

## **Changes, Adaptation and Complementary Noetic Transformation**

**A Keynote Address delivered by Rev. Fr. Prof. Innocent I. Asouzu at the**

**2nd African Philosophy World Conference (UNICAL 2017): Jointly Hosted by the University of Calabar, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, and the University of The Witwatersrand, in Collaboration with the Conversational School of Philosophy (CPS), OCTOBER 12–14, 2017 @ THE UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, NIGERIA. THEME: The State of African Philosophy in Africa Today**

### **Abstract:**

**I recognise that the state of African philosophy is today more promising than ever. This notwithstanding, African philosophy has to contend still with some difficulties traceable to remnants of the spirit of the Great Debate: There is still the tendency to model African philosophy after soliloquy where, one speaks one's thoughts aloud by oneself, at best only within a closed circle of friends and admirers short of speaking to a wider global audience. As a problem that is noetic in character, I seek to address it by an understanding that articulates method as ikwa ogwe within a complementary comprehensive systematic framework.**

### **Introduction: Craving for Changes and Adaptation**

I am greatly honoured as one of the Keynote Speakers of this conference and I thank you immensely for this privilege. Philosophy has much to do with the resourcefulness with which we handle the changes we encounter in life. Many of us have observed, and rightly so, that especially two areas of African philosophy that are closely linked with remnants of the spirit of the **Great Debate** appear to be resistant to changes. The first is the persistence by some practitioners of African philosophy to model philosophical discourse after soliloquy. In soliloquy, especially in drama, one speaks one's thoughts aloud by oneself. This is exactly how, in doing African philosophy, many conduct philosophical investigation while speaking their thoughts aloud, but at best only within a closed circle of friends and admirers short of speaking to a wider global audience. The second relates to the preconceived myth that in African philosophy nothing actually changes: For this reason, there is only one pattern of philosophising that is valid and commands respect in this area: that pattern that portrays African philosophy as the collective ideas of African peoples. Granted African philosophy, as we know it today, is relatively young, it is definitely no compliment to continue to make it appear younger than it actually deserves. Believing that it is new, and its practitioners neophytes, may be one of the many reasons many, even seasoned Africans scholars, have remained unteachable as to alternative ways of seeing African philosophy and African philosophers. This is why, commitments to misconceptions and enduring myths of this type has, very unfortunately, continued to linger, and worst still empower many non-African thinkers at the cost of their African counterparts in open market of ideas. Here, driven not necessarily by motives of scholarship, many, including African scholars and philosophers, celebrate and continue to celebrate mostly ideas of non-African thinkers and scholars at the expense their African counterparts. Where we feel inhibited in giving due attention to ideas, systems of thought, and theories developed by African scholars and philosophers, just because we assume they are neophytes and African philosophy recent, aren't we contributing in under developing African philosophy; and many things Africa stands for? If you do not treasure your own and your things, others will hardly take you seriously. Countering these

misconceptions and myths remain some of the positive changes we crave as we review the place of philosophy in Africa today. Fortunately, the attendant feeling of oddness and inhibition in relating to available theories, ideas and systems of thought of African scholars and philosophers appears to be waning gradually, at least here in the University of Calabar, and among scholars of Calabar School of Philosophy who are gradually penetrating many institutions; also as Members of Conversational School of Philosophy. We stand resolutely committed to changing this odd situation. When at this conference, two years ago in South Africa, a participant, I was informed, used the expression “**the shrine of contemporary systematic African philosophy**” to designate University of Calabar, this person may not be far from the truth. Such a consideration, that is widely held, may have contributed immensely in earning us the hosting privilege of this year’s conference. In this sense, **I welcome you to the shrine** and thank you immensely for coming and for your generosity in granting us the hosting privilege.

Driven by a systematic interest, we wish to contribute our quota in dispelling some of the misconceptions and myths that weigh heavily on the way African philosophy is conducted. Not only here in Calabar, but elsewhere, the realisation that this retrogressive trend has to change is setting in if we remember the efforts being invested by seasoned scholars and researchers to found schools and movements with sole aim of exchanging ideas at more personal levels (Chimakonam, History of African Philosophy). Besides, African philosophers are fortunate in that there appears to be a new form of intellectual mainstream steering the freedom of inquiry, where motives of higher utility drive interest. You may have noticed that many now care for ideas that impacts their lives directly beyond national and ethnic boundaries. A typical example of beneficiaries of this form of intellectual awakening is Ada Agada in his **Consolationism** that addresses a problem of our collective global interest for which he was recognized, quite recently, with the award of a prestigious book prize (Agada, Existence and Consolation). There are many similar success stories in African philosophy, I am quite aware. However, I single this one out because, it is an instance of a new crop of young, highly motivated and resourceful African intellectuals with completely new orientation bent on taking African philosophy to greater heights. These are the types of changes we all crave. Bearing these positive developments in mind, I can confidently and proudly state: The state of African philosophy is today more promising than ever. Consolidating on such positive gains is definitely some of the many challenges of the future, where the dynamic of the new remains change itself. If there is anything for which African philosophy should be noted for, it is its capacity to be amenable to positive changes and adaptation for good. Desire for change is one of the things that drive philosophical reflection, enliven it and give it its character. It is one of the major things that can help curb some of the self-imposed constraints of the past. Carefully considered, some of the difficulties deriving from remnants of the spirit of the Great Debate are noetic in character and have a dimension of method that cannot be ignored. How the idea of complementarity can help in addressing some of these issues constitutes one of the key interests of this address.

### **Complementarity, Management of Relativity and Universal History**

When I talk of complementarity (the nearest English equivalent of the Igbo expression **ibuanyidanda**), I understand the inherent mutual dependence between units within any framework as they serve each other interminably as missing links of reality (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda. New Complementary Ontology*, 2007, pp. 251-284). In other words, complementarity subsists in what it takes to denote that the act of existence is the capacity to affirm insightfully that *whatever exists serves a missing link of reality for the joy of being (jide ka iji)*. Arriving at such an insight is the first step in handling creditably the types of self-encasement or self-imposed limitations existent realities may be subjected to within any given context. Such is the spirit with which many conduct philosophical investigation within the African context even today. In a complementary type of relationship effects are inherently linked to their causes and co-

determine them (Asouzu, Ibuanyidanda 284-294). This mode of co-determination stays in opposition to the type of determination we encounter in a linear exclusionist understanding of causality where causes are generally perceived as efficient causes that are disproportionately greater than their effects (cf. Mario Bunge, Edward H. Madden, and Alexander Rosenberg). Incidentally, most ideas of causality of this divisive linear, unilateral type owe their origin largely to impact of Aristotelianism (Asouzu, Ibuanyidanda and the Philosophy of Essence; cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, Book A, 2): Something that has impacted heavily on the way many understand causes and perceive reality in the history of ideas and in the way we conduct ourselves generally. We encounter this type of linear determination in the dogma of the primacy of practical over theoretical or technical reason that suggests a disproportionate type of causal relationship between ends and their means (Schwemmer, *Theorie der rationalen Erklärung*, 25-26). The inherent complementary relationship between ends and their means is not obvious in this model; something that can have enormous consequences in the way we perceive reality, build society and handle human interpersonal relationship. However, ends and their means, causes and their effects are complements, such that in realising one the other follows and is co-intended (Asouzu, Asouzu, I. I., *Kritische Betrachtung der konstruktiven Wissenschaftstheorie*, 110; cf. Asouzu, -- "Eine Analyse und Kritische Bewertung 1984). In complementarity, we have at our disposal a higher principle based on which human conduct can be validated beyond the constraints imposed by common sense experience. By recourse to this legitimising idea, we become conscious of some of the most severe consequences of our actions that are restrictive; and which have the capacity to complicate human interpersonal relationship. In a complementary type of relationship, we are dealing with the necessary connection between units within any given framework. As something geared towards the purest form of mutual dependence, a complementary or an ibuanyidanda type of relationship seeks to address the fracture in the mind that makes harmony of differences difficult, if not impossible. Such a relationship in its transcendence solidifies the innate feeling of empathy that connects units. In this way, it is something geared towards the purest form of syncretism, eclecticism, hybrid and other forms of symbiotic existence. Hence, in all manners of complementary relationship, we encounter a moment of natural compulsion by reason of which units reach out to each in joyous service, conscious of their limitations and fragility in view of a future that is all-embracing (Asouzu, *Method and Principles*, 277). The key idea in this form of inherent natural constitution of all existent realities remains service in complementarity; which is negated the moment units perceive themselves as self-constituting as to imagine that authentic existence subsists in being alone i.e. **ka sọ mụ di** (Asouzu, Ibuanyidanda 2007, 10-13). Basically therefore, all modes of complementary relationship demand what is needed to mediate meaningfully the tension which mistaking contraries for contradictories generates in the mind. Such is the tension of adhering to extreme poles of the divide between the universal and the particular, between the absolute and relative, between the conservative and the progressive, between the essential and the accidental, between the necessary and the contingent etc. Within such a complementary contexts, our perception of human relative condition remains paramount. Hence, in all forms of complementary relationship the aim is how to come to grips with the challenges posed by relativity; and most especially of human relative condition. In complementarity, not only is our sense of relativity enhanced and strengthened, it contributes enormously in pointing to a future we perceive as indeed open, and one on account of which relativity is perceived as an opportunity instead of a disadvantage and a burden. It is this type of understanding that makes it insightful how within any given context units remain what they are, by upholding their individualities, while becoming what they are not by reason of mutual complementary enrichment that defines and transforms their being. Therefore, as something dealing with the natural order of things in their relativity, a complementary type of determination is about competent management of relativity. Remove this form of conscious experience of our being and reality generally, we become absolutizing to our own detriment and those of others; and in ways that contradict our very nature. As natural and compelling a

complementary mode of relationship is, it has to contend always with an equally basic form of determination akin to our nature – **fear**. Being foisted on the mind through our primitive instinct of self-preservation, this fear amplifies our needs beyond all imaginable limits, so much so that the ego unilaterally always thinks that it has to defend itself against an outside that threatens its interests. For this reason, the ego strives to preserve those special privileges it perceives as its own and on account of which it believe to deserve more than other do; and indeed those it perceives as aliens and a threat. **By so doing, this innate fear magnifies the dangers which asymmetries of life conditions pose in ways that make us assume that to survive we have to devise measures to ward off an outside that is intrusive and threaten always. It is for this reason that in most contentious situations of life, actors easily perceive existence as enduring struggle between irreconcilable opposites.** If this form of natural anti-complementary tendencies is not adequately managed, it very easily congeal into diverse forms of negative obsessive behaviour – to complexes, to forms of identity crisis, to forms of double-consciousness, and other forms of compulsive acts. This is when, for example, we can rightly also talk of “jinxed mentality”, and not otherwise. As a tendency deriving from an interior that is challenged, such can always create difficulties in the management of differences which the mind easily identifies and defines as absolute differences incapable of reconciliation. Interestingly, **Afro-constructivists**, as Agbo calls them, in African philosophy, who coined the expression “jinxed mentality” tend to think that what they identify as reliance of Africans on Non-African ways of life to express themselves is always a negative trait (Agbo, 219-239). Granted an unimaginative unilateral type of dependence on others hardly does anyone any good, this does not in any way negate the fact that differences attain their true worth, when they are taken as complements. Remove this form of mutual complementary dependence among beings and they lose their credibility. In our own case, we cease to be humans in our relativity and fragility. Fundamentally, we uphold our uniqueness, grow and have our being by mutual complementary imitation and association, and not otherwise. This is even what contributes enormously in legitimising our work as our own in our diverse professions and conditions as we are mutually dependent in the genesis and further development of our ideas. In seeking to negate this complementary natural order of things, on account of oversensitivity about differences, on account of diverse forms of avoidable fear, we may inadvertently also be contributing in deepening the divide in the ego itself and between peoples. As matters that deal directly with the mind, this dimension of our existence is often forgotten as we seek to resolve conflicts, build society and philosophise. Negligence or lack of interest in the noetic dimension of this problem has its prize even in philosophy. This is one of the many unexplored lessons by variants of historical determinism, as we encounter them in most forms of emancipatory theories. These tend to treat such compulsive behaviour only as factors of deprivation, manipulation and unfulfilled hopes and promises and differences as determined by social and economic stratification. For this reason, such theories concentrate more on the dark moments of the history of individuals, groups and society in view of explaining human behaviour, constructing theories and deriving generalisations about them. In the case of Africans and blacks, for example, they see their deplorable conditions mostly as factors of external impositions and manipulations, of unaddressed unjust social and economic conditions and of asymmetry in social and political relationship. In other words, the individual is a victim of his situation and nothing more. Even if human problems can be understood within the historical contexts of their genesis, they gain more in importance within the context of universal human history. Universal human history teaches that there is some dark spot within each individual ego that goes beyond the instigations of social and economic conditions on account of which they can be a problem to others and to themselves without even realising this. The moment we overlook these facts, we would always forget the ego at the center of events and for this reason assume that all our problems come from an outside that never wishes us well. This is one of the difficulties most theories that derive their inspiration from those version of double-consciousness theory and conceptual decolonization have to contend with as they make the outside responsible for most human problems (Du Bois, Fanon,

and Wiredu). Since they assume that most human problems are there on account of unjust social, political and economic conditions, roles, positions, etc., they fail to understand why the ego has the capacity to act even against its own interests; as it even seeks to brutalise, subjugate, exploit, and exterminate others. We are dealing here with a universal human problem, this is why those who think that issues of this kind are typical African problems may have to think twice. Hence, even if the past historical experiences of blacks the world over cannot be discussed without considering the dark moments of their history, it would be a great mistake to derive and expound issues relating to Africans and black experiences always from such negative moments. This is applicable to all human groups without exception. Relapse into historical determinism in handling such matters is bound to misfire and is perhaps one of the major reasons for the type of negative philosophy that has plagued and continues to plague African philosophy. It is that thinking that believes that historical conditions and individuals never changes. Hence, most contentious issues relating to the stagnation of African philosophy, man inhumanity to man, strained human relationship, and the like, gain more in importance when they are interrogated from the background of universal history and within a wider theoretical context. Nowhere is this as obvious as in the problem of method and its implications for philosophy and African philosophy in particular.

### **The Problem of Method, the Negation of Differences and Self-Negation**

Most treatises dealing with method, as derived from the Greek *meta hodos*, bring it in direct relation to such ideas as strategy, means, procedures, and techniques geared towards the realisation of some ends (Bronstein et al. *Method*, 55; cf. Coreth, *Metaphysik*, 47). What is not always evident by these approaches is the close relationship between method and the mind. This aspect of method comes out clearer in Igbo language where method is understood as **ikwa ogwe** i.e. building a bridge. In tune with this understanding traditional Igbo philosophers of the complementary system of thought aver: **onye kwaa ogwe amara uche ya** i.e. in constructing a bridge the content of the mind becomes evident i.e. in method the content of the mind is revealed (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda* 2007, 24-56, 124). In handling method as strategy and as a veritable tool of emancipation - something that can be amplified by our education, socialisation and indoctrination - and a means of reclaiming and defending those natural rights and privileges we think are our own we inadvertently expose ourselves to all manners of paradoxes. Not even scientists are immune to difficulties of this type, their education and level of enlightenment notwithstanding. The same can be said of people in diverse professions and standings. In the case of philosophy, this is obvious in those controversies where philosophical debates are overcast by strategies aiming at reclaiming what we believe is our own by right of progeny and those things that give us our identity. That such strategies, that are anti-complementary are self-negating is not always obvious. This can be amply illustrated but I take a few examples. Thus, perceiving method as strategy, **Senghor**, for example, claims that “Emotion is Negro, as reason is Hellenic” in view of carving out a niche for Africans. He, takes this stand forgetful of some of its most severe negative implications for the person of the African. His position is as widely controversial as it is refuted. As widely refuted as such positions are, they hardly lose in attraction because they derive from the basic fear that blindfolds and instigates when we are dealing with our most cherished interests, and in view of defending these against an outside we perceive as threatening. This is why more recently, we see Senghor’s mistakes (un)surprisingly being repeated by Beck. He avers that Europe is predetermined “to differentiate and to structure reality rationally” while Afro-Asiatic area “developed an accordingly sensitive, intuitive ability and basic habit” (**Beck 64**). What is interesting, however, is that Beck expresses this opinion in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, within the context of intercultural philosophy, as basis of what he calls creative encounter between different cultures of the world. Many African philosophers have always amazed with their theory of Philosophy of Stolen Legacy. Yet, when we read renowned philosophers of intercultural affiliation upholding that “Philosophy originated not only in Europe, but elsewhere as well” (Wimmer 1 cf. Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 2007, 102), one wonders if they have, by implication, transcended the theories of diffusion, migration and linear evolution: The very inspirations of Philosophy of Stolen Legacy. This make one to wonder, if intercultural philosophy,

the way it is being vigorously pursued by some of its major European proponents is not a new brand of eurocentrism being presented under more liberal guises of a philosophy of dialogue. In the face of its most cherished interests, the mind perceives method as instrument and stealth strategy designed only to defend, reclaim lost and contested intellectual territories, secure highly priced privileges, redress perceived injustices, ward off forces of aggression, marginalisation and exploitation and restore ones battered or disputed image, legacies and identity. We can then understand when some Western philosophers, their apparent liberal attitude notwithstanding, aver that African philosophers are only good at copying and imitating the works and styles of their European counterparts. It is this claim that I designate as **copycat philosophy**” (Asouzu Ibaru, 30) i.e. the Western version of Philosophy of Stolen Legacy evident in intercultural philosophy. From here derives my criticism of the hegemonic mind-set driving this style of philosophising as some of its major proponents seek dominance over other philosophies of the world. What is not always evident in all these contentions is the concealed negation of the complementary character of reality; and most especially the complementary nature of the origin and further development of our ideas. Where this concealment remains unexposed the mind stands always to negate those values it cherishes and praises to high heavens; and so much so that lawgivers easily become law breakers; and scientists inadvertently infringing against the high ideals they profess. This concealment becomes most evident when we consider the quality of discussion surrounding the so-called the “Black Athena Debate”, where contestants under the guise of scientific theorising engage each other in ethnocentric induced tussles. *In all these cases, they risk of derailing scientific discussion is always given because of lack of commitment to the complementary character of all ideas in their genesis and further development. That this type of attitude invariably leads to self-negation and contradictions can still be shown more clearly in the cases of those African philosophers who in their over-sensitivity about differences are very critical about the appropriation of Western conceptual schemes and models. They often discover, to their utter embarrassment, that they can hardly consummate their reflection and execute their actions and ideas meaningfully without falling back on the very ideas and things they reject, demean and deride as Western and alien. In other words, whatever strategies we employ to negate the complementary order of reality, is bound to misfire and lead to self-negation at all levels of determination. For this reason, it would be most unjust and unrealistic to expect anyone to produce completely different formats of theories, or of anything whatsoever, to prove the uniqueness of their work or in their dealing with fellow human beings. This is why that version of conceptual decolonisation that insists on guarding against uncritical assimilation of conceptual schemes embedded in foreign languages and cultures, as a strategy of dealing with matters of this kind will always present difficulties (Kwasi Wiredu’s Idea of African Philosophy 42; cf. Oladipo, Philosophy and the African Experience 19-20).* What this shows is that the quality of our work stands to suffer, where researchers employ strategies that exude excessive feeling of otherness and are carried by deep feeling of estrangement. This is also relevant when mutual exchange is accompanied by excessive feeling of entitlement and plagued by feeling of guilt deriving from past negative historical experiences. (cf. my reply to Kimmerle and Graness 2008 in: Asouzu, Ibuanyidanda...and Some Basic Philosophical Problems 2013, 39). Understandably, considerations of asymmetry of representation in the history of ideas, where some regions of the world feel grossly underrepresented or even marginalised, have very much contributed in promoting a cultural philosophy of equal representation and mutual respect. Yet, such lofty proclamations are good when we can match words with deeds and such that contribute in eradicating the kind of concealed resentment and disdain philosophers, and even scientists of diverse regions of the world often bring towards each other. The same can be said in human interpersonal relationship at all levels of determination. That much needs to be done in matters of this kind is evident if one remembers that in most contentious situations of life method is perceived as empowerment for manoeuvring in the vilest sense of the word. Fortunately such tendencies are not always intended. As unintended acts deriving from the fundamental fear which our primitive instinct of self-preservation foists on the mind in the face of its most cherished interests, I designate it as **the phenomenon of unintended ethnocentric commitment** (Asouzu, Ibaru, 36). As something that can impact very negatively, not only

on scientific objectivity and integrity, but also on overall human interpersonal relationship, this phenomenon deserves more attention than the issue of value oriented bias in inquiry that focuses mostly on scientific integrity and objectivity (Weber, Nagel etc.). One thing is clear: In its relationship with the world generally and most especially in the face of its most cherished interests the mind tends to negate the natural complementary order of things even at the risk of self-negation and at the risk of sounding absurd. It is a universal human problem and can help us elucidate some of the difficult issues concerning African philosophy. As a universal human problem, answers to issues of this kind can adequately be provided only within the context of a universal theory of human action. The major objective is to elucidate why the human subject, in most contentious situations of life, seeks its autonomy outside its foundation in being that is complementarily constituted. In other words, we wish to understand why in the face of its most cherished interests, the human subject acts in most baffling ways as to even negate the very interests it strives to protect.

### **Transcendent Complementary Comprehensive Existential Analysis: Addressing the Rift in the Ego**

The question then is: Why do people, in apparent insight, do things in ways that, by all indications contradict what they intend; such that they have to contend with self-contradiction? In other words, why do people in most contentious situations of life in apparent insight do those things that promote hatred and dissention believing that they are wise and wise and smart? Providing adequate answer to this question that deals with the severest consequences of negation of the complementary order of the world entails an existential analysis that is all embracing – a complementary comprehensive existential analysis. It is such that can guide the mind beyond the type of solutions that are provided by common sense experience, the very reason for problems of this type. In other words, we seek a solution that has the capacity to even penetrate the internal workings of human consciousness. *Among other things, answering these questions creditably will help confront one of the most fundamental problems of philosophy in Africa today as this relates to modelling philosophy after soliloquy, in an inward looking mode, believing that this is what it takes to widen its range of applicability.*

To start with, it is always important to hold firmly: In most things that relate to our most cherished interests the tendency is to make recourse to those means we adjudge insightful, reasonable and convenient, but, quite unwittingly also, means which may invariably lead towards negating such interests, without our realising this fully. We make this mistake because all existential situations are ambivalent tension laden and beclouded by *ih* **mkpuchi anya** (phenomenon of concealment). This is something that we easily forget in the face of our most cherished interests. It is on account of this ambivalence that we mistake the complementary character of the world; the complementary character of ends to their means and causes to their effects. This is what I categorise as the problem of **the phenomenon of the tyranny of human ambivalent tension laden existential situation**: A noetic challenge that can complicate matters even for the most discerning mind of good intentions. As rational subjects, it is always good to remember that we are still under the constraints of our primitive instinct of self-preservation. Thus, drawn between being rational and the demands of this primitive instinct, a tension is generated in the internal working of human consciousness; something that is further complicated by what I designate as **ih** **mkpuchi anya** (closest English translation is “phenomenon of concealment”). Taken together, I refer to them as the mechanisms and phenomena that constrain our experience of reality. These mechanisms and phenomena taken together, militate against our ability to reason, judge, will and chose accurately in the face of our most cherished interests. For this reason, the ego, in most contentious situations of life that require circumspection, the mind quite unconsciously attends only to one pole of this ambivalence in its bid to preserve its interests first. Thus in the excessive desire to preserve its interests first, the ego the ego forgets that others too are under the same primitive drive. Hardly aware that its unilateral acts are the cause of irreconcilable conflicts the ego blames an outside that it projects as threatening its interest first. This is how, in matters relating Nigeria, as in many African countries, for example, almost everyone cries marginalisation, insecurity and complains bitterly about the deplorable conditions of almost everything. However, when it matters most, people almost always do those things they complain about, those things

they condemn and despise. You complain bitterly but you insist and persist in doing those things that you think are the causes of your problems. This is the paradox of the tyranny of our tension laden ambivalent existential situation, where the ego, quite unwittingly, acts against itself believing that it is the wisest and smartest thing to do. It thereby blames others for its misfortune. What this indicates is that those who believe that inadequacies of social and economic conditions are the causes of our problems, may be addressing the symptom instead of the disease that is more fundamental. We are dealing with a mental problem of a more profound type where one is the architect of this own misfortune without realising this. This is why the ego complains bitterly, pointing only at those causes made available by common sense experience, as the reasons for its misfortune: Attributing its problems only to such common sense factors as colonialism, neo-colonialism, bribery and corruption, nepotism, ethnicity, religious differences, infrastructural inadequacies, poor leadership and forms of deprivation, ethnicity, religious differences, ethnic differences, disparity in achievement etc. Since the ego is oblivious of causes of more fundamental type it acts in apparent insight of its condition. It is therefore necessary to unravel and make explicit what is concealed in human consciousness; the very reason people can be the very architects of their own misfortune without them fully realising this. In other words, we wish to explore causes beyond those made readily available by insinuations of common sense experience as to assume that all our problems are from the outside always, and for which reason we must all imaginable factors except ourselves. It is therefore necessary to penetrate the internal workings of human consciousness, by way of by way of a complementary comprehensive existential analysis that transcends the impositions of common sense experience as we seek for causes. If you think that this is a typical African problem, you may be mistaken. We have this in all professions, in the relationship of peoples, groups, organisations, in the relationship of nations to each other and in our relationship with the world generally. It is on account of such internal constraints that are easily overlooked, that stakeholders may be most willing to pursue their most cherished interests so passionately as to lose circumspection, in the process of which they even contradict themselves, oblivious of the high ideals and values they profess and cherish. These are instances where the ego acts oblivious of the legitimising character of the complementary nature of the world. It is thus a mental scourge that transcends persons, institutions, positions and achievement. Thus in mismanaging our tension-laden ambivalent experience and **ihe mkpuchi anya** (phenomenon of concealment) even the most gifted and knowledgeable are bound to err in their judgement as they seek solutions in very critical matters (cf. Hawking, Stephen and Walter Ulrich believe only on technological solutions for all human problems overlooking the tension in the mind). What this shows is that the mind becomes very unpredictable, extremist and dichotomising, contrary to all good intentions and goodwill both practically and theoretically, the moment the ambivalent tension in the mind remains unattended to adequately. We can then say: Those individuals, institutions and human communities are in the measure validated as they put mechanism in place to detect, expose and address the type of concealment that can make compliance to the complementary character of the world impossible; and so much so that the ego becomes a problem to itself and to the world without fully realising this. Where we fail, we would always assume that most of our problems are from the outside, forgetful of an inside that has all the potentials to distort the ontological order. That this observation has great implication in the way we do African philosophy can easily be shown by reference to a simple syndrome quite widespread in African philosophy. This is when in seeking to put our interests first almost everyone strives to “say-it-first” as Chimakonam puts it (Chimakonam, Transforming the African philosophical place, 465). This is why in matters of this kind, in the passionate pursuance of our most cherished interests, all thinkable techniques are employed to blackmail and intimidate, to outmanoeuvre and to denigrate, to impersonate and conceal, to misinterpret and falsify, to plagiarise and fabricate and so much so that theoreticians become insensitive to rules governing scientific best practice. Where the interest that guides theorising surpasses or even suppresses knowledge production, effective philosophising is bound suffer greatly. Hardly anyone feels guilty. Are we then surprised, when double dealings of this sort leads to stagnation in our discipline. (cf. Nweke, “Complementary Reflection Vs. Binary Complementarity). As one of the groups that are very sensitive to oppression, blacks remain some of the worst oppressors of fellow blacks and so much so that “they all manage [once they are in authority] to turn themselves into little tyrants over their

own people” (Negro (Aro of God, 107). In the same passage Achebe critically observes that acting in this way “seems to be a trait in the character of the Negro”. How can we then say that all our problems are from the outside? The moment the harmony between the ego and the world is distorted as to suggest that the ego acts oblivious of the complementary character of the world, it is bound to act in very paradoxical ways; as to even do things that work against its interests without realising this fully. Addressing human affairs from an interior that is grossly challenged, exclusivist and divisive will always produce results contradictory results. The same is applicable in the construction of theories. This is why a theoretician immediately becomes a part of the problem, where theories derive from an interior that is exclusivist and challenged. Approaches of this kind have very much in giving African philosophy the outlook of a negative and backward-looking philosophy modelled after soliloquy. Many of such approaches do nothing other than bemoaning and bewailing African problems, but fail to understand the noetic dimension of the problem that needs to be addressed first. In their exclusivist dichotomising character such theories hardly invest much to address what I call the **super maxim** after which they are modelled. On the contrary, such theories are so inward-looking that their adequacy and range of applicability will ever remain grossly limited (Asouzu, “Ibuanidanda...Communalism and Theory Formulation”). The super maxim that steers such theories states: **the nearer the better and the safer**, by reason of which actors and theoreticians are instinctively persuaded to seek solutions in conjunction only with those they share some bond of intimacy. They do so because they assume that these insiders are better and safer, as against those outsiders that are instinctively projected as enemies, as alien and as threats. *Restoring human consciousness to an equilibrated complementary state in view of performing its functions creditably remains therefore an enormous task both practically and theoretically. As a noetic challenge that deals directly with the way the mind perceives the world and adopts strategies to resolve matters, it has a deeply ontological dimension that is often neglected. At such instances being and its attributes are projected into the mind as categories incapable mutual complementary coexistence. How we resolve such a noetic challenge ontologically becomes a methodological task.*

### **Reconstituting Method as Complementary Disposition: Noetic Transformation**

Where we associate philosophy mainly with issues dealing with socio-economic and political emancipation, we easily overlook its therapeutic function. Where philosophy only serves emancipatory function in aforementioned way, method is mostly objectified and perceived as an external instrument, an object, at the disposal of the subject (Asouzu, “Method as Disposition. Challenges of Philosophy in a World of Relativity” cf. Asouzu, Ibuanidanda, 2007, 25). Besides, within such contexts, the mind focuses mostly on such causes that are presented by common sense experience as the cause of its problems, negligent of the rift in human consciousness itself. Addressing the causes deriving from common sense experience without first addressing the rift in the mind will hardly yield any fruitful result. Hence a noetic transformation by way of **noetic propaedeutic**, that precedes all valid acts, is demanded. To start with, I attend to this herculean task by **conceptualising method as disposition in ibuanidanda philosophy**. In this case, method, as a human act, subsists in the mutual conscious experience of sharing consummated in the disposition to think, judge, will and act in a complementary mode beyond impositions of common sense experience. On its part, noetic propaedeutic is the process itself needed to address the tension in human consciousness – the very reason for misuse of method as instrument or strategy. It is the effort invested to make insightful that to be is to be in mutual complementary service with all existent realities. This is attainable by converting what I call **the transcendent categories of unity of consciousness**, to actively lived categories in our thinking, judgement, willing and action. To these transcendent categories or forms of the mind i.e. akara obi/mmụọ, (in Igbo language), and their nearest English equivalents, belong: ozurumbaonu (universality), mkpochakota (totality, comprehensiveness), uwaezuoke (relativity, historicity, fragmentation or world immanent predetermination), alusi (absoluteness or inviolableness), njikotaonu (unity), ihe ukwu kpe azu (future reference) - (Asouzu, Ibuanidanda 2007, 323-349). These are the tools of effective management of

relativity as they serve control and douse the tension in the mind in the application of method. When method assumes the form of complementary disposition, it immediately becomes very clear to human subject that judgements and actions concerning given existential conditions are not necessarily objective statements of fact as they occur in our consciousness, but judgements that can be preconditioned by mechanisms and phenomena that constrain our experience of reality. (Asouzu, *Method as Disposition*, 140-159; Asouzu *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology*, 2007, 24-55, 317-349. For this reason, that human action is validated, that relies on the demands of these transcendent categories for its execution. They are transcendent categories and not transcendental categories because relying on them the mind can transcend all forms of impositions and constraints. They are the very categories driving the formulation of the principles of ibuanyidanda philosophy as its metaphysical principle affirms all existent realities as missing links (Asouzu, *Method and Principles*, 237). The same is true when the practical variant of the same principle demands that all human acts are geared towards the joy of being (*jide ka iji*). As the very foundation for the formulation of the principles of ibuanyidanda, these transcendent categories, in their realisation, bestow the same apodictic clarity as is natural to the first principles. In their realisation the demands of the principles of ibuanyidanda are fulfilled. This is precisely why negation of the principles of ibuanyidanda is tantamount to self-negation always and evokes what I call the **ontological boomerang effect**. This ontological boomerang effect states that within any given complementary framework, what any of the units constituting the whole undertakes to subvert the interests of other units is equivalent to what it takes to make realisation of the interests of the offending unit difficult if not impossible. It is another way of saying that all acts of consistent and extreme self-interest are tantamount to anti-self-interest, since they boomerang (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda* 2007, 391-400; Asouzu *Ibuanyidanda* 2013, 101-104). This is one of the highest insights provided by noetic propaedeutic as it makes evident that the capacity to affirm all existent realities as missing links is a necessary condition for our own self affirmation and survival. The same is applicable to denial of complementarity. Where this insight is in place, the danger and futility of pursuing method only as strategy for resolving conflicts in a unilateral mode becomes obvious. The same can be said of all acts that derive their justification from the supermaxim of the nearer the better and the safer (Asouzu, *Method*, Calabar, 2004, 302-310 cf. -- "Redefining Ethnicity).

What this shows is that the principles of complementary reflection, as higher principles of legitimisation, provide the basis for exposing very radically what is concealed by our tension laden existential situation and **ihe mkpuchi anya** (phenomenon of concealment) in view of guiding the ego towards the attainment of the highest form of self-consciousness or **ima onwe onye**. This form of consciousness derives from an innate type of complementary subjective disposition which the ego recognises as truly its own in its relativity; something that is concretised in sharing and service rendered to all existent realities. Herein lies highest forms of emancipation ever attainable, and such that makes it clear and evident that all forms of human accomplishment, and all those things that give meaning to human existence can only be articulated as mutually complemented to uphold their worth. Within such contexts, human culture and knowledge are unmistakable recognised as things that are complementarily constituted to remain credible. Denial or negation of this basic insight by the mind is one of the major reasons for strife and irreconcilable differences, where the ego persists in absolutizing relativity as the most authentic form of existence. Where this happens, method is immediately misconstrued as strategy valid only for warding off an outside that is perceived as alien and threatening our interests always. Because the ego at such moments negates the inherent complementary character of reality in its relativity, such acts are bound to boomerang always since they enshrines high potentials for error, both practically and theoretically. This is why such dispositions inadvertently always lead towards extremist tendencies, towards block-building and to acts that divide instead of such that unite (Asouzu, *Inaugural Lecture*, 56). Such

avoidable difficulties can be overcome where method is seen as a disposition that is complementarily constituted (Asouzu, Ibuanyidanda, 2013, 72-74).

### **Ibuanyidanda and some Challenges of Systematisation in African Philosophy**

Noetic propaedeutic reveals that steering a complementary course is one of the most important ways philosophy can play its emancipatory role adequately. It is by reason of this its complementary orientation that it legitimises both to the inside and to the outside as to ensure harmony in the subject itself, and between the subject and the totality of reality. As a science, this its complementary orientation becomes most visible within a systematic framework that spans the totality of reality. This is the context also that best provides the conditions for the emergence of those higher principles based on which philosophical inquiries are known; and by reason of which philosophy upholds harmony between theory and praxis. Addressing this systematic need seems to be grossly lacking in the way many do philosophy in Africa today. Apparently many are sceptical as to its usefulness to African philosophy. Whatever be the case, the importance of such an undertaking derives from the character of the thing itself, since science is an undertraining that is comprehensively structured as it seeks truth ultimately. Hence craving a systematic orientation has hardly anything to do with specifics of any region of the world. On the contrary, it is something that has to do with the character of the mind as it seeks certainty. Fortunately, there are scholars of African philosophy who recognise the need to fill up this yawning systematic gap, its rigorous demands notwithstanding. What exactly do we mean when we are talking of systematization in African philosophy? Many things come to mind immediately. However, Oguejiofor mentions some fundamental requirements that can be very helpful in this direction. According to him, systematization is that style of philosophising that “is comprehensive, individual and consistent. Its existence needs development of principles that are applicable to all areas of philosophy” (Oguejiofor, Inaugural Lecture 20-23). While I subscribe to this position, I would merely add that in systematisation a method should be readily available. Bearing these characterisations in mind, Oguejiofor concedes that “Asouzu’s complementary reflection” more than any other approach in African philosophy fulfils these conditions (Oguejiofor 21). However, his contention then remains that complementary reflection is a “system in the making” (Oguejiofor, 21). To this critical remark, I stand to reply that that was perhaps then. This notwithstanding, the initial idea was to lay the groundwork of a comprehensive theory with clearly worked out method and principles that can be applied to all areas of knowledge. This is exactly what the metaphysical principle of ibuanyidanda philosophy, the principle of integration or principle of harmonious complementation sets out to achieve when it states: *ihe di, nwere isi na odu* i.e. **anything that exists serves a missing link of reality. It is another way of saying that to be is to be in mutual complementary relationship with all existent realities**, (Asouzu, Ibuanyidanda 2004, 273-275; cf. Asouzu, Ibuanyidanda Special Edition, 1). This principle which constitutes the one of the major methodological statement of ibuanyidanda philosophy or complementary reflection drives most works that derive inspiration from its assumptions. The same can be said of its variants among some members of Calabar School of Philosophy aka Conversational School of philosophy as they pursue a systematic goal. In steering a systematic cosmopolitan course in our quest for knowledge here in Calabar, therefore, we seek changes bearing in mind the complementary character of the world in its relativity. We are convinced that one of the ways to enhance the relevance of African philosophy, as one of the key themes of this conference, is to give it a systematic orientation. In tune with this systematic quest, we strive to give our theories some personal touches as a way of bringing variety in the way philosophy is conducted in Africa. In this way also, we seek to contribute in reviving, whenever available, personal ideas, systems of thought and theories of individual African philosophers. We do so bearing in mind that this is one of the many noble objectives that inspired many early works in African philosophy. This is most evident in Odera Oruka as he sought for the persons behind ideas in his project of “Philosophic Sagacity” (Odera Oruka, Sage Philosophy: The

Basic Question). Where some of these early models focus mostly on ideas of traditional African philosophers, we are more interested in creating the ideas in the present in view of the future since African philosophy is a continuum that spans the past, the present and the future. Where producers of ideas are not given the attention they deserve, this is bound to impact negatively on the philosophy of any region. Here, changes are inevitable in African philosophy. That our efforts have not been in vain can be attested to by the level of awareness and adaptation our style of theorising has enjoyed within the last few years. The principles, method and presuppositions underlying our movement are widely referenced and relied upon by scholars both nationally and internationally to address issues in their respective areas. These and many more have helped to reinforce our conviction that the relevance of African philosophy can hardly be discussed and sustained today outside a systematic framework. When we take a systematic path therefore, our intention is clear: To develop a culture of critical systematic philosophising that makes theoreticians accountable for their ideas, theories and systems; something that has hitherto not been the case always in African philosophy where many theoreticians prefer to hide behind generalisation provided by collective thoughts to express themselves. Should the world behold the beautiful face of African philosophy that many are desirous to admire, there is need to strive beyond remaining anonymous. We strongly think that philosophy is not contraband that should be traded anonymously only, and under deceptive aliases that stifle creativity. It thrives in the open market of ideas, where its practitioners have valid addresses and the courage to take responsibility for their ideas. Paving the way for critical exchange of ideas between thinkers based on recognisable theories, methods, principles, systems that guide their ideas, is therefore a conversational challenge worthy of aspiration. When the idea of conversation surfaces within this context, it assumes the form of a context-bound reconstructive systematic type of conversation that can be replicated elsewhere. Yet, it is something specifically aimed at transforming that type of philosophy modelled after soliloquy that has been the bane of African philosophy. This conversational goal is being pursued today variously by many as it becomes evident, for example, in the works of Edet. Especially in the **1<sup>st</sup> Distinguished Scholarly Lecture Series of the Conversational School of Philosophy**, Edet makes recourse to what he calls **Conceptual Mandelanization**, to show how such a critical conversation can be conducted in view of addressing some of the complementary challenges presented by the idea of **conceptual decolonisation**. (Edet, "The Question of Conceptual Decolonization" cf. Edet, Afroxiology, Conceptual Mandelanization and The Conversational Order). Similarly, Chimakonam, one of the most passionate advocates of this trend, in **Ezumezu Logic** ("Principles of Indigenous African Logic"), within the context of **integrative humanism** (Ozumba, Philosophy and Method of Integrative Humanism), pursues a brand of three value complementary logic designed to address some of the excesses of classical two-value logic that negate complementarity. In highlighting the personal touches in theorising, we are cognisant of the fact that ideas of individuals have always played a major role and have always contributed immensely in shaping the lives of peoples and destinies of nations. After all, what is philosophy, as we know it elsewhere, if not the ideas of individuals, in their diversities, that are nationally and collectively celebrated? Isn't it largely also the ability to identify with the ideas of thinkers? Here, we need to adapt; and it is a lesson we should also take into account and internalise always as we do Philosophy in Africa. Even then, this does not entail that we construct theories oblivious of our diverse backgrounds. **On the contrary, it means that our primary cognitive ambience, the context of our cultures and primary socialisation, should never be compelling reasons to be inhibited when addressing the world. If we succumb to the dictates of our primary cognitive ambiances to organise, express ourselves and construct theories, such is bound to misfire. Such tendencies suppress the type of intuition needed to generate those higher principles that drive philosophy and for which wisdom is known.**

Within such a complementary systematic context therefore, the mind-set that guides scientific inquiry becomes paramount. Here, a complementary comprehensive type of mind-set **obiqha** that is not foreclosed to any area of reality reigns supreme. It is a mindset that bestows the internal freedom by reason of which differences legitimise at a more positive higher plane; as relativity compels and always seeks completion in an opposite other. Many who have learnt and mastered the lessons provided by the complementary character of reality explore it to excel and to flourish always. This commitment to complementary openness, is one of the unwritten canons that has always driven and sustained cooperation between scientists. Today, though, more in the exact natural and technological sciences than what we are experiencing in the way many conduct philosophical investigation at the moment. One can say that the technological sciences, their flaws notwithstanding, appear to be proving themselves daily the new model of liberalism and openness, as it pertains to their understanding of knowledge acquisition as sharing, as something complementary and transcultural. That this has very much contributed in the proliferation and advancement of technology, can hardly be contested. Guided by the idea of complementarity, which Oluwole and Kimmerle call "the specific contribution of African philosophy to world philosophy" (Kimmerle, *An Amazing Piece*) individuals and human communities stand better chances of attaining higher levels of legitimisation always. As people caught in a globalising world and are committed to multiculturalism and globalism, either by choice or by necessity, we approach the world and do philosophy while abdicating this complementary responsibility at a great cost. The moment philosophers become divisive and romanticise human problems in ways that promote hatred, division, ethnic and racial biases they lose credibility. Most especially today where ethnic, racial, ultra-nationalistic, far right populist, supremacist sentiments and variants of extremist tendencies are on the rise and tend to tear the world apart, a change of strategy in the way we philosophise has become a priority. If we remember that diverse forms of radicalisation today that breed fanaticism are affairs of the mind, the relevance of noetic propaedeutic as important therapeutic dimension of philosophy of complementation becomes relevant. Here, African philosophy can play a major role in determining the type of changes and adaptation we seek in the world today.

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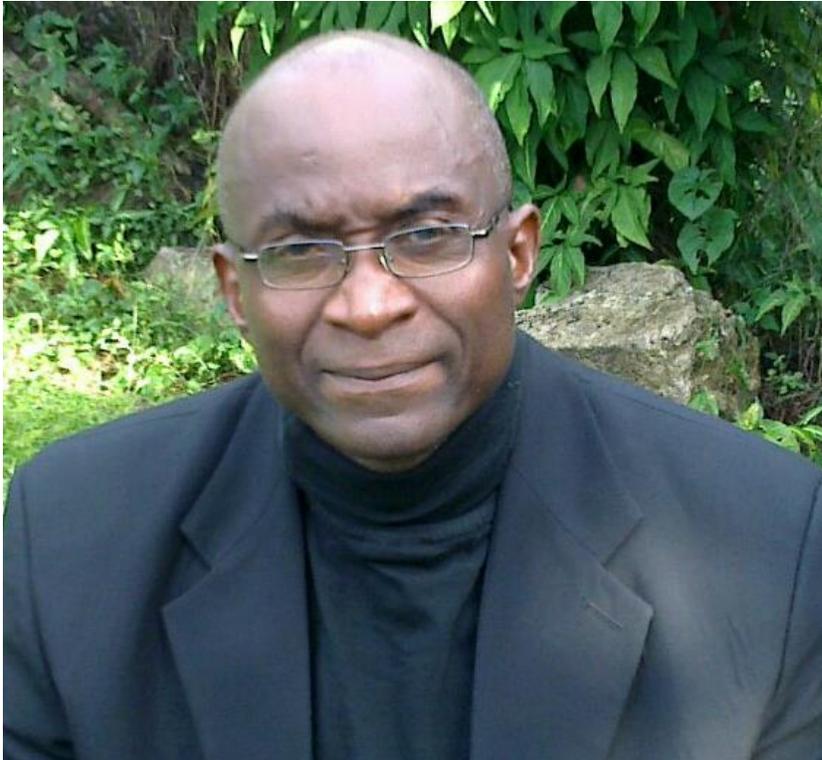
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### **Curriculum Vitae**

Innocent Izuchukwu **Asouzu** is a Nigerian Igbo Catholic Priest and Philosopher; born on October 13, 1952 at the commercial Enyimba City of Aba to the merchant family of Mazi Charles Ijeoma Asouzu and Ezinne Juliana Anaezi Asouzu of Aro-ndizuogu.

After his philosophical studies in Nigeria in 1975, he travelled to Austria to continue with his postgraduate studies. He studied Theology to M.A. level at the Theological Faculty of the University of

Innsbruck under the auspices of the Jesuits at Collegium Canisianum. During this time, he came in contact with the writings of Paul Tillich, whose method of correlation he admired, and the works of Wolfhart Pannenberg. His deep interest for social theory is already evident in his M.A. Thesis in Philosophy titled, „Verstehen gesellschaftlicher Handlungen durch Begründungsschritte“ (Rational Steps for the Understanding of Social Action). He did his doctorate studies in philosophy and sociology at the Geisteswissenschaftliche Fakultät (Faculty of Humanities) of the University of Innsbruck where he continued with his interest in social theory. His Ph.D. Dissertation was devoted to a critical disagreement with some of the basic ideas of Erlangen School of Philosophy. The dissertation bore the title “Gesellschaftliche Konfliktregelung Als Pragmatische Aufgabe. Eine kritische Betrachtung des Konstruktivismus” (Practical Regulation of Social Conflicts. A Critical Consideration of Constructivism). An extract from his dissertation was published by the Austrian philosophical academy upon request under the title -- “Eine Analyse und kritische Bewertung der Methode und des Prinzips der praktischen Argumentation Oswald Schwemmers”. in: *Conceptus, Journal of Philosophy*, 18(1984) No. 44, pp. 85-103. Asouzu has devoted his life towards working out a complementary social theory for the regulation of conflicts and this has crystalized into his Ibuanyidanda Philosophy or Complementary Reflection. The seminal ideas of his theory are already contained in his early writings that include 1) “Kritische

Betrachtung des konstruktiven Wissenschaftstheorie. Erwägungen zu praktisch-philosophischen Konfliktregelungsstrategien” (A Critical Consideration of the Constructive Philosophy of Science. Strategies towards practical Philosophical Regulation of Conflicts) Georg Olms Publishers in Hildesheim, Germany, 1984 2). “Gedanken über die religiöse Problematik der Gegenwart im Licht der Theologie der Religionen” (Reflections On the Contemporary Problems of Religion in the Light of Theology of Religions): In this work on religion, Asouzu sought to offer insight into how mutual harmony can be achieved in the co-existence of diverse religions of the world; a cause that has always agitated his mind for which he was invited on November 30, 1995, to give a public lecture held in Feldbach, Austria and organised by URANIA on "Meine Erfahrung im Zusammenleben mit Moslems" i.e. "My experience living with moselms". Radio Gloria Switzerland equally invited Asouzu in 2013 to deliver a scholarly lecture on ibuanya philosophy towards promotion of mutual coexistence among peoples. Asouzu spoke on the theme: “IBUANYIDANDA UND DIE HERAUSFORDERUNGEN DER DOPPELWERTIGKEIT UNSERER LEBENSERFAHRUNGEN” i.e. “ibuanya and the ambivalent challenges of Life”

Prof. Asouzu was ordained Catholic priest in Austria in 1979. On returning to Nigeria in 1986 he worked briefly in his diocese, Aba, before taking a permanent teaching appointment at the University of Calabar in 1988. He has since then been teaching at this University and researching intensively into the theoretical preconditions of mutual coexistence between units within any given framework. This gave rise to his ibuanya philosophy, in which he succeeded in articulating his idea into a system with its own principles and method of investigating reality. Since the application of Asouzu’s ibuanya philosophy to African philosophy, African philosophy has noticed tremendous positive changes as it steers a systematic course. Variants of his complementary philosophy are trending among reputed African philosophers who draw inspiration from his ideas. His wide ranging influence in African philosophy can be seen in Compatibility Theory, Integrative Humanism, Consolationism, variants of tree valued logic, Ezumezu Logic, Harmonious Monism, Conceptual Mandelisation etc. Besides, his ideas have influenced a new generation of young ambitious scholars who are bent on changing the major contours of African philosophy for good, as can be attested to by the number of critical essays and works written on Asouzu’s Ibuyanda Philosophy (Complementary Reflection) by professional national and international scholars alike. The same can be said of the numerous Ph.D. Dissertations, M.A. Theses and scientific projects that have been articulated on and around Asouzu’s Ibuyanda Philosophy. The idea of complementarity which Asouzu espouses is so important for African philosophy that Heinz Kimmerle designates it as: “the specific contribution of African philosophy to world philosophy” (“An Amazing Piece of Comparative Philosophy”. In: Confluence: Online Journal of World Philosophies], pp221-223, 2014. Vol 1)

Fr. Prof. Asouzu has been consistent in developing his system as is shown in the collection of his essays: “Ikwa Ogwe”. Besides his numerous essays published in highly reputed national and international journals, that reflect the systematic application of his thinking to diverse areas of knowledge, Asouzu has tried to give a systematic account of his thinking in his major books but most especially in these works: 1) The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and beyond African Philosophy. Lit Verlag, Münster, New Brunswick, London, 2005. 533 pages. 2) “Redefining Ethnicity Within ‘The Complementary System of Thought’ in African Philosophy”. In: Re-ethnicizing the Minds? Cultural Revival in Contemporary Thought. Edited by Thorsten Botz-Bornstein and Jürgen Hengelbrock. Amsterdam/New York, 2006. pp. 63-78. 3) Ibuyanda. New Complementary Ontology. Beyond World-Immanentism, Ethnocentric Reduction and Impositions. Litverlag, Münster, Zurich, New Brunswick, London, 2007. 440 pages. 4) Ibuyaru. The Heavy Burden of Philosophy beyond African

Philosophy. Litverlag, Münster, Zurich, New Brunswick, London, 2007. 335. 5) Ikwa Ogwe. Essential Readings in Complementary Reflection. A systematic methodological Approach. Saesprint Publishers, Calabar, 2007. 439 pages. 6) -- Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection) and Some Basic Philosophical Problems in Africa Today. Sense Experience, "ihe mkpuchi anya" and the Super-maxim. Litverlag, Münster, Zurich, Vienna, 2013, 120 pages. For many reputed scholars, Asouzu's approach is a major breakthrough in what is known as African philosophy. He was honoured with an award by The Philosophical Association of Nigeria in recognition of his invaluable contributions to African philosophy.

As a member of University of Calabar community, Fr. Prof. Asouzu has served meritoriously in various capacities as the Dean of Arts, as Head of Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy and as a member of the University Senate, among others. He was the priest in charge of St. Paul's Parish, University of Calabar from 1987-1990. He is a member of many professional bodies including the Nigerian Philosophical Association; National Association of African Religion and Culture; Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria.

As a Roman Catholic priest, Fr. Asouzu has served as pastor of souls in diverse capacities within an outside Nigeria.