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An Afro-Cultural Contribution to the Discourse on the Contemporary Challenges to Human Dignity

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Abstract

At present, several challenges militate against the dignity of human beings, irrespective of race and gender. This has furthered the lack of respect and dignity tied to every individual. The spate of killings and homicides, moral differences, insurgence, the role of science and technology cannot be overlooked when some direct or indirect factors that militate against the dignity of humanity is considered. Through the method of critical analysis, this paper revisits the question of human dignity via the traditional deontological ethic of Immanuel Kant and the Judeo-Christian perspective. After a thorough exploration of the core of these, the study finds them inadequate as it posits that African ideas explored via pedagogy can serve as a veritable sources to reverse the ugly trends that have corrupted the appreciation of human dignity and worth.

Key Words: *African Philosophy, Dignity, Humanity, Immanuel Kant, Pedagogy.*

Résumé

À l'heure actuelle, plusieurs défis vont à l'encontre de la dignité des êtres humains, indépendamment de la race et du sexe. Cela a aggravé le manque de respect et de dignité lié à chaque individu. La vague de meurtres et d'homicides, les différences morales, l'insurrection, le rôle de la science et de la technologie ne peuvent être négligés lorsque l'on considère certains facteurs directs ou indirects qui vont à l'encontre de la dignité de l'homme. A travers la méthode de l'analyse critique, cet article revisite la question de la dignité humaine à travers l'éthique déontologique traditionnelle d'Emmanuel Kant et la perspective judéo-chrétienne. Après une exploration approfondie de leur noyau, l'étude les trouve insuffisantes car elle postule que les idées africaines explorées via la pédagogie peuvent servir de véritables sources pour inverser les tendances laides qui ont corrompu l'appréciation de la dignité et de la valeur humaine.

Mots clés: *Philosophie africaine, Dignité, Humanité, Emmanuel Kant, Pédagogie.*

Introduction

The lack of respect for the dignity of humans has been demonstrated in ways that ranges from homicide to stigmatization against the other for being themselves. The first question to therefore commence with is what makes a human a human that demands some worth or dignity? The philosophical anthropologist Battista Mondin introduced the concept of the human “person” as comprehensive name for man's being. According to him, this name is not used for both plants and animals but for man. Thus, to ask the question what is human person? Is same as asking what or who is man? The use of term “Man” is a generic sense to mean the human person. So, “human person” and “man” are often used interchangeably to mean one and the same. Responding to the question to who is man? Battista Mondin (1985:1) says the question of who is man: This is the interrogative of

all interrogatives...it is an old interrogative yet it is also new. In other words, man is mystery unto himself. He has not fully captured or understood who he is even though he has knowledge of other things.

The question: who is man or who is the human person has remained as elusive as issue for thinkers through ages. Efforts have been made by man across the centuries to study himself both as an object in nature and also as a subject. The past and even the present centuries have recorded a handsome number of books centering on man all in attempt to demystify the being of man. Many discordant voices have been heard beginning from ancient thinkers down to the contemporary era. The Greek thinkers sought to grasp a concrete knowledge of man through Cosmocentric approach. They sought to understand the cosmos through without precise definition of man. This knowledge is sought with the plane of God in the medieval era. The modern thinkers made their study of man in the light man himself. The contemporary thinkers sought to understand man through science and technology (Ozigbo, 2004:37).

In Heidegger, man is refers to as Dasein. Fundamental in the concept of man is that he is being in the world. Man is just a being in the world, instead, he is, "the being to whom the world, including all things within it can reveal itself" (Harries, 1978:68). The human person is seen as embodied being with physical or material body and spiritual or intellectual soul. The body is the visible, material and corporeal aspects of the human that identifies with other animals but different him from purely spiritual beings. The soul elevates him above other animals that are purely materials and makes it possible for him to participate in the spiritual world. The mind differentiates him from irrational beings (Anumiri, 2004:75).

Granted, the idea of personhood is beyond the full concern of this inquiry, it is the calculated aim to have a fair grasp of what it means to

be humans worthy of dignity and why this ought to be upheld. The challenges to upholding this dignity or worth is therefore too numerous in contemporary times that everything human seems to have been frustrated. It is however crucial to examine the main idea and motivation for these atrocities that are sometimes done in the name of God and in other cases ideological convictions. This is the task of the next section. Two popular or dominant ways of assessing these convictions for the withdrawal of human dignity in the Judeo-Christian and Kantian moral philosophy will be the focus of the second section. It is in the third section that this research looks at the discourse from the African perspective with some recommendations how pedagogy can be used to endorse this perspective. The fourth part concludes this essay.

Threats and Challenges to Human Dignity

Despite the value and worth of the human person with regard to his Human dignity, the dignity of the human faces lots of challenges in the society both in the Western World an in the African Society. This section therefore examines these threats, paying close attention to science and technology, emphasis on the self, insurgency, ethical relativism and poverty. Granted there are more ways that human dignity can be revoked, this research will however limits its concern to these five owing to space-time limitation.

Ours is the era of possibilities. To us it belongs to experience the God-like powers of science and technology. In fact, there are convincing reasons to believe that we are entering into the greatest period of change the world has ever known that the time has come to dream of new earth. Technology and science seem to be in control of human in this age more than any other (Ofuasia & Okogie-Ojiek, 2017: 29). Biotechnologies will make a great impact on how we think about ourselves and our place in the universe. True, they will lead to a better medical care, cures for currently incurably diseases, and most likely a

cheaper and possibly more nutritious food supply. With advances in bioengineering we can have everything from 'designer' drugs to 'designer' food. In the recent times scientific researchers have been able to create synthetic skin, plants that produce human blood proteins, and bacteria that protects against cavities. In line with the above statement, Jay and Preston Gralla (2004:1) write: there is no doubt that among the technological breakthroughs that will define the time for future generations...The advances made in the past decades have been tremendous and they are only a taste of what is yet to come. Virtually every aspect of our lives from what we eat, to our medical care, to how we live and work will one way or another be affected by them. Imagine a world where cells can be created for therapeutic treatment of certain diseases or whole organs, generated for transplants. Extinct species of animals could be restored to earth's population. Humans could duplicate themselves or make exact copies of deceased ones. While these things may seem a bit far-fetched, cloning could one day make a likely possibility.

In spite of all the remarkable accomplishments and the many promises of science and technology yet to be accomplished, there is danger of science to human dignity. There is possibility of human cloning for example. No matter the utilitarian value to favour human cloning, human cloning is ethically wrong for human beings to be used as a means to an end. Human cloning diminishes human dignity and the personhood of the individual. Human beings are been used for experimental purposes. Man has become a slave of science. To this end, the Document of the Second Vatican Council puts it simply: Though mankind is stricken with wonder at its own discoveries and its power, it often raises anxious questions about the current trend of the world, about the place and role of man in the universe, about the meaning of its individual and collective strivings, and about the ultimate destiny of reality and of humanity. (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1967: No.3).

Our argument for human dignity being inherent in man makes it possible to locate the source of the abuse in the same man. What we mean is that, if human dignity is inherent, then sources that contradicts it will also be inherent. This may be logically and biologically proven. The case of masturbation, for instance, explains our position appropriately. A man who is unable to control his sexual intolerance can be said to abuse his dignity through such acts. He is equal to that man who attempts to commit suicide. In fact anyone who engages in acts contrary to the self-dignity can be categorized as suicidal.

One of the threats of human dignity is the issue of insurgence, comprising of kidnapping, bombing, et cetera. The case of Boko Haram in Nigeria today and the incessant spate of kidnapping are threats to human dignity. The horrible situation of unemployment that has led to demeaning conditions for many young people is a strong index of human indignity and precipitates for more abuse on human dignity.

Threats to human dignity are triggered by unwholesome ideologies especially the ideology of Relativism. Relativism is the concept, that points of view have no absolute truth or validity, having only relative, subjective value according to differences in perception and consideration. The term often refers to truth relativism, which is the doctrine that there are no absolute truths, that is., that truth is always relative to some particular frame of reference, such as a language or a culture. Another widespread and contentious form is moral relativism. So it means that if one thing is right because it is right for me or for someone else, then this ultimately means the question of God — is no longer relevant. Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI says we are building a “dictatorship of relativism” (Pope Benedict XVI, 2010: 50-59).

This relativism is so pervasive because, such forms of behaviour and thinking are being presented as the only reasonable ones and, therefore, as the only appropriately human ones. Christianity find itself exposed now to an intolerant pressure that at first ridicules it- as belonging to a perverse, false way of thinking- and then tries to deprive it of breathing space in the name of ostensible rationality (Ibid: 53). The wave of moral relativism is what has opened the deluge of moral perversion in the variants of homosexual marriages, cases of prochoice and Planned Parenthood, etc, all of which have great threats to the esteemed corpus of our Catholic moral teachings and human dignity. Apart from this common manifestations of the dictatorship of relativism, there are some ideologies which this dictatorship influences and have posed dangers to human dignity. Worthy of mention are modernization, globalization, secularism and “transhumanism”- the belief or theory that the human race can evolve beyond its current physical and mental limitations, especially by means of science and technology.

Aside the four threats already attested in the previous paragraphs, poverty is another major threat to human dignity is poverty. There are very poor economic situations and high inflation in the country, and this serves as one of the major sources of traumatic challenges in the society. Workers receive unlivable salaries and wages, and the unemployment rate is high. This has driven most of our youths (men and women) to the streets in the quest for daily means of livelihood. This brings about rape, stealing, etc., that abuse the human dignity. Now that attempts have been made to understand the various ways through which human dignity has been frustrated, it is pertinent to therefore consider some traditional solutions to them and see if they can work in contemporary times. This is the aim of the next section.

Traditional Perspectives to Dignity: Judeo-Christian and Immanuel Kant's Perspectives

Before assessing the Judeo-Christian and Kant's perspectives to human dignity, it is crucial to first have a fair grasp of what it means to possess human dignity. Perhaps, the starting point is the conviction that human dignity is realized and protected in community with others. The community must help preserve human dignity and if there is any community that does not preserve human dignity, that society is steeped on self-annihilation. Human dignity involves respect both from individual and the community. Man lives in community and the community exists only because of the human person. Respecting a person takes account of their feelings and experiences; their social situation; their ethnic, religious and sexual identity, though they may be very different from my own. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches:

Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature. These rights are prior to society and must be recognized by it. They are the basis of the moral legitimacy of every authority: by flouting them, or refusing to recognize them in its positive legislation, a society undermines its own moral legitimacy. If it does not respect them, authority can rely only on force or violence to obtain obedience from its subjects. It is the Church's role to remind men of good will of these rights, and to distinguish them from unwarranted or false claims (Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 1930). In a latter document, it is made more clear thus: Respect for the human person proceeds by way of respect for the principle that "everyone should look upon his neighbour (without any exception) as 'another self', above all bearing in mind his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity (Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 1931).

Human dignity demands fairness and justice in human conditions. It requires that economic situations should not be exploitative. Humans are to be loved and goods to be used and never the reverse. All human beings, therefore, are ends to be served by the institutions that make up the economy, not means to be exploited for more narrowly defined goals. Human personhood must be respected with a reverence that is religious. When we deal with each other, we should do so with the sense of awe that arises in the presence of something holy and sacred. There should not be disparity of wealth and exploitation of labour for the advantage of maximizing profit. The dictates of human dignity challenges capitalist structures everywhere. Pope Benedict puts it this way: The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require, particularly today, that economic choices do not cause disparities in wealth to increase in an excessive and morally unacceptable manner. Thus, human dignity strives for economic balance. Further along this border, economic conditions must be humane and it is a source of scandal if this too could militate against social and international peace as is extant in the world today and even in Nigeria.

Human dignity necessitates respect for life. It interprets the imperative of the fifth commandment and all it behoves. Human dignity stems from the respect of human life. Any abuse or contempt for human life; implicitly or explicitly is contempt for human dignity. As explicitly formulated, the precept “You shall not kill” is strongly negative: it indicates the extreme limit which can never be exceeded. Implicitly, however, it encourages a positive attitude of absolute respect for life; it leads to the promotion of life and to progress along the way of a love which gives, receives and serves. It abhors all forms of killing from abortion, international homicide, euthanasia, suicide, genocide, and, gendercide; the practice of sex-selective abortion.

Human dignity involves too respect for the dignity of person and therefore rejects all forms of scandal, respect for health (avoiding every kind of excess: the abuse of food, alcohol, tobacco and medicine), respect for the person and scientific research (organ transplant, etc), respect for bodily integrity (abhors kidnapping, terrorism, torture, amputations, mutilations, sterilizations), and respect for the dead. The Document of Vatican II adds: Whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury (Gaudium et Spes No. 27).

With the proper exposition to human dignity already explored, the task then is to properly and analytically consider the Judeo-Christian perspectives first and then Kant's later on. In Antiquity, Christianity and the Renaissance the concept of human dignity expressed the moral superiority and responsibility of human beings in relation to themselves, animals, nature and the whole universe. The dignity of life resides first in the uniqueness and irrepeatability of life. No life can replace another. Nor can any life be repeated here on earth. The life of human beings is once and for all. This makes it so precious and valuable. But above the all foundation and basis of human dignity is found on the great value that the author of life has reposed on earth.

Christianity which is an upshot of Judaism has always defended and upheld the dignity of the human person especially from the scriptural point of view. Two scripture passages are paramount in the defense of human dignity from a Judeo-Christian perspective of the Human dignity. First; Genesis 1:27 wherein we read: "Then, God created man

in his own image and likeness” and second; He gave him a special dignity, crowned with glory and honour and given dominion over all other creatures (Psalm 8:6-10). God created man in God's image and likeness (Imago Dei). Thus, Obioha (2012:25), asserts that from the Catholic perspective, the source of human dignity is rooted in the concept Imago Dei, and our ultimate destiny of union with God.

This implies that man is not ordinary, but extraordinary. He is indeed supernatural, divine, a being like God. This in fact is a gratifying exaltation, a special dignity that applies to every man irrespective of age, tribe, gender, nationality or race, and is meant to be sacrosanctly respected and upheld by all. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council puts this succinctly in the following words: “All men are endowed with a rational soul and are created in God's image; they have the same nature and origin, and being redeemed by Christ, they enjoy the same divine call and destiny; there is here a basic equality between all men and it must be given an ever greater recognition” (cf. *Gaudium es Spes – Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 29).

Succinctly put, Human dignity originates from God and is of God because we are made in God's own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27). Human life is sacred because the human person is the most central and clearest reflection of God among us. Human beings have transcendent worth and value that comes from God; this dignity is not based on any human quality, legal mandate, or individual merit or accomplishment. Human dignity is inalienable – that means it is an essential part of every human being and is an intrinsic quality that can never be separated from other essential aspects of the human person. This dignity is not earned or merited but inherent. Which is why Iroegbu (2005: 82) says: The human being has something of dignity of God in him or her. Man is like God, being his image. To be like God demands that one be treated as a being like God. He himself

should also be so conscious of this that he takes himself and behaves himself accordingly; like a being in divine image and supernatural likeness. Such is the great status that is the privilege of human life.

At the forefront in the promotion of the human dignity is the Catholic Church. Lots, through encyclical letters of Popes have been written on the dignity of the human person. We shall consider the Catholic teaching on the dignity of the human person which has its foundation from scripture. The notion of human dignity has had primary attention in the development of Catholic thought throughout the centuries but it has enjoyed renewed and more central attention only since the Second World War. The influence Catholic thought had and still has on the development of the notion of human dignity in its legal context is however mostly underestimated or ignored. This is unfortunate, because the Catholic understanding of the human person and its view of human dignity is one of absolutes that does not leave room for doubt or negotiation about the profoundness and consequences of human dignity, seeking to protect the dignity of every human being from conception onwards, regardless of any human valuation. This strict view of the notion of human dignity can only benefit human kind as a whole Christian or not – as it does not exclude anybody. Corroborating this, Aguas (2009:54), summarizes the Catholic thought of human dignity in these words:

The dignity of a human being is not bestowed on it by somebody else; it is “incommunicable, inviolable and absolute” leading to a radical freedom. It is the human being's complex constitution of material and spiritual aspects that makes it so uniquely different from all other species.”

In the same token Novak M., (1998:109), asserts: “It is also the Christian tradition, “following in the footsteps of Judaism, which made human dignity a notion of universal application, even when this

happened late in history. This broad concept was for example not shared by the ancient Greeks or Romans, as they reserved dignity for certain classes of people, not including slaves and other groups of “lesser” human beings.” Full dignity in these latter traditions was attributed only to free men and women. So when trying to understand human dignity, it is vital to include a thorough analysis of Catholic thought on the subject.

More so, Kwasi Wiredu acknowledges and corroborates this image of God and thus the spiritual basis of human dignity when he writes: Descriptively the Akpan conceive the person (onpia) as made up of three principle elements: okra, sunsum and mogya. Okra is the life-principle, a particle of the Supreme Being. It is the Ultimate basis of the equality of all human beings and the source of human dignity... And since every human person possesses in him this speck of divine substance; every human person has an intrinsic dignity (Wiredu 1992:196).

Four sets of modern-era Catholic Church documents can be identified as especially relevant in contributing to the legal-philosophical understanding of human dignity: Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), Declaration on Religious Freedom, (1968), *Dignitatis Humanae* by Pope Paul VI and the (social) encyclicals written by Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła), whom as a Pope personally experienced both Nazi and Communist totalitarian regimes and thus knew all too well what happens to a society that disregards human dignity. Finally, the writings of Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger). We shall briefly bring out the points.

In Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (1965:125), Pope Paul VI holds that the fundamental element of the human being's dignity, the document says, is the ability to listen to its conscience and to be able to choose to do good and avoid evil.

Obeying conscience is “the very dignity of man”. The human being also rebels against death because it is created with a soul that has been made to live eternally and thus cannot be limited to its earthly dimension. Therefore, no matter the great technological advances and the ability to prolong human life in its biologic sense, it does not take away the longing of the human being for the “higher life”. This longing is such an important element in understanding human dignity. The document states: “whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia or willful self-destruction...everyone must consider his every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary to living it with dignity.”

Accordingly, in The Declaration on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965), Pope Paul VI speaks of the right to religious liberty finds its foundation in the dignity of the human being. This dignity, it states, can be known through the revealed Word of God and through reason. Human dignity consists of human beings being gifted with both reason and a free will. This then enables them to take personal responsibility for their lives and for what they do. The importance of *Dignitatis Humanae* lies therein, that it clearly sees religious liberty as one of the defining aspects of human dignity itself. More than a consequence, it is a vital component of human dignity.” The human dignity is exclusively reserved for the human being, and not for example for animals, because it is only the human being that has the capacity of self-giving. Dignity in this sense can only be human. We now turn to Immanuel Kant on the subject at this juncture.

Without doubt, the most influential proponent of the view that all human beings possess human dignity is Immanuel Kant. By human dignity, Kant means that the human being, which is also the “person” “man” or the “rational being” has an absolute inner worth. Kant

understands the human person as an intrinsically free being that is an end in itself. The human being is “endowed with inner freedom” This inner freedom, Kant goes on to say, constitutes the “innate dignity of a human being” and is the “only original right belonging to every man by virtue of his humanity” (Kant 2009: 176). The human being by virtue of this freedom possesses autonomy Kant's most often quoted categorical imperative, his paradigm on the absolute inner value of human dignity, is “so act to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only” (Kant, 2001:186). This is one of the most significance legacies of the ethics of Kant.

Accordingly, Nwaezeapu (2011:192), writes: “...human beings have an inherent dignity...As a result; some reproductive techniques have come under intense criticism as being unworthy of human dignity.” Supporting this view, the Council of Europe, Additional Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity state that: “The instrumentalisation of human beings through the deliberate creation of genetically identical human beings is contrary to human dignity and thus constitutes a misuse of medicine and biology.” Thus, any artificial reproductive system (example, human cloning) contravenes Kantian second formulation of the categorical imperative about the intrinsic worth of human beings. For according to Kant “Everything has either a price or dignity. If it has a price, something can be put in its place as an equivalent; if it is exalted above all price and so admits of no equivalent, then it has dignity” (Kant, 1964:102).

Furthermore, in contrast to humans beings, Kant would say, animals have value only insofar as they serve human purposes. Human beings though animals, but they are animals with worth, value dignity and sanctity. So far as low animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals ... are there merely as means to an end. That end is

man. We can, therefore, use animals in any way we please. We do not even have a “direct duty” to refrain from torturing them. Kant admits that it is, probably wrong to torture them, but the reason is not that they would be hurt; the reason is only that we might suffer indirectly as a result of it. As Kant says; “he who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals” (Kant, 1963:240). Hence, mere animals, Kant holds have no importance at all but human beings have.

Kant speaks of the value of human beings using two important facts about people that, in his view, support this judgment: First, because people have desires and goals, other things have value for them, in relation to their projects. Mere “things” (and this includes nonhuman animals, whom Kant considered unable to have self-conscious desires and goals) have value only as means to ends, and it is human ends that give them value. Thus if you want to become a better chess player, a book of chess instruction will have value for you; but apart from such ends the book has no value. Or if you want to travel about, a car will have value for you; but apart from this desire the car will have no value.

Second, and even more important, humans have “an intrinsic worth, that is, dignity,” because they are rational agents - that is, free agents capable of making their own decisions, setting their own goals, and guiding their conduct by reason. Because the moral law is the law of reason, rational beings are the embodiment of the moral law itself. The only way that moral goodness can exist at all in the world is for rational creatures to apprehend what they should do and, acting from a sense of duty, do it. This, Kant thought, is the only thing that has “moral worth.” Thus-if there were no rational beings, the moral dimension of the world would simply disappear. The absolute worth of the human person makes Kant writes: In the kingdom of ends everything has either Value or Dignity. Whatever has a value can be

replaced by something else as its equivalent; on the other hand, whatever is above all value and therefore admits to no equivalent, has dignity. Furthermore, he says: This estimation therefore shows that the worth of such a disposition is dignity, and places it infinitely above all value, with which it cannot for a moment be brought into comparison or competition without as it were violating its sanctity

So, for Kant, human dignity requires that every human person be treated “never merely as a means, but always also as an end” (Ibid: 105). Those words must have influenced Karl Marx's strong protest against the exploitation of man by man” (Omogbe, 1993:224). In other words, moral law forbids any man to be used simply as means to an end. It is an offence against human dignity to use being simply as an instrument to attain one's ends. Accordingly, Kant says: “They are the beings for whom mere “things” have value, and they are the beings whose conscientious actions have moral worth. So Kant concludes that their value must be absolute, and not comparable to the value of anything else. At this juncture, we no turn to the African side of the discourse in order to obtain the needed balance in a world that seems to have lost respect for humanity.

The Dignity of the Human Person in Traditional African Standpoint

A good place to begin this section is to consider the Human person in the African Cosmos. African religion and thought is anthropocentric. In other words, Man is at the centre of the universe, more central than God (Kanu, 2015:100). Accordingly, Mbiti (1969:92), states “Man is at the very centre of existence and African people see everything else in its relation to this central position of man... it is as if God exists for the sake of man.” Corroborating with Mbiti, Metuh (1991:109) as cited by Kanu writes that “Everything else in African worldview seems to get its bearing and significance from the position, meaning and end of man.” The idea of God, divinities, ancestors, rituals, sacrifices, et cetera are only useful to the extent that they serve the needs of man.

In African world-view of the human person (man) is intrinsically with its dignity. Let us consider the Igbo term for man: “mmadu”. This term is “mmadu” ontically explained as “the beauty of life or the goodness of life or existence” (Ekei, 2001:130). Couched in this concept of 'mmadu' are two constituent parts 'mma' meaning beauty or good and 'ndu' meaning life or existence (Ozigbo, 2004:40). Mozia (1982:185) in his view sees this concept 'mmadu' as the synthesis of all that is good in creation.” Edeh (1985:100), in his metaphysical study of the Igbos, understands man as 'mma-di' which means 'the good that is'. In the studies of Nwala (1985:41-42), man means 'madu' 'the centre of creation the most important aspect of creation'. Man for the Igbo is the focal point of creation, the culmination and the pivot around which other things revolve. He is of 'intrinsic worth-good'. The 'intrinsic worth-good' of the human person is the dignity of the human person. It is not limited the facial beauty, but the dignity that the human person possesses over other creatures.

Consequently, one of the values of the Africans is the sacredness of human life. Iroegbu (1994:84), states that while almost all societies have respect of life, African have a deep reverential deference for life, especially human life. Its beginning is elaborately celebrated in pregnancy, birth, naming ceremony and initiation ceremonies. Its growth and continuity is feasted in adulthood, and adolescence rites, family rites and communal festivities. Its end is buoyantly celebrated in death rites, departure rituals and funeral festivities. African value from life is from conception to death. She never known the hypothetical Hobbesian State of Nature. Rather, she could be compared to Lockean State of nature in that she was characterized by innocence, peace mutual assistance, good will and preservation (Onaulogho, 1997).

Conversely, to take human life, that is to shed blood especially

innocent blood is the greatest evil on earth. Others who threaten and harass lives are proportionately sanctioned according to their evils. Witches and wizards who constitute recurring menaces to others people's lives were hated as public enemies. Given the opportunity, the community will summarily eliminate them. The sacredness of life has been desecrated due to European influence. Today, abortion is the order of the day. Incessant Killings and taking of human life is at its peak in Africa. The instrument of killing is been manufactured and brought to Africa to take away life (Irabor, 2017:162). Speaking of the sanctity of life in man with the African Traditional society, Obi (2002:48), states that:The African worldview is anthropocentric. In fact, all other beings in the world visible and invisible act on the human person to preserve life. African religion and culture are enhancing. Human life is held "sacred" in African. It is esteemed as the highest value...life is appreciated at the primordial ground for all human endeavour and aspiration.

The above statement shows how the traditional African Society conceives the human person as "life" that has dignity as a human being (Ajayi, 2003:90). In short, African deep love for, and profound for life make all development a development for-life; and all progress, a progress towards full-life. All tools must in consequence be for-life tools, life-promoting instruments because life is the supreme value. The respect for the sacredness of life is the supreme value with which African could nourish humanity and thus, African might assist the world in a process of evaluation (Ehusani, 1991:10).

Conclusion

From the foregoing, we have seen that the place of man is threatened by the new civilization of Western hyper technology. This new way of living is unfortunately already being uncritically imitated by some Africans. However, if the West considers and treats the human person as machine, Africans do not share this viewpoint. The considered view

of the traditional African society is that the human person is life. By that we mean that the life of the human person, that is to say, the person as person, is the central cord and measurement of all values and commitments, the scientific-technological included. Hence, as a fully blooded African, I am proud of my identity as I belong to a people who find a lot to celebrate about life. 'Ask me then if life is worth living and I answer that no situation makes life not worth living since the human person is life for my people. As such, my existence is authentic since I live a shared life with others and I hold high the dignity of the human person. The call then is that Africans should teach the world how man can best be man, this is in the return to the value of life that surpasses that of the machine.

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