

## Chi in Igbo Religion and Thought: The God in Every Man

**Abstract.** — *This paper attempts to show that the concept of chi gives the Igbo-speaking people of Nigeria a central, unifying theme that integrates the various fields of their thought. The author argues that chi is inextricably linked with eke, a complementary spiritual force, and both are associated with the act of "natural creation." Thus, chi constitutes the foundation of Igbo intelligence, providing a "satisfactory" explanatory model for the diversities of human personality and the broad category of causation. In the light of this, the author rejects the "established" idea that Chineke denotes God in the monotheistic sense of the revealed religions. Rather, he suggests that a view of chi and eke as inseparable dual divinity fits in with Igbo way of "thinking" as a whole. In any case the emphasis is on the crucial interpretative role chi plays in Igbo religious thought and philosophy. [Igbo, Nigeria, Religion, World View]*

The categories are . . . priceless instruments of thought which the human groups have laboriously forged through the centuries and where they have accumulated the best of their intellectual capital (Durkheim 1915: 32).

### 1. Introduction

Emile Durkheim's (1915) classic pioneer study of religious anthropology offers not only a general sociological theory of religion based on Australian "totemism" but also a significant introduction to the sociology of knowledge. The impact of the latter theme on anthropological studies of traditional

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