

The Taxonomy of the Mind: An African Visual

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How to cite this paper: Dimkpa, A. C. (2022). The Taxonomy of the Mind: An African Visual. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 12, 624-643.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2022.124043>

Received: September 9, 2022

Accepted: November 12, 2022

Published: November 15, 2022

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Abstract

The image of Africa in the world at the moment does not fit into that of a dignifying and adequately humanised and humanising unit of mankind. The situation beats and challenges the philosophical and anthropological aphorisms that seem to commune all men in general. This philosophical reflection investigates the deep roots of the extant situation. It focuses more on inherent factors to the exclusion of all exterior sources and causes of the problems, which it considers as secondary even if important. It has employed philosophical anthropological categories maximally and has also engaged metaphysical concepts to an extent to explore the general human *modus operandi*. Against this backdrop, it has beamed its searchlight on the Africans, specifically as a species of the human to identify to what extent it fits into the generally accepted pattern. This has led to an identification of the mind as the seat of the albatross. The philosophical anthropological analysis of the specific African mind and how it has been functioning has been carried out amidst a larger spectrum of the experiential operations of the mental state of mind. This has led to an examination of key concepts like fascination, imitation, success and failure, the heart and hope. A specific sample of an African concept has been adopted from the Igbo cultural background of Nigeria. How these concepts in practice have affected the organisation of African society and development has been examined and has led to an identification of various types of intelligence operative among the majority of African leaders, thinkers and the masses and the vicious cycle that is provoked by this. The external factors that feed and nourish this status quo have not been examined herein. But the shamelessness of the generality of mankind in tolerating this *de facto state*, for whatever can be labelled a third world within the one world, is implicitly indicated. The essay is a tribute to Professor Richard Onwuanibe who spent decades teaching philosophical anthropology to several generations of Nigerian seminarians who have become great philosophers as well today. It is also a wake-up call to philosophers, Africans and all people of good will. By concentrating on the internal conditions that in turn, obfuscate the mind and keep Africa and by implication the world behind its fullest pos-

sibilities of growth, peace and a better home for all, it looks forward to the exposition and possible neutralization of the latent external factors which belie the entire matrix of the African mindset at the moment.

Keywords

Mind, African, Philosophy, Anthropology, Success, Intelligence, Igbo, Onuwanibe, Obi, Fascination, Imitation, Culture, Third World Nations, Uche, Echiche, Epistemology

1. Introduction

Most people, in general, presume the existence of a common human nature.¹ Therefore, thinkers seek to understand it. The aim is first to clarify certain given or apparently observed patterns. It is also to provide avenues and structures that would help in understanding and grappling with man's surrounding reality. To approach the explanations, many thinkers always take off from given concrete situations. A. C. Osuji expresses this differently. He says that "most of what we do and our lifestyles, our beliefs, our opinions, our world views, our philosophical outlook and life options, are shaped by what we experience..." (Osuji, 2015). Thinkers theorise so much, that human beings have been described from several points of view. Each of these perspectives may, in the strict sense, appear to fit every man in general. But this is often only a permissible illusion.

Man succumbs to the available explanatory category² and rational or quasi-rational calculus. He sticks thereunto until something that evidently transcends the *status quo* emerges.³ This situation cannot be truer than that which would emerge from a very critical and non-sentimental examination of the Black African at the moment.⁴ This would be vis-à-vis current anthropological postulations on man in general. While it is true of all people that they accept the explanations they have, the Africans need to study their stake in it.

That is the current enterprise. It is to honor the philosophical anthropologist, Prof. R. I. Onwuanibe⁵ after half a decade of teaching about the man. The essen-

¹The myriad references to human nature in anthropological, philosophical and theological treatises make this very evident.

²Several explanatory categories have held sway in this world from the mythical through the religious to the philosophical, the scientific and the present technological and robotic artificial intelligence points of view. Each holds some validity for some time and some still retain their validity with some section of humanity.

³The Philosophy of Science has exposed this all the more in recent times with all the identifications and falsifications of what should be the adequate explanatory category or not.

⁴This temporal specification refers to the post-colonial, post-slave trade, neo-colonial appearance of the majority of the generality of African environments, governments, standard of living, and global presentation. The formulation looks forward to being made unnecessary and reversed in the event of the future radical transformation expected by the article.

⁵Professor Onwuanibe taught Philosophical Anthropology principally in his years as lecturer in the Seat of Wisdom seminary, Owerri, Affiliate Institute of the Pontifical Urban University Rome and the Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria.

tial parameters to be employed in the analysis and assessment of man in the course of affirming the given thesis include fascination, imitation, and the effects of hope and fear through a focus on success and failure from the African's standpoint in a particular manner. This is as radically opposed to how he is presented by non-African scholars in general.

2. Fascination

Fascination is the secret interior driver in the African's operative centre. Every man has his operative engine. This is activated by some external stimuli which set the whole machine running effectively. The stronger the quality of this stimulus gets the more efficient the output of the machine becomes. It is like the external elements of oil and fuel that are meant to get machines running smoothly or of force, wave and compass, which guide objects in a given direction. Even when these are energised and lubricated otherwise, the fact remains that the energy source gets activated exteriorly. Batteries are different from what they power. Solar energy is exterior to facilities that run on it and so are electrical and nuclear energies to the appliances that run on them.

A parallel and corresponding affirmation to that made above about fascination could be Aristotle's thesis that wonder is the beginning of philosophy. Or one may as well recall the same author's second dictum that "all men by nature desire to know" (Mckeon, 2001). In spite of these, it would be pertinent to remember Nietzsche's opinion expressed in the words of Samuel Enoch Stumpf that "it is unrealistic to assume that there is only one kind of human nature whose direction can be prescribed by one set of rules" (Stumpf, 1989).

Nietzsche goes on to state that there is one thing that does characterize all human beings—the drive to dominate the environment. This drive is held to be central to human nature. Nietzsche calls it the *will to power*. After much description by Stumpf of what Frederick Nietzsche means by the will to power (Stumpf, 1989), the whole thesis goes to affirm the stand of this article that thinkers set out to understand and point out what they observe in human nature which they consider universalizable.⁶

In this vein, Stumpf still writes that "everything turned upon the accurate understanding of man's essential nature for Plotinus" (Stumpf, 1989). Before the Neo-Platonist's time, to build their moral philosophy, the Stoics had found it necessary to have a clear view of what human nature is like. Consequently, they transferred their ideas of the organisation of the material physical world to their anthropology and ethics (Stumpf, 1989).

If all that has been looked at till now appear Western, a side glance would be in place. This time, a look at China would be of help. According to Chang, Mencius is held to be the intellectual and spiritual successor of Confucius. He wrote several works. He believes that there is a beginning or potentiality of goodness in human nature. This is because of four kinds of virtue namely *Jen, i, li* (decency)

⁶Kant's whole Metaphysical edifice is built on such an assumption.

and *chih* (knowledge). These he held to be inherent in human nature. This view is believed to presuppose that man as a rational being has moral sense and knowledge (Chang, 1967).

Even penetrating more deeply, Mencius singled out the priority of the work of mind and thinking. In Chang's presentation, according to him "learning without thinking is labour wasted; thinking without learning is dangerous" (Chang, 1967). The office or duty of thinking which gives the right view of things belongs to the mind. By neglecting to think, the mind fails in this office.

All these explanations and descriptions of the human mind are important. This is because they are all efforts to explain human nature. They also underline the primary thesis that inductive reasoning is quasi-inevitable in the understanding of man. From this induction, the concrete man is not only analysed but directed, moderated, and assisted to develop himself or herself.

Taxonomy has got to do with the process of organising things such as plants or animals into different groups that show their natural relationship (Summers, 1987). Applying taxonomy to the human mind, therefore, would have to do with the classification of the operations of the human mind and behavior to show their relationship. This would be as relevant to understanding the African primarily as thence-from, it would be for comprehending man in general.

Setting out from fascination as an essential human characteristic, this element is seen as super accentuated in the African. The postulation is that what the desire for knowledge served for Aristotle, a spark of the divine for the Stoics, the independence and primacy of the soul in relation to the body for Plotinus; what the *will to power* explained for Nietzsche, the *will to meaning* for Victor Frankl and his logotherapy and *thinking and learning* for the Chinese, that is what fascination did and does for Africans more than any other thing.

The first action to be undertaken now is to examine whether a selected few of the already existing explanatory categories can satisfactorily explain predominant African patterns of life. Let it be assumed that wonder indeed is the beginning of philosophy. What does this do for the Greeks? It sets them on a path of inquiry. How is this managed? The answer is that it is handled publicly. The sophists start peddling their knowledge and trying to share it. They demand remuneration for it. But at least they set others wondering. Thereby, they stimulate society toward change. They arouse interest. They excite knowledge. The stoics theorise on this knowledge from their wonder.

In Socrates, what does wonder do? It kindles his personal interest too. He sets out on a quest to produce greater and more knowledgeable human beings – his students. He starts teaching but without fees. His style challenges the *status quo* and contests the practice of the Sophists. He runs an open door and a freelance investigation into reality for whoever can. This style is also adopted by the atomists, the naturalists, the Pythagoreans and all the ancient thinkers.

But were they the first to discover this wonder? No way! By no means!! (Onyewuenyi, 2015). The Africans had started wondering and reflecting long before these Greeks. In fact, many of the latter went to Egypt to learn philoso-

phy. But what happened? The issue is that they were super-fascinated by their own discoveries and few inventions. They got blinded by fascination. Knowledge was cryptic. They got entangled in the mystery cults. They became objects of esoteric lifestyles and elitist conservations. Fascination had turned on itself. Egypt had become renowned as the cradle of civilization. But it also buried civilization as an ever-onward process. Fascination impeded its own progressive order to retain its identity unchanged.

This got so mangled that till date, it is difficult to decipher how the pyramids were built. That is the powerful product of the ancient African mind. They developed and got fascinated by it. This in turn, turned against the positive development of humanity that would have been faster, easier and more benefiting. All the inventions of that generation like the shadow clocks, the writings in hieroglyphics, the astronomical and astrological efficiencies that had been achieved got blinded by the dazzling fascination. This is so that in losing them, humanity lost more than two thousand years of a developmental pace that it could have achieved earlier. The African mind!!!

One can also examine the Africans against the *will-to-power* principle. Nietzsche lived in the 19th Century; that was when he discovered what he stated about human nature. The Africans also lived in this period. Can their lifestyles be described by the *will to power*? First, what does Nietzsche mean by the *will to power*? He calls it an inner drive to express a vigorous affirmation of all man's powers. This, he says, is expressed in a will to war. According to Stumpf, it is a will to power and to overpower (Chang, 1967). Let the veracity of this affirmation be shelved for the moment. Its verifiability or falsifiability would be another issue.

Supposing that this *will* is found in man's idea of dominating the environment indeed, the question would arise for instance; Africans live by the Atlantic Ocean and by the Indian Ocean, in the thickest rain forests, and by the Sahara Desert. Granted that some empires and kingdoms like Timbuktu, Benin and Biafra did arise, become organised and flourished, yet did the Africans really dominate their environments adequately for that time, in the strict sense?

They were fascinated by the ocean. Therefore, they identified the water spirits and idolised and worshipped them. They were fascinated by the great forests. Therefore, they considered them to be abodes of spirits and turned many of them into evil forests, places of rituals and mystery worship. They were amazed at the vastness of the earth and its capacity to provide food for both man and beasts. Consequently, they deified it. The earth goddess became the centre of everything the African did, in thought and action. He poured libations on the soil—the earth—and created the abode of the ancestors therein. Such blessings as the birth of twins attracted not critical reflection but the uncritical jettisoning of innocent babies into the evil forest. Indeed, man's being *superman* fell very short of Nietzsche's fantasies at least in the African. His *will to power* was distorted.

He lived on like this, basking in the complacent enjoyment of the available

good that basic necessities in life had warranted his forebears. A whole complex life was generated. It occurred in the form of cultures and traditions that all have non-indispensable connections with the earth goddess in one way or the other. Fascination!

Another parameter is the other dictum of Aristotle that “all men by nature desire to know.” Knowledge and its desire become here defining characteristics of man. Francis Bacon held that knowledge is power. What type of knowledge is this that characterizes man? Does it fully characterize the Africans? He is the man and therefore, ought to be fully characterized by it. But it was stated earlier that the proposers of these *dicta* are inductive in their procedure. As a result of this, the practical interest in raising this question is less epistemological than anthropological, socio-cultural, historical and psychological.

The existent metaphysical foundation of a people’s conception of reality ultimately influences it. Sometimes this is objectively identified. At other times, it is only inchoately, broached over. For instance, Plato’s metaphysics where the real exists in the real world and the things in this world are but their shadows redounds on his anthropology and decisively on his politics. So, just as the invisible is the real and prior to it, so the invisible soul is the real and prior to the body. In his politics, the soul will be translated as the rational part of man. It would be represented by the philosopher kings or the rulers. This influence of Metaphysics on anthropology may be found in the other major thinkers especially those of them who are more systematic.

From a purely anthropological point of view, the African certainly has the exterior and interior faculties that every other man has. But from a purely metaphysical perspective and in the light of the epistemological inductive generalisation of Aristotle about man’s desire to know, some questions arise with regard to the African. What is the quality of this knowledge that all men desire? How do the Africans actualise this desire? And what are the practical effects of their knowledge when compared with where others are today? This could be considered to be too particularistic. Contemporary continental Africans have not really shown the power of human reason at work in contemporary human development. The reasons for this do not totally reside in them but the need to make an effort to get behind these reasons and uncover them resides in them.

Another way of posing the question would be to re-examine the inductive dictum that all men by nature desire to know as a whole. But in this way, it would encounter the traditional objections to all inductions. This would be especially in its classical formulation by David Hume: that the sun has risen every day in the east does not guarantee that the sun would rise in the east tomorrow (Kemerling, 1967; Charles, 1927).

Induction could suffer Bertrand Russell’s quip that “the fact that an opinion has been widely held is no evidence whatever that it is not utterly absurd” (Russell, 1929). Similarly, that many a sound and the ambitious man desires to know does not mean that every man by nature desires to know. Indeed some people do not care to know at all. They have more issues that occupy them. Why some

would not care for that which identifies the majority of their kind, would be part of the object of this inquiry. But the exception proves the rule.

Before that inquiry, the first point to be established so far is that strictly speaking, one could contest Aristotle that not all men by nature desire to know. Not all men by nature feel exactly the same way over the same issues. What is often said of all men enjoys primary validity (most probably) in the proponent and his (anthropological specimen of) observation. There is a certain degree of fascination in all really healthy and functional human beings. Is fascination equivalent to what Aristotle would consider the desire to know? Fascination happens and is activated in the face of a reality that is either new or strange to one. But it is best if it arises by the mere wonder of the world, which indeed impresses man as he awakens healthily to consciousness.

Fascination, therefore, characterises man. It has its strengths. But it has its debilitating effects just as drugs constitute wonderful stimulants though they have the discouraging side issues that differentiate them from the natural state they seek to imitate or restore. It precedes the desire to know. This is evident from the basic fascination that characterises almost all sentient beings, which does not automatically translate to the desire to know. The desire to know is a little above the mere fascination before the strange element. Epistemologically and anthropologically, fascination is at the upper border between the sentient and the rational level. The desire to know is fully at the rational level. It translates into curiosity, restlessness to get answers, research, experiments, discoveries, inventions, etc. Yet, while man is basically a rational animal, not every one of his operations belongs totally to the rational category. This should be clear since the rational harbours the instinctive or intuitive, the sensitive and the irrational at the same time.

3. Imitation

This is the capacity of beings to copy other beings. Better and simply expressed, it is the ability of individual organisms to learn from others through the repetition of observed behaviors and patterns. Cognitive scientists observe that intelligence has got to do primarily with the capacity to imitate. Similarly, there appears to be a direct relationship between brain size, the capacity to imitate and intelligence. The rapport between the first (i.e., brain size) and the others may be doubted. For instance, the Eagle's head is smaller than the sheep's but the eagle appears more intelligent than the sheep. The cow's head may be bigger than the snake's but the latter appears smarter. So also the lion's head may supersede that of man physically but man is certainly more intelligent. However, there is a difference between the size of the head and that of the brain.

Returning to the discussion of imitation, one notices that it characterises man. Children (understood here to be infants with the exception of precocious ones who manifest rare genius in an early age) mostly learn by imitation. However, it is notable as well that it would appear that genetic predispositions are transmit-

ted by which the kids of today appear more adept at learning through immersion in playing freely with high-tech appliances and equipments than has been traditionally known. Even in the animal world, most of the survival instincts and reactions of both the domestic and the wild ones have to be obtained and perfected through imitation. The art of domesticating animals in captivity and then releasing them into the wild has revealed a lot about imitation. It has shown that there are so many necessary arts of survival that the young ones can only learn from their mothers. Otherwise, while they may survive, chances are that they tend more in general to lose out in the battle of survival when the human aids are suddenly withdrawn. They had never learned because they could not imitate their perfect exemplars. This means that like other animals, in man, imitation is a primary survival endowment.

Imitation is important as it is closely related to the rational nature of man. While all animals, but more especially monkeys and apes, may imitate their kind, there is a special perceptive faculty in man that enables him to perceive meaning and make a distinction in his imitation. This is where Victor Frankl's *will to meaning*, the necessity for man to find meaning in events and in actions, comes out again. Both the capacity to find meaning and that to imitate in a value-laden concerned manner are specifically human. Imitation is captured in the Greek concept of *mimesis*. This has often been translated to cover two meanings. It is translated by imitation and by artistic representation (Kerferd, 1967).

Mimesis differs very fundamentally from imitation and mimicry. It involves the invention of internal representation. Its specific difference is that it is not tied to external communication alone. One can intentionally search through his memory, try to recollect and imitate what is there in the memory. This is why man can create (albeit not ex-nihilo). But he can create art. He can invent. The keyword here is, create. Imitation should give room to creativity.

Plato deplored art. This is because of *mimesis*, i.e., imitation. It put the man away from the real and ideal world and only chained him more to the phenomenon. Kerferd states that in Plato's vision "because art is an imitation of an imitation, it is even further removed from the truth than the world it imitates" (Kerferd, 1967). According to this position, art corrupts the consumer. This is because art stands in relation to the phenomenal world as the phenomenal world stands in relation to the world of forms.

Nevertheless, recent philosophers of the mind have tried to see the positive aspect of imitation. This is without prejudice to Heil's position that "minds are just brains" (Heil, 1998) which "is evidently widespread" (Heil, 1998). But as said above, "the fact that an opinion has been widely held is no evidence whatever that it is not utterly absurd. Indeed, in view of the silliness of the majority of mankind, a widespread belief is more likely to be foolish than sensible" (Russell, 1929).

That brings this reflection to the consideration of the mind-body relationship, in considering imitation. The brain helps humans to think as rational beings.

But the mind helps them to go beyond the immediate given of brain activity. The brain equally assists all men in imitating. But the mind makes fewer men sidestep the limits of the example to be imitated. The brain may assist in identifying the basic survival necessities. The mind pulls the brain to an inexhaustible multiplicity of alternatives. The brain may detect danger, caution and good sense. The mind hovers over the region of meaning, history, value, the intangible. While they correlate, the quantity of brain matter may be the same or on average beyond the basic minimum in all humans. The mind operates on a superlatively different, qualitative, and materially immeasurable dimension in various human beings.

All these affect imitation. The quantity of the brain and its quality can make a particular man be a better imitator than the other. When this is widespread within a given wide population, everyone can be wonderful on a certain basic level of operations, development, judgment and perception. But it does not go beyond that. On the other hand, the aptitude of the mind from the same similar brains goes totally outside and beyond the normal range of imitational capacities of the masses.

This superlative mental capacity lies dormant in the majority of humans. It could be activated in even those with less ability for great imitations. It is auto-awakened in a very little portion of all of humanity. It is possible that for a very long time, calculated in terms of human life spans (but short in the comprehensive cosmic and spatio-temporal scheme of created intelligent perception), it never happens. In that case, nothing much appears to go on. There seems to be a sort of stagnation. Everyone (including the inner members of the given population and the outsiders) notices with utter amazement and paralyzing sorrow, the fact that there is something strange.

Yet, where it does happen—where for any reason the superlative mental capacity wakes from its sleep, a new wave of creativity, productivity, originality, innovation is activated. Though it may take place in a few people, yet it generates such spirals of socio-cultural magnetic fields where the surrounding dominant population once more exercises its normal and regular imitational daily living. But it imitates the wakened mind, rubs with it and catches the flame. The rest of the world comes to copy this at different rates depending on: 1) how rapid is the relationship and interaction between the mind and brain correlations of the majority of people in a given geographical space and 2) the degree of interference from subterfuge sabotaging activities of other men of other social and geographical spaces can be identified and controlled.

This situation where the minds of the majority are awakened creates another. Man begins to defy death—that most profound sleep from which no mere man by his ordinary personal powers may wake another. He takes risks. He gets disinterested in excessive useless materialism (though he still loves to acquire it). He appreciates human dignity and prices it high. The former situation of acting on the brain level engenders wonderful policies without commitment to realise

them. It favors an imitation of the enjoyment of the most grandeur production of successful human regions. But it blinds this imitation to value, dignity, interiority and detachment. Death and its fear enslave the brain operative at this level. Materialism and egoism get enthroned and the heart dies. The reason here is distorted. Someone here may pass any examination in this world provided the success depends on the repetition and imitation of what has been learnt. But result in creativity in terms of side stepping the imitated reality lies at zero or near zero. Several Africans in the majority need to disprove this as it depicts them.

These situations can be verified in Africa today. One could begin with culture. This means nothing but a way of life. It should be a dynamic reality. It ought to be living and growing, developing and being transformed into something better. The second situation mentioned above where the mind could ascend to a superlative crescendo happened in Africa more than seven thousand years ago. Then they invented some basic tools and utensils (like mortar, pestle, flutes, basic art crafts, discovery of food processing techniques, wine production, distillation, etc.), some recreational facilities (like drums of all types, flutes, musical instruments, etc.), some clothing, basic housing, basic animal husbandry, and subsistent farming.

These fascinated their discoverers and inventors. Subsequent generations were content with imitating these earlier paradigms. Unfortunately, they got stuck, stagnated, disgruntled, disappointed and disoriented. The transition was never made to the agricultural revolution, or to the industrial revolution, or the technological or any other revolution at all. The consequence is that one gets nearly a zero level of originality in terms of materials that are quasi absolutely unprecedented on African soil by Africans. The environment may not be holistically to blame in a sense. Man domesticates his environment rationally. But the leaders who have heavily shaped this environment post colonially and the colonial wry influence has a slot to do with it.

In imitation, most Africans are like the rest of the children of men. So, instead of a *de facto* study of culture, the stagnant and imitational mind thinks only of returning to the past. But all of these, a return to the past, an appreciation of the present and a fearless launching into the future must be integrated. This need raises the demand for a withdrawal of an inspired select few, from among whom the human spirit may once more be liberated unto catching up with other minds in other regions. The blades of this speeding up fans are turned backward and even utterly wedged by an excessive potential or real attachment to success, achievement, hero worship, personality cult, a morbid fear of failure, death, and a sense of being perceived as ordinary or at most as a nobody.

4. Success and Failure

Success and failure in what they truly mean are concepts that are defined by human relative parameters. This implies that they derive their validity from society. Both realities are reverse sides of each other. Their modes of perception

have a powerful effect on the mind and they condition the action and reactions of a host of people. This gets so strong that they constitute a sociological constant in many societies.

Their significance in an anthropological discourse stems from the fact that an organised human life stands directly in front of these two realities. Success motivates and encourages, constitutes the goal of man's operations and serves as his reward. Failure threatens and guides, constitutes the borders of the "ought" and the dare not, the "might try" and the surrender; it may demoralise and weaken and may ultimately frustrate and sadden.

These two realities help in determining many a human attitude to work. They affect many a cultural conditioning to development. They engender an opening to innovation or self-complacent indolence and finally, they constitute a challenge that in the end affect fascination and imitation, and re-affect the mind of their candidates and the immediate society.

5. Uncritical Success as Regressive Culture

The law, among other things, seeks to help order or reorder society. This ordering happens in the form of the regulation of the means of livelihood, lives and property, and the relationship between individuals and between the institutions and the individual. The law also seeks to avoid a situation where flagrant impunity is condoned in any way. But these are things that the mental formation of the citizens helps to achieve to a more or less extent. This means that foul play and criminality or other improper behaviors ought to come to the notice of and be checked by the law. This can only happen with the co-operation of all citizens or their majority. When it is left to the exclusive monitoring of the law makers, its executives and the law enforcement agents alone, the aim of the law is greatly defeated as that is very inefficient. This inefficiency has a ripple and a spiral effect through the generation of undue success and failures in varied sections of the polity. The mind of several Africans currently has not awoken to this need for the free access of all or at least practical majority of citizens and their right to co-operate to make written laws achieve practical effects on the African socio-political and economic reality.

The materially and economically successful in these types of societies and as a product of the inefficient application and execution of laws, seek to consolidate their status. They seek to protect their means of success. This leads to a further perversion of the system of justice and morality. Even crimes are employed to protect this status quo. This may range from the corruption of the already ineffective agents of the law and the diversion of the direction of right thinking in the majority of the citizens.

When this happens, a whirlwind of mediocrity and impunity reigns unchallenged. Success speaks. The riff raff of society are multiplied. These attain positions of power but for the lack of both proper knowledge and willpower, they are unable to change society. They are swayed by the mighty. As leaders, their posi-

tions appear to attract other lazy minded and easy life seeking fellows. The more disorderliness is rewarded, the more various sectors of society succumb to corruption. The average mental disposition of the citizen is polluted. Many become false. The strong-willed are bought over with money. Where they resist, they constitute such a minority that they hardly make meaning to their immediate contemporaries. Pragmatism and utilitarianism engulf such a society. The majority of the minds of the “best” or the acclaimed best become nothing short of warped.

These types of minds lose the sense of shame. They are unable to resign at the accusation of impropriety. The creation of conducive and enabling environments and the provision of standard amenities elude such minds. But their lack of shame makes them seek these necessities elsewhere when others have achieved such. The creation of sound and functional institutions escapes them though they desire it for their own well-being and that of their offspring. This creates a vicious circle.

The best lose out. The worst are paraded as the best. The good ones become failures. The incompetent ones occupy the policy-making and change-capable positions. The best serve their inferiors. The privileged leaders but of inferior intellectual and skill capacities become more conscious of their privilege, of the benefits of manipulation. They wield such authority more and seek to perpetuate the system. A huge wave of poverty and misery for the majority of men is generated and human beings remain poor in the larger percentage of the population.

This situation creates a culture. It has become a tradition. It constitutes a system. Since culture is the way of life of a people, this becomes a way of life. The mind is affected. People become afraid to fail. Genuine efforts with very high risks of failure but with marginal chances of breakthrough and life changing discoveries and inventions get suppressed. The ensuing culture is backward. It cannot compete. It is self-deceptive. Documents here say one thing, but the reality says another. All these issue from the mind, affect other minds and condition how still more minds are formed.

This creates a real anthropologically worrying situation. It is important because in this situation, the faculties and senses are used as if they do not really and cannot properly serve their functions. The memory is treated as if it has no storage and recalling capacity. The intellect appears not to be expansive and inexhaustible any longer. The will is the worst hit. When a people as a people cannot organise itself any longer and handle the oppressive forces that hold it down, when its fear for death keeps it dead in reality for too long; then the mind-body interaction is smouldered.

This is what one finds in most segments of all the third-world countries at the moment. The fantasy and imagination, the intuitive capacities, the irascible appetites which should goad one on are all imprisoned in frustration and worst of all, even reason is itself held captive in some sense in these environments. But the ability to put these to fruitful, productive and liberating use is what distinguishes humans from highly sophisticated domestic animals. The wonder then,

is, apart from functional laws—enforceable and actually enforced laws, which are products of reason and experience—are human beings not just a little more than some brutes, still in the process of developing their minds (and hearts) toward man’s full integral capacity?

6. Where the Heart Comes in

The heart is a very fundamental anthropological subject that may not be left out easily in discussing man. Though the major faculty in this reflection till now has been the mind, the heart is an old terminology and reality that enjoys a better trust. It is linked to both the mind and the soul. Prof. Onwuanibe, teaching on the anthropological subject of the soul had stated that in the Igbo language, the heart and the soul are related in nomenclature but not the same. The heart is called *obi*. The soul is called *mkpuruobi*. The mind instead is called *uche*. Thinking as a substantive is called *echiche* while as an infinitive it is *icheechiche*, which means “to think”. In this connection, one can as well think of the conscience. The simple Igbo word for the heart also takes care of it without any difficulty. So, to translate the expression: “he had remorse for what he did,” an Igbo can as well say, *ihe o mere wutereyan’obi*. This would literally be translated as: what he did pained him in the heart or gave him regrets. But the concepts cannot be expressed without a mention of the heart except by a presumed implication. *Ihe o mere wutereya* (said without *n’obi*)—what he did pained him (without mention of the heart)—which really implies the understanding of *n’obi* (in the heart) since *mwute* (i.e., pain the sense of regret) is always *mwutenke obi* (regret in the heart) when fully understood.

This is important in the assessment of the mind as there is no sharp separation in non-philosophical categorizations of the heart, the conscience, the mind, and the soul. The distinctions surely exist. But they are so intertwined that a depravation of the mind—*uche*, would imply a deviation in the *conscience (obi)* formation and the heart—(*obi*), a rupture in right thinking (*ezigboechiche*)—logic, a diminution in the natural tendency of the soul, and an intentional subjugation of common sense—*akonauche*.⁷ When these happen, *oguguisi*—reason, no longer works at its maximum efficiency. It is battled and contested by so many other appetites that it appears to labour in frustrating circumstances. Its improper functionality affects the heart—*obi*.

Obi (heart) is such a multivalent word in Igbo language that in one accent it has several meanings, and in another it has a totally different meaning. An example would show that. *O nweghi obi* would ordinarily be translated literally as he has no heart. This would be correct for a non-Igbo. Assuming that the accentuation of the *obi* is *óbi*, that would be heart. If it is *òbí*, that would mean the traditional hut that serves as a hearth and place of congregation for men in the Igbo traditional set up. So, the translation of the original statement *o nweghi obi*

⁷The Igbo words are used differently by different professional philosophers from the original meaning in non-reflective language. The latter is what has been followed here though it could receive some touch with some license.

could as well be “he has no hut.” The interesting translation in the expression, *O nweghi obi*, is the first one, *obi*. But idiomatically, one could translate that to mean that he is so sensitive that he cannot do any harm—he has no heart here could mean ironically but realistically that he is not heartless. This would be correct. But it could as well be translated to mean that he has no feelings—he is heartless. It would as well be correct. The correct meaning would depend on the context and all the circumstances surrounding the expression of the fact that *O nweghi obi*.

This would warrant a classification of the linguistic category of literal interpretations. Granted that an interpretation can be classical or literal, the literal can be purely or flatly so or viably so. The pure or flat literal interpretation in African languages tends often to be meaningless. In that case, that it is a purely literal interpretation constitutes a non-viable one. The viable literal interpretation appears more meaningful though it is still not the classical interpretation. Not all formulations take the literal interpretation in its flat or pure and in its viable forms. Some take the simple viable forms. Others permit the complex but purely (or flatly) literal sense—which is non-viable, the viably literal sense as well as the classical sense of meaning.

One could take for instance, the expression, *Obi di yamma*. This would mean literally: “the heart is good to him.” But really it means that “he is happy”. Purely or flatly literally, it would mean that the heart is good to him. But that would be meaningless. Another more viable literal way of translating it would be that his heart is at peace. The opposite, *Obi adighiyamma*—purely literally, would be translated as the heart is not good to him. That would mean more viably that he is not happy. Similarly, the more viable literal translation would be that his heart is not at rest or at peace. Again, *O buiheojoon’obi* (purely) literally, he is carrying a bad thing in his heart, would mean that he has evil plans. This could also be translated such that it would mean that his mind is bent on evil. This literal sense is in this case viable and so stands.

From this point of view and all similar ones, the circle gets completed where the mind and the heart fuse once more into one. So, in the Igbo worldview of Africa or in the Igbo provenience of Prof. R. Onwuanibe, the heart very much integrally understood constitutes the seat of government in man. Thus, a man can name their wives, *obi di ya*—the heart of her husband. A question may arise (among the Igbos), what of the saying that *ndubuisi*—that life is the head (literally) or life is the principal reality? The answer is that *isi* in that expression in terms of viability does neither stand for head nor for the brain nor for the mind. It stands for ordinal priority. It means life first. But *Obineche*, *Obiji*, *Obinna*, *Obialo*, *Obidi*, *Obioma*, *Obioha*; all go to emphasise the priority of the heart as a primal faculty for the rational and mental organisation of man. And this must be rediscovered by the African. This would be more like the situation where the Greek word for the mind, *dianoia*, means mind, reasoning and intelligence. That would be the equivalent of the Igbo, *obi*. This dianoetic (i.e., reasoning process) function of the African (exemplified in the Igbo) *obi* must be harnessed.

According to Hans Urs von (von Balthasar, 1990) “for the Bible, and for the (philosophical) thought of man as a totality, the heart is the true centre of the spiritual-physical human being... The turning of the ‘whole heart toward God’ is the opening of the whole man to him (Apocalypse 8: 37; Matthew 22: 37)” (von Balthasar, 1990). He also states that Greek philosophy following Homer saw in the heart the centre of spiritual and psychic life, and for the stoics, it was the *hegemonikon*, the ruling faculty. Interestingly, the New Testament theology adds:

On the one hand, a factor of incarnation (for the soul is entirely incarnate in the heart, and the body becomes, in the heart, the total expressive sphere of the soul), and, on the other, a factor of personalisation (the Christian man, body and soul, is in the call of God, a unique person, and turning to God offers with his heart what is thus unique in him) (von Balthasar, 1990).

Balthasar shows a list of German authors who have worked to develop the importance of the heart in reflection on the mind (like von Hildebrand, 1967; Siewerth, 1963; and Maxsein, 1966). These all go to show the importance of the heart. It implies that a careless mutation of the mind would surely engender unforeseen damaging to the heart and therefore, a thwarting of the whole man. Therefore, the idolatry of wealth and titles, of positions and ends irrespective of means, the exaltation of impunity and indifference to conscience, all predicated on the idea of success as the ultimate value, have not only shrunk minds but destroyed millennial cultures. The hearts of the nobles and would-have-been nobles or to borrow a religious language, would-have-been *martyrs*, die for the restoration and conservation of ideal, regenerative and creative new minds. In this death of the heart, the men owning these hearts die as well. They lose the force of the human bite. The real ingredient that should make them human is gone. They become toys and instruments of the manipulation of external market forces, and internal political wrangling by the products of the earliest unchallenged mental dwarfs. The result is everywhere to see. It includes arrant frustration and shameful inhuman practices that go unpunished everywhere. Nigeria becomes a case point for this study; African countries in the sub-Sahara support her while the third-world nations show that the pattern is a rule. The saddest is that mankind in other regions is not ashamed of this, in our one world.

7. Conclusions and Provocations

Granted that man is not just a bundle of aspects, nor disjointed elements, one would better tend to agree with some other philosophers that he “is a unity in spite of multiplicity” (Frankl, 1988). His dimension of the mind is so strong that while it could be said to be the motor of the spiritual dimension of man, yet, it has its fuel from the physical and the biological. Fascination and imitation, which were amply examined at the beginning of this reflection start with sense perceptions. That means that the sense organs perceive the material and physical objects that in turn fascinate man. The imitation is at the somatic level the first time and then exercises such a powerful influence on the mind that it gets condi-

tioned. Its noetic capacities are encompassed. This is where the intellect and the will come in.

One would wonder, can man not by his simple power of the will refuse all the effects and the insinuations that occur from the activities of the mind? Does the intellect not present the reality of the situation clearly enough for the will to follow? The answer would lie in how human intelligence, which is the operation of the intellect, functions. It would appear from these observations that there are three types of intelligence. These would be the necessarial, the survivalist and the revolutionary salvaging types of intelligence.

8. The Necessarial Intelligence

The *necessarial* intelligence would be that basic perceptive ability that characterises a man as such. It can help him set traps and pursue what is most necessary for feeding, housing and clothing. It is to a very large extent very instinctive, simplistic and can achieve some lower inventions. Its strongest characteristic is that it is very reverential and fears death more than anything else. This type of intelligence is found in all persons and the amount of wealth, social achievement, success and personal sense of fulfilment that one has, does not really change it. Those are on the surface.

When a society operates at this level of intelligence, talent and ingenuity are stifled. They are strangled on two altars. That of the narrow mindedness of the better-offs and that of the lack of opportunity for the endowed in this area. Unfortunately, no human being grows and develops well without the prior and early care of better and stronger adults. The infancy of human beings is uncharacteristic of animals, so non-precocious that the child needs at least seven full years to come to some significant use of reason which faculty distinguishes man as a rational being. In this situation where only the most generalised form of necessarial intelligence is allowed to thrive, people merely exist. They do not live.

Real convictions that transcend societal expectations and adulations are rare. People directly make themselves idols and their wealth and success become their images. They are worshipped through these images. Among the types of things that one may find here is the situation where criminals and criminality are praise-sung as if they were positive values and admirable characters. The Igbo unfortunate saying “*O gburuozuna high sea*” literally means “he murdered in the high sea.” The true but sad origin should be the fraudsters who murdered their business partners in the ship in waterways and usurped their products. They are considered successful from the wealth perspective of this ill-fated situation. Their achievements make them enviable people. There is no effective system to cross-check the means of these wealth possessions. The expression is then used to describe the achievers. It shows the level of mental indiscipline obtainable in this society and how necessarial the society is.

Here the mind starts functioning negatively. Originality is capsized. Innovation is turned upside down and people hear of things that would be unimaginable.

ble elsewhere. They are nothing short of originalities—but in the negative. Just imagine sound reasoning individuals stashing trillions of whatever currency in foreign banks when their immediate neighbors live in situations that would hardly qualify as ghettos in the civilized world! Only minimal imitative intelligence can do this. The Nigerian presidents of the past half-century and their immediate close collaborators would but too easily justify this type of categorization of intelligence.

9. The Survivalist Intelligence

The other type of intelligence deduced from the analysis of the intellectual function of the mind is the *survivalist*. This intelligence combines what is found in the necessarial with what is beyond that level. It is very highly imitational or imitative. It can copy. To a very high degree, it is observational but sadly it is incapable of identifying the deep sources of problems and of proffering solutions. When others discover problems, they can notice the problems. When they create solutions, they can imitate them. But beyond this, they nearly remain inert. It is a very materialistic intelligence in that it directs to matter, visible success, immediate achievement and is frustration. This type of intelligence fears death as morbidly as the necessarial level. This keeps it from necessary risks.

Here also, there is hardly an original innovative invention or discovery of world significance. Whenever there is anything in that direction, the avid personal dimension and selfish interest that characterises this type of intelligence obstructs it from openness to the benefit of wider neighbors. In so doing, benefit to mankind is as well blocked. The survivalist intelligence is also triumphalist. It shuns public wealth in favor of a private personality cult.

In this type of intelligence, although the mind functions positively, it tends to act very negatively as well. Originality is not fully capsized as in the necessarial. Innovation is sought and people do their best to bring up what may have been seen elsewhere but are not so easy to achieve on the ground. They are originalities in loco—but in the main, in truth, they are modified copies. At this level, since honesty is affected, there is no fear of infringing on copyright laws, piracy, patent, and all such. Everything goes. Yet nothing is in order.

There is a palpable disaggregation of the products of the mind. It becomes clear that things keep falling apart more and more. Examples would include a situation where a nation has all the genuine laws on paper, yet no government administration ever succeeds in using available resources to accomplish foreseen necessities. The minds at this level of apprehension engage in frivolities and dish the people trash! Only a survivalist imitative intelligence does this. The mind here is content that it trudges and survives along. But real living (for all) is far from its framework of organisation of the instruments of work for more success. It gives up at the first instance at the apparently impossible.

With this type of intelligence, the person is one who may be physically and socially very rich. But humanly and integrally, they remain pitiable “poor things

or poor ones”. Like the proverbial one-eyed man in the land of the blind, sooner or later, they pass out with no worthy tales or footprints on the sands of human time and history. Here *having* has the way all through. It prevails over being. So, being takes a secondary role. This affects the value of life and the dignity of the human person. The mind is in this case enslaved by some remote controls that it cannot neutralise.

10. The Revolutionary Salvaging Intelligence

Last but not least is the *rebellious, revolutionary salvaging, intelligence*. It is an intelligence ever alert. It makes the geniuses, inventors and discoverers of different places. It makes great composers, “fearless men and progress soldiers.” People with this class of intelligence are very apt at problem identification. They easily perceive the solution from the inside of the very problem and they set out to seek its resolution. These are people who initially break boxes in order to understand the reality around them; they re-purify and transform the area for themselves and for their generation and (where they have them) their grandchildren’s generation—their posterity. They normally upset the status quo, but their contempt for death is like the central distribution point in an engine—or the human brain box.

The people with this mind-set know that one dies but once. They try to accept defeat only on the tacit assumption that they have done all their best and yet to no avail. Nonetheless, they do not give up. This is why research—real research—continues and is funded adequately. But they cannot help despise death because they are sure that it has no strict power over their activities. They are the brain boxes of the various innovative ventures going on in the world. They have hearts that beat. These hearts live on and make the distinction between being human consciously and transcending the animal-ness that links or makes man in common with his fellow animate creatures.

Those with this frame of mind compete in advancement and despise the idolatry of fame, position and achievement. They have enough shame to understand what are unacceptable as conditions for humans. So, they ensure that they are part of the well-being of their society. They demonstrate, not by the immediate repetition at examinations, but by the creative potentiality that is actualised, that humans are really human and therefore, ultimately radically different from any other creatures or intelligent beings.

Here, the sky is the limit in reality. Or one could say that there is even no limit to human capabilities. By policy, the slightest innovation is encouraged. Talent and ingenuity are rewarded by law and goodwill. Mental discipline is at its height. The good of society prevails over the private selfish interests of individuals. But the well-being of society automatically implies that of the individual as well. Strict problem-identification and solution-providing attitudes are encouraged and inculcated from the beginning here. This is followed by self-contentment with personal achievement with a lofty sense of dignity even in little. Parochial-

ism gives way to pragmatic welfarism. The value of meaning is restored while the meaning of value remains sacrosanct. Human sensitive results and visions depict this type of intelligence.

11. Hopes

The discoveries and inventions of the past century all over the world clearly show that the human mind can still do more than it has done hitherto. The fact that some of the most spectacular success stories are those of personalities who were transferred from their environments to others shows that the mind's capacity to the ultimate highest level of intelligence is innate in all persons. Yet, it is often dormant. This is especially in those areas where external influences of subtle human jealousy have surreptitiously but adeptly kept the autochthonous persons stunted in mind and stifled their capacity for waking up. Unfortunately, all histories of third-world nations mirror this. Thus, the innately highest-level-capable mind requires certain conditions to catch fire and be activated after the specifically human intentional external factors must have been eschewed. These would include the enabling environment, the sincere study of the meanings and values of what a people have as a culture and the adoption of a sacrificial mentality of individuals who would realise that nobody is indispensable. That would in the final analysis mean that no one would seek to get it all at once. Yet, all would be ready to assist others some steps ahead at once. And even if this costs one his or her life, the price would be worth it. Only so, an account of human existence that takes seriously the most powerful anthropological gift of man—the mind—and his most inevitable point of reference (i.e., death), would have helped in moving man some steps further towards the total realization of mature personhood by all humans. This is the hope that would help the various kinds of intelligence to sublime themselves to the best for optimal results. What the African mind has so far demonstrated reveals that there is a great need to get the minds unshackled from so many elements that keep it at the necessarial and survivalist intelligence level at the moment. The various achievements of continental Africans outside the homeland, ranging from the scientific, technological to the cultural and financial through the intellectual and spiritual only lend credence to this. An Christological consciousness in re-evaluating these classes of minds will be a boost and to that the next reflection will attend.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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