

Asouzu's *Ibuanyidanda* Ontology and Heidegger's Ontology of Dasein-with-Others

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Introduction

Ibuanyidanda is not a novel concept in the history of ideas. Although the concept is generally ascribed to Innocent I. Asouzu, it can be traced back to the traditional Igbo African system of thought. In the Igbo traditional thought-system to which Asouzu belongs, the concept of *ibuanyidanda* expresses the natural order of interdependent cooperative action to achieve a goal. The word *ibuanyidanda* literally means that no load is impossible for ants (*danda*) to carry. As an abstract concept, the word refers to the mutually interdependent cooperation exhibited by a colony of ants while carrying large and heavy loads (see further below).¹

For Asouzu, *ibuanyidanda* ontology posits that culture is more than Igbo culture, African culture, Western culture, and so on.² Within an *ibuanyidanda* context, “the input of all the actors and factors needed to generate the ideas and values from which culture evolves is indispensable.”³ This implies that reality, being or existence, contains what Asouzu calls “missing links” (which means that existence comprises a multiplicity of views or different perspectives). These missing links require the complementary interdependency of different

1 Francis O. C. Njoku, *The Philosophical Grid of Igbo Socio-Political Ontology: Ibuanyidanda* (Enugu: University of Nigeria Press, 2018), 34–44; Innocent I. Asouzu, “‘Ibuanyidanda’ (Complimentary Reflection), Communalism and Theory Formulation in African Philosophy,” *Thought and Practice: A Journal of Philosophical Association of Kenya* 3, no. 2 (December 2011): 9–34, <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/tp/article/view/74871>. See also Romanus Ogbonnaya Ohuche, *Ibu Anyi Danda: The Centrality of Education in Igbo Culture* (Owerri: Culture Division of Ministry of Information, 1991); Ihechukwu Madubike, *The Igbo Challenge in Nigeria: Beyond Rancor and Recrimination* (Glassboro, NJ: Goldline & Jacobs, 2012); Apollos O. Nwauwa and Chima J. Korieh, ed., *Against All Odds: The Igbo Experience in Postcolonial Nigeria* (Glassboro, NJ: Goldline & Jacobs, 2011).

2 Asouzu designates his project as ontology because he seeks to offer an ontology that goes beyond African worldviews to articulating a philosophy of being that is universal and comprehensive. For more details, see Innocent I. Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology. Beyond World-Immanence, Ethnocentric Reduction and Impositions* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2007), 210–227.

3 Asouzu, “‘Ibuanyidanda’ (Complimentary Reflection),” 16.

philosophical cultures.⁴ As a philosophy of integration and complementation, Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology "strives to bridge incidents of broken unity in human consciousness occasioned by our tension-laden ambivalent existential situations ... one that instigates actors to be reclusive and exclusivist in their thinking."⁵ For Asouzu, then, "*ibuanyidanda* always seeks to overcome any form of artificial divide between the universal and the particular, between the absolute and the relative ... between mine and dine, between the community and the individual, between indigenes and strangers ... etc."⁶ This is the reason why *ibuanyidanda* ontology conceptualizes being as "that on account of which anything that exists serves a missing link."⁷ Thus, no one culture or perspective can claim absolute dominance to the riches, multidimensionality, and multiplicity of reality.

Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others seems to express a similar ontological mutuality, interdependency, and complementarity as *ibuanyidanda*, which invites a comparison of these two concepts. My choice of Heidegger as the subject of comparison with Asouzu is informed by the transcultural implications of his ontology of Dasein-with-Others, and its seemingly close affinity with Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology. With the notion of Dasein-with-Others, Heidegger constructs an ontology of mutual and interdependent existence. In Heidegger's estimation, as Being-in-the-world, our existence is already a Being together-with-Others.⁸ This "with" is integral to the character of Dasein, which implies that "by the reason of this *with-like* [*mithaften*] Being-in-the-world, the world is always the one I share with Others."⁹ In Heidegger's estimation, the "world of Dasein is a *with-world* [*Mitwelt*]" and "Being-in is *Being-with* Others."¹⁰ This also entails that the Being-in-themselves of Others, within the world, is *Dasein-with* (*Mitdasein*).¹¹ However, what makes Being-with-Others possible is not the spatial proximity of their beings, but their mutual relation. Where no mutual relation exists, there can be no Being-

4 Asouzu, "'Ibuanyidanda' (Complimentary Reflection)," 16.

5 Asouzu, "'Ibuanyidanda' (Complimentary Reflection)," 19.

6 Asouzu, "'Ibuanyidanda' (Complimentary Reflection)," 28; Njoku, *The Philosophical Grid of Igbo Socio-Political Ontology*, 34–46.

7 Asouzu, "'Ibuanyidanda' (Complimentary Reflection)," 29.

8 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward S. Robinson (London: SCM Press, 1962), 55–61; See also, Joseph J. Kockelmans, *Heidegger's "Being and Time": The Analytic of Dasein as Fundamental Ontology* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology & University Press of America, 1989), 137–144.

9 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 155.

10 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 155.

11 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 155.

with.¹² Thus, Being-with-Others is woven into Dasein. This also indicates a certain level of openness to the Other, sharing of common nature, sharing of one world, common bonding and communion with the Other.

My choice of Asouzu as the representative of Igbo (African) thought-tradition was informed by the views expressed in his book *Ibuanyidanda*. I believe this work most legitimately captures the authentic Igbo view of reality, because of its ties to the holistic, interconnected, dynamic, and relational character of the Igbo traditional worldview. My choice of Heidegger as the representative of the German thought-tradition was informed by the transcultural implications of his ontology of Dasein-with-Others and its seemingly close affinity with Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology.

Previous scholarship on Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* and Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others has focused on the communitarian, political, linguistic, historical, educational, phenomenological, hermeneutic, and ontological dimensions of these individual thought traditions.¹³ However, no previous studies have paid attention to how *ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others can be fruitfully brought into conversation and provide the basis for transcultural philosophy. This study is an attempt in such a direction. The present paper will examine the areas of convergence and divergence in both philosophical traditions as well as their implications for transcultural philosophy.

Transcultural philosophy, as I employ it in this paper, is a style of philosophizing that adopts the transcultural critique of bounded notions of culture and encourages dialogue across assumed cultural boundaries. It challenges the view that philosophy is the sole possession of one culture and recognizes each philosophic or cultural tradition as equally important. It therefore supports mutual understanding, tolerance, and interdependent cooperation among different philosophic traditions or cultures. It recommends mutual learning, and includes the notion that an understanding of reality can

12 Kockelmans, Heidegger's "Being and Time," 138.

13 See. Kockelmans, *Heidegger's "Being and Time: The Analytic of Dasein as Fundamental Ontology*; William S. Wurzer, "Heidegger's Problem of the 'Hermeneutic Who,'" *Dialogos* 15, no. 35 (1980): 121–137; Njouku, *The Philosophical Grid*; William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1963); Michael A. Gelven, *A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1970); Uchenna L. Ogbonnaya, "Asouzu's 'Communitarian' Ontology: A Reflection on the Ethnic and Religious Crisis in Nigeria," *Contemporary Journal of Arts and Science* 1, no. 1 (March 2015): 96–103; Ohuche, *Ibu Anyi Danda*; Ihechukwu Madubuike, *The Igbo Challenge in Nigeria: Beyond Rancor and Recrimination* (Glassboro, NJ: Goldline & Jacobs, 2012); Nwauwa and Chima, *Against All Odds*; John Gabriel Mendie, "Metaphysics and the Method of Ibuanyidanda," *GNOSI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Theory and Praxis* 3, no. 1 (2020): 32–39, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3829012>; Okpo Odumayak, "The Idea of Truth within the Context of Ibuanyidanda," *Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities* 2, no. 4 (September 2016): 94–99; Akoijam Thoibisana, "Heidegger on the Notion of Dasein as Habited Body," *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* 8, no. 2 (September 2008): 1–5.

only be achieved through the joint efforts of diverse philosophic and cultural traditions. A cross-tradition approach to doing philosophy—a constructive engagement or conversation between philosophic traditions or perspectives—therefore complements and reinforces the objectives of cross-cultural and intercultural philosophy.

Within the context of transcultural philosophy, my purpose is to investigate the precise manner of rationality and relationality between cultural boundaries. The need to philosophize from one's own cultural background does not rule out the idea of interaction with other cultures or contact with other minds. Interaction and contact open up other perspectives and help to broaden the epistemic horizons of a thinker in a way that would be impossible if they were to restrict themselves to their own world, which would ultimately impoverish their thought.¹⁴ Asouzu is one of the African philosophers who has shown apparent interest in what I here term “transcultural philosophy.”¹⁵ This interest can be gleaned from his assertion that in *ibuanyidanda* complementary ontology, “we share mutually and infinitely all missing links of reality in as far as we are integral parts of the totality of reality ... In this sharing, it is an honor instead of dishonor, indeed a natural right to benefit from one another because all autonomies gain their authenticity from co-determination.”¹⁶ Heidegger seems to corroborate this view when he says that we genuinely philosophize only “when we enter into a discussion with philosophers,” and this implies that “we talk through with them ... that about which they speak.”¹⁷ To this extent, the Asouzuan and Heideggerian insights can provide us with the foundation upon which a genuine philosophy can be established.

Although a transcultural dialogue does not necessarily presuppose that two different thinkers—here Asouzu and Heidegger—share a common view on a particular issue, it does indicate that there is a basis for exchange.¹⁸ The

14 Anthony Chimankpam Ojimba and Ada Agada, “Nietzsche’s Idea of Eternal Recurrence and the Notions of Reincarnation in Onyewuanyi and Majeed,” *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 9, no. 2 (August 2020): 35–56, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ft.v9i2.3>.

15 Anthony Chimankpam Ojimba, “*Ubuntu*’s Ontological Account in African Philosophy and its Cross-Tradition Engagement on the Issue of Being Versus Becoming,” *Comparative Philosophy: An International Journal of Constructive Engagement of Distinct Approaches towards World Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (January 2023), 98–115. [https://doi.org/10.31979/2151-6014\(2023\).140109](https://doi.org/10.31979/2151-6014(2023).140109); Joseph C. A. Agbakoba, “Interculturality, Heterosis and Trans-Colonization: An African Philosophical Perspective,” *Filosofie & Praktijk* 43 (2022): 35–48. Ojimba and Agada, “Nietzsche’s Idea of Eternal Recurrence,” 35–56.

16 Innocent I. Asouzu, *The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection in and beyond African Philosophy* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005), 485.

17 Martin Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Jean T. Wilde and William Kluback (New Haven: College and University Press, 1958), 67.

18 Ojimba and Agada, “Nietzsche’s Idea of Eternal Recurrence,” 37.

ontologies of *ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others seem to provide just such a basis to enter into a transcultural philosophic conversation. A transcultural philosophic conversation or dialogue is not intended to be a comparative study, even though comparison contributes to rather than contradicts the objectives of transcultural dialogue. Perhaps comparison would be feasible were both bodies of thought under comparison to emerge from the same cultural perspective or background. However, these two ideas—*ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others—arise from two different perspectives or cultures, Igbo and German.

Certainly, doing philosophy does not presuppose that we reflect only on our personal experience, but includes reflection on how we relate with other cultures and the world at large. One might even argue that philosophy can only be meaningfully carried out with the transculturally-oriented conviction that philosophy, as such, is not the sole possession of any one tradition, whether German or Igbo. A transcultural approach to philosophy offers us a common space of discourse where philosophers of all traditions can meet and converse with full dedication to truth. The ontologies of *ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others map unto the notion of transculturality to the extent that they make space for a meaningful and constructive understanding and correlation of the German and Igbo traditions. This might motivate scholars to engage with philosophical cultures other than their own and, as such, might widen their intellectual and cultural horizons and advance the cause of transcultural studies. In other words, my exploration and interpretation of the two ontologies and my transcultural engagement with these two thinkers will contribute, in no small measure, to the exercise of transcultural philosophy.

With this purpose in mind, the paper is divided into three sections. Section one examines Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology, while section two examines Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others. Section three discusses the areas of convergence and divergence in the ontologies of *ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others and their implications for transcultural philosophy.

Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology

Asouzu's concept of *ibuanyidanda* has as its major project the exploration of a new and improved way of articulating ontology, which takes into consideration the relational, complementary, and holistic nature of being, as compared to an ethnocentric reductionist ontology that is committed to non-relationality and non-complementarity. The application of the notion of ontology to the description of Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* is justified in the sense that it describes a theory of being and of inter-subjective human existence. In other words, it is a social ontology.

As pointed out above, *danda* is the Igbo word for a species of small ants. *Ibu* denotes "load," while *anyi* might be translated as "insurmountable." Thus,

ibuanyidanda describes the idea that no load is too great for this species of ants to carry, so long as their effort is interdependent and cooperative.¹⁹ The implication of this idea is that no task is insurmountable for human beings when they complement and cooperate with one another and combine their potentialities. This is basically what Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* connotes, especially when used alongside the English term "complementarity," as the horizon within which ontology plays itself out.²⁰ It is also important to note that the comparison of humans with ants here is used in a metaphorical sense.

Before delving into a detailed discussion of Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology, it is appropriate to provide background and context, to facilitate the understanding of Asouzu's place in recent African philosophy. Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology arose in the context of characterizing the authentic nature of traditional African ontology (ontology that is dynamic and relational) by African philosophers, as discussed below, and, at the same time, of transcending this ontology in a mutual and complementary manner. Asouzu reproaches African philosophers before him for what he perceives as their ethnocentric reductionism, and for developing an ontological framework that is committed to non-relationality and non-complementarity, which does not reflect the authentic nature of traditional African ontology. For instance, he argues that Placide Tempels' and Alexis Kagame's articulations of African *Bantu* ontology were unduly influenced by Aristotle's metaphysics. Both authors described *Bantu* ontology as force or dynamic ontology without further qualification (without describing the basic character of such dynamic ontology such as relationality and complementarity),²¹ a description that, in Asouzu's estimation, does not actually reflect the dynamic complementary character of African traditional ontology.

For Asouzu, this characterization of traditional African ontology rests on an inaccurate analysis of the prevalent currents of thought in traditional African societies.²² He writes that this approach relies "on the ethnocentric inspired assumption that there is a way of thinking congenial to all African traditional societies; an assumption that induces the mind to see Africans only from the perspective of a collective either for good or for worst, but

19 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology*, 252.

20 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 252.

21 Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. A. Rubbens (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959); Alexis Kagame, *La Philosophie Bantu Comparée* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959).

22 Asouzu has in mind here Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 23–31. Kagame, for Asouzu, also fell into the same trap; see Alexis Kagame, *La Philosophie Bantoue Comparée* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1976). Onyewuenyi also toed the same line, as did Mogobe Ramose; see Innocent C. Onyewuenyi, *African Belief in Reincarnation: A Philosophical Reappraisal* (Enugu: Snaap Press, 1966), 33. Mogobe Ramose, *African Philosophy Through Ubuntu* (Harare: Mond Books, 1999), 50–55.

more often for worst.”²³ For Asouzu, such an assumption fuels the prevalent supposition that Africans are conformist as long as such congenial way of thinking is in keeping with their ontology. He contends that Tempels’ and Kagame’s ethnocentric approaches to characterizing traditional African ontology reinforce this prejudice.

Asouzu thus emphasizes that “what many see as *the general worldview of the traditional Africans, and by implication that of Africans, in general, cannot be characterized as dynamic or force without qualification.*”²⁴ In his estimation, anyone intent on characterizing Africans as such falls into the same trap as Tempels and Kagame. This is because, in Asouzu’s view, what Tempels and Kagame described as force or dynamic ontology in depicting African traditional ontology can be designated as only “dimensions of what most traditional African philosophers of the complementary system of thought understand as elements of mutual complementary interrelatedness existing among units within a given framework.”²⁵ In his estimation, one can therefore say that traditional African ontology is dynamic, not in the sense that Tempels and Kagame employ the concepts of “dynamic” and “force,”²⁶ but from the angle of dynamic relationality and complementarity from which most traditional African philosophers of the complementary system of thought understood it (African traditional ontology).

For Asouzu, then, “one can say *that the traditional African system of thought, in all its modes of expression, is one caught in the dynamics of the tension created by all human ambivalent situations.*”²⁷ Internalizing this crucial point is the first step to transcending the impositions and constraints of Tempels’ and Kagame’s ethnocentrism, which clouds our understanding of matters relating to the conceptual universe of traditional African thought-systems. In Asouzu’s view, since Tempels and Kagame fail to reckon with this important feature of African traditional ontology, mutual complementarity, their conclusions are likely to be false.²⁸

Thus, in the quest to transcend the ontologies of the above-mentioned types, including those of Tempels and Kagame, Asouzu posits *ibuanyidanda* ontology as “a new ontological horizon [that] seeks to provide the tools towards overcoming the type of reductionism inherent in all forms of ethnocentric

23 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 181.

24 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 181. Italics in original.

25 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 181.

26 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 181; see also Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 23–26.

27 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 181. Italics in original.

28 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 181.

rationality.”²⁹ Asouzu introduces a novel way in which philosophy is to be done in Africa that transcends the approach of Tempels and Kagame. In so doing, he creates an ontology that goes beyond African worldviews (that is, an ontology that transcends African cultural perspectives or worldviews to mutually relate with and complement other cultural perspectives or worldviews), “to inquire into the preconditions for articulating a philosophy of being that is universal and comprehensive” while “leaning on the ideas of traditional Igbo philosophers of the complementary system of thought.”³⁰ The benefit of this approach is that it retains its traditional ambience, while seeking to articulate a philosophy that transcends this ambience (“transcending” in the sense of mutually relating this traditional ambience with other ambiances or cultural traditions in a mutual complementary manner). Such an approach, in Asouzu’s view, will facilitate the progress and development of African philosophy, which has been rendered stagnant by Tempels’ and Kagame’s ontological approaches. Hence, contemporary African philosophy should embrace this new complementary ontological horizon of *ibuanyidanda*.

The Igbo concept of *danda* includes both singularity and plurality.³¹ However, in the usage of *ibuanyidanda*, the sense of plurality is always invoked, that is, *danda* here denotes a collectivity of ants. This is the sense in which its ontological significance comes to the fore. Thus, “the expression *ibuanyidanda* gets its full meaning when it is seen as that horizon within which being can be grasped as something that has an intrinsic relational moment of mutual complementarity.”³² This is another way of affirming that whatever exists serves a missing link of reality. To say that something exists, in this sense, entails the fact that it is only meaningfully graspable within the context of a complementary universal framework (from the perspective of mutual complementarity and relationality).

In Asouzu’s estimation, this mode of understanding being represents the most viable way of addressing some of the most difficult problems in ontology, which hinge on the relation between substance and accidents, and construe these two as mutually exclusive and belonging to two separate regions of being.³³ For Asouzu, this way of viewing being polarizes and distorts our perception of reality, as well as our manner of relating to other beings. With *ibuanyidanda* complementary ontology, Asouzu intends to bridge the artificial

29 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 211.

30 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 211.

31 The concept of *danda* is used in Igbo society as both singular and plural. Whether it is plural or singular depends on context.

32 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 252.

33 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 253.

chasm that the mind conjures between substance and accident. In Asouzu's estimation, the constant tension and conflict that exists between human beings and the world can be resolved with *ibuanyidanda* complementary ontology. To be in existence, according to Asouzu, an entity must be in complementary and mutual relationship with other existents. This informs his position that any person who thinks they can live alone, outside the legitimizing complementary mutual relationship between all missing links, is to be pitied.³⁴ This implies that to be is to serve a missing link of reality within a complementary framework of the whole.³⁵ Existence, then, presupposes being in mutual complementary relationship with all missing links of reality, the totality of which constitutes the full significance of being.

Within the framework of *ibuanyidanda*, every being is understood in its relational mode. Without this essential relational mode, a thing cannot be said to meaningfully exist. Being is thus considered here to have "head and tail-end" (see further Asouzu quote below)—serving a missing link and graspable within a complementary horizon of *ibuanyidanda*.³⁶ The above expression stipulates that an idea of being that favors isolationism and is devoid of a mutual relational character is unacceptable. This rejects any bifurcating, divisive, and exclusive tendency and embraces complementarity with regards to being. Thus, being or reality must be considered within the horizon of complementarity, relationality, and mutuality. The primary task of ontology, in Asouzu's view, does not consist in knowing what being is in a fixed, pre-deterministic, and abstract sense, but with knowing what *is* as long as it serves a missing link of reality.

This view of ontology presents being as something that is inherently relational. In Asouzu's words:

In this way, the new complementary ontology turns out to be the attempt to regain the idea of being from the preceding condition of a comprehensive unified ontological bracket, which seeks to supersede all forms of world immanent pre-deterministic concomitant thinking. The same is applicable, as it targets all forms of bifurcating and exclusivist modes of relating to the world. This approach, reveals that all matters of ontology have to do with the comprehensiveness of meaning in the sense that all modes of being

34 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 254.

35 Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* complementary ontology can be related to the philosophy of holism, especially as posited by the African philosopher, Mogobe Ramose, in his *ubuntu* ontology, which construes reality from the perspective of a whole with different interconnected parts as articulated in his concepts of *ubu* (being in its universal sense) and *ntu* (being as manifested in concrete entities) which are mutually founding and complementary. See Ramose, *African Philosophy Through Ubuntu*, 50-54; Ojimba, "Ubuntu's Ontological Account in African Philosophy," 101-103.

36 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 257.

seeking meaning serve each other to uphold their being. Approaching ontology in this way, opens up for us that horizon that disposes the mind to grasp being as something that is inherently relational, comprehensive and future referential in its determination.³⁷

Asouzu believes that the approach above dislodges the question of being from its abstract speculative mode, a mode arguably adhered to by Aristotle. Rather, being is conceived in terms of missing links of reality, which open up an “enormous frontier within which being can be articulated in its dynamic relational essentiality without much difficulty.”³⁸ This implies, for Asouzu, that we come to know things not in their isolated mode, but in their mutual complementarity with other beings.

It is in the context of the ontological mutual complementarity of all things that reality achieves its full ontological significance. Within this complementary ontology, contraries naturally complement themselves, opposites are harmonized, and tensions are resolved. It is also Asouzu’s contention that being is embedded in meaning and is as such graspable and sharable within the framework of mutual complementarity that connects the horizon of all missing links. Being is conceived, here, from the point of view of inherent relatedness. It is from this viewpoint that Asouzu contends that, despite the difficulty inherent in the Aristotelian and traditional African modes of penetrating being, “they [Aristotelian and African modes of penetrating being] can be considered as complements to each other when they are rid of their excesses.”³⁹ This perspective makes room for transculturality in philosophy, since ontology can be pursued not only as the science of being *qua* being, as Aristotle conceived it, but also as the preoccupation with the idea of being within the framework of mutual complementarity of all missing links of reality.⁴⁰

The complementary ontological framework thus represents an emergence of being outside of which nothing can be said to exist:

Within the context of this new ontology therefore, things have relevance and are in being by virtue of the type of service they render to each other just [as] *ibuanyidanda* (complementarity) constitutes the inescapable horizon for penetrating being within the context of contraries but insofar as these contraries build complementary opposites. Hence, to be is not

37 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 258.

38 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 259.

39 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 264.

40 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 265; see also Emmanuel Kelechi Iwuagwu, “Martin Heidegger and the Question of Being,” *Journal of Integrative Humanism* 8, no. 1 (2017): 25–48.

merely the capacity to subsist or endure in isolation, but the capacity to have head and tail-end (*inwe isi na odu*) as to be concretely relevant and meaningful. In this way, a complementarity framework turns out to be the context for the full emergence of being outside of which nothing can be conceived that claims existence.⁴¹

Asouzu's intention here is to go beyond the conception of being as an abstract concept and its reduction to irreconcilable opposites.⁴² He reconstructs the idea of being from the perspective of *ibuanyidanda*—mutual complementarity, inherent relationality, comprehensiveness—as the foundation of all authentic complementary relationship.

Asouzu also conceptualizes the human subject as a being that is conceivable within the framework of a mutual complementary relationship (*ibuanyidanda*) with other existent realities.⁴³ This brings to mind the Heideggerian Dasein as essentially existing alongside others. Asouzu's contention is that the removal of the capacity to be in relationship with other beings amounts to the negation of the capacity for human existence. Thus, to be conceived as existing or as a human presupposes the ability to be in mutual complementary relationship with other existing beings. This implies that to be is the capacity not to be alone (Igbo: *ka so mu adi na*).⁴⁴ This also corroborates Heidegger's assertion that an isolated Dasein is not existentially tenable.⁴⁵

Furthermore, Asouzu is of the view that the human being is the only subject that has the capacity to consciously articulate their mode of relationship with other existing entities. As such, the capacity or ability for a mutual complementary relationship can be described as part of the natural constitution of being human. In fact, things become meaningful for a human being only by virtue of their complementary relational engagements with other existing realities. Thus, for Asouzu, "human beings carry this mode of intrinsic mutual relationship mostly in those basic operations that characterize them as human."⁴⁶ This, in Asouzu's estimation, describes human beings as imperfect entities who are dependent on other existing beings for meaning and significance. Human life is inconceivable in the absence of such mutual complementarity and relational interdependency.

41 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 265.

42 Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, 51–52.

43 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 301.

44 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 301; quote (*ka so mu adi na*) also from Asouzu. Further on this dictum, see below.

45 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 152.

46 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 302.

Asouzu further conceptualizes *ibuanyidanda* as a philosophy of being within the global context:

There is need to start thinking of a situation where we do not have diverse philosophies strictly taken, but the philosophy of being based on which all missing links seek harmony, since they all share and are subject to the same horizon of meaning. This horizon of meaning and [*sic*] which serves as the foundation for overcoming all forms of bifurcating mentality is provided by the idea of *ibuanyidanda* (complementarity).⁴⁷

In this passage, Asouzu emphasizes the need for a philosophy of harmony that returns all missing links of reality to their basic foundation in mutual complementarity (*ibuanyidanda*), thereby dislodging and displacing all exclusionist, absolutist, and hegemonic claims to reality. With the idea of mutual complementarity, every stakeholder comes to appreciate *ibuanyidanda* (no task is insurmountable for *danda*, the ants). This appreciation of *ibuanyidanda* is necessary, because, in Asouzu's estimation, "we, in our diversities, but in the mutual complementation of our efforts, are these *danda*, those ants that have the capacity to surmount very difficult tasks when they complement their efforts."⁴⁸

The relevance of any philosophy must therefore be considered in view of how it can help to bring to reality the positive ideas embedded in the character and activities of *danda* (the ants). In Asouzu's view, the philosophy of being within the context of globalization has as one its major aims the working out of an idea of being that jettisons the possibility of bifurcation and division, and embraces the idea of harmony and unity. For Asouzu, the idea of *ibuanyidanda* provides a credible foundation for such an ontology, insofar as it brings to our attention that whatever exists serves a missing link of reality.

Having highlighted Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology, I will now proceed to articulate the basic ingredients of Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others.

Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others

Heidegger conceptualizes our being in the world as already a being-together-with-Others. For Heidegger, a bare subject without other subjects is existentially untenable. Similarly, an isolated Dasein without Others is unthinkable.⁴⁹ This presupposes that the concept of Being-in-the-world already encapsulates

⁴⁷ Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 418–419.

⁴⁸ Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 420; see also Anselm K. Jimoh, "Ubuntu, *Ibuanyidanda*: Harnessing African Philosophy of Personhood for Peaceful Co-existence in Nigeria," *Ewanlen: A Journal of Philosophical Enquiry* 1, no. 1 (November 2017): 40–49.

⁴⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 152.

the idea of Being with Others. It further depicts the concept of the “who” of Dasein as Being already there with Others. For Heidegger, being with Others does not have the ontological character of being-present-at-hand-along-with them within a world, but is something of the character of Dasein that is to be understood existentially and not categorically.⁵⁰ Thus, the world of Dasein is always the world it shares with Others by virtue of its with-like Being in the world. This presupposes that “the world of Dasein is a *with-world (Mitwelt)*” and “being in, is being with Others.”⁵¹ The Others’ Being in the world itself also presupposes Dasein-with (*Mitdasein*).⁵²

Heidegger characterizes Being-with as an existential feature of Dasein. This presupposes that Being-with refers to the basic nature of Dasein—the human person—as a being that exists alongside other beings or human persons. For Heidegger, even Dasein’s being-alone is also a Being-with, within the world. This presents Being-alone as a deficient mode of Being-with. In Heidegger’s estimation, Being-with is an essential feature of one’s own Dasein, and “Dasein-with” characterizes the Dasein of Others to the extent that it is freed by its own world for a Being-with.⁵³

The implication of this, for Heidegger, is that “only so far as one’s own Dasein has the essential structure of Being-with, is it Dasein-with as ‘encounterable’ for Others.”⁵⁴ Heidegger conceptualizes Being-with Others as belonging to the Being of Dasein. This Being-with Others, as the basic feature of Dasein, presupposes that as Being-with, Dasein is essentially for the sake of Others. Being-with, here, is understood from the existential perspective—from the perspective of Dasein existing alongside Others. For Heidegger, even if a particular Dasein manages to get along without Others or seems to believe that it does not have any need of them, it is still in the way of Being-with. Thus, in “Being-with, as the existential ‘for-the-sake of’ Others, these have already been disclosed in their Dasein.”⁵⁵ This implies that “with their Being-with, their disclosedness has been constituted beforehand; accordingly, this disclosedness also goes to make up significance—that is to say, worldhood.”⁵⁶ Being-with is understood in such a way that the disclosedness of the Dasein-with of Others belongs to it. The implication of the above statement is that

50 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 152.

51 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 152.

52 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 152.

53 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 157.

54 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 157.

55 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 160.

56 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 160.

because Dasein's Being is Being-with, its understanding of Being already presupposes the understanding of Others.⁵⁷ Admittedly, this understanding is not dependent on any acquaintance with or knowledge of the Others, but tied to the primordially existential nature of being, which brings about the possibility of such knowledge and acquaintance.

Heidegger goes further, to posit that:

Knowing oneself is grounded in Being-with, which understands primordially. It operates proximally in accordance with the kind of Being which is closest to us—Being-in-the-world as Being-with; and it does so by acquaintance with that which Dasein, along with the Others, comes across in its environmental circumspection and concerns itself with—an acquaintance in which Dasein understands.⁵⁸

Heidegger makes an ontological difference between Being towards Others and Being towards “Things,” the latter of which he describes as present-at-hand. This is because the Being of Others has the same understanding as the Being of Dasein. This sameness of understanding between the Being of Others and the Being of Dasein indicates that “in Being with and towards Others, there is thus a relationship of Being from Dasein to Dasein.”⁵⁹ Furthermore, for Heidegger, this “relationship is already constitutive for one's own Dasein, which, in its own right, has an understanding of Being, and which thus relates itself towards Dasein.”⁶⁰ One can, therefore, conclude that the relationship of Being, which one has towards Others, can be interpreted as a projection of one's own Being-towards-oneself into something else. The Other, in that case, runs the risk of appearing as a duplicate of the Self.⁶¹

Being-with, in Heidegger's estimation, is an existential constituent of Being-in-the-world. He postulates that as long as Dasein *is* (exists), it has Being-with-one-another as its distinct characteristic.⁶² Dasein's Being-with, here, reckons with the Others even without seriously considering them or wanting to have anything to do with them. Furthermore, “one's own Dasein, like the Dasein-with of Others, is encountered proximally and for the most part in terms of the with-world with which we are environmentally concerned.”⁶³

57 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 160.

58 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 161.

59 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 162.

60 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 162.

61 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 162.

62 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 163.

63 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 163.

Heidegger's interpretation, here, is that when Dasein is absorbed by the world of its concern and in its Being towards Others, it becomes inauthentic, losing itself in this very absorption. This encapsulates Heidegger's idea of everyday Being-one's-Self and the "they" (the idea of everyday Being-one's-Self and the they, as employed by Heidegger, describes the tendency of Dasein to lose itself and become absorbed by the public opinion and the way things have been publicly interpreted for him by Others).⁶⁴

For Heidegger, the idea of distanciality characterizes Being-with-one-another. In his estimation, the more hidden this type of Being or distanciality is to everyday Dasein, the more firmly it establishes itself. It dissolves Dasein and makes it stand in subjection to Others:

This distanciality which belongs to Being-with, is such that Dasein, as everyday Being-with-one-another, stands in *subjection* [*Botmässigkeit*] to others. ... its Being has been taken away by the Others. Dasein's everyday possibilities of Being are for the Others to dispose of as they please. These Others, moreover, are not *definite* others. On the contrary, any Other can represent them. What is decisive is just that inconspicuous domination by Others which has already been taken over unawares from Dasein as Being-with.⁶⁵

Heidegger postulates here that Dasein's essential character, as Being-with, ties it to the Others and makes Others dominate Dasein. Thus, Dasein comes to belong to the Others and enhances their power. Importantly, these Others are not defined. Rather, they are indeterminate, denoting not this or that person, nor a group of people, but what Heidegger describes as the "neuter," the "they" or *das Man*.⁶⁶

Heidegger further maintains that in the kind of Being that defines everyday Being-with-one-another, one's own Dasein is completely dissolved into the Being of the Others. This makes the Others highly indistinguishable and elusive, and herein also lies the dictatorial power of the they. According to Heidegger, "we take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* [*man*] take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as *they* shrink back; we find 'shocking' what *they* find shocking."⁶⁷ From Heidegger's perspective, this they—which we all are, and which, at the same time, is indefinite and not concretized as

64 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 163.

65 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164.

66 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164.

67 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164.

the sum—describes the Being of everydayness.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the existential feature of the they is averageness that describes the nature of Being-with-one-another, which is characterized by distanciality.

Taken together, distanciality, averageness, and levelling down describe different ways of the Being of the they, and these collectively constitute what Heidegger postulates as publicness. In Heidegger's estimation, this publicness determines the manner in which Dasein and the world get interpreted. In other words, the interpretation of the world, as well as Dasein's ways of Being, is completely dependent on the influence and control of publicness. According to Heidegger, this control and interpretation of Being as well as the world by publicness is "always right—not because there is some distinctive and primary relationship-of-Being in which it is related to 'Things,' or because it avails itself of some transparency on the part of Dasein which it has explicitly appropriated, but because it is insensitive to every difference of level and of genuineness and thus never gets to the 'heart of the matter' [*auf die Sachen*]." ⁶⁹ From Heidegger's perspective, everything gets obscured by publicness, and this obscurity gets transmitted as something familiar and accessible to all.

The dictatorial power of the they does not tolerate any critique of its authority. If a particular Dasein tries to challenge the authority and dictatorship of the they, it is called to order through every possible means. The they presents every judgment and decision as its own, and consequently denies the individual Daseins of any answerability and responsibility. It can thus be stated that the they deprives the individual Daseins of their freedom and responsibility and, at the same time, offers them protection and relieves them of answerability and responsibility. The individual Daseins, thus, become inauthentic and fail to stand by themselves. More so, the they is answerable for everything because it cannot be interpreted as a particular individual that must vouch for or defend anything: "It 'was' always the 'they' who did it, and yet it can be said that it has been 'no one'." ⁷⁰

What Heidegger postulates, at this juncture, is that in Dasein's day-to-day activities, the they constitutes the agency through which most things come about in such a way that it can be said to belong to no one in particular. The particular Dasein, in its everydayness, according to Heidegger, is therefore *disburdened* by the they who, in turn, accommodates Dasein and relieves Dasein of any responsibility and answerability. Consequent upon this constant accommodation and disburdening of Dasein by the they, the they constantly

68 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164.

69 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 165.

70 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 165; see also Kockelmans, *Heidegger's "Being and Time,"* 143–144.

and firmly establishes its dominion and authority over Dasein.⁷¹ As a result of this disburdening of Dasein by the they, everyone becomes the other and no one becomes himself. Thus, the they, which raises the question of the identity or the “who” of everyday Dasein, in Heidegger’s estimation becomes the nobody, to whom every Dasein makes a total submission of itself in its relation with the Others.

As pointed out above, the features of distanciality, averageness, levelling down, publicness, and disburdening of one’s Being define the characteristics of everyday Being-with-one another. These features highlight the peculiarity of Dasein’s Being as Being-with,⁷² which defines Dasein’s inauthenticity and failure to stand by itself. It further reinforces Heidegger’s concept of *das Man*, which demonstrates the inauthentic nature of Dasein’s existence in its everydayness, where its authentic existence is taken over and obscured by the dictatorial authority and dominance of the they, the anyone, and the public. This mode of existence is characterized by Dasein’s consideration of itself as incapable of dictating its mode of living. It detaches Dasein from choosing itself and dissolves it in the anyone. As a result of this detachment of Dasein from choosing itself and the dissolving of Dasein into the anyone, Heidegger theorizes Dasein as having no possibilities. Rather, Dasein’s possibilities are dictated by the they, *das Man*, or the anyone.

This mode of Dasein’s existence can be described, in my opinion, as the depersonalization of Dasein’s “personhood” or abandonment of its “I-hood” with reference to its uncritical participation in and acceptance of its “worldhood” or existence. In such mode of existence, Dasein’s consciousness is taken over by public consciousness and the *naïve* or public interpretation of things. From Nietzsche’s perspective, this *naïve* public interpretation of things finds expression in the concept of the “herd.”⁷³ Such a mode of existence, according to Heidegger, differs from the authentic mode in which Dasein clears away concealments and obscurities and breaks up the disguises with which it is surrounded or which bar its disclosure.⁷⁴ For Heidegger, the phenomenon of anxiety constitutes one of the conditions for this authenticity of Dasein.

In a sense, this attainment of Dasein’s authentic way of living can be likened to Nietzsche’s concept of the superman (*Übermensch*) or the master

71 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 165.

72 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 165.

73 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Holingdale (New York: Vintage, 1989), 120–139. Nietzsche’s concept of the “herd” has similar connotation with his idea of the “slave” as discussed in his concept of the herd or slave morality and as distinguished from his idea of the master or the master morality. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (New York: Vintage, 1966), 204–208.

74 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 167.

who affirms himself and his existence.⁷⁵ Importantly, the authentic mode of Dasein's Being does not presuppose a condition of detachment from the they, but an existential modification of the they. However, essentially, Dasein is in the with-world, which describes the average world—the world of everydayness, where Dasein relates with the Others. Admittedly, in Dasein's basic mode of living, Dasein remains a being that exists alongside the Others. In Heidegger's estimation, "with this interpretation of Being-with and Being-one's-Self in the 'they,' the question of the 'who' of the everydayness of Being-with-one-another is answered."⁷⁶

***Ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others: Implications for transcultural philosophizing**

In this section, I will focus on Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology and Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others, with a view to showing their areas of convergence and divergence, as well the implications of these concepts for transcultural philosophy. As already hinted above, transcultural philosophy represents a style of philosophizing that extends beyond the confines of one particular culture to dialogue with other cultures. Simply put, it is a cross-tradition approach to doing philosophy—a constructive engagement or dialogue between one philosophic tradition or cultural perspective and another. It is an approach to doing philosophy that transcends ethnocentric reductionism and reclusivism.

Undoubtedly, a discourse of this transcultural nature, such as an engagement of *ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others' ontologies of Asouzu and Heidegger from the Igbo and German traditions respectively, will invariably pose some challenges for philosophy and knowledge in general, such as how these two different cultures can understand themselves, learn from each other and broaden their cultural, conceptual, and intellectual horizons. Such learning and understanding is possible in a transcultural dialogue of the Igbo and German cultures, as I have articulated in this paper.

For instance, the German or Heideggerian scholar can engage and dialogue with, complement, learn, and understand the cultural dimensions of

75 Nietzsche's concept of the superman (the "overman" or the master) represents an authentic mode of living, where the individual affirms his life and existence and chooses himself or takes his decision without being controlled or overridden by the public opinion or being influenced by the way things have been publicly interpreted. For Nietzsche, the superman represents an authentic style of living. Nietzsche's concept of the superman can be likened to Dasein's authentic mode of living in Heidegger because the superman and the authentic Dasein, in both Nietzsche and Heidegger, affirm their existence and make their decisions without being influenced by the public, the "herd," the "they," or *das Man*. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Adrian Del Caro (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6–7, 45; Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 204–208; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 167.

76 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 167–168.

ibuanyidanda ontology as concretely expressed in some Igbo cultural practices like *ichu nta*—traditional hunting. In the Igbo traditional hunting practice, for sacrificial purposes, the services of traditional professional hunters are utilized. In this cultural activity, the services of professional and traditional drummers and singers are also used to energize the hunters to capture the appropriate and desired animal needed for such sacrifice.⁷⁷ In this process, no hunter is considered as more skilled or important than the other. Rather, every hunter is regarded as equally important, and their united, interdependent, and cooperative action is believed to result in capturing the desired animal. This mutually interdependent and cooperative action expresses the traditional Igbo cultural practice of *ibuanyidanda*. On the other hand, the Igbo or Asouzuan scholar can also engage with, learn, and understand the German or Heideggerian concept of Dasein-with-Others as expressed in Heidegger's concepts of the they, *das Man* and publicness.

The engagement of the above two forms of thought—*ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others—will advance transcultural philosophizing and the development of philosophy, as I further elaborate below, as it will call our attention to the fact that no one view of reality has an absolute understanding of reality, hence the need for mutual complementary, interdependent, or joint efforts to reach a fuller view of reality.

As argued above, Asouzu displays a great interest in what I have described as transcultural philosophy. This interest is evident in Asouzu's assertion that reality has some missing links that must be filled with complementary interdependency of different philosophical cultures.⁷⁸ Heidegger corroborates Asouzu's view when he states that we only philosophize when we enter into a discussion with other philosophers and talk through with them that which they speak about.⁷⁹ These perspectives, as expressed by Asouzu and Heidegger, present us with the basis for transcultural philosophizing.

Philosophers like Ram Adhar Mall and Ernest W. Ranly have raised questions regarding how different cultural traditions can contribute to and benefit from one another.⁸⁰ Even though Mall and Ranly did not use the term transcultural philosophy, instead using only "intercultural" and "cross-cultural" philosophy respectively, it is important to note that the term "transcultural philosophy," as I have employed it in this paper, complements rather than contradicts the concepts and objectives of intercultural and

77 Egbeke Aja, *Doing African Philosophy* (Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press, 2015), 114.

78 Asouzu, "'Ibuanyidanda' (Complimentary Reflection)," 16–29.

79 Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?*, 67.

80 See Ram Adhar Mall, *Intercultural Philosophy* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000); see also Ernest W. Ranly, "Cross-Cultural Philosophizing," *Philosophy Today* 35, no.1 (Spring 1991): 63–72.

cross-cultural philosophy. In the context of transcultural philosophy, I will focus my attention on establishing a common ground in the thought of Asouzu and Heidegger, for “such commonality will enable us to perceive the areas where there are places for both cultures to learn from each other.”⁸¹

Admittedly, Asouzu and Heidegger may not be concerned with the same question. This is partly due to the fact that the authors do not have the same cultural and historical backgrounds. Despite their differences, however, they share the universal tradition and problem of philosophy (such as the question of truth, value, etc.),⁸² which is rooted in continuous dialogue with other minds. One may therefore submit that the ontologies of *ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others provide Asouzu and Heidegger with the basis for transcultural philosophizing, to the extent that they give room for a meaningful and constructive engagement and understanding of these ontologies in the Igbo and German philosophical traditions. Such meaningful and constructive engagement has the capacity to broaden the intellectual and cultural base of these traditions.

For instance, the German or Heideggerian scholar will be acquainted with another dimension of Igbo cultural expression of *ibuanyidanda* (apart from that expressed in the Igbo traditional hunting for sacrificial purposes, as highlighted above), as concretized in the event of death (Igbo: *onwu*). In the Igbo tradition, death is perceived as an event that affects the entire community. That is to say, the immediate family of the deceased is not the only family that bears the emotional, financial, and psychological aspects of death. The community takes charge of the entire affair, including the burial arrangements. The food contribution rite (Igbo: *itukota nri*) is particularly illustrative. Each family in the community, usually represented by a matriarch, prepares a delicacy for the guests. No family’s contribution is considered to be more or less important than another’s, due to the belief that mutual complementary efforts of each family makes the burial task successful, thus expressing the *ibuanyidanda* philosophy. Even though Heidegger describes this mode of Dasein’s existence as inauthentic, scholars from both traditions—German and Igbo—will understand and learn from these various expressions and dimensions of community living as respectively enunciated in the Heideggerian and Asouzuan concepts of Dasein-with-Others and *ibuanyidanda*. Such acquaintance, engagement, and learning from both cultural traditions will promote transcultural philosophy.

81 Chukwuelobe, “Eternal Return and ‘Ilo Uwa,’” 45.

82 See Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 7–20; Jason M. Wirth, “Reviewed Work(s): *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective* by Kwasi Wiredu,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 38, no. 1 (March 2000), 157–159.

The justification for transcultural philosophizing is “rooted in the intimate link between philosophy and culture.”⁸³ For instance, one can argue that the Aristotelian and Platonic philosophic enterprises emerged from their dialogue with the philosophic and cultural traditions of the pre-Socratics.⁸⁴ Similarly, some African philosophies can be said to harness non-philosophical principles or specific elements⁸⁵ in African culture.⁸⁶ This argument regarding the intimate link between philosophy and culture does not aim at reductionism as it does not try to reduce philosophy to culture.⁸⁷ Rather, it tries to establish that philosophy simultaneously grows from culture and transcends culture,⁸⁸ and that this is made possible through hermeneutics.⁸⁹

It can be argued, with good reason, that hermeneutics has broad implications for transcultural philosophic reflection,⁹⁰ especially with reference to Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* and Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others. Hermeneutics can provide Asouzu and Heidegger with the necessary instruments to interrogate, interpret, question, and transcend their cultures (the fruitfulness of the hermeneutic instrument in the above direction will be explored towards the end of the next section.). Admittedly, hermeneutics makes for the possibility of harmonization, and epistemic transcendence or knowledge sharing between Asouzu and Heidegger. To be more precise, hermeneutics offers a possible platform for the migration of ideas, texts, and transcultural philosophizing.

83 Ojimba and Agada, “Nietzsche's Idea of Eternal Recurrence,” 46.

84 The pre-Socratic philosophers include philosophers like Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, etc. For detailed discussion of these philosophers, see Kathleen Freeman, trans. *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers: A Complete Translation of the Fragments in Diels* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 1–60.

85 Such specific elements include religion, language, myth, folklores etc.

86 See Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*; John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969); Okonda Okolo, “Tradition and Destiny: Horizons of an African Hermeneutics,” in *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings*, ed. Tsenay Serequeberhan (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1991); Onyewuenyi, *African Belief in Reincarnation: A Philosophical Reappraisal*; Ojimba and Agada, “Nietzsche's Idea of Eternal Recurrence.”

87 Anthony Chimankpam Ojimba, “The Case Against Ethnophilosophy,” in *Ethnophilosophy and the Search for the Wellspring of African Philosophy*, ed. Ada Agada (Cham: Springer Nature, 2022), 105–116. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78897-1_7.

88 See Anthony Chimankpam Ojimba, “The Case Against Ethnophilosophy,” 113.

89 Ojimba and Agada, “Nietzsche's Idea of Eternal Recurrence,” 46; Chukwuelobe, “Eternal Return and ‘Ilo Uwa,’” 45; Mesembe Ita Edet, “Innocent Onyewuenyi's ‘Philosophical Reappraisal of the African Belief in Reincarnation’: A Conversational Study,” *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 5, no. 1 (January–June 2016), 76–99, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ft.v5i1.6>; Theophilus Okere, *African Philosophy: A Historical-Hermeneutical Investigation of the Conditions of Its Possibility* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983).

90 Ranly, “Cross-Cultural Philosophizing,” 199.

A hermeneutical engagement with *ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others from Asouzu's and Heidegger's perspectives might open up the possibility of the transgression and transcendence of boundaries imposed by culture.⁹¹

Convergence and divergence in the Asouzuan *ibuanyidanda* ontology and Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others

At this juncture, a brief elucidation of the core claims that underlie both Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology and Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others seems to be necessary. It is important to note that Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology is dependent on common sharing, complementarity, mutual relation, and cooperative action.⁹² Similarly, for Heidegger, the idea of Being-with, as well as Dasein-with-Others, depends not on the spatial proximity of two beings, but their mutual relation.⁹³ Likewise, Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* presupposes that one belongs to others and enhances the power of others. This idea is reinforced by the concept of *igwebuiké*—"the community is the strength"—in the Igbo African terminology. In a related manner, Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-of-Others projects the idea of one's belongingness to others and enhancement of the Others' power.⁹⁴

Another area of convergence between the thought of Asouzu and Heidegger has to do with the fact of a shared world. Asouzu's interpretation of reality projects being as a conglomeration of missing links, which gains its full significance and meaning in mutual sharing, complementarity, and cooperative action. For Asouzu, this common sharing, complementarity, and interdependent cooperative action is only possible because of the sharing of a common world. This reinforces his above-mentioned concept of *ka sọ mụ adi na*, which is translated in the English version as *that I may not exist alone*.⁹⁵ For Asouzu, an isolated existence is thus inconceivable, and existing in the world presupposes an engagement with others in mutual complementarity. Similarly, in Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others, there is a presupposition of sharing of one world with the Other, which constitutes their Being-together.⁹⁶ From Heidegger's perspective, there is never any completely isolated Dasein. In other words, being in the world is basically Being-with and Being-together-with-Others. This point of convergence of

91 See Ojimba and Agada, "Nietzsche's Idea of Eternal Recurrence."

92 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 260, 266.

93 Heidegger, *Being and Time*; see also Kockelmans, *Heidegger's "Being and Time,"* 138.

94 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164.

95 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 301.

96 See Kockelmans, *Heidegger's "Being and Time,"* 140.

thoughts in the philosophies of the two authors can facilitate transcultural philosophical conversation, and aid mutual learning and sharing of thought between these two cultural traditions.

The following anecdote might illustrate how the convergence of thoughts in two different philosophic traditions can promote transcultural philosophizing. I was recently invited to a virtual conference organized by the Centre for Comparative Philosophy, San Jose State University, USA on the theme “Cross-Tradition Engagement on Philosophy as a Way of Life and Worldview: Perspectives from African, Islamic, Latin-American, and Western Perspectives.” I presented a paper entitled: “*Ubuntu's* Ontological Account in African Philosophy and its Cross-Tradition Engagement on the Issue of Being versus Becoming.”⁹⁷ In my dialogue with one of the organizers and presenters, who was of Chinese origin, I discovered that *ubuntu* ontology in African philosophy has a close affinity with the Chinese *yin-yang* metaphysical vision of the *Yi jing*. My discovery of this point of convergence between Chinese *yin-yang* metaphysics and African *ubuntu* ontology fueled my interest to engage with these two traditions of thought, thereby promoting a transcultural dialogue. In addition, the conference also facilitated the interests of other scholars to engage with the philosophies of other cultures, thereby advancing the cause of transculturality.

In Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology, being is irrevocably tied to meaning.⁹⁸ In the Igbo language, meaning is depicted as something having “head and tail-end,” which signifies, for the Igbo, something that is meaningful and serves a missing link of reality. Similarly, for Asouzu, something is considered meaningful when it complements something else or serves a missing link of reality.⁹⁹ The above assertion implies that reality or being is intimately linked to meaning in Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda*, as long as meaning is depicted as that which serves a missing link of reality or that which has head and tail-end (Igbo: *ihe ndi nwere isi na odu*).¹⁰⁰

The same can be said regarding Heidegger. This is because, in Heidegger, meaning is also tied to Dasein's relation with itself and its relations with Others and the world. Furthermore, for Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda*, the human subject can only be conceptualized within the framework of mutual complementary relationship with other existent realities.¹⁰¹ Heidegger expresses a similar

97 For the published version of this paper, see Ojimba, “*Ubuntu's* Ontological Account in African Philosophy.”

98 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 261.

99 See Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 257–255

100 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 259–265.

101 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 301.

view when he maintains that a completely isolated Dasein is existentially untenable. This is because, for Heidegger, Dasein exists, primordially, as a Being-with-Others, which implies that the “with” is something of the character of Dasein.¹⁰²

For Asouzu, the human subject is the only being that can consciously articulate their relationship with other beings.¹⁰³ Similarly, in Heidegger’s articulation of Dasein-with-Others, Dasein is described as the only being that can understand itself as well as other beings and its relationship with them.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, Asouzu’s *ibuanyidanda* attempts to bring out the communal and communalistic aspects of being. This is encapsulated in Asouzu’s statement that “we, in our diversities, but in the mutual complementation of our efforts are this *danda*, those ants that have the capacity to surmount any difficult tasks when they complement their efforts.”¹⁰⁵ Thus, in the human interdependent mutual cooperative efforts and action, no task is insurmountable for them (humans), hence, *ibuanyidanda*. Similarly, Heidegger’s ontology of Dasein-with-Others brings out the idea of a community, as seen in the concept of the *they* and the idea of common sharing.

A transcultural engagement with these two philosophies will allow scholars from both traditions to learn more about the conceptual and cultural backgrounds of the two ontologies: *ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others. The Heideggerian scholar, for example, will have the opportunity to become acquainted with the cultural background and the social-ontological context of *ibuanyidanda* and its emphasis on the notion of missing links, especially as it is concretized in the Igbo tradition of *ikwa ogwe*, translated as moving heavy logs.¹⁰⁶ *Ikwa ogwe* is a sociocultural practice and festival in Igbo culture that entails groups of young people, known as “the age grade” (usually between the ages of eighteen and forty years), assembling at the village square where they move heavy logs of wood from one location of the Igbo community or forest to another, spurred on by the villagers using traditional drum beats and dances. One can witness, in this practice, the concretization of the idea of mutual complementation of efforts and cooperative action that lies at the heart of the social ontology of *ibuanyidanda*. Each participant serves as a missing link in the conglomeration of other missing links represented by the other members of the group. It is when they come together as a group that the missing links are complete, which leads to the realization of particular goals, as the task of moving heavy logs symbolizes.

102 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 154–155.

103 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 301.

104 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 32–32.

105 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 420.

106 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 123–126.

This is why a typical Igbo person believes that when people come together to urinate in the same spot at the same time, it produces lots of bubbles (Igbo: *agbakota aka nyuṣo mamiri, oḡbaa ofufu*).¹⁰⁷ The concrete effects of this mutual complementation of efforts on philosophy, as espoused above by *ibuanyidanda* ontology, is that no one philosophic tradition or worldview would see itself as having an absolute or comprehensive understanding of reality, hence the need for complementarity, the joint efforts of other philosophic traditions, to reach a fuller understanding of reality. Similarly, at the international community level, much can be accomplished through the mutual complementation and complementary efforts of countries as advanced by *ibuanyidanda*.

On the other hand, Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others and Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology might be applied to tackle the problem of racism at the global level, even though, of course, Heidegger may not typically be considered anti-racist.¹⁰⁸ This application of the Dasein-with-Others and *ibuanyidanda* ontologies of Heidegger and Asouzu in tackling the problem of racism would require that each human (each Dasein) begins to see the other humans (other Daseins), regardless of race, as a significant Other equal to one's own self (one's own Dasein) and to see one's own existence as dependent on the existence of the Other. This is a logical continuation of Heidegger's assertion that an isolated Dasein is existentially inconceivable and that Dasein invariably exists alongside Others. Obtaining the above described type of relation between one's self and other selves reduces to a minimum the tendency towards discrimination, either on the basis of skin color, race, language, religion, or values. This has the potential to usher in an era of peaceful and harmonious co-existence among human beings. Above all, a transcultural dialogue between the ontologies of *ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others, as I have explored in this paper, has the capacity to advance attitudes of solidarity, tolerance, cooperation, complementarity, and interdependence between Igbo and German cultures by expanding their respective cultural and intellectual horizons and encouraging treatment of the Other as equal to one's own self.

Despite the aforementioned areas of convergence in the thoughts of the above authors, there are, of course, areas of divergence. For instance, in Heidegger's conception of Dasein's relationship with the Others, Dasein stands in total subjection.¹⁰⁹ As articulated in the concept of the they, Dasein

107 An Igbo adage not tied any particular person or source.

108 The racial undertones in Heidegger's elaboration of the notion of the "Volk" have been heavily critiqued. However, as I argue throughout this paper, his concept of Dasein-with-Others and his belief that in dialogue with others have significant transcultural implications. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 153–163; Heidegger, *What is Philosophy?*, 67.

109 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164.

loses its individuality and freedom to the they, which makes it inauthentic. This is different in the case of Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda*. Rather than standing in subjection to the Others, the individual's relationship with the Others is construed as one of complementarity and mutual interdependent cooperation, which makes them authentic rather than inauthentic. Furthermore, in Heidegger's articulation of Dasein-with-Others, there is no definiteness in the idea of the Other—the Other is indefinite (not defined).¹¹⁰ Such indefiniteness, however, does not apply to the Other in Asouzu's elaboration of *ibuanyidanda*, especially in its traditional Igbo-African sense.

In Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda*, especially in its traditional Igbo-African understanding, there is a sense in which we can say that the individual is submerged within the authority of the community, and this is where the concept of *igwebuike* (the community as the strength) comes to the fore. However, this sense of submersion of the individual into the community is interpreted within the framework of complementarity in Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda*, as noted above. In Heidegger's concept of Dasein-with-Others, the particular Dasein is similarly submerged within the community or the they.¹¹¹ However, in Asouzu's view, this sense of the individual's surrender to the community projects itself in terms of complementarity, as already pointed out, whereas for Heidegger, it shows itself in terms of subjection and dictatorship, as evidenced by his concept of the they, *das Man* or publicness. Here arises the question of individual freedom, which the public or *das Man* renders insignificant.¹¹² The individual or the particular Dasein does not challenge the authority of the they or the public, thereby relinquishing its personal freedom to the they.¹¹³ At the same time, for Heidegger, the they relieves the particular Dasein of any answerability and offers it protection. The they, in Heidegger, does not tolerate any critique of its authority by any particular Dasein. Thus, it was always the they, who is responsible for anything and no one. In Heidegger's words, "it 'was' always the 'they' who did it, and yet it can be said that it has been 'no one.'" ¹¹⁴ The they is constantly invoked, if any sense of decision and responsibility is in play.

Another area of divergence between the Heideggerian Dasein-with-Others and the Asouzuan *ibuanyidanda* is in the area of the primordial nature of Dasein's existence. For Heidegger, existence is already a Being-together-with-Others. This informs his view that Dasein, from its beginning, or primordially,

110 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164.

111 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164; see also Kockelmans, *Heidegger's "Being and Time,"* 143.

112 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 164.

113 Kockelmans, *Heidegger's "Being and Time,"* 143.

114 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 165.

is a “they self.”¹¹⁵ This, however, is intricately bound up with the concept of *das Man*, which supposedly contributes to the inauthenticity of Dasein. Asouzu’s *ibuanyidanda* does not imply this because *ibuanyidanda*, in Asouzu’s estimation, does not presuppose that the subject is, from the beginning, a they self or a public self. Rather, for Asouzu, the human subject consciously develops this spirit of complementarity and community in the process of life, and this complementary and cooperative spirit makes him authentic. For Heidegger also, Being-with reckons with Others, even without to the desire to have anything to do with them.¹¹⁶ This is not the same in Asouzu’s *ibuanyidanda*, where there is a conscious effort by all to complement and cooperate with Others.

For Heidegger, when Dasein becomes inauthentic, consequent upon its absorption and immersion into the they, *das Man*, or the public, something is required to bring it back to itself. One of the remedies to such inauthenticity is the concept of anxiety. According to Heidegger, “anxiety ‘does not know’ what that in the face of which it is anxious is ... that which threatens cannot bring itself close from a definite direction within what is close by; it is already ‘there,’ and yet nowhere; it is so close that it is oppressive and stifles one’s breath, and yet it is nowhere.”¹¹⁷ Heidegger posits that the condition under which one has anxiety is characterized by the obstinacy of “nothing” and “nowhere.” This obstinacy of the “nowhere” and “nothing”—“within-the-world,” as he puts it—means that as a phenomenon, “*the world as such is that in the face of which one has anxiety.*”¹¹⁸ Heidegger contends that anxiety restricts Dasein from understanding itself solely in terms of the way in which things have been interpreted publicly. Thus, “anxiety throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about—its authentic potentiality-for-Being-in-the-world. Anxiety individualizes [personalizes] Dasein for its ownmost Being-in-the-world, which as something that understands, projects itself essentially upon possibilities.”¹¹⁹ What Heidegger means here is that anxiety detaches Dasein from the public, the they, or *das Man*. It prevents Dasein from understanding itself and the world in terms of public or communal interpretation. Thus, anxiety brings Dasein back to itself, and this is Heidegger’s interpretation of authenticity. Anxiety frees Dasein from the they and grants it freedom to take hold of itself.¹²⁰ Such a view does not obtain

115 Kockelmans, *Heidegger's “Being and Time,”* 144.

116 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 163.

117 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 231.

118 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 231. Italics in original.

119 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 232.

120 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 232.

in Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology. Instead, for Asouzu, the immersion and submission of the individual, who is only a missing link of reality, into the community of other missing links that makes for the completeness of reality, is perceived from the angle of mutual complementarity. This is authenticity for Asouzu.

According to Heidegger, the notion of being was clouded and misrepresented by the philosophers that came before him. This resulted in what he terms the forgetfulness of being, which highlighted, in his view, the necessity to reassess the question of the meaning of being.¹²¹ This forgetfulness was engendered by the prejudices of previous ontologies concerning the self-evidence, universality, and indefinability of being.¹²² Heidegger deconstructed these previous ontologies or approaches to being and contended that they do not give room for a clear understanding of being. In place of these previous ontologies, Heidegger posited the phenomenological approach toward the study and understanding of being, which takes as its point of departure the understanding that human being is encapsulated in the concept of Dasein. Dasein thus represented being in general and the being of human in particular, and the understanding of the being of human translates into the understanding of being in general.¹²³ The phenomenological approach posited by Heidegger as the authentic method of studying being allows "that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself."¹²⁴ This explains why Heidegger posited that only as "phenomenology is ontology possible,"¹²⁵ which might be taken to mean that only when we allow being to manifest itself can we understand it. This is consistent with Heidegger's conviction that being is something hidden that requires manifestation and phenomenology allows for this manifestation of being.

The above view does not apply exactly to Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology. Even though Asouzu, like Heidegger, criticized previous ontologies because of their lack of emphasis on relationality and complementarity,¹²⁶ he does not wish to remedy this lack through phenomenology, as Heidegger did. Rather, for him, this lack can be remedied using *ibuanyidanda* complementary ontological framework, which leans on the complementary traditional African ontology, while simultaneously seeking a philosophy that transcends

121 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 2–35; Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 1–27.

122 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 22–24.

123 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 26–35.

124 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 58.

125 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 60.

126 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 180–200. For relevant sections of Tempels' work, see Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 23–31; Kagame, *La Philosophie Bantu Comparée*, 1–334.

this ontology in a universal and complementary manner (that is, a philosophy that transcends cultural boundaries or perspectives, to accommodate the philosophic traditions and cultural perspectives of others).¹²⁷

Against the backdrop of Heidegger's idea of Dasein-with-Others, one can observe his sense of the hermeneutic hegemony, rigidity, or dictatorship of *das Man* or publicness, which allegedly dictates and interprets everything on behalf of Dasein.¹²⁸ Dasein's interpretive freedom is absorbed by publicness, the they, which contributes to its inauthenticity. This is different in Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda*, where one can instead observe the idea of interpretive or hermeneutic flexibility and dynamism as every interpretation offered is recognized and considered in a mutually complementary interdependent manner. Furthermore, in Heidegger, Being-with-one-another has the character of "distantiality," while in Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda*, especially in the traditional Igbo sense, being with one another depicts complementarity and mutual interdependent cooperative action. This is instantiated in the action of *danda*, the ants. Hence, Asouzu maintains that "we, in our diversities, but in the mutual complementation of our efforts, are this *danda*, those ants that have the capacity to surmount very difficult task when they complement their efforts."¹²⁹

These considerations highlight the challenges of a transcultural philosophic dialogue. They show that there are areas of convergence as well as divergence between Asouzu's idea of *ibuanyidanda* and Heidegger's concept of Dasein-with-Others. These areas of convergence and divergence might facilitate a mutual understanding, interpretation, and critique of these two forms of thought, and this might be made possible through hermeneutics.

The hermeneutic tool can be utilized to bring Asouzu and Heidegger into a transcultural philosophic dialogue. This approach can harmonize the ideas of Asouzu and Heidegger, and at the same time, it can also facilitate a critique of one or the other of these two thinkers.

To illustrate, as discussed above, Heidegger interprets Dasein's authenticity and freedom from the perspective of Dasein's liberation of itself from the dictatorial power of the they, while Asouzu interprets the individual's authenticity and freedom from the angle of mutual relationality and complementarity of the communal authority. Heidegger's ideas of Dasein's freedom and authenticity might be employed to question the idea of the individual's freedom, as articulated in Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology, which may ultimately result in the individual's freedom from struggle with the communal authority. This struggle of the individual's freedom with the communal authority is implicit in *ibuanyidanda* ontology, as Asouzu seems to

127 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 210–227.

128 See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 149–168.

129 Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda*, 420.

create the impression that the communal authority takes precedence over the freedom of the individual.

On the other hand, *ibuanyidanda* might also be utilized to critique and balance Heidegger's ontology, especially regarding Heidegger's concept of death as individualizing Dasein. Recall that one of the cultural expressions of *ibuanyidanda* complementary ontology in Igbo society is in the communal nature of death. The Igbo conception contrasts sharply with Heidegger's, who sees death as particularizing and individualizing Dasein. This Heideggerian concept of death might encourage extreme individualism and the withdrawal of the individual's cooperation with the Others, especially as the individual comes to the realization that death, as Heidegger theorizes, is personalized or particularized to the individual—that the individual dies alone and not with Others. As a result of this realization, the individual might want to be concerned only with his or her self and affairs, ignoring the mutual cooperation of other individuals. The tendency for self-concern, individualism, and possible withdrawal of cooperation of individual from the Others that is implied in Heidegger's concept of death can be balanced and complemented with *ibuanyidanda* complementary ontology, as expressed in the traditional Igbo conception of death as a communal event, as discussed above.

Certainly, a hermeneutic of *ibuanyidanda* and Dasein-with-Others, from the perspectives of Asouzu and Heidegger respectively, as I have attempted above, is a suitable means to bring these two thinkers into a transcultural philosophic dialogue.

Conclusion

This paper set out to examine Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology and Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others with a view to showing their areas of convergence and divergence, and, most importantly, their implications for transcultural philosophy. Transcultural philosophy, as I have defined it in this paper, is a style of philosophizing that adopts the transcultural critique of bounded notions of culture and encourages dialogue across assumed cultural boundaries. With the intention of working through this concept of transcultural philosophy, this paper delineated Asouzu's *ibuanyidanda* ontology, provided an outline of Heidegger's ontology of Dasein-with-Others, and attempted to place them in a productive transcultural dialogue. Although there are significant differences (in addition to commonalities) between Asouzu's and Heidegger's views of reality, I hope to have demonstrated that a transcultural dialogue can help to facilitate a meaningful and constructive understanding of these two traditions.