

CHAPTER ONE

ONEBUNNE: APPRECIATING REALITY AS TRUTH

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Introduction

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

Philosophy of Name

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

Philosophical Meaning in a Name

Name is synonymous with noun. A noun, as a part of speech, is a name of person, animal, place, thing or idea. This means that a noun is a nomenclature defining a reality that is there. According to *Wikipedia*, a name is a term used for identification by an external observer. They can identify a class or category of things, or a single thing, either uniquely, or within a given context. The entity identified by a name is called its referent. A personal name identifies, not necessarily uniquely, a specific individual human. This is why the name of a specific entity is sometimes called a particular or proper name. And, when consisting of only one word, it is a proper noun. This is the thrust of linguistic philosophers.

Philosophy of language as human enterprise and applied philosophy is a speculative philosophy. It is an application of philosophical principles on language and verbal utterance as vehicle of communication since man is a *homo loquens*. Philosophy of language is the reasoned inquiry into the nature, origins, and usage of language dealing with the nature of meaning, language use, language cognition, and the relationship between language and defined reality. And by a defined reality we mean a reality. Those who use the term "philosophy of language" typically use it to refer to work within the field of Anglo-American analytical philosophy.

Linguistic speculation has a chequered history as every reality is ascribed with a particular name. Naming and linguistic speculation predate the emergence of grammatical traditions of systematic description of language, which emerge from ca. the 7th century B.C.E. in India (Yaska), and from the ca. 3rd century B.C.E. in Greece (Rhyanus). In the dialogue *Cratylus*, Plato considered the question whether the names of things were determined by convention or by nature. Often, names are given in African tradition and even Judeo tradition within the circumstances of one's birth. Application of name to a *being-there* is often on a natural correctness. According to Plato, there was a natural correctness to names. However, Aristotle in his realism was concerned with the issues of logic, categories, and meaning creation. He separated all things into categories of species and genus.

In the nature of meaning which every name carries, most continental and analytic philosophers have tried explaining what a name actually means. Despite the differences between the views of Frege and Russell, they are

generally lumped together as descriptivists about proper names as definite description. However, Frege replied Bertrand Russell and other logical positivists that any referential expression as name has a sense as well as a referent. For him, the sense of a sentence is the thought it expresses. Such descriptivism faces problems which were articulated in Saul Kripke's influential philosophical book of the twentieth century *Naming and Necessity* published in 1980 and of which Kripke was of the opinion that proper names in contrast to most descriptions, are simply rigid designators. Thus though, a proper name refers to the named object in every possible world in which the object exists.

Payne & Huddleston (2002:516) of *Cambridge Grammar of English* distinguishes the syntactic category of proper name from that of proper noun. A proper noun is a word-level unit of the category *noun*, while a proper name is a type of *noun phrase*. So, for example, the proper name “Alice Walker” consists of two proper *nouns*: “Alice” and “Walker”. A proper name (the *noun phrase*) may also—and often does—consist of a single proper noun, just as a verb phrase may consist of a lone verb. Hence, the sentence “Alice sleeps” is comprised of a noun phrase/proper name and a verb phrase; the noun phrase contains a single proper noun, and the verb phrase consists of a lone verb. Through these parts of speech like the *noun phrase* or in other functions as an *adjectival verb*, name becomes meaningful and in a sense follows the named. It is a fact that we *follow our names* (that is, often our nature is identified by our names) than *our names follow us*.

Origin of the Proper Name: Onebunne

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

expected survival. However, the name *one-bu-nne* was simply questioning the obvious as well as appreciating hopefully the reality before them.

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

Etymology of Onebunne

One-bu-nne or *One-bunne* is a compound word that is synonymous with *Olewunne* as well as *Olebunne*. That is, the *ole* or *one* is a matter of linguistic-dialect depending who may be speaking. And it literally questions: *How many?* It is a matter of number or figure of calculation. It demands the numerical strength as such. But in a special sense, *one* or *ole* here demands rather than smacks of numerical value remains a question of identity. It tries to single out the reality and its existential possibility.

Bu or *wu* is translated *is*. It is the verb to be. Equally, *bu-nne* or *wu-nne* is as a result of same linguistic-dialect differences that questions: *Is it true?* *Bu-nne* or *Wu-nne* questions directly the reality at how with much confidence and necessary doubt of course. In this case, they know that either the child dies or the child lives. The question, of course, tolerates every possibility related to the survival or demise of the child.

Some people mistook *Onebunne* as relating to motherhood: *How many are mothers?* Far from it, *nne* in the context of *Onebunne* connotes *truth*. Hence, one can question: *O nne!* that is, *Is it True?*

Semantics of Eziokwu in Igbo Linguistics Dialects (The word "Eziokwu" in different Dialect).

In Igbo land, the word *eziokwu* which means *truth* is something that is real or fact. People have different ways of saying it according to their dialect but has the same meaning with the word *eziokwu*. Examples:

Ọ ezie	Ezigbo okwu
Ọ ihe ọ bụ	Ọ tosiri
Ọ ive ọ bụ	Ọ mere eme
Ọ ya	Gbam
Ọ yawa	Ọ nịni
Ezie ka ọ bụ	Ezioffu
Ọ nyanwa	Ọ nnya
Okwu kwu ọtọ	Ejiokwu

Truth

Philosophical discourse as a human enterprise started as a journey of discovery in the truth of all reality in their making as *urstoff*. When ancient philosophers of Western philosophical tradition were searching for the basic stuff of reality, they were actually philosophizing on the fundamental truth of all that is.

Etymology of Truth

"*Aletheia*" is the most important Greek counterpart of 'truth'; *alethes* (true), *alethos* (truly) and *alethein* (to speak the truth) are related words. However, the Greek "truth-family" is much more comprehensive and consists of 14 words, among others (adjectives): *atrekes*, *nemertes*, *adolos*, *ortos*, *apseudos*, *etymos* and *etetymos*. It is characteristic of several words, including *aletheia* also, belonging to this variety begin with 'a'. The most common interpretation of this lexical phenomenon is to consider 'a' as a sign of privativum, that is, as a negative noun or adjective. This understanding of *aletheia* was proposed by Sextus Empiricus, Plutarch, Ohimpiodoros and the so-called *Lexicon Gudianum* in antiquity (Luther, 1935, pp. 12-13) and (Friedländer, 1954, pp. 222, 375). As far as the matter concerns *aletheia*, its etymology is derived as *a* + *lethe* + suffix. *Aletheia*, as a noun occurred with so-called *verbadicendi*, [verbs of saying] that is, verbs like Greek counterparts of "to tell" or "to hear".

Trado-Religious Tradition of Truth

The question of truth is an enquiry of reality manifesting as such in different ancient religious beliefs and practices. Hence, philosophy deals with different elements and rudiments of truth. Mariatain, J. (2005, 3) opts that “some of the most elementary truths with which philosophy deals were known long before philosophy itself had come to birth”. Their philosophic truths were actually religious truth as was inherent in the monotheism of the Persians, the Zoroastrianism and its dualism’s double principles: principle of Good (*ormuzd*) and the principle of Evil (*Ahriman*), the primitive religion of India and her *Vedas* of which Maritain, J. (2005, 6) exposes their remarkable phenomenon thus:

when the original religion-the primitive of the Vedas-no longer proved sufficient to satisfy the intellectual demands or social needs of a more advanced civilization, philosophic notions which seem to have originated as interpretations of sacrifice and other sacred ritual but developed in a spirit hostile to the ancient traditions and the cult of the gods, found a home among the sacerdotal caste and took possession of the priesthood. To reconcile the perpetuation of their office with their new opinions, the priests while continuing to perform the traditional ceremonies, directed their worship no longer to the old gods, but to the undefined and secret forces of the universe.

Truth then was simply a religious thing. It is often seen in the religious principles, doctrines and *dogmas* as it is with different monotheistic and polytheistic religions like Judaism, Pantheism and other religions of the eastern tradition with great deal on pseudo-mysticism, ethics, knowledge and general well-being of man in the world. Hinduism for example has great elements of truth as Maritain, J. (2005, 6) maintains that Brahmanism or Hinduism is “essentially a philosophy, a metaphysics, a work of human speculation, but being, so to speak, clothed in the ornaments of the sanctuary, was invested from the outset with the sanctions and attributes of a religion”. For pre-Socrates, truth meant revealing, unveiling. But Plato corrupted it by a seizure of two worlds and

threw the appreciation of truth away from the realm of our cosmos. Further, Plato also derailed and *sinned* by identifying ‘idea’ with the good (*agathon*) and reality as a shadow. This conferred on humanity the unmerited power to judge creation and existence. The deployment of that power is the subsequent history of metaphysics.

In understanding further, the meaning of truth, we have to take a cursory look on what Modernist and Post-modernist movement hold on truth. While in the Modernist movement, truth could be learned through the examination of facts, in the Post-modernist movement there are no facts. There is no distinction between “truth-claims” and fiction. According to McCallum, D. (1996), truth only exists in our heads. Contrary to the Greek and Hebrew’s understanding of truth, which reveal God as an absolute truth and his authoritative decrees as an overall rule to be followed, Post-modernism teaches that there is no truth, just a collection of interpretations and that each culture possess its own truth that should be followed. To them, truth may exist independent of human consciousness but there is no objective means of nailing it down but then, Truth for Modernist movement exist independent of human consciousness and can be known through the application of reason. To further understand the meaning of truth, we will have to take a critical look on the philosophical theories of truth.

Truth in Ancient Near East Traditions (ANET)

The Egyptian culture was centred on order, everything had its due place in the world. This included religion, society and seasonal changes. The goddess *Ma’at* came to represent the concept of balance and order because many Egyptians needed to explain the world around them. *Maat*, also known as *Ma’at* or *Mayet*, was a female goddess in the ancient Egyptian religion who represented truth, justice, balance and morality. The daughter of the Egyptian sun deity, *Ra* and wife of the moon god, *Thoth*. She served as a spirit of justice to the Egyptians. She decided whether a person would successfully reach the afterlife, by weighing their soul against her feather of truth, and was the personification of the cosmic order and a representation of the stability of the universe. She was the one that kept the stars in motion, the seasons changing and the maintaining of the order of heaven and earth. The opposing force of this was known in ancient terms as “*isfet*” or chaos. Ancient Egyptians considered the desert beyond the River Nile to

be chaotic; whereas, the area close to the Nile was considered orderly. Together, these two forces brought balance to the world in which they lived and was an important part of everyday Egyptian life. *Ma'at* is usually depicted in the form of a woman seated or standing with outstretched wings attached to both her arms. In other images, the feather alone conveyed her presence. This feather has come to symbolize her being, as well as the representation of balance and order, it became a hieroglyph for "truth." For Martin, D. (2008), *Ma'at* represents the ethical and moral principle that every Egyptian citizen was expected to follow throughout their daily lives. They were expected to act with honour and truth in manners that involve family, the community, the nation, the environment, and the gods, thus, were associated with the law in ancient Egypt.

Truth in the Scriptural Testaments

Ladd, GE (1993) teaches that the Old Testament Hebrew word for truth is אֱמֶת transliterated *emeth*. Its opposite, however, קֶרֶשׁ, *sheker*, means falsehood or lie. *Emeth* and its cognate words, is the word that the Bible translators have traditionally rendered as *truth*. However, this word has a much larger range of meaning than the English word "truth." The Person who acts in *emeth* is one who can be trusted (Gen. 24:49; 42:16; 47:26; Josh. 2:14). A witness of *emeth* is one whose testimony can be trusted because it corresponds to the facts (Pr. 14:25). Actions, speech, reports or judgement are *emeth* because they are reliable (Dt. 13:14; 22:20; 1 Kg. 10:6; 22:16; Pr. 12:19; Zech. 8:16). The most important use of *emeth* in the Old Testament is in the description of God, that is, the *manifest* character and virtues of God. Very often *emeth* is attached to *hesed* חֶסֶד to mean covenant faithfulness. *Hesed*, is a word "which designates God's loyalty in fulfilling His promises and His covenant", (Ladd, 1993). God showed his *emeth* and *hesed* by leading Abraham's servant to find a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:27), in Jacob's prosperity in Laban's house (Gen. 32:10) and the covenant at Sinai (Ex. 34:6). In addition, God shows his *emeth* by punishing the wicked (Ps. 54:5). Therefore, the God of *emeth* that the OT describes (2 Chr. 15:3; Jer. 10:10) is a trustworthy, reliable God. The God characterized by *emeth* is not an abstract God, but concrete and absolute. The people of God are called to walk in *emeth* (1 Kg. 2:4; 2 Chr. 31:20; Ps. 26:3; 86:11; Isa.; 38:3). Thus, when used in association with God's people, *emeth according to* Ladd, GE (1993) "becomes essentially *the revealed will of God*", (p.301).

The difficulty in attempting proper definition of *truth* in the Old Testament (OT) is because of its Hebrew origin. OT *truth* is rendered *trustworthy, reliable* and *faithful*. In the NT, it is read, “the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14). Again, the NT has it that, “for the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (Jn. 1:17). *Grace* and *truth* in these two passages are the equivalent of *hesed* and *emeth* in the OT concept of Truth.

However, the New Testament (NT) carries the definition of truth a step further. The Greek word that is usually translated as truth is transliterated *aletheia* of the Ancient Greek, ἀλήθεια. *The opposite of truth, alitheia*, is transliterated *pseudos*, a falsehood, untruth, lie of the original word ψεῦδος. Etymologically, this word means *unclosedness, disclosure, openness*, what is not concealed according to Hodge, 436. Pilate used the word *alitheia* when he asked Jesus *what is truth?* Through the Gospel of John, the OT concept of truth finds meaning in *truth* that is Christ (Jn. 5:33). Now God of *truth, emet* of the Old Testament is fully revealed in the person of Christ. Therefore, according to Ladd, G.E. (1993), when Christ says *I am the truth* (Jn. 14:6), he is declaring that he is the full revelation and *embodiment of the redemptive purpose of God*. When Pilate asks Jesus, “What is truth?” the answer to his question is standing right in front of him. With the knowledge that Christ is the *truth*, one can better understand several statement of Jesus about truth. Again if Christ had answered Pilate’s all engaging question about truth, knowledge and learning would have ended. Christ direct response to what is truth would have ended systematic enquiries and scientific discoveries.

When Jesus proclaims, *you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free* (Jn. 8:32), he is declaring that freedom is found in the intimate knowledge of the Son of God and who he is, the *incarnate truth*. Not only does the noun *aletheia* refers to Jesus, but also the adjective *alethinos, true*, points to Jesus as the truth of God. In the same, Gospel of John, Jesus says, *I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven*. (Jn.6). The Scripture is clear about the truth nature of Christ thus: *True Bread, the True Vine* (Jn. 15:1), *Son of the True God* (Jn. 3:33; 7:28;

8:26). However, Jesus is the truth, whatever proceeds from him is true. The words he speaks are true (Jn. 8:40, 45). His ministry on earth bears witness to the truth (Jn. 18:37). The Spirit that proceeds from him, the promise from on high, is the *Spirit of truth* (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). Truth in the scriptural tradition has wielded enormous influence in establishing that truth theologically is an attribute of God as the creator, God as the redeemer and God as the sanctifier of the human race already created and redeemed. Therefore, truth has nuances of scriptural undertone.

Philosophical Theories of Truth

Truth is one of the central subjects in philosophy. It is also one of the largest subject-content of philosophy right from the dawn of critical excursus. Truth has been a topic of discussion in its own right for thousands of years. Moreover, a huge variety of issues in philosophy relate to truth, either by relying on theses about truth, or implying theses about truth. It would be impossible to survey all there is to say about truth in any coherent way. The problem of truth is in a way easy to state: what truths are, and what (if anything) makes them true. But this simple statement masks a great deal of controversy. Whether there is a metaphysical problem of truth at all, and if there is, what kind of theory might address it, are all standing issues in the theory of truth. In order to give truth a definition or a way of accounting for the different kinds of statements that we believe are true, philosophers came up with these theories: Correspondence, Coherence, Pragmatic and Semantic theories of truth.

Correspondence Theory of Truth

Correspondence Theory proposes that a proposition is true if it corresponds to the facts. For example, “the bird is sitting on the tree” can be true only if the bird is in fact sitting on the tree. Therefore, we can say that a statement is true if it actually corresponds to reality. Aristotle actually, referred to this particular theory when he said, of truth in general, “to say that something is when it is, is true. To say that something is when it is not, is false.”

This theory is very much applauded because of its simplicity and appeal to common sense. For instance, in order to prove that “it is a rainy day” is true, according to the correspondence theory, all one must do is look out through the window and verify that it is in fact raining. This is very

much in line with Rene Descartes (1639) explanation of truth when he said, “I have never had any doubts about truth, because it seems a notion so transcendently clear that nobody can be ignorant of it... The word *truth*, in the strict sense, denotes the conformity of thought with its object.” Correspondence theory is not without its problems. First of all, when we say that something corresponds to reality, we might find ourselves asking, “How do I know if I am perceiving reality accurately? And what is reality anyway?” There are true statements outside of “reality”; there are truths that don’t correspond with reality. Consequently, the set of all true statements is not comprehended in mere correspondence with reality. Correspondence theory claims that a proposition is true if it corresponds to the facts, but circular reasoning asks the question “What is a fact?” A fact is, by definition, a true proposition. So, a proposition is true if it corresponds with another proposition that is true. The facts must also be proven to be true – by showing that they correspond to other facts. An important rule of writing a definition is that one cannot use the word you are defining in the definition of the word, which is what correspondence theory does, in a sense. It is rather like defining egg as an egg-like object. Meanwhile, this theory has two main versions which are object-based, and fact-based (currently prominent). It can say to have linguistic issues. We can say here that whatever truth is, it must be more than simple correspondence.

Coherence Theory of Truth

This theory, a rival to the correspondence theory, is preferred by many idealists. For these set of people, reality is like a collection of beliefs. This makes the coherence theory particularly attractive. The coherence theory of truth states that if a proposition coheres with all the other propositions taken to be true, then it is true. This explains that certain propositions may have no connection with reality, but be internally consistent (coherent) between statements in a closed system. The truth of a belief can only consist in its coherence with other beliefs; truth comes in degrees. Coherence theorists hold that truth consists in coherence with a set of beliefs or with a set of propositions *held to be true*, not just an arbitrary collection of propositions. Mathematics, geometry, physics and logic are examples of coherent systems of truth. Propositions in these systems do not necessarily correspond with reality. Like the Correspondence theory, the Coherence theory falls prey to circular reasoning. Example: Proposition A is true because propositions B and C are true. But how do

you know B is true? Therefore, proposition A and C are true. But what external evidence is there to support the truth of any of these propositions? So, it is possible to imagine a completely coherent system of statements that are ultimately false. So, while correspondence theory emphasizes how beliefs and reality agree, coherence theory emphasizes the importances of a coherent and connected network of beliefs (Fresh Essays, June 2023). Young (2018) maintains that in coherence theory, the truth conditions of propositions consist in other propositions; follow logically and coherently from a set of axioms (or intermediate propositions). The correspondence theory, in contrast, states that the truth conditions of propositions are not (in general) propositions, but rather objective features of the world.

Pragmatic Theory of Truth

William James is considered the father of pragmatism. However, we must draw a distinction between *meaning* and *truth* in order to understand James' presentation of pragmatism. A sentence is meaningful only if believing it would make a practical difference in your life as opposed to believing some alternative to it. It is, simply, that a proposition is true if it works for whatever purpose you need it. For example, Proposition A: There is a gaping hole in the middle of the cafeteria. Would believing this proposition to be true make a practical difference in your life? It is safe to assume that one would take a path that avoids the middle of the cafeteria if one believed that there was a gaping hole there. The previous example is an illustration of a *meaningful* proposition – belief in it (or lack thereof) makes a practical difference in one's life. What about truth? Only meaningful sentences can be true or false. James' take on both the coherence and correspondence theories of truth is that they are not competing theories, but rather different tools to be applied to beliefs to see if those beliefs work. Wikipedia Contributors, (2024) through William James, maintains that “ideas (which themselves are but parts of our experience) become true just insofar as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience,... truth in our ideas means their power to ‘work’”. The key thing for James and pragmatism is that of an idea “working”. If believing that there is a gaping hole in the middle of the cafeteria prevents you from falling and breaking a leg, or making a fool of yourself in front of that cute boy from chapel, then that belief works. It is “true”, (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024). Consequently, pragmatic truths are limited to propositions about the

practical realm. It therefore, suffers from the problem of all empirical, inductive, or scientific observations, that the “truth” of such propositions could be invalidated if there were enough of the right kind of evidence amassed against it. They are, simply, not “necessary” judgements (that is, true in all cases, as are mathematical propositions); rather, they are what we call “contingent” (the truth of which depends on the circumstances).

Semantic Theory of Truth

We come to the semantic theory. The semantic theory of truth (STT, hereafter) was developed by Alfred Tarski in the 1930s, (Wolenski, n.d.). The theory has two separate, although interconnected, aspects. This theory is a little unusual, but it’s kind of flip side of the correspondence theory. It is the truth of a proposition which has everything to do with our language and only incidentally with “reality.” For example, if we claim, “Mount Everest is 29,029 feet tall”; this statement may be true under the correspondence theory, but what in the world is a Mount Everest, and what is a foot? Mount Everest is just the name we have arbitrarily assigned to a very massive geographic phenomenon in a landmass we have arbitrarily called Asia, and a foot is just the name we have arbitrarily assigned to a particular unit of measure that is long. There is no essential truth value to those phenomena in and of themselves. They are just phenomena. Our language assigns truth value to them, but our language is artificial. We see an example of semantic truth in the scriptures, when Adam is naming animals, and as Mark Twain writes, Eve insists on calling a zebra a “zebra” because, of course, it was the animal most like a zebra, as anyone could plainly see. Well, you can understand the problem here, (Wolenski, n.d.).

Ancient Western Philosophical Tradition on Truth

Pre-Socratics alongside other Ancient Greek Philosophers after Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in their bid for the *urstoff* of reality were actually searching for the truth of reality. In his metaphysics, Aristotle stated thus "to say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true" proceeds to say of Aristotle: Some Greek philosophers maintained that truth was either not accessible to mortals, or of greatly limited accessibility which, however, lead to so many philosophical positions as idealism, realism, nihilism scepticism, pyrrhonism, epicureanism, and stoicism.

Medieval Philosophers were very apt in their approach to truth. Hence, Avicenna (90-1037), the early Islamic philosophers defined truth as: what corresponds in the mind to what is outside it. Therefore, Jan A. Aertsen (1988, 152) asserts that the truth of a thing is the property of the being of each thing which has been established in it. Equally, Simone van Riet has it that: Truth is also said of the veridical belief in the existence of something. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), assessing philosophers past him maintained that the truth of the human intellect (logical truth) is based on the truth in things (ontological truth). Following this, he wrote an elegant re-statement of Aristotle's view that *veritas est adæquatio intellectus et rei*.

That is: Truth is the conformity of the intellect and things. On this, Wikipedia (n.d.) concludes thus:

Aquinas also said that real things participate in the act of being of the Creator God who is subsistent being, intelligence and truth. Thus, these beings possess the light of intelligibility and are knowable. These things (beings; reality) are the foundation of the truth, that is, found in the human mind, when it acquires knowledge of things, first through the senses, then through the understanding and the judgement done by reason. For Aquinas, human intelligence (*intus*, within and *legere*, to read) has the capability to reach the essence, and existence of things because it has a non-material, spiritual element, although some moral, educational, and other elements might interfere with its capability.

St. Augustine on Truth

The Augustinian theory defines truth as the meaning of reality. Truth takes form as understanding. True understanding is knowledge. The understanding of truth itself, if true, is knowledge. A good understanding of truth provides the criteria for deciding what is, and is not, knowledge. Augustinian belief and practice are aspects of Truth, and specifically, are both a philosophy and a part of religious truth. Augustinian philosophy

as explanation takes the form of theory, and as theory, it is open to progressive enhancement as human philosophies and purposes required. It defines the nature and methodology of knowledge and truth, where knowledge is true explanation, (Onebunne, 2018). Augustinian Epistemology studies reality through experience and Augustinian knowledge corresponds to reality and truth in all its forms. Augustinian knowledge, Onebunne, J. (2018) maintains "is the explanation of reality, describes reality and how to change that reality to achieve the improvement of the human condition. The theory provides a compatible framework for philosophy, science and religion and enables the achievement of a unified culture", (p.384). It shows how human experience can be explained in a manner which makes sense of human existence, and which can impart meaning, purpose and direction both to individual lives and to the development of the culture.

St. Thomas Aquinas on Truth

Middle Ages dwelt so much on "an ethical truth in which truth is understood to reside in persons". With the reformation and renaissance updates, truth became more political as political truth in which truth is understood to reside in documents of many magisterial documents. Aquinas states that truth is "the conformity of the mind to the object", that is, we accept the outward information that our senses are transmitting to our intellect, and our intellect accepts these as they are, and does not deny them or distort them, through self-interest or other motives.

Milbank and Pickstock (2001) were of the opinion that Aquinas approach to truth is entirely different from contemporary thought, being able to explain the reasons for doubt, to see the truth equally practical and theoretical, to demonstrate that faith and reason co-exist in its defining and finally to show that "truth is immediately accessible to the simplest apprehension, and yet amenable to profound learned elaboration." For Aquinas, therefore, faith and reason cannot exist independently. Reason requires faith to operate continuously and faith still "demands discursive argumentation." But faith for him is higher than reason because it "enjoys a deeper participation in the divine reason" as "direct intuition or pure intellectual vision". This means that both faith and reason are equal, yet qualitatively different ways of *participation* in the divine mind and the created world, and as such, basic tools for discovering the truth or the

reality of being. We see here that Aquinas is neither a fideist, nor a rationalist in the modern sense of the word, (Milbank and Pickstock, 2001).

In the reasoning of contemporary philosophers, Aquinas' conviction that truth exists and his interest in the meaning and role of faith and reason, is completely lacking. Post-modern philosophy questions not only the validity of faith and reason, it doubts the adequacy of "realism" itself; it challenges the very idea that there are such things as true and real. It represents the so-called "nihilistic" stance to truth. And the main argument of the nihilist against the existence of truth is that we live in a *one-dimensional* world, where the "participation" in the external reality is an illusion of mind. It is so because to participate means, before all, to communicate, to act and re-act, to move and be moved, and our supposed participation is simply a one-dimensional operation of mind that has knowledge of the world, but does not communicate with it on an *equal* basis. In short, human mind is *alone*, and what mind perceives and finds real is limited to its own perception, (Heisenberg, 1983).

Truth, therefore, according to Aquinas, is neither epistemological nor a property of statements. It is convertible with being, it is a "mode of existence" and an aspect of being, understood as "beautiful assimilation between things." Truth is the full circle of the modes of existence. It is not only the temporal state of a thing; it is also its *ideal*. When we say, "This is a true rain!", we imagine the strongest possible rain, and in this imagination we judge the truthfulness of what we observe through the prism of the hierarchy of conditions, where the level of density and power reveals the level of being of the observed thing. Aquinas' realist theory of truth is a simple correspondence of mind to things as discovering the hierarchy and their direction to the divine intellect.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) in Modern era of philosophy, endorses a definition of truth along the lines of the correspondence theory of truth. Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* writes that the "nominal definition of truth, namely that it is the agreement of cognition with its object, is here granted and presupposed". Truth, therefore, is said to be consistent in the agreement of cognition with its object or the reality it cognizes. For GWF Hegel (1770–1831), truth is truth is analogous within its own self-movement within itself. Teleological truth moves itself in the three-

step form of dialectical triplicity of *thesis*, *antithesis* and *synthesis*. According to Hegel, the progression of philosophical truth is a resolution of past oppositions into increasingly more accurate approximations of absolute truth. Hence, Maybee, Julie E., (2020) maintains that Hegelian Dialectics thus:

The "thesis" consists of an incomplete historical movement. To resolve the incompleteness, an "antithesis" occurs which opposes the "thesis." In turn, the "synthesis" appears when the "thesis" and "antithesis" become reconciled and a higher level of truth is obtained. This "synthesis", thereby, becomes a "thesis," which will again necessitate an "antithesis," requiring a new "synthesis" until a final state is reached as the result of reason's historical movement. History is the Absolute Spirit moving toward a goal.

Kierkegaard (1813–1855) accepts reality of truth with an understanding of a human person. Objective truths are concerned with the facts of a person's being, while subjective truths are concerned with a person's way of being. While objective truths are final and static, subjective truths are continuing and dynamic. According to Schopenhauer (1788–1860): *Truth is the reference of a judgement to something different from itself which is its sufficient reason (ground)*. Judgements can have material, formal, transcendental, or metalogical truth. It's a logical or formal truth. Nietzsche (1844–1900) equally accepts that the search for truth, or 'the will to truth', was a consequence of the *ubermensch* that is the will to power of philosophers. He thought that truth should be used as long as it promoted life and the *will to power*. A.N. Whitehead (1861–1947), a British mathematician who became an American philosopher, said: "there are no whole truths; all truths are half-truths. It is trying to treat them as whole truths that plays the devil". His mathematical precision remains his problem.

Heidegger, M. (1889–1976) and other philosophers take this common meaning to be secondary and derivative. According to Martin Heidegger, the original meaning and essence of truth in ancient Greece was *unconcealment*, or the revealing or bringing of what was previously

hidden into the open, as indicated by the original Greek term for truth, *aletheia*. On this view, the conception of truth as correctness is a later derivation from the concept's original essence, a development Heidegger traces to the Latin term *veritas*.

Now, Heidegger maintains that none of these theories afore-explained has clarified what truth itself is. Heidegger, 'the last Aristotelian', which is the title Hans-Georg Gadamer bestows on him, is seeking after the 'original essence' of truth by way of a radical 'de-construction' of traditional metaphysical concepts (or theories) by resisting the traditional temptation and asking about the condition under which truth *manifests* itself to our knowledge. Noteworthy, is the fact that, Heidegger is indeed speaking just about the *correspondence* but his argumentation also applies to other modern theories. Hence, for Heidegger, the Western tradition has forgotten the *sense of being* and also the *sense of truth* which belongs to the core-sense of being. He believes that the very possibility of the question 'what does it mean to be?' has been closed-off by the tradition itself and, specifically, by its various accounts of 'reality.' Moreover, the sense of being has not been clarified, and the sense of truth depends on the sense of being, the sense of truth has likewise not been clarified. Through his destructive retrieve, he wishes to disclose (re-find) an original experience of truth that has become lost. What does this mean? What does it mean to say that the original essence of truth was forgotten by the tradition itself? Furthermore, how is it possible to recover it when we are so far-removed from the Greeks? Indeed, how can we make this recovery without thinking of the Greek tradition 'traditionally' and hence, missing its archaic *pathos*? Heidegger believes that even though we are entrenched in the tradition we can nonetheless look for its basis, as we have already indicated, by way of 'deconstruction'. We need to examine our traditional understanding of truth and exhibit the no longer recognized conditions which make it possible, i.e. what it presupposes and with which our traditional understanding of truth has lost contact.

Heidegger says that from the beginning *truth* is already connected with *Being*. In other words, truth was for the Greeks a feature of ontological inquiry which is nevertheless ontosophical. Being is, by this unique idea, ontosophical (Umeogu, B., *Public Lecture*). We can see this connection already in the oldest 'definition' of the term 'truth' attributed to Plato and Aristotle. Truth never meant 'correspondence' (or 'representation') for

them in the sense of the modern Cartesian idea concerning the relation between *subjectum* (a knower) and *objectum* (what is known by a knower). According to that view, the subject *determines* what truth is: if there is no proposition there is no truth, or at least there is no truth without presupposing a *subject* who is capable of making propositions. For the Modern era, therefore, truth is guided by a regulative idea of self-certainty. Since Heidegger is trying to gain an insight into the nature of truth *as the Greeks understood it*, he emphasizes that we must not confuse truth with knowledge. For the Greeks, *truth* was an ontological question; for the contemporary thinkers truth is an epistemological question. Truth is not primarily an epistemological question because the question of knowledge already presupposes a certain understanding of what truth is.

In order to gain a better understanding of Heidegger's position, we must consider how his concept of truth is articulated through his *fundamental ontology* of *dasein*. This is because, he understands analytically, the central and specific problem of metaphysics to be, not the abstract investigation of the totality or plurality, or even the unicity of being. It is not the Platonic *idea* or the Aristotelian *ousia*. It is not the Thomistic *onto-theological approach* of explaining Being with the God of religion. It is not the scholastic *being qua being*, not the Cartesian *solipsistic cogito*, not the Kantian *transcendental apperception*. Heidegger subscribes neither to Leibnizian *subjectivity* nor to Spinozian *monadology*, nor still to the *uubermensch* (superman) of Nietzsche. To him, these are false routes to the being of ontology. The fundamental project of metaphysics from which all these persons and more have derailed, is the unearthing of the deep meaning of *Sein* (*esse, etre, 'to be', essere*). The *Sein* is the soil and the foundation of beings. It is otherwise called the *ontological difference*. It is the primary object of metaphysics. The *point-de-depart* of this proper ontology is for Heidegger, *fundamental ontology*. The investigation of the human being, otherwise called the *dasein*, who posits the question of being, and who is the only *locus* in which the being-question can be investigated. Heidegger's metaphysical schema runs thus: first, the question of *Sein*; second, the investigation of the investigator, *dasein*; third, *dasein* inquires into the *Sein* of beings. His treatment of truth found in *Being and Time*, follows immediately upon the existential analysis of *dasein*, and so the essence of truth is investigated from the perspective of *dasein's* being. Heidegger's account of truth, therefore, emerges from an inquiry into what it means 'to be', an

inquiry that gets started with his radical question: How can we clarify the sense of being independently of any dogmatic assumptions of what Being is? The introductory question of the work (*die Fragenachdem Sein*) is the question which can be investigated only by *human* being or what he calls *dasein*. Unlike all other beings, *dasein* is occupied with its own existence and the sense of its own Being. *Da-sein* is literally the 'Da', or place, where 'Sein' is disclosed. Heidegger (1990) says: "Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of *Dasein's* Being. *Dasein* is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological." This means that *Dasein* is not simply self-consciousness, but mainly and fundamentally is conscious of itself or conscious of itself as Being (-in-the world). In this regard being as *dasein* is ontosophical. Being-in-the-world is a fundamental characteristic of *Dasein* and original with this openness to its own being is an openness to other beings as well as the being of other beings. This disclosedness of Being to *Dasein* is, according to Heidegger, what truth means in the most primordial sense. Truth in its original (*essential*) sense, therefore, refers not to an *object* but to *Dasein*. Only by an object's being *uncovered* can anyone then say that this object is true.

Truth is an *existential aspect* of *Dasein*. This means, then, that truth as such does not exist independent of *Dasein*. There is truth only insofar as *Dasein* 'is' and as long as *Dasein* 'is'. This has led Heidegger (1990), to say that there is no truth without *Dasein*. There would be no truth because what makes truth possible is the world's disclosedness and being open to a world is a basic characteristic of *Dasein*. In other words, *Dasein* is only open to a world because in its essential constitution, *Dasein* is 'worldly.' As Heidegger (1990) says, "only with *Dasein's* disclosedness is the most primordial phenomenon of truth attained." Heidegger is not saying that *Dasein* *determines* what is the truth (as the 'subject' of modern epistemology does: seeing man as the measure of all things), but rather since *Dasein* is the site of disclosedness, truth can exist only as a mode of *Dasein's* Being. Therefore, it is not any new attempt to formulate a subjectivistic or relativistic theory of truth. All truths are 'relative' only *in Dasein's Being* (but not *to Dasein*). The central idea here is that truth considered as disclosedness would not be possible without *Dasein* because then there would be no *Dasein* to do the uncovering of entities within-the-world." For in such a case, truth as disclosedness, uncovering, and uncoveredness, cannot be," as posited by Heidegger. We might say that *Dasein* is the necessary though not the sufficient condition of truth.

For Heidegger truth is something that *happens*, and so it is an *event of being* (*Ereignis*) which is only *revealed* to us. Therefore, we cannot *see* truth; truth is just *shown* to us by itself. Also, Heidegger reiterates thus, “what is demonstrated is not an agreement of knowledge with its object, still less an agreement between contents of consciousness among themselves. What is to be demonstrated is solely the Being-uncovered (*Entdeckt-sein*) of the entity itself - that entity in the how of its uncovering.” Of course, we might ask: Is it possible to say that Heidegger’s analysis of truth is ‘true’? But Heidegger is inquiring into the sense of truth which allows this very question to be asked in the first place. He is not concerned with any particular true or false claims. His inquiry works, rather, at a formal level which seeks after the foundation of truth, i.e., the conditions which make possible anything like ‘true’ or ‘false’ judgement-claims.

Truth as Reality

Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary (2005), defines truth as the property of being in accord with fact or reality. Here, reality is understood as anything that is. Reality is, therefore, that which is in so far as it is. Reality as such is a fact that is, a fact of being, a fact of existence, a fact of being-there, a being-there. Truth is the characteristics of a thing *in tandem* with another thing as such. Therefore, a natural thing, being placed between two intellects, is called *true* insofar as it conforms to either. With respect to its conformity or even corresponds with the human intellect, a thing is said to be true insofar as it is such as to cause a true estimate about itself, a good reflection of its being. Accordingly, Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (n.d.) noted that in everyday language, truth is typically ascribed to things that aims to represent reality or otherwise correspond to it, such as beliefs, propositions and declarative sentences. Reality has been defined as the summative of all that is exist or real within a system. Reality is opposed to idealism in which one is left with only mental memory or picture. Ontologically, reality essentially shows existence. Interchangeably, one may use truth as reality and *vice versa* amidst seeming distinctions. Knowledge of truth is knowledge of reality though there could be no more glaring example of the increasing dichotomy between reality and the truth

According to Jagdish Nargundkar (n.d.), “there are indeed subtle differences and distinction between reality and truth; in as much as the

former exists but only the latter can confirm its existence in any given circumstance”. Reality, therefore, gives truth essential existence or existential essentiality. However, the great scientist, Albert Einstein, had observed that *reality is merely an illusion, albeit, a very persistent one*. Jagdish Nargundkar (n.d.), however, gave differences between truth and reality thus:

Truth is absolute, reality is cognitive. Truth hurts, reality bites. Truth is singular, reality is manifold. Truth is objective, reality is subjective. Truth is permanent, reality is ephemeral. Truth emancipates, reality constrains. Truth redeems, reality informs. Truth comes from the heart, reality follows from the head. Truth requires courage, reality reflects convenience. Truth is always real, reality is not always true. The finality of truth can be summed up in this quotation from *The Bhagavad Gita: What is not real never was and never will be. What is real always was and cannot be destroyed*. So yes, by all means, keep it real, but always seek the truth!

Reality and appearance are one of the major and fundamental, problems of ontology or metaphysics. Robert, A. (1998), defines it as: how things actually are. Reality is how things appear in themselves. As appearance has to do with how things seem to a particular observer or perceiver. Therefore, reality differs from appearance as appearance does not necessarily determine reality. According to Iroegbu, P. (1995), there are appearance and reality. But appearance is not reality nor is reality appearance. Metaphysics investigates reality. Reality and appearance are not always the same. However, it is reality that appears to be this or that reality. Therefore, to know the true nature of things, we have to go beyond appearance and get at the realities themselves. Reality gives us the true nature of things. There are realities behind appearances.

The great dualism or dichotomy between many philosophers of the ancient Western philosophical traditions started with Plato’s world of forms (ideal world) and world of reality (real world). Kant made a great

contribution to philosophy with his sharp distinction between things-as-they-are-in-themselves (*phenomena*) and things-as-they-appear-to-us (*noumena*). Reality has to do with realism. According to *Philosophical Dictionary* (1972), realism literally means a standpoint of reality. Realism in contrast to idealism is a position that a real existent subsists in the ideal world.

Reality is the quality of being real or true. Reality is the resemblance to what is real. *Oxford Language and Google Dictionary* (n.d.) has it that reality is a real thing or fact. Reality is the state of things as they actually exist. It is opposed to an idealistic or notional idea of them. It is the state or quality of having factual existence or substance. Reality means anything, that is, anything that exists. Any activity or event that has actually happened, or a thing which really exists is said to have *reality*. To be or being is reality as such. Something close to reality is realistic. Reality is the state of things as they are, rather than as they may appear or might be imagined. Reality is synonymous with the concepts: the real world, real life, actuality, truth physical existence and corporeality. Reality is an absolute truth. Reality is fact that takes us close to truth. *Facts* are what we human beings declare to be real. The real is a fact, therefore, the word *fact* is a status that we confer on something which we believe to be indubitably actual. By definition, facts exist by their own right as truth and actuality.

Onebunne: Appreciating Truth as Reality

Truth amidst its theories and definitions of great thinkers and scholars received greatest attention in the teaching of Christ and more in the eventful naming of my grandfather this one and all important name: *Onebunne*. Reality simply unfolds in the name. Reality is questioned in the name. Hence, *Onebunne* is a name-question. Truth as such is the unfolding of this reality. Questioning doubtedly and appreciating at the same time, the continued existence and rightly put, the survival of the little boy *Onebunne* is an action that will gradually unfold. The future determines the answer to the name-question, *Onebunne*. His survival or his continued growth is the unfolding, gradually developing, or revealing. Actually, the concept of *Onebunne* as a name, questioned and appreciated this fact of unfolding. Wikipedia (n.d.) defines this unfolding reality thus:

Reality is the sum or aggregate of all that is real or existent within a system, as opposed to that which is only imaginary. The term is also used to refer to the ontological status of things, indicating their existence. In physical terms, reality is the totality of a system, known and unknown.

So, the word *Onebunne* was like questioning *the unfolding reality before them as truth*, probably with every doubtful-possibility as a result of their past experiences. The truth or reality on ground is that the child before them, that is, the reality before them, is being questioned of his existence, of his actual reality, that is, to be or not to be. Implicitly *Onebunne* as a concept questions truth as reality not in utter ignorance but as an appreciation of a reality that has dawn on them, that is, a reality that has unfolded and continues to unfold in the *o nne!*, that is, *is it true?*

Conclusion

Truth as reality in an unfolding manner as such. It simply means that truth is reality. The truth being questioned *appreciated* simply opens out, spreads out, stretches out, flattens, straightens out, unfurls, unrolls, unravels, uncoils, unwind, extends. This is reality as it should be. Thus, truth as reality which, nevertheless, unfolds with a bench mark that truth is reality. Hence, truth is correspondence with reality. Truth is a true statement that is in accordance with reality. Truth is coherence. The truth coheres on the person being named as such. It means a fact or belief that is accepted as true. Truth is equally pragmatic as the name-question presented and discourses. However, reality is a thing that exists in fact, even if previously only existed in one's mind - but then obviously tested on its reliability. Truth is semantic as the word *Onebunne* is assigned with a linguistically name-question. This reality, of course, is the cumulative of all that is factual or existent within a system. This is in contrast to that which is simply a fantasy. The term is also used to refer to the ontological status of things, indicating their existence. Reality is the totality of an arrangement that is. *Onebunne*, is a name-question that questions the reality of truth as something there.

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CHAPTER TWO

ONEBUNNE: THE META-EPISTEMIC PRUNING OF TRUTH (*IKWACHA EZIOKWU*) IN IGBO COSMOGONY

Jude I. Onebunne

Introduction

In Igbo Weltanschauung, it is a popular saying and a maxim of human operation that truth as *eziokwu* is properly pruned, that is, *a na-kwacha eziokwu akwacha*. The word pruning as an agricultural act is translated *ikwacha*. By implication, you actually prune or trim a tree unlike budding or grafting, for a better ornamental shade and most probably for a better productive height. The act of pruning is not actually detrimental to the being or nature of the tree nor does it change the stuff or nature of the tree as budding and grafting will actually do when applied. In spite of the act of pruning, truth as truth, therefore, ought to be presented as such in a manner that sustains it as truth and not otherwise. However, there are other aphorisms that seem to portray same ideas expressed above in relation to truth.

The Scripture made allusion to the fact that truth must be told with love as God is truth (cf. Jn. 14:6) and God is love (cf. I Jn. 4:16). Equally, the Papal Encyclical of Pope Benedict's XVI *Caritas in Veritate* deals with contemporary forms of human development based on *truth in love* or *charity in truth*. These conceptual synonymous nuances of the truth and love nevertheless are responses to the meta-epistemic questioning and appreciation of truth in Onebunne.

Lexical Appreciation of Key Concepts

Words or concepts as we know are pregnant with meaning. Through semantics and or their etymologies, we approach a dissection meaning and appreciation of words in their real meaning.

a. *Onebunne*

Onebunne is synonymous with *Olewunne* as well as *Olebunne*. That is, the *ole* or *one* is a matter of linguistic dialect depending who may be speaking literally questioning how many. Equally, *bunne* or *wunne* is as

result of same dialect differences questioning is it true? *One-bu-nne* is a proper name. *One-bu-nne* as a proper name that has garnered over decade of years the status of a family name, and now enjoys the status of an extended family name as a surname for many. *Onebunne*, a mere concept is pronounced distinctively as *one-bu-nne* questions the veracity of a reality before the pronouncer. However, *Onebunne* simply questions; thus, *one bu eziokwu*?

b. Veritate

Medieval thinkers were inclined to another formulation of traditional definition of truth as: *veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*. That is truth (*veritas*) is the agreement or correspondence (*adaequatio*) between things (*rei*) and the intellect or mind or mental sentence. Often, truth is the reason behind everything in life identifying properly when we go wrong. J. L. Austin in a symposium in 1950 expanded amidst theories of truth of a correspondence theory of truth that makes essential use of the sentence or statement distinction. This is so because some words have natural connection with what they are about to represent or show or identify with. Laurence Goldstein et al (2010, 67.) cited Austin's write-up thus: "a statement is said to be true when the historic state of affairs to which it is correlated by demonstrative conventions (the one to which it refers) is a type with which the sentence used in making it is correlated by the descriptive conventions". Later modern thinkers had alternatives to correspondence theory with coherence and pragmatic theories as well as classical truth and deflationist truth.

African worldview has something to do with critical realities around it. One of such fundamental realities is the concept of truth. Osuagwu, C. (2003) writes that the concept of truth in Igbo cosmogony is dynamic. Etymologically, *eziokwu* is a compound root words: *ezi* and *okwu*. Truth, therefore, is translated *eziokwu* in Igbo language. *Okwu* means word, that is, *logos*. It is a form of statement made or uttered. *Okwu* suffixed to *ezi* is *Eziokwu* which literally means statement that has been made. It's not hidden but a reality as such.

c. Eziokwu

Eziokwu is an Igbo compound word: *Ezi* and *Okwu*, that translate the English word *Truth*, Latin word *Veritas*. *Ezi* means pig as well as Candid, genuine (adjective). As *ezi n'ulo* family it literary means compound and

house. As *ezi omume* it means good behaviour or *ezigbo nwoke*: good man.

Okwu as a noun means word, talk as well as literally translates address and vocabulary. From the above nuances of meaning as regards compound words, it means: *Ezi Okwu* means good word. Then as a concept *ezi okwu* means truth. *Eziokwu* therefore, is fact, reality, truth, factual, frank, honesty, integrity, valid point. *Eziokwu* as an operative word translates the concept of truth.

Truth is *eziokwu*. Reality equally is whatever is or what-is-there. Reality with appearance is one of the most fundamental problems of philosophy and principle focal point of ontology. Hence, the distinction between ‘appearance’ and ‘reality’, between what things seem to be and what they are border on reality as truth. This is why appearance is how something appears to be while the reality is how something actually is. Nothing, therefore, is outside of reality. However, the main difference between appearance and reality is that appearance is the way something looks, while the reality is the state of things as they actually exist or the true state of something. Reality in Igbo is translated as *Ihe mere eme*, *Ihe a hụrụ anya*, *Ihe b́ara na mmezu*, *Nke anya hụrụ*, *Ihe na - eme eme*, *Ihe d́ ad́* and *Eziokwu*. Reality, therefore, is translated as *Nsiridi*, *Ifedi or di* (from *idi*). In the Igbo expressions of these concepts, though one tries to explain reality, *eziokwu* perfectly translates reality and in it we see a kind of relation. Hence, relating to reality in Igbo is *metụtara eziokwu*.

Veritate in Caritas (Eph 4:15a)

This is speaking the truth in love. The concept of truth is very much lauded in the scriptures to the extent that God is identified as truth as well as love. Truth, therefore, matters a lot in religious and human interactions. St. Paul’s was very succinct in speaking the truth with love when he wrote thus: *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ* (Ephesians 4:15 KJV). One may be tempted to ask if truth and love are synonymously the same. That is to ask, is the truth more important than love or is love more important than truth? However, same Scripture maintains that: Truth is love and love is truth (cf. Romans 13:8-10). Drop one and you lose both. Gain one and the other will come. Therefore, we need to speak the truth in love and lovingly proclaim and live out the truth. Both of these elements, truth and

love, are not to be compromised in any way. We must speak the truth in love. We speak the uncomfortable truth because people need to hear it. We speak lovingly because it is the only way to speak the truth. Otherwise, we misrepresent the truth. We speak the truth in love while refusing to compromise the truth in the name of love.

In religious contexts, therefore, truth has often such attributes as eternity, immutability, and transcendence, and attributed to God or some divine existential realities. Furthermore, truth is often not simply a conceptual knowledge but existential matter. In other words, man comes to understand or become aware of truth only through religious practices or process of embodiment.

Exposition of the Papal Document: *Veritate in Caritate* (ViC)

Pope Benedict's XVI in June 29, 2009 released an Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*. It is about all contemporary forms of human development based on *truth in love* or *charity in truth*. Through it, the Pope appreciates *the place of charity in salvation history as the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and all humanity*. (CV, No.1.). Pope observed that love, charity, which is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine (CV, No.2) and *the greatest gift to humanity* is a force that has its origin in the absolute truth that is God and therefore, "an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace" (CV, No1). Continuing, Popes reiterates that charity, though undervalued in our contemporary and often regarded as weakness is still relevant within the bounds of moral responsibility:

Hence, the need to link charity with truth not only in the sequence, pointed out by Saint Paul, of *veritas in caritate* (Eph 4:15), but also in the inverse and complementary sequence of *caritas in veritate*. Truth needs to be sought, found and expressed within the "economy" of charity, but charity in its turn needs to be understood, confirmed and practised in the light of truth. In this way, not only do we do a service to charity enlightened by truth, but we also help give credibility to truth, demonstrating its persuasive

and authenticating power in the practical setting of social living. This is a matter of no small account today, in a social and cultural context which relativizes truth, often paying little heed to it and showing increasing reluctance to acknowledge its existence.

The above extract from the Papal Encyclical CV is the basis of the paper, that is, that *Truth needs to be sought, found and expressed within the “economy” of charity*. That is to say, truth must be told or spoken with charity. Charity or love is actually the identity of God and the only virtue which we share with God. This is why the whole commandments of God is summarised in love. Albert Einstein, the greatest man of the 20th century once recognised this force of love when he wrote her daughter thus:

When I proposed the theory of relativity, very few understood me.... I ask you to guard the letters as long as necessary, years, decades, until society is advanced enough to accept what I will explain below. There is an extremely powerful force that, so far, science has not found a formal explanation to. It is a force that includes and governs all others, and is even behind any phenomenon operating in the universe and has not yet been identified by us. This universal force is LOVE...Love is light, that enlightens those who give and receive it.

Love is gravity, because it makes some people feel attracted to others. Love is power, because it multiplies the best we have, and allows humanity not to be extinguished in their blind selfishness. Love unfolds and reveals. For love we live and die. Love is God and God is Love. This force explains everything and gives meaning to life. ...I made a simple substitution in my most famous equation. If instead of $E = MC^2$, we accept that the energy to heal the world can be obtained through love multiplied by the speed of light

squared, we arrive at the conclusion that love is the most powerful force there is, because it has no limits...When we learn to give and receive this universal energy, dear Lieserl, we will have affirmed that love conquers all, is able to transcend everything and anything, because love is the quintessence of life.

Love or Charity otherwise referred to as *caritas* is very fundamental to human existence and interaction.

Philosophy of Love (*Caritas*)

It is a critical appreciation of love as a basic and fundamental reality in human existence. The act of charity or love is a more than a mere animal act even on the level of sheer instinct. It is more of a divine act than a human act since *God is love*. It is an act informed by circumstances of the welfare of others. As an informed act, it is always a result of unaided reason letting our controlled emotions overriding our philanthropic regards for others. It is the *vital force* of Placid Tempels and Albert Einstein echoes such force that defines human acts as such having determined every act of the salvific acts of Christ through the Holy Spirit in the Father. The true philosophy of charity would not condemn these modern tendencies of relating charity as mere act of give and take as well as an organization making big business around the very few. The *Philosophy of Caritas* received an appreciation by Fulton Sheen in his Philosophy of love showing that charity begins within the bosom of the Triune God for charity is the definition of God. According to F. J. Sheen therefore:

Charity, then, is not horizontal, extending from kindhearted men to needy men, but vertical, extending from the infinite source of charity, God Himself, down to the members of the mystical body, through the incarnation. Charity, then, is not organized, nor is charity accomplished through organization.

To this extent, there is philosophy of love. Such love may be understood as the basic stuff underlying every reality as it is the force that *explains*

and gives life to all. It is the *universal energy* and according to Einstein, the *quintessence of life*. It is nevertheless a human attitude. We are very much aware that man is a product of his environment as well as product of nurture. Philosophy of love, therefore, is a great search for the wisdom of love. It is a human search for the ultimacy of charity. This form of love “is not horizontal, extending”.

Understanding the Igbo Maxim: A *Na-Akwacha Eziokwu Akwacha*

A *na-akwacha eziokwu akwacha* is literally translated as *truth is always pruned* or *truth is always trimmed* is a statement that captures Igbo people’s understanding of truth as something that is dynamic. This dynamism is seen in the act of continuous trimming or pruning as the case may be which is summarily reflected in the theories of truth as it corresponds, coheres or pragmatic. This stand negates all forms of relativism and subjectivism. Rather, it smacks a form of evolution or what one refers as *uche na-abia abia*. There is, therefore, a form of continuous dialogue tries to midwife certain issues with certainty. *Ikwacha*, pruning, removes unnecessary branches from tree’s data excesses, trimming. This *nkwach*a is a form of redressing and for some it is saying the truth with prudence. Prudence here, means being careful with truth so as not to hurt anyone by mere fact of saying the truth as truth cannot but unfolds. The unfolding of truth is this act of pruning that does not negate nor relegate truth from being truth. Truth is truth but can be allowed or manifest at the right time. This is the meaning of *ikwach*a.

Man as *homo cogitans* reasons unto reality that which simply unfolds. As *animal rationalis*, he reasons and dialogues with reality as it unfolds. But as *homo emotionalis*, through human cognition and social cognition, appreciates reality as such. More than reason, emotions guide our decision making with regard to reality interpretation. Perception of reality is part of this appreciation of reality especially in the particular act of pruning.

Philosophico-Religious Traditions of Truth

When ancient philosophers were after the *urstoff* of reality, they were actually looking for the truth of reality or rightly say they were looking for the truth underlying across all reality. They were actually searching for what is true, what is certain, what really is. The problem of truth or the conceptual question *Onebunne* is actually the problem of

epistemology with regard to human knowledge. This is why the natural desire of man to know tends not only towards knowing things but also towards knowing the truth about them. This is equally meta=epistemic. The prominent ancient Western philosophers: Thales, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were, however, very elemental in defining the limits of this truth.

St. Anslem (of Canterbury c. 1080-85) in the middle ages wrote a treatise titled *De Veritate* asserts that truth is *rectitudo mente sola perceptibilis*, that is, rightness perceptible only to the mind. Medieval Philosophers: Augustine and especially Thomas Aquinas quoting Isaac Isreali Ben Solomon, a philosopher and Egyptian doctor of Jewish culture were very direct in defining truth thus: *Veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*, that is, adaequation of intellect to the thing. E. Gilson commenting on this traditional definition writes that *truth is only the agreement between reason which judges and reality which the judgement affirms*. This act of adaequation is seen in some of the theories of truth we know. And in the theories of truth (Correspondence, Coherence and Pragmatic), we see these act of adaequation in pruning as such.

Modern philosophy starting with Rene Descartes, has a broad philosophical tradition characterized by great emphasis on clarity and argument (often achieved via modern formal logic and analysis of language) as well as respect for the natural sciences. The concept of truth, in metaphysics and the philosophy of language, the property of sentences, assertions, beliefs, thoughts, or propositions that are said, in ordinary discourse, to agree with the facts or to state what is the case.

Contemporary philosophers equally have their own version of the appreciation of truth. Kant in his transcendental apperception tried to riddle metaphysics of its extreme dogmatism and all forms of radical empiricism and sensism with his noumenon and phenomenon. Kant was of correspondent view that truth consists in the agreement of knowledge with the object. The work of Immanuel Kant, specifically with his work: *The Critique of Pure Reason*, was at the gateway of postmodern thought. Kant made a foundational distinction between the “objects” of subjective experience and the “objects” of “reality.” He labels the former, *phenomena* and the latter *noumena*. The noumena for Kant are things in themselves (*ding an sich*). These exist outside of and separate from the

mind. These are what we might call “reality” or actual states of affairs similar to what we saw in the correspondence theory above. But for Kant, the noumena are entirely unknowable *in and of themselves*. However, the noumena give rise to the phenomena or are the occasion by which we come to know the phenomena. The phenomena make up the world we know, the world “for us” (*für uns*). This is the world of rocks, trees, books, tables, and any other objects we access through the five senses. This is the world of our experience.

Heidegger thought he has a complex concept of truth yet he defined truth as “dis-closedness” or “un-concealment” by applying a Greek term, “Aletheia” (ἀ-λήθεια). In Classical Greek, “Lethe” (λήθη; *lêthê*) literally means “forgetfulness” or “concealment.” It is related to the Greek word for “truth”: The differential *a* here as in *a-lethe-ia* (ἀλήθεια), means “un-forgetfulness” or “un-concealment.” In Heidegger’s ontological difference, that is, his fundamental ontology, Dasein (human being) is the locus where truth becomes evident. Although, human being has an implicit understanding of truth, truth is usually concealed or forgotten because human being exists in “inauthentic” mode. Only when human being restored its “authentic” mode of existence, that is, his authenticity that human being becomes a being where truth is manifested. From Heidegger’s perspective, therefore, man’s openness to the world is the fundamental condition that allows man to encounter things in the world. Theoretical knowledge and truth, including the correspondence of knowledge and reality, become possible due to man’s ontological openness to truth.

Mahatma Ghandi dedicated his life to the wider purpose of discovering truth, and in his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* he said “God is Truth.” He would later change this statement to “Truth is God.” Thus, Truth in Gandhi’s philosophy is God. But, Alfred North Whitehead as a British mathematician who became an American philosopher, said: “there are no whole truths; all truths are half-truths. Other existentialist philosophers like JP Sartre, who were of the opinion that *existence precedes essence* (recognizing human freedom) were concerned with the concrete existential situation of the human being. Here, the human being seems to be the only being that can stand out, *ex*, to question his existence. Dividing reality into 3 as: *being-in-itself*, *being-for-itself* and *being-for-others* and having negative approach (via

enslavement and meaninglessness) to all reality led him into *Being and Nothingness*, a form of contemporary nihilism.

We now turn to religious truth. In Christian science as well as in religious context, Truth is God. Truth has often such attributes as eternity, immutability, and transcendence, and attributed to God or some divine existence. Furthermore, truth is often not simply a conceptual knowledge but existential matter. In other words, man comes to understand or become aware of truth only through religious practices or process of embodiment. In Jesus' words, "I am the truth," for example, implies that he is the embodiment of truth. Buddhism was established on 4 noble truths. The *Four Noble Truths* are the most fundamental Buddhist teachings and appear countless times throughout the most ancient Buddhist texts, the *Pali Canon*. In Judaism as the revealed religion has truth as the revealed word of God, as found in the Old Testament-Laws and Prophets, and to a lesser extent, in the words of the sages of the Talmud and ANET. Christianity as an off shoot of Judaism, with reference to OT and NT, refers to Christ who has declared himself as the truth even when Pilate asked him with askance, *what is truth?* However, the central person in Christianity, Jesus Christ, claimed to be "Truth" when he said, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father but through me."

God is Truth

Among the attributes of God is truth. *God is truth* is an ontological way to refer to truth as one of His moral attributes. *God is truth* extends beyond Him being truthful to declaring that truth itself find its very source in His nature. Other things can be truthful, but only God Himself *is* truth. Truth flows out of His very nature. Throughout the Scriptures, God is defined as truth. In John 14:6, Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." He equally refers to the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of truth" (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13) In this one passage, Jesus makes it clear that the Triune God is truth. St. Augustine in his treatise on the trinity writes on *God is Truth* thus

For he, too, has a true [real] soul who has not a great soul; since the essence of body and soul is not the essence of the truth [reality] itself; as is the Trinity, one God, alone, great,

true, truthful, the truth...Behold and see, if thou canst, O soul pressed down by the corruptible body, and weighed down by earthly thoughts, many and various; behold and see, if thou canst, that God is truth. For it is written that "God is light;" not in such way as these eyes see, but in such way as the heart sees, when it is said, He is truth [reality]. Ask not what is truth [reality] for immediately the darkness of corporeal images and the clouds of phantasms will put themselves in the way, and will disturb that calm which at the first twinkling shone forth to thee, when I said truth [reality]. See that thou remainest, if thou canst, in that first twinkling with which thou art dazzled, as it were, by a flash, when it is said to thee, Truth [Reality]. But thou canst not; thou wilt glide back into those usual and earthly things. And what weight, pray, is it that will cause thee so to glide back, unless it be the bird-lime of the stains of appetite thou hast contracted, and the errors of thy wandering from the right path?

To say that God is truth is to acknowledge that truth itself proceeds from the nature of God. While many things can *have* the truth, only one thing can *be* the truth, with that one thing being God Himself. The Hebrew term for "truth" is *emet*, which means "truth," "firm," "stable," and "faithful." The Greek word for "truth" is *aletheia*, which denotes being "truthful" or "upright" or "having nothing to hide." From these terms—and from other attributes of God that support His truthfulness such as His immutability (God cannot change), infinity, and simplicity (God cannot be partly anything)—we understand that God Himself is absolute truth. That truth will never change and can always be relied upon. Iroegbu, P.O. (1995:267), was very apt in connecting truth with *logos* of John 1:1 as he writes thus:

A deeper hermeneutics of *logos*, the one done by Martin Heidegger shows that *logos* in ancient Greece meant more than just word or utterance. *Logos* has the more expansive meaning of revealing, manifestation, unveiling and de-enveloping. *Logos* is the revelation of a given reality that was formally hidden or unknown. In this content of drawing out of hiddenness, *logos* manifest the *aletheia* (truth) of reality in its presence-at-hand.

One-bu-nne: A Meta-Epistemic Question of Reality

Onebunne as a concept questions reality as truth as such. *Veritatae in Caritate* equally is a definite attempt in response to all *Onebunne* questions. The general maxim of the Igbos that *ana akwacha eziokwu akwacha* critically inundates the enquiry into *Onebunne* as questioning of truth. *Onebunne* (2023)

One-bu-nne or *One-bunne*, a compound word that is synonymous with *Olewunne* as well as *Olebunne*. That is, the *ole* or *one* is a matter of linguistic-dialect depending who may be speaking. And it literally questions: How many? It is a matter of number or figure of calculation. It demands the numerical strength as such. But in a special sense, *one* or *ole* here demands rather than smacks of numerical value remains a question of identity. It tries to single out the reality and its existential possibility. *Bu* or *wu* is translated *is*. It is the verb to be. Equally, *bu-nne* or *wu-nne* is as result of same linguistic-dialect differences that questions: Is it true? *Bu-nne* or *Wu-nne* questions directly the reality at how with much confidence and necessary doubt of course. In the case at hand they know that either child dies or the child lives. The question of course tolerates every possibility related to the survival or demise of the child. Some people mistook *Onebunne* as relating to motherhood: How many are mothers. Far from it.

Nne in the context of *Onebunne* connotes truth.
Hence, one can question: *O nne!* that is, Is it True!

In African metaphysics, *One-bu-nne* questions reality as it searches for truth in reality as reality. Truth is a concept that cuts across every facet of reality that is life and living as such. Truth seems to be sought in every human endeavour. This complemented Aristotle's classical correspondence view thus "to say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true". As a human enterprise truth connects every reality with each other. This is why the truth of life is not different from truth of science and logical endeavours.

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CHAPTER THREE

ONEBUNNE: IN QUEST OF ITS IGBO LINGUISTIC HERMENEUTICS

Iwu Ikwubuzo

Introduction

The importance the Igbo attach to personal or given names explains why naming ceremony (*igụ aha*) is one of the transitory processes in an individual's rites of passage (events or ceremonies which mark an individual's passage from one social status to another, from childhood to adulthood) in traditional Igbo society. "The Igbo believe that giving a child a name is one way of giving him recognition and identity in his community. This is because a person without a name has no identity in his community" (Ikwubuzo, 2009, p.145).

Crystal (1992, p. 112) explains a name as "a word or phrase that identifies a specific person, place or thing", and points out that onomastics – the scientific study of names – is divided into the study of personal names (anthroponomastics) and place names (toponomastics). However, onomastics in popular usage refers to the study of personal names, and toponymy used for place names. In naming practice across cultures and languages, children may be named after saints, events, places, omens, personal traits, famous individuals and even animals. Use of names may also be based on professions, for instance, Smith (Crystal, p. 112).

Among the Igbo, name-giving may derive from the peculiar circumstances surrounding the bearer's birth, the giver's life experiences, desires, perception of kinship relations, religious beliefs (in God, deities, ancestors, etc., believed to have intervened or been supportive in human challenges), among others. Emeka-Nwobia (2015, p. 1) while agreeing that child naming is one of the most important rites of passage in most societies in Africa and across the world also affirms that "Personal names in indigenous African societies are laden with meaning and may well identify the socio-cultural, political, professional and religious background of the person bearing the name and the person giving the name." Therefore, the Shakespearean assertion that "there is nothing in

a name” is inconsistent with Igbo belief - as with those of many African people - that names perform special roles in people’s lives. To the Igbo - and again this is true of other Africans - humans’ destiny could reflect in their names. Thus, there could be a relationship between a person and his or her name. This understanding is evident in the Igbo saying, *Aha onye na-edu ya* (A name guides the bearer). The expression, “*Aha onye na-edu ya*” (A name guides the bearer), indicates the Igbo socio-religious belief that the name a person bears is not a mere appellation or label; rather it is like a guardian spirit, or monitor of the bearer’s life, thoughts and actions. The Igbo also believe that “*Ezi aha ka ego*” (Good name is better than riches). These sayings underpin the importance of Igbo given names in Igbo society.

Drawing attention to name as being “a word or phrase” in Crystal’s definition implies that a name can be looked at from linguistic viewpoint. Thus, it can be construed as a linguistic construct because Igbo personal names have either the form of a phrase or sentence which can be subjected to linguistic analysis. Besides, Igbo personal name can be used to express any notion the Igbo have of something – anything in their life and thought. For instance, it is believed that falsehood (*asị/ughā*) does not promote good human relationship, especially on issues that border on expectation of honesty from individuals; dishonesty may have negative consequences. This, perhaps, explains why the Igbo say: “*Eziokwu bụ ndu*” (Truth is the basis for living). The eminence and seriousness the Igbo accord ‘truth’ explains the reason why they not only emphasize it as evidenced in a number of Igbo expressions but also show it even in some Igbo personal names they give and bear, which include Ònebùnnè, Qwùbènnè and Eziokwu.

This paper explores the Igbo name, Onebunne, from linguistic standpoint in order reveal its syntactic composition and semantic denotation. As a prelude to the analysis, the paper discusses some of the issues that are germane to its main thrust, namely, the meaning and significance of name and the concept of truth in traditional Igbo life and thought, which is not different from the universal notion of it.

Theoretical Considerations: Overview of Hermeneutics

Jens Zimmermann (2017) outlines nine facts one needs to know about hermeneutics. He tells us that the word ‘hermeneutics’ comes from the

ancient Greek language, which means “to utter, to explain, to translate” and was “first used by thinkers who discussed how divine messages or mental ideas are expressed in human language” (p. 2). This may be why Richard Palmer (1969) as cited by Paul Goring et.al (2001, p. 152) adds that etymologically the term ‘hermeneutics’ “related to the name of the messenger-god, Hermes who is ‘significantly associated with the function of transmuting what is beyond human understanding into a form that human intelligence can grasp’.” Little wonder, bible scholars who apply it in interpreting scriptural texts have described hermeneutics as science of interpretation. Zimmermann explains further that the term is also a name for the philosophical discipline where philosophers concern themselves with analyzing the conditions for understanding, and how our cultural traditions, our language, and or nature make understanding possible. For hermeneutic thinkers, “understanding is the interpretative act of integrating particular things such as words, signs, and events into a meaningful whole” and an object, word, or fact can only be understood “when it makes sense within our own life context and thus speak to us meaningfully” (Zimmermann, 2017, p. 2).

Goring et.al (2001, p. 152) notes that Anglo-American critics and theorists do sometimes use the term ‘hermeneutics’ “as a loose synonym for interpretation, or ‘theory of interpretation.....” The followers of Martin Heidegger, a German philosopher, construe hermeneutics as ‘a philosophical exploration of the character and requisite conditions for all understanding.’

Forster (2005) makes an insightful exposé of the views of some of the hermeneutic scholars. One of them is Ernesti who in his discussion of hermeneutics argues, among others, that “the *meaning* of words depends on linguistic usage, so that interpretation is fundamentally a matter of determining the linguistic usage of words” (p. 4). The idea here is that meaning is word usage. Ernesti further maintains, in the words of Forster, that “interpretation must deploy a detailed knowledge of a text’s historical, geographical, etc. context.” Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) also highlighted by Forster (2005) sets hermeneutics “on the foundation of philosophy of language, and like Ernesti, sees hermeneutics, among others, as words-usages – that it is an essential task of interpretation to determine linguistic usage and hence meaning. Herder affirms the need to complement linguistic with psychological

interpretation, that is, with a focus on authorial (in our case, name giver's) psychology.

Forster also reveals that Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), commonly regarded as the father of modern hermeneutics, sees every problem of interpretation as a problem of understanding, thereby defining hermeneutics as the art of avoiding misunderstanding. To him, hermeneutics is the theory of understanding. In his development of Herder's idea of complementing linguistic with psychological interpretation, he believes that the latter (psychological interpretation) is required in order to penetrate authorial conceptual-linguistic individuality. He also sees it as being due to the fact that where an author's rules of word usage and hence meanings are idiosyncratic, rather than shared in common with a whole linguistic community, the relevant actual uses of a word are available to serve the interpreter as his evidential basis for inferring to the rule of word usage; and the interpreter will need to have recourse to a further source of guidance, namely a general knowledge of the author's distinctive psychology. Schleiermacher, like Herder, also grounds hermeneutics in philosophy of language – "a doctrine that meaning consists in "the unity of the word-sphere," that the thought is identical with language, and that meanings are constituted by empirical schemata, or rules for production of images" (Forster, p. 16). He distinguishes between grammatical interpretation and psychological interpretation. While the former studies how a work is composed from general idea, the latter studies the peculiar combinations that characterize the work as a whole.

Ernesti, Herder and Schleiermacher's analytic explorations of hermeneutics appear to fall within the purview of two identified levels of linguistic truth: the first being the level of conformity with acceptable rules of grammar and second, the level of the correspondence of the idea expressed by language to the existent state of affairs.

The hermeneutic approach to literary criticism is also concerned with "recovery of meaning" as its main goal. It considers recovery of meaning as being "both possible and desirable but only through 'the intuitive agreement of two consciousnesses' - the sender's and the receiver's (Anozie, 1981, p. 212). In interpretation of verbal message, the hermeneutists emphasize the role played by the receiver rather than the

sender or the message. Hermeneutics as a theory of interpretation is a way of achieving an understanding of texts, utterances, and so on (Forster, 2005).

Insofar as the main objective of hermeneutics is to recover the meaning a literary work, text, or utterance contains, and also has an “essential task of interpretation to determine linguistic usage and hence meaning” - the view (in philosophy of language) that “the *meaning* of words depends on linguistic usage so that interpretation is fundamentally a matter of determining the linguistic usage of words” (grammatical interpretation) - it is relevant in the interpretation of the structural, semantic and cultural features of Igbo names, and Onebunne in particular. The linguistic structural features of the name in relation to Igbo language, its syntax, the interconnectedness of words in the construction of the name would be analyzed. While Schleiermacher’s idea of grammatical interpretation is relevant for analyzing how the name, Onebunne is derived or formed, that is, its syntactic structure, his idea of psychological interpretation may relate to the emotional circumstances or motivation that must have given rise to the name.

In its principles, hermeneutics requires that the normal language, real people, real event, real history are to be looked at. Language needs to be understood in its ordinary, literal way, normal everyday language. Thus, Ernesti’s view that “interpretation must deploy a detailed knowledge of a text’s historical, geographical, etc. context” (Forster, 2005) is valid because some Igbo names will only be meaningful if certain contexts: cultural, religious, etc. or even peculiar circumstances of the giver or bearer’s life are understood. Igbo names have contextual inferences or undertones. This is why it has been noted that “... the contextual implications of names present them as responses to contextual situations” (Ogbulogo, 1999, p. 62). To the Igbo, meaning, as it applies to personal name is not, therefore, dependent only on linguistic usage. Omoregbe (1998, p. 21) has in agreement with Bertrand Russell argued that language “is by its nature related to something outside itself, and that is its meaning. If it does not relate to something outside itself, it becomes meaningless for it would then convey nothing and communicate nothing.” This means that language is not an end in itself. This is true of Igbo personal names. Authorial (for our purpose, name-giver) intent is important in hermeneutics, that is, what the author’s intended meaning is. What does

he intend to convey or communicate - the message in the name? In our case, what is the giver's intent in Onebunne? What is the message in the name? These questions, and other highlighted concerns of hermeneutics as they apply to Onebunne, are to be addressed in our analysis in this paper. If name giving involves language or speech act, the language context concerns the language usage - ordinary or figurative - which requires that the environment in which the language is used should be taken into consideration in arriving at the interpretation of a message.

Literature Review

In this section, we shall look at both some of the scholarly views on names and the concept of truth since the focus of this paper is on an Igbo name that reflects human quest for truth. As we noted earlier the Igbo notion of truth can also be resonated with given names.

Some Previous Studies on Igbo Names

Ubahakwe's (1981) work, *Igbo Names, their Structure and their Meanings*, is one of the pioneer studies on Igbo personal names. He identifies the correlation between the structure of Igbo personal names and the grammatical structure of Igbo language when he remarks that "The structure of Igbo personal names may be said to constitute a minimum grammar of the language", and that to "understand the structure of Igbo personal names is to understand, in its essentials, the grammatical structure of the language." He explains further that "Igbo personal names are in the form of sentences and phrases. When they appear as single words they are invariably the short forms of longer expressions" (p. 2). Ubahakwe identifies and analyzes the following six major syntactic classes in the structure of Igbo personal names: Noun phrase, Positive statements, Negative statements, Questions, Requests (which include commands and exclamations), and complex sentences

Onukawa (1998), according to Ogbulogo (1999, p. 61), classifies personal names into unique, given and pet names. Ogbulogo (1999) himself discusses Igbo personal names as discourse focusing on Igbo female names. He analyzes Igbo names that reflect women, kinship relations, God and deities, names suggesting the good and the virtuous, as well as those deriving from calendar and material assets. He observes that "There is the tacit understanding that a text deals with the expression of meaning", seeing meaning in this context as one that has to be "shared

within a speech community. Ogbulogo cites, and agrees with, Brown and Yule (1983) that “analyzing language in use should extend to the context which adds meaning to any linguistic performance.” He explains further that “meaning is usually coded in structure” and that “...the contextual implications of names present them as responses to contextual situations” (Ogbulogo, p. 62). These features which aid the understanding of the meaning of an utterance will enable us to interpret the Igbo name under study. They will also enable us to handle how the hearer’s inference is based on the mutual contextual belief or mutual understanding of the giver and the hearer of a name. The understanding about the significance of names, particularly to the Igbo, is well-articulated in what Emeka-Nwobia (2015, p. 1) writes:

The history, philosophy, and ideology of the Igbo people are encapsulated in the name they bear. Name is as important as a people’s history and Igbo people take pride in their culture and ancestry.... Personal names are not just empty labels but are associated with certain interpretations that parents, the extended family and society at large give.

Onuora (2016), following Ubahakwe (1981) and Ogbulogo (1999), has noted that “Igbo personal names are structured like Igbo phrases and sentences”, adding that they have meanings which are derived from Igbo value system. Onuora buttresses her point with Akinnaso’s (1980) submission that “... the special characteristics of African personal names are their elaborate linguistic structure, the complexity of their semantic content, and their relationship to the African value systems” (Onuora, 2016, p. 1).

Onuora further explains that: “Basically. Igbo personal names are constructed from two syntactic rules that explain their mode of derivations, which could be from Noun Phrases or from sentences represented as follows: 1. Name – NP, 2. Name – S.” Following Akinnaso (1980), she argues that irrespective of their derivational sources, Igbo personal names are “written as single words because of their syntactic classification as noun phrases (NPs) and their psychological

perception as single words. In other words, whether Igbo names are derived from NP or S, they are structurally nouns and function as patients or agents.”

The Concept of Truth

The common global practice of leading a witness before giving evidence in court to swear on oath: “I solemnly swear that the evidence I shall give to this court is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth”, and using the sacred book - the Bible or Koran or any other instrument - to administer the oath, underlines the esteem or preeminence given to truth. The notion of truth in Igbo life and thought is an epistemological issue. ‘Truth’ has been variously conceived by philosophers over the millennia. To Plato, an ancient Greek philosopher and his followers, truth is “an entity existing outside the mind, an entity in the intelligible world”, which the mind discovers and participates in (Omoregbe, 1998, p. 39). Omoregbe further hints that St Anselm, sharing St. Augustine’s trend of thought, defines truth as “the rightness of something as perceived by the mind”, which itself is not capable of inventing truth. Truth, therefore, is seen as an immutable and eternal, and owes its source to God who enables the human mind to discover or know the truth. To Descartes, unlike the philosophers of Platonic tradition, truth is, and known through, “clear and distinct perception” emanating from within us (innate idea), not outside us, and it is indubitable.

Omoregbe highlights, among others, three classical theories of truth, namely, correspondence theory, coherence theory and pragmatic theory. The philosophical concept of truth most applicable to the main subject of this paper is articulated in the correspondence theory: that what is in the mind must correspond with what is the case in reality. This means that if a statement does not correspond to an actual situation, the statement is false just like a character attributed to an object which such object does not possess is false. Truth consists in conformity of the mind with reality. This theory is premised on Aristotelian notion that truth lies in the conformity of the mind or intellect with reality. The emphasis is that there must be a semblance or correspondence between what is known and what is in the mind of the knower, meaning, in Aquinas’ view, that the truth or falsity of an idea lies in judgment because judgment is made by the intellect and not the senses (Omoregbe, p. 40). Kant, another philosopher of Aristotelian school of thought, also agrees that truth consists in

“judgment which the mind makes when it applies the categories to phenomena (things as they appear to us).” The name, *Onebunne*, as we shall analyze in due course, seeks to ascertain the truth, and the seeker of truth invariably expects that certain condition should be met as the basis for establishing the truth – correspondence between statements, claims or what is being contended and what is the case in reality or an actual situation.

Having seen the classical conception of truth, it will be equally pertinent to consider how the Igbo as a people conceive truth? The Igbo word for truth is ‘*Éziókwū*’ (and/or ‘*Ñné*’ in some Igbo dialects). The explanation given to it by Ejeh is relevant to this study. According to him, it is “a combination of two words: *ezi* which means correct, genuine, right or good; and *okwu* which means word or speech. *Eziokwu* therefore means literally, good talk, the correct sentence, right word or the appropriate statement. In other words, *eziokwu* means the correct response to a question...” (Ejeh, 2019, p. 4). We need to add that *ézi* as an adjective modifying *ókwú* means an affirmation or confirmation of a talk, speech, claim or statement - a sort of perlocutionary act suggesting that the affirmation should be done by the listeners/audience, not necessarily the speaker. It might have been shortened from an affirmative statement (sentence) like “*Ọ bụ ezi okwu*” (It is correct talk). The Igbo can also simply say “*eziē*” (in truth) to affirm the appropriateness of a statement. Even in dialects where ‘*Ñné*’ is a word for truth, the word appears to be a shortened form of the affirmative/declarative statement “*Ọ wū ñné.*” In such dialects, a question can be asked “*Gịni bụ isi nne okwu gị?*” or *Ole isi nne okwu gị?*” (What exactly are you saying?), whereby *nne* in that sense means the main, exact or real thing.

The notion of *eziokwu/nne* (truth) in Igbo epistemic repertoire can be distilled from various statements made or beliefs held about the subject. The statements include, among others, the following:

- (i) *Eziokwu bụ ndụ.* In this saying, truth is metaphorically said to be life, implying that it is the basis for living. Standing on the truth frees or liberates the individual, removes every form of falsehood and makes life worth living.
- (ii) *E tighuchaa eziokwu, ọ dịkwa ndụ,* which literally means that after killing truth, it survives. Its import is that to deny the truth will only be an effort in futility. Truth cannot be suppressed. This

concept of truth in traditional Igbo thought is also evident in a statement one Igbo man is quoted to have made in a case of land dispute between two kinsmen that: "... the truth can hardly be hidden forever. It's like the moon. No one can successfully cover it with the palms of his hands. However hard he tries it, he will certainly fail" (Chukwu, 2014, p. 54). In another related statement about truth, the Igbo say:

(iii) *Eziokwu na-agba ka ọnwà*, meaning literally that truth is as illuminative as the sun; its underlying denotation being that truth is incontrovertible; it is evident and cannot be hidden. Truth lights the way. *Eziokwu na-agba ka ọnwà* is also the same as saying: (iv) *Eziokwu kwu ọtọ* (Truth is straightforward/Truth is constant).

(v) *Eziokwu na-adịgide* (Truth is constant, eternal), which can also be said thus: (iv) "*O nweghị ihe ga-eme ka eziokwu ghara ibụ eziokwu*" is implying that truth is immutable. Truth subsists; whether it is accepted or not is beside the point; it is irrepressible. The Igbo believe that no matter what happens, truth certainly remains immutable, a view which reinforces another postulation that "if a thing was not true in the past, it cannot be so at present either; and if a thing is not true at present it [could] not have been in the past.... That if a thing cannot happen at present, it probably will never do so in the future" (Chukwu, p.58). This again suggests that truth is seen to be constant. It also buttresses the view that "there is no particularization of truth in Africa or elsewhere in the world ... there is only one truth and it is eternal, unchanging and applies to all irrespective of colour or race" (Ejeh, 2019, p. 1). This means that truth is universal. 'Truth' is truth to the Igbo as it is to other homo sapiens, irrespective of 'opinion' held by any individual, which by its nature is subjective and uncertain, according to the relativistic theory of truth. Relative truth can only be situational or circumstantial.

(vi) "*Onye kwurū n'ezikwu maobu jide ezikwu, o gaghi ada*" (Whoever stands by truth does not fall). An upholder of truth is always vindicated. As noted by Okafor (1992: 32), "The just man in the Igbo moral estimation" is one who, among others, "tells the truth regardless of who or what is at stake; who is objective

in his judgment.” If the Igbo perception of truth is inherent in all these Igbo expressions, it is not surprising, therefore, that the people can make such remark as “*One bụ nne?*” (“Which among them is the truth?”) when presented with several claims or statements each of which lays claim to truth.

The value, eminence, force or seriousness attached to truth is also noticed in the measures or approaches adopted in Igbo traditional society to establish the truth on any indeterminate matter whenever there is a compelling need to do so. The desire to know, which Aristotle sees as a natural human inclination, is the reason for the quest for truth. When there is, for instance, strong contention, dispute or misgiving about something, the Igbo can even opt for oath-taking as a way of “establishing truth and guilt and of discouraging lying ...in the community” (Nwala, 1985, p.73); or as Ilogu (1974, p.54) puts it, those in search of “knowledge of the truth” from the gods can consult the oracles through divination. In line with Ilogu and Nwala, Okafor (1992:41) also agrees that if the recognized Igbo judicial institutions fail to resolve a dispute to the satisfaction of an aggrieved party, recourse is taken through oath-swearing or consultation with an oracle to the supernatural whose verdict is believed to be absolute, pure, final and justiciable. Okafor adds that “When one party in a legal dispute swears an oath to testify the truth of his claims, the other will be satisfied to withdraw his own claims with utter resignation believing that God will not fail to vindicate the cause of justice.” Ubesie (1978, p. 201) therefore shares the idea that oath-taking is one of the ways the Igbo use to ascertain the truth so that the innocent would not be seen as guilty.

Often times, *Ofọ*, a staff of authority, also believed to symbolize “justice, righteousness and truth” (Njaka, 1974, cited in Okafor, 1992:29) serves as the swearing tool in the traditional Igbo judicial process. When employed, the parties involved in the dispute are committed to say the truth while the arbitrators stand for justice. The arbitrator or *Ofọ* holder can use it in “swearing in ceremony” of people involved in adjudication of dispute, making such pronouncement as “*Onye hụrụ eziokwu n’okwu a hapụ ikwu ya, ofọ gbuo ya*” (Whoever sees the truth in this case and refuses to say it, may *Ofọ* kill him) while others will chorus *Ihaa/Isee* to give a stamp of approval. All that has been said so far indicate the importance of truth to the Igbo and the Igbo notion about the immutability of truth is consistent with the classical conception.

Analysis of Syntactic Structure and Semantic Denotation of *Onebunne*

Onebunne as Interrogative Sentential Personal Name

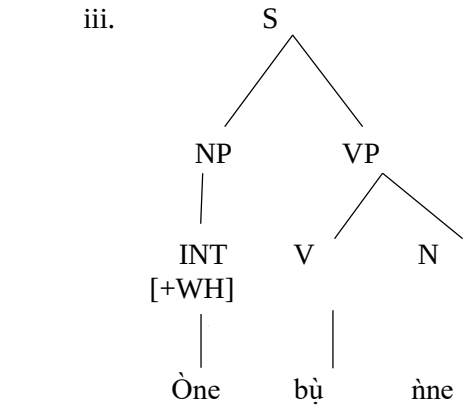
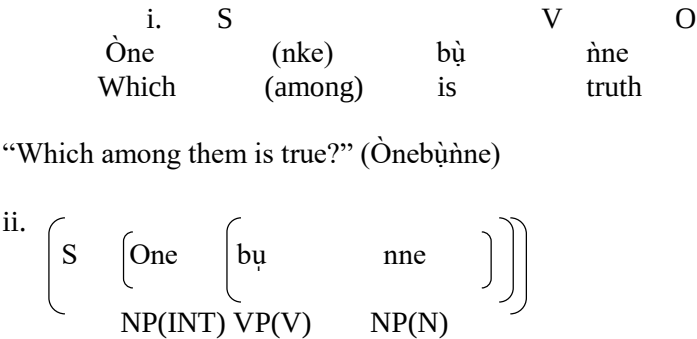
As Onuora (2016:10) has observed, “all Igbo sentential names are grammatical sentences but not all grammatical sentences are names”; and on the basis of functional classification, various moods: declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory can come into play in the construction of sentential names. *Ònebùnne* by its structure is a sentential personal name of the interrogative type, that is, Igbo personal name that takes the form of question. It is formed from grammatical sentence as we shall see shortly. The name has 5 syllables in its syllabic structure (*Ò + ne + bù + ñ + ne*). The first two syllables ‘*Òne*’ (*Ò + né*) with Low and High tones, is a dialect word for the Igbo interrogative marker ‘*Òlé*’ while the last two syllables in the name, “*nné*” (syllabic nasal /n/ + consonant with a vowel, ne) with Low and High tones is a dialect of Igbo for “*eziokwu*” (truth).

The sentential form of ‘*Onebunne*’ could be put in any of following ways in the standard variety of Igbo language: *Òle bù eziokwū* (Which is true?), *Òle ñke bù eziokwū* (Which among them is the truth?), *Òleē ñke e kwùrùla bù eziokwū* (Which of what have been said is the truth?) or *Kedu ñke bù eziokwu* (Which one is the truth?). In contrast to Ubahakwe’s (1981, p. 58) erroneous translation of the name ‘*Olebunne*’ as “Which among them is the mother?”, the name has nothing to do with ‘*nné*’ (a word for ‘mother’) which has high tones on the semi-vowel and vowel in it. “*Ñné*” and ‘*nné*’ are similar lexical items but semantically different as noticed in their tonal difference. It should be noted, however, that *nne* for *eziokwu* has High High tones in Alor dialect of Anambra State. Of the two types of interrogative sentences found in Igbo language - Yes/No questions and Wh-question (Uwalaka, 1997) - *Onebunne* falls under the latter type. The category is so-called because in English the relevant question words begin with *wh-* as in ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘who’ and ‘which’. ‘*One bù nne?*’ (shortened from *One ñke bù nne?*) translated in English as

- (i) “Which among them is the truth?”, or possibly as
- (ii) “How many of them are true?”

makes it a Wh-question. Translations (i) and (ii) above are in construction both syntactically and semantically correct depending on the context but (i) appears to be the intended meaning of *One bù nne?* Onuora (2016) is also right in explaining that “interrogative sentences are desententialised

by merging their constituents into single word items that function as personal names” (p. 14). This morphological process of desententialising is observed in the name *Onebunne*, where the wh-question is constituted in Subject-Verb-Object word order as follows:



The above is the representation of interrogative sentence in a tree diagram

The wh-question word that features in the construction of the name is ‘Òne’ (Which), which, as we indicated above, is a dialectal variant of ‘Òle’ (just as ‘nné’ is a dialectal variant of ‘eziokwu’) in standard Igbo, and it occurs at the sentence initial (head) position.

Semantic Denotation of *Onebunne*

Down the ages, the Igbo have been proud of their identity and their names. But more importantly, the Igbo do not give personal names in vacuum; their given names have semantic denotations – social and cultural significance. Ubahakwe (1981, p. 99) recognizes the important place of names in Igbo culture when he explained that:

An indigenous African name on the whole personifies the individual, tells some story about the parents of the family of the bearer, and in a more general sense points to the values of the society in which the individual is born.

Ubahakwe's view that names can be sources of information about an individual, the parents/family and their societal values is shared by Crystal (1992, p. 114) who also asserts, with reference to place names, that "The names people give to their surroundings provide a unique information about a society's history, beliefs and values... Often, a place name is the only record of a historical event or a person's existence."

Both Ubahakwe and Onukawa agree that unique and given names "reflect unique circumstances like the day of birth and circumstances of birth." Charles Ogbulogo (2021, August 6) who was personally interviewed in the course of writing this paper as to why his younger sister is named "Eziokwu", for instance, explained: "Eziokwu was named after my father won a major legal battle against a whole clan. The people [later] came as a group to apologize to my father. Indeed, *eziokwu bu ndu!* Eziokwu's immediate elder is Udoebiuwa (Peace does not assuage people of the world), born in the heat of the court processes. After Eziokwu is Chinedu, celebrating God's guidance, faithfulness and progress of the family in spite of all distractions." 'Eziokwu', as a name, is a response to a situation where truth that was originally contested became indubitably clear.

Another respondent, Mr. Israel Chikwem (2021, August 26), explained the circumstances surrounding the naming one of his cousins "Ọwụbènnè". The name was derived from a reaction of uncertainty by the father who, after protracted search for a male child, was told that his wife had been delivered of a baby boy. In his bafflement, he said to the bearer of the news: *Ọ wụbè ònne?* which in standard Igbo can be put as *Ọ*

burulanu eziokwu? (Could it be true?) It is a statement couched in misgiving. And thereafter, upon confirmation, the baby boy was christened *Òwùbènne* in reminiscence of the father's reaction. The Igbo usually give such name in a situation where a man who has either been childless or experienced incessant loss of male child (or children generally) at birth would on arrival of yet another new baby not be sure of whether or not the baby born has come to stay. Inherent in the name *Òwùbènne* is the notion that a statement or claim must correspond to reality for its truth to be accepted. For the name giver, the truth status of the news was yet to be established and required confirmation. And this he did, perhaps, when he was presented with the baby. At first, when the news came, the man sounded as if he was not convinced yet. Given his past experience, even when he sees the baby, he may still feel that he needs some period of observation to confirm that the child has actually come to stay before accepting the reality. All the circumstances of naming related by our respondents above illustrate the fact that in Igbo life and thought, experience built from or situated within historical, social, cultural, and religious contexts, and even psychological tension can dictate choice of names. Truly, some of the names the Igbo give to children reflect the parents' experiences and desires in life, such as desires for healthy living, progress in terms of human and material increase, and even fear of survival.

The brief exposition above provides the backdrop against which *Onebunne* can also be analyzed. Naturally, realities of human existence can engender conflict situations, disputations, allegations, counter allegations, confusion about differentiating between truth and falsity, which in turn can necessitate a quest for truth especially when contenders are enmeshed in controversies, contestations, with each party laying exclusive claim to truth. The Igbo characteristically can argue over matters in defense of their lives, rights, possession, and against perceived injustice done to them. Interrogative Igbo names are believed to be mainly given to children as parent(s)' response to such circumstances or scenarios as highlighted above, or even to situations of uncertainty and apprehension (as in the case of *Òwùbènne* discussed earlier). And such names may be given, depending on the context, as the giver's expression of apprehension, vindication, exoneration or declaration of innocence in the case of allegation.

Contextually, *Onebunne* appears to be an interrogative reaction - an attempt to inquire about or ascertain the validity and authenticity of a case or claim in order to establish the case. It could be a reaction prompted by a contentious situation, an issue shrouded in confusion or ambiguity. In the midst of various conflicting statements/claims, somebody can react thus: “*Ife niine a e kwulu, one nke bu nne?*” / “*The niile e kwuru, ole nke bu eziokwu?*” (Of all that has been said, which one is the truth?) All the respondents interviewed in the course of writing this paper were in agreement that the name, *Onebunne*, could possibly be a response to any situation of dispute, disunity, or domestic acrimony, perhaps arising from accusation that a member of the family is the architect of his/her siblings’ misfortune; or suspicion that a wife who has not been able to conceive in her marriage may be responsible for her experience but pretending to be innocent. That a child born in any of these contextual situations, where truth appears elusive or polemical, may be christened *Onebunne*, especially when the parent or parents feel vindicated or justified at the end. The question of authorial intent - what the name giver’s intent is in the case of *Onebunne*, that is, what the name giver intends to convey or communicate, the message in the name, which hermeneutics is concerned with, becomes apparent.

Onebunne is an example of language usage and the likely context that can generate this kind of language has been highlighted. Hermeneutics has an “essential task of interpretation to determine linguistic usage and hence meaning.” As we have indicated, a child born in the heat of any the controversies where truth is at issue can be named *Onebunne* by any of the parties involved. The semantic implication of the name in this context is shared within a speech community.

The Igbo know the essence of truth and seek it when the need arises. The name, *Onebunne*, raises a philosophical question about the validity, accuracy, genuineness or infallibility of a claim, an assertion, thought, or even suspicion. The name, therefore, implies the possibility of the inaccuracy, imprecision, falsehood of a claim or an idea in human existence and experience, hence the attendant quest for knowledge of truth. The interrogative nature of the name validates the above possibility and suggests that the audience, listeners or arbitrators in a controversial case are not convinced yet after listening to conflicting claims they are

expected to accept as truth. They expect that a statement or claim must discernibly correspond to a case in reality for its truth to be accepted

Conclusion

The paper has looked at the Igbo personal name *Onebunne* through the critical lens of hermeneutics, examining its syntactic structure and semantic denotation. The paper also looked at the significance of naming culture among the Igbo, the socio-cultural contexts and motivations of Igbo personal names, emphasizing that to the Igbo names are not mere labels but reflective of certain circumstances in human life and experience. Thus, it argued that the implicature of *Onebunne* could be unveiled by understanding the possible contextual background of the name; positing that the name which implies an attempt to interrogate, ascertain or determine the truth value of a statement or claim could have been given under certain circumstances, possibly as a rhetorical response to issues of allegation, suspicion, disputations, or other issues originally shrouded in uncertainty. The name giver's intention may be to assert or declare their vindication.

Considering that the name borders on epistemological subject of truth, the paper explored not only the classical concept of truth but also its perception among the Igbo. It is revealed that the quest for truth, knowledge, is universal. The Igbo, like other homo sapiens, search for truth, the consciousness of which is evident or reflected even in some personal names they give themselves. The only difference, which of course is not peculiar to the Igbo, is the traditional approach they may deploy in their quest for truth.

Onebunne as a name raises the question of what is truth, its nature and how it can be known. Can there be objective or absolute truth that invalidates all shades of human skepticism? To the Igbo, truth is one of the moral virtues, necessary for an individual's ability to attain an ideal state of life, hence the saying *eziokwu bụ ndụ*, but for the human mind to discover, know or comprehend it is fraught with difficulty as expressed in the inquiry, *Òne bụ̀ nne?* ("Which among them is the truth?"), from which the name is derived.

The paper has established that the structure of Igbo personal names, as exemplified by *Onebunne*, is correlated to the grammatical structure of

Igbo language. The name as an interrogative sentential name is found to have both syntactic and semantic properties. It is found to be a wh-question constituted in Subject-Verb-Object word order. And like other Igbo personal names, it is not likely to be given in a vacuum as it is believed to have a possible story line or circumstances surrounding its choice by parents of the bearer. In conclusion, it should be emphasized that Igbo personal names are symbolic and can convey philosophical thoughts of the Igbo about existence and experience, and as such personal names, like Onebunne, deserve to be preserved.

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CHAPTER FOUR

ONEBUNNE: AN ESSAY IN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This paper is on the critical analysis of the concept of *Onebunne*. *Onebunne* is popular name in Igbo worldview. Beyond a personal name it is regarded as a family name of a sort. Viewed differently, the nomenclature *Onebunne* is very unique and very open to various appreciations by analysis. The reality that is questioned in *Onebunne* is realizable in a succinct analysis of *Onebunne*.

Keywords: *Onebunne*, analysis, name

Introduction

Onebunne is suggestive of being open to nature and realities. It seems to affirm knowledge, the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge as a pathway to enter into the heart of reality. The name indicates the desire and crave not to be shut up within oneself, but rather to be and remain conscious of one's environment or surrounding reality. *Onebunne* represents a specific manner of being open to reality, that which belongs to sentient beings, in a more proper rendition self-conscious being. It is in the nature of this name to question this very relation or openness to reality. This is contrary to the position which idealism may hold, that knowledge is not necessarily openness to reality.

Understanding of *Onebunne*

Onebunne in the course of skimming for openness to reality, in deep reflection, engages in some sorts of inquiries, where he enters into some doubts about the realities as presented or discoverable by him. Methodically, these doubts and interrogations may not be. The truth is that *Onebunne* doesn't like Descartes put everything in doubt. *Onebunne* indicates a mind or a consciousness that thinks his own thoughts, has its own ideas,

handles his own ideas, a subject that is ever open to a world of realities, even though the subjective interiority of this subject is quite certain and evident. *Onebunne* being disposed to interact with forces in the universe both physical and spiritual and forces of some kind ultimately turns out to embrace both idealism and realism in his philosophical sphere. He is subjective in the bid to work on his idea and on himself, and by a stroke of human make-up he recoils and protrudes in a mysterious way and fashion to put himself in touch radically with the world of realities for human existence is forever social, it is interactive, one must connect with others, the Igbo know it as being with, and being-for others.

Philosophical Approach on *Onebunne*

In *Onebunne* the Igbo land deny the existence of forces or the external world, for they know that realities exist, so not only minds do exist. It is against the absurd view of absolute idealism which lead to hold that “Reality is exclusively mental or spiritual either finite or infinite or both”. The Buddhist school of Vijnana – Vada, emphasized that reality is only consciousness; even Berkeley too in his ‘esse est percipi’ emphasized such and land crashed. The moderate idealists maintain that there is objective reality, but Kant who is the chief representative argued that only phenomenon is known, that is the appearance of reality but not ‘noumenon’ – the reality itself. “Our knowing of the data distorts or twists it to such an extent that what is known are our sensations and perceptions, that is, the phenomenon. We know our experience of reality, not reality itself”.

In our instance, both the subject and object can trigger and specify knowledge. In *Onebunne* the human mind both projects and acknowledges the forces of play in nature and in the course of human relations and development. It recognizes the necessity and relevance of self (the subject) and other objects; and active giving and receiving. In *Onebunne* man is made or put in the frame of mind to be conscious of both the objective and subjective sides of the coin of knowing, such that a proper synthesis is done, for there is no way man can truly think or talk of knowing and overlook subjective perceptions or even judgements. Mercier in one of his write-ups seems to capture it in this way that human consciousness is necessarily related to the non-self. It is a subjectivity open to an objective reality, a subject-object relationship, knowledge has a bi-polar structure in which the subjective pole and the objective pole

face each other. Suppress one of the poles and human knowledge disappears.

The world as depicted by 'Onebunne' is disclosed so man has a sort of deeper insights into realities; he has an illumination which beats out energies in him for upward move for self-actualization. The name 'Onebunne' portrays the beauty of a community, a people – Igbo people to be very precise and specific. One who carries this tag (name) not the one who answers it, is different from a host of others. He is beauty epitomized in the consciousness and social facticity of the people as he x-rays in his acts, dealings the values of the people, as he represents the community. He is said to be the community type; the individual fades but the community (type) remains. Beauty charms whenever and wherever it is nested. Akanni, S. (2006:4) reiterates that "Beauty can be defined as a combination of qualities that give pleasure to the senses or to the mind. It is a pleasing or attractive feature about something or somebody. It can be external or internal." ⁴

Onebunne Questions Unfolding Reality

It is due to the fact that beauty is a charming phenomenon that, men are attracted to it and some people make huge investment on it and many just desire it and afraid so to do especially if it concerns character. 'Onebunne' doesn't communicate the beauty of the physique, and achievements, position, etc. These are not static or stable they fade away. It, rather points at a beauty that attracts any sensible one, the inner beauty generated and weaved from within, beauty of the soul and heart, which produces wisdom, understanding, ageless, quietness, that endures for it is incorruptible. This beauty is tied to values, principles and reality.

It is the possession of a submissive heart and a meek spirit that would make one not to be proud, full of himself or high-minded. Beauty connotes gentleness, and such will make one to be submissive, be in possession of quiet spirit, that makes him unperturbed, undisturbed even if there are perplexities and challenges along the existential path of self-discovery, self-re-discovery, and self-realization. Beauty suggests equally purity and loyalty; one who is anti-community, anti-life will not strive to maintain the ethos of the community, he will live recklessly. Living according to the values and norms of the community entails (requires) high level of discipline and hardwork. 'Onebunne' posits the

necessity and relevance of character in the community. Character is strong, it is engaged, not just skin-deep, it is what makes life valuable. Heraclitus asserted that a man's character is his fate. Squandering one's character means endangering oneself. It is only a community or a culture that rests on her values, that produces character in her members. Such culture or community is accountable. Rutland, M., (2003:1) writes:

A life, like a block of granite regard, will, at the end, be either a masterpiece or marred rubble. Character, the composite of virtues and values etched in that living stone, will define its true worth. No cosmetic enhancement, no decoration drapery can make useless stone into enduring art. Only character can do that.⁵

Truth Value in *Onebunne*

'Onebunne' project compels one to interrogate himself, his actions, and analyze his condition; and know and decide when and how to retreat put finishing touches on his life and ways and proceed again. It has so much to do with integrity as it is like a guide, a radar to one's ship of life. Integrity is not the truth, but it aids one who wants to act on the truth, for it helps him in deciding and discerning the right from the wrong. It equally aids one to do what one knows to be right. Truth is not clear always, not apparent immediately, as such one can be in error, that doesn't mean one lacks integrity. Integrity is the capacity, and willingness to change one's course immediately one discovers he has erred. This is necessary because truth can be manipulated by the people or public opinion. Kwant, R., (1965:114) asserts:

....the light of truth has a human character. The light of truth is not something that exists in absolute independence of our knowing mind; on the contrary, it clings, as it were to man's knowledge. The so-called light of truth is a correlate of our knowing mind and is inseparably connected with the mind. Truth is meaning for us and therefore cannot be divorced from us.⁶

‘Onebunne’ suggests a code of ethics, a value system quite different from that of the crowd. Not just having an ethics for everybody has one, even the thief and harlot. Price, F.K.C. (2000:5) holds:

Having ethics does not guarantee that you will do what is right or that you will stay out of legal trouble. If your ethics are warped, then your value judgement will be warped because you can only make value judgements based upon what is in you.

He continues;

...it isn’t until you combine morals and character with your ethics that you become a person of integrity a person whose faculties guide to do what is right.⁷

Integrity is a personal thing; the guide and direction or prompting wells up from within. It dwells in the company of discipline, fortitude and other related virtues, takes a combination of morals, ethics and character to achieve, as it makes the whole difference. It makes you committed to a course, it does not matter what another is laying or doing provided you are in the right. The fact that integrity serves only as a guide is suggestive that you should tread with caution, make your own analysis and judgement especially where and when you discover new facts, information or something that proves your former stand or decision wrong.

Relationship of Truth with Reality in *Onebunne*

The name ‘Onebunne’ indirectly points to the fact that one who goes by the principles and dictates of this name is known for excellence, and it must threaten many people, and they will likely attack him; but he must remain dogged, rugged, persistent and consistent in order to realize his goal. ‘Onebunne’ as a name does not claim that it encapsulates the truth, but that it gears toward the truth. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. He alone is the truth, he not only speaks the truth, he acts out this truth, himself as the manifestation of absolute freedom, in it or via it; he shares his love, truth and life with us. He is the spirit of truth; who guides into all truth. It is by his self-giving love that we discover ourselves, our innermost and true selves, of course in the service of the other that is how

we can realize the generous love in life, which is not just creative but liberating, such engenders true commitment.

Proper articulation, rendition, appreciation and understanding of 'Onebunne' have to do with response with the full energies of the heart, mind and will, which we can call wholesome response. It is a course, where one becomes one piece personality, and not a split personality, a confused one, who gallivants from one side to the other, who speaks from both sides of the mouth. It shows cases one whose yes is yes and whose no is no, save at the introduction of new information which should compel one due to its vitality to change one's position. It shows one who is not only responsible but creative, having his energies and integrity in unity or properly integrated. It is only such pattern or posture that has the capacity of transforming his desires, imagination, intuitions and intentions to merge into fundamental attitudes, quite disposed to make proper decisions that have to do with fundamental options.

'Onebunne' indirectly points at the response of inner strength which springs from group's coordination assemblage and integration of various dimensions/aspects of life, this will ensure consistent use of drive passion enhancement to achieve in life. It talks about virtue. Eric Osborn (1976:2) asserts:

Virtues are neither value-terms like good and bad, nor are they normative terms like right and wrong. A distinct category, virtues are traits of characters. They are relevant to choice-situations in which the good of some being is at stake. They enable a choice to be made without the obscuring or blurring effect of passion.⁸

It suggests the development and application of not just intentions but dispositions, as disposition is deeper than intention as joy is deeper than happiness; having to do with the spirit. Proper disposition signals nearness or arrival of attitude that produces the ruggedness and willingness to become courageous and bold in this existential journey; that will make it possible for one to flee from unhealthy life attitudes and concern for the self, from undue, unnecessary anxiety, crippling fear of

hurting other, in short from excessive scrupulosity’, so as to set oneself free to be creatively disposed to help the other.

It tends to show that uncritical submissiveness, cowardice and other negative dispositions spring from fear of the unknown and lack of vision cum purpose; this makes relationship unhealthy and barren. You need courage to develop in all ramifications R. May, (2009:230) holds that “courage is the basis of any creative relationship”.^{9a} He continues: “strange as it sounds, steady, patient growth in freedom is probably the most difficult task, requiring the greatest courage”.^{9b} Bernard Haring (1978: 88) remarks:

When one’s fundamental option so permeates one’s inner self that it becomes a fundamental attitude, new perspectives, new intuitions and new dispositions arise.¹⁰

The richness and weightiness of this name like in its expansion and extension to involve the generation of responsible and ever creative persons, who will be sensitive to entire range of values; head, heart and hand; such as to offset not only emotions but affectivity and sensitivity of other persons. This relating with the other such as to involve not just emotions and sentiments, but those really enlightened by a sorting intuition, in such way persons are enriched. Rudolf Otto is of the opinion that once man is sensitive to these that responsive sentiments must proceed and transcend individual/particular actions, and are more prepared than mere understanding and is ‘beyond the realm of usefulness’, beyond pragmatic decision-making and even consciousness of duty”. It touches the core of man’s being as it expresses the capacity of one to discern, to value what is there presented and pull one to respond beyond just mere biological presence. It has a ring of human wholeness; as it touches the heart. It is just in tandem with what Haring states concerning the heart, Bernard Haring (1978: 90) continuing writes:

“Heart” points to the person in his or her wholeness, building bridges to others, grasping the unique value of each one as a person and the manifold values embodied by persons, and thus calling for an ever new embodiment of these values in one’s own life.¹¹

‘Onebunne’ in a way and sense, can be interpreted to have an ethics that has nothing to do with the ‘must ethics’, do’s and don’ts in a very strict sense, and it gives room for contemplation and admiration of the other and nature, as it rate one to develop one’s inner resources in the bid to develop healthy rhythmic balance in relationships. As the relation thrives, there is commitment basically geared towards enhancement of self, the other and for achievement of common purposes. It points at a configuration of an ethics that evokes value-response which echoes and re-echoes not only in one’s consciousness but hearts, with accompanied emotions which pull the string of sensitivity. Once there is real concern and commitment, spontaneous response is evoked. Bernard Haring (1978: 94) continued thus that “A person becomes ever more responsive and creative in commitment and faithfulness as his or her purposes take shape by listening and responding”.¹²

The ethical value of man’s actions flows from the heart where basic dispositions and value-responses spring up. There is need for man to be in constant vigilance in order to be really disposed and committed in genuine fidelity to strike a creative pattern that will drag his intentions in unity as to always respond to the bid of his fundamental caption-being human. Ethics of responsibility enshrined in the name under discussion entails creative freedom and fidelity, this doesn’t make one lose sense of commitment and a sense of continuity and allegiance to the community even though, one is still concerned with self-affirmation and actualization. Man is a historical animal, who thinks about the past, the present and projects into the future. It is the sense of history that makes sense in commitment and struggle for self-affirmation and development; if not man will simply live the life of goat, and cow. Historicity is a part of our existence, because our experience is a mediation of the past into the future, it is the course of living that each one defines who he actually is, as he develops into what he so desires or into whatever his passions dragged him into; ‘Onebunne’ tends to point out that man is history himself and still he has history; so in order to get the best in life, we must meet history. It is by accepting history and responding creatively towards it that we can really relate properly with the other and a myriad of forces in the Igbo-African universe.

It is memory that we should use very well in order to achieve much when we invoke the past. We are supposed to make use of our factual,

perceptual and personal memory; this aids us in either gaining new knowledge or insight. Memory remains one of the sources of our creativity. Time, living realistically in time provokes challenges, and such triggers creativity. The future makes our life more challenging as it makes us to desire to make proper and adequate use of our opportunities in the present. Thinking of being responsible, points of accountability which has both theoretical and practical dimensions, more easily seen in community facticity. Accountability is a derivative from the verb 'to account', one who shows degrees of accountability is said to be accountable. One who is accountable has an obligation to give an account, that is to make a statement or statements explaining one's conduct, where in, one will give reasons, grounds or motions for one's action. Being accountable in life means that one is indeed answerable to someone or something. In 'Onebunne', the Igbo people are not concerned with low degree of accountability for they do know that a high degree is possible and equally realizable.

Economics of *Onebunne*

In 'Onebunne' with regard to accountability, the Igbo recognize that there are multiple forms of accounting when we talk of communication, and the circumstances under which we give account varies, as such some degree of discretion is required for different occasions. In order to really account, one must show high level of responsibility is not a sufficient condition though a necessary one for accountability. Responsibility is basic to relationships, and is prerequisite to obligation, so it is a validating condition for answerability or accountability. It is because of accountability that the Igbo man does all in his powers to maintain harmonious relationship with the forces in the universe, so as not to be found wanting. Whichever way we want to examine these related concepts of responsibility and accountability, it will only have meaning because we relate or communicate, apart from birthing relationship, we strive to discover meaning. In the act of communication, the art of listening is very essential, it shows availability and disposition. Listening is what we owe the other in human relations, it is simply put an act of love, a duty we owe each other. Listening is not just mere hearing the words somebody or the other has spoken, it takes energy and requires commitment of the concerned. McKean Erined states that listening requires being at alert and ready to hear something.

Listening is an art and a science; it demonstrates care and concern for the other. In it and by it we acknowledge the humanity of the other. It is by listening that presencing really takes place, for it opens the door to the other. It is an important skill that requires maximum concentration, attention whereby we must cage distracting, thoughts, and dispose ourselves to become receptacles in which the other pours himself (in order to live life to the full).

Listening is a spiritual form that can magnetize the other, in short, it recreates. Eliciting listening from the other is good, but we equally need to develop the capacity to listen to such others. Paschal Paul Okeke (2011:225) asserts:

The capacity to listen and to hear as the other person expresses anguish, confusion, anger, or pain, without attempting to counteract or argue indicate not only someone's understanding and the willingness to enter into the suffering of the other but as well the desire to be alongside the person in pain or difficulty.¹³

Listening makes both parties to value each other, and the inability to listen demeans, causing disillusionment. When we listen, we are attentive, we are very open, non-judgemental and as such the concerned can express himself well. Once we develop the capacity to listen, which we derive from patience as designated in the name under analysis we stand to build trusted relationships. Listening is very essential in communication so as to build rapport, because each person has a story and is a story with colon, semi-colon, full stop, abbreviations, etc.

Listening is difficult, experience shows that it requires discipline. Thomas Leo (1987:8) emphasizes that:

Listening demands great deal of sacrifice. Attentive listening demands that I restrain my desire to tell my story. This is a sacrifice because listening to another's pain stirs of memories of my painful experience which I have never shared with another...¹⁴

Paschal Paul Okeke (2011:227) notes that “Lack of attention and understanding, obsessions, compulsions, exhaustion, and the like can also immobilize the listener.”¹⁵ Onebunne stretching patience notes that good listening, true and genuine listening is rare, but that is the kind of listening it postulates for self-realization in Igbo world. In order to have the best result, we are to listen emphatically, compassionately, therapeutically and creatively.

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CHAPTER FIVE

ONEBUNNE AS RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract

Onebunne is a surname to many and only a first name to the first bearer. Over the time, *Onebunne* has turned out to be a phenomenon. There are many appreciable nuances of *Onebunne* but foremost with regard to this paper is relational aspect. Therefore, *Onebunne* is more of a relationship of the past ending with the present as well as the future that it actually doubtfully and mockingly questions.

Keywords: *Onebunne*, value, relationship

Introduction

Though millions of people tend to overlook and ignore injustice in life, and proudly operate in the tranquillity, *Onebunne* suggests one who will with coarse and hoarse voice, with gait haunt their lives day and night to compel them to once again appreciate sanity and know justice.

Onebunne would be or mean one who has attained a level in life, through existential study, experience and determination to generate and weave ideas capable of changing the course of history or his time, either by localizing it in a doctrine or ideology.

Onebunne suggests being engaged in physical, mental and spiritual affairs, instituting a philosophy of combat with forces of nature in the bid to produce a human being. It connotes destruction and annihilation of inhumane systems and regime and replacing them with human ones that will guarantee the future security of the people. Little wonder Soyinka, W., (1975:96) writes: "Human life has meaning only to that degree and

as long as it is lived in the service of humanity. For the humanity is infinite”

This name suggests or shows an understanding according to Jean Reston in Knoop, C.E., (1976:7) that: “There is no life so degraded, debased, deteriorated or impoverished that it does not desire respect and is not worth defending with zeal and conviction”

Critical Hold on *Onebunne*

Onebunne emphasizes the primacy of persons in life or else men would not be at the centre of the universe in African understanding. Edward, P., (1967:107) assumes “that man is the “ontological ultimate and for which personality is thus the fundamental explanatory principle”. And for Sahakian, W. S. & Sahakian, M. L., (1965:494) man is “an individual substance of a rational mature” not a psychophysical organism”, as he is the sole metaphysical reality and of ultimate intrinsic worth /value” For Haring, B., (1968:2) “it is a spontaneous and often explosive reaction against a manner of thinking that is thing-oriented against a way of planning and managing that manipulates man solely as an object”

It is not a cover up for incapacitation of anyone, not to have developed enough discipline in life to carry him in the course of existential experiment, and avoid life of action; even if one is equally concerned with life of contemplation. There is need to merge ‘vita contemplativa’ with ‘vita activa’ for man is “ens capax”. In this name, by it and through it everything /force is there to serve man, provided man aligns with such forces, massages, and manipulates them, for this world is an ontological one for man’s realization of himself as his essence seems to reside in his existence, for he is a project, a possibility, very open, this necessitates his making choices but his choices are never final for his existence is not indeterminate. Heidegger, M., (1962:184) seems to have a glimpse of this Igbo appreciation when he penciled, “My own existence is a possibility stretching out before one, about which I concern myself and over which I have some control”.

***Onebunne* an Issue Beyond Decision**

Man becomes whatever he can be by the use he makes of the available possibilities and opportunities open to him in life. Little wonder. John Bosco Akam (1987:7) writes “.. the essence of man life is his existence...,

means understanding himself in his own ability to be ..., enables man to be man in the most essential respect, namely in respect of himself”.

Though he is not responsible for his existence, he is for his essence. He is condemned to make a choice from alternatives in life. He is free. Jean Paul Satre (1956:483) holds: “Freedom is the freedom of choosing but not the freedom of not choosing. Not to choose is, in fact, to choose not to choose”

Even though they are some behaviours that are caused yet man is free or considered free. Donceel, J.F. (1955:388) writes: “Everything in this material universe is determined by and in it causes. The only exception to this rule is the freedom of the human will”

According to Sartre, J.P., (1955:505): Man is free, man is freedom. Man is condemned to be free. Condemned because he finds himself thrown into the world, yet free because as soon as he is conscious of himself, he is responsible for everything he does.

The Igbo in *Onebunne* understand that even if we are influenced in life by external or even internal prices/factors, even though these have unconscious roots that rise far as we know about them either wholly or partially that we are free, so our freedom is not inhibited. It is in tandem with the reasoning of C.A Campbell (1938:119) who asserts: “the agent himself in the situation of moral temptation does not, and indeed could not, regard his formed character as having an influence whatever upon this act of decision as such. For the very nature of that decision, as it presents itself to him, as to whether he will or will not permit his formed character to dictate his action”

Freedom is vital in being human. Hospers remarks: “The ability to overcome the early environment for example by the exertion of effort is also determined by other aspects of the early environment or, just purely fortuitous”

Mondin, L., (1965:31-32) buttresses the relevance of choice thus: The choice in human activity becomes really a free choice only from the fact that it comes from a much deeper root (free-will) than ordinary actions. That deeper choice too, is some kind of choice, not with respect to specific

objects but with respect to the totality of existence, is meaning and its direction”

The goal of life, human existence is for man to come to maturity and be human, so as to know fulfilment which will cause the generation of a perfect society of human beings only by so doing can man discover the hidden fountain of human existence, experience understanding and wholeness capable of organizing, guiding our hopes, aspirations and energies for the enrichment of our future.

Onebunne: A Question of to Be

‘Onebunne’ in stretching for realization of self doesn’t approach it in a negative’ like existentialism, rather it sees it project in the positive towards the birth of a free and morally responsible human beings, who realizes himself in the community as the Igbo man is nothing outside his community. He is a being in communion, a communitarian being.

In ‘Onebunne’ the Igbo appreciates the ability of man to desire to know himself the other, the forces of nature and the disposition to relate with those forces so as to confer meaning to man’s existence. It strikes at man’s desire for his thoughts and arts to rhyme and confirm with those of other forms in nature in order to strike a balance in relation, to establish harmony.

One who is real must be open, which is discoverable in communication. It is in being open that man can find his way out of his inwardness, in order to establish enough ground and struggle to sustain his cherished inwardness. Openness is very vital and cardinal in establishing any sort of relationship if it worths its mettle. Niebuhr N.R., (1952:162) assents that the science of ethics is concerned with human relationship”

Ethics is the science of moral principle, in that which life will be hellish and full of agony as there will be no control in life. Emmanuel Mounier (1949:17) asserts: Common opinion notwithstanding, the fundamental nature of the person is not originality nor self-knowledge nor individual affirmation. It lies not in separation but in communication”

In the project of ‘being human’ *Onebunne* suggests that man exists in the other fellow, hence strives to co-exist with him and affirm him as such. Mounier, E., (1949:17) got a glimpse of this when he asserts thus: Man’s

chief task, is not to master nature but, increasingly to bring about communication tending to universal understanding”. *Onebunne* subsists in relationship, via its man is revealed not only to himself but to others and that is the authentic path for discovering oneself. Relationship is not sustained carelessly, it is not a bed of rose, so there are difficulties. Jasper in Freidman, M., (1964:204) comments: ... this communication is not blind love, indifferent to its object, but a contending love which is clear-sighted. It challenges, complicates, demands and draws the other potential *existenz* out of his potentiality”.

It is in communication that one could really say one belongs, being warrants being wish, in Igbo world. Once we don’t communicate, we lose our vibrancy, velocity and valence. Karl Jasper (1970:54) holds: “An avoidance of true communication is tantamount to a relinquishment of any self-being, if I withdraw from it, I am betraying not only the other but myself”

Onebunne: A Question of Relationship

Onebunne depicts the cord that is properly knitted is human relations, which bears fruit in human existence showing human flourishing or excellence recognizably in the individual, which protrudes as a matter of necessity and urgency to the community, depicting solidarity in sociality Haring Bernard (1968:27) captures this thus: “Human activity to be sure takes its significance from its relationship to man. Just as it proceeds from man, so it is ordered toward man. For when a man works he alters not only things and society, he develops himself as well. He learns much, he cultivates his resources; he goes outside of himself and beyond himself”.

Onebunne does rhyme with this position of Higgins, F. J. (1949:359) that, “Human history emphatically testifies that men do not live isolated lives but have ever acted as members of some group”.

It is no doubt that the Igbo are communal in nature, community-oiled, influenced and bred; as such the Igbo man is subordinated to the community he exists, because others exist, so he can be called upon or even summoned by the community of which he is a part to sacrifice for the community something even his our life .i.e during wars. But the community should not demand something that is unthinkable, not for

common good or else it will be an assault on the individual who is part of the lines of the 'We.'

Plato in Book 11 of *The Republic* asserts: "The state (in our case, the community) exists in order to serve the wants of men. Men are not independent of one another, but need the aid and cooperation of other in the production of the necessities of life ... they gather associates and helpers into one dwelling place and give this joint dwelling the name of a city (in our instance community)"

Community is a union of human beings, all there may not even be human resources, but who are under a common authority, with a common purpose which tends to provide the bond that holds them together in unity, this unity is indeed not just physical, it is moral, which makes it a permanent union. The members of the community must have knowledge of the purpose of their union and that the tie binding them in unity is that of intellect and will not just compromise.

In the community, there is not just public good but common good, the end of the community is the good of the community, the good of the union. Evans J. W. & Ward, L.R (1965:88) maintains that "it is the good of human life of the multitude of persons, their communion in good living. It is therefore common to the whole and the parts; it flows back to the parts and parts benefit from it." Furthermore, they emphasized "the common good is not only a set of advantage and utilities, but also integrity of life an end good in itself."

Onebunne has something to do with human communication and relationship as it emphasizes some vital values in life and human community.

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CHAPTER SIX

FROM ONE-BU-NNE TO IGWE-BU-IKE: THE QUEST FOR ORDER IN IGBO WORLD-HOOD

Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu

Introduction

The names of God and persons occupy a very significant place in the African life. For instance, among the Igbo, God is called: *Chineke* (the God who creates), *Chukwu* (the great God), *Osebuluwa* (the sustainer of the universe), *Eke kere uwa* (he who created the world), *Chi-oke* (God that apportions lots), *Nna-di-Ebube* (the awe-inspiring father), *Odogwu-nagha* (victorious warrior), *Ome Mgbeogharike* (actor in times of difficulty). These names reveal that God is the absolute controller of the universe, and thus, names are not just identification tags among the Igbo African people (Kanu 2015). A name carries with it the feelings, philosophy, religion, worldview, culture of the African people who bear them. In relation to the names borne by human persons, several factors play key roles in the generation of the name and the naming itself.

Some of these determinant factors include: the events surrounding the birth of the child, which could either be positive or negative. For instance, if a mother dies during child-birth, the child is called *Onwudonjo* which means that death is bad. When it has got to do with a child born after several years of childlessness, the Yoruba name the child, *Ayodele*, which means, Joy has come here. There are also names that reflect the mood or circumstances of the time which could serve as warning and rebuke. For instance, among the people of Zimbabwe, the name *Nhamo*, which means misfortune, points to a time of misfortune. There are times when names are given on the basis of a celebrity culture- as in the case where a man gives his son the name of a great hunter or warrior. Names are also given according to the order of birth (as in *Diokpara*- first son or *Ada*, first daughter), or day of birth (as in the case of *Nworie*- born on *Orieday* or *Nweke*, born on *Eke* day). Some other names are given on the basis of the name of the ancestor who is believed to have returned through reincarnation. For the purpose of this research, the focus would be on the Igbo name *Onebunne*. It would be studied in its historical context as it

relates to the manifestation of a story of disorder in Igbo traditional society. It would also explore the possibility of the restoration of order through *Igwebuike*.

***Onebunne* as a History of Disorder**

Before the emergence of writing among the African people, oral tradition has been a major means of human communication through which knowledge, art, ideas, cultural materials are transmitted and received from one generation to another. Such transmissions are usually through speech, song, folktales, ballads, chats, prose, verses, etc. This has been the means through which the African people transmitted oral history, literature and law over the years, long before the advent of the system of writing. Among the African people, names were one among the media through which histories were preserved and transmitted. What the choice of a name does to the history is that it articulates and condenses a history of several pages into a word for its preservation. Thus, African names always have unique stories behind them, and these stories are what influence the naming of the child. It is within this context that *Onebunne* is considered not just as a name but as a story, a history- and reveal a wealth of information about the bearer. *Onebunne* is not just a name, it is a story that is handed down from one generation to another. It preserves the memory of a historical event that occurred not only in the life of the parents of *Onebunne* but in the life of *Onebunne* himself. It is a story that leaves a lesson for the next generation regarding the possibilities in nature. This history domiciled in the name *Onebunne* is a history of the manifestation of the disorder in nature.

Like any other African word within the duties of the African philosophy of language, sociolinguistics and linguistics, carries ‘meaning’ for the speaker of the same language. This is very significant as it is a language which is local and indigenous to the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria and Western Africa. *Onebunne* is synonymous with *Olewunne* or *Olebunne*. The *ole* or *one* is a matter of linguistic-dialect, and depends on the background of the person who may be speaking the language. *One* or *ole* literally means *How many?* *Bu* or *wu* means *is* and *nne* means *true*? Thus, put together, *Onebunne* means ‘how many is true?’ Some mistake *Onebunne* as relating to motherhood; in the sense of *How many are mothers?* Far from it, *Nne* in the context of *Onebunne* connotes *truth*. Hence, one can question: *Obu nne!* that is, *is it True!*

Historically, the Igbo word, *Onebunne*, within the context of this research is the surname of Dr. Jude whom this paper is written in his honor, and its origin goes back to his great grandfather who had six children who died immediately after birth. The birth of his grandfather as the seventh child of his grand parents, therefore, necessitated the name *Onebunne*, that is, *nkeaobueziokwuna o ga-adiri?* meaning literally, *is it true that this one will survive?* It, therefore, borders on the question of truth- that is, the question of the truth of the possibility of the seventh child surviving. This name, peculiar as it is, was given him in such a manner that it questioned whether the grandfather of Dr Jude will survive knowing fully well that all the other six children born before him died immediately after birth. So, *Onebunne* as a name questioned *a reality before them* probably with every doubtful-possibility as a result of their past experience.

Onebunne within this context points the presence of disorder in nature. This is because within the African context, the death of a child is not expected to be a part of the order of nature as the order of nature in relation to the human life complete its circle with the ripe old age and transition to the world of the ancestors. More so, order in nature is linked to predictability, necessity and laws of nature, and manifests a triumph over and above disorder. Sickness, early death, pain, etc., are signs of disorder in the African world which has to be investigated and restored. *Onebunne* with all the unpredictability of nature that it symbolizes points to a situation of disorder in nature.

Onebunne as a Personal Identification of Disorder

Whenever a child is born within the African context, the first question to be responded to is: “who is the child that has visited humanity?” Understanding the child helps the community to relate with the child in question, and also to know what good the child has come with and how the community can best manage this good for optimum purposefulness. This question about the identity of the child borders on the personal identity of the child. Thus, Ezekwonna (2005) avers that: “A name is the first mark of personal identity in African communities” (p. 72). Maquet (1972) writes that:

An individual is defined by his name. This is an inside name which is never lost, and this is distinguished from the second name given on the occasion of an increase in strength...The inside name is an indicator of a person's individuality within his lineage (p. 27).

Corroborating Maquet and Ezekwonna, Tempels (1959): "The first criterion is the name. The name expressed the individual character of the being. The name is not a simple external courtesy; it is the very reality of the individual" (pp. 73-74). In this case, to hear the name of the person is to know about the person already.

Etymologically, the concept 'person' is derived from the Latin *persona*, traceable to the Greek *prosopon*. *Persona* was originally used to denote the mask worn by an actor and then was later applied to the role he played (Okon). Philosophically, Klubertanz (1953) argues that a person is a supposit that has a rational nature. Izu (2004) opines that it suggests a being with qualities like intelligence, self-awareness, and the ability to communicate. According to Mundi (1985), it is a concept that gives a comprehensive name to man's being, expressing his entire reality in a precise and unequivocal way. Mundi's understanding of a person captures the relationship between the *Onebunne* as an Igbo-African name and the question of personal identity. *Onebunne* as a name captures the entire reality of the African child that has been born in a precise and unequivocal way- in this way identifying the child with the particular experience or history.

When a child is named *Onebunne*, in the African context, it is not a focus on the reality of the physical man that has been born. The identification is not about the specie-specific that has been born. It is in this regard that Locke distinguishes between a man and a person who is notspecie-specific (Uzgalis 2007). A person in the African context emphasizes the spiritual rather than the biological aspect of man. While the idea of man speaks of the biological, the person goes to speak of the spiritual, and it is at this level that a person is able to become a personification of particular events and history. In this case, *Onebunne* becomes the

personification of the particular experience of disorder or pain or unpredictability in the life of the family.

***Onebunne* as an Igbo Theodicy (From a World of Disorder)**

The name *Onebunne* points to an Igbo awareness of the reality of human suffering and evil in the *Uwa* (World). It points not just to suffering, but a suffering in which one knows not when it would come to an end-suffering with doubt and without a certain hope of redemption. It is an unpredictable suffering. Even though Griffin (2002) asserts that suffering is only a dimension of evil connected to and experienced by human beings and other creatures, Obiezu (2008) asserts that among the Igbo, suffering and evil are interchangeably used in discussions that one is often assumed when the other is used, and often understood within the context of the relation of cause and effect. However, suffering as understood by Stoeber (2005), Hick (1966) and Cassell (1991) has been identified with an emotional consciousness that one would not ordinarily want to desire. Be that as it may, the idea of suffering employed here is within the context of Obiezu's concept of suffering which interchanges suffering with evil.

Kanu (2014) also brings out another dimension of suffering among the Igbo as *ahuhu*, which means an unfavourable situation which ought not to be. The word can be applied in a strict sense and in a broad sense. In a strict sense, *ahuhu* connotes a gravely difficult, painful and dishonourable situation which a person undergoes as punishment for offences committed against the deities, humanity or the created order. This definition agrees with the Igbo unified view of reality, which sees the world as having an ontological link (Madu 2004). Ezeanya (1994) avers that "Suffering of every kind – epidemic, sickness of all sorts, accidents, fire outbreak, natural disasters like flood, and earthquakes were all attributed to the influence of the powers above man, both good and evil showing their displeasure at human offence" (p. 19). This explains why the Igbo would say *awoanaghi agba oso ehizie na nkiti* (a toad does not run in the day time for nothing, for either it is pursuing something or something is pursuing it).

Within the context of *Onebunne*, it is a manifestation of an Igbo theodicy. It presents a dialogue between a good and all-powerful God who has blessed a family with seven children, and yet a family that has lost six children to the cold hands of death. It presents an Igbo world in which

evil does not conquer well. Although six had died, it is not the end of the story. The story of pain and unpredictability ends in survival and life. It is a story that ends with success and the celebration of life. In this Igbo theodicy, the presence of evil does not negate the presence of a benevolent God. It is because of God's benevolence that the human person is able to survive evil.

***Onebunne* as a State of Mind in a World of Disorder**

At the psychological level, *Onebunne* as a name speaks of the mood of the time or circumstance when the child was born. Being the name given to a child that was born after others have died, it raises questions about the survival of the new bon child and therefore a sorrowful and uncertain period in the history of the name givers. The name in this case is a manifestation of what is going on in the mind of the name giver(s). It is within this context that Echekwube (2005) and Egbunu (2013) aver that, beyond signs, African names are symbols that evaluate nature, essence, relationships, and therefore, are intrinsically and extrinsically meaningful, and would require a deliberate effort on the part of the persons encounter in the name for the first time to decode. To understand the meaning of *Onebunne*, the analyst must, therefore, study the mind of the name giver as the name is a manifestation of the mind of the giver. At the psychological level, *Onebunne* becomes an overt expression of a covert content.

***Onebunne* as a Phenomenological Approach to Understanding Disorder**

Onebunne is a phenomenological approach to the reality of life. Not only because of its descriptive capacity but because it tells the reality of life as it is or as it presents itself without any reference to any universal laws or underlying principles. It focuses on what is perceived. According to Chidili (2005), the phenomenological approach focuses on reality as it is and not as it appears to be. Madu (1997) adds that the task of the phenomenologist is to make an analytic description of these data presented. However, the association of *Onebunne* with the phenomenological approach is because of its descriptive nature. At this level, one can speak of *Onebunne* as a manifestation of African traditional phenomenology.

Onebunne is given as a name based on the observation that the human person is a social being who operates in the society; it, therefore, shows the social factors surrounding the human person at the time of birth. For instance, those in rocky areas like Nsukka will always answer 'Ugwu' which means 'hill'. As observed by Mbiti (1969), the meanings of African names are tied largely to circumstances of the birth of the child. Nyamiti (1988) and Magesa (1988) add that within the African context, the personal identity of a person is determined by a complex of circumstances surrounding the birth of the child.

Interestingly, unlike one would expect, *Onebunne* as a name presents a phenomenological understanding of the disorder manifest at the birth of *Onebunne* without reference to supernatural powers or forces. It only states the state of affairs with the accompanying uncertainty surrounding the overcoming of the state of affairs.

Igwebuike as an Instrument of Order in an Onebunne World

In the African world, the human person is a being in relation to the other. He or she is not a being lone to himself or herself. Therefore, the name that is given is a manifestation of the relationship between the person and the community to which he or she belongs. *Onebunne* as a name is an identity that has been conferred on the individual person by the community, and the conferral of this name speaks of the sentiments of the community in relation to the child who has been born into an uncertain world. The name speaks of not only the prayer of the community but also her prayer and pains. It manifests further the commitment of the community towards the destiny of the child which the community does not just sit down and watch to let it happen if it is in the negative. *Onebunne*, therefore, speaks of the dialogue of emotions between an innocent child that has been born into a troubled community and a community of other human beings who are bound to the good of their own. Describing the human person in relation to the other, Maquet (1972) writes: "For no man is isolated. He constitutes a link in the chain of vital forces; a living link, both active and passive fastened by the top to the link of his ascending line, and supporting at the bottom the line of his descent" (p. 27).

Focusing on the anthropocentric dimension of African names, Bujo (1997) avers that it reminds the individual of his or her responsibility

towards the group as the community is a dialectical relationship in which everyone must place his own part for the sustenance of the whole. Names, therefore, help in the cohering of the dialectics. The name *Onebunne* reminds the bearer and the giver of the name that they are human beings in a community of human beings. It reminds *Onebunne* of the relationship between him and the community into which he was born. In fact, it reminds him that he was born into a human community, and what the community did for him, and also what he owes the community as its member.

How does *Igwebuike* aid the restoration of order in a disordered world? First of all, what does *Igwebuike* mean? The expression, *Igwebuike* is a combination of three Igbo words. Kanu (2021) avers that it can be understood as a word or a sentence: as a word, it is written as *Igwebuike*, and as a sentence, it is written as, *Igwebuike*, with the component words enjoying some independence in terms of space. Literally, *Igwe* is a noun which means number or multitude, usually a large number or population. The number or population in perspective are entities with ontological identities and significances, however, part of an existential order in which every entity is in relation to the other. *Bu* is a verb, which means *is*. *Ike* is a noun, which means *strength* or *power* (Kanu 2016a&b). *Igwe*, *bu* and *Ike* put together, means ‘number is strength’ or ‘number is power’ (Kanu 2017a&b). However, beyond the literal sense of *Igwebuike*, it means *otu obi* (one heart and one soul) – *cor unum et anima una*. Beyond the literal understanding of *Igwebuike*, it concatenates Igbo forms, symbolism, signs, media, meaning, anthropologies, universal cosmic truths, functions, semantic powers, physics, phenomena, faculties, and Igbo environmentalities.

The story that *Onebunne* brings into the discourse is one of pain and uncertainty. Since six siblings are already late, *Onebunne* although a name, it questions if the bearer would survive unlike the other children: that is, *nke a o bu eziokwu na o ga-adiri?* meaning literally, *is it true that this one will survive?* It, therefore, borders on the question of the truth of the possibility of the seventh child surviving. At the level of *Onebunne*, there is only a question that requires an answer and the solution to the problem begins with the effort towards providing an answer to the question. Where then can the answer to these questions in the tone of pain and uncertainty

be gotten? This is where *Igwebuike* comes in as a response to *Onebunne*. It is not only a response to the questions but a stabilizer to *Onebunne*.

Onebunne shows that the universe in which the human person lives is a world of probabilities and pain, and this is where *Igwebuike* comes in. An Igbo proverb says: “If a thing remains one, then nothing remains.” *Igwebuike* therefore calls for an existential backing, that is, a complementary approach, given that the power or strength generated by a person is not strong enough to withstand the existential gamble of life, as the chances of being overcome are on the high side. There is also an African proverb that says: “while going to the toilet in the morning ensure that you carry two sticks”. The sticks were used for cleaning up oneself after using the convenience. But because there is always the high probability of the stick falling into the pit, it is always advisable to take a second stick, just in case. With two sticks one has a greater assurance of cleaning oneself up after using the convenience; the higher the number, the greater the preparedness towards minimizing the casualty of life; the second stick is also necessary in case of a second coming or remainder of the output. In a metaphoric sense, *Igwebuike* is used within the Igbo linguistic setting to refer to relational engagement in the world, accomplished in solidarity and complementarity, and the powerful and insurmountable force therein (Kanu 2017c&d). The closest words to *Igwebuike* in English are complementarity, solidarity and harmony (Kanu 2018a&b).

Conclusion

Several factors play key roles in the generation of the name and the naming itself. These factors make the African name to point to the essence of the thing or person that is named. Some of these determinant factors include: the events surrounding the birth of the child, which could either be positive or negative. There are also names that reflect the mood or circumstances of the time which could serve as warning and rebuke. There are times when names are given on the basis of a celebrity culture—as in the case where a man gives his or her child the name of a great hunter or warrior. Names are also given according to the order of birth (as in *Diokpara*- first son or *Ada*, first daughter), or day of birth (as in the case of *Nworie*- born on *Orieday* or *Nweke*, born on *Eke* day). Some other names are given on the basis of the name of the ancestor who is believed

to have returned through reincarnation. These notwithstanding, this research has focused on the name *Onebunne*.

This piece has researched on the name *Onebunne* from the perspective of the disorder that it points to in the Igbo-African world-hood. Regarding the manifestation of this disorder, there are different faces of the reflection of *Onebunne*. First of all, as a history of disorder among the Igbo-African people as it points to uncertainty rather than certainty, pain rather than joy, restlessness rather than peace. Second, is that the name becomes personalized in such a manner that the bearer of the name personally identified with that experience, and thus, everyone who hears the name is able to understand who he is. Third, *Onebunne* becomes an Igbo-African theodicy as it reflects the reality of presence of a benevolent God in the face of evil and human suffering, and presents a world in which the good always prevails over evil. Fourth, is that *Onebunne* manifests the state of the mind at a particular point in history. Fifth is the understanding of *Onebunne* as a phenomenological approach to the understanding of life realities. The concept does not say anything beyond what experience presents.

This notwithstanding, in the face of the disorder which the concept *Onebunne* manifests, the question that looms at the horizon is how order can be restored for the good of the Igbo-African world-hood. *Igwebuiké*, is, therefore, presented as a path towards the restoration of order in the world. As such, while *Onebunne* spells disorder, *Igwebuiké* becomes the stabilizing agent for the restoration of order. *Igwebuiké* calls for solidarity and a collective effort towards the restoration of order in the world.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

ONE-BU-NNE AS AN IGWEBUIKE APPROACH TO AN IGBO- AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF TRUTH

Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu

Introduction

In the historical development of thought, several theories of truth have emerged in response to the question: what is truth? These theories have been categorized majorly into three: the correspondence/dialectical theory, the coherence theory, and the pragmatic theory; however, with other theories alongside these major theories, which include: the dialectical theory, the redundancy theory, the semantic theory and the relativistic theory of truth. Over the years, scholars of various extractions have concerned themselves with the determination of which of these theories of truth represents the appropriate or adequate position of truth(Wittgenstein 1959, 1961,1971, 1958,1993; Austin 1962;Malcolm 1970; Hymes 1977; Nze 1994; Prah 1995;Opata 1998; Lycan 2000;Hornsby, and Longworth 2006; Kishik 2008;Panda 2009; Udefi 2018).

A cursory glance reveals that the correspondence theory of truth is the oldest, best known, and perhaps most natural theory of truth which originated from Aristotle. It holds that truth is a correspondence to fact. The implication of this theory is that when I say that something is true, I must point out a fact that corresponds to what I have said as a confirmation of the truthfulness of what I have said to be true. The problem with this theory is that it is simplistic and may not be applicable for every truth (Prior 1969). The coherence theory of truth holds that the “truth of a proposition must be measured by its consistency with the whole system of knowledge”(Wallace1977). In other words, the theory states that a proposition is true if and only if a proposition is in agreement with other propositions in a system of propositions such that proposition strengthens the acceptability of the entire system. The complication with this theory is that coherence is not enough to determine the truth of a statement; and since no statement is in a position of being true to all

statements, it is difficult to know which statements not to cohere the statement in question with.

The pragmatist theory of truth holds that a statement or a belief is true if “it works”. That is, if it allows us to function effectively in life. The semantic theory of truth or the minimalist theory was proposed by Alfred Tarski and avers that something is true if it makes an assertion about a sentence; that is, if it applies to statements of the base language (Tarski, 1944). For instance, the statement that ‘All Igbo people like money’ can only be true if ‘All Igbo people like money’. Redundancy or deflationary theory of truth holds that to assert that a statement is true is to assert the statement itself. For the relative theory of truth, truth is relative. This was the position of the sophists who argued that what is true for you is true for you and what is true for me is true for me. Thus, there are no absolute truths.

Although a common concept for truth among the Igbo is *eziokwu*, for the purpose of this research, *ONEBUNNE*, an Igbo word that raises fundamental question about truth, and which has the Igbo word *nne*, another word for truth would be studied and situated within the context of the already established theories of truth. The distinctive pattern of *Onebunne* will also be investigated so as to show where and how it distinguishes itself from the mainline theories of truth. This would be studied in such a manner that brings out the *Igwebuike* dimension of *Onebunne*.

Onebunne: Historical and Ontological Perspective

Onebunne, like any other word within the duties of the philosophies of language, sociolinguistics and linguistics, carries ‘meaning’ for the speaker of the same language. This is very significant as it is a language which is local and indigenous to the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria and Western Africa. *Onebunne* is synonymous with *Olewunne* as well as *Olebunne*. In this case, the *ole* or *one* is a matter of linguistic-dialect depending who may be speaking. *One* or *ole* literally means *How many?* Equally, *bu* or *wu* means *is* and *nne* means *true*? Thus, put together, *Onebunne* means how many is true? Some mistake *Onebunne* as relating to motherhood; that is, *how many are mothers*. Far from it, *Nne* in the context of *Onebunne* connotes *truth*. Hence, one can question: *O bu nne?* that is, *Is it True?*

Onebunne, historically is the surname of Jude Onebunne in whose honor this paper is written, and its origin goes back to his great grandfather who had six children with all dying immediately after birth. The birth of his grandfather as the seventh child of his grand parents, therefore, necessitated the name *Onebunne*, that is, *nke a o bu eziokwu na o ga-adiri*? literally meaning, *is it true that this one will survive*? It, therefore, borders on the question of truth- that is, the question of the truth of the survival of the seventh child of the family. Thus, *Onebunne* as a name questioned a reality before them at a particular historical time probably with every doubtful-possibility as a result of their past experience.

An Overview of Truth in Igbo World-hood

The word *Nne* alongside *Eziokwu* are the two Igbo words that identify and comparatively compounds with the English word ‘Truth’ as equivalent. *Nne* which is the focal point of this paper, has within itself the compound elements of Igbo ‘Truth-Conditions’. However, a more common word for truth among the Igbo is *Eziokwu* which is a combination of two words: *ezi* which means correct, genuine, right or good; and *okwu* which means word or speech. *Eziokwu*, therefore, means literally good talk, the correct sentence, right word, or the appropriate statement. From the foregoing, Ejeh (2019) avers that *eziokwu* means the correct response to a question; in the contention of Nze (1994), it represents utterances that are true or that lack inner self contradiction. When a person says what is considered not true, the Igbo would describe it as *asi* (lie) or *O bughi Eziokwu* (it is not true).

The idea of truth is very important to the Igbo-African, and this explains why proverbs regarding truth are littered all over their sayings:

1. Truth is life
2. Truth is the first victim of war
3. Truth is like fire, it cannot be hidden under dry leaves
4. Truth cannot be hidden forever under evil
5. The naked truth is always better than the well-dressed lie
6. It is better to be punished for telling the truth than to be rewarded for telling a lie
7. Whoever tells the truth is chased out of nine villages
8. A lie has many variations, the truth, none
9. Buy the truth but never sell it

10. It takes a long time to fabricate a lie but it takes only seconds to tell the truth
11. Truth is like noonday
12. Truth cannot be buried in the ground
13. Truth is harsh to the ears
14. The truth is bitter

Outside of *nne* and *eziokwu*, Ejeh (2019) introduced another concept for truth among the Igbo: *Ihe mere eme*. He makes an argument for his position, comparing *Ihe mere eme* with the semantic theory of truth:

Ihe mere eme can also be used to maintain the principle of the semantic theory of truth, since the semantic theory of truth makes truth a property of sentences rather than in judgments. The theory holds that, to say that something is true is to make an assertion about a sentence. For example, the statement “The country is bad” is true if and only if the country is really bad, as what is the case can refer to the content of a propositional sentence agreeing with reality, rather than just asserting the historicity of what happened (p. 43).

He writes further, expanding the reason for the choice of the concept *Ihe mere eme* arguing that it augurs well with the very nature of truth in Igbo-African ontology:

From the ongoing, the expression *Ihe mere eme* seems to be more in line with the very nature of the Igbo concept of truth and is therefore preferred, since it does not exhibit the apparent ambiguity inherent in the expression ‘Eziokwu’. This toes the same line with the western conception of truth in which the correspondence theory is seen as the better representative of what truth is. Thus, while the expression *Ihe mere eme* defines what truth is for the Igbo, *eziokwu* gives the criteria to strengthen it (p. 44).

While this perspective at first sight suggests a breakthrough in Igbo epistemology, a deep thought reveals that it is weaker than the concept it tends to replace. *Ihe mere eme* when simply translated means *what or the thing that happened*. Truth is not limited to events or happenings. This

makes the concept *Ihe mere eme* inadequate for the concept of truth let alone replacing the concepts *nne* or *eziokwu*.

Truth within the context of *Onebunne*

Within the context of *Onebunne*, truth can be understood in three different broad ways: as a method, as real and as showing.

a. *Onebunne*: Understanding truth as a method or Rule

The question *obu nne?* Which means, is it true? implies that for truth to be considered as one, it must go through the process of verification which might not be possible at the point of questioning. As in the case of *onebunne*, when the question regarding the truth of his survival was asked, it was not an answer that could be given immediately, but one that requires the confirmation of time during which it will have to be shown to be real and demonstrated. This process of showing as real and demonstrating its truth-thingness is a method and a rule for the exposition of knowledge for the conditioning of true knowledge. Okonkwo (2020) avers that this is simply the reason why the Igbo speaker will at the end of a long or short ‘speech-talk’ ask the speech presenter-*Eziokwu*? Which means *true*? He writes that:

The frame of such a question summarizes what the German language would present as *DasVerfahren der erklärendenWissenschaft* (the process of the exposition or clearance of knowledge for the phenomenological conditioning of the true-knowledge). In applying the ideas of Wittgenstein here, the *Eziokwu-question* conveys the means of/for an intricate rule for a condition of truth and therefore remains an inherent rule for the unravelling, untangling, elucidation and clarification of the form of the Igbo-rule-governed-nature of permeability truth condition of which if this inherent rule is changed, the form, the grasp and meaning of a truth-life and truth-essence will change (p. 9).

Okonkwo (2020) writes further on the place of *eziokwu* as a way, method, road and rule in the search for knowledge:

The Igbo question *Eziokwu*?... as a single-word, conditions itself from its *expressisverbis*, as the revelation and manifestation of the ‘what-*quidditas*’ and the ‘thing-*realitas*’ and stands out in Igbo language as the way, road, method and rule-following structured condition of ‘doing’ as well as constituting and conditioning the truth as that social bonding and in so doing, it becomes the gateway to knowledge and consequently stands away from subjective appellations and individuations like solipsism, soliloquy and speaking in tongue-charismatic. *Eziokwu* in this same case becomes the exhibition of constituted Igbo truth-conditional behavior (p. 10).

The word *onebunne* (how many is true?) is a question that requires response, not necessarily verbally. It is a question that can be responded to by experience. And it is not a question that must be responded to by immediate experience. The dialogue or dialectics between the question and experience points to a process in arriving at the truth. It is in this sense that is understood as a method, rule, etc.

***Onebunne*: Understanding Truth as Real**

Onebunne reveals a dimension of truth as that which is the Real. In the question: *Obu nne*? Which means: is it true? The response that is required for it to be true is an appeal to the real. In the case of *Onebunne*, it will not be considered true until it is seen and becomes real that *Onebunne* has survived. It is at this level that truth within the context of *Onebunne* corresponds to the correspondence and the pragmatic theories of truth. At this point, with emphasis on the real, the beingness of the truth must correspond with the beingness of truth-thing-ness. Thus, Okonkwo (2020) in his analysis of the Igbo concept of truth avers that:

The ... single Igbo word *Eziokwu*, for the moderation of the truth elemental (word)conditioners (*expressisverbis*) follows and flows from the signification of the same word-root-structure ‘*Eziokwu*’ and reflects the constitutive contents and the constructive descriptions of the being-ness of truth as, the real, the good, the valuable, the worthy, etc., and also stands as the question about the same being-ness of

truth that inherently must spring out of the same question about the being-ness of truth-thing-ness. This assertion and application corresponds with the position of Martin Heidegger that: ‘*die Fragenach dem Wesen der Wahrheitentspringtaus der Fragenach der Wahrheit des Wesens*’ (the question after the being of truth consists of the question after the truth of the (that) being) (pp. 10-11).

When a thing is said to be *nne*, it means that it is real. The emphasis on the real as truth admits of the possibility of the opposite, that is, the unreal. *Obu nne* means that it is true; *o bughì nne* means that it is not true. Thus, Russell (1970) avers that “our theory of truth must be such as to admit of its opposite, falsehood” (p. 70). He writes further that “it seems fairly evident that if there were no beliefs there could be no falsehood; and no truth either, in the sense in which truth is correlative to falsehood” (p. 70). Okonkwo (2012), therefore, avers that:

On this very note therefore, the truth-thing-ness and its being-ness must correspond, adhere and stick to/on the *realitas* and stand as *realitas* about the real, the good, the valuable, the worthiness of the exhibited and constituted knowledge behavior of the very ‘known’ as the ‘unchangeable’ in so far as its definitiveness is objectified within the Igbo ideal world (*realitasobjectiva*) and the stances of the spoken Igbo word-*Eziokwu*. The method for the conditioning of truth is and becomes therefore the virtue of knowledge itself that can relate with the Greek philosophical conceptions of *eudaimonia*, *arete* and *autarky* (i.e. fulfillment), as the presentation of the authentic, valuable and worthiness of the human *actus intellectus* as against the evils of fallacies, deceitfulness, lies etc (p. 61).

Within this context, a thing is only true if it is real and not true if it is unreal as its realness is a mark of its truthness.

Onebunne: Understanding truth as Demonstrable

Onebunne implies that for truth to be truth, it must be shown or demonstrated. Thus, if it cannot be shown or demonstrated, then it is not

truth. This is why the question *Obu Nne?* Would remain unanswered and unproven as truth until *Onebunne* survives unlike his six late siblings. Therefore, the survival of *onebunne* becomes the demonstration and manifestation of the truth of the *nne*ness. Before it is demonstrated, it remains an unproven truth. Within the context of Igbo language, Okonkwo (2021) avers that, at this level:

Eziokwu brings forth the Igbo socially constituted performable operational elemental implicature that highlights the demonstrate-able and elucidate-able synonyms of correspond-able sets of socially constituted concrete operational Igbo language and linguistic arts for conveying truth in and through equipmental utilizable Igbo conventional dealings designated and derivable from *E-zi-Okwu* with the *Zi* element-denizen disclosing, showing and manifesting ‘the truth’ as reality (p. 11).

Focusing on the *Zi*(which means to show) in *Eziokwu*, Okonkwo furthers the demonstrable and elucidable nature of that which must be considered as truth within the Igbo context:

Zi in *E-zi-okwu* is the determinant elemental-denizen and factual methodology for the Igbo ‘onto-linguistic-making-clear’ of and for the idea and ideology of truth so as to become an Igbo socially constituted practical behavior, conduct and conduit serviceable equipmental conduciveness for a total comprehension of and for the determination of Igbo truth conditions (p. 11).

From this perspective, that which is considered truth for the Igbo, either from the position of the word *eziokwu* or *nne*, such a truth must be demonstrable and elucidatable.

Igwebuike as the Operating Condition of Onebunne

Having understood the consequences of the word *Onebunne* for truth in Igbo world-hood. Going beyond the three perspectives of truth that have emerged as a result of the study of the word *onebunne*: that is, truth as a method, truth as real and truth as demonstrable, this piece concludes that the spirit behind *Onebunne* is *Igwebuike*. This is very significant as *nne* serves a complementary perspective of truth as it encompasses the different

basic objective theories of truth. These notwithstanding, what does *Igwebuike* stand for? First of all, Kanu (2021) avers that *Igwebuike* is an Igbo proverb and also a typical Igbo name. Igbo proverbs and names are among the major traditional vessels where African philosophy, religion and culture have continued to be preserved. Mbiti (1970) writes that: “It is in proverbs that we find the remains of the oldest forms of African religious and philosophical wisdom” (p.89). They contain the wisdom and experience of the African people, usually of several ages gathered and summed up in one expression (Kanu 2018). This is to say that beyond the linguistic expression lies a deeper meaning, that is, the spirit of the letter, which is the philosophical level, where *Igwebuike* is understood as providing an ontological horizon that presents being as that which possesses a relational character of mutual relations (Kanu 2016a).

The expression, *Igwebuike* is a combination of three Igbo words. It can be understood as a word or a sentence: as a word, it is written as *Igwebuike*, and as a sentence, it is written as, *Igwebuike*, with the component words enjoying some independence in terms of space. Literally, *Igwe* is a noun which means number or multitude, usually a large number or population. The number or population in perspective are entities with ontological identities and significances, however, part of an existential order in which every entity is in relation to the other. *Bu* is a verb, which means *is*. *Ike* is a noun, which means *strength* or *power* (Kanu 2016a&b). *Igwe*, *bu* and *Ike* put together, means ‘number is strength’ or ‘number is power’ (Kanu 2017a). However, beyond the literal sense of *Igwebuike*, it means *otu obi* (one heart and one soul) – *corunum et anima una*. Beyond the literal understanding of *Igwebuike*, it concatenates Igbo forms, symbolism, signs, media, meaning, anthropologies, universal cosmic truths, functions, semantic powers, physics, phenomena, faculties, and Igbo environ-mentalities (2017b&c).

In relation to the concept of truth in *Onebunne*, one notices that the concept of truth therein is an articulation of several perspectives of what truth consists of, and thus a complementary perspective. First of all, there is the correspondence theory of truth in *Onebunne*, this theory holds that the truth must correspond with fact. In the case of *Onebunne*, who is named thus as a result of the death of six other siblings. The question of the truth of his existence is dependent on the reality of his survival. If it is true that he is, it must correspond with the reality of his existence. It is not enough that it is

said that he is; it is enough that he should be seen as existing confirming the statement that he does exist. *Onebunne* also corresponds to the coherence theory of truth which holds that the truth of a proposition must be measured by its consistency with the whole system of knowledge. The coherence in this case is coherence with what the Igbo understand as actually existing. 'Idi' means 'to be', and for it to be *nne* (true), it means that it must cohere with the principle of *Idi* (to be). And thus, when the Igbo asks *obu nne?* (is it true?) to ascertain that it is true, the Igbo would have to confirm that there is coherence with the principles of *Idi*. If there is a proposition that *obu nne*, and that which is *nne* does not cohere with the principles of *Idi*, then its *nness* upon confirmation becomes *asi*(lie). Another dimension of *Onebunne* is the pragmatist theory of truth which holds that a statement or a belief is true if and only if "it works". In this case, it is considered as *nne* only if it works out. If it fails to work out it is said that *obughi nne*, which means that it is not true. If it works out it is considered as *nne*. *Onebunne* also corresponds to the semantic theory or minimalist theory of truth which holds that something is true if it makes an assertion about a sentence; that is, if it applies to statements of the base language. For instance, the statement that '*One bu nne?*' can only be true if there is '*One na one bu nne*'.

Conclusion

This work has responded to the question: what is truth? From and Igbo African perspective, and thus adds to the already existing perspectives on what should be considered as true. While gaining an understanding of the various theories of truth: correspondence, coherence, pragmatic, semantic, relative, reductionary, etc., this work focused on the concept of truth as can be derived from the Igbo name *ONEBUNNE*. It was studied in such a manner that attention was paid to its relationship with the various theories of truth and with the intention of understanding how it distinguishes itself as a perspective of truth. Very significant to this study is the understanding that *Igwebuike* is the operative condition or the animating spirit of *Onebunne* as a complementary perspective of truth.

The connection between the *nne* and other theories of truth, such as the correspondence theory, coherence theory, pragmatic theory, semantic theory, etc., makes *nne* an eclectic perspective of truth as it shows that the different theories of truth are complementary to each other. In this sense, no particular theory of truth is complete enough as to determine the

parameters of that which is to be considered as true. There is need for the complementarity of the different perspectives for the arrival at that which is true. However, this complementarity does not admit of the relativistic theory of truth which holds that what is true for you is true for you and what is true for me is true for me. This is very important as a relativistic theory of truth would imply that there is no truth as everything would be true, and thus does not admit of an opposite. This complementary and eclectic perspective to truth is what the concept *Igwebuike* captures and communicates.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

ONE-BU-NNE: INTER-COMMUNAL SEMANTIC ANALYSIS

Thecla Udemmadu & Charles Onebunne

Introduction

A name is a word or set of words by which someone or something is referred to, known, or addressed. People or families have personal or family names. One of such names is an Igbo name “Onebunne”. Igbo people do not bear names for bearing sake. They have circumstances behind every given name. But some prominent writers like Shakespeare is of the opinion that there is nothing special in a name; that people can answer any name arbitrary. On this premise, this study is then set out to investigate the elasticity of this assertion especially as it pertains to the name “Onebunne”. “Onebunne” as a family name is found in different parts of Igbo speaking people. The major objective of this study is to interrogate the inter-communal semantic implications of the name using linguistic tools. The inter-communal semantic analysis will cut across the geographical areas where the name “Onebunne” is answered. Primary and secondary sources of information will be used in both collecting and in analysing of data. The primary source of data collection will be from respondents from different linguistic background who bear the name “Onebunne” as their family name.

This academic exercise will be segmented into: the introduction, review of related literature, analysis of data, then, the findings and conclusion.

Literature Review

This section will among other things look at the concept of name, Igbo communities and names, semantic analysis, concept of inter-communal, and dialect, then, the Igbo dialect classification.

Concept of Name

A name is a word or phrase that identifies a specific person, place, or thing. We see the entity as an individual, and not a member of a class. ‘Ekene’, for example, is a unique name (a ‘proper noun’), whereas ‘school’ applies to a whole class of objects (a ‘common noun’). In the

written language, European languages generally recognise the distinction by writing names with an initial capital letter. The science that studies names is known as onomastics, usually divided into the study of personal names (anthroponomastics) and place names (toponomastics). Personal names- Most people are familiar with only one personal naming system, and are surprised to learn that practices differ greatly from language to language. Even such a basic distinction as ‘given name’ (or ‘Christian name’) and ‘family name’ (or ‘surname’) is not universal. These names are also often referred to as ‘first’ and ‘last’ names; but this nomenclature is ambiguous when comparing languages as there is considerable variation in the order in which such names occur. In most European languages, the family names follows the given name; but the reverse is the case in, say, Hungarian and Chinese. According to www.sciencedirect.com>article, personal names can be classified as given name, first name, middle name, fore name, Christian name, local name or adopted name. They are opposite of last name, surname, family name or clan name. Proper names- The use of words as personal labels is a matter of particular significance- a fact which is early learned by children, who are often anxious to conceal their own names, and who so easily hurt, and are hurt, by name-calling. Many primitive people do not like to hear their name used, especially in unfavourable circumstances, for they believe that the whole of their being resides in it, and they may thereby fall under the influence of others. (Crystal: 1985)

According to Shakespeare, “What is in a name” means, name of a thing does not matter as much as the quality of the thing. Shakespeare used this phrase in his famous play *Romeo and Juliet*. A ‘rose’ if called something entirely different, would still smell as sweetly as it does with the name ‘rose’. What someone or something is called or labelled is arbitrary compared to their or its intrinsic qualities. The names that we call things are just randomly assigned by us. Just because people named something a billion years ago does not mean that is what it is. Why can’t we call a horse, a pencil? Or a pencil a horse for that matter? Names are just arbitrary, so we should not read into them so much. Names are random. There is no reason a horse should be called that initially. But the problem with this kind of reasoning is that over time, names do mean something. If you go around saying, ‘Oh, look at how fast that pencil gallops’ (when you really mean a horse), then everyone will think you have lost it. Names might not mean anything in the beginning, but over time, they take on

meaning. And that meaning sticks. And that is just with objects. It gets a whole lot stickier with people.

A name is super important to someone's identity. What is the first thing you do when you meet a new person? You tell him/her your name. That is because that is what you are called and in a way, it is who you are. Now we suppose you could tell people something about yourself before saying your name, but we all know that is not what people expect. Just say we met someone and we said, 'Hi, we're Shnoop'. And they said, 'Hi, I'm popcorn eater'. As cool as that would be, it would be, um, weird. So, the answer to the question, "What is in a name?" is this: a lot. A whole lot. www.shakespearesglobe.com/www.quora.com>what-is-the-meaning.

According to www.merriam-websters.com>name, name is a word or phrase that constitutes the distinctive designation of a person or thing. Also, www.dictionary.com>browse>name holds that name is a word or a combination of words by which a person, place, or thing, a body or class, or any object of thought is designated, collected, or known.

Igbo communities and names

Personal names in Igbo land are characterised by the following: names are clustered along the lines of dialects, largely because of geographical factor. (www.sciencedirect.com>article) Igbo is one of the major tribes in Nigeria and the language is spoken by over 25million people and characterised by dialects. The Igbo people are originally from the Eastern part of Nigeria but can be found in virtually every country of the world. Similar to any other ethnic groups in Africa, naming in Igbo is premeditated venture that is designed to speak to the future of the newly born child. Igbo people are not careless in naming because of their belief that names are tied to destinies and as such have religious, philosophical, psychological, historical, and linguistic interpretations. Personal names in Igbo land are characterised by the following:

- Names are clustered along the line of dialects largely because of geographical proximity, migration and historical ties.
- Sentential names are heavily been replaced with Pentecostal names.

- The influence of God called ‘Chi’ or ‘Chukwu’ is very strong in Igbo personal names.
- Superstitious beliefs also influence the naming system.
- Sociological effects such as procreation and importance of children over barrenness, wealth, status, riches for example, ‘Nwako’, caste system like ‘Osu’, ‘Umeh’, traditional post or monarchical lineage, for example, ‘Adaeze’, ‘Ezedinobi’. Innuendo or response to mockery, childlessness or taunting for example, ‘Iroahushi’, superiority of their siblings, clan or kinship or kinsmen over others, or their wealth, beauty, riches, sexual or intellectual abilities for example, ‘Akubailo’, ‘Ofunneka’.
- Igbo personal names are gender sensitive because of the patriarchal nature of Igbo people. The males are often named based on issues such as: gods or deities, physical and spiritual objects, intellectual prowess and dexterity in trade or agriculture, nature or mysterious phenomena, sportsmanship and craftsmanship, animals and so on. On the other hand, female names are often associated with good lineage, fruitfulness, beauty and intelligent, moral responsibility, favour, good luck and tidings, joy, happiness, wealth, purity and so on.
- Maternal lineage or descent can influence the personal names given to Igbo people,
- Historical or geographical events for example, waterfall, market days, birth of prince or princess, disease outbreak, war, famine, draught, great harvest, fruitful period and so on.

So, many researchers have investigated various aspects of names and naming but none has investigated the linguistic analysis of the name, “Onebunne” In Onumajuru’s work in African Research Review, he states that Mbonu (2010:xiv) defines a personal name in Igbo as a story. She opines that a name functions as a place-holder, social location and a part of belonging in most African societies. Ezeanya (1994:9) states that naming is as important to the Igbo as it was to the Hebrews of old. He remarks that a person receives a new name to indicate a change in his rank or in his appointment to a new post.

All Igbo names are lexicalized sentences and so they are written as one word. Lexical names, Noun Noun Phrase, Noun Verb Phrase, Noun Verb

Complement/ Sentential, Interrogative, Imperative/ Injunction/ Exaltation.

Interrogative names- Some Igbo names are questions which also express the projections of the parents or the actual situation or the family at the time of birth of the child, example,

- Afūlūchianya (Is God seen?)
- Amandianaeze (Does one know who to avoid?)
- Onyedīkachukwu (Who is like God?)
- Onyekaozulu (Who is self- sufficient)
- Afūlūenuanya
- Onyemaechi
- Onyenwenwa
- Agaegbu
- Amauchechukwu
- Ōbūmneke
- Ōbūmneme
- Oledīmma (How many are good)
- Olekamma (How many are better)

Semantic Analysis

Semantics is a branch of linguistics that studies meaning in language. This linguistic approach aims to study the properties of meaning in a systematic and objective way, with reference to as wide a range of utterances and languages as possible. It is thus broader than the approach taken by many logicians and philosophers, who have tended to concentrate on a restricted range of sentence (typical statements, or ‘propositions’ within a single language), (Crystal:1985). In modern linguistics, meaning is studied by making detailed analyses of the way words and sentences are used in specific contexts. It is an approach shared by several philosophers and psychologists. Ludwig Wittgenstein, in particular stressed its importance in his dictum, “the meaning of a word is its use in the language.”

The semantic analysis means expressing the meaning (literal meaning) of some of the data structurally presented without taking into consideration the circumstances or context of the choice of the names while the pragmatic analysis entails considering both the semantic meaning and the context or situation.

Semantics have components like:

- Prosodic meaning: The way a sentence is said, using the prosody of the language, can radically alter the meaning. Any marked change in emphasis, for example, can lead to a sentence being interpreted in a fresh light. Each of the following sentence carries a different implication, as the stress (indicated by capitals) moves.
John bought a red CAR (not a red bicycle).
John bought a RED car (not a green one).
JOHN bought a red car (not Michael).

The prosody informs us of what information in the sentence can be taken for granted (is 'given') and what is of special significance (is 'new')

- Grammatical meaning: The categories that are established by grammatical analysis can also be analysed from semantic point of view. A sentence such as, "John read a book yesterday" consist of Subject + Verb + Object + Adverbial, but can also be analysed as an 'actor' performing an 'action' or a 'goal' at a certain 'time'. There is great deal to be said about 'semantic roles' played by syntactic elements which is an area of study that falls uneasily between semantics and grammar.
- Pragmatic meaning: The function performed by the sentence in a discourse needs to be considered. The meaning of the sentence, 'There's some chalks on the floor' seems plain enough, but in some situations, it would be interpreted as a statement of fact ('Have you seen any chalk?') and in others as a veiled command (as when a teacher might point out the chalk to the child in class).
- Social meaning: The choice of a sentence may directly affect the social relationship between the participants. We may convey such impressions as politeness, rudeness, competence, or distance, and this will affect our status and role within a community. 'What do you mean by talking to me like that', is a question that raises larger issues than the meaning of the individual lexemes and sentences that have been used.
- Propositional meaning: The most important trend in modern semantics is the investigation of sentence meaning using ideas derived from philosophy and logic. In this kind of approach, a careful distinction is drawn between sentences and propositions. A proposition is the unit of meaning that identifies the subject

matter of a statement; it describes some state of affairs and takes the form of a declarative sentence, example, 'Mary loves Michael'. In such theories as "truth-conditional semantics", sentences are analysed in terms of the underlying propositions they express, and those propositions are then tested to see whether they would be true or false, in relation to the real world, (Crystal, 1985). It is not difficult to sense the complexity of language structure, but it is not so easy to say how many levels should be set up in order to explain the way this structure is organised. Some simple models of language recognise only two basic levels: The set of physical form (sounds, letters, signs, words) contained in a language, and the range of abstract 'meanings' conveyed by those forms. More commonly, the notion of forms is sub-divided, to distinguish different kinds of abstractness. In speech, for example, the physical facts of pronunciation, as defined by the processes of articulation, acoustic transmission and audition, are considered to be the subject matter of phonetics.

The way different languages organise sounds to convey differences of meaning is the province of phonology. And the study of the way meaningful units are brought into sequence to convey wider and more varied patterns of meaning is the province of grammar. The term semantics is then used for the study of the patterns of meaning themselves.

Four-level models of language (phonetics/phonology/grammar/semantics) are among the most widely used, but further divisions within and between these levels are often made. For example, within the level of grammar, it is common to recognise a distinction between the study of word structure (morphology) and the study of word sequence within sentences (syntax). Within phonology, the study of vowels, consonants, syllables (segmental phonology) is usually distinguished from the study of prosody and other tones of voice (suprasegmental phonology). Within semantics, the study of vocabulary (or lexicon) is sometimes taken separately from the study of larger patterns of meaning (under such headings as text or discourse). All of these are regularly referred to as 'levels' of structure, (Crystal:1985).

Is there a ‘best’ direction for the study of a language using the framework of levels? The American linguist, Leonard Bloomfield (1887-1949) recommended an approach in which one worked through the various levels in a particular order, beginning with a phonetic description, proceeding through phonology, morphology, and syntax and concluding with semantics. In this view, the analysis at each level apart from the first is dependent on what has gone before.

Morphology is the branch of grammar that studies the structure of words. Syntax is the way in which words are arranged to show relationships of meaning within (and sometimes between) sentences. The term comes from syntaxis, the Greek word for ‘arrangement’. Most syntactic studies have focused on sentence structure, for this is where the most important grammatical relationships are expressed.

Semantics is the study of meaning in language. The term did not come to be widely used until the 20th century, but the subject it represents is very old, reaching back to the writing of Plato and Aristotle, and attracting the special interest of philosophers, logicians and (these days) linguists.

In a nutshell, semantics is a branch of linguistics that systematically and objectively study the meaning of words, structures and utterances in language.

Concept of Inter-communal and Dialects

When something occurs within two or more communities, it is said to be inter-communal. Various speech forms of different communities within Igbo speech area are known as dialects. Dialect is a form of a language distinguished from other forms of the same language by pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary. It may be regional, social or occupational. In a concrete terms, we could talk of the English language whose dialects or varieties include Received Pronunciation (RP) or Standard English, Cockney (working class London English) Scouse, Geordie, Yorkshire, Cumbrian. In the same way, we discuss the Igbo language whose dialects or varieties include Owere, Onicha, Ebiriba, Ohnuhnu, Nsuka, Izhii. Etc. In general, dialects are considered as speech varieties of a given language that are mutually intelligible.

In describing the relationship between varieties of linguistic forms in the Igbo language, Ohiri-Aniche (2013) quotes an Igbo adage, “Mba na-asu n’olu, n’olu, ma ha kwaa ukwara ya buru otu.” Literally translated- “ A nation speaks in different dialects, but when they cough it becomes one”. This Ohiri-Aniche’s quotation affirms with Emenanjo (2001) earlier assertion that the Igbo understand themselves, despite dialectal differences. In the present day Nigeria, Igbo language is spoken homogenously in five South East states of the country, namely: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. Sizeable numbers of Igbo speakers are found in Delta and Rivers states. While they are also found in one or two communities in Edo and Akwa Ibom states.

Igbo Dialect Classification

Some Igbo linguists have grouped Igbo dialects according to their phonological relatedness. The Aguata speech area falls under Northern or Onitsha Ibo dialect according to Ohiri-Aniche (2013) classification of Igbo dialects. Nwaozuzu (2017:21) classified them as East Niger Group of Dialects (ENGd) Okigwe, Orlu, Owerri speech communities belong to Southern or Owerri Ibo group from Ohiri-Aniche (2013) classification. For Nwaozuzu (2017:21), they belong East Central Group of Dialects (ECGD). It is pertinent to mention that this study will adopt the most current classification, which is that of Nwaozuzu (2017)

Interviews

Some people whose surnames are Onebunne were interviewed to decipher the actual meaning of the name. The people interviewed with their responses are as follows:

Rev. Fr. Marcel Olebunne from Obibioghasi near Ihioma in Orlu says that the name is a question which queries the truthfulness of anything said or anything that happens. For instance, when someone has seven children, the person or people around might ask “Onebunne” meaning, how many will survive? The name can also imply that you do not count your chicks before they are hatched. According to Rev. Fr. Marcel, when somebody says something, how truthful is it? They said seven million people contracted Covid 19, how truthful is it? What is the true situation of things. A hen hatched ten chicks, how many will survive? How many will kite carry? How many will flood carry? How many will go astray? So, how many is truly counted? These are questions waiting for answers.

Philip MaryOlebunne from Umūuruakū, Umūeshi, Ideato South L.G.A. of Imo state, states the Onebunne is a question. When people are talking which one is true? They said someone is a thief, do I know the truth? According to Philip Mary Onebunne, there is confusion in knowing the truth of a matter.

Reacting on the issue of the meaning and reason for the name Onebunne, Rev. Lucky Onebunne from Okie village, Orume quarters, Akwaihedi in Nnewi South L.G.A. of Anambra state said that his uncle Mr. Cyprain Onebunne narrated to him that some many years ago in their lineage, that it was a repeated reoccurrence that children born by their forefathers die young. That the bad omen was a reoccurring decimal till the birth of their direct forefather. When their forefather was born, the elders of the community named him “Onebunne” asking question, whether this one will stay or will he die like others. This is how the descendants of their forefather adopted the name “Onebunne” till today.

On this own part, Charles Onebunne from Ikenga in Aguata L.G.A of Anambra state stated that the name “Onebunne” is a question asking, How many are true? Everything we see in the world, everything you hear, see, how many are true? It is question waiting for answer.

Inter-communal Semantic Analysis of the Name ‘Onebunne’

Different communities in Igbo land answer this name Onebunne. But do to phonological differences, the pronunciations differ.

People from East Niger Group of Dialects (ENGD) according to Nwaozuzu (2017) Igbo dialects classification, Ikenga and Ekwulobia in Aguata L.G.A and Akwaihedi in Nnewi L.G.A both of Anambra State in particular, the name is “Onebunne”.

For people from East Central Group of Dialects, (ECGD) Orlu and Ideato South L.G.A both of Imo state, the variation of the name is “Olebunne”. Mbaise which also belongs to ECGD, the same name is realised as “Olewūezi”.

Phonologically, (in CV Phonology), the name is made up of VCVCVSCV (that is, vowel, consonant vowel, consonant, semi-vowel, consonant, vowel).

The tone mark of the name Onebunne is LHHHH

“One?” is dialectal. It is a variation of “Ole?” in the standard Igbo, which semantically means, how many?

“Nne” is also dialectal variation of ‘eziokwu’, which literally means ‘good word’ (that is, ezi means ‘good’ while ‘okwu’ means ‘word or talk’)

ezi = good
okwu = word or talk

The actual meaning is ‘true’.

A layman might mistake “nne” in this context to mean “mother”. For such a person, the name “Onebunne” might mean, how many are mothers?

Mbaise people will say “Olewuezi”. “Ezi” here for Mbaise and “Nne” are synonyms, that is, different vocabularies for the same word.

The verb ‘bu’ na ‘wu’ are the same. Their difference is phonological, that is pronunciation.

Morphologically, the name “Onebunne” is a sentential word because three independent different words which are lumped together made up the name.

Syntactically, it is a complete sentence that has Subject, Verb, Complement structure.

“One” at the sentence initial position is a nominal. It is an interrogation and it is the subject of the sentence. The name is a rhetorical question. That is question that does not demand an answer.

“Bu” is the verb and stative in nature.

“Nne” is the complement, complementing the verb ‘bu’.

Semantically, the responses from our respondents about the meaning of the name “Onebunne” have one reference; they are all pointing at the same fact. From all indications, the name “Onebunne” depicts uncertainty of situations around us, that the world we live in is unpredictable and unreliable. This supports the semantic notion that what is said might not be how it is. It could be seen among our political office holders, among

businessmen, among friends and even family members. When they reported that Covid 19 is ravaging the world and that the rate of its spread is alarming, how true is it? Onebunne? Someone says, he loves you, Onebunne?. Someone promises to help you gain admission, Onebunne?. Someone says, lend me some money, I will pay back at the end of the month, Onebunne?

Another question is, who then answers the question, ‘Onebunne’? What is the answer to the question, ‘Onebunne’? This is where pragmatics comes in. Pragmatics is language in use. It is the context and situation that gives the actual meaning of any speech event. When something is said, it is the situation surrounding the utterance that helps to bring out the actual meaning of what is said. The circumstances like, who said it, who was the person talking to, when was the sometime said, what happened before it was said, what was the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, why was that thing said, and so many other things, jointly determine the actual meaning of every speech event.

Conclusion

This name ‘Onebunne’ is advising people not to swallow any information hook-line-and-sinker because human some beings are neither trustworthy nor faithful to their words. With this name in mind, one can navigate the journey of this life hitchfree by not casting all his or her hope on what someone says. The name is telling us to be cautious in all our dealings and undertakings.

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Appendix

Olebunne, Philip-Mary, a businessman of about 60yrs from Umūuruakū, Umūeshi, Ideato South of Imo State.

Olebunne, Marcel, a Catholic Priest of about 40yrs. From Obibiōchasi, Orlu, of Imo State.

Onebunne, Charles, K. aged 38yrs, a lecturers in the Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. From Ikenga, Aguata L.G.A. of Anambra State.

Onebunne, Lucky, aged about 35yrs, an Anglican Priest and a lecturer in the Department of English and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. From Okie village, Orume quarters, Akwaihedi, Nnewi South L.G.A of Anambra State.

CHAPTER NINE

ONE BU NNE: QUESTION OF RIGHT ACTIONS IN IGBO SOCIETY

**Chukwugozie Donatus Nwoye, PhD
Charles C. Nweke**

Introduction

Names do not often harbour one meaning. Certain names present ambiguities, thus requiring hermeneutic actions to determine the specific intended meaning at any given context. Igbo names are good instances of multi semantic inherence of meanings such that decoding of the intended particular meaning at any given pronunciation entail not only a fair knowledge of the language, but that of existential realities they represent. Hence, Igbo names are mostly symbolic representations of life circumstances, situations, questions, events, beings, persons, beliefs, desires, expectations and so on within the Igbo society and world view. To this effect, naming of whether a person, a thing, a family, a clan or a community within the Igbo society is informed by such earlier stated aspect of the existence of the Igbo.

In Igbo society one word or name might have or not have the same dialectical pronunciation, but with diverse meaning that differs from one community to another. The Igbo word, *egbe* would require proper phonetic markings to determine the contextual English translation in a formal setting. To understand the intended meaning in an informal setting would require deployment of usage, dialect, community and context. The name *Nkechi*, for instance is replete with meanings like either *tying*, *belonging to Chi* or *for tomorrow*.

Onebunne is one of such Igbo name of which meaning is shrouded in much ambiguity. Adequate understanding of its meaning do require critical philo-hermeneutic inquiry in the face of its contexts of giving and usages. Amidst the immediate epistemic questions of truth (*eziokwu*) the name presents, it is arguable that the name also contain issues bothering on Igbo morality which is the core concern of the present reflection. Is

One-but-one a question limited to what is true? Could the question also mean; What action is right?

The Idea of Morality

Within the field of philosophy, morality relates to rightness and wrongness of action. Issues of morality focuses on existing sets of values adopted by a society or culture, and determines whether an action aligns with those values or violates them in some way. (Bailey, 2021) Man possesses the natural inherence of rationality upon which his basic sense of morality is founded. Humanjourney.us presents that developmental psychologist Paul Bloom states in his book *Just Babies: The Origins of Good and Evil* , “we now understand how the amoral force of natural selection might have instilled within us some of the foundation for moral thought and moral action. ... This is not the same as an impulse to do good and avoid doing evil. Rather, it is the capacity to make certain types of judgments – to distinguish between good and bad, kindness and cruelty.” This entails that “...humans come into the world with the moral underpinnings that help ensure our survival as individuals who co-habit with others.” (Humanjourney.us)

Humanjourney.us also states that Charles Darwin in 1872 recorded in *The Descent of Man* , “If the one tribe included ... courageous, sympathetic and faithful members who were always ready to warn each other of danger, to aid and defend each other, this tribe would without doubt succeed best and conquer the other.” Moral standards are values that a society uses to determine reasonable, correct, or acceptable. Some standards are universally accepted while other are not. Moral standards are founded on more fundamental moral principles. For example, the principle of equality is the belief that every person has the same rights and that no life is inherently worth more or less than another. This principle gives rise to moral standards ranging across many specific topics and issues, such as fair treatment under the law and workers' rights. (Bailey, 2021). In philosophy, all moral issues are considered under its branch of ethics also called moral philosophy, the discipline concerned with what is morally good and bad and morally right and wrong. The term is also applied to any system or theory of moral values or principles (Britannica.com). Ethics deal with more fundamental moral questions of inter-human living. Such questions include:

Is it right to be dishonest in a good cause? Can we justify living in opulence while elsewhere in the world people are starving? Is going to war justified in cases where it is likely that innocent people will be killed? Is it wrong to clone a human being or to destroy human embryos in medical research? What are our obligations, if any, to the generations of humans who will come after us and to the nonhuman animals with whom we share the planet? (Britannica.com)

These questions bothering on right or wrong actions of persons within the human society are founded on the basic belief of man's inherent moral imbuement and natural dispositions. Such moral endowment comprise four identified capacities viz;

1. *A moral sense – some capacity to distinguish between kind and cruel actions*
2. *A rudimentary sense of fairness – a tendency to favor equal divisions of resources*
3. *A rudimentary sense of justice – a desire to see good actions rewarded and bad actions punished*
4. *Empathy and compassion – suffering at the pain of those around us and the wish to make this pain go away (Humanjourney.us)*

Igbo Concept of Morality

Igbo concept of morality relates to Igbo world view on human actions termed either right or wrong as contained in the code of laws and customs known as *omenala*. *Omenala*, the embodiment of Igbo holistic values derives organically from the Igbo main feminine deity, *Ala* (land) the goddess of morality, fecundity and the ancestors stored in her womb. *Ala* is the earth goddess itself and as the deity of fertility, it generates and sustains life as well as harbours all living things in the earth. Thus, it is deified and venerated since it is taken to be involved in all human and supernatural affairs of the Igbo. As such, all land in the Igbo society are sacred and must be preserved so. In this regard, every human conduct is tied to how it affects the sacredness of *ala*. *Ala* deity is a major determinant of Igbo moral codes as it can independently through the instrumentality of its custodian priest identify a wrong action and its perpetrator. The reverence for *ala* highlights the reality of wrong actions

taken as acts against her and as such considered abominable. *Nso ala*, that is the sacredness of ala ought to be maintained while *alu*, desecration of *ala*, includes taboos and heinous acts against the deity. Thus:

As the goddess of morality, Ala is involved in judging human actions and is in charge of Igbo law and customs known as *omenala*. Taboos and crimes among Igbo communities that are against the standard of Ala are called *nsọ Ala*. All ground is considered holy land as it is Ala herself...It is said that if a person commits a taboo in a community, that they have also desecrated or insulted Ala as the abomination (called *ajo njo* or *Aru Ala*, *Alu Ani*) was committed on her earth.

In every human society, morality relates to the regulations of the actions of the members of the society. But then, moral realities are not meant for abstractions, they are established for existential purpose, that is, for the ultimate end of human societal preservation. In the Igbo society, morality is considered in relation to values or is value oriented. As every society has determined values that basically shape its life and guarantee its general well-being, the Igbo society contains established cultural values. Areji & Anyaehie (2005, 102) conceive that “There are traditional moral values that are well known among the Igbos of the south-Eastern Nigeria.” In Igbo world view, cardinal values are distinguished from other values. Cardinal values derive from natural rights and are more universal to Igbo society in the sense that the existence of such values cut across the entirety of Igbo society. Igbo cardinal values include life(*ndu*), offspring(*nwa*), truth(*eziokwu*), justice (*egbe bere*), *omenala*, name(*aha*), community(*obodo*). The pre-eminence and importance of these values are found in some Igbo names and expressions as follows:

Life (*ndu*)

- *Ndu bu isi*- Life is supreme

- *Ndu ka aku*- Life is superior to wealth

Offspring (*nwa*)

- *Nwa ka ego* – Child is superior to money
- *Nwa di mkpa*- Child is important
Truth (eziokwu)
- *Eziokwu bu ndu* – Truth is life
Justice (Ikpe mkwmoto)
- *Egbe bere, Ugo bere*- Let the kite perch, let the eagle perch
Custom (*Omenala*)
- *Omenala ndi na edu ha*- A community is guided by its custom

Name (afa)

- *Ezi afa ka ego*- A good name is better than money
Community (Obodo)
- *Ofu onye adihgi akari obodo*- An individual is not greater than the community

Apart from these cardinal values, other values are community specific. What constitute value in one community could be less valuable in another. For instance, monkeys are sacred animals (totem) in Awka cultural community, but bush meat in some other Igbo communities. Approaches to marriage and burial ceremonies vary from one community to another. Areji & Anyaehie (2005,103) in quoting Ugwu presented a combined enlisting of Igbo values. For them, "... these traditional moral values among the Igbos include Truth, and a life of rectitude humility, loyalty or obedience, honesty, sincerity/justice, goodness, hospitality, chastity before and in marriage among the women, respect for sanctity of human life, and the recognition and belief in the existence of God." Igbo morality, that is right and wrong actions are conceived and designed ostensibly for the preservation of these values.

One bu Nne? Question of Right Action

Various linguistic interpretations are derivable from the Igbo expression in the question form; *One bu Nne?* In the expression, The English translations for the igbo word *One* include the questions "which?" or "how many?". *Bu* is a cardinal verb centrally translated as 'is'. *Nne* is centrally translated as mother. But the dialectical derivative of the word presents other interpretations like truth, correct, real, right. Thus, the expression *One bu nne*, excluding the context of referring to the mother would be quizzically understood as the posing following questions:

- (a)How many are true?
- (b) Which is true?
- (c)Which is real?
- (d) Which is correct?
- (e) Which is right?

Upon a philosophical consideration of these questions, it is arguable that issues of truth in relation to ‘real’ in the present context, as well as correctness belong comparatively to the province of epistemology. But the term ‘right’ in the question, “which is right?” belongs to the cardinal subject of ethics- rightness or wrongness of action. Thus, the need for adequate identification of Igbo concept of right actions informs a true semantic understanding and hermeneutics of the question “*One bu nne?*”.

Igbo Concept of Right Actions: *One bu Nne?*

Since morality in Igbo society is value driven, what constitute right actions represented in no longer the question *one bu nne?* rather in the statement, *one bu nne* (the ones that are right) are those actions performed towards the preservation of Igbo society and values. They include the attitude of every Igbo individual to act rightly and justly towards every spiritual, human, living and non-living entities within the society. It equally involves obedience to communal laws and adherence to Igbo moral codes as well as respect for Igbo norms and customs. Igbo laws, norms, codes and customs are not the entities to which human right conducts are directed, but legal, moral and cultural principles designed for proper guidance of human actions. As Igbo ontology includes the spiritual and physical realms of existence, its communalistic orientation consists of proper recognition of the constituent beings within each realm. Hence, identifying objects of right actions ought to be in cognizance with those of the various existential strata.

a. Divinity

Igbo realm of the divinity involves a hierarchical gradation of beings.

i. Chukwu (Supreme Being)

The highest ranking being within the Igbo cluster of the divine is Chukwu, the Supreme Being. Although there has been a long lasting disputation generated by T.U. Nwala on the concept of Supreme Being in Igbo ontology, its reality subsists as evident in some Igbo communal

nomenclatures and traditional religious rituals. For instance, the supreme status of Chukwu is reflected in the naming derived from two Igbo words *chi* (god) and *ukwu* (big). It signifies the Igbo recognition of a God that stands out among an array of gods. Chukwu is known for *okike*(creation), hence the designations *Chukwu Okike*, *Eke kere uwa*, *chi na eke*, *Eze chitoke* all represent major Igbo creative identification of the Supreme Being. The designation, *Obi n' igwe* (Who resides in the sky) captures the Igbo belief in the abode and supreme rulership of Chukwu. Thus, right actions towards Chukwu are due recognition and reverence reflected in various expressions mainly of morning rituals, due sacrifices and kolanut prayers. Uzukwu (1982) observes that:

The Igbo elder begins his day with the morning prayer (*igo ofo*: lit. praying a/a-praying by the intermediary of *ofo*). The centre of his prayer is life: thanksgiving to Chi/ Chukwu, ancestors and the spirits for having preserved his life, the life of his family, clan etc; petition for the ongoing provision of the necessities for maintaining and increasing life; disavowal of having mediated on or attempted the destruction of his neighbour's life or anything fundamental to the continuity and increase of the said life; malediction directed against those who threaten his life or the life of his family

ii. Deities (gods)

Following immediately below the Supreme Being (Chukwu) are notable deities superintending over various strata of the Igbo world. Such deities like Ala (earth goddess), *amadioha* (sky god), *ifejioku* (god of planting season), *ikenga* (personal god), etc have defined identities and responsibilities within the Igbo ontology. The Igbo society, for the sake of intrinsic harmony between all levels of its existents, maintains a moral symbiotic relationship between these deities and the humans. The gods, on their part, owe the society (individuals and communities) the responsibility of attending to their specific notable duties for sustenance of the Igbo core values of life, offspring, justice and so on. Humans have inversely the moral task of ensuring that the gods take their proper place within every community including setting up their cults and places of

sacrifice. Each community is to ensure reservation of designated sacred places and persons for the service of the gods as well as respect the sacredness of such designations. They are communally owed the duty of constant and due sacrifices, rituals for potency and active roles in Igbo communal affairs. Each Igbo community has moral norms encoded in their customs on acts and attitudes which constitute offence (nso) against the gods. Of course, reactions of the gods on any offence informs its encoding in the moral repository of each community. However, communities ought to work towards avoidance of offending the gods, as certain offences attract their(gods) wrath with severe consequences. Uzukwu (1982) notes as regards sacrifices to the divine thus:

... there are sacrifices which could be circumstantial (following a happy event, or necessitated by misfortune) and sacrifices coming at fixed times in the year. An Igbo who receives the gift of a child from his personal chi never forgets to make a thanksgiving sacrifice; the same goes for favours received from ancestors or localised non-corporeal spirits. A person who suffers a misfortune should propitiate the malignant spirits responsible for the misfortune and invoke the aid of friendly and powerful spirits through a sacrifice. Sacrifices at fixed times of the year normally come at planting and harvest seasons. These intensify prayers of petition in view of successful planting and project gratitude for the supply of food received. These sacrifices and prayers show us that the Igbo consider the union or communion with Chi/ Chukwu, the personal chi, ancestors and spirits as absolutely vital in their universe-without these, life can neither be maintained nor augmented.

Ancestors are intrinsic segment of Igbo ontology. They are men and women of great virtues as well as others known for heroic acts in their lifetime, given adequate burials as proper rites of passage to *ala ndi ichie* (ancestral world). They are considered as the living dead residing in the spirit world, but spiritually oversee the affairs of their

families/communities. Right actions towards them include setting up of their shrines and performance of requisite rituals of reverence and invocations. Every eldest adult in each family/community, community heads and chief priests must, as matter of duty, greet in every morning prayer rituals with kolanut, all known ancestors of the family/community, pouring them due libations. In every breaking of kolanuts, their own share must be thrown to *ala*, the vehicle to their abode.

b. Human Community

The Igbo human person is intrinsically a moral agent. Mbarah (2014) notes that, “Texts in ethics reveal that the individual is bound to behave in certain laid down ways in which the individual does not enjoy autonomy, but is held responsible for their actions.” In Igbo society, inter-human right actions consist in positive attitudes harboured and exhibited for the preservation of Igbo core values. The sacredness of life is paramount and to be respected by all. Hence, the Igbo would say, *ndu bu isi* (life is the ultimate). Murder, suicide and other forms of bloodletting are abhorrent and abominable (*alu*). In inter-personal dealings and social relations, every Igbo ought to be guided by the principle of justice and communality which find expression in the idiom, *egbe bere ugo bere* (let the kite perch, let the eagle perch). The sense of communality guides the Igbo general attitude towards every child who is not just the property of the parents, but communally owned. The expression, *Nwa bu nwa oha* (the child belongs to the community) and the name Nworah are in-depth representations of the Igbo communal ownership of offspring. Another distinctive feature of inter-human right action in Igbo society is respect for elders inculcated into every person from childhood. This attitude is not voluntary but a *sine qua non* for every Igbo child to respect the parents, siblings, all relatives and every other person older in age in the society.

The integral development of the Igbo society is driven by the principles of complementarity represented in Igbo philosophic theories of Ibunyanidanda (Asouzu, 2011), Njikoka Amaka (Chimakolam, 2014) and Igwebuikwe (Kanu, 2017). To this end, active participation in the spiritual, socio-political cum economic activities of the community constitute an important aspect of right actions among the Igbo. A true Igbo person is a community person known for contributions to all communal affairs including attending meetings, being a member of the age grade or

umuada, consistent payment of all dues, participating in cultural affairs, etc.

i. The Family Level

Guided by basic communal spirit, the Igbo family setting includes both the nuclear and extended family. Hence the family is not only made up of father, mother and children, but includes paternal cum maternal close and distant relatives. Right actions within the nuclear family include attending conscientiously to the conventionally family responsibility bequeathed by nature and the community.

The Igbo run an efficient family system. A married man is expected to be responsible enough to fend for his family. He ought to possess the capacity to protect them from all forms of danger. He has another duty of ensuring proper maintenance of the family shrines by performing all required rituals for cordial relationship with the gods and family/communal ancestors. He is to ensure the performance of all child rituals of his children. He must not fail to train his male children to be responsible adults. Any lack in the expectations from a man typifies him as *efulefu/akaloghi* (irresponsible/misfit) and constitute wrong actions. Apart from the natural responsibility of child bearing/rearing, the Igbo mother has the onus of training her daughters to maturation and prepare them suitably for marriage. She must bequest them with all domestic and moral requisitions for marital efficiency. The Igbo child or youth is generally expected to be obedient to the parents. Docility to parents and respect for elders are the hallmark of a good Igbo young person. Such tameness enables the child to realize and develop inherent potentials as well as learn sufficient indigenous knowledge in preparation for responsible adulthood. A good and respectful Igbo child or youngster constantly attracts the blessings of elders. Such blessings add immense spiritual values to the wellbeing of the blessed child.

Generally, virtue constitute right actions within the human sphere of Igbo ontology. Right actions produce goodness of person (*ezigbo mmadu*). Hence, to be reckoned a good person in Igbo society is to be virtuous, meaning that one is considered just, dutiful, honest, upright, benevolent, etc. Such a person must have consistent witnessing of moral rectitude. Such a person, in his/her lifetime is adorned with rewards and communal recognitions and eventually immortalized as an ancestor.

Nso (Offence) and Alu (Abomination)

Every form of moral offence and misdemeanour in the Igbo society is deemed, apart to the individual, group or the community committed against the gods. Forbidden acts are referred to as nso. Certain actions, for instance, disrespect for parents and elders, disregard for sacred places and items, a man beating his wife, an Ozo titled man eating in the public are forbidden. Restitutions for forbidden acts require specified acts of appeasement of those offended and in some cases, extended to the gods. Remaining with such offences attract both physical, social and spiritual wraths. Such offender is regarded as ofeke(misfit) and goes around with social stigma. Forbidden acts differ very significantly from more serious immoral acts deemed as alu (abomination). Alu is a crime committed directly against the ala deity. That is the reason alu is often referred to as nso ala. Abominable acts include, suicide, murder, adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality, desecration of deities, etc. Punishment for abominable acts include banishment, burial in evil forest. Concealment of an abominable acts attracts grave consequences from ala deity which could, apart from the individual, disrupt the peaceful existence of the entire community. Such individual could be afflicted with madness while the community experiences various forms of calamities until the culprit is identified and the attendant appeasement carried out. Uzuoku (2022) submitted in this regard that:

Ala ~urns with anger at these crimes. Her anger has to be calmed by sacrifices offered at her shrine to 'remove abomination' (ikpu alu). Expiating crimes like homicide often necessitates the presence of Nri priests (from the north-Igbo village-group which enjoys a special relationship with Ala). This sacrifice reestablishes harmony in the community, revitalizes the link between the community and Ala, between the community and ancestors who collaborate intimately with Ala to guard the laws of the land, and between the community and Chi/ Chukwu, since certain crimes attack this source of life, who could directly punish the criminal (especially through Amadioha-the spirit of thunder).

Justice as Epitome of Right Action

Due to the various philosophic approaches to the concept of justice, the concept does not have a single definition. Though, its generally acceptable definition tends to be that provided by Aristotle- giving everyone his due. The idea of giving everyone his due which informs distributive justice, though not limited to social sphere but extends to the moral, finds expression within Africa in the theories of socialism (Ujamaa) and communalism. Igbo concept of justice revolves around inclusiveness founded on the basic principle of communalism. It is reflected in the popular idiom, *ebge bere ugo bere, ... (let the kite perch, let the eagle perch)* which entails giving everybody within the spiritual realm, the family and community, both indigenes and strangers, proper sense of belonging. The principle and sense of justice guide every communal decisions and policy on individuals and groups geared towards harmonious coexistence in Igbo communities, inter communities and the society at large. Apart from offence against the gods, every act of injustice is repaid with the concluding part of the idiom *...nke si ibe ya ebena, nku kwaa ya* (... if any prevents the other from perching, let its wing clip off).

In Igbo society, justice is the cardinal moral principle from which right and wrong action are stipulated and determined. The moral principle of truth, for instance is maintained by justice. All punitive measures, by either the gods or humans, for wrong deeds are acts to maintain justice. To this effect, the question of *one bu nne?* as the question of right action in Igbo society is answered in the reality of justice in the statement *one bu nne or nke bu nne*.

Conclusion

The question of which is right or wrong action contained in the Igbo name One-bu nne remains apart from its truth interpretative perspective, a moral concern. The universal concept of morality deals with issues of fundamental human concern for guided conducts toward societal harmonious co-existence. Hence, nature's wisdom include provisions of inherent moral capacities and dispositions. In line, every human society,

given its socio-environmental circumstances defines moral codes sequel to basic ethical principles suitable for their societal wellbeing.

Such moral codes in Igbo society are encapsulated in Omenala, a body of values for an organized community of spiritual, human and material existents within the Igbo ontology. Beginning with the Igbo cardinal values and actions towards their preservation to right actions for all levels of existence in the communal society, onebunne, either posed as an epistemological or ethical question, more so given as a name represent the Igbo need for its communal preservation founded on stable and sustainable moral footings.

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CHAPTER TEN

ONEBUNNE: AN ETHICAL EVALUATION OF TRUTH IN AFRICA

Osita Gregory Nnajofofor

Introduction

All human inquiries and endeavors make effort to search for truth. Truth is also the goal of philosophy because it searches for the truth of all reality. It is on this wise that Okolo believes that the truth of reality should be the major focus of African philosophy. A deeper understanding of African reality will open more salient epistemological and metaphysical foundation of the traditional African society. It also justifies his definition of African philosophy as a “path to a systematic and coherent discovery and disclosure of African in his world of reality; it concerns itself with the history, tradition, custom etc., and the significance these have for him.” (1987:10). It is on this wise that Ejikemeuwa (2019:169) observes that among other disciplines, it is only philosophy that searches for the totality of truth of all reality. This is why Philosophers down through the ages have occupied themselves with this search for truth.

In his *Metaphysics* Aristotle asserts that “To say of what is that it is not or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, is true” (Quoted in Omoregbe 43). This simply means that truth is what is, is and falsehood is to say what is, is not. This is the Aristotelian bivalence of truth. Asouzu is of the opinion that bifurcation that we witness in the world can be traced to Aristotelian bifurcation of these extremes.

Since our tension-laden ambivalent existential experience and *ihe mkpuchi-anya* (phenomenon of concealment) often mislead us into assuming that life is a struggle involving irreconcilable opposites, *Ibuanyidanda* ontology seeks ways of reconciling the apparent ontological tension between being and its attributes. This type of tension found its way into

Metaphysics by certain specifics of Aristotle's doctrine of being. (Asouzu 2013: 60).

Aristotle, in employing his preferred bivalence principle, seems to draw a line between what is true and what is not. The irreconcilable opposites have polarized the world into two extremes of truth and falsehood. Ontology for Aristotle consists of the substance (which is truth) and accident (which is falsehood) (Aristotle 1926: Book A, 2, 6, 8). As a matter of fact, it is the substantial (Truth) that characterizes being.

It is worrisome however to note that people are leaving the substance in place of the accidents. In our contemporary times people derive joy in peddling falsehood in the public space more than they broadcast the real substance. The boom in the communication industry has escalated the level of information in the mass domain. This boom in information industry has shifted the power of information from the original source down to the receiver. It then means that the receivers (consumers) are more in control of what they want to read, hear and see when they want to do so. What this shifting means is that the consumers no longer rely on the local news sources, such as newspaper and magazines but they can access news themselves by just logging on to internet (Okunna, 2012:49).

The flexibility of the internet is so precise that it does not require media conglomerate nor the service of an agent neither does it require an editor/censor to vet what you are about to upload to the public. The only requirement for its service is for your device page to be on ISP's page then whatever is written and uploaded will get to anyone, anywhere in the world (who desire to read it). These advantages has made information circulation seamless in contemporary world and impacted the world positively. But on the other hand, information circulation is done not minding how false, scatological, subversive and banal it is to the public. In the absence of any information gatekeepers, what should guide the public in the discernment of the truth? Since philosophy searches for the truth of all reality, which branch of philosophy should lead us in this pursuit of suit?

This paper explores the under-utilized ethical version of truth *one-bu-nne* as a remedy in reducing the false and scatological information confronting the world in our contemporary time. In the next chapter, this

paper takes a look at the conventional notions of truth to determine their tenets. The next chapter will be to consider the traditional theories of truth to consider its proponents, tenets and loopholes. For the scope of this paper, few theories were chosen to give the direction to this paper. The next section ushers us to the restricted notion of truth in Africa with special focus on Igbo worldview.

Conventional Notions of Truth

Scholars have grappled with the notion of truth since Plato's analogy of life as shadows on the wall of a cave over 3,000 years ago (Okpo, 2019:97). In philosophy, truth deals with both the meaning of the word "true" and the criteria by which we judge the truth or falsity in statements. Etymologically, truth comes from the Latin word *veritas*, which translates to "reality". Truth also implies "the actual state or nature of things" (Chukwuokolo, 2007: 11). Truth can be traced to its Greek root, *aleteia*, which means unhiddenness, uncoveredness, not been concealed, discovery, revelation or to place in contact with naked reality. Truth can be summed simply as "the state of affair or what is the reality" (Okolo, 2008: 42).

From the time of Aristotle to Aquinas and Kant to Chisholm, the major tasks of philosophers were to locate truth and its place in philosophical enterprise. As we have noted in the introduction, Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* asserts: "To say of what is that it is not or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, or of what is not that it is not, and is true" (Quoted in Okpo 96). This implies that truth is conformity of the mind with reality. This is contained in his ontology. The great scholars per excellence, Thomas Aquinas defines truth as "conformity of the intellect with reality" (Omoregbe, 40). Truth, for Kant, lies in judgment which the mind makes when it applies the categories to phenomena (things as they appear to us) (Okpo, 98). Kant also was in agreement with the notion of truth as the agreement of knowledge with its object. Okpo notes keenly that Kant's "Copernican Revolution" could not allow him to see beyond the common tendency of regarding truth as the mind's correspondence with the object. Chisholm viewed truth as not only to the "states of affairs" but also to "states of affairs that exist", and "states of affairs that do not exist." His own notion of truth is principally linked with the idea of "states of affairs" and facts. His own definition is simply a confirmation of the traditional correspondence theory of truth.

Alvira, Clavell and Mellendo (1991) conceived truth as something that is attributed to judgments of our understanding. Truth belongs to those acts of the intelligence which conform to reality and express it faithfully. So, a judgment is true when it asserts that something which exists does exist, or when it asserts that something which does not exist really does not exist (p. 151). From the above expression we can deduce that truth is that which is. It follows that whatever is, is true; whatever is not, is not true. The above scholars all spoke as objectivists or traditional theorists.

Theories of Truth

There are still various divergent views on the actual meaning of truth and this has divided philosophers into groups. Some are occupied on how truth can be gotten, comprehended and justified. Since knowledge is progressive, many theories have emerged out of these known theories but for the sake of this paper, we shall concentrate on the traditional ones.

1. Correspondence theory
2. Coherence theory
3. Pragmatist theory.
4. Dialectical theory

Correspondence Theory of Truth

Correspondence theory of truth is the first and oldest theory of truth (Etim, 2007:27). It is the theory held by the realists and empiricists and is therefore often referred to as the realist theory of truth. The proponents of this theory hold an event to be true when there is the correspondence of the mind with realities. This is why Randall and Buchler (1971) holds that the correspondence theory of truth consists in the agreement of our thought with reality (146). It then suggests that a belief is called true if it agrees with a fact.

The basic idea of the correspondence theory is that what we believe or say is true if it corresponds to the way things actually are – to the facts. In the early 20th century, Russell and Moore advocated that the correspondence theory of truth is the view that truth is correspondence to, or with, a fact.

Ejikemeuwa and Onwudinjo (2020: 100) observes that members of the correspondence theory of truth family employ various concepts for the

relevant relation (correspondence, conformity, congruence, agreement, accordance, copying, picturing, signification, representation, reference, satisfaction) and/or various concepts for the relevant portion of reality (facts, states of affairs, conditions, situations, events, objects, sequences of objects, sets, properties, tropes). The resulting multiplicity of versions and reformulations of this theory is due to a blend of substantive and terminological differences that later followed. The above differences created obvious loopholes which scholars exploited to formulate the coherent theory of truth.

Coherence Theory of Truth

The coherence theorists hold that truth can only exist when there is coherence with the existing body of established truth. In this sense, consistency becomes the yardstick to measure truth. In Omoregbe's line of thinking, "Coherence theory holds that a statement is true if there is coherence between the statement and a systematic body of statement(s) already known to be true" (2000: 48). It then implies that a proposition is true only if it can be deduced from an already established statement in the same field of knowledge with what it tries to explain. Coherence theories of truth claim that coherence and consistency are important features of a theoretical system, and that these properties are *sufficient* to its truth. To state it in the reverse, that "truth" exists only within a system, and doesn't exist outside of a system.

The coherence theory was propagated mainly by rationalists metaphysicians like Spinoza, Leibniz, Hegel, A. H. Bradley and logical positivists like Otto Neurath and Carl Hempel.

Later coherence theory of truth has it that truth is a *systematic coherence* that involves more than logical consistency (quoted in Ejikemeuwa and Onwudinjo:2000). According to them, a proposition is true to the extent that it is a necessary constituent of a systematically coherent whole. There is a combination of rationalists, logical positivist and core logicians in formulation of this theory. This theory is more of systemic and consistence of statements and its coherence with reality. But we can consider other avenues of appraising truth like the context of the truth.

Pragmatic Theory of Truth

The pragmatic theorists are of the conviction that the only way to know the truth is in its usefulness and workability. The pragmatists are unbending and core empiricists.

Mbah et al (2019) capture the assignment of the pragmatist thus:

The main intention of the pragmatists was to establish a scientific and mathematically influenced approach to investigation that would yield a result of unified opinion like Descartes did in philosophy. Based on this, the test of truth for them is a test of utility, workability or satisfactory consequences. Whether a theory is believed to be true or false is unimportant, what matters is whether it affects one's actions. Truth as intellectual knowledge is rejected as wrong because according to them our thoughts are not passive mirrors of things and the world is not static, complete and achieved reality, but a laboratory open to experiment (2019:3).

The principal advocates of pragmatic theory of truth are Peirce and James. They believe that utility is the essential mark of truth. Their core conviction is that beliefs that lead to the best "payoff", that are the best justification of our actions that promote success, *are* truths, according to the pragmatists. The summary of the pragmatic theory of truth is that truth is what works in practice and now. Ideas remain true as long as the work and false as long they fail to work (Omoregbe 2000:50). This theory is faulty if only what work is the only criteria of considering truth because it denies the process. If the process of an outcome is not genuine, then the output will be faulty. We should appraise what led to the outcome before affirming it or rejecting it.

Dialectical Theory of Truth

The proponents of the dialectical theory of truth are of the view that truth is in the process of becoming

Theories of Truth in African Philosophy

The traditional theory of truth explained in the preceding section was western inspired and had no place African epistemic space and ambience. A detailed look at them shows that they are fraught with many inconsistencies and loopholes. Some African scholars have taken up the challenge to go extra mile in covering these unclaimed ground. Some of the areas covered range from epistemological to metaphysical then extending to logical and then ethical. In the next section we shall consider the epistemological dimension of truth theory in African philosophy. To find truth in its right manner, it is right to engage the epistemological tool of philosophy to unravel it. In the same manner, we shall engage the deliberative theory of Kwasi Wiredu to establish African traditional theory of truth.

Deliberative Theory of Truth

This is one of the African theories of truth which was advanced by Kwasi Wiredu, who sees truth to be merely an opinion. Wiredu's idea is that there is nothing called truth as distinct from opinion (Wiredu, 1980: 111). In another place Wiredu established that truth is nothing but belief and opinion. It is worthy to observe here that Wiredu's version of truth is contrary to conventional theory of truth or what Wiredu calls the objectivist theory of truth. He calls them objectivist because they (conventionalists) see truth as logically distinct from opinion and belief. These theories of truth as conceptualized by different philosophers are at best considered opinions that were arrived at through reasoned deliberations in relation to a given context.

Wiredu's concept of truth as opinion emanates from the naturalistic account of the principles of rational inquiry. He sees opinion as 'considered belief, judgment and thoughts that must be supported by adequate evidence, information. Truth is a product of conscious deliberations by individual human beings as epistemic agents that always look and interpret the world from a credible point of view (Wiredu 1980:174-179, 1996: 34-41). Asiegbu and Nweke (2019 :41) summed Wiredu notion of truth as a reasoned belief grounded on a point of view. In deliberative theory of truth, truth is defined and evaluated by human beings as they deliberate on their lived world. It then means that we should not accept or truth claim without a reasoned deliberation to weigh and deliberate its credibility. The reasoned deliberation is a necessity

because what human being claim to be true is fallible, imperfect and subject to change in the face of a better understanding that may emerge as human beings deliberate on their experiences in the world. As a reaction to Wiredu, Blocker (1985:55-67) notes that Wiredu's deliberative theory of truth relies on the attempt to develop a theory that is grounded on human experiences but devoid of dogmatic conclusions and self-contradictory form of relativism. The above stress the need for deliberation on issues for it to be true because the Igbo has a saying that *agwo ofu onye furu na agho eke*. (a snake seen by one person eventually turns to a python). Human beings are dynamic and subject to change. Truth is arrived at after thorough deliberation in a consensus manner. Having seen the epistemological dimension of truth, we shall consider the metaphysical notion of truth in African philosophy. To do this, we shall consider Asouzu's complementarity of truth as one of the theories in African philosophy.

Complementarity of Truth in Africa

Innocent Asouzu developed this theory of truth from the idea of mutual dependence and interdependence in Complementarity. Complementarity (*Ibuanyidanda*) for him is the moment of reflection between the choices of isolation and teamwork. Asouzu (2007: 14) in his complementary philosophy of *Ibuanyidanda*, sees the African reality as "an all-embracing whole, in which all units form together a dynamic play of forces, which are in harmony with each other, by completing and supporting the other. Asouzu (2004: 46) later presents reality as "necessary complements of each other." While describing the human society, Asouzu advanced that, "Human beings and societies exist only in relations." (2004: 74)

Asouzu's notion of truth tries to mirror the mind as one in search for comprehensiveness and universality. Here truth and authenticity go beyond the realm of mere epistemology and logic to relate to the universal and comprehensive unity of being and consciousness in all areas of existence. It also entails that truths claim must relate to the totality of existent realities in all its operation and cohere with one another in a harmonious complementary manner. Unlike the coherent theory of truth, Asouzu maintains that the truth of statements is more than the evidence or reason adduced to support it. Truth consists rather in the sum total of all the facts needed to demonstrate that a thing is what we claim it is (2000:261)

The question of truth and authenticity moves beyond mere statement of facts to include what things mean in a comprehensive sense. Thus, the truth and authenticity criterion “is the link between the relative and absolute in a way that upholds the character of each in a complementary harmonious manner”, opines Asouzu (Asouzu 2004: 319). In this metaphysical dimension of truth, Asouzu demonstrates that truth is found in complementarity of being. *Ihe nwere isi nwere odu* which means that everything serves as a missing link in reality. When we complement, we find the truth.

In the next session we shall consider another theory of truth which is metaphysical and also epistemological at the same time. This theory is a theory propounded by Ikechukwu Kanu with the name Igwebuike theory of truth.

Igwebuike Theory of Truth

This version of truth was propounded by Ikechukwu Kanu which for me is an extension of Asouzu’s complementary notion of truth. *Igwebuike* is divided into three words. These are: *Igwe* as a noun which meaning a huge number or population. *Bu* as a verb, means is. *Ike* is another verb, which means strength or power. When put together, it means ‘number is strength’ or ‘number is power’, that is, when human beings come together in solidarity and complementarity, they are powerful or can constitute an insurmountable force (Kanu 2017: 165-183). In Kanu’s estimation, at the level of Igwebuike, no task is beyond the collective capability. He sees Igwebuike as an ontological horizon that presents being as that which possesses a relational character of mutual relations. Ejikemeuwa and onwudinjo summed the theory thus “It argues that ‘to be’ is to live in solidarity and complementarity, and to live outside the parameters of solidarity and complementarity is to suffer alienation. ‘To be’ is ‘to be with the other’, in a community of beings” (2019 :102).

Igwebuike is an attempt to unravel truth in reality through universal approach. This is because a universal approach is better compared to an individual approach. For a community or society to truly evolve, all hands must be on deck. We arrive at the truth faster when we pull our resources together because two good head is better than one. We go straight to the logical dimension of truth as espoused by Jonathan

Chimakonam in his *Ezumezu* logic from where we gleaned his theory of truth. He is of the opinion that context will always upset fact.

***Ezumezu* Context Theory of Truth**

Ezumezu is an Igbo word meaning ‘the collective, the aggregate or the totality of all that is most viable, most potent and most powerful. This simply means that *Ezumezu* depicts “an aggregate of all. *Ezumezu* logic was developed by Chimakonam Okeke with inspirations from the works of Asouzu’s Complementary Logic (2004, 2013) and Chris Ijiomah’s Harmonious Monism which was worked out by Chris Ijiomah (2006, 2014). In *Ezumezu* theory of truth statements are evaluated true or false not based on facts which they assert but rather on contexts. The consequence of this is that facts would not be the yardstick for determining the values of propositions but rather contexts. Chimakonam (2017: 25) notes that this will surely upset the notion of truth peddled in the traditional theories of truth in which there is a primary focus on the relationship between facts and propositions that assert them. He maintains that in *Ezumezu*, context upsets fact (Context-dependence of Values (CdV).

In *Ezumezu* theory of truth, truth is something somewhat less rigid as the Aristotelian logical formulation as well as the Boolean algebraic equation would rather have us believe. The condensed idea is: ‘truth value of propositions varies from context to context.’ (Chimakonam, 2019: 142).

He explained the context principle thus:

Whatever that is stated, is a statement about something and that which is stated to be meaningful, must be stated within a context. Variables shed their meanings and acquire new ones from context to context. There are two sub-contrary contexts which have in-between them an intermediary context. This third intermediary context is a mode at which the sub-contrary contexts complement. Because African logic is three-valued which admits of the intermediary third option i.e. truth-value glut, to assert that a variable strictly holds or that it strictly does not hold (Western logic undertone of African

logic) it would be imperative to reduce each given inference to a context. (2019:99)

In Aristotelian arrangement, a statement is either true or false but in this arrangement a statement can be true and false at the same time. This is possible when we consider the context of the event. That is why at contextual levels, truths have a life of their own but somehow connected. Chimakonam (2019) calls this solidarity of truth. One truth may confirm the other even though they may carry different values for the same set of facts. He used this illustration to demonstrate truth in its contextualized form. The statement that ‘one needs water to stay alive’ when contextualized in the Sahara desert where one is dehydrating and in the River Niger where one is drowning, respectively; they will carry different values even though they contain the same set of facts. However, despite the difference in values, one confirms the other. Water could save your life in the desert but the same water could kill you in the river.

These truths are in solidarity, each enables one to understand the other better. This shows that from our context we have truths to tell from our end. The truth that may be the golden bride may come from the neglected area but when given a chance, it may be beneficial. Having considered the above branches of philosophy vis-a-vis their attempt in explaining truth in African philosophy, we found them inadequate to explain our thesis. We now want to consider the ethical dimension of truth to know if it has the capacity to attempt the objective of this paper.

Truth in Igbo Ontology

The Igbo compound word for truth is “*ezi-okwu*” *but when* we separate them, the results are “*ezi*”, meaning “good”, “right”, and “real” and “*okwu*” meaning “word”. Truth for an Igbo implies the correct sentence, confirming the fact or saying the real or appropriate thing. In Igbo culture, we know one who matches his words with action as *onye-ezi-okwu*. This shows that such person is a just and upright man. This for me satisfied to be called a pragmatics. In Igbo culture, we witness correspondence theory of truth when there is conformity between a statement and a fact or a concrete thing. This is usually seen when one wants the interlocutor to say the truth, he demands of him, *kwuo ezi okwu*. This means that the interlocutor should confirm what he heard or saw.

Mbah et al consider another version of the word “eziuka”. According to them, “ezi” acquires a deeper meaning, “real” and “uka” also means “statement.” Thus, truth is translated as “real statement in contrast to false proposition” (2019: 10). They note that this view of truth is akin to Western correspondence understanding by which truth is the correspondence of mind to reality. Also, among the Igbo, coherent theory of truth could be obtained by analyzing what a person says. If the analysis reveals that the statement coheres with a set of accepted facts or beliefs, then it is true; otherwise it is false (Nnoruka: 1999). Put differently, a statement is true if there is coherence between the statement and a systematic body of statement(s) already known to be true. For a statement to be real, it should be seen as statements that are consistent with other statements. This is the reason why, to ascertain the truth of a statement made by a diviner, an Igbo man need to consult other diviners in order to compare the consistency of their statements with one another (Mbah et al, 2019: 11).

One-Bu-Nne as an Ethical Evaluation of Truth

One-bu-nne is an Igbo aphorism and a compound name seeking the certainty of a matter of fact. *One* is an Igbo question, asking - how many? Also, the word *bu* means is. While the word *nne* means truth or reality. As a compound word it is a name/ question demanding the certainty of a matter. We can also take *one- bu- nne* to mean *one bu ezi-okwu*. Ejikemeuwa and Onwudinjo (2019) divided truth in Igbo worldview as both subjective and objective. They demarcated the subjective truth as truth that is based on personal conviction of what is right. *onye na Chi ya so aga* captures this subjective truth. Also, the Igbo name *Mu na chi m so aga* aptly captures this subjectivism. At this subjective level, they note that if one walks and works with his *Chi*, the outcome of event becomes a true reflection of one’s destined path irrespective of how others may see or view those events. Thus, it becomes truth according to how one’s *chi* wants things to go, according to conscience and moral rectitude. On the other hand, the Igbo also see truth in relation to communal or ancestral heritage. Truth is what has been long standing and upheld by the community down the ages. It is a composition of solidarity, unity, purpose, agreement and togetherness. Thus, where there is collective unity of purpose, the Igbos believes truth prevails and exists there.

In the midst of these demarcations, one has the ethical responsibility to ask himself at any time and in all circumstances – *one-bu-nne*? *One-bu-nne* in the subjective sense, is a need to heed the advice of the Socratic injunction “man know thyself”. It was Socrates that advises that an “unexamined life is not worth living.” So, it is indeed a call for introspection and examination. There is need to examine the activities that go within and outside our lives to discern the actual truth. When our mind and soul challenge us with plethora of actions to take which seem contrary to our conscience, it is this time we are required to apply the ethical evaluation of truth (how many of them are real) *one-bu-nne*? This question will allow us to re-evaluate, re-examine and re-strategize our priorities.

Objectively, *One-bu-nne* can be applied in our epistemic spaces where there are avalanche of resources for our intellectual consumption but we are at the cross road for authentic options. This is witnessed in our internet world today. This is because daily we are flooded with information and messages from different media platforms both from where we subscribed and from where we didn't. In our media space, we witness daily news from the radio, television, WhatsApp, Facebook etc. and most of this news are uncensored. These news and messages are recycled and sent to the masses as fake messages. The ugly side of this challenge is that most of these information are not true or authentic news. They are peddling these as fake news to deceive the ignorant populace or undiscerning members of the public. Some miscreants exploit this avenue to dupe the gullible individuals who may fall by their tricks. These miscreants go to the extent of hacking peoples account and use the victims account to cause mayhem to the members of that forum or platforms.

The challenge then is, how do we safeguard ourselves from the menace of this falsehood and discern the truth when confronted with these challenge of falsehood or fake news? We have observed somewhere in this paper that among other disciplines, it is only philosophy that searches for the totality of truth of all reality. We equally noted also that this is the sole reason why Philosophers down the ages have occupied themselves with this search for truth. Through our analysis, it is obvious that it is the ethical tool of philosophy that has the capacity to ameliorate this daunting challenge. It enquires on what is right or wrong in the society or what ought to be done or what ought not to be done.

When these messages get to us, instead of taking them in hook, line and sinker, the first step is to look inward and then do a thorough contemplation. The contemplation should birth a question like this, among these information clamoring for my attention: *one-bu-nne*? Meaning, which among these is truth? This kind of evaluation is needed to wean our hearts from falsehood and fake information. *Onebunne* is a theory of truth that allow us the time for evaluation, contemplation and introspection by asking the necessary question. This all important question is all that is needed to save our populace from pains and disquiet dispositions.

Conclusion

The task of philosophy is the task to search for the truth and it searches truth in totality. The world has been polarized in choosing from truth and falsehood. Unfortunately, it seem that falsehood is having an upper hand. The world is seriously in search of truth. Metaphysis, epistemology, logic, ethics and axiology are all in the quest to unravel truth. This paper has applied the unexplored notion of truth from Sub-Saharan African space to formulate an ethical theory of truth that will evaluate unwarranted information in our public space. *Onebunne* is a theory of truth that allow us the time for evaluation, contemplation and introspection by asking the necessary question. This all important question is all that is needed to save our populace from pains and disquiet dispositions.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

ONEBUNNE: PHILO-LINGUISTIC SEMANTIC INQUIRY

Chidimma Nkemdilim Ezeador

Introduction

Onebunne is an Igbo name which originates from an inquiry on the search or the curiosity to know the real truth about something. It is a composite word drawn from the Igbo language and also a name that asks a question; *kedu nke bu eziokwu*. Igbo people are one of the major tribes in Nigeria, which occupy the Southeastern states of Enugu, Imo, Anambra, Abia and Ebonyi. The native tongue of the Ibo people is Igbo language, and since language is an integral part of culture, Geraldine (2018:167) avers that Igbo language reflects many aspects of the Igbo culture, including names and meaning. *Onebunne* as an Igbo surname constitutes of three words ‘one’ (which or how many), ‘bu’ (is or are) and *nne* (true or truth), although *nne* in Igbo language is generally conceived or known to be a ‘mother’, but there are some parts of Igbo land that in their dialect, *nne* can also mean *eziokwu* (truth). These areas are Anambra state, basically in Aguata local government area; the towns that have such dialect are Igbukwu, Ikenga, Isuofia and Ekwulobia. Also, in Imo state, basically in Ideato local government area, the towns that speak the dialect *nne* are; Osina, Urualla, Akokwa etc. they conceived *nne* to mean *eziokwu* (truth). But to achieve clarity and to be explicit which is the main business of the analytic Philosophers, and to avoid any form of ambiguity, indeterminacy and confusion as Stumpf citing Wittgenstein (2002: 438) states;

Our language creates confusion for us; it tells us (wrongly) what to think and how to think; it equally tells us (wrongly) what is important and at the same time lies to us. So, it is now the function of Philosophy to free us from these semantic confusions, to provide therapy for our linguistic neuroses and to help us achieve clarity of thought.

From the statements above, the British analytic Philosopher Wittgenstein was of the view that everything that can be thought of at all can be thought of clearly. If a question can be put clearly, then it can be answered clearly. So, for him, clarity that we are aiming at is indeed complete clarity. Again, Okeke (2012:165) states that meaning is a concept usually influenced by different factors. Thus, he puts;

An utterance can be interpreted in diverse ways depending on the emotional disposition of the speaker at the time of making the utterance. Because of this, the intended meaning of an utterance may be different from the meaning perceived by the receiver of the message

However, to be explicit, *nne* can be interpreted in diverse ways depending on the background or emotional disposition at the time the utterance is rendered or made. This is why the intended meaning of an utterance may be different from the meaning perceived by the receiver of the message. So *nne* here means (truth) *eziokwu*. This is a combination of two words *ezi* and *okwu*, *ezi* here means correct, right or good; and *okwu* therefore means word. *Eziokwu* therefore means correct talk or the right statement. Therefore, *Onebunne* as an Igbo word literally means how many are true? *Kedu nke bu eziokwu*? Philosophically pointing at the truthfulness and what is true is real. Truth *nne* therefore represents the Philosophy and worldview of the Ibo people towards life. No wonder there is an adage or a popular saying in Igbo which says *eziokwu bu ndu* that is, truth is life. The truth can never be covered, even when an attempt is made; there is always a repercussion that follows. And to avoid these negative effects, there is always a need to search for the truth. However, for proper understanding and clarification, there is a need to define some key words that are necessary in this paper.

What is Linguistic Philosophy?

In the words of Ozumba (2004:15), Linguistic Philosophy consists in the attempt to solve Philosophical problems by analyzing the meaning of words and by analyzing logical relations between words in natural languages. He observes that this may be done in order to solve such traditional philosophical problems as those concerning determinism, skepticism, causation, etc. Rorty cited in Ozumba (2004:16) defines linguistic philosophy as the view that philosophical problems are

problems, which may be solved or dissolved either by reforming language or by understanding more about the language we presently use. The philosopher however focuses its attention in knowing what language is, its role, functions and its efficacy in promoting the growth of knowledge.

What is meaning?

In the words of Ifechelobi (2012; 238) meaning is not stable or fixed rather it is dynamically generated in the process of using language. She goes further to state that words have no meaning in themselves but only when used in the language they belong, and before one can understand language, one needs to know the meanings of words and of the morphemes with which they compose. Ozumba (2004:34) while observing the attributes of language states that language is language because it is an instrument for communication and what is communicated is meaning. He further insists that a meaningless language is therefore a useless language. Importantly, for a word to have meaning, the user of language must know how to combine words into phrases in order to generate meanings. Also, the context of the word needs to be put into consideration when determining meaning. There are several theories of meaning which seek to provide an answer to this question what is meaning? Ozumba rightly states that when we are talking of theories of meaning, we mean the different ways through which the meaning of words, phrases, sentences are construed. These theories are Referential theory of meaning, Ideational theory of meaning and the behavioural theory of meaning. As Ozumba paraphrasing Alston describes them,

The referential theory identifies the meaning of an expression with that to which it refers or with the referential connection, the ideational theory with the ideas with which it is associated and the behavioral theory with the stimuli that evoke its utterance and/ or the responses that it in turn evokes.

Referential Theory of Meaning

This theory is the one mostly preferred in solving problems of meaning. It holds that the meaning of an expression is what it refers to or denotes. This theory presupposes that all expression means what all our linguistic expressions are directed at some referential ends. (Ifechelobi 2012; 234) avers that this particular theory of meaning emphasizes the relationship

between language and objects. The ability of an individual word to specify an object is best seen in proper names, because the given name specifies only one thing. G.E. Moore in his common sense theory of meaning advocates that we ensure that things mean what they ordinarily or conventionally refer to and there should not be any mix-up in our referential apparatus. According to Moore, many things that are indefinable like good etc. should be understood intrinsically instead of trying to assign meanings to them which do not belong to them. For him, we commit a naturalistic fallacy when we do this, and importantly words and sentences should have direct reference to things which they name.

Meanwhile, Ozumba (2004:53) puts that the naïve version of the referential theory holds that for a statement to have meaning, it must refer to something other than itself. This however means that words have meaning in the sense that they are symbols that stand for something other than themselves. On the other hand, the sophisticated version holds that the meaning of the expression is to be identified with the relation between the expression and its referent, that is; the referential connection constitutes the meaning. The problem associated with this theory of meaning Ifechelobi observes is that there are many words without physical objects they refer to. She maintains that words like ugly, engineering, pride, manhood, etc. which do not have the concrete qualities of nouns may not have referents. Ozumba (2004:54) adds:

We must also not forget the fact that there are expressions of language that do not refer. Examples include what we call logical connectives such as, 'and', 'or', 'whereas', 'if-then', and so on. They also include all those terms which Nelson Goodman calls "syncategorematic". They are words that do not come under any of the categories enumerated by Aristotle. They do not make meaning except in conjunction with other words. There are other words that denote all the members of a given class but nothing in particular- like abstract nouns, adjectives or verbs. Because it does not refer to anything in particular it fails to conform to the requirements for the referential theory.

Again, polysemous words, that is, words with more than one meaning may have the additional problem of having more than one referent. Finally referring to the words of Alston in Ozumba (2004:54), “no sort of referential theory will be adequate as a general account of meaning unless it is true that all meaningful linguistic expressions do refer to something”.

Ideational or Mentalist Theory of Meaning

There is an affirmation that all these theories of meaning are interrelated, interwoven and intertwine at least in the sense that they are all concerned with words and human reactions when words are said. Ideational theory is a refinement of the referential theory of meaning. According to the referential theorists, words excite what words stand for or represent. However, the ideationalists hold that words excite ideas when they are mentioned. Ideational theory emphasizes that language is used to convey ideas. In other words, without ideas there is nothing words are good for. In other words, without ideas there is nothing words are good for. Ideas, however, are non-physical imaginary and transcendental, thereby, made of concrete through the use of words. Ozumba avers that without words our ideas will be latent and dormant. Locke paraphrased in Ozumba (2004:55), observes that there was need to give label to our ideas to enable us identify and re-identify them. He explains that ideas should be known by certain words and after being familiar with these network of relationships, the mere speaking or sight of words should excite the corresponding idea or set of ideas in us.

Saussure in Ifechelobi (2012; 234), adds that meaning is to be understood in the context of signs in general. Although, fascinating as this theory may sound, it has attracting so many criticisms for not been amenable for testing. This is because; a theory is strong depending on its verification.

Behavioural Theory of Meaning

According to Ifechelobi (2012:235), the behaviourist theory has it that the meaning of an expression is either the stimulus that evokes it or the response that it evokes, or a combination of both. This theory has its simple and sophisticated versions. The simple version according to Ozumba holds that meaning is a function of common features of situations in which expressions are uttered and responses made to those utterances. The underlying belief here for him is that meaning is a function of aspects of the communication situation that are open to public

inspection. The more complicated version for him is given in terms of dispositions to response produced by utterances. The behavioural theory involves itself with the use of language. It has to do with publicly observable behaviour.

Naming

Naming is an important ceremony and every society has a unique way of accomplishing the process. It is a human contrivance for identification, distinction, meaning and reference. Scholastic and Patricia (2019:17) define a name as the combination of words by which a person, place or thing, body or an object is designated, called, or known. They also define a name as a term that can refer to anything; hence, one can say that a name is an identification marker. In the words of Ifesinachi (2012; 172), name points to the bearer which could be humans, trees, places, concepts. It makes the thing named distinct from others of their kind. For Frege, all nouns, phrases and sentences that refer are seen as names. Like any word in the dictionary, a person's name has meaning. The meanings of surnames can often tell us a bit about our ancestors' lives, the region from where they came from and their occupations for which they were known. On this note, guessing the meaning of a surname is a very dangerous game to play. This is because

1. Names have changed considerably in form over the centuries and
2. Where the word is the same, it may have had a very different meaning at the time when it was being formed.

Truth

The question, what is truth? is a major concern of epistemology. It is a question about the quality of statements when they are assessed as conforming to reality. Uduma (2004; 93) states:

Whereas the aim of science is to discover which of the propositions or statements in its domain are true, that is, which statements possess the property of truth; the central concern of philosophy with truth is to discover the nature of that property. Thus, the philosophical question is not what is true? But rather, what is truth? This is to ask what it means to say that a proposition is true.

From the above expression Uduma was of the view that the proper aim and natural result of scientific inquiry is ultimately concern with truth. We have four theories of truth: correspondence, coherence, pragmatic and reliabilist theories of truth. Correspondence theory of truth involves when the statement corresponds to the state of affairs. Truth by coherence is when there is an agreement with the ideas that feature in the statement. Pragmatic truth is determined by workability. Reliabilists centered on the trustworthiness of ideas either by correspondence or coherence.

A Historical Origin of *Onebunne* as an Igbo Surname

In Igbo society, majority of indigenous names are not gender sensitive; they are drawn basically from situations surrounding the birth of a child, occupation, description or family history. *Onebunne* as an Igbo name means how many are true. *Olee bu eziokwu* or *kedu nke bu eziokwu*. It is an interrogative name, a name that asks a question, trying to fish out the real truth. From the conversation or an interview made with Mr. Chinedu Ezeokoli, a native of Ekwuluobia in Aguata local government area of Anambra state. He states that some Igbo surnames originate from nick names and also things our ancestors did in the past which can either be right or wrong and from then, it will take up their names. He maintains that repetition and continuous calling of these names given to these persons as a result of their distinguishing characteristics or things done in the past can take up their names. In other words, these persons can no longer be known by their original names, those nick names will replace their original names, and for him that was how *Onebunne* originated.

According to Chinedu, *Onebunne* is not a name ascribed to a person with good pedigree. He says that in a community, there are some men and women who are known for their bad reputations and when such people speak, their statements will never be accepted as truth unless continuous search and investigations are being carried out. So, when such people speak, their words are not accepted immediately, there would be a continuous investigation that will lead to a continuous questioning in order to find the truth in all that was said. From there, these will take the position of the person's name and will linger from generation to generations. According to Chinedu, Igbo respect their elders so much that one cannot openly say to an elder that he lies. He says that Igbo use proverb to talk to an elder when discovered that there is no truth in what the person said. Some of the proverbs used for elders who are not honest

are *Okenye amaghi egwu ala bu aghugwo* (for an elder to say that he does not know how to dig the ground is a lie), *Asokata eze anya ekpuru nkata gwa ya okwu* (when a king repeatedly does evil, the people will cover their faces with basket and talk to the king).

More so, another interview was conducted with Mr. Daniel Obiakor. Daniel hails from Osina in Ideato local government area of Imo state. His views were similar to that of Chinedu, but he maintains that in their dialect, they do not speak *one* but rather what they speak *isole* that is *olebunne*, in other words, *olee nke bu eziokwu*. Daniel spoke in proverb saying, '*agagh ieji okwu onye asi eje ugu*' meaning that anyone who is well known for his inability to say the truth, his words can never be held to be true. So, there must be a continuous investigation in order to ascertain the truth. Just like Chinedu, Daniel also agrees that some names originated from people's attitude that is, what people are known for in the past and some atrocities they committed. He says that a trustworthy individual can never answer *onebunne*. He avers that *Onebunne* is a name given to people who are not honest, and can never say the truth, and once they make any statement, people will not easily accept their words to be true, and they will keep asking *olebunne*, because they already knew that there was no single truth in all his statements. So anytime the person stands to say something, people will not give him a listening ear or attention because of his inability to speak the truth, so the villagers will keep asking *olebunne* in all that he said. So from that, the name will take the place of the person's name, even to the extent of referring the name to the children as *umu Onebunne*.

However, Igbo people believe so much on truth; this is because for them, truth is life. The Igbo people have some words and phrases which they use to determine what is true or express the concept of truth. *Eziokwu* is actually a combination of two words: 'ezi' which connotes 'right or correct' and 'okwu' which means 'speech or word'. *Eziokwu* therefore means 'right talk or correct statement'. In other words, *eziokwu* connotes a right or an appropriate response to a question or as Nze in Ejeh (2019; 4) rightly points out that the common understanding among the Ibos is that *eziokwu* – truth is used to represent utterances (the lack of inner contradictions) that are true. Other phrases associated with the concept truth in Igbo thought system is *O bughi eziokwu*, that is, (false statement), or *asi* (lie). The notion of truth is so important and central for the Ibos

such that there are a number of ways in which it is used to capture the real meaning of truth in Igbo thought system which some of them are *Onebunne* which is the question, *O bu ihe mere eme? I no ka o mere?* Hence, these expressions make truth an empirical fact, in other words for a statement to be true, it must be empirically observed, so any statement devoid of verification and observation appears to be false. However, Ibo people conceive truth as the conformity of the mind with reality, hence for (Ejeh 2019; 6), the Igbo, when what is in the mind conforms or agrees with what is in reality, then that is *eziokwu* or truth. But when it does not conform to what is in reality, it becomes *asi* or lie. So, truth is like noonday, *eziokwu di ka ehihe*. This implies that statement that is true is self-evidence and there is nothing anybody can do to destroy the truth. No wonder, there is an Igbo adage which says that *anaghi ekpuchi afo ime aka* which signifies that the truth is seen as pregnancy which can never be hidden, it must be shown or revealed one day, that is, *eziokwu ga aputa ihe*. Igbo people have their own way or method of verifying the truth of a claim, the believe that relying on one to one correspondence with facts is not enough but first considering the character of the person and the persons moral background are paramount.

Philo-linguistic Inquiry on the Meaning of *Onebunne*

To inquiry philo-linguistically involves the application of analysis, rigour and critical thinking to the use and understanding of the meaning of words. Since meaning is the heart-beat of philosophy of language, the philo-linguistic inquiry on the meaning of *Onebunne* geared towards analyzing the statement for better understanding and clarification of the name *Onebunne*. Linguistically minded philosophers believe so much on the logical analysis of language we use. In other words all statements should be understood as fronting for the fulfillment of all important purpose of language. It is argued that once meaning is attained, then the whole problem of language is taken care of. It is also believed that the problem of language centers on the absence of meaning. In the words of Ozumba (2004:28), words and sentences are used which are said to be devoid of meaning. Thus, for him;

Language has therefore suffered abuses which have greatly affected the conveyance of meaning, and this has led to opacity, ambiguity, indeterminacy, confusion and outright dislocation of meaning.

Ozumba was of the view that meaning comes basically from inherent meaning of word, the use of words in sentences in accordance with acceptable rules of grammar. However, in order to understand the meaning of a word or sentence, one needs to understand the sense and reference. For a word to have sense means that the word is meaningful, in other words what is without sense cannot be understood. Importantly, if we cannot understand something which has meaning, it is because it follows the acceptable rule of syntax but does not make sense because it is outside the scope of what we understand. However, these linguistic philosophers believe so much that for a statement to be meaningful it must be empirically observed. For them the meaningfulness of any proposition depends on its ability to be verified and any statement that cannot be verified is not only meaningless but also nonsensical. So for these linguistic philosophers, their concern is not on the number of statements made but rather to make those statements clear. In other words, the meaning of *Onebunne* lies on clarity of those statements the speaker made, if those statements made are not stated clearly, it therefore means that the statement is not only meaningless but nonsensical.

Analytic philosophers like Russell, Wittgenstein and Carnap believe that the business of philosophy is to reconstruct the language we use. So, for them a statement is meaningful when there is one to one correspondence of the word and reality. This is drawn from the referential theory of meaning. The meaning of the word should be traced to events which they refer. In other words what has no reference has no meaning. Ozumba paraphrasing Russell maintains that a word/sentence that has no reference is deceptive, useless and improper, arguing that it is only by linking meaning with reference that we will be able to take care of words/sentences that masquerade as meaningful.

Similar to the view of the philosophers of language, Igbo people believed so much on truth. *Onebunne* from the meaning given above aspires to reach the truth. For them *eziokwu bu ndu*, and the opposite is *asi* which is falsehood, the truth can never be covered, even if any attempt is made, one day the truth must be revealed. For there to be a continuous search for truth connotes that the words uttered are full of lies *asi*. The Igbo have a number of ways in which the concept of truth is ascertained. For instance, the Igbo would say: *Eziokwu di ka ehihe*. That is, truth is like

noonday. What this means is that truth is self-evident and there is nothing anyone can do to destroy or suppress the truth. What is true easily stands out and can never be hidden. Importantly, Igbo believe strongly that truth is harsh to the ears, bitter or hard to swallow, that is, *eziokwu na-agba agba na nti*. These expressions surface when there is an attempt to cover the truth.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

ONEBUNNE: QUESTIONING THE REALITY OF MALE CHILD AND LINEAGE IMMORTALITY IN IGBO SOCIETY

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Abstract

The story of Onebunne thrived today, most probably. he was a boy, that is, a male child in a culture that extols such. Immortality, that is lineage immortality, keeps the family on with a form of permanence and along with its ancestry or bloodline. Using the method of critical analysis the researcher discovers that Onebunne as a male name keeps the reality of a family name with every possibility of lineage immortality.

Keywords: Onebunne, male child, immortality

Introduction

Every Igbo traditional name has a covert or an overt implication which tells the story of the child, his family or his entire village. The names of children in an Igbo family frequently tell of the family's hope, fears, joys and sorrows. Babies' given names mark circumstances prevailing at the time of conception or birth, and in this way, names constitute a kind of oral history. Oweleke (2021) stated that the events surrounding the birth of a child, the physical appearance of the child, the state of mind and experiences of the parents, time and place of birth, as well as the shared values and beliefs of the society are all encapsulated in the names given to a child. Thus, in the traditional Igbo society, names have real meaning and power.

The Name "Onebunne"

Onebunne is not a very common name in Igboland. *Onebunne* as a name, echoes the apprehension the parents of a child entertains after witnessing the death of numerous siblings before him. It is an inquisitive expression

of fear mingled with hope on the survival of a child that was born after series of deaths of his siblings. After years of childlessness, when this child is born, the parents basking in the euphoria of the child's birth, questions the veracity of this child's survival and pray hopefully that his survival becomes a reality. Landy (2020), affirms that Igbo names are not mere tags to distinguish one thing or person from another; but are expressions of the nature that which they stand for. *Onebunne* is not an exception. Literally, One-bu-nne, can be translated as; is this one true? Is this a reality? Will this one survive? As a family name in Igbo land, *Onebunne* questions reality and truth. Often one of the reasons for marriage in trado-cultural Igbo society and Judeco-Christian tradition is procreativity which rests solely and depends entirely on be-getting a male child. This has today translated into what we often regard as male chauvinism. There is this unwritten code connoting as such that we are in a man's world, a phrase many feminists hates to hear. In spite of the much lauded feminism, all form of feminists' work and movements across the world, the African society especially the Igbo world inadvertently act out that we are in a man's world. Hence, the birth of a male child is more appreciated and looked forward to than the birth of a female one. Continuity rests with the male child. *Onebunne* as a male child, coming at a point of great despair to the family was much a blessing. As a male child, *Onebunne*, though they still doubted his survival as against six children before him, was a great blessing on the lineage feared to close, was enlivened with his birth. In Igbo society, patriarchal system of inheritance and continuity is the practice. *Onebunne* as a male child will keep the family lineage as it ought to, hence a blessing to the family.

The Name and Place of the Male Child among the Igbo

The Igbo tribe dominate the south-eastern part of Nigeria. Igbo refers to the language as well as the people of the South East Nigeria. The Igbo tribe which is the third major tribe amongst the two hundred and fifty ethnic groups in Nigeria can be found in Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Imo and some parts of Delta State of Nigeria. Anedo (2019) stated that elongation of family life is what worries every Igbo person. There is a belief that once one is born, one must beget another for continuity of the family line. The Igbo tribe has so much faith in children, especially the male child who will continue the family line so that the family name does not go into extinction.

The main objective of every Igbo man is to have a male child who will succeed him. It is a cause of worry, embarrassment, disappointment and indignity when a family does not produce a male child. Hence every Igbo man strives to have a successor for whom he will be remembered; hence, they give names such as: *Ahamefuna* – (May my name not go extinct), *Obiechina* – (Let my family hub not go extinct), *Afu nwa echeta nna* – (When a child is seen, the father is remembered) that is to say that a (male) child is a representation of his father, *Ikemefuna* (my lineage (strenght) will not cease to be) *chukwu ebunye m oche* - God has given me a seat/place. These names reveal the strong desire for heir and progeny-based immortality lurking in the heart of every Igbo man. The absence of a male child in a family is considered a calamity. The implication of this being that when all the females in the family are married out and the parents eventually die, the lineage dies as well and goes into extinction. The Igbos believe so much in passing their inheritance to their male children, this is why the birth of a male child is received with remarkable jubilation and festivity albeit mingled with apprehension as seen in the case of *Onebunne*.

Male Child and Lineage Immortality

A lineage is a group of individuals who trace descent from a common ancestor. In a patrilineal society such as the Igbo society, individuals are related as kin through the male line of descent. The birth of a male child signifies the immortality of the lineage. Isidienu (2022) noted that in Igbo land, when a child is born, there are two types of congratulations, the first congratulation is that a child is born and the sex of the child whether male or female determines the second congratulation. This second congratulation is received when the child is a male. Igbo people openly live by the conviction that male children are more superior or more valued than female children hence the preference. Male-child superiority involves having more value for boys than girls to the extent that it breeds negative effects on the girl-child, women, the home and the society (Egede and Egede, 2010). Male-child superiority over the female gender has remained one of the most lasting cultural values among the Igbo of South eastern Nigeria. This phenomenon is evident in societies where male children are accorded special recognition and or higher status relative to their female counterparts (Akpan 1995; Nwokocha, 2005, Isidienu, 2022). In communities where such gender distinction is a norm, male children are perceived as sustainers of lineage, holders of central,

and often, most important positions of authority and inheritors of immovable properties. According to Isiugo-Abanihe cited in Oweleke (2021), the Igbo with very few exceptions are patrilineal and attach strong significance to male-determined and dominated structure. Also, in traditional Igbo society, the status of a man is assessed in part by the number of his sons, a man with many sons is viewed as a wealthy or an accomplished man; his neighbours cautiously avoid confrontation or litigation with him; he is assured of a befitting burial at death. Illustrating this more vividly, this author noted that a man who died without a son lived a worthless life; he is inherited by his brothers, and is soon forgotten since his branch of the family tree has ended. Indeed, for an Igbo man to die childless or without a male child is a calamity. Abasili (2012) asserts that in Igbo society, “to die childless is tantamount to a descent into oblivion, to be forgotten by both the living and the dead. This is because such a person has left no heir (male child) to pour libation for him.”

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe narrates that “Okonkwo” felt a cold shudder run through him at the terrible prospect, like the prospect of annihilation. He saw himself and his father crowding round their ancestral shrine waiting in vain for worship and sacrifice and finding nothing but ashes of bygone days...” It is believed that such a man is not admitted in the prestigious status of ancestor (Ichie) after his death. In Igbo oral tradition, according to Ezeifeka (2019) there are idioms that have been identified as related to the domain of lineage perpetuation and seem to conceptualize this domain on the permanence-extinction or perpetuator-terminator and hope-despair stereotypes with reference to men and women respectively. For instance, the maxim *Ama choro ichi echi bu so nwaanyi ka o na-amu*, an extinction-hungry homestead is one that begets only female offspring. The reference to female offspring as the harbinger of extinction of a homestead is also explicit. *Nkita nwaanyi zuru na ata akwa*, a derogatory way of appreciating the effort a woman has put in bringing up a child. The stereotypes these idioms seem to encode are: male as perpetuator of lineage, female as terminator of lineage, male as hope and female as despair. Names like *Afu nwa elota nna* that is to say that a male child is a representation of his father, are clear illustrations on the faith reposed on the male child. The male child in this context may even drag the purported name of the father to the mud. Moreover, famous individuals world over are remembered for themselves not their male children. Names like Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, Dr K.O. Mbadiwe, Dim

Odimegwu Ojukwu, Jerome Udorji, Chinua Achebe among others readily come to mind as names of people who have been immortalized by themselves not by their male children.

The superiority of a male over the female child is based on assumptions that when male children become adults, they will become the breadwinners of their family and take care of their elderly parents. In agreement, Ani and Chime (2021) state that another major contributor to the superiority of male children among Igbo communities of Nigeria is found in the principles guiding a person's right to succession/ inheritance under Igbo native law and customs. The central principle of Igbo native law and custom as it relates to right to succession or inheritance revolves around the tenets of primogeniture which favours the eldest son's right to inherit his parent's entire estate to the exclusion of the daughters. Ani and Chime (2021) in furtherance affirm that under primogeniture, the eldest legitimate son (*Okpala*) inherits the father's personal *Ofor* and other objects of worship, furniture, the widows, and wearing apparel. The *Okpala* also inherits as a right, his late father's dwelling compound commonly referred to as *Obi* and the immediate surrounding compound.

Thus, the birth of a male child establishes the worth of an Igbo man on one hand and the legitimacy of his marriage on the other. This superiority of male children prevalent among the Igbo communities, can also be seen by the widely held notion that since female children are married off to suitors, they are not to be regarded as permanent members of the family. The perpetuation of the lineage is vital to the Igbo people, and to them, the male child is the natural and cultural way of guaranteeing the lineage immortality. The agonizing and worrisome situation of lack of male child often makes the families concerned to do the unimaginable to see that a male child is produced for the family. At this juncture, the female child comes to the rescue, if the female child present in the family can as well play a significant role in the continuity of the family this author seeks to question the reality of male superiority for lineage immortality. This is the thrust of this paper.

Gender Superiority for Lineage Immortality: The Reality of the Female Child

A social construction of reality, according to Kuhn as cited in Kanu (2019), is the entire constellation of belief, values, techniques and so on

shared by the members of a give community. In the Igbo traditional society, the reality on ground is that the male child represents the extension of a family line. A situation may arise where a man throughout his lifetime was unable to father a male child and this state of affairs in the Igbo setting creates a dividing line as to who inherits the deceased man's estate due to the nonexistence of an heir (male child). With no heir to inherit the property of the deceased, the property will revert to the deceased brothers or other male relatives upon his death. To ensure that the estate of the deceased remains in his family and that his lineage does not go into extinction, certain Igbo customs have a way around this difficulty caused by the absence of a male heir; such practices as *nrachi*, woman to woman marriage, posthumous marriage comes to the rescue. The female child hitherto looked at as inferior and belonging to another family, *ezi onye ozo* now becomes the stock, and the reality on which family lineage can be immortalized.

The *Nrachi/Nhachi/Nnuikwa* Custom

The Igbo custom popularly referred to as *Nrachi* makes it possible for a deceased to retain his estate and for the deceased's lineage to continue even without a male heir. According to Agujiobi (2021), this is experienced in situations where a man dies with no male children but has many daughters of marriageable age. One of the daughters may be asked to stay at home and beget children for her late father. The reason behind this is to produce male children on behalf of their late father. These children born in the family are legally of the woman's late father and they as well inherit his property. The female child become automatically relevant. Under Igbo native law and custom any man that has not got a male child can allow one of the daughters by way of *Nrachi* to raise issues for the purposes of getting a male child that will inherit the assets of the father and continue the lineage. Thus, the *Nrachi* Custom enables a daughter to inherit the *Obi* of her father which ordinarily is only inheritable by a male child. Ani and Chime (2021) noted that upon the completion of certain rites, such daughter holds multiple personalities of a daughter, a female son, a female father and the head of her family and these multiple personalities makes it feasible for her to inherit the family property. A male child born through *Nrachi* custom automatically steps into the shoes of his maternal grandfather and takes full control of his property as his own upon the death of the man. He also inherits his compound and lands.

Woman to Woman Marriage

Another custom in Igbo land that falls back on the female child for lineage immortality is the surrogate marriage. It is a form of traditional African customary marriage where a woman marries another woman and assumes control over her and her offspring(s). Culturally, women-to-women marriages were allowed in different contexts. For example, barren women and widows took wives to obtain rights over children produced in such marriages. In other societies women who had no sons married daughters-in-law for a nonexistent son with the aim of procuring male progeny. However, it would seem that the most significant reason for the practice of female husband was the improvisation of the male child personality, with the inherent functions and responsibilities thereon. The children belonged to the lineage of her father, consequently, she played the role of the father, provider, protector and indeed all the functions and responsibilities enshrined in the patriarchal concept which included physical protection of the family and its territory, the male economic sphere, the spiritual sphere, the social sphere among others. Amadiume as cited in Nwoko (2012) noted that at this level, the female husband was treated like a man and her opinion was first sought in the gathering of opinions. In some societies, she enjoyed equal privilege with her male counterparts. She combined both secular and spiritual functions and obligations. Nwoko (2012) reiterated that she inherited her late father's properties which included; farmland, economic trees, domestic animals, etc. Indeed, there was a total transplant of the patriarchal rights and functions. And her lineage was counted without bias among the lineage of the extended family tree.

Posthumous Marriage

In Igbo Land, there is a tradition in some families to marry wives for the deceased so as to raise children for them. Posthumous marriage is a type of marriage in which a woman or a girl is married to a man who had already died by the deceased's family or relations so that the children raised through this relationship become children of the deceased. According to Free Encyclopedia (2015), it is a type of marriage in which one of the partners is deceased. Ogolla (2015) defines posthumous marriage as a marital arrangement in which one participating partners is deceased. Nnadozie (2013) defines it as a type of marriages where a woman or a girl is married to a man who had already died. Posthumous marriage can be arranged in different forms. A marriage may be

contracted for a dead man who had no male child so that his lineage will continue. In this case, it may be his widow, his daughters or relations who will marry a young woman of child bearing age to bear children for him. Another form of posthumous marriage occurs when a woman marries a wife for her dead son or a miscarriage of a male fetus. This mostly happens in a polygamous family where a widow who has no male child is denied of her inheritance from her late husband by her co-wife with male children. The maltreated woman can marry a wife for her dead son or a miscarried male child (foetus) if there is any. If this wife bears a son, the maltreated woman can now become eligible to inherit her share of her late husband's property through the posthumous son.

Female Gender in Contemporary Times: The Reality

The place of the woman in the contemporary Igbo society constitutes a shift. The shift in this case represents a change from one way of thinking about women to another; something of a transformation. A female child functions as the traffic that keeps the path open as can be seen in *nrachi*, surrogate marriage and posthumous marriages. There is a Ghanaian proverb which states that without the woman a lineage is finished, in effect women announce a continuous flow and a renewal. Women in contemporary times have proved to be of immense advantage to the family. It has been objected by some that woman is not equally capable with man and that she is deficient by creation. The difference in capability between a man and woman is due entirely to opportunity and education where the woman has been denied the right and privilege of equal development. If equal opportunity be granted her, there is no doubt she would be the counterpart of man. Women have arisen in the affairs of nations and equaled men in their accomplishments in their various chosen careers. It is clear that many female children have done their family proud. The girl child must be recognize and encouraged, after all women like Dr.Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, Late Prof. Dora Akunyili, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, to mention but the few are from Igbo land. The reality of it is that there is no gender that is superior to the other.

Conclusion

Igbo people see child bearing as one of the most important aspects of getting married. In the Igbo traditional society, a man who is without a male child does not count. Having only female children is believed to be training another man's property and the female child will not be given

access to her father's inheritance. Igbo preference of the male child is purely due to their belief on inheritance and lineage immortality. The present paper has explored the content and context of male-child superiority among the Igbo of Nigeria. The notion is that absence of a male child will lead to extinction of family name despite having female children hence the apprehension seen in people when the male children are not forthcoming or are dying. The paper argued that if the female child can become relevant in traditional Igbo society through some cultural practices such as nrachi and the likes there should not be this undue emphasis on the male child. Again, to question the 'Ahamefula' syndrome, many famous people remain immortal through their own deeds not a male child, then why the despair of lineage immortality. Legends and giants in history were known for their names and not the male child who takes his own name or may end up not living up to expectation of the names they are meant to immortalized.

In recent times, the female children have been the backbone of families. If this is the case what is the reality of male superiority, why the fear of lineage immortality? In Igbo society, there are few signs that the quest for male children would be abating in the near future. It is therefore suggested that, since male-child preference has been upheld over generations and given that changing times have distorted its relative strength, more vigorous reorientation towards value, attitudinal and behavioural change on superiority of any gender be emphasized in Igbo society.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE NAME ONEBUNNE AND BELONGINGNESS IN IGBO AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY.

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Abstract.

Name is a metaphysical concept that identifies an individual in a community he or she finds himself or herself. Igbo people uphold the significance of a name. This paper explores the significance of names in Igbo philosophy focusing on the name, Onebunne which means truthfulness. Onebunne reflects the Igbo emphasis on honesty and its role in fostering human harmony. By examining the name – giving process and the meaning embedded in Onebunne, the paper argues that using critical analysis that names are not merely labels but powerful tools that reinforce societal values and a sense of belonging within the Igbo community and beyond.

Keywords: Onebunne, belongingness, Igbo, name, truthfulness.

Introduction

The Igbo people, predominantly residing in the south-eastern region of Nigeria, are renowned for their vibrant cultural heritage. Their language, Igbo, is a cornerstone of their identity, and their cuisine boasts an array of mouth-watering delicacies, including *Onugbo* soup, *Egusi* Soup, *Nsala* soup, *Ukwa*, *Abacha*, *Ede*, *Ji*, *Ede bu Ji*, *Akpu* and *Qna*, among others. In Igbo culture, naming a child is a significant tradition, with the chosen name often influenced by circumstances preceding conception, during pregnancy, and following birth. These circumstances play a crucial role in determining the name bestowed upon the child during the naming ceremony.

The naming process of a new born baby often involves not only the parents but also extended family members, who contribute to the selection of a suitable name. In Igbo culture, the naming process can

sometimes lead to disagreements among parents, as they want a preference to be from either of them and also on the believe that “*aha ọnye na-edu ya*” – a person’s name guides him or her. A name is considered unique and peculiar to the individual, serving as a vital identifier of their origin, culture, and identity. The arrival of a new born baby is a moment of immense joy for both the immediate and extended family. Following the birth of an infant, an authentic naming ceremony is performed after two market weeks (equivalent to eight days in the Gregorian Calendar) according to the Igbo Calendar.

The naming ceremony, known as *Igu Afa* in Igbo, is a significant event where the eldest family member presents the child with the parents’ preferred name. This joyous occasion is filled with merriment, feasting, and symbolic rituals. The use of white chalk, or *nzu*, is a notable tradition, where people apply it to their foreheads and even drink it as a liquid solution. Men also use the chalk to offer prayers, invoking the four market days to bless the child and their parents. In the past, everyone would carry the new born baby and dance with him or her but this practice has largely disappeared due to modernization, Christianity, and globalization.

In Igbo culture, a name is believed to shape a child’s life. Names are often given based on the time of year, place of birth, events preceding conception, or experiences during pregnancy and delivery. An Igbo name signifies identity, belonging, and uniqueness. Names are also influenced by circumstances surrounding the child’s birth, such as being born during war, after the war, after a tragic event or a joyous event, harvest season, or rainy season.

An authentic Igbo name distinguishes an Igbo child from others and identifies them wherever they go. It serves as a connection to their heritage and community, allowing them to receive help and support in times of need, even in foreign lands. Igbo names foster a sense of belonging, unity, and brotherhood among Igbo people, both at home and in diaspora communities. The phrase ‘*Igbo amaka*’ embodies this spirit, meaning ‘Igbo is beautiful’ and symbolizing the bonds that tie them together. Through their names and cultural identity, Igbo people living abroad find a sense of belonging and acceptance, strengthening their ties and recognizing one another as brothers and sisters.

The Igbo people place great significance on names, which symbolize the beliefs and values, culture, tradition and customs of the parents and the community. A name in Igbo culture is not just a label, but a reflection of the circumstances surrounding the child's conception, birth, and upbringing. For instance, the name Onebunne, which means truthfulness, embodies the importance of honesty and integrity in Igbo society. Names are integral part of Igbo identity and heritage, representing the bearer's character, family roots, and social standing. They are sacred and stands out serving as a form of identification and connection to the community.

In Igbo culture, names are believed to shape the bearer's destiny and influence their behaviours as well. Parents carefully choose names that reflect their values and hopes for their child's future. Names also serve as a link to the family's genealogy and history, with surnames often indicating the family's roots and social status. The significance of names is deeply ingrained in Igbo tradition, emphasizing the importance of belonging, unity, and brotherhood.

The process of naming a child is a thoughtful and deliberate act, reflecting the parents' beliefs and aspirations. A name is not just a label, but a source of identity, pride, and connection to the community. In Igbo culture, learning one's name is a crucial aspect of self-discovery and socialization, starting from a young age. A name is a powerful symbol of belonging, identity, and existentialism, shaping the bearer's sense of being and place in the world.

Igbo names are deeply rooted in tradition and culture, connecting a child to their immediate family and community from birth. These names embody our unique identity and are an integral part of our daily lives, influencing our thoughts, actions, and relationships. Surnames often identify a person's village or town of origin, while our given names reflect our cultural heritage and values. Our names are a source of our pride, belonging, and bounds of love which shape our sense of beings within the community. In some cases, names are passed down from reincarnated ancestors, while others are given to commemorate achievements or milestones. Our names inspire us to succeed and bring joy to our families. They are a vital part of our cultural preservation, peculiarity and uniqueness.

This article explores the concepts of the name - Onebunne, Metaphysics, and Belongingness, examining their relationships and metaphysical implications. Understanding the nature of names and human identity is crucial in the field of metaphysics, and this work aims to provide insight into these fundamental concepts. This paper provides a rich understanding of name that is imbibed in belongingness in the African context, emphasizing its significance in shaping our identities, communities, and societal values.

Insights to Meaning of Metaphysics.

Metaphysics, a fundamental concept in philosophy, has been explored by thinkers throughout history to understand abstract concepts that define human existence. The concept of name and meaning is rooted in metaphysical ontology. Metaphysics examines abstract entities including, being, knowledge, identity, space, and time. It seeks to understand the nature of reality, causality, necessity, possibility, and change.

According to Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy:

Metaphysics is a word that is difficult to explain. Metaphysics is a study that somehow goes beyond physics, a study devoted to matter that transcend the mundane concerns of Newton and Einstein and Heisenberg. This impression is mistaken. The word Metaphysics is derived from collective title of the fourteen books by Aristotle that are currently title of four books by Aristotle that are currently think of as making up Aristotle 's Metaphysics. Andronicus of Rhodes title the fourteen books of Aristotle has "*Ta meta phusika*" the after the physicals or the ones after the physical ones. Aristotle has four names for the branch of philosophy that is the subject matter of Metaphysics -first philosophy, first science, wisdom and theology. Metaphysics is about things that do not change. Aristotle identifies the subject matter of first philosophy as being as such and in another as first cause.¹

Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that studies the fundamental nature of existence, reality, and being. It explores questions about abstract

entities, including name and belongingness. Encyclopaedia of Philosophy highlights the definition as thus:

Metaphysics studies things the way they are, *ons qua ons, ens qua ens*. So many Philosophers in the past ages has engaged in metaphysical complexities as to bring to the knowledge of the society. Some abstract concepts that defines the way the world came in existence or how the way the world defines existence in the history of mankind. ²

Oxford Dictionary defines Metaphysics as the branch of philosophy that deals with the first principles of things including abstract concepts such as being, knowing, identity, time and space. They would regard the question of the initial conditions of the universe as belonging to the real of metaphysics or religion. ³

Belongingness, a bond of being and acceptance, is essential in Igbo culture, as seen in the principles of *Ujamaa* (brotherhood) and *Ubuntu* (common goals achieved through community).

Metaphysics, a long-standing philosophical concept, has evolved over time. The term was first used by Andronicus the Librarian to describe the books shelved after Aristotle's physics books and it literally means *ta meta physika* in Latin that is after the physics. Metaphysics encompasses various meanings, including the entelechy of things (the nature of things) and the Forms of Plato.

According to Britannica Encyclopaedia, Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy whose topics in antiquity and the middle ages were the first causes of things and the nature of being. ⁴ That is Metaphysics made things to be in existence. It is the entelechy of things as epitomised in the nature of things. It makes things to be what it is as in The Forms of Plato.

www.yourdictionary.com defined metaphysics as the branch of philosophy that examines the nature of reality including the relationship between mind and matter, substance and attribute, fact and value. It is the branch of philosophy that deals with first principles and seeks to explain the nature of being or *Uurstuff* reality (ontology) and of the origin and

structure of the universe (cosmology). It is also closely associated with the nature of knowledge. Metaphysics also is a field of philosophy that is generally focused on how reality and the universe began. An example of Metaphysics is a study of God versus the Big Bang Theory. Metaphysics is that branch of philosophy which studies fundamental principles intended to describe or explain all that is and what are not themselves explained by anything more fundamental, the study of first principles, the study of being in so far it is being (*ens qua ens, ons qua ons*).⁵ by exploring metaphysics and the concept of Onebunne, we gain insights into the abstract entities that define human existence and the significance of names in Igbo culture.

Metaphysics, a complex and abstract field, defies a single definition. However, based on various interpretations, it can be understood as an exploration of concepts conceived by the human mind and reason. Metaphysics delves into the fundamental nature of existence, reality, and life's first principles. It encompasses broad topics like reality, being, causality, space, and time. As the nucleus of philosophy, metaphysics bridges the spiritual and physical realms, revealing the innate aspects of human existence. A name, like Onebunne, embodies identity, cultural beliefs, and belongingness, connecting the individual to family, community, and society.

What is Belongingness?

Belongingness refers to the state of being a member of a community, family, or group, providing a sense of security and inner peace. It's a fundamental human desire to belong and feel connected to others, whether in a nuclear family, extended family, friendship circle, church, association, society, or workplace. Belongingness fosters a sense of identity and personhood, influencing our actions and relationships within the community.

Belongingness, a bond of being and acceptance, is essential in Igbo culture, as seen in the principles of *Ujamaa* (brotherhood) and *Ubuntu* (common goals achieved through community). Onebunne, as a name, reflects an individual's personality and character within the context of their community that is embedded and enshrined in belongingness. Belongingness binds people together physically and spiritually, shaping

our individuality and well-being, and is inherent in the identity bestowed by a given name in any society. Iroegbu (2004:30) opines that

Our thesis is that in its innermost core or substance, to be is to belong, which can be expressed thus: Being is Belongingness. Such Belongingness has the value of not only defining being or reality as such, but also of pointing to the consequences which being has both ontologically (as being vis-a- vis other beings) and ontologically (as being qua tale, being as such). ⁶

Belongingness is a vital aspect of human existence, making an individual a *bona-fide* member of their community. It fosters a sense of identity, brotherhood, and connection, allowing individuals to thrive and grow. Belongingness is a bond that unites people, providing a shared sense of purpose and belonging. Being accepted and belonging to a society with a common identity gives individuals the courage to showcase their strengths and learn from their weaknesses. It helps them define their existence and connect with others, actualizing their dreams amidst societal competition.

Brower defines belonging as that course of feeling of connectedness to a group or community. It is the sense that you are a part of something. You feel attached, close thoroughly accepted by your people. But belonging is more than just being part of a group. Belongingness is also critically tied to social identity, a set of shared beliefs or ideals. To truly feel a sense of belonging one must feel united and a common sense of character with and among members of your group. ⁷

Belongingness embodies communalism, where people learn from each other and share beliefs, ideas, values, and mutual understanding. It's an integral part of our existence, enabling us to coexist and connect with others. A name like Onebunne automatically connects the bearer to a unique family and community, becoming an indisputable identity. Belongingness pertains to individual connectivity, entitlement, and well-being in society, defining our existence, relationships, and mutual understanding. It brings out the personhood of an individual, aligning with the psychoanalytic attitude of an accepted community.

Belongingness in the African context is a bond tied in a relationship of an independent and the community. It is clear that belongingness is a fundamental concept in African culture, emphasizing the importance of community, unity, and interconnectedness. This paper highlights how belongingness defines our well-being, actions, and responsibilities within the society, making us active participants rather than mere spectators. Iroegbu (2005 :3) is of the opinion that:

Belongingness holds that our existence as humans as well as our integral interpretation in the society in which we find ourselves are to be defined by our being given sense and substance of belonging. There should be solidarity of belonging and belonging of solidarity in the way and manner in which we are to live and relate to one another as fellow citizens of the world. This sense of belonging or belongings has two basic aspects: Being turned on. On going. Thus if we belong we are, if we do not belong we are not.⁸

Belongingness is a fundamental concept in African society, essential for our existence and well-being. It makes us active participants in our communities, defining our actions and responsibilities. Without belongingness, we would be mere spectators, disconnected from our societies. Belongingness assures us of our membership in our communities, binding us together with love, commitment, togetherness, unity, and strength. Communalism, rooted in *Igwebuike* (unity is strength) and *Njikokamma* (togetherness is better), enables us to share ideas, values, and responsibilities, striving together for progress and individual welfare.

In view of the above about an individual being an active member of a community in reference to belongingness, Onebunne J.(2019A:137) held the view that” Belongingness can be variously conceived either as participation or possession. As participation, saying that “I belong to Ekwulobia community “means that “I participate in the membership of” or “I am part and parcel of Ekwulobia community “. ⁹ Belongingness as conceived in this sense of participation gives the one that participate some special duty, rights and privileges over another who does not.¹⁰

Belongingness is an innate sense of connection to our societies, and a name like Onebunne embodies this concept, signifying oneness, truthfulness and uniqueness. It satisfies our need for belonging, fostering self-realization and acceptance within our cultural communities. Belongingness spans from our immediate families to our extended families, kindred, villages, towns, and the broader Igbo society, both within and beyond our diaspora.

According to Baumeister and Lean (1995), A sense of belonging has been described as a fundamental human motivation underpinned by a pervasive and compelling need to belong that we continually seek to find and maintain.¹¹

Belongingness is vital for our well-being, actions, and existence in African societies. It binds us together, enabling us to interact, share, and strive for progress and individual welfare. We are not isolated individuals but interconnected beings, and our existence is defined by our relationships with others and the world. Ejenam (2007 :391) enunciates that:

Belongingness is a principle of membership applied to a given political community. It is what moulds a community's cultural, historical and traditional values. According to Iroegbu, it is both a terminus a quo and terminus ad quem. That means that it is very fundamental such that we cannot speak of social justice in Africa without it. Belongingness makes all members real and participating members of the community. It gives all a sense of belonging.¹²

With reference to the above, a society cannot participate politically without first of all having a communal relationship of the community involved. Iroegbu (1995:19) points out that Belongingness makes sure all belong and none is marginalized, both contributively (duties and obligations) and distributively (sharing of communal cake).¹³ This implies that belongingness bounds members of the community together. Responsibilities are shared together as to make a meaningful impact.

Belongingness is an inner sense of belonging and connectivity of an individual to the society. A name as contained in Onebunne allows the bearer to know and have the feeling of being a *bona-fide* member which literally translates to *Nwa a mụrụ amụ*, *Nwa a mụrụ nke oma*, *Nwa afo* , *Nwa zuru oke nke Ula Ekwulobia na ala Igbo Ndi ozo* . The name satisfies the vital role and needs of belonging in a society. Belongingness brings in-depth aura of self realization in a society which is achieved into a name given to a child that is why Onebunne bring out the actual feeling of being a member, belonging and having an acceptance with fellowship in a cultural community.

Belongingness is an important aspect of an individual's life. Belongingness spans from the immediate nuclear family, extended family, kindred (popularly known as *Umunna*), village, town and the general Igbo society within and in the diaspora. Iroegbu (2005:3) shows that "Belongingness holds that our existence as human beings, as well as our integral participation in the society in which we find ourselves, are to be defined by our being given the sense and substance of belonging"¹⁴

Belongingness bonds the people together by their values and by shaping their lives for the actualization of a individual 's well-being and the betterment of the society. Therefore, belongingness brings out the innate personality in an individual. Bringing out the innateness and sub consciousness of an individual to relate with the world can be seen in what Mealeau Ponty wrote that, "Insofar as when I reflect on essence of subjectivity, I find it bound up with that of the body and that the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity(consciousness) is merely one with the existence of the world, and because the subject that I am , when taken correctly is inseparable from this body and this world"¹⁵ . This means that the self cannot operate alone in the universe unless it mingles with the world. That is there is nothing like isolation for any individual person but rather there is a continuity between the subjective or individual self and the world. Onebunne (2023:17) opines that

Belongingness is a principle of membership established on the conceptual idea of. Jean Paul Sartre shares this Ohazurume a popular idea that there is no being which is the being of a certain mode of belonging, a certain mode of existence. Ohazurume is

such an existential mode. Ohazurume means the collective will of the people in a community.¹⁶

Onebunne and Alike (2019:14) in *Belongingness and Migration* enunciate that

Belongingness is an African concept of to be or to belong. It is a belief that all irrespective of socio-cultural or religious background belong to a particular community and therefore is accepted and appreciated as a member of such a community. Belongingness has been a fundamental aspect of African philosophical and communalist engagement. Belongingness we must note has been a basic cultural trait within the exigencies of African Philosophy.¹⁷

With the above, it reflects belongingness as an onus of a society. Without belongingness an African community cannot stand because the people within accommodate and appreciate themselves as one entity.

Man, as a social being interacts with individuals, the society and the world. Man defines himself and strives amidst failures and glows amidst successes. An individual must belong and be in a society because no man is an island on his own. An individual must exist in a society for a proper identification and belongingness. For an individual to exist in any given society, he or she must have a given name whether particular (a name given by person by himself or herself) or general (a family or generational name) which is peculiar and unique to him or her and a cultural identity.

Aristotle The Greek Ancient Philosopher made it clear that, man is by nature a social animal, an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that proceeds the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common Life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society is either a beast or a god.¹⁸

This assertion by Aristotle shows that man is a social being by nature and therefore he must relate with his immediate environment and beyond. So, if there is any man who has no need for a society is either a god or a beast.

This means that an individual must belong to a society as to define his existential being and anybody that does not want to belong to a society is a god which means he or she is not a human or the person is a beast which means he or she is an animal in a human clothing . It is inherent in man to socialize. Man is not an island oh his own and cannot live in isolation. A man interacts from a toddler with immediate family and people he sees around, extended families, immediate environment and the society at large.

As Aristotle noted, humans are social animals, and our existence is defined by our relationships with others and the world around us. We cannot exist in isolation; we must belong to a society to define our existence and identify ourselves. A name, whether particular or general, is essential for our existence in any society, providing a unique and peculiar cultural identity.

The references to philosophical ideas from Jean-Paul Sartre and Aristotle reinforce the notion that humans are social beings, inherently connected to others and the world around us. Our existence is defined by our relationships, and belongingness is essential for our well-being and self-realization. Edmund Husserl an existential philosopher and a Phenomenologist in his Existentialism said that I, We and the world are together. By essence, an individual is an individual when he or she belongs to a society or a community in which they find a bearing and reach out to the world. ¹⁹ Martin Heidegger the German Philosopher has the same theme with Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. In his book, Being and Time (1927) he mentions that we and our activities are always in the world. Our being is being -in-the world so we do not study our activities by bracketing the world, rather we interpret our activities and the meaning things have for us by looking to our contextual relations to things in the world. We check ourselves in Dasein which is being whose being is in individual. The active person and not the spectator. ²⁰

Heidegger's life in world has three interpretation of three domain namely surrounding world, with world and self-world -Dasein which means man is a being with others. Individual, being, self- world and their hierarchies belong together. Man is interconnected with other beings in the universe. ²¹ Man is not meant to be alone. Man must belong and associate with others. Belongingness brings out that social aspect of man in an African

community where togetherness is extolled. Being together propels other members of the community to prosper and define their existence. Belongingness can be identified by a name which shows acceptance of the cultural interpretation by the bearer. Let's look at what is a name via Onebunne.

What is a Name via Onebunne?

A name like Onebunne holds a peculiar identity, anchoring an individual within their community and society. Belonging to a society, an individual finds themselves among others, striving to survive and thrive. The name Onebunne, borne by a family in Ula-Ekwulobia, sparks acceptance and joy within the community, fostering a sense of belonging, commitment and relation among kinsmen. Even interactions with outsiders bring immense joy. Names carry identities, revealing cultural interpretations, aspirations, and desires. That's why some Igbo people change their root names, with the fear that their meanings might impact their endeavours in life. Igbo names are prestigious, carrying charisma and glamour, passed down through generations. Some retain the first generational name, others the second, while some take their father's name to stand out. Girls often bear their husband's name after marriage.

Onebunne, an Igbo African Cultural name, embodies truthfulness, trustworthiness, equity, fair play, and justice. It represents clarity, distinctiveness, and radiates light in an environment where the bearer resides. Onebunne binds the bearer to the society, fostering love, togetherness, relationship and community strength. Igbo names carry an aura of uniqueness, reflecting the family's identity and reputation. Each family is known for their distinct characteristics, skills, or achievements within their community. When a child misbehaves, the elderly may ask, '*Nwa m ọnye mụrụ gị?*' (My child, who are your parents?). The response often leads to a comment about the family's reputation. If the child comes from a troublesome family, the elderly might say, '*Akam asịkwa, o yiri nne ya ma ọ bụ nna*' (No wonder, they resemble their mother or father). However, if the child comes from a respected family, they might say, '*Nwa nke a adighị eme ka nne na nna ya, Gịnị mere?*' (This child doesn't take after their parents, what's the reason?). The elderly might then acknowledge, '*The ị na-ekwu ọ bụ eziokwu na ọnye dị otu a mụrụ gị*' (What I'm saying is true, that's the way of your family).

Igbo names indeed carry a rich cultural significance, reflecting the family's history, values, and reputation. Our names can shape individual identities and influence community perceptions.

The name Onebunne, borne by a family in Ula-Ekwulobia and beyond other Igbo communities, carries a sense of acceptance and belonging within the Igbo community. It brings joy and smiles when the bearer interacts with others in any Igbo society, even outside Eastern Nigeria. This is because Onebunne is an Igbo name that evokes a sense of belonging to a particular group of people, creating a sense of community and connection in a distant land. Belongingness is a powerful tool for an individual's growth and self-actualization. In Igbo culture, names command respect and dignity, and many successful Igbo individuals around the world are recognized and celebrated whenever they are mentioned. This recognition extends to anyone who bears such a name, carrying a sense of pride and heritage.

Onebunne as a name is definition of oneness, truthfulness, uniqueness which genuinely brings out the existential characteristic being in a Man. Man is an existential being who defines his existence through his name where he belongs at a particular time of existence. He exists with others in the society and this what Jean Paul Sartre termed being-for-others.

Names have a very big significance in our lives. Igbo names have the sense of belonging they evoke, even in distant lands. The name Onebunne is a great example of this, sparking joy, acceptance, and respect within the Igbo community. The name Onebunne which means oneness, truthfulness, and uniqueness, embodies the essence of belongingness and existential identity. They bind people together.

What is Truthfulness?

Truthfulness as a concept can be explained without the confines of truth in philosophy. Truth as a concept has been the concern of Philosophers age long. They were constructive on what can be named to be true or not. Truth is being explained by the existential outcome of circumstances surrounding an incident. It is what substantiates our claim. Pardi, (2015) posits that Postmodernists describe truth not as a relationship outside of the human mind that we can align belief to but as a product of belief. We never access reality because we can never get outside our beliefs to do so.

Truth as concept in philosophy does not have a generally accepted definition because what may be true for A may not be true for B due to circumstances, environment and promulgation of laws if any exists within the jurisdiction of an act. In Britannica.com, Truth is the aim of belief, falsify is a fault. People need the truth about the world in order to thrive. Truth is important. Believing what is not true is apt to spoil people's plans and may even cost their lives. Telling what is not true may result in legal and social penalties.²³ Two most famous Truth theories in Philosophy include:

1. Correspondence Theory of Truth
2. Coherence Theory of truth.

Correspondence Theory of truth: In Correspondence Theory, Aristotle "To say of what is that it is or of what is not that it is not, is true. In other words, the world provided "what is" or "what is not" and the true saying or thought corresponds to the fact so provided. ²⁴

Coherence Theory bases the truth of belief on the degree to which it coheres (hangs together) with all the other beliefs in a system of beliefs (typically one person 's beliefs but it could be any body of knowledge.²⁵

A coherence Theory of truth would claim that the beliefs of a given individual are true to the extent that the set of all their beliefs is coherent. Such theories, thus make truth a matter of a truth bearer's relations to other truth bearers rather than it's relation to reality.²⁶

Conclusion

In conclusion, let us cherish and honour our names, recognizing them as reflections of our unique stories, cultural heritages, and identities. Our names are an integral part of who we are, and we should embrace them with pride, celebrating their significance amidst all challenges. With the guidance of our Chi (destiny helper), our names serve as a source of strength and joy, connecting us to our families, communities, and the stories that define us.

As special gifts from our parents, our names are a treasured part of our cultural legacy, shaped by the circumstances of our births. By preserving and embracing our names, we ensure the continuity of our cultural heritage and our unique selves. Let us strive for global recognition and

appreciation of our names, acknowledging their importance in human existence.

We should remember that a name is a vital part of an individual 's identity, speaking volumes about an individual 's history, culture, and character. By clinging to our local names, we proudly preserve our African identity, wherever we may be in the world. Let us keep the flame of our names burning bright, shining a light on our rich cultural heritage for generations to come.

This paper explores the significance of names, particularly in Igbo culture, where a name like Onebunne carries a rich cultural identity and heritage. Names bring acceptance, joy, and a sense of belonging within the community and beyond. The importance of names in shaping individual identities and aspirations is also well- articulated.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INTERACT OF TRUTH, LOGIC AND REALITY: EMILE ZOLA'S NATURALISM IN AFFINITY WITH THE AFRICAN CONCEPT OF ONEBUNNE

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Abstract

Onebunne, a philosophical framework that emphasizes the idea that truth is a subjective construct formed by personal experience and opinion with analogies to Naturalism, a philosophical school of thought, which holds that truth is rooted in empirical evidence and natural phenomena, excluding supernatural or metaphysical explanations. In terms of logic, Onebunne and Naturalism endorse a rationalist approach to understanding the world, in which Onebunne recognizes the role of reason and critical thinking in the interpretation of reality; Naturalism emphasizes the scientific methods and empirical observations to draw logical conclusions. Both philosophies aim to discover the underlying patterns and principles that govern the universe, especially with respect to reality, according to which they share the common belief that reality depends on phenomena that can be observed and confirmed that reality is a structure formed by human perception and experience. While Onebunne and naturalism may differ in certain aspects, such as the role of subjectivity versus objectivity, their comparative analysis reveals intriguing parallels in their perspectives on truth, logic, and reality. This article delves into the intriguing connection between Onebunne concept and Emile Zola's naturalist ideology, with a particular focus on their shared philosophies of truth, logic, and reality. Despite belonging to different eras, Onebunne and Naturalism exhibit remarkable parallels in their philosophical outlook, emphasizing the importance of objective truth, rationality, and an unflinching examination of reality. In essence, this comparative analysis tends to shed light on the affinity between these two ideologies and explore their enduring relevance in today's society.

Introduction

Onebunne is an Igbo traditional name representing a part of the culture and heritage of the eastern people of Nigeria, it bears philosophical ideas in affinity to the concept of naturalism which largely emphasizes on scientific and in-depth logical observation of life and circumstances without idealism or avoidance of the ugly. Literary **Onebunne** though one word will have a phrasal translation in English and French languages because of the meaning, sense and ideas it transmits. *Onebunne* can be divided into three syllables *One-bu-nne*, with each of them having a full meaning on its own then bring about an illustrative meaning of the concept of *Onebunne*. A breakdown in both English and French languages, the first division “*One*” means “how many/which ones” and “*Lesquelles*” respectively having an idea of rhetoric attached to it to make view the questioning of circumstances, individual point of view or personal presentation of character or situation. The second division “*bu*” is an Igbo verb which has both a singular and plural representation of the verb “to be” conjugated in the present tense to be “is/are” and “est/sont”. The third division is a matter of context as a typical Igbo man will address the word “*Nne*” as mother and mere which is what first comes to mind at the sound of it, but contextual meaning of “*Nne*” in **Onebunne** signifies “Truth/reality” and “Vérité/Realité”.

A logical analysis into the breakdown brings a phrasal representation of the concept in English language as “How many is true/real? Which ones are true/real?”, and in French language as “*Lesquels sont vrais/réels? Lesquels sont la vérité/realité?*”. It is justified to present the logical understanding of the concept as “Which ones are logical? How many are logical? the logical point of view presents the naturalistic idea of thorough observation and critic of ideas, circumstances and situation with verifiable justification before acceptance or near acceptance. This generally correlates the concept of truth and reality in naturalism and its affinity to the idea of **Onebunne**.

Naturalist Views on Truth, Logic and Reality

Naturalism is a philosophical position that asserts that the natural world, governed by physical laws and observable phenomena, is all that exists. It rejects the existence of supernatural or metaphysical entities and emphasizes the importance of empirical evidence and scientific inquiry. When exploring the relationship between naturalism and truth, we delve

into how naturalism's worldview informs our understanding of what is true and how truth is obtained. At the core of naturalism is a commitment to the scientific method as the primary means of acquiring knowledge. Naturalists argue that truth is discovered through systematic observation, experimentation, and rigorous analysis of empirical evidence. They emphasize the importance of objectivity, rationality, and skepticism in the pursuit of truth. By relying on the evidence provided by our senses and employing critical thinking, naturalists aim to uncover truths about the natural world. The cardinal of French naturalism, Émile Zola, endeavored to incorporate naturalism into literature. In his essay, *The Experimental Novel*, Zola tried to justify the implementation of scientific and experimental methods in new practice. Naturalism claims that reality can be ascertained through systematic observation and experimentation, but the importance of naturalistic commitment is not confined to philosophy, but rather to the naturalistic philosophies of psychology, social science, science, and literature. It is very important to appeal to ontological precepts and naturalistic methodological principles.

Richard Rorty acclaims: *"In a naturalistic view, truth is not an objective correspondence with reality, but a product of our linguistic practices."* Apparently, truth is not an abstract or absolute concept but rather a product of our interactions with the physical world. It is based on the correspondence between our beliefs or statements and the facts of reality. John Smith defines Naturalism thus:

A philosophical standpoint, asserts that reality can only be understood through empirical methods. It argues that truth and logic are grounded in observable phenomena, rejecting supernatural explanations. This approach challenges traditional notions and emphasizes the importance of evidence-based reasoning.

Naturalists believe that truth is grounded in the objective, observable properties of the natural world and can be understood through scientific investigation. They reject the idea of transcendent or supernatural sources of truth, advocating instead for an evidence-based approach. Naturalism also recognizes the fallibility of human perception and cognition and acknowledges that our understanding of truth is constantly evolving as

new evidence and scientific discoveries emerge. Naturalists emphasize the importance of revising and refining our beliefs in light of new information, fostering a commitment to intellectual honesty and open-mindedness.

Critics of naturalism argue that its reliance on empirical evidence and scientific inquiry limits the scope of truth. They contend that naturalism disregards non-empirical domains such as ethics, aesthetics, and metaphysics, which they believe are essential for a comprehensive understanding of truth. The likes of Scott Smith offers numerous case studies demonstrating that we *do* have genuine knowledge of reality. Thus, philosophical naturalism is false, therefore some other ontology is necessary for knowledge of reality. He affirms thus: “a naturalist could admit that we don't actually know reality. This might appeal to some, perhaps as a gesture of intellectual humility, but it leads to self-referential incoherence”.

Various arguments and critics have emerged in the process of analyzing naturalism and its ideology, however, naturalists counter that while these areas may involve subjective experience and interpretation, they can be explored through naturalist means such as psychological research and philosophical analysis. The relationship between naturalism and truth extends further to questions of ultimate meaning and purpose. Naturalism typically denies the existence of intrinsic or predetermined meaning in the universe, instead positing that meaning is constructed in the context of an individual's life and relationships. In this sense, truth is closely related to human values, aspirations, and the pursuit of a meaningful existence. Naturalism emphasizes empirical observation, rationality, and skepticism, and approaches truth through an evidence-based, scientific lens. It rejects supernatural or metaphysical explanations and seeks to reveal the truth of the natural world through the systematic study of observable phenomena. Critics argue that naturalism may have limitations in dealing with certain domains of truth, but proponents argue that a naturalistic worldview is a way of dealing with truth within the confines of the physical universe. It claims to provide a reliable framework for understanding and exploring. In our quest to understand the fundamental nature of existence, we encounter three interconnected concepts: **truth, logic, and reality** which even though interrelated, each

concept carries distinct characteristics that shape our perception and comprehension of the world.

Objective Truth as the Foundation

The concepts of naturalism and Onebunne gave the most importance to the concept of objective truth. For Zola, truth lay in an unfiltered depiction of reality, a literary approach he called naturalism. Similarly, Onebunne postulates that objective truth can be achieved through a rigorous examination of evidence and a constant pursuit of logical coherence. Truth, often seen as the correspondence between statements and facts, represents a state that exists according to reality. It serves as the fundamental pillar upon which our understanding of the world is built. In George Orwell's dystopian novel 1984, the protagonist, Winston Smith, struggles to uncover truths hidden by a totalitarian regime. The Communist Party's manipulation of the historical record underscores the manipulation of truth for political control. Orwell's account shows that when truth is distorted or suppressed, freedom can be eroded and alternate realities can be imposed. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that their common emphasis on objective truth forms a fundamental aspect of their philosophy.

A look at Emile Zola's masterpiece *L'assommoir*, we can see the traces of objective truth to portray his ideology, instances can be taken from the works thus:

She came into the world at a time when a vast industrial development was in progress, when the working classes were accumulating enormous wealth. The streets of Paris overflowed with money, and into them flowed the surplus earnings of the common people.

This highlights the socioeconomic context of the story, portraying the objective truth of the industrialization and its impact on the working class. Nonetheless, life wasn't fair to everyone; some still had the hard life to battle and struggle through survival. *Alas Gervaise wept, overcome by her misfortunes, declaring that poverty was hereditary in her family.* This demonstrates the deterministic nature of naturalism, suggests that poverty is viewed as a genetic condition, emphasizes the objective truth of the characters' situations, and the objective truth of the economic differences

between different characters then shed light on the harsh realities people face. These excerpts from *L'Assommoir* offer insight into Zola's naturalistic approach by presenting objective truths about socioeconomic conditions and differences.

Rationality and Logical Analysis

Pursuing the truth in both *Onebunne* and Zola had to rely on reason and logic. Zola's literary work was marked by rigorous research and an unwavering commitment to rationality. Similarly, *Onebunne*'s meaning and sensory structures emphasized the importance of logical analysis and critical thinking in understanding reality. Logic is the framework for drawing valid conclusions and making rational decisions. It follows a set of rules and principles that govern the coherence of discussions. Arthur Conan Doyle's legendary detective Sherlock Holmes embodies the power of logic to unravel mysteries. Holmes uses deductive reasoning, relying on evidence and logical deduction to solve complex cases. His famous quote, "*Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth,*" showcases the reliance on logical reasoning to arrive at truth. This delves into the role of rationality and logical reasoning in both ideologies, highlighting their shared belief in the power of intellectual rigor.

Emile Zola's work *L'Assommoir* is a prime example of naturalism in literature, with clear examples of rationality and logical analysis in the context of naturalism found. A detailed and unfiltered presentation and exploration of the working-class life in Paris, focusing on struggle, poverty, and alcoholism emphasizes objective observation of the characters and their surroundings as a way to accurate portray of reality. Second, if naturalism seeks to establish causality based on scientific principles, Zola examines how a character's social conditions, genetic factors, and environment contribute to their downfall thereby presenting a logical analysis of their situation and enhancing determinism. It's also very important to note that in *L'Assommoir*, Zola's characters are portrayed as victims of the environment: Their actions and outcomes suggest that individuals are shaped and largely determined by social and environmental factors to underscore the deterministic nature of human existence and are in most cases greatly affected by external forces. Zola finally employs logical analysis to critique societal issues, whereby he uses the novel as a platform to expose the harsh realities of poverty,

alcoholism, and the dehumanizing effects of industrialization. The logical portrayal of these themes aims to provoke reflection and social change.

Unveiling Reality's Dark Corners

Onebunne and the ideologies of naturalism were unafraid to delve into the darker side of reality, exposing the evils of society and challenging dominant narratives. Zola's novels dealt with taboo themes such as corruption, poverty, social injustice and abuse, and attempted to reveal hidden realities of his time. Similarly, Onebunne's philosophical inquiry explored the complexities of human experience and often challenged established norms and perceptions. A reality that encompasses the totality of existence encompasses both the objective and subjective aspects of the world. It is a realm of concrete experience and the outside world that exists independently of human perception. But reality is also shaped by individual perspectives and subjective interpretations. In Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, society is ruled by a fabricated reality, and citizens are conditioned to accept a distorted version of the truth. This novel examines the tension between the objective reality imposed by the ruling elite and the human need for individuality and authentic experience. This idea thus contributes to their ideological affinity, like their shared dedication to exposing inconvenient truths.

Zola's narration acts as a social critique which exposes the dark corners of reality to provoke thought, ignite a call for change, and challenge readers to confront the uncomfortable truths that lurk beneath the surface. Through dark and unflinching scenes, Zola delves into the depths of human existence thereby shedding light on the destructive power of alcoholism and substance abuse and the devastating consequences it has for individuals and families. The characters of *L'Assommoir* struggles with dire situations caught in a cycle of misery and despair, and Zola fearlessly peels back the layers of social façade to reveal the true colors of suffering. In summary, Zola's vivid portrayal of abandoned buildings, overcrowded slums, and suffocating poverty, reveals the harsh realities of working-class neighborhoods and all these penetrated dark corners of misery and vice to reveal a despicable world hidden from a polite society where poverty, alcoholism and depravity reign.

The obvious fact that truth, logic, and reality are interrelated does not exclude the possibility that they have different qualities that shape our

understanding of the world. Truth serves as the foundation, representing the alignment of propositions with facts, while logic acts as the tool through which we derive rational conclusions and make coherent judgments and reality serves as the objectivity of existence, subject to external realities and individual interpretations. Understanding the naturalistic differences between truth, logic, and reality is essential for navigating a complex world where information is abundant and often conflicting. As individuals, we must strive for the pursuit of truth, employing logic as our guide, while recognizing the dynamic and multifaceted nature of reality. In summary, Truth, Logic and Reality form a triad of concepts that shape our understanding of the world. Exploring these naturalistic differences provides greater insight into the nature of existence and the complexity of human perception.

Onebunne's Intervention for Truth Rationalization

The impossibility of justifying truth is a complex philosophical question that has puzzled thinkers for centuries. Essentially, the question asks whether a definitive and irrefutable justification can be provided for the truth or the veracity of any claim. The challenge arises from the nature of truth itself: Truth is often seen as an objective and independent concept that corresponds to reality. However, establishing an absolute and universally applicable justification for truth encounters several obstacles, nonetheless, different perspectives, prejudices, and cultural backgrounds shape our understanding of truth and can make it difficult to find a universally valid justification.

Additionally, the problem of induction poses a significant challenge. This usually justifies relying on evidence and arguments, but all the evidence we gather is limited in scope and subject to interpretation. Conclusions drawn from the available evidence may not necessarily apply in all circumstances, raising the question of whether complete evidence is available to fully justify the truth. Moreover, the paradox of self-referential statements adds another layer of complexity. When trying to justify truth, we have to rely on other statements and criteria. However, such criteria themselves require justification and lead to infinite regression and this recursive nature undermines our ability to arrive at a fully justified basis for truth. The impossibility of justifying truth arises from the inherent subjectivity of perspective, the limitations of evidence and argument, and the challenges posed by self-referencing. While we

may strive to deepen our understanding and seek evidence and arguments to support our claims, achieving a final and universal justification for truth seems an elusive goal.

Onebunne, a philosophical concept rooted in the pursuit of truth, logic, and reality, encapsulates a deep affinity for these fundamental aspects of existence and emphasizes the importance of aligning one's beliefs and actions with objective truths and logical principles. In the realm of truth, Onebunne encourages individuals to seek genuine knowledge and understanding, free from biases, misconceptions, and falsehoods. It fosters a commitment to rigorous inquiry, critical thinking, and intellectual honesty, striving for coherence between one's beliefs and the actual state of affairs. Regarding logic, Onebunne recognizes the power of reason and rationality in comprehending the world. It advocates the application of logical principles to the analysis and evaluation of arguments so that valid deductions can be distinguished from sound conclusions. By assuming logical consistency, Onebunne aims to foster a consistent world view based on rationality. Moreover, Onebunne recognizes the importance of fact as the basis for knowledge and understanding, and encourages individuals to engage directly with reality, using empirical evidence and observations to strengthen their beliefs. This appreciation for reality serves as a counterbalance to subjective interpretations and predispositions, emphasizing the interest of exact and objective comprehension. Essentially, Onebunne's relationship with truth, logic, and reality has inspired individuals to strive for integrity, intellectual consistency, and a real understanding of the world, ultimately leading to a more grounded and informed perspective on life.

Conclusion

In exploring the relationship between Émile Zola's naturalist ideology of truth, logic and reality and the African concept of Onebunne, some fascinating connections emerge. Zola's naturalism and Onebunne ideology emphasize the importance of foundational understanding in empirical evidence and the observable world. Zola's relentless portrayal of the dark corners of reality resonates with Onebunne's quest to uncover hidden truths and challenge Onebunne's conventional notions. Onebunne, as a symbol of African thought, embodies a holistic approach to truth and reality, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all things, while Zola's naturalistic view is consistent with the holistic

worldview by highlighting the complex network of cause and effect in human life and society. Both views reject simple explanations and acknowledge the complexity and nuance of existence. Furthermore, Zola's exploration of the social and environmental influences on individuals reflects the interconnectedness and interdependence emphasized in Onebunne. Both ideologies recognize the profound impact of external factors on human behavior and challenge deterministic notions of free will. In essence, the affinity between Zola's naturalist ideology and the African concept of Onebunne lies in their shared commitment to unveiling truth, interrogating conventional wisdom, and embracing a nuanced understanding of reality. Together, they encourage us to confront uncomfortable truths, question prevailing assumptions, and seek a deeper comprehension of the complexity of existence.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

ONEBUNNE IN SEARCH OF AFRICAN METAPHYSICS OF TRUTH

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Abstract

The search for truth is a worthwhile human enterprise. Though philosophy, especially of Western philosophical traditions, began with wonder in this all important search, African philosophy of African philosophical tradition, nevertheless, began with *onuma* as a result of and a reaction against years of frustrated engagement of trying to rediscover what was for centuries deprived of us as Africans in the name of stolen legacies orchestrated by exploration turned into exploitation of Africa through many faces of colonial misrule unto the eventual partitioning of African continent. Even as we have established African philosophy as such, this search continues. The concept of Onebunne en-kindles this search in African metaphysics.

Keywords: Onebunne, African metaphysics, truth

Introduction

Truth is a concept that cuts across every facet of reality that is life and living as such. Truth seems to be sought in every human endeavour. This complemented Aristotle's classical correspondence view that "to say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true". As a human enterprise, truth connects every reality with each other. This is why the truth of life is not different from truth of science and all logical endeavours. Medieval thinkers were inclined to another formulation of traditional definition of truth as: *veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*. That is, truth (*veritas*) is the agreement or correspondence (*adaequatio*) between things (*rei*) and the intellect, mind or mental sentence. Often, truth is the reason behind everything in life identifying as such and

properly when we go wrong. J. L. Austin in 1950 symposium expanded amidst theories of truth especially of a correspondence theory of truth that makes essential use of the sentence or statement distinction. This is so because, some words have natural connection with what they are about to represent, show or identify with. Austin J. L., continuing asserts that: “a statement is said to be true when the historic state of affairs to which it is correlated by demonstrative conventions (the one to which it refers) is a type with which the sentence used in making it is correlated by the descriptive conventions”. Later, modern thinkers had alternatives to correspondence theory with coherence and pragmatic theories as well as classical truth and deflationist truth. Onebunne (2023) maintains that the African world-view has something to do with critical realities around it. One of such fundamental realities is the concept of truth.

Appreciating the concept of Truth as *Eziokwu*

Ezi depending on the dialectical translation is *pig* as well as outside (*ilo*). *Ezi*, however, is from the root word *zi* or *izi* that is to show, to direct. *Zi* is like an instruction or command meaning *show*. It is the root from where words like *Izi* (to show), *kuzi* (to knock aright), *Nkuzi* (to teach). However, *Izi* literally is *to show*. Moreover, some scholars have traced the root word *izi* to an Igbo tree *uzi* which is known to be the most erect tree in Igbo cosmogony. This Igbo tree is very symbolic. *Uzi* as a tree in Igbo cosmogony, therefore, symbolizes straightforwardness, uprightness, rigidity. Dukor, M., (2021, 39) with regard to *uzi* explains thus: “among the Igbo people and in their theistic panpsychic humanistic ontology, the *uzi* tree is the physical structure and picture of whatever is upright, or of rectitude; *uzi* is the tree of truth”. As a result of this symbolic understanding and connection between *zi* and *uzi*, there is appreciation of *ezi* in the concept of *eziokwu* which is truth. However, Osuagwu, C., (2003, 333) made an allusion to this symbolism thus:

The Igbo word for truth is *Ezi*. *Ezi* means corrected, ordered, positive, proper, array, rectitude, genuine, upright, or valid. This is employed as a validating adjective. And so *Ezi* is employed to qualify *Okwu*, which is the Igbo word for word or statement in the generation of the compound word *Eziokwu* which stands for valid, positive or genuine truthful statements.

Another source has it that the Igbo word for *truth* is ‘*ezi okwu*’. *Ezi* here is the short-form of *ezigbo*, which means *good*. *Okwu* means *talk*. So, Igbos believe that what makes a talk good is not how good it sounds, but whether it is the truth. Once the talk is good which is within the boundaries of value and aesthetics, it is true. This is why it is popular among the Igbos that *eziokwu bu ndu*, meaning *Truth is life, knowing full well that life is a primary value without which no values worth it nor are meaningful. Truth as eziokwu is a value very fundamental and primary since truth is life, life is truth.*

There are many translated-synonyms of truth as one tries to understand the concept of truth as *eziokwu*. *Eziokwu* as we have it is: *a fact that has been verified; conformity to reality or actuality; a true statement (and the quality of being near to the true value)*. Truth is synonymous with honesty, integrity, candid, frank and in-deed. Nuances of *eziokwu* as: *Eziokwu* as a noun is truth but as an adjective is true. *Eziokwu* (my truth), *eziokwu gi* (your truth) and *eziokwu ya* her truth). Once more, Onebunne (2023) reiterates thus:

Eziokwu, therefore, translates the Latin word *Veritas*. *Ezi* equally means candid, genuine (adjective). As *ezi n’ulo*: family, it literary means compound and house. As *ezi omume*, it means good behaviour or *ezigbo nwoke*: good man. *Okwu* as a noun means word, talk. As well it is literally translated address and vocabulary. From the above nuances of meaning as regards compound word, *Ezi Okwu*, means good word. Then as a concept *ezi okwu* means truth. *Eziokwu*, therefore, is a fact, reality, truth, factual, frank, honesty, integrity, valid point. *Eziokwu* as an operative word translates the concept of truth.

Truth is *eziokwu*. As reality, it is realizable. Reality as *whatever is* is realizable. Reality is “the state of things as they actually exist, as opposed to an idealistic or notional idea of them”. Reality has similar concepts like the real world, real life, actuality, truth, physical existence, corporeality, substantiality and materiality. It is either a reality or mere fantasy, dream or a kind of castle in the air. It is the state or quality of having existence or substance. Philosophically, this existential aspects and fact of reality is simply absolute, self-sufficient and objective, and not subject to human

decisions or any theoretical conventions. As a noun, reality stands for a thing that is actually knowledgeable, genuinely experienced or truly seen, especially when this is unpleasant. It is the fact or quality of being lifelike or verity. This is simply realism or verisimilitude as well as authenticity, very much opposing to idealism. Reality means anything that exists. An event that has actually happened, or a thing which really exists is said to have "reality." Something close to reality is realistic. Reality is the state of things as they are, rather than as they may appear or might be imagined.

According to Jagdish Nargundkar “there are indeed subtle differences and distinction between reality and truth; inasmuch that the former exists but only the latter can confirm its existence in any given circumstance”. For him, therefore, truth is absolute, reality is cognitive... Truth is objective, Reality is subjective. Truth is permanent, Reality is ephemeral... Truth is always real, Reality is not always true. In spite of these comparative understanding and expressions, truth is reality expressed in its fullest meaning. According to Dukor, M (2021:36), “the concept of truth in African philosophy is an intrinsic, permanent, dynamic process that in along its structural and ontological nature exhibits the ontological and physical manifestation of falsehood truth”

There are different expressions of truth-concept well expressed in many Papal encyclicals. However, charity is, still relevant in our society which is devoid of moral responsibilities and ethical response-abilities. Reiterating further within the bounds of love, Albert Einstein, while appreciating the universal force of love in his theory of relativity, summarily writes that Love is the quintessence of life. This is why love as charity otherwise known as *caritas* is the universal force of activities and the basis of good human interaction. It is the only virtue we share with God even as human. This love a Divine and a human attitude. Many significant figures in history have tried to show what love is all about. Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin Jr. KBE (1889-1977) remains one of them, if not the most popular. He was an English comic actor, film-maker, and composer who rose to fame in the era of silent film. He became a worldwide icon through his screen persona, *The Tramp*, and is considered one of the most important figures in the history of the film industry. This popular comedian of repute, Charlie Chaplin, reflecting on the power of love was accredited of the popular thus: You need power, only when you want to do something harmful, otherwise, love is enough to get

everything done. This is the power of Love. Of all the known virtues the only place we resemble Christ is on the virtue of love. Jesus Christ went to the extent of making love the summary and supreme of all the Decalogue. Love, therefore, is a force, an activity.

Love as a Standard for Activities

Love is a standard underlying all human attitudes, especially Christian attitudes. It is a standard for acting and speaking. Any action or word not rooted in love or borne out of it is empty and a misnomer (cf. 1Cor. 13:1ff). As one of the theological virtues, it is only in the language of love and attitude that we resemble Christ and become more Godlike. God, who is ever faithful in Himself as we know, cannot have faith in anything if faith means believing in a being, somebody of something. God as well cannot have hope if it is one's relationship with the future because God is in timelessness and His name which is I am (cf. Ex. 3:15) smacks more of now, a kind of *presentiality*. But God can love for He is love (cf. 1 Jn.4:8). In this powerful Christian attitude of love, we resemble God. Our Christianity depends on our power of love with regard to the love of God, love of neighbour and enemies, and love of self. For any human being, to be devoid of love, which is a protestation of love, is to be devoid of the primary principle of life and living. Christian love has a practical attitude that simply loves.

On the already darkened human society, where an attitude of love can put on another flame of living, the worst that has happened to this attitude or language of love is its identification with sexual immorality, banality, carnality and other abhorring social ills. It is a betrayal of love. Love betrayed cannot but create other existential tragedies and perversions of love seen in the type of Kiss that betrayed Christ, like the hug of love in Brutus that betrayed Caesar; the lying and sleeping in the name of love that destroyed Samson; or the expression of love that ends in all forms of litany of unfaithfulness and infidelities.

Onebunne J. (2012, 52) expanded on this love thus: Love as human attitude is *a verb*, and a humane language. It is a part of speech, a part of what you do or say; an action word. Love is a doing word. Hence, evil deeds are devoid of love. Evil is an activity devoid of love, a negation of good activity. Being an action word, love as a Christian attitude is an act of choice that is not only an affirmation of something; it is also a rejection

of something: where good is affirmed and evil rejected. It is freedom from something and freedom to something. An attitude of Christian love is simply freedom from attachment or combinations of selfishness, self-destruction, self-effacing, obsessiveness, possession, abuse-in-use, intimidation, monitoring, luring, bondage of knowing him or her, infatuation, irresponsible and immature commitments. An attitude of love is freedom to or detachment to be free to live a good life, disciplined life, defined life, determined life, and be free from all forms of false rationalization and deception inherent in today's expression of *I love you* which translates and interprets the lazy and presumed phrase: *I want sex!*

As a Christian attitude or doing word, even as a Christian name or noun, love has principles known as principles of love and loving which state thus: *Love is free. I am free from you for God; I am free from you for my man or woman, therefore, I reject you and accept him or her on a commitment level.* A sign of love is shown in the freedom given or enjoyed. If you love something, set it free. If it strays away, it was never yours. If it comes back after straying, it belongs to you. Therefore, love is *freedom from* and *freedom to*.

Caritas as a Call for Service

Therefore, unless you understand the natural or Christian call to love as an attitude along the paths of living, the principles of love, sacrifices of wounded love and appreciation that sex or romance, infatuation and or friendship have boundaries within the geography of love in the map of existential living-out of human relationship and interaction, your love map simply leads nowhere. It will always be a shipwreck on the sea of love: a voyage or expedition of destruction and annihilation; a showdown in the play of life and a defeat amidst powers of love. Unfortunately, love has no middle term: either it destroys or it saves (Hugo Victor).

What will our world look like without the principle and Christian attitude of love? No wonder Christ commands: *Love one another* (cf. Jn. 15:12). This Christian attitude identified a Christian as such in the then pagan land of Antioch. Therefore, Christ's prescription, command, to love one another is the only condition or attitude for being a Christian. Love is nonetheless, a constant in being a Christian. It identifies with and defines every other Christian attitude along the paths of life. This is why every living thing hears or speaks, understands or responds to this language of

love. The language of love is heard and seen through the attitudes of obedience, sacrifice, freedom, self-discovery and self-discipline, patience and maturity, humility and steadfastness. Hence, the language of love which is a language of civilization (progress and development) is a language that tolerates excuses, understands, identifies with, appreciates, accommodates along the littered paths as well as one that accuses, rebukes and reproaches all that litter the Christian paths. A lot of people misunderstood Christ in the scripture when He spoke this language of love to the woman caught in Adultery, (Jn. 8:1-11) Mary Magdalene (Lk. 8:2), Public sinners and Tax collectors (Mk. 2:13-17), and even to the thief on the Cross (Lk. 23:39-43). A good Christian knows that the Christian attitude of love is an encounter that cannot leave a Christian in the same old person. And the Christian language of love which Christ ever utters leaves the Christian along the littered path with the words of salvation thus: *Go and sin no more!* (cf. Jn. 8:11). When you play on the strings of love, the rhythm is forgiveness, peace, harmony, happiness and understanding. Thus, St. Augustine exclaimed:

Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new,
late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was
outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my
unloveliness, I plunged into the lovely things which you
created. You were with me, but I was not with you.
Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not
been in you, they would have not been at all. You called,
you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You
flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness.
You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath
and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger
and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for
your peace.

St. John of Cross reminds us that this Christian attitude of love will be the basis of our final judgement when he wrote that: *In the evening of your life, you will be judged on love.* We may at this point identify that the greatest tragedy with regard to this Christian attitude of love along the littered Christian path is when many have no one to love them or anyone to love. Equally, by sheer wickedness and loveless attitudes, others are betrayed in the name of love. Such people do listen and enjoy the

preaching of the devil thus: *that God hates you! And that is why you suffer and are besieged with one calamity or the other.* This is bad news against all Christian attitudes. The good news is that *God loves you in spite of yourself.* A good Christian attitude of love necessitates other Christian attitudes of patience, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Love is Inevitable

You must love or you perish! This Christian attitude of love, Mother Teresa of Calcutta says, *begins when it pains. Love begins when love pains.* Christ's love was very passionate and painfully sacrificial. The wounds borne out of love are true signs of this Christian attitude of love. Notwithstanding, whoever has a heart full of love always has something to give (Pope John XXIII). Being a Christian attitude and a constant in Christian life, we are called to be people of love along the Christian littered paths of life. It is a new demand and commandment of God to love.

In love, a Christian inspires somebody than expires him or her. With regard to love and love affairs, there are people whom I do not believe in or have any regard for. I don't believe in those who *fall in love* when they are expected to stand upright, morally erect and firm in love. I do not believe in people who exploit and use others in the name of love and more, those whose love affair leads astray. Love should be *sightful*. Unfortunately, we have many fools in and of love amidst trepidations in love, titanic moral uproars and exigencies of love, zeroed morality and shattered loving relationships and existence. Through these *fools in love* we identify the demons in the Christian attitude of love as: hatred, lust, possessiveness, betrayal, sexual promiscuities and more in our time as well as other sexual tragedies as abortion, internet pornography, homosexuality, lesbianism and pornography.

As an attitude, one learns to love than to hate. Love is loveable. To love is to be loveable. In everything, this attitude of love is supreme and utmost. Everyone loves to be loved. Everybody loves. Everybody wants to be loved. Love, therefore becomes a priority. The new people of God, the people of the New Testament, the Christians, enjoy this attitude, with the priority of love over all prophecies and laws. The people of Old Testament lived under the Law. In our time, this civilization of love

inaugurated by Jesus Christ continues and is the bedrock of human existence and relationship.

Expanding Philosophy of *Caritas*

This is philosophy of love. It is a critical appreciation of love as a basic and fundamental reality in human existence. Onebunne (2023) reiterates that “the act of charity or love is more than a mere animal act even on the level of sheer instinct. It is more of a divine act than a human act since God is love. It’s an act informed by circumstances of the welfare of others”. Furthermore, Onebunne (2023) stressed that as an informed act, love is always a result of unaided reason letting our controlled emotions overriding our philanthropic regards for others. Love, therefore, is the vital force. Placid Tempels and Albert Einstein had already echoed that such force defines human acts as such having determined every act of the salvific acts of Christ through the Holy Spirit in the Father. The true philosophy of charity would not condemn these modern tendencies of relating charity as mere act of give and take as well as an organization making big business around the very few (Onebunne, 2023). The philosophy of *caritas* received an appreciation by Fulton Sheen in his critical appreciation of love. Charity for him begins with and is within the bosom of the Triune God for charity is the definition of God. According to F. J. Sheen therefore:

Charity, then, is not horizontal, extending from kind hearted men to needy men, but vertical, extending from the infinite source of charity, God Himself, down to the members of the mystical body, through the incarnation. Charity, then, is not organized, nor is charity accomplished through organization.

Philosophy of love, to this extent is understood as the basic stuff underlying every reality as it is the force that *explains and gives life to all*. It is the *universal energy* and according to Einstein the *quintessence of life*. It is nevertheless a human attitude. We are very much aware that man is a product of his environment as well as product of nurture. Philosophy of love, therefore, is a great search for the wisdom of love. It is a human search for the ultimacy of charity, (Onebunne, 2023).

The Philosophy of Onebunne

It is all about the critical appreciation of the truth in a question form. Hence, Onebunne captures truth as a dynamic enterprise in people's life and living. Onebunne questioningly appreciates all the dynamisms of truth. However, within the philosophical traditions of truth, the idea of Onebunne surfaces. The philosophical traditions of truth were actually searching for what is true, what is certain, what reality is all about, (Onebunne, 2023b). The problem of truth or the conceptual question Onebunne is actually the problem of human knowledge. This is why the natural desire of man to know tends not only towards knowing things but also towards knowing the truth about them. The prominent ancient western philosophers: Thales, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were, however, very elemental in defining the limit of this truth, (Onebunne, 2023b).

The philosophy of Onebunne is a philosophy of questioning-reality. Philosophy as a human enterprise questions every and any time. It questions and appreciates whatever is, insofar as it exists. This is the background concept in the naming act of Onebunne. In Onebunne, as a name, a reality that is the object interrogated is facie-a-facie with the questioner. Onebunne, literally means: *how many is true?* and actually means *is this one true?* This is why the Philosophy of Onebunne, nevertheless, questions reality at hand. That is, a questioner tries to confirm while doubting a reality before him as such. Onebunne questions reality as it is before us as reality. In this regard, there is a given being questioned of its *given ness* or a being, of its *beingness*. The Philosophy of Onebunne, therefore, acknowledges and appreciates a datum by way of appraisal question that seems to doubt.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

DECIPHERING AUTHENTICITY OR INAUTHENTICITY IN PEOPLE OR THINGS (MATT. 7:15-20): KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE IGBO CONCEPT “ONEBUNNE”¹

Ezeogamba, Anthony Ikechukwu

Abstract

Authenticity is the greatest virtue that is eluding humanity today and inauthenticity has invaded all aspects of human vocations and carriers. This is why Jesus was primarily against the Pharisees, Scribes, and it was the fundamental reason he calls them, “blind guides” and even “hypocrites” (Matt. 23). Yet, in the eyes of the Jews, the Pharisees, Chief Priests and Scribes are the best. They pretentiously behave as if they are the best. In the same way, our society today is filled with pretentious men and women. The implication is that among politicians, civil servants, clergymen and women, medical doctors, Christians and non-Christians, Muslims and non-Muslims, lawyers, and others, there exists authentic ones and inauthentic ones. The worst is that the inauthentic most often resembles the authentic hence deceptions are everywhere even in the assembly of believers. That is why Jesus in his wisdom warned his disciples to beware of false prophets who come to them in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves (Matt.7:15). The problem is, how does one know and distinguish the counterfeit from the original since they look alike? This paper aims at understanding the Igbo concept of “Onebunne” in the context of deciphering false prophets from authentic prophets through their fruits. Textual Criticism and Thematic Interpretative method of exegesis were used both in the interpretation of Matt. 7:15-20 and the concept “Onebunne”. Significantly, this paper will be very relevant to all Igbos and non-Igbos for it exposes the full import of the concept “Onebunne.”

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Keywords: Onebunne, authenticity, inauthenticity.

Introduction

We live in difficult times in Nigeria today. There is nothing like steady electric supply, no water supply system, there is insecurity virtually in every part of the nation, bad road everywhere especially in the South-East of Nigeria, imbalance in federal government appointments despite Quota System enshrined in the Nigerian constitution, maladministration by the government of the day both in the federal, state and local government areas. All these situations provide ready tools for falsehood. They anchor on any of them or all of them to play on people's psychology and the unsuspecting crowd, especially the gullible ones would see them as messiahs that have come to judgment. Thus, it is not hyperbolic to say that the electioneering period is a period when falsehood that seems to be the truth is almost on the lips of every politician. They make statements that are laden with promises that are rarely true or nearer to reality. They convincingly speak to people and in admiration, they believe them and vote them in. At the end of the day, when they assume office, they will abandon those promises and follow their hidden scripts. To make the matter worst, during their campaign period, they distribute things ranging from money to material things; call them on phone during that period, they answer immediately, knock at their gate, they open the gate immediately, ask them a question, they attend to it satisfactorily and promptly but as soon as they assume office they distance themselves from the electorate on the claim of insecurity in the country.

Even in the religious arena, some claim to be what they are not. There are so many ministers and they all claim to have been called by God to be ministers when in actual fact, it is poverty that is propelling them. Lack of accountability is prevalent among false ministers. The greatest problem is that they even pray, look, walk, and dress like real ministers. This accounts for the proliferation of Churches in the world, especially in Nigeria. This inauthenticity also affects goods and services. The volume of falsehoods going on in our various markets and government offices is alarming. This ranges from the declaration of age in the government offices to the value of goods and services down to actual costs of materials in the market. The above exposition questions the Christianity of Christians since Christians are really in the majority in Nigeria and even when they are not more populous, it is a little spoon of salt that salts a pot

of soup as Ezeogamba (2019) exposed in his book, “The Christianity of Christians”. This work, therefore, struggles to answer the question, “Onebunne?”

Understanding the concept of Onebunne contextually.

The word Onebunne is an Igbo phrase that is made of three words namely, “One,” “bu,” and “nne”. One? though spells like the Roman numeral one, is a question. It simply means “how many?” The word “bu” is a verb that may be singular or plural. It is, therefore, the context that reveals whether it is singular or plural. Hence, it means either “is” or “are”. For instance, “his name is John” is translated in Igbo as, “Aha ya bu John,” whereas the sentence, “they are Israelites” is translated in Igbo thus, “Ha bu ndi Israel”. The third word, “nne” can mean two things in the Igbo language depending on the context. Nne means mother, it also means truth. In the context of Onebunne, it means “truth”. The full and literal English translation of Onebunne is “How many are true?” or “How many are authentic?” or “How many are correct?” That name questions always, “How many is truth?” “How many are authentic?” It is a name that warms, among all the things that have been said, how many are really true or authentic or practicable?

Authenticity, according to the New Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language, International Edition (2004) means “the quality of being authentic”. Authentic comes from the Greek word *authentēō* from *autos*, self. Put differently, it is the quality of being sincere, honest and faultless. Authentic means being true, or reliable or something that cannot be doubted. A good example is the Holy Bible. For instance, we talk of the authenticity or inerrancy of the content of the Holy Bible. Broderick (2005) referring to the authenticity of the biblical text says,

Though often referred to as the inerrancy of the Bible, it is directed primarily at the trustworthiness of the text, its official recognition by authorities, and the exactness with which it expresses the known thought of the Scripture. The Scriptures derive their authenticity first from the authors of the books and second from the studied declaration of the Church” p.57.

The implication is that whatever the pages of the Holy Scripture say is correct and can never be doubted by the believers. Anyone, therefore, who cannot be trusted is seen as inauthentic or hypocrite especially when one claims what he/she is not.

The Onebunne Concept and Hypocrisy: Anyone that asks, “onebunne?” is one who is being careful from the beginning to avoid making mistakes. The phrase onebunne has a lot to do with deciphering who is authentic and who is a hypocrite. The parable of Wheat and Tares touches on this idea of the real and unreal (Matt 13:24-30). Anambra state is preparing for the gubernatorial election which is to take place on 6th November 2021 and it has not less than 14 candidates vying for the Anambra state Government house popularly known as “Agu-Awka”. The greatest problem now for Anambrarians is who is actually who among these 14 candidates. They all have wonderful curriculum vitae with wonderful manifestoes. Who among them will implement his manifesto? In other words, onebunne among them? According to Rowe (1996) a hypocrite is,

An actor, one who plays a role on stage. Its metaphoric sense connotes a pretender or dissembler, and this is the meaning that prevails in the Bible. A hypocrite is one who displays exterior piety without interior devotion, one whose actions conform to ritual obligations but whose heart is without intention p.455.

In the same vein, Greenlee, H. and Killen A. (2005) defined hypocrisy in the context of Greek drama as a term “applied to an actor on the theatre stage. Since an actor pretends to be someone other himself, *hypokritēs* was applied metaphorically to a person who acts a part in real life, pretending to be better than he actually is, one who simulates goodness” p.823. It thus points towards inauthenticity, imitation, deceptive, lawlessness and insincerity. No wonder Jesus warned his followers against the “leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy” (Matt 12:1). Henry (2012) says, “False prophets are those who produce false commissions, who pretend to have immediate warrant and direction from God to set up for prophets . . . those who preach false doctrines in those things that are essential to religion; who teach that which is contrary to the truth as it is in Jesus, to the truth which is according to godliness” p. 1307. They are, therefore, nothing but pretenders. Again, Fisher (1996)

further averred, “Empty displays of piety are labelled hypocrisy in Matt 6:5 because they serve only to impress others and lack sincerity of heart” This idea is captured in the assertion “this people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Isa 29:13//Matt 15:7). This idea can also be seen in such passages as Mic 6:8; Isa 1:11-17. This implies one must live according to one’s profession. This double or masquerading type of life or living a life contrary to one’s vocation is what Ezeogamba (2019) dealt with when he questions the Christianity of Christians (pp.125-137). Hypocrisy in the New Testament is seen clearly in Jesus’ polemic exchange with the Pharisees or Jewish opponents especially in chapters 6 and 23 of Matthew’s gospel (Fisher 1996, p.456). Even among the chosen, hypocrisy is not a foreigner. One has to recall to mind here the situation that arose between Peter and Paul and Judaizers. Paul had to accuse Peter of being a hypocrite (Matt 23:28) because of the insincerity and dissimulation he portrayed in the presence of the circumcision party (Gal 2:13). Ananias and Sapphira also hypocritically connived and lied so as to deceive the apostles, death was the consequence of that. Remember that they were believed by some of those that heard Ananias in the first instance except Peter (Acts 5:1-11). Peter was able to decipher the falsehood. In the same way, when APC was campaigning against the PDP, APC and Muhammad Buhari made a lot of promises, for instance, a dollar will be N1 to \$1; insecurity will be fought to a standstill, PMS/Fuel will sell below N65, bribery and corruption will be a thing of the past, rule of law and due process will be upheld, electricity will be steady and affordable within the first six months of their assumption to office. People applauded them but PDP her candidates were not applauding them like the rest of the people instead they made it clear that if the APC and their candidate are elected know that Nigeria will be entering into a reversed gear, that they are going to lead us 50 years backward on our way to development. This they demonstrated with children running a relay race. On that relay race, PDP candidate, Goodluck Ebere Jonathan was running forward and people were hailing him but immediately the baton was handed over to Muhammad Buhari he started running backwards instead of forward. A deep look into Buhari Administration reveals that clearly. The worst thing that can happen to anyone is to be a hypocrite or pharisaic without knowing that (Matt 7:20-23). As a result of the understanding of the phrase, onebunne, Paul reveals that in the last days there will be people who follow evil spirits and doctrines of demons and speak lies in hypocrisy (1 Tim 4:1-2). Those last

days seem to be with us now. A Christian must, therefore, be careful so as to eliminate any atom of hypocrisy in his/her life (1 Pet. 2:1).

Unity and Delimitation of Matt. 7:15-20: Matthew 7:15-20 is a unit that deals specifically with warning and how to avoid being bamboozled or beguiled as a result of the appearance of false prophets. First, there is a warning and secondly, there is a description of how to decipher among them so as to find out how many are real or authentic (onebunne). Hence, there is a warning and there is an encouragement to lip before one jumps or to ask, onebunne? V15 is like a superstructure which is a warning against false prophets and verses 16-20 are the foundation or what gives meaning to the structure or the criterion for recognizing the false prophets which are the deeds of the prophet. Hence, ka onye si eme ka ekwe si akpo ya (one's behaviour determines one's integrity). That is why one sees in verses 16 and 20 such statements as “apo tōn karpōn autōn epignōsesthe” (from their fruits you shall know them) thus they form an inclusion. It implies that epignōsesthe of v16 forms an inclusion with epignōsesthe of v.20 (Craig, 1993). This confirms the unity of the text. Thus, the centre of this work is 7:15-20 in the context of the Igbo concept, onebunne, any other reference to any other chapters and verses may be references to authenticate facts.

Synoptic of Matt 7:15-20: There is no doubt that this portion is part of the double tradition or Quelle materials in the New Testament. So it is part of the materials Matthew and Luke have in common of which Mark is ignorant. This implies that Matt 7:15-20 is parallel to Luke 6:43-45,

Textual Criticism is a branch of criticism that investigates the origins of ancient texts in order to understand the world behind the text. According to Soulen (1981)

The function and purpose of Textual Criticism are of a dual nature: (1) To reconstruct the original wording of the Biblical text; and (2) to establish the history of the transmission of the text through the centuries. The first of these two is in fact hypothetical and unattainable. In every instance the original copy (called the autograph) of the books of the Bible is lost, hence every reconstruction is a matter of conjecture. Textual

criticism's task, therefore, is to compare existing MSS, no two of which are alike, in order to develop a critical text which lists variant readings in footnotes, called a **"critical apparatus"** p. 192.

Textual criticism, therefore, examines manuscripts so as to get to the original text or nearer to the original text so as to interpret the text that exposes the mind of the author. Let us now critically examine Matt. 7:15-20 bearing the above idea in mind. Summarily, verses 15-20 of chapter 7 of Matthew have six critical problems which show that different manuscripts that recorded Matt 7:15-20 have six variant/different readings and each of these manuscripts claims to be the original text or closest to the original. This study uses Nestle-Aland (2001), *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th Edition) as the basis for the comparison of different manuscripts to guess what seems to be very close to the original or the original itself.

In verse 15 there is an insertion of the particle "de" which is a discourse particle meaning "but", or "and" by the following manuscripts, Majority text, including the Byzantine Koine text which indicates readings supported by the majority of all manuscripts, syh which is a Syriac version known as Harklensis named after Thomas of Harkel in AD 616. It is the only Syriac version that contains the whole NT. Another manuscript that has de is samss which is two or more Sahidic manuscripts. Another manuscript that has de is bo which is known as the Bohairic manuscript. Alexandrian texts like Codex L (8th cent.), MSS 33 (9th cent.) have de. Again, Byzantine texts like Ephraemi (C), Washingtonianus (W) have de as well. Others include Θ 0281 f1.13 f q. They all have the discourse particle de. But Nestle-Aland is supported by most ancient manuscripts like Sinaiticus which is a 4th-century manuscript that contains the entire NT texts; Vaticanus which is also a 4th-century manuscript that is best in gospels; as well as some uncials like 0250 and 565, etc. Considering the meaning of de ('but' or 'and'), its addition is superfluous considering the age of manuscripts that omitted it and those that inserted it. It must be as a result of scribal correction.

Verse 16 has an alternative reading of a word which is staphulas (grapes) which is an accusative plural which comes from the word staphulē (grape), Our primary text, Nestle-Aland has staphulas but manuscripts

like Ephraemi (C) has staphulēn which is accusative singular; again, manuscripts like L W Θ f13 and majority texts have staphulēnas. The correct word that ought to be there is staphulas which is in the accusative case whereas staphulēnas must be as a result of exegetical misjudgment or at best an editorial fatigue. Staphulas is upheld by the following ancient manuscripts, Sinaiticus which is a 4th-century manuscript; Vaticanus which is also a 4th-century manuscript as well as 0250 and 0281 etc.

Verse 17 has transposition of the following words, kalous poiei (good produces). The original edition of Vaticanus has poiei kalous (produces good). This makes more sense though both mean the same thing. The only difference is which one comes first, but who reads has to read meaning into what one reads. The sentence reads thus, “Produces good fruit.” The present writer accepts this over what Nestle-Aland has.

Verse 18 has two critical problems and both are alternative reading of words. Firstly, Nestle-Aland has poiein which is present active infinitive from the word poieō meaning “to make, form, construct” (Matt. 17:4; Acts 4:24). It refers to God as “the maker.” It can also refer to the idea of “to establish, ratify, assume” but manuscripts like Vaticanus and Orpt have enegkein which is also second aorist, active infinitive meaning, “to bear”. Poiein and enegkein are parallel to one another. Each can stand for the other. Manuscripts like Sinaiticus, C L W and others used poiein. Such is not far from being as a result of Scribal’s personal decision. But any of them may be used without changing the meaning of the sentence. The second critical problem is also as a result of the use of that the same word poiein. It is a matter of consistency. Those who made use of poiein are consistent in its use whereas those who used enegkein were also consistent.

Finally, verse 19 has an insertion of a word, oun by the following manuscripts Cvid L Z f and others. It is mere conjunction expressing either a simple sequence or consequence. It means “then,” “now then,” “thereupon,” “therefore,” “consequently,” it also serves to mark the resumption of discourse after an interruption by parenthesis as used in 1 Cor. 8:4 (Wesley, 2001) p.299. If this word is added it is just for emphasis or expression of the consequence of action or behaviour and if not added, it has not swallowed up the consequence of the action or behaviour. The consequence is clearly spent even without it but to add it

would have made a better meaning. The implication is that its addition must as a result of the editorial correction.

Semantic of Matt 7:15-20: Here, we explain some important vocabularies that will make the understanding of this passage in the context of onebunne to be easier. Such words include: Prosechete which is second person plural, present active indicative and it is an imperative from the Greek word, prosechō meaning especially when followed by apo, mē, or mēpote “to beware of, take heed of, guard against” as it was used in Matt 6:1; 7:15. A sort of command and warning. Another important word that exposes the content of verse 15 is erchontai. This is 3rd person plural present middle or passive, deponent indicative (but active in meaning) from the word, erchomai meaning “to go, to pass, to come” (Merrill, 1984). The coming of someone includes the one’s appearance and mood of coming or reason of coming.

In verse 16 and 20 we have such words as epignōsesthe which second person plural, future, middle indicative, it is also a deponent verb from the word epignōskō (epi + gnōskō) which generally mean to make a thing a subject of observation; hence, to arrive at knowledge from preliminaries; to attain to a knowledge of something. But as used in Matt. 7:16 it means simply, “to discern, or to detect” (Wesley, 2001). This idea of discernment is what this paper wants to portray and to remind all of the Shakespearean adages that says, “All that glitters is not gold.” Thus, the Igbo concept, onebunne! Once one discerns properly through a laid down principle, one may likely come to the truth itself. Another word that is of interest is this word in verse 16, sullegousin which is 3rd person plural, the present indicative active mood from the word sullegō (sun + legō) as used in 7:16; or 13:28 means “to collect, or to gather”. In a wider sense, it can mean to reap, to benefit, to receive and the like. A bad person does not offer goodness and a good person does not offer badness. By implication, no one sees a bad person and expect anything good from him or her.

Where one needs serious discernment is when a tree appears to be a good tree or appears to be fruitful but the reverse is actually the case. A good example of such a pretence is the encounter Jesus had with the fig tree. Jesus discovered on a fig tree that ostensibly showed features of a fig that has fruits when in actual facts it has not; Jesus and his disciples came to

gather fruits from the fig but were disappointed and that fig tree received its own reward for such a pretentious lifestyle (Mark 11:12-14, 20-25). Again in verse 17 as well as in John 11:47, there is a word that goes to expose the substance of a being and that word is poiei which is 3rd person singular, the present indicative active mood from the word, poieō meaning “to make, effect, bring to pass, cause to take place, do, accomplish” (Wesley, 2001). The major interest of this meaning is “to cause to take place, to make something happen, to cause something to happen. This is at the level of production. It exposes the intrinsic meaning of the Latin adage which says, “Nemo dat quod non habet”, no one produces what is not his/her nature or what he/she has not. One cannot do what he is not capable of doing.

Verse 18 offers such words as dunatai which is also a 3rd person singular present indicative middle/passive mood. It is also a deponent verb and comes from the word dunamai. According to Wesley (2001), dunamai means, “to be able, either intrinsically and absolutely, which is the ordinary signification; or, for specific reasons” p.108. It implies that it is how a tree stands so does it falls unless there is any external force from any angle. Mango tree cannot produce pear but mangoes. Thus, mangoes are intrinsically the product of a mango tree. This verse has also enegkein which is the 2nd aorist, active mood and an infinitive from the Greek word, pherō meaning “to bear”. It has an affinity with poiei of verse 17. The implication is that “to bear” and “to produce” can stand for each other depending on the context. In the context of Matthew 7:15-20, both words mean the same thing.

Finally, in verse 19, poieō was also used but its present indicative active mood which is also participle, nominative singular, neuter poioun. Another word that is very important is the one that explains what will happen to a tree that does not bear good fruit and indirectly to a prophet that refuses to bear good fruit by leading people astray. It will be ekkoptetai. It is 3rd person singular, present passive indicative from the word ekkoptō (ek + koptō) meaning “to cut out; to cut off, to remove, to render ineffectual” (Wesley, 2001) p.126. These are all nuances of the meaning of the above word. It is like a warning to false prophets, anyone that does not produce/bears the required fruit or pretends to be producing/bearing bad fruit would be cut down and removed. There is still another verb that was used to demonstrate fully the final end of bad

trees or false prophets or those that bring about confusions or hypocrites namely, balletai. This is 3rd person singular, present indicative, passive from the word ballō meaning “to throw, to cast, and to lay”. The implication is that the bad tree or false prophet will not only be cut down or removed but it must also be throwaway, cast away or even be thrown into the fire.

Content of Matt 7:15-20

False Prophets (v.15): False prophets refer to any who falsely claim to be the spiritual leaders of the people which they are not, including even some of the most scrupulous of God’s people (Leske, 2004). Here the false prophets can also be referred to as lying teachers who charm the public by their show of piety while pursuing their own selfish ends. This idea is very similar to what Jesus expressed in Matt 24:4ff where he said, “take care that no one deceives you because many will come using my name and saying, ‘I am the Christ . . .’” They claim to be what they are not. France (2007) sees false prophets as “A recurrent problem in the OT, and Matthew’s term here, pseudoprophētēs, occurs in LXX Zech. 13:2 and often in Jeremiah, who found himself frequently pitted against the more popular prophets who proclaimed ‘peace’ when there was no peace (Jer. 6:3-14; 28:1-17)” p.289. The greatest problem is that majority of people always love false and shiny prophets and prefer them to authentic prophets. The encounter of prophet Micaiah son of Imlah against 400 false prophets comes to mind here. The king of Israel prefers their false prophecy to the true prophecy of Micaiah (1 Kings 22:5-28). Another OT example of false prophets and their influence over the people is seen in 1 Kings 18:20-40 which is the account of the encounter of Elijah and the false prophets of Baal. When Elijah exposed the false prophets and their falsehood, 450 of them were put to death immediately.

Furthermore, in the NT apart from Matt. 7:15 there are other places where a warning was given against the false prophets and they include Matt. 24:11, 24; Acts 20:29. In reaction to the above, France (2007) says, “There is, of course, no evidence that ‘prophecy’ as such featured in the disciple group during Jesus’ ministry, but it quickly became a prominent feature of early Christian congregational life, and almost as quickly became subject to abuse. The warnings of 24:11, 24 indicate that Jesus was aware of this future hazard, as indeed OT experience might lead one

to expect”. p.289. What is very clear in verse 15 is that false prophets most often are not really the members of the community for all the members of the community know one another. Hence, the false prophet will definitely come from outside and finely dressed just to deceive. Elise (2021) says,

A group of conmen who dressed up as cardinals to swindle victims out of millions of dollars have been caught by Italian police, in an undercover sting operation conducted by officers who were disguised as priests. Members of the Carabinieri, the Italian military police who enjoy broad authority in Italy, set the trap at the Basilica of Holy Mary of Angels and Martyrs in central Rome after receiving complaints from two hotels that were scammed out of 20,000 euros (\$23,631) and 75,000 euros (\$88,616) in 2017

The implication is that they pretend to be members when in actual fact they are not members at all. They are actors that claim to be what they are not. They dress as if they are authentic members but underneath they are ravenous wolves. Hence, *cucullus non facit monachum* (habit does not make a monk). A person should not, therefore, be judged by just his dress, looks, appearance, but by their characters or behaviours. The above shows that fake/hypocrite is everywhere. One has to beware that everything is really possible when it comes to fake.

The people of God both in the OT and NT are regarded as a flock of God or God’s sheep and God is the shepherd (Ezek. 34:10; Zech. 11:17; 13:7; Psalm 74:1; Matt 9:36; 10:6, 16; 15:24; 18:12-13; 25:32-33; 26:31). This might be the source of the imagery of the wolves that dress in sheep’s clothing (Harrington, 2007). This shows that they appear like the real sheep but they are covering themselves with what is not natural just to deceive. A good example is the statement of Isaac when he said, “The voice is Jacob’s, but the hands are Esau’s” (Gen. 27:22). Women’s makeup and different types of wear in modern times have exposed a lot of mild facades to the extent that one finds it difficult to know who is actually beautiful or ugly. Everyone that wishes to be fair in complexion during the week may also decide to remain black during the weekend. The colour of hair one sees does not show the actual colour of the hair of

the person, hence, onebunne? The wolves must necessarily disguise themselves in order to confuse sheep so as to get them cheap. Zephaniah attest to the above when he said, “The rulers she has are roaring lions, her judges are wolves of the wastelands which leave nothing over for the morning, her prophets are braggarts, impostors, her priests have profaned what is holy and violated the Law (Zeph. 3:3-4). Henry (2012) opines that “Every hypocrite is a goat in sheep’s clothing; not only not a sheep, but the worst enemy the sheep has, that comes not but to tear and devour, to scatter the sheep (John 10:12), to drive them from God, and from one another, into crooked paths” p.1307. No wonder Barclay (1997) says,

A man might wear a shepherd’s dress and still not be a shepherd. The prophets had acquired a conventional dress. Elijah had a mantle (1Kings 19:13, 19), and that mantle had been a hairy cloak (2Kings 1:8). That sheepskin mantle had become the uniform of the prophets, just as the Greek philosophers had worn the philosopher’s robe. It was by that mantle that the prophet could be distinguished from other men. But sometimes that garb was worn by those who had no right to wear it.p.282.

The word “Beware!” warns one to scrutinize, be cautious and alert to risks, differentiate, distinguish and discriminate before embracing any idea or persons because many claims to be what they are not. It means that people should not just be taken in their face values (1 Cor 14:29, 37-38; 2Thess.2:1-3). France (2007) adds, especially “when they claim to speak for God” p. 290. That is, prophets should be scrutinized when they claim to be speaking for God. False prophets/teachers seem to have thrived because there used to be honest and sincere prophets or teachers from God. For instance, there is a blessing placed on the head of one who receives a prophet because he is one (Matt. 10:41; 23:34). Thus, people go about welcoming connen and hoodlums in the name of prophets. Barclay (1997) went even further to explain what makes false prophets or connen very dangerous; for him the basic fault of the false prophet “is self-interest. The true shepherd cares for the flock more than he cares for his life; the wolf cares for nothing but to satisfy his own gluttony and his own greed. The false prophet is in the business of teaching, not for what he can give to others, but for what he can get to himself” p.284.

In the same vein, Henry (2012) takes the warning thus and advises, “Well, beware of them, suspect them, try them, and when you have discovered their falsehood, avoid them, have nothing to do with them, stand upon your guard against this temptation, which commonly attends the days of reformation, and the breakings out of divine light in more than ordinary strength and splendour” p.1307. By Their Fruits, You Shall Them/Onebunne (Vv 16a, 20). The fruit according to Matthew’s gospel is seen as behaviour (Matt 3:8); it is the manifested character or behaviour of someone (Matt 12:33-34); it is the lifestyle of someone (Matt 13:8, 23); it is also the life and loyalty which God expects of his people (Matt 21:33-43). That is why France (2007) calls the above phrase, “an ethical metaphor” p.291. Through the fruits the prophets produce, one can decipher which among them is authentic or inauthentic or even describe them. In the author’s own house, for instance, there are two pear trees. One of the trees produces sweet pear and the other produces pears that have high oil content and taste sour (i.e. like lemon or vinegar) in the mouth. The funny thing is that their fruits resemble so much to the extent that if someone gives you both you cannot distinguish through their appearance. What all of us who are aware of this similarity resort to is that anytime one offers you the pear from the house, the first question would be, from which of the two pear trees are the pears coming from? No one really enjoys taking pear from that particular tree that produces sour fruits. Henry (2012) makes this suggestion,

By the fruits of their persons, and the course of their conversation, you would know whether they be right or not, observe how they live; their works will testify for them or against them. The Scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses’ chair and taught the Law, but they were proud and covetous, and false, and oppressive, and therefore Christ warned his disciples to beware of them and of their leaven (Mark 12:38) p.1307.

Jeremiah had conflicts with the prophets who proclaimed, “Peace, peace, when there is no peace” (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). They are false prophets if what they predicted does not happen (Deut. 18:21-22). The Holy Writ quickly ordered that even if a prophet’s words do come true, they are to be rejected if they call God’s people to follow other gods (Deut. 13:1-6). The

ungodly behaviour of false prophets also expose them and reveal what they are (Jer. 23:9-15). For Jesus, the way a prophet lives his life matters a lot (v.16). Thorns and thistles are in the Old Testament symbols of the fall into sin (Gen 3:18; Hos 10:8; Isa. 7:23-25) and the desolation it brings (Leske, 2004).

Politicians and Falsehood: Most of the people that come out for one political office or the other present themselves as a kind of messiah that wants to save his fellow citizens from hardship when in actual fact they are struggling to better their own lots and that of their household. A good example is what happened in Nigeria before 2015 when Muhammadu Buhari became president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Nigeria witnessed insecurity and even fuel scarcity and employment, and even high school dropout and so many others. Buhari and his campaign theme studied the situation and presented a sort of master plan that would make Nigeria a Uhuru. Mayowa (20115) wrote in The Cable that Buhari and APC made the following promises to Nigerians and reiterated them after Buhari's 100 days in office. He told Nigerians among other things that his administration will do the following:

1. Public declaration of assets and liabilities;
2. Ban on all government officials from seeking medical care abroad;
3. Revival of Ajaokute steel company;
4. Empowerment scheme to employ 740,000 graduates across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory;
5. 720,000 jobs by the 36 states in the Federation per annum (20,000 per state);
6. Eradication of state of origin, replacing that with state of residence to ensure Nigerians are Nigerians first, before anything else;
7. Working with the National Assembly towards the immediate enactment of a Whistle Blower Act;
8. Establishing a conflict resolution commission to help prevent, mitigate and resolve civil conflicts within the polity;
9. Permanent peace in the Niger Delta and other conflict-prone areas such as Plateau, Taraba, Bauchi, Borno and Abia;
10. Nationwide sanitation plans to keep Nigeria clean;
11. Construction of 3,000km of superhighway including service trunks;

12. At least one functioning airport is available in each of the 36 states;
13. Stabilizing the naira;
14. Strengthening INEC to reduce, if possible, eliminate electoral malpractices in Nigerian's political life;
15. Free Education at primary, secondary and tertiary institutions for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Education.

What is very obvious is that all these promises are not kept at all. Today, the lives and properties of Nigerians are highly at risk to the extent that travelling on Nigerian roads is like taking 95 risks with one's life. The sacredness of human life has been bastardized. Insecurity is at its pick. There is one type of insecurity in all the regions of Nigeria or the other. It is worst today to the extent that in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria living your house every Monday is like someone deliberately signing his or her death warrant. But campaigns of Buhari and APC presented President Buhari as a messiah. A lot of people are today biting their fingers. The implication is that some people see all their campaigns of 2015 as very unreliable and life is very difficult in Nigeria at the moment.

Evaluation and Conclusion: Onebunne is a wonderful Igbo concept that if one has it always at the back of one's mind while listening to people, one would be able to decipher falsehood from reality. The work argues that if one has the concept of onebunne guiding one, it will be very hard for one to be confused or tricked by numerous false prophets, ministers, traders, politicians, religious men and women, Imans and others. The work recommends that everyone must have the concept of onebunne in one's day to day interaction with people. For one to know the authenticity of any speaker you must consider the following: who is he? What is his past like? What did he say? What is his lifestyle? Then ask yourself, onebunne? Never accept a politician, prophet, minister, etc at their face value. Look before you jump. Reflect before you jump to any conclusion.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

BU NNE: AN ONTOLOGICAL QUESTIONING OF EXISTENCE AND REALITY

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Abstract

In engaging existence and reality in terms of ontological questioning is a task of primordial stamp. It presupposes knowing whether existence and reality are authentic beings or not. The problem with this discourse lies in the fact that it is using the subject-matter, knowingly or unknowingly, to question itself. Hermeneutically, findings result in, first, to ontologically question existence and reality using *Bu Nne* (truth) from Igbo world-view reveals the question of God's existence. Second, the yardstick used in the questioning is itself God. In conclusion, we argued that God is what is, that is, the very existence and reality that delivers other existences and realities. Again, that the concept of truth *Bu Nne* or *Eziokwu* as seen from Igbo world-view is itself God, in a sense.

Keywords: *Bu Nne*, Ontology, Ndigbo, Existence, Reality

INTRODUCTION

To ontologically question existence and reality is to ask a very fundamental question. It is tantamount to asking if there is existence and reality. And to ask such question is to ask a “mother” of all questions. That is, to question what is. To question what is, is to question the origin of existence and reality in themselves. The questioning is further interesting when it uses the benchmark, standard of truth to do so. Interesting in the sense that truth itself is a concept of intriguing nature. To adequately engage this discourse, we will proceed by, firstly, identifying who the Igbo are because it is from their lifeworld that the concept of *Bu Nne* (truth) is used to ontologically question existence and reality. Second, we conceptualize the key words that formulated the topic and it is at this very stage that the questions that propel this discourse is adequately addressed. The third section is summary and conclusion.

Ndigbo, Who Are They?

Ndigbo are among the most dynamic nationalities in the globe. They are named as one of the world's Ten Great Tribes in *The World's Great Tribes*. Ndigbo are seen in every corners of the world, with an estimated population of over 100 million people. It is not out of place most to summarize Ndigbo as among the true citizens of the globe, not being limited by geography, climate, language or religious affiliations. Their unique features of ingenuity, industry, courage and the drive of her citizens are acknowledge and respected the world over.

Igbo traditional society is dominated by religious warriors, aggressive commercial class and a highly intelligent clerical class. "The republican nature of the society encourages individualism, egalitarianism, achievement-orientedness and adaptability. At the same time and, paradoxically too, the communalistic character of the culture, makes them highly collectivistic, self-reliant and hospitable."¹ Ndigbo have a strong cultural philosophy and ideology, etched in a world-view known as *Omenala* or *Omenani*, "whose elementary principles are truth, justice and equality (Ofo-na-ogu, Egbe bere Ugo bere) and which, as the core of their national ethos, acts as a cementing force that binds the people."²

Igbo people have cultural and ethnic links with the Caribbean, the American blacks and most of them believe that "...they are of the breakaway groups (among the Hebrew) that parted ways and went hinterlands during the first Aliya the great exodus of the Lord's people in the days of Moses."³ Ndigbo are among the few African nationalities that included in their traditional religion the worship of a Supreme Being known as *Chi-ukwu* or *Chineke* before the arrival of Christianity in Africa.

Ndigbo are among the nationalities that constitute one of the three largest ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. Similar to their neighbours, they are a member of the Negro race in Africa, and speak a language that belongs to the *Kwa group* of languages experienced in West and Central Africa. Ndigbo have their official language as Igbo with many local dialects in it.

The population estimates of 2005 placed the Igbo in Nigeria within the neighbourhood of about 50 million. Their territory spans beyond the

Equatorial Forest in the South and the Savanna in the North. Igbo landmass harbours areas both East and West of the River Niger. In the West, Igboland territory has parts of Aboh, Asaba and Agbor Divisions in the Delta State of Nigeria. In the East, it includes the whole of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states of Nigeria, and extends to parts of Ogoja in the Cross River Stat of Nigeria with Ikwerre, Ahoada and Port Harcourt divisions of the Rivers State of Nigeria.⁴

“In terms of longitude and latitude, Igboland is roughly circumscribed between 6⁰ and 81/2⁰ East Longitude and 41/2⁰ and 71/4⁰ North Latitude. The neighbours of the Igbo are the Igala, Idoma and Tiv in the North; and Ekoi and Ibibio in the East, Ijaw and Ogoni in the South and the Benin and Isoko in the West.”⁵

Conceptualization of Basic Concepts in this Discourse

Ontology

In academic discipline, ontology is an aspect of metaphysics that concerns itself with the study of being. By being is meant what exists. It asks fundamental questions about the existence of being or existence itself with the view of understanding it better. It asks about the constituent of being, what it is made of and its characteristics. In knowing what being is, ontology makes it clear what non-being is or not, as well. For Simon Blackburn, Ontology is “Derived from the Greek word for being, but a 17th century coinage for the branch of metaphysics that concerns itself with what exists. Apart from the ontological argument itself there have existed many apriori arguments that the world must contain things of one kind or another: simple things, unextended things, eternal substances, necessary beings, and so on.”⁶ For Thomas Hofweber, as an initial approximation, ontology is the examination of what there is. Some object to this articulation of what ontology is, hence, it is solely an initial approximation. Numerous ancient philosophical problems are problems in ontology. They are concerned with the questions such as whether or not there is a god, or the problem of the existence of universals, etc. The foregoing are all problems in ontology in the sense that they inquire if or not a certain thing, or more widely entity, exists. The above notwithstanding, ontology is normally equally seen to encapsulate problems about the most common characteristics and relations of the

beings which do subsist.⁷ The larger discipline of ontology can thus be seen as having four parts:

- (O1) the study of ontological commitment, i.e. what we or others are committed to,
- (O2) the study of what there is,
- (O3) the study of the most general features of what there is, and how the things there are relate to each other in the metaphysically most general ways,
- (O4) the study of meta-ontology, i.e. saying what task it is that the discipline of ontology should aim to accomplish, if any, how the questions it aims to answer should be understood, and with what methodology they can be answered.⁸

From the musings above, we can rightly deduce that ontology is concerned with whatever that exists and the relations therein. Inexorably, it equally peeps into what does not necessarily exist but lives in one's imagination in the quest to knowing what exists, beings.

Questioning

Obviously, to question means to inquire into something for better understanding of that. It connotes going beyond the surface meaning, understanding of something to know its actual state. It also means to know the essence of a thing, entity, etc. Questioning clears doubt or doubts about things. It removes the ambiguities, vagueness, etc., surrounding a phenomenon under review.

Existence

Existence can be said to mean everything that is. Anything conceived to be tangibly subsisting. "1 the fact or state of existing; being. 2 the continuance or maintenance of life; living, especially in adverse circumstances. 3. Something that exists; a being or entity. 4 everything that exists."⁹

Reality

Reality is everything that exists. It can be distinguished as reality with big "R" and one with small "r." The one with big "R" is used to signify God, the Supreme Being or Being in itself, for short. The one with small "r"

signifies every other thing created by the big “R.” Or for short, beings, as the case may be. In the opinion of Simon Blackburn, Reality is: “That which there is. The question of how much of it there is forms the dispute between realists and anti-realists. Does it include: numbers, possibilities, the future, the past, other minds, colours, tastes, the external world, mind as well as matter, or matter as well as experience?”¹⁰

For us, from the explication of existence and reality thus far, existence and reality depict the same meaning. Any difference between the two is that of mere semantic nuances. So, to talk of existence is to talk about reality, so to speak. Therefore, in line with the topic of this discourse, we will be questioning existence and reality, that is, questioning the same phenomenon. But before then, in reference to our topic above, we are faced with two possible interpretations arising from the nature of the topic: *Bu Nne* (truth): An Ontological Questioning of Existence and Reality. The first possible interpretation therefrom is truth as the phenomenon that questions existence and reality. The second one is truth as the yardstick, standard used to determine the authenticity, beingness of existence and reality, that is, if what is said about existence and reality are the case. These two interpretations may not have essential difference between them but the second one seems more explicit. This discourse settles with the second interpretation: the use of Igbo concept of truth (“*Bu Nne*” or “*Eziokwu*”) to determine the authenticity, beingness of existence and reality.

Bu Nne

Bu Nne means truth in English language. Truth in Igbo language means *Bu Nne* or *Eziokwu* depending on the Igbo dialect in question. Another dialect has it as *O nne*. All, that is, *Bu Nne*, *Eziokwu* and *O nne* mean the same thing, truth. Before going ahead to understand the concept of truth in Igbo world-view with regard to our subject of discourse, it is good that we refresh our minds as what truth means in the western world-view for a better appreciation of what it is in Igbo world-view with regard to our discourse.

Plato and his pupils construed truth as an entity existing outside the mind. An entity in the intelligible world. The mind of man uncovers it and take part in it. Truth in this line is one, eternal and immutable. Plotinus on his

own typified truth with the “One” and by reflecting on the “One” the mind associates, participates in truth. St. Augustine of Hippo, following closely on the heels of Platonic tradition, also, looked at truth as an entity that is, one, eternal and unchanging and he predicated the existence of God from that, and God as the source of truth. With the question, what is the source of truth? Augustine will answer that it cannot be the human mind, since the human mind is not eternal or changeless. The human mind only reaches and uncovers it, it does not invent it and once the human mind gets at it truth imposes itself on the human mind. For the fact that truth is eternal and immutable, its source must be an eternal and immutable being as well and this being is God. Accordingly, God is the source of truth, and it is only by the divine illumination emanating from God that the human mind is able to know the truth. St. Anselm in the tradition of Augustinians conceived truth as the correctness of something as seen by the mind, that is, truth lies in the mind rightly seeing the divine ideas mirrored in things. For all things are mirrors of the eternal ideas of God, the ideas in the divine mind from which he made things. Before God made things he had in his mind the ideas of what he was going to make, and he ended up making everything in line with these ideas in his mind. Therefore, created things are mirrors, reflections of these divine ideas. Hence, when the mind rightly apprehends these ideas of God as reflected, shown in things, it reaches the truth. “The more we perceive the reflection of the divine ideas in things the more we know the truth.”¹¹

For Descartes “truth is the ‘clear and distinct perception’ of innate ideas. Truth is indubitable, it comes from within us, not outside us, and it is known through ‘clear and distinct perception’, that is, through an intuitive perception.”¹² For the Aristotelian tradition, “truth is the conformity of the mind with reality. When what is in the mind conforms with what is in reality, then there is truth. For Aquinas, truth is the conformity of the intellect with reality.”¹³ Furthermore, we will have an overview of the traditional theories of truth.

The correspondence theory of truth holds that truth is the correspondence of the mind with reality, that is, if what is in the mind corresponds with what is the case in reality. The coherence theory holds that a statement is true if there is a coherence between the statement and a systematic body of statements

already known to be true. If the statement in question coheres with these statements already known to be true, supporting them or strengthening them, then the statement is true. The pragmatic theory holds that a statement or theory is true if it works in practice. An idea is true if it works and leads to beneficial results.¹⁴

The foregoing has thrown light on what truth is conceived to be according to the western mind through their different philosophers and the theories crystalized from them in terms of their different epistemological schools of thought.

Over and above the different dialects in Igbo language with regard to the concept of truth, *Eziokwu* is centrally used in Igbo language as truth. Therefore, in this discourse, *Bu Nne*, *Eziokwu* and *O nne* are used interchangeably. According to Paulinus Chikwado Ejeh

Ezi-Okwu is actually a combination of two words: ezi which means correct, genuine, right or good; and okwu which means word or speech. Ezi okwu therefore means literarily good talk, the correct sentence, right word, or the appropriate statement. In other words, eziokwu means the correct response to a question or as Nze rightly pointed out that “the common understanding, (among the Igbo) is that ‘eziokwu’ - truth is used to represent utterances (that is, the lack of inner contradictions) that are true” (Nze, 1994:4). Other phrases associated with the concept of truth in Igbo thought system is Obughi Eziokwu (it is not Good talk), and Asi (Lie). Thus among the Igbos, truth means Eziokwu, which literally translates to “good talk”. For the Igbo, to be is to be true to what one really is.¹⁵

Ndigbo puts this ontological principle in the aphorism: *Eziokwu Bu Ndu* (Truth is life; life is truth). “In Igbo, ethico-ontological praxis, not only in the moral sense is the utterance of truth an affirmation. In the ontological order, the true is the living. Truth is authenticity, (Ugwu ndu). Not to be in the truth is not to be in life, in dynamism, self-manifestation and the vital energy. It is to die. Only the true lives. The untrue disappears into the false-hood of non-being.”¹⁶

For P.C. Ejeh, “The opposite of Eziokwu (good talk) is Obughi Eziokwu (it is not good talk), i.e. if we take the opposite of truth in English to be falsity. Obughi Eziokwu (it is not good talk), translates cognitively in Igbo, unless there is reason to believe that a person is deliberately making a falsehood in which case, *Obughi Eziokwu* (it is not good talk) takes on a moral undertone.”¹⁷ We take exception to the above claim by Ejeh. We think that the right idea to be conveyed at this particular point is that the obverse of *eziokwu* or *Bu nne* is (right word/talk) *Obughi eziokwu* or *Obughi Nne* (it is not right word/talk). This is because *Ezi* means and denotes “right” necessarily and primarily, and not good *per se*. Good talk as Ejeh postulated above is not *ad rem* for *eziokwu* because it is loose in meaning here. Good in the context he used it connotes the idea of well-expressed opinion or statement which may not necessarily be true or exact, correct word or sentence. But “right” means correct match. Hence, *eziokwu* or *Bu nne* means right, correct match of a word or talk.

Continuing, Ejeh says, in addition to *ezi okwu*, Ndigbo equally explain the truth of a statement with the expression *Ihe mere eme* or *ihe mere*, which implies what really took place or what happened. For example, Ndigbo would say:

“ ‘Q bu ihe mere eme’ - It is what actually happened

‘Q bughị ihe mere’ - It is not what happened.

‘Q bu gịni mere? -What happened?

‘Q bu ihe mere eme?’ -Did it really happen?’”¹⁸

Furthermore, he maintains that in Igbo thought system, the expression *ihe mere* or *ihe mere eme* elucidates the Igbo concept of truth and in line with ‘what is the case’, ‘what agrees with reality,’ or as ‘testimony’. Accordingly, *ihe mere* or *ihe mere eme* indicates an event which has been accomplished or performed. Therefore, the statement, *ihe mere eme*

depicts truth as an empirical fact and not an intuitional fact. That is to say, truth as described by *ihe mere eme* assumes something that can be examined and verified empirically. *Ipso facto*, the Igbo expression *ihe mere eme* depicts for Ndigbo truth as correspondence for what is the case agrees, tallies with what took place in reality. Inclusively, Ndigbo equally see truth as rightly noted by Aristotle that, “‘to say of what is that it is not, or what is not that it is, is false. While to say of what is that it is, or what is not that it is not, is true’ (Opata, 1998:77). In other words, the Igbo conceive truth as the conformity of the mind with reality. Hence, for the Igbo, when what is in the mind conforms or agrees with what is in reality, then that is *eziokwu* or truth.”¹⁹

The foregoing explains the concept of truth *Bu Nne* or *Eziokwu* in Igbo world-view. What remains now is to relate *Bu Nne* or *eziokwu* truth, to the working interpretation of our topic which is, truth (*bu nne*) as the yardstick, standard used to determine the authenticity, beingness of existence and reality, that is, if what is said about existence and reality are the case. In essence, to talk about existence and reality is to talk about that which gave rise to existence and reality in themselves before discussing the offal of existence and reality, that is, the individual contents of existence and reality. Therefore, talking about existence and reality necessarily brings us to the phenomenon of God in Igbo world-view for God is that which is. And that which is dovetails well with our definitions of existence and reality above. Therefore, in the main, it implies that we are questioning, examining the existence and reality (God) before talking about any other thing that might follow, in Igbo understanding, with the use of truth as *Bu Nne* or *eziokwu* in Igbo world-view as the standard or yardstick. Essentially therefore, the task of this study is, invariably, to question the existence of God in Igbo world-view using the unique concept of *Bu Nne* or *Eziokwu* (truth) as the plumb. This is because one cannot discuss any other sense of existence and reality without, first and foremost, discussing the pristine and inherently fundament, ontological sense of existence and reality, that is, that which occasions the ideas of existence and reality. For Ndigbo, God is that which is. And that which is in Igbo language can be translated as *Ihe di* or *Ifẹ di* depending on the dialect in use. *Ihe* or *Ifẹ* can be seen as a thing or light. Adding *di* to it translates as “a thing that is or exists” or “light that is or exists.” The thing that is or exists, the light that is or exists, is the primordial thing or light that gives rise to other things and lights, so

to speak. And this primordial thing or light in Igbo world-view is God. It is the phenomenon that gives rise to other things. It is the supreme cause of other things. This idea of causality in Igbo world-view is illustrated well when Edeh argued thus:

The Earth's fertility is an idea fundamental to Igbo cultural life. The Earth is a mother which feeds and nurtures people. The Earth did not endow herself with the power of fertility; otherwise she would not need the forces of the other elements. Whence, then, comes the Earth's power of fertility? Here the Igbo makes a spontaneous leap prompted by reason to a superhuman power. In this process reason and faith complement each other. It is in this leap and by it that we have the birth of Igbo traditional religion. That superhuman, supersensible power is the Igbo God, Chukwu, the ultimate foundation of all beings. Chukwu, through the mediating power of the earth's fertility, a power with which he has endowed her, is the author of existence and all forms of life.²⁰

Another way of answering to the *Bu Nne* (truth) in terms of existence and reality among Ndigbo, sourced from Edeh, is from his concept of *Chineke*. From the science of origin and development of words, *Chineke* (chi-na-eke) is a portmanteau of three words, *Chi*, *na* and *eke* literally translating as, "Chi who is creating." The statement *na-eke* (who is creating) in the Igbo language is an exclusive reserve for that activity by which something is made out of nothing. It is common knowledge among Ndigbo that such an activity, power is well known to be the uncommon power of the Supreme Being. *Na-eke* does not refer to a human being because no human being is *Onye-okike* (the one who creates). By the mention of this name, thus, Ndigbo show their knowledge of God as the creating God. "The work of forming the entire universe, and all in it: the good and the evil, the visible and the invisible is continuously being effected or permitted by God. In this capacity, he is known as *Chineke*. From this derive all other names expressive of the creative activity of the Supreme Being, for instance, *Onye-Okike*, *Eze-chitoke*, *Chukwu-Abiam*, *Anyanwu-Eze-Chitoke*."²¹ From the thoughts of Edeh above, one can see affirmation that the source of existence and reality according to Igbo people is God. God is that which is whence others emanate from. He is

existence in itself and reality in itself. God is one as existence and reality. He is identical with them.

Another concept from Edeh to buttress the point of God as existence and reality is, *Osebuluwa*.

...as a name for God indicates that the Igbos recognize that God has a plan for the world and he supports and directs his creatures to a realization of this plan. ...they (the Igbos) call the “creating-Chi ‘Osebuluwa’ ”—“He who is carrying or supporting the world,” including man; and were the creating Chi to release his hold, the world would relapse into “nothingness” (Ife obuna adeghe na uwa).²²

The above simply reaffirms the foregoing point that God is, first of all, the conceived existence, reality. He is the primary existence, reality that gives rise and supports other existences and realities, so to speak. Questioning existence, reality, simply reaffirms God’s existence, reality.

On Edeh still, *Chi-ukwu* is the name by which Ndigbo indicate their knowledge of God as he is in himself, beside any relation, comparison to created things. The absolute existence and reality in itself. It is an absolute name, highest in absolute sense, that is, a being that is totally other. This is commonly expressed in Igbo name as *Onye di ka Chukwu*? Who is like God?²³ The sense of God above yet confirms our position in this discourse. His absoluteness confirms his existence, reality as the primary one. He is that that gave rise to others but not in comparison with others because his own otherness is on a distinct plane from others. The others are used to speculate about his own otherness that is incomparable. There is no other without his own otherness though not comparable the others. In essence, no existence, reality without his own existence, reality.

Hence, if we are asked: *O bu nne na Chukwu bu ife di*? Is it true that God is? The answer will be: *Eeh! O bu nne na Chukwu di*. Yes! It is true that God is. God is that which is. Hence, he is existence, reality in itself. Having questioned and established the authenticity of existence and reality as, first and foremost, God from Igbo world-view; we make bold to as well to argue that the benchmark used in ontologically questioning

existence and reality— *Bu Nne* or *eziokwu* (truth)— is itself, God, in a sense, in Igbo world-view. How? Whatever is true is pure and it is held at high esteem in Igbo world-view. It is truth that binds people together and it is truth that Igbo society is built and sustained with. It is believed that any person who says the truth is a child of God and one who lies is a child of Satan. A reminiscent of childhood plays! It was used to teach us morals then. But, over and above that, it is a real existential fact among Ndigbo. The one that tells the truth always is taken to be close to God, the truth itself. This fact is confirmed when Ejeh, after summations about the concept of truth among Ndigbo stated that:

Consequently, all traditional societies have a strong moral orientation in their conception of truth. Truth sustains relationships with God, the deities and their fellow men. Truth is paramount in Igbo life and they believe it is what gives life to any society. Hence, the traditional Igbo society is built on truth and the basis of this is trust which is primarily dependent on the ability of the individual members to tell the truth to one another. It is the basis of their faith in God and in the people. Truth is the foundation of any Igbo community.²⁴

“...The trust built in Igbo society lies mainly in the ability of the individual members to tell one another the truth. Thus, it is obvious that the pillar stone of every community is telling the truth. Thus the Igbo say: “*eziokwu bu ndu*” “truth is life.” On the other hand, “*onye okwu asi*” (“a liar”) is someone who negates this life principle which the truth gives.”²⁵

Summary and Conclusion

The discourse started by making meaning out of the basic concepts that form the topic of our engagement after introduction. Before the conceptualization of the basic terms that formed the topic, there was an excursus on who are Igbo people. Thereafter, the engagement started in earnest by giving answers to the questions raised that eventually did justice to the whole discourse.

In conclusion, our reasoning in this discourse led us to assert two facts, namely, first, that to engage in ontological questioning of existence and

reality is to delve into, knowingly or unknowingly, the question of existence, reality of God. And the answer to the question is that God is existence, reality itself in accordance with Igbo world-view. It is from God's existence, reality that anyone can begin to talk about existence, reality of other things. Second, that truth in itself is God himself in Igbo world-view. This is because lies are frowned at while truth is always cherished and advocated in Igbo world-view. It is believed among Ndigbo that truth is that special cord that holds the living and the dead. It is the foundation of existence and the sustenance of life itself. Without truth there will be chaos and much misery. It is truth that stabilizes human relationships breeding peace and unity that enable progress and development in any society. Hence, the cliché, the aphorism in Igbo world-view "*Eziokwu bu ndu*" (truth is life). Therefore, in the whole, the topic of this discourse is an exercise in affirming and reaffirming that God is existence, reality that gives rise to other existences, realities. And again, that the benchmark, standard of questioning existence, reality—truth—is itself God in the special sense of absolute goodness, according to Igbo world-view.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

EPILOGUE: ONEBUNNE AS CRITIQUE

Ogugua Ifunanya C.

‘Onebunne’ as the name sounds vibrates with a tone and tune of critique. ‘Onebunne’ has to do with community consciousness, which fixes to an extent life’s destiny for the people in a fundamental way, and people tend to be greatly influenced by this, as such it requires collective effort to improve let alone change the existing community consciousness. It then means that we must remain critical of our community facticity.

The truth is that community facticity cannot do without the person, for it is in the person that it’s meaning is deposited and found. The function of community facticity is to ensure that the person is, for in his existence it remains and grows or is strengthened. It is by maintaining an everlasting vigilance, and constant criticism of our community consciousness and facticity that we can know progress in the community and life. Again, critique is not done by the community or group; it is only done by an individual (person) as it is a personal activity. In critique, we are able to make proper distinctions among concepts and values from non-values such as to get meaning or also it will be virtually impossible to separate meaning from meaninglessness.

The capacity, ability and disposition to do this separation is vital, as usually community facticity is oiled with a sort of ambiguity, as therein we notice a mixture of light and darkness. Some concepts are hazy, as we engage in the separation we no doubt, pull the wool out of the dark regions for light to penetrate and ensure enlightenment and understanding.

Critique gains valence and power at the level of judgement. Before then, man has started critiquing indirectly via his predisposition *i.e.* being uneasy about a situation that could be demeaning, this is pre-predicative the relevance of any situation, sees something as appealing to him or not, such one judges. In the very words of Remy Kwant, “critique, however, becomes more consciousness and more effective when it is given a voice, when it is spoken and becomes predicative critique”. He adds, “true,

predicative critique is based upon pre-predicative critique, for it is the expression of it". (Remy C. Kwant *Phenomenology of Social Existence*. USA: Duquesne University Press, 1965, p. 18).

Usually there is no progress without criticisms or conflict in life. Little wonder, the thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis proposal. There are two types of criticism, constructive and destructive; progress is tied to the constructive type. Normally in life, if men must be alive to their nature, a critical voice at times seen as dissenting voice arises in some situations, and ought to be listened to especially if it expresses the feeling of the people; such voices strikes the cord of action in life. At times, it can trigger a sort of revolution, in our stance mental revolution. Man is a being that works hard to situate himself. In life, critique signals and underlies any sort of improvement, for situations are improved upon when they have been epistemologically and ethically assessed and meaningfulness dislocated from meaninglessness. Critique though personal is the engine house for progress in human community, it this personal seeing, understanding, and judging that the community adopts most often.

Community consciousness and facticity need critique so as to develop properly. It is only by distinguishing meaningfulness from meaninglessness that the aspects of life, situations can be positioned for enhancement of the community. There is no doubt that then need the human element to develop and progress, but we must know that human progress or that of the community is not mechanical or automatic. The rate and path of development is dependent on the human elements involved, is a function of their knowledge, understanding, disposition, insight and preparedness. Do you now see that the critical and creation abilities of those human elements need to be sharpened? Many a time, the over-riding interest of those who take the task of running the community is to suppress the voice of the dissents and put in check the critical sense of the members of the community. Why, it is simple at times to uphold the 'status quo' and protect the existing order. Indirectly, they by so doing condemn the community and block its potentials for growth and progress, and as such you see stagnation or at best conservatism. Remy Kwent remarks, "the danger of silencing critique manifest itself even more sharply if we keep in mind that in the modern world critique occupies an extremely crucial position", (Remy Kwent *ibid.*, p.188)

Community consciousness and facticity exist in the human element, and cannot exist outside it; it comes to critical evaluation only in the human element, in which it exist. When the human elements cease to take on community consciousness and facticity, what remains is not a community that is alive, vibrant and strong but only a soulless community. It is the human elements that have the capacity to take up community facticity and keep it growing; for it is by so doing that that human elements amount to what they ought to be, Kwant insists that “Critique is contained in both the certain aspects of social facticity, (Ibid., p.189).

‘Onebunne’ tends to suggest via intonation, that the very way community consciousness and facticity are taken up or absorbed by the human elements point at the level of critique involved. This facticity can be taken up with joy or carelessly or grudgingly.

Normally, man would desire that the future should continue the past, ‘Onebunne’ as an interrogation and critique kicks against it so as to give room for new insights that will generate progress. This may compel those who desire/want the ‘status quo’ to remain, to even exaggerate the motivation of the community consciousness and facticity; critique is most effective when expressed in words; in as much as this verbal expression can be a force to pull critique backward. Why? When words are used, it is possible that words that have lost valence can be used, and as such they will not be able to motivate anyone, as these words have lost values in life/community. It is via interrogation and critique which proper interpretation of the name ‘Onebunne’ will generate that meaningless words, phrases, etc are buried or allowed to disappear.

‘Onebunne’ can be built into theory or philosophy or in the least a system which protest against irresponsibility and unaccountability in living one’s life; and pursuance of values which will put man in the position to arrange and plan life in such a way that man lives with positive and real motives in view. It is an open system which will aid in preventing alienation and estrangement of any sort, courtesy of critique which tends to open our eyes to reality. It is unfortunate when critique instead of disclosing facts aid these facts and put man in a blind alley by concealing reality. This it can do when it derails to exaggerate issues or situations.

‘Onebunne’ by an additional stress in tone marking can be seen to mean, who can stand alone? It is a question yet, an affirmation that it is impossible. Why? It is because the Igbo man lives in the community, with the others for the good of the whole. Moreso, because man is not indispensable from institutionalized forms of being-with in Igbo world, which is anchored on Igbo ontology. These forms are the family, umunna kindred, ‘ebo’-village, ‘obodo’-town. Man has obligations and duties towards each of these; as such he creates relationships that run across these segments. The bonds so created express themselves in our attitudes which engineer a sort of solidarity. These attitudes may not be easily conceived outside natural ties.

Basically our existence is community-tied, as we are not alone, each of us is just a piece in the main and can only realize our possibilities within the social context and it must be through the aid of the others. We cannot express any value outside our co-existence in the community. Our existence is intrinsically social, we can never remove the social tread from our personal lives; even as we live in our personal capacities, we do ‘thinking-in-action’, we use things already put in place or else the world will not be usable for us. The bonds we create are there to aid our togetherness to function smoothly.

Irrespective of how ‘Onebunne’ is viewed, from any prism, one will eventually consent that the human element will only develop himself to common meaning, this comes to existence in the human element. As we talk of individual responsibility and individuals make up the community, we indirectly talk about community/common responsibility. It is not then difficult to see that the individual is the product of the community consciousness and facticity. The common meaning can only exist in the individual, so individuals enter into a whole of meanings, this is a creature of culture, the output of the community consciousness and facticity.

In ‘Onebunne’ the Igbo don’t subscribe to the view that individual is lost in the anonymity of the crowd or community, even if our existence is tied to community’s existence, and our consciousness as well. ‘To be able to exist meaningfully, man must be able to devote himself to meaning and values. The fundamental values are social, and we become ourselves, even on the personal level, by dedicating ourselves to social or common values”, (Ibid., p. 256).