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Article

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A CRITIQUE OF GENDER INEQUALITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ASOUZU'S COMPLEMENTARY PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

This article titled "A Critique of Gender Inequality from the Perspective of Complementary Philosophy," argues that Asouzu's complementary philosophy can be used to critique gender inequality. Gender inequality is an existential and phenomenological issue that confronts humanity globally. This issue highlights a strain in human relationships, where one gender is perceived as inferior and the other as superior. As a result, the gender viewed as inferior is marginalized and oppressed, while the superior gender enjoys certain privileges. Gender inequality presents an existential challenge that warrants philosophical investigation. This paper utilizes Asouzu's complementary philosophy as a framework for this inquiry. The rationale for employing Asouzu's complementary reflection stems from the central concept of his philosophy: the notion of the "missing link." This concept suggests two possibilities: 1) an entity can exist independently, and 2) an entity exists in relation to others. The strength of this complementary philosophy lies in the argument that entities must exist in a mutually complementary relationship. In this regard, the paper contends that gender inequality implies that one gender (the superior) can exist alone, while the other (the inferior) cannot and is deemed inconsequential. Furthermore, the paper posits that both genders cannot thrive separately; instead, they must exist in a mutually complementary relationship, as both are essential "missing links" to one another. Therefore, this paper opposes gender inequality, which leads to the bifurcation and polarization of society along gender lines, and advocates for the harmonious coexistence of both genders as interdependent entities. The paper employs philosophical methods such as critical analysis, exposition, and logical evaluation to support its argument.

Keywords: Asouzu, complementary, Gender, Inequality, Philosophy.

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Introduction

Asouzu's complementary philosophy, rooted in African culture, particularly the Igbo concept of "Ibanyidanda," emphasizes the importance of complementarity in understanding existence. Unlike Aristotle's view, Asouzu argues that entities achieve completeness through mutually complementary relationships, describing being as a "missing link" (Edet, *Being as Missing Link* 28-32). Emmanuel Efem Etta and Joseph Nkang Ogar expand this by asserting that being is part of a unified transcendental whole, emphasizing that "nothing exists in isolation," which promotes unity (*Being as Being and Complementary Reflection* 27). Asouzu's complementary reflection has various branches of philosophy, including 'complementary ethics' (*The Method and Principles* 329), 'complementary epistemology' (*The Method and Principles* 227; *Ibanyidanda... Some Basic Problems* 74-90), 'complementary logic' (*Ibanyidanda... Some Basic Problems* 90-112), 'complementary socio-political philosophy' (*Effective Leadership*), 'complementary environmental philosophy,' and a 'complementary philosophy of religion' (Adekunle 96-102). Complementarity also encompasses a method known as complementarism, where insights from multiple models are integrated to better understand reality (*Explanation as a Comprehensive Task in Complementary Reflection* 67). Scholars like Mesembe Edet have applied this method to African values (*The Application of the Methodology of Complementary Reflection in an Enquiry Concerning Traditional African Central Values and the Development of Afroxiology*), showcasing its versatility in philosophical discourse. Complementary reflection, as both a method and philosophy, can address the existential and phenomenological challenges of gender inequality. This issue affects global relationships, often leading to gender opposition, where one gender is marginalized while the other enjoys privileges. Such inequality denies the marginalized gender full humanity and contributes to social imbalance. Asouzu's complementary philosophy can effectively tackle this by introducing the "missing link," suggesting that opposing realities can coexist in a mutually beneficial way. By viewing gender as a complementary dynamic, we can promote a more harmonious relationship between genders.

Understanding the Problem of Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is a significant social issue today. To understand it, we must first define what gender inequality is, as it stands in direct opposition to gender equality. The term "gender equality" comprises two key concepts: "gender" and "equality." Aver Theophilus, citing Gupta, defines gender as "the widely shared expectations and norms within a society about appropriate male and female behavioral characteristics and roles." It is a social construct that differentiates women from men and shapes their interactions. Also, Theophilus cites Idyorough as saying that:

Gender as social construction of relations between male and female in terms of roles such that certain roles are seen as exclusively females and other as males. In the context of this work, gender denotes the social differentiation or cultural distinction between men and women and the attribution of certain roles on the basis of that differentiation. (2)

With defining gender, one has to move over to defining equality in connection with gender equality. According to UN Women:

Equality between women and men (gender equality) refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same

but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. (Cited in Shang 3-4)

The negation of gender equality results in gender inequality, which is characterized by the absence of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for men, women, boys, and girls. Although gender inequality can affect anyone, some scholars have argued that it is primarily experienced by women and girls. For instance, Baoping Shang argues that gender inequality involves "the lack of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for women and girls" (Shang i). Furthermore, he states that "gender inequality is the result of gender bias and social norms that restrict women's rights and opportunities" (Shang 4). This perspective aligns with the views of some Western scholars who argue that women are often seen as inferior and subordinated to men (Aristotle, *Politics* 2796; 2810-2812; Aquinas 621-622; Nietzsche 56; Freud 257). However, there are scholars who contend that men also experience gender inequality (Chinweizu 9-14; Benatar 9; 15; 16; 25; Reeves 15; 35; 4; Wojnicka 1-4).

Shang emphasizes that "gender inequality refers to the part of gender gaps that are driven by gender bias and unequal gender rights and opportunities" (Shang 5). Based on this definition, it is important to recognize that gender inequality can lead to a gender gap, which refers to "the observed differences between men and women or between boys and girls in relevant indicators" (Shang 3). After outlining the definition of gender inequality, one can now explore its dimensions. There are several dimensions of gender inequality, including political, legal, economic, educational, social, cultural, and demographic aspects. Each of these dimensions will be briefly discussed. Political gender inequality persists globally, with women historically excluded from politics. Despite slow progress in representation, women remain significantly underrepresented in political offices. Joyce Jacobsen notes that this includes lower numbers in elected positions and corporate appointments (1). In contrast, Chinweizu argues that men are also subordinated as they govern to please women (9-12). Legal gender inequality is present in many societies. Jacobsen highlights ongoing legal discrimination against women long after suffrage (1). The World Bank points out that women receive only three-quarters of the legal protections afforded to men. They face numerous legal barriers, from job restrictions to unequal pay and inadequate protections against harassment. For instance, laws allow husbands to "correct" their wives, thereby neglecting women's rights within the legal system (cited by Shang 1).

The criminal justice system often prioritizes men's interests, failing to adequately address spousal abuse and sexual harassment. Women can be harassed without explicit legal protection against such acts (Theophilus 6). Moreover, there are concerns that men accused of rape face an environment biased against them, leading to unreported cases where men and boys are victims of sexual violence without legal protections. Economic gender inequality is evident across various sectors, primarily disadvantaging women. Historically, many countries excluded women from formal work, relegating them to low-paying, private household roles (Scott 1, 7). Although improvements have been made, the economic gap remains. Shang notes that women generally have lower access to formal financial services compared to men (3). Even when women join the workforce, they tend to occupy low-status, low-paying jobs and earn less than men for similar qualifications (3). Moreover, educational gender inequality persists globally. Jacobsen points out that while some countries show men

as disadvantaged in educational attainment, historically, women have faced greater barriers to education (Jacobsen 1). Shang corroborates this, stating that significant gaps still exist in tertiary education, despite progress in school enrollment (3). Today, Reeves observes that while girls are often outperforming boys in school, boys are generally suffering in school (23). Despite this, challenges remain for both genders in different educational contexts.

Social gender inequality affects both men and women, with differing consequences. Jacobsen highlights that men often face violence, imprisonment, and disability, while women are frequently victims of domestic violence and sexual assault (Jacobsen 1). Alarming, "one-third of women experience gender-based violence (GBV) in their lifetimes" (Scott 13), which reinforces gender inequality. Many men also struggle to report such violence due to societal perceptions that overlook them as victims. Cultural gender inequality presents challenges for both genders. In numerous societies, women face significant disadvantages, such as restrictions on property ownership and inheritance, which predominantly favor men. This economic dependency perpetuates inequality, as men are often seen as the custodians of cultural norms. However, Chinweizu argues that some cultures empower women to control men (14-23), a view supported by Benatar, who points out that societal structures can also perpetuate inequality against men (16). For example, men are often less likely to gain custody of children after divorce, leading to emotional and psychological stress (Benatar 40; Reeves 41). Demographic gender inequality shows that men can also face disadvantages, such as living shorter lives on average (65 years for men, 69 for women). Additionally, women may experience discrimination even before birth, leading to situations where men outnumber women in certain countries (Jacobsen 1). This highlights the demographic segregation experienced by men and women in different contexts.

Gender inequality is a significant existential challenge that requires philosophical engagement. This inequality encompasses various issues, including poverty and women's well-being. From an economic perspective, gender inequality hinders growth, as women, who comprise over 50% of the African workforce, often work unpaid in the informal sector or earn less than men despite equal qualifications (Ashraf Wani and Dastidar 388-389). They encounter limited career advancement opportunities, job security issues, and reduced access to education, often managing smaller, less profitable enterprises. Patriarchal culture has perpetuated male dominance, resulting in domestic abuse, emotional violence, and unfair workplace treatment, which collectively lead to severe emotional and economic consequences for women. Gender inequality not only stems from poverty but also contributes to it, with similar negative impacts observed across nations. Gender inequality leads to significant individual and societal losses, despite women constituting over 50% of the population. Only 7% of governments are led by women, resulting in decisions that often favor men, which is inefficient for society. Deeply rooted in history and culture, gender discrimination harms women's self-worth and dignity (Ashraf Wani and Dastidar 388-389).

Addressing gender inequality is critical as it impairs men and women's well-being, limits opportunities, and undermines social welfare. In many developing economies, lower female tertiary enrollment rates due to bias result in the underutilization of women's talents (Shang 7). The urgency of tackling this issue stems from the substantial social and economic consequences it carries. Gender inequality directly harms women through violence and harassment, rooted in biased social norms. This misallocation of female talent affects economic growth and investment. Reducing gender inequality can improve decision-making, enhance firm performance, and yield macroeconomic benefits like increased productivity and reduced income inequality (Shang 4). Zulfqar Ashraf Wani and Ruchi Ghosh Dastidar

highlight that sex-selective abortion is a major aspect of gender inequality, leading to human trafficking, demographic imbalances, and sexual exploitation, with India and China as key examples. In China, a preference for male children due to societal undervaluation of females and the one-child policy has resulted in a significant gender imbalance, with approximately 32 million more boys than girls under 20. Similar trends are seen in India, where boys are celebrated and girls devalued, violating the right to life and skewing the natural sex ratio (Ashraf Wani and Dastidar 387-388). This issue challenges philosophers to advocate for women's representation as a means to correct gender disparities. To promote gender equality, focus should be on improving women's education, public health, childcare facilities, and their voices in all societal spheres. This dissertation will use Asouzu's complementary philosophy to support equal treatment for men and women, beginning with an exploration of complementary ontology principles.

A Discourse on Asouzu's Complementary Philosophy

Complementary philosophy has its own method known as the method of 'Complementary Reflection' or 'Complementarism'. For Asouzu, method is a crucial pathway for philosophizing, as it enables philosophers to achieve their ultimate goal: arriving at truth, particularly objective truth. Therefore, he argues that method is a central concern in philosophical inquiry because it is essential for creating a conducive and "correct atmosphere for doing philosophy" (Asouzu, *Ikwa Ogwe* 148). This method is what allows philosophers to accomplish the objective of their inquiry — truth. Asouzu advocates against equating individual or personal truth with objective truth. For him, objective truth can only be attained through the correct method or mindset (disposition). This perspective sets the foundation for his *Ibanyidanda* method of philosophy. In this method, each inquirer with conflicting views must perceive themselves and their positions as missing 'links'. The aim of this approach is to create the necessary conditions for reconciling conflicting positions (*Ikwa Ogwe* 53). This framework encourages individuals to adopt an open-minded attitude and accommodate the perspectives of others. Through this process, they can come to understand objective truth and develop confidence in the knowledge of others. This mutual dependence among all stakeholders (inquirers) fosters an environment where they communicate their relative discoveries about truth freely and meaningfully, without the fear of being deceived (*Ikwa Ogwe* 150). This is possible through complementary mindset.

Complementary mindset (also referred to as the global mindset or *obioha*) harmonizes and unifies reality, viewing different aspects as interconnected missing links. The complementary mindset seeks to harmonize these realities so they find their completeness within a whole where they can complement one another (*Ibanyidanda* 402). Complementary mindset is essential for a proper understanding of existence. This understanding is facilitated by principles, imperatives, and criteria developed and articulated by Asouzu. The key principles include the principle of integration (or harmonious complementation) and the principle of progressive transformation. The principle of integration or harmonious complementation asserts that "anything that exists serves as a missing link in reality" (*Inaugural Lecture* 44). This leads to the idea that missing links do not exist in isolation. They exist in a mutually complementary relationship and serve to and affirm the existence of each other (Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya, *African Metaphysics, Epistemology and a New Logic* 97). This principle of integration serves as the metaphysical counterpart to the practical principle of *Ibanyidanda*, known as the principle of progressive transformation. The principle of progressive transformation states that "all human actions are geared towards the joy of being" (*Inaugural Lecture* 44). One can deduce that "all actions

that are meaningful and right are the ones that lead to the joy of all who are affected by the actions” (Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya, *African Metaphysics, Epistemology and a New Logic* 97).

One cannot but say that these two principles of complementary philosophy have their root and grounding in complementary imperative and the truth and authenticity criterion. Asouzu’s complementary imperative avers that “Allow the limitations of being to be the cause of your joy” (*Inaugural Lecture* 44). The point is that “the awareness of our self-insufficiency should remind us of our mutual dependence and should lead us to seek complementation” (Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya, *African Metaphysics, Epistemology and a New Logic* 98) resulting in joy. The above imperative although helps one understand the above stated two principles, it still leaves room for the truth and authenticity criterion to ground the principles. Asouzu states his truth and authenticity criterion thus: “Never elevate any world-immanent missing to an absolute instance” (*The Method and Principles* 2005: 69, 270, 317-47). The key deduction from this criterion is that “it is better to place all missing links on the same plane” (Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya, *African Metaphysics, Epistemology and a New Logic* 98). These principles, imperative, and criterion elevate the concept of complementarity rooted in the Igbo aphorism ‘*ibuanyidanda*’ from a mere observation and descriptive statement to a synthetic-analytic statement (Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya, *African Metaphysics, Epistemology and a New Logic* 98). They define complementary philosophy and its method as distinct from any other philosophical system that might be derived from African cultural world or anywhere else in the world. There are lots of key concepts in complementary philosophy that should be discussed here. They include the phenomenon of concealment (*ihe mkpuchi anya*), noetic propaedeutic, existential Conversion, *obioha*. missing link, personal autonomy – *ima onwe onye* (being-in-control), and the joy of being (*jide k’ji*).

- i. **The phenomenon of concealment (*ihe mkpuchi anya*):** According to Asouzu, the “‘phenomenon of concealment’ is an existential condition that militates against the capacity to reason soundly, judge correctly and imaginatively; most especially in matters dealing directly with our most cherished interests. It ... can lead to errors of judgement in the way we relate to our needs and our interests” (*Ibuanyidanda...Basic Philosophical Problem* 12). Asouzu also links human ambivalence situations to this phenomenon of concealment (*ihe mkpuchi anya*) (*Inaugural Lecture* 50). Consequently, he asserts that these human ambivalence situations and *ihe mkpuchi anya* serve as barriers to perceiving reality from a holistic perspective. These barriers impose fragments and limited aspects of reality as the entirety of reality, impacting how philosophy and the pursuit of knowledge are conducted. This influence is detrimental because it restricts the pursuit of truth, which should naturally guide us to knowledge. It also negatively affects interpersonal relationships.
- ii. **Noetic propaedeutic:** Asouzu explains noetic propaedeutic as a pre-education of the mind and human reason intended to overcome the fractured unity in human consciousness that results from the tensions of ambivalent existential situations and *ihe mkpuchi anya* (phenomenon of concealment) (*Inaugural Lecture* 49). Noetic propaedeutic acts as a pedagogical and psychotherapeutic approach through which the mind is pre-educated before it engages with broader realities.
- iii. **Existential Conversion:** Existential conversion that mechanism that enables the mind to achieve noetic propaedeutic, live beyond the phenomenon of concealment, and have a comprehensive mindset required for seeing reality in comprehensive manner. In

Asouzu's words: existential conversion is "a form of consciously lived experience of a subject in view of activating those innate transcendent categories that bestow authenticity" (*Ibuanyidanda...Basic Philosophical Problem 75*). Existential conversion that the mind "learns to convert the transcendent categories of unity of consciousness of *ibuanyidanda* philosophy into practical action" (*Ibuanyidanda...Basic Philosophical Problem 59*).

- iv. **Missing link:** Asouzu defines missing links as "all imaginable modes of relations that can be abstracted and interrelated in a complementary, mutually beneficial way" (*Ibuanyidanda...Basic Philosophical Problem 50*). These fragments of reality are inherently incomplete on their own but find completeness through their complementarity within the larger whole. In this way, Asouzu describes them as entities and the entities of entities, ideas and the ideas of ideas, units and the units of units, encompassing both spirit and matter, animate and inanimate, among others (*Ibuanyidanda...Basic Philosophical Problem 59; Inaugural Lecture 50*).
- v. **Personal autonomy – *ima onwe onye* (being-in-control):** Also, existential conversion brings to *obioha* another dimension of thinking known as *ima onwe onye* (being-in-control). In the view of Asouzu, *ima onwe onye* is an act of existential conversion in which "an acting and a thinking subject is entrapped and such that finds expression in the experience of transcendent complementary categories of consciousness with missing links" (*Inaugural Lecture 54*). *Ima onwe onye* is not only a thinking pattern, it is also "an important attribute of an authentic being (individual)" (Chimakonam, Globalization and *Ibuanyidanda 5*). A true person is one who is in control of him/herself and his/her faculty of reasoning when he/she confronts realities. Such an individual remains unbiased in relating with these realities and others. It is at this point that the individual is able to harmonize missing links within the whole, where their limitations and insufficiencies are complemented and their being actualized. Asouzu goes on to assert that it is "the highest form of self-consciousness" (*Ibuanyidanda...Basic Philosophical Problem 76*).
- vi. **The joy of being (*jide k'ji*):** The joy of being is one of the aims of complementary philosophy. According to Asouzu. "In all cases, *ibuanyidanda* seeks ways of converting relativity historical conditions to very positive experiences and through which the joy of being (*jide ka iji*) can become a reality and sustained" (*Ibuanyidanda...Basic Philosophical Problem 76*). The joy of being enable an individual to relate with others in unity and to act in such a way that they also considered in a positive light. So, the individual sees him/herself and others as missing link who are mutually dependent on each other (*Ibuanyidanda...Basic Philosophical Problem 103*). The joy of being (*jide k'ji*) aims at harmonising and promote harmonious coexistence among realities and individuals. This is seen in the harmonious relationship of mutual complementary service for the common good.

How Asouzu's Complementary Philosophy Can be Used to Address Gender Inequality

To understand gender inequality, it is essential to look beyond the sociocultural, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical dimensions and explore a philosophical perspective. This is where Asouzu's complementary philosophy comes into play. While we have previously discussed that cultural, economic, political, and social factors contribute to gender inequality, it is important to identify the underlying cause of this issue. Gender inequality arises when one gender is regarded as superior to the other, leading to the latter being deprived of the opportunities and rights enjoyed by the dominant gender. This raises the question: what

causes this imbalance in relationships? One could argue that this disparity is linked to what Asouzu refers to as the phenomenon of concealment (*ihe mkpu chi anya*) (*Ibuanyidanda* 57, 235, 358; *The Method and Principles* 61-69). How does this phenomenon enable gender inequality? The answer is straightforward. All relationships—whether among humans or between humans and non-human entities—originate in the mind. Thus, the way individuals perceive and comprehend realities significantly influences their interactions with others and the world. The phenomenon of concealment acts as a mechanism that hinders the mind from recognizing that realities are interconnected and capable of coexisting. Instead, it leads individuals to view realities as fragmented and perpetually divided, making it difficult to achieve harmony or unity. This flawed perception of how realities exist and relate (*Ibuanyidanda...Basic Philosophical Problem* 12) ultimately shapes how people engage with and treat one another.

Gender relationships are significantly influenced by the phenomenon of concealment, which operates in a negative sense. This concealment can lead to errors in human judgment and action. It manifests alongside situations of human ambivalence, where individuals possess a dual capacity to relate to one another: first, as unified beings and second, as irreconcilable opposites. The phenomenon of concealment hinders the formation of unity and promotes the perception of oppositional differences. Consequently, when concealment dominates thinking, society often views one gender as superior to the other. This results in the dominant gender enjoying opportunities, privileges, and rights that the inferior gender is denied. In many societies, this leads to gender inequality, as the male gender is often regarded as the embodiment of humanity, entitled to all the benefits that women are deprived of. Conversely, in some contemporary contexts, gender imbalance may favor women, portraying femininity as synonymous with humanity. In these instances, being a woman grants individuals access to the opportunities, privileges, and rights associated with being human. The phenomenon of concealment acts as a barrier, preventing society from recognizing that both male and female genders share a common humanity, and that the opportunities, privileges, and rights inherent to this humanity should be equally accessible to both. This phenomenon obscures the perception of gender equality, resulting in a divide between those regarded as human and those who are not. Also, one can argue against gender inequality and for gender equality using Asouzu's complementary philosophy. For instance, Asouzu's complementarism can be employed in arguing for gender equality. As noted earlier, philosophical approaches tend to produce subjective and fragmented conceptions of truth, which according to Asouzu, can overcome through complementarism – a method for achieving an objective and holistic understanding of truth (*Ikwa Ogwe* 146). For Asouzu, objective holistic truth considers all possible perspectives of truth through the lens of complementarity, ensuring that no aspect of truth is overlooked since they are complementary to one another.

This method has significant implications for addressing gender inequality. If gender inequality is rooted in the perception that one gender (either male or female) epitomizes the essence of humanity, while the other is seen as lacking in full humanity, then there is a pressing need for a more inclusive approach to understanding reality—one that is holistic and embraces differences. Asouzu's complementarism provides such a method, as discussed above. Just as different truths complement each other to form a more complete understanding of objective truth, men and women can also be seen as complementary in defining humanity. This perspective highlights that humanity comprises both men and women in a mutually supportive relationship. While acknowledging the differences between

genders, it emphasizes the commonality that underlies all subjective truths—namely, that humanity itself represents a shared truth. By adopting a complementary approach, we can overcome the problem of gender inequality, allowing both men and women to enjoy equal opportunities, privileges, and rights. Thus, to truly define humanity, we must think of the male and female genders as being in a mutually complementary relationship.

Also, the principle of integration can be employed to address the problem of gender inequality. This principle highlights the concept of "missing links" as essential realities that cannot exist in isolation. Each of these links is dependent on the others, and they come into existence only through their interconnected relationships (Asouzu, *Inaugural Lecture 44*; Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya, *African Metaphysics, Epistemology and a New Logic 97*). In other words, without one another, their existence is impossible. Missing links derive their significance from their opposing counterparts; thus, they must coexist within a whole—referred to as the community—where they complement one another. This principle has the potential to eliminate the issue of gender inequality. The principle asserts that "individual entities exist" (*African Metaphysics, Epistemology and a New Logic 97*), which implies that male and female are individual entities that rely on each other for their existence. Building on the concept of missing links, we can say that men and women are essential to one another in the community of humanity. Neither can exist in isolation; they must coexist and work together to form a complete human experience. By embracing the idea of missing links, as articulated in Asouzu's principle of integration, both men and women can be recognized as equals, with neither being considered superior or inferior to the other. They are interconnected and serve as essential links within society. Likewise, the principle of progressive transformation can be utilized to tackle the issue of gender inequality. This principle suggests that human actions are not aimless; rather, they are directed toward achieving joy or the joy of being. However, only the right actions can lead to this joy (Asouzu, *Inaugural Lecture 44*; Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya, *African Metaphysics, Epistemology and a New Logic 97*).

Applying the principle of progressive transformation to address gender inequality one can argue that humans (men and women) act to bring about joy. The joy of being arises when humans act to unite all individuals as one. This mindset can help address the issue of gender inequality. In this context, it's crucial for humans to ensure that their actions promote joy for both men and women. Gender inequality leads to sadness, as it denies individuals their rights as members of humanity. However, by embracing the principle of progressive transformation, humans can act in ways that recognize both males and females as integral parts of humanity, allowing them to enjoy the opportunities, privileges, and rights that come with being human. Furthermore, the complementary imperative offers a valuable perspective for addressing the issue of gender inequality. This idea asserts that all beings have limitations, and these very limitations can be harnessed to foster joy (Asouzu, *Inaugural Lecture 44*; Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya, *African Metaphysics, Epistemology and a New Logic 98*). The question arises: how can this be applied? Just as all beings have their specific limitations, so too do men and women possess unique limitations. Consequently, neither gender can be considered a perfect representation of humanity. It is through acknowledging these inherent limitations that both men and women can be viewed as complementary to one another in defining what it means to be human. Translating this understanding to the issue of gender inequality, we can assert that women must be recognized as complementary equals, embracing their inherent limitations alongside those of men. This perspective is crucial for overcoming gender inequality. The truth and

authenticity criterion can be applied to address gender inequality by emphasizing that nothing should be considered absolute. This means that neither the male nor female gender should be treated as superior. In this context, both males and females should be viewed as equals, with equal opportunities, privileges, and rights that come with being human.

In Place of a Conclusion: Towards Achieving Gender Inequality using Asouzu's Complementary Philosophy

Since the underlying cause of gender inequality is psychological—specifically, the phenomenon of concealment (*ihe mkpu chi anya*)—the solution will also require a psychological approach. This involves a noetic propaedeutic supported by existential conversion. Noetic propaedeutic refers to re-educating the mind to recognize reality as consisting of missing links that can be harmonized and unified (Asouzu, *Inaugural Lecture* 48). This is achievable when the mind undergoes existential conversion—allowing it to “experience the transcendent complementary unity of consciousness with all missing links” (Asouzu, *Inaugural Lecture* 54-55). When the mind undergoes noetic propaedeutic and existential conversion, it ultimately develops a complementary (Obioha – global) mindset. Such psychological transformation could serve as a foundation for overcoming gender inequality and achieving gender equality. Gender inequality can be overcome, and gender equality achieved, when individuals adopt a complementary mindset. With this mindset, individuals begin to see both male and female genders as complementary units in society. This means that they “have learned how to view units as complements within a comprehensive universal setting” (Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda* 83). Viewing both genders as complements suggests they can be treated as equals in society. This perspective implies that individuals recognize both genders as missing links within society, seeing them as integral parts. This recognition results from having undergone noetic propaedeutic and existential conversion, enabling individuals to appreciate both genders as transcendent categories of unity in consciousness, according to Asouzu. Those with a complementary mindset have learned “to convert the transcendent categories of unity of consciousness of Ibuanyidanda philosophy into practical action” (*Ibuanyidanda...Basic Philosophical Problem* 59). Thus, the practical implication is that if all individuals experience noetic propaedeutic and existential conversion, they will possess a complementary mindset. This mindset will not only allow individuals to see both genders as equals but will also motivate them to treat each other as such.

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