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CONTENTS

1.	Prudence as Basis for Economic Excellence and National Development: The Aristotelian Paradigm Maraizu Elechi, Ph.D & Ihejirika Cardinal, Ph.D	- - - 1-9
2.	Religious Scepticism and the Positivists' Categorical Mistake: An Epistemological Response Anthony Raphael Etuk-	- - - 10-22
3.	Economic Factor as the Central Motive of British Imperialism in Africa 1800-1900: The Nigerian Experience Sandy Ojang Onor, Ph.D	- - - 23-31
4.	Educational Significance of an Algebraic Function for the Permutation of Truth Table Columns Etorobong Godwin Akpan & ThankGod Bekweri Amadi	- - - 32-38
5.	The Morality of Xenotransplantation Procedure: A Case for Animals P. B. Bisong, Ph.D & Eric Besong	- - - 39-50
6.	'Moral Dualism in Niccolo Machiavellis' <i>The Prince</i> : A Critical Analysis Anthony Nwaigbo	- - - 51-59
7.	Postmodernism, Phenomenology and Afriphenomenology Diana-Abasi Ibanga Francis	- - - 60-72
8.	Heidegger and Gadamer on Hermeneutics: A Comparative Study Peter Alawa, Ph.D	- - - 73-81
9.	The African Novel and the City: A Reading of Zaynab Alkali's <i>The Initiates</i> Ekpenyong Tete Ekpe	- - - 82-87
10.	Epistemology and Education: Locating a Cynosure and Creating a Nexus for Authentic National Development Abel Idagu Ushie & Abanda John Uket	- - - 88-96
11.	"Whistle-blowing" and the Quandary of Policy Implementation in Nigeria Thomas Alama Etalong & Gloria Enechojo Williams	- - - 97-107
12.	John Rawls' Original Position: A Model for Socio-Political Retooling of Nigeria Agha Eresia-Eke, Ph.D	- - - 108-118

POSTMODERNISM, PHENOMENOLOGY AND AFRIPHENOMENOLOGY

By

Diana-Abasi Ibanga Francis

Abstract

In this paper, I aimed to study the relationship between postmodernism and phenomenology. In the study, I established that postmodernism and phenomenology bear similar ontological marking, which base their concepts and methodologies on an individualistic framework. On the basis of such ontological framework, phenomenology, in particular, postulates a method of studying phenomena, which involves individuating and isolating the phenomena from horizon and holding them as separate individual entities. The purpose is to enable the phenomenon or object to stand out and be seen clearly as it is in itself. In this way, it is expected that the true essence of the object will be visible and projected. I have found this conceptual framework inadequate in the study of phenomena and grasping of their true essences and meanings. I argue that bracketing off the horizon in order that the object may clearly stand out will transform the object into another object different from its original form. To solve this observed problem, I introduced the concept of "afriphenomenology", which is a phenomenological theory and methodology that is based on African ontology. Afriphenomenology, basing its premises on African ontological experience, holds that objects and phenomena are interconnected, interrelated, interdependent and complementary. For this reason, when phenomena or objects appear they do so as cohort, cluster, correlative and interconnective entities or events rather than as individuated and unrelated realities. Therefore, to grasp the true essence and meaning of an object or a phenomenon will involve studying the object or phenomenon in relations with the correlative objects and phenomena. Citing example of the events that led to the discovery of the planet Neptune, I show how afriphenomenology can help us discover new information about objects and phenomena.

Keywords: Postmodernism, Phenomenology, Afriphenomenology, African Ontology.

Introduction

In the 20th century there was a new turn in thinking. The new thinking was prominent in the arts, architecture, and philosophy; and it marked a radical departure from modernism. Postmodernism sought to displace traditional bases of norms, values, benefits, and desires; by questioning, albeit radically, and rejecting the veracity of their structural and conceptual foundations. For this reason, postmodernism was described as a protest movement. Since it was basically cultured towards upturning modernist thinking pattern, its ventures were dubbed "anti", i.e., anti-this or anti-that. Around the same time postmodernism was buzzing, a philosophical orientation called phenomenology was also engaging discourses in philosophy and science. Phenomenology bears similar character as postmodernism in that it rejected one-dimensional explanation of reality, revolted against repression

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of "multi-ism" and encourage non-dogmatic style of thinking and experiencing. Jim Unah and Chris Osegenwune hold that postmodernism and phenomenology have certain linkage in each other in terms of their advocacy of facile eclecticism and rejection of objectivism that characterized modern thought (153). Firstly, this paper examines the (possible) linkage between postmodernism and phenomenology. It does this by examining their characteristics, vocabularies, methodologies, claims, and applications. Secondly, the paper introduces the concept of "afriphenomenology" to make for the inadequacy observed in phenomenology.

Postmodernism: Conceptual Clarification

The word postmodernism is derived from two words "post" which means 'after' and "modernism" which refers to a philosophical orientation that characterized industrial Europe known for its rejection of tradition and determinism. Modernism is derived from the Latin word *modo*, meaning "just now, this moment". Specifically, the prefix "post" as used in defining postmodernism is juxtaposed after the Greek word *ana*, meaning "back again" not simply in relation to time sequence. Eva Brann avers that the use of the word or concept 'postmodern' is intended to mean that "the future comes 'after' the 'just now' in the sense that such a work is not composed in accordance with any previous universal values" (5). This implies that postmodernism is held to mean being determined by no antecedently present conditions, that is to say, getting out of box. Postmodernism means going beyond the present forms and narratives in order to escape the determinateness of the antecedently present thereby creating new forms and narratives. This means that postmodernism is historical, non-dogmatic and normative. Dewan Hossain and Shariful Karim maintain that "postmodernism also involves a preoccupation that there is nothing absolute or unified sense behind reality" (173). By its orientation and aims, it is subjective and contextual. Unah and Osegenwune attempt a definition of postmodernism thus:

Post-modernism thrives on the assumption that there is an "essential indeterminacy of human experiencing"; that man is a constantly moving subjectivity; that ways of knowing are inherently culture-bound and incomplete representation of a more complex reality; and that the search for a "God's eye perspective", especially in our ways of philosophizing is an exercise in futility. (81)

Unah and Osegenwune further argue that postmodernism is primarily a rejection of Greek traditional metaphysics and epistemology which is embedded in rigidity, monism, and absolutism; rather what it requires is "a metaphysics of pluralism and fluidity, and our theory of knowledge should become that of indeterminacy and immanence (160). Postmodernism is also associated with poststructuralism, relativism and deconstructionism. Recently, Unah has associated postmodernism with existential phenomenology.

But it is worthy of note that some scholars regard postmodernism as "not a phase beyond modernity but represents the most advance, and possibly final, stage of modernity" (Delanty, 131). However, Lemert has insisted that "postmodernism has something to do with the breaking apart of modernism"; and that postmodernism emphasizes that "there is a better world than the modern one" (21, 22). Terry Barrett holds that "postmodernism does not merely chronologically follow modernism, its reacts against modernism, and might better be called anti-modernism" (17).

Historical Evolution of Postmodernism

The term, postmodern, can be traced back to literature that appeared around 1870s and 1920s. The French philosopher, Jean-Francois Lyotard, however, was the first to use the term "postmodernism" in describing what he called "post-modern condition" – a situation in which technological and economic forces changed the landscape of thought in a modern West, whereby structuralism and formalism were transcended for the purpose of recognizing "differends" (difference) and "justice of multiplicities" (that is, liberal pluralism). In grafting history of postmodernism, scholars sometimes find themselves in exasperating situations that are confusing. This is so because postmodernism can be presented, though incoherently, as movement or thought system. Unah and Osegenwune stated that postmodernism has been associated with the avant-gardism of the arts in the 1950s and 1960s that attracted intellectual attention in the 1970s and thereafter (155). In other words, what was regarded as "postmodern" was non-representational activities in arts, literature, and architecture, etc. It aimed to bring down the walls of rationalistic liberal humanism through non-objectifying and non-impositional representation of reality. Postmodern traditions in the various areas of arts were therefore viewed as oppository, anti-establishment, protest form – hence, it contemplation as a (social or political) movement rather than a philosophical system. By presenting reality in non-objectifying manner, postmodernism attempted to decisively break with the straight-jacketedness of the Enlightenment tradition that absolutizes reality. This efforts were seen in the works of Charles Olson, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Irving Howe, William Spaws, and perhaps, Jurgen Habermas. But of all early postmodernists, Lyotard actually stood out.

In the works of these scholars, modern thought and metaphysics was called into question. The objectifying and absolutizing of the real, and straight-jacketed of same, was re-thought in the updatedness Kant and Marx following Darwin's thesis of evolution. The postmodernist expressed loss of faith in transcendent truth and totalized reality. It was on the basis of this that Lyotard could call for "justice of multiplicities" and Harbermas could offer profound analytic-criticism of the regime of rationalism which dominated modern thought. From here the vocabulary of postmodernism was developed. The landscape of postmodernist vocabulary comprises expressions that mark a change or departure from the modernist epistemology which informed the authoritarianism of the old controlling humanism (Unah & Osegenwune, 160). This was manifest in the language and attitudes that protested against excessive formalism and representationalism; rather it seeks to decentre reflexivity by resisting the temptation of being determined by external influence. This implies a demand for continual innovation and hybridity (Bertens, 62). It stresses the pluralism of multicultural orientation in our ways of knowing and doing. As Unah and Osegenwune note, "postmodernism is primarily and mainly a rejection of the old Greek metaphysics and epistemology and the world outlook that they have helped to fashion" (161). It was for this reason that the terms anti-form and anti-representation entered into the vocabulary of postmodernism. The postmodernist desire for freedom of thought, dissensus, localizing, and multifarious representation of form also fostered multiculturalism as a vocabulary of postmodernism. Feminism also entered into the vocabulary of postmodernism due to the postmodern methodology of deconstruction which informed discussion on role reversal and displacement of hierarchicization. This was featured eminently in the works of Sandra Harding and Patti Luther. Postcolonial epistemology also found its way into the vocabulary of postmodernism with its anti-capitalist, anti-western modernism and

formalism informed by the postmodernist methodology of deconstruction which bring into fray displacement of western-centred hierarchization and role change. Generally, old postmodernism takes the form of "anti" but Unah & Osegenwune have argued that new postmodernism should rather take the form of "multi", to reflect its innovative, dissensus, decentred, and pluralistic nature (165).

General Overview of Phenomenology

Unah and Osegenwune argue that phenomenology is not a homogenous school of philosophy but a "label of revolt" against traditional philosophy (153). They maintain that, like postmodernism, phenomenology is a cacophony of doctrines for anarchic individualism, responsibility and selfhood. Phenomenology is philosophical doctrine originally identified with scientific philosophy of Edmund Husserl. But it is with Martin Heidegger that phenomenology seems to have had the greatest transformation, in terms of its application to the discourse on being as well as solving of practical everyday problem. In terms of African philosophical literature, Jim I. Unah has stood out as a lighthouse of applied phenomenology.

What is phenomenology? The term "phenomenology" is derived from two Greek words – "phainomenon" which means "thing-in-itself" or "to show itself", and "logos" which means study or theory. Therefore, phenomenology implies the study of what shows itself or how a thing shows itself. Husserl and Heidegger's usage of the term 'phenomenology' actually implied "to the things themselves" (Husserl, 37; Heidegger, 24). Heidegger notes that a phenomenological usage of the concept "thing" implies that which show or display itself, that which exhibits itself or that which leaves itself open for sighting (25-6). Phenomenology, therefore, is the science of how things show themselves. Linda Finlay also defines phenomenology as the science that "explores the intentional relationship between persons and situations, and discloses the essences, or structures, of meaning immanent in human experiences through the use of imaginative variation" (7). That is to say, phenomenology does not only aim at study how a thing manifest to knowing subjects but also studies the relationship between the subject and the object, and disclosing the structures of meanings created by such relationship (that is, the object-subject awareness). This later aspect of phenomenology focuses on the knowing subject hence it is interpretative. The former aspect focuses on the "thing" (the object) hence it is descriptive. Husserl's phenomenological tradition is descriptive, whereas that of Heidegger is interpretative. In other words, Husserlians focus on the object (thing) while Heideggerians focus on the subject (human being). These are the two major streams of phenomenology, namely: the descriptive phenomenology and the interpretative phenomenology. Both traditions use the same methodology of three interlocking steps which dovetail one tradition into the other: (1) phenomenological reduction, (2) description, and (3) search for essences. Finlay notes that "phenomenological researchers generally agree that our central concern is to return to embodied, experiential meanings aiming for a fresh, complex, rich description of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived (6).

Phenomenology is aimed at orienting the mind to what appears and how it appears. Generally, the human mind can, and do, mystify and distort things (phenomena). The mind is configured with all sorts of concepts, notions, ideas, prejudices, and idiosyncrasies – which tend to disorient perceptions and impurify consciousness, thereby obscuring reality and rendering it biased. Immanuel Kant refers to these preconceived notions and presuppositions as mental categories; and posits that they are those things that transform our perceptions which make things to

appear the way they appear to us according to the subjective constitution of our consciousness against the original structure (or orientation) of the object (50). Innocent Asouzu describes the mental presuppositions as "ethnocentric commitment" or *ihe mkpuchi anya*; while Francis Bacon describes it as mental idols. What phenomenology aims to achieve is to reorient the mind by purifying of consciousness through phenomenological reduction (or eidetic reduction) to open up to the thing as it appears. That is the reason phenomenology places high premium on description of reality, and through interpretation it seeks to search for its essences. Phenomenology demands for self-reflexivity and subjectivity, and calls for phenomenological attitude in experiencing of any kind. By phenomenological attitude it means, in experiencing, one does not privilege one position against the others. This therefore opens up consciousness to what manifest as it is. Phenomenological attitude is a multi-dimensional way of perception, and stresses multi-representation and multi-form (Francis, 5).

There are a number of key concepts that defines phenomenology. There are several of them but we shall confine or constrain ourselves to a few. These concepts define the phenomenological method.

Epoche: The "epoche" or phenomenological epoche (as Husserl calls it) is the Greek word for "bracketing". It is the phenomenological requirement that the subject should distance himself from the object of his intentionality in order to let it manifest itself clearly as it is. This "requires the assigning of index zero to everything transcendent or not immanently given" (Unah & Osegenwune, 23). In observing an object the subject must do so from a philosophical distance, this implies removing oneself from the immediate and lived engagement with the object in order to properly experience, observe, analyze, abstract, and describe the object of intentionality. This means not leaning on established doctrines or central authorities (be it theory, premises, hypothesis, or conceptual framework) while experiencing, observing and describing object of intentionality. This ultimately may lead to multiplicities of perspectives and dimensions.

Intentionality: This is a key concept in phenomenological research. It borders on consciousness and individual subjectivity. In the context of phenomenology, consciousness is directional and marked by intentionality of the subject. Consciousness relates itself to objects. Consciousness is directed at some object intended by the subject. "Consciousness is always consciousness of something intended by the subject" (Unah & Osegenwune, 14). Husserl describes it as "an outward-moving vector". Unah notes that "thinking is always thinking about something, and the object and subject of experience are equiprimordially present in consciousness" (On Being, 53). This ultimately paves the way for subjective and unabsolutized description of experience, since intentionality itself is subjective therefore relative. Unah also affirms, "no matter how transcendental, the ego is ultimately a subjective ego and truth and objectivity are to be found in intersubjectivity, that is, in subjectivities collectively affirming reality" (On Being, 53). For this reason, there cannot be pre-determined privilege position in describing experience, hence multiplier of perspectives and dimensions.

Subjectivity: Consciousness is subject-object encounter. It is the interrelationship and interdependency of the subject and object. "To be a subject means to confront an object, just as to be an object means to be perceived by a

subject" (Unah & Osegenwune, 15). This makes the concept of subject-ivity crucial to phenomenological research. The knowing subject is significant to meaning abstraction. As Unah and Osegenwune note, "objects do not have meaning in the abstract; things are not intelligence a priori; they are only meaningful to us" (15). There are no objects except those intended by the subject. Hence, George Berkeley asserts "to be is to be perceived". There are no objects except intentional objects. Even though object manifests itself it does so only in relation to a subject. It is for this reason, Heidegger avers that it is only through Dasein (the subject) that being (object) is known – for it is to Dasein being manifest itself. Phenomenology studies how object manifest itself. Therefore, in phenomenological understanding the object does so in profiles or aspects. Yet, object never fully manifests itself. "The object does not stop at the actual given, but extends to possible other aspects of the given, to its horizons" (Unah & Osegenwune, 16). This goes a long way to point out that there can be no absolute position, since a perspective to reality is only an aspect of several other perspectives (relative to knowing subjects) which never ceases to change. Absolute objectification of reality (or experience) is un-phenomenological.

Linking Postmodernism and Phenomenology

I have already indicated in the previous section the commonalities shared by phenomenology and postmodernism. Both philosophical traditions focus on dissensus of experience and place emphasis on individuality, subjectivity, selfhood, reflexivity, freedom, and innovation. Phenomenology indicates that objects are in the process of becoming, and thus the subject orientation of them. Moreover, the knowing subjects actively participate in the construction (orientation) of objects by their act of intentionality. This does not mean that the subject creates the object but that it determines how the object is perceived. Unah rightly asserts: "Consciousness does not create these beings that are known. Reason or thought does not create the object of its intuition. These objects are given, they lie around, they are presence-at-hand" (On Being, 84). Postmodernism stresses constructivism – the notion that knowing subjects actively construct their reality, and that they are not passive participants in their environment (Sapp, 19). The constructivism, it should be emphasized, is of subjective orientation.

The orientation of postmodernism is captured in this Lyotardian phrase "justice of multiplicities". The orientation of phenomenology is expressed in this Heideggerian phrase "letting things be". Both phrases and expressions communicate subjectivity, individuality and self-reflexivity. Reflexivity places premium on contextualisation of meanings. Unah and Osegenwune aver that reflexivity is a concept clearly associated with phenomenology and can spare postmodernism from fossilizing into some sort of authoritarianism (166). This is instructive given the fact postmodernism emerged as a protest against modernism.

In keeping with the idea of reflexivity, which in phenomenology, implies descriptive neutrality, postmodernism is averse to all totalizing pretensions, to orthodoxy, to authoritarian accounts and regimes of truth to excessive conceptualization of reality that lock us up in rationality. (Unah & Osegenwune, 166-167).

Moreover, the phenomenological understanding of consciousness as intentionality has tremendously influenced postmodernism which treats mind as its own reality. Generally, what is held as "intentionality" in phenomenology is interpreted as "freedom" in postmodernism. The phenomenological understanding of

object as self-disclosing reappears in the postmodern demand for all people of all races, sexes and cultures to have unfettered access to reality in its discourse and to achieve legitimization through dissensus or what Lyotard called "justice of multiplicities" (Unah & Osegenwune, 167). Further, as Unah and Osegenwune rightly note:

Postmodernism is a call to self-discovery, to multi-vocation and invitation to witness the contingency, fragility, indeterminacy and immanence of human ways of knowing and experiencing, and a heeding of Husserl to return to "the things themselves" to pre-reflective consciousness, to naive experience, to the lifeworld, in order to organize experience, anew with a view to understanding the politics of creating meaning. This is how postmodernism becomes a version of phenomenology (167).

The Concept of Afriphenomenology

In this paper, I introduce the concept of "afriphenomenology" for the first time. It is a concept that join two distinct word or concepts together – "Afri" (from Africa) and "phenomenology". (I reject the usage "afro-phenomenology" because of the possibility of confusing the concept with Afro-American pop art and cultural experience). However, there may be some exciting attempts to define "afriphenomenology" also as "African Phenomenology". But I reason that the phrase "African Phenomenology" is capable of distorting and derailing the concept of "afriphenomenology". For example, it may be used to refer to all sort of notions including using it to describe the works of those doing phenomenology in Africa or African scholars doing phenomenology. It may even be used to describe some ethnographic materials someone may rake up later as a form of ethnophilosophy. All those possibilities in defining African Phenomenology may be appropriate; but those cannot appropriately define "Afriphenomenology", as shall be shown later in this section. In this sense, I prefer to use the term "Afriphenomenology" rather than 'African Phenomenology'. In fact, "afriphenomenology", "afro-phenomenology" and "African Phenomenology" are mutually exclusive concepts. Let me define what I mean by "Afriphenomenology".

By afriphenomenology, I mean the conception and definition of phenomenology that is based on African ontology. There are many approaches to studies in African ontology. (Some of them are African colouration of either Aristotelian metaphysics or Hegelian metaphysics. But all of them lead up to the same description of reality as interlinked, interconnected, interdependent and mutually inclusive). At the moment, one of the most original approaches to the study of being in the African philosophical place is that called Ibuanyidanda. It is a theory of being developed by Innocent Asouzu, and based essentially on Igbo metaphysics. The most essential proposition of Ibuanyidanda (which is also reflected by other African ontological theories) is that being exist as cohort or cluster. This is captured in the statement: "to be is to be in mutual complementary relationship (ka so mu adina) and its negation is to be alone (ka so mu di)" (Asouzu, Philosophy of Essence 42). Deriving from this, Asouzu renders a normative account of his theory thus: that things do not only exist as cohort or cluster but they equally exist to complement each other – hence, they are fragments of the whole (Ibuanyidanda, 267).

The most important concept in the Ibuanyidanda literature is "missing links". Asouzu posits that "anything that exist serves a missing link of reality"; that no existent can uphold its being solely on its own but "can do this only with reference to

the whole and in complementary harmony with other missing links" (268). This means that an object serves to announce other possible objects in the horizon. It is for this reason, Asouzu argues that "there is need to consider the diverse units that are involved in any given context, not only with regard to their historical conditions" (121). This is important, given the fact that being always manifests itself in relation with other beings. The lesson in the Ibuyidanda approach to the study of being is that no existent can be individuated without taking into account the correlative objects it relates with. For instance, the planet, Saturn, has fifty-three moons (NASA, 1). A correct perception of the planet is impossible without taking its fifty-three moons into account; yet there is further need to take the entire galaxy into consideration when trying to define the character of the planet.

How does this serve to answer the question: What is aphenomenology? Phenomenology is the science of how things appear or the study of occurrences, events, or things as appear in consciousness. Phenomenology is a science that holds that consciousness is the primary way man has access to the world. It takes departures from the Cartesian thesis: *cogito ergo sum*, 'I think therefore I am'. The Cartesian thesis holds that ultimately consciousness reveals the thinking subject "ego" or "I"; phenomenology maintains that consciousness reveals not only the thinking subject but the object as well. For phenomenology, consciousness is always directed at some object. In thinking we always think of something. It is object that enables our thinking. But such object of thought is intentionally ordained by our consciousness. However, to understand the object of thought essentially, phenomenology prescribes a method, called eidetic reduction, whereby the knowing subject distances him/her self from the object of cognition, that is, becoming uncommitted or disinterested observer of the object as it evolves or appears. The purpose is to enable the ego to completely purge him/herself of his presuppositions about what is appearing in consciousness.

It is important to note that in the Husserl-Heidegger's phenomenology, the object appears as individuated just as the subject. This is so because phenomenology is premised upon the Cartesian thesis of "I", and on a bivalent framework which is monistic. An object is ultimately individuated object and can only be understood that way. The phenomenological method is designed to dissect an object to the exclusion of other possible objects that connect to it. Husserl maintains that "the goal of phenomenological clarity requires us to go back to the individuum as the primordial objectivity" (37). The phenomenological method insists on singling out the object for analysis by bracketing off all other possible objects relating with it. Unah avers that:

Phenomenology does not deal with the concrete existence of individual things or their particularizing characteristics; it deals instead with the essences of things... A phenomenologist does not regard the particularizing features of things as meaning of things... The requirement of "eidetic reduction" is for the phenomenologist to put in abeyance all existential and particularizing characteristics of the object of investigation and focus his attention on its essential structures in order to grasp its essence... The result of this reduction, according to Husserl, is that the object (*cogitatum*), the "noema" is made to stand out clearly as it is (Phenomenology, 211).

Existential phenomenology, adumbrated in the works of Jean Paul Sartre and even later Heidegger, has rejected the method adopted by Husserlian

phenomenologists in the study of reality, which consists mainly in distancing of oneself from the object of intentionality and bracketing off one's ego and the environment (the backdrop of the object). Unah notes that "man, for existentialists, is not a passive spectator of life experiences; he is rather an active participant in the drama of life; man is part of the world and, ipso facto, part of the experiences he is analyzing" (Phenomenology, 215). Despite this, existential phenomenology does not dispute the individuated projection of "true" objects characteristically in isolation to other objects; rather what it rejects is denying of man active role, by Husserlian phenomenology, in the construction of objects.

Afriphenomenology agrees with existential phenomenology that the manner object appears is actively determined by consciousness, not as transcendental ego, but in its platial state together with all its accumulated experiences. However, afriphenomenology does not just stop there in its critique; rather it also argues that by bracketing off the object's canvass (the backdrop of the object) the object cease to exist, at least in the manner it appeared, and another object is created in its stead. The canvass (or the backdrop) that projects the object is an essential ingredient necessary to perceiving the object. Once the object's environment is bracketed off by the transcendental ego, the transcendental ego itself replaces it by another, thereby transforming the object into some artificial object different from its original form. This is so because the object is made visible by the canvass (or backdrop) that projects it. The manner with which the object appears is important to phenomenological studies. Phenomenology maintains that "real" objects appear in individualistic form – individuated and isolated. For afriphenomenology, the object does not appear as a single individuated object but as "object-of-objects" or "object-with-objects", that is, with other objects tied to it called the "horizon" or "canvass". To understand the object or grasp its essence, the object must be studied or abstracted in consonance with correlative objects that relates with it. To attempt to individuate the object or single it out for sensation is to distort the meaning that it projects. To attempt to individuate an object, in the manner Husserl proposed, will be like attempting to grasp the essence Jupiter by bracketing off its twelve moons or bracketing off the galaxy.

African ontological experience, exemplified in Ibuanyidanda, maintains that object exist only in relation with other objects in the horizon. In the context of African ontology, it is impossible for an object to exist alone, individuated or in isolation to other objects; rather objects exist in relation with other objects in the horizon. That is what Asouzu means by the concept of "missing links". He avers that to be is to be in mutual complementary relationship and its negation is to be alone (Asouzu, Philosophy of Essence 42). This is the ontological context of which afriphenomenology is to be understood, namely: that object is never individuated rather it is interconnective with other objects in the horizon. Therefore, liquidation of the horizon or canvass in order to project the object clearly will only transform the object into another form different from its original form. To fully understand an object, therefore grasp its essence, requires that individual to study it in relation with the correlative objects to which it interconnects and complements or appear together. A splendid example to demonstrate the plausibility of this thesis, in scientific terms, is the set of events that led to the discovery of the planet Neptune.

In 1821, Bouvard of Paris published tables of the motions of a number of planets, including Uranus. In preparing the latter he had found great difficulty in making an orbit calculated on the basis of positions obtained in years after 1800 agree with one calculated from

observations taken in the years immediately following discovery. He finally disregarded the older observations. In a few years, however, the positions calculated from the tables disagreed with the observed positions of the planets and by 1844 the discrepancy amounted to 2 minutes of arc. Since all other known planets agreed in their motions with those calculated for them, the discrepancy in the case of Uranus aroused much discussion. In 1845, Leverrier, then a young man, attacked the problem. He checked Bouvard's calculations and found them essentially correct. Thereupon he felt that the only satisfactory explanation of the trouble lay in the presence of a planet somewhere beyond Uranus which was disturbing its motion. By the middle of 1846 he had finished his calculations. In September he wrote Galle at Berlin and requested the latter to look for a new planet in a certain region of the sky for which some new star charts had just been prepared in Germany but of which Leverrier apparently had not as yet obtained copies. On the twenty-third of September Galle started the search and in less than an hour he found an object which was not on the chart. By the next night it had moved appreciably and the new planet, subsequently named Neptune, was discovered within 1° of the predicted place. This discovery ranks among the greatest achievements of mathematical astronomy (quoted in Copi & Cohen, 471).

In the example above, it is evident that the planetary scientists could not correctly calculate the orbiting of Uranus because they individuated the planet and projected its characteristics as internally projected behaviour alone. It was until Leverrier took into consideration the possibility of Uranus being influenced by a correlative object, were they able to solve the problem.

Most times social scientists set out on a bivalent framework to determine the cause or effect of a phenomenon. But many times they find their experiments upset by confounding variables, that is, correlative phenomena, which their framework have relegated. Afriphenomenology essentially states that objects, phenomena and concepts do not exist alone, individuated and isolated rather they exist in relation with other objects, phenomena and concepts. On the basis of this, for one to grasp the essence of that object he/she has to investigate it not in isolation to other objects or as isolated individuated object but as "object-with-objects", in relations with other objects it complements or that coexist with it in the overall framework of the horizon that projects it. It is in studying things this way that one can grasp the truth or comprehensive meaning about his/her object of study.

Conclusion

This study was designed to examine the relationship between postmodernism and phenomenology as well as introduce the concept of afriphenomenology. To achieve that goal, I carried out general overview of postmodernism and phenomenology from which their common grounds were established. From the study, it is evident that both postmodernism and phenomenology concern with rejection and/or radicalisation of traditional Greek metaphysics. The old Greek metaphysics which runs all the way from Thales asserts that reality is one and that only a single knowing subject can comprehend the totality of experience. Modern thought inherited this orientation which resulted in crisis due to its rigidity and

fanaticism. What postmodernism did was to reject the "single story" patterned epistemology and metaphysics of modern thought by calling for "justice of multiplicities".

On the other hand, phenomenology rejected the old Greek metaphysics by calling for free access to reality by all irrespective of their social characteristics. The implication of this discourse on political view is rejection of authoritarian regimes and a call for multicultural approach to socio-political discourse. That is what happened in Paris in May 1968 when rioting students and prominent scholars "demanded radical changes in a rigid, closed, and elitist European University system" (Barrett, 17). The nexus of postmodernism and phenomenology is interlocking in that one dovetails into the other and vice versa, via sharing common conceptions of reality as fluid, contextual, multi-representational, and intentional.

Afriphenomenology accepts much of the thesis of phenomenology but rejects its individualistic ontological foundation which allows it to project objects as individuated and isolated. Afriphenomenology, basing its statements on African ontological experience, affirms that objects are clustered, hence in studying a particular object, one must not individuate it (that is, bracket off the horizon or correlative phenomena); rather it maintains that because phenomena are fragments (that is, "missing links") of a complementary whole, to enable a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon, the object should be studied in relation with other correlative objects that it complements.

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