

NJIKOKA: THE PHILOSOPHY OF INTEGRATIVE HUMANISM

The njikoka philosophy or integrative humanism is an intercultural philosophical theory whose principal proponent is Godfrey O. Ozumba and in the recent times has witnessed a more dynamic development and propagation by Jonathan O. Chimakonam. Both are core members of the **Calabar School of Philosophy**, a philosophical movement aimed at promoting intercultural philosophical inquiry as well as Africa's contribution to philosophy.

Other notable members of the school and their thoughts include: Innocent Asouzu (Ibuanyidanda or complementary reflection); Chris Ijiomah (Harmonious monism); Ephraim Essien (Compatibility theory); Jonathan Chimakonam (African thought system and Ezumezu logic); Mesembe Edet (Afroxiology); Andrew Uduigwomen, Chris Akpan, Egbai Oja, Kyrian Ojong and Jonathan Chimakonam (on Theories of African Science).

As the Igbo-Africans would say, **njikoka** amaka – to integrate is better than to disintegrate! Integrative humanism¹ is an intercultural philosophical theory that sees reality as having both physical and spiritual dimensions; the self and the other; the past and the present; as well as harmonized future framework in which seemingly opposed variables unite without contradiction to achieve progress, success and harmony of contraries. It is a ratio-empirico-spirito-centric approach to doing philosophy where realities are contraries rather than contradictions. The essence of integrative humanism is to show that through physical and spiritual insights we can provide answers to most of the questions that confront us in our daily lives. These questions may be ethical, epistemological, metaphysical, logical, jurisprudential, political, religious, aesthetical or scientific. The methodical demands of integrative humanism are contextual, analytic and mutual integration. Therefore, integrative humanism is a cautious management of relevant variables in a context-dependent dynamic network for resolutions of tasks that would rather prove difficult for mono-sequestered and non-contextualized theoretic applications.

This theory is derived from insights from electronics and mathematics. In mathematics we talk of integers which are the root word that bears integration and it means whole number. We reasoned that since all things were in the beginning one, all that exist existed in the bosom of **Nke-Mbu**² as the Integrativists would prefer, the discreteness we witness in physical things is the consequence of the externalization of things inherent in the Nke-Mbu. Or, it could be called the “unbundling” of composite but united reality. This means that through proper and deep philosophical reasoning we can always build bridges of harmony among cultures, peoples and things since for Integrativists, seemingly opposed variables are contraries rather than contradictories. This also goes to prove that nothing is lost nor gained in line with the law of conservation of mass. We aver that no theory is utterly useless. All we need do is to figure out the context in which a theory or combination of theories can be used to achieve the set out objective. Such theories or variables that adequately integrate in a given context are said to be members or elements in the **relevant set** or R-set for short. Others that are set aside from the R-set are said to be members or elements in the **irrelevant set** or the I-set for short. They are irrelevant only in relation to the working context, aside that, there may be other contexts where they could be relevant. In general, we accept the Lakatosian insight of

¹ Integrative humanism is a philosophical coinage by Professor Godfrey Okechukwu Ozumba of the Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar¹. Later, J. O. Chimakonam eventually emerged as his leading disciple helping in developing and popularizing the theory. See Ozumba, G. O. “*Spirito-Centric Humanism: A Paradigmatic Method for Theory and Praxis in Contemporary Philosophizing*”. *Drumspeak: International Journal of Research in the Humanities*. Vol.2, N0.1, 2005. pp. 56-76. And especially *Philosophy and Method of Integrative Humanism*. Calabar: Jochrisam Publishers, 2010.

² This is the name Integrativists call the greatest of all beings (in Christian parlance, God) who is in himself without beginning, limit nor ending. It means The One or The First. Integrativists hold that every being in its original state is with Nke-Mbu, as part of Nke-Mbu, in Nke-Mbu.

research programs and modify the Popperian paradigm of conjectures and refutation. This we have done by stating that refuted theories are not jettisoned but are kept in the cooler for the time of their utility. Falsifiable theories though more scientific but unfalsifiable theories are also not discarded for that reason. Knowledge is all about what Kegley and Ann call “quests ever seeking a better view of things and never resting content with a final answer”³. Knowledge is a cumulative assemblage of facts.

Integrative humanism has its other inspiration from electronics. Here we see the picture of integrated circuit, we have the criss-crossing of electric wires on substrate which enables the wires to conduct electric signals to the mother-board which is harnessed for the achievement of sound or other electronic activities like heating, music, rotation (like in fans), cooling like in fridges and in microprocessors and so on. This gives us an insight that as philosophers we should not always be thinking about how to bifurcate or maintain individuality of things or cultures. Individuality is only essentially meaningful in a community. This tendency of partitioning reality can only be useful to the extent it helps us in analysis, but, analysis must not be seen as the end of our philosophical exercise neither should this be seen as the sort of analysis of the British philosophical tradition. When the Integrativists talk of analysis, they employ it above all else, in a way that showcases how Integrativists weld seemingly opposed but context-relevant variables into a harmonized unity without an upsurge of contradictions using the method of integrativism. This is why the motto of Integrative Humanism is “Analysis for synthesis”. Philosophy therefore should be seen as the substrate akin to the electronic substrate on which an integrated circuit is fabricated and which provides mechanical or any other form of support for the attainment of truth.

J. O. Chimakonam

Find the whole article and the bibliography under “Links and resources” (ODIP)

³ Kegley Jacquelyn and Ann K. *Genuine Individuals and Genuine Communities*. P. 11