Complementary Ethics

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One of the central ideas of complementary reflection is that ethics and morality do not concern themselves solely with right and wrong actions or with good and bad conducts but primarily also with the joy and sadness of human action. It is therefore not enough to state that an action is good or right. Such an action must also be a source of joy for the actor. Hence, a morally good act is one, which is performed in the consciousness that it has a comprehensive and total outreach and with a view of being a source of joy to the actor and is capable of radiating such a joy in a dynamic complementary future referential manner. To act is to act for the joy of being and to act is to have the imperative of complementarism fully realised in all existential situations. It is under this condition that missing links of reality function as modes of expression of being in history.

Therefore, an action is performed not only because of the goodness that sustains it but more so for the authentic joy that animates and upholds it. A joy is authentic if it offers the actor reasons to believe that the criterion of truth and authenticity is upheld in his action. In this way, acting out of joy and acting out of goodness find one indivisible and total legitimacy in the one ultimate foundation of being. It is only in this way that this joy gives special character to ethical conduct. It does this in a manner that enhances and sustains authentic existence such that individuals and social institutions attain their autonomy fully and completely by acting under the impelling force of the joy of being. In acting, therefore, the mind is not only drawn by the good that sustains it but also in evident insight of the joy, that drives it.

This fact notwithstanding, we notice that human beings do not always act in response to those things that bring joy to their lives but often

insist on doing those things that leave them sad and broke. One of the most difficult tasks of ethics is to unravel the root cause of this paradox. This is the paradox of the ambivalence of human interest. This paradox subsists in the fact that a person, in given existential life situations, insists on doing those things that he would ordinarily not like to do believing this to be the wisest thing to do. If in performing an act a person experiences sadness instead of the joy of being, this is indicative of the fact that such an action is not comprehensive enough in its conceptualisation and execution.

The duty of ethics and morality then is to show that for an action to be considered human it must be comprehensive enough. Hence, one of the necessary conditions for considering something an authentic human action is its ability to be articulated within a wider framework of meaning as to be as universal as possible. Where our knowledge and volition are not comprehensive and universal enough, the dangers are always given that we choose in apparent clear and full insight those things that invariably bring sadness into our lives.

In this way, ethics seeks to show how and why we should replace our fragmented and world immanent structured interests with those that have their legitimacy in the authenticating foundation of all missing links of reality in a non-contradictory future oriented manner. Similarly, it seeks to show how those ethical and moral laws that bind the ego unconditionally must be made evident in a way that provides us clear insight into the nature of our authentic interests.

Whereas ordinarily we approach the issue of morality and ethics from the point of view of the aim establishing human action, complementary reflection achieves the same thing by pointing out the implications of erecting our actions on contradictory non-complementary foundation. Instead of asking the question what is the good in its ultimate and universal form, complementary reflection asks the question what would be the case if what we claim as the interest guiding our action turns out to be false. It is the same question concerning what would be the case if an actor insists living in a contradictory manner. The answer is clear: The actor automatically ceases to make claims that he is actually acting because his claims obviously do not tally with his action. This is the moment where a person chooses non-being to being in this process of self-negation.

Now, living entails commitment to existence in the most joyous comprehensive, total, and complementary manner. It further entails comprehensive commitment to all those things that help this joy materialise and enable it be sustained. If it turns out that we are committed to existence and do those things that negate this existence, it means that we wish to live and

not to live at the same time. This is a contradiction.

Contradictory existence subsists in the negation of the ontological imperative establishing our action. It also means a negation of the joy of being in a way that one affirms and negates existence at the same time. To be entails those measures we take concretely to show the joy of being in our action. A situation where we negate consciously and willingly, but in implicit ignorance, the legitimacy conveyed by the principle of contradiction to our action and the truth and authenticity criterion, we run the risk also of depriving our action of the foundation on which it is erected even if only erroneously. This is the moment when we commit ourselves to the dictates of the ego in a way that makes the ego absolute in total negation of its relative constitution. A person, who lives in a contradictory way, as to negate the relativity of his existence does so only in the illusion that he is living authentically.

A person shows therefore that he is human, the moment this person seeks to be conscious of the forcefulness of ethical and moral laws as these find expression in the imperative of the principle of complementarity. To act ethically reasonable therefore, is to uphold the imperative establishing our actions. This imperative subsists in the harmonisation of our actions, in joy, with the authentic objective establishing them. It is the consciousness that all fragmented moments of our existence are moments of missing link of reality that seek unity in the foundation of our being. A deontological ethics, as has been pointed out, overlooks this fact and seeks this imperative in a way that negates the important role, which fragmented relative moments of historical experiences play in the execution of human action. These fragmented relative dimensions of history are aspects of the totality of the joy that gives meaning and justification to human action. Hence, to act in consideration of the authentic joy we derive from our action is equivalent to acting in accordance to the dictates of the being that is the cause of our joy. This is why to act from duty must take seriously the joy we derive from acting from the joy of being to be ethically meaningful. In this way, the fragmented moments of historical existence show themselves as the only condition for ethical conduct.

Now, an issue deserves particular attention within the context of complementary reflection. Every human action is subject to the dictates of human ambivalent situation. To act ethically or morally responsible entails acting in view of overcoming this ambivalence. To overcome this ambivalence means choosing the positive side of our ambivalent situation. If one states that human actions are under the dictate of our ambivalent situation, does this leave the individual with the freedom to choose? That is to say, a

person might argue that a person who is acting under the dictates of his ambivalent situation is under no obligations since the individual is not free after all. Replying to this objection, I would say that the contrary is the case because the fact speaks for itself. Our ambivalent situations are situations of choice, where a person is free to choose or not to choose the negative side of this ambivalent interest. What is decisive is his manner of choice. In most cases, it is a choice made in very clear and evident insight of what is required of him but a choice made in error. The error is with regard to what one genuinely desires and wills insightfully. We can illustrate the damages resulting from such free choices by reference to the following four examples that give us insight into the nature and level of culpability that is involved.

A. A person can suffer injury unintentionally and here we say that this person is not directly the cause of his misfortune. This is the case where the requisite knowledge concerning a type of agent that can cause some effects is not in place. Example is when a person does not know that germs cause sickness and does not take the necessary precautions to protect himself from damages resulting from exposure to contamination with dangerous viruses. Due to his type of ignorance of the cause, his culpability is conditional.

B. Another case is the situation where a person suffers injury out of his desire to take possession of something, which he willingly and insightfully identified as good. However, this thing is injurious to his health. His knowledge notwithstanding, he insightfully and willingly chooses the agent as to suffer some damage. Here he knows the cause of his problems and choose it.

C. Another case is similar to the second, this is where the person, insightfully, willingly identifies something as good, but is ignorant of the fact that he as the actor is the cause of his problems.

While A may be blamed conditionally for his problem, B and C should be blamed grievously for their problems because of the level of insight and freedom involved in their choices. In the case of C, something peculiar is involved, here although the actor chooses his problems freely and insightfully, he is not aware of the fact that he is the cause of his problem. For this reason, he may not understand why he should be blamed for his action. This is why he would complain and blame external factors for his predicament and problems.

C is the type of situation we are dealing with in most ambivalent situations. Here, the agent suffers so much illusion due to his inability to come to terms with this ambivalence that he can be the cause of his predicaments without knowing it. In such situations, a person chooses a thing in-

sightfully and willingly but is ignorant of the fact that his choice is the cause of his problem.

The fact that his choice and the object of his cognition turns out later on to be the wrong thing does not matter much. This is where the error reverts to culpability because he has not taken the necessary precautions to forestall a problem that he would have been in a position to avert. This is why this person starts to regret his choice and action but may not be fully aware that he was the one who caused the problem due to his inability to be conscious of the ambivalence of his situation. The tragedy of his situation becomes very evident when this person imagines that his problems are caused by an external agent other than himself. In this case, he starts looking for scapegoats and for sacrificial lambs.

That is to say, a person desires the wrong thing insightfully and wilfully believing it to be the correct thing to do. At the initial stage of his action, his intention is clear, that is, he wishes to take possession of something he identifies as desirable, but which turns out to be wrong. The problem is that one exercises an act of the will in full insight of what one wants but his choice is directed towards the wrong side of what he wants. Whether he desires the correct thing or the wrong thing afterwards does not actually matter, the issue is that he initially desires it wilfully and insightfully.

We are witnesses to those situations where people act wrongly in apparent insight into what they know and will. What this shows is that individuals can be committed wilfully and insightfully to those things that can undermine their interests believing this to be right. It does not show that in full insight and volition they do actually follow their inauthentic interests.

Complementary reflection aims at creating awareness concerning such wrong choices that can be averted through creating consciousness concerning the ambivalent nature of our interests in all existential situations. It further calls attention to the phenomenon of concealment, which can render all good will null and void. The main objective of such critical awareness is to be able to recognise our interests for what they stand for in their capacity as the motor driving our actions.

Knowing a priori the authentic nature of our ambivalent interests is not easy but it can be achieved through the rigorous process of learning that makes conversion of ontological categories of comprehensiveness, totality, and universality a habitual assumption in all our actions. The mind converts the transcendent categories of being into existential categories through this process. In this process, the mind is enabled to act within the confines of its legitimacy in a habitual manner.

Inability of the mind to act under this form of habitual assumption

can result not only in its getting entangled in all manners of ambivalence, but worst still is the fact that the actor easily suffers a double tragedy which subsists in the fact of his being both culpable and a loser. An example suffices: A person sees a piece of land and believes that it contains gold. Now, in his greed, he sells everything he has and takes possession of the land. If the land actually contains gold, and if this gold is comprehensive enough to give him the satisfaction he wants he is a winner.

If it contains less precious minerals than he had earlier on anticipated he is a loser. Now, if due to his greed, he has not given full thought of the possibility of the land containing lesser minerals and he commits all his resources, both human and material, acquiring the piece of land, he may be very disappointed if his expectations do not materialise. The fact that his expectations did not materialise has nothing to do with the fact that he committed himself to this act insightfully and willingly. Furthermore, whether the land contains gold or not does not invalidate his greed. If now he had known that the land could have contained less precious minerals from the outset, he would be more cautions in his action. That is to say, he would be more careful in making his choice. In this case, this person would definitely harmonise his desire with the content of his expectations. This care and awareness concerning the content of our desires and the object of our knowledge is what is often lacking in our relationship with the world that is often ambivalent. In most cases, we approach our interests in a non-comprehensive absolute manner that they make us losers and culpable at the same time.

In most cases, we are not circumspect enough such that we are caught off guard in the wrong side of what we desire. We often have a one-way approach to the world and this is why we often make ourselves appear strange to the world and victims of our ambivalent interests. This is the paradox of ambivalent existence. Thus, ambivalent existence entails an existential ignorance of enormous proportion and consequences where a person acts in limited insight into his possibilities and thereby negates the comprehensiveness, totality, and universality that gives authenticity to human life. This is one of the highest forms of ignorance. The reason is that a person thereby employs his energies in those fragmented and relative moments of existence that turn out to be complete waste of energies and resources. It is like learning the wrong stuff all your life. A person puts all his energies learning the wrong thing. If he later finds out what the case is, we know how frustrating the experience can be. The person knows and wills the outcome indirectly. It is the error implicitly resulting from this insightful, wilful, but wrong choice that attracts our attention. One can say that the actor

wills his interest wrongly and knows it negatively and it is this wrong and negative knowledge and act of volition that is disturbing in all situations. If the being of a man of goodwill is the ability to do good, bad-will is a sign of negative ambivalent existence.

Hence, we can say that the inability to manage the ambivalence of human interest well is a fundamental sign of bad-will. Where there is goodwill there is a way and where there is bad-will, human existence turns to excruciating torment and there is virtually no way at all. The most concrete form of expression of bad-will as negative existence is in contradictory actions. Therefore, contradictions and inconsistencies are the endemic forms of bad-will. When complementary reflection seeks to create awareness in this regard, it does this with the intent of calling our attention to the fact that bad-will does not pay. Hence, it targets the illusion or fallacy that a person can gain from negating the legitimising foundation of his action. That is to say, all moral and ethical bad conducts are self-defeating actions because they are fundamentally contradictory and as such negate indirectly what the actor intends. In the final analysis, all attempts at gearing ourselves towards the positive side of our ambivalent interest brings with it double dividend. First, it guarantees our ethical autonomy and responsibility in a positive sense. Second, it guarantees that we get what we want, that is to say, it helps us to choose correctly the positive side of our ambivalent interests and thereby be winners at the same time. …

Nature of authentic human action: The joy of being – jide ka iji

The question that is to be handled here is to state under what conditions human actions are true and authentic. We can state that a human action is authentic if by acting a subject rejects its absoluteness and concedes to its relativity. A person is in a position to act in this way, if the actor is able to acquire a mind-set that knows no other alternative than that conferred by the principle of non-contradiction as the legitimising foundation of all human actions and desires. Where this type of mind-set is operational, it is then possible for an individual to state categorically, in all given situations, that something is evil or that something is good. It is a question of "either or". Here, there is no alternative. The mind can achieve this because this is the point where complementarity gives place to absolute convergence in a way that gives forcefulness to the idea of transcendent complementary unity of consciousness. Here the mind sees very clearly between alternatives and can make categorical distinctions between states of affairs. It is only under such a condition that we can identify something as good and stand by it. In this case, we can affirm its goodness categorically in a way that does not

leave anyone in doubt and in a way that does not admit of an alternative because its negation would imply a negation of the foundation on which the reality of our being is erected. In the same way, if we identify something as evil, we reject it in its entirety since it is incompatible with the foundation on which the unity of our being is erected in a non-contradictory manner. When this happens, evil takes the form of absolute non-reciprocity or non-being, which in its rejection is the affirmation of absolute reality. In the same manner, we affirm goodness in its totality as absolute reciprocity or being. It is in the unequivocal affirmation of the good and the negation of evil, for example, that we concretely witness the bridging of the subject-object dichotomy in a way that gives legitimacy to transcendent complementary unity of consciousness underlying all authentic human actions. This is the moment where complementary reflection turns to metaphysical commitment.

Due to the limitations that characterise our being, we are not always in a position to respond and concede to this critical demand. These are those ambivalent moments when we tend to overstep, to overreact, or when we fail to meet certain expectations directed towards us because we have the natural inclination to protect our interests. In such situations, we may also be inclined to use all means at our disposal to get what we want. Such situations present themselves as very critical moments of decision between being and non-being, between the authentic and the inauthentic, between morality and immorality, between law and disorder, between good and evil etc. These are the ambivalent existential moments of our lives that must be confronted with all the awareness, energy, and insight we can afford.

We show who we are in the way we confront these situations and the type of measures we adopt in addressing them. In all those situations where we seek to define our interests referentially within the ambit of the common good, we seek to respond positively to the demands of the criterion establishing our action. On the other hand, we fail the test of this criterion of truth and authenticity in all those situations where we substitute the ego as the absolute norm of our action. This is the case in those conditions where we seek to define the rules of human co-habitation arbitrarily such that those who have the advantages over others can always exploit such.

Typical examples of this type of situation abound in all human societies were what it takes to uphold ones interest is commensurate to those measures needed to subvert it. This subversion is most pronounced in those measures the subjects embarks upon towards eliminating competitors arbitrarily in the erroneous belief that he can secure his interests without taking the interests of others into account. The tension between the ego and the

world reaches its peak in those circumstances where we equate what it takes to conserve private interest erroneously, and in some cases, unequivocally with the common good. This misidentification does not legitimise an action positively but highlights that we can in the best intentions err.

Hence, all those measures needed towards self-preservation, even if they are performed for the common good, have no legitimacy if they are exclusive of the interests of others and seek their legitimacy on their own terms. Hence, the conditions that favour personal autonomy are the same conditions that are necessary towards upholding complementary harmonious existence in society. The imperative guiding both actions belong to the same sphere. Hence, all laws that appear to guarantee personal autonomy to individuals and societies in utter disregard of the universal outreach of such autonomy are overhaul worthy. Since the line of demarcation between the laws originating from within the self and the legitimacy conferred by the absolute future foundation of all missing links of reality is not always easy to draw, due to the type of close relationship between the self and foundation of our being, individuals and groups can easily indulge in excesses believing them to be legitimate. When we seek to act from this background of selfishness and in our eagerness to preserve ourselves, we can unwittingly even embark on those things that lead to our destruction.

Hence, the unification of all missing links becomes a challenge that we carry into all spheres of life. This becomes most evident in the type of services we render to people in the areas of management of resources, in the production and distribution of goods and services, in the harnessing of talents, in the ordering of peoples' lives, in the administration and control of people etc. Within this context therefore, one can say that the goodwill to excel in the face of our diversities is a visible expression of our commitment to the ultimate absolute foundation of all missing links of reality. This is at the same time the surest step towards overcome the ambivalence of our situation as human beings. This goodwill subsists in that urge, in all circumstance and at all times, always to seek the highest forms of legitimacy. It subsists in the urge, in all circumstances, to expunge all that would compromise those values on which human life, healthy interpersonal relations, social institutions, and indeed all common goods are erected. It is the urge to replicate nature in its beauty and to conserve it while exploring it.

Where this type of goodwill is cultivated, it sees all relative values as means to an ultimate end of all missing links of reality. This notwithstanding, it considers these relative values as moments of joy that must be upheld in the most sacred and comprehensive manner. This approach is quite in consonance with the idea of anonymous traditional African thinkers

who conceptualise the experience of transcendent complementary unity of consciousness as service in complementarity.

This is why where there is no goodwill, most especially goodwill in service, all resources remain a waste; all laws have no focus, all rules ineffective; all meanings become distorted and ambiguous. It is because of the possession of a goodwill that we can find the good side of our ambivalent interests and employ it ultimately to its desired end. The reason for this is that the same law, which establishes the goodwill, is the same law that controls the fragmented and relative moments of all missing links of reality. Where the will is bad, it seeks to establish its own laws such that its own laws contradict the law on which all missing links of reality are founded. By so doing, it easily negates also the raison d'être that establishes all relative values. Since the law that gives the goodwill its legitimacy is the same law that sustains all missing links of reality, any conflict between both laws has untold consequences since it throws individuals and societies into irreconcilable differences and confusion.

Deviation from this law is possible because individuals have the natural capacity to enthrone themselves as supreme arbiters in all matters relating to their interests. This is one of the gravest dangers to any human institution and human societies in general. It is that moment where individuals and societies confuse their relativity with absoluteness. Since man's destiny is good, any individual is capable of choosing and discovering those things that would enable a person attain this destiny. In this connection therefore, the goodwill is something that has its foundation in goodness per se, it is something that is within reach of anyone who earnestly seeks it. It is because of the goodwill that a person can, in anticipation and in the proleptic actualisation of his future hopes, experience contentment, and happiness in his actions. Since the ultimate common good, the unconditioned basis of human happiness is not identical with any world immanent value, the ability, therefore, to desire it as an end in itself, can only be the property of something that has the unconditioned character belonging to the imperative establishing this end. Here the postulation of an absolute goodwill, as an integral part of our finitude in anticipation of the foundation of our being, becomes a practical meaningful and necessary assumption.

If an ultimate transcendent foundation of all missing links of reality is anything to go by, it must have the same character as impels me to take possession of it; this character is its fundamental absoluteness and goodness. The will is naturally impelled by this goodness and has a premonition of it in anticipation. Hence, it is only on the condition of our upholding, in all circumstances, a fundamentally goodwill that we can desire that which is the

legitimising foundation of society. This fundamental goodwill is natural to our being in anticipation and characterises us in our finitude.

Kant devoted a greater part of his work "Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals" to investigate the nature of the will. He insightfully came to the conclusion that " nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a Good Will" (Kant, 166).[1][1][1] He thus identified an absolute goodwill as belonging to the law, which conditions it in a way that it absolutely acts without any form of inclination. For Kant therefore the absolute goodwill belongs to the law which demands "I am never to act otherwise than so that I could also will that my maxim should become universal law (Kant, 172).[1][1][2] For Kant, real human happiness subsists in possessing an absolute good will that concurs to the demands of this absolute law unconditionally and without any form of inclination whatsoever. In this case, it is something that must be attained through duty and duty alone. If by inclination Kant means renunciation of personal interest as opposed to the common good as the foundation of human action, Kant's approach would have consonance with the demands of the principle and imperative of complementarity. Kant's understanding of inclination gives the impression that missing links are not constitutive of the processes needed to attain human happiness. For this reason, the method he advocates in arriving at the imperative establishing the goodwill is not totally in harmony with the objective pursued by complementary reflection.

For complementary reflection, every proclivity of duty is intricately related to the joy that gives legitimacy to all human actions. What this means is that for complementary reflection there is need to act due to inclination as opposed to Kant's deontological ethics which dispenses with inclinations as a part of ethical good conduct. This is important because complementary reflection lays much emphasis on the need to take all missing links of reality into our equation of action. What this means is that for human action to be moral or ethical it must take into account the comprehensive outreach of any action we perform. That is to say, duties are no longer performed for their own sake but are tied to human interests in a way that defines their realisation within a more universal, total and comprehensive framework. Here, our interests and all missing links of reality are seen as opportunities for a higher form of legitimisation and for the joy of being. This is duty in complementarity and any duties we perform in a complementary sense is duty performed, directly or indirectly, for the common good and for the wellbeing of the actor. For this reason therefore, we may not be doing what we want to do for duty's sake or from duty as Immanuel Kant

advocates (Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, 168-175),[1][1][3] but we do so because we know that this is the natural joyous human way of doing things.

That is to say, whereas Kant sought human happiness through duty and renunciation of all forms of inclination, the principle of harmonious complementarity does not consider it a disadvantage for one to act out of inclination in the process of seeking human happiness. The reason for this is that complementary reflection considers inclination a necessary condition for allowing the limitations of being to be the cause of our joy. As long as anything that exists serves a missing link of reality, all missing links of reality are integral parts of the goodwill in its attempt to attain the joy of being. We cannot say hold firmly to the joy of being, always seek to retain it, now and in all future cases (jide k' iji) - if we do not make all missing links of reality the realm of our action. Hence, all missing links of reality are very important moments and dimensions of our overall quest for happiness. For this reason, acting out of inclination is an expression of serving a missing link of reality. In service for example, we experience concretely the transcendent complementary unity of consciousness, as this constitutes the foundation of our joy, which we must seek consciously, conscientiously and energetically. The task is to establish how acting out of inclination as a missing link of reality can become a meaningful source of our joy.

To start with, in spite of all our efforts to maintain a goodwill, and an absolute goodwill for that matter, we are still subject to the constraints and limitations, which the realities of human existence impose. We can never wish this fact away and we have to accept it as an integral part of our finite existence in future referentiality. We must carry this burden of our finitude with all the dignity, honesty, and courage we can afford. It is in surmounting these difficulties with wisdom that we can hold tenaciously to that which gives meaning to our life and as such, we can mutually affirm in a future referential manner: hold firmly to the joy of being, always seek to retain it, now and in all future cases (jide ka iji).

The insinuations that our limitations are merely handicaps would immediately change, if we see ourselves as subjects of the transforming insight of the imperative of complementarity. This is the case when this imperative demands that we allow the limitations of being to be the cause of our joy. Here we discover our mutual involvement in the experience of this joy in our mutual joyous affirmation of jide ka iji. The imperative of complementarity imbues our actions with an inbuilt regulative mechanism that seeks to confer a more positive meaning to our limitations; insofar it considers these limitations as deriving their meaning from the proleptic source of all meanings. In view of this proleptic source of their being, our limitations

do not discourage and hold us back in our efforts to maintain a perfect goodwill. On the contrary, they give us a positive inspirations, since we see them as possibilities for the joy embedded in the anticipated end of our desire. In difficult human situations therefore, in situations of challenges and even of failure, for example, we are not discouraged, by the momentary setback, we rather know that there is always the possibility for a new beginning in view of the future referential source of our being. In this case, we would always see failures and success, good and evil, hardship and joy as different sides of the same coin that seek authentic complementarity. In this case, they become veritable opportunities always to excel and to seek better alternatives.

It is this imperative that makes it possible to know that there are diverse and inexhaustible possibilities at our disposal towards arriving at the authenticating foundation of our desires and actions. Within this context, it is not the negative side of failure that is decisive, neither is it the limitations of our mistakes that are crucial, it is rather the natural insight into the nature of the ultimate good, which energises and sustains us whenever it matters most.

The stringent perfectionist Kantian approach to the issue of goodwill appears to overlook, not only the limitation of human existence, but also the dynamic dimension of imperative of complementarity, which is invigorating, therapeutic, cathartic and cleansing.

The liberating nature of any theory of action that seeks to use the will to establish true human happiness subsists in the dynamic constitution of this faculty. Since all things constituting the missing link of reality have their completion in the joy of the being that removes all ambivalences, the will owes its existence to this being. The will is ever attuned and dependent on this being for its direction. Where the will is attuned to this all-determining reality, it can never err, since what appears as error is legitimised in an intention that is pure. Where the intention is pure, it is capable of acting according to the dictates of this all-determining being. When one is acting from purity of intention sustained in the reality of this absolute foundation of all missing links of reality, what we call error in such contexts would be nothing other than a moment of missing link of reality that seeks completion in the foundation of its being.

Even in such cases, our goodwill remains the source of inspiration, our mistakes, and failings notwithstanding. Even if the goodwill can be misused, the decision about its origin can never be an affair of the limited individual subjective consciousness. Such goodwill can only be something received and sustained by a higher principle of the character of the principle

of non-contradiction. This is the only principle that can give legitimacy to all expressions of goodwill. It is only as received goodwill that any form of pure goodwill, as the basis of our action as individuals, makes any sense. It is received in as much as we are dependent on the all-good, absolute, and infinite being to do good. This absolute infinite being can confer a goodwill whose operations are characterised by the purity of intention. We can consider the reality of this absolute being the necessary assumption of any philosophy that sees complementarity as a foundation of human joy and happiness. In such a situation the fact of a being that confers a goodwill, on which the actions of all individuals, in a complementary relationship rest, is something that has to be taken for granted. The reason for this is obvious. The condition for complementarity is the inescapable common bond, the common good, which sustains such a relationship. The reality of this bond is tacitly implied both practically and theoretically in all human actions both positive and negative and we intuit it as that force that impels us in all situations of life to ask questions in a transcendent manner and seek ultimate answers. This being that gives all missing links of reality their legitimacy sustains this unending questioning and search for ultimate answers in future referentiality. Where goodwill in future referentiality is lacking nothing can substitute for its absence. Not even religion, for example, can fill up its place. In this way, one can even shed some light to the ubiquitous avoidable failures in human society in spite of human passionate religious commitment. As received goodwill, the goodwill can become a common property and bond for all who seek to do good in whatsoever capacity they find themselves.

A life style borne by this consciousness is characterised by the unified expression of actions and meaning as they seek to realise the absolute in the most authentic and clear manner. In a situation of this nature, a universe of discourse and meaning is achieved which authenticates the convergence of all experiences and action in all fundamental issues, most especially those that guarantee a higher we-consciousness. Where this level of consciousness is achieved, one can hardly differentiate the feelings and aspirations of individual subjects from their foundation of legitimacy in moments of intimate relationship. It is this ability to objectify and conceptualise reality as mutually shared meaning in a comprehensive, universal, total, and future referential manner that makes authentic mutual participation and experience of a transcendent complementary unity of consciousness possible. This objectification has as its dynamic moment in the goodwill we bring to bear on concrete situations of life. A natural intuition into the idea of an absolute in a future referential manner sustains such goodwill. This type of goodwill

enables individuals and societies to eradicate all forms of contradictions in a manner that enables them to transform the limitations of being to the cause of their joy. One can then say that the level of humanity and civility within any given society depends on the level of goodwill in complementarity that is present. It further depends on the ability of all concerned to transcend themselves in the experience of transcendent complementary unity of consciousness in a universal, total, comprehensive, and future referential manner.

This goodwill has its natural expression in service, in the spirit of mutual dependence and care, in the spirit of fairness and justice, in the spirit of give and take and in the unflinching desire to excel and to goodness. It subsists in recognising that the varieties obtainable in nature are not purely accidental but are necessary conditions for the attainment of our ultimate joy and destiny. This realisation is the foundation of civilised societies wherever this is practices authentically. This is still the case even if the aim sustaining this practice is not immediately evident to every individual in all circumstances.

Generally, one can say that the aim driving all ethically and morally good conducts is the joy of being as the ultimate legitimising foundation of all missing links of reality. We are provided with an instance of the experience of this joy of being in the content driving the Igbo aphorism hold firmly to the joy of being, always seek to retain it, now and in all future cases (jide k' iji), as the mutual experience, in joy, of tasks well accomplished. In the mutual experience of jide k' iji human action shows its tendency towards the highest form of legitimacy. In this experience, within the contexts of mutual interaction, the actors intuiting the foundation, which gives completion to all human actions, urge themselves mutually to hold firmly to this foundation now and in all future cases. In this way they enthuse mutually jide k' iji i.e. hold firmly to the joy of being, always seek to retain it, now and in all future cases. They do this in the evident insight that this goodness, worth adhering to, is the source of their being and joy. This is an instance where we come to the insight that being is communicable only in authentic mutual action and in service as this is possible between individuals and communities. In the mutual affirmation and grasping into the foundation of all missing links of reality, as is made evident in this mutual experience, the mind is challenged to hold tenaciously to the goodness that is the authentication foundation of all missing links of reality, now, and in all future occurrences in a certain, absolute, universal and comprehensive manner. In response to the insight arising from intuition of goodness in this mutual act, the mind experiences being authentically in those legitimising moments

of authentic action in history. Since such actions are subject to spatio-temporal vicissitudes, the mind anchors its hope in the veracity of the content expressed and held firmly in this aphorism as future experience. The certitude thereby derived, becomes evident in the joy accompanying human action in anticipation of this content.

In the authentic experience of being implicit in its joyous expression in jide ka iji, therefore, the mind, in anticipation, grasps at the fullness that makes this experience possible and for this reason can share it with others as lived experience. In the mutual experience of the determining content of jide ka iji, no one is left in doubt as to the certainty of the being that gives authenticity to human action in the past, in present and in all future occurrences.

Whenever human beings live from the mutual imperative driving the experience of jide ka iji their actions are geared towards the future in a joyous proleptic manner since they live from the certitude of the being that gives completion to their action. In this way, their present state anticipates the future in joyous expectation of its actual realisation. This joyous hope energises and sustains their efforts and impels them to prove that they are right in view of the totality that gives them hope about their present joyous state. Here the anonymous traditional Igbo philosopher has a premonition into the nature of this ultimate content as something positive, hence, he affirms and urges in all successful and positive situations of life jide ka iji i.e. - hold firmly to the good, to the joy that gives completion to all human actions in a future referential manner. This is why when the Igbo says to a person jide k' iji no one is left in doubt that the person is doing well and everyone wishes this person to hold firmly to it i.e. to the being that gives ultimate meaning and joy to a person's existence.

Even if the content that impels us in our experience of jide ka iji is not completely evident to us here and now, we, nonetheless, anticipate it as the fullness of all fullness, the goodness of goodness, the truth of all truths in a universal, total, and comprehensive manner. It is for this reason that in the spirit of jide ka iji the content of the future in referentiality must be transcendent but complementarily communicated to have any meaning at all.

The joy of being in the experience of jide k' iji subsists in the experience of the existential categories of being in day-to-day encounter with reality as missing links. It is the capacity of the mind to give meaning to all missing links of reality as moments of expression of being. Here, the mind seeks to place all fragmented moments of existence in their authentic contexts as aspects of the joy that is constitutive of the authenticating foundation of all existent things. In other word, in the experience of the joy of be-

ing, the mind seeks full realisation of fragmented missing links of reality in a universal, total, absolute, unified, and future referential manner. This experience of joy of being becomes a complementary reality the moment we can communicate it mutually in action. In this way, the content expressed in the aphorism jide k' iji recasts the transcendent complementary unity of consciousness as the mutual conscious experience of being as the authentic foundation of human action.

Whenever the mind is not able to transcend fragmented existence in a universal, total, and future referential perspective, it negates the joy of being as the foundation of the transcendent complementary unity of consciousness. At this moment, it gets itself entangled in all forms of low-level comprehensiveness in view of its determination. At such moments, we would hardly say jide k' iji and mean it, this is the moment of mismanaged ambivalence.

For this reason, complementary reflection does not consider the fragmentation of historical existence a big disadvantage to our self-actualisation and authentication. On the contrary, it views it as the condition of possibility of all forms of human self-authentication and actualisation. It is only due to and in the fragmentation of our existence that we can meaningfully and joyously affirm "jide ka iji." Hence, this fragmentation is the condition for our encounter with the world and as such, the only condition for the realisation of ultimate joy that is characteristic of being. In this fragmentation, we experience being in the most natural and yet authentic way.

The principle of harmonious complementarity enables us therefore to come to the insight that although we are finite, we are not condemned to our finitude but we are beings aiming towards ultimate completion in joy. This joy is not something that we can identify with the diverse moments of missing link of reality but is the property of a being that transcends the fragmented moments of historical existence and gives legitimacy to this. For this reason, complementarism makes recourse to truth and authenticity criterion as that criterion which grants autonomy to all missing links of reality in a manner that guarantees the authenticity of their being.

We can then understand why those human societies, which see the fragmentary moments of all missing links of reality as opportunities for authentic joy, are more likely to meet this criterion than those others who view the historical moments of existence as absolute constitutive determinants. Hence, the traditional African society, for example, in its fundamental complementary orientation, is more likely to meet this criterion more than the paradoxical individualism of the contemporary African society. In the same

way, all forms of authentic conjunctive reasoning are more likely to satisfy its demands more than all forms of disjunctive articulation of world immanent realities. A philosophy is in a position to meet the postulations of complementarism as it concedes to the fact that anything that exists serves a missing link of reality and seeks to conceptualise all existing realities in a manner that leads them to their joyous, common absolute future referential determination. It is in the pairing-up, in categorisation and harmonisation of all compatible missing links of realities, in view of an absolute synthesis of all relative world immanent realities that our positively shared experiences can be conceptualised as reinforcing themselves mutually and joyously.

In seeking this legitimisation in this absolute foundation of our being, we reject all those conditions that are opposed to the authentic nature of our being. In this way, one can say that exclusivities have their legitimacy only in the affirmation of the totality that gives meaning to them. That is to say, it is only in view of this absolute foundation of the transcendent complementary unity of consciousness that any form of distinction or exclusive claim we make can have any meaning. Where this condition is not met, such exclusivities revert to arbitrariness and a negative infringement into the will seeking autonomy. Where such exclusiveness occurs, in view of the totality of all missing links of reality, the individual can never regain his autonomy since he is committed to the negation of the foundation of his existence. Positive commitment to that transcendent, ultimate foundation of our action should always constitute a major focus of ethics and morality insofar as they concern themselves with human action and insofar they seek to establish the conditions for those insightful actions that lead to the joy of being.

Source:

Asouzu, Innocent. The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and beyond African Philosophy. Calabar University Press 2004, pp. 354-380