

A REVIEW OF IGWEBUIKE AND THE LOGIC (NKA) OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY BY PROF. ANTHONY IKECHUKWU KANU, O.S.A

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This piece, published in 2017 is a work of great attempt on one of the most dreaded areas of Philosophy, the Logic and in particular the African Logic. It is noteworthy that, while some promising African scholars were still at large on the possibility of African Philosophy, Kanu has started discussing the logic that is the *Nka* of African Philosophy. In this paper, Kanu painstakingly dwelt comprehensively on the logic of African Philosophy. Logic as a major branch of philosophical discourse is the science of unaided correct reasoning knowing full well that correct or good-exact ideas do not fall from heaven. Logic, from the Greek word, *logos*, therefore, is an art of right and sound reasoning. According to Aristotle, logic is the *new and necessary reasoning*. Logic as an organon of knowledge is the product of human mind as well as that of a man as an *animal cogitans*, thinking animal and *animal rationalis*, rational animal relating it with the concept of Igwebuike, the African philosophy of complementarity and solidarity which sees power as belonging to the multitude.

The author sees philosophy as very fundamental, addressing reality with regard to the welfare of man that rationalizes. Making a cursory attempt at the dawn of philosophical enterprise, from ancient period, through the medieval times and unto the modern and contemporary, philosophical reflections were all about the value of Knowledge for humanity. Kanu succinctly admits that as an academic discipline, philosophy basically exercises the principle of reason and logic in an attempt to understand reality and answer fundamental questions about knowledge, life, morality, and human nature. African Philosophy has become a part of the world philosophic heritage that can no longer be neglected. Obi J. Oguejiofor in his paper *Problems and Prospects of the History of African Philosophy*, published in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 77, Fall 003, No. 4. sees logic as an indispensable ingredient in any discourse to merit philosophy. If African Philosophy is to be distinguished from the derogatory-disregard as ethnophilosophy, Sage or Folk Philosophy and the likes, it must have the needed logic.

Kanu continued to show in this paper indebted knowledge and mastery of the *unknown and yet to be acknowledged* History of African Philosophy by the references he made of the works of Innocent Onyewuenyi's *The African Origin of Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentricism*, and Makinde's *African Philosophy: The Demise of a Controversy*. Other African philosophical works that demonstrated the existence of Philosophy in African Continent centuries past are: Theophile Obenga's *African Philosophy: The Pharaonic Period 2780-330BC*, George G.M. James' *Greek Philosophy is Stolen Egyptian Philosophy*, Theophile Obenga's *Ancient Egypt and Black Africa* and George Quest's *The March of Civilization*. These literary works presupposes great scholarship on philosophy in Africa Continent centuries past.

Nka or African Logic in African Philosophy remains a theory of reasoning or the study of the consistency of statement-thoughts and valid consequences of an argument. As long as Africans are *homo loquens* and interacts, there is need for *Nka*. Logic is needed to prove us rationally consistent. If African Philosophy is to maintain the expected *philosophicality* there should be an operational logic. If it must maintain its *Africanity*, such philosophical enterprise must be on African context, reality or worldview, done by scholars within or outside the geography of African continent. Kanu authoritatively doubted if there can be African Philosophy without proper *Nka*, African Logic. He nevertheless admits that for any philosophy to retain the identity of philosophy, it must have basic elements of logic to maintain the philosophical structure. By extension, African philosophy must have African Logic, properly referred as *Nka* to worth the name. Having established African philosophy, it is illogical to question the existence of African logic knowing that *no logic, no philosophy*. Maritain Jacques underscores this when he enumerated the great division of philosophy thus: Logic, Speculative Philosophy and Practical Philosophy.

Prof. Kanu appreciating logic as the foundation of sound structures of valid arguments and correct statements was passionately vehement in the appreciation of African logic, that is, *Nka*, as such. For him, in African logic, the focus is on the structure of African pattern of thought and reasoning as it is related to traditional African language. He emphasized that the adjective *African* in African Logic shows the locus of the logicity. African logic while exercising the general principles of logic is contextualized within the African reality as every good culture is expressed within the frame of language and thought. The relationship of *Igwebuike* as the modality of being in African Philosophy provides the *relational*

connectedness of solidarity and complementarity within the African society. Kanu aptly observes that African worldview is ruled by the spirit of complementarity which seeks the conglomeration, the unification, the summation of fragmented thoughts, opinions and ideas with this understanding that parts can never be greater than the whole. Igbo reality as such has a complementary as well as distinctive character corresponding to the universality and particularity of logic as Logic. Since the branches of Philosophy are interrelated, Igwebuiké being the modality of being, and African ontology having been understood as the *strength is power* or *power of the multitude*, then African logic flowing from the African ontology is complementary. Here lies Igwebuiké as the ontological foundation of an African logic. African man in his worldview must *think* correctly and *reason* validly within the bounds and limits of his reality.

African Logic or *Nka* is a great attempt at solving one of the greatest problems of contemporary African Philosophy after Method. Other attempts have been made with regard to the proper Igbo nomenclature and the actual Igbo fitting translation of Logic. We have seen Kanu's *Nka* which has something to do with *scientificity* or *systematicity* as it concerns *techne*. Recently Chimakonam proposed Ezumezu logic as African Logic in African Philosophy. The Concept of Ezumezu as *Ezu m ezu* connotes a kind of *coming together* which in a very strict and large sense is related to Igwebuiké.

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