

## **ASOUZU'S BEING-IN-CONTROL (IMA-ONWE ONYE)**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper was written to examine and explain even better Asouzu's Being-in-control (Ima-onwe-onye) concept. Professor Innocent I. Asouzu in his complementary ontology envisions a world where actors are completely in control (Ima-onwe-onye), ultimately guided in thought and deed by complementary mindset. This paper did not criticize Asouzu's concept of Being-in-control; it did not adjoin issues to it, rather it explained in plain words, made clear, elucidated and justified this great principle for better understanding of ima-onwe-onye principle and complimentary ontology.*

**Keywords:** Being-in-control, complimentary ontology

### **Introduction**

Professor Innocent I. Asouzu in his complementary ontology envisions a world where the actors (Human beings) are ultimately guided in thought (first) and deed (second) by a complementary mindset. This is a situation where actors will come to realize that they are only a fraction of a whole. At this point existence or interpretation of reality becomes "that anything that exists serves a missing link of reality". In this case all stakeholders, actors, come to embrace the fact that the answers they expect can never be obtained unless they are geared towards a 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 mind set.

The above background leads to Asouzu's being-in-control which is the core responsibility of this research. The Ibuanyidana Philosophy conveys some special facts and teachings on how actors can be interpreted to as being-in-control.

Our task in this work therefore is to examine Asouzu's Ima-Onwe-Onye (Being-in-control), to completely determine its existential meaning and implications. We shall consider and deduce what deposition is expected of an actor, when designated to being-in-control. Possible applications of this concept in the likes of being-in-control and absolute self expression, being-in-control, absolute power, religion and idea of God, being-in-control, the idea of God and the joy of being (*Jide K' Iji*); being-in-control and contemporary religious experience in Africa, limits of communication Vis-à-vis Ibuanyidanda; being-in-control general laws, super maxims and the African condition, shall be consider for better clarification and understanding of the essence of reality.

### **A Brief Exposition on the Theories of Being**

Being has been defined as a state of existence or reality. It is an extremely broad concept encompassing objectives and subjective features of reality and existence. (Wikipedia) 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 philosophy – 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). 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 changes. 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 are believed to be the clan that constitute the “form” and that aspect of reality that defines enduring parts of our worlds, constitute 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. A follow up of Aristotle are the scholastics. 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 brief exposition of the

In the wisdom of the Scholastics being is everything that exists and derives its existence from the external being-God. They agree with Aristotle that being has the changing and the 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 Ockam, Alexiles Munong, Husserl, Hagel, Bradley etc., 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.

Asouzu in his wisdom sustains a definition of being that is quite unique. He believes that Being is complementary. In Ibuanidanda 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 (Ibuanidanda, 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 do 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 Being-in-control: An Overview**

Asouzu believes that reality cannot be apprehended without a system or method. When 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. This is what he calls *Ikwa Ogwé* (Ikwa Oge, 5). In other words "...methodological system approaches enables us to follow step by step the mode of reflection of a thinker or the strategies a thinker devises to penetrate reality " (Ikwa Oge, 6). Thus, Asouzu in a mission to create a bridge (method and principles) through which we can penetrate reality articulated the Ibuanyidanda principle and other philosophical explanation 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. Before the articulation of this concept of a complementary system of thought Asouzu believes that human nature was under attack from different societal forces. These forces include challenges of the triadic forgetfulness, the varied character of 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 (Ibuanyidanda, 56). When an actor sees being as an expression of missing links, it is said to being-in-control. This is the point in one's existential condition where he is totally free from the phenomenon of concealment (*Ihe Mkpú chí anyá*) and all ambivalence situations.

### **Being-In-Control Vis-À-Vis The Concept Of Absolute Power Religion And Idea Of God**

In order for Asouzu to make a better teaching of his Being-in-control theory, he devised a means, very philosophical, by applying it to different fields of human existential conditions. Thus in this section, we shall examine the various ways Asouzu explained further the being-in-control theory and its application in some sectors of our existential condition starting with the challenge of absolute power, religion, idea of God, general laws and end with super-maxims and the African condition.

Under that concept of Being-in-control, absolute power, religion and idea of God. Asouzu discovered a problem. That problem is the situation where the world is threatened by human endemic thirst for power and absolute power over other human beings. This is what he calls the danger of being-in-control in most negative and vile form. According to him this negative version of being-in-control is existence in our systems, today where conflicts are instigated, and human beings manipulate nations, incite against each other in view of creating enabling atmosphere to control them and demonstrate one's position as superior over many others. In connection to practical example, Asouzu opined that United Nations and most of its organs can be manipulated, intimidated to submission by those who think that they have "absolute power". This same problem and challenge finds expression in the issue of religion and the idea of God.

In dealing with the idea of God and the face of religion today, Asouzu discovered that religion has become one of the most important instruments of manipulation and control. The problem is that actors in this field in trying to perform religious activities have allowed themselves to come under attack by human ambivalent situation which is tumultuous and vicissitudinous. This existential darkness makes actors make interpretative the idea of God that is non-complementary in nature. By their definition of the absolute being, it is obvious that they have no idea of the mean of being which is complementary. This is why Asouzu opine that anything that exists serves a missing link of reality. But the idea of God projected today pictures reality as bifurcating and polarized against unity. Ibuanyidanda philosophy assumes that any man who carries out religious activities in the vilest moods of seeking to salvage humanity from the grips of darkness and forces of evil and destruction, which is nothing other than their own very selves and their ideas should be pitied for *Oma gi own ya* (not in control). Thus the call to adopt Ibuanyidanda principle informs actors that:

- God is absolute
- No spatio-temporal category has capacity to depict the mode of his operation as an efficient cause in immensity of his being. Thus let this claim that I know God more than you be discouraged.
- Any religion that seeks to uphold the idea of God that heat up ethnic and tribal sentiments, seeks to polarizes the world and set nations against the other has lost control of itself.

### **Being-in-control, General Laws, Super Maxims and the African condition**

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. (Ibuanyidanda, 358) Example of such self-evident premises is Igbo's "the nearer the better and the safer" super-maxim. This axiom explains prevalent mindset of most actors in contentions situations within traditional African communities, where a nearer neighbor is perceived as unharmed and other as harmful. 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 feels unsaved when encountering others outside his/her clan. The respect accorded to such maxims is evident in the names or expressions like: *Umunna*, (kindred are greater) *Nwannemuka* (my brother or sister is greater) etc.

This is where the problem lies. For Asouzu, this super-maxim is nothing but an expression that shows or reviews the human consciousness still at the level of causal work immanent pre-deterministic con-comitant commitment. The cause of such commitment is as a result of the challenges arising from ones overhaul ambivalent situation prevalent in the society. But, the principle of Being-in-control advocates, we should grow pass the level under this universal weakness endemic in human nature. The answer or way still remains the programme 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 there 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.

## **Conclusion**

A closer look upon the language expression of this paper reviews the fact that the paper agrees with Ibuanyidanda principle as vibrant system of thought or a bridge for researchers seeking answers about the nature of reality or being. We know of Hegelism, Kantian categorical imperative and likes, with their prospects and impediments, we see Ibuanyidanda principle as exposing a new prospect in the system of methods for 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 allows the causal world immanent pre-deterministic concomitant mode of thinking prevalent in the societies to over whelm them may find it difficult to under Ibuanyidanda principles. I am not such a person. A clear examination of the Ibuanyidanda being-in-control reviews the principle as a tool for rescuing humanity. Humanity, full of manipulators flooded with phenomenon of concealment (Ihe mkpu chi anya), which makes it difficult for actors to transcend the limits imposes by maxims has bifurcated and polarized reality at its detriment. This is why principle of being-in-control explains better the way out for actors to attain salvation through noetic propaedeutic, a way out of the paradoxes and the tension surrounding reality.

In conclusion, the way out for humanity in answer to predicating phenomenon of concealment (Ihe Mkpu Chi anya), unintended ethnocentric commitment and like is mind training. Thus, let all actors accept the tenant of this principle and decide to work by it, so that the world will be a better place.

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