

Book Review.

Title: PHILOSOPHY AND METHOD OF INTEGRATIVE HUMANISM

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It is the occupation of philosophers to discover ways by which our knowledge is acquired, the depth of our knowledge, and the standards or criteria by which we can reliably judge the truth or falsity of our knowledge.

Often, we are apt to accept without questioning, what we think we know about our environment and indeed the whole universe. Sometimes, we are shuddered to learn that what we thought was certain are proved to be erroneous or false. When this scenario repeats itself, we tend to become doubtful or suspicious to all our claims to certainty.

When for instance, a teacher we have enormous faith in, comes along to confess that all he's been teaching us are spurious theories because he did not want us to know the truth, we might begin to doubt not only this man and his theories but other men, their theories and even ourselves. In this discomfort, we would ultimately begin to wonder what kind of evidence and condition we would need to help us discover the states of truth and falsity. Indeed, we would begin to ask the sort of questions which, to this day, have landed philosophers in a postmodern impasse, in attempts to develop a theory of knowledge.

The stunning revelation however, is that different theories of knowledge are actually mere individual opinions elevated to the level of theories. Surprisingly, none of such theories however spurious or absurd has gone without diehard apostles. Popkin and Stroll state:

No theory or belief has been so absurd that

there has not been someone who believed it, and argued for it. The history of science is replete with theories that have been thoroughly believed by the wisest men and were then thoroughly discredited.

What this means is that knowledge is a multi-layered phenomenon, each step signifying growth and progress rather than an outright end. This is, apparently, the beauty of our enterprise.

Professor Ozumba has in this book made a stunning contribution concerning the future of philosophy and epistemology in particular. He dramatizes a way out of the postmodern crisis by just like Kant, calling for the recognition of the elements of the corporeal and the incorporeal but quite unlike Kant, giving epistemic ontological status to the incorporeal. In doing this, he restored and retained the Foundationalist flare lost in the postmodern crisis as well as plotted a new and veritable course to future philosophical research. In today's world where everything is defined in relation to man and where man is at a loss as per what should drive his relationship to mankind and other beings; in addition to the crisis facing humanity from this disordered relationship, I personally think that Integrativism as a theory will be pivotal in determining philosophy's uncertain future.

Integrativism: Conceptualization, Philosophy and Method

Perhaps I shall begin by looking at the conceptualization of Integrativism. Ozumba says that the inspiration for this concept is drawn from three principal dimensions: the mathematical, the scientific and the sociological (113). This means of course, that the functionality of his main concept "integration" in these three contexts was borrowed and localized in the structure of philosophy. In his words:

We are hoping that the adoption and application of integrative humanism in philosophy will aid us in achieving configurational, thematic, linguistic, ontological and epistemological integration (13).

He goes ahead to add that this concept when properly constructed to fit the framework of philosophy can be intrinsic, extrinsic, vertical, horizontal, connective, classificatory and regulative. Although, he did not border to explain these, one can rightly see that what he means is that

as a philosophy, Integrativism will yield a broad theoretic base and as a method, it will engender comprehensive approach to doing future philosophy.

In the mathematical dimension, Ozumba indicates that he derived the concept integration from its mathematical root, in this case called integer (11). By definition, integer is any number that is a natural number (the counting numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, ...), a negative of a natural number (-1, - 2, -3, -4, ...), or zero. What this means is that integer is a whole number that is not a fraction. What is perhaps derivative here is that a large proportion of mathematics has been devoted to integers because of their immediate application to real situations. It follows therefore, that as a method, Integrativism will translate the success in mathematics i.e. immediate application to real situations for speedy solution in philosophy.

From the scientific dimension, one can see the power and efficiency of integrated circuits. This is a tiny electronic circuit used to perform a specific electronic function, such as amplification; it is usually combined with other components to form a more complex system. In large scale integration (LSI), as many as 5000 circuit elements such as resistors and transistors are combined in a square of silicon measuring about 1.3cm (.5in) on a side. Hundreds of these integrated circuits can be arrayed on silicon wafer 8 to 15cm (3 to 6in) in diameter. Large-scale integration can produce a silicon chip with millions of circuit elements. Chips are assembled into packages containing external electrical leads to facilitate insertion into printed circuit boards for interconnection with other circuits or component.

During recent years, the functional capability of identical integrated circuits (ICS) has steadily increased, and the cost of the functions they perform has steadily decreased. This has produced revolutionary changes in electronic equipment – vastly increased functional capability and reliability combined with great reductions in size, physical complexity and power consumption (Ozumba, 12). What is derivable here is that computer technology and other electronic devices have benefited greatly in the form of simplicity, reliability, speed and capacity. Ozumba therefore reckons that the attempt in Integrativism is to adapt these electronic operations and make them work in the realm of philosophical methodology (12). Here, the interconnection of circuits would become the interconnection of philosophers or their philosophies

or different methods with the goal of finding not just a common ground but that which will solve all philosophical riddles and help philosophers to discover truth. From this, he enthusiastically declares, “We are sure to experience some form of breakthrough. As many good heads remain better than one ...” (12). This shows how much passion Ozumba has and the faith that Integrativism will do for philosophy what integrated circuits does for science.

The third element is cultural integration found in sociology or the social sciences dimension. Ozumba maintains that “cultural integration is an aid to explanation, an aid to description, an aid to innovation, and a force in social cohesion” (13). What this implies is that where this could not be obtained a breakdown of peace and stagnation of progress will follow. What is derivative here is that cultural integration engenders functional interdependence and is based on logical and meaningful coherence. Thus, cultural integration entails incorporation of disparate ethnic or religious elements of the population into a unified society, providing equality of opportunity for all members of that society. In such a society, an individual's attainment of an education, access to any public or private facility, opportunity for employment and ownership of property are neither denied nor limited by reason of race, religion, or national origin. A good example is the American society where the minority races especially blacks are integrated into the white dominated society. Ozumba reckons that when this is translated as a philosophy or its method, it will bring about a breakthrough in the difficult areas of philosophy.

On the whole the author surmises that “from this mathematical, scientific and sociological background insight and impetus can be drawn for the development of the theory and method of integrative humanism.

As a Philosophy

Ozumba defines Integrativism “As a ratio-spiritocentric approach in understanding human existence, interpreting human affairs, and a rigorous philosophical attitude which takes into consideration, the spiritual and the mundane dimensions of human existence and reality” (22). This implies that Integrativism is a method which fuses the elements of empiricism and rationalism (spiritual) in studying reality. It is, in a way, likeable to Kant's synthetic apriori where the elements of the physical and transcendental were considered. The difference however, is

that while Kant brings together the synthetic method from the phenomenal sphere of reality and the apriori method from the noumenal sphere, Ozumba's attempt is to amalgamate all known methods and approaches in rational, transcendental and empirical realms. Integrative humanism therefore, becomes all encompassing. In Ozumba's words, "my humanism is all embracing" (17). Thus one might describe Integrativism as Ozumba's Kantian reconciliation. However, this description can only be metaphorical for Ozumba does not precisely advocate a reconciliation as Kant did but something more analogous to a combination with synthesis as the ultimate goal. For Ozumba;

Philosophy has continued in an unending spree of agreements and disagreements, revolution and Counter-revolutions, thesis and anti-thesis but integrative humanism emphasizes more the method of synthesis (24)

From the foregoing therefore, it is partly the need to salvage philosophy from a position of conflict that inspires Integrativism. He avers that philosophy and its methods have reached the end of the road in post modernism (24) where all philosophies and methods are pulled together into an enormous conflict out of which the only rule that survives is "anything goes". But this rule is anarchistic (Ozumba, 36). Anarchism for him cannot be the ending point of philosophy. It is neither a veritable method nor a convenient philosophy. Thus according to Ozumba:

Integrative humanism as a philosophy adopts a guided but open attitude in approaching issues of knowledge as they affect humans directly or indirectly. This attitude takes a serious view that all parts of reality constituting matter and spirit, the plant and animal world as an integrated ecosystem of which no part can be isolated without dire consequences (23).

In other words, Integrativism as a philosophy attempts to study reality from the perspectives of both the physical and the transcendental. And as a method, it tries to reach a synthesis from the conglomeration of all known approaches in the study of reality. Philosophy should as the

author says be an integrative work using the provisions of raw materials supplied by all fields of human endeavour (23). And this is the reason why philosophy plays the role of "gad flying" other disciplines.

Integrativism as a philosophy is saying that reality is physical and transcendental, corporeal and incorporeal. Man as an entity for instance, is composed of both physical and spiritual aspects. Ozumba describes him as a being unto eternity (24, 44). This means that his existence continues from physical to spiritual. He is not spatiotemporal or bound within space and time. He might as well be a demigod or the demiurge, inferior to the supreme God but godlike- the producer of imperfection and evil. Ozumba did not suggest this of course.

What he states is that ultimate reality can be found in both the physical and the transcendental realms. This means a direct contradiction of most of the classical views. Plato sees the things in the physical realm as mere shadows of their real versions in the transcendental realm. Aristotle on the other hand sees ultimate reality as residing in the physical realm. The disagreement as to where reality resides has been a perennial problem for philosophy. A view amply expressed by Bradley and Russell who felt that the discrepancy between what appears and what is real had become a problem in philosophy leading him to ask "is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man could doubt it?"

Ozumba sees appearance and reality as a problem resulting from the division of truth into the halves (23), one half in the transcendental realm and the other half in the physical realm. To solve this problem each half has to be harvested and merged together in the form of synthesis. Thus, reality resides in both realms but in a fragmented form. This, I shall like to dub "fragmentalism"- the view that ultimate reality is not one complete whole in its natural state, it exists in two fragments residing in the two separate realms of knowledge. Ozumba's philosophy of Integrativism therefore, suggests that to reach ultimate reality in its fullness, the physical and the transcendental realms must be considered. The method of course, would have to be Integrativism.

As a Method

Integrativism as a philosophical method is an instrument for conducting research from a broad based spectrum. Because all known methods are limited, Integrativism fusions the good elements in all.

Ozumba says it will be synthetic, analytic, eclectic, syncretic, complementary and agglutinistic (38). These, on the whole mean borrowing, networking, sifting, unmasking and gluing of ideas or facts together. This has to involve a great deal of coherence and tolerance in order to bring new understanding to bear on old facts.

This method demands that a researcher understands the kernel of different methods, the weaknesses and strengths of these methods, so that he can weld together their strengths in studying a given reality. This implies that he must first of all seek to understand the subject of his study by finding out its physical and transcendental aspects, so that the approach will be broad based and not one-sided or rife with bias and narrow-mindedness.

Ozumba explains that researches in the past have been truncated by idealism/realism, spiritualism/materialism demarcation which makes it difficult for philosophers to be open-minded. He therefore suggests a spiritocentric and materialistic approach (39) which considers both the material and the non-material as valid realms of knowledge. In his words:

The idea here is not to restrict research potentialities and the explorative ranges, but to equip us with the mindset that will liberate, deepen, balance and enhance our capacity for a broadened enquiry (39).

In this case, Integrativism as a method strikes off all brackets enclosing one method and one realm against the other and emphasizes the importance of exercising sensitive openness in the process of inquiry.

Ozumba maintains that the essence of his philosophy includes marrying theory with practice in a way that will yield both earthly and eternal happiness. His major assumption therefore, is that the “ought” of theory should imply the “can” of praxis (45), praxis been the practical application of theory. Every theory has something to offer and every theory has a context where it works. What integrative humanism does with other theories therefore, is to, at each point, fix a round peg in a round hole and a square peg in a square hole.

To establish what is true or false and what is right or wrong, Integrativism engenders us to consider the earthly ends and the eternal ends. In the case of knowledge one must find which is superior. And in the case of values, one must choose which is better under the

circumstance. Truth like values springs from the physical realm unto the transcendental realm – both are not fixed, nor are they limited in time and space, they are both part of the continuum of man's existence. The earthly truth and values sustain us so that we might qualify to attain their transcendental counterparts.

Integrativism despite combining the elements of other methods remains a single method and does not proclaim the demise of others. It allows for a hundred flowers to bloom in order that the effective would be separated from the ineffective and the best of all harnessed to make better the process of philosophical inquiry.

This world is a stage of a process which ends in eternity. Thus Integrativism as both a philosophy and a method is a process which has its terminal point only in eternity. The truth of this world is not enough; it must be complemented with the truth of the spiritual realm. Knowledge like values is both as deep as this world and as high as heaven. What decides what stands as epistemically true or morally right is solution to a given problem. In this way, Integrativism exhibits the properties of Pragmatism. This method, Ozumba echoes, is not speculative but solution giving (46). Thus Integrativism does not just ask how do I know the truth or the right moral law, but what produces the solution? It is therefore reductionist in character for it brings down the philosophical enterprise from the ivory tower to the marketplace and from speculation to praxis, where we not only ask how and why but also, of what implication and of what value.

Professor Ozumba's book entitled Philosophy and Method of Integrative Humanism is no doubt a bold forward march in the family of contemporary philosophy. It is a must read to anyone who believes that the post-modern heuristics is not essentially the right or ultimate destination of the philosophical enterprise and also to those who rightly think that philosophy should be refocused to the foundationalist questions. His pictorial writing is enviable as it creates lively images in the mind of the reader. There may yet be seeds of future philosophy and its method in this theory.