



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Metaphysics and the Method of Ibuanyidanda

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ABSTRACT

Asouzu's 21st-century philosophy of complementary ontology (popularly known as ibuanyidanda) has brought to bear the abstract nature of metaphysics as expounded by the west. Through the West has a different world view which many African scholars have seen to be driven by anthropocentric tendencies. African system of thought imbued in communalism have often called for mutual complementarity among whatever that exist, for the essential purpose of attaining the greatest possible flourishing and realizing the common good of man. The Ibuanyidanda philosophy of mutual complementation holds that there is a mutual dependence of all missing links in their unifying interrelatedness. Hence, all cultures, races, sexes, tribes, nations, religions, and political affiliates are in mutual complementary indebtedness to each other in their privileges and responsibilities. The essence of this paper is to a critical look at the position of Ibuanyidanda on metaphysics.

Keywords Ibuanyidanda, metaphysics, Theories of Being.

INTRODUCTION

Asouzu in his metaphysics envisions a world where the actors (Human beings) are ultimately guided in thought and deed by a complementary mindset. This is a situation where actors will come to realize that they are only a fraction of the totality of being. At this point, existence or interpretation of reality becomes "anything that exists serves a missing link of reality". In the line of this contention all stakeholders, actors; come to embrace the fact that the answers they expect can never be obtained unless they are geared towards mutual complementarities of all possible relations (Ibuanyidanda, 65).

It is for this reason Asouzu developed the method and principle called 'complementary reflection in and beyond African Philosophy'. For this method, all aspects

of reality are in a relationship of mutual joyous complementary service (The method and Principles, 147). With all the above in place, Asouzu is agitating for the necessity of a noetic propaedeutic. He believes that the problem is with the mind; therefore, save the mind, you save the man- for there is a need to train the mind towards the acquisition of the complementary mindset.

Our task in this paper, therefore, is to expose in brief the subject matter of metaphysics holistically together with Asouzu's *Ima-Onwe-Onye* (Being-in-control) as a core of his metaphysical discusses, to completely determine its existential meaning and implications. To determine whether metaphysics is possible as the sciences presented in *Ibuanyidanda*, we must establish what method *Ibuanyidanda* will have to use. A paradigm is scientific only when it possesses its method, and when it is aware of the nature of this method and capable of defending it.

THE SUBJECT MATTER OF METAPHYSICS

The word "metaphysics" is derived from the Greek word *meta ta physika*. This means "after the things of nature". The phrase is said to have been introduced by Andronicus of Rhodes, in the 1st Century BC, Andronicus is one of the editors who classified and catalogued Aristotle's works. Hellenistic thinkers and later commentators use the expression to refer to Aristotle's untitled group of texts, which we now call "metaphysics". Aristotle himself calls the subject of this texts "first philosophy", "theology", "wisdom".

Classically and traditionally, metaphysics is the science of beings as beings (Akpan and Ogbonnaya 141). It investigates beings in that which makes them into beings, their being. That is why metaphysics is the basic or fundamental science since it investigates the basis, ground, or foundation of all reality. It is also the universal science, science it studies that which is common to all reality whatever. It can be the basic and universal science only because it pushes to the ultimate unity or ground of everything, Absolute Being. The object of metaphysics is never an object in the sense of a datum of sense experience; to know this object an act of thinking is required which penetrates the data and transcends them in the direction of the ultimate and the absolute, in the direction of being.

We could refer to history that it is not even possible to establish the first foundations of metaphysics if human knowledge is not envisaged against the horizon of the Absolute. A complete system of metaphysics supposes a continual referring to absolute being, in whose light alone the being of beings stands revealed in his fullness and depth. We see therefore that both the history of metaphysics and the very nature of its problems show us that metaphysics is a bipolar science, a science of beings as such, and a science of the absolute foundation of being. In line with the historical notion of metaphysics, the question remains how the tradition of western metaphysics understands science and how metaphysics as a science may be critically justified and constructed in the light of our modern awareness of its problems and methods.

A BRIEF EXPOSITION ON THE THEORIES OF BEING IN METAPHYSICS

Being has been defined as a state of existence or reality. It is an extremely broad concept encompassing objective and subjective features of reality and existence. (Akpan and Etta 122) The concept is often used when trying to explain what should count for the existent. Due to the controversial nature of the concept, it has been listed as one of the fundamental problems of metaphysics—the most popular of them. Many philosophers have written copiously on the subject. Parmenides in his wisdom understood being to be permanent, one, unity external and real (Kanu, 5, 10). A couple of years from when Parmenides defined being as one and permanent, Heraclitus conceived of being in a state of flux (Ozumba, 63). By the above Heraclitus believes that being is changing and ephemeral. There is a problem with this view. Critics have judged from the background that sometimes we experience that some aspects of physical reality remain the same, some other aspects change. Thus Heraclitus may not be said to be accurately right.

Plato tried to attempt a solution to this problem by interpreting being as multiple but existing in their pure and real form in the world of ideas. Plato in his popular theory of the “word forms” and “World of Senses” articulated that reality exists in the real and it duplicates or copies appear to us in the physical world (Kanu, 10). The physical world is a mere poor copy of the real.

Aristotle, on the other hand, opined that being is temporal, having changing and enduring aspects. That part of reality that changes from time to time is believed to be the clan that constitutes the "form" and that aspect of reality that defines enduring parts of our worlds, constitutes the matter. He defined Being as having Substantial and Accidental parts but submits that reality in itself stays at the substantial realm. Aristotle taught that being in its purest form belongs to the region of substance or essence. He defined being as having substantial and Accidental part, but submit that reality in itself stays at the substance realm. Aristotle taught being or reality in the true sense of the word belongs to the region of substance or essence.

A follow up of Aristotle is the scholastics that held the opinion that being is everything that exists and derives its existence from the external being-God. They agree with Aristotle that being has a changing and enduring aspect. For them, God is the only unchanging being while other beings are temporal. Considering the above, we can, therefore, say that the term "being" can be seen as a standing form of existence whether permanent or ephemeral.

Other philosophers like Heidegger, Sartre, William of Ockham, Alexiles Munong, Husserl, Hagel, Bradley, and many more in our contemporary time, like Quine and Asouzu philosophized on the meaning of Being. Their views of the concept vary depending on the perspective from which they are viewing it.

Professor Asouzu in his wisdom sustains a definition of being that is unique. He believes that Being is complementary. In Ibuanyidanda's ontology, Asouzu believes that "...that person is to be pitied who thinks that a subject can afford to live alone, outside of the legitimacy provided by the mutual complementary relationship between all missing links and call this existence" (Ibuanyidanda, 10). In other words, being as being is complementary. His point of emphasis is the relationship at work in being. Within the context of the new complementary Ontology, the negation of being (that accident can be

done away with if we will) is the capacity not to be in any form of relationship. Reality or being in its purest form is the moment of mutual intrinsic complementary realities.

ASOUZU'S METAPHYSICS AS BEING-IN-CONTROL

In the introduction of the book "*Ikwa Ogwe*", Asouzu highlights the belief that reality cannot be apprehended without a system or method.

The main title "*Ikwa Ogwe*" is derived from the Igbo language. *Ikwa Ogwe* means "building a bridge" in the scientific sense of adopting a methodological systemic approach to an inquiry... in this way, they help inquirer come out with results that can be identified as belonging to the system in question and the method provided to investigate reality. It is because systems and methods serve as guides that we refer to them as bridges (*ogwe*) through which reality becomes accessible more transparently. (IkwaOgwe, 5).

He goes on to explain that the event where thinkers or scientists embark on a strenuous exercise as to craft a unique bridge through which one can embrace reality, such people are said to be embarking on the art of providing a system and a method needed to connect them to reality. In other words "...methodological systematic approaches enables us to follow step by step the mode of reflection of a thinker or the strategies a thinker devises to penetrate reality" (IkwaOgwe, 6). Thus, Asouzu in a mission to create a bridge (method and principles) through which we can penetrate reality articulated in the Ibuanyidanda principle and other philosophical explanations of reality in its purest form.

The concept of being-in-control is a state of mind that can only be achieved through a mental activity called Noetic Propaedeutic. With this he explains:

Hence, one can say that the question of how the theory of complementary reflection can be made practically insightful subsists in probing further into the nature of the mind, and its diverse modes of operation. We do this with the intent of showing how these cohere and harmonize with the character of being in its essential dynamism. Where such coherence is in place, chances are that most conflict situations can be handled creditably, because the mind at such moments is in a state of harmony with what it seeks to express. That is to say, the mind is in harmony with being as this finds expressing as missing links of reality (Asouzu, Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology, 312).

Before the articulation of this concept of a complementary system of thought, Asouzu believes human nature was under attack from different societal forces. These forces include challenges of the triadic forgetfulness, the varied character of the human relative condition, challenges of ethnicity, Globalization, and the challenges of a bifurcating type of ontology, etc. These challenges and more have attacked human's existential condition and effected seriously its interpretation of reality the correct way. Thus complementary reflection emerged as a system with its unique method of investigation to help researchers acquire and master the skill needed in the use and application of the method and principles in their own independent reflections to interpret reality.

Being-in-control expresses the state of human existential condition where an actor within this context of the new complementary system of thought has acquired the proper education on what is required of him to live above all human ambivalent existential

situations. It defines, the man who in all matters of ontology, not only grasps being or the foundation on which all existent realities are erected but also one whose mind has been empowered and re-empowered to be in charge in all existential situations which are ambivalent and as such tension-laden.

In all matters relating to the human person, it would be a tragic mistake to forget the inherently multidimensional tension-laden character of the human condition and constitution. Therefore, we can say of such approaches that they are forgetful of the ambivalent nature of all human existential situations. (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology*, 56).

When an actor sees being as an expression of missing links, it is said to be being-in-control. This is the point that is meant to express in one's existential condition where he is free from the phenomenon of concealment (*IheMkpu chi anya*) and all ambivalence situations.

THE METHOD OF IBUANYIDANDA

It is worth mentioning here that the method of *Ibuanyidanda* is invariably the method of understanding metaphysics not only in African philosophy but generally (Bassey & Mendie 2019). If this methodological rule is binding to all science, it is especially binding to metaphysics and *Ibuanyidanda*, for, since it investigates an object which is beyond all sense experience, metaphysics cannot appeal to that experience to justify its procedure. Other sciences may justify the methods they use by pointing to the results they reach. Metaphysics will never be able to use this pragmatic criterion.

To determine whether *Ibuanyidanda's* metaphysics is possible as a science, Asouzu has established the method it will use. Science is science only when it possesses its method, and when it is aware of the nature of this method and capable of defending it. *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy or complementary reflection conceptualizes the method as disposition. Thus, Asouzu asserts:

Within the context of a transcendent complementary comprehensive existential analysis, *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy or complementary reflection conceptualizes method as disposition. By this I mean the type of disposition needed to approach sense experience (*ihe ahu naanya ekwe*), and reality generally, with a transcendent complementary comprehensive type of mindset beyond the impositions arising from mere sensation. Method is the type of disposition needed to relate to missing links of reality in a vicarious mutually related mode. Expressed in another way: method is the fundamental disposition needed to think and act in an *Ibuanyidanda* mode. It is the capacity to focus on the “*Ibuanyidandaness*” of any given phenomenon or existential condition. (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: Special Edition*, 22)

From the understanding of the author, it is evident that reasoning alone cannot be the method of metaphysics. For reasoning is mediated knowledge, it starts necessarily from some previous knowledge. The reasoning is done in syllogisms, which presuppose certain premises. In all given instances, claims the author, the method is co-intended and consummated, both formally and materially, in the process of noetic-propaedeutic (pre-education of the mind), where the human subject learns to convert the transcendent categories of the unity of consciousness of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy into practical action.

Another difficulty Asouzu attempted to solve in the comprehension of reality includes the idea of general super-maxims and the African condition. The mind perceives maxims according to Asouzu as Universal imperatives having the character of law. (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology*, 358). Based on its methods, *Ibuanyidanda* seeks to show why judgments concerning given empirical conditions are not necessarily objective statements of fact as they occur in our consciousness, but judgments that can be preconditioned by mechanisms and phenomena that influence the way we perceive reality. An example of such self-evident premises is Igbo's "the nearer the better and the safer" super-maxim. By the above, an average African with his unrefined mindset will, by all means, feel safer to have deals with anybody from his clan and feel unsaved when encountering others outside his/her clan. Therefore, in dealing with the world, such a method makes it imperative for theoreticians and actors to search always beyond mere sensations; and to delve into the phenomena and mechanisms that drive theories and actions. Akpan expounded, very clearly, how the method of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy can serve as an alternative paradigm and understanding in science. (Akpan, "Ambivalence of Human Existential Situation", 1-10).

Here is where the problem lies. For Asouzu, this super-maxim is nothing but an expression that shows or reviews the human consciousness at the level of causal work as immanent pre-deterministic concomitant commitment. The cause of such commitment is a result of the challenges arising from one's overhaul ambivalent situation prevalent in society. The sure way is, relying on the method of *Ibuanyidanda*, we are immediately conscious of the fact that certain phenomena and mechanisms of non-rational and quasi-rational nature are integral aspects of our experience of reality; such that they can invalidate the apparent incontestable and seemingly rational character of raw data of experience. But, the principle of Being-in-control advocates, we should grow to pass the level under this universal weakness endemic in human nature.

The answer or way remains the program of noetic propaedeutic. While intercultural philosophy advocates for change of dialogue *Ibuanyidanda* advocates a change of mind. Thus: exponents of *Ibuanyidanda*, which this paper supports and shares their view opines a change of mind through rigorous systematic mind training in *Ibuanyidanda* ontology until one begins to live above causal world immanent pre-deterministic concomitant mode of thinking prevalent in the society. The method of *Ibuanyidanda* strives to unravel the type of determination to which human consciousness is subjected due to the constraining mechanisms and phenomena characteristic of our experience of the world (Bassey 2018). Its method further strives to show how these challenges can be addressed through the application of the principle of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy and other allied tools belonging to it. Over and above all, its endeavours to emphasize that, its predicaments notwithstanding, human subjects have an innate capacity deriving from aforementioned transcendent categories of the unity of consciousness to address, successfully, these existential constraints to which they are exposed. Finally, its method shows why noetic propaedeutic is indispensable for addressing the challenges posed by our world in its fundamental tension-laden constitution.

CONCLUSION

A cursory look at the metaphysical expression of this paper reveals the fact that the method agrees with the Ibuanyidanda principle as a vibrant system of thought or a bridge for researchers seeking answers about the nature of reality or being. The greatest challenge to the project of systematizing the *Ibuanyidanda* brand of philosophy is weaved into the questions: what is the need? What can *the Ibuanyidanda* method offer in the understanding of metaphysics? Answers to these two questions constitute the justification for this paper on metaphysics and the method of *Ibuanyidanda*.

There is a need to raise a method fit with the African native thought system. The present author in his paper "Asouzu, Method and Principles", argues conclusively that African intellectuals have not excelled in inventive and theorizing exercises because the background logic of Western science is not genial to them and not necessarily as Western scholars contend, that they cannot think. Hence, raising *the Ibuanyidanda* method as a metaphysical model for the understanding of being in an African and universal way.

There is a need for a method that can offer a safe and adequate understanding of African philosophy. For we know of Hegelism, Kantian categorical imperative, and likes, with their prospects and impediments, we see the Ibuanyidanda principle as exposing a new prospect in the system of methods for a better understanding of reality. The theory of Being-in-control each time I study it looks like an abstract conjecture without existence implication. Again I understand that its only people who allow the causal world immanent pre-deterministic concomitant mode of thinking prevalent in the societies to overwhelm them may find it difficult to under Ibuanyidanda principles. This paper does not suggest any such difficulty. A clear examination of metaphysics in Ibuanyidanda being-in-control reveals the method as a tool for rescuing humanity. Humanity, full of manipulators flooded with the phenomenon of concealment (ihemkpu chi anya), which makes it difficult for actors to transcend the limits imposed by maxims has bifurcated and polarized reality at its detriment. This is why the method of *Ibuanyidanda* explains better the way out for actors to attain reality through noetic propaedeutic, a way out of the paradoxes, and the tension surrounding reality.

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