

ASOUZU AND UNITY OF SUBJECT MATTER OF THE SCIENCES

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Abstract

This paper on Asouzu and Unity of Subject Matter of the Sciences posits that there is the problem of the unity of subject matter of the sciences. The paper traced the problem to Aristotle, who argues that metaphysics is the 'queen of all the sciences' and should dictate for the other sciences, how they should be done. The paper goes on to aver that it is this elevation of metaphysics and its subject matter (substance) to an absolute instance that led to revolt by other sciences. Thus, they all defined their respective subject matters as well as methods. This is more glaring with the natural sciences that posit that they and their method are the yardstick for all other sciences. It is in this manner that science has been done own the history of ideas with every discipline seeking supremacy over others; and this is done with the idea that their subject matter is unique and should be the subject matter of all other sciences. It is on this premise that Asouzu posits that all the sciences has truth as their subject matter and that they can arrive at this truth through the wholistic comprehension of reality. Hence, for Asouzu, all the sciences lead to partial truth since their subject matter is just an aspect of reality. It is in line with this that Asouzu asserts that all the sciences are serving as missing link to each and that it is until they see themselves as complementary to each other they cannot lead to truth that they seek. This paper employed the philosophical methods of critical analysis and reflection.

Introduction

In the history of the origin and development of ideas, it is believed that all of the sciences existed earlier on as one. They were all found under the common branch of knowledge known as philosophy. But as time progressed they disintegrated into divers units of knowledge. At first, there was the division of philosophy into rational philosophy and moral philosophy. From these two wide branches of philosophy came other disciplines. This split of science into diverse disciplines or sciences is due to the belief that all have different subject matters as well as methods of study. For instance, the natural scientists hold that their subject matter is the natural objects that are physical. It is on this premise that natural scientists employ the empirical method. It follows that the social sciences do not

make use of the empirical method. This is because their object of study, which is the human person, transcends the physical but has also a spiritual dimension. It is this spiritual dimension that cannot be accessed using the empirical method of the natural sciences.

This leaves one wondering: if there are actually different subject matters in each of these disciplines or sciences? Or if all the sciences still share the same subject matter despite their differences in method? This paper seeks to show that all the sciences irrespective of their diverse methods have a common subject matter. It is not only this paper that has tried to do this. Some scholars have in time past tried to point scientists to the unifying factor(s) in all of the sciences. For instance, Rudolf Carnap notes that the unity of the sciences is found in the logic of science (a question of logic), and the laws of the various branches of sciences (397). The unity of the sciences, according to Martin Carrier and Jurgen Mittelstrass, can be linked to “the unity of scientific language, of scientific laws, of scientific method and of science as a practical-operation enterprise” (17). Edward Schouten Robinson also notes that there is the unification of the sciences in three areas namely, the unity of method, unity of laws, and unity of terminology (129). When these assertions on the unity of the science based on logic, language (terminology), method and even practicability are considered carefully, one will come to realize that it is not all the sciences that employ all these. And if at all they do it may not be in the same way. This therefore destroys the very foundation of their being the basis of the unity of all the sciences.

Frege tends to hold a contrary position to the above stated positions as he notes that “to discover truth is the task of all sciences” (289). But he goes on to posit that “it falls to logic to discern the laws of truth” (289). This is like saying that not only are all the sciences geared towards achieving truth but that it is logic that makes it possible. In other words, logic is the means to achieving truth. Asouzu’s conception of the unity of subject matter of the sciences agrees with Frege’s that it is truth but does not see logic as what can lead to truth. This assertion is clearly found in the philosophy of Asouzu, popularly known as *ibuanayidanda* or complementary reflection. The philosophy posits that all disciplines are one in as much as their subject matter is concerned. It is this position that this paper will try to highlight and elaborate.

The Man Asouzu and His Philosophy

Innocent Izuchukwu Asouzu is a professor of philosophy in the University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State – Nigeria. He was born on 13th October, 1952 to Mazi Charles Ijeoma Asouzu, a renowned businessman of Igbo extraction, during the colonial period. He hails from Ndiakunwanta Uno, Arondizuogu in Ideato North Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. He attended Christ the King’s School, Aba, from 1959 to 1965, and had his Secondary education at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Ahiaeke-Umuahia between 1966 and 1972. He began his philosophical studies in Bigard Major Seminary, Enugu and came out as one of the best graduating students of his set. “*Graduating in 1975, he was selected as one of the best graduating students of his diocese, Umuahia, to continue with his studies at Leopold Franzen University Innsbruck, Austria*”. (Inaugural Lecture 63). Here, he studied theology under the auspices of the Jesuits at *Collegium Canisianum*.

Due to the evident new-found interdisciplinary convergence sweeping through the German Academia in the 70s of the 20th Century, Asouzu embarked on the study of Philosophy and Sociology at the *Geisteswissen-Schaftliche Fakultat* (Faculty of Humanities) of the University of Innsbruck. It is here that he had his Ph.D in 1982. Asouzu took a pastoral and teaching appointment for three and half years, in Rheinfelden.

In 1986, Asouzu returned to Nigeria and did his National Youth Service at University of Calabar in 1987. After which he took up a permanent teaching appointment in the University of Calabar that same year. Since then, he has risen to the rank of professor of philosophy. He has served as the Dean of Faculty of Arts of the University. He has also been an external supervisor/examiner to the University of Lagos, University of Port Harcourt and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Asouzu before coming back to Nigeria has published some his works; and they include: Switzerland during which he published the book “*Gedankenuber die religiose problematik der Gegenwart im Licht der Theologie der Religionen*” (Reflections on Contemporary Problems of Religion in the Light of Theology of Religions); his Masters Degree thesis in Philosophy captioned “*Verstehen Gesellschaftlicher Handlungen durch Begrundsschritte*” (Rational Steps for the Understanding of Social Action). This effort precipitated to A Practical Reconstruction of Human Action based on a New Understanding of Kant’s Categorical Imperative; his

Ph.D dissertation which bore the title “*Geisteswissenschaftliche Konfliktregelung Als Pragmatische Aufgabe. Eine Kritische Betrachtung des Konstruktivismus*” (Practical Regulation of Social Conflicts. A Critical Consideration of Constructivism) (*Inaugural Lecture* 64). This work was later published with the title “*Kritische Betrachtung des Konstruktiven Wissenschaftstheories. Erwagungen Zu Praktisch – Philosophischen Konfliktregelungsstrategien*” (A Critical Consideration of the Constructive Philosophy of Science: Strategies towards Practical Philosophical Regulations of Conflicts).

He is an ardent researcher and this has precipitated into his philosophy of complementarity also known as *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy, as is reflected in most of his works, which include: *Effective Leadership and Ambivalence of Human Interest. The Nigerian Paradox in a Complementary Perspective* (2003), *The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and Beyond African Philosophy* (2004), *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology Beyond World- Immanentism, Ethnocentric Reduction and Imposition* (2007), *Ikwa Ogwe: Essential Readings in Contemporary Reflection, A Systematic Methodological Approach* (2007), *Ibuanyidanda and the Philosophy of Essence (Philosophy, the Science of Missing Links of Reality)*. 50th *Inaugural Lecture* (2012), *Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection) and Some Basic Problems in Africa* (2013), *Ibuanyidanda (Special Edition): Excerpt from Online Dictionary of Intercultural Philosophy (ODP)* (2013).

It is germane to state that a lot of works has been published on his *Ibuanyidanda* Philosophy or Complementary Reflection. This can be attested to by the numerous B.A. Projects, M.A. Thesis and Ph.D Dissertations that are centred on this philosophy within and outside the University of Calabar. There are also a lot of articles that has *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy as their focus or defining thought. This philosophy is indeed a ground breaking work in African philosophy and philosophy in general.

The *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy of Asouzu is a philosophy of complementarity. This idea is first and foremost depicted in the very coinage of the concept, *Ibuanyidanda*. The concept, *Ibuanyidanda* is as Asouzu puts it, a composite word made up of the following three parts, namely: *ibu* meaning “load or task”; *anyi* meaning “not insurmountable for”; and *danda* meaning “a species of ants, danda”. Put together, these literally translates into the traditional Igbo aphorism that “no load is insurmountable for the species of ants called danda” (*Ibuanyidanda* 11).

The concept of *Ibuanyidanda* according to Asouzu draws inspiration from the teachings of traditional Igbo philosophers of the complementary system of thought, who having observed the mutual dependence exhibited by a species of ants called *danda*, concluded that the advancement of any course in life is wrought within the vortex of complementarity. Hence, they adopted as a way of life and constitute a typical Igbo work song *bunu bunuoo ibuanyidanda-lift the load, nothing is impossible for danda, the ant (Ibuanyidanda 11)*.

Adopting the wealth of this concept into the philosophy of being-ontology is what Asouzu has done in his complementary reflection spread across his numerous works. "By adopting this approach, the new complementary ontology wishes to grasp the notion of being from the preceding condition of its intrinsic interrelatedness devoid of polarization and exclusiveness" (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 10).

This philosophy is built on two fundamental principles, namely: the principle of integration and the principle of progressive transformation. The principle of integration which states that "anything that exists serves a missing link of reality" (*The Method and Principles 273*), is metaphysical in nature. It is also known as the science of missing link. This principle seems to be an idea that he has nurtured for so long a time before developing it into a system. This can be seen in one of the works that he published in the early nineties. In this article he notes that "the missing link is by nature both an empirical and non-empirical reality which through its dynamism gives clues to its nature" (*Progress in Metaphysics 88*). It is this principle that is the basic foundation of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy and is found in all of Asouzu philosophical thoughts and works.

The principle of progressive transformation which states that "all human actions are geared towards the joy of being" (*The Method and Principles 273*), is according to Asouzu, a practical variant of the principle of integration and it addresses particularly the issue of human actions in the society. It is on these principle of integration and principle of progressive transformation that the complementary imperative which states that "allow the limitations of being to be the cause of joy" (*The Method and Principles 273*), is built. In other words, the complementary imperative is a secondary product of the principle of integration and the principle of progressive transformation. These culminate in the truth and

authenticity criterion which states “never elevate any world immanent missing link to an absolute instance” (“*Ibuanyidanda*” and the *Philosophy of Essence* 105).

Asouzu does not any way agree with the bifurcation or elevating of an aspect of reality to an absolute instance; and therefore avers that where this occurs, it is due to human ambivalent tension and the phenomenon of concealment (*ihe mkpuchi anya*) (*Ibuanyidanda ... and Some* 8). This process of not seeing other missing links in a unified, universal, and comprehensive manner can be overcome through the transcendent categories of unity of consciousness, or what is rendered in Igbo as *akara obi/akara mmuo* (ODIP 23). This leads to mutual complementation and harmony. The attainment of mutual complementation and harmony according to Asouzu “entails a return to the inner recesses of its being and consciousness in view of exploring some of the latent potentialities thereby imbedded, and which are needed to equilibrate this tension” (*Inaugural Lecture* 50). This is possible through existential conversion (*Ibuanyidanda* 327), which has noetic propaedeutic as its reformative mechanism (pre-education of the mind). It is only at this state the mind can see reality in a mutual complementary manner as well as see itself as being-in-control (*ima onwe onye*). This connotes authentic self consciousness (*Ibuanyidanda and the Philosophy of Essence* 113).

In this way, the mind is led to the complete truth about other missing links. Hence, Asouzu asserts, “whenever the mind acts in full harmony with the dictates of these transcendent categories which belong naturally to it by reason of its relative anticipatory character, it can never err” (*Ibuanyidanda* 324). However, in his *Inaugural Lecture*, Asouzu asserts that such a mind that is imbued with the transcendent categories of unity of consciousness can never err culpably (56). This is not a contradiction but rather additional information to the effect that any mind that is imbued with the transcendent categories cannot perform negative actions deliberately. Hence, it would be free from any blames at the event of unexpected results.

The Question of Unity Subject Matter of the Sciences in Asouzu’s Philosophy

The problem of the unity of subject matter of the science is traceable to Aristotle, according to Asouzu. This, for him, is linked to the bifurcating metaphysics of Aristotle. He argues that it was Aristotle that brought about the rivalry among the sciences and scientists. This is found in the kind of mindset that Aristotle

inbuilt into the scientific community. It is this mindset that brought about the bifurcating and polarizing of reality. It is this that led to the schism in the scientific enterprise since every scientist sees his/her area of concern as the best. It is this kind of mindset that brought about the division of the sciences into superior and inferior sciences. Asouzu captures this thus:

Metaphysics, for Aristotle, as the study of the essential or substantial structure of reality is wisdom per excellence, and in this capacity the very ideal science. It is for this reason that he considers metaphysics a much more superior science than the other sciences (“ancillary” sciences) that study accidental qualities. This unfortunate distinction between metaphysics and the other sciences would have a tremendous consequence for the way science is understood and scientific debate conducted. (*Inaugural Lecture 18*)

Asouzu substantiates this as he notes that;

Generally, fidelity to Aristotle’s metaphysics has resulted in the tendency to see reality as something disjointed, bifurcating and polarized; where what is essential or substantial is easily equated with what is superior, whereas what is accidental is equated with what is inferior and inconsequential. (*Inaugural Lecture 18*)

What Asouzu is saying about Aristotle is that there is a great distinction between metaphysics and the other sciences; and that this distinction lies in their respective subject matter. According to Asouzu, Aristotle is of the view that metaphysics is concerned with the substantial element (substance or essence) of reality, while other sciences are concerned with the accidental.

This kind of open presentation of the gap between metaphysics and other sciences finds its root in Aristotle’s metaphysics. This metaphysics, as stated earlier on, is a bifurcating and polarizing metaphysics. In Aristotle’s metaphysics, being or reality is believed to be that which consists of substance (essence) and accident, but he goes on to equate being with essence, which is an aspect of being. This kind of conception of reality put forward by Aristotle does not only bifurcate reality, but also polarizes reality, as well as elevate an aspect of it to an absolute instance. This is apparent in Aristotle equating essence with

reality. This can be seen in his statement that reads: “if these are not substance, there is no being in all; for the accidents of it cannot be right to call beings” (Bk B, 5). By this, accident alone cannot be equated with being but substance can. By implication, essence is superior to accident, and those who are concerned with study of essence of being or reality are superior and this science is as well superior. This, for Asouzu, is what has coloured the scientific enterprise down the history of ideas. He substantiates this point thus:

It is interesting to note, that most contention in Western philosophy, in disguises, revolve around the relationship of substance (essence) and accidents. Besides, most metaphysical textbooks, used in teaching teachers of teachers for decades, for example, have subscribed to Aristotle’s radical distinction between “essence” or “substance” and “accidents”. For this reason, they subscribe largely also to Aristotle’s teachings that substance or essence does not need accidents to subsists, whereas accidents need substances on which they inhere. Going by this teaching, reality or being, in the true sense of the word, belongs to the region of substance or essence. (*Inaugural Lecture 16-17*)

This connotes that essence or substance is the subject matter of metaphysics. And since metaphysics is concerned with studying essence which can subsists or exists on its own without accident, it is a superior science to the sciences that are conceived with the study of accident, which cannot exists outside of essence.

It is in this manner that science and its accompanying debate has been conducted in the development of ideas in European. This, for Asouzu, continued even after the renaissance, which came with critical liberal attitude. It is continued due to the radical influence of Aristotelianism that has been passed down their history of ideas. Thus, liberalism was but no solution to the problem. It rather continued the problem. Asouzu captures this point in the following manner:

This is why even in the face of the new-won liberalism, the scientific community was not spared some of the worst excesses of a philosophy of essence while seeking for solutions... The new won critical attitude notwithstanding, most scientists soon started seeing themselves as rivals and

competitors paying allegiance only to the subject matter of their sciences. (*Inaugural Lecture 19*)

This kind of mindset that stems from Aristotle's metaphysics naturally inclines scientists or scholars to thinking that there are arch-rivals, who are not pursuing the same goal or studying the same subject matter. It is based on this that the logical positivists came up to turn the table against metaphysics, which was regarded as the "queen of the sciences" through Aristotle's influence (Kanu, 11). The positivists posit that metaphysics is a non-scientific enterprise since its claims are not accessible to the empirical sciences. (Ayer, *The Impossibility of Metaphysics* 36; Kraft, *The Vienna Cycle* 24, 30-33).

Apart from positing that metaphysics is non-scientific, the positivists questioned the possibility of the social sciences being called 'science' or a 'scientific enterprise'. According to Allen Ryan, even J. S. Mill doubted the scientific status of the social sciences (8-9). In all, they posit that it is only the natural sciences that are science and constitute pure/true knowledge that is empirically accessible to scientists. This kind of mindset is what has followed the Aristotelian metaphysics that divides the sciences as it has done to philosophy itself. In the words of Asouzu:

Such a dichotomizing and polarizing approach is not restricted to the conceptualization of reality, but is visibly evident in the philosophy of praxis, which insists on "the primacy of practical over theoretical reason, or the primacy of practical over technical reason". (*Inaugural Lecture 18*)

It is in this way that the practical sciences overturn the table on the theoretical science and thus see their subject matter as different from the subject matter of the theoretical sciences. They also see their subject matter as superior to that of the theoretical science since for them it can lead to truth that is observable and provable by all. This has adverse effect on philosophy and the sciences in general. It is in this light that Asouzu avers that

Whenever the supremacist conservative and triumphal dimensions, takes the upper hand, the target of philosophical investigation, as the universal science of ultimate reality or science of being as being in as far being can be grasped within

a complementary framework is grossly jeopardised. (*Ibuaru* 44)

Hence, it is impossible to talk about a unified subject matter of the sciences. This is because all sciences see their subject matter as superior and can lead to the truth that they seek and hold to be sacrosanct.

Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Philosophy as the Solution to the Problem of the Unity of Subject Matter of the Sciences

Asouzu in his *ibuanyidanda* philosophy argues that all the sciences have a common subject matter, which has human being as its centre. In his view, all the sciences are confronted with a common problem, which is metaphysical. According to him:

Going by Aristotle's approach, it would seem as if there is real opposition between the subject matter of diverse sciences. This must not be the case, because metaphysical problems are very relevant to the natural sciences, just as the problems of the real world are integral aspect of metaphysics. (*Inaugural Lecture* 22)

Asouzu elucidates this point as follows:

When carefully considered, we see that most sciences that investigate mere empirical nature often preoccupy themselves also with questions concerning fundamental nature of things. This they do the moment they start questioning the foundation on which their assumptions are based. Such questions are often none empirical and the answers sought are none empirical. Whenever such happens, the passion to investigate beyond mere superficial assumptions overwhelms the scientist concerned, the extent that the scientist starts to ask questions about questions raised in his discipline. (*Ikwa Ogwe* 19)

Thus, metaphysical question is at the background of every scientific enterprise, and should be overlooked or taken for granted.

He also argues that the unity of subject matter of the sciences is not only found within metaphysical questions that confront them, but that it is found in the quest to solve the existential human problems. He captures this thus: “since all sciences claim to do services to humanity and the world in general, they are humanistic in orientation and must be concerned with the human problems. And here, clear-cut empirical or metaphysical answers do not suffice” (Asouzu, *Inaugural Lecture* 22). Hence, when one is addressing whether empirical or metaphysical question, one is still doing the same thing – science. This is because all knowledge seeks to solve human problems as well as restore order in the cosmos.

Asouzu remarks that since all the sciences are after solving human and world problems. They can only do this through a proper understanding of reality. And it is not by approaching an aspect of reality as most of the sciences do, but by approaching the entirety of reality. This is because studying an aspect of reality leads to partial truth, but the totality of reality leads to the whole truth that can help to solve the problems of humanity. It is the whole truth that Asouzu wants all the sciences to embrace and confronts. This is the idea of the sciences seeking for the truth. This can also be seen in the work of Emmanuel Eze, who notes that “the most dream of philosophy (is) to speak the truth” (40). Asouzu also brings out his point as he makes philosophy a case in point and asserts that philosophy as a discipline must have a common objective that drives its inquiry. In his words: “Here, one can say that all forms of authenticate philosophizing have the sole objective of making all philosophers focused on a clearly identified subject matter that guides them. This objective is the excogitation of reality truly and authentically” (*Ibuanyidanda* 115). As philosophers focus on examining the whole of reality, the philosophers at this point are not mere philosophers by name or title but are philosophers that transcend disciplinary boundaries as they quest for the truth. Thus, they could be mathematicians, biologists, sociologists and so on, but are also philosophers because of their interest which is the totality of reality that leads to wholistic truth. The scientists at this point are philosophers because they seek to answer pure metaphysical questions that lay behind every scientific inquiry. This metaphysical question as asserted above is the question of truth.

Asouzu extends this dream to all the sciences as he posits that “this dream is not restricted to philosophy alone, but to all the sciences that seek to remain humanistic” (*Inaugural Lecture* 23). Asouzu stresses further this point of all the sciences seeking the truth as avers that:

Scientists always strive, to the best of their ability to tell the whole truth. What this shows is that scientists, in principle, do not seek partial grasp, but full grasp of their subject matters and by so doing they demonstrate that the idea of science is and remains to tell us the truth and if possible the whole truth, about the world. Visible sign of commitment to the truth subsists in commitment to both the metaphysical and empirical dimensions of reality, as these constitute the whole. (*Inaugural Lecture 23*)

What is implied here is that no aspect of reality is the only source of, or means of arriving at, truth. This is to say that it is all aspects of reality that lead to the whole truth that all the sciences seek.

Thus, if any of the sciences restricts itself to only the cognitive empirical aspect of reality, it cannot give or lead to truth. It can only give partial truth. This half or partial truth is no truth at all and cannot solve human existential problems. It cannot also serve nature as it ought to. Asouzu reiterates this thus, “all sciences, no matter their methods have the ultimate end to serve nature in all ramifications” (*Inaugural Lecture 22*). And this ultimate end is to arrive at truth. This is possible only when the entirety of reality is sought after and wholistic truth arrived at. According to Asouzu,

In other words, all sciences must pursue the type of wisdom that never divides and never polarizes in the search for truth. It is in this way that they can demonstrate that the wisdom they seek is the type that unites and not one that divides. It is in this way that their truth claims must be such that reconciles the essential with the accidental, the relative and the absolute. (*Inaugural Lecture 23-24*)

It is therefore not an aspect of reality that constitutes truth. It is the whole of reality. It is the study of both the essential and the accidental that can give one a comprehensive idea of truth. And this is what all the sciences are after – to grasp truth in totality through an understanding of the whole of reality.

What is being said is that all the sciences have truth as their subject matter. They all seek truth and strive to arrive at it through studying the whole of reality and not part of it.

Truth as a transcendental quality of being has an integral unity within itself. In this intrinsic unity subsists its intelligibility and character as guide of all scientific inquiries. Here, the new complementary ontology proposes a complementary truth. Within this framework, truth is sought in the comprehensiveness of its interrelatedness and in the complementary multidimensional character of its expression. (*Ibuanyidanda* 112)

In the view of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy truth cannot be sought after by considering only an aspect of reality. This implies having partial truth. Truth is only possible when one studies reality in its entirety. This is possible when scientists make recourse to *ibuanyidanda* ontology. This can be found in *ibuanyidanda* principle of integration or harmonious complementation. This principle states that “anything that exists serves a missing link of reality”. Each of the truths promoted by the diverse sciences stands in need of complementation since they are incomplete truth. It is the complementation of these partial truths that will lead to wholistic truth. This is to say that all partial truth is mutually dependent on each other for them to be said to be truth. Asouzu brings out this point as follows:

In this mode of mutual complementarity, the human mind shows its intrinsic relatedness to the character of truth itself, which has much to do with the comprehensive nature of reality. This reality can be grasped in the mode of intrinsic relatedness of those substances and accidents of which all things are constituted, without division and without polarization. (*Ibuanyidanda* 112)

The way out of the problem of scientists considering their own subject matter as the superior and only subject matter that ought to be studied can be overcome through existential conversion, with the help of noetic propaedeutic. It is this that leads to a philosophical mindset, which Asouzu calls “*obioha*” (*Ikwa Ogwe* 201-203, 217). It is this mindset that will help scientists to realize that just studying an aspect of reality can never lead to truth. In the words of Asouzu,

A philosopher-king in this sense is one who has acquired a philosophical mindset and not necessarily a practitioner of philosophy as a discipline or one who claims to be one. Here,

each one of us can be that philosopher that is guided by this overriding higher objective of operating from the background of knowing truth in its entirety. (*Ibuanyidanda* 115)

It is this philosophical (*ibuanyidanda*) mindset that can bring about truth in its entirety. It is *obioha* that lead scientists beyond studying a particular aspect of reality as the only reality that exists and ought to be studied as the only source of knowledge and truth. With this mindset scientists look beyond their relative positions and discoveries as absolute truth. It enables them to see this fragmentary truth as limited and in need of complementation. It is with this mindset that objective truth will become the focus of all scientific enterprise. In other words, “this is that aspect of doing science that transcends science itself, as to raise questions that go beyond science itself and such that drive all scientific inquiries beyond all attainable limits” (*Ibuanyidanda* 116). All that one is saying is that even when scientists disagree in their methods or discoveries, they are “pursuing a higher objective, which is truth in its entirety” (*Ibuanyidanda* 116), although through different means or route. The *ibuanyidanda* mindset will help scientist to begin to speak in one voice about a unified perception of reality which is possible by the harmonizing of their diverse conceptions of reality, which can only lead to partial truth if left alone. But with the harmonizing of these diverse conceptions of reality a more wholistic understanding of truth can be attend. This is in congruence with Asouzu truth and authenticity criterion, which posits that “never elevate any world immanent missing link to an absolute instance” (*ODIP* 24; *Ibuanyidanda ... and Some* 71, 107).

This truth and authenticity criterion helps to stress the point that no relative truth can be absolute truth. It also posits that relative truths stand in need of complementation from other truths. This thought that is clearly stated in Asouzu’s principle of harmonious complementation or integration which writes “anything that exists serves a missing link of reality” (*ODIP* 23). This is to say that all relative truths are missing link to each other. Asouzu argues this thus:

Since anything that exists serves a missing link, things have to be considered first and foremost in themselves as to determine what they are in themselves. At the same time, they have to be considered in relationship to other missing links of reality in view of determining their purpose. It is within this framework that the polarization that has hitherto characterized scientific

propositions in situations of conflict can better be resolved.
(*Ikwa Ogwe* 54)

Asouzu buttresses this further as he avers:

Thus in matters of scientific inquiry the missing link evident could constitute an important point of departure in another science. Problems raised in a particular science could be elucidated in the off-shoots in another science. The isolated study of issues within the sciences creates an illusion of independence that could be detrimental if not disintegrative to the purpose of the sciences itself. (*Ikwa Ogwe* 17)

This purpose is to seek objective truth that stems from the wholistic studies of reality that can be possible through complementation of all the scientific inquiries that are in existence.

Conclusion

What has been argued from the onset of this paper is that the sciences and scientists have greatly disagreed with respect to their subject matter. And their point of disagreement has made scientists to conclude that their subject matter is the only subject matter that can lead to truth, which is the centre or interest of science. But this paper has also posited that no particular science or method of science can lead to objective knowledge. They can only lead to relative knowledge due to the fact that they are concerned with particular aspects of reality, which cannot lead to objective truth. This quest of the sciences for objective truth is the metaphysical question that guides all scientific inquiry. It is in this light that Asouzu asserts that it is necessary to note that

Question which metaphysics has to (be) tackle in a more intensive manner is one, which actually confronts other sciences without some scientists being aware of this. In this sense, it has to be stressed that no serious science is complete without incorporating into its inquiry, one way or the other, the issues that metaphysics addresses. It is when this consciousness is not in place that issues relating to this common subject matter, apart from becoming obscure, may

even become almost irrelevant to the sciences concerned. (*Ikwa Ogwe* 12)

This common subject matter of the sciences that is metaphysical is truth. All the sciences quest for truth in their diverse methods. This does not imply that the truth that is discovered in any of these sciences is in any way the absolute. This is not true. The truth discovered in each of this science is relative and needs to be complemented by other truths discovered in other sciences, in order to arrive at objective truth which is the aim of all scientific enterprise.

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