



Social justice in view of Ibuanyidandan philosophy

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Abstract

The search for a just society and resolution of all social problems has remained main goal since societies first developed, and remains so to date. Almost every mature person knows intuitively what is 'just,' and can intuitively identify 'injustice.' From Ancient theory of 'might is right' to the recent, 'justice as fairness', all involve a determining factor for its actualization, which includes rising beyond our ambivalence of human nature, which is the crux of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy. Plato agrees with this when he claimed that 'an un-examined life is not worth living', as our decision and life activities contributes extensively to social injustice. This is because if we examine our actions and decisions as Plato advised, our limitations can be identified and then we can endeavor to rise beyond our ambivalence human nature. This paper attempts to apply *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy to the problem of social justice.

Keywords: Ibuanyidanda, social justice, injustice, ambivalence human nature

1. Introduction

There are large voices yearning for justice, from a wide range of political, social and religious organizations. Also, in a wide range of ways, specifically by method for media; the daily papers, radio, and Television, with voices centered on individuals who have been victimized - peoples, groups, races, the financially underprivileged, casualties of totalitarian administrations, women who are subjugated and marginalized, gays, children – slavery or labour, the worker who has been deserted to the self-assertive choices of the industrialists, etc. This call for justice, by both the individuals and groups of individuals, is firmly connected to recent awareness in our world; democracy and postmodernism. Since the pre-Socratic era, philosophers have concerned themselves with solving the problem of social injustice which is believed to be one of man biggest problems. For instance, Karl Marx had lived all his life writing extensively on social injustice and how humans could be over it. For him 'capitalism' brews social injustice and must be eradicated if man wants to live in a just society (Arendt, 2002) ^[1]. He further opines that capitalism breeds inequality, strips the workers or their individuality, alienate man from his work, the product or service, species-essence and lastly relations of production. Furthermore he opines that class distinction came about due to the raise of capitalism. He did attempt to offer solution by introducing revolution and 'communist state', though, this idea is quite encouraging, but achieving them is quite problematic. Many now believe that the important philosophical venture of communism has fallen; liberalism and democracy has obviously come to possess the space. In any case, when Rawls' published his work; *Justice as Fairness and Lectures on the History of Political Philosophy* it ended up plainly evident that his liberal worldview proposed radical changes in Karl Marx political framework that we

know. He dismisses the welfare state of Karl Marx and offered property owning democratic system and liberal communism as two frameworks which fulfill the standards of social justice. John Rawls theory was not without criticism, as Robert Paul Wolff condemned Rawls from a Marxist point of view in *Understanding Rawls: A Critique and Reconstruction of A Theory of Justice* (1977). He contended that Rawls offers a conciliatory sentiment for the present state of affairs seeing that he builds social justice from existing practice and dispossesses the likelihood that there might be issues of foul play implanted in capitalist social relations, private property or the market economy (Wolff, 1977) ^[13]. Studies in social contractarian shows that humans are egoistic in nature; this makes social justice difficult in our society. This paper joins the debate on social justice and proposes a contemporary African Philosophical thought (*ibuanyidandan* philosophy) to help solve man's oldest problem-injustice.

2. Social Justice

We live in an unjust world. From human perspective, many individuals do get away with murder. Villains cheat, lie, take, and live in luxury to the detriment of others. Some utilizes force to oppress their victims, keep them in virtual slavery to their selfish wants and wishes. And, whether by official and legitimate means (as in the utilization of business or government office) or through unofficial and unlawful means (as it is been used by mafia, for example) the purpose is the same. The term social-justice is a bit difficult to define as many scholars have different views as to what it is and what it entails. However, Social Justice is the idea that all individuals from a given society merit an equivalent balance as far as opportunity, political rights, distribution of wealth and benefits are concerned, with the goal that they would lead to

the ability to satisfying lives and making them realize their potentials. All-through western philosophical era, researchers have differed on what constitute social justice. One of the most noteworthy philosophers to have given a reasonable insight into this problem is Plato. Plato had trusted that justice does not rely on a culture and customs or any other outside drive. For him in his book *The Republic*, Justice is interior as it lives in the human soul (Rosen, 2005) ^[10]. Plato strikes a connection between the human living being from one perspective and social living being on the other. For Plato, Justice must be accomplished in a society when everybody tends to its very own concerns without meddling in others position. Plato is also attributed with the quotation, "An unexamined life is not worth living" (Famakinwa, 2012) ^[6]. It is a fact that life is an amazing succession of occasions that incites love, disdain, liberality and joy; however, imagine a scenario where life remains unexamined. If everyone would do whatever he/ she pleases selfishly, there will be clash of interest and as claimed by the social contractarians, society will be in a state of chaos. Solely because of this reason the institution of government was formed to curb unforeseen social problems. This is to curtail many persons who may still involve in activities of life that is not worth living. Aristotle on the other hand accepts that everything has a particular point and man's particular point is to achieve the bona fide fulfillment. He clears up the possibility of justice on the reason of individual life. According to Aristotle, justice in individual is the concordance in the human soul, and in the overall population is correspondence and degree in the fulfillment and quality. Justice, to Aristotle as to Plato, is morals, all things considered (Lorenz, 2009) ^[9]. Justice infers that every person from a gathering should fulfill his moral duty towards the related people from his gathering. Apparently, the two most compelling modern masterminds about justice are John Rawls and Robert Nozick. In spite of the fact that their speculations of justice are very mind boggling, the key contrast between them is that Rawls favors - justice as equal fairness, while Nozick inclines toward - justice, fairness strategies and procedures (Wolff, 2010) ^[12]. Rawls contended that just standards are those that would be chosen by any individual in a society where they had no learning of their race, sexual orientation, knowledge, capacity, physical qualities, money related circumstance or the position they would involve. He recommended two standards: every individual ought to have break even with rights and fundamental freedoms to the degree that these don't encroach upon another's comparable rights and freedoms; and social and monetary disparities are justly justified when (a) they are sensibly anticipated that would be further bolstering everybody's good fortune, and (b) connected to positions and workplaces open to all. Rawls calls this —justice as fairness (Lister, 2013) ^[10]. It is likewise usually called social justice'. Despite these wonderful philosophical postulations, what is the yardstick in achieving them?

3. The Concept of *Ibuanyi Dan Dan* Philosophy

The idea of '*Ibuanyidanda*' According to Asouzu, is drawn from the Igbo dialect and has to its closest English proportionate; 'Complementarity', in the feeling of fellowship, (*igwe bu ike*) quality in harmony (Asouzu, 2007)

^[4]. The word *Ibuanyidanda* is a consolidated word comprised of three sections: *Ibu* which signifies "Load or errand"; *Anyi* significance insurmountable force, and *Danda* (ants). This idea *Ibuanyidanda* draws its motivation from the lessons of traditional Igbo philosophers of the complementary system of thought. For the traditional Igbo dialect "*danda*" (ants) can surmount the most troublesome difficulties if they work in a concordant reciprocal way (Asouzu, 2004) ^[4]. This thinking springs out from extensive study of ants' unique nature of oneness and complementarity. An individual ant knows how to pass an obstruction yet does not have the physical energy to move the load, but the gathering of her group is always there to help actualize her thought. Ants are among the not very many creatures, other than people, that cooperate among themselves to convey stacks far heavier than an individual from their species. Drawing from this, *Ibuanyidanda* system of thought is the snapshot of reflection between the decisions of segregation and collaboration. In the light of this, Prof. Asouzu opine that when we say *Ibuanyidanda*, we are making plan of action to such an ontological condition of shared administration in Complementarities as the skyline of our reality (Asouzu, 2007) ^[4]. A sufficient handle of Asouzu's reasoning of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy is subject to the comprehension of two noteworthy standards whereupon his idea is based. These are the principle of 'harmonious complementation' and the 'principle of progressive transformation'. The previous states that "anything that exists serves a missing link of reality". By missing link it implied the assorted part or substances of which any current reality is constituted. In accordance with this guideline, Asouzu affirms that "a system can only work when the diverse components of which it is constituted serve each other complementarily and authentically as aspect of its existence", (Asouzu, 2003) ^[2]. The principle of progressive transformation then again, is a fruition of the standard of 'harmonious transformation'. The principle states therefore; "allow the limitation of being to be the cause of your joy" (Asouzu, 2003) ^[2]. What Asouzu suggests here is that, a thing serves a missing link with reality if and only if it can in like manner get its substantial legitimization. In other words, every single human act, including the demonstration of metaphysical speculation must be coordinated to a valid source as a condition for them to be the source of their joy. For instance, the people who perform contrary acts get some antagonistic satisfaction from it, yet this happiness which the confinement of being gives must be changed to legitimate euphoria to have its significance. Along these lines, complementary reflection ontology is "a philosophy that seeks to consider things in the significance of their singularity and not in the exclusiveness of their otherness in view of the joy that gives completion to all missing links of reality" (Asouzu, 2007) ^[4]. Basically in this way, Asouzu's *Ibuanyidanda* is a life philosophy looking to comprehend reality from the foregoing environment of its African background, without submitting itself uncritically to these preconditions. Asouzu tries to draw the conditions for comprehension and deciphering human life and circumstance with a view to giving the necessary tools for harmonious co-existence. Asouzu alludes to his idea of 'joy of being' as the main impetus of our lives, the good life as claimed by Aristotle. But for Asouzu, this must be made clear in

cognizant endeavor in order to live legitimately through mastering our situation. In this way, a man is said to have enabled the limitation of being to be the cause of his joy, on the off chance that he partakes in the joy implanted in the ultimate foundation of being, and this is made apparent in authentic living and in the cognizant endeavor to pick the positive side of this ambivalent interest. Asouzu further claims that there is a joy that is constitutive of our reality of being and it is known to us proleptically and referentially in each one of those minutes where we make sincere commitment to experience it authentically in our existential situations.

4. Ibuanyi Dan Dan Philosophy and Social Justice

Man is a being towards defending of the self. In such manner each one of his exercises and perspectives are to be surveyed against the measure of his atomistic prideful method of reasoning in self-defending. This is fundamentally as it is the main cause for social injustice. Thomas Hobbes and other social contractarians had envision a condition of nature where man lived without a bigger power to keep them all in amazement, and no man was so much stronger than another by nature and man could not be killed by stealth (Williams, 2007) ^[11]. Man, in this state, is sovereign to himself, and along these lines *homo lupus homine*. To some social contractarians, man soon was in an interminable condition of genuine and adrenalin-pumping dread. This include, dread of war, dread of infringement of self-preservation, dread of pulverization of life etc. Ambivalence of Human Interest began having negative effect on man. John Locke like Thomas Hobbes concludes that man is actually incited to do whatever he supposes “fit for the preservation of himself” (Locke, 1965) ^[8]. This is on account that even in the condition of nature, man is shrewd to realize what is beneficial for him. The problem of ambivalent human interest inherent in our society latter gave birth to modern government. Surveys on Asouzu’s work *Effective Leadership and the Ambivalence of Human Interest: The Nigerian Paradox in a Complementary Perspective*; will be a sufficient guide for our comprehension of the wonder of social activity, social development/design identifying with the ambivalence of human interest. A careful comprehension of this work uncovers that it is coordinated towards the finding of the most key wellsprings of contentions and conflicts in society. Accurately the author gave a vivid explanation for our failure as individuals to do those things we distinguish as great yet demand doing those shocking things we energetically despise and censure from the beginning (Asouzu, 2003) ^[2]. The author recognizes issues, for example, unfairness, carelessness, misadministration and negligence for the welfare of individuals as a portion of the characteristics of the horrifying activities in any given society. He places that every one of the issues inalienable in a general public are in solid terms because of our powerlessness to perceive that human interest is ambivalent. This is not a long way from Socrates’ thought which states that “knowledge is virtue” and vice is ascribed to unawareness of the good (Barney, 2010) ^[5]. Human interest as ambivalent implies that it has a twofold limit of representing something negative and positive in the meantime. Little ponder on Socrates’ morals grounds sees why he rebukes us to examine our life critically. This might be educated by the need to know about our ambivalent interest

because ignorance for Socrates is vice and to be well-informed necessitates knowing the good and not the vice. Therefore the peril of inherent ambivalence is situated in the limit of our interest to delude us to unintended yet willful, keen activities and conclusions. As indicated by him; we once in a while persistently and keenly accord acknowledgment to a man of questionable character or precursor, thereby subscribing indirectly to the ill consequences related with the individual’s way of life. Amusingly when we end up noticeably awkward with the result of our activities particularly with its debilitating impacts, we swing round to dismiss them. In this regard, we wish to express that other than our powerlessness to know about the negative outcomes of our activities from the beginning; our social activities are regularly antecedented to some extend greed and selfishness. The element of egoism, selfishness and greed we assume obscures or restrain our rationality as humans. Socrates had forewarned that one ought not to permit the appetitive component of one soul to overwhelm the rational component that deciphers between virtues and vice. Here, Asouzu with accentuation calls attention to that: If we were completely mindful of the threats related with the ambivalence of our interest, we would certainly not sign our death warrant; we would fervently oppose those things that will muddle matter later and placed as into inconvenience (Asouzu 2007) ^[4]. In light of the general premise that human beings have fundamental natural characteristic propensity to survive, Asouzu observed; if we individually or cooperatively had those acts that would cause our destruction, it implies we have neglected to sufficiently distinguish those acts as dangerous. This sounds more like Socratic lessons in light of the fact that were we to recognize them as unsafe and equipped for achieving our own particular destruction, we would not have picked them. In this way, it is conceivable to include that the attention to the ills of our activities in the society bears us the sound benefit of picking that side of our advantage that would forecast well with our survival instincts. Tending to social actions in connection to the ambivalence of interest, the case of the suicide bomber is fundamentally analyzed for instance. Here, the activity of the suicide bomber could be seen as having benevolent objective or as Asouzu puts it, something positive. Other than the accomplishment of its constructive objective which was obstinately completed for the benefit of the general public as biased, the contrary outcome which could be turned away if analysis involves the bomber executing himself and individuals who may be sympathizers of his course. Here the bomber may kill both his adversaries and companions for vengeance. He may similarly cause individuals from his family and friends torments in the heart for killing himself particularly where they placed high esteem on him. In this situation, one notes that ambivalence of human interest makes the suicide bomber to neglect to understand that there are choices and more positive methods for tending to the same dilemma that clued-up the bombing. As indicated by Asouzu; “It is the lack of adequate awareness concerning the phenomenon of ambivalence of human interest that makes us to choose wrongly” (Asouzu, 2003: 7) ^[2]. In this way, legitimizing our social activities and actions involves sufficient consciousness of our ambivalent human interest, which would make us to set up lively endeavors to stay away

from those things that we would entirely never desire regardless of the possibility that they address our most appreciated personal interest. Focusing on the point over, the author opine that: “The moment a person is not aware of the double capacity of his interests this person easily becomes a victim of error of judgment and his actions, in worse cases, can have tragic consequences” (Asouzu, 2003: 7) ^[2]. Inferring from the above, there is requirement for a sane way to deal with the way we conceptualize reality and disagreeable circumstances in our society or social life. This incorporates making our advantage/activity part of the entire society. When this is factored, the problem of social injustice will be controlled and eradicated in our existential society. In any case, indeed, the attention to the ambivalent nature of our actions is at the agony of the acknowledgment of human limitedness. This acknowledgment summarizes Asouzu's philosophy as it ought to scientifically and overwhelmingly leave us on the area of complementarity where the ‘Joy of being is accomplished’. We gather, from our exposition, an incomprehensible transaction such that man's selfish impulse for the perpetuation of the self, argumentatively transforms into an overpowering and convincing requirement for a complementary existence, because only in this stand can we co-exist as humans on heart and make social justice attainable.

5. Conclusion

What we have attempted to show in the foregoing pages is that, the metaphysical dimension of complementary reflection has a very strong practical aspect since the being that gives legitimacy to all missing links of reality is the same-being that confers legitimacy to human action. This being manifests itself in action as service toward others. We however, identified a shortcoming in our perceived idea of joy of being, which is the cause of human injustice affected by our ambivalent human nature. Most times, other person in a given action, who receives, seems to be neglected. Efforts must therefore be made, in the spirit of complementary reflection, to show how our actions can possibly transform to serve as a source of joy. This source of joy is not a selfish one. Only when we are able to put the ambivalence of our human interests into checks as Plato advised ‘Man know thy self’, that we can achieve this unifying joy.

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