

ADDRESSING THE PHENOMENON OF CONCEALMENT AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION THROUGH ASOUZU'S NOETIC PROPAEDEUTIC

Godfrey Atunu Dibie

Department of General Studies

Federal University, Wukari, Taraba, Nigeria

godfreydibie5@gmail.com

Abstract

From feminist linguistic, psycholinguistic and philosophical perspectives, the discrimination against and man-tailored woes suffered by women are across ages arise from the concealment of the mind against the women by sexist men, which calls for a global pedagogy on Asouzu's philosophical orientation on concealment in his noetic propaedeutic aspect of the Ibunya'idanda ontological philosophy. Concealment is the central element of Asouzu's noetic propaedeutic, which stresses the imperative of training the mind to be resolved on existential opposites and realities without polarising them; to realise that every two opposite things and persons complement each other and cannot exist/live in isolation and to accommodate others. Noetic propaedeutic pedagogy is needed to expel whatever concealment against women from the minds of sexist individuals. Once that is dealt with, the individual is bound to see the woman as an existential complementary opposite sex that is indispensable and equal with him. This study maintains that the negative conception of and actions against women among global cultures, which warrant gender stereotype, the discrimination against them and the man-tailored woes they suffer, arise from the mind that locks itself against the reality of existential inevitable complementary opposites. It calls for attitudinal change and mind training.

Keywords: *Concealment, Basis, Gender Discrimination, Women, Asouzu*

Introduction

Gender stereotype, discrimination and woes that plague the woman, merely for being a woman, are worrisome and have thus gained the wide attention of philosophers, linguists, feminists, sociologists, lawyers and many other professionals over the years. Asouzu is one of the philosophers, whose critical thoughts reflect gender issues

against women. Although he is not a feminist philosopher per se, the reality of his Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection) ontological philosophy, an African truth-seeking ideology, lends credence to the feminist conception of gender equality between men and women. Realistically, men and women are existential complementary opposite sexes that are yet same humans and thus equal in all regards, regardless of the ageing polarisation of the differences that ground the misleading notions about women, the discrimination against them and the man-tailored woes they suffer. As a philosopher, who is worried about human and non-human problems in the society and conceives philosophy as an enterprise that ought to help in resolving problems, Asouzu (2017:1) notes that ‘philosophy has much to do with the resourcefulness with which we handle the changes [and challenges] we encounter in life.’

The linguist is likewise. That is why Nwala (2008) observes that the numerous problems bedevilling our societies could have been addressed if the linguists were up and doing. The linguist is thus charged to be up and doing in order to professionally and tactically handle the task of tackling human problems linguistically, since most human problems stem from linguistic problems and deserve linguistic solutions (Dibie and Robert, 2016). It implies that African philosophers and linguists ought to be up and doing so as to interrogate, investigate and proffer solutions to life and human problems that can only be best resolved philosophically and linguistically. It is to that end that this feminist linguist is worried by the ageing concealment of the reality of [truth about] the complementary opposite nature and role of men and women. That is why this paper sets out to describe how Asouzu noetic propaedeutic pedagogy could help in addressing gender discrimination and all man-tailored woes against women among all cultures. His philosophy is considered herein as a panacea to the gender

stereotypical plagues on women, which arise from the concealment of the mind against women, conceiving them as inferior humans that do not deserve anything worthwhile with men and thus considered objects of discrimination and man-tailored woes that negate women's existence and compound their problems.

Asouzu on Concealment

In his discourse on and analysis of noetic propaedeutic, Innocent Asouzu identifies the phenomenon of concealment (known in Igbo as *Ihe mkpuchi anya*) as 'one of the major impediments militating against objectivity and progress in our society' (Asouzu, 2011:95). In Asouzu's words, *Ihe mkpuchi anya* [concealment] is an Igbo phrase, which is translated in English as: 'the thing that impairs vision' or 'the thing that covers the eyes' (Asouzu, 2011:95). It implies that concealment is that [thing] which covers the eyes of the sexist over the realities of existential complementarity, gender complementary relations and gender equality. It also impairs human vision in general, the feminist vision of women emancipation and gender equality and progress in the society. Concealment damages women's image and reputation and undermines their natural abilities and distinct qualities. It only considers all that is wrong with women as well as all they cannot do easily or often against all that is right about women and all that they can do easily. It allows for egoism, prejudices against others, the negation of others, disregarding others, underdevelopment, retrogression, subjectivity, purposeless living, sour intergroup relations, and hinders the realization of vision, objectives/goals, progress and so on.

In what sheds light on the place of all human situations, Udoh (2016) says 'this phenomenon [concealment] commonly manifests in human existential situations.' Udoh's words tally with Asouzu's that 'the phenomenon [concealment] represents our inability to properly

manage existential situations around us.’ It implies that this phenomenon manifests in different, if not all, human situations, including gender situations or issues. It hinders objectivity and progress in all human situations. Gender issues arise from subjectivism. Our subjective conception of the opposite sex hinders us from valuing, respecting and objectively considering the opposite sex, and from taking cognizance of gender reality and complementary relations for unification of the oppositeness and the missing links. Concealment also hinders progress in all ramifications. Women’s progress in all ramifications hampered by concealment, as women are excluded from or not adequately involved in progressive ventures and development processes. Stating categorically, Asouzu (2011:95) says,

One of the most adverse effects of concealment (Ihe mkpuchi anya) is its capacity to becloud our intellect... It is capable of twisting our consciousness and induces us to perceive and interpret situations only to our [own] advantage and ignore the interests of other stakeholders [persons].

Concealment makes people put themselves above others, disregard others, perceive others as less important, less human or threats to them, and so on. That is what makes most men put themselves above women in all regards and thus neglect, relegate, batter and dehumanize them. It does not allow for tolerance and mutual understanding. Concealment is largely responsible for the sexist plagues unleashed on women by men of different cultures. Men, whose minds are concealed against women, continuously tend to consider their own interest alone all time, even at the expense of women’s. Asouzu posits that this negative tendency rises from

‘inherent primitive instinct of self-preservation’, for which the persons enveloped by concealment feel threatened by others’ interest and thus do their best to exclude them from what their inclusiveness threatens them for.

Most often, human beings to devise all possible strategies in the bid to first secure their interest. One of the strategies is what Asouzu calls super maxim, which states that ‘the nearer, the better, the safer.’ By virtue of this maxim, many assume that those who have the closest affinity with them are the safest to them. They fail to take cognizance of the fact that those are the very most harmful persons to them (Asouzu, 2004:69). It follows that the sexists usually believe in the super maxim in terms of their sex folk. For example, lesbians and homosexuals feel they do not need their opposite sex partners, as they get enveloped by concealment and super maxim. Both male and female sexists are likewise. Consequently, gender discrimination (stereotype) prevails in their relationship with those they feel are threats to them. Noetic propaedeutic is thus imperative in ameliorating the problems arising from these phenomena and the likes, such as gender issues, which characterize the society. Udoh (2016:5) affirms this fact, as he notes, ‘The roles of tribalism, nepotism, religious sentiments and political affiliations which have utterly blindfolded (concealed) objectivity and uprightness can however be addressed and managed by what Asouzu calls Noetic propaedeutic.’

What follows concealment is what Asouzu calls ‘ambivalent of human interest’, which he says causes societal conflict. It derives from or is brought about by concealment. The ambivalent of human interest has both negative and positive phases. It represents things both negatively and positively. With this, there is the primitive inclination for self-preference and self-preservation, which can

mislead one into doing wrong things as well believing it to be right. This is what we see in sexist gender relations that variously plagues the woman in society. The danger of the misleading interest is the inherent ambivalence. To that end, Asouzu (2003:15-6) notes,

It is a paradox that a person seeks to observe his interest, but undertakes those things that would ensure his own destruction. This is the root of the problem.... This assumption defies common sense; it has an inherent contradictory dimension because it seeks to negate what one originally intended.

Indeed, we contradict ourselves in our sustained efforts to protect only our own interests at the peril of others'. The obvious implications of gender stereotype (discrimination) and man-tailored woes on women are manifestations of the destruction caused our dangerous assumptions about women in society. For example, excluding them from development processes and meaningful ventures, in sexist men's efforts to secure their interest, poor development and countless issues of all phases arises and in turn affects men, and their loopholes become obvious and turn against them. They end up destroying themselves in the course of trying to protect their interests on the lane of gender. Asouzu believes that creating awareness about the ambivalent of human interest is one the greatest challenges towards building a just, equitable, harmonious, and violent-free society. This applies to the task of creating awareness about gender equality and/or gender fairness, which would bring to place the new world order in which women would not be stereotyped in anyway, on sexual (gender) lane and otherwise.

In view of the foregoing, Asouzu (2003:15) suggests that noetic propaedeutic is the panacea for concealment, whereby the individual

would solidly reform their personal character and thoroughly train and renew their mind [mindset] and mentality about reality, truth, humanism and others. He notes that ‘nothing can be achieved unless there is concrete will to change.’ So, nothing significant can be achieved as supposed in the society without the concrete will to change from negative gender perception of women, negating gender reality, gender discrimination, negative gender framing and plaguing of women with man-tailored woes, women exclusion from development processes and meaningful ventures, women misrepresentation in politics, gender inequality, the different phases of injustice against women in society, the outright denial and breach of women’s fundamental human rights, breaching the ageing extant gender gaps between men and women in all spheres and so on.

Asouzu insists that critical thinking (philosophising) should be based on the mental harmonising faculty, which ensures equilibration or harmonisation of existential differences, harboured in the mind. The harmonising faculty harmonises all factors or forces that tend towards divisiveness, polarisation and exclusiveness by controlling the ambivalent-laden existential situations and ensures that the phenomenon of concealment does not make the mind go a unilateral way. It ensures that concealment does not turn intelligence and wisdom hegemonic but remain positive. When left alone under the influence of concealment, they easily turn hegemonic and negative. Upon the guidance of this faculty, the subjects (actors or individuals) realise that they cannot solve their problems and difficulties alone but with reference to those who share similar problems and experiences.

Asouzu (2007a:323-4) posits that the mind can never err culpably if it acts in harmony to the dictates of these categories, which include fragmentation (relativity), unity, totality, universality,

comprehensiveness, wholeness and future reference. Where the categories are made active by the harmonising faculty, the mind would have the capacity to adhere to the demands of the principle of non-contradiction (Asouzu, 2007b:241). The solution to concealment is thus the harmonising faculty, the seat of mediation, which has the capacity of freeing the mind from concealment. When it clears the mind of concealment, it enables the transcendent categories to remain active, known as ‘complementary transcendent existential conversion’. Complementary transcendent existential conversion is the procedure taken to dispel the concealment from the mind so as to make the transcendent categories active. It is the ‘process through which human consciousness attains the highest level of experience or intuition of being, as that on account of which anything that exists serves a missing link of reality’ (Asouzu, 2007a:329).

Upon transcendent existential conversion, the individual undergoes an instance of the harmonisation of the mind with the transcendent categories of being in a non-contradictory manner. When this occurs, the mind stops relating with the world in absolute fragments and polarisation, but rather relates with it in a framework of complementarity and comprehensive whole future referential dimension. It is at this point that the mind begins to see being from a dualistic mindset, from a global totalising mindset, which is the precondition for certainty. Also, it becomes aware of the limitation of the super-maxim and pursues to transform them to general imperatives that states: ‘allow the limitation of being to be the cause of your joy’ (Asouzu, 2007a:328). It is at the point of existential conversion that the mind becomes fully aware of the implications and limits of the super-maxim: ‘the nearer, the better and safer’ and seeks to go beyond it. It realises that the nearer must not always be the better and safer. It is at this point that virtues like fellow feeling,

mutual help, care, love, honesty, respect, etc. would begin to be shown to all missing links irrespective of the place of origin, ethnic affiliation, gender, or sexual differences.

Noetic Propaedeutic, Concealment and Gender Discrimination, Woes and Reality

Concealment could be got rid of through internalising and practising the teachings of Asouzu's noetic propaedeutic. Getting rid of concealment implies getting rid of gender discrimination, woes and complex issues that are man-tailored. Noetic propaedeutic is the panacea to concealment that causes gender discrimination and gender woes unleashed on women by men, only for being women. The prime solution noetic propaedeutic offers to gender discrimination and woes of all phases is made manifest by its clarifications and proof of gender reality, which human relations should anchor on it and thrive, rather than the otherwise. The reality of complementary relations, for which all humans are humans, equal, interdependent, social and moral beings, never fully independent, and eternally complementary opposites that are yet inseparable, proves gender discrimination and woes as negative acts. These negative acts are hatched by the concealed mind that polarises gender reality and contravenes the contrast between the two sexes or gender labels: male and female, which are mere existential pairs. Ignorance and negligence of the gender reality upheld by noetic propaedeutic against concealment often allows for gender discrimination and woes. It is on that ground that the sexist unleashes gender woes on human of the opposite sex. The commonest ones unleashed on women by men include image battering, domestic violence or alienation, sexual harassment, rape, cheating, education deprivation, poverty feminisation, outright abuse of women's rights, gender framing of work and social responsibilities, negative

widowhood practices, denial of rights to inheritance, man-tailored family and marriage woes, etc.

Asouzu's noetic propaedeutic model situates in his Ibuanyidanda philosophy, a complementary ontology. *Ibuanyidanda* is an ontology that emphasises the dire need for mutual complementarity between and among persons, people(s), groups, phenomena and things for the realisation of the greatest possible thriving and gaining the collective good of all. In other words, this philosophy teaches that there is a mutual dependence of all missing links in the unifying interrelatedness of things and all living creatures in generality (Asouzu, 2011:102). It implies that Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda ontology also emphasises gender equity between the two human sexes that exist and ought to ideally live complementarily to each other, as complementary opposites, and whose oppositeness need not be polarised by the mind. Noetic propaedeutic is an integral part of the whole Ibuanyidanda philosophy, which revolves around the resetting and restructuring of the mind in order to accommodate existential opposites without their polarisation. It is a systematic philosophical pedagogy involving psycholinguistic analysis of what goes on in the mind in relation to the perception of others and existential realities that are in duality or plurality and yet in monism.

It teaches one how to overcome the broken unity in human consciousness that is caused by the challenges of the tension-laden human ambivalent existential situations and concealment [Ihemkpuchianya] (Asouzu, 2011:108). It takes the conscious training of the mind against concealment to hold on to unity in diversity and mutual complementary relations and interdependence, without negation and/or polarization. To salvage the ego from shattered unity and to restore the subject to true self; realize, affirm and be conscious of the fact that 'to be' is to be in mutual

complementary relationship with all missing links of reality [ka so mu adinal]; to avoid negative gender framing, wrong perception of women by men and vice versa, and the polarization of the ideal or supposed existential sexual differences; and to accommodate others in opposites, the mind has to be trained and locked against concealment. It has to be trained towards the acquisition of a good mindset that is free from concealment and can genuinely transcend bifurcating tendencies, as it attains the common good and not the otherwise. The man, whose mind is so trained, would consider the woman as an existential complementary opposite being that he inevitably needs all through his life. Such a man would not be greedy to pursue egoistic individual good on the basis of being a male, but consider the common good of both sexes.

Asouzu teaches that noetic propaedeutic is essential for the apt ‘understanding and sharing of meaning in a way that outweighs [the] artificial impediments it creates around itself’ (Asouzu, 2007a:81). This means that noetic propaedeutic offers a better or an ideal understanding and sharing of the meaning of gender. Giving it a feminist philosophical thought, it would be understood that concealment is a negative psychological factor that hampers the better or an ideal understanding and sharing of the true meaning of gender, which is free from the misinterpretations that bring about the bias conception of women as inferior, less human, deficient, problematic, men’s object or property, and so on. Also, on feminist lane, it could be inferred from Asouzu’s noetic propaedeutic pedagogy that any undertaking that takes the tensions generated in the human situation seriously must also be interested in the acquisition of a type of mindset which transcends cultural boundaries, as to provide clarity and credibility in gender matters and all matters of inquiry. All forms of discourse have to be carefully

articulated and given a bias-free solid foundation (Asouzu, 2007a:80).

The solid foundation created through noetic propaedeutic becomes a common horizon for mutually shared understanding which communicates meaning to all involved. We need to seek true knowledge of gender relations in order to free our minds from the polarization of gender and the negation of humanity on the basis of gender differences. In seeking authentic knowledge and meaning of gender [reality], the mind has to be rightly positioned in that direction through conscious and unceasing training of the mind by self and others. Such training and consciousness would expel or suppress concealment in the mind. The mind as such becomes aware and always conscious of complementarity and logical gender reality. The mind would cease to conceal itself against the other sex or person, as it realizes and remains conscious of ‘the missing links’; the logicity of both sexes being equal because they are both humans; and the inevitable complementary existential connectivity between one being and another regardless of their sexual differences.

The necessity for the foregoing (mind cleansing) is affirmed by Asouzu when he observes that where proper cleansing and restructuring of the mind is lacking, there is often no prospect; and so the mind ought to be trained and always made to attain the level of refinement expected of it, it has to learn to view units ‘as complements within a comprehensive universal setting (Asouzu, 2007a:83). He further states that to free the mind from the strong tendencies of becoming absolute and exclusivist in its commitments, its urgent treatment to overcome the ambivalence of human interest and *ihemkpuchianya* (phenomenon of concealment) is imperative (Asouzu, 2007a:83). From the foregoing, it could be easily understood that stereotypical gender framing, dichotomy and

perspectives arise from the misunderstanding of the ideal and authentic meaning of gender conceptualization, conception and reality. Reflecting on Asouzu's complementary ontology, Udoh (2016) notes, 'All groups, unions, cultures, races, sexes, tribes, nations, religions, political conglomerations, etc. are in mutual complementary indebtedness to each other in their privileges and responsibilities.' Noetic propaedeutic is an ontological pedagogy of Asouzu's Ibuanyidanda philosophy. Ibuanyidanda philosophy is that which aims at harmonising and complementing reality rather than seeking or exhibiting dividing, polarising and bifurcating of reality (Asouzu, 2011:104).

For Asouzu, any relationship that is the like of ibuanyidanda or that is anchored on ibuanyidanda usually seeks to proffer solutions to 'the fracture in the mind that makes harmony of differences difficult, if not impossible'. Humans are in complementary relations with other humans, their fellows, and the non-humans, particularly as social beings. In all complementary relationships of whatever manners and phases, a moment of natural compulsion is encountered, for 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, 2004:277). It is at the point of 'unity of opposites and all' by accepting the other(s) or each other deep in the mind that the units Asouzu talks about reach joyous services, having being 'conscious of their limitations and fragility in view of a future that is all-embracing'. All modes of complementary relationship demand what is needed to mediate meaningfully the tension that mistakes contraries for contradictories, generated in the mind (Asouzu, 2017:3). Noetic propaedeutic is the needed panacea for concealment, which informs us that when the mind negates itself against reality and against others through concealment, it rejects others and reality. Clearly, noetic propaedeutic can resolve the problems faced by

women and the gender plagues on them, which concealment causes, for which concealed minds become sexist, discriminatory, and so on.

Asouzu argues that reality presents itself in ambivalences. That is why we have white and black, long and short, superior and inferior, wise and foolish, we and them, I and you, educated and not educated, strong and weak, rational and irrational and so on. These ambivalent pairs exist in complementary relationship, mutually serving each other. However, humans are prevented from seeing this complementarity inherent in these pairs; thereby making them to exalt one pair above the other. When this happens, it means the phenomenon of concealment is at work. For humans to see the existential complementarity that harmonises life ambivalences, the phenomenon of concealment has to be got rid of from the mind. Its elimination brings to place virtuous acts like peace, love, kindness, mercy, care, fellow feeling, honesty and the likes in human beings (Asouzu, 2007b:233). They would begin to see all reality as sharing the same complementary horizon, if they become fully conscious of the functioning of the constraining mechanisms and overcome them.

To get rid of concealment, both Asouzu and Aristotle believe that the mind has to be trained to see reality in relational modes. This act of training the mind in this regard is what he describes ‘noetic propaedeutic’. The relational modes constitute the existential complementarity that Asouzu insists must be realised and upheld at all times. In his words, ‘noetic propaedeutic is the pedagogical and psychotherapeutic dimension of ibuanyidanda philosophy’ (Asouzu, 2011:46). It teaches that the mind has to be well-trained to be aware of the existential complementarity between and among humans, things, phenomena and groups of all spheres. The noetic propaedeutic pedagogy, according to the proponent, has processes

through which it is adequately attained. To this end, Asouzu (2012) concisely notes,

Noetic propaedeutic is a pre-education of the mind and human reason with a view to overcoming the broken unity in human consciousness caused by the challenges of tension-laden human ambivalent existential situations and the mkpuchi anya, meaning literally as 'phenomenon of concealment'.

The foregoing implies that gender reality presents itself in ambivalences, for which we have men and women, boys and girls, mothers and fathers, male and female, etc. The mutuality of these pairs anchors on the existential complementarity phenomenon, which concealment seeks to destroy at all times. And so, we have to individually and collectively fight, expel and/or overshadow the phenomenon of concealment in order to have smooth gender relations free from all forms of negativity and stereotypes. The single gesture of consciously expelling concealment from the mind and allowing reality to be uncorrupted, natural, overwhelming and complementary brings to place peace, love, kindness, mercy, care, fellow feeling, honesty, integrity and many other virtues (virtuous acts) in human beings. All these virtuous acts do not allow for stereotypical gender framing and sexism.

On the contrary, the concealed mind is otherwise and thus forms the basis gender discrimination, as it seals off itself against the other(s) and sees existential opposites as avenues for discrimination, stereotype, prejudices, and polarisation and negation of realities, such as the indisputable reality of gender equality between men and women of all cultures, which the concealed mind that is opened to patriarchy polarises and negates. Consequently, the individual carrying that concealed mind exhibits non-virtuous and sexist acts

against the other sex. In most cases, more men than women exhibit these to and against women. Most female radical feminists exhibit these acts against men.

Again, an understanding of gender relations from Asouzu's perspective would undoubtedly offer us individually and collectively the better knowledge and alternatives for addressing the inevitable or non-bargained challenges that characterise human relations, such as gender relations. With noetic propaedeutic as such a solution model, we are bound to be able to better control the challenges; to realise and excellently handle the natural order of things in their relativity; and to competently and adequately manage the relativity of things. Fear is on kernel challenges that confront every complementary relation/ship. Fear magnifies the conditions that one experiences or suffers and failure to control the fear causes the tendency to resort to devising alternatives, for which the sexist resorts to: the polarisation of gender reality, negative gender framing, gender stereotypes, women relegation, sour male-female relations, gender discrimination, gender role assignment, strained emphasis on the inconsequential existential sexual, psychological and personhood differences between men and women, and plaguing women with gender woes. Asouzu (2017) lends credence to the foregoing viz:

...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 congeals 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.

It is on account of existential contradictions that world's complementary character (the complementary character of ends to their means and causes to their effects) is mistaken for negations, which consequently generates internal tension that may manifest later as external tension or conflict. The matters arising from this psychological situation is what Asouzu terms the problem of the phenomenon of the tyranny of human ambivalent tension laden existential situation, which he considers a noetic challenge that can complicate matters even for the most discerning mind of good intentions (Asouzu, 2017:7). It should be recalled that noetic propaedeutic pedagogy basically aims at training the mind of individuals in order to fully understand the interrelationship in reality and how to maintain it, taking into consideration the complementary comprehensive nature of reality (Asouzu, 2007a:81). At best, this mind training towards smooth gender relations, gender equity and gender unification rather than polarisation requires self-training, self-consciousness of and reflection on the reality of complementarity, and the training by others through both written and oral media.

It is on account of existential contradictions that world's complementary character (the complementary character of ends to their means and causes to their effects) is mistaken for negations, which consequently generates internal tension that may manifest later as external tension or conflict (Asouzu, 2017:7). The foregoing tells of the root cause of gender conflict and violence. The natural differences between the two human sexes, differentiated by linguistic constructs for easy distinction of the two sexes, are the constituents of the world's complementary character mistaken for negations. The negation of these natural gender or sexual identities for contextual distinction causes the gender tension or conflict between the two sexes. This tension or conflict, generated first in the

mind by fear caused by concealment, begins internally and manifests externally in gender relations. The matters arising from this psychological situation is what Asouzu describes as problem of the phenomenon of the tyranny of human ambivalent tension laden existential situation, which he considers a noetic challenge that can complicate matters even for the most discerning mind of good intentions (Asouzu, 2017:7).

Yet, the consciousness towards and the acceptance of the natural existential gender reality of complementary relations are the points where noetic propaedeutic comes in dealing with or resolving the tension or conflict caused by concealment. Being conscious of the reality that humans are inseparably complementary in nature would make one realise that the ‘missing links’ between the two human sexes are the grounds for gender relations, which should be complementary rather than competitive. Asouzu teaches that Ibunya-danda is the philosophy of missing links that focuses on complementation, not competition. As it is said that ‘there is no competition in destiny’ so it is with ideal gender relations, whereby the bio-sexual, natural and psychological differences between males and females only naturally exist for complementation and not competition. It is the phenomenon of concealment that conceives, falsifies and presents them as competition grounds rather than complementation grounds. Clearly, the imperative of the teachings and warnings of noetic propaedeutic against concealment is imperative.

It is in search of the missing links that we either converge or relate to find and make up the missing links, not the otherwise — not for conflict or competition. Religiously, it is the need and search for the missing links (missing rib) that a man marries a woman to become complete. It means that a man is incomplete until he has a woman –

– a wife. Existentially, some vital parts of the either sex exist in the other so that the missing links become their binding forces. That is, men and women are part and parcel of each other, carrying the missing links of each other. So, neither of them can disregard the other, or claim autonomy or complete independence. And, if that be it, then they are inevitable complimentary opposites, who overcome and must let out concealment in order to live together and relate well eternally. If ants (*danda*) could realistically exhibit the unceasing dire need for mutual interdependence in carrying loads that appear bigger than they, every difficult task could be perfectly handled easily in mutual communion by humans, who are conscious of this reality that ants take cognizance of and exhibit. It is high men and women learnt from ants and began shouldering the hardest burdens or tasks together in mutuality — mutual interdependence. That would permanently resolve ageing gender issues across the globe, such as issues of man-tailored gender discrimination and woes suffered by women.

If no task is insurmountable for ants [Ibu anyi danda] (Asouzu, 2007: ii) because of their exertion of unison, interdependence and complementation, the same [and even more] is the case of humans, when no set of humans is excluded from the web of complementation. It implies that men and women must consistently unite at all times to carry all existential tasks with ease and surmount them. It is the exclusion of women from different critical, significant or paramount tasks of life in society that makes many of the tasks insurmountable. Herein, while Ibuanyidanda philosophy teaches the necessity for complementation in gender relations rather than individualism or disjointedness, noetic propaedeutic, its model, stresses the consciousness and efforts toward overcoming mind concealment for smooth gender relations free from discrimination and man-tailored gender woes. Asouzu (2017:4) infers that

negligence or lack of interest in the noetic dimension of human problems, such as gender framing, issues and woes, intolerance, sexism, discrimination, racism, poverty feminisation, superiority tendency, crimes, criminality, fear, poverty feminisation, unemployment, etc., continuously causes tension and contestation between humans of the two sexes (males and females).

Conclusion

The absolute joy of humanism depends on complementarity (complementary relations) of mutual interdependence, free from polarization, negation, discrimination and artificial (man-tailored) woes on women and/or vice versa. Also, the logical reality of humanism relies on complementarity (mutual complementation). Males and females, as both humans, are thus logically equal. Complementarity, which opposes and melts out concealment, is considered the panacea for gender discrimination and man-tailored woes on men. Humans, like ideas, are only complete when all humans or both sexes are accommodated and treated equally. The interrelatedness of all beings, realities, segments, ideas and things that work in mutual complementation eventually bring about the general well-being and common good of all.

As Asouzu teaches in his noetic propaedeutic of his complementary reflection [Ibuanyidanda] ontology, we are bound to come to terms with our finitude and limitations, when we understand the fact that anything that exists serves a missing link of reality. For example, understanding, accepting and being conscious of the reality that males and females are complementary opposites of equal humanism would make us realize that their existential sexual (gender) differences are meant to serve the missing link of reality and not the otherwise. By that understanding, we are bound to accept them as given and as well see them as conditions through which we can

achieve higher levels of legitimization and authentic joy of being in unison and complementary relations, free from all forms anomalies, discrimination and man-tailored woes.

Noetic propaedeutic is a practical, philosophical, psychological, procedural, ontological, educative and therapeutic model for effectively addressing gender woes. It is the ontology of mutual complementation that upholds and insists on unity in diversity and polarity. It frowns at and campaigns against individualism and disjointedness, as in the case of gender discrimination and man-tailored woes arising from concealment that anchors on individualism and disjointedness. Males and females are naturally complementary beings. Just as all their body parts are interwoven and cannot exist and function well without one, so also they [males and females] cannot be complete and cannot do well without the either sex in full reality. By complementing each other, they serve existential missing links that naturally bind them together at all times. All said and done, it is factual that concealment is one of the bases of gender discrimination, inequality and man-tailored woes unleashed on women in society. This study calls for a change of mind and attitude towards women on the basis of concealed, individualistic and disjointed gender reality. Doing so requires the knowledge, principles and methods of and imbibing noetic propaedeutic to free the mind from concealment in gender relations.

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