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On the Origin and Character of Human Values: A Complementary Reflection

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Abstract
In an earlier paper entitled "Human Values and their Foundations: Towards an Ethic of Living Right (EOUSLY)", I had advanced the view that "valuing" is an inevitable consequence of man's rationality. It is so intrinsic to man that just as one can say that man is a rational animal; it could be said that man is a valuing animal or that man is an "evaluating animal". His behaviour is grounded in valuation. Values are the basic and fundamental substructure in all matters of our choices, preferences and decision making. This is to say that valuing is an inherent component of human nature. That paper explored the various realms of values and their foundations. The present paper extends the analysis and seeks to unravel the origin and character of human values. The thesis advanced here is that, values being an inherent component of human nature, must derive from human interests, intentions, and appetites. Thus, the paper espouses and defends an axiological theory that tends to be subjectivist in orientation. However the paper takes a departure from strict subjectivism in its identification of self preservation as the fundamental driving force of the world and also a sense of "common good" which derives from the regulation of self interest, as the basis for the construction of structures to sustain human values, intrinsically designed to fulfill man's goal of individual and collective preservation and survival. These structures constitute the vehicles which stimulates us to desire and seek objects (physical or abstract) as possessing of value. The point of the paper is that there are subjective and objective elements of value and valuation. This way the paper seeks to reconcile subjectivism and objectivism in Axiological inquiry. The methodology adopted in the paper is expository and analytic, in line with the principles, assumptions and praxis of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy [1]and its method of complementary reflection[2].
Keywords: Human values, Human desires, Self preservation, subjectivism, objectivism, complementary reflection, *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy common good.

1 Introduction

Broadly speaking there are, in Axiology, two general types of axiological systems or theories which seek to address the main challenge of Axiology. These are objectivism and subjectivism. The main challenge of Axiology – the study of value – is the question: Do objects possess value because we desire them, or do we desire them because they possess value? Value is "objective" if it is independent of a subject or a valuating consciousness; conversely value is "subjective" if it owes its existence, its sense, or its validity, to the reactions of the subject who does the valuating or evaluation, dependent upon his physiological or psychological disposition.

The contention between the objectivists and the subjectivists arises from the obvious fact of our experiences that values do not exist by themselves, but depend, rather, upon some value carrier or support, which is generally of corporeal substance. Thus, beauty, for example, does not exist by itself, floating as it were in space or in mid-air, but is instead, embodied in some physical object: a human body, a piece of clothing a work of art, a stone, etc. Similarly, honesty, charity, honour, intimacy as values, do not have concrete existence by themselves, until we recognize these in specific actions, situations or relations. This is to say that values are enfolded in material objects, actions, situations or relations, that is, within depositories or carriers. The need for a depository in which to reside lends a peculiar character to value, which condemns it to a somewhat "parasitical"existence.

In my earlier essay, "Human Values and their Foundations: Towards an Ethic of Living Right (EOUSLY)" I stated that *"...value is a property of objects, including physical objects as well as abstract objects (e.g. actions, situations or relations), representing their degree of importance or worth."* (Edet, 2014, p.128). What this suggests is that for us to talk of values, it must be recognized by a subject who considers it important or worthy. This seems to reduce values to the status of things. But the question we would then need to address must be: what kinds of concept are, most characteristically "properties" or "qualities"? After this, we shall have to ask whether the chief logical characteristics of properties or qualities are shared by values. We said that values do not exist for themselves, at least in this world; they need a carrier of value within which to reside. Therefore, they appear to us as mere properties or qualities of these value carriers: beauty of a picture; the quality of a book, utility of a tool, etc. Also consider the value of family intimacy expressed in the actions or situations of bedtime story-reading or dinner family conversation; or the value of honesty expressed in the action of a cab driver who returns a bag of money he discovers in his taxi.

In the objects mentioned above, there are some qualities which seem essential to the very existence of

the object: the solidity and weight of the work of art or book, for instance, or the length of the tool, for another. None of these objects could exist if any of these qualities were missing. John Locke calls such properties of objects, *primary qualities* (See Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*). These qualities or properties inhere in the external object itself. They are the genuine and objective properties or qualities of that object-the basic qualities or properties without, which objects could not exist.

Besides these *primary qualities*, there are *secondary qualities* or sensible qualities, such as colour, smell, taste, sound, etc which can be distinguished from the *primary qualities*. These *secondary qualities* indicate that objects have the power to produce subjective experiences in us. Of course, the secondary qualities resemble the primary qualities, since they form part of the essence of the object, but we have to make the distinction between *primary* and *secondary qualities*, because a clear-headed reflection on common experience demands it. For example, we may have different opinions about the height or length of a particular object, but we can check our opinions against the objective properties of the object itself.

However, when I say the tea is too bitter and you experience it as sweet, we realize the same tea can affect our palates in different ways. Similarly an orange is always spherical and not cubic no matter what the viewing conditions may be. But as any artist knows, the colour of the orange will change when viewed in sunlight or shadow, with an incandescent or fluorescent lamp. The shape remains stable and the colour changes because shape is a *primary quality* and colour is a *secondary quality*.

The twanging of the guitar string (a primary quality) produces motion in the air, which produces the sensation of sound in our ears (a secondary quality). The vibrating string is not melodious or noisome; it is just a physical object in motion. But we may experience the effect of this motion as melodious or noisome music. The same fire can cause the sensation of warmth or pain in us. Just as we would say the pain is in us and not in the fire, so we should understand that the warmth is a sensation in us produced by the *primary qualities* in the fire.

This discussion of primary and secondary qualities provokes the question of what characteristic of properties or qualities are shared by values. Are they primary or secondary properties of objects, actions, situations or relations? We must note that whether colour for example, be a subjective impression or whether it be located in the object, it is evident that there can be no iron or cloth or paper or marble which does not possess colour. The colour belongs equally to the reality of the object, to its very being. On the other hand, beauty, elegance or utility are not necessarily part of the essence of the object, since things which do not contain these values can exist. Likewise, not every situation of family dinner conversation necessarily reflects intimacy or the gesture of the cab driver mentioned earlier necessarily suggest honesty. We must then rethink the character of values.

An ingenious application of the law of Excluded Middle suggests that values must be either objective or subjective "in the object" or "in the subject." One may then conclude that value, must really be either a property or quality of the object or a response of the subject. In this paper I shall rather apply the principles of complementary reflection in view of reconciling subjectivism and objectivism in Axiological inquiry. This is to say that the confusion between the objectivists and the subjectivist may be the result of a tension between the object and the subject, which presents a subjective as well as an objective aspect of values, deceiving those who stake their all on only one of these position. In my view objectivism and subjectivism in axiological inquiry ought to complement each other.

2. The Character of Values

In my essay on "Human Values and Their Foundations: Towards an Ethic of Living Right (EOUSLY)," I noted that *"...values are a conglomerate or set of institutional ideals cherished and considered desirable either by an individual or by a group of people*" (Edet, 2014, p. 130). As institutional ideals values are in some sense facts. It is a fact, for instance, that men being what they are, food has value for them. It is a fact that for Christians love itself has value or is a value. These statements are all *in some* sense true statements of fact. But I am not here reducing values to the status of things. No one has tried to do that. But I have noted that values have often been confused with the material objects or actions, situations or relations which enfold or express them, that is, with their depositories or carriers. The "parasitical" character of value which lends it a peculiar character cannot justify the confusion between the supporter and that which is supported.

To avoid this confusion it is pertinent to make some important preliminary distinctions. First we must distinguish between the thing that is valued, and the activity of valuing it, between a drink, or the act of drinking – a – drink, and the enjoying of drinking –a-drink; between the beloved and the act of cherishing her; between loving and the act of valuing love itself. The point of the subjectivist can be made hereby: we cannot speak of values without considering actual or possible valuations. Infact, what sense would values have if they could completely escape man's appreciation? How would we know that such values exist, if they were forced to sustain themselves outside the sphere of human valuation? In this respect, subjectivism seems to be on firm ground; value cannot be free from valuation?

But then, the question still lingers, what is the character of values? If they are neither *primary or*

secondary qualities of objects (physical or abstract), what is their nature or character? In my earlier essay I alluded to the point that "value" can be characterized as something like the platonic *form*; some kind of principle, or criterion, which allows us to evaluate particular occurrences, objects, qualities, actions, events, relations or situations – and, consequently, to ascribe to them value, positive or negative. (Edet, 2014; p. 129). I called this *axiological* value. This is similar to Nicolai Hartmann's contention that values are essences, Platonic ideas.

However Risieri Frondizi has argued in his book *What Is Value? An introduction to Axiology* that there is an error committed in considering values as essences. According to Frondizi, *"The error committed in thus merging values with essences is due in part to the confusion between unreality –a peculiar sign of value and ideality which characterizes essences"*. (Frondizi, 1963, p. 4).

Frondizi also dismisses the characterization of values as "tertiary qualities" for the purpose of distinguishing them from primary and secondary qualities. According to the author, the designation of values as "tertiary qualities" is found wanting because *"values are not a third kind of quality in accord with the criterion of common classification, but rather, a new category, in accord with a different criterion which is also new."* (Frondizi, 1963; p.6).

Frondizi posits that values are "unreal qualities." This characterization of values as "unreal qualities" compels my rethink of the character of values. I am inclined to go with Frondizi. Values may not be ideal. Furthermore, as we have seen, they do not add reality or substance to objects. Indeed they only add value to objects. Thus values are not real qualities. They are neither *primary, secondary* or *tertiary* qualities. They are really, "unreal qualities."

Value is synonymous with good. Note my reference in the earlier paper to Andrew Uduigwomen's position that *"the question of value revolves around what a person or society conceives as being good..."* (Uduigwomen, 2009, p.32). This position is, I noted, affirmed by Theophilus Okere and William Frankena. Okere says that *"values are what is regarded as good..."* (Okere, 1978, p.6) and Frankena says that values are what a man or woman have or think to be good. Thus what can be maintained then is that values are not things, nor elements of things, but properties, qualities which certain objects, actions, situations or relations called "good" possess.

Good or goods are equal to valuable things or actions, that is, to things plus the value they carry. Thus a piece of canvas is a mere thing; the hand of the painter or artist adds beauty to it after a deft splattering of paint, and the mere thing is transformed into a beautiful work of art, into something "good" or valuable. The canvas continues to preserve all the characteristics of mere canvas – its solidity, its weight, etc; nevertheless, something has been added which has changed mere canvas into a work of art. What has been added to it is an aesthetic value; an axiological value - Beauty. From the foregoing analysis, I affirm with Frondizi that *"values are therefore, neither things nor experiences, nor essences, they are values"* (Frondizi, 1963, p.5)

I have alluded earlier to the fact that value cannot be free from valuation, and we put the subjectivist on firm ground. But the objectivist can respond to this. Indeed, the objectivist will maintain, valuation is subjective, but valuation and value can be distinguished. The objectivist may argue that value is prior to valuation. If there were no values, what would we evaluate? But subjectivism appears to stand on higher ground as experience tells us that if values were objective, then individuals would have come to unanimity concerning such values. But history reveals to us a continual disagreement on human values as individuals have their tastes and preferences and hold on to these very strongly.

But when we also consider that there are times when it appears evident to us that values are objective realities to which we should submit, since they possess an overpowering force which brushes aside our preferences and overcomes our will, such times as when we make effort to create a work of art – a painting, a poem, a novel – only to give up immediately when faced by the evidence of failure, upon noticing that beauty is lacking in our creation or that it is not good enough. Of course, if values were to depend on the psychological disposition of the subject, he would project beauty over what he had created, and he would subsequently find that which he had superimposed. It is the same situation when we appraise positively objects or actions which we do not like, or when we notice the scant value possessed by that which arouses us because of some purely personal reasons. This scenario suggests to me that there is a nexus between the subjective element and the objective element of value and valuation, and that these are not exclusive.

In my view, an approach to resolving the knotty problem would be to consider a distinction between external objects or actions valued and one's own activity valued. In the case of drinking, for example, the object is the actual liquid; the activity is what we do with the liquid, namely, drinking. Strictly, what we value is drinking –a-drink. Both drink and drinking are distinct from the valuing or enjoying. In this case then, it is clear that what we value or enjoy is a complex, made up of certain objective sensory characters (coolness, bitterness, aroma) and a certain personal physiological or psychological activity (muscular). Thus there is a combination of subjective and objective elements in the valuing of drinking-a-drink.

Similarly, in the case of the beloved also we must distinguish the object (a physical and mental "person"), what we do with the object (activities physical and mental), and the act of valuing or enjoying. Here

again, we value or enjoy both the object and our activity. Once more we exercise both subjective and objective elements in valuing the beloved.

In considering the examples above, another interesting perspective of the character of values is revealed. It is the perspective of values as ends, or values as means. In the case of the drink, we may incline to say that we value the object *merely* as a *means* for the activity. In the case of the beloved, some would probably insist that they valued her mainly for her own sake and not merely as a means. They might say that they appreciate her intrinsic excellence. This distinction between *ends* and *means* is a significant pointer to another aspect of the character of values; some things are valued for their own sake and some things are valued only as instruments for the attainment of other things. We may call things that are valued for their own sake "intrinsically good" and things that are valued only as means "instrumentally good."

Things that we originally valued only as means may come to be valued as ends. Money, or rather the activity of acquiring it, which for most of us is a means, becomes for the miser an end. On the other hand, things that we formally valued as ends may come to be discarded, or sought only as means. Of course we out grow our childish tastes.

The questions that can be raised consequently is, are there any things, or is there any one kind of thing, which we cannot but value intrinsically? This is the question of ultimate value, to which many answers have been given: pleasure; greatest happiness for the greatest number, serenity; virtue, freedom, etc. (I shall address this question in a separate paper).

We have laboured to argue and establish the point that there are subjective and objective elements of value and valuation; and that subjectivism and objectivism in Axiological inquiry are not exclusive, but rather complementary and reconcilable. In my opinion it needs no gainsaying, that value is of a subjective nature. For what aesthetic value would a painting have if men did not have eyes? And what sense would there be in talking about the aesthetic value of music if God had condemned humanity to eternal deafness? The silence of the desert lacks value until the moment when the wandering traveller finds it desolate and terrifying; likewise is the example of the waterfall until human sensitivity finds it sublime. In the final analysis, I posit that the origin of our values is our interests, intentions, and appetites. But again we must ask ourselves why it is that man cannot fail to recognize value, objectively, once he is confronted thereby? What is it about objects themselves which are capable of calling forth within us the desire which makes the object valuable? It does appear that there is some aspect of human subjectivity that gives value its objective force – our concern in the following sections.

3. The Origin of Value – The Subjectivist Doctrines

I maintain that values derive from human intentions, appetites and interests. This is clearly an affirmation of subjectivism. The subjectivist thesis had been long inaugurated in Axiology. Risieri Frondizi says that "*Alexius Von Meinong (1853 – 1921) was the first to state, in systematic form, the subjectivist interpretation of values, in his work entitled Psychological-ethical inquiry into a Theory of Value"* (Frondizi, 1963. P. 31). But it must be noted that there were statements of a subjectivist type which antedate Meinong. Benedict Spinoza, for example, wrote in his *Ethics*.

> *From what has been said it is plain, therefore, that we neither strive for, wish, seek, nor desire anything because we think it to be good, but on the contrary, we adjudge a thing to be good because we strive for, work, seek, or desire it* (Spinoza, 1966; P.46).

Meinong and others took it up from there.

Meinong sought the key to the problem of values in the domain of psychology, and postulated that values are rooted in our emotional life. He formulated his thesis thus: *"something has value when it pleases us, and to the extent to which it pleases us."* Christian von Ehrenfels (1850-1932) a friend and follower of Meinong was subsequently to criticize this thesis. Ehrenfels whilst not deviating from the subjectivist inclination of Meinong argued that value is really a subjective state of an emotional nature, but reference to the object is maintained by means of existential judgment. Meinong writes that *"an object has value insofar as it possesses the capacity for furnishing an effective basis for a value sentiment "*(Quoted in Frondizi, 1963; p. 36).

For Ehrenfels, the weakness of Meinongs thesis is that it suggests that if an object is valuable when it is capable of producing in us a feeling of pleasure, then only existing things will be valuable. But according to Ehrenfels, the truth is that we also value what does not exist; perfect justice, the moral good which is never realized. For this reason, Ehrenfels doesn't think that the basis of values can be found in the sensation of pleasure, but rather, one must look for it in the realm of appetite or desire. Things which we desire or covet are valuable, and they are so because we desire and covet them (Frondizi, 1963, pp 36-37).

The point of this polemic between Meinong and Ehrenfels is that there is a subjectivist shift of the basis or origin of values from pleasure to desire. The American Ralph Barton Perry (1876-1957) changed the subjectivist gear. In his monumental book *General Theory of Value,* he modifies the earlier subjectivist tradition and argues that an object acquires value when *interest* is imparted thereunto. Thus, he postulates interest as the basis of value. He formulated his thesis thus: *"that which is an object of interest is eo ipso invested with value.*

Any object whatsoever it be, acquires value whenever any interest, whatever it be, is taken in it" (Perry, 1950; P.115)

Subsequently in another work entitled *Realms of Value*, Perry affirmed his thesis that:

> *A thing whatever it may be, has value, or is valuable, in its original and generic sense, when it is an object of interest, no matter what it (the interest) may be. Or, that which is an object of interest is ipso facto valuable* (*Realms of Value*, 1954, p.3).

Thus with Perry, the concept of interest acquires singular importance in Axiology. For Perry "interest" expresses the complex attitude of every living being when we find ourselves in favour of or opposed to certain things. It embraces, therefore desire and aversion, preference and rejection, pleasure and displeasure and also includes the act, disposition or attitude in favour of or against something.

Another variant of subjectivism is expressed in the thesis of logical empiricism, logical positivism of the Vienna circle: that value judgments are neither true nor false because they do not affirm anything, but rather express the sentiments of the one who makes the judgment. The most influential members of this Vienna circle included Rudolf Carnap, Otto Neurath, Herbert Feigl, Friedrich Waismann and Kurt Godel. A.J. Ayer introduced logical positivism to England in his classic book *Language, Truth and Logic* and Hans Reichenbach led a similar group in Berlin. They maintain that Axiology especially with ethical and aesthetic judgments does not make factual claims capable of being verified and, therefore, they have no cognitive meaning. They merely have *emotive* meaning and should be best understood as verbal ways of expressing certain attitudes of approval or disapproval. For these people, when someone says, "you acted wrongly in stealing that money", this does not make a factual claim about stealing, because no sense data corresponds to the quality of "moral wrongness" or "value worthiness". Instead, when a person morally condemns an act of stealing, what they are actually doing is (1) stating a fact plus (2) expressing an emotion or attitude towards it.

We must note though that the conception of the logical positivists does not exactly coincide with the traditional subjectivist doctrines. Traditional subjectivism holds that he who states a value judgment asserts the existence of a definite state of mind; for example, his approval of the value in question. In that case his judgment will be true or false, since it may or may not be true that he experiences the state of mind which he asserts. For traditional subjectivism (and indeed with objectivism) value judgments are true or false. For the logical positivists (especially with Ayer) there is no such thing.

In *Language, Truth and Logic*, Ayer argues that we cannot dispute about axiological questions, for if a value judgment does not imply a proposition, there cannot be any axiological propositions which contradict each other. And he goes further: he asserts that we never argue about questions of value, but rather about questions of fact. Value judgments lack real meaning in that their truth or falsity cannot be determined since they do not affirm anything. Consequently, according to Ayer, the only thing which we can legitimately investigate about value judgments is what reactions they provoke or what kind of feeling they express. Ayer opines that both tasks belong to the field of psychology, not to ethics or axiology. In fact, ethics or axiology, as science or as branches of legitimate knowledge, has no possibility of existence. There is no way of determining the validity of any ethical or axiological system and consequently, it is nonsensical to ask whether it is true or false. For Ayer, the supposed ethical problems, when they have some sense, really belong to psychology and sociology (See Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic,* 1982).

Bertrand Russell with his "Scientific" attitude toward philosophy was also drawn close to logical empiricism. He also enunciated a subjectivist doctrine of values in various statements. In his book *Religion and Science*, he points out a connection between goodness and desire. He claims that "*it is obvious that the whole idea of the good and the bad has some connection with desire"* (Russell, p.231). In another work, he writes "*we call something "good" when we desire it"* (*An Outline of Philosophy*; p.242). And in *What I believe* he declares that it is "*our desires which confer value"* (What I Believe, p.17). This connection between what is good and what is desired forms the hypothesis of his entire axiological doctrine.

Thus we see here that values are reduced to psychological conditions – pleasure, desire, interest. Value is reduced to mere personal experience, a subjective psychological or physiological state. These psychological interpretations of value, of course are not mutually exclusive. But again, this doctrine cannot satisfy us completely because we do recognise that objects actions or situation somehow or somewhat possess qualities which are capable of calling forth within us our pleasure, desire or interest which makes the object, actions or situations valuable or somewhat posses qualities which are capable of calling forth within us our pleasure, desire or interest which makes the object, actions or situations valuable. I cannot unduly magnify the subjectivist thesis when it does appear that indeed we do not desire or find pleasure in objects, actions and situations out of sheer caprice or without reason, but because something resides within them which stimulates us to desire those objects, or actions or situations.

I used the example of the desert and the waterfall earlier. Why does the traveller find the desert desolate and terrifying and the waterfall sublime? Is it not because the desert possesses qualities different from those of the waterfall, and that in its presence, we cannot fail to react in a manner likewise different? Of course,

the desert would not be terrifying if there were not any men capable of being terrified, but we cannot deduce from this fact that we confer that attribute upon the desert when we become terrified. Parrots or cockroaches can inspire terror in a neurotic, yet this fact does not permit us to assert that parrots or cockroaches are terrifying. The point then is that no thing can be terrifying, beautiful, sublime, elegant if there is no subject to appraise or evaluate it, and it would still be correct to assert that if there were no values in the object, action or situation, what would we evaluate? Indeed we must distinguish between valuation and value. To confuse valuation with value is akin to confusing perception with the object perceived. Perception indubitably does not create the object, it grasps it. The same thing happens in the case of valuation.

In my view the way to resolve the problem lies in seeking or establishing a balance or really a complementation between the subjective and the objective elements of valuation and value. I shall adopt the insights of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy and its method of complementary reflection which is guided by the heuristic principle, stated as "Anything that exists serves a missing link of reality". This principle aims at providing the conditions for the reconciliation of conflicting positions without undue polarization. The principle provides the possibility to excavate the relevance of two, three and various conflicting propositions without rendering any of them useless. Thus I seek to reconcile subjectivism and objectivism in axiological inquiry, because the principle takes into account the fact that contrary views are not necessarily contradictory exclusive positions that can never be reconciled with each other.

Subjective Human Interest, Intentions and Appetites as the Origin of Valuation

Without being polaristic or rejectionist, an explanation of the origin of value from the perspective of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy will incorporate the insights suggested by Meinong (Pleasure), Ehrenfels (appetite or desire), Perry (interest) and by the objectivists – that value is independent of the valuating consciousness. This is because, based on the heuristic principle that "Anything that exists serves a missing link of reality" (the principle of harmonious complementation or integration), their propositions or postulations serve as *missing links,* and so cannot be out of place or be considered false or irrelevant.

I here argue in agreement with Perry, that *Human interest* is important in determining the origin of human values. Talking about interests, it is a most basic and fundamental assumption of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy that individually and collectively there are certain interests to be secured or established. No human action is devoid of any interest. Innocent Asouzu says that "*all human actions have interest guiding them"*. He says elsewhere that *"We are beings that live from our interests"* (Asouzu, 2004; pp 6 -7).

The urge to preserve our interests, individually and collectively is a fundamental attribute of our humanity. We are born into a system of interests and specific interest – relations, and in the course of our lives, we create and acquire more interests to become whom we are.

Ibuanyidanda philosophy postulates that all human interests are ambivalent and posses a double capacity at the same time. This situation is described technically as "the ambivalence of human existential interests". Asouzu has noted that,

> *Not all our interests are good just because we perceive them so. We can err even in the pursuance of those most basic interests we take for granted. This type of situation demonstrates that our interests are not as homogenous as we often assume. The issue of lack of homogeneity with regard to the character of our interests forms the central thesis concerning the ambivalence of human interests* (Asouzu, 2004, p.61).

Ibuanyidanda philosophy encourages a closer study of the nature of human interests from the perspective of their ambivalent constitution.

Ibuanyidanda philosophy postulates the thesis that our inability to recognize that all human existential situations are ambivalent is one of the most fundamental causes of social problems and tensions. It is this phenomenon of the ambivalence of human existential situations that holds individuals and societies to ransom because of its capacity to conceal its devastating effects. It is a situation where we insightfully but ignorantly choose or value those things that can even work against our most cherished interests.

What is the human most fundamental and cherished interest? It is self-preservation. This is the point where we must consider human desire and appetite (proposed by Ehrenfels and Russell) as the origin of value. Desire is backed by intention. An intention is a desire for a chosen goal. So, what may be the ultimate goal of most humans? In my insistent view, it is self preservation. It needs no gainsaying, the fact that one of the most important basic laws of nature is the law of self preservation. According to this law, living organisms would do everything possible to uphold those conditions that favour their continued existence.

Ibuanyidanda philosophy promotes this thesis that: *"the need to self-preservation is the primordial human interest around which human beings articulate their meaning. This motive drives the rules guiding human action either individually or collectively"* (Asouzu, 2004, p.52). The *Ibuanyidanda* system insists that our actions, in all existential situations, are driven by the natural law of self preservation. It is this law that gives meaning to all things that human beings seek to achieve and have achieved (Asouzu, 2004, p.53). We cannot

escape this "law" because the issue of self preservation is as universal as our interest are. Self preservation is the human most fundamental interest, the human ultimate intention.

A minority of humans may choose alternative goals, such as pleasure, pain, knowledge, beauty, compassion, justice, serenity, even annihilation, etc, but indubitably, the intention of most human's is self preservation in any of three ways viz: personal survival – the continuation or sustenance of one's body, mind and soul; genetic survival – the continuation or perpetuation of one's offspring; memetic survival-the continuation of one's memory creation. Thus appetites are developed. These appetites are desires arising from the human capacity for pleasure and pain, the capacity to choose, rightly or wrongly, prioritize and value. We can maintain then that valuing or valuation originates from the subjective human interest, intentions and appetites, which we have noted as ambivalent in character.

Also, related to the theme of human interests is the notion in *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy relating to the "common good". In this regard, another basic assumption of this philosophical system is that the "common good" is the authentic foundation of all human interests. The "common good" consists in the harmonization of our individual interests with that of others. This theme of the "common good" is very crucial for an adequate articulation of the origin and location of value, and especially in determining that aspect of human subjectivity that gives value its objective force.

The Sense of "Common Good" and the Objectivity of Values and Valuation

It is necessary to elucidate on this idea of the "common good" as the foundation of all human interests. Human beings have a natural propensity to perceive the inclination to self preservation and the pursuit of interest as good in itself. It is for this reason that all acts that are related to our inclination to preserve our interest first are considered within the framework of "the Good" or valuable. It was Aristotle who declared that "the good is that at which all things aims": Thus, anything that is good or has the semblance of goodness attract us naturally as an opportunity to preserve our selves (and we value it). In this circumstance we seek to acquire all good things for ourselves and for ourselves alone. It is for this reason also that we perceive our interests as intrinsically good, even when they are dubious.

Since we are inclined towards the good and since we fundamentally perceive our interests as good (and valuable), we seek to pursue those interests and take possession of them by recourse to those means we judge adequate and effective. We often fail to recognize that not all our interests are good just because we perceive them so. Thus in the process of pursuing our interests we can err and derail. It is important to note that the way we perceive our interests as individuals and as groups goes a long way in determining how we act towards these interests.

If a person defines his interest around his individual subjectivity, that is to say, with himself as measure, he is likely also to define the world in relation to himself alone and in terms of his needs and desires. At this point human interest easily emerge as self –interest, such that the fundamental drive to self -preservation easily becomes a threat and a burden to the larger society and our selves. The extent or degree to which a person seeks to define the world around his person is the degree also to which this person would perceive the world as means that must be used to achieve his ends. In such circumstance, the ego becomes an end in itself and every other thing serves it necessarily. This is a self- interest which culminates in egocentrism and insists on over – concentration on a person's interest alone.

There is another mode of human relationship to our interests. In this second mode, we seek to uphold our personal interest, knowing fully well that no human being acts against his interest and we recognize equally that every human being seeks to uphold his interest.. Thus we recognize the right of other individuals to pursue their interest since we devise strategies to achieve our personal interest. This is another form of self – interest, but in this regard, it may be understood as "enlightened self – interest" because it is geared toward the actualization of the interest of others as a necessary instrument towards the realization of my personal interest.

Enlightened self –interest is still egocentrism because in the final analysis the ego still stands at the centre and can dump the other as soon as it's interest are well served. Asouzu says that *"enlightened self – interest can easily turn to the euphemism for being cleverly egocentric"* (Asouzu, 2004, p.63). According to Asouzu, *"where this happens, the danger the ambivalence of our situation pose may not be evident to the actor immediately since this is concealed by his apparent commitment to the interest of others"* (Asouzu, 2004, p.63).

The moment we are not adequately aware of the ambivalence of our existential situation, the crisis of the self –interest arises as we then seek to manipulate situations to our advantages only and believe that this is the right thing to do. Asouzu describes this as "self –deceit" with its enormous consequences. According to Asouzu,

> *This self –deceit subsists in the fact that, we fail to realize that other persons have right too, which they equally always seek to preserve first. That is to say, we over look the fact that they, also, have the same propensities to seek their interest first and consider this the wisest thing to do. Where we elevate this manner of approach to an accepted general rule, it easily leads to survival of the fittest.* (Asouzu 2014,

p.36).

In such situation as Asouzu presents above, nobody succeeds, as all stand to lose since each person would live in perpetual fear of the other whose action becomes dangerously unpredictable. What this shows is that if we seek to pursue our private interests such that we directly or indirectly negate those of others, we thereby also create the condition that would negate our own interest. In such a case, we see that our actions become necessary conditions towards their own self negation. It is a paradox of human existence. Consequently, *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy recommends aspiration to the common good as the foundation of all interests. The common good basically consists in the harmonization of our individual interests with that of others.

Again we must note that in the system of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy the common good can be understood in two ways. First, the term "common good" refers to the ultimate authenticating anthropological basic constant of human life. It is that ultimate foundation that gives legitimacy to all human actions (Asouzu, 2014, p.382). Secondly, the "common good" has a fundamental relational dimension and a character of complementary imperative. It is this relational dimension that can help us understand the relevance of the common good in existential situations of life. And it is the concept of "reciprocity" that offers us the framework for explicating the idea of the "common good" in its relational, complementary, comprehensive and future oriented manner.

As human beings who share the world with others, other persons and things, we are inescapably and inevitably joined in a reciprocal interactive relationship. Reciprocity is the disposition through which discrete and distinct entities can be brought in relationship to each other, such that each, more or less, recognize the necessity of the mutual dependence that is fundamental for the ordered execution of their functions. Reciprocity derives from the natural complementary systemic relationship existing between units. All partners in a reciprocal relationship are necessariy bound complementarily.

Asouzu posits that *"human existence, in whatever form we conceive it, makes meaning only when viewed as a system typical act"* (Asouzu, 2014, p.383). I agree that human existence is a system. Now, when we consider that a given system upholds its nature only on the condition that all its parts reciprocate their functions, we will come to realize that human existence and survival depends on our ability to maintain a qualitatively high reciprocal relationship. What this means is that whenever we find ourselves within a universe of discourse, we stay in an inescapably reciprocal relationship to each other. This is the only condition for each single unit to uphold its existence. In other words , this is to say that a human society has the capacity to maintain itself and attain its objectives if and only if the different components of which it is constituted function in a genuine reciprocal relationship and understand their action as such.

Thus the realization of our interests and intentions, and the satisfaction of our appetites, as human beings, in a genuine reciprocal relationship, is characterized by give and take in mutual complementary dependence and bonding. And in any such complementary relationship, a profound and well developed sense of common good as the authentic foundation of all interests and as the vehicle for the harmonization of individual interests, is essential towards upholding even one's autonomy and preventing relapse into the destructive tendency of self-interest. The consequence of this realization is the establishment of structures to sustain human goods or human values, which are intrinsically designed to fulfil the human ultimate goal of individual and collective preservation and survival.

In this light, the "common good" is in reference to the *"authenticating foundation of interpersonal relationship in society, expressible in all those socio-empirical goods and services we own in common whose upkeep is necessary for well-coordinated and contented existence"* (Asouzu, 2004, p.380). In this regard, our common goods include such resources as space, air, water, sunshine, forest, land, the earth, natural resources, our environment and so on. Others include natural heritages, such as language and parentage. In come cases, common goods can take the form of non-natural objects to include infrastructures and institutions such as roads, schools, public libraries, hospitals, post offices, telephone installations, electricity supply facilities, water supply facilities, cultural heritages and so on. But most crucial is the "common good" of VALUES, valuation being an inevitable consequence of man's rationality.

Asouzu says that we designate these as common goods because "*within a given framework of action and meaning, each individual needs the common goods for the ordered and effective execution of his function as a human being; but he has no exclusive claims to it beyond what is his or her due"* (Asouzu, 2004; p.380). According to Asouzu,

> *We own these resources and amenities collectively and they can help us add more quality and meaning to our individual existences. As common goods, we are challenged to uphold and preserve theme as a common legacy. If we are successful, they can be a cause of our joy and in this case, we sense the urge within us, which challenges us to keep them as something good, to hold firmly to them now and in all future cases. This challenge is possible primarily as a mutual experience.*

In the final analysis *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy promotes the idea of the common good as the common source of

collective legitimization which transcends the dictates of the ego, and as a dimension of the ultimate foundation of our being, the idea of common good always connotes mutual relationship. Of course, implicit in the collective legitimization which observance of the common good ensures is a dimension of common ownership that takes account and makes provision for the needs of others. The idea of common good thus negates the idea of absolute possessiveness and exclusiveness. The common good is the binding force of community existence; the force which propels human life with the we-consciousness.

What I have done in this paper is to interpret the sense of the "common good" as the force which is the basis for the construction of structures to sustain human values which are intrinsically designed to fulfil the ultimate intention of individual and collective preservation and survival. Humans, being interest-pursuing beings recognize the need for the regulation of individual self-interest and thus set up structures which constitute the vehicles which stimulate us to desire and seek certain objects, situations, actions or relationships as being valuable in view of sustaining common good. In my earlier paper "*Human Values and Their Foundations: Towards An Ethic of Living Right (EOUSLY)*. I identified some of these structures and value sources (I referred to them as realms of values) to include religion and the fear and worship of God, formal institutions (such as schools, the family, organizations), social conventions, customs, traditions, norms, social standard practices, social class, constitutionalism and of course human rationality itself. (Edet, 2014; pp 128 – 134). These social forces drive the objectivity of values and compel us in various situations to develop appetites or desires which make us consider objects or actions or situations of value as valuable. In that paper I advanced the position that,

> *...human values are intrinsically designed to fulfil man's goal of individual and collective preservation and survival and consequently that the human tendencies to pursue virtues such as peace, justice, truthfulness, friendships, honesty, charity, solidarity, care, mutual cooperation are naturally embraced to ensure the wellbeing and survival of humankind* (Edet, 2014; p132).

Furthermore, the point was made that

> *...virtues such as truth, respect for the sanctity of human life, justice, duty, loyalty, responsibility, peace, friendship, love, benevolence, integrity, gratitude, faithfulness, promise keeping, etc are part and parcel of our human identity toward which societies and people strive or evolve. We believe, for example that fellow-feeling, practicing care, generosity, seeking peace of mind, keeping promises, adhering to sincerity, truthfulness, desiring peace are intrinsic human values found among all human beings, in all societies and at all times* (Edet, 2014; p.132).

These values originate or are generated in human minds by the social forces I have identified – religion and the fear and worship of God, formal institutions (Schools, the family, organizations). Social conventions, customs, traditions, norms and standard practices of the society, social class, constitutionalism, human rationality etc. These are the social determinants of value which confer objectivity on values.

I made the point in the earlier paper that no one would believe that any human society can survive long, if a majority or all of its members embrace the deviant route. Consider if we all choose to live on the principles of egotism, selfishness, injustice, faithlessness, wickedness, immorality, hate, violence, chaos, war, conflict and such other negative tendencies. Consequently I posited that:

> *...the infinite superiority of humans over animals lies in the human capacity to adopt the strategy of co-operation, social solidarity and mutual dependence for the goal of preservation and survival. Therefore, the human tendencies to pursue virtues such as peace, love, care, justice, truthfulness, integrity, friendliness, sincerity, beauty, honesty etc are naturally embraced to ensure the wellbeing and survival of humankind* (Edet, 2014, p.130).

The point this paper labours to make ultimately is that human subjectivity constructs objective forces or structures and in turn these structures compel valuational subjective activity.

6. Conclusion

This paper adopts the insights of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy and its method of complementary reflection which is guided by the heuristic principle, stated as "Anything that exists serves a missing link of reality" to show that subjectivism and objectivism in axiological inquiry are reconciliable, and not necessarily contradictory or mutually exclusive positions. The paper succeeds to establish the point that there are subjective and objective elements of value and valuation. The thesis advanced is that, values being an inherent component of human nature, valuation comes naturally and originates from human interests, intentions and appetites. Self preservation which is the fundamental driving force of the world is moderated by a sense of "common good" which compels the construction of social structures to sustain human values, intrinsically designed to fulfil man's intention or goal of individual and collective preservation and survival. These social structures constitute the vehicles which stimulate us to desire and seek objects, actions, situations and relations as possessing of value. These social determinants of values confer objectivity on values. This way complementary reflection of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy reveals a harmonizing, synthesizing, or integrative approach to axiological inquiry.

Explanatory Notes

[1]*Ibuanyidanda* philosophy is a contemporary methodological philosophical trend popularised by Professor Innocent Asouzu of the University of Calabar, Nigeria which rejects a one-sided, fragmented, exclusivisit, polarizing or bifurcative approach to explaining human interests and concerns, but rather projects a complementary, comprehensive, wholesome or inclusive approach which seeks to harmonize seemingly diverse or opposing units, segments, fragments and variables in any given system by insisting on their possibility of mutual co-existence. It is a philosophy of harmony or complementation.

[2]Complementary reflection is the method of *Ibuanyidanda* philosophy. It compels a frame of mind, a mindset or disposition which considers reality in the Universality, totality, wholeness, comprehensiveness and future relatedness of their composition. As a methodology of explanation in philosophical inquiry, complementary reflection recommends a complementary, comprehensive mode of explanation which takes into consideration all actors and factors, and combines all related and often unrelated aspects that make up the reality to be explained. Complementary reflection is basically about viewing isolated units of reality, not as fragments, but as complements, in view of harmonizing fragmented world immanent historical experiences in a manner that conveys authenticity to them.

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