

## COMPLEMENTARY ONTOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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### **Abstract**

*The question that engages one's attention in grappling with the above problem is: following complementarism i.e. in the spirit of complementary metaphysical reflection how can one achieve authentic/concrete existence through his action? In other words the bone of contention here is how a human being can realize his authentic self through his actions in the society he lives, bearing in mind the ambivalence or the double capacity of his personal interests. Thus, this paper beings by making clear the sense in which the key concepts are used in the work. Hence, "Being" is here used to refer to human authentic existence, and the "REALISATION" of this "BEING" refers to the process of attainment of that concrete and authentic existence of the human person. Complementary Ontological Reflection on the other hand, is a metaphysical speculation from the complementary perspective as expounded by Innocent Asouzu. According to Asouzu, in complementary ontological reflection, the mind seeks to understand missing links of reality for what they are and this determines the way it relates concretely or authentically to the world. Bearing in mind that human beings are beings who live and act from their personal interests, this paper argues that except one recognizes or becomes aware of the double capacity (ambivalence nature) of one's interests, one would find oneself performing those actions which he abhors and condemns as bad. This insight is provided by Asouzu's complementary reflection. In doing this, such a person will not be able to realize his authentic self through his actions. More so, he becomes for removed from attaining an authentic living when he neglects his relativity and assumes a position of absoluteness. In alliance with complementary ontological reflection, the paper makes the point that, the four ways in which the mind relates to reality must be consciously employed or followed in order for one to realize his (being) authentic self through his actions. These four ways are:- 1. Seeing realities as mere fragments which can be abstracted as essences 2. Considering realities as units that can be categorized in ways that are compatible but distinct from other compatible units. 3. Relating reality to each other in the sense of co-determinacy 4. Viewing them as serving each other in view of a totality that gives them their authenticity.*

**Keywords:** Realization, Being, Human Action, Innocent Asouzu, Complementary, Ontological, Reflection

## **Introduction**

There is a common goal that's constitutive of action, something at which behavior must aim in order to qualify as an action; just as a pre-dispositional attitude must aim at being true in order to qualify as belief. Our actions has a constitutive aim of this sort namely, the good. If every again aims at something conceived as good, then conduciveness to the good would appear to be an internal criterion of success for actions, since the most successful actions, by this criterion, are the ones that are most conducive to the good. (Cullity/Gant: 40). This leads us to the reality of our concrete existence through our actions. The human action cannot be separated from the ontological view. We are seem as a Being, not really in Parmenides' sense of "being" but also as that which, goes beyond the superficial outlook and entails the idealistic view or concept. Our actions can't be remove from our existence hence human existence and pattern of living is premised upon not only our own perceptions but upon the peoples' perception as well. It is therefore pertinent to bear in mind that as we live in the society, certain behavioral patterns and values are expected of us. We should not be overridden by the double capacity of our personal interests, hence we lose the realization or our authentic self through our actions negatively. That is why man by virtue and good deals is made great. As social and rational being, we are expected to be a cultural being also, we are the society and the society is also us. We are expected to take to the dictates of our cultural values, cultural values are expected to be laid down rules which govern man actions, it becomes an ethical issue here, we are expected to shun vices and embrace virtues in order to sharpen our human behavior and human conduct for the good of oneself and the society at large. By realizing our authentic self as a rational being, our rational will tell us that certain kinds of actions are bad and must be avoided while other kinds of actions are good and should be done. Hence, to co-exist effectively with one another, man actions play a determine role no one wants to co-habit or live with vices, mutual and integrated ability thus comes to fore.

## **Complementary Ontological Reflection**

A human person even in its concrete form is also a transcendent reality. In complementarily, it is not just enough to deal with man as a physical entity but also the immaterial transcendental unit. We are constituted of the mind, the mind makes recourse to the soul, body, the spirit, thinkable and imaginable units that complement each other. When we take a look at the mental picture of man, the human person is seen as the highest creature, man's dominant features and

inherent disposition in the spheres of life and nature places him at the highest plane of creation, yet there also exist in man, missing link of reality.

Through complementary ontological reflection, we come to realize our true self, we know that “all fingers are not equal” and this applies also the sphere of dual capacity, we need others to complement our efforts and works, there is a proverbial saying that “one finger does not carry a load on the head” it invariably means that we need the ten fingers to do that, and this apply to a collective effort by one another. Some work great jobs while some small, otherwise how do we exist? The joy of our being comes to the full when we realize the limitations that characterize our being. Beauty is relative, moral acts differ in acceptance, why was I not born a girl or boy? We cannot be everything, as mere mortals, we all have mere talents, when properly used result in a harmonious form.

### **Realisation of Being in Human Action**

As human beings, it would be unrealized and illogical for us to see ourselves as “finished products” with a stamp of perfection on us. We are the determinants and makes of our actions. It is of no use, to run from the fact that our actions has to do with the “self” in us. We are not programmed robots which can be tuned at will to act according to its systematization. The complexities of our human nature comes to bare in us as individuals and in the society/as large. Very individual has something embedded in humor her and we can affect the society either positively or negatively according to the ways in which the mind relates to use. In our daily behavioral patterns, the average person tends to act from their personal interests, not suited for a particular job offer and then goes all his way to stop the rightful person suitable for such a job either through diabolical means or even through physical brutality. Self-interest sets in here “self-interest is the disposition always in all situations to desire undue advantage for and solely for the person or persons involved, in total disregard of the common good (Asouzu). Our double capacity nature, the fact of not knowing where to draw the line betweenegoism and the common good prepare the stage for the ambivalence nature in us and until we realize that there is no perfection in any human being and removed “absolutism” placing it with relativity, then we can begin to realize our authentic self. Our authentic existence through the realization of our Being brings about the attainment of that concrete and authentic existence of the human person. We should not see ourselves as “the all in all” we are living in a society, society is not an isolated unit, it comprises of others as well, we cannot separate ourselves from others with the idea of one’s self interest without putting

the other person into consideration. As the body consisted of different parts, all synthesize to become a whole in a harmonious form with the different parts of the body performing its function thus bringing a well-coordinated entity, so also should we as human being desire such mutuality. It is not enough to desire if we should endeavor to practice what we preach or advocate for.

The feelings of superiority over one another has eaten so deep into us in our own individualistic tendencies and manner and also into the society at large. How do we explain the case whereby one tribe has the feeling of superiority over another and this more and often bring about the issue of marginalization among ethnic groups. An authentic living is also a healthy living. It is expected that we respect the rights and privileges of others. It is for this reason that we should a times be disposed to suffer for the sake of some higher value (Asouzu: 146) people today become dishonest and insincere in order to get all they want as everybody wants to live in a duplex or mansion. People want to travel to United States of America, France etc. everybody wants to ride the best car in the world. Dishonesty and insincerity of the people had led to embezzlement in the country. Many people no longer respect intellectual achievements and dignity of labor but materialism. There is no proper accountability and transparency, in fact all these invariably is as a result of our ambivalence nature and our misplacement of personal interest, a negativity of our being in essence. In the society, taking the Nigeria situation for instance, a critical look at our recent history shows that the elite class in this country has been in large measure insensitive to the plight of the masses who look up to them for succor. As politicians, traditional rulers, administrators, successful business men and women, and religious leaders, they have often neglected to do something about housing for the generality of the population, while they build monstrous mansions for themselves at various locations in the country. Some of these structures are unoccupied for years and left at the mercy of lizards and cockroaches.

The leaders have often neglected to do something about public schools in Nigeria, while they send heir children to exclusive private schools in Europe and America where they pay incredible amounts of money that would in Nigeria. They have often neglected to do something about dilapidated health institutions in the country, as a result of which many poor Nigerians have died prematurely, yet these leaders patronize the best hospitals and clinics abroad, keeping themselves alive with the latest medical technology at very high costs.

Looking at the Nigerian Socio-political and economic landscape, one can discern a near total neglect of the common good in the personal life style and in the value orientation policies and projects pursued by our leaders and the privileged few in the society. Individuals, families and groups have a right to acquire private property, in pursuit of their destiny, and for the enhancement of their comfort and their security and in order to promoter a healthy ethnic. This right to private property is however not absolute. It has a social mortgage, it is curtailed or checkmated by the good of the generality of the people. The common good is violated when an individual or group of individuals appropriate or amass for themselves an unreasonably high percentage of the earth's resources while others are starved of the basic necessities of life. No matter how intelligent the individual may be, no one has the right to more than a fair share of the earth's resources, since they are destined for the good of all. A society where floating islands of wealth are to be found amidst a sea degrading poverty cannot be said to be truly human.

The poverty level of Nigeria today has driven level of Nigeria today has driven many into frustration, it has turn many into embracing aggression, which is a defeatist position. Where then lies our authentic living as a person? The average Nigerian can hardly eat three good meals a day. These have left many hungry and made many wild. At the slightest provocation they (mostly youths) brandished machetes and all sorts of dangerous weapons to unleash on one another, there is so much upsurge of crime and violence. The way we perceive our interests as individuals and as groups goes a long way in determining how we act towards these interests. When our interests lies around "Individualism" and not "generalism" of goodness of purpose, then the pursuance of such interests beings about ambivalent and selfish situation. We are faced with situation whereby tribalism is being set on a pedestal; the unique spirit of loyalty and solidarity among dominant groups becomes pronounced when questions as to who becomes what in any company or in the federal set-up are involved. On such occasions the Hausa/Fulani group would invoke the spirit of "Ja miyyar Mutanen Arewo" The Igbo would vociferate "Enyimba Enyi" and "Igbo Kwenu", and the Yoruba would whip up familiar sentiments encapsulated in the "tiwan 'tiwa" sibole; deifying this unwholesome practice as a pragmatic instrument for national unity which is why it has been rightly said that most of us feel that others will not tolerate such emotional honesty in communication: we would rather defend dishonesty on the grounds that it might hurt others, and having rationalized our phoniness into nobility, we settle for superficial relationships.

## **Conclusion**

It is pertinent for our own good as well as the good of others which results into a common good, to pursue it in a purposeful manner. We should not make our society that of self-seeking individualists and money grabbers, a society in which social values and worthiness are determined by money and such mundane things. For example, Nigeria today faced a lot of challenges arising from her diversity, such challenges could be traced to apparent contradictions in belief, attitudes, values and ethos of the various ethnic and religious communities in the country. But in spite of this, the ethnic groups had not lost grip of the fact that they needed each other and that their strength lay in their diversity. It is necessary to uproot all seeds of "absolutism" and 'egoism' among us. The desire and thirst for self-interest (negatively). It is of no use to be condemned to these turbulent "selfism", to sink or swim in these messy waters of inauthentic existence and ambivalent of actions. In fact half of our people are already drowned and the other half are swimming in the wrong direction. Cultural superiority should be put behind us. Some tribes in the country feel they are indispensable to the growth and success of the Nigeria Economic, they feel they are the Rock of Gibraltar and the primal foundation of Nigeria, of course such cases a times brings about an ambivalent and unrealistic existence. We should seek in the most natural, harmonious and compatible possible the ideal authentic self.

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