

THE RISING SUN: AN EXISTENTIAL DISCOURSE ON PROFESSOR IKECHUKWU ANTHONY KANU

Ejikemeuwa J. O. Ndubisi, PhD

Department of Philosophy & Religious Studies
Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra State, Nigeria
E-mail: ejikon4u@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper is written to introduce Professor Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony. He was born on 20th November, 1981 to the family of Sir Emmanuel Nwafor Kanu and Lady Cecilia Menwa Kanu of Arondizuogu in Ideato North Local Government Area, Imo State, Nigeria. He is the last child among the six children of his parents. At a very tender age, Ikechukwu developed interest in education. He received his first formal education at the Command Children Nursery and Primary School, Jimeta – Yola, Adamawa State from 1984 – 1986. Between 1987 – 1992, he was at the Demonstration Primary School, Jimeta – Yola, Adamawa State for his primary school education.

Keywords: Igwebuike Philosophy, Kanu Ikechukwu Anthony

Introductory Remarks

Our knowledge of metaphysics shows that one of the transcendental properties of being is truth. It follows to say that whatever is insofar as it is, is true. This is a metaphysical reality. Without mincing words, one can say that Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu is true to his being. He has manifested his true nature in the pastoral field and more especially in the academic world. He became a professor at 35 (in 2016) and for that, there is no better way to describe him other than the Rising Sun. It is characteristic and natural for the Sun to rise every morning. Experience has shown that no matter the darkness of the night the Sun has to rise in the morning. When the sun rises, it shines. But one thing to note is that the sun rises early in the morning and gradually begins to radiate its light. The few lines that follow is an attempt to bring to limelight some important features in the life of the philosopher-theologian, Prof. Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu. His life, so far, can be described as the Rising Sun.

Birth and Early Education

Rev. Fr. Prof. Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu, OSA, was born on 20th November, 1981 to the family of Sir Emmanuel Nwafor Kanu and Lady Cecilia Menwa Kanu of

Arondizuogu in Ideato North Local Government Area, Imo State, Nigeria. He is the last child among the six children of his parents. At a very tender age, Ikechukwu developed interest in education. He received his first formal education at the Command Children Nursery and Primary School, Jimeta - Yola, Adamawa State from 1984 - 1986. Between 1987 - 1992, he was at the Demonstration Primary School, Jimeta - Yola, Adamawa State for his primary school education.

Vocation to the Roman Catholic Priesthood

Having proved himself a genius and burning with the zeal to offer himself entirely to God, Ikechukwu decided to enroll for his secondary school education at St. Peter's Minor Seminary, Jimeta - Yola, Adamawa State from 1995 - 1999. In 2001, he attended the Order of St. Augustine's interview for admission into the senior seminary and came out very successful. That same year, he began his philosophical studies at St. Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary Makurdi (an affiliate of Urban University, Rome). At the end of his philosophical studies in 2004, Ikechukwu came out with First Class honours. What a show of rare intelligence! Between 2004-2005, he underwent Augustinian Novitiate experience where he spent one uninterrupted year of spiritual formation and development. At the end of the Novitiate, the Order of St. Augustine found him worthy for theological studies and so he was sent to St. Augustine's Major Seminary, Jos (an affiliate of the University of Jos, Plateau state). As a confirmation of his natural and unique intelligence, Ikechukwu completed his theological studies in 2009 with another First Class honours - a true confirmation of the nature of the Rising Sun! He was ordained a Roman Catholic priest by Late Bishop Christopher Abba on 4th July, 2009.

Pastoral Responsibilities

Shortly after his priestly ordination, Fr. Kanu was posted to Augustinian community Nkwo Nike, Enugu State. Among other things, he served as the procurator of the Augustinian community between 2010 - 2012. In 2012, Fr. Kanu ministered as the Parish Priest of Assumption Parish Nkwo Nike and later Parish Priest of Ibagwa-Nike both in Enugu state. His landmarks in both parishes within his short period speak volumes as can be testified by the parishioners and admirers of the parish. In 2012 also, the Order of St. Augustine, Province of Nigeria elected Fr. Kanu as the Province Secretary. This is an exalted and respected position in the Augustinian Province. This is also a typical manifestation of the Rising Sun - the Sun has to rise! He served in this capacity

between 2012 – 2016. He brought to bear his First Class brain to the administration of the Religious Order within his period as the Province Secretary. Fr. Kanu also distinguished himself as the Procurator of St. Monica's Priory, Rantya, Jos within the period of 2012 – 2015 while residing at the Augustinian Provincial House.

In 2015, the obedient and humble priest of God, Fr. Kanu, was transferred from Jos to St. Vincent Catholic Church, Olodi-Apapa, Lagos, to shepherd the people of God as the Parish Priest. Following his distinct qualities and track records, the Archbishop of the Metropolitan See of Lagos, His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Alfred Adewale Martins appointed him his *Censor Deputatis* in 2016. The truth is that the golden fish has no hiding place – the Sun has to rise. Fr. Kanu's pastoral zeal and engagements as an Augustinian priest are very remarkable. It is pertinent to note here that from 2011 to date, Fr. Kanu has served as the National Executive secretary, Conference of Major Superiors (Men) of Nigeria; member, National Missionary Council of Nigeria (A subsidiary of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Abuja); and member pastoral agents (A subsidiary of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Abuja). His pastoral experience and achievements as a young priest cut across the shores of Nigeria. Since 2014, he has served as a member of the International Commission for the Laity, Order of St. Augustine, Rome.

Further Studies

Despite his pastoral engagements and responsibilities, Fr. Kanu continued to add to his academic and intellectual development. He was not satisfied with having first degrees in philosophy and theology as it is customary for priestly formation; he wanted something more. And so, in 2010 he enrolled for a Master's degree programme in the Department of Religion and Human Relations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Having specialized in African Traditional Religion, he completed his Master of Arts Degree in Religion and Human Relations in 2012 with distinction. As a man who is very studious and who knows how to do many things at the same time with ease and excellent results, he enrolled for another Master's degree in Philosophy in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 2010 specializing in metaphysics. The Rising Sun – Fr. Kanu – completed his Master of Arts Degree in philosophy from the University of Nigeria in 2015 with distinction. As a serious academic who will not accept to be a 'second class citizen', he aimed for the highest academic degree – PhD. Between 2012 – 2015, Fr. Kanu obtained his Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Religion and Human

Relations (with specialization in African Traditional Religion) from the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.

Dr. Kanu believes that education is a continuous process and so his unquenchable thirst to add more feathers to his academic cap. The First Class brain - Dr. Kanu - obtained course certificates in Professional Studies in Research Methods, Dissertation Writing and New Trends in Education from London Graduate School, London (2019); Advanced Negotiation Strategies: Mastering the Art and Science of Negotiation from Harvard University, Boston, USA (2018); Foundations of Everyday Leadership from University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign, USA (2018); Building Your Leadership Skills from HEC Paris, International Business School, Paris, France (2018); and Creative Writing: The Craft of Plot from Wesleyan University, USA (2018). In 2017, he obtained certificate courses from Young African Leaders Initiative Network, U. S. Department of State, USA, in Basics of Public-Private Partnership; Understanding Elections and Civic Responsibilities; Understanding the Rights of Women and Girls; Management Strategies for People and Resources; and Strategies for Personal Growth and Development. The Rising Sun also obtained certificates from Young African Leaders Initiative Network, U. S. Department of State, USA, Certification in Servant Leadership (2016); Community Organization for Action (2016); Understanding Climate Change (2016); Workforce Collaboration and Development (2016); and Understanding Human Rights (2016). The sun is still rising!

Academic and Administrative Responsibilities

Dr. Kanu's interest is not only in pastoral activities but also in academic activities, hence, his numerous academic responsibilities. As a senior seminarian, he served as a member of literary committee, Augustinian House of Philosophy, Makurdi; 2001 - 2004. Between 2008 - 2009, he was the Student's Sub-Dean and also chairman Literary and Debating Committee, Augustinian House of Theology, Augustinian Monastery, Jos. A man of academic prowess, Kanu served as the group coordinator, Second International Conference of the Department of Philosophy, University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 2011. He took up a lecturing job in 2011 with the International Bio-Research Institute, Ugwogo Nike, Enugu state. While at the institute, Dr. Kanu served as the Dean of Studies in 2012. Also since 2012, he has lectured both at St. Augustine's Major Seminary, Jos and Augustinian Institute of Philosophy, Makurdi.

Dr. Kanu has served in different capacities in the academic world. Since 2013, he has served as the General Secretary, Association of African Traditional Religion and Philosophy Scholars. He has also proved his worth and integrity as the treasurer of the Executive Board of African Congress on Philosophy and Religion since 2013. He was the Chairman, Augustinian publication commission, Province of Nigeria; 2014-2015. In 2016, Dr. Kanu was appointed the Rector of Augustinian Institute, Makurdi. This is one of the essential features of the Rising Sun. In that same 2016, the academic guru, Dr. Kanu, received an appointment as a Senior Lecturer to the Department of Philosophy, Veritas University of Nigeria. Later in the same year, he was appointed a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Tansian University, Umunya, Anambra State, Nigeria. Following his antecedents, Tansian University appraised him for professorial position and consequently, after all the rigorous assessments, Dr. Kanu was appointed a Professor of Religion and Cultural Studies at the age 35 – the Sun cannot but rise! His professorial position at such a young age in 2016 shows that academic excellence and resilience can be very rewarding.

Since it is in the nature of the sun to rise and shine, Prof. Kanu was not deterred by his academic achievements. He continued to accept further academic responsibilities. He is currently the Chairman, Augustinian Commission on Tertiary Institution and also a member, Reviewer Committee, International Conference on Education, E-Governance, Law and Business, Universite du Quebec a Montréal. It is important to note here that since 2013 till date, Prof. Kanu has worked as a co-organizer of the annual international conferences of the Association of African Traditional Religion and Philosophy Scholars both within and outside Nigeria. He has convened and organized international conferences for the Association for the Promotion of African Studies (APAS). Prof. Kanu became the Rector, Villanova Polytechnic, Isimi-Ile, Oshogbo, Osun State, Nigeria in 2018. He also served as a Member of the Association of Private Polytechnic Proprietors of Nigeria (2018); Member of the Association of the Heads of Institutions in Osun State, Nigeria (2018); Member of the National Association of Rectors in Nigeria; Member, Programme Committee, World Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences, Paris, France (2018); Consultant Researcher, Nnadiesube Research Institute, Awka, Anambra State (2018); among many other academic and administrative responsibilities. In fact, the Rising Sun has continued to shine even at the moment of writing this paper.

Academic Publications

Prof. Kanu is a renowned and respected academic. He has created an indelible landmark in the history of philosophy and religion. He is a prolific writer. He has over fifty quality books to his credit. Some of his books include: *African Bioethics: An Indigenous Humanistic Perspective for Integrative Global Bioethical Discourse* (2016); *African Philosophy: An Ontologico-Existential Hermeneutic Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues* (2015); *A Hermeneutic Approach to African Traditional Religion, Theology and Philosophy* (2015); *Igbo-African Christology: A Cultural Christology Construct in Post-Missionary African* (2016) among many others. Prof. Kanu has published more than 170 journal articles, over 50 chapters in books and more than 50 papers in referred books of proceedings. His works are centered on African philosophy (with more emphasis on *Igwebuike* philosophy), Metaphysics, Religion, Spirituality and Public affairs.

Editorial Responsibilities

As an ardent researcher and an erudite scholar, Prof. Kanu has served in various capacities for the growth and development of research within and outside Nigeria. He is the Editor-in-Chief, *IGWEBUIKEPEDIA: Internet Encyclopedia of African Philosophy* (2015 - date); the Editor-in-Chief, *Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities* (2015 - date); Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development* (2017 -). The Rising Sun - Prof. Kanu - is an Editorial Consultant to varied reputable journals, namely, *Oracle of Wisdom Journal of Philosophy and Public Affairs* (A publication of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Tansian University Umunya); *Journal of African Traditional Religion and Philosophy*; *Journal of Moral Education in Africa* (A publication of the Association of Moral Education in Africa); *Nnadiesube Journal of Philosophy* (A publication of Nnadiesube Pan-African Academy of Philosophy, Religion and Cultural Research - NPAAPRCR); *Nnadiesube Journal of African Culture* (A publication of NPAAPRCR); *Nnadiesube Journal of Humanities* (A publication of NPAAPRCR); and *Nnadiesube Journal of Education in Africa* (A publication of NPAAPRCR).

More so, Prof. Kanu has served as an editorial member to so many local and international journals. He is an editorial member of *The Catholic Voyage* (A publication of the conference of Major Superiors of Nigeria, 2012 -); *Filosofia Theoretica* (Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religion, University of Calabar, 2013 -); *Augustinian Publications*, (2014 -); *API Journal of Applied Research, India*, (2015 -); *Pyrex Journal of African Studies and Development*, (2016 -); *Pyrex Journal of History and Culture*, (2016 -); *Professor Bassey Andah Journal of Cultural*

Studies, University of Calabar, (2016 -); *International Journal of Theology and Reformed Tradition*, University of Nigeria Nsukka, (2016 -); *International Journal of Research in Arts and Social Sciences*, University of Nigeria Nsukka, (2016 -); *Integrity Journal of Education and Training* (2017 -); *Journal of Advances in Social Science Humanities* (2017 -); and *Innovative Journal of Social Sciences and Education*, (2017 -). Prof. Kanu's impact in the academic world has earned him constant admirations from colleagues and friends. His is a case of the Rising Sun!

Membership of Learned Societies / Governing Boards

It is an existential fact that the human person is a being-with-others. In this regard, Prof. Kanu is not a loner in the academic field; he belongs to so many reputable and learned societies. He is a member of Igbo Studies Association, USA; Nigerian Philosophical Association; Association for the Promotion of African Studies (APAS); Association of African Traditional Religion and Philosophy Scholars (AATREPS); Society for Research and Academic Excellence (SRAE), University of Nigeria; International Research and Development Institute (IRDI), Uyo; International Society for Development and Sustainability, Japan; Association for Promoting Nigerian Languages and Culture (APNILAC); Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN); International Centre for Economics, Humanities and Management (ICEHM), Canada. He is also a member of the following learned groups: Alternative Perspectives and Global Concerns (APGC), United States of America; Emirates Association of Arts and Management Professionals (EAAMP), Canada; Young African Leaders Initiative Network, U.S.A; Universal Researchers, UAE; International Association of Humanities, Social Sciences and Management Researchers (HSSMR); Honour Society, Washington D. C.; Association for Development of Teaching, Education and Learning (ADTEL), India; Global Psychology and Language Research Association (GPLRA) India; Global Association of Humanities and Social Science Research (GAHSSR) India; among others.

Prof. Kanu is also a governing board member of International Bio-Research Institute (IBI), Ugwogo Nike, Enugu State, (2011 -); APURIMAC ONLUS (NGO), Jos, Plateau State, (2012-2015); Member, Board of Trustee, Association of African Traditional Religion and Philosophy Scholars (2012 -); Member, Board of Trustee, African Congress on Philosophy and Religion (2012-2013); Member, Governing Board, St Monica's Academy (SMA), Jos, Rantya, (2012-2015); Member, Board of Trustee, Conference of Major Superiors of Nigeria (Men), (2011 -); Member, Board of Trustee, Order of Saint Augustine, Province of

Nigeria (2013); Scientific Board of Arts, Literature and Social Sciences (2015) and International Advisory Board, Alternative Perspectives and Global Concern (2015).

Academic Foundations

The special interest of Prof. Kanu in bringing about academic growth and development prompted him to think of establishing a channel through which researchers and scholars can develop themselves and contribute to human knowledge. In 2015, The Rising Sun founded *Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*. This international journal has proved its worth with enormous impact factor. Imbued with the zeal of academic development, he founded *IGWEBUIKEPEDIA: Internet Encyclopedia of African Philosophy* in 2016. This internet encyclopedia has been a source of help to so many who desire to deepen their knowledge on issues relating to African studies. Also in 2016, our revered Professor founded the Association for the Promotion of African Studies (APAS). The *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development* is the brainchild of Prof. Kanu founded by him in 2017. In 2019, Prof. Kanu founded *Villanova Journal of Science, Technology and Management (VJSTM)* (A Publication of Villanova Polytechnic, Imesi-Ile, Osun State); *Villanova Journal of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (VJSSAH)* (A Publication of Villanova Polytechnic, Imesi-Ile, Osun State) and *TOLLE LEGE: An Augustinian Journal of Philosophy and Theology (TLAAJPT)* (A Publication of the Augustinian Institute, Makurdi). These foundations manifest Prof. Kanu's ingenuity and also his concern for academic excellence.

Award of Honours / Excellence

Prof. Kanu has received several awards in recognition for his contribution to knowledge and human development. In 2013, he received the Best Paper Award for American Journals of Contemporary Research (A publication of the Centre for Promoting Ideas, Louisville, USA). The Lagos Archdiocesan Council of the Catholic Women Organization, Apapa Deanery honoured him in 2016 with an Award of Excellence. He received another Award of Excellence in 2017 from St. Vincent's Catholic Church, Olodi- Apapa, Lagos. In recognition of his contribution towards religious research, the African Watch Orator honoured him with the 2017 Gold Merit Award. The Society for Research and Academic Excellence (SRAE), University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) awarded him the Distinguished *Academic of the Year Award* in 2018, in recognition and appreciation of his contribution towards academic research and development.

Prof. Kanu received Oracle of Wisdom Award of Excellence in 2018 from the Department of Philosophy, Tansian University Umunya, in recognition and appreciation of his outstanding contribution towards research in Nigeria. It was very remarkable and worthy of special note to state that the entire Faculty of Arts, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka found Prof. Kanu worthy to receive an Award of Excellence as *Patron of the Arts in 2018*. There are other numerous awards received by Prof. Kanu in recognition and appreciation of his qualitative and excellent contributions to research development, human and societal development, and nation building. The Rising Sun is truly a man of many colours as can be attested to by the various awards received from different organizations.

Kanu: The Igwebuike Philosopher

One thing that is remarkable about Prof. Kanu is his originality and ability to make novel contributions to human knowledge. Today, the name Kanu is identified with Igwebuike philosophy. Igwebuike philosophy captures his philosophical and theological enterprise. In his understanding, *Igwebuike*, as an ideology, is anchored on “African principles of solidarity and complementarity”. For him, Igwebuike is the “underlying principle and unity of African Traditional Religious and Philosophical experience”. Kanu has presented papers in both local and international conferences to buttress his arguments on Igwebuike philosophy. He has also written volumes* on Igwebuike as an ideology. Some of his works on *Igwebuike* philosophy include: *Igwebuike as an Igbo-African Hermeneutic of Globalization*; *Igwebuike as a Trend in African Philosophy*; *Igwebuike as the Consummate Foundation of African Bioethical Principles*; *Igwebuikecracy: The Igbo-African Participatory Socio-political system of Governance*; *Igwebuike as the Expressive Modality of Being in Igbo Ontology*; *Igwebuike and the Question of Superiority in the Scientific Community of Knowledge*; *Igwebuike and the Logic (Nka) of African Philosophy*; *Igwebuike as a Complementary Approach to the Issue of Girl-Child Education*; *Igwebuike as an Igbo-African Philosophy for the Protection of the Environment*; *Igwebuike as a Wholistic Response to the Problem of Evil and Human Suffering*; *Igwebuike as an Igbo-African Ethic of Reciprocity*; *Igwebuike as an Igbo-African Philosophy for Christian – Muslim Relations in Northern Nigeria*; etc.

One important thing to note is that Igwebuike philosophy is all-embracing. It cuts across logical, metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, socio-political and religious bents. *Igwebuike* philosophy, in the nature of the Rising Sun, is gradually making waves in global discourses in philosophy, religion and public affairs.

Selected Works on Igwebuike Philosophy

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Concluding Remarks

Without mincing words, one can simply say that excellence is in the nature of Rev. Fr. Prof. Ikechukwu Anthony Kanu, OSA. Posterity will never forget his landmark contributions both locally and internationally. He has touched many lives positively and has equally brought smiles and happiness to the lives of many. It will be superfluous to say that Kanu is a philanthropist – he is a man with a soft heart for the needy. At his late thirties, Prof. Kanu has already written his name on the sands of time. This is to say that now is the early morning of his life. In fact, the sun is still rising in a remarkable and diverse ways. As it is at the moment, who knows what will happen when the day breaks very well?

The life of Rev. Fr. Prof. Kanu stands as an inspiration to many. The present author earnestly admires Prof. Kanu's zeal, courage, resilience and approach to issues of life. To be a professor under 40 years in Nigeria is not an easy feat. Only very few have achieved that such as Prof. Charles Esimone, who became a Professor at 37 (in 2007) and is currently the incumbent Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Hopefully, who knows, the Sun may so rise that one day, the setting would be in the Comity and League of Nations.

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