

Some Reflections on Human Needs, Peace, Transculturality and Igbo Proverbs in the Light of Emmanuel Edeh's African Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Within the framework of a transcultural, psychodynamic and holistic approach, Edeh's concept of Man as Mma-di (in Igbo language in Nigeria, mma-di = good that is, and mma-ndu = the beauty of Life) is presented as the nucleus of his philosophical articulation from an African metaphysical-anthropological perspective. In this context, some reflections are shown on the following topics: human creativity and peace... of mind, body and soul, as existential values and entity in bioethics; aspects of Edeh's philosophy and his work on the peace in the world; transculturality and Igbo proverbs shaped in form of Japanese Haiku poetry. These reflections emphasize the importance of induced aesthetic mental state in the subject, which derives from biological impulses but from archetypal and symbolic value of the object and continuously enter into a metaphysical experience as a form of life energy and human existential need. In this context, we discover also Edeh's philosophy as a new stimulus for further reflections and research on human life potentials, creativity, peace and Man's cosmic responsibility.

Key words: Edeh's philosophy, peace, bioethics, creativity, transculturality

Introduction

In our time when we are faced with the technical mythology of the third millennium, humanoid robots and bionic man of tomorrow, quantum healing, transplant memory, we are also confronted with the results of modern epidemiological research on various diseases, disorders during growth and development, growing number of elderly and disabled people, various forms of trauma, new forms of existential anxiety and depression in the world's population. Also in this time, along with a slightly noise of scientific interpretations of psychosomatic and spiritual aspects of human existence, in terms of C. G. Jung (1875–1961), man is faced with the intellect as a space of Self – thoughts. At a very same time, an enormous quantity of emotional energy gets lost in the sand of an intellectual desert, which fascinates him with his strength and size in different ways. The contemporary technical-mythological imaginary power thus seems like a threat of a virtually coming new world epoch of slavery. A rhetorical question could be raised – is it possible?

In various investigations is revealed that speech marks all physical manifestations and that it is the primeval origin of hermeneutics itself, that the subjective aesthetic

mental state is related to both hormonal responses and distant analogies of archetypal images in human consciousness, that the hypothesis in both scientific knowledge and art is pronouncedly heuristic, that man is compelled to discover with his own brain all the deficiencies in functioning of that same brain, and that human achievements in morality are not less relevant for human existence on this planet than achievements in biology, physics or medicine...

In terms of Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 535 – c. 475 BC) and Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) in the awareness of one's own existence, man gradually reveals and becomes aware of a dark labyrinth of his own bloody interior where there are also primordial beginnings of self-awareness of his own impulses and needs.

One of the characteristic of the human existence is its transcendence. That is to say, man transcends his environment towards the world; but more than this, he also transcends his being towards an ought. When he does this, he rises above the level of the somatic and the psychic and enters the realm of the genuinely human^{1–3}.

The potentialities of life are not indifferent possibilities: they must be seen in the light of meaning and values. Cognition of biological, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic, moral or spiritual values is a mediation which unifies immanent subject state – both somatic and psychic: illness and health, fear and joy, beauty and ugliness, truth and lies, good and bad, love and hate... and transcendental object yet unknown to the subject. In existential tension an individual's intent may be defined as being the various values which arise from the situation, potentialities, inclinations, aspirations and needs, and are formally represented as actual and habitual. And in Divine Comedy (Divine Comedia) the angel at the gates of Purgatory presents two keys, one golden and one made of silver, and says: »...One key is a symbol of forgiveness of sin, and the other is a symbol of science and reason...«. So Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) accompanied by the Roman poet Virgil Publius Maron (70–19 BC) examines the mystery of pain, the mystery of Love which »moves the Sun and other stars, and represents the unity of a universe in a man«.

In this large crowd of people of different race, color, religion, cultural traditions, rich and poor, healthy, sick and disabled, people who speak different languages, and practice various rituals they all are blessed with different skills and education..., however in spite of all these differences it seems that each individual is preoccupied with his/her own needs – to be alive, to be loved, desired, free and to be in peace – peace of mind, peace of body and peace of soul.

The understanding of human creativity, needs and life potentials in a bioethical approach takes place at the level of formed consciousness and the ethics of life as the actual moral consciousness. Some aspects of bioethical medicine have been identified as early as in the interpretations of classical Greek philosophers, the Pythagoreans for instance, but also in the ancient Ayurvedic scripts. Within such framework it is possible to reflect on ancient medicines from various traditions and periods, within which we can also find a thought by Hippocrates: »In a living body, all is interrelated«. This thesis is also found in the content of contemporary transcultural, psychodynamic and holistic approaches in various studies on human existence. These are also the foundations for the theses on human activity within the fundamental bioethical principles: autonomy, charity, righteousness and harmlessness. Thus we also come to the relation between bioethics and deontology, and we may consider the peace as a bioethical entity and existential value^{4,5}.

Aim

A critical outlook on the world today highlights the dire need for peace; ranging from conflict of interests, insecurity of lives and properties, tribal and cultural differences, political ambitions and above all, the insatiable quest for survival man. These of course have led to the introduction of different schools of thought and peace models that can help salvage the situation, and bring about authentic peace. In this context we discover the work of Father Edeh

from Madonna University in Nigeria who is the great articulator of African philosophy (from an African Igbo – metaphysical – anthropological perspective).

In this essay, the aim was to present some of the aspects of Edeh's philosophy and his work on the peace in the world. In the light of Edeh's philosophy the aim was also to briefly present Igbo population in Nigeria (where there are three major ethnic groups: the Yorubas, the Hausas and the Igbos) and thereby stimulate reflections on the value of proverbs in Igbo language and culture and on transcultural level. In this context, the aim was also to present excerpts from the study on the topic: Igbo proverbs shaped in the form of Japanese haiku poetry, with special emphasis on the process of creativity (self-esteem and self-expression), and the value of induced archetypal images, aesthetic and moral messages in the minds of the subject^{6–8}.

Aspects of Edeh's Philosophy and his work on the Peace in the World

Father Prof. Emmanuel Edeh from Madonna University in Nigeria is the Great Articulator of African Philosophy. The life work of Father Edeh is built on practical and effective charity, and it should be considered as a great contribution to the development of modern science and spirituality with the aim of discovering and supporting life potential and quality of life in man. It has been confirmed by experts from various disciplines (philosophy, medicine, theology, economy, law and other social sciences, diplomacy as well as different fields of art).

Edeh's concept of man as *mma-di* (good that is) and *mma-du* (the beauty of life) is the nucleus of his African (Igbo – metaphysical – anthropological) philosophy. His strong belief in the idea that we are nothing other than pure good, deriving our goodness from *Chineke* (the supreme Good – in Igbo language and African metaphysics), has made it imperative that peace is then an integral part of man's existential need. In African metaphysics, it is clear that the notion of being is derived from man (the good that is). This does not necessarily follow that man is – good in se – but it is to be seen from the context of creation; that having been created in the image of his creator, man shares in the being of his maker the highest good...

Father Edeh has professionally developed this philosophy to an extent that it constitutes his peace model. The central tenet of this philosophy contends that the Igbo (African) word for man »*Mmadi*« (a good that is) is not just a mere linguistic expression but an endemic belief that man was created by an ultimate goodness and as such is ontologically good. Authentic human existence for Edeh entails bringing care and support wholeheartedly to man especially the sick, the suffering, the abjectly poor and the abandoned; it is duty which everybody must uphold.

In Edeh's philosophy, thought and action are inseparable. This is characteristic of Edeh's philosophy which has developed into autonomous philosophical school of thought known as Edeh's Philosophy of Thought and Ac-

tion (EPTAISM). Peace is interchangeable with good and love or charity. This is Edeh's conception or theory of peace as could be inferred from his thoughts and actions: peace is attained through love expressed in Charity. Charity, as we understand, stands at the center of Edeh's thought and action. It is the practical expression of love. Love is a rational and mental emotional state of goodness, while charity is the physical and practical demonstration or externalization of that state of goodness. This perception of being and man maintains that man's life, existence and values are fundamentally derived from Chineke (in Igbo – metaphysics the Absolute Being) who is responsible for goodness. As a result, Edehism or Edehistic metaphysics treasures man holistically with regards to his spiritual, psychological (psychosomatics), bioethical, socio-economic needs and aspirations⁹.

Edeh has demonstrated the practical applicability of this philosophy by establishing institutions where love and charity are exhibited to a fault... Father Emmanuel Edeh is the founder of the First Peace, Justice and Reconciliation Centre in the world; the first and only Museum of Charms and Fetish objects in the world; the largest Pilgrimage Centre in Africa; the founder of Education in Africa including the Prestigious Madonna University – the first private University in Nigeria and first Catholic University in West African sub-region; Madonna University Teaching Hospital and others where he gives free medical care to those who cannot afford payment... To confirm the necessity of the peace in the world, Father Edeh established also the Madonna International Charity Peace Award (MICPA). In the voice of Chief Dubem Onyia, Former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nigeria: »Fr. Edeh is... a man who has done a lot in ensuring that there is peace in families, in society and the whole world«¹⁰.

Philosophy of Father Edeh has been presented on numerous conferences organized by the universities all around the world and numerous books have been written about the work of Father Edeh. For example: Pierpaolo Cioceta in his book (printed in English and Italian) *The Works of Father Edeh: Hope for a Peaceful Continent* (Le Opere di Padre Edeh: La Speranza per un Continente pacifico) has written: ...Even the most poor in a desperate state are hosted and treated in the hospitals established by Fr. Edeh; in fact thousands of homeless persons are given humble accommodations and daily meals: differently, they would be reduced to an extreme misery and starvation. Every work I was honored to have been hosted pervades the love feeling that the Father Founder feels for the neighbor. Also those people who live, work, study in those buildings are able to make you feel their affection feelings and this is important to improve both the living conditions and the spirituality of the next generations. Many other things should be done in Nigeria, since only charity is not enough and this is the reason why the choices of the Fr. Edeh are extremely important: his aim is to teach his people how to lead their life by themselves, not living only on charity. So, he believes that a good education is the key for a better, above all for the next generation...¹¹.

In the book *World Peace through Education and Human Empowerment*, Emek wrote: »In the perspective of Edeh's Peace Model, the individual's tranquility is nothing short of a condition sine qua non for a holistic and authentic peace model capable of tackling the problems challenging this global bride (World peace)... The same author wrote about Edeh's philosophy and psychosomatic components of human existence and suggest »that for any model to restore men's inner peace, it must take care of his material and spiritual needs...«. Edeh's philosophy has been developed on the basis of transcultural, existential and holistic approach and is the result of many years of seminal work aimed at the development and establishment of new forms of human communication and empathy on the planetary scale. Edeh's philosophy on Thought, Action, Creativity and Peace is presented as a lived philosophy, and a way of life expressed in peoples rituals, language/proverbs... (folklore, legends, myths, arts, poetry...) and other cultural manifestation^{12,13}.

On Igbo Proverbs in the Light of Edeh's Philosophy

Modern Nigeria is made up of many ethnic group, but the three major ones are: the Yorubas, the Hausas and the Igbos. The historical background of the Igbo's help us to understand the Igbo identity. Ethnologically the Igbos are an ancient race. Studies of Igbo anthropology, culture and socio-religious life have revealed the importance of proverb in the Igbo language and culture.

Edeh in the book *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics* states: »Proverbs, that is, brief, popular epigrams. Proverb is the oil with which words are eaten – »Ilu bu mmanu eji esuru okwu«, is a significant saying which expresses how the Igbos value the use of proverbs, which are a natural form of speech in all traditional societies¹⁴.

In the book *Aspects of Edeh's Philosophy*, Nze states: »...The Proverbs may derive from various sources but they have anthropocentric undertones... Man is at the center as he is the ultimate beneficiary... It is expected that his internal and external cosmos would be properly ordered by his preparedness to learn and apply or appreciate the hidden wisdom in those proverbs. A proverb expresses both linguistic reality and creativity«. It is »an artistic device for giving complexity to narrative, unity to form, coherence and pattern to action and direction to moral and social insights.« It is a mode of expressing, exploring and developing reality. In Edeh's words: »When I express my feeling in well-known and accepted proverbial forms, in effect I put my personal speech in a traditional context. Thus I reinforce my ideas by objectifying their validity. But by doing this I pay tribute to myself as vehicle of traditional wisdom«. Another importance of proverbs is their capacity to foster a bond of unity between peoples and generations of peoples sharing common (archetypal...) cultural matrix (The term archetype, »representation collectives«- is essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious by being perceived, and it takes its

color from the individual consciousness in which it happens to appear...). This is an ancient practice that can find significance for the people of our times...¹⁵.

Some Reflections on Self-esteem, Aesthetic Pleasure, Transculturality and Igbo Proverbs Shaped in Form of Japanese Haiku Poetry

It is considered that an idea denotes a mental ideal or a paradigm and serves as a regulative principle in various forms of creation, that is, both in arts and in science. While, on the one hand, the hierarchical relations in science are manifested in the development of traditional and new scientific disciplines, in the constant discovery of enigmas of man and the world, the primeval and magical power of various forms of art, on the other hand, constantly enters the metaphysical field of experience, as a form of vital energy and self-realization of an individual... Connecting the knowledge of different cultures and traditions, intuitive consciousness about the notion of human spirit, creativity and the connection of man with nature has also its deep holistic, transcultural and cosmic dimension.

To look at the world through haiku consciousness is to commit an act of love and complete understanding written by Štambuk, a doctor, Croatian diplomat and a poet, in the book »From Nowhere« (in trilingual edition in Croatian, English and Japanese languages)¹⁶. Haiku consciousness is not about looking (which anyone can do) but about seeing and comprehending in a healing and attentive, compassionate way. In today's prevailing atmosphere of chaos and disorder, haiku is a way to heighten our awareness of this disruption and cacophony and the need for serene return home. There is no other way but a return to the old ways, with haiku representing a golden, precious opening into the invisible spiritual world which can restore the wholeness of our world, us with us, us with nature, us with our inner glue, our spiritual alloy. Haiku's aim is to establish, through reversion, a new order through details and insights, using a pars pro toto aesthetic. Three lines of verses, which though short, contain a vast metaphysical space, constitute the haiku poem.

We can find the stimulus for these reflections in the thoughts of Heidegger (1889–1976), who also acknowledges a great cognitive value to art of poetry »as discovery of being of the being«, art is thus in a certain way foundation of truth in a manifold sense of the word: as giving (das Schenken), founding (das Gründen) and beginning (das Anfangen). And in the ancient roman times Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65–8 BC) wrote *Ut Pictura poesis* – »As is painting so is poetry«.

In this context within framework of an psychodynamic and transcultural approach hypothesis was used, according to which – »perception of aesthetic equilibrium (in Self-esteem) can directly affect the functioning of the whole person... When order is perceived in the environment, there is corresponding feeling of order within the mind and body of perceiver...«. According to that starting point I have tried in a special way to aesthetically shape

in the form of haiku poetry transcending beauty of Igbo proverbs, as shown in the following examples: Morning prayer (Igo Ofo), Human soul (Muo-madu) and Truth is Life (Eziokwu bu ndu).

IGO OFO – MORNING PRAYER

N'oge gboo gboo – A time prior to the beginning of beginnings

Ani muo – The world of the unseen

Chi-ukwu – The unlimited fullness of being

MUO–MADU – A HUMAN SOUL

Osini nkea amaka! – What a beautiful tree!

Kedu ife odi mma ya? – To what purpose is its beauty?

Chineke – The Supreme Good

EZIOKWU BU NDU – TRUTH IS LIFE

Otu nwanyị – One certain woman

Ofu nwoke – A certain man

Aru-na-muo – Body and soul

Existential Analysis: On Creativity, Peace and Homeostasis within Psychodynamic and Holistic Approach

Classical psychoanalytic free association techniques are very much related to the poetic consciousness. Through projection and random association, the person transcends the mechanical purposefulness of thought and allows inner symbols and sensations to become manifest in consciousness. Thoughts and proverbs from the Igbo culture, aesthetically shaped in the form of haiku verses, it is possible to analyze within the psychodynamic approach as a form of existential analysis and reflection on trans-cultural level and also for educational, prophylactic and/or therapeutic purposes¹⁸. As the essence of this and any other phenomenon has its aesthetical character, the development of aesthetical experience in an act of creation could be thus explained as a result of the development of perceptive consciousness and metaphysical intuition which permeates that being: the truly and absolutely beautiful is always elevated, and the elevated (if it is true) is beautiful, writes Schelling (1957) in his system of transcendental idealism¹⁹.

For example, Edeh used Eziokwu bu ndu (Truth is life) to illustrate truth and sincerity. Ezi would refer to right, good, correct, true, and straight. Okwu means words, saying, speech, statement or logos. Ezi okwu has divine connotations. It is a keying into the logos which can pass for a synonym as well as its Ground of Being or beings. Heraclitus of Ephesus believes that is the Logos. The presupposition is that knowledge of the Logos is transcendental, hence, in a way, fundamentally accounts for our knowledge of other realities. This is very akin to Igbo understanding:

all other knowledge that can be acquired is all meant to prepare man to live in the truth of things and be correspondingly true to himself...

In the dynamics of symbolic contacts, art has always provoked spontaneity, the congenital need for freedom, satisfaction in expression, truth, and the truth has always provoked the being. But, what kind of truth does the scientific experience contain? The written word does not resemble what it expresses, and the truth has a completely different meaning in art or in scientific treatises in mathematics, laws, religion, medicine... The aesthetic consciousness (aesthetic pleasure), in its ability to heighten and strengthen the value of perception, is concerned with more than the appreciation of beauty as conventionally defined²⁰.

Bio-psycho-sociological Equilibrium and Self-transcendence

The aesthetic consciousness determines our self-image as individuals and as a society in that we define ourselves through our modes of selectively perceiving and giving value to whatever we do. In this respect, it seems appropriate to describe, on this occasion, experience of the phenomenon of peace and aesthetic pleasure which was induced during clinical psychotherapy for breast cancer patients in a way I described in the book *Ecstasy and Genesis...* Peace in the concept of psychotherapy is a mysterious moment between nothing and everything, homeostasis, surpassing of subjective experience and objective reality what reflects an energetic substrate of the discovered personal existence aestheticism which supports a trembling flame of life. It is at the same time dialogue and permanent melologue of *Mythos* and *Psyche* in the dramatic symphony of existence...²¹. The homeostasis principle, however, that underlies the dynamic interpretation of the man, maintains that his behavior is basically directed towards the gratification and satisfaction of his drives and instincts, towards the reconciliation of the different aspects of his psyche such as *id*, *ego* and *superego* and towards his own bio-psycho-sociological equilibrium and self-transcendence^{22,23}.

Existential analysis attempts to be not only an analysis of a certain person, that is, an analysis in the ontic sense, but also an analysis in ontological sense; in other words, in concept of Edeh's philosophy, it attempts to be an analysis and explication about human creativity, mor-

al and social insight. At the same time human existence may be seen in view of a common archetypal matrix of a man (in Edeh's terms) on this planet. Within psychodynamic and holistic approach, we can say that: »...Although each image (in those verses...) is basically a symbolic summary of realism and surrealism of the existence, the aesthetic ideal with its substrate and biological recording corresponds somehow to the state of mind in terms of establishing a complementary truth regarding one's own existence, which transcends the language in which it is articulated itself«.

Conclusion

Human creativity consists of a large number of projective, postural proprioceptive, hormonal, spiritual and moral tendencies. Aesthetic pleasure (aesthetic mental state) derives from biological impulses, but from the archetypal and symbolic value of the object, and continuously enters into a metaphysical experience as a form of life energy...

Thinking about creativity and cosmic consciousness of man, I have once written: »...In an ecstatic moment the soul is elevated-carried away by beauty, and contemplation is a free penetration of spirit into the space of Wisdom...«. In sinking of heart because of the time he cannot overcome, Man still endeavors to overcome libidinous, ambivalent flows of energy, discovering thus a dramatic act and mystery of Love – which is still, as it seems, the foundations of everything: death and birth, pain and pleasure...«²⁴.

An Igbo proverb says: Whatever has a beginning will have an end (»Ife welu mbigo g'enwe njedebek«). How come, asked Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) a German philosopher who established the school of phenomenology, that man in himself, merely from the source of his own spontaneity, can create constructs that can assume the value of ideal objects in his ideal world and that can be presented in the form of historic timeness as theories and sciences.

When the mind faces an intellectual and moral crisis of progress, there is an increasing interest in the hidden world of the soul. In this context, we discover also Edeh's philosophy as a noble and new stimulus for further reflections and research on human life potentials, creativity, peace and Man's cosmic responsibility.

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NEKA PROMIŠLJANJA O LJUDSKIM POTREBAMA, MIRU, TRANSKULTURALNOSTI I IGBO POSLOVICAMA U SVJETLU AFRIČKE FILOZOFIJE EMMANUEL EDEHA

SAŽETAK

U okviru transkulturnog, psihodinamskog i holističkog pristupa Edehov koncept o Čovjeku kao Mma-di (u Igbo jeziku u Nigeriji Mma-di = dobro koje je takvo; Mma-ndu = ljepota života) prikazan je kao izvorište u njegovom afričkom metafizičko-antropološkom gledištu. U tom kontekstu prikazana su neka promišljanja na slijedeće teme: čovjekova krativnost i mir uma, tijela i duha, kao egzistencijalna vrednota i entitet u bioetici; aspekti Edehove filozofije i njegovog djela za mir u svijetu; transkulturalnost i Igbo poslovice uobličene u formi japanske haiku poezije. U ovim promišljanjima naglašena je važnost induciranog estetskog mentalnog stanja u subjekta, koje proizlazi iz bioloških poticaja, a također iz arhetipske i simboličke vrijednosti objekta i neprekidno ulazi u metafizičko iskustvo kao oblik životne energije i ljudskih egzistencijalnih potreba. U tom okviru otkrivamo također i Edehovu filozofiju kao novi poticaj za daljnja promišljanja i istraživanja o ljudskim potencijalima, kreativnosti, miru i kozmičkoj odgovornosti čovjeka.