

## The Noetic Propaedeutic Pedagogy as a Panacea to Environmental Degradation

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Received 2 February 2014; accepted 15 April 2014  
Published online 20 April 2014

### Abstract

The phrase, ‘sustainable development’ has in recent times become a household phrase, thanks to the works and agitations of the environmental philosophers, scientists, animal right activists and other concerned bodies and groups. However, in spite of these campaigns, environmental degradation still goes on apace. This shows that the popularity of the phrase ‘sustainable development’ has remained only in theory and has not been translated to actions. The researchers believe that the problem of environmental degradation persists because of the divisive and polarising mindset with which man operates with. The moment this divisive mindset is converted to egalitarian one, humans would begin to see the environment as an important aspect of their life, without which their existence would be negated. An egalitarian mindset sees other beings as missing links sharing the same complementary framework of existence. Because they share the same framework, negation of the other becomes negation of the self. Negation of the environment is negation of the self. This kind of mindset according to Asouzu, could be attained through the process of noetic propaedeutic pedagogy. This is a kind of education of the mind that is geared towards converting the mind from its divisiveness to egalitarianism. This work is therefore, aimed at showcasing the noetic propaedeutic pedagogy as a profitable way to tackling the environmental crisis.

**Key words:** Sustainable development; Environmental degradation; egalitarianism; Environmental crisis

Bisong, Peter Bisong, Apologun Sylvester Sunday (2014). The Noetic Propaedeutic Pedagogy as a Panacea to Environmental Degradation. *Canadian Social Science*, 10(4), 37-46. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/4357>  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/4357>

### 1. THE NEED FOR A NEW ETHIC OF ENVIRONMENT

There has been widespread concern over the state of our environment from all angles of the world. There are reports in the media, books, journals, symposia etc of the degradable condition of the natural environment due to the predation of humans. The human population is daily increasing by between 280000 and 300000 people. It is estimated that an average of four to five children are born every second, whereas an average of two people die every second. This difference between birth and death rate shows a gain of 2.3 more humans per second in the world’s population. In 2004 the U.S Census Bureau estimated that the total world population is about 6.4 billion people and this was growing at 1.4 percent per year; implying that the world is adding nearly 73 million more people per year (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2006, p.75). This galloping increase in population means, that the pressure on the environment is growing and that we are constantly polluting the soil, the ocean and the atmosphere with huge amount of radioactive and other poisonous substance. Because of this pressure of humans on the environment, scientists believe that the Earth’s surface temperature has increased by about 0.8 degree Celsius (1.4 degree Fahrenheit) leading to what is referred to as global warming (America’s Climate Choice, 2010, p.15). Estimates reveal that if the present day rate of development continues unabated, the depletion of the biosphere to the point of instability would occur in the second half of next century. We are presently spending the potential energy of the biosphere at ten times the

rate it is being accumulated by living organisms that can absorb sunlight. At least 60 percent of the forests of the planet have been lost. It is estimated that about half of the Earth's mature tropical forest, that is between 7.5 million and 8 million km<sup>2</sup> (2.9 million to 3 million sq mi) that until 1947 covered the planet – have now been destroyed (Nelsen, 2006, p.35). Some scientists are predicting that if the present level of destruction goes on, by 2030 there will only be 10% of our forest remaining, with another 10% in a degraded condition and 80% totally lost (Wilson, 1988, p.4). Depletion of forest means, increasing the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which is the root cause of global warming. It was reported in May 2013, that readings for CO<sub>2</sub> taken at the world's primary benchmark site in Mauna Loa surpassed 400ppm (BBC, 2013). In 2012, studies suggest that in 20 years, 25% of all mammal species could be extinct. It is also estimated that if the present rate of extinction is not halted, up to 30% of all species will be extinct by 2050. Of these, about one eighth of known plant species will be extinct (Gabriel. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/6432217.stm>). Today it is believed that the equilibrium of biospheric processes is threatened, for many of the accommodated mechanisms of the biosphere are functioning close to their full capacity (Laptev, 1990, p.111)

There have been a number of theories attempting to remedy this ugly trend in the environment – attempts which have proven futile, because of the continuous eroding of the earth resources by humans to satisfy their technology driven quest for development. The failures of these attempts to hold back the quest of humans to totally subdue nature is a sign to the researcher that a new ethic needs to be ushered in. This ethic would bring a change of values that now drives humans, transforming their hegemonic vision of the world to an egalitarian one. This work proposes a new ethic which, is founded on the *Ibuanyidanda* ontology as propounded by Innocent Asouzu. *Ibuanyidanda* is a composite of three Igbo words: *ibu* (load), *anyi* (insurmountable for) and *danda* (a species of ant). These three words are conjoined by Asouzu to arrive at the construct – *Ibuanyidanda*, which etymologically translates to 'no load is insurmountable for danda the ant'. The employment of the construct – *Ibuanyidanda* by Asouzu, as a horizon for the articulation of his ontology was inspired by the anonymous traditional African philosophers of Igbo of Nigeria extraction, who upon observing that *danda* (ants) when acting in unity have the capacity to carry loads that are bigger and heavier than them, inferred that human too when acting in unison could surmount very difficult tasks.

Building upon this idea Asouzu avers that anything that exists serves a missing link of reality (*Ibuanyidanda*, 2007, p.139). Nothing exists in isolation. Everything is in a complementary relationship with every other thing. He urges everybody to affirm this complementarity in

nature, if he/she hopes to attain knowledge, truth or rightness of actions. It follows therefore, that a being that negates this complementarity in reality does not act well. Thus, humans who negate the complementarity that exist between them and the environment (by looting it) are never acting well. Such humans according to Asouzu would need to undergo a noetic propaedeutic pedagogy to make them affirm the nonhuman environment as an important part of the complementary horizon.

## 2. NOETIC PROPAEDEUTIC PEDAGOGY

Asouzu believes that the moment humans are conscious of the fact that their being has both a relative and absolute determination that is the moment virtues like tolerance, truth, justice, patience, love, kindness, mercy, peace, honesty etc would be cherished and aspired for by humans (Ibuaru, 2007, p.233). He argues that the moment they realize that reality presents itself in ambivalences and understands the operation of the phenomenon of concealment that is the moment they would begin to see each other as sharing the same horizon of meaning. He however argues, that this does not come by chance but through a noetic propaedeutic pedagogy. The constraining mechanism (the ambivalences of human existential conditions and the phenomenon of concealment) that beclouds the mind impeding and distorting can therefore, be removed through this process of noetic propaedeutic pedagogy. Noetic propaedeutic is a self-impose act of conscious experience of realities as missing links (Ibuanyidanda and some basic Philosophical Problems, 2013, p.74). It is a form of positive personal awareness of the capacity of the constraining mechanism to inject fear in an individual regarding the dangers we are facing and thus instigating the instinct of self-preservation to lead the mind in a one-directional and polarized manner. Noetic propaedeutic therefore, subsists in the efforts we make to affirm the mutual complementary relationship of all existent beings. It subsists also in the consciousness of the boomerang effect of our actions - the realization that when we undertake actions that harm or hurt others, we are indirectly hurting ourselves. Noetic propaedeutic opens our eyes to see the world in a broader way, by becoming aware of the risk our ambivalent existential condition is capable of leading us into. Thus, through the process of noetic propaedeutic, an individual is better equipped to overcome the tension laden ambivalent condition of our existence which, is concealed from us by the phenomenon of concealment (*ihe mkpuchi anya*). Through noetic propaedeutic pedagogy "our power of circumspection is rekindled and revitalized, thus igniting the flame for more positive action towards all missing links of reality" (Ibuanyidanda and some basic Philosophical Problems, 2013, p.74). It opens the mind-eye to the limitless opportunities that would accrue to it, if we were to act in complementarity.

Asouzu believes Aristotle introduced a bifurcating mindset to the world through socialization and education, necessitating a need for a re-education and re-socialization of the mind, to rid it of these bifurcating tendencies; so that it would be capable of grasping being from the preceding conditions of its dynamic interrelatedness with all missing links. The main objective of a noetic propaedeutic therefore, according to Asouzu is to make the acting subject adaptable and receptive towards understanding and sharing meaning, in a way that transcends all artificial boundaries. There is need to train the mind to grasp reality and meaning beyond what is implied, putting into consideration the comprehensive, complementary, whole and future referential character of reality (*Ibuanyidanda*, 2007, p.81). This has to be so, because “we can hardly enter into any form of meaningful discourse with each other, where the mind remains unchanged” (p.13). This implies that all manners of philosophising, especially ones that have a culture-related ambition and ones that deals with interpersonal issues ought to start with the mind – it has to lay out the ontological precondition under which the mind can be trained to relate well with the world in general, so that in every situation one would take account of all factors and actors that enter into its origin (p.42). A change of heart according to Asouzu is necessary for philosophy to take the *Ibuanyidanda* way. This means that all forms of discourse needs an overhauling based on a transcendent noetic faculty Asouzu calls ‘*obi/mmuo eziokwu* (harmonising faculty).

### 3. OBI/MMUO EZIOKWU (HARMONISING FACULTY)

*Obi/mmuo eziokwu* according to Asouzu is the harmonising faculty through which human actions come to be and have meaning – it is the faculty of equilibration which, ensures that all actions and differences remain equilibrated. *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* is the faculty that harmonises all forces that tends toward divisiveness, bifurcation, polarization and exclusiveness – it regulates our ambivalent tension laden existential situation and thereby bringing it in control. It ensures that wisdom and intelligence remains positive and not negative and hegemonic. Asouzu believes that wisdom and intelligence without the aid *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* easily turns hegemonic and thus transforming to negative wisdom and intelligence. This is a situation where individuals use their intelligence and wisdom the perpetrate evil in the guise of smartness and craftiness. When negative wisdom and intelligence hold sway, the super-maxim “the nearer the better and safer” (*Ibuanyidanda*, 2007, p.315) are easily turned into categorical imperative. The super-maxim could be broaden to mean “the more removed a thing is from our intimate region of belongingness, our immediate neighbourhood, our ethnic and tribal world for example,

the less are we obliged to it and the more can we exploit it freely with impunity for our own survival” (p.319). A mindset that is not guided by *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* enthrones the super-maxim and makes it a universal canon for actions. Asouzu believes this super-maxim is at the root of all exclusivist tendencies – making the mind to tend towards securing its own interest and that of its families, clans, tribes, country et cetera first.

However, when wisdom and intelligence is founded on *Obi/mmuo eziokwu*, they take complementary and comprehensive outlook. When there are so founded, there find full expression in their diverse concrete modes of expression, obliterating and equilibrating all divisiveness that lead to a hegemonic mindset as well as the exaltation of the super-maxim “the nearer the better and safer”. It is when wisdom and intelligence is founded on *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* Asouzu argues, that one can claim to have a complementary mindset (*obioha*). Whenever this complementary mindset is active, the subject enters the region Asouzu calls ‘transcendent complementary unity of consciousness. This conscious experience makes it clear to the subject, that in order to attend to the interest of all, it must adopt a universal complementary approach – which reveals that all missing links exist in interrelationship and are indebted to each other.

*Obi/mmuo eziokwu* therefore is the seat of equilibration and mediation of all ambivalent tension and differences. Under the guidance of this faculty, subjects shun all discriminatory tendencies and prejudices and come to realize that all missing links are subject to the same difficulties as others and thus should be given equal chance. Under the guidance of this faculty, subjects come to realize that they cannot solve their problems and difficulties alone but with reference to those who share similar problems and experiences. They would come to the awareness that failure only results where all possible relations have not been explored and harnessed adequately, such that the diversity inherent in the world remains poorly utilized (65). Thus, when *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* is active, subjects have the chance of capturing being in its dynamism, truly, insightfully and authentically and thereby giving us the capability of encountering the opposite other in its otherness and embrace this other as an extension of the self (*Ibuanyidanda*, 2007, p.321). When *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* is active, the mind stops discriminating and starts seeing otherness as an integral part of its being. Thus, it puts the interests of others into consideration as an essential requirement in upholding its own interest. This means that where *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* is operational “personal interest is immediately seen and defined as those positive measures needed to preserve ourselves in view of the survival of all human beings and missing links (*Ibuanyidanda*, 322). Where *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* is in control and active, the instinct of self-preservation ceases to operate in a hegemonic negative one directional

mode, and becomes a positive drive towards upholding the interest of missing links. The faculty draws attention of the mind to its relativity, insufficiency and to the limits of its possibilities when it walks alone and thereby make it to strive towards an existence in mutual complementary relationship. This is achievable through *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* acting to conform the mind to the dictates of what Asouzu calls ‘the transcendent categories of unity of consciousness’.

#### 4. THE TRANSCENDENT CATEGORIES OF UNITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The transcendent categories according to Asouzu are the forms of the mind through which *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* secures the transcendent experience of the mind, so that its action is beyond all forms of arbitrariness and divisiveness. He avers that the mind can never err culpably if it acts in harmony to the dictates of these categories (p.324). These categories include: “fragmentation (relativity), unity, totality, universality, comprehensiveness, wholeness and future reference (p.323). Through these categories (forms of the mind), *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* overcomes all forms of arbitrariness and bifurcation. Through these categories *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* obliterates all forms of divisiveness, dichotomies, paradoxes, aversion for the other, spitefulness, rejection, prejudices, differences and diversities which often evoke conflict and discord (p.316). These categories aid the mind to perceive missing links in their interrelatedness and as serving each other mutually in a complementary relationship. This is why Asouzu avers, “that mind is fit and healthy in which the transcendent categories of unity of consciousness (akara *obi/mmuo*), as its active ingredients or forms remain operative” (*Ibuanyidanda*, 2007, p.327). In reliance to these categories, the human mind grasps missing links of reality as pure means and relational essences. Where the categories are made active by *Obi/mmuo eziokwu*, the mind would have the capacity to adhere to the demands of the principle of non-contradiction (*Ibuaru*, 2007, p.241).

It should be noted that these transcendent categories are natural to the mind but are often inactive due to the influence of the phenomenon of concealment which, clouds the mind, making it unable to see the ambivalent tension inherent in our existential conditions. *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* in its capacity as the seat of mediation, discolours the mind of the phenomenon of concealment and make it capable of seeing the ‘*ibuanyidandaness*’ inherent in all realities. This process whereby the phenomenon of concealment is cleared by *Obi/mmuo eziokwu*, enabling the transcendent categories to remain active is referred by Asouzu to as ‘complementary transcendent existential conversion’.

#### 5. COMPLEMENTARY TRANSCENDENT EXISTENTIAL CONVERSION

The transcendent existential conversion according to Asouzu is the process needed to dispel the influence of the phenomenon of concealment, 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” (*Ibuanyidanda*, 2007, p.329). In the process of existential conversion, the transcendent categories are made a habitual assumption for the mind in its relationship to all missing links of reality. When transcendent existential conversion takes place, a subject experiences an instance of the harmonization of the mind with the transcendent categories of being in a non contradictory manner. When this conversion takes place the mind ceases to related to the world in absolute fragments and polarization, it rather relate to it in a framework of comprehensiveness and universality. When this is the case, the mind ceases to see being in a limited mindset but with a global or totalising mindset, which is the prerequisite for the attainment of certainty.

In the process of existential conversion, the mind arrives at the realization of the limits of the maxims, and thus seeks to convert them to a general imperative which states “allow the limitation of being to be the cause of your joy” (*Ibuanyidanda*, 2007, p.328). Thus, inspired by *Obi/mmuo eziokwu*, the subject conscious of its insufficiency and relativity, aspires to act in ways that the practical mode of expression of *obi/mmuo eziokwu* become general laws. These practical expressions of *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* that would be translated to universal law when existential conversion takes place according to Asouzu include: benevolence, fatherly heart, fraternal heart, compassionate heart, gentleness, merciful heart, forgiving heart, human heart et cetera (*Ibuanyidanda*, 2007, p.328). These would be expressed to all missing links universally and not merely to those belonging to a particular enclave.

Through the process of existential conversion the mind is led to the full awareness of the limit of the super-maxim “the nearer the better and safer”. The transcendent existential conversion is therefore, that act through which the transcendent categories of unity of consciousness are made practically active as existential categories. When this conversion has taken place, knowing and willing assume a harmonic relationship, which would signify that *Obi/mmuo eziokwu* is in control over the absolute hegemonic wisdom and intelligence. Also when this conversion has taken place, theory and practice assume a harmonic relationship and thus, ceases to be in divisive poles. At this point of existential conversion, the mind no longer perceives reality in absolute fragments, but in a comprehensive, whole future referential dimension. To

determine whether the mind has reach this point, it has to be measured against the truth and authenticity criterion.

## 6. TRUTH AND AUTHENTICITY CRITERION

Truth and authenticity criterion according to Asouzu refers to “the measure by which we can state if a thing conforms to the demands of the principles, methods and imperative of complementarity as far as these are founded on the principle on non-contradiction” (*Complementary Reflection*, 2004, p.310). The truth and authenticity of all missing links therefore, depends on how far the mind recognizes the total, comprehensive and ultimate foundation, which gives legitimacy to their existence. Truth and authenticity criterion, “serves as a regulative mechanism which checks against misuse and helps to minimize error of judgement in all contentious and difficult existential situations of life” (*Ibuanyidanda*, 2007, p.317). Therefore, all actions and claims to knowledge that conform to the demands of truth and authenticity criterion cannot err. Thus, those decisions, statements, claims to knowledge and actions that conform to the demands of the truth and authenticity criterion which states “you must not elevate a world immanent missing link to an absolute mode” (*Ibuaru*, 2007, p.197) are authentic and thereby okay. All knowledge claims Asouzu argues conforms to the demands of the truth and authenticity criterion if it does not breach the harmonious relationship that exists amongst missing links, which means it has to captures being through the transcendent categories of unity of consciousness – which are; comprehensiveness, totality, fragmentation, unity, universality, wholeness and future reference (*Ibuanyidanda*, 2007, p.323). Thus, all experiences, actions and knowledge claims that do not grasps at the universal, total and comprehensive dimension of what is expected to be explained would rarely give us any authentic insight into the nature of being we are searching for.

Truth and authenticity criterion also urges us to always “concede to the type of unity existing between world immanent realities and the foundation of all existing realities” (*Ibuanyidanda*, 320). This means that truth claim must always relate to the totality and comprehensiveness of being as the foundation of all existent realities. This is when we could claim certainty. Arriving at truth and authenticity Asouzu argues, is a transcendent act, because the mind would need to go beyond the immediacy to the future referential dimension of its determination. The mind therefore, always seeks to comprehend and explain facts totally and comprehensively in all matters of truth and authenticity. This is why Asouzu maintains, that all experiences and knowledge claims that are not directed at grasping being from the universal, total and comprehensive dimension of what is expected to

be explained would hardly give us authentic and true insight into knowledge – in which case we cannot claim certainty. This implies that any “truth claim that ignores the relativity of human existential situation as to state apriori and apodictally what the case would be in all situations and fails to acknowledge the fragmentary and referential nature of all missing links of reality is bound to err” (*Complementary Reflection*, 2004, p.315). The truth and authenticity of all missing links therefore, depends on how far the mind recognizes the total, comprehensive and ultimate foundation, which gives legitimacy to their existence.

Ibuanyidanda ontology being a philosophy that is against all bifurcating and reductionist tendencies, thus argues that in most attempts at explanation, there is always something left unexplained and unattended to. This is the case of the allegory of four blind men who experienced the elephant. Each of the blind men gave a different description of the elephant from their vantage points. Each description from these blind men therefore, when taken in isolation leaves something unaccounted for. However, the contribution of the four blind men when taken holistically would give a more comprehensive knowledge of the elephant. But when one of the blind men elevates his own experience of the elephant to an absolute mode, it leads to error in judgement and knowledge claims. this is the same thing that happens when the empiricists, rationalists, idealist, materialists, pragmatists, super-naturalist, realists and others such groups who see their positions in absolute mode. Absolute knowledge to Asouzu comprises all the individual experiences of the blind men and more. Absolute knowledge to Ibuanyidanda philosophy goes beyond all that the empiricists, rationalists, pragmatists, super-naturalists and others individually hold to be true, because no single experience taken on its own can serve as a guarantor for knowledge and truth. So also a right action is not the one that negates the other, it is rather the one that embraces the other in its otherness, and sees the other differences not as a sign of inferiority or weaknesses but as a uniqueness peculiar to him/her intended by nature to make the world perfect and beautiful - this is because there is beauty in diversity. The world would certainly be a dull place if there was no diversity in beings. For instance, the world would not be interesting, if all that are in the world are human beings and nothing else. The world would be duller, if all the humans were blacks. It will be worst, if the black men that are the sole existent reality in the world had no diverse parts – let’s say, the whole of the human person is just the eye or this eye was just made up of only retina and nothing else. Diversity in the world therefore, brings beauty and perfection. The eye is beautiful because, it is made of diverse parts like retina, pupil, lens et cetera. The world is beautiful, because it contains animals in their diverse forms, plants in their diverse forms, mountains, valleys, rivers, air and other types of existence. Therefore,

destruction of the rich biodiversity put forth by nature due to man elevation of his being to an absolute mode is clearly contrary to Nature's grand design. Negation of the rights of other beings to existence, to Asouzu and to the researcher is indirectly a negation of the rights of humans to existence. Harm done to other 'co-tenants' of the ecosystem is indirectly harm done to oneself, because the boomerang effect would certainly catch up with us. This boomerang effect of our malevolent acts towards the rest of nature is becoming very evident in our world today, and is threatening to intensify. We hear of cries of global warming, climate change, ocean acidification, rise in sea level, flooding, drought et cetera – these are the boomerang effect that is described in *Ibanyidanda* philosophy. The statistics of this boomerang effect are ever climbing higher, pointing to the necessity of urgent action to forestall them. For these actions to be authentic, there must be geared towards redirecting the mind of humans from a bifurcating and hegemonic vantage point to a complementary outlook on life. The nature of the actions to be taken to reverse this ugly trend is the subject of the next chapter.

## 7. NOETIC PROPAEDEUTIC PEDAGOGY AS A PANACEA TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

Asouzu is of the belief that the moment the mind is in control of its existential tension laden ambivalent conditions of life, that is the moment virtues like respect, justice, love, kindness, care et cetera would crop up (*Ibuaru*, 2007, p.233). This however, he argues like Aristotle before him, does not come by chance. But unlike Aristotle who prescribed forced training, through habituation, Asouzu prescribes a training of the mind, he calls 'noetic propaedeutic pedagogy'. Asouzu believes that the mind naturally is imbued with transcendent categories like fragmentation (relativity), unity, totality, universality, comprehensiveness, wholeness and future reference (*Ibanyidanda*, 2007, p.323). These categories he argues are the natural forms of the mind, through which it perceives reality. This means that the mind naturally does not capture reality in absolute mode but in a relative, comprehensive and future referential dimension. It is however, because of the ambivalent tension inherent in our existential situation and the influence of the phenomenon of concealment that plague the mind distorting it and shielding it, and thus making it to perceive reality in a divisive and bifurcating mode. The noetic propaedeutic pedagogy is simply a process of removing these constraining mechanisms that thwart the mind, inhibiting its categories or forms. Noetic propaedeutic pedagogy is therefore, a process of reawakening the mind's transcendent categories and thereby making them active. This is very necessary

because the problem of subjugation and domination of the environment by man and other problems on inter-personal, inter-organisational and inter-national mode originates from the mind inability to perform ultimately because of the inhibiting and constraining effects of the ambivalent existential condition and the phenomenon of concealment. Since the problem is the mind problem, Asouzu believes the solution too needs to start from the mind. When the mind is cleared of all the cobwebs that render its categories inactive, then it would stand a better chance of grasping reality from the preceding conditions of its interrelatedness and mutual dependence.

This clearance of the mind of all the cobwebs that entangle and hold it bound, is the process of noetic propaedeutic. This does not happen arbitrarily, it is rather a self-imposed act of conscious experience of being as missing links of reality (*Ibanyidanda and some basic Philosophical Problems*, 2013, p.74). It is the personal effort we make to affirm the mutual complementary relationship of all existent entities. It subsists in the personal awareness of the capacity of the constraining mechanisms to instigate the instinct of self-preservation to seek its interest even when this negates the interest of others. this process of noetic propaedeutic culminates in the 'complementary transcendent existential conversion'. When transcendent existential conversion takes place in an individual, the subject experiences an instant harmonization of the mind with the transcendent categories. When existential conversion takes place the mind ceases to relate to the world in absolute fragments and starts relating to it in a framework of comprehensiveness and universality. When this is the case, the mind realizes the limitation of maxims. It would realize that the nearer is not always the better and safer, fighting for the interests of members of an ethnic enclave is not always the best; polarization, divisiveness, spitefulness, aversion, intolerance et cetera do not maintain the intrinsic relationship that binds all missing links in a whole future referential dimension. When noetic propaedeutic pedagogy culminates in existential conversion, the intrinsic relationship that human share with its co-tenants in the ecosystem would be affirmed and upheld. Here, the environment would cease to be seen in absolute divisive poles like inferior –superior, irrational–rational, sentient – insentient et cetera. rather, it would be clear to the mind that inferiority and irrationality are intrinsically connected to superiority and rationality respectively. The two respective features cannot exist apart, when one disappears, the other necessarily disappears. When inferiority disappears, superiority also disappears, because there is no superior without inferior – the two are tight to a mutual complementary relationship– this is the natural way the mind perceives them, the tendency to perceive them in polarized mode is a function of a defective mind, held bound by the ambivalent existential tension and the phenomenon of concealment.

The tendency to see rationality as absolute and capable of independent existence is also an artificial divide that follows Aristotle divisive treatment of being –where he considers substance as capable of having an independent existence from accidents. Conception of being this way is a sure sign that existential conversion is yet to take place in an individual. When it has taken place, the mind sees accident and substance, rationality and irrationality, superiority and inferiority as respectively sharing the same horizon of meaning and thus must be captured in mutual complementation, if any of them would stand a chance of authentically and truly being grasped. Also humans and the nonhumans in spite of their differences would be captured as forming the same horizon of mutual sharing and complementarity.

Due to the centrality of the mind in any attempt to resolve the environmental crisis, this work along with Asouzu advocates for a conscious training of the minds of humans to discolour it of the constraining mechanisms. This is very necessary because the way the mind perceives reality informs the values it formulates and follows. A bifurcating and divisive mindset necessarily follows hegemonic values like intolerance, aversion, spitefulness, stereotyping, cheating, greed, competition et cetera. An equilibrated mindset favours global totalising values like truth, honesty, justice, love, respect, care, mercy et cetera. Tackling the environmental issues from the mind therefore, connotes tackling it from the roots. Any issue that is tackled from the roots die off, just like any tree that is cut from the roots die off. Other attempts to solve the environmental problem that do not take cognisance of this fact, are only pruning the problem, leaving it unsolved and in fact to grow better. A change of action necessarily follows a change of values, which also follows a change of mindset. If the mindset is not reset, then new values that would give birth to new set of actions would not emanate. Therefore, a constant call for change of actions that is witnessed in the world today has been like pouring water on the back of a duck fowl, because a corresponding change in the mind had not been pre-effected. Theories, symposia, conferences, promulgations et cetera calling for a change in the way the environment is handled has been a clanging gong because the bifurcating and polarising mindset humans are plagued with has not been obliterated and equilibrated. It is the contention of this researcher, that no matter how hard, scientists, philosophers, sociologists, governments and other stakeholders try, the environmental crisis may not wane, because of the mindset on which these pleas are poured on – it is like talking to deaf ears. The ears must first be made sound before they can hear. The mind must first be cleared of the distempers that plague it before the dictates and pleas of these theories and promulgations would be internalized. The mind therefore, has to undergo a noetic propaedeutic pedagogy before it could imbibe the proper values that would shape its relationship with the environment. Noetic

propaedeutic pedagogy would open our mind-eyes to the complementary relationship existing between and among missing links. It would open our minds to the realization that to be, is not to be alone, but to be in a complementary relationship. Thus, it would be better placed to affirm and uphold the existence of others as a necessary prerequisite for the affirmation of its own existence. It would be better equipped to affirm and uphold the existence of the nonhuman part of the environment as a necessary prerequisite for the affirmation of the self. It would recognize the total, comprehensive and ultimate foundation (Ibuanyidanda) that gives legitimacy to the existence of all missing links. It brings to the understanding that any action that does not take into consideration the universal, total and comprehensive dimension of being is not authentic. It understands that a right action is not the one that negates the other, it is rather the one that embraces the other in its otherness, and sees the other's differences not as a sign of inferiority or weakness but as a uniqueness peculiar to it, put in place by Nature to make the world a perfect and beautiful place to be. The difference in the nonhuman nature is not a weakness to be exploited but a design of Nature to perfect the world in beauty. Negation of the other therefore, is a negation and destruction of the beauty of the world. When the mind is converted and beings to see the intrinsic relationship that exists between it and the whole of creation, that is the moment the cry for sustainable development would begin to flow naturally. This would be so because, that mind that sees reality in mutual complementarity would naturally evolve positive values that would brew up actions that would foster the sustainability of the environment.

Symposia, conferences, regulations et cetera on the environment would do better if there are directed at education of the mind of man to view reality the way it truly is – complementary. When the mind begins to see reality as existing in complementary mode that is the moment respect would begin to be accorded to the rest of Nature as an important part of the complementary whole. It is at this moment that exploitation of nature would give way to tenderness, appreciation and care for the environment. It is at this moment that Nature would no longer be conceived as existing to service man's needs but as a co-tenant of the ecosystem, needing service from man as well – it does not exist for man, rather both exist for the sake of each other – both possess intrinsic values in themselves as well as possessing instrumental values when considered in their relationship to each other. To attribute instrumental values to Nature and intrinsic values to humans is a clear indication of an unhealthy mindset (bifurcating and divisive mindset). A bifurcating and divisive mindset (as in Aristotle who made a sharp distinction between substance and accidents, attributing substance to the wise and accidents to the inferior) creates a sharp distinction between instrumental and intrinsic values and thereby attributing one to Nature and the

other to humans respectively. Aristotle believes the wise are destined to rule the unwise, so also do his followers believe that those with intrinsic values are destined to dominate and exploit those with instrumental values. A healthy mindset clearly sees the weakness in this mode of viewing reality and thereby grasp the two (intrinsic and instrumental values) in a harmonious complementary relationship. The two are inseparable and must be captured as head and tail-end. Each being therefore, is held in this work as having both intrinsic and instrumental values. It is in this sense that we can acclaim, that all that exists serve a missing link of reality. This serving of missing links of reality reflects the instrumental value of all beings, human inclusive. Thus, human beings have instrumental values to nonhuman nature and the nonhuman nature equally has instrumental value to humans. It is a symbiotic relationship. All beings too in addition to their instrumental values also have intrinsic value in themselves, in that their worth is not solely dependent on what they can contribute to others. Their intrinsic worth is dependent on the perfection of beauty of the ecosystem that they make possible. All beings therefore, can be authentically and truly grasped, if they are captured as both intrinsically and instrumentally valuable. The mindset that has undergone the noetic propaedeutic pedagogy captures being authentically and truly, in that both its intrinsic and instrumental values are harmoniously captured. To capture either the intrinsic or instrumental mode alone is a feature of a defective and divisive mind. To capture the instrumental value of nonhuman nature devoid of their intrinsic value or to capture the intrinsic value of man devoid of his instrumental value is akin to capturing only the heads and not the tail-end of reality, in which case being cannot be said to be authentically and truly grasped.

A mind that has undergone the noetic propaedeutic pedagogy, captures being in an egalitarian mode, as what has head and tail-end and not in divisive and bifurcating poles. Reality to this kind of mind is viewed in a comprehensive complementary whole future referential mode. This is the mindset that does not see reality only in the present but also in the future dimension of its determination. Seeing reality this way would instigate the mind to consider the future in its relationship with the environment. In this case, the mind would understand the need to sustain the environment for the future and not just for the immediate. Sustenance for the mind becomes not just the conservation of resources for the present generation but to the future generation also. This is because the future generation are also missing links occupying the complementary horizon, and thus need to be served also. An authentic action is not just an action that serve the present missing links but the possible (future) missing links. This is why for any action to be authentic and right, it must take into cognizance the comprehensiveness of missing links. Any action on the

environment is therefore right and is to be upheld if it also foster the environmental needs of the future missing links. In this case actions geared towards frugality are seen by the mind as the best. And conversely all consumerist tendencies are condemned and sponged. At this moment, the assertion of Gandhi, that nature has enough to serve man's needs and not enough to serve his greed becomes very evident to the mind. At this moment, the mind no longer conceives wealth as the bountiful accumulation of Nature's resources by an individual or a group of individuals for their personal interest satisfaction. Consumerism which has been fuelled and fanned by the vibrant capitalism that is fast engulfing the world, is one of the greatest threat to the survival of the environment. By the help of catching advertisement, people these days purchase more than they actually need – the necessary and unnecessary, reasonable and unreasonable. This excess consumption is fast eroding Nature's capacity to support life. This is because consumerism thrives on over-exploitation of Nature's resources, most of which are non-renewable. Consumerism over-exploits minerals, animals and plants. A noetic propaedeutic mindset model itself after the example set by Curitiba, a city in Brazil. The city prior to the emergence of Mayor Jaime Lerner was like any other developing city in the world – there was an increase in air pollution, deteriorating and inadequate roads leading to traffic congestion, inadequate water, housing and waste disposal system et cetera. When Lerner came up, he put forward a rigorous campaign of civic action that turned the city around. Today Curitiba city is seen worldwide as an example of a sustainable city development. The heart of Curitiba educational plan is education for both children and adult. Signs posted on the way reads, "50kg of paper equals one tree" and "recycle; it pays". School children are made to study ecology along with other subjects. The city records that it saves 1200 trees per day through its paper recycling. Lerner argues that 26 million trees per year could be saved every year if the paper recycling program is instituted in the whole of Brazil (Cunningham & Cunningham, 328). One would imagine the number of forest trees that could be saved worldwide if this example of sustainable consumption as set by Curitiba is copied by all cities of the world. Excess consumption has continually pitched humans against the environment. We see people especially in Nigeria, owning fleets of cars, stocking up clothes and shoes that sometimes, they never get to use – for them piling up this things makes life more beautiful and enjoyable. But Curitiba city, once again showed us that it is possible to live a healthy and satisfying life without a corresponding extravagant resource use. This is shown by its effectively instituted mass transit program. Lerner, the Mayor of the city in order to counter a difficult problem of congestion and pollution caused by overpopulation of the city, introduced special buses, elevated bus stops, and a network of small feeder routes that work quickly and efficiently. This resulted to more

than three-quarters of the city dwellers to leave their cars at home every day to join mass transportation. The effect of this was amazing; there was a massive reduction of congestion and pollution as well as a massive cut in the energy spend per day. According to William Cunningham and Mary Cunningham (2006), today about 1.5 million of the 2 million inhabitants of that city now use public transportation daily which, is markedly different from the 25000 people per day that was recorded 20 years ago (328). Sustainable development is possible without a corresponding degradation of the environment. Through a program of sustainable consumption of trees and energy resources the Curitiba inhabitants have been able to develop as well as allowing the environment to also develop. If this feat could be accomplished everywhere in the world, billions of trees would be saved every year, plenty tons of oil reserves would be saved, pollution would be massively cut down and humans would lead a more meaningful life.

The mind that has undergone existential conversion through the process of noetic propaedeutic pedagogy understands that consumerism by exploiting the environment, indirectly harms humans because harm that is done to other missing links necessarily boomerangs. That mind would also understand the interconnectedness of all realities and thereby shun selfish interests such as dumping of poisonous substance on the land and rivers of other unsuspecting countries. Doing this may seem smart and wise, but Asouzu would call it negative wisdom, since such actions would necessarily bounce back on the perpetrators, as a result of the interconnectedness of all missing links. This truth could be demonstrated using the recent strike of the academic staff union of universities in Nigeria (ASUU). Those who initially felt unconcerned about the strike, later felt the effect of the strike percolating to them. Business people got the effect through low sales. Road transport workers also got the shock through low turnover of passengers. Students were hit by idleness; parents were troubled by the continuous presence of their children at home. Even other salaried workers had their own share of the effect, because the academic staff are their parents, brothers, sisters, friends and relations. Thus, when they lacked as they did during the period of the strike, because of the no work, no pay clause by the federal government; they would fall back on their working class kins and friend for financial assistance, and thereby increasing their burdens. It was not without reason that almost everybody complained of hardship during the strike period. This is a practical example that a problem on one complementary sector, would circulate to other sectors. The SARS (Severe acute respiratory syndrome) epidemic that broke out in china in early 2003 is another example of the interconnectedness of all missing links. The highly infectious disease quickly spread at alarming speed to 31 countries, only within a short period of 4 months. (Cunningham & Cunningham,

2006, p.231). This is a testimony to the fact that we are all linked together in a big wide web. To dump poisons in one segment of the world, because there are the poor and less privileged, and because this area is conceived as far removed from one's home, would prove at the long run to be negative wisdom – for this would have a long range effect in all missing links, because all share the same complementary horizon. Failure of a missing link affects in a way the foundation of the complementary horizon, just like success of a missing link would strengthen and advance other missing links. For instance, the successes of individuals like Albert Einstein, Newton, Galileo and other great scientists did not only end with them, it percolated to other missing links and would still affect the future missing links. Failures of people like Adolf Hitler, also affected in a grave way other missing links of reality both humans and nonhumans. This is why we aver in this research that for an action to be considered right it has to take into consideration the comprehensiveness and future reference of all beings. A right action should not be judged based on its immediate benefit to the actor but also on its effects on other missing links both at present and in the future.

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## CONCLUSION

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For development to subsist, the human mind must be in control of the existential tension and the phenomenon of concealment that tend to cloud the mind of man, making it incapable of grasping the complementary relationship that exists between all missing links of reality. When the mind is in control, that is the moment human development would cease to be extolled to an extent that it no longer matters, whether it negates the development of other parts of Nature. When the mind is in control, that is the moment when humans would realize that true and authentic development that is worth the name only occurs when other part of Nature are accorded their own rights to development. When the mind is in control development ceases to be an exploitative tool that is used by the tyrant-man against Nature but becomes a nourishing and refreshing tool that leaves the environment better than it meets it. When this is so, human and societal development would cease to be doom to nonhumans; civilization would cease to be measured on the magnitude of the environment a country has exploited, but on how much the agility of the environment has been boosted by a country's effort. A mind that is in control therefore, undergoes this Copernican revolution equivalent – development is not how much has been taken from Nature but how much has been given to the environment. For the mind to be converted from its present conception of nonhuman nature as an inferior, unwise, irrational, accidental entity that needs to be dominated, to the conception of it as an essential part of the intrinsic complementary whole, it must undergo a kind of education. This education has to be aimed at erasing the bifurcating and polarising

tendencies the mind is plague with. Since these constraints on the mind are the root cause, removing them too would have to be the best solution. This kind of mind education is what Asouzu refers to as a noetic propaedeutic pedagogy. This education is a consciously imposed kind of education, where the limitations of the super-maxim and the boomerang effects of actions not geared towards a mutual complementation are made evident to the mind. Where the mind is so educated to see the limitation and counter-effects of actions committed from a bifurcating mindset that is where existential conversion would take place in the mind. At this stage the mind is converted from seeing itself and those nearest to it as absolute beings whose rights and interests must be affirmed and maintained always, even when this quest violates the rights and interests of other stakeholders. This would be so, because the mind would understand that negation of other's rights and interests is invariably a denial and negation of the right and interest of the self, because of the surety of the boomerang effect. That mind would understand that negation of the right to existence to meaningful existence of the environment is a negation of the meaningful existence of humans

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