



2. Introduction

A cursory glance at the historical evolution of thought reveals that right from the ancient world, thinkers have been concerned about the nature of the operative conditions of reality. When Thales of Miletus pointed to water as the fundamental unity underlying the diversity of reality, it was born out of the search for reality's operative condition. When Anaximander referred to a neutral element that is infinite, eternal and indeterminate, he did not only express the fundamental nature of reality, but the search for the unity of the plurality of things. According to Anaximenes of Miletus, Air is the underlying principle of all reality (Omeregbe, 1997 and Kanu 2014).

The search for the operative conditions of reality has been part of Africa's intellectual, documented and systematic tradition. In his work, *La Philosophie Bantou*, Placide Tempels arrives at a fundamental and underlying factor in Bantu philosophy, which he calls force. Tempels (1945) writes: "...the Bantu speak, act, live as if, for them, beings were forces. Force is not for them an adventitious, accidental reality. Force is even more than a necessary attribute of being; force is the nature of being, force is being, being is force" (p. 431).

Alexis Kagame, in his work *Philosophie Bantou-Rwandaise de L'Etre*, develops Tempel's philosophy of force further. He argues that *Ntu* is the category of being or the generic meaning of something. This he classified into four: *Umntu* (human beings); *Ikintu* (non-human beings); *Ahantu* (place and time); *Ukuntu* (Aristotelian category of quantity) (Kanu 2012a). *Ntu*, thus, becomes the unifying notion among all these, and the element of interaction between all these forces. Edeh (1983) in his *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics* observes that *Idi* is the Igbo verb *to be*, and can be used as an adjective and suffixed to anything to show that it exists (Kanu 2012b). Iroegbu (1995) in his *Metaphysics: The Kpim of Philosophy* avers that *to be* is *to belong*. Thus, *being* is *Belongingness*. He defines belongingness as 'the synthesis of the reality and experience of belongingness' (p. 374). While Okere (1983) and Abanuka (2003) have proposed *chi* as an alternative concept for being in Igbo ontology, Asouzu (2011) and Njoku (2018) have introduced the concept of *Ibuanyidanda* as an intellectual framework to hang the being of society.

The present lecture on *Igwebuiké: The Operative Condition of African Philosophy, Religion and Culture- Towards a Thermodynamic Transformative Ontology* is the

researcher's contribution to the ongoing discourse on the operative conditions of reality. *Igwebuike*, in the researcher's perspective, is the moving spirit and the pivot upon which African philosophy, religion and culture revolve, thus, the key to the understanding of African Traditional religion, culture and philosophy. It is thermodynamic because of the interdependence and complementarity of the elements of the African universe, which characterizes the African way of thinking, feeling, talking and responding to various human conditions. *Igwebuike* which is an Igbo proverb and proper name forms the 'tool box', the trajectory system and the practical art for the development of this inaugural lecture.

What is the basis for the shift from *Ibu anyi danda* to *Igwebuike* since both deal with the complementarity of reality? At the centre of the concept *Ibu anyi danda* is the limited being called *danda* (the ant), and even though the meaning of the concept has gone beyond the literal understanding, the abstract meaning generated through the binoculars of reason cannot escape the limitations of the creature *danda*. We cannot entirely speak of the human person in relation to *danda*, since the former is rational and the latter irrational. No matter how great *danda* is in carrying out its activity towards sharing the burden of life, it cannot be entirely related to the human person. There is, therefore, the need for a concept that goes beyond the particularities and particularities of reality right from the conceptual level, wide a concept, however, potent enough to accommodate the different beings within the economy of the hierarchy of being, and this concept is *Igwebuike*.

To accomplish the demands of this presentation, the lecture would be divided into four parts. The first part would focus on the philosophical dimension of *Igwebuike*, the second would reflect on the socio-political dimension of *Igwebuike*. While the third part would deal with the economic dimension, the fourth would entertain issues around the religious dimension of *Igwebuike*. The choice of these dimensions is to express the broadness of *Igwebuike* as a thought current.

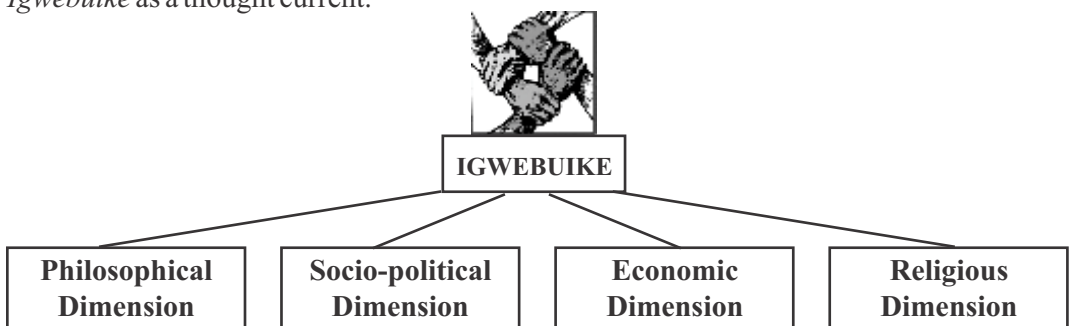


Figure 1: Lecture Outline