and the rest of existence. Yet there is room for repentance and atonement because *Amadiḡha* does not strike anyone who sins, and acknowledges one’s sins and makes atonement for them and resolves *not to commit*, same crime again. This means *Chukwu* and his agents recognize the fallible nature of man. On the other hand, if a sinner thinks and wants to get lost in the crowd, that is when no one takes responsibility of a crime, or decides to be an anonymous criminal, the chief priest appeals to the court of *Chukwu* for justice and *Chukwu*, in turn, would mandate *Amadiḡha* to act. It comes to the point that crime-anonymity has no place in the world-view of the Igbos. This is to say, there is room for restitution and reconciliation in the Igbo society; however these opportunities are lost when one does not open up and the chief priest, using the *ḡfḡ*, appeals to *Chukwu* for justice for a matter whose offender is humanly indeterminable. To wriggle out of the impending doom and avert the devastating impact of *Amadiḡha*, the anonymous individual engages his/her personal deity (*chi*), believing that his/her *chi* would shield him/her from the consequences of his/her atrocious crime(s). Even the *chis* realize the futility of working at cross-purpose with *Chukwu*, or even other deities, and so would not be willing to shield a criminal. It is at this point that a person professing a particular deity feels his deity (*Arusi*) has become powerless and consequently threatens to discard such deity. It is as a result of this state of affairs it is said: “*ma Ikenga adighi ire a waa ya nku*” – an *Ikenga* that has become ineffective (powerless) must be converted to firewood or “*arusi waa anya a gwaya osisi eji tuḡya*” – a stubborn (troublesome) *Arusi* must be told of what wood it was made from. *Amadiḡha* also settles land disputes when such disputes seem intractable by humans.

In this hierarchical arrangement also belong the ancestors. They constitute the spiritual beings that have certain connections with the humans. The ancestors are believed to be human beings that lived exemplary lives while on earth. At bodily death, it is believed, they continued to live in the ancestral world, and are of tremendous help and influence to the living. Hence they are called the living dead. A person who lived a false life or sinful life cannot, at death, be welcomed by the ancestors; that is, the person cannot belong to the college of ancestors. He continues his life with a kind of regrettable existence as his spirit continues to hover aimlessly and restlessly in the unbounded, non-physical world; belonging neither to the physical nor to the ancestral worlds. Because of such state of restlessness, it is believed that usually the person would be approaching his living relatives to help him appease the gods so that he could be allowed to rest, that is, rest, but not amongst or with the ancestors. This may be the possible reason the Oracle in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* told Obiako that his late father demanded a goat from him as appeasement sacrifice. Perhaps, Obiako not satisfied with the type of life led by his late father refused to carry out the injunction. He rather sent the Oracle back on errand to find out from his father if he ever had a fowl when he was alive (p. 15).

The conception of these divinities is in the human terms. This is to say that the Igbo ontology is anthropocentric. Though it did not start in or by man, but everything is centered on man.

Next in this arrangement is *madu* (man). *Madu* seems to be at the lowest rung of the hierarchical ladder. But this does not make him less important when compared to other entities in the hierarchy. The difference is in type: while other members of the hierarchy enunciated above may have only spiritual qualities and character, only *madu* parades both spiritual and physical qualities and can easily be assessable. These attributes even make it possible for the divinities to be conceived in human terms. Yet, despite his physical nature, *madu*, also remains like the divine beings; ever indeterminate and mysterious, and quite incomprehensible. *Madu* is a physical being but always tending towards the acquisition of spiritual attributes. This is evident in man's aspiration for an ancestral elevation. Odoemene (2004) has in his work, posited that "even ... philosophers and theologians ... assert not only the similarities between the gods and men but also man's effort to be like gods. This effort or striving, is for many the purpose of life and *the aim of good living*" (p. 122). Odoemene situated this assertion using a quotation from Julian, a Roman pagan theologian and philosopher. Julian was quoted to have said man is a living being that straddles two realities; his mortal being individuates him while his immortal nature universalizes his existence. So, *Madu* participates already in the nature of the gods, in so far as he is immortal. Being a mixture of mortal and immortal he can also be said to be a mixture of good and bad. These attributes of *madu*, therefore, place him well above other spiritual beings or divinities apart from *Chukwu*. This is the reason for such names as "*Maduka*" – (Man is supreme), but only in recognition of such other Igbo name or expression as "*Maduabuchi*" – (that is, man is not God). That is, *madu*'s supremacy is when compared to other existences outside *Chukwu*, because there is none with which to compare with *Chukwu*.

### **Christianity and the burden of colonization**

Contemporary African history is replete with experience and impact of colonialism. These usually come in a negative hue since it has firmly been established that the colonial experience held nothing good for the colonized. This means the average African in the contemporary era is, according to Hans-Georg Gadamer, "effectively historically conscious" as he concretely grasps within the context of the African situation. This is the sense in which Fanon's references to history and reinstating the history of the former colonized should be understood. Fanon, therefore, writes in *Towards the African Revolution* that:

The setting up of colonial system does not of itself bring about the death of the native culture. *Historic observation reveals, on the contrary, that the aim sought is rather a continued agony than a total disappearance of the pre-existing culture.* This culture, once living and open to the future, becomes closed, fixed in the colonial status, caught in the yoke of oppression. Both present and mummified, it testifies against its members. It defines them without appeal. The cultural mummification leads to a mummification of individual thinking. The apathy so universally noted among colonial peoples is but the logical consequence of this operation (p. 34, emphasis is mine).

Religion, and particularly Christianity, is one of the colonial apparatuses that is a culprit to the scenario painted by Fanon in his claim that Christianity's inroad to Africa came side by side Europe's annexation of the continent, thereby revealing an intricate pattern of connections in the interplay of colonial and imperialist powers. Ngugi, following this, described the operation of power in Africa based on a conception of three dependent and mutually supportive faces of

colonialism as he seeks to unravel the oppressive ideological forces which Christianity has become in independent African states. Invoking his concept of the “holy trinity”, where in a fatal meeting between the native and the colonizers, the missionary with his bible, the soldier with his gun and the administrator with his coin conspired to make colonization possible. Hence, his holy trinity: Christianity (Bible), commerce (the coin), civilization (the coin) (Ngugi, quoted in Kanneh, pp. 97, 137), all colonial institutions, contributed to refashion the African in a debased image of Europe (Chinweizu, pp. 3 & 78). This mission originally hidden, *ab initio*, was masqueraded as a philanthropic project couched in the claim of uplifting millions of Africans to their proper position among the intellectual and moral forces of the world (Blyden, 1967, p. 25, cf., Kanneh, p. 58). And to achieve this, Christianity was projected as a *a superior culture* to any local culture that rescues the dark continent. This mind set was captured by Blyden (1967) in the following statement “we are persuaded that, with the book knowledge they already possess, and their love of letters, many of them would become ready converts of a religion which brings with it the recommendation of a higher culture and a nobler civilization” (p. 188). But certain suspecting African minds were clearly opposed to what they felt were unnecessary foreign intervention into their life world. Some branded critics or even heathen and heretics and rebels, were categorized as such because they abhor the antics of Christianity; masked in the so-called idea of development and progress. “Blyden’s view of an African future is reliant on ideas of progress and development which themselves are dependent on the obliteration of indigenous African time” (Kanneh, p. 58), and values. Mbiti (1970) thought these are attributes Africa has in abundance as they (values) are mediated by religion, and Africans are in turn acknowledged by all and sundry to be naturally (incurably) religious (Parrinder, 1962, p. 9; Mbiti, 1970, p. 38; Busia, 1967, pp. 1, 7; Gykye, 1997, p. 27; Mazrui, 2001).

Carol Sicherman (1995) in her “Ngugi’s Colonial Education: ‘The Subversion... of the African Mind’” wrote: “one measure of the power of colonial mental subversion is the venom with which the neo-colonial Kenyan government pursued its vendetta against Ngugi even after he had gone into exile” (p. 48). Here, neo-colonial Kenyan government would represent for us all institutions or individuals influenced by colonial Europe and which in the contemporary era, work to perpetuate explicitly or implicitly, the colonial aspiration of complete subjugation of Africa and the Third World. With this idea one recalls vividly the Nwoye factor in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, where Nwoye aligns completely with a foreign religion and culture that eventually eroded the identity of Umuofia.

One clear reading of Nwoye’s vituperation is that he was a quisling who glorified and stated his commitment to foreign malediction and to the system it aspires to perpetuate. His actions were in utter contradiction of those of his father who undertook to institute in Umuofia a nationalist system, thereby carrying out a task that must have to be done – that is, creating a system that would prevent the foreign mentality from spreading among the children of Umuofia and producing more and future Nwoyes. It is to this that Chinweizu quips “that a mentality as thoroughly Anglophile, Afrophobe and neo-colonial could exist ... is a tribute to the lasting indoctrination of Africans carried out by colonial malediction” (Chinweizu, p. 362).

### **Igbo individualism**

So far, in this work, we have been able to identify two major sources of the problem of instability in Africa. These sources are religion as epitomized by Christianity and colonialism. Among these

influences on contemporary African life, however, colonialism has been the most derisive and most criminally sustained in generating socio, economic, political and psychological crises in Africa. Colonial incursion into sub-Saharan Africa affected traditional cultures in many irreversible ways, and has continued to be the bane of Africa's underdevelopment till date (cf. Oladipo, 2009, p. 17). By extension, it has become the determining paradigm for the Igbo personality. Thus William Abraham ably describes the effect of colonialism as having

ushered in unbridled economic exploitation and sapped sub-Saharan cultures of their vitality. They become deprived of direction and internal impetus, and increasing survival as pageant and ceremonial. New ideas concerning individual accountability and individual rewards, the spread of the sense of individual vision and the ascendancy of self-interest in contrast with community interest as a basis of action, the growing sense of private power arising from self-action rather than clan direction, all of these atomising factors, acting in concert, have loosened the internal bonds and efficacy of lineage-based clans (p. 27).

In other words, colonialism replicates in the Igbo society the basis upon which capitalism as ideology is founded. That is, the assumption that freedom, in its liberal mode, means non-interference in the affairs of individuals by other human beings or institutions. But this understanding is defective or deficient, simply because, according to Oladipo (2009), "it divorces freedom from the conditions of its realization" (p. 75), and creates a problem of social inequality. That is to say, by sanctioning competition and the pursuit of self-interest in a situation of unequal opportunity, it secures assurances for only a privileged few to adequately actualize their freedom of self-determination, and consequently deny the larger mass of this same opportunity (Oladipo, 2009, p. 75; cf. Mazrui, 2001, pp. 118-9). The result today can only be imagined as we live in a society that landmined by brigandage, theft, killings and youth adherent to drug, ritualism and cultism. This trend is not acceptable to the socialists, especially socialists of Igbo hue who believe in the philosophy of *umunna wu ike* (agnate is strength).

The Igbo-world-view adumbrated above, tried to fill the gap created by this passion, with the duty of creating self-transcendence and authentic personality. These qualities "entail those mechanisms and measures we put in place to rid ourselves of the passion for exclusiveness and to harmonize our personal interests and dysfunctional expectations" (Asouzu, p. 197) with those of the community, hoping that community holds the principles of organisation. Principles of organization because, community in turn provides the conditions for individual security, identity and well-being. Thus, symmetry is created between the community and the individual – the individual is dependent on the community for his/her self-fulfilment, while the community provides the ambience upon which he grounds him/herself to pursue his/her interests (Oladipo, pp. 78ff; Mbiti, 1969, 108-109). That is to say, the individual's interest can only be realized in and through the community interest. This creates what Asouzu describes as "a complementary type of totalizing mind *obiha*, ... firmly grounded in the harmonizing faculty of *obi/mmuo eziokwu*", which, in turn, relates to harmony of differences expressible in the Igbo hope that *Igwe (umunna) wu ike*; that is the hope that strength is expressible in the union of individual minds, signifying the impossibility of the existence of the individual without the community. The usual expression of this philosophy amongst the Igbo is the claim that "it is impossible to break a bundle of broom, while it would not take the minutest energy to break a broom stick". It is similarly said that "*igurube jikoo aka ha agbawa ite*" (If locust unite, they break the pot), and many more. That is



why the decision of *umunna* is affirmed by the yell of *Igbo kwenu* and the resounding response of *haa*. It is based on this that Mbiti (1969) could affirm the existence of the individual from the premiss of the existence of the Other - "I am, because we are, and since we are, therefore, I am" (108-109). This underscores supremacy of the community over the individual from the point of view of power rather than right (Ekei, 2005, p. 331), which must, of necessity, be defined by individuality. Here, the abstractness of *obioha* is concretized by *obi nwanne* and *umunna wu ike*, that is, the feelings of brotherly compassion and comradeship. These are existential imperatives that guarantee our continued existence in the ancestral world after our physical existence. This is on the basis that for the Igbo, human life revolves around a unified consciousness made possible by the belief in a future existence after death.

However, the condition of the contemporary Igbo society becomes a challenged one where the subject, as a result of the ambivalent tension of his environment, "had to contend fiercely with the impairment ensuing from the phenomenon of concealment" (Asouzu, 2007, p. 242), consequent on the existential need for survival and self-preservation. Unjust, exploitative and oppressive life situations or challenges would naturally imbue in the subject the urge for self-defence. Wise contends that,

all symbolic expressions ... function... as creative responses to their various social situations, or they function as dynamic attempts to resolve the various crises, of material necessity in the on-going historical struggle to 'wrestle a realm of freedom from the realm of necessity' (Wise, p. 1059).

Also, extreme situations of challenge demand a totalizing kind of defence with all available arsenals. One of such means being *uche aghugho*. The Asouzian *uche aghugho* ignores the urge for a wholly and absolute appreciation of reality, simply owing to the desire to respond to situations in one's own way. In other words, it is a situation of ego tripping, when the ego solely arrogates to itself the power to act arbitrarily as its own source of existence. This, for Asouzu, means that individual's attainment of absolute truth remains impaired and almost impossible as "truth emerges within an ontological bracket that has a complementary absolute dimension" (Asouzu, p. 227).

The post-colonial and post-civil war experiences present the Igbo as quintessentially individualistic. In his individualism he questions the basis for collective social existence and community, while becoming complacent with crude pursuit of wealth, arbitrariness and grandeur. In this posture, the inherent values – of freedom, cooperation, justice and fair play – inherent in traditional life and necessary for the enlistment of humanity, comes under serious threat. This gives rise to a situation where an individual considers the measure of a person or beingness as depending absolutely in physical force (power) and inordinate material possessions rather than concern for the progress of the community and the well-being of others. With this, there is, effective resurgence of the Hobbesian state of nature in the Igbo contemporary society, where life, has once again, become nasty, brutish and short; a counter to the ancient-Igbo acclaimed intolerance for injustice and arbitrariness. Yet there ought to have been an effective check on this pattern of life by the fact of human limitations and material scarcity as necessitating imperative for social existence.

At this level, one is left with no other option than to say that the Igbo-world-view, adumbrated above is completely a lost world. In other words, the dissolution of the Igbo ontology is only evident; this dissolution, by implication, also marks the disintegration of the most basic social and psychological structures of the pre-colonial Igbo. It as well, marked the imposition of a whole new

set of organizing structures and/or paradigm that is obviously Cartesian and a necessary contradiction of the ontological and collective subjectivity that led Fanon to think “every ontology is made unattainable in a colonized and civilized society” (Fanon, p.109). This Fanonian thinking comes in consonance with Achebe’s which shows that for the pre-colonial Igbo to be inducted into colonial society, the abandonment of a previously more collective social form of existence becomes only a mandate, so that the physically painful construction of a colonized subjectivity may be violently imposed upon the native. The inordinate materialist quest has overtaken every known value that has at its epicentre community life and human dignity. They stand to counteract such ideals like temperance, trustworthiness, truthfulness, compassion, and humility. Hence, such crimes as advance fee fraud or 419 in our local Nigeria parlance, ritual killings, yahooism, child trafficking, sycophancy, kidnapping, looting of public treasury, etc., are held as nouveaux norms. Also lack of transparency and accountability become the hallmark of public political office aspiration and acquisition. These are counters to the Igbo worldview hinged on the philosophy of unity and ordered relationship as the Igbo basic moral vision, since the Igbo worldview “plays the role of a moral prompter, providing the needed guide and force to human actions and behaviours” (Ekei, 2005, p. 328). It also acts as a guide to upholding the tenets of moral justice, simply because, man, according to the Igbo, is never a discrete individual but what Ekei following Heidegger describes as a “being-with”. The consequence is, as Ekei (2005) noted, “an enduring manner of attending to man as a being with inalienable interconnectivity with the rest of men” (p. 331). This is the rationale for thinking agnate is strength (*Igwe-wu-ike*). The *Igwe-wu-ike* philosophy is inherent in the republican political arrangement of the traditional Igbo society where agreement on and about issue is arrived under very charitable condition ‘under a tree’ by all and sundry. Such consensual agreement far from being an imposition on unwilling members of the society is simply a product of societal affirmation and approval that is not contentious and questionable (Obioha, 2009).

### Conclusion

In this work, we have been able to make some excursions into the Igbo-world-view. Our aim here was to highlight those nuances the Igbo hold with high regards as his guiding principles. Most of these are based in the Igbo’s relation to his understanding of the divine. Our excursion indicated therefore that the pre-colonial Igbo world-view had a lot to offer in terms of preservable values. Nonetheless, we also made it clear that this pre-colonial world-view did not enjoy a prototypic universal status even among the Igbos, and as such, was open to serious criticism. At least, this, it would be agreed, would guarantee certain of its philosophical attributes and make it possible for it to push ahead. Again, unless we are dispassionate enough to point out the inhumanities in this culture, alongside the externally engineered, one risks being judged guilty of unwarranted protectionism of aberrant cultural practices in Igbo culture. The incursion of Christianity into Africa, greatly undermined Africans’ attachment to the culture of their ancestors, destroyed their commitment to a communalist ethos, and erased their sense of patriotic responsibility to their society. African values were derided and attacked. The example provided by Chinweizu in this piece is quite enlightening. It demonstrates the complicity of Western religion which ordinarily should have been a partner in progress with the African (Igbo). Igbo happens to be one of the greatest adherents of this foreign religion. She does this at the detriment of, and great prejudice to her local culture and existence. William Abraham (1992) tenaciously holds “they put an end to the political hegemony of local cultures, not only by their assumption of powers of coercion and the introduction of new social institutions, new ways of doing things, and new reasons for doing them” (p. 27). The morale that effuses from these is that at the instance of colonialism and Christianity,

individualism flourished, what used to be frowned at as offensive to public sight or viewed from the objective-African-point of view, can now be seen from the prism of relativity and subjectivity. Adherents of this alien religion now hold tenaciously in the efficacy of secret confession to the utter negligence of Igbo principle of justice that has some element of restitutiveness. Our inquiry also indicated that the damage done to our collective conscience and psyche and even individual opportunities for self-hood by colonialism in conjunction with early European missionaries, continues to be programmatically malicious and colossal. This makes it necessary for a re-appraisal of the current methods of achieving a world-view by the religious that make them appear conquered by the world they exist to conquer and submerged in its questionable values. We must conceptually decolonize where need be. We cannot preserve the gospel values unless we are authentically African, for the damaged African is essentially the damaged gospel.

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