



## An Igbo Metaphysics of the Human Being: Going Beyond Emmanuel Mathew Paul Edeh's Metaphysics of *Mma-di*

Anayochukwu Kingsley UGWU, MA  
Department of Philosophy Faculty of Social  
Sciences Madonna University, Nigeria

[anayochukwuip@gmail.com](mailto:anayochukwuip@gmail.com) and [anayochukwu.kingsley.pg82208@unn.edu.ng](mailto:anayochukwu.kingsley.pg82208@unn.edu.ng)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0465-5277>

Mobile Contact: +2348060587835

### Abstract

There are various versions of conceptual schemes through which African scholars have conceived the human being. While some took to communalistic and aesthetic perspectives, others took to socio-ontological and theologico-anthropological perspectives while very many others took to normativist and derivatist perspective. Emmanuel Mathew Paul Edeh's conception took an ontologico-aesthetic and derivatist perspectives where the human being is conceived as the 'good that is' following his/her ontological 'participation' in the 'goodness' of his/her Maker whose substance, essence and nature epitomize 'goodness'. At this, questions arise: What is the true nature of the human being? What differentiates human existence from the existence of other beings — be it physical or metaphysical? Why has the human being kept exhibiting bad attitudes (evils) if s/he is truly 'good that is'. Why has evil persisted if everything that comes from the Maker of everything is all good? It is in addressing these questions that this paper presented a socio-ontological conception that views the human being as *Maadvjuru* which interprets 'Sustained-Survived/Surviving-Spirit' whose nature is explained in his/her existential realities beyond Edeh's 'good that is'. The paper presented more insights into the discourse by showing that the human being is a concretized-spirit with complex physical and metaphysical components whose existential experiences underpin his/her complex nature. The paper adopted a hermeneutical method where interpretations and analysis are used for comparison and critical evaluations.

**Key Words:** *Maadvjuru*, Edeh, Umuoka People, Good that is, Sustained-Survived/Surviving-Spirit, Human Being, Philosophy

### (1) Introduction

There are series of theses from Igbo and generally African and non-African scholars regarding the conception of the human being. These theses take various perspectives that could be described as social, socio-ontological, theologico-anthropological, normative, aesthetic, behavioural and even ancestral. However, the paper attributes these conceptual varieties to influences from cultural, academic and professional backgrounds and dispositions, social statuses, religious beliefs and existential experiences. These influences equally explain why some scholars choose to designate the discourse on 'human being' with some terms like 'man', 'person', etc. Be that as it



may, the paper found out that a critical cross-examination of these theses reveal their non-inclusiveness.

It is thus against this backdrop that the paper argues that the socio-ontological conception of the human being held by Umuoka people of Ojebe-Ogene, Udi-Agbaja of Enugu State stands better inclusive than other varieties of theses held by some people and scholars. The human being, by the conceptual scheme, is interpreted as *Maadjvu* which means 'Sustained-Survived/Surviving-Spirit' whose nature explains his/her existential realities. The conception explains why human beings exhibit existential nature of both virtue and vice.

Adopting a hermeneutical method characterized by interpretations and analysis, the paper proves that the human being is only but a being whose existence is socio-ontologically sustained as a concretized-spirit. It also shows that the human being is a complex being whose existential composites are too many; hence that explains the mystery of the human being.

## **(2) An Analysis of Edeh's Metaphysics of *Mma-di***

It is paramount to make a clarification on the term central in this discourse as articulated by Emmanuel Mathew Paul Edeh in his metaphysical contribute to the development of African philosophy. While Edeh adopted the term 'man', this paper consistently adopted the term 'human being' in the discussion. However, where the term 'man' is seen from a direct citation, and in the analysis of such citation, the paper is forced to still employ the same term to, either maintain a grammatical consistency or ease understanding hence it must be understood as a reference to 'human being'.

The philosophy of *mma-di* is Edeh's philosophy (metaphysics) of the human being. It is, by extension, an ontological articulation on being. The metaphysics is Edeh's academic or intellectual gift to the world. In the metaphysics, Edeh tried to articulate what he thought could be a firsthand literature on African Philosophical discourses. Suffice it to say that he articulated African Philosophy through an Igbo conceptual scheme through which the question of being is raised. By this metaphysics, Edeh came up with an Igbo conceptual scheme of being as epitomized in the beingness/existence of the human being. It is a theologico-philosophical conceptual framework about being as holistically portrayed in humanity as the foremost principle into the enquiry on being as a discourse. This metaphysics was first articulated elaborately in his literary prime titled *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics* (Edeh, 1985, 1999 reprinted), and later expatiated in his handy material titled *Igbo Metaphysics: The First Articulation of African Philosophy of Being* (Edeh, 2009). In these pieces of literature, a theologico-philosophical conception of the human being is presented and the human being became known as the 'good that is' and his existence characterized as a God-man-relationship. The implication behind this is that the 'good that is' must be shown through (1) a socio-ontological participation in the goodness of the Creator, and (2) concretization of the 'good' among fellow human beings. It is therefore a human-centred philosophy, hence by extension, it could be described as an African philosophical brand of humanism.



Edeh in his *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics* presented an ontological perspective of the human being by the Igbo that has aesthetic *cum* anthropological dimensions. Edeh said that he took an empirical method which involved field work through questionnaires, interviews and cross-examinations of certain metaphysical phenomena among the Igbo people. For him, this methodological approach was the most appropriate because the motivational events for the philosophical articulation were mostly Igbo-African experiences as related to the following: (1) the devastating effects of the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War, (2) the dire need to restore the dignity of the Igbo human beings, and (3) the necessity to present suitably qualified and original philosophical work that could be called the philosophy, but more precisely, metaphysics of African peoples, especially the Igbo ethnic nationality. In the end, he was able to come up with what he said was the most original, and explanation of the metaphysics of the African people through the articulation of Igbo metaphysics.

To start this epistemological journey in enquiring what being is, he went into searching the most appropriate term that can explain the concept 'being' as it is fundamentally central in metaphysical discourse like the one he engaged. That then prompted him going into postulating two hypotheses: *Onye* and *Ife*, to explain what being means from an Igbo perception. After series of Language Game he showed with the term *Onye* in '*Onye Hypothesis*', as an Igbo, no doubt, he accepted it arguing that "it unquestionably conveys the idea of a human being and ... can be employed to designate spiritual beings," but rejected it following his reason that "it cannot include inanimate, vegetative or non-human animate entities" (Edeh, 1999, p. 94). Going to the term *Ife* in '*Ife Hypothesis*', he considered *Ife* as being nearer to portray the exact Igbo meaning of the term 'being', but the challenge there was "that *ife* does not bring out completely all that *being* means. *Ife* does not emphasize the important aspect of *being*, namely, the fact of existence" (Edeh, 1999, p. 96). But the adequacy of *Ife* over *Onye* hypotheses is that "*ife* standing on its own can be used to refer to both existent and nonexistent entities" (Edeh, 1999, p. 96). But this lacuna in *Ife Hypothesis* is not unsolvable "when we remember that *Ife* can be affixed to any adjective or to a verb to mean a specific thing. The Igbo verb *to be* in the sense of *to exist* is *idi*. *Idi* used as an adjective can be suffixed to any thing to show that it exists" (Edeh, 1999, p. 96). It is at this point that Edeh therefore interpreted 'being' as *Ife-di* (that which is/exists) so as to answer the question of being.

But how do human beings know 'that which is/exists'? Now to pose the question: 'what is being', which interprets 'what is that which is?' demands an answer. When taken to the extreme, the question turns rhetorical like *Ife-di bu Ife-di* (that which is is that which is); and by that, no point is made. At this point, Edeh returned (Heideggerian influence now in play) the question and the answer to the human being hence he contended that the knowledge of the human being stands as a stepping stone to the true knowledge of being, that which is, anything that is at all. In this regard, Edeh wrote: "Confronted with the question: How do you become aware of what is? The Igbo, it seems, would say that an awareness of what is could begin with an awareness of man as a visible concrete instance of what exists" (1999, p. 98). At this point, it is important to note that Edeh no longer struggled to present a firsthand knowledge of what being is, from an Igbo



perspective hence he has left the question of 'what is being' to 'how do we know what being is'. More on this will still surface under the critique section below. He then focused on the question: "how do you know that beings are" and answering himself, he said "I know this at least from the fact that human beings are... We human beings are" (1999, p. 100). At this juncture, what we could be summarized about the Igbo understanding of being as presented by Edeh is that being is *lfe-di* (that which is). It is at this point that his attention then shifted to the question of how we could know that which is, instead of 'what is what is'.

However, there are remarkable points in Edeh's concept of being. (1) The question of being is below or after God. That is why man becomes the replica of what being is, and why His products determine what being is in as much as being is 'what is' and 'what is' remains a creature of God. Going deep, one could say that Edeh's concept of being excludes God because when the concept of being revolves around creatures, God is therefore excluded from the concept of being as a creature. This is because (a) God is already in existence, and (b) He created/creates being, hence His activity (creation) determines what being is. So it becomes a contradiction when Edeh said that he wanted a term that pictures being holistically and still portrays the idea of existence, and he then arrived at *lfe-di* which is "the most appropriate Igbo rendering of English concept of being because it covers all entities, both visible and invisible, as well as the note of existence which we commonly associate with being" (1999, p. 96). It is contradictory because God is one of *lfe-di*; and so, giving the whole knowledge of what is, on what God created is a big flaw in Edeh as God cannot take such double position to create and then turn to become a creature so as to be included in the concept of being. (2) Being is being-derivative in nature. The principle of derivativism here draws from a dualistic dimension: (a) Being is being-created. Creature is the standard for being. "If it is said that there is no Chi-ukwu, then being would not be. Nothing would exist" (1999, p. 34). Without being-created, there will be no-being. Being is being-created while non-being is being-uncreated, the very opposite of being (if non-being is not a kind of being). That is to say that being is being-a-creature-of-God, the source of all things (being). (b) Being is being-good (that-is). That is to say that in as much as being is being-created by Chineke (God who creates/created), and being-created presupposes being-good (that is) through the principle of participation in the goodness of Chineke (the creating Being – God), then, being is being-good. But a question thus arises: Does the good/ness of human beings follow from the fact of participation principle or from the etymological meaning where *mmadu* is pronounced as *mma-di* interpreted as 'good that is'? To answer this question, I would think (and it would have been a logical shield to Edeh to avoid some flaws in his work) that the concept of 'good/ness' being identical with the concept of 'being' follows from the fact that the sole source of being is good in Himself not from the etymological meaning of one being – human beings. "Whatever is good is so because of Chineke, the source of all being" (1999, p.37).

Nonetheless, here we can see Edeh being influenced by some philosophies or philosophical traditions like: (1) The concept of universality attached to the Heideggerian existentialist notion of being, (2) Thomas Aquinas' position that the conception and definition of being differ from the way essence is conceived, (3) The concept of



uniqueness underpinning the question, act, meaning and interpretation of being in the theology of Bernard Lonergan, (4) The philosophical contents and implications in the saying which has, hitherto, been argued to be of African origin (the Egyptian Mystic School) 'Man Know Thyself' as much as the Igbo saying, *Akụ ruo Ụlọ*. Even though *Akụ* here primarily refers to wealth and riches, it denotes the idea of 'Think Home Philosophy' where 'Self-Knowledge' is encouraged to be a fundamental process. It was a Heideggerian influence that he had to return the question and knowledge of being to those of man so as to know the unknown (other beings extended from man) through the known (man). Likening this to the number four above, this aligns with the African influence through African sayings that encourage self-knowledge as a fundamental step towards raising and answering questions on being. From Aquinas' influence, he had to detach the notion of man ('good that is') from the concept of essence (man's goodness which is divinely derivative). From Lonergan, he was influenced to technically struggle for, and apply the concept of universality which guided him through the epistemological enquiry in the *Onye* and *Ife* Hypotheses. It is at this very point that the foundation upon which one can stand and describe Edeh's philosophy as an African philosophical brand of humanism takes justification.

Nonetheless, for Edeh, the proper term for 'being' became "'Ife-di'... because it covers all entities, both visible and invisible, as well as the note of existence which we commonly associate with being" (1999, p. 96). He further maintained that the understanding of *Ife-di* begins with the understanding of the 'subject' of the enquiry (human being). Going fundamental, the scholar maintained that the Igbo etymology for the 'human being' is *Madụ* which "is a short form of *mmadi* (*mma-di*) "*Mma*" is the Igbo word for "good," "a good," or "the good." "*Di*" is from "*idi*" which, as we have seen, is the Igbo verb "to be"" (Edeh, 1999, p. 100). From this position, *Mmadụ* which, he, though, calls *Madụ*— is a derivation from *mma* (good) and *dụ* which he, as an application of linguistic game, turned to *di* hence *mma-di*. But *di* is a derivative from the Igbo verb (Ngwaa) *idi* (meaning, 'to be' or 'to exist'). Now, when affixed to *mma*, man therefore became *mma-di* meaning 'good that is'. Having given it a theoretical meaning, the scholar went on with the practical implication of this theoretical postulation, thereby raising a question of how this goodness could be sustained so long it is a derivation from participation in, or, belongingness to the goodness of the Maker. In his word, "the Igbo notion of "good that is" must be understood in the context of creation... divine creation. To say that man is the "good that is" is not to say that man is "good *in se*", for no one is "good *in se*" except God" (Edeh, 1999, p. 100). Thus, the goodness or man's essential quality as the 'good that is' is only by participation or sharing in the goodness of his Creator. He contended that the Igbo disposition of ideal-practical orientation differentiates the Igbo-African from the Western knowledge of being which tends towards radical dualism. Hear him:

The distinctive feature of African philosophy is that it cannot be thought of, in terms of an objective abstract science as was fashionable in Western philosophy. In African philosophy, we are dealing with a practical theoretical science in the sense that by nature, African metaphysics is a lived philosophy rather than a purely theoretical science enterprise (Edeh, 2010, p. 1)





In addressing this point, Edeh advised that human beings must restore the existential paradigm of 'goodness', and so, must treat fellow human beings with everything replicating goodness. Blending this theoretical conception with practical humanitarianism, Edeh came up with a philosophical postulation that tries to blend theory and practice as a working ideal for the betterment of human beings. Naming it after his own name, he coined the term EPTAISM- to represent Edeh's Philosophy of Thought and Action. In this respect, the name of the academic Journal of the Department of Philosophy of one of his Universities, Madonna University, Nigeria took after this idea of blending theory with practice hence MUTAJOP, representing Madonna University Thought and Action Journal of Philosophy. In this philosophy, the ideal (goodness) is practically concretized in humanity (Melladu, 2011; Onukwube, 2012). His thought towards Practical and Effective Charity (PEC) is equally a by-product of EPTAISM as widely enunciated elsewhere (Edeh, 2010). To this end, Edeh's metaphysics took an anthropocentric perspective where the primacy of existence becomes man-centred.

Edeh also went on to present an Igbo communalistic view of the human being. This is where his cultural background of anthropocentric world-view played out vividly in his articulations and equally facilitated or made it feasible for his orientation towards theoretical-practical dispositions. He holds an ontological communalistic personality of being Igbo (African) which expresses the fact of functionally cooperative existence among (Igbo) beings. He elaborately put this communalistic disposition thus:

the Igbo way of life emphasizes 'closeness' but not 'closed-ness.' There is a closeness in living because each person 'belongs to' others and in turn, 'is belonged to by' others. By adopting this life of 'closeness' or 'belongingness,' an Igbo becomes immersed in the culture's spiritual substance, love, and by love he acquires a fulfilment as a person beyond mere individuality (Edeh, 1999, p. 105)

This implies that apart from his metaphysics of the human being, he still presented an Igbo communalistic view and personality of the Igbo human being which prioritizes cooperative instead of individualistic meaningfulness of existence. Identifying the African personality with the fact that man is communally and ontologically centred in the universe, Edeh opined that man is essentially a 'participatory-being' and in his communalistic participation towards one another, the paradigm of the nature, substance and essence of his Creator who is the *Summum Bonum* (the Supreme Good) ought to be the watch word; that is, the centre of the ontological communal participation. This suffices that the welfare of the human being ought to be at the centre of the ontological interrelatedness, for the human being is the weakest, and takes the central stage. The sense of humanism characterizes African communalism where priority is on the consciousness of the feeling that the being with whom the African lives and communes, is a fellow human being, and by that essence, ought to be approached with a more humane 'face'. Significantly, humanism and communalism are two existential qualities that define what could ever be referred to as value among Igbo-Africans.

Edeh also delved into more pure metaphysical dimension to address the issue of duality of being in regards to the components of the human being according to Igbo ontology.



He posited that the human being is made up of the following components: (1) *Ahụ/Arụ* (from the physical perspective) and (2) *Mkpụlụ-obi*, (3) *Chi* and (4) *Mụọ* from metaphysical perspective. He said that *Ahụ* (*Arụ*) “has a common root with *ihụ* which means to see with the eyes. Thus, *ahụ* or *arụ* has the notion of being visible, that is, perceptible by the senses” (1999, p. 80). Edeh was fundamental and conclusive on this, but more, for the sake emphasis and analysis on the physical components of the human being, was elaborately presented by Ugwu (2022a). Talking about the metaphysical components, Edeh wrote that *Mkpụrụ-obi* (which though he has consistently written as *Mkpụlụ-obi*) is identified as “the nut or seed of the heart” (1999, p. 80). The implication is that it is still a part of the visible components hence he said that he does not agree with some scholars who argue that the term depicts the concept of the Christian soul. Going beyond Edeh on this, an Igbo scholar has denied the reality of the Christian soul concept in Igbo ontology arguing that it was a misconception and misinterpretation to have such concept in Igbo metaphysics of the human being; and that it also has no real Igbo name (Ugwu, 2022b). Talking about *Chi*, Edeh argued that the concept took its root from the position that man resembles God in his soul, hence it is identified as ‘life’ “in the sense of life from God, or the presence of God;” that is, ‘life of God (in human) or life from God (to human)’. But Edeh went on to suggest that the concept of *Chi* can appropriate to the concept of ‘soul’ because man resembles God in his soul according to the Christian ontology or theology. He said, “I would think that “chi” is perhaps not too inappropriate for the soul, provided it is understood as not indicating that... God is partitioned among his creatures” (1999, p. 81). Suffice it to that for Edeh, in Igbo ontology, man resembles God in his *Chi*. But is it true, and to which extent can this be true, and what exactly does the concept ‘Chi’ mean and imply in Igbo ontology? More on this concept has been enunciated by Abanuka (2009); Ugwu (2019). Giving more support to the argument on *Chi* concept, Edeh opined “that the Igbos have the idea that the soul in its activity directs and protects the body” because *Chi* is “an active participation of God in terms of life in man” (1999, p. 81). Finally, talking about *Mmụọ* (but consistently written as *Mụọ*) he identified it as ‘soul’ when he wrote that “the Igbo idea of the human soul is most appropriately conveyed by the term “mụọ” (Edeh, 1999, p. 81). Up there, Edeh just said “that “chi” is perhaps not too inappropriate for the soul” and here he is saying that “the human soul is most appropriately conveyed by the term “mụọ.” This implies that *Chi*, *Mmụọ* and Soul mean the same and one thing. But the question now is, ‘why separating *Chi* and *Mmụọ* as different components of the human being in Igbo ontology?’ However, differing from many Igbo scholars especially fellow priests and those highly influenced by Western religions, he rejected the idea that the term *Mkpụrụ-obi* represents appropriately the ‘soul’ concept because: (1) the term was an invention by catechists who worked with the first missionaries in their bid to explain what they understood from the foreign religious colonizers (missionaries) as the Western concept of soul to fellow indigenes; and (2) that “the term conveys the idea of the physical concentration of the soul in one part of the body.” But it has been established from an Igbo ontological perspective that what Edeh has presented as the components of the human being did not show his status as a metaphysician, hence there are other essential constitutive elements of the human being. For a more elaborate view on this, Ugwu writes:



For the Igbo, in the Umuokan scheme of thought, *mmadu*, or *maadjvu(ru)*, is basically a composite of two main 'existential phenomena/spheres': Physical and Metaphysical. His Physical existential phenomenon/sphere comprises of the presence of *Ahu* (Body). In his bodily existential sphere, we have *Mkpuru Obi* (Heart), *Uburu/Uvuru* (Brain), *Akpukpo Anu-Ahu* shortened (Anu-Ahu) (Skin) *Aji* (Hairs), *Obara* (Blood), *Okpukpo* (Bones), *Akwara* (Veins), *Anu* (Flesh), *Mmiri* (Waters including the sex cells and all the moisture-contents) and *Ihe-Mmehiga* (Wastes). His Metaphysical existential phenomenon/ sphere comprises of the presence of *Mmuo* (Spirit) *Onwe* (Self), *Uche* (Mind/Intellect), *Echiche* (Thought), *Akọ* (Wisdom), *Onyinyo* (Shadow), *Nghota* (Understanding), *Ume* (Breath), *Oyime* (Ghost), *Ehihe* (the Doubleness of Man) *Agwa* (Attitude), *Obi/Mmuo-Ikpe* (Conscience), *Onatara Chi* (Natural Talent/ Skill), and *Chi* (2022b, p. 159)

In addition to all these is consciousness, a very important constitutive element of the human being which not only explains human existence distinct from that of non-human beings, but also stands as a defining factor for an authentic existence. More on this shall be discussed later under the 'components of the human being' and has been pointed out elsewhere (Ozoemena, *et al.*, 2022). To show the importance and identical nature of consciousness to human existence, some scholars like Descartes, Heidegger, etc. hold the view that to be human and unique in the community of beings, is to be conscious, hence being human is being conscious. For Descartes, consciousness makes humanity to the extent that it defines being human and being human is thinking – an expression of consciousness (Descartes 1850). The human being is a bundle of consciousness, and this has not only underlined the definition of the human being by Descartes but also summarized his position on what being really implies as represented in the beingness of the 'thinking self' in Descartes' dictum, 'I think, therefore, I am'. The defining fact of existence being anchored on thinking is feasible from a conceptual scheme that thinking, by which being is identified, is a by-product of consciousness. Being is identical with thinking, and thinking is an inherent expression of consciousness according to Descartes. The mention of human beings is the mention of consciousness. For Heidegger, the human being is the fundamental gateway to real understanding of what being is, as only human beings 'exist' while every other being merely 'is'. The 'exist-status' of human beings is based on the human consciousness which makes him/her to raise questions about being and answer them as well unlike every other being which merely 'is' (Heidegger, 1956; 1962; Ozoemena, *et al.*, 2022). The implication is that the beingness of the human being becomes unique and different from the beingness of every other being because the beingness of the human being expresses not just consciousness but also volition, freewill, subjectivity or individuality, responsibility and equally raises questions on moral agency.

It will add more value to make it clear that even though the aesthetic perspective initially taken by Edeh took a derivativist digression on the process, nonetheless, it has to be known that it is not only Edeh who has taken the aesthetic perspective in their conceptual approach to the meaning and existence of the human being. Scholars like Udobata R. Onunwa (1994; 2011), Obed E. Anizoba (1986), George O. Ehusani (1991), Dominic Zahan (1970), Elizabeth Isichei (1969), Eze Chielozona (1988),





Anozie cited in (Obiajulu, 2015), B. Uzukwu (1982), among others have maintained aesthetic conception of the human being that projects the dignity and integrity of the human life in specification, and the ontological existential value and centrality of the human being among other beings with whom s/he exists. In fact, for Anozie, *mmadu* means 'let goodness be'. The human being represents what goodness, existential sacredness, value and beauty mean and imply. Uzukwu's position would make it more glaring: "In speech and action, whether in a ritual or a profane context, (the human) LIFE stands out for the Igbo as a value around which other values find their meaning. *Ndubuisi* (life is first), *ndukaku* (life is greater than wealth) are proper names pregnant with meanings" (1982, p. 195). For Onunwa, "Man is located at the centre" and is found "at the centre of the universe where the pressure and influences of all other beings converge and operate" hence it can be said that "it is man that makes the world *liveable* and *loveable*" (1994, p. 252). Some scholars like Onunwa (2011), Ijiomah (2005) and Ekwealor (1990) even went ahead to diagrammatically represent the aesthetic conceptualization of the human being and its socio-ontological value and the dignifying central position of the human being in the community of beings.

### (3) Critiques of Edeh

While it must be commended that Edeh has offered a laudable contribution to the development of African Philosophy, the paper still has some critical reservations against him. Let us itemize them one by one.

One, Edeh must be commended for going hermeneutical as that facilitated the level of positivity seen in his work. He must equally be given kudos for going literally to philosophize in not just his Nkanu dialect but also Onitsha Igbo dialect all of which are referred to as *Olu Mba* (community dialectics). His dialect gave a clear insight into linguistic emphasis on the identification of being as expressed in the beingness of the human being as *mma-di* (good that is). It must be recalled that indeed, he has succeeded in propounding a theoretical framework that encourages humanism among the community of (human) beings through his articulation of *Mma-di* philosophy. These are positive contributions deductible from Edeh's work on one hand. But on the other hand, it has added to many typographical errors and wrong spellings of Igbo words in the work. Just for instance, we can see *di* written as "*de*," *Udi* written as "*Uḡdi*," "*Adighi*" written as "*Adeghi*," "*Qdi*, *Qdidi*" written as "*Ode*, *Odede*" translating as "there is, being," etc. (Edeh, 1999, p. 32, 89).

Two, it is considered gender-insensitivity to consistently adopt the term 'man' in a people's metaphysics of being as articulated by Edeh. In Igbo, 'man' means *nwoke* (a male human being). It does not comprise of *nwanyi* (a female human being). Hence, it is more appropriate to adopt a term that should comprise of both genders, *mmadu* (human being), as opposed to non-human being. It is to avoid such shortcoming that this paper consistently adopted the term 'human being' to refer to both male and female in the discussion unless where it is necessary as a matter of grammatical connection with Edeh.

It is undeniable that Edeh got a lot of influences from Western scholars, religious belief systems, schemes of philosophizing and conceptualization, etc. These influences came clearer in Edeh's manner of conceptualization and philosophical articulation. A brief dissection of this will be of great help.



Three, Edeh was hugely influenced by Plato's philosophical articulations being as expressed in the ideal and physical worlds. Holding the position of pluralism of reality, Plato opines that realities truly exist in the ideal world while their photocopies exist in the physical world. That is to say that the prototypes of realities as beheld in the material or physical world are there in the formal or ideal world. But there is a principle of 'demiurge' that enhances the possibility of grasping reality in the formal world from the material world. But in Edeh, the epistemological journey of knowing from the material to the formal world is through the concept of 'participation'. While Plato calls it 'demiurge' Edeh calls it 'participation' (*iketa òkè n'ife* or *isonye n'ihe*). So, Edeh took a leap from the Platonic position to maintain that the goodness of the 'good that is' (man- the symbol of what is) is not *in se*, implying that it is a derivative or participatory one from the *Summum Bonum*. Explicitly, it is put thus:

The Igbo notion of "good that is" must be understood in the context of creation. For the Igbos the notion of "good" is derived from divine creation. To say that man is the "good that is" is not to say that man is "good *in se*," for no one is "good *in se*" except God... Man is "good that is" in the sense that, having been created by God, he is a product of his maker and hence he shares in the being of his maker, the highest good (Edeh, 1999, 100-1)

Significantly, while Plato contends that the mind is capable of transcending into the formal world to grasp reality as it is, Edeh contends that it is by 'participation' or 'sharing' in the ideal that human beings partake (grasp, as in Plato's) in the divine nature (goodness) of the Creator. While Plato's tilts more towards rationality and takes an epistemological substance; that of Edeh tilts more towards theological position and takes to the substantial nature of the human being which could be seen as theocentric-anthropological.

Four, Edeh got another influence from Aristotle who would strongly hold that there are four causes underlining every reality. The formal cause which is referred to the form, essence or functional nature that identifies the truism of what is made; the material cause which is the material used in making what is made, the efficient cause which simply refers to the maker of what is made; and then, the final cause which refers to the 'whyness' or teleology of what is made. In describing what being is, or what reality is made up of as it relates to his informant and his usual attitude of ascending to a certain phenomenal stool (*oche ndi Nze*) before responding to questions, Edeh wrote that his informant said he would respond better when on the stool following certain socio-ontological implications of the stool. Thus, his informant says that the socio-ontological implications of the stool follow from the fact that "there are four groups of things that make anything be what it is" and they include first, "that which is visible and can be touched," second, "that which is hidden," third "the artisan who used wood and other materials to make this stool," and four, "the thing that brought about why this stool of representatives of the dead was built" (Edeh 1999, 28-30). Even though this is hugely arguable in Igbo ontological conceptual scheme for that was a typical instance of attempt to westernize Igbo philosophy, Edeh nonetheless, argued that that which is there in the Aristotelian position is there also in the Igbo ontological framework of



conceiving reality. That was a clear demonstration of Aristotle's philosophical influence on Edeh.

Five, being a 'Christian Plato', one who Christianized Plato's work, St. Augustine demonstrated an epistemological *cum* metaphysical philosophy motivated by Plato. Plato maintained a rationalist epistemological *cum* metaphysical position that realities are generally referred to as forms domicile in the formal or ideal world and the photocopies domicile in the physical or material world. He represented these two ideas with the concepts of Necessary Being and Contingent Beings respectively. He also maintained that the human mind is capable of grasping realities through rational process. But Augustine in his attempt to Christianize the philosophical work of Plato was of the opinion that the Platonic forms in the ideal world are divine ideas, and the ideal world is the mind of God, and the natural capability of the mind to grasp realities all the way from the ideal world is nothing but a divine illumination. However, that was a huge and clear sign of influence from medieval thoughts and Christian theology and belief system which is more of theocentric than ratiocinative. Significantly, that was a reason a scholar like Heidegger criticized the scholars of the medieval era that they did not do true philosophy because if it was already known that after every thinking process that all the possible result would still fall back to God, then there was really no need to trouble the brain or the mind in the thinking. In other words, the essence of philosophizing was divine. This could be said that the answer is already known before the question. Be that as it may, Edeh was in a significant way influenced by St. Augustine when he maintained a divine media for men to share in the good or any qualification of the Necessary Being. That explained why Edeh deprived man of anything good or knowledge of goodness without being divinely derived through the concept/principle of participation. This is clearer thus: "Man is "good that is" in the sense that, having been created by God, he is a product of his maker and hence he shares in the being of his maker, the highest good" (Edeh, 1999, 100-1).

Six, the philosophical position of the 'Christian Aristotle' (St. Thomas Aquinas) equally influenced Edeh. Aristotle maintained the position that God does not know and care for the world because knowing and caring for the world amount to materially staining the substantial nature of God by becoming one with what He (God) knows and cares for. In other words, essence (of the human being) must not be defined and known together with the human being him/herself. Contrary to that Aquinas maintained that God knows and cares for the world hence becoming part of what He (God) knows and cares for. Again, the essence of God is unknown to the human being even though Aquinas argues, like Plato and Aristotle, that the human mind is capable of grasping reality without divine illumination. The knowledge of God's essence to the human being is by analogy; analogy here is like comparison, inference. This Thomistic concept of analogy could be likened to Edeh's concept of sharing/participating by analysis which has landed him to derivativism. Thomistic 'analogy' concept which leads the human mind to knowledge is represented in Edeh's 'participation' as analyzed which leads to the human sharing in the good/ness-status of his/her all-good God. Thomistic position that the essence of God is unknown to the human being is Edehistic position that the goodness of the human being is only by 'participation' in the Supreme Good. The Thomistic concept of 'Necessary being' from which all other beings (contingent beings) came, pictures the Edehistic position that God is the Maker of all things and every



idea/sense of goodness on all creatures comes from their Creator (God), which is why reality becomes identical with 'good that is'.

Seven, Heidegger's position that the real knowledge of being is identical with the being of *Dasein* characteristically influenced Edeh. Heidegger is of the view that the reality of being revolves around the reality of *Dasein* and its knowledge. That is why he sees *Dasein* as the being that raises the question of being, the being in whose mode of existence is the hunger to enquire into being. This position explains why *Dasein* is the only being that truly exists. "The being that exists is man. Man alone exists. Trees are, but they do not exist. Angels are, but they do not exist. God is, but he does not exist" (Heidegger, 1956, p. 215). Thus, there is a big existentially substantially distinction between 'exist' which expresses the beingness of *Dasein* (human being) only, and 'is/are' which express the beingness of every other being. Edeh on his own opined that the knowledge of *ife di* (that which is) is by the knowledge of the human being who stands as a unique being, a being whose existential qualities express what existence truly means. Thus, for Edeh and Heidegger, the knowledge of *Dasein/mma-di* is the beginning of knowledge of being and what it takes to truly exist.

Eight, as pointed out earlier than now, the concept of uniqueness underpinning the question, act, meaning and interpretation of being in the theological perception held by Bernard Lonergan influenced Edeh so much to technically struggle for, and apply the concept of universality which guided him through the epistemological enquiry in the *Onye* and *Ife* Hypotheses. To situate it in a particular perspective, Lonergan wrote that the notion of being is unique, for it is the core of all acts of meaning, and it underpins, penetrates, and goes beyond all cognitional contents... Other thoughts result from some insight either into the use of their name, or into things-for-us, or into things-themselves. The notion of being ... cannot result from an insight into beings, for such an insight would be an understanding of everything about everything, and such understanding we have not attained (1956, p. 359-60)

Lonergan's philosophical conception in a full alignment with Western tradition had a big influence on Edeh so much so that it was too clear to be denied. From Lonergan, he drew inspiration of generalization of his meaning of being and even left it halfway and then delves into emphasizing the uniqueness of human beingness but to place it over the beingness of every other being. This influence answers why he did not care so much about the danger in using the etymological meaning of the human to give a general identification to every other reality as being hence the universalization of the term (*mma-di*) over every other entity in existence. He put it thus:

*Ife nine bu ife-di* (all things are beings.) This is the way, I think, of stating that the notion of being penetrates all other contents; hence it is present in the formulation of every concept ... In the Western tradition ... being is not an essence and therefore indefinable. Ideas of essence are formed by abstraction, that is, by leaving out of consideration nonessential characteristics (Edeh, 1999, p. 99)

Edeh just tried to bring in Western concept into African philosophy, by allowing himself to be influenced with such universality concept; and that was why he fell into the problem of misconception that everything becomes 'good that is'. Even when one finally



succeeds to force a round peg into a square hole, the improperness will always remain visible.

Nine, having now interrogated Edeh's major sources of influences as related to this paper, it could be deciphered that there lies the very problem. From Edeh's position above, one might not strictly categorize him as a normativist, but an ontologist and 'derivatist' (an exponent of 'derivation principle' in the course of philosophizing and in the discourse on being). This is because the goodness of human beings (and by extension, every being) is not socially derived, but 'derivative' in so far as they are creatures. Listen to him: "Man is "good that is" in the sense that, having been created by God, he is a product of his maker and hence he shares in the being of his maker, the highest good" (Edeh, 1999, 100). But Edeh kept shooting himself in the leg when (1) he appeared to have forgotten that not all being is a creature of God; (2) he kept emphasizing that to "say that man is the "good that is" is not to say that man is "good *in se*," for no one is "good *in se*" except God" (Edeh, 1999, 100). If the goodness of human beings is ontological on them, that is, by virtue of being creatures, then they are good *in se* not the other way round as Edeh kept emphasizing. If their goodness is derivative in the sense that they achieve it through the principle of participation while growing and socializing among themselves (concretizing the participated/achieved good/ness) in the society, or that it is society that bestows the 'goodness-status' on them, then it is true that they are not good *in se* as Edeh emphasized. Thus, Edeh is both an ontologist and derivatist: a derivatist following his position that the good/ness of human beings is derived from their Creator who is all-good; that is, by being creatures of the Supreme Good; but contradictorily derivatist following his position that the status of their goodness is derivative through the principle of 'participation'. He, initially, meant to remain a metaphysician, ontologist, but on the way, got confused and ended up contradicting himself and landed in derivativism.

Ten, standing on the derivatist interpretation of Edeh that essentially the human being is not good, but good just by mere 'participating', as a creature, in the goodness of his all-good Creator, what is the *modus operandum* in the process of the 'participation'? Can the human being refuse to 'participate' in the 'goodness' of all-good God following the implications in Edeh's analysis of *iketa oke n'ife* and *isolu/isonye n'ife*, and will the person stop being designated as 'good that is'? What is the fate of human beings in the 'participation' concept if they refuse to become (or share/participate in the) good/ness as illustrated by Edeh: would they now be designated as 'bad/evils that are'? Put differently, in that concept of 'participation' or 'sharing', what is the fate of the freedom of human beings? Are they the ones who will themselves to 'participate' or is it divinely willed? Those who refuse to concretize the 'shared or participated good/ness' from their Maker, will they stop being designated as 'good that is' according to Edeh's illustration of 'participation' concept? Following the same illustration, 'participation' as a concept is strictly a human affair because it is only human beings who could be categorized as beings who 'participate' in something according to Edeh's illustration. It is only human beings "who come together to share something which as a whole belongs only to the group" (1999, p. 101). It is only they who "follow others in something" (1999, p. 101). He went further to say: "This proverb emphasizes that participation is a matter of community appurtenance, not individual or personal endowment" (1999, p. 101). From this, Edeh even got us more confused following his logical inconsistency on that





concept. 'Participation', by this, has now taken a communalistic dimension, and that is highly un-existentialist because 'being' and 'existence' are core concepts to the existence of human beings. They are subjective affairs; and Edeh's 'participation' concept is an existential concept which must be subjective (individualistic or personal) equally. Trees and other lower beings to human beings cannot sufficiently 'participate' according to the principles implied (extractable) from illustrations Edeh presented to us; or if they can, is it by their size or height which unfortunately, Edeh did not tell us? Again, if they can, how would human beings know when, where, how and to which extent they could do that.

Eleven, still on the concept of 'participation', are spirit beings designated as 'good that is'. How do they carry out their own activities of participation according to Edeh's illustrations of 'participation'? Who judges their standard for qualification in the sharing/participating in the good? Are they truly creatures, coming from Igbo ontological perspective so it could be said that they are naturally 'good that are' so long they are creatures of all-good Creator?

Twelve, Edeh attempted to look into the reality of evil, its origin/emergence and the question of the all-good God creating everything which must participate in the good/ness nature of the Maker. How can it be explained that there is evil among 'goods that are'; and how possible is it that evil is caused by human beings or nature or spirit-beings? To our utmost surprise, Edeh responded by arguing that non-compliance to *ome-na-ala/omenani* is the central cause of evil and even evil spirit. He conceived *ome-na-ala/omenani* as "a generic term for the body of Igbo socio-religious laws, customs and traditions passed from generation to generation and handed down to the ancestors from God, Chukwu, through the Earth-god" or "an inherited pattern of thought and action that is mysteriously in harmony with the totality of all that is" (1999, p. 103). He was very emphatic on this when he wrote: "For the Igbos, an evil is basically regarded as an offense against "omenani." Even natural catastrophes, and all sorts of undesired occurrences in the universe are regarded as evils because they disrupt the normal order of reality which is supposed to be preserved by "omenani" (1999, p. 103). But is *ome-na-ala* that essentially affective that observing its principles could bring about such cosmic order as presented here by Edeh? What is the relationship between *ome-na-ala* and cosmic order and divine reality to be bestowed such ontological function? In another place, Edeh told us that spirits like the Sea God, Wind God, Sky God and bad/evil spirits cause evil, and sometimes, use human beings to carry out their evil/bad intentions which cause disaster to human beings. To conclude this point, Edeh (1999, p. 109) opined that "neither of the element-gods cause evil alone" hence they equally cause good, and "the second thing we may note is that the element-gods and the evil spirits are the proximate causes of evil." Questions that arise here include: (1) By spirits causing evil, are they still 'goods that are' in the same way like human beings knowing that one does not offer what one does not have? (2) By this position, then Edeh has just contradicted himself by positing that evil is caused by human beings' privation knowing that some of the instances presented to us have no link to explain that human beings cause these spirit to cause evil in the universe. (3) By inference, it could be explained that evil spirits originated/emerged when there are human beings who refuse to dance to the tune of *ome-na-ala*, and then when they die, they form the idea and circle of evil spirits in the hereafter as against the circle of the other group who danced according to



the tune of *ome-na-ala* while they were alive. Therefore it could be concluded that rejected spirits answer the question of the origin of evil spirits because of their evil attitude while alive. They also answer the question of how the evil spirits that counter the good ones whom Edeh referred to as 'ancestors', are formed in the hereafter. These evil spirit-beings cause evil as against the earlier position that evil is caused by human beings through their privation.

But in another place, while addressing and giving "clue to the Igbo idea of the origin of bad [evil] spirits," Edeh writes about his question and response from one of his informants thus:

How are the spirits of dead children, unmarried boy or girl regarded?... Bad spirits. Since they have nothing on earth, no son or daughter, they go about looking for lives to destroy... They are regarded as unclean. The reason is: they have died a bad death and left no achievement for their clan (1999, p. 24)

It is confusion that in one time, Edeh would attribute evil to human privation, in another time, to natural phenomenon implying that God has questions and hand in it, and other times, to spirits of people with neither human achievements (no marriage so as to produce children) nor material achievements in life. The implication of this is that spirits of people, including some 'Men of God' who have neither children nor material achievements in life, form a part of the flock of spirits accumulating to the huge number of evil spirits on earth. The points above and many more raise questions on self-contradictions in Edeh on the epistemological enquiry on being as expressed in the beingness of man as 'good that is', the vitality of human existence and the reality of evil. But from another perspective, some questions beg for answers. Critically speaking, if what makes us good is by being created, then what logically should make us bad/evil is living in discord with the principles of creation or against the purity and principles of He who has created. Following the logic of the concept of 'good that is', it could be better put that evil came about as a result of human beings displaying the very opposite of what they are, that is, instead of constantly displaying, in life, that they are truly 'goods that are', they rather display 'bad/evils that are'. This should better explain the concept of evil than the concept of *ome-na-ala* as posited by Edeh

Thirteen, implications in Edeh's position follow that so long as the human being is primarily and essentially 'good that is', (1) That his/her nature, substance and essence is (good (not evil) that is), because, s/he is nothing but a *paradigm* of his/her Creator—all-good-God; (2) That s/he was made in the image and likeness of God, his/her Creator; (3) That s/he shares or partakes in the goodness and holiness and all-goodness-nature of his/her Creator; (4) That as the goodness of God is replicated in him/her, so should that of s/he be doubled and concretized among human beings to make life easier. But in a sharp follow up contradiction, Edeh later told us that no human being is good *in se* except God. He (Edeh, 1999, pp. 100, 03) equally noted that "the problem of evil is as old as man" and that "evil is a phenomenon common to all peoples of the world. It is present at all levels of beings." So, if evil is as old as the human being and some evils acknowledged quite natural (Edeh, 1999) and that evil is a phenomenon to life and the world, how can we then explain the understanding of *Mmadu—Mma-di*



(Human Being) and indeed, being in general, as the 'good that is'? If some evil acknowledged natural, how can we explain and defend the point that the nature, substance and essence of the human Creator is 'all-good' from which human beings and all other beings draw their 'goodness'? Or does it mean that God cannot explain the emergence of some evils? Some conceptions and qualities bestowed on God as His nature, substance and essence are reductionistic and therefore contradict the reality of God (Ugwu & Ozoemena, 2019).

Fourteen, it was not just a huge but fundamentally devastating fault that Edeh lost focus on the fundamental question that led him into the research which is the question of 'what is being' and most significantly at its peak, and went after another question that focused on 'how do we know what being is?' That confusion gave his effort a deep shake as he ended up telling us that being means a statement, verbal proclamation (what is — *lfe-di*). Edeh went further to say again that the etymological meaning of the Igbo name for the human being did not just become an embodiment that expresses what what is really is, but also stands for an identity/name of whatever is; everything therefore becomes *mma-di* (good that is). That was a conclusion from erroneous processes and premises.

Fifteen, again, following the fact that the goodness of the human being is ontological on him/her by the virtue of being a creature of the Supreme Good, then his/her goodness-status is not a derivative one as Edeh emphasized. That is why it is necessary to say that Edeh's idea of human 'participation' or 'sharing' in the divine nature of the human Creator is highly illogical and faulty. This is because that concept of participation/sharing is the one that could be described as derivativist. He used two aphorisms or hypotheses to explain this. In his idea of sharing which means *iketa oke n'ife*, he said that it literally and normally "conveys the idea of individuals who come together to share something which as a whole belongs only to the group. It belongs to each of those who share in it only insofar as one is a member of the group" (1999, p. 101). What if the person is not a member or did not contribute in items that made what would be shared available hence s/he will not be among those participating in the sharing? What if death occurs before the sharing? Definitely from Edeh's illustrations, the person/s affected will not be among those to share the item/s. But Edeh's concept of sharing in the goodness-status of the Supreme Good was by creation, not contributing items (participation); and that is the difference and fault. His concept of goodness-status on the human beings is ontological, but his concept of participation/sharing does not trace the idea of participation to the ontological status, but to the status of being a member to a particular group after being created, or attaining a particular qualification in life (the coming together, without which s/he will not follow in the sharing/participation). The participation hypotheses should have been that in as much as one is a human being, then, one is qualified, or has already attained the status of belonging in the 'sharing/participation' concept. Edeh later used another aphorism, *isolu n'ife*, which literally means "to follow others in something" (1999, p. 101). The very opposite of this is that if you do not follow/belong, you will not share or participate in a particular thing. Again, this concept is not ontological as it is a quality you attain while growing and socializing and belonging to different groups in life. That is to say that it is not the same with sharing in the nature of the Supreme Good in which participating in it is by mere being a creature of the Supreme Creator who is all-good. So from these two instances,



Edeh was not logical enough to avert such contradictions when he proposed that the human being is good that is, but that his goodness is only by participation in the goodness of his all-good Creator. Following the reality of his thesis that the human being is 'good that is' only by being a creature of the Supreme Good, then s/he does not have to participate or share in the goodness-form or nature of his/her Creator. S/he is therefore a part of the goodness of his/her Creator. In other words, s/he is an embodiment of expression of the goodness or nature of his/her Creator.

Sixteen, further on this, on the periphery, one may not describe Edeh as a derivativist because the goodness of man is ontological to him as a creature of the Supreme Good hence his goodness is not a community bestowed one. But just like the case of Kantian epistemological revolution about how the mind grabs knowledge, what if it is said that the goodness of the human being testifies the goodness of his Creator hence the human goodness affirms that of his Creator? Put differently that the goodness of God or God's designation as the Supreme Good is dependent on the goodness seen in human beings both aesthetically, behaviourally and ethically or morally. How would Edeh swallow this up? This is logically possible following the fact that Edeh would always posit from the onset that it is through the known that the unknown is known. As man is known, and takes a resemblance of his Creator, then, it is logically justifiable if said that we know the unknown (God and His supreme goodness nature/status) through the known (man and his shared/participated goodness). Invariably, the implication thus becomes that the goodness or badness of God thus become ones that get their affirmation from those of the human being because s/he is inherently a composite of both good and bad as shown in his/her actions, thought and speech. Human nature therefore exposes to us the nature of the human Creator. By this, Edeh's conception of God and His creatures as embodiments of good/goodness becomes a contradiction as from the human nature which comprises of both good and bad. The implication therefore becomes that the nature of God comprises of good and bad.

Seventeen, talking about the designation of anything in existence as 'good that is', how logical is it that if the derived good/ness from the Maker of the human being bestows on him/her the status of 'good that is', that what s/he made or invented would still be seen in the same level as 'good that is' with him/her? What should be designated as 'good that is' is a natural being like him/her not human-made beings, hence the good/ness-status of being is based on creation in the sense of divine creation. The human being does not create, and so, what s/he made should not be categorized as 'good that is', and Edeh perhaps forgot to tell us that the good/ness-status of the human being is so infectious that it can infect what s/he made. Logically, if it should be, then there should be levels/categories of 'good that is' in the sense that God's creatures are first class/fundamental/original good-that-is, while spirit-beings' creatures, human beings' creatures and any other being made by any other category of being created by God, are all second class/fake good-that-is. This is because the sources of their good/ness are different and so, should be substantially different following the substantial standards of their makers.



Eighteen, to designate the understanding of *being* holistically with the term 'good that is' following the fact that all beings (perhaps, without evil) come from God, is very wrong. This is because the term 'good that is' comes only from the etymological meaning of *mmadu* (human being) which Edeh interprets as *mma di* (good that is/exists). So, *Osisi* (tree), *Mmiri* (waters), *Okwute* (stone) *Aja* (sand) are not etymologically 'good that is' as theirs are different from that of human beings— *Mmadu*. Also, if 'everything that is' should be designated with the term 'good that is' just because they are all created and by God, then they should be designated with a name/term relative to creation, not from the etymological meaning and implication of human beings as *mmadu*. That is to say that all beings should be defined by different names that would emerge from creation to pinpoint their realities, or even, take from their etymologies. Furthermore, reality (being) cannot be defined as 'good that is' because there is 'bad that is' too, and as part and parcel of reality as can empirically be perceived, unless Edeh would count 'badness' as a non-reality, and that should imply that God cannot answer for their real existence. This position would lead to 'what is really the nature of reality, and by extension, God' the Maker of 'all that is' as Edeh would uphold?

Nineteen, some Africans or Igbo may not agree in creation (Biblical) account; and so, the term and the logic that follow it due to their virtue of creation, become all fallacious and foul. Edeh has only, in his postulations clearly shown the level of influence got from western orientations especially religion and theology as a foreign religious priest.

Twenty, Edeh ended up giving us nothing new apart from what was there before his philosophical journey to produce a better philosophical conception that could be originally Igbo. He could not tell us clearly what being is. Should we say that being is *ife di* (what that is)? There is no how this verbal expression could stand as the concept of being in Igbo. Today an instance of being which is the human being interpreted as *mma-di* (good that is) has become all what could be said about him (Edeh). He left the question of being and diverted to the discourse on a being (human being), and at the final logical analysis and conclusion, saw him as being. Edeh just ended up presenting to us what could be described as a theological anthropology with a hermeneutical touch under philosophical disguise. This is because (1) the human being is conceived in line with the biblical creationist story; and (2) what he ended up presenting to us, as 'philosophy of *mma-di*', is a product of the same theological *cum* religious conception where the goodness of the human being is dependent, derivable and explainable from his/her Creator who is the Supreme Good. In Edeh, the human being is a product of remote; and this remote is God, and that raises the question of human freedom, volition, etc. In Edeh, s/he has no freedom; even what makes him/her recognized and even as a being (goodness) is a derivative one, not ontological, and the reason for the actions towards fellow human beings hinges on his/her derived goodness from his/her Creator.

It must be recalled that this is not the only work that has criticized Edeh's philosophical articulations. A scholar like Iroegbu has before now criticized Edeh based on (1) the empirical method he adopted, (2) articulating a sort of collective thought or world view and terming it a philosophy, and (3) articulating a philosophy and attributing it to a people instead of subjectively claiming the ownership of his work (Iroegbu, 1995). This





number of criticisms has equally attracted a number of responses from scholars one of whom is Kanu (2019).

Having now rendered some criticisms pointing out the shortcomings in Edeh's conception and articulations on being and especially as expressed in the beingness of the human being, the paper now proceeds to present a better option and more inclusive conception of the human being from an Igbo conceptual scheme as hermeneutically implied in an Igbo language.

#### **(4) An Igbo Conception of the Human Being**

The conception, analysis and lingual definition of the human being (*Mmadu*) according to Umuoka scheme of thought as a people, is quite interesting, captivating, enlightening and insightful. The people of Umuoka are one of the sons of Ojebe-Ogene in Ojebe-Ogene Development Council in the Northern part of Udi as a Local Government Area in the Western Senatorial District of Enugu State, South Eastern Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. Culturally, they are generally petty farmers; and cultivate and take, as their cultural and local food, cocoyam, okra, vegetable, pepper and yam (which is culturally, the chief of food for which they hold an annual festival called *Iwa/iri ji Ofuṣu/Ofuṣu* (new yam festival). Subsistent agriculture and other menial activities to include palm wine taping, firewood selling, and crafts are their local sources of income. They practise *Ódò* version of masquerade hence their masquerades do not parade/recreate on *Orie* (Oye) days because culturally, that is women-day and *Ódò* is majorly a men-affair. They have thinkers/philosophers some of whom are categorized in different epochs of African philosophical periodization to include the Ancient/Antiquity Era with its early and late phases, Political Era with its early and late stages, Modern Era and the Contemporary Era with its two sub-divisions of early and late phases. With this handy description of the people culturally and otherwise, the paper shall now delve into the presentation of their conception of the human being from their linguistic *cum* etymological, ethical *cum* moral, aesthetical, attitudinal/behavioural, metaphysical and socio-ontological perspectives and implications.

In Umuoka language, just as it is applicable in Igbo language generally, the term *Mmadu* refers to the 'human being'. But for Umuokan people, this term *Mmadu* is a combination of *Maa* (Spirit) and *Duru* (Survived). In the central Igbo language, *Mmadu* stands for 'human being', but in the Umuokan thought, the central Igbo *Mma* is (and pronounced as) *Maa* and *du* is (and pronounced as) *duru* but the *ru* is silent in pronunciation. For them, the pronunciation of this term, *Mmadu* (which in their dialect sounds like *Maadjvuru*, that is, *Maadjvu*) is the same with that of the central Igbo language, but in their thinking, it simply connotes the idea of a 'Survived/Surviving Spirit'. By implication, the human being is *Maadu*, that is, spirit that exists, having sustainably-survived. S/he exists, only through the fact of his/her sustainability into survival.

It is of high significance that a clarification and remark is made thus regarding the conception of the human being expressed in Umuoka language and conceptual scheme as 'Survived/Surviving Spirit'. The notion of 'survived' in 'survived spirit' and in reference



to the human being points to the human ontological existence; that is, an expression of existence that has begun as manifestable in the visible beingness of the human being. The notion of 'surviving' in 'surviving spirit' and in reference to the human being points to the human existential process. By this, existence (1) is not just ontological but also a process through which the human being keeps developing him/herself, and (2) a means through which the human being experiences socio-ontological sustenance from visible and invisible realities. Thus, the human being has not just come being, but he is also an entity that expresses what continuity in existence truly means and implies as s/he keeps growing from level to level along with other beings. His existence exemplifies what existential ontology and continuity imply. Thus, the human being as a 'survived or surviving spirit' means a spirit that has not just survived but keeps surviving as expressible in his/her life development along with other beings whom s/he socio-ontologically influences and who, in turn, socio-ontologically influence him/her also.

Basically, the pronunciation of the central Igbo *dụ* as in *Mmadụ*, in Umuokan language sounds like how possible it could be when letters d, j, v and ụ are combined as a word (*djvụ*). However, meaningfully, when the two words— *Maa* and *djvụrụ/rụ*— are joined together, we get something like *Maadjvụ/rụ* (Survived/Surviving Spirit) which, in the central Igbo language, could be written thus *Maadụ/rụ*. But significantly, this 'survival' is never conceived without the sense of 'sustenance' that has both social and ontological underpinnings.

Fundamentally, the root of the definitive completing word (of *Mma/Maa*) which is *dụ/dụrụ* spurs up from the fact and meaning of the term *Ndụ* (denotatively meaning 'Life', but connotatively meaning 'Existence'). Practically, when an Umuokan person wants to ask, for instance, if a crop his/her neighbour planted survived or has survived, s/he would say: *ihe ahụ i-kurụ ọ djvụrụ (dụrụ)?* Meaning, 'did the crop you plant survived?' The affirmative response to this would go thus: *ọ djvụrụ (dụrụ)* (it survived/has survived). So *idjvụ* (*idụ*) 'to survive' or *ndjvụ* (*ndụ*) or *ọdjvụdjvụ* (*ọdụdụ*) 'survival' depicts nothing but the facticity of 'survival/surviving' which refers to nothing but *ndụ* 'life/living' (or 'existence' in a broader sense). Significantly, this 'life/living or existence' is a process that is begun from and in the metaphysical sphere, towards the physical sphere, and is being socio-ontologically continuously sustained by the invisible and the visible within the context of the 'other', and more importantly again, it grows unstopably to/into eternity through the sustenance it constantly gains from both the physical and metaphysical spheres. Thus, the 'human being' as *Maadjvụ* or *Maadjvụrụ* according to the Umuokan scheme means a 'Sustained-Survived/Surviving-Spirit' whose sustenance is socio-ontologically derived. That is purely a metaphysical cum ontological conception of the human being. It is against both the normativist and the derivativist approaches. Significantly, there are thirteen outstanding implications in the Umuokan conceptual scheme of thought about the being of humanity.

One, the Umuokan conceptual scheme of the human being as a 'survived/surviving-spirit' presupposes 'sustenance', hence, 'survival/living' for the Umuokan, is never imagined without 'sustenance'. This 'sustenance' initiates the human 'survival' and physically leads it through and back to the invisible world— its



origin. Thus, the sense of 'sustenance' precedes the actuality and sense of 'survival/living' (existence in a broader sense).

Two, the 'sustenance' is socio-ontological, in the sense that (from) the invisible realm begins the principle of the sustenance; and its continuity necessarily revolves around the 'other'— fellow beings most nearest of whom are fellow human beings. Perceptibly, the 'sustenance' is ontologically vertical— referring to the 'sustenance' initiation from the invisible, divinity; socially horizontal— referring to the facticity of the 'sustenance' remaining in continuity within fellow beings— beginning from fellow human beings, lower animals, trees/vegetative, etc. Thus, the invisible sustenance extends towards the horizontal sustenance and in the community of 'others'.

Three, by the social or horizontal perspective of the sustenance, human beings are naturally condemned to socialization (the activity of be-ing-in-the-world) where human beings live. This sustenance instils in human beings the nature of not just socialisation, but being-in-the-world; that is, being condemned to the world. Without the world, the human existence/survival is incomplete, for the vertical perspective of the sustenance necessarily needs the horizontal perspective for a holistic human existence. Unlike in the Western philosophical contributions by Plato, Descartes, etc. where the invisible does not necessarily need the visible before being considered as having perfect, holistic and ontologically meaningful existence.

Four, the existential nucleus (sustenance) of human beings portrays human beings as both beings-in-actuality and beings-in-process/potency. The sustenance is neither static nor does it exist within time. With the sustenance, human beings are kept into the ocean and realm of non-stopping-existence through which they accomplish their aspirations and grow (live) towards *infinitum* from the visible to invisible realms and vice versa. On this continuous existential process, human beings become what they are not and stop being what they are hitherto. By extension, the conception upholds two outstanding views: (1) that human beings are not already-made; (2) that human beings express their virtue and vice nature through the exercise of their nature as possibilities hence evil and good are natural, and any of them that triumphs over any human being has its way. Thus, whether or not a human being is moral, s/he is vulnerable to the fate/blindness of evil and good. However, the level of morality in a human being plays an ontological role towards good or evil prevailing over him/her (Ugwu & Ozoemena, 2019).

Five, the conception brings out the novelty in the African conceptualization of value: that anything of African value must be modified or characterized by the sense of 'humanism' and 'community'; that is, humanist and communalistic-ontology. Anything of African value must be human-based and community-minded. Because of the African awareness and consciousness of the fact that life is sacred, and ought to be preserved with utmost dignity, and following the existential reality that it is in the community that the African communes with the 'other', therefore, the sense of humanism and community-consciousness stand prior to the African value-conceptualization. Thus, it is deducible that by the identification of the human sustenance within the community of fellow human beings where the continuity of the sustenance is assured, the sense of



human-based and community-mindedness therefore prevails. This conception is based on, and is drawn from humanist-ontology and not racist-ontology as could be seen in the Western counterpart from scholars like Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Hume, Kant, Meiners, Hegel, Heidegger, Popper, Levy-Bruhl, Westermann, Carothers, Horton, Finnegan, Gobineau, the two French neuropsychiatrists, Gallais and Planques, etc. Simply put: that this conceptual scheme proves the dual fold of African conception of the human being where it is humanism-ontologized and community-bounded.

Six, standing on the fifth implication, the conceptualization bestows on each human being the humanistic consciousness by which s/he ought to approach his/her fellow human beings. Put differently: it points to the 'duty' perspective of the conception where each human being is obliged to ensure the duty of preserving his/her own humanness through that of the 'other'. It is a conceptualization that is human-duty-bound for the humanistic value of the 'other' and the community-welfarism that makes the existence of both human beings and their community liveable and continuity-assured. The conceptualization portrays the sanctity/sacredness/divinity of life/existence; and the right of every being, not to take or damage any life of the other. Existence thus is bounded in duty: moral obligation. Living is engulfed in moral responsibilities, and that makes the human being a moral agent, and by extension, grants unto him/her the opportunity to prove the existential authenticity of living. Suffice it therefore to say that to live is to live in indebtedness; to live in ever-obligation and moral duties towards the living of the 'other'.

Seven, this conception brings to the fore, the fact that the surviving being is not the real owner of the life s/he possesses and enjoys, rather it is divinely, though necessarily, bestowed on the being. However, deducing from the fact that the existence of human beings, just like the existence of other beings, is not theirs in a strict sense, makes them ever-indebted-beings. Human life thus becomes a duty of everybody to protect because you are neither, nor am I, the owner of the life we live. Taking existence as a broader concept of living to incorporate other beings that exist but not live, it therefore implies that all that can be said about reality is the *facticity of existence*, not water, air, fire, reason, will, earth, number, event, etc. as held by very many Western thinkers and philosophers. All these mentioned 'stuff' first of all do exist, and then stand upon *the facticity of existence* as the primordial element underlining every reality as argued by Western scholars of mainly ancient times.

Eight, the conception conveys the point that there is a self-sustaining principle behind existence or living. The nature, essence and substance of this existence or life-Sustainer is that it exists for ever-sustaining the life given to beings enjoying it. By this, the principle proves the ownership/mastership of existence/living, for that is its nature hence it is tirelessly dutiful to the sustenance of the given life. Thus, it is necessary that the life-sustainer institutes the principle of existence from where beings share; and it is necessary also that beings, human beings inclusive, exist and survive so as to stand as proofs of real ownership/mastership of life/existence by the sustainer. Put in medieval understanding, that the necessary being necessarily needs to open its beingness to the contingent beings in order to prove its necessity in, to and for them— the contingent



beings. No wonder then the Bible says that even if human beings refuse to praise God, He (God) will make stones and other lifeless beings to praise Him. It (Bible) would have rather said that He (God) will make Himself to praise Himself instead of stones and lifeless beings to do that. By and large, the necessity of the lower, powerless, contingent beings to the proof of the superiority of the necessary being is existentially inevitable. The existence/life-sustainer principle has its beingness conditioned by its nature, substance and essence. The principle is never conditioned by 'outside' factors, rather 'inside' factors embedded in itself. However, whenever, wherever and whatever it does is solely self-necessitated. For the sake of clarity, the principle of 'life-sustainer' as used here is not a direct reference to God (or the medieval Necessary Being concept). It has to be recalled that the principle of sustenance in the Umuokan conception is both social and ontological. So, the concept of 'sustainer' here refers to the operational manners, methods, rules and guides of the socio-ontological sustenance of life/existence.

Nine, another outstanding point is the clarity of the metaphysical-implication of this ever-sustaining-existence through the concept, 'existence/life-sustainer'. For the religious and theologian, the concept of 'existence/life-sustainer' here could imply and be an expression of the existential quality of the Supreme/Necessary Being. This explains why some names like *Ose-buru-ụwa* (He who ever carries (depicting ever and continuous love, care, provision and sustenance) the world (in his hand)), etc. are given to the Supreme Being. This name is all about the Igbo popular saying and song that God holds/has/carries the whole world in His hands. 'Having/holding/carrying' the whole world in His hands does not only imply here, bragging about His ownership of the whole world, or ability to smash it any time He wills, but also showing His ever-dutifulness in caring, overseeing, well-managing, accounting for and ever-sustaining the whole world. The point of emphasis here is that an aspect of this conception of the human being by Umuokan people that depicts the Supreme Being as an essential part of the sustainers (or sustaining-principle) of life/existence. But while it could be argued that the concept of 'sustainer' or 'sustaining-principle' of life/existence starts from the metaphysical, its continuity and vitality is in the physical. Fellow human beings and other physical beings essentially live/exist to sustain the human life/existence. In other words, 'creation' continues by, in and with human beings and other beings in the physical after the foundation/principle has been built/laid in the metaphysical, hence the socio-ontological conception and implications of life/existence.

Ten, in this conception, an ever-processing-sustaining-survival is seen; that is, a process-existence, ever-sustaining or sustained-existence. That is, an existence/survival/livingness that is not only ever-sustained, but also lived-into eternity. At this juncture, we must recall and juxtapose this conception of the human being with Iroegbu's analysis of Belongingness as the fact of Reality. Iroegbu starts his articulation on the concept of 'being/reality' by saying that "to be is to belong" and "to belong is to be." That is 'to be-on', 'to emerge (be existentially concretized) on this world (ụwa) and by that, there is an overcome to non-being (existential abstractism or nothingness as oppose to concrete-existence or somethingness). Buttressing the position by analyzing the first stage of Belongingness, he writes: "The 'belong' involved in Belongingness is a turning on of being in general and abstract into being as concrete expressed entity. It is





a 'being-on' in the *Uwa* (World, Cosmos)... To be on therefore is to escape the contrary of being on, i.e, to be off" (Iroegbu, 2004, p. 8; Iroegbu, 1995, p. 372-82). Thus, at the next stage, "having been turned-on into *Uwa*... the being now goes on... There is always process both in the act of becoming being, and in the practice of getting along in being: the maintenance of being." Here, being through the activity of Belongingness keeps going-on in his/her emerged existence/survival, that is, the on-goingness of being through sustenance without which, s/he dies off, and which would equally signify that the activity in the existence/survival of being is endless. But on the contrary however, "being is something that goes on. In going on however, it is both itself (identity) and something else (difference)." In this on-goingness of being, any being that "belongs today cannot... be regarded as not belonging tomorrow... Not even death can break the Ongoingness of being defined as Belongingness" (Iroegbu, 2004, p. 8, 9, 10, 11). This on-goingness as belongingness stays "as long as ever" because "Belongingness of being is open-ended." Here, the existential nature/facticity of belongingness of being has no end, once it starts; refer to the second implication of this conception above. The survival of the human being as a spirit has no end hence it has started; it continues being (on-going) and is endlessly being sustained socio-ontologically.

Eleven, the Umuokan conceptual scheme positions the human being as an embodiment/epitome of morality-consciousness. Human existence symbolizes the standard of morality, hence anything 'anti-human' is 'anti-morality'. The human being stands as a symbol of what moral-consciousness means and implies. S/he is the only being in whose existence it necessarily is, to ask/raise existential moral questions. S/he is thus a moral being(agent); and as such, existentially ought to stand for some moral measures/standards for human-welfarism. The human existence alone expresses what 'morality consciousness' stands for.

Twelve, very insight-giving in the Umuokan scheme of thought on who *Maadjvụ* or *Maadjvụrụ*— central Igbo *Mmadụ* (Human Being)— means and implies, is a mode of being that inherently portrays 'Survival/Surviving and Sustenance (SS)'. The human being as a 'Survived or Surviving Spirit' means that s/he is a spirit, his/her survival and sustenance are ensured by both the Divine and human beings. The definitive term 'survival' of human beings here does not only and exclusively mean 'the facticity of existence or living', but also 'sustaining-survival, sustaining-living, sustaining-existence'. Put in another way: that his/her survival/living characteristically carries the facticity of sustenance. 'Existence' is inseparable from 'sustenance'. His/her beingness is a sustaining-survival/living which is endless but sustainably-survives-into-eternity. Thus, the human being is not just a survived spirit, but also a survival/surviving-spirit, in that, s/he survives-and-is-constantly-sustained socio-ontologically.

Thirteen and finally, this conception lays more emphasis on the spiritual rather than physical living-survival of the human being as the foundational principle of existence. Life/survival starts from an invisible realm, to visible realm and in activities/process, grows back towards the invisible realm (eternity). Appropriate attention and care must be assured to the spiritual affairs of the human being and the physical affairs through justifiable and reasonable ways of living(managing) physical affairs. Any mistake in the



physical living/survival of the human being will greatly mar and disrupt the spiritual. The two existential affairs are as important and complimentary as a two-sided coin. They both complement each other. Even though the spiritual stands for necessary existential affair, it necessarily needs the complementarity of the physical and its contingencies.

### (5) The True Nature of the Human Being beyond Edeh's 'Good that is'

In the Igbo thought, true expressions, definitions and descriptions of the human being—as against non-human beings, are explained in the etymological term *mmadu*. This term explains entirely, the existential reality and conditions of human beings. All the etymological explanations and attempts to analyze the human being by Igbo scholars are all unfortunately half-done. Having observed this, it then becomes the onus of this paper to fill the knowledge gap. Their attempts are not 'all-inclusive', and that is why all the existential aspects of the human being are not explained. Those who gave definitions according to the Igbo conception of human beings see only the positive aspect/explanation of the etymological term— *Mmadu*— perhaps to exonerate themselves from attributing evil-tendencies to the nature of human beings and their Creator, among other reasons. But contrary to that, it is pertinent to know that human beings are intrinsically or naturally 'good and evil'. From the etymology of the 'human being', the term *Mmadu* is got. This term could be critically dissected and explained in the following analysis bellow in order to be holistic.

By its etymology, 'human being'— *Mmadu* could mean (1) *Mma Ndu* ('Beauty of Life'— in terms of *Mma* as in 'Aesthetics'; or 'Good of Life'— in terms of *Mma* as in something 'Right, Approved, Acceptable, commendable, Better/Best, Right Quality/Standard', etc.); (2) *Maa Ndu* (Spirit of Life); (3) *Mma Ndu* (Knife/Machete of Life); (4) *Mma Di* (Beauty or Good that Exists); (5) *Maa Di* (Spirit that Exists); (6) *Mma Di* (Knife/Machete that Exists); (7) *Mma Duru* (Survived/Surviving Beauty and Good); (8) *Maa Duru* (Survived/Surviving Spirit); (9) *Mma Duru* (Survived/Surviving Knife/Machete); (10) *Mu Di* (I Exist or I who Exist) and finally (11) *Mu Duru* (I who (have) Survived or who am surviving). From these analysis and etymological implications of *Mmadu* (human being) in Igbo, it is clear that the human being is a *Beauty or Good or Spirit or Knife (who) that Exists, Beauty or Good or Spirit or Knife of Life that Survived or is surviving; or a portrayal of the facticity of Individual Proclamation of 'his/her' Existence or Survival*. Giving more analytic credit to the conception, as a **Beauty**, the human being is depicted as the most *beautiful creature, ontological centre of aesthetic* attractions among all beings. As a **Good**, s/he is depicted as the most *right, best, acceptable/accepted, quality-endowed, precious, sacred* showing his/her existential uniqueness or replica of what being right, or just or good really means and ideally implies. From scholars who are engrossed in religious influences, the neutrality of this conception would quickly be attributed to the Creator of the human being from whose most-good-nature, the human being draws his/hers. As a **Spirit**, s/he is portrayed as the most *complex* in nature referring to his/her physical and metaphysical components. As a **Knife/Machete** which symbolically stands for peace or disaster/violence, the human being is either a symbol of *peace* (good) when shown his/her good nature or personality or *disaster* (bad/evil) when shown his/her bad nature or personality. And finally, the term can also portray the **ascertaining, proclamation and facticity of self/individual existence and survival**. From this stand point, *Mmadu* is essentially, naturally and



substantially an embodiment of metaphysical and physical compositions and in full potency of being peace/disaster-ambassador or an icon of beauty, or good-paradigm or facticity of reinstating existence/survival. S/he is an embodiment of both vices and virtues in potency hence both good and evil are natural and intrinsic nature of the human being. This may have been basically the reason some scholars like Hobbes, etc, insist that evil is an essential part and an inclination of man; and those like Heraclitus, etc, believe in the principle of opposition and change as the true nature of reality. This equally may explain why some theorists like Machiavelli, etc, came up with theories that encourage both virtues and vices so as to counter or balance man's nature and inclinations to virtues.

### **(6) Components of the Human Being**

For the Igbo, in the Umuokan scheme of thought, *mmadu*, or *maadjvu(ru)*, is basically a composite of two main 'existential phenomena/spheres': Physical and Metaphysical. His Physical existential phenomenon/sphere could be generally referred to as *Ahụ* which takes its root from *hu* meaning 'seeable' or 'seen'. By *Ahụ*, all the physical components of the human being is represented, hence in his/her bodily existential sphere, we have *Mkpurụ-Obi* (Heart), *Ụbụrụ/Ụvụrụ* (Brain), *Akpukpọ Anụ-Ahụ* shortened as (Anụ-Ahụ) (Skin), *Aji* (Hairs), *Ọbara* (Blood), *Ọkpukpọ* (Bones), *Akwara* (Veins), *Anụ* (Muscle), *Mmiri* (Waters including the sex cells and all the moisture-contents) and *Ihe-Mmehiga* (Wastes). The Metaphysical existential phenomenon/ sphere comprises of the presence of *Mmuo* (Spirit) *Onwe* (Self), *Uche* (Mind/ Intellect) (and its functions like *Ncheta* (Memory or Reminiscence), *Nhụkwata/Nhikwata* (Imagination), *Nhụmi* (Perception/Conception), *Ichọ* (Wanting) through which human beings express their volitional nature and dialogue with the will and freewill as human existential experiences, *Ike Mkpebi/Nkwubi* (Will), *Echiche* (Thought/Thinking)), Feeling (*Obi-Mmetụta*) is the function of the heart combined with human instinct, *Akọ* (Wisdom), *Onyinyo* (Shadow), *Nghọta* (Understanding), *Ume* (Breath), *Oyime* (Ghost), *Ehihe* (the Doubleness of Man) *Agwa* (Attitude), *Obi-Ikpe/Mmuo-Ikpe* (Conscience) which is the functional meeting-point of the 'mind' and the 'heart', *Omuma/Ima* (Consciousness which is so inclined with human life), *Ọnatara Chi* (Natural Talent/ Skill), and *Chi* which has variously been interpreted as God, Guarding Angel, Fortune, Predestination, Day Break and Night Falling, 'Being' in terms of emergence or beingness of something that has not been there hitherto, etc. (Ugwu, 2019). Based on this, we can see that the human being is such a complex being that almost every aspect of his/her life is a component of him/herself in the Igbo thought.

Reincarnation as an outstanding belief among Igbo people is manifestable through both the physical and metaphysical components of human beings. In this regard, among these components, the foremost components that are centrally active, *vis-à-vis* the reincarnation belief, include *Anụ-Ahụ* (Skin), *Mmuo* (Spirit) *Onwe* (Self), *Akọ* (Wisdom), *Nghọta* (Understanding), *Agwa* (Character/Attitude), *Ọnatara Chi* (Natural Talent/Skill), *Mmiri* (specifically sex cells with the peculiar question of genetics) and *Chi*. The African existential experiences explain the reality of these components. These African experiences identify the African culture, religion, beliefs, traditions, and spirituality. They equally explain why some African practices appear ontologically irrelevant and irrational



to non-Africans and some Africans who live, to the negligence of realities as obtainable in their own environment following influences from Western thinking pattern and act of philosophizing. Be that as it may, from a critical investigation into the implications of the Umuokan conceptual scheme of the human being and his/her components, it is deductible that s/he is a composite of metaphysical and physical elements. Both spheres of existence are very crucial to each other; one is highly intrinsic and relevant to the other and vice versa. The conceptual scheme equally shows that from the metaphysical sphere of the human being, s/he is not only a thinking being but an emotional being. As the human metaphysical elements are concretized in the physical, and the physical inhere in the metaphysical, so does the human critical and logical potencies facilitated by the human thinking-mind get softened/dowsed by the human emotion and empathy facilitated by the human feeling-heart. It is from this humanistic bent that human existence and its worth are, in Africa, not only measured by rationality through the thinking-mind, but also measured by empathy through the feeling-heart. Thinking (*via* the mind as a faculty) and feeling (*via* the heart) are two inseparable features/aspects of human being and existence that are obviously too obvious to be denied of African livelihood. The African does not just think with his mind alone, s/he feels along with his/her heart which vitalises the critical and logical potencies of the mind with emotions and feelings which are by extension, expressions of the 'will' and 'humanism' of human nature. The African toes this dimension in valuing what life could mean and imply because s/he measures life in community, and practically lives under the guide of communalistic principles.

## (7) Conclusion

This research has been able to interrogate the conception of the human being by and whom Edeh keeps referring to, as man. That is gender insensitivity especially as it concerns the modern world where feminism has become a philosophical central discourse. It has also pointed out the loopholes regarding the conceptual non-inclusiveness in Edeh's. Stating its findings, the paper argues that Western influences on African scholarship are major challenge and cause of the misconception found in some of their conceptions about the human being. It equally dared to amend the observed loopholes and posited a new conception of the human being according to the Umuoka scheme of thought which conceives the human being as a survived/surviving-sustained-spirit. On the same scale, it has enumerated the components of the human being, and pointed out the central values of the African human existence which revolve around the concepts of 'humanism' and 'community', and finally, the inseparable nature of the human being as a thinking-feeling being.

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