

ALA: AN EMBODIED SPIRIT AND UNIFYING REALITY/CONCEPT IN IGBO-AFRICAN WORLD-VIEW

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Abstract

In recent time, there have been attempts by some scholars to reflect on the concept of ALA from either the Universalist point of view or Particularist point of view. Unfortunately, none of these efforts, taken singularly, has yielded the expected result in the concept of ALA as a unifying factor in Igbo-African world-view. This is because such approach either negates the Universalist aspect of ALA while considering the Particularist aspect or the Particularist aspect is obliterated in the course of sounding the Universalist quality of ALA. In the present paper, further attempt is made to bridge the created gap by the Universalist and the Particularist understanding of ALA. The paper seeks to suggest that considering the Universalist quality of ALA alongside the Particular aspect is necessary. But the problem is how to achieve this feat. The work argues that this can be possible if the argument is dragged further to the point that it accommodates that talk about environmental friendliness becomes an emerging ethics for ALA as environmental protectionism. This is so bearing in mind that while ALA is called land, ground, soil and environment in Igbo-African world-view, ALA is, above all, the earth goddess/deity whose being penetrates the entire being of all Igbo-African in the Igbo-African traditional set-up; hence it is a unifying concept that binds all livings together. The study of ALA raises the concern for environmental togetherness wherein man, animals and plants share same protection and demand for same care and concern for preservation of all species in the entire ecosystem. This paper is a product of an analytic and critical, evaluative methods of reasoning, presentation and conclusion.

Keywords: ALA, Embodied Spirit, World-View, Environment

Introduction

In Igbo-African language generally, ALA means so many things but one. For instance, there is a sense of ALA as 'land'. Although there are some dialects that write and pronounce ALA as 'ANI or 'ANA', they all represent one and the same reality. The Igbo-African world-view has other senses of ALA beyond ALA as

land. For instance, when someone says 'My land' or 'our land', it simply means: *ALA M* or *ALA ANYI* respectively. Here, *ALA* is used in the sense of land. At other times, *ALA* could be used in the sense of 'ground'. For example, when someone says: 'This thing or that thing is on the ground', he simply means that what is being referred to 'no n'elu *ALA*'; In other words, 'it's on the ground'. Literally, it would mean 'it is on top of the ground.' 'No' is a preposition indicating place or location. Thus, 'N'elu *ALA*' means literally "on the ground; on top of the ground'. Now beyond *ALA* as land or ground, the Igbo also uses *ALA* in the sense of an environment. That is to say that when a statement like "It is not the same thing in my land or in our land" is made, it means that the sense of *ALA* that is being invoked is not necessarily *ALA M* (as in my land) or *ALA ANYI* (our land). Instead, what is being thought about here is an understanding of *ALA* as an environment. In other words, "*ALA ANYI* or *ALA M*" would be simply my environment or our environment.

There is a further sense of *ALA* in *AJA ALA*. Here, *ALA* is understood as soil. When one says, for instance, *AJA ALA A adighi mma*, it means 'this particular soil is not good'. This statement is usually used when talking about planting or building etc. When environment is the sense of *ALA*, environment refers to the natural conditions, which include land, air, and water in which people, animals and plants live. It also involves human beings and their surroundings, which include also the life support provided by the air, water, land, animals and the entire ecosystem of which human beings are but a part.

In the sense of *ALA* as *ALA M* or *ALA ANYI*; (i.e., my environment or our environment), *ALA* is understood as culture; hence my culture or our culture. To say, for example: 'It is not the same in my land or in our land' would simply be interpreted as meaning it is not the same in 'my culture or in our culture. It is the same as saying it is not the same in my tradition. This is what we mean when we say for example, in 'Igbo land' (as when we mean Igbo culture/tradition) or in Hausa land (as when we mean Hausa culture/tradition) and in Yoruba land (as when we mean Yoruba culture/tradition) etc.

Finally, beyond the understanding of *ALA* as land, ground, soil and environment, there is this perspective of *ALA* as the deity; the earth goddess. Here *ALA* becomes or assumes the status of a unifying factor or concept or reality in Igbo-African world-view.

With this background, one realizes that *ALA*, no matter which dialect it is written, is therefore such an important reality in Igbo cultural world view, which

merits or is worth-studying as embodied spirit and unifying reality in Igbo-African cosmology and world-view.

ALA: Embodied Spirit – what does it mean?

The Igbo-African tradition believes that reality is interconnected. This interconnectedness implies a universe that is characterized by a unitary view. According to Onyeocha (2006:12), “The African conceives of reality in terms of a universe of forces that are linked together, and that are in constant interplay with one another.” Unitary view of reality claims that *ALA* is an environment comprising of elements which are both ‘material and mystical, visible and invisible, physical and mental, corporeal and spiritual and each of these elements is so linked and interconnected with the other in such a way that they appear almost inseparable (Onyeocha, p. 13). It is on this backdrop that when the Igbo-African says, for instance, *ALA M* or *ALA ANYI*, he goes beyond the sense of *ALA* as a natural conditions comprising of air and water, but sees *ALA* as an environment involving the entire ecosystem in which people, animals and plants live and of which human beings are but a part. Therefore, although *ALA* could be said to be a part of the ecosystem, *ALA* is equally an embodied spirit unifying all realities in Igbo-African world-view. There is no gain-saying that it is only in the concept of *ALA* as environment, beyond other understandings, that the sense of reality as interconnected is absolutely made manifest.

There is a further sense of *ALA* as community. Iwe (1988) captures this in the following remarks:

Ala (Ani or Ana): This is the most common divinity in Igboland. It is therefore generally the arch-divinity of every locality. It is regarded as the earth goddess of fertility and the custodian of public morality in co-operation with the spirit of our departed and venerable ancestors.³⁷ Breaches of public morality or social prohibitions and taboos (nso ala), such as stealing from the barn, homicide, incest, infidelity, woman climbing the palm tree or wrestling her husband down in a fight, etc. are all considered offences against the *community* ‘emphasis mine’ (Ala).

Notwithstanding in whichever sense it is used, *ALA* generally brings about the idea of closeness of all realities. For instance, it is in the concept of *ALA* that we find the sense of the universe as a unified whole of visible and invisible realities

where each of the four empirical categories of the world: the mineral, vegetable, animal and human, coheres and forms a unit but only as a part within a larger whole (Ezebuio, 2015). It is also in the concept of *ALA* that the organic whole of the visible world spiritually blends with the divine, invisible world to give the Igbo-African the ultimate whole of all life (Singer, 1975). Njoku (2009) also refers to this closeness as the “we identity” whereby *ALA* is seen as an embodied spirit in the midst of humans and natural environment within which man acquires his being and right. The recognition and adoption of this life of ‘closeness’ or ‘belongingness’ with *ALA* is what makes the Igbo-African become so immersed in his culture’s spiritual substance.

***ALA* as both Universal and Particular: The Starting Point of our Exposition**

To say something is universal means that it is everywhere; it is ubiquitous. And to say something is particular means it is localized; within a specific place or location. In this work, our understanding of *ALA* will be in both universal and particular senses. In other words, we shall be going to treat *ALA* as both a universal and particular reality in Igbo-African world view.

When we say both qualities of universality and particularity are together in the concept of *ALA*, it brings about certain sense of complexity of *ALA* or the nature of *ALA*. Such arrangement would appear so complex though in such a way that one may imagine if they could be separable at all. Oguejiofor first sensed this impending complexity when he writes: “Ala is a much more complex phenomenon than one that can be rightly categorized straightforwardly as universal or particular; that it is a religious phenomenon, and shares to the full the ambiguity that is most often associated with religious thinking” (Oguejiofor, 2002:22).

True, *ALA* is a religious phenomenon, according to Oguejiofor. And that is why it occupies such importance in the life of every Igbo-African. As a religious phenomenon, *ALA* is revered as whatever that stands and finds life on it is also revered. *ALA* is both here and far. It is universal as well as particular. It is this dual nature that brings about the complexity of *ALA*. In other words, the manifestation of the complexity of *ALA* is revealed in the concept of universality and particularity attributed to the concept of *ALA*.

Ordinarily, universality implies the negation of particularity if universality is understood as “the opposite of the particular, the circumscribed or the localized” according to Oguejiofor. Particularity is also the opposite of universality if we

understand particularity as localized or circumscribed. But the use of universality and particularity at the same time in the concept of *ALA* does not show that one negates the other. Of course, natural logic would tell us that universality implies ubiquitousness; (that what is being discussed is in every place) and particularity implies specific and location-locality- (that what is being discussed is in a specific place or locality). But *ALA* as a complex reality is used in both contexts in such a way that both senses of universality and particularity are merged together in such manner that while we are talking about localized universality, we are also talking about universalized locality.

In an article submitted to *West African Journal of Philosophical Studies* (WAJOPS) on the theme: “*Universality in Igbo World View*”, Obi (2001) believes that the universality of *ALA* means that it is common to Igbo-African generally and as embracing humankind particularly. According to him,

The validity of the universality of *ALA* in Igbo context is based on the fact that in the main, the cult of “*ani*” remains the same all through Igbo land. Even the roles of ‘*ani*’ and offences against the same remain uniform for all traditional Igbos. While ‘*ani*’ as land, ground, or, soil affords the link between the traditional Igbos and their human counterparts elsewhere, ‘*ani*’ as earth goddess” unites the Igbos as a cultural group.

Like Oguejiofor, Obi appears too concern about the universality of *ALA* as it concerns the cult of *ALA*, which remains uniform for all traditional Igbos. But beyond that, Obi also observes that *ALA* is the earth goddess in Igbo-African religion and cosmology. This observation is true as it makes *ALA* assume an important position in traditional Igbo-African world-view.

Obi further disclosed that the universality of *ALA* (the earth goddess) is manifestly seen in the proper names that the Igbo-African bears. According to him,

Proper names oriented toward ‘*ani*’ like “*Aniwetalu*,” *Anierobi*, “*Anikwenwa*” and “*Anikamadu*” are not only valid throughout the Igbo territory but, also, express the pan belief in the supremacy of ‘*ani*’ over humans which in turn informs the position of meek that “the most important deity in the public and private life of the Igbo is not *Chukwu*, *Anyanwu* or *Amadioha* but *ani* or *ala*, the earth deity” (Obi, 2001, 23).

Obi's observation that proper names are oriented toward 'ani' is not mistaken. However, such names like "Aniwetalu," Anierobi, "Anikwenwa" and "Anikamadu" are not only there to express validity throughout the Igbo territory but, also, display the pan belief in the supremacy of 'ani' over humans which in turn informs the position of meek that the most important deity in the public and private life of the Igbo is not Chukwu, Anyanwu or Amadioha but ani or ala, the earth deity. It is obvious therefore that Obi's sense of the universality of *ALA* cannot be disputed although it says nothing about the particularity of *ALA* or rather it fails to recognize the sense of localized universality in his treatment of universality of *ALA*.

No doubt, Obi's universality of *ALA* makes *ALA* ubiquitous as ever (in the sense of being everywhere), but this does not, and should not negate the particularity of *ALA*. Particularity of *ALA* says that while *ALA* is universal, *ALA* is also particular; hence particular universality or localized universality.

Localized universality of *ALA* can be expressed using such proper names like 'Aninwemadu', which is an abbreviated form of "Ani" nwe madu nine" ("ani" owes everyone). Here, *ALA* is used in the sense of *ALA onye*. Bear in mind that *ALA onye* has also a universal sense although within a localized sense. This is because while it is common in all Igbo-African culture to say, for instance, that *Ani nwe madu* when the idea is to portray that 'ani' (earth) owns and gives birth to humans, it is also correct to say *ALA* is particular when the idea is to say that *ALA* sustains them and ultimately takes them back into itself when they die.

The general idea that *ALA* sustains life is seen in such proverb like "*onye si solu ya nso ani, osi na enu?*" which simply means that 'ani' sustains whatever dwells on it. When the Igbo-African says, for instance, '*mmadubuja*', what it means is that humans ultimately revert to *ALA* (ani) at death. And this is a universal recognition of *ALA* as sustainer of life and custodian at death.

Edeh (1985) understands *ALA* as land, ground and soil. In his Doctoral project entitled *Towards an Igbo Metaphysics*, *ALA* is clearly captured. In that work, the erudite scholar articulates the universality of *ALA* both within the Igbo territory and with regard to humankind as a whole. According to him, "ani means land, ground, and soil. It is also the name used for the earth goddess, the highest and most universal god in Igbo land" (Edeh, 1985:59). Edeh's articulation shows that the whole sense of the above elucidation supports the claim that whenever the traditional Igbo-African introduces the term *ALA* or 'ani' in a discourse, it is understood both in the generic sense as embracing humankind as a whole and

also in a specific sense when it becomes qualified as belonging to one community, or, the other as in (*ALA ONYE* or *ALA NDI*).

***ALA* as Earth-Goddess Further Explained**

Traditional Igbo-African understands that *ALA* is so pervasive in the life of any traditional Igbo-African. Hence it is called the goddess of fertility both human and agricultural. According to Obiego (1981), in the quotation he borrowed from Talbot, "*Ala*" – *Ale* or *Ana* or *Ani*) – the Earth-Spirit – is another spirit that features very prominently in Igbo religious psychology; and has been described as the "nearest" and "dearest" of all the Spirits to the Igbo." With this thought therefore, it becomes clear that the Igbo-African concept of *ALA* is by no means simple: it affects their religious inward consciousness regarding their relationship to *Chukwu*, as well as to the other subtle, complex and intricate being.

But beyond the understanding that *ALA* possesses the two qualities of universality and particularity discussed above, among the Igbo, *ALA* is also the Great Mother-Goddess. Obiego captures this clearly when he says:

Ala is regarded by the Igbo to be the "Great-Mother-Goddess"; the unseen president of each Igbo community, the "parochial" symbol of common origin and solidarity of the community – a common bond of humanity; She is the queen of the Underworld, and as such intimately connected with the cult of the ancestors; the Spirit of Fertility, who is responsible for increase of the fertility of man and the productivity of the land; the mystic power of which everybody stands in awe; a merciful mother, who intercedes for her children with God and the other spirits; a mother from whom other spirits must ask to 'warn' her children before they take action against them (her children on earth); a mother, nevertheless, who, when she has decided to punish, no other spirit (of course with the exception of *Chukwu*) may intercede or intervene, but all the same she is a mother, who does not punish in haste but quite reluctantly when a series of warnings had gone unheeded; She is the great mother of all: plants, animals and men both quick and dead. Hence the Igbo call her '*ANA NWE MMADU NINE! ANA NWE ANYI!*' – "*Ana*, the owner of all mankind, yes, *Ana* is the owner!!(Obiego, 1981:12).

John Orji (1993) who did a study on the *Nri* Myth of Origin did observe that in *Nri* myth of origin, the primordial foundation of this function is that *Chukwu*, at the intervention of *Eri* commanded *ALA* to bring forth yam to feed the Igbo in time of pristine famine. Oguejiofor added that this is why *ALA* should not be defiled by spilling blood that goes counter to its central function of procuring fertility since all come from *ALA*. In his words,

Ala is the owner of all (*Aninwe*). Its power is much greater than that of mere human being (*Anikammadu*). It is the abode of the ancestors, and the land of the spirits. It is the most dreaded guardian of morality, and thus taboos are taken as defilement of Ala (*Nso ala*). As guardian of morality it is also attributed judicial function (*Anikpee*). It is the determinant of fortune or success (*Anikwenze*). It is ever present and never chickens out (*Aniagbaoso*). It is the one that keeps things in their proper order (*Anarodo*) (Oguejiofor, 2002: 27).

But following the overwhelming presence of *ALA* in Igbo-African cosmological, socio-cultural and religious consciousness, as Oguejiofor further pointed out, Meek reckons *ALA* as the most important deity both in the public and private life of the Igbo-African. It is on this note therefore that for both Talbot and Echeruo (1979), *ALA* remains the supreme deity in the Igbo-African pantheon. Echeruo's statements provide some further important enlightenment thus:

One divinity however, was beyond the capriciousness of the Igbo man: that divinity is neither *Igwe*, nor even *Chukwu*, but *Ala*, the goddess of the earth. She was the one deity which no man or woman and no community could afford to offend, much less discard. If ever there was a supreme god among the Igbo it was *Ala* (Echeruo, 1979: 9).

The Limited Universality of *ALA BU OTU* and the Case of Eco-Spirituality

The Igbo-African says *ALA BU OTU* in every circumstances. This means that *ALA* is one and the same everywhere. In our earlier discussion of *ALA* as possessing the quality of universality, which, in reference to place or locality means ubiquity, i.e., that what is under consideration is present at every place, we did also point

out that particularity is also a quality of *ALA*. However, our identification of particularity does not in any way remove, obliterate or over-rule the universality quality of *ALA* even when Oguejiofor seems to insinuate that.

For, according to him, “Universality in this attenuated sense may mean the quality of being in every place, but then may not mean that it is the same undivided reality that extends from one locality to another” (Oguejiofor, 2002:24). In that sense, Oguejiofor argued that “Universality can also refer to a particular space or group of beings that are under particular consideration. In this case, it is restricted in meaning. (Because)...only a non-material or spiritual reality can acquire the characteristics of ubiquity” (Oguejiofor, 2002:23). The truth of the matter is that Oguejiofor was overwhelmed by his thinking that

Our knowledge is inevitably marked by particularity, and thus particularity controls our thought in many ways. ...the universal is beyond the capacity of the human since we cannot conceive it. Our understanding of the infinite, for instance, is hypothetical, unreal and unverifiable state of the absence of all limits. In the sense, the state of universality is an imperceptible state. It is a conceptual deduction from the particular (Oguejiofor, 2002:24).

Unfortunately, what Oguejiofor did not realize was that saying that our understanding of the infinite is hypothetical, unreal and unverifiable could be likened to Immanuel Kant who denied that the noumena (the thing in itself) cannot be known except as phenomenon (i.e. what it appears to the eyes to be), although he was aware of the noumena himself. This is self-contradictory which amounts to using the same thing to explain the same thing. It is obviously unacceptable to say “that almost always the human operates within the realm of the particular, which is in fact what he is able to apprehend in cognition.”

What is being denied or neglected by Oguejiofor in the recognition of *ALA* as both universal and particular in its very unlimited sense is the fact that *ALA* in its particularity is also both cosmic (as physical) and metaphysical (as divine). Although, it could be true that when *ALA* is invoked, as it is frequently in prayer, it is *Ala Onye*...our land – or *ALA Umueke*, that is called upon as pointed out by M. Green (1964:26), but this does not mean that *ALA onye* negates absolutely the universal quality of *ALA*.

“*Aru*” (bad omen) in traditional Igbo set-up is always an offense against *ALA* everywhere, every time. There are several offences that constitute “*Aru*”. And

each of these offences may have been directed to one particular thing or the other, yet the Igbo-African still regards them as "*Aru*" when they happen irrespective of where the offense was directed. C.K. Meek (1937:212) has the following to say in this regard: "No person who had been guilty of homicide was allowed to take part in any festival of Ala. During such a festival he had either to absent himself from the town or else sit on a platform, as contact of his person with the ground was regarded as a pollution of the Earth-deity."

Beside homicide (the killing of a member of a particular community), there are also other actions that help to constitute *Aru* in Igbo traditional community. One can commit *Aru* by falling down certain abominable tree(s) (bad tress: *Ajo Osisì*) that were regarded as the abode of spirits, or getting into abominable forest (*Ajo Ohia*) where the spirits live when one is not supposed to do so, or worst still, saying something that one is not expected to say either at a particular time or place (*Ajo Okwu*) etc. Thus to say that one has committed an offence (*O mere aru; Imeru ala'* or *O meruola ala*) in Igbo traditional life is to say that an offense against the Earth-goddess (*ALA*) has been committed and it goes beyond doing something at a particular or localized place.

ALA is pervasively respected in Igbo-African tradition and culture. It is not always true that when it is defiled in a localized or territorial term, it does not refer to all *ALA*. Truly, the defilement of *ALA* as the killing of a member of a community, for instance, does not almost always apply only to that community where the offence happened. Instead, it includes other community where the killing was not done. Oguejiofor seems to be right in a way here to say that when a man commits an offence against *ALA* and runs to another community, he is safe because the land he offended was not a universal land but a particular and localized land. This does not seem true as it does not happen in all cases.

What Oguejiofor failed to realize was that the person who committed the atrocity (*Aru*) would continue to be seen as one who has offended *ALA* by those who have the knowledge of the offence he committed. There could be cases where someone commits *Aru* and runs to a different community, and he is being rejected from that community where he ran to on the same ground that the offence he committed is also condemnable in that community where he ran to. In that case, the offence he committed follows him to wherever he goes. Except in situation where the knowledge of such offence is hidden from those of the other community where he ran to in such a way that no one would see him as one who

has offended *ALA*. This is the sense when the Igbo-African says '*Ala bu otu*' meaning that *ALA* is the same everywhere, every time.

Oguejiofor probably thinks that the practice of breaking off physical contact with *ALA* during festivals shows that the Igbo-African understands *ALA* that is offended to be their own specific *ALA* and not a generic goddess. This is not always the case.

Cosmological and Metaphysical Ideas of *ALA*: Determinants of cultural, social and religious activities in Igbo worldview

It was Elochukwu E. Uzukwu (1997) who observed that the African world as humans, experience it is a world full of activity: action, reaction, interaction. The gesture that is motion or movement, measured beat or pulse, helps us to grasp the kind of activity recorded in Africa. Africans take note of the pattern of motion which characterizes some animals. The legendary chameleon, for instance, has its measured movement. This gesture goes back to the time of creation when God sent the chameleon to inspect the created earth (*ALA*). The earth *ALA* was not yet firm; consequently, the chameleon's motions display care. Till today, the Igbo believe that the care displayed by chameleon is to be replicated to everything that its life is sustained by *ALA*.

In the same manner, the hen (and fowl in general) has an almost reckless motion of scattering earth (*ALA*) in search of food. This is a gesture bestowed on the hen when it was first sent down by Oduduwa or Obatala (the Yoruba creator divinities) at the time of creation. Its motion of scattering the earth (*ALA*) is to ensure that nothing harms *ALA*. Thus by this gesture, *ALA* and hen (and fowl in general) established relationship whereby *ALA* will always keep or preserve food for the hen (and fowl in general) and none should harm the other. This is the reason why any time the hen (or fowl in general) pollutes the earth (*ALA*), she runs away because she thinks she has offended *ALA* and that *ALA* is after her.

The respect of *ALA* goes to everything that finds sustainability on *ALA*. According to B.E. Nwigwe,

There is a relationship of covenant between her and the people. She is not just a mythicised entity, but a real object and she is taken as staying in close communion with the community's dead ancestors.

The Earth goddess provides life nourishment and protection and acts as the arch custodian of all laws, including the moral laws for

the assurance of peace and harmony among the people. As is the case with the other divinities, the function of the earth goddess stems from the very needs of man: health, wealth, protection, children etc., acquisition of all these constitute the community.

In Igbo world view, the nourishment and protection that *ALA* gives to her children does not end when a person leaves a particular land (*ALA*) for another land (*ALA*). Rather, it follows the person to wherever *ALA* exists. That is why an Igbo can travel to another man's country and still connect with the *ALA* of that place. A man who leaves his country for another country goes with the confidence that the *ALA* of the place he goes to would protect him. It is on that condition that he prays to *ALA* Russia, *ALA* America, *ALA* Britain etc. Although it looks as if *ALA* Britain, is different from *ALA* Russia or *ALA* America, in all, it is the same *ALA* that its protection is sought.

The consciousness that *ALA BU OTU* (that all *ALA* are the same) is the reason why the Igbo respects human life. The Igbo sees life as sacred and as offense against *ALA*. Everything that has life finds sustenance in *ALA*. Trees and other lower animals that share life with humans are also respected. This respect yields to environmental friendliness where humans see themselves as one with *ALA*. It is a consciousness that makes one respect the ecosystem.

Elsewhere, I have argued that the global concern for environmental ethics springs from the recognition that the earth (*ALA*) is suffering from serious environmental hazard. We stated that the concern about environmental crisis is connected with the recognition that there is an increase in the destruction and degradation of the atmosphere, depletion of the ozone layer, and the accelerated deforestation and desertification of the entire ecosystem. It is upon this situation that we say, is responsible for the increase in the destruction of wild-life, oil-spillage, gas flaring, littering of all nook and crannies with refuse. Hence the need to show protection and preservation, restoration/or improvement to the natural environment (*ALA*) becomes an imperative.

The idea that respect for one's particular *ALA* is respect for *ALA* as a universal reality follows that within the sphere of environmental ethics and protectionism lies the hope and survival of the human species and entire ecosystem. This brings about environmental consciousness that in turn serves as invitation to every individual on the planet earth *ALA* to become aware of his or her vulnerability and of the urgent need to preserve the environment (*ALA*).

Conclusion

Beyond the one-sided approach to the concept and understanding of *ALA*, the present paper has contemplated for a middle term knowledge of *ALA* wherein particularity quality of *ALA* breeds and sustains the universality quality of *ALA* and vice visa. Against those who insisted that it was either *ALA* onye or *ALA* Umuneke, the present work argued that the universality quality of *ALA* is one and the same thing with the particularity quality of *ALA*. It supports its claim with the fact that traditional Igbo-African believes in the divinity and protection of *ALA* irrespective of which *ALA* he prays to. Thus *ALA* Britain, *ALA* America, *ALA* Congo etc., is always invoked to protect her children. This form of Universalist cum particularist approach and understanding of *ALA* engenders a great sense of environmental protectionism and is capable of creating and sustaining environmental friendliness both in the world of the Igbo-African in particular and those of the world of humans in general.

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