

IBANYIDANDA, DESCRIPTIVE STATEMENT AND THE SUPER MAXIM.

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Abstract

This work has discussed and/ or analyzed what Ibuanyidanda Descriptive statement and the super maxim designates. In doing the analysis, we did not lose sight of making an explicit introduction into our essay. Also major terms and/ or concepts were vigorously elaborated upon. We took pain also to critically evaluate the Ibuanyidanda Descriptive statement and the super maxim.

Keywords: Ibuanyidanda, Descriptive Statement, Super Maxim.

Introduction

The Ibuanyidanda Descriptive statement and the super maxim is the thought of Prof. Innocent I. Asouzu of the Calabar School of Philosophy, University of Calabar, Calabar Nigeria. The Ibuanyidanda Descriptive statement and the super maxim is the concern of this paper, we shall in this essay make explication of what the Ibuanyidanda designates, we shall give account also of what the descriptive statement and the super maxim implies. But before doing the above, we shall not lose sight of the need to clarify major terms and/or concepts; this is for clarity of purpose and freeness from every form of vagueness, in consonance with analytic philosophy's notion of clarification of concepts. It is in this regard that we shall define Ibuanyidanda, Descriptive statement and the super maxim. This we shall do without equivocations.

Definition Of Concepts

Ibuanyidanda - It is said to be a composite word made up of three parts to writ:

- Ibu, which means "load or task"
- Anyi, designates "insurmountable for"

- Danda implies a “Species of ants”.

According to Asouzu, the concept Ibuanyidanda draws its inspiration from the teachings of traditional Igbo philosophers of the contemporary system of thought (Asouzu P.11). Ibuanyidanda is the principle of togetherness, that is the coming together of all parts of reality either in the physical or the metaphysical realm, in order to create a nexus without which there will be a missing link.

The Ibuanyidanda rejects a one-sided fragmented or exclusive approach to human interest, concerns and projects a complementary, comprehensive, wholesome or inclusive approach (The International Research, Page 57). The Ibuanyidanda is an Igbo term which means: “No task is insurmountable for danda (the ants)”. The Igbos views that danda, because of their mutual dependence, have the capacity to carry loads that appear bigger and heavier than them (Asouzu P.19). But in philosophy it’s Rev. Fr. Prof. Innocent I. Asouzu of the Calabar School of philosophy that borrowed, the concept: “Ibuanyidanda” from the Igbo people to explain his philosophy of complementarities (Messembe, unpublished lecture note).

Descriptive statement: This is a statement that gives an elaborate account of an event, it makes attempt at describing a state of affairs. Most Descriptive statements are not true, but may seem true on false value. Asouzu noted that, like the statement “Ibu anyi danda”. Statements like this are evidently not always true and valid in all ramifications. Even though in some cases we think and/or assume that such statements are true. Some other Descriptive statements in the Igbo language are to writ: Njiko ka, ummuna bu ike, igwe bu ike etc. all these are statements in Igbo describing one thing, event or the other. Descriptive statements are a statement that gives us an insight into the state of affairs, by way of describing explicitly what an event and/or state of affairs designates.

Descriptive statements state a factual description of human affairs, e.g.: “the state of much of the Middle East is in turmoil”. That is a descriptive statement.

Super maxim: A super maxim is a law-like dictate that fundamentally controls our actions, such that we mistake their hypothetical character for a universal imperative (The International Researcher, P. 59). In Ibuanyidanda, the super maxim can be said to mean “the basic rule of danda” and summarizes what all hypothetical injunctions seek to express, which are designed to help stakeholders

uphold a bond of intimacy needed to securing privately motivated actions (Asoouzu, P. 24).

An Elaboration Of Ibuanyidanda

Ibuanyidanda is an explanation of the complementary nature of beings from the inter-relatedness devoid of polarization and exclusiveness, for the new complementary ontology, to be is the capacity to be in mutual complementary relationship with all things that exist and it is that which Ibuanyidanda idea of complementarity seeks to explain or address. The idea of Ibuanyidanda seeks to supersede all abstract, abstruse and bifurcating modes of conceptualizing being (Asoouzu, p. 10).

Before going further into giving an explication of the Ibuanyidanda philosophy, it is imperative to dissect the word Ibuanyidanda. The term Ibuanyidanda is a composite word made up of the following parts:

- Ibu, which means “load or task”
- Anyi, designates “insurmountable for”
- Danda implies a “Species of ants”.

Asoouzu in his book, “Ibuanyidanda, New complementary ontology” (Pg. 11), posits that the orthographic style Ibuanyidanda instead of Ibu, Anyi, Danda, draws its inspiration from the teachings of traditional igbo philosophers of the complementary system of thought. For these igbo philosophers, the idea of complementarity is inferred from observing a specie of ants called danda. These ants, ‘danda’ have the capacity to carry load that appear bigger and heavier than them. What this implies is that they can surmount every difficulty tasks when they are mutually dependent on each other in the complementation of their efforts. The concept Ibuanyidanda is a very important idea in Igbo vocabulary. It is a way of life and constitutes a typical Igbo work song *Bunu bunu oo* “ibuanyidanda” lift the load, lift the load, nothing is impossible for danda, the ant (chorused many times in refrain) it is around this concept that the new complementary ontology is articulated as its horizon. For anything to claim existence it has to fulfill a minimum condition which subsists in its commitment to mutual complementary relationship between it and the other units with which it shares a common frame work. When this condition is fulfilled we can then

refer to such a thing as what is and has head and tail-end (ihe di, nwee isi na odu). A thing that exists has no head or tail-end (ihe enwegi isi na odu).

Ibuanyidanda Descriptive Statement

The character of the Descriptive statement: "Ibu anyi danda" (no load is in surmountable for danda), umunna bu ike, (the kindred is strength), Njiko ka (togetherness is the best strategy).

All the above descriptive statements as opined by Asouzu enshrine mere hypothetical injunctions that are mistaken for categorical commands, and as such, acting in tune with them, always uncritically is bound to lead to error of judgment (Asouzu, p. 24). Such expressions for Asouzu, enshrine hypothetical injunctions of the type "The nearer the better and the safer" which are easily mistaken for universal laws. They are habitual assumptions that have inherently conditional dimensions that are not always evident. A typical example is Mbiti's widely acclaimed phrase "I am because we are; and since we are therefore I am". Many rely upon this phrase to derive some of those principles and ideas based upon which they seek to construct a communalist theory needed to validate African experience of the world.

However, this phrase serves as one of the major point of departure for assuming that the idea of intimate belongingness bestows Africa experience of the world its unique character. But this is not always the case, because those that are nearer to us are not always better and safer, and so adhering strictly to super maxims of this kind to legitimize their actions, people can always err even in the point of negating those values they cherish, believing that they are acting in the most authentic mode. Such existential errors are induced by mechanisms and phenomena that have the capacity to distort the internal workings of human consciousness, and this can make people not always conscious of their errors and as such be acting unintentionally.

Elaboration Of The Super-Maxim

Super maxim according to Asouzu, in the International Researcher is a law-like dictate that fundamentally controls our actions such that we mistake their hypothetical character for a universal imperative. Within the context of Complementary Reflection, all maxims relating to the realization of human interest can be reduced to this one super maxim that: "The nearer the better and the safer". It is that which all human are susceptible to this fallacy and illusion.

In the light of the above, the super-maxim of the nearer, the better, and safer is a misguided concept which is operational in every human endeavour, and most times being used as danda, the super maxim can be seen to mean “the basic standard in appropriating what ought to be in a parochial manner which still tilts towards self-interest, and egoistic tendencies, it is on this note that Asouzu explains further that, the super-maxim; The Nearer, the – better and the safer, is “All forms of exclusive mindset derive from our natural tendency to self-preservation.” This again expresses itself in our propensity to secure our interest first at the expense of those of others. To survive better than others, we have the general tendency to highlight certain things we imagine are special or exceptional about ourselves. We encounter this tendency in almost all spheres of life and at almost all leads of our existential situation. In this way racism ethnicity, nationalism, tribalism and all forms of exclusive tendencies derive their force from the primordial human natural inclination to self-preservation (Asouzu 2004, 68). The point being made is that human by nature only seek those things that are conducive towards fulfilling their self-interest. Our primitive instinct of self-preservation instigates us to share interests only with those we assume are those nearest to us, who we believe, or assume will guarantee our survival most. We believe it is better and safer to relate with those nearest to us, we are more inclined to stay close to those who are closest to us and to those with whom we share certain common interest and have similar values. Consequently, we are drawn to our kith and kin, those from our tribe, from our clan, from our ethnic group, our race, our political groups etc.

Ibuanyidanda Descriptive Statement And The Super Maxim

Human by nature are egoistic, they tend to preserve their interest in any given situation or circumstance no wonder, for the golden age philosophers the preservation of the self is the first law of nature, this in time past and still in the 21st century, the golden rule of self-preservation is inherent in all human actions irrespective of individual prowess in life.

In his “Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection) and some Basic Philosophical Problems in Africa Today.” Asouzu asserts that this self-preservative stigma is constructing impact of our tension – laden ambivalent existential experience of reality and the Mkpuchi anyi (phenomena of concealment) (pg, 22). What this means is that agents or individuals have not allowed the limitation of being to be the cause of their joy instead the reverse is the case. If individuals are aware of

the ambivalence of human nature, then Descriptive statement such as Ibu anyi danda (No task is insurmountable for the ants), Umunna bu ike (the kindred is strength), Igwe bu ike (multitude togetherness is strength), Njiko ka (togetherness is the best strategy) and the super maxim of the nearer the better the safer (pg, 24) would hold no water.

In line with the above, social agents tend to interpret these Descriptive statements to suit them thereby making other individuals who are not intimate relations by blood, marriage, clan, village, community etc as enemies or infidels. The society have been beclouded in their reasoning to think and even conclude illogically that any member(s) outside their comfort zone tends to be a threat among or to them, thus they result in excommunicating such individuals, one way or the other.

The super maxim and Descriptive statements has made human consciousness react “vigorously, but uncritically, and at times quite unintentionally to lessons of commonsense experience” (Asouzu , pg 23). However, since experience has showed that “multitude is strength, and it stands undisputed that togetherness is strength, that we stand to succeed when we poll our resource together, and hold closely to each other in times of crises , and it is better to help and support those who are nearer to us. Since... they do not pose the same threat which outsiders pose” (pg 23). Individual tends to exalt their kindred than outsiders, this is what Asouzu calls Ihe-mkpuchi anyi (phenomenon of concealment) because this action for the individuals are an insider command, norm or values (pg. 25) and mistake the descriptive as a universal law or imperative, and this makes them prone to error.

Asouzu (25) explicate on the above; “stakeholders can always err... since such existential errors are induced by mechanisms and phenomena that have the capacity to distort the internal workings of a man’s consciousness, actors are not always conscious of their errors and can as such be acting unintentionally”. The Descriptive statements such as Ibuanyi Danda (no task is insurmountable for the ants (danda), umunna bu ike (the kindred is strength), Igwe bu ike (multitude or togetherness is strength), Njiko ka (togetherness is the best strategy) and the super maxim of the nearer the better and the safer, and concealed the aura of complementarily, also this Descriptive statement can once again be seen in the mibiti philosophy of brotherhood, when he asserts that “I am, because we are,

and since we are , therefore I am” (Asouzu, P. 25), this mibiti’s assertion is tantamount to hatred, contempt etc among individuals of diverse culture and/or origin. Also the super maxim has encouraged negative attributes such as nepotism, ethnicity and tribalism and to some extent this could be identified as some of the problems of Nigeria. Thus, the question which is pressing at this juncture is what is the way out?

Critical Evaluation Of Ibuanyidanda Descriptive Statement And The Super Maxim

The Ibuanyidanda Descriptive statement and the super maxim as articulated by Rev. Fr. Prof Innocent I. Asouzu is an eye opener over the limitations in human nature. This philosophy by Asouzu will serve as remedy to human existential problems, which we at times fall into though unintentionally. Here, we see how due to the impact of the phenomenon of the mkpucki anya (phenomenon of concealment), it is not always immediately evident to us that we can be the very cause of those very problems that are weighing us down. In such situation, it is not always clear to us that precisely our personal anti-social acts are the very causes of the problems we are complaining about (Asouzu, p.33).

But on the contrary, since human beings are too complex and/ or diverse in views and aspirations, it will be difficult to subject them into coming together, as there are still some humans who will still want to divert from the principle of Ibuanyidanda. And on these grounds, the Ibuanyidanda will not hold sway generally as a theory for human unity and/ or togetherness. There are cases also were people who are not near to us by birth, marriage, religion and ideology tends to be very harmful of us, case study is the harm done to Christians in Northern Nigeria by some religious sect members in the guess Boko Haram (Kanu 5).

Be that as it may, the Ibuanyidanda descriptive statement and the super maxim will for the greater good of the greater number of people in the society serve as a panacea for unity, progress and development of our world, particularly Nigeria. Ibuanyidanda Descriptive statement and the super maxim is therefore a master piece for development.

Summary/Conclusion

We have in this essay, been discussing and/ or analyzing on what the Ibuanyidanda Descriptive statement and the super maxim designates. In doing the analysis, we did not lose sight of making an explicit introduction into our essay. Also major terms and/ or concepts were vigorously elaborated upon. We took pain also to critically evaluate the Ibuanyidanda Descriptive statement and the super maxim.

It is imperative to state without equivocation that Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda Descriptive statement and the super maxim need to be taught to students and none student the world over. This is because it is the only way humanity can be aware of her short comings and/ or her ambivalent nature, in other to make change and ensure unity, harmony, peace and progress thrive in our society. Ibuanyidanda Descriptive statement and the super maxim is therefore the ideal for social – cultural and human developments.

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