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AJOBI AND AJOGBE

Variations on The Theme of Socation

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**AJOBI AND AJOGBE:
Variations On The Theme of Sociation**

By

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INTRODUCTION

It was Tom Burns, the Scottish sociologist, writing in the *British Journal of Sociology*, some years ago, who aptly described the predicament which many of those who have been called upon to give inaugural lectures find themselves. He said, "Having to give an inaugural lecture is a rather daunting affair", but then, he admitted that it is "a salutary one", for the fact that there is always a model to follow. He identified these three models of inaugural lectures:¹

"There are those, to begin with, which announce new departures for a subject, new horizons, recent territorial acquisitions in teaching or research, perhaps a reformed constitution: they are in short, manifestoes — delivered, of course modestly, even diffidently sometimes, and with proper deference to neighbours and previous tenants, but manifestoes nevertheless; muted manifestoes. The second kind defines itself more precisely. There is hardly a single field of scholarship or science in which the contribution (the country and the university itself, have) not been extensive and weighty — even, at times, momentous; very few branches of learning in which it is not possible to point to a noble and inspiring tradition of intellectual endeavour".

Then there is the third model which Burns calls "the guided tour through the thoroughfares of a new and unfamiliar subject". To him, this third model is:

"Less striking in its appeal than the first, less elegant in manner than the second, more pedestrian by definition of course than either, (for) the guided tour runs the twin hazards of losing half one's audience by boring them with what is already distressingly familiar stuff, and the other half by hurrying them through the more complicated or remote precinct".

The lecture which you are now sharing with me contains, I am afraid, all the risks of Tom Burns' models and few of their virtues. What I have done is to follow my own inner dictates as I compose the lecture, allowing, of course, the examples which my predecessors in the Faculty of Social Sciences in particular and in the other Faculties of this University in general, have set, to act as guides. As my thoughts unfold I shall tell you briefly first about myself and then about my department; its genesis and its process of being and becoming what it is today. But "histories" provide the back-

ground or, if you wish, the landscape against which to see my intellectual and professional pre-occupations which conventions demand that I spell out on an august occasion such as this one.

The Making of a Nigerian Sociologist-Anthropologist

Before proceeding to the main subject of this inaugural lecture, let me first give you a brief history of myself and of the department in which I have been working since I came to Ife, and where I have had the honour of being appointed to the first Chair of Sociology and Anthropology in this University, almost two years ago.

Morehouse Days

My training as a sociologist began at Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. in 1950. For many decades before I went to Morehouse, W.E.B. Dubois had established at the Atlanta University system a sociological perspective by which people of African descent in America saw, analysed, and explained the realities of their existence within a caste system. In such a situation, the black people in general, and the black intellectual in particular, had the responsibility to themselves and their community, of defining, in the clearest of terms, the odds that everyone faced. Morehouse College, an all-black University College at the time, followed not only that tradition of scholarship but also the one which prevailed at the University of Chicago where most of the senior professors including the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Benjamin Mays, were trained. A few others trained at Harvard and Columbia.

From your Freshman year you were expected to do a lot of reading on your own, and to come to class ready to disagree, if you could, with your lecturer. You were told, again and again, that great minds from ancient times to date belonged to all times, all peoples, and all climes; that wealth does not guarantee excellence of mind, nor does low parentage or childhood environment deter the development of your mind. You were invited to join the band of men and women with universal and immortal spirit. But what was more, you were taught repeatedly that whenever a civilisation was pushed forth, someone had dared to break with tradition. Paul, we were reminded, established Christianity by breaking with Judaism; Nehru and Gandhi broke with tradition to set India free. "Only those who can stray from the beaten

path with loyalty to trust have caused change", Dr. Mays once said.

Boston Days

On getting to Boston University, I was attracted to the group of lecturers whom we students came to identify as belonging to the "convergence school" of thought. We had Practicums Seminars as well as Pro-seminars in Human Relations as devices for teaching graduate students. At the Practicums and Pro-seminars we were exposed, *inter alia*, through films, to the therapeutic method of Carl Rogers.

As a kind of "housemanship", I worked in housing development, city planning, and in the study of individuals and families in crises situations. The last mentioned experience exposed me to a formidable panel of an interdisciplinary research group, under the leadership of the British psychoanalyst, Gerald Caplan, at the Family Guidance Centre of the Harvard School of Public Health, located in Roxbury, Massachusetts.

The so-called "Convergence school" of sociology at Boston University examined societies in terms of the theoretical assumptions and empirical studies of the relationships between personality, culture, and society and contributions from, and convergent developments in psychology, anthropology and sociology.

During my time, all Ph.D. candidates were expected to pass two European languages: French and German. I was permitted to substitute Yoruba for German, after I protested against taking two European languages. However, I was allowed to waive examination in Yoruba since there was no one better qualified than the candidate to assess him in the language. I complied with the other requirements of the Department for a Ph.D. degree and chose Sociological Theories, Advanced Methods of Research, Urban and Rural Communities, and Cultural Anthropology as my four areas of specialisation in which to take my qualifying comprehensive oral examination.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, distinguished members of the audience, from both the Morehouse and Boston University experiences, I have to come to believe, rather strongly, that I must one day break, where I can, with the established traditions of sociology in which I was trained; but whenever it is possible for me to do so, I must be loyal to scientific truth. Also, I have come to believe that

in the course of one's life, as an intellectual, there may be and ought to come a time when one becomes preoccupied with a theme that develops from one's life work. Such a theme may or may not have sub-themes.

In my case, my preoccupation has been, for a decade and half, with the theoretical and practical uses of sociological knowledge in Africa. An important sub-theme of this is what at the beginning of its formulation I called the indigenization of the sociological enterprise. In a yet-to-be published work retitled, *Sociology in Nigeria; which Way Is It Going?*, but previously titled *Pathways To A Nigerian Sociological Tradition*, I put forth the argument for indigenization thus:

"The idea is that Sociology can benefit from home-grown ideas contained in African oral literature so as to lessen the danger of depending entirely upon Western concepts and theoretical assumptions"²

Furthermore, I said:

"Nigerian social scientists in general and sociologists in particular have an obligation of recycling what are elements in our world views into their explanatory and analytical studies of present or future social conditions of existence, and to the development of new knowledge about this and other societies".³

While the theoretical aspect of this preoccupation has simply been called "fruitful alternatives" to Western theories of society, the practical aspect, which has been conceptualized as *IFOGBON TAIYESE* (literally, using wisdom to remake the world) deals with the application of sociological insights to the problems of social welfare and social development. Consequently over the past fifteen years I have divided my time to working in both areas: searching for useful concepts and formulations in an African social system on the one hand; experimenting with the application of African wisdoms to personal and social problems on the other. The beginning was incredibly slow and painful. It meant, initially, the uncertain search for "fruitful alternatives" to the conceptual schemes and sociological theories which one had acquired both as a student and as a teacher abroad. The period in which this was being done was the most costly to me in terms of reward and punishment as a university teacher. Because I had not come out with specific "discoveries" or "formulations", my Curriculum Vitae was described too "thin" for promotion. It was even difficult to find a fellow Nigerian sociologist who understood what I was about. A former colleague who has since abandoned the socio-

logical enterprise for the more financially rewarding profession of law in the U.S.A. went as far as to diffuse the view that my pre-occupation was a clear indication of "an inability to do statistics". For some strange reason, I found unexpected sympathy and understanding from the members of a small circle of non-sociologist friends at the University of Ibadan. They included two leading Ibadan University economists: Professor Ojetunji Aboyade, Professor (then Dr.) Dotun Phillips. It was the latter who first provided me, as editor of *Nigerian Opinion*, with an outlet to publish two essays which gave public expression to the indigenization of knowledge theme; while it was the former who first saw in these public expressions the elements of the humanist tradition of social science at Ibadan. An informal group of friends including Segun Sowumi and his wife Adebisi, the E. U. Essien-Udoms, and the Alhaji Khalil Mahmud in private discussions but sometimes through invitation to speak to a class on the subject, demonstrated that they were endowed with a clear and definite "sociological imagination". I shall return to this later, but now a short history of my Department.

A Short History of the Department⁴

Prior to 1973, this Department of Sociology and Anthropology was known as the Department of Sociology and Demography. Its Acting Head, Dr. (now Professor) Adenola Igun, was also the Director of the Demographic Research Unit which had been organized as part of that Department. The teaching staff included Dr (Mrs) Simi Afonja, Dr (Miss) Caroline Dennis, Dr. I.I. Ekanen, Dr P.O. Olusanya who was at that time a Senior Lecturer, and Robin Horton who was Research Professor of Anthropology. These were later joined by two expatriates in the persons of Dr. Ascadi, a Population Council expert; and Mr. Van Rest designated an Association Expert from Holland, according to the available record.

By September, 1973, when I arrived, the Demographic Research Unit had become a separate autonomous Institute. The Department was re-named the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. I assumed the acting headship, having previously been appointed Reader in Sociology and Anthropology from the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) where I was a Senior Research Fellow and Acting Director. The total number of

the 'old' members had been reduced to five. Doctor Ascadi left before I came; and Doctor Ekanem had joined the Institute of Population Research and Manpower Studies. Therefore, I met Mrs. Afonja, Miss Dennis, Dr. Olusanya and Research Professor Horton who incidentally was based in the Department of Religion, College of Humanities, as it was called at that time. At the same time as I took up the headship of the new Department of Sociology and Anthropology, two new members joined it. They were Dr. John Peel, Reader, and Mrs. Olufunmilayo Oloruntimehin, Lecturer. These brought the total number of the teaching staff to eight. Not long after this, Mr. Van Rest left for Holland during the 1974/75 session. Between 1974 and 1976 the Department's staff was enriched by the appointment of three more members: Dr. Theophilus Olatunde Odetola, the Reverend Father Dr. Patrick Isichei, and Mr. David Alhaji Aweda. Subsequently, as a result of the application, within the University, of a policy of converting Tutors to the Lectureship grades, the Department received two new members from the General Studies Programme of the former College of Humanities. These were Mrs. Adetanwa Odebiyi, and Mrs. Tommie J. Amusa.

From 1977 to date, the Department had experienced some losses and gains. To illustrate what I mean, The Reverend Father Isichei transferred his services to the University of Jos, Professor Robin Horton opted to join the Department of Philosophy of the Faculty of Arts, Dr. P.O. Olusanya — who incidentally is now Professor of Sociology and I am reliably informed Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, at the University of Lagos — was appointed Acting Head of the newly established Department of Demography and Social Statistics. The gains were in the addition of Dr. Tola Olu Pearce, medical sociologist, from Brown University; Mr. Rufus Adewale Rotimi, a penologist trained at the Sam Houston State University, Texas; Mr. Adedayo Ademisokun-Turton who takes a communication systems analyst view of the sociology of mass communication; and Mrs. Sheilah Clarke Ekong, the first graduate assistant in the Department and who is to receive her Mr. Phil. degree in Social Anthropology, hopefully, at this year's Convocation. I am happy to note the addition of Dr. Ade Ademola, the only full time Anthropologist, to the Department.

Growth Pains

This growth in number of the members of my department has been accompanied by an equally impressive qualitative development of the teaching and research and publication programmes of the Department as a whole. As we are nearing the mid-point of our seventh session as an independent department, we now have one Professor, and three senior lecturers, seven lecturers, one graduate assistant — all of whom are in line for advancement. There are two graduate students just beginning their course work for their Masters degrees. The Department has become known in the Faculty as the department in which the female teaching staff members outnumber the males by one. In a male-dominated society, it is a credit to the male staff that the social organizational structure of the Department has not been irreparably shredded by conflicts. It is also a clear evidence of the fine sensibility of our female colleagues that they maintain their own as intellectual equals without fuss.

I think it should be put on record too that since my assumption of the headship, the Department had followed the tradition of occasionally reviewing and revising our course offerings. This tradition, though less than a decade, has gone a long way in improving and updating our undergraduate curriculum. But this has not been without some painful consequences. There was a time when we insisted that our undergraduates must take more mathematics and possess a good working knowledge of French. This created an upheaval one year. The entire Part Two students studying sociology and anthropology threatened to transfer *en masse* to another discipline within the Faculty which, at that time did not require mathematics as a compulsory subject or expect undergraduates to select French 101B as an elective. The threat did not result in the change of the Programme — thanks to the Vice-Chancellor who supported our stand. There were periods when we were the butt-end of jokes for trying to introduce our students who may want to become museum curators, to African music and architecture, or to the literature of Africans in 'diaspora'. There was an occasion in Senate when a Senator in the course of lampooning our diversification of courses asked why we were not offering Introduction to Astronomy!

Today, I am pleased to note that sociology courses have been

made compulsory or elective subjects by various departments in the Faculties of Arts, Education Health Sciences. Law, Pharmacy, Science and Technology of this University. Some students from these faculties also join the Sociological and Anthropological Students Association of Ife. I hope the authorities will take note of this increased call for Sociology courses to an increasing number of departments outside the Faculty and offer the much needed supportive resources where we ask for them.

The Sociological Imagination

The quality of mind which possesses the sociological imagination — which I referred to at the end of the brief history on myself — is ‘found in the social and psychological sciences, but it goes far beyond these studies as we now know them.’⁵ Not only individuals, but cultural communities also can acquire and use it to advance themselves. It is to be noted too that not all sociologists acquire this imagination, or where they do, not all know that they have acquired it and therefore do not use it to meet “the cultural expectations that are coming to be demanded of them” by their students, colleagues, and their government.

There are many definitions given to the phrase *sociological imagination* by Mills himself. The most appropriate for this occasion is, restating him, an imaginative attention to the social routines and catastrophies which reveal (and which shape) man’s nature” when the images of man become more problematic.⁶ The sociological imagination, says Mills, stands in opposition to the notion of social science, “as a set of bureaucratic techniques which inhibit social inquiry by methodological pretensions which congest such work by obscurantist conceptions, or which trivalize it by concern with minor problems unconnected with publicly relevant issues”⁷ Also the terms sociological imagination does not refer merely to the academic discipline of Sociology. The attributes which the terms convey are shared, in my view, by many Nigerian playwrights, some journalists, several African novelists, political scientists, anthropologists, physicists, botanists, and by African historians, ecologists, geographers, medical men and women whenever they take on imaginatively the larger engrossing and frustrating problems which face the Nigerian society to the point of reforming the distorted images of the human beings and of the human society. All the professions which I have just listed display

the sociological imagination whenever they practise the art of *ifongbo t’ayese* in their respective professions.

With specific reference to this Chair of Sociology and Anthropology at Ife which is now being inaugurated, I submit for our consideration that the sociological imagination can be enhanced if we identify, know, understand and apply in our sociological and anthropological activities, the perspective of a Nigerian humanist philosophy.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, and distinguished ladies and gentlemen, please grant me the indulgence to devote the rest of this inaugural lecture to sharing with you example of a set of ideas and concepts upon which I have devoted a considerable part of my academic life, since returning to Nigeria in 1964, to developing — using the sociological imagination in the *Orunmilaist* perspective. I shall endeavour to show how fruitful this approach can be in developing new ideas, and how it may enhance the usefulness of the sociologist and anthropologist in a contemporary African society.

Members of the audience, for the rest of this lecture you will be exposed to words and expressions which may sound alien. I have no apologies to offer for them because I have found the words and expressions in thier original forms, with or without translation, easy to use in order to preserve their full meanings and my intentions.

In this inaugural lecture, I am using the phrase, “Variations On The Theme of Socation”, as a convenient “signature tune” to introduce a subject which for a long time, has been the basis of my past and current intellectual work. The subject is the direction that sociology may take as a theoretical and an empirical discipline in Africa in general, and Nigeria in particular. As a theoretical discipline, I have devoted mental and physical energies to discovering how to define and explain the phenomenon called Society to non-specialists (literate and non-literate) as well as how best to explain the fast changing bases of social relationship among Nigerians — a change which, according to Professor Adeoye Lambo, has brought about a tenuous relationship between various ategories of Nigerians, and the community in which they are unctioning.⁸

The phrase “VARIATIONS ON A THEME” is a favourite expression found among composers of European musical tradition in particular, but the phenomenon of thematic variation in music

is a universal one. According to Tunji Vidal, Head, Department of Music here at Ife, a musical variation can be on any aspect of a theme. It can be on its rhythm, melody, harmony, or form of a composition.⁹ An interesting example which I can find to illustrate such variations is that of the theme titled "*Alagbafọ to binu sin wo*" which was popular when I was a little boy in Lagos. I do not know the original composer even now, but I know that the Nigerian Police Band had always played a rhythmic variation; at least two of Nigeria's musicians trained in the classical tradition of Western music — Fela Sowande and Samuel Akpabot — have arranged different melodic variations. I have also come across lyrical variations in pidgin English and in Itsekiri. However, although the phrase conveys a musical sensibility, sociologists often use it as a felicitous expression to convey a non-musical sense of different styles or approaches to the treatment of a sociological subject or issue.

"Themes", says, Robert Nisbet,

are crucial to the philosophical and scientific disciplines; just as crucial as to the arts. In philosophy 'variations on a theme by Plato' could serve as the title of literally thousands of works. In more modern times political science came into existence quite literally as series of sixteenth — and seventeenth — century variations on major themes set down by Machiavelli, Bodin, and Hobbes. And for contemporary sociology 'variations on a theme by Weber or Durkheim' would describe a great deal of published writing. The same is true in the physical sciences. Gerald Horton has shown the importance, from Kepler to Einstein, of certain basic themes in science.

"Some of the themes which Professor Holton has identified in physical science are found also in the arts, and, of greatest import here, in sociology and the other social sciences".¹⁰

What is very important to me from the view of this lecture is that the summing up of the situation came from a popular Yoruba saying, "*Ko si alajọbi mọ; alajọgbe lo ku u*". A free style translation of this saying into English is: "There is no more alajọbi in the relationships of human beings; only alajọbi is left." It is the root words *ajọbi* and *ajọgbe* of *alajọbi* and *alajọgbe* which I have unsatisfactorily but conveniently translated into the English language as consanguinity and co-residentship. Both are variations on the theme of sociation which two German sociologists at the turn of this century, had used to conceptualize what to me are two very significant matrices of interpersonal relationships: concord

and conflict. To serve as a bridge between these introductory remarks and the mainland of the ideas or discussions, I ask these questions: what is *sociation*? What are the defining characteristics of *ajọbi* and *ajọgbe*?; through what perspective of sociology can *ajọbi* and *ajọgbe* be regarded as variations on the theme of sociation? As I said a few seconds ago, I shall return to these questions.

The Orunmilaist Perspective of Man and Society

According to the perspective of a Nigerian humanist philosophy to which I referred earlier on, human beings are, essentially, metaphysical forms of expression. The purpose of the human physical form is the transmission of certain spiritual values to the inhabitants of the Earth through human beings. For, according to the Reverend O. Epega in a foot-note observation on a verse from the *ODU IROSU WORİ*,

Nigbati awọn ọmọ Oduduwa pejọ, Awọn ti Oduduwa yan lati ko ire na wa ode aaye li anpe ni ENIYAN. Awọn ọmọ Oduduwa ni igi ọpẹ, ẹranko, ati ekolo, eniyan, ati awọn ohun miran bi bẹẹ.

Translation:

"When the children of Oduduwa assembled before Him, those whom He chose to convey goodness to the earth are those we refer to as ENIYAN, (or Man). The children of Oduduwa include the trees, the palm trees, beasts, and earthworms, Man and such like things".

And what are these spiritual goodness which Epega cited from the *ODU İFA İROSU WORİ*,

*Amọtan ohun gbogbo,
Ayọ nigba gbogbo,
Wiwa laisi ẹru, tabi ominu ọta
Ija-ejo, tabi ẹranko buburu miran.
Laisi ibẹru iku, arun, ejo, ofo, oşo,
aje, tabi eşu
Laisi ẹru ifarapa, omi, ina, ewe-oro tabi iwo.
Laisi iberu aini tabi osi.*

Translation:

"Knowledge that is complete, and a state of happiness that never diminishes. A state of harmonious existence in which man has overcome all his fears such as fears of the hostility of enemies, the attacks of snakes or other ferocious beasts

A state of existence in which there are no fears of death, illness, losses, court cases, witches, wizard, or Esu; a state of existence in which all fears of want and poverty are nil."

This *Orunmilaist* view of society is not a primitive version of Thomas Moore's Utopia. It is an achievable state toward which a society must press the *agbara inu* (inner will), *iwa-rere* (beneficial comportment) and *ogbṛṅ* (insights derived from daily experience) of its people through what Anthony F.C. Wallace in his essay, "The Psychic Unity of Human Groups" has labelled the totality of what has been learned and is now known".

In *Irosu-Wori*, the elements of the maze which human beings must be made to possess include a psychic equipment in all human being which enable them to bond together (*lati ṣuwa*). This equipment is, in the words of F.C. Wallace, the basis of "the psychic unity of human group". Other Western Scholars, John B. Watson and his clinical psychologists colleagues (1923), Karl Mannheim (1957) a sociologist, Abraham Maslow (1966, 1971), a clinical psychogist, and Gerald Caplan, the British psychoanalyst (1974) to cite very few examples, have all identified several "birth equipment" of the human child. Karl Mannheim, for example, while recognizing such equipment suggests that a correct picture of this essential human equipment is possible if we analyze the relationship of instincts to habits, the transformation of emotions and of *libido* and the nature of interests and attitudes. (Karl Manaheim, p.3). Gerald Caplan gives the general terms of "primitive instinctuality" or instinctual impulses" to describe the expression of this equipment (Gerald Caplan p.114). One can run down the line of names already cited; but it will be just mere repetition of the same idea.

From the *Orunmilaist* view, a human being is an *aṣuwa* (a physiological organism) which is capable of forming and being an *asuwada* (social organism). That is, human beings possess equipment which make it possible for them to form purposive and purposeful bonds and to live together as one entity. As mentioned earlier, the *Orunmilaist* sees human beings (*eniyan*) as primarily a metaphysical being with corporeal forms or manifestation. Consequently he possesses two major sets of elements:

- (a) the intangible, or spiritual, elements and
- (b) the tangible or physical ones.

The former elements control the latter, although the latter always

act as if they are independent from the intangible elements. Both sets of attributes interact to a degree to influence a human to act as a conscious being.

Among the intangible attributes of man are *eero* (thought) *imṛ* (knowledge) *ogbṛṅ* (useful insights gained from experience) *obaa* (wishes) *ṛṛ* (the spoken word). The mental instruments employed by man to activate the intangible elements include *Ori-Onise* (the actualizing self) *laakaye* (the practical common sense), *iye* (vitality) *oye* (ability to discern things). All these mental instruments, in my judgement, constitute the brain power.

The tangible or physical elements of human nature include the following *eya ara* – parts of the body, such as the *ori* (head), *gṣg* (feet), *itan* (thighs), *apa* (arms), *ejika* (shoulders), *ṛrun* (neck), *igba-aaye* (chest), *oju eyes*, *eti* (ears), and *ibadi* (waist).

The behavioural expression of human consciousness are *ise* (doings, efforts or activities), *isesi* (pattern of doing, or simply action), *ifurasi* (hunch), and *ihuwasi* (behaviourial pattern).

Human consciousness, however, finds behavioural expression through such members of the body (*eya ara*) as *ori* (head), *ḡnu* (mouth), *ookan aya* (heart) and *ikun* (stomach). The *isesi* of an individual (which is the relationship between his or her elements of consciousness and the behavioural instruments), is directed toward other individuals or to a group of individuals who act under the same manner in concert or under a given rule or set of standards. An initiator of an *isesi* is in turn, the object toward whom other individual's *isesi* are directed. The result is, among human beings, a complex network of *isesi* bond which unites every man, woman, or child to another. This network is what I have called *Aṣuwada* or the purposeful knitting together of conscious beings for the attainment of a goal.

In the case of conscious human beings, the purpose of such a knitting together is social. Hence from according to this view, that which is called human society is what we call *asuwa eniyan*. Human Society, *aṣuwada eniyan*, provides for each member who makes it up, five categories of inalienable social values which constitute the purpose and goal of human collectivities. There are:

- (a) *Ire aiku* (the value of good-health till old age)
- (b) *Ire-owo* (financial security) or *ire ṛkṛ-aya* (the value of

intimate companionship and love)

(c) *Ire-omo* (the value of parenthood); and

(d) *Ire abori ota* (the value of assured self actualization)

A human society, therefore, has meaning for its members if and only if these social values are consciously sought as common goals. These five are internalized as *ire gbogbo*, the values belonging to all members of the collectivity; or simply we may call them social values common to all.

I submit that this Orunmilaist perspective of human society is what Abraham H. Maslow (1966) describes as the *humanist view of society*; and Amital Etzioni (1978) has named as *the project view of society*. I also submit that the five categories of *ire gbogbo* (the good of all) are what Maslow again has identified as *humanly based values*, and in my judgement they are the empirical reference of Ojetunji Aboyade's (1976) "a people's innermost values". Writing some three years ago, Aboyade recommended that for the Nigerian society, "the planning approach" which will result in "a sound system of national management" must be based upon not only "skilful policy manipulation" and "a free consensus of national opinion, "not just on technical or administrative efficiency", but it must also derive its underlying inspiration from an acute sense of humanism" (pages 111). And, in particular, from an acute sense of "African Humanism". Aboyade defines African Humanism as it relates to planning when he says:

Probably the most important obstacle to decolonization is that of a mental attitude that has lost touch with its cultural inspiration. The Western mind is alienated from important dimensions of life by over-compartmentalizing knowledge; and development planning is reduced in this context to pure economics and a function of economics and a function of technology. On the other hand, the African has not gone too far in the process of self-alienation. He is still sustained by a humane idealism, an idealism not based on more abstractions but on the totality of man's existence in a real-world society that seeks to blend stability and change through a careful equilibrium in social relations.¹¹

He also calls upon the social planners and social scientists, particularly, to blend the realism of African Humanism with an analytical objectivity of their disciplines.

I believe I have cited sufficient evidence from the writings of Maslow and Aboyade in support of my proposition that the *Orunmilaist* perspective of the sociological enterprise has found expression elsewhere in different forms. There is, however another point to make, and that is the distinction made by Abraham H. Maslow, between mechanistic and humanistic science. This dis-

tinction is worth noting before the transition to the next section of this lecture. In a book written for the John Dewey Society for the Study of Education and Culture and titled the *Psychology of Science: A Reconnaissance* which the chairman of the committee that commissioned the John Dewey Lectures described aptly as "a book in the honourable tradition of dissent". Maslow "challenges the dominant *Weltanschauung* that governs the definition of problem and methodologies in the science concerned with human personality and behaviour".¹² Behind the sciences, he discovered two "world views", or "philosophical orientations" which he named *mechanistic* and *humanistic* respectively. The mechanistic "world view", says Maslow, is characterized by "its basic conception of strict causality, of its summative and random character of natural events, of the aloofness of the ultimate elements of reality, governed not only physical theory but also the analytic, summative, and machine-theoretical view-points of biology, the atomism of classical psychology, and the sociological *bellum omnium contra omnes*".¹³

By contrast the humanistic "world view" accepts the possibility of the human emotion being "synergic with cognition, and a help in truth finding"¹⁴; it accepts also the view that "the *empirical attitude* is a matter of degree rather than an all or — non-skill acquired all at once in a single moment when you get a Ph.D. and that you can only then practice."¹⁵ That means that the humanistic world view accepts "the specialized abilities of the professional scientist and intensifications of (a set) of general human qualities."¹⁶ In the same spirit as Aboyade, Maslow calls for an alteration in attitude toward science by rehumanizing science and knowledge as part of a larger social and intellectual development.¹⁷ In line with preceding discussions, then, *asuwada eniyan* is also physical expression of a non-physical design whose main object is to bring goodness to all mankind.

Ontogeny of Sociality

Let us now turn to another discipline for a greater understanding of *Asuwa eniyan* on *Human Society*, namely, the field of ethology, or the field which studies society. Ethologist Peter H. Klopfer¹⁸ tells us about aggregation *asuwaa* among lower animals. He said that basic to animal aggregation is sociality whose factors of ontogeny include the following:

(a) a predisposition to respond to other organism of the same

species, and an ability to reinforce an initial response.

- (b) co-existence within a given physical environment or territory.
- (c) *unwelt*, a particular kind of orientation to, or perception of, space which includes the social recognition of members of the same horde through basic sensory coding.
- (d) an aggregation which may be caused by tropism, kinesis, or social recognition.
- (e) density of aggregation which may be due to the response of the nervous system, to pressures from the environment or through reproduction, or both.
- (f) directional movement by freewill.
- (g) spatial organization.
- (h) **antagonistic behaviour resulting** from social discriminatory behaviour, dominance, and leaderships.
- (i) **altruistic behaviour which Klopper defines as "behaviour that benefits another while extracting a price from the performer"**¹⁹
- (j) social independence and reintegration as may be illustrated by the separation of young ones from their mothers at various ages and their forming of their own peer groups.
- (k) capability for social learning.²⁰
- (l) possibility of cultural transmission.²¹

Vice-Chancellor Sir, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I submit that from the various studies of these factors in the sociology of animals, the classical sociologists and those of the Chicago School had learned much and written about the *sociality* of man. By sociality we mean the quality of being able to live and grow in communities; the quality or fact of being able to establish companionship and mutual converse, in the Orunmilaist perspective is simply the quality of being able to *suwada* (come together for a common end; to coexist). The perspective clearly distinguishes between *asuwa* (co-existence) and *asuwada* (the fact of being together for a purpose). Both animal and human *asuwa* requires no overt responses to one another, though it has survival values for the members. In the language of the ethologist, *asuwa* can be said to be mere "kinetic aggregation". It does not require the exercise of a free-will response to the physical or social environment. By contrast, *asuwada*, or social aggregation, results from the free-willed response of one individual person to another. It is species-oriented, and leads to the emergence of various types of social categories such as the dyad, the triad, the quad, families, poor

group, complex organisations as well as what anthropologists like to label as bands, tribes, states and stateless societies, to mention a few. While we can speak of the ontogeny of animal sociality, I think we should only talk of the phylogeny of human sociality.

The 'Unwelt' of *Asuwada*

There is another notion to be examined before embarking upon the main theme of this lecture, and this is what I have called *the Umwelt of asuwada*. According to Peter H. Klopper, the German word *unwelt*, in its ethological usage, is "the world around us as we perceive it".²² Accordingly, bees, birds, beasts and man have their own *unwelt* characteristic which are determined largely by their system of sensory mechanism. Although it can be assumed that the sensory system remain the same in all mankind in all regions of the earth, I am inclined to believe that the world around us as we perceive it differs from one *asuwada eniyan* to another, in accordance with human phylogenetic structure, and in variance with population size and dispersion rates, modes of communication, and behaviour patterns found in a given *asuwada eniyan*. These intrinsic variables, exert in turn feedback effect upon themselves and the environment.²³

What we perceive, therefore, in the world around us, and how we respond to it are, in my view, largely influenced by the beliefs, values and world view which as members of a specific *asuwa eniyan*, we share in common in our given environment. I am strongly inclined to believe also that there is an *unwelt* characteristic of the African peoples wherever they may live in *asuwada eniyan*, and regardless of the climatic and physical condition. Africans, to my mind, perceive spiritual beings in the world around them. They believe that the true substances — that is the real selves of such objects as man, trees, rivers, hills, desertland, fishes, crocodiles, horses and the like — are those forces which continue in being after the physical forms of the objects have been rendered inactive somehow. As illustrations, they aver that when a fire is extinguished its real self is sheathed in ashes awaiting the next occasion to burst forth in flames; that when a banana tree matures, the real banana assumes new expressions in offshoots, and that a tree when cut down by a wood cutter, comes out as a tender sapling. The capability of human beings to reproduce their kinds is merely one way of expressing the substance or realness of Human Beings.

The Reverend Olamiwa Epega in an unpublished lecture, "Background To Musicology: Lecture I IFA" delivered at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, in 1968 used the word "reincarnation" to explain this re-emergence of the realness of a being. According to him, however, the principle of reincarnation is at the root of African traditional religion and, in particular, of the Orunmilaist perception of the world. He asserts: "But it is not individual human beings alone that reincarnate. A whole nation, even a country, also incarnates".

Earlier in that lecture, Epega had said that "Not only *Orunmila*, but all the mighty gods, goddesses, spirits and so on, are under the law of reincarnation. Even *Eṣu* is not exempt, much less *Ogun*, or the *Irumaleṣ*, or the *Odus*". Such then are the characteristics of an African *unwelt* of human society and of the world around them.

From the foregoing, Vice-Chancellor Sir, I submit that according to the African humanist viewpoint, societies are alive, active, goal-seeking, self-actualizing social organizations, capable of dying and reincarnating. Sociology and Anthropology are therefore jointly the scientific study of man-in-society; a people, their culture, material and non-material: that is, the ideas, values, beliefs, gods and goddesses, institutions, technologies and sciences which take new forms of expression in a progression of states of incarnation, dying, and reincarnation as *aṣuwada eniyan*.

Ajṣbi and *Ajṣgbe* – as Primordial Forms

The primordial forms of *aṣuwada eniyan*, that is human society, are *Ajṣbi* and *Ajṣgbe* whose English equivalents as mentioned earlier, are *consanguinity* and *co-residentship*. Anthropologists, speaking generally, define *consanguinity* as the facts of lineal and collateral relationships based upon blood and birth; while *co-residentship* I shall define as the fact of sharing same or contiguous shelter whether or not the sharers are related by blood. From the point of view of this lecture – the derivative concept *alajṣbi* may be defined as that which sustains all kinds of lineal and collateral relationships; while the derivative concept *alajṣgbe*, as that which sustains persons or individualized groups who are living together, under one roof or in contiguous shelters in a locale.

By these definitions, it follows that *ajṣbi* refers to members of a family, or a group of related families or several groups of related

families, in a house, in a compound of dwellers, units in a village, town and so on. *Ajṣbi* also refers to members united by birth and blood who live separately in distant villages, towns, or regions of the world, or a people in diaspora. According to the Orunmilaist perspective of mankind, all human beings, regardless of race, colour, and religion belong to a primordial *alajṣbi*, and therefore, share the *ajṣbi* bond. This idea is expressed thus: *Iya kan, baba kan lo bi gbogbo wa* (translated as one mother, one father gave birth to us all, humankind). Despite this assertion, however, this perspective accepts the fact that individuals, groups of persons, in fact a whole nation, by *eero*, *ṣrṣ*, *iṣe* and *ihuwasi* (thoughts, words, acts, and behaviour) do negate, deny, or break assunders (i.e. *gbe igi da'lajṣbi*) the bonds of *ajṣbi* relationships between them and others. When such a negative situation arises, some members of an *ajṣbi* group must, even if only fruitlessly, try to rebuild the ties of consanguinity. Each society provides processes of restoration. Among some, it may be the mere calling of one by the other as "Soul sister" or "Soul brother", or by uttering the phrase "remember *alajṣbi*" or "I beg you in the name of *alajṣbi*!"

The Total Breakdown of the Ties of Consanguinity

Despite such appeals, *ajṣbi* bonds get attenuated to the point of seeming non-existence. The history of African peoples contain the conditions which have caused *alajṣbi* bonds to be irreparably damaged. Among these could be mentioned the linkage of local economies to the metropolitan markets of Europe during the eighteenth century which led for the first time, to the acquisition of easily portable forms of money, sudden social upheavals which led to the physical separation of blood relations, and which forced one to depend on total strangers for help and sustenance. Through commerce and paper currency and light-weight metal coins, it became easily possible to acquire wealth through one's own individual initiative and efforts, and with little or no dependence upon one's blood relations. The successful ones among blood relations acquired more money, bought new things, and could afford to marry the most attractive or influential young women around. The less successful ones were gingered into competition, or envy. Slavery, or the seizure and forcible sale of a relative, fellow villager or townsman became the culminating point of unchecked sibling rivalry among members of an *ajṣbi* group. Unbridled lust for

money led to indiscriminate kidnapping of children who were sold into slavery. Alex Haley in his famous book, *Roots*, gives a very detailed description of how Africans who wandered from the safety to their villages were captured by Arab slave-raiders who were aided by people from nearby villages or one's own village. This practice of kidnapping and selling of children — others or ones' own — continue today in contemporary Nigeria. As soon as the social processes of competition, envy, and conflict over the visible means to success were universally established among *alajobi* members, a new form of social bond called *ore* (friendship) emerged. It was not based upon blood relationship nor marriage but on similarity of *iwa* (individual's mode of expressing his being). Friends could live in one or the other's home, and take part in the life of the household except in the rites of the household. The physical structure of the household changed to accommodate the increased population by adding dwelling units as a new optimum was reached. A household became therefore a fold of such added units. Thus it is clear that it was not everyone who lived in the same household that constituted an *ajobi* since the folks in a household may include lineal and collateral relations alien residents, friends, migrant workers, and so on. Together, these social elements form the *ajogbe* (the co-residentship) with a distinctive set of *eewo* (taboos), forms of interactions, persistence and discontinuities.

Ajobi and *Ajogbe* as Variations of Sociation

As forms of *asuwada eniyan*, therefore, *ajobi* and *ajogbe* are distinctive social relationships and social processes with established observable patterns. It is these broad defining characteristics, I submit which German sociologists Leopold van Wiese and Georg Simmel, who lived at the turn of the 19th century into the first decades of this century, have called *Sociation*.²⁴ Our knowledge of the works of these great seminal thinkers in the field of sociology come from the translated works of a few American sociologists in the formative years of the discipline in the United States of America. Van Wiese's idea of the quality of sociation, quite apart from the concrete forms, is that of approach and withdrawal (avoidance) in all social behaviours. Van Wiese held the view that sociology is the study of the direction and repetitive patterns of approach and avoidance in human inter-relationship. In short,

sociology is the systematic study of three processes, namely, association, dissociation, and what he termed "mixed processes"

Association and *dissociation* are, for Von Wiese, the main processes and each subsumes a number of subprocesses which can be arranged along a continuum depending upon the degree of the valences of the main process present in each. J. Milton Yinger, writing on Von Wiese's main processes, identified the following subprocesses of *Association*. One, *advance* — "in which 'there always remains some feeling of hesitation", two, *adjustment*, in which there is "modification of differences among the persons involved.", and three, *accordance*, in which also, "mutual participation in emotions, memories and habitual attitudes ensues ...". The fourth and completing subprocess of *Association* is *amalgamation* in which there occurs a great measure, but never complete, coalescence." In amalgamation pairs, and other types of small groups, as well as a large number of persons for "co-operative purposes", are formed.

The subprocesses of *dissociation* are *competition*, *contravention*, and *conflict*. The least dissociative is competition; while conflict as a subprocess is an extreme process of dissociation. Milton Yinger noted that for Leopold Von Wiese "Conflict does not necessarily result in continuing dissociation; it may, in fact, result in well-marked association". This is due, in part, to the fact that latent dissociative processes "serve as a greater barrier to future amalgamation than the most violent forms of open combat."

Georg Simmel devoted a most significant proportion of his thought to conflict as a form of sociation. We owe to Kurt H. Wolff's translation in English, our knowledge of his thoughts, particularly the two works titled 'Conflict and 'The Web of Group Affiliation'. The empirical studies and theoretical formulations of many sociologists of the so-called Conflict School of Sociology throughout the world are founded, in my judgement, upon the works of Simmel. Japanese sociologists continue, in a large measure, to be influenced by the works of Simmel. In fact, many of his works have been translated into the Japanese languages. In his introductory remarks to his essay on "The Sociological Nature of Conflict," Georg Simmel writes:

The sociological significance of conflict has in principle never been disputed. Conflict is admitted to cause or modify interest groups, unifications, organizations. On the other hand, it may sound paradoxical

in the common view if one asks whether irrespective of any phenomena that result from conflict or that accompany it, conflict is itself a form of sociation. At first glance, this sounds like a rhetorical question. If every interaction among men is sociation, conflict — after all one of the most vivid interactions which, furthermore, cannot possibly be carried on by one individual alone — must certainly be considered as sociation. And in fact, dissociating factors — hate, envy, need, desire — are the causes of conflict; it breaks out because of them.²⁵

Simmel, from this definition of conflict, has identified positive negative aspects of conflict which are separable only conceptually but not empirically. In its positive aspect, conflict helps to achieve some kind of unity between contending parties; while in its negative aspect, it helps to annihilate one of them. Conflict, he goes on, contributes to the development of human personality, for, “The individual does not attain unity of his personality exclusively by an exhaustive harmonization according to logical, objective, religious, or ethical norms of the content of his personality.”²⁶ As to the unity of society, Simmel presents us with a two-fold meaning of the concept, Unity, upon which to base our understanding of the unity of society. These are:

- (a) that unity is “the consensus and concord of interacting individuals as against their discords, separations, and disharmonies.” and
- (b) that it is “the total group — synthesis of persons, energies and forms”.

These two definitions of unity in Simmel’s view, is inadequate and imprecise. A larger meaning of unity is that which takes into consideration the characteristics of discord of opposition and integrates them with the defining characteristics of unity which I have just quoted. Let me clarify this very important notion. Simmel recognizes, as we all do, the “negative and destructive character” of discord or opposition, and the tendency on the part of most people to conclude that these effects affect the total group. But he cautions the careless acceptance of such a perception, because, as he puts it:

In reality, however, something which is negative and damaging between individuals if it is considered in isolation and as aiming in a particular direction, does not necessarily have the same effect within the total relationship of these individuals. For a very different picture emerges when we view the conflict in conjunction with other inter actions not affected by it. The negative and dualistic elements play an entirely positive rôle in this more comprehensive picture, despite the destruction they may work on particular relations.²⁷

The Orunmilaist philosopher will certainly call this Simmelian view of unity as *Ibi-ire, ejiwapo* (the co-existence but non-cooperation of evil and goodness); for at no given time are discord and opposition in full control of a social condition or situation, nor concord and consensus and unity always pervasive. If one takes the *ejiwapo* view then we can speak of a fraction of a sociation with concord and consensus as numerator, and discord and disharmony as denominator, to describe the sociological nature of the relationship between two interacting individuals at a given moment or over time. If the magnitude of concord and consensus is higher than that of discord and disharmony, then the inter-physical relationship between the two individuals may be described as most sociative, but if the magnitude of the latter is higher than that of the former, then the relationship between the two individuals may be described as dis-sociative. Whatever is the fraction of sociation between interacting individuals, it is correct to say that there exists some reciprocity of “driving impulses and purpose” (between them). As a way of summary we may say that:

Sociation is the form (realized in innumerable different ways) in which individuals grow together into a unity and within which their interests are realized: And it is on the casts of their interests — sensuous or ideal, momentary or lasting, conscious, casual or too logical — that individuals form such unities.²⁸

Having spelled out the senses in which Leopold Von Weise and Georg Simmel conceived and defined *sociation*, I shall now proceed to indicate the senses in which *ajobi* and *ajogbe* are variations on the theme of sociation. In the first place, both *ajobi* and *ajogbe* possess different fractions of sociation. In *ajobi* the magnitude of concord and consensus is ideally very high because each member is able to link his or her identity to a common source such as the same mother or the same father, or the same father and mother. In this form of sociation, it is probable for the individuals who compose it to grow up together and realize their common interests within it. However, discord and disharmony may emerge to separate them as a result of sibling rivalry which every *alajobi* eventually suffers from. There are some children of the same mother, or same father, or of the same mother and father, who will not share their possessions such as love, money, food, knowledge, clothes, and so on — with their co-siblings who are in need, or who suffer from great poverty; but may prefer to share with a stranger. During the era of slave trade in Africa, an

oral history: has it that relatives sold or bought one another as slaves. Yet, despite these separative factors, the spirit and memory of that common origin called *alajobi* – always remained deeply embedded emotionally, ready to surface to provide “the driving impulses of purpose”, as Simmel will put it, for unity of separated relations.

Out of the disharmony in one or more aspects of the relationship and separations of the members of an *ajobi*, comes new forms of sociation such as *grę* (friendship), *ara* (neighbours) and *ileto* (settlements). When natural bonds *okun-ifa* (such as *Okun-ifa iya*, *Okun-ifa baba*) weaken or are severed, new types of bonds of a social character are created, such as *ifowo-sowopo* (cooperatives) *ajoje* (eating social groups or dinner’s club) or *ajomu* (drinking social group, or drinker’s clubs) and so on. I have called these social forms of sociation *differentiating affiliations*. That is, they are different groups of individuals who are more or less in contact and united for common purposes and who adopt or take new persons as members. These social forms or sociations, may emerge in response to constraining pressures by the *ajobi* on its members to remain within the fold, as it were, or to one’s need for playmates outside, or to a breakdown in the *ajobi* social graces of *ikini* – *idanilohun* (greetings and responses). Those forms of sociation may also emerge in responses to the dictates of religious rites or rituals. Demographic forces such as emigration and immigration, political processes, war, as well as peace, may force men to create new social bonds.

Toward a Sociological Tradition at Ife

These explanations of *ajogbe* and *ajobi*, *alajobi* and *alajogbe* respectively, as variations in the theme of sociation has led to the question: What then is sociology? Toward what tradition, if at all, is the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Ife moving? From both empiric and theoretic perspectives, how is this science to be developed bearing in mind that the subject of its study – society – is seen and defined from an Orunmilaist perspective? Given the concept of *ifongbontaayese* as an African pragmatic view of intellectual knowledge what contributions can sociology as an orderly pursuit of the knowledge of man, society and culture make to human affairs? In what immediate areas of our existence can such knowledge with its derived insights be applied?

I shall attempt to answer most, if not all, of these questions.

To the question: “What is sociology?” I find this statement by Alex Inkeles quite appropriate:

There is no one conception of sociology to which all who regard themselves as sociologists will subscribe. Even what is called the “classical tradition” is interpreted quite differently by those who urge us to continue its line. Emile Durkheim who every one acknowledges as one of sociology’s founding fathers, may be cited by some, on the basis of his research on suicide as supporting the empirical approach; others will use his name in supporting the case for theory, pointing to Durkheim’s writing on the division of labour; and yet others will argue that Durkheim is important mainly as a model of the sociologist as moralist and man of public responsibility. Of course, these roles are not mutually exclusive, as Durkheim and Marx Weber showed early in the twentieth century, as Robert Lynd, demonstrated in the thirties, and as Daniel Bell and others are demonstrating today.

Sociology is a mansion of many rooms, and not all who dwell therein are on the best of terms. The common cause is the conviction that society and social organization are worthy of serious and systematic study of their own right, and can be understood through the accumulation of facts to which we apply the discipline of reason.²⁹

One of the reasons for this many-mansion characteristics of sociology is that European scientific sociology has several philosophical foundations. The writers of the classical tradition in sociology, to whom I have just alluded, all based their works on one or other philosophical arguments or approaches. What we call positivism, naturalism, marxism are examples of such arguments. We owe our clarity of understanding of sociology today their faithful adherence to the chosen philosophical approaches. If scientific sociology in Nigeria is to flourish as an element of our intellectual heritage then those who profess it must do one or two things. One, they must master thoroughly the relevant European philosophical foundation of their particular “school” of thought. Two, they will have to meet the challenges of developing for sociology a particular approach or perspective derived only from (a) an African philosophy or (b) a European philosophy not hitherto used as the foundation of a science; or (c) from a combination of complementary African and European philosophies.

In our Department of Sociology and Anthropology here at Ife, there is a definite appreciation among us members of the contributions which African philosophical ideas, though oral in their expressions, can make to the growth of our disciplines. This is

especially so for some of us who are doing research works in the substantive areas of medical sociology, political sociology, industrial sociology, and sociology of mass communication.

In the specific case of my present investigation in the area of sociology of knowledge, I am combining the fundamental assumption about the value of Man and Society in the Orunmilaist philosophy with the elementary postulates of Western axiology, or science of value, as may be found in the works of Robert S. Hartman. I believe that the synthesis of the two systems of thought, the oral and literal, if carefully and critically worked out, can contribute to the fashioning of a method of analysis in social science in Nigeria which will include some "tools in the armoury of natural science", used in the analysis of multiple causation, and those now in use in the scientific study of human values, while one agrees with Julian Huxley that:

Values are deliberately excluded from the purview of natural science; values and all that they connote of motive, emotion, qualitative hierarchy and the rest constitute some of the most important data with which the social scientist must deal.³⁰

One must definitely disagree with the underlying assumptions implicit in the statement: "But how can science deal with them? Science must aim at quantitative treatment: how can it deal with the irreducible absolutes of quality? Science must be morally neutral and dispassionate: how can the social scientist handle the ethical bases of morality, the motives of passion?"³¹

To these questions one must answer that in one sense sociology, and that includes anthropology, deals with value data from "the irreducible absolutes of quality" as objects or social facts; but that in another sense, sociology can study social values in decision-making process with the aid of axiological propositions and mathematical principles. It was this conviction which led Robert S. Hartman to assert in a letter to this speaker dated July 8, 1960 from Universidad Nacional Autonoma De Mexico, that "axiology is very much applicable to sociology and can serve as the exact basis for that science. The same goes for Anthropology". Just how is that possible? Let us go back to the five humanly based social values of the Orunmilaist philosopher which I discussed earlier on in this lecture as being the objectives to be pursued by the human society. They are: *ire aiku* or the value of good health till old age; *ire owo* or financial security, *ire omọ* or the value of parenthood; *ire oko aaye*: the value of companionships, and *re*

ibori ota, assured actualization of one's potentialities as a result of victory over man-made and natural obstacles. These values define for us the concept of the *good Human Society*. A good society, in the axiological sense, is that which its Government pursues unceasingly these values for its nationals.

It may be argued that the concept of goodness, *ire*, conveys the notion of a denumerable set of intangibles. For who can see or touch the intangibles of the goodness, for a man, in financial security, or in the overcoming of the hurdles of natural or man-made obstacles? Nevertheless, it is Hartman's belief that it is possible to measure the intangibles which form conditions of life in the good human society. To Hartman, the intangibles "constitute the basis of choice in decision-making". There was a time, he reminds us, when all that are now tangibles in the natural science were intangibles. It took the Galilean Revolution, through such works as the *Two New Sciences* to make the intangibles tangible to the physicists by directing the human mind from its preoccupations with natural philosophy to natural science.

There is a lesson for the African sociologists who wish to enlarge the range of the existing scientific tools for social analysis if they can shift their minds from the intangibles of African social philosophy to the tangibles of daily existence. This shift can be done by linking the descriptive properties of man and society, and value properties of man and society to Hartman's formal axiology.

Formal axiology, explains Hartman, is a field of study which is derived from "the traditional moral philosophy", and which can be applied to "all kinds of social and human situations" including economic and business management. Just as Mathematics is a pattern of extensional logic, so formal logic is a pattern of intensional logic. Furthermore, just as the former transformed natural philosophy into natural science, so can formal axiology be used to transform moral philosophy into moral or social science.

How the pattern of intensional logic can be applied to the assumptions of Orunmilaist moral philosophy so as to bring the basic human values into social scientific assumptions does not concern us here; they are the objective study and application of a course of intellectual pursuit which I have decided to embark upon next.

The Nigerian Society as an *Ajogbe*

I have spent a considerable portion of this lecture in telling you about my preoccupation with the development of an African perspective of human society which I have called *asuwada eniyari* and an African approach to Sociology. This has been so because I see the need to adhere as much as possible to some of the conditions for effective communication with a critical and well informed audience such as this one.

I have tried to think of those fields of experience which we all might have in common, so that a sharing of my intentions can occur with some measure of success. But now I have come to a point in which I must state in what senses is our country Nigeria and *ajogbe*.

This vast territory which constitutes the legal and physical homeland for a very large collectivity of some two hundred or more language communities is a unity of denumerable sets of *ajobi* who are consciously becoming a self-conscious *ajogbe*. In my mind, what constitute the *ofi* (warp and woof) of the unity are primarily our will to sociate, the several attractive culture configurations of our peoples, and the unestimated resources available to us on and below the earth's surface. It is the will to sociate which we have tried with some measure of success to express in our constitution. Nigeria is truly an affiliation of several *asuwada eniyari*. Inevitably as a growing *ajogbe*, we the people are trying to discover how best to fashion new social ties as we develop new perceptions of the world around us (our *unwelt*), and to give newer definitions to what-is-mine and what-is-yours. Unfortunately, we have come to think that the Constitution, as an objectified will-to-associate of us all, which lives in a written form, is sufficient to sustain us as a people. Yet, as we know very well, social life is a moment-to-moment process of sociation of human beings. It is largely subjective. What we need then to sustain the will-to-associate in addition to the Constitution includes internalized appreciation of the worth of human life individualized in our fellow countrymen; appreciation of the worth of other ethnic groups, other townspeople, other states. It includes also what Sope Oyelaran has translated to English as forebearance (*Suuru*), and what he conceptualized as "right" comportment" (*iwa*) between men.^{3 2}

In the *ODU* of *IFA* called *OTUA-ARIWAFIN*, we come across a metaphorical illustration of the indispensability of forebearance and right comportment in all types of *ajogbe*. It reads:

Ka moju kuro l'oran
Ka leni L'ara
A dun bi aaye ajepo;
Ka foran jin
Ki eni ma ba tuka.
A difa fun Okaa
A bu f'Ekun
A bu fun Alabahun — Ijapa
Omo Arinlosin
Nijoti awon meteeta jumọ se ajogbe
Ti i awon meteeta n jumọ se ajorin
Ti i awon meteeta n jumọ se ajoje-ajomu
Won so atata lorin apero;
Okaa ni oun ko afara-yimi
Onibobo ko titeṅiru-mole
Ekun ni oun ko afaragbongbo
Oloko l'oun ko fere-iwo-ni-loju
Ajapa l'oun ko ohun "Hoo"
Gbogbo won daale
T'Alabahun — Ajapa lo di "Hoo"
gbogbo won tuka lo o
A tun won ni ajoje-ajomu^{3 3}

Translation:

If we overlook offences
We shall have people around us
Life is sweet when it is lived together;
If we forgive offences
Then the people will not disperse
Thus was divined for Okaa
And apportioned for Ekun
And apportioned for Alabahun — Ijapa
The offspring of Arinlosin
When the three together created an Ajogbe
When the three jointly decided to move together
When the three jointly decided to eat and dine together

They uttered important words of deliberation:

Oka said he abhors rubbing against faeces,
Onibobo abhors people treading on his tail;
Ekun said he abhors being entangled in the bushes.

Oloko abhors furtive look at his eyes;

Ajapa abhors the epithet "Nonsense!"

All broke their spoken covenant

It was Alabahun — Ijapa who first heard, "Nonsense!"

Consequently, they were all dispersed

They went helter-skelter from

Their dining and their drinking together.

If we accept this metaphorical representation of *ajogbe*, then there should be no minorities in the great *alajogbe* we call Nigeria. Certainly there are ethnic and racial groups who differ in norms and standards of comportment. One ethnic group may comport themselves with leonine pride; others may comport themselves, when provoked, with leopard-like ferocity; others may possess cunning as a virtue. In the co-residentship of multilingual collectivities such as Nigeria, it is inevitable for the preservation of national unity that we tolerate, in our day to day interactions, the unique attributes of each group. If we do not do this, the national unity which we all believe in will disintegrate leaving us to run helter-skelter from our homes and means of livelihood, abandoning our *alajobi*. Reverence for the uniqueness of each language group in Nigeria can be sustained on the same principle by which association of two or more persons is sustained. For Africans in general, and Nigerians in particular, it is the principle of "*Ka moju kuro loran*", (the overlooking of serious offences); and "*ka foran jin*" (letting issues rest) which can guarantee fellowship of peoples who communicate with each other through the medium of a foreign tongue. It is not by abhorring every personal or group offences, that interpersonal and intergroup forms of association can be sustained. For whether it be in a consanguinous or co-residential form of sociation, there can never be complete peace and concord in human collectivities of a large and heterogeneous population with distinctive ethnic traits. In the social processes of association and dissociation there are no permanent defeats or final victories. Each succeeding generation of nationals must renew the struggle for unity. But we can promote concord if we strive toward *ajobi* of our divers peoples, and socialize our children regardless of

religion, ethnic affiliation and tongue in the five basic human values of the Orunmilaist thinker. In addition we must work out definite concrete social programmes that will make the basic human values real in the life of every Nigerian. If we do this, we would be laying the foundation for a higher and exalted civilization for the on-coming generations. If not, then we shall be like the people of whom it was once said in the *ODU OFUN-SA*:

Otoro! Aiye ja

Ogbara! aiye la kanle!

Bi aiye ba ti owo eni baje

Aimọ wahu wa ni

Translation by Epega (1968):

Otoro! The world has flown off its hook into space

Ogbara! The Earth is rent assunder to its core

If the world becomes unlivable in our time

It is because we no longer know how to behave.

The Sociologist as the *Atokun* of Society

There are evidences, today, of an ever-rising current of *aimowahu* (loss of the sense of good comportment) in our midst. What social role would I like to see the Nigerian sociologist play in his status as an intellectual worker given such a situation in his Fatherland? It is the social role of an *atokun* of his society! An *atokun* in the *egungun* cult has at least seven distinctive duties. He pilots or shows the way to the *egungun* masquerader. He interpretes to the people: that is, the unlookers, what the masquerader says. He goes before the *egungun* to ascertain that he does not trip over the pot-holes and pitfalls in the way. He says to the *egungun* "Proceed along this side of the road": he is therefore director of the onward movement of the *egungun*. In addition to those four roles, he collects into a bag, the gifts, in cash and kind, given to the *egungun*. Also, he sees that all the arrangements or preparations for the festival are orchestrated or coordinated. Finally, he mediates between the *egungun* deity and the ones who worship it.

The sociologist who pursues the Orunmilaist tradition sees and studies the bare structure (*egigun*) of his national society, how the parts of his structure are articulated and harmonized to work together. Just like the *atokun* of the *eegun* who must know human anatomy well, so too the sociologist as societal *atokun* must work to possess a thorough knowledge of the anatomy of his own socie-

ty: that is, the peoples, their cultures, their languages, the norms, religions, and general world views and *unwelts* of the vast collectivity. He must lead himself to recognize these assortments of the elements of sociality as an integrated whole, and be able to identify himself or herself with the welfare of each social category.

This objectively derived knowledge of the entire form of the society must be sound, unprejudiced, and must be unequalled by his knowledge of any other society in a distant or nearby nation. Such a knowledge will enable him to advise well on social planning, to coordinate projects if called upon to do so; to be a way-shower in the setting of priorities, and be ready to apply, so-to-speak, the whip to anyone who stands in the way of societal progress. He must, through undaunted research, monitor the forces and processes of social change which Professor Lambo said are creating tenuous relationships between Nigerians and their environment in which they function but which Aboyade sees as slowly alienating the African from his traditional source of inspiration. As Nigerian sociologists, if we take this perspective, we should be able to resolve, or reduce to a bare minimum, the frustrating conflicts within our own professional group. It is true that the theorists of the sociating nature of conflict among us have given a deserved place to social conflict; but they have not succeeded in discovering for our benefit and the benefits of other sociologists and mankind in general, how and why conflict works in creating a negative sociation, making difficult the attainment of these five universal social values which I discussed earlier, and why conflict should help us understand the social principles which operate in the outward behaviour of conflicting minds in a collectivity. As *atohun* of our society, Nigerian sociologists will not only find it easier to overcome the inner contradictions of our professional association, but also be in the best position to help the Government, in cooperation with other academic disciplines, in finding lasting solutions — derived from the souls of the Nigerian people — to very grievous social problems this nation now faces.

I am identifying five serious social problems or *Ibi marun* which I feel very strongly that Nigerian sociologists should address themselves to in teams. They are: (a) the phenomenal rise in the number of the mentally ill, (b) the ebb and flow in the tide of armed robbery; (c) the rising mortality rate of young adults from the age of 25 to 45 years, (d) the unabating abandonment of Nigerian

children by young mothers; and (e) the discovering of a self-evident truth in the world around us to which the Nation can hold political leaders and upon which new *ajobi* and *ajogbe* sociations must be founded. The money to fund social research into these problems should not be sought from the Nigerian Government, but from the various local communities through traditional rulers, and from Nigerian men and women who are known to be affluent. Nigerian sociologists, through their national professional associations, must set up their own National Sociological Endowment Fund for the purpose of harnessing the fund collected from these sources and themselves. I make this suggestion because I do not believe that any regime of the Nigerian Governments, judging from past statements and performances, is interested in developing a social science policy on the development of social science research and curriculum. I do not believe that any Nigerian Government, including the present one, a Ministry of Science and Technology, will get round to establishing a National Social Science Council. Nigerian sociologists of all traditions must therefore work together in establishing a National Council For Sociological and Anthropological Sciences on their own. This is because, as Tola Olu Pearce and I maintained recently, in a paper submitted to UNESCO on social science and the policy process in Nigeria "the social scientific situation in Nigeria cannot continue any more in an inchoate manner at this stage of the development of academic tradition in Nigeria; probably what is lacking is the "right" group of individuals to constitute an advisory body to a social science research council; or in the particular case of social scientists, an approach has not been found to the constitution of such an advisory body".

Mr. Vice Chancellor, learned colleagues, the creation of two autonomous non-profit-making organisations: A National Council For Sociological and Anthropological Sciences and A National Sociological Endowment Fund, by, and for sociologists and anthropologists will provide two alternatives, to the much needed, but Government ignored National Social Science Council of Nigeria.

Thank you for your attention. I hope I have not bored you too much.

NOTES

- ¹ Tom Burns, 'Sociological Explanation' in *Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis*. A collection of edited works with an Introduction by Dorothy Emmet and Alsdar Macintyre. London: Macmillan, pp. 55 and 56.
- ² Quoted from Akinsola Akinwowo, *Sociology in Nigeria: Where Is It Going?* Typescript, Quarto size, 142 pages, p.6.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p.7.
- ⁴ Edited version of the short history is contained in a typescript, *Handing Over Notes from Professor Akinsola Akinwowo to Dr. T.O. Adetola*, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, September 27, 1978, pp. 1-2.
- ⁵ C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*. Pelican Penguin, 1970, p.21.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- ⁸ Adeoye Lambo, 'The African Mind in Contemporary Conflict', an unpublished text of the Third Jacques Parisot Foundation Lecture (No.d), p.14.
- ⁹ Communication from Dr. Tunji Vidal during a conversation with him on 8th April, 1979.
- ¹⁰ Excerpts from Robert Nisbet, *Sociology as an Art Form*. Oxford University Press, London, 1976.
- ¹¹ Ojetunji Aboyade, *Issues in the Development of Tropical Africa*. Ibadan, 1976, p.111. Incidentally, F. Pappenheim, in *The Alienation of Modern Man*, supports Ojetunji Aboyade fuller theoretically in this case for this assertion and provides this alienation.
- ¹² Arthur G. Wirth, Foreword to Abraham H. Maslow, *The Psychology of Science: A Reconnaissance*. 1966, p.9.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p.3.
- ¹⁴ Abraham H. Maslow, *op. cit.* p.112.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 136.
- ¹⁶ The words in bracket are mine.
- ¹⁷ Arthur G. Wirth, *op. cit.* p. 3; Julian Huxley in *Man in-the-Modern World*. A Mentor Book, 5th Edition, 1953 provided another reason for the call for a change of scientific attitude, but not the scientific spirit. Said he on p. 113:
'The triumphs of natural science both in discovering radically new knowledge and in applying it practically to satisfy human needs have

been so spectacular and so faithful that it would seem natural and obvious to extend the same methods to the field of social phenomena. The answer is a very simple one: the methods are *not* the same, the scientific spirit remains unaltered whether it is contemplating a nebula or a baby, a field of or a trade's union. But the methodology of social science is inevitably different from that of the natural science. It is different and must be different for one basic reason — he investigates man by the same methods by which he investigates external nature. He can use the methods of natural science to investigate certain aspects of man structure working his body, for instance, or the mode of his heredity; but that is because these are shared with other organisms and because they are partial aspects which can be readily externalised. But when he starts investigating human motive, his own motives are involved; when he studies human society, he is himself part of a social structure.”

¹⁸ Peter H. Klopfer, *Perspectives in ethology* (1973).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ For the discussion of Leopold Von Wiese's views, I have depended almost entirely on the biographical works by Milton Yinger which may be found in Harry Elmer Barnes, *An Introduction to the History of Sociology*. University of Chicago Press.

²⁵ Georg Simmel, *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliation*. Free Press, 1955, p. 13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁸ Kurt H. Wolff, *Georg Simmel*, p. 315.

²⁹ Alex Inkeles, "Sociological Perspectives" in *Readings on Modern Sociology*, Series Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1960.

³⁰ Julian Huxley, *op. cit.*, 115.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

³² Used by Sope Oyelaran in his summary of the lecture "Iwa" by Chief Adeyeye Orishamakinwa at the University of Ife, Ile-Ife on November 22, 1979.

Probably the most important obstacle to decolonization is that of a mental attitude that has lost touch with its cultural inspiration. The

Western mind is alienated from important dimensions of life by over-compartmentalizing knowledge; and development planning is reduced in this context to pure economics and a function of economics and a function of technology. On the other hand, the African has not gone

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17. Sowande, Fela, *Collected Essays* n. d.

