

Asouzu's Complementarism and Nietzsche's Perspectivism: Implications for Cross-Cultural Philosophizing

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Abstract: This paper examines Asouzu's complementarism and Nietzsche's perspectivism with a view to showing how convergence and divergence of thoughts in the Asouzuan and Nietzschean philosophy contexts can inform cross-cultural philosophizing. Asouzu's complementarism projects multiplicity of perspectives as constitutive of reality and construes it as a composite of missing links, while Nietzsche's perspectivism also postulates multiplicity of views and interpretations as he believes that reality is deeply rooted in infinite possibilities. Attempts are made, in this paper, to articulate the essential principles of Asouzu's complementarism and to highlight the dynamics of Nietzsche's perspectivism in a fruitful encounter of the African tradition of thought which Asouzu belongs to and the European thought tradition which Nietzsche belongs to. These two traditions of thought will be critically x-rayed to show their implications for cross-cultural philosophizing. Simply put, the paper will show how the philosophical studies of the ideas of complementarism and perspectivism in the thoughts of the German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, and the African philosopher, Innocent Asouzu, can enrich the cultural understanding of human societies and ideas for the betterment of universal values and humanism.

Keywords: Complementarism, perspectivism, endless interpretations, missing links, cross-cultural philosophy, dialogue.

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores Asouzu's complementarism and Nietzsche's perspectivism to show the degree the convergence and divergence of thought in the African and European philosophic traditions can advance cross-cultural philosophizing. We chose to compare Asouzu's view with Nietzsche's in order to show how a constructive engagement of these two thinkers from the African and European traditions of thought can promote intercultural philosophizing. Simply put, the paper will show how the philosophical studies of the ideas of complementarism and perspectivism in the thoughts of the German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, and the African philosopher, Innocent Asouzu, can enrich the cultural understanding of human societies and ideas for the betterment of universal values and humanism.

Asouzu's complementarism represents a philosophic worldview that construes reality as a composite of missing links or as consisting in multiple perspectives. It emphasizes the richness and differentiation of divergent worldviews and does not lend recognition to any particular worldview that singularly makes claim to absolute categories. Asouzu contends that reality is a conglomeration of missing links [1]. In this way, he projects the view that being is made up of multiplicity of views or links and is loaded with infinite possibilities in such a way that no one perspective or view can exhaust the riches of reality.

Thus, for him, in order to arrive at a fuller meaning of reality, there is need to relate this multiplicity and divergent perspectives, within the world, in a mutual and compatible way.

In a related manner, Nietzsche's perspectivism, like Asouzu's complementarism, postulates the notion of multiplicity of divergent views as Nietzsche believes that reality is made up of infinite possibilities and endless interpretations [2]. However, unlike Asouzu, Nietzsche would not relate these divergent and multiple perspectives in a mutual, complementary and compatible manner. Rather, for him, these perspectives or interpretations are locked up in endless struggle [2]. Furthermore, in trying to emphasize the perspectival character and multiplicity of reality, Nietzsche's perspectivism, like Asouzu's complementarism, defends the notion of ontological pluralism. This is the case because, just as Asouzu would contend that reality consists in the multiplicity of views as expressed in his concept of the "missing links" [1], Nietzsche would also argue that reality or being is constituted by multiplicity of perspectives or wills to power [2]. Thus, both Nietzsche and Asouzu project the view that reality manifests itself in endless perspectives and no one perspective can dominate the totality of being. Admittedly, the divergent and multiple nature of existence, as Nietzsche and Asouzu posit, reveals reality or being as having an interpretive and perspectival character [cf. 3]. This implies that being is similar to a text to be interpreted and there are infinite possibilities of interpretations constituting it. Like Asouzu, Nietzsche nurtures the belief that among these

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various interpretations of being, no single interpretation or perspective can make absolute claim to reality. Thus, in precise terms, the common ground for the Asouzuan complementarism and the Nietzschean perspectivism is their common emphasis on the multiplicity of views or perspectives as constituting the fundamental nature of reality. Unarguably, this common ground or convergence of thoughts in the Nietzschean perspectivism and Asouzuan complementarism provides us with the basis for cross-cultural philosophizing.

Beyond doubt, the difference in style, language and methods of the Asouzuan and Nietzschean cultural and philosophical traditions constitute a problem: (1) how do we raise the question of complementarism and perspectivism given the difference in style, method and language, which separate the worlds of Asouzu and Nietzsche? (2) What are the implications of these for cross-cultural philosophizing?

Cross-cultural philosophy describes a philosophy that enables us to feel the presence of a generic concept of philosophical truth in its omnipresence in different philosophical traditions [cited in 4]. It examines how different cultures express their rationality and their conceptions of reality [5, 4] and exposes the interrelatedness of cultures as well as the need for one to go beyond one's cultural milieu and interact with other culture's philosophical tradition for a better understanding of reality. The importance of such interaction cannot be overemphasized as it "broadens a thinker's epistemic horizons, which would have been impossible, if such a thinker is restricted or limited only to his/her world, which would ultimately impoverish his/her thought and genuine approach to reality" [5]. In view of this, one can posit that we genuinely philosophize, only when we enter into a discussion with philosophers from other cultures and this implies that "we talk through with them that about which they speak" [6]. Even though a cross-cultural dialogue does not, of necessity, suggest that different philosophic and cultural traditions, like the Nietzschean and the Asouzuan traditions, share exactly the same thought on the same issue, it nevertheless requires that there should be a basis upon which they establish their exchange. The ideas of complementarism and perspectivism provide such basis upon which Asouzu and Nietzsche can enter into a cross-cultural dialogue and upon which genuine philosophizing can be established. Unarguably, doing philosophy does not necessarily entail the restriction of our reflection to only our experience in relation to ourselves, but also

incorporates our reflection with regards to our relation with other cultures and the global world. [cf.7]. Consequently, genuine philosophizing can only be meaningfully carried out with a cross-cultural-oriented conviction that philosophy, as such, is not the sole possession of any one tradition, be it European or African [cf.7]. Thus, a cross-cultural orientation provides us the fulcrum or platform, where philosophers of all traditions can come together and converse with one another with full dedication to truth [cf.7]. In view of this, the Asouzuan complementarism and Nietzschean perspectivism map unto the notion of cross-culturality to the extent that they provide the basis for a meaningful understanding and constructive engagements of these thoughts in the African and European traditions. This paper, therefore, examines Asouzu's complementarism and Nietzsche's perspectivism with a view to showing how convergence and divergence of thoughts in the African and European philosophic thinking can inform cross-cultural philosophizing.

Previous works have focused on the communitarian, political, physical, metaphysical, epistemic and hermeneutic implications of Asouzu's complementarism and Nietzsche's perspectivism [see 8-13]. However, none has paid attention to how these forms of thought – Asouzu's complementarism and Nietzsche's perspectivism – can provide the basis for cross-cultural philosophizing. This work represents an attempt in such a direction. To accomplish its purpose, the paper is divided into three sections. Section one articulates Asouzu's notion of complementarism, while that of two examines Nietzsche' idea of perspectivism. Section three represents an attempt to critically examine the areas of convergence and divergence in the Asouzuan complementarism and the Nietzschean perspectivism and to show their implications for cross-cultural philosophizing. This section also serves as the conclusion.

ASOUZU'S NOTION OF COMPLEMENTARISM

Asouzu's notion of complementarism intends to relate the world immanent realities or divergent and multiple views of the world in a compatible and harmonious manner. According to him, "complementarism is a philosophy that seeks to consider things in the significance of their singularity and not in the exclusiveness and absoluteness of their otherness in view of the joy that gives completion to all missing links of reality" [1]. Thus, in complementarism, there is an emphasis on richness, multiplicity and

differentiation, which does not accord any recognition to the treatment of exclusiveness as absolute categories of world immanent realities [1]. For Asouzu, within the context of the new world order, complementarism represents the attitude of openness, transparency and tolerance in the context of the relationship existing between nations. According to him, one of the distinctive features of complementarism is the demolition of ideological blocks and absolutes, as well as the direction of inquiry into the basic nature of being, in the most profound, universal, transparent, total and comprehensive way. Furthermore, for him, it establishes a liberalized mindset, which construes all immanent realities or multiple perspectives as complimentary of each other in view of the realization of the ultimate foundation of our being. This articulates the idea of our fundamental mutual indebtedness and complementary relatedness. For Asouzu, part of the functions of philosophy, in the contemporary period, is to liberalize and democratize our conception or interpretation of reality in such a way that accommodates free and fair expression of opinions, as well as divergent and multiple perspectives, within the ambience of mutual complementation of ideas or views within reality and in view of harmonizing all the missing links of this reality [1].

According to Asouzu, complementarism challenges us to revalue our views, ideas and ideals and encourages us to reposition and liberalize these views, ideas or ideals in accordance with the manner that provides the relevance for the possibility of their independent development and, at the same time, within a wider and universal framework, which relates to all missing links and perspectives of reality [1]. Also, in his estimation, complementarism expresses the desire to excel in all challenges of life, bearing in mind, the fragmented nature of our historical origin and the heterogeneous nature of reality [1]. For Asouzu, the realization of our genuine and ultimate freedom is embedded in complementarism. He posits that “in complementarism, the mind focuses on the immense possibilities the multidimensionality of our world has to offer us. Here, our mutual indebtedness in complementation turns out to be a condition of possibility for the realization of our freedom wholly and comprehensively” [1]. In his estimation, any form of human relationship, which is not founded on the principles of respect for divergent views and mutual complementation, hinders us from the realization of our potentialities and authentic living. This beckons on us to define our interests, divergent views and

perspectives in a manner which harmonizes and accords equal respect for other perspectives, ideologies, views and interests and which does not make any absolute claim to reality.

Asouzu contends that “in the spirit of true complementarism, anything that exists serves a missing link of reality in view of the totality that gives completion to all that is” [1]. This presupposes that no one perspective or link can exhaust the richness of being. Rather, every link or perspective is situated in a particular region or background of the world and tries to give an account of reality from that point of view. It also implies that any view of reality is only a missing link or perspective of reality which requires other perspectives and links for comprehensiveness, universality, totality and completeness. In Asouzu’s view, this is realized within the context of interdependent mutuality and harmonization of divergent perspectives or all the missing links of this reality. Thus, any link or perspective that aspires to offer a clearer picture of reality must be readily prepared to contain with distortions arising from the other divergent perspectives or links and towards the harmonization of these links into a mutual corporative unity [cf.14]. In view of this, any tendency towards exclusivism and absolute enthronement of any particular link or view would only limit our knowledge of reality and restrict us to the skimpiest of audience. In this connection, Asouzu opines that “in a world where the origin of ideas and values can be thought of only within the context of mutual complementary dependence of all stakeholders, it is really doubtful if any form of purely indigenizing, ethnocentric-induced approach... can be of much benefit to any culture” [14]. His concept of *ibuanidanda* [cf.15], which advocates for equal respect, mutual and interdependent cooperation and accommodation of divergent views of reality, articulates this idea. Thus, for Asouzu, every perspective or link from which ideas are generated is indispensable and this materializes in the conceptualization of reality as missing links, where human beings relate to one another in a mutual interdependent and complementary manner to achieve completeness.

Complementarism is further viewed by Asouzu as an instrument of bridging the divide between the self and the world. According to him, “it is based on complementarity that individuals and societies can fully realize all their potentials and meaningfully interpret their actions as geared towards a future referential absolute that gives legitimacy to all missing links of reality” [1]. The focus, here, is on the eradication of

existential contradictions which is realizable within the context of positive transformation that strives for the unity of being in a way that complements all contraries. For Asouzu, "this is what gives complementarism its special forcefulness as a philosophy of integration and transformation in human societies" [1]. At this juncture, the uncertain, the contraries, the unexpected and all contingencies of human existence, for Asouzu, must be conceived from the future referential foundation of all missing links or perspectives of reality, in order to have their full significance and meaning.

In Asouzu's view, complementarism entails the accommodation of every kind of reasoning and view, as far as there is a provision for the mutual coexistence of all these views as aspects of the totality, which gives legitimacy to reality. This implies the transcendence of our limited and myopic approaches to reality and beckons on us to surmount every prejudice and bias which makes harmonious coexistence an unpleasant experience. In this manner, Asouzu contends that we come to the realization that multiple and divergent views constitute our being than the elevation of one single view to an absolute position [1]. Thus, in order to live a fulfilled life, according to Asouzu, one must recognize that we are dependent on all missing links or perspectives of reality, including those that we may not accord immediate significance. Thus, for our view of the world to be legitimate, other views of the world must be accorded equal recognition in such a way that guarantees a mutual interdependent cooperative relations and coexistence of these views. Having discussed Asouzu's complementarism as the endorsement of multiplicity of views or links as constituting the basic feature of reality, I will, at this moment, engage Nietzsche's perspectivism as also the recognition of multiplicity of perspectives or views as the fundamental nature of being.

NIETZSCHE'S IDEA OF PERSPECTIVISM

Nietzsche's perspectivism represents a dethronement of ontological monism and the affirmation of ontological pluralism as constitutive of the basic feature of being. This is because, for him, multiplicity and plurality of perspectives constitute the fundamental nature of reality. He sees his perspectivism as a counter movement against metaphysics and the dethronement of the metaphysical and epistemic absolute. This informed why Granier [10] is of the view that by affirming the perspectival character of existence, Nietzsche defends ontological pluralism. What this implies, for him, is that the

essential nature of being manifests itself from a multiplicity of viewpoints. Being, therefore, shows itself from endless perspectives.

Nietzsche's idea of perspectivism aligns closely with his concept of interpretation. Often times, Nietzsche considers the two concepts as having the same notion. The idea of interpretation, as employed by Nietzsche, represents being as an expressive, perspectival and interpretative phenomenon: being is considered as a "text" to be interpreted and not as having a fixed or absolute meaning [cf. 11]. According to Granier, "while the idea of perspectivism tended to emphasize the plurality of ways by which Being is disclosed, the idea of interpretation accentuates its equivocal character" [10]. Nietzsche is of the view that subjectivity and multiplicity of viewpoints – endless interpretations – is an essential component of being [16]. He dislodges the idea of fixity, objectivity and absolutism of being and replaces being with endless interpretations and becoming. Nietzsche's description of being as endless becoming finds expression in the Heraclitus' ideas of endless flux. No wonder Nietzsche finds his intellectual ancestry in the philosophy of Heraclitus who is popularly known as the philosopher of change. Similarly, his emphasis on multiplicity of viewpoints or perspectives, as defining the basic character of being, which is expressed in his idea of perspectivism, is ultimately an emphasis on the nature of being as consisting in endless becoming.

For Nietzsche, reality presents a perspectival or interpretive character and existence without interpretation, in his view, is nonsense. In his estimation, the world becomes infinite, to the extent that it includes endless or infinite interpretations or perspectives:

How far the perspectival character of existence extends, or indeed whether it has any other character; whether an existence without interpretation... doesn't become 'non-sense;' whether, on the other hand, all existence isn't essentially an interpreting *existence* – that cannot, as would be fair, be decided even by the most industrious and extremely conscientious analysis and self-examination of the intellect; for in the course of this analysis, the human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself under its perspectival forms, and *solely* in these. We cannot look around our corner: it is a

hopeless curiosity to want to know what other kinds of intellects and perspectives there *might* be; e.g. whether other beings might be able to experience time backwards, or alternately forwards and backwards (which would involve another direction of life and a different conception of cause and effect). But, I think that, today, we are, at least, far from the ridiculous immodesty of decreeing from our angle that perspectives are *permitted* only from this angle. Rather, the world has once again become infinite to us: insofar as we cannot reject the possibility *that it includes infinite interpretations* [2].

The above quotation indicates that Nietzsche's perspectivism attempts to counter the idea that the world possesses a single, objective, unconditioned and fixed features, which are in principle, prior to or independent of interpretation [cf. 11]. Our interpretation or view of the world, for Nietzsche, is modelled on perspective, which demands of us to understand that there are possibilities of other perspectives or interpretations. Nietzsche, thus, "urges us to combine perspectives, or move between them, which shows that we not only know that there are other perspectival views, but that we know what some of them are" [2]. For him, "there is *only* a perspective seeing, only a perspective 'knowing'; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more eyes*, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing be..."[2]. However, these different eyes need not ever yield a singly unified picture [cf. 11]. This is because, for Nietzsche [16], the essential character of the world manifests infinite interpretations or perspectives, otherwise, it is meaningless: "...the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings – 'Perspectivism'" [16]. This does not mean, for Nietzsche, that perspectives can be adopted at will, but only suggests that new interpretations are reached only by great efforts and constitutes a seemingly good reason at the time of adoption [see 16]. Nietzsche maintains that all our evaluation is projected from a definite perspective and this is usually done with a view to preserving the individual, a faith or a culture. For him, owing to the fact that our evaluation is always made from a particular perspective, an individual may harbor a confusion of contradictory valuations and drives. In his estimation, within the ambience of preferences and rejection or

love and hate, what is invariably expressed is a perspective, which represents the viewpoints and interests of certain types of life [16]. Because reality is constitutive of multiplicity of perspectives, Nietzsche would view any drive or perspective as an effort to dominate others and compel them to accept a particular tradition or norm. This is, basically, the problem he saw in religion with particular reference to Christianity which, in his view, compels people to accept it, unconditionally, as the highest and only perspective. For him, Christianity is only an interpretation of the world or a perspective among the multiplicity of interpretations and perspectives and should not baptize itself as a first and only condition of existence prior to the existence of the world or independent of any interpretation. This informs his outright condemnation of Christianity in *The Antichrist* [17]. The same thing can be said with equal importance regarding his attack on system builders like Plato and, by extension, Kant. Plato postulated the world of forms where things exist as independent ontological entities. These forms, for Plato, are the prototype of all things and every single entity in the natural world is only but an imperfect reflection, copy or imitation of these forms. This is also similar to Kant's positing of the noumenal world, where things exist in themselves. The postulations of these philosophers angered Nietzsche, which fueled his attack on them. Particularly, Nietzsche describes his philosophic movement as a countermovement against metaphysics, which ultimately means, for him, a movement in opposition to Platonism [cf. 18]. Similarly, his attack on Kant was engineered by Kant's postulation of the noumenal world: the world of things in themselves [17]. This is because, for Nietzsche, there are no things-in-themselves, but only interpretations or perspectives.

Within the political world, Nietzsche's perspectivism could be construed as the expression of different political viewpoints, where any attempt to absolutize or impose a particular viewpoint on others will be met with stiff resistance or rejection. In a democratic and free society, it could be interpreted as endorsing freedom of expression and multiplicity of opinions. Nietzsche would embrace political pluralism and favour the struggle and opposition of divergent political views. This is expressed in his idea of the will to power that endorses the existence of multiplicity or plurality of wills to power locked up in endless struggle and in constant play of overcoming [see 16; cf. 19]. This is why he is of the view that reality is characterized with infinite possibilities and endless interpretations/perspectives

and these interpretations/perspectives are in continuous competition or struggle for dominance and superiority. Unlike Asouzu's complementarism that will relate multiple and divergent perspectives/views in a compatible and complementary manner, Nietzsche perspectivism embraces the clash and struggle of views or interpretations. Thus, for Nietzsche, existence is made up of plurality of views, perspectives or interpretations that are in constant tension within themselves. As a result of this, Nietzsche, just like Heraclitus would endorse strife and struggle as the basic feature of being. Thus, when Nietzsche expresses the view that reality, viewed from its innermost part, is will to power and nothing else [see 20], and when he posits also that life is nothing but will to power (16; cf. 21), he is only saying that reality is composed of endless wills to power or perspectives in endless struggle for dominance. Thus, Nietzsche's perspectivism incorporates a dialectic principle, which sets, in constant motion, the struggle of infinite perspectives.

Aside relating Nietzsche's perspectivism to the political world, his perspectivism also permeates the world of morality [cf. 21]. For him, morality is just a perspective or, as Asouzu would contend, a missing link of reality, which is from a definite perspective and which should also recognize the existence of other perspectives. In his estimation, there is no moral absolute, but there are multiplicity of moral interpretations. He regards as his chief proposition that there are no moral phenomena, but only a moral interpretations of these phenomena [16]. He attacks the idea of any morality positing itself as the sole and highest morality. This informs his attack on Christian morality, which sees itself as a morality in itself and as constituting the first condition of life, independent of any interpretation or prior to any perspective. Furthermore, he condemns the idea of Christianity positing itself as the sole and highest perspective and compelling its adherents to accept it as such. Nietzsche's perspectivism, thus, aims at the dethronement of any single or absolute perspective or interpretation that attempts to establish itself as the sole and highest perspective and the subsequent replacement of this with multiplicity of perspectives. This is aptly captured in his idea of the will to power as stated above, which affirms the notion of multiplicity of views or wills which are in a constant play of overcoming and endless struggle. However, Unlike Asouzu, as hinted earlier, Nietzsche would not advocate for the mutual complementation of these

perspectives as implied above. Rather, he would champion their endless struggle for dominance. Having analyzed Nietzsche's perspectivism, we will now proceed to examine this concept in relation to Asouzu's complementarism and to show the implications of this for cross-cultural philosophizing.

COMPLEMENTARISM AND PERSPECTIVISM: IMPLICATIONS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL PHILOSOPHY

We will explore, in this section, Asouzu's notion of complementarism and Nietzsche's idea of perspectivism with a view to showing areas of convergence and divergence in both thought systems as well as their implications for cross-cultural philosophizing. However, we will take our point of departure by addressing some conceptual issues in cross-cultural philosophizing.

Some Conceptual Issues: A Preamble

Undoubtedly, a discourse of this nature will have some implications and challenges for cross-cultural philosophy and, by extension, knowledge, in general. One of the challenges, which complementarism, as well as perspectivism, poses to us, is how different cultures can learn from one another. For sure, Nietzsche represents one of the philosophers, who has shown great interests in cross-cultural studies. This interest is clearly captured in his expression: "we ought to be learning from our neighbors, precisely as the Greeks learned theirs' not for the sake of learned pedantry, but rather using everything we learned as foothold, which will take us up as high – and higher than our neighbor" [22]. Similarly, the same can be said with equal importance regarding Asouzu: "in complementarism, we share mutually and infinitely all missing links of reality in as far we are integral parts of the reality. In this sharing, it is an honor instead of dishonor, indeed a mutual right to benefit from one another because all autonomies gain their authenticity from co-determination" [1]. The above Nietzschean and Asouzuan views furnish us with the basis for cross-cultural philosophizing. Questions have often arisen regarding what different cultures and philosophical traditions can learn from one another and their contributions to one another. This is the fulcrum upon which cross-cultural philosophizing rotates. Within the context of cross-cultural philosophizing, our interest lies in establishing a common ground in the philosophical thoughts of Asouzu and Nietzsche. Certainly, Asouzu and Nietzsche may not be raising the same question. This stems from the fact that both are not from the

same cultural backgrounds and philosophical traditions. However, despite this, they share in the same universal problem of philosophy. In line with this, one can posit that complementarism, as well as perspectivism, provides Asouzu, as well as Nietzsche with the basis for cross-cultural philosophizing. No doubt, it can be affirmed that the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle were developed based on the philosophic and cultural traditions already established by the Pre-Socratic philosophers. Similarly, African philosophy takes its cue from non-philosophical principles or elements in African culture [cf. 23-26]. The intention, here, is not to reduce philosophy to culture, but to establish that philosophy derives its ingredients and principles from culture and, at the same time, transcends it [cf.5]. This transcendence is accomplished through the instrumentality of hermeneutics.

Certainly, hermeneutics has broad implications for cross-cultural philosophy, especially, with regards to Asouzu's complementarism and Nietzsche's perspectivism. At this juncture, hermeneutics becomes an instrument through which Asouzu and Nietzsche can interpret, question, interrogate and transcend their cultures. In other words, hermeneutics makes possible, the harmony, as well as epistemic transcendence or knowledge-sharing between Asouzu and Nietzsche (cf. 5). That is to say that the migration of ideas, text or cross-cultural philosophy is made possible through hermeneutics. Undeniably, a hermeneutic of complementarism and perspectivism from the perspectives of Asouzu and Nietzsche makes possible the transgressing of boundaries imposed by culture [cf. 4].

Convergence and Divergence in the Asouzu Complementarism and Nietzschean Perspectivism

One question that would naturally arise is the question of what core claims that underlie Asouzu's complementarism and Nietzsche's perspectivism. It is to be noted that we establish that for Asouzu, reality consists of "multiplicity of missing links" [1] and loaded with infinite possibilities, while for Nietzsche, reality is made up of multiplicity of perspectives and also infinite possibilities [2]. This multiplicity of perspectives is captured in his idea of the will to power which, in his estimation, comprises of many wills to power with each of them in constant competition with one another and in an assiduous play of overcoming [cf. 5] In a sense, one can say that there is an emphasis on the idea of "many" and not "one" in both authors. This informed the reason why Asouzu is of the view that "in a world

where the origin of ideas and values can be thought of only within the context of mutual complementary dependence of all stakeholders, it is really doubtful if any form of purely indigenizing, ethnocentric-induced approach...can be of much benefit to any culture" [14]. The same reason spurred his assertion when he contends that "in complementarism, the mind focuses on the immense possibilities the multidimensionality of our world has to offer us" [1]. Similarly, the same line of thought underlies Nietzsche's thinking when he asserts that "...the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but *countless meanings* – 'Perspectivism'" [16]. Furthermore, the emphasis on the idea of the "many" can be seen in Nietzsche's contention that "the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing be..."[16]. This establishes that in both authors, there is much emphasis on the idea of "many" as against the idea of "one."

Asouzu's complementarism and Nietzsche's perspectivism both emphasize ontological pluralism. For instance, perspectivism is an attack on ontological monism. In other words, by affirming the idea of perspectivism, Nietzsche defends multiple interpretations as constitutive of the basic character of reality [cf. 10]. For him, the essential nature of being manifests itself from a multiplicity of viewpoints. Being, therefore, shows itself from endless perspectives and not just one perspective. This, also, informed why he is of the view that reality becomes infinite, to the extent that it includes infinite interpretations [2]. In a similar manner, Asouzu's complementarism is also an affirmation of ontological pluralism. For him, reality consist in the multiplicity of missing links. In his thought, no one link or perspective can exhaust the richness of reality; rather, every link is just a perspective contextually and situationally located and only derives its significance from the existence of multiplicity of other missing links. The above analysis attests to the idea that there is an emphasis on the multiplicity of reality in the thoughts of both authors.

There is an idea of openness, freedom of expression and critical mindedness in the thoughts of Asouzu and Nietzsche. Asouzu believes that complementarism democratizes and guarantees free and fair expression of opinion within the framework of mutual complementary ideas and challenges us out of our cocoon towards a radical reevaluation of our ideals and values [1]. In a similar vein, Nietzsche's

perspectivism is critical, open-minded and guarantees free expression of opinions or perspectives. This is why Nietzsche is of the view that "today, we are, at least, far from the ridiculous immodesty of decreeing from our angle that perspectives are permitted only from this angle. Rather, the world has, once again, become infinite to us: insofar as we cannot reject the possibility that it includes infinite interpretations" [2]. Nietzsche's critical mindedness can also be seen in his deconstructive attitude and attacks on system builders like Plato and in his attack on religion. This same critical attitude informed his declaration of the death of God and his forceful advocacy for revaluation of our values. The above analysis confirms that in both authors, there is an attitude of criticality and openness in thinking.

Both Nietzsche and Asouzu emphasize the multidimensionality and infinite possibilities of existence. In the words of Asouzu, "in complementarism, the mind focuses on the immense possibilities the multidimensionality of our world has to offer us" [1]. This multidimensionality presupposes the existence of multiplicity of missing links, divergent interpretations or perspectives, which constitute the real nature of the world. Similarly, Nietzsche's thinking is not far from this. Nietzsche contends that the world is infinite to the extent that it incorporates endless possibilities and interpretations: "the world has once again become infinite to us: insofar as we cannot reject the possibility that it includes infinite interpretations" [2]. Thus, there is an emphasis on multidimensionality and infinitude in the thoughts of both authors.

It is also to be noted that both Nietzsche's perspectivism and Asouzu's complementarism are highly deconstructive of exclusivist and absolutist system of thought that tends to class itself as the highest value and compelling people to accept it as such. This is because, for Asouzu, reality is only a multiplicity of missing links and no one system or link is qualified to assert itself as exclusively constituting the whole of reality. This is why he is of the view that any form of purely indigenizing, ethnocentric or monistic approach to reality is bound to fail [see 14]. This also informed why he maintains that complementarism "stands for the demolishing of ideological blocks...and the tearing down of the so-called iron cotton" [1]. This Asouzuan line of thought is deconstructive of exclusivist or absolutist approach to reality. In a similar vein, Nietzsche's perspectivism is also deconstructive of any exclusivist or monistic approach to reality. To be precise, perspectivism is a deconstruction of

ontological monistic approach to reality. In other words, it is an affirmation of ontological pluralism. This means, for Nietzsche, that being manifest itself in endless perspectives and not just one perspective or, in the words of Asouzu, not just one link. This deconstruction is also present in Nietzsche's attack of Platonism and Christianity as absolute systems. In fact, he describes his philosophy as a countermovement against Platonism [cf. 18]. However, whether Nietzsche succeeded in achieving this aim is questionable.

Despite these areas of convergences in the thoughts of Asouzu and Nietzsche, there are also areas of divergences. For instance, Asouzu's complementarism is complementary and integrative, while Nietzsche's perspectivism is competitive and dynamic. Also, complementarism tends towards mutual interdependency of all missing links or perspectives of reality, while perspectivism is essentially based on endless struggle and competition of perspectives. In addition, while Nietzsche identifies endless *perspectives* as constituting the nature of reality, Asouzu identified the basic nature of reality as consisting in the multiplicity of *missing links*.

Asouzu's Complementarism favours absolute synthesis of all immanent realities: "it is in the pairing-up, in the categorization and harmonization of all compatible missing links of realities, in view of an absolute synthesis of all relative world immanent realities that our positively shared experiences can be conceptualized as reinforcing themselves mutually and joyously" [1]. However, Nietzsche's perspectivism would not advocate for any absolute synthesis or foundation. In fact, this is precisely what he attacks in system builders like Plato. Furthermore, Asouzu's complementarism tilts towards the idea that being has absolute grounding and foundation [1], while Nietzsche perspectivism affirms the groundlessness and foundationless nature of being: "it seems to me important that one should get rid of all, the unity, some force, something unconditioned; otherwise one will never cease regarding it as the highest court of appeal" [16, 10]. Thus, while Asouzu's complementarism tends towards ultimate foundation [1], Nietzsche's perspectivism is foundationless and groundless, as Nietzsche would affirm. However, the question of whether Nietzsche was right in denying being any ultimate foundation has been addressed by several authors [see 18].

Complementarism subscribes to the transcendent significance of supersensible and immaterial realities:

“any form of agnosticism, positivism, materialism, and empiricism that does not make provision for the transcendent significance of supersensible and immaterial realities can hardly satisfy the demands of complementarism” [1]. This implies that Asouzu’s complementarism clings to the view that higher and supersensible values constitute our being. On the contrary, Nietzsche’s perspectivism is essentially an attack on the supersensible realities. This is why he had Zarathustra say to the people: “I beseech you, my brothers, remain faithful to the earth and do not believe those who speak to you of extraterrestrial [supersensible] hopes!” [27]. Perspectivism, thus, is an affirmation of the dethronement of the highest values and the subsequent enthronement of endless interpretations as constituting the real nature of being. This is, because, Nietzsche sees these highest values as metaphysical fictions and as diminishing our will to power: the will to endless interpretations or perspectives.

Interestingly, one positive dimension of the Nietzsche-Asouzu dialogue is that it gives room for a meaningful and constructive engagement and understanding of complementarism and perspectivism both in the Western and African traditions. This is the essence of cross-cultural philosophizing [see 28] as these traditions can learn from one another, talk with them, engage with them, understand them, complement them and make joint contribution to the development of philosophy. To illustrate, the Nietzschean radical emphasis on struggle, opposition and competition, with reference to his idea of perspectivism as constituting the fundamental nature of reality, can be complemented with the mutual, interdependent and complementaristic outlook of the Asouzuan complementarism. This will advance the cause of cross-culturality in philosophizing and, in addition, inspire scholars in these traditions to learn more and engage with the philosophies of other cultures, other than theirs, thereby advancing the contemporary development of philosophy. For instance, the European reader will learn or be acquainted with the cultural background of complementarism as a philosophy of “missing links” and as expressed in the Igbo traditional concept of *ibuanyidanda*. In the Igbo African society, *ibuanyidanda* describes the idea of the multidimensionality, plurality, multiplicity and complementarity of Igbo view of the world. *Ibuanyidanda*, as a concept, is made up of three words: *ibu* (load) *anyi* (insurmountable) and *danda* (the ant). It is pronounced as a compound word –

ibuanyidanda – meaning no load is insurmountable for the ants (*danda*) to carry, as a result of their cooperative, mutual and interdependent nature [cf. 15]. Thus, as a result of this mutual and interdependent nature of the ants, no load will be insurmountable for them to carry. It is from this cooperative nature of the ants that the Igbo traditional society arrived at the concept of *ibuanyidanda* [cf. 15]. This is because, *danda*, in Igbo traditional view, is used in the plural sense depicting the multidimensionality and multiplicity of the Igbo worldview. Thus, *danda* denotes the multiplicity and plurality of divergent views or perspectives in the Igbo world, which is harmonized in a compatible, mutual and complementary manner. In carrying any load, every single *danda* (ant) is recognized as important in accomplishing this task. No single one of them claims to be superior or more important than the others. Similarly, in the Igbo thought, every single individual or view, like the *danda* analogy, is recognized as important as the other and accorded due respect and recognition. The Igbo community recognizes every view as important part of the community of views or links as expressed in Asouzu’s philosophy of the “missing links.” It recognizes every individual or view of the world as a “missing link” without which other links or views of the world will be incomplete. This is because, reality, for the Igbo African, is made up of conglomeration of “missing links,” perspectives or views and any “missing link” or view of the world within this conglomeration of links, renders the world or reality incomplete. Thus, multiplicity, interdependency and complementarity is the bane of Igbo traditional society. This is why the Igbo believe that *agbakota aka nyuo mamiri, ogboo ofufu*, translated as when people gather in a particular place to urinate, at the same time, in the same spot, it produces much bubbles. Thus, the above analysis as exemplified in the Nietzschean-Asouzuan dialogue will promote cross-cultural philosophizing.

At the social ontological level, Asouzu’s complementarism can encourage the complementarity of cultural diversity even at the global level. Just like Asouzu believes that reality is constituted by multiplicity of views or links, which can be harmonized in a compatible and complementary manner [1], the global society can leverage on this to harmonize cultural conflicts and ideologies within the globe. Furthermore, just as the Asouzuan complementarism, as concretized in the Igbo traditional concept of *ibuanyidanda*, accords due respect and mutual recognition to every view or individual in the society, the global community can, as

well, replicate this at the world level by according every culture due recognition and equal respect, be it European, African or Asian culture. The idea of racial discrimination on the basis of skin color, language or culture should be totally done away with. Rather, every individual or people, notwithstanding their cultural background, should be treated with equal respect and see themselves as complementary aspects of one humanity. This will encourage the attitude of love and solidarity at the global level. Also, in a society, where the freedom of speech is suppressed, the Nietzschean perspectivism and the Asouzuan complementarism can be applied to encourage freedom of expression. Even though the Nietzschean idea of perspectivism may endorse the struggle of views or perspectives [cf. 29], which is the bane of a free, egalitarian and true democratic society, it will reject the imposition of any view(s), which has not gone through the censorship, critique or scrutiny of other views [cf. 30, 31]. After going through this scrutiny of other views, the Asouzuan complementarism can then be leveraged on to harmonize these views in a mutual, complementary and compatible manner. This will advance transparency and openness in such society and in addition promote a cross-cultural understanding of reality in these societies and cultures.

CONCLUSION

This paper set out to examine Asouzu's complementarism and Nietzsche's perspectivism with a view to showing the areas of convergence and divergence in both thought system as well as their implications for cross-cultural philosophizing. Simply put, the paper examined the philosophical ideas of complementarism and perspectivism from the Asouzuan and Nietzschean perspectives to establish how philosophical studies can constructively promote a cross-cultural understanding of human societies and reality in a more universalized manner. In order to achieve this objective, the paper highlighted Asouzu's notion of complementarism, exposed Nietzsche's idea of perspectivism and attempted an articulation of the areas of convergence and divergence in both forms of thought, as well as their implications for intercultural philosophizing. It observed that there are areas of similarities as well as differences in the Nietzschean perspectivism and Asouzuan complementarism and that these areas of commonality as well as differences can furnish us with the basis for cross-cultural philosophizing for a better, constructive and meaningful understanding of these thought systems in their respective philosophical and cultural traditions.

Certainly, this will expand the intellectual, cultural and conceptual horizons of both philosophical traditions, which would have been inconceivable without such cross-cultural engagement.

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