

# INTEGRATIVE HUMANISM: EXTENSIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

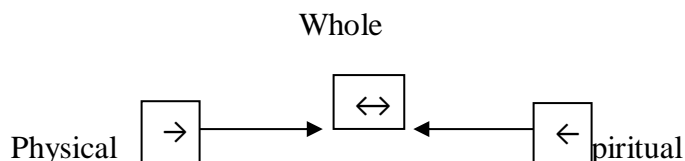
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## Introduction

When we talk of African philosophy as a different philosophical tradition we do not wish to suggest that it studies different range of realities from those that concern the other philosophical traditions. What we demonstrate is the difference that arises in approach or method naturally informed by the resident logic. Thus in African philosophy we study ultimate reality of which being is at the center. What being and even nothingness mean for us is not the same with what they mean in other traditions. Unity: we sometimes say that being is one single whole without wishing to say that this view is monistic. In this light we hold that being is complete with both physical and spiritual aspects. Duality: we also share the view on the duality in nature without insisting that this is strict and permanent. Duality for Africans is essentially a point of inferential departure not a terminal point. The dual arrangement of things in nature is to necessarily lead to a tripartite conception. Triadic conception: this is the terminal point of all inferences in African thought. Yes, there is duality in nature but they exist as fragments and contraries i.e. incomplete in themselves but capable of coming together to form a whole. Obtaining this fusion of contrary fragments represents an inference from duality to triadic conception of reality. What this African conception is all about is not that being is tripartite or dual but that the coming together of two aspects of being is necessary for the formation of being. Yet this inference is not necessarily monistic, it is triadic as in the figure below (Chimakonam 113) but being is holistic: Fig. 1:



Nothingness on the other hand would not be the express negation of being as it is popularly conceived in Western tradition but the failure of the contrary fragments to integrate (Integrative Humanism) or complement each other (Complementary Ontology). In this way no reality has served a necessary link or missing link to the network of realities. In integrative humanism we distinguish two aspects of being (aru -physical and nmuo- spiritual), and two forms of reality (ama-ife that which appears or accident and ama-aru that which is felt or substance). In the former, the two aspects must come together for being to emerge and in the later, the two forms must also come together for reality to emerge. This entails that being is reality but reality is not necessarily being i.e.  $B=R \supset R \neq B$ . Even though it is taken for granted that every reality in African world view has both physical and spiritual aspects we do not readily assert it without first establishing it. The reason is to keep in mind the emphasis that the physical and the spiritual aspects are fundamental.

So it is easy to see that African philosophy also seeks what other philosophical traditions seek but in a different way. Two of the most established schools of African philosophy are Integrative Humanism and Complementary Ontology. In this work, we seek to extend and clarify some of the tenets that undergird philosophical inquiry following the method of Integrativism and the philosophy of Integrative Humanism.

### **Extensions**

In this paper, one of our aims is to come up with veritable extensions to the theory of Integrative Humanism. Every viable theory hinges on some rules gate-keeping methods and application of such theory. For example, it ought to say something about its limits, strengths; it ought to specify the indices of its practical relevance; it also ought to say something about its scope and uniqueness or point of departure from other rival theories. The sum of these provides a researcher with clear insight into what a theory is all about. In this space, we shall collate these under two headings namely: the canons and themes of Integrative Humanism.

There are eight canons or observation principles of Integrative Humanism which a researcher must have at his fingertips as he employs it as a tool of research. They include (Okeke and Agu 19):

- i. Context-dependence of value:** A researcher must recognize that value for the integrativists is not straight-jacketed but depends on context or ontological landscape (Ozumba 23) what is true or what works in one context might be false or might not work in another.
- ii. Multiplicity and Inter-dependence of reality:** A researcher must recognize that reality for the integrativists is multi-layered (Ozumba 22) and they form a network of inter-dependence through which a comprehensive understanding of reality is obtained.
- iii. Continuity of Being:** A researcher must also recognize that being for the integrativists is not spatio-temporal bound i.e. it does not have terrestrial limitation. It continues from the physical to the transcendent realm. Man for example is seen as a being unto eternity (Ozumba 24).
- iv. Epistemic relevance of theory:** A researcher must recognize that in harmonizing or integrating various theories for a given result-oriented research, not all available theories must be integrated. As a result of this principle, only theories that are considered best suited (Ozumba 14) or relevant to the theme or demands of the research are integrated. Others which are not relevant to the subject would not be thrown away but set aside for a fitting subject matter.
- v. Comprehensive approach:** A researcher must understand that integrativists adopt a comprehensive approach in studying reality. Sensitive openness is exercised (Ozumba 38) in admitting theories and structures as well as in the dimensions of existence such as spiritual/physical divide. Integrativists stand against regimentation, fragmentation, compartmentalization and discriminations in the process of enquiry.
- vi. Non-abandonment of structure:** For the integrativists, theories are structures and it is not encouraged that structures be demolished simply because an area has been

identified where it does not fit in. Integrativists set aside hypotheses which are ineffective to a given subject of research. Every research is contextualized and every context deemed unique, structures which fail in one context could thrive in another (Ozumba 50).

- vii. **Theoretic suspension:** In the course of a research, the goal of an integrativist is always to assemble all possible and relevant theories so as to, as much as possible, reach the standard of comprehensiveness (Ozumba 50). In doing this, sometimes it is possible to stumble on theories which do not fully represent all they claim or which have generated some doubts over their relevance. Integrativists advocate the suspension or setting aside of such theories not their outright rejection. Even theories that are found to be irrelevant to a given context of research are not abandoned but suspended.
- viii. **Spirit-centeredness:** A researcher must recognize that the spiritual or the transcendental occupies a significant place in the project of Integrative Humanism (Ozumba 22). Reality, being, man, life, purpose, etc., linger into the transcendental. They are not earth-bound! Every research and every earthly endeavor has a purpose but all endeavors have one ultimate goal/purpose which is not physical but spiritual or transcendental. Thus, in studying reality, being, man, nature etc., the transcendental dimension must be taken into consideration if a researcher hopes to obtain a balanced or comprehensive result.

Also, Integrative Humanism has some basic themes which include (Okeke and Agu 19):

- i. **Reality:** It is multi-layered
- ii. **Being:** It has physical and transcendental sides
- iii. **Life:** There is life in the hereafter
- iv. **Man:** He is at the centre of humanistic studies and is a being unto eternity
- v. **Delineation:** Every research is delineated to a context
- vi. **Holism:** At integration, different realities come to form a holism.
- vii. **Interdependence:** Things are all in a network.
- viii. **Purpose:** Every research has a purpose and all researches have a grand purpose which is in the transcendental.
- ix. **Spirit:** The spiritual or the transcendental forms a necessary part of the web of reality.
- x. **Positive outlook:** Integrativists maintain this mindset in studying reality. Therefore, a basic understanding of integrative humanism must be rooted in the appreciation of these canons and themes. We may now construct a model of explanation in science using integrative humanism.

## Clarifications

In this section, we are going to do three things namely: separate the theory as a method and as a philosophy; separate the theory of Integrative Humanism from an equally similar theory of complementary ontology; and finally, offer major conceptual clarifications.

Sometime in May 2012 a faculty member M. I. Edet delivered what turned out to be a deeply intrusive paper entitled “Godfrey Ozumba’s Spirito-centric Humanism: A Conceptual Critique”. In it, he delivered a smash-home critique of Integrative Humanism making a stunning revelation on a major conceptual ineptitude due to the Champions of the theory. In this lecture delivered to a general academic audience put together by the Graduate Research Forum of the University of Calabar, Edet shows the confusion of the theory as a method and as a philosophy which is present in all the writings of the proponents. Prior to this revelation, it is common-place to see Integrativists employ the terms “Integrative Humanism” and “Integrativism” as synonyms for philosophy and for method. As M. I. Edet writes:

Ozumba employs “spirit-centric Humanism” and “Integrativism”, as well as “Integrativism” as synonyms and interchangeable, and another problem arises here. Ozumba writes that “Integrativism is another name for our method of “spirit-centric humanism”. By integrativism we mean harnessing, processing through engrafting of the different forms of knowledge” (Ozumba, 2010, 41; 2009;61). He says that “the undergirding objective of integrative humanism is the need to place man’s physical and spiritual well being at the centre of every intellectual endeavour” (Ozumba, 2010, 19).

It does appear to us that “Integrativism” is the method, rather than “Spiritocentric Humanism”, which Ozumba presents as synonymous with “Integrative Humanism”. And in our view, it would have been more appropriate for Ozumba to describe his philosophy as “Integrative Humanism” which employs the method of “Integrativism”, rather than introduce the inconsistent and paradoxical notion of “Spiritocentric Humanism” and present this as synonymous with “Integrative Humanism”. This is because it is clear that “Integrative Humanism” as Ozumba conceptualizes it advocates the integration of insights from the physical and spiritual dimensions of reality in tackling all human-based problems and quests for knowledge. This is clear and understood. Why then do we need the emphasis on the Spiritocentric perspectives? (17-18)

M. I. Edet’s observation is stellar and one which appears to have eluded the integrativists. In this paper, we wish to officially acknowledge the validity of his argument. It was Kwasi Wiredu in his work *Philosophy and an African Culture* who stated that “without argument and clarification, there is, strictly, no philosophy”. M. I. Edet has made a valid argument which we here wish to admit and to clarify other foggy aspects of his observation. Our theory no doubt espouses both a philosophy and a method of doing philosophy. As a philosophy it foreshadows the combination of the physical and the spiritual in forging an adequate interpretation and understanding of reality(Okeke 167 ).this is because, in African thought there is a place for the physical as well as the spiritual and their coming together represents the molding of parts into a whole. This we may now strictly refer to as “Integrative Humanism” following a proper admonition from Edet’s criticism. On the other hand, as a method our theory streamlines a procedure for obtaining a viable fusion from integral parts. It is not the fusion or the whole obtained, it is rather a mechanism for obtaining it. In this wise, we say that our method is engrafting, sifting, eclectic, etc., where

only the aspects of theories relevant to the context of the problem at hand are taken. This we may now strictly call Integrativism.

As for M. I. Edet's displeasure and insistence that the concept of "spiritocentric Humanism" is irrelevant, we beg to differ. The concept is a useful emphasis that demonstrates the primacy of the spirit in our brand of humanism. Man for us has two aspects, the physical and the spiritual, with the latter being primary. In other words, our philosophy of Integrative Humanism is not just about harmonizing the physical and the spiritual, it emphasizes the primacy of the spiritual over the physical hence, for example, we say that man is a being unto eternity (Ozumba 24 &44). Thus the concept of spiritocentric humanism as a synonym for Integrative Humanism is essentially more than a synonym, it is, in addition, emphatic!

Also, in the University of Calabar, a good number of graduate students and faculty members have continued to question the difference between Ozumba's Integrative Humanism and Asouzu's Complementary ontology, we wish to dwell on some of that here. Evidently, both have African logic as their background logic but differ in some ways. Complementarity derives from the Igbo word Nmekoka which means coming together of insufficient parts to obtain sufficiency; each part lacks something which another has and, has something which another lacks. Individually, they are insufficient with variance in the sum of what they each lack and what they each has. Nmekoka therefore lays emphasis on group strength or power where such strength or power is impossible to achieve on individual basis. A man for example complements a woman and vice versa. They must each come together, contributing what is missing in the other to find common fulfillment. It is in this light that the Complementarists talk of the individual being as a *missing link* of reality. That missing part being the unique thing each being has which is lacking in the rest.

On the other hand, Integrative Humanism derives from the Igbo word Njikoka which means obtaining truth, value or meaning by pulling together the relevant parts of variables. The emphasis of this concept is on group identity rather than individual identity or group strength as in Nmekoka. The concepts of strength and identity may be equal in some senses but they are essentially different thus we may describe Complementary Ontology and Integrative Humanism as *equidifferent*. Strength may be an aspect of identity (theoretical equality) but it is not identity (practical difference); and identity may be an aspect of strength but it is not strength. Hence the concept of equidifference as we employ it here describes a situation where two concepts are theoretically equal but practically different. In Integrative Humanism therefore, truth, value, meaning etc., are tied to the group not to the individuals that make up the group. In another rendition, the focus is on the grand theory not on the individual theories which contribute relevant parts to form the grand theory. In this way, the Integrativists talk of an individual theory as a *necessary link* rather than missing link in the web of reality. In this web, individual theories are linked-up like chains in a network of interconnection. Any part of that chain is necessary for the much valued interconnection of the web.

### **Integration and Complementation: Conceptual Differences**

Integrative Humanism and Complementary Ontology are brands of African philosophies or theories which aim at giving African interpretation and perspective to dialogue on reality issues. The fundamental demarcation between them is in direction rather than substance. They are much like two maidens plying different routes to the same stream, one short and fat, the other tall and lean. Their difference therefore, consists in one being fatter than the other and the other being taller than the one. This is also noticeable in their conceptual derivations from Igbo language. Integration is a near equivalence of the Igbo term *Njikọka* which says that truth, value or meaning is derived from variables when they are brought together. It is made more elaborate in G. Ozumba and J. Chimakonam (*Njikọka: The Philosophy and Logic of Integration, Forthcoming*). The emphasis on *Njikọka* is on group identity rather than on individual identity. The western thought system favours the later hence, the law of identity. But African societies are more gregarious, the individual does not exist in isolation, he exists in a group. It is the group that gives identity, hence the idea of integration – *Njikọka*!

If for example we take up ‘A’ as our working variable, the variable A is said to be true only in the company of another or other variables. The argument is that A is primarily true because it has a group to which, it belongs. The direct suggestion here is that if A has no group to which, it belongs then it cannot be evaluated. Similarly, A is evaluated false if it belongs to a group other than the one in context. It is evaluated as complemented if it belongs to two different groups, one in context and the other not in context. An in-context group is the subject matter of a given thought. A not-in-context group would be a thought unconnected or irrelevant to the conclusion of an argument. However, this discussion on groups should be understood at the surface level, intended simply to buttress the position of integration as a natural phenomenon in African thought. Therefore, in the arrangement of thoughts Africans hold a basic belief that it is in integrating or coming together that value or meaning is derived; hence integration is also treated as a law of thought in African logic (Cf. J. O. Chimakonam, *Principles of African Logic...*, forthcoming).

On the other hand, the term complementarity comes nearest to explaining the Igbo concept *Nmekọka*. Literarily, *Nmekọka* means that strength or power is found in the group or achieved in coming together. Some may confuse this term with the popular Igbo Concept *Igwebụike*, this is wrong. *Igwebụike* is broader, a composite of both *Njikọka* and *Nmekọka* (Cf. J. O. Chimakonam, *Metric System in Igbo Thought Long before the Arrival of the Europeans*, presented at the Igbo Studies Conference, 2013). The focus of *Nmekọka* is on group strength or power. The difference between *Nmekọka* and *Njikọka* is at two levels, while the former centers on group power the later focuses on group identity; again, while in the later, the individual finds his identity in the group, in the former, the individual finds no power in the group but must join or team up with others to generate group power. Hence, in complementarity, the individual loses itself in the group whereas, in integration, the individual finds or discovers itself in the group.

If we take ‘A’ as our working variable, the variable A is said to be complemented or in a complementary mode of existence or thought, A is and is not at the same time. What is meant here is that A is both true and false i.e. (TF) A. It should be noted that all complementary modes of existence are pre-contextual, that is to say, without particular or contextual reductions, a variable A is potentially or capable of being true and also false. To strictly determine whether it is true or

false, the variable has to be moved out of the complementary mode of existence (which is a perfect or complete mode of truth-value expression) to the contextual mode of existence or interpretation (which is a partial or incomplete mode of truth-value expression). This process is known as value fragmentation. The contextual mode is an existential world of sensual inferences while the complementary mode is a pre-contextual world of mental or non-physical inferences. Thus the former is concrete whereas the later is partly concrete and partly transcendental.

Logically, let us note the value attachable to A in a meta-theoretic formulation is “C”, this is different from  $(T) \wedge (F)$  or  $(T) \wedge \sim (T)$  because the conjunction which is present in the later suggests admission or inclusion, (T) includes (F) or  $\sim (T)$  admits (T). In “C” we say that the two values (T) (F) are complemented or joined, each losing itself to the group. In “C” there is no more the individual (T) or (F) they have come together to produce “C” such that we no longer talk of (T) or (F) but exclusively (C). as a result, it would be improper to define (C) as  $(T) \wedge (F)$  because the individuals which, the conjunction defines are no longer there. Hence, when we say that a variable is complemented we are referring to an intermediate inference of a pre-contextual mode. In it, every variable is complete or full until moved to contexts or fragmented. The complemented is as much a value as truth and falsehood but whereas the latter two are fractional or partial and whose application is on the two fragments of reality (matter and non-matter), the complemented represents the completion or perfection of values and whose application is on the confluence of the two fragments of reality.

This also marks the difference between African law of complementarity and western law of non-contradiction. In the later  $(T) P \wedge (F) P$  or  $(T) P \wedge (T) \sim P$ , this is called truth value-gap where both cannot be true or both be false at the same time hence the idea of contradiction. This stems from the two-valued character of classical western logic. Even in the three-valued logic which, later western logicians developed out of extrapolations, the idea of two-valued disposition is still sustained in the third value hence it is called “undetermined”. It is neither true nor false – there is a withholding of assertion. If P is neither true nor false then not much progress has been made from P cannot be true and false at the same time. Both assertions are denials of P’s ability to move ahead and get transformed. The third value in say Lukasiewicz’s three-valued logic is actually negated and can never be affirmed since the two standard values that form it are contradictories. So we notice that the so-called third value in western three-valued logic is actually no value in reality. Hitting this brick wall of disharmony, the so-called three values quickly roll back to two values, whereas in African logic the two standard values which are treated as contraries come to a functional perfection of mutual complementarity in the third value called the complemented or ezumezu.

The African law of complementarity allows the variable A to get ahead and be transformed from an individual that is true or false to an individual that is capable of being true and false (C) hence the third value is called the complemented. This is known as truth-value glut in logic. In this demarcation partly rests the difference between African logic and western three-valued logic.

## **Conclusion**

In this work, we have established that the concern of African philosophy are not so different from those of other philosophical traditions save for method and or approach. In this vein we

extended the theory of Integrative Humanism, a major movement in African philosophy by articulating its basic cannons and themes. We also offered some clarifications on matters that have arisen from further discussions on Integrative Humanism especially the insight from Mesembe Edet's criticism of our theory. Finally, we did a conceptual derivation of the two often confused theories of integrative humanism and complementary ontology from Igbo linguistic frame work and with some logical depth.

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