

SEMINARY OF SS. PETER AND PAUL, BODIJA
IBADAN, OYO STATE

BODIJA STUDIES
DEPARTMENTAL LECTURES OF PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

VOLUME I

2012 – 2017

APRIL 2017

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DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

LECTURE SERIES ORGANIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The following Essays represent series of Lectures organized as Inaugural and Departmental Lectures by the Department of Philosophy of the Seminary of Ss. Peter and Paul, Bodija, Ibadan, Oyo State from May 2014 – April 2017

THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF THE DOMINANT CURRENT OF MORALITY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Being the Departmental Lecture of Philosophy on the 16th of May 2014

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In this lecture, I attempt to carry out, in a singular action, the dual task of presenting a picture of the dominant moral attitudes in the twenty-first century, and identify the philosophical foundation of these attitudes. For, philosophy's powerful influence on the formation and development of any culture or system – be it moral, social or political – cannot be overemphasized. Every society or age has its own peculiar orientation as a base for enacting its own superstructure. This also constitutes the lens with which reality is approached and understood. And, perhaps, it is appropriate for the sake of sharpness, to state this philosophical orientation in contrast with that of the modern period. The modern period, on the one hand, is represented in the philosophical activities or searching for, and bringing to the fore, some singular, fixed, universal or transcendental set of principles and methods constituting a grand totalizing framework of reference for discourse, actions, policies and institutions. For, according to Jurgen Habermas, "If we imagine the philosophical discussion of the modern period reconstructed as a judicial hearing, it would be deciding a single question: how is reliable knowledge possible."¹ Here, attention is given to notions and ideals such as homogeneity, universality, objectivity, truth, rationality and reality. On the other hand, the postmodern orientation characteristic of the twenty-first century privileges heterogeneity, discontinuity, pluralism, difference, relativism and historicity, and in the rather reckless spirit of anarchism and chaos theories in epistemology.

It was Philip Kitcher, for instance, who echoed the postmodern vision of relativism that ethics is something we have worked out together for most of our history as a species. According to him, the needs that prompt our cooperative activities lie deep in our human characteristics, and were derived from our human past.² This vision has been further stretched by Paul K. Feyerabend in arguing that a moral character cannot be created by argument, "education" or an act of will.³ It cannot be created by any kind of planned action, he argues, "whether scientific, political, moral or religious."⁴ In his words, like true love, it is a gift, not an achievement. It depends on accidents as parental affections, friendship, and a delicate balance between self-confidence and a concern for others.⁵ He was, however, quick to point out that "we can create conditions that favour the balance; we cannot create the balance itself."⁶ The question that looms large at this point is what constitutes the values of morality in the postmodern? In other words:

What can we do in an age like ours that has not yet achieved that balance?
What can we do while our criminals. Their judges and Henchmen, while the

philosophers, poets, prophets who try to force us into their patterns, and while we, who are collaborators or victims or simply by-standers, are still in a barbaric state? The answer is obvious: with a few exceptions we shall act in a barbaric way. We shall punish, kill, meet violence with violence, pitch teachers against students, set intellectual leaders against the public and against each other; we shall speak about transgressions in resounding moral terms and demand that violation of the law be prevented by force. But while continuing our own lives in this manner, we should at least give our children a chance. We should offer them love and security, not principles, and under no circumstances should we burden them with the crimes of the past. They may have to deal for generations with the physical, juridical, and financial consequences of our actions and with the chaos we leave behind; but they are free of any moral historical national guilt.⁷

The forgoing captures the character and content of the moral orientation of the twenty-first century.

A number of assumptions underscore the above position, and to that extent constitute the philosophical basis on which it is erected. One such assumption is that the theories, facts, and procedures that constitute knowledge, reality, rationality and morality at any particular time result from specific historical developments and any such theories, facts and procedures cannot be history-independent realities – a rejection of the idea that tradition independent point of view can overrule traditions. There are different points of view, ways of thinking and knowing. In the same vein, moral theories branch out in different directions, use different and sometimes incommensurable concepts, and are evaluated in diverse ways. What counts as evidence or as an important or sound moral procedure depends on time, profession and the group.⁸ Reality can be, and indeed, approached in many ways, and for every statement, theory, or point of view believed to be true with good reasons there exist conflicting arguments. Human experience, Paul Feyerabend argues, is not restricted to merely intellectual matters, but includes concrete human feelings, faith and empathy, and involves more than just one single medium of discourse it is generally supposed to be. It is not a product of reason.⁹

In addition to the above, it is pertinent to note that what is left, in the twenty-first century, of the response to the demand by the modern period for principles of morality is represented in the following:

1. A minority that still follows the old ethical system.
2. A yet smaller minority that believes conscientiously in a new rational interpretation of reality, adopting new ideals of conduct and standards of moral behaviour.
3. A great majority following a mixed pragmatic code of morality made up of (a) the striving for individual wealth and enjoyment, (b) certain taboos left over from the old culture, for example, against murder, theft, adultery and so on, (c) to a slight extent, a top dressing of the new moral ideals from (b) above, and (d) an actual social ethics of group egotism or tribal patriotism.

A proper representation of the spirit of the present age can be stated thus: “a growing culture narcissism, in which the highest values are placed on self-fulfillment, physical attractiveness,

pleasure, and the accumulation of possessions. This, in turn, has contributed to the breakdown of the family and the assault on human dignity which has been described as the ‘culture of death’.”¹⁰

The philosophical foundation of the twenty-first century condition reached its present state of conceptual and epistemological relativism represented today in the epistemology of anarchism and pluralism, prescribing that anything goes. Paul K. Feyerabend, Richard Rorty, Thomas Kuhn, Donald Davison, to mention a few; represent great actors in this camp. What was bequeathed to the contemporary period was made up of those assumptions or presumptions or axioms represented in the epistemology of Archimedes, Rene Descartes, and Francis Bacon, arguing for a fixed point of references. True, the dawn of the twenty-first century was greeted with the birth of logical atomism, Positivism and Empiricism. This was also complemented by the philosophy of relativity of Albert Einstein, followed by the Science of Quanta, which announced the canonization of the principles of post modernity in culture and geography, quantum theory in Physics, chaos and quanta geometry in Mathematics, and fluid mechanics. All these form the basis for the twenty-first century attitude towards life and reality; making morality a matter for historical and cultural contexts: nothing is given, and reality is actually created. Truth does not exist, and objectivity is an illusion.

In all, the human condition as we find it in the twenty-first century must be subjected to the scrutiny of certain moral ethos prescribed in the principle of “common good”: “that which belongs to everyone by virtue of their common humanity.”¹¹ By the common good, it is understood “the sum total of the social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.”¹² Promoting the common good cannot be pursued by treating each individual separately and looking for the highest “total benefits”, in some kind of utilitarian addition. Because we are interdependent, the common good is more like a multiplication sum, where if any one number is zero, then the total is always zero. If anyone is left out and deprived of what is essential, then the common good has been betrayed. In order to achieve the common good, it is suggested here that we received every overture of twenty-first century morality with a consistent skepticism. For according to George Santayana:

Scepticism is the chastity of the intellect, and it is shameful to surrender it too soon or to the first comer: there is nobility in preserving it coolly and proudly through long youth, until at last, in the ripeness of instinct and discretion, it can be exchanged for fidelity and happiness.¹³

As we navigate through the twenty-first century condition, I find the state of mind represented in the above a preferred guide to one characterize by confusion and indecision represented in Gabriel Okara’s “Piano and Drums.”

Terrorism and the Ambivalence of Unity: Nigeria at 100

Being the Departmental Lecture of Philosophy on the 21st of May 2014

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Introduction

Nigeria is celebrating her 100 years of existence as a nation state going by the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorate in 1914, where the British, having received their old share of parts of Africa or “piece of chocolate cake” in words of Chinua Achebe, in the Berlin conference of 1884-85 began a process of effective occupation and subsequent forceful joining together of diverse peoples and their culture into one whole called “the Nigeria State” in 1914.

However, the political history of the Nigerian state has been tainted with diverse forms and levels of socio-political violence that threatened the existence and unity of the state. In the 1980s Islamic extremist groups such as the Maitatsine and Muslim Brotherhood which depict themselves as Islamically “just”, fighting to wrest the soul of Islam from corrupt Sufism, establishing a Muslim Umma and reducing what they perceived postcolonial state institutions structured in a favour of Christianity caused unmatched violence within the polity (Kukah 1993). By the late 1980s, Evangelical Christians or Pentecostal Christians formed vigilantes to violently resist the goals of the Islamic extremist groups or movements whose aim is to Islamize the Nigerian state. This was evident in 1987 where the Christians fought the Muslim in Kafachan, Zaria, Kaduna, Wusasa, Funtua and Kastina, although the Christians suffered more losses as 152 churches five mosques were destroyed (Falola 1998). Similarly, in 1992 fundamentalist Christian groups such as the Christian kajes in Zango-kataf, Kaduna state fought Muslim Hausa-Fulani, this resulted in deaths of both Christians and Muslims. (Haynes 1996).

From early 2000 till date, the state has seen the emergence of other extremist groups such as the Al-Sunna WalJamma, “Followers of the Prophet”, widely known as “the Nigerian Taliban”, the Jama’atulAlhulSunnahLidda’watiwal Jihad also known as Boko Haram and its splinter group, Jama’atuAnsarulMuslimina Fi Biladis- Sudan (popularly called (Ansaru). These extremist groups that claim to be fighting for the imposition of the practice of true Sharia in all parts of Nigeria have been involved in various acts of terrorism in the North Eastern parts of Nigeria. They carried out several bombings of religious places such as churches and mosques (perceived as preaching moderate Islamic doctrines), markets and assassination Christians, moderate Muslims, clerics and politicians (Danjibo 2009). In 2011, the Vanguard of September, reported of the emergence of a Christian extremist group known as the AkhwatAkwop that threatened to retaliate the incessant bombings and killings of Christians by the Boko Haram Islamic Sect. They made known their objectives by dropping leaflets in some parts of the north, including Benue, Taraba, Yobe, Borno, Bauchi, Adamawa, Plateau, Kogi, Nasarawa and Kaduna states (Mamah 2011).

The spate of bomb blasts, and suicide attacks are emerging trends of terrorism in the country. This is rather unsettling for a nation, which still grapples with a multiplicity of other socio-

political and economic challenges. Kidnapping, armed robbery and political assassinations, are added dimensions to the security crises, which are stretching the nation to its limits, sometimes threatening the very fabric of its existence

The argument proceeds in six sections, firstly, we conceptualized the term "terrorism". This is followed by analysis of the various factors that contributed to the emergence of terrorism. We go further to examine the consequences of acts of terrorism on national security and unity of the Nigerian state. The challenges of combating and preventing terrorism and recommend strategies of curbing terrorism are also analysed. The last section concludes the work.

Conceptualizing Terrorism

There are on-going debates as to what constitute terrorism. This is as result of complexities inherent in conceptualizing the term and the misuse of it to score political points (Laquer 1999, Hoffman, 2006, Schmid 2011). The term "terror" and "terrorism" originated from a Latin word "terrere" which means to tremble or dread. According to Schmid (1997), the usage of the term in Western European languages' lexicon went back to the fourteenth century and was first used in English in 1528, but gained political nuance during the French revolution. The French revolutionaries launched what is known as "regime de la terreur", which saw the elimination of those perceived as enemies of the state in their quest to consolidate their hold on power (Hübschule 2005:3, Hoffman 2006:3).

Furthermore, it has been argued that the act of terrorism is implicitly and explicitly political. This differentiates terrorism from other forms of violence. Hoffman (2006:2) reiterates this fact when he stated that "terrorism in the most widely accepted contemporary usage of the term is fundamentally and inherently political". Acts of terrorism which entail the acquisition and utilization of violence to influence the decisions of others to be in line with the objectives of the terrorists is unambiguously a political act. According to Held (2008), "terrorism is certainly violence, and it is political violence. One can doubt that Al Qaeda has political objective in the sense in which many people understand politics, but since it aims at the religious domination of the political; its violence is indeed political. Although, perhaps, it is not open to usual responses to political aims, through dialogue and compromise, its aim to expel US and European forces from the Middle East is clearly political".

Scholars have also argued that in order to appreciate the concept of terrorism the attributes associated with the term over the years, need to be fully analyzed (Wilkinson 1976). Terrorism is known for its unselective nature. The casualties of an attack by terrorist groups are not the proposed target but an entire population (Wilkinson 1976, Cronin 2003, Obi 2005). Wilkinson (1976) asserts that the indiscriminate nature of terrorist attack does not preclude the fact that terrorists sometimes have specific targets whether individual or collective, but this unavoidably creates the fear that anybody can be a potential victim of a terrorist attack. Aron cited in Wilkinson (1976:13) has stated that, the 'action of violence is labelled "terrorist" when its psychological effects are out of proportion to its purely physical result". Secondly, acts of terrorism are spontaneous and unpredictable, irrespective of the fact that terrorists on occasions send out death threat but this is still within the discretion of the terrorists (Wilkinson 1976). Thirdly, terrorism is unscrupulous and antinomian in character. Terrorists believe in the superiority of their laws over societal laws or norms and thus, are not under obligation to obey societal laws." (Wilkinson 1976:17).

Furthermore, scholars are of the opinion that in order to assimilate the concept of terrorism, it is important to differentiate it from other forms of violence such as: criminal, natural or man-made disasters and other political violence that breed the same atmosphere of fear or terror. Wilkinson (1976) argues that terrorism has been erroneously associated with criminal violence such as: armed robbery, serial killings or psychopathic killings, ritual killings, arson or psyche terror. The terrorism that is being mentioned in this paper is one that is overtly and covertly political. Although, there are other forms of political violence that also create an atmosphere of violence and terror such as guerrilla warfare and insurgency, it is necessary to differentiate terrorism from other forms of political violence. Although, terrorist groups, guerrilla fighters and insurgents employ similar tactics such as: kidnapping, hit-and-run, assassination, bombings and hostage taking to accomplish their goals, guerrilla fighters operate as armed military unit which attack enemy military forces and occupy a particular geographical location where they exercise certain level of control over the population within the area (Hoffman 2006). Similarly, insurgents have these features but are somewhat dissimilar to guerrilla fighters, because of their capacity to engage in psychological warfare or propaganda against an extant government, imperialist power (Whittaker 2004, Hoffman 2006). Moreover, terrorist groups do not function as military units and avoid confronting regular military forces; do not control any geographical area; are inept in mobilizing popular support and do not seek to administer a government at both central, regional and local levels. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this theorization in terms of territorial occupation. Terrorist groups such as: Hezbollah, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) and Tamil Tigers are known to control some geographical areas (Hoffman 2006, Schmid 2011). Hoffman (2006), further asserts that acts of terrorism should be differentiated from the individual's personal violent conduct, which is purely motivated by personal or idiosyncratic grounds. Even though they employ similar strategy, terrorists claim to be humanitarians. However, this theorization no longer holds much ground due to the emergence of *lone wolf terrorists*. According to Barnes (2013), "in recent years, a new type of terrorist threat has emerged: the "lone wolf." Lone wolves present a challenge for current law enforcement and prosecutorial approaches to combating terrorism because these individuals are radicalized without significant contact with others and operate alone (Goldstein & Rashbaum 2011, McClain 2013).

I define terrorism as a violent attack or the threat of it by individuals, groups or states on civilians or unarmed combatants in order to push forward their political objectives. This definition emphasizes that terrorism is not only established when there are clear cases of violence; the threat of violence can also constitute acts of terrorism because it creates similar effects. Secondly, the definition incorporates terrorist violence executed by both state and non-state actors.

Exploring the Causes of Terrorism in Nigeria

Terrorism have assumed the most dangerous dimension in the post cold world war era. This has engendered many studies and scholars have postulated various alternative explanations to the upsurge of terrorism globally. One of such explanations traces the root cause to the United States hegemonic agenda, especially its foreign policy objectives of enforcing democracy all over the world particularly, in the Muslim states (Mamdani, 2004). The US engagement in

proxy wars to stop the influence of the Soviet Union in the Middle East by supporting the Mujahedeen fighters through the provision of training and military hardware to fight Soviet encroachment in some parts of Africa such as Congo, Angola and other parts of Southern Africa are regarded as remote factors that have given rise to terrorism. (Mamdani, 2004:6).

Furthermore, the US support for Israel during the Israel and Hezbollah war, the Palestinian question, its impact on the Middle East; the US and the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and her war on terror which has seen the death of Al Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden, and other key Al Qaeda leaders, have generated resentment in the Muslim community. It has also reverberated in diverse regions of the world including Nigeria (Lengmang 2011).

Another alternative explanation to the rise of terrorism is poverty, which stems from state policies that engender economic inequities, marginalization, and corruption. As Ramesh Thakur puts it, poverty can be “an incubator of terrorism”, the terrorist leaders who are often influential and wealthy people find their members or followers among the poor, marginalized people in the society, who are then indoctrinated and end up as terrorist foot soldiers. Therefore, “alienation, despair and discontent provide fertile grounds to would-be terrorists” (Thakur 200).

According to Dagne (2002), in Africa, the rising incidences of terrorism, is attributed to the fact that most African states are either failing or failed states, unable to provide and protect their citizens leading to an upsurge of diverse militant groups. A case in point is defunct Sudan which was a safe haven and training ground for terrorist groups such as Hizballah, Egyptian Islamic group, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas and the Abu Nidal organization. This is attributed to years of poor economic conditions, government repression and conflicts. Scholars have argued that, in Nigeria, high employment rate, poor per capita income of less than a dollar per day, lack of adequate infrastructure, high rate of corruption at all levels of government, particularly in the Northern part of the country, which has over 70 percent of the people living below poverty line, explain the rising incidence of terrorism in that part of the country (Ogundiya, and Amzat 2009). Most of these violence have been carried out by the *Almajeris*; “a large army of unemployed vagabonds roaming the streets paying their dues of discipleship by begging and scavenging”, and who are prepared to engage in any violence for a fee. Wealthy terrorists have exploited their social state to commit acts of terrorism (Danjibo 2009). Although the poverty thesis explains why economically marginalized individuals in the society are easily recruited as terrorist foot soldiers, it fails to clarify why terrorist master minds are drawn from the middle or upper middle class.

Moreover, the elite interest/manipulation thesis have taken us further in explaining and understanding the increase in the acts of terrorism. Scholars have different approaches to the thesis on elite’s interest/manipulation. Some stress the view that political elites particularly those who feel deprived or who are opposed to the prevailing socio-economic order, find attractive and useful, the violent dispositions of religious extremists and terrorists, which they exploit for socio-political and economic gains; (Onuoha 2012) others identify religious elites as agents that most often initiate violent extremism and terrorism as tools to express their grievances against the state through mobilization of their followers against constituted authorities. Thus, they employ or exploit their religious affiliations to score political goals. According to Falola (1998), religious leaders have much in common with politicians: they

lead sizeable flocks, speak on behalf of millions, pressurize the state on specific policies and organize protest against the state and their rivals.

Substantial literature that focuses on appraising ideology, specifically religious ideologies, as an explanation for the rise of religious extremism and terrorism, varies from scholars who see religion as essentially violent, (Gus 2001), to those who view Islam as far more violent than any other religion, (Juerguermeyer 2006) and others who argue that it is not religion itself, but the subjective re-interpretation of the sacred text or religious thoughts by religious ideologues (Black 2011). Religious thoughts such as: millennialism¹*Halacha*,² *Jihad*,³*Takfir*,⁴*Jahaliyya*,⁵ has been attributed to the rise of violent extremism and terrorism. Jewish adherents to the theological belief of millennialism argued that, for the end of the world to come quickly, followers must work towards it, thus certifying the adoption of violence (Lacquer 1999). Similarly, the ancient law of Halacha is regarded by Jews as a divine mandate that requires Jews to apply self-defence in the event of an impending danger to their lives and that of others. This religious thought has however been reinterpreted by religious extremist to mean anyone that opposes the existence of the Jewish state and the return of the Jews to their Holy land. This was what Yigal Amir cited as justification for his assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister Rabin Yitzak (Lacquer 1999: 127).

Furthermore, the concept of Jihad has been reinforced and reinvented by Islamic scholars such as *Abu A'la Mawdudi* and *Sayyid Qutb*. Scholars are of the opinion that a remote factor which has spawned religious extremism and violence is attributed to subjective interpretation by these religious ideologues (Lacquer 1999). According to Mamdani (2004), the subversion of the concept of jihad to denote violent struggle against unbelievers, can be traced to the writings and teachings of these two intellectuals, *Abu 'A'la-Mawdudi*, and *Sayyid Qutb*. Central to the

¹Millennialism is a central element of eschatology, which refers to a period in time which the world is expected to come to an end and a new world begins. "The vision of an ingathering of Jews in the present day to the land of Israel is an essential part of Jewish eschatology. Upon the defeat of Israel's enemies and the reconstruction of the Third temple, the period of resurrection of the dead and the advent of messiah are anticipated, to be followed by age of peace, tranquility, and spirituality". Although, millennialism is an ideology that is more promoted by Judaism than other Abrahamic faith, other religions such as Hindus believe in Rajneeshpiram and sects like the AumShinrikyo, demonstrates that the concepts is endemic in all religious groups (Forum on Foreign Policy 2007).

²Halacha, found in the Bible, Exodus 22:2 "if a thief found breaking in and be smitten so that he dieth, there shall be no blood guiltiness for him,"

³Walter Lacquer stresses that the traditional Islamic understanding of the concept of jihad is that it can be divided into two, the greater jihad which means the struggle by Muslims to live a pious life, while the lesser jihad entails the defence of the Islamic faith. Islamic clerics have placed more emphasis on the greater jihad and it is therefore considered more important than the lesser jihad. This is not the case with radical Islamist where the greater jihad is significant. Walter Lacquer, *The New Terrorism. Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 127

⁴Takfir in Islamic teachings refers to the avowal of community of individuals who have backslidened from their faith; a declaration which attracts a death penalty according Islamic law. Sarah Lavene, 15, October, 2011, "Religious extremism and terrorism" accessed 16, February, 2012, Terrorscope. Sara-lavene.blogspot.com/2011/10/15-religious-justification-provided-by.html. Accessed 16, February, 2012.

⁵is an [Islamic](#) concept of "ignorance of divine guidance" or "the state of ignorance of the guidance from God" or "Days of Ignorance referring to the condition in which Arabs found themselves in [pre-Islamic Arabia](#) (in the non-Islamic sense), i.e. prior to the [revelation](#) of the [Quran](#) to [Muhammad](#). The root of the term *jahiliyyah* is the I-form verb *jahala* "to be ignorant or stupid, to act stupidly" see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jahiliyyah>. Retrieved 20th March 2014.

idea of *Mawdudi* is his position that Muslims must struggle through jihad to attain the Islamic *Umma*. Mamdani advances that Mawdudi's argument was based on the precept that, the only true and pure state is one sanctioned by God. Thus, he advocated for an ideological state that is essentially theocratic, which he believed can be achieved through violence. According to Mamdani, Qutb argued that the perception of jihad entails both the proselytization of friends and the use of force against enemies. "Only physical force will remove the political, social, economic obstacles to the establishment of the Islamic community. The use of force to realize freedom is not a contradiction for Qutb" (Mamdani 2004).

The Consequences of Acts of Terrorism on National Security and Unity of the Nigerian State

The consequences of acts of terrorism are diverse and dangerous. It goes a long way to threaten the national security of the state and consequently undermines national unity. Arguably, this is one of the goals of the terrorist groups in Nigeria, as their attempts at carrying out terrorist attacks in the Southern parts of Nigeria and killing of southerners in the North has fuelled ethno-religious sentiments and attacks in parts of the South. The most recent clashes between the Northern traders and Ibadan traders over the alleged killings of their members (Ibadan traders) by Boko Haram Islamic sects on their way to the North to buy some goods is a case in point. Here, the various effects of acts of terrorism on the Nigerian state are carefully examined. These effects include:

Subversion

One of the inevitable implications of terrorism in Nigeria, is the subversion of the security agencies. The military, even in stable democracies, remain one of the main instruments of state power. It is, usual for governments to remain stable, so long as the military and other security forces remain loyal and dedicated to duty. This explains, why, one of the first targets of terrorists all over the world is the military and other security agencies. The pattern, usually, is to first attempt to subvert these agencies through false and inciting publications in the print media. When these non-violent attempts at subversion fail, attempts are then made to violently subvert them through terrorist acts. It is no accident therefore, that the majority of terrorist attacks in Nigeria have been directed at the security agencies. The aim of the terrorists is to destroy the confidence of the security agents and cause them to be disloyal.

Subversion of Government Civil Agents

Sustained terrorist attacks in Nigeria may lead to the subversion of the government agencies responsible for the implementation of government plans and programmes. Being associated with government will then qualify one to become a legitimate terrorist target. If they succeed in subverting the civil agencies there is no doubt that government plans and programmes will suffer and the terrorists will now use this to discredit government. In such circumstances, the rest of the citizenry will lose confidence in government and probably turn against it, as the terrorists hope. Subversion of the civil agencies of government will have severe consequences on national stability and security in Nigeria.

Political Instability

Political instability is an inevitable implication of terrorism around the world. The situation in Nigeria cannot be different, if terrorism is allowed to thrive. Political stability is the first major casualty of terrorism, because the aim of the terrorists is often to overthrow the existing government in the countries in which they operate. The activities of the defunct Red Brigades contributed immensely, to the political instability in Italy, which has had over forty governments since World War II. Similarly, the political situation in Algeria has been unstable since 1992, due almost entirely to the terrorist acts of Islamic fundamentalists fighting the military-backed government of that country. Terrorist activities in Nigeria, can therefore only lead to political instability as a polity frequently subject to acts of terror, cannot be said to be stable. When members of the so-called Movement for the Advancement of Democracy (MAD) hi-jacked a Nigeria Airways A310 to Niamey, they claimed their action was politically motivated. Sustained terrorist attacks is therefore bound to create political instability and the attendant loss of confidence by the governed.

Breakdown of Law and Order

It is difficult if not impossible to discredit a government which guarantees law and order in society. It is in such an atmosphere that citizens lead a good quality life and go about their socio-economic activities unmolested. It is for this reason that terrorists seek to create an atmosphere of lawlessness by wanton, indiscriminate killing of innocent persons and destruction of their property. In nations where terrorism thrives, such as in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, there is a pervasive air of disorder due principally to the activities of terrorists. Terrorism is therefore likely to cheapen life and cause irreparable losses to families. It is also certain that it will lead to further violence as more people become familiar with terrorist weapons and tactics. Most importantly however, it will affect the psyche of the people and cause them to be less sensitive to bloodshed. Violence is bound to increase in such circumstances, leading to scant respect for law and order. National stability and security will thus be directly threatened.

Destruction of Lives and Property

Terrorism is extremely destructive. It destroys human lives in large numbers, as was the case in the crash of the PANAM airliner over Scotland, due to a bomb planted on the air plane in 1988. In Nigeria, the activities of Boko Haram has taken toll on human lives and properties. Besides the loss of human lives, vital economic and social infrastructure are also damaged or destroyed. Such huge losses of human lives and valuable economic resources are the hallmark of terrorism. The implications for the nation are staggering considering the serious impact it will have on national security.

Discouragement of Investments in the Economy

Terrorism discourages all types of investments in the economy. Foreign and domestic, short or long term investors shun nations and societies where terrorist activities are rampant. An economy in which investors are not eager to participate stagnates and eventually disintegrates. For a developing economy such as Nigeria's, any phenomenon or issue which discourages foreign investors cannot be tolerated, because it will stall the growth of the economy with dire consequences for the nation. If the airports and hotels in any nation are declared or perceived as unsafe, the consequences on the investment climate will be drastic. This is also true of

tourism, an aspect of the economy which is still being developed in Nigeria to earn foreign exchange. Unless the economy is buoyant and stable, the nation cannot be stable and secure.

Increased Expenditure on Security

Every nation commits a certain percentage of its national resources to the maintenance of its internal security. The percentage of the resources committed is a factor of the level of security or insecurity in a nation. Terrorism usually creates an atmosphere of total insecurity, as a result of which valuable resources are diverted to security to the detriment of other essential services as seen in the 2012 Budget. Even at the individual and corporate levels, terrorism will cause expenditure on security to rise beyond what the resources can reasonably sustain. Both for the nation and the individual, this is unacceptable. A nation ruled by fear and dominated by fancy security gadgets is not what Nigeria should aspire to. Unfortunately, this is one of the implications of terrorism for the nation. The productive sectors will consequently continue to suffer as more and more resources are devoted to security.

Poor International Image

The image of Nigeria has suffered seriously because of the illegal acts of a few of its nationals involved in international terrorism. Terrorism will effectively disqualify Nigeria from hosting rights and may even deny her participation rights, if her competitors become regular targets of terrorists. Furthermore, even the hosting of international conferences and the location of the headquarters of international organisations will elude the nation. It is not inconceivable that existing offices may be re-located from Nigeria. The possibility also exists that a terrorist situation may cause the nation to earn a pariah status in the comity of nations. This will be a devastating blow to the nation's security and consequently national unity.

Challenges in Combating International Terrorism in Nigeria

Prevention and combating terrorism has become a daunting task to many nations due to the dynamic nature of the phenomenon. Nigeria has put in some efforts in order to combat the threat of international terrorism in the country. She has been cooperating and collaborating with the international community in this regard as well as internally building the instruments for combating the spectacle. These efforts at combating the menace of international terrorism are however, not without challenges. Some of these challenges are discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

Lack of Political will

Even with increasing spate of international terrorist activities and the identified threats to Nigeria such as persistent violent conflicts, poverty, proliferation of SALW as well as porous borders, the political leadership could not facilitate the establishment of the right instruments for preventing and combating it. The lack of political will has delayed the formulation of a sound policy and enactment of good legislations on international terrorism for the country. Unless the problem of lack of political will is overcome and a policy as well as legislations rolled out, Nigeria cannot effectively prevent nor combat the scourge of international terrorism. If this phenomenon continues unabated, it would certainly portend grave danger to Nigeria's national security.

Lack of Appropriate Policy

Policy is supposed to be the blue print and a guide to achieving the aim of preventing and combating international terrorism in the country. It is to define the phenomenon, appoint lead and supporting agencies as well as lay down comprehensive courses of actions once the degree of the threat to national security is determined. The policy will also enable the counter terrorist apparatus to be focused in their preparation to contain the scourge. However, despite all attempts since 2002, Nigeria has not been able to come up with a policy on terrorism to guide the conduct of preventing and combating international terrorism in the country. The formulation of a sound counter terrorist policy for Nigeria would enable security services and agencies to effectively detect, plan and suppress the scourge.

Lack of Adequate Legislation

The enactment of good legislation on international terrorism for Nigeria has continued to elude the country. Good legislation is an important instrument for combating international terrorism. It is based on the requirement of good legislation that the UN requested member states to domesticate its resolutions on international terrorism. In the US's response to September 11, 2001 attack, states like New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and several others enacted additional statutes to define terrorism crimes and provide enhanced law enforcement investigative authority (Suater and Carafano 2005). In Nigeria, however, enacting a law on international terrorism has become a problem for years. The draft bill HB. 255 (2002) and HB 288 (2006) for combating terrorism and related matters are yet to be passed into law by the NASS (National assembly Journal 2010). The enactment of enabling laws for the country would go a long way in facilitating law enforcement and intelligence activities in support of counter terrorism in Nigeria in addition to safeguarding her national security.

Low Level of Security Perception of International Terrorism

Lack of political will, policy and legislation for preventing and combating international terrorism in Nigeria may be due to the low level of security perception of the phenomenon by the government, security community and the general public. In Nigeria, international terrorism does not seem to be real but the potentials are manifest. Probably that is why the interest in the subject of international terrorism even by the intelligence community began after the events in other places such as the September 11 attack. After the arrest of Umar Faruq Abdulmutallab there were general moves to, among others, beef up security at the airports. The National Assembly (NASS) also stepped up efforts to pass the bills on terrorism which has been before it for a long time while the Federal Government sacked the Director General NIA for misjudgement. However, due to the low level of security perception of the threat of international terrorism in the country, all the above moves to deal with the event fizzled. It is therefore, important that the low security perception among the political leadership, intelligence community and the general public on the threat of international terrorism must be reversed in order to effectively combat it.

Lack of Capacity

Lack of capacity to detect, prevent, defeat and manage the consequences of international terrorism is a major challenge in combating the phenomenon in Nigeria. This affects areas such as:

- a. **Intelligence.** The failure of intelligence to track and report the movement of Abdulmutallab from Ghana through Nigeria to Amsterdam, even after his father had reported his activities, is an indication of intelligence failure in Nigeria. Similarly, even after Abdulmutallab's incident, a man managed to board a New York bound Flight 215 in Abuja even though he is on an official no flying list (Olaniyi 2010). According to a human rights based organisation, the Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (COPRIN), the Boko Haram uprising in Borno State was as a result of security intelligence failure and the lukewarm attitude of the Borno State Government. This situation is compounded by lack of interagency cooperation such that after the arrest of Abdulmutallab, the Federal Government had to initiate an investigation to find out why the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) failed to inform the State Security Service (SSS) or otherwise. Therefore, inter agency cooperation and collaboration as well as positive responses are essential so that international terrorist activities could be detected on time and preventive as well as protective actions can be taken.
- b. **Counter Terrorism Team.** Although efforts were made to train military, police and other intelligence and security personnel in counter terrorism, a centrally coordinated counter terrorist team has not yet been formed. Most of the personnel trained are scattered all over the formations and units. There is also no joint and combined training and exercises for the trained counter terrorists to enable them blend. There is the need to build an effective counter terrorist team through joint and combined training and exercises as well as including counter terrorism training in the curricula of the various security services and agencies' schools.
- c. **Control of Small Arms Proliferation.** The obvious threat of proliferation of SALW especially their employment in some violent conflicts in the country signifies the lack of control over these arms in the country. Ogwu (cited in Ajumogobia 2010) affirmed that, the proliferation of SALW continuous to fuel new conflicts, render the old ones intractable and reinforce criminal networks in Africa. The glaring abundance of SALW used in various violent conflicts in Nigeria signifies the magnitude of the problem in the country. The illegal possession of SALW must be checked in order to stem the unrelenting violent conflicts in the country.
- d. **Control of Explosive Materials.** The inability of Nigeria to control the acquisition and usage of explosive materials by unauthorised persons is also a serious challenge in its drive towards combating international terrorism. The pilferage of large quantities of explosive materials from quarry sites and magazines of legitimate consumers has been one of the factors facilitating violent acts in the country. Lack of equipment such as detectors for detecting and preventing the threat of harmful materials in Nigeria compounds the situation. It is pertinent to note that non-state actors with access to incendiary materials would contribute significantly to acts of international terrorism in the country. These have far reaching implications for Nigeria's national security. The possession of large quantities of Improvised Explosive Device (IED) accessories by Boko Haram members confirms the lack of control over the acquisition and usage of these items. The Federal laws on acquisition and possession of explosive materials could therefore, be reviewed in line with current

development. Effective monitoring of the sources and movement of these materials could be controlled to prevent its usage by international terrorists.

Poverty

The inability of the Federal Government to control poverty in the country is a big challenge to its efforts at combating international terrorism. International terrorists are known to exploit conditions of abject poverty for recruitment and planning their activities. The Federal Government is to avoid a situation whereby organizations could take over the responsibility for the provision of social services to the people as in the case of Hezbollah in Lebanon or Hamas in Gaza. Boko Haram was said to have been providing education, medical and other essential social services to its members. This situation will make the people to have more confidence in the organizations and could lead them to carrying out the organisation's biddings including terrorism.

Violent Conflicts

Managing the persistent violent conflicts in different parts of the country has become a major challenge for the government. Crimes are usually exploited. International terrorists could therefore take advantage of some of the violent conflicts in the country to perpetuate illicit activities such as illegal arms brokerage, drug trade and other fund raising acts to build their capacity. Getting to the root causes and suppressing the menace of the unrelenting violent conflicts in Nigeria would prevent international terrorists from taking advantage of these plagues.

Terrorist Financing

The ability to effectively fight international terrorist financial structure is another challenge faced by Nigeria in her efforts at combating international terrorism. International terrorists mostly rely on financial and material resources in order to sustain their operations, buy weapons and maintain their operatives. They depend on proceeds from crime, other self-financing methods and diversification of funds to finance their activities. Some terrorist organisations also rely on state sponsorship for financial support. International terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda are self-sufficient that they are able to operate freely without financial constraints. These sources of fund have to be curtailed as part of efforts at stemming international terrorism. The porous nature of Nigeria's borders, corruption and unethical banking system are threats to combating international terrorist financing. Therefore using Financial Intelligence Units (FIU) and enforcing ethical banking practice in detecting and fighting international terrorist financial structures are keys to their defeat.

Poor Border Security

The protection of her extensive and porous borders remains a major challenge to Nigeria in her endeavour at combating international terrorism. International terrorism and other cross border crimes, thrive where there is limited border protection. Effective border security is important in order to prevent the entry of international terrorists or their assets (such as smuggled weapons and illicit financial instruments) while ensuring the efficient flow of lawful traffic and commerce. This requires trained personnel and equipment to accomplish. There is also the problem of having strong cooperation and collaboration among the border security agencies with immediate neighbouring countries in this regard. The protection of Nigeria's

borders would discourage terrorists and other criminals from taking advantage of the porous borders to perpetrate their acts.

Inadequate Funding

All aspects of combating international terrorism have financial implications. Funds are required for training, equipping and maintaining the counter terrorist instruments. To raise reasonable sum to finance these requirements in the face of other competing demands is a difficult task for Nigeria. Counter terrorist team comprises experts such as snipers, lifesaving experts, explosive disposal experts, intelligence and investigation professionals as well as communication specialists. According to ASP Aliyu, it costs about N5million to train one counter terrorist for three months (Wunti 2010). This indicates that a large sum is required to not only train the counter terrorists but also to maintaining the outfit. The Federal Government could therefore review the responsibilities of security agencies and appropriately make budget for their requirements so that they can effectively carry out the task of combating international terrorism in the country.

Strategies for Preventing International Terrorism in Nigeria

Overcoming the challenges of combating international terrorism is a function of deliberate, integrated and collaborative effort. Effective planning and programming would therefore provide guidance for the implementation of the design for combating international terrorism in Nigeria. Some strategies are expounded to overcome the challenges Nigeria faces in combating international terrorism.

Improved Political Will

Advanced countries could improve political will through bilateral agreement and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) could influence political will. Similarly, international organisations and donors do so by setting standard practices and benchmarks. The international community could therefore, pressurise Nigeria to change her indifferent attitude towards the fight against international terrorism. Internally, security services/intelligence agencies could develop a way of sensitising the political leadership on the dangers posed by the threat of international terrorism to national security. To achieve this, they could monitor international terrorist activities and brief the political leaders regularly in order to stir in them the interest to face the threat squarely. These suggestions could spur the leadership to immediately take proactive actions in combating the threat of international terrorism in the country.

Policy Formulation

There is the need to craft a sound counter terrorism policy for Nigeria in order to effectively plan and combat international terrorism in the country. This could be achieved by indepth study of the trends in the activities of international terrorist organisations and input from the security community. A technical outfit could then be set up to draft the policy for executive approval by the end of Third Quarter 2010. This will provide guidance to the counter terrorist team in its planning and operations.

Legislation

In order to properly define terrorist crimes and provide the right penalties for them, good counter terrorist legislations could be enacted for the country. This would facilitate investigations and ease the disposal of terrorist cases. This could be achieved by the Federal government through lobbying the NASS caucuses to facilitate the passage of the terrorism bill before the end of June 2010.

Improved Level of Security Perception

There is the need by the Federal Government to increase the level of perception of the threat of international terrorism among the political class, security agencies and the general public in order to give the threat the seriousness it deserves. This could be achieved through training, public lectures, seminars and other modes of enlightenment and could commence with immediate effect. If this is carried out, it would make people to be more conscious of the threat and report suspicious activities promptly.

Improved Capacity Building

The Federal government needs to develop the capacity of the intelligence community in intelligence and information management for them to detect, infiltrate, monitor and deter international terrorist activities in Nigeria. A counter terrorist team could also be established to integrate the activities of all the security services and agencies including combined training and exercises. Equally, all equipment must be raised to international standards. There is also the need for the Federal government to build the capacity to control the proliferation of SALW and the possession and usage of explosive materials by unauthorised persons. The sum total of these efforts is to put the security agencies in proper perspective and develop the capacity to be able to tackle terrorist activities as they unfolds. These capacities could give the Federal Government the capability to combat the threat of international terrorism in Nigeria competently and could commence immediately.

Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation

In order to address the challenge posed by poverty, the Federal Government could intensify employment generation programmes in the country in order to stem its growing scourge in the society. The Federal Government could exploit the employment opportunities in agriculture, solid minerals, small scale industries and other self-employment activities so as to reduce the problem of unemployment in the country. This will in turn alleviate poverty in the society thereby reducing the chances of international terrorists taking advantage of the poverty situation.

Border Protection

International terrorism and other transnational crimes defy geographical boundaries. International terrorists are also known for taking advantage of insecure borders to create sanctuaries as well as for recruitment and training. The Federal Government could develop the capability of the border security agencies to effectively secure its porous borders by adding manpower and technology. There must also be joint patrol by all the security agencies to check illegal movement across the border. A successful security system for securing the porous borders must however, rest on committed partnership between and among states. Nigeria could cooperate and collaborate with her immediate neighbours and the international

community in general through exchange of intelligence, early warning and patrols in an effort to protect her borders. Generally, the security of Nigeria's porous borders is a top priority and every effort must be made to defend it.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that the consequences of the activities of terrorist in the country do not only pose a huge challenge to national security but it ultimately undermines national unity. The proliferation of acts of terrorism has helped in garnering ethno-religious sentiments and subsequently violence in some parts of southern Nigeria. Arguably, this is a reaction to the activities of Boko Haram and Ansaru extremist groups. Going by the state's record of intermittent ethno-religious violence that threatened the state's unity, there is no doubt that the activities of these groups will aid the resurgence of ethno-religious violence in the country. We further posit that while the Government have initiated security policies aimed at curbing the rising trend of terrorism, more needs to be done. This study further recommends that in order to curb the menace, the Nigerian Government needs to initiate a deliberate, integrated and collaborative security strategy. Specifically, there should be collective political will, appropriate legislation to counter terrorism while respecting human and groups' rights, improved level of security perception, poverty alleviation programmes, improved capacity building and tightening of the country's borders.

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**THE CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA VIS-À-VIS THE
INTERVENTION OF NIGERIAN PHILOSOPHERS**

Being the Inaugural Lecture of the Department of Philosophy on the 14th November 2014

By

Rev. Fr. Dr. Daniel Aigbona, C.Ss.R

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most succinct way of addressing the question of development in Nigeria and across the African continent, is to situate it within the context of a world order consciousness, that is crystalized in the predicament of a people and nation who have continued to grapple (50 plus years after independence), with the crisis of unemployment, endemic poverty, insecurities of life and properties, underdevelopment, high infant mortality rates, social and political instabilities, ethnic rivalries, religious extremisms, nepotism, corruption coupled with an uncanny sense of political gerrymandering which has become the hallmark of the Nigerian socio-political climate; a reality which is at a crisis level such that it threatens to destroy the very fabric of society's solidarity and social cohesion which is a sine qua non for any nations economic growth and developmental plans.

This dilemma reasoned or unreasoned, which some authors have identified as the African predicament has its roots in the many years of deliberate attempt by the colonialists to alienate the traditional African individual from his identity; a move which has a lot of

hermeneutical undertones which even today impress negatively on our collective consciousness and existence such that we are no longer certain who we really are and what national political and economic agenda we are pursuing. It is the work of hermeneutics to try to bring to the fore and make understandable what was previously shrouded in mystery and not properly understood. No doubt the many years of Colonialism has left a lasting impact on the history of the African continent. This is a reality that we cannot deny. While we may never know in what direction development and progress within the African continent would have gone, one thing is certain, knowing our past experiences is a very important step towards making clear our presuppositions and these can often serve as “guides for action both for our National and personal development.”⁶

The question which has preoccupied the minds of many scholars even now is, how is that more than 50 years after political independence, Nigeria and many other African countries which, are blessed with so much human and natural resources seem to be the bedrock of all that is wrong with politics, economics and social infrastructural developmental issues such that many countries in Africa do not measure up to the rest of the world in terms of technological development and growth as published in the United Nations Millennium Development goals projections?⁷

The initiative to help the worlds’ poorest Nations achieve a level of development that meets the world’s standard was the driving force that informed the setting up of the United Nations Millennium Developmental Goals. In the year 2000, about 189 Nations of the world signed a document, which has come to be known as the United Nations Millennium Development goals. The Millennium development goals are Eight International Developmental goals that these nations and over 23 other International Organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. These include reducing by half extreme poverty, Infant mortality rates, fighting disease epidemics such as HIV\Aids, malaria and other diseases etc., and developing a global partnership for development. This declaration was an effort to address the various crises both human and natural, which were plaguing the world and threatened to destroy the very fabric of human existence on earth. The MDG as the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Kii Moon points out, encapsulate the development aspirations of the world as a whole, “They are not to be seen simply as development objectives but issues that encompass universally accepted human values and rights such as freedom from hunger, the right to basic education, the right to health and a responsibility to future generations.”⁸

A fall out of the influence of the Renaissance and Enlightenment era, as we shall see later, is the fact that through the history of the development of reason, what we have received as the rich deposit of knowledge came to be essentially patterned along Eurocentric thought system. Reason or rationality was brandished as a humanistic value which stood as the great divide between the civilized and the uncivilized, the logical and the mystical.”⁹ Georg Friedrich W. Hegel for example believes that “Reason” is at the base of all dialectical processes of changes and development in the history of the human race.

⁶ Collingwood R.G., (1946), *The idea of History*, ed., T.M. Knox, Oxford: Clarendon Press. P. 24

⁷ United Nations Development Programme Report, 2008, p.6

⁸ Ibid. p. 6-7.

⁹ D.A. Masolo, (1994), *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*, USA: Indiana University Press, pg. 1

The western attitude towards Africa leading on to Colonization and the supposed “burden of the westerners” (i.e., to civilize the dark continent of Africa) may have started as a mere cultural bias which was premised on the erroneous ideological presuppositions rife in the academic expressions of writers and philosophers like Immanuel Kant and much later re-echoed by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.¹⁰ Kant for example relates the emergence of different races to the various natural and environmental conditions of their geographical territories. Kant believes the original human species were white appearing as dark brown. The dark race may have its origin due to the humid heat beating on the skin of the original species. So for Kant any authentic philosophical analysis of the natural history of the human race must start from the comparison of the sources of every race especially those that appear contradictory. From these sources, Kant argues that it is possible to demonstrate that indigenous Americans and blacks are a spiritually decadent race among other members of the human race.¹¹

Hegel’s philosophy of history explains development and change as the manifestation of the Absolute Spirit in an evolutionary dialectical conflict of opposites starting from a thesis negated by its anti-thesis and resulting in a new synthesis. Hegel unwittingly excludes the continent of Africa from this process of history by arguing that, “in Africa life is not a manifestation of dialectical reason but of a succession of contingent happenings and surprises. No aim or state exists whose development could be followed.”¹² One point which, Hegel’s assertion here immediately reveals, is his lack of knowledge about the earliest forms of civilizations which are hardly located in Hegel’s known western world. While no one would deny that knowledge is dialectically related to reality and history, which are in a dialectical movement, the fact remains that as many of the recent excavations have shown, the earliest written clues, signs of civilization were to be found in cuneiform records of merchants’ stocks from Sumeria, and the Royal archives from Assyria, hieroglyphic tomb inscriptions identifying the Egyptian dead dating to before 500 B.C.¹³

For the purpose of emphasis it suffice to say that what is important to our discourse here is not the historical accuracy of Hegel’s philosophical presuppositions but the debate which it engendered leading to the attempt to bifurcate the world into the world of the civilized and the uncivilized nations; such distinction has shifted today in a different way between the economically developed nations and the underdeveloped nations; notwithstanding the many years of pillage and exploitation of the human and natural resources of the African continent during colonialism. Unfortunately most countries in Africa fall within the bracket of those unwittingly branded as “third world Countries.”

It was therefore not an accident of history that Philosophy was defined initially along Eurocentric ideas. By extension European Rationality laid claim to a universality of thought

¹⁰ See Immanuel Kant, 1775, *Von den Verschiedenen Rassen der Menschen* (Of the Various Races of Man) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, 1975 (English trans.) *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*

¹¹ Kant, *Ibid.* pp. 17- 34. Cf. Masolo, *op.cit.* p.4

¹² Hegel, G.W.F. (1989), *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, revised edition. London and New York:Routledge. P. 176.

¹³ Parker, Philip, (2010), *World History*. Great Britain: Dorling Kindersley Press, p. 16

which effectively excluded the unique categories and differences that were present in the far-east in China, Indo-china, Africa and a host of others. I believe therefore that a starting point in the discussion of a topic as the above, will be to treat the question of the Challenge of Development in Nigeria as an epistemological problem needing first and foremost an explication of our historical\ideological presuppositions and misconceptions with far reaching implications for meta-ethics (our value systems) and praxis (with special emphasis on real\concrete issues that impact directly the lives of the people).

The question was always going to be, what kind of civil society could better serve the social political structure of the post-independent Nigerian or African societies in general? It is a matter which according to Olusegun Oladipo has its provenance in the colonial and post-colonial attempts made by scholars, Nationalists, philosophers etc., to reclaim the African pride. He points out that it was always “the issue of how best we can achieve freedom and development without compromising our identity.”¹⁴ The debate, which this attempt engendered, was more of a theoretical disagreement than a pragmatic one. While the liberals thought that the future of Africa would be better served by patterning it along the example of the European Seventeenth century capitalist economic revolution, advocating for a strong political and civil society, the proponents of the Africanist position advocated for a civil society that is built on the ideals of pre-colonial, pre-capitalist traditional African societies. The free capitalist market system, they argued was an external and artificial imposition on an otherwise communitarian society, which was a unique expression of a premarket “economy of compassion.”¹⁵

It is my contention in this paper that while there may be some merit to the argument that the present spate of economic inertia In Nigeria and across the African continent may have a direct link to colonialism and some of the political and economic structures, legacies of the colonial era, bequeathed to us (foreign to us as they were), the present crop of Nigerian political leadership do share a lot of the blame for the many years of mismanagement of its human and natural resources which has lead us to a near infrastructural and economic collapse and political instability. To hold Colonialism solely responsible for our social problems is to shy away from accepting our responsibility in the role we have all collectively played in continuing the exploitative and selfish agenda that defined most colonial administrations. The paucity of holding such a claim and attempting to defend it is seen in the fact that many other nations of the world like the United States, Canada and Australia who also have had a colonial historical past are not on the same economic pedestal as Nigeria and most countries in Africa today.

DEMOCRACY AND THE DEVELOPMENTAL AGENDA

Perhaps the oldest understanding of democracy that we have, comes from the contraction of two Greek words i.e. *demos* – common people and *kratos* – rule or strength, taken together to mean the rule of the (common) people.¹⁶ I choose to emphasize the word common in this paper because we discover that with the different liberal and conservative interpretations that have been given to the act of democratic practice, the common people are

¹⁴ Olusegun Oladipo, (2006) “The Issue of African Self-Definition in the Contemporary World” in Core Issues in African Philosophy, ed., Olusegun Oladipo . Ibadan, Nigeria: Hope Publications, p.59.

¹⁵ Mandami Mahmood, (1996), Citizen and Subject, New Jersey: Princeton pp.1-13.

¹⁶ Finley, Michael, (1973), Democracy: Ancient and Modern. London: Macmillian Press. P. 24

often at the receiving end of the ladder. In a 1962 UNESCO survey, virtually every country claimed to be a democratic state.¹⁷ Is the practice of democracy necessarily a guarantee for economic and technological development? This is a question that is not amenable to a simple answer for the very reason that ideal principles do not always translate to practice without the constitutional provisions and the political will, based on strong moral convictions to translate policies to concrete programmes. If the practice of democracy was a sufficient guarantee of the good life, then the wave of occupy street protests that we have seen across many city capitals of the biggest democratic countries in the world would be an over-kill, an exercise in futility, at best staged to entertain the viewing public.

Though democracy as was practiced in Athens was hardly representative of all the people¹⁸ the oldest form of democratic practice was meant to serve the social and political needs of the people and it was based on the principle of equality for all participating members such that a person's wealth and prestige in the society did not necessarily confer a greater privilege on him in the legislative assembly. All had equality, i.e. "*Isegoria*" – 'an equal right to be heard in the sovereign assembly before public decisions were taken.'¹⁹ In any case, Plato does not believe that everyone should rule since the act of ruling itself requires a special skill needing both talent and extensive training.²⁰ His political blueprint is one that strictly divides society into three categories of Philosopher Kings, auxiliary and workers. A society is just according to Plato, when everyone is performing such roles or function that he/she has the ability to do. It is strictly the function of the rulers to rule and that of the auxiliaries to defend the state and the workers to work; these roles were not interchangeable and the possibility of social mobility was zero. How just is a social system that does not allow people to aspire to be whatever they choose to be, where they have to live the indignities of whatever estate they have been consigned for the rest of their lives?

The strongest and yet most sublime indicator of development within the context of political economy is often to be sought in the causal connection between the Political/administrative structures that exist within a society and the level of substantive freedom of its citizens seen in terms of its human resources development. That the expansion of instrumental freedoms (i.e., the process of expanding education, health care, security of life and property and other conditions of human life) is the preeminent objective of development is a belief, which is as old as history itself and one, which has been dominant in many economic policies of the developed and industrialized nations of the world. Development according to Amartya Sen involves the whole process of expanding the real freedom that people enjoy and if freedom is what development advances, then there is a major argument for that overarching objective ... which requires the removal the major sources of unfreedom i.e., poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social

¹⁷ C.B. Macpherson, (1966), *The Real World of Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P.7 cf Dipo Irele, (1998), *Introduction to Political Philosophy*, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, p.83

¹⁸ Legislative function was reserved to free male adults while Women, children, slaves and foreigners were excluded. In essence it was a decision of the minority group over the majority.

¹⁹ See Dipo Irele, op. cit., p.84. See also M.I. Finley, (1973), *Democracy: Ancient and Modern*. London: Macmillan Press.

²⁰ *The Republic*, (1955) with English trans., with introduction by H.D. Lee, London: Penguin Harmondsworth.

deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over activity of repressive states.²¹

A critical element in the socio-economics of growth is that development is a function of the convergence of the structure of political authority and the national cohesion, which engenders a commitment to the national agenda. As Professor Ade Ajayi would argue, development is not simply an activity in which the old is replaced by the new in a mechanical manner. Rather it involves a process of social reconstruction in which the past survives in the present, though in a modified form.²² Although power may be described, as the authority to command and make people do whatever one wants it cannot at the same time command a solidarity and commitment to the national interest. Development cannot be engendered in a civil society where its citizenry feel no sense of obligation to the national interest of that society. My contention is that the practice of democracy by itself does not necessarily guarantee the good life and development for the very reason that ideal principles do not always translate into practice without the constitutional provisions, backed by a strong and free judiciary and the political will to implement decisions based on strong moral convictions.

Development is not so much a function of the history of a nation as it is a combination of the organization of political power and the management of its human and material resources. It is a function of the arrangement of the structure of power and the way it is able to manage the crisis of insecurities and the fears of domination and all the other issues that plague society that determine the rate of its growth. We are not denying that history matters for as Collingwood points out, knowing our past experiences is a very important step towards making clear our presuppositions and these can often serve as “guides for action and our personal development.”²³

The Intervention of Reason in the Age of Enlightenment: Development Conceived as the Movement of History

The industrial revolution across Europe heralded by the French revolution in the 17th century marked the beginnings of the age of enlightenment, which brought along with it, a concomitant paradigmatic shift, in the way men viewed the world. It was a period which witnessed the birth of Rationalism marked by a great intellectual revolution that sought, by recourse to reason and logic, to unmask all our previously held assumptions (about God, religion and morality) and demythologize the metaphysical presuppositions upon which these assumptions were based. The search for truth had now taken on a new ideological shift both in direction and emphasis, and this had a great influence on the thrust of philosophical analysis, which began to see progress and development in the context of the movement and unfolding of the historical process. With science and commerce taking the center place in people’s life, the aura and mystery surrounding religion and the worship of God was gradually being replaced with a new value system that was now to be determined by the functional value

²¹ Amartya Sen, (1999), *Development as Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 3

²² Ajayi, J.F., “The Past in the Present: The factor of Tradition in Development,” National Merit Award Lecture delivered in Lagos, Nigeria, December 1990. Cf Olusegun Oladipo, “The Issue of African Self-Definition” p.69

²³ Collingwood, op. cit. pg. 191

of commodities. Consequently the great scientific discoveries, industrialization and the economic wellbeing present in a society became the indicators of progress and development.

Kant may have unwittingly championed this movement when he planted the intellectual seed adulating the place of reason in the reductionist attitude to divest all our earlier held notions and conceptions of their mythical presuppositions and religious foundations. Kant desired to establish a new approach to morality that was both rational and equally compelling on all rational human individuals; human individuals he believes should be able to arrive by unaided reason at a normative dictum about what is right or wrong and what we ought to do. This was not to be a mere theoretical enterprise of the sort that prescribes the “ought” i.e., what we ought to do but such that is pragmatic to the level that by our reason we can know what is right and by our will be equally able to do that which is right.²⁴

Kant’s proposition began a wave of new intellectual consciousness with the sole aim of extricating a God-related consciousness from the ethical and moral codes governing relationships and life in the modern society. This trend is even more pronounced with the discovering of the cyber techno-virtual reality, which seems to offer to the world a new albeit false consciousness of a world of infinite possibilities where appeal need no longer be made to the infinite and omnipotent intervention of God in the course of human history. Gotthold E. Lessing, a famous enlightenment writer, for example also argues that reason was the ultimate tool in understanding the universe. Everything is accessible to the human mind, even the mysteries of religion, myth and scripture.²⁵ Friedrich W Hegel formulated this in terms of the manifestation of the “Absolute Spirit” reaching its highest stage of development in the development of reason.²⁶ Karl Marx and Ludwig Feuerbach saw this development in respect of the material forces of history.

Karl Marx for example conceives development in terms of the material forces of production. The history of the consciousness of a people, Marx argues, is the history of the inter-relationships that exist in the society i.e., their material environment considered in terms of all the interconnected activities of interactions conscious or unconscious, planned or unplanned, in the course of the material production of their existence. The ownership of private property and control of the factors of production and its complex value based system engenders a class differentiation between the bourgeoisie (who owns the capital and the means of production) and the proletariat (the have-not, workers who only have their labour power to sell).²⁷

Political economy proceeds from the fact of private property. The worker is engaged in the production process of a product from which he is alienated. The worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces. He is treated as a commodity of even a lesser value than the very product he has laboured to create. His human condition becomes so deplorable in proportion to the increase in value of the product - commodity that he has helped to create.

²⁴ See Zacharias, Ravi, (1994), *Can Man Live Without God..* p.36

²⁵ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, “On the Proof of the Spirit and of Power.” *Lessing: Philosophical and Theological Writings* (2005), H.B. Nisbet (trans and ed.). Cambridge University Press, p. 87

²⁶ Georg W.F. Hegel, (1989), *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, rev. ed. London: Routledge

²⁷ Karl Marx, (1972), *Philosophical and Economic Manuscript*. Moscow: Progress Pub. P. 277ff

Political economy, Marx would argue, conceals the estrangement in the nature of labour by ignoring the direct relationship between the worker (labour) and production. This is such that the more the worker produces, the less he has to consume and the more value he creates, the more worthless he becomes.²⁸

For Karl Marx, the history of all human societies is the history of class conflict. History is engendered, by the movement of dialectical material conflict of class differentiations, and as history itself has shown, this conflict has existed in all forms of society from the primitive agrarian societies through the feudal societies to the present contemporary times. It is in the process of the conflicts arising from the production process that our consciousness is formed. For Marx therefore, it is not consciousness that precedes existence as Hegel would argue but existence precedes consciousness. According to him,

In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or – this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms – with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure.²⁹

The irony of the movement of society in this new direction of economic industrialization is that it also created a great disillusionment and inordinate competition that sometimes led to the enslavement of the weak and powerless and even total annihilation in cases of unresolved conflicts of interests. It made even more obvious the widening gap between the rich nations of the world and the poor, the powerful and the weak. So the growth and development of ideas, which was supposed to serve the course of human progress, became ironically the bane of our human society.³⁰

²⁸ Marx, *Ibid*, 279ff. See also Cohen, Joshua, (1982), 'Review of G.A. Cohen, Karl Marx's Theory of History', *Journal of Philosophy*, 79: 253–273.

²⁹ Marx, 1972, p. 97

³⁰ Acton, H.B., (1955). *The Illusion of the Epoch*, London: Cohen and West. P. 21

Religion vs. Science: Humanistic Approach to Development and the attempt to dethrone God from history and development

History was seen as having not only a beginning but also a direction of growth and development towards a higher and better human condition, which was only to be comprehended by the deployment of reason. The end of history was ultimately the freedom of man to express himself in his newly found humanism, where man according to Sigmund Freud, will take back to himself that power, his prowess and intelligence to determine his future, which hitherto he (as a result of his infantile neurosis resulting in an emotional need for a powerful, supernatural father-figure) had projected to the image of an all-powerful God.³¹ The aim was to throw out religion (and consequently God) which kept the people in a cocoon of religious stupor, afraid to think for themselves and thereby change the course of history by challenging the despotic and oppressive rule of Kings and Monarchs (all across Europe and the known world at that time), in the hope of a promised eternal life in heaven. It is not surprising then that Karl Marx dubbed Religion as the “opium of the people.”³²

Freud believed that Religion had outlived its usefulness and in *The Future of an Illusion*, he argued that religious beliefs serve the function of psychological consolation. The belief in a supernatural protector serves as a buffer from man’s fear of nature just as belief in an afterlife serves as a buffer from man’s fear of death.” Thus, he contends that “religion once necessary to restrain man’s violent nature in the early stages of civilization, in modern times can be set aside in favour of reason and science.”³³

Friedrich Nietzsche, Gotthold Lessing, Ludwig Feuerbach, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx and a host of others, wrote their philosophical opinions in the age of enlightenment when, as Ravi Zacharias observed, “Morality became defined as rules of conduct that were neither theological in their basis nor legal nor aesthetic, but were freed from those disciplines and given cultural space of their own.”³⁴ And in his parable of Zarathustra, for instance, Nietzsche proposes an alternative view to religious views that sought to establish all life’s meaning and purpose within the theological context of an afterlife in heaven, an immanent appreciation of this life in aesthetic term. Ideal, he contends is the experience of *Amor Fati* (love of fate), in which one loves one’s own life with all its flaws, just for what it is.³⁵ We see in Nietzsche’s use of the parable of Zarathustra, an attempt not only to demystify all that was held to be sacred but to redirect the consciousness of man towards a wholly new humanism and secularism reinvigorated with an appreciation of the prowess of the human intellectual capacity such that conveniently expels God from the state of affairs of human existence. He proclaims that “God is dead”, a claim of an epic proportion never so bluntly expressed in the enlightenment period. Just like Zarathustra had to discard his once treasured belief and left his hermetically sealed world, Nietzsche believes that man is at present a halfway stop between the beast and the overman. Thus Zarathustra would say,

³¹ Sigmund Freud, (1972) *The future of an Illusion*. London: Hogarth Press. P. 57 (1st ed., 1927)

³² McLellan, David ed. (2000), *Karl Marx, Selected Writings*, 2nd edition, Oxford: University Press p. 289ff

³³ Sigmund Freud, *ibid.* p.86ff

³⁴ Ravi Zacharia, *op. cit.*, p.35

³⁵ See Babette, Babich (2006) *Nietzsche’s “Gay Science”*, in Keith Amsell Pearson ed., *A Companion to Nietzsche*, London: Blackwell, pg. 97-99

You have made your way from the worm to man, and much within you is still worm. Once were ye apes, and even yet man is more of an ape than any of the apes...believe not those who speak unto you of super earthly hopes! Poisoners are they, whether they know it or not. Despisers of life are they, decaying ones and poisoned ones themselves, of whom the earth is weary: So away with them! Once blasphemy against God was the greatest blasphemy: but God died, and therewith also those blasphemers.³⁶

Nietzsche agenda to dethrone God from the state of affairs of the human world was shared by writers like Aldous Huxley who contends that for himself and a few other contemporary thinkers, the whole project of seeking a philosophy of meaninglessness was directed initially at the root of such oppressive social economic or religious systems that sought to regulate and put restrictions on our liberty to do whatsoever we desired to do. According to him,

The philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom; we objected to the political and economic system because it was unjust. The supporters of these systems claimed that in some way they embodied the meaning (a Christian meaning, they insisted) of the world. There was one admirably simple method of confuting these people and at the same time justifying ourselves in our political and erotic revolt: we could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever.³⁷

On the Attempt to Place a Wedge between Science and Religion

There is a point to be made in support of a philosophical point of view that denounces any unjust social or economic system that is both exploitative and would even denigrate the individual human persons to a level less befitting of the dignity of the human person. The same is to be said for any moral system which imposes impossible demands on the people that are not only debasing of the human prowess but such that expresses itself only in the passive acceptance of the injustices of the human experiences in the hope of a promised heavenly inheritance. That been said, to extend this argument to include the liberty to express our sexual proclivities without a reasonable and responsible check is to set the basis of all human relationships of love and affection on a kind of slipping slope, the end results which no one can accurately predict. It will destroy the very foundation upon which certain human ethical conducts and behaviours are based and consequently the very fabric of society itself. How far are we willing to stretch this question of liberation? Does it also involve the possibility of destroying anyone who stands in our way of expressing to the full any of these supposed

³⁶ Thomas Common, (1976)(trans.), *The philosophy of Nietzsche* (New York: Random House, p.28-29 See also Friedrich Nietzsche, (1891), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*; with English trans. by Thomas Common. Germany: Ernst Schmeitzner p.28-29

³⁷ Aldous Huxley, (1932), *Brave New World*, London: Oxford University Press. p. 273, See also *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (1956), London: Oxford University Press.

liberties? What is stopping me from forcefully and violently raping any woman that my heart desires if that is exercising my liberty to the full? The age of enlightenment represented not only an attempt to glorify reason but to an extent an attempt to place a wedge between the demands of religion and the purview of the purely rational or scientific investigation.

Friedrich Jacobi takes a different approach to the thinkers of enlightenment and he strongly believes that the unrestricted deployment of reason in the analysis of all subject matters, will ultimately lead to the destruction of religion. He contends that Spinoza's position and that of his followers depicts the danger of reason, which ultimately leads to pantheism. To identify God with nature while denying his transcendence is the same thing as atheism and this leads into skepticism "which involves an erosion of faith and common sense, leading to a belief in nothing – "nihilism."³⁸ It is against this backdrop of a shift towards a rejection of God from human affairs that the Church Fathers like St. Augustine, Anselm and a host of others set to prove the relationship that exist between the "necessary" existence of God and the facts of human existence. If the argument were to be made that the reason is the highest quality of man, St. Augustine would stress this argument by adding that, "suppose we can find something which you are certain not only exists but is also superior to our reason, would you hesitate to call this reality, whatever it is God?"³⁹ The point need to be made however that Kant's assumption that the human individuals can discover some normative values that were not only universal, categorical and internally consistent has failed to take notice of the reality of human history and cultures.

The historical process no one would deny is an important ligament of all human existence on earth. According to Mircea Eliade, the modern man and the ancient thinkers approach the subject of history differently. While the modern man sees himself as the product of history, the archaic thinker sees himself in relation to events that took place within a mythical time, which is outside our ordinary frame of time. "It is a sacred history because the events took place in a sacred time," by supernatural beings. Thus while history may not be repeated, sacred history can be repeated and since it is the acts of Supernatural beings, it is absolutely true. Malinowski and Eliade believe that we cannot simply get rid of religion because of its mythical contents (even though these cannot be subjected to the scrutiny of reason and science). Despite their failure to pass the scientific investigative criteria, they nevertheless fulfilled in primitive cultures an indispensable function i.e., they did not only express, enhance and codify beliefs, they also helped to safeguard and enforce morality.⁴⁰

Levi Strauss in the "Savage Mind" compares the archaic man to a bricoleur or handyman (who solves a problem by using whatever is at hand for each project and the modern man whom he sees as the engineer (who creates new tools and materials for each new project).⁴¹ If the attempt of the modern man is to totally jettison religion, God and any allusion to the usefulness and place of myths in the understanding of the historical process then maybe

³⁸ Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and George Di Giovanni, *The main Philosophical Writings and the Novel Allwill*, McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Ideas Sept., 2001, p. 37-40.

³⁹ ³⁹ See Joseph Omoregbe, *A simplified History of Western Philosophy*, (1991), vol.1 Nigeria: Joja, p. 93-99

⁴⁰ Mircea Eliade, (1954), *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, London: Blackwell, p. 23-25

⁴¹ Levi Strauss, (1953), "The Savage Mind" in *Natural Rights and History*, Chicago: Doubleday p. 13ff

the contention of Adorno and Horkheimer in the “dialectic of Enlightenment is pertinent here for as they contend, myth is already enlightenment and enlightenment reverts again to myth,

...Ruthless towards itself, the enlightenment has eradicated the last remnant of its own self-awareness. Only thought, which does violence to itself is hard enough, to shatter myths. In its attempt to estrange itself from nature it gets even more entangled, “Just as myths already entail enlightenment, with every step, enlightenment entangles itself more deeply in mythology. Receiving all its subject matter from myths, in order to destroy them, it fails as judge under the spell of myth. It seeks to escape the trial of fate and retribution by itself exacting retribution on that trial. In myths, everything that happens must atone for the fact of having happened. It is no different in enlightenment: no sooner has a fact been established that it is rendered insignificant.”⁴²

In the critique of Science, Jacobi points out that the advancement of science is leading to the destruction of our essential moral and religious beliefs; “the more the sciences progress, the more they discover the causes of life, human action, and the origin of the universe; but the more they find these causes, the more they support materialism, determinism and atheism.”⁴³

Wendell Berry criticism of Edward Wilson was an extension of the enlightenment and counter-enlightenment debate. Wilson is of the opinion that the scientific endeavor is an enterprise so organized and systematized to gather knowledge about the world and to codify this knowledge into testable laws and principles. In its most extreme form it is called ‘Consilience’ – which holds that nature is organized by simple universal laws of physics to which all other laws and principles can eventually be reduced. In its tendency to allow the particular to be absorbed or obscured by the general, Berry contends that science in its empirical knowledge of the material ultimately leads to abstractions, since such statistical averages really do not have a material extension and only can exist as ideas.⁴⁴

No one I believe will doubt the place of reason in the development of ideas and the advancement of science and technology but these great strides in human endeavor and pursuits would not have been possible without a preponderance of the mysteries and wonders generated by the fact that our encounter with the universe leads us on to search for the things yet to be discovered. The independent existence of this reality whether discovered in terms of our material deposits of human knowledge or as it relates to matters that pertain to other minds or religion or God is grasped intuitively. It is often the way we express our deepest beliefs over the humanistic academic sophistication of our time. In our academic sophistication and philosophical brazenness, we have only been too willing to mock such beliefs as the antiquated ideas of religiously minded persons, needing redemption from attachment to myths and

⁴² Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Philosophical fragment is translated from Vol. 5 of Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften: Dialektik der Aufklärung und Schriften* (1940) ed. by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. Trans by Edmund Jephcott. Pub. by S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt. P. 2, 8ff.

⁴³ Jacobi, op. cit., p.85

⁴⁴ Wendell Berry, *Recollected Essays 1965-1980*, New York: Powell’s Pub. P.37 Cf. O’Connor B., ed. (2000) *The Adorno Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell p.53

uncritical belief systems which belongs to antiquity and can only be held by the intellectually immature mind.

If God is dead, as Nietzsche would argue, it would seem that the human world is left to its own whims and caprices with no clear and authoritative reference point of a lawgiver and a determiner of moral codes. What then are we left with and how are we to resolve conflicts of ethical and moral nature on which we cannot agree upon a universal and categorical basis of consent which enables us to know what is right or wrong? Would it not be leaving the determinations of such all- important, life-changing principles to the whims and caprices of the few who may be powerful enough to impose their will as representing the collective will of all peoples, not minding their historico-religious backgrounds?

For me it would seem a difficult, if not an impossible task to attempt to find a common platform upon which to establish a reasonable and coherent ethical theory without first establishing the *'teleos'* question i.e., the purpose and destiny of all human life. In Nietzsche 'new world' without God, life would seem to have no purpose or goal beyond the materially given and consequently the ethical battle ground would be no less than a free-for-all fight. There is no conflict between a God-informed consciousness and a consciousness that seeks the well- being of society and the improvement of the human condition. Religion and the scientific pursuit don't necessary have to be mutually exclusive. There are men of science who are very religious and vice-versa and whatever differences are perceived are not irreconcilable. Let us now examine development in the context of the Nigerian civil society

The Civil Society, Development Agenda and the Crisis of Leadership in Nigeria

The ancient Greeks strongly believed the notion that as human individuals we carry within us the natural tendency to spiritedly and ferociously defend our clan and this they called *thumos*. However this traditional and natural instincts, is what civil society is out to counter balance. The colonialism that took place in Africa may have been built around the inner dialectics of the German idealist Georg Friedrich Hegel's view of the civil society i.e., that it is only through the state, which is the embodiment of the highest values, that the individual can fully realize his\her freedom. In the dialectics of the negation of the thesis in the anti-thesis leading to a synthesis, the absolute Spirit gradually evolves in time until it achieves it highest and most enduring value of freedom, which is embodied in the state. In this dialectical movement the Absolute Spirit had undergone different processes of evolution with each new state better than the previous one and subject to the laws of reason, it tends towards the cause of progress and development reaching its highest evolved form in freedom.⁴⁵

In the Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, Hegel had said, "the characteristic feature of the negroes is that their consciousness has not yet reached an awareness of any substantial objectivity – for example, of God or the law – in which the will of man could participate and in which he could become aware of his own being. The African, in his undifferentiated and concentrated unity, has not yet succeeded in making this distinction between himself as an individual and his essential universality, so that he knows nothing of an absolute being which is other and higher than his own self."⁴⁶ It is not surprising then that

⁴⁵ Hegel, op. cit., p.58

⁴⁶ Hegel, op. cit., p. 177

Hegel would deny that the black race has any history because where there is no culture, there is no reason and by extension no history.

The fundamental concept of civil society did not really take strong roots in Nigeria (the same is true of other countries in Africa) until the post-colonial independent period. It stands to reason that since the history of the civil society in Nigeria and across the many nations of the African continent, was first crystalized in the checkered relationship of conflicts that grew out of a colonial state where the rights of free association were expressly forbidden, the right to vote was denied and the essential opportunities of social mobility were racially defined. As such one may argue that the African colonial experience was indeed a drawback, to the growth and development of the African political and economic climate, which by analogy was a painful reminder of the indignities meted upon the people in the colonial civil state.

The Post-Independence dilemma was therefore how to build a nation based on the principles of equity and justice, reflecting the new world order of modernity. The thinking was that a true and a meaningful freedom for African peoples can be attained, by some form of mental reorientation and liberation coupled with a return to genuine traditional African humanism wherever it is possible. There were those Like Julius Nyerere of Tanzania (in Ujamaa) and Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal (in Negritude) who called for total jettisoning of the vestiges of colonialism and a return to the African-pre-colonial past and those like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana (in Consciencism) who wanted the newly independent states to embrace all the good elements of the industrialized capitalist nations, religion etc., and adapt the western economic development model to fit the African reality. On the extreme end were very vocal voices like Franz Fanon (*In the Wretched of the Earth*), who contended that just as Colonialism interrupted the historicity of the indigenous culture, in like manner, the reclaiming of the “National time” is possible only on the demise of colonial temporality.⁴⁷

Fanon was one author who believed that extreme situations required extreme measures. Patrick Taylor would say that for Fanon, “the demise or destruction of the colonizer means the beginning of the possibility of a new history for the colonized.”⁴⁸ Fanon sees this as an inevitable conflict between contending radical and non-commensurable cultural historical totalities. The conflict is thus reduced to that of opposites in the conflict of negating each other, something which Hegel identifies as useful processes in the development of the absolute Spirit in time- a movement leading to the highest level of development in freedom. The paradox of such inner dialectic is that while it creates a lot of wealth, it also at the same time results in division of labor, which ultimately increases the possibility of class differentiations. Class differentiations in the face of such stupendous wealth can lead to a greater gap between the rich and the poor. It is the irony of the Hegelian inner dialectic of the working of the development of civil society that it creates wealth but is not also able to prevent excessive poverty.

It is pertinent to point out that for the most part, in Nigeria and in many African countries, colonialism is often to be blamed by both the indigenous political class and

⁴⁷ See Frantz Fanon, (1963), *The Wretched of the Earth*, Canada: Library of Congress. See also African Philosophy, An Anthology, (1998), ed., by Emmanuel Eze. London and New York: Blackwell Publishers. P.77ff.

⁴⁸ Patrick Taylor, (1989), *The Narrative of Liberation*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press. P. 174

academics as the primary reason for the present economic inertia of most African countries. As Tsenay Serequeberhan observes, on the epistemic grounds, colonialism thrived under an underpinning policy of “surreptitiously privileging, on a metaphysical level, a particular culture and historicity and this is coterminous with Being or existence as such.”⁴⁹ Consequently, any debate or discussions on the role of the Nigerian Philosophers in explicating the challenges of development in Nigeria, would reveal the deep division between those who wish to continue to blame the present economic woes in Nigeria and across the African continent on its colonial past and those who are more pragmatic and believe that we ought to examine today how the present structure of the balance of power, the ethnic divisions, religious sentiments etc., reflect the reality of life in Nigeria and other African societies.

Many critics of the developmental agenda in Africa would argue that in the mad rush to consolidate political power and nationalize multinational companies, the post-independent African political leaders had little or no time to address the question of building an educated citizenry equipped to meet the challenges of modernity, which was fast enveloping the world. The failure of the Nationalists leaders was not to have realized the critical connection between empowerment of the populace and national growth. It is the primary function of the political leadership structure to shape the culture and work ethics of a nation in order to respond to the needs of development. When people are happy and trust their leaders they will be more committed to ensuring that the goals of the organization are achieved. Another failure of the development of civil society was the question of urban migration, which was greatly ignored in the mad rush to concentrate jobs in the big cities while the same measure was not extended to the villages and provinces; this has become known as the white collar job mentality such that the civil service job became the new attraction for wealth and status.

Sometimes for political expediencies, many Nigerian and African leaders have resorted to a divide and rule method in order to perpetuate their hold on power. The tensions and divisions arising from the political class’ desire to consolidate power were amplified by old ethnic rivalries and religious sentiments which were used as diversionary measures to cover up their profligacy and ineptitude. It is a crisis of the leadership class in that they failed to encourage the solidarity necessary for economic growth and development. In a situation where leaders have amassed personal wealth at the expense of their nations, there is bound to be a weakening of the national spirit of cohesion, which is needed for economic growth and development. Commenting on the leadership crisis in Nigeria for example, Kalu says:

The central problem in Nigeria has been the lack of public leadership nurtured by the core values of indigenous elite across the national landscape-political, civil society, cultural, religious, educational, and in many instances, family. The absence of public leadership is directly related to the absence of national dialogue on what Nigerian identity should be about and how the different nationalities that were brought together by colonialism should live together productively.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Tsenay Serequeberhan, (1991) ed., *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings*. London: Paragon House Publishers, p. 252

⁵⁰ Kelechi A. Kalu, “Echoes of Instability: Implications for State, society and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria”, *The Constitution*, vol. 5, No.1 (March 2005), p.3.

The implication of the statement above is clear - we do need in Nigeria a leadership structure with a clear vision on the direction to take the country as it affects all facets of our lives otherwise we will continue to grope in the darkness of political and economic misadventure without a clear vision of who we are as a people. This has a lot of hermeneutical implications for Nigeria and the African continent in general especially since we are in the throes of redefining and rediscovering what it means to be an African person in a world that is both multicultural the modern. So if the hermeneutical question must be addressed then we ought to go back to the very root of the crisis of identity as a whole. For however we may choose to proceed we will find ourselves always having to ask the salient question of Being; what does it mean to be an African, living the reality of life in a continent with a colonial historical past and a present economic state of inertia in the face of the challenges of globalization and the United Nations Development agenda. Evidence from history lends credence to the fact that the structure of conflicts in Nigeria and across the continent of Africa was always along ethnic and religious divide. So any real attempt at Nation building should first and foremost address the questions of,

1. Uniting the diverse ethnic groups, who initially had no common history and affinity but were forced to form a geographical entity; this was a common predicament amongst many newly independent African states
2. Fear of ethnic domination
3. Educational imbalance between the federating units
4. Division across religious and denominational lines
5. Insecurities of life and property
6. Urban migration etc.,

The argument is also proffered by critics of the African developmental agenda that since many countries were only geographical entities created for the purpose of trade by the western colonial interest, there's no way one can expect a national spirit among a people that have always been so divided. This argument is not only escapist in its composition it also begs the question. This is not unique to Africa alone. Nations have been built where there are so many ethnic groupings working together for the common interest. A critical examination of these issues will serve to make pertinent the overall implications for the study of African Philosophy. Philosophy in Nigeria thus has a very urgent need to help Nigerian leaders and people understand these issues and how the inner dialectics of these conflicts engineered for political gains can undermine the development of a nation. It should also be able to translate ideologies into manageable and practical means and using the opportunities which our studies provides to turn the gains of modernity to its advantage rather than to continue to seek a scapegoat in its historical colonial past.

From Ideologies to Praxis: The Task of Nation building and the Intervention of the Nigerian Philosophers

In Das Capital Marx points out that “a spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality.”⁵¹ Since the recorded history of

⁵¹ Karl Marx, Das capital, (1974), vol.3 Moscow: Progress Pub. P.23

philosophy in the Greek city of Ionia, man has never ceased to search for this common ground that explains all known categories of the human pursuits? Thales, one of the earliest known Greek philosophers knew from his observation of the world around him that there was an infinite varieties of things; the planetary bodies, animals, plants etc. He propounded the argument that all things must have originated from water which seems to permeate all life and matter. However, he still had to answer the question of how diversity came about from the unity of the primordial substance. A lot of the philosophical propositions after him, from his student Anaximander, to Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Rene Descartes and a host of others including those who have advocated for an atheistic evolutionary position have all been hard pressed with providing answers to the question of human existential reality. The Nihilist tried to escape this question by simply denying the existence of everything, except of course the immediate contents of their consciousness which in itself is something even though they would want to make us believe it is a representation of nothingness. “Nothingness” is not even an entity and we can only affirm it in the context of “something” however we may choose to describe it is immaterial. According to St. Augustine, it is a contradiction in terms to affirm nothingness because to accept this position is self-contradictory as this would amount to admitting knowing something in the least.⁵²

A renowned English poet G.K. Chesterton was quoted as saying that he learned more about life by observing children in a nursery than he ever did by reflecting upon the writings of any of the philosophers.⁵³ What is in the life of a child, which would have fascinated Chesterton so much as to leave such a lasting impression on him if not the mystery and the wonder surrounding the growth and behavior of the child? It is this mystery and wonderment which first engendered the philosophical pursuit.

One thing that is remarkable of the 21st century and to date is the unprecedented development of the information and technological age which immediately makes us aware of the quantum leap in the level of the world’s economic development and wealth, in the field of commerce and communication which invariably shames our collective consciences at the concomitant institutionalization of poverty, destitution, exploitation and total deprivations of the benefits of living a dignified life exemplified in the ever widening economic gap between the rich and the poor all in the name of a free capitalist economy. It is even more so today with a greater divide between the wealthy nations of the earth and others who are barely scrapping their options in order to feed their citizens. It is the irony of human historicity that in a world of unprecedented opulence inundated with expert opinions of presumably tested principles of social and economic development, many nations of the world are still struggling to feed its populace who live below the poverty line reference of \$1 a day and to provide them with adequate security of life and property.

In Nigeria, every man, woman or child has become a law or mini jack of all trade to himself. No one waits for the government to provide them with shelter, security or health care anymore. We have become a country, where people struggle to make a living and when they get sick, they either self-medicate or buy medicine from a road side pharmacy which is of

⁵² See Joseph Omoregbe, *op. cit.* p.99. See also Copleston F, (1972), *A History of Medieval Philosophy*, London: Methuen Books

⁵³ G.K. Chesterton, (1985), *As I Was Saying* ed., Robert Knille, Grand Rapids Mich. Eerdmans, p. 267

course a quicker and sometimes more reliable remedy than going to wait for hours in the hospital to see a doctor who may sometimes make a wrong diagnosis or worst still, suffer the indignities of angry nurses who think they are doing you a favor. On the road, as a traveller you do not only have to deal with bad roads riddled with potholes or better still death traps but also gun wielding police officers who are trigger ready to kill over failure to part with your hard earned money or criminals who have devised various tricks to make you stop so they can rob you. We have become a country; of electric company officials who have become experts at putting us in darkness than providing us with lights and people who compete on purchasing electrical Inverters and generating sets (popularly known as ‘I pass my Neighbour’); of teachers who seek for gratifications in order to pass students in exams; of politicians who make electioneering promises they never hope to keep; of people who would do just about anything including selling drugs to survive; of internet and financial fraudsters; of religious fanatics who on one extreme are ready to blow you up in bombs and on the other extreme create a morbid fear of satanic possession and a promise of deliverance that force you to part with your money while they smile to the bank and ride in private jets and SUV’s etc. Bishop Mathew Kukah in a lecture in honour of the 80th birthday of Professor Wole Soyinka aptly captures the essence of this crisis when he described Nigeria as a country where,

The smartest students pass with first class and get admissions to Medical and Engineering schools, the second class students get MBAs and LLBs to manage the first class students. The 3rd class students enter politics and rule both the 1st and 2nd class students. The failures enter the underworld of crime and control the politicians and the businesses. And, best of all, those who did not attend school become prophets and everyone follows them.⁵⁴

What a paradox and irony of what life has become in Nigeria! So now the question is what role can the Philosophers play in all of these? What kind of intervention can they make in terms of the challenges that afflict the Nigerian society? Karl Marx writing in his Theses to Feuerbach (words which are also conspicuously inscribed on his grave) said that, “the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The point however is to change it.”⁵⁵ I want to presume here that this is what the Organizers of this lecture had in mind when they chose the topic, “The challenges of development in Nigeria and the intervention of Nigerian Philosophers.”

Let me assume for the benefit of argument that what is presumed here is a conceptual analysis of the ideas of economic, social and political development that will help the leaders to better understand the moral and social implications that are associated with the issue of governance. I believe the call is for the Nigerian philosophers (which interestingly already includes all of you students of philosophy) to become albeit in your various institutions, agents of change and transformation. The paradox here gentlemen and ladies is that only that individual can be an agent of change who is himself free of any socially constructed and artificially erected structures of psycho-affective nature calculated to both denigrate and alienate the individual from himself. An individual who is remotely alienated from his identity

⁵⁴ See Mathew Kukah, (2014), Text of Lecture Commemorating the 80th birthday of Professor Wole Soyinka. Guardian Newspaper, September 23.

⁵⁵ Karl Marx, Thesis to Feuerbach, Moscow: Progress Pub. P 5

and has a jaundiced sense of history, cannot become in himself a catalyst for change since he would be bereft of the psycho-intellectual capacity to transcend such systematic, deliberate and artificially engineered social structures which are only driven by the selfish political and economic interests of the conquering bourgeoisie or political class in the case of Nigeria.

The yearning for freedom, to both exercise one's intellectual capacity and associate without hindrance, is a value of all human societies. We have constitutional provisions, policies and laws that promise the Nigerian citizenry a good life but why are we still far from enjoying the benefits of that good life or what in our political parlance is now dubbed "the dividends of democracy?" It is not the case that we are bereft of ideas but we are today faced with the urgency of a problem that has transcended the level of the theoretical to the level of pragmatism i.e., the question is essentially how to translate ideology into praxis in a way that is both new and transforming. It is the role of Philosophy to be able to analyze the objective truth of any given situation. Philosophy in Nigeria thus has a very urgent need to help the Nigerian leaders and people understand these issues and how the inner dialectics of these conflicts engineered for political gains can undermine the development of a nation. It should also be able to translate ideologies into manageable and practical measures by using the opportunities which our studies provides to turn the gains of modernity to its advantage rather than to continue to seek a scapegoat in its historical colonial past.

In the inaugural address at his swearing in as the first black President of the United States of America, Barack Obama says, "Our challenges may be new, the instruments with which we meet them may be new, but those values upon which our success depends, honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism -- these things are old."⁵⁶ Values are beliefs about what is desirable. They are reflections of the underlying assumptions of culture, e.g. trust, openness, Integrity, cooperation, intimacy, teamwork etc., which are essential for success of effective corporations and nations as we see today in Japan and America to mention but two of the industrialized nations of the world. The level of development and technological advancement of these nations, are according to an entrepreneur William Ouchi, a function of a distinctive corporate culture internally consistent and characterized by shared values of Intimacy, trust, cooperation, teamwork, and egalitarianism. Success in these organizations was not a matter of technology as it was in managing people, which of course is a consequence of the leadership structure in the countries in question.⁵⁷

Philosophy in Nigeria and in the continent of Africa should be preoccupied with a search for models of excellence in both economic, cultural political and social segments. Discovering and adopting such paradigmatic possibilities that are not just beautiful treatises but realizable, practical and non-absolutist categories, as they affect all facets of human life especially in what has been identified as the seven core areas of human life and culture i.e., history, spirituality and ethics, social, political and economic organizations, creative productions (art, music, literature, dance, etc.) and ethos. This may be extended to include language and all such matters that may contribute positively to expanding the measure of freedom enjoyed by the individual in the society.

⁵⁶ Culled from the internet, Sept. 2014.

⁵⁷ Ouchi, William G., (1981), *Theory Z*. New York: Avon Books, p.35

It is instructive however that the failure of the various attempts made by African leaders since independence was the presupposition that ideology can be translated into praxis without first empowering the people with the requisite tools to both understand and digest these ideologies in the first place. Something was essentially lacking which needed to be addressed as a first step towards economic empowerment; here the role of an educated citizenry cannot be overemphasized. A first step towards transcending this mental picture ingrained in the mind of a typical Nigerian individual is to educate the people to think for themselves and analyze new received information for their own merits without a bias to one's own ethnic origin or leanings. The plus side of such an education is that it is liberating. Dorr Donal would argue that, "when a people work for liberation, its struggle is ultimately a spiritual one, even though it is necessarily carried out at the political, economic and cultural levels."⁵⁸ What Dorr is saying here is that people who are ultimately involved in a liberation struggle for the restoration of their freedom and dignity are so consumed by such pursuit to the level of a passionate involvement that can only be compared to a religious fervor. Such fervor as history would bear witness has made people to readily sacrifice their lives for the cause for which they are struggling. And because the struggle consumes their time and it is the consummate element that defines their other social interactions, it cannot but be likened to a spiritual endeavor.

J. Kisekka believes that the sort of liberation referred to here is possible but he points out that "the nature of liberation required by the individual in contemporary Africa is not the fatalistic, but one which the individual has to create or else it will not come and will not evolve positively as desired. It will come to this desired form only if the individual begins to break the "culture of silence" and "self-censorship" and critically discourses upon the world, remaking his or her world by "learning to read the word through a reading of the world." In this way one would be able to pursue truth by calling things by their proper names and by learning to recognize facts as they are without overrating them."⁵⁹ For as Gabriel Massi point out, "change is first and foremost a personal choice before it is shared with others. Its effects are likely to have a lasting influence on people and all around it when it is consciously appropriated and reproduced on whatever level by its beneficiary."⁶⁰

Gabriel Massi and Bert Olivier both agree that the public intellectuals have a very unique role in combatting the two major issues of poverty and ignorance that have prevented us from fully embracing the change that is necessary if we are to be fully immersed in the global culture and development. For Massi this role must begin from the readiness of the intellectuals to deal with the concrete issues (by "naming the present") that affect the continent of Africa thereby showing how change is a necessary response to realities bedeviling this continent;

⁵⁸ Dorr, Donal, (1998), "The Poor as Agents of their own Liberation." In Deirdre Carabine, Martin O' Reilley, *The Challenge of Eradicating Poverty in the World: An African Response*. Kampala: Uganda Martyrs University Press. P. 211

⁵⁹ Kisekka, Joseph, (2011), "The Destiny of the Individual in Contemporary Africa." In *Journal of Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change*. Series II Africa Vol. 9, p..51

⁶⁰ Massi, Gabriel, (2011), "The Role of the Public Intellectual in an African Context: Naming the Present." in Gerard Walmsley ed. *African Philosophy and the Future of Africa*. USA: Library of Congress Publication, p.53

they must not only allow themselves to be shaped by it but in the process they must also shape it in their interpretation of realities that are stifling the continent of Africa.⁶¹

Bert Olivier believes that the intellectual institutions should be the centers of critical and intellectual oppositions to the paralyzing, powerful but popular opinions, which may come in form of entertainment or the bureaucracy since they occupy what he calls “privileged points of intersection” between key dimensions of human life. The problem however is that the intellectuals in Nigeria and in Africa are caught in the conflict of being faithful to the truth and dealing with the issue of power play that concern the interests of the political class or the multinational corporations who may be adversely affected in the process of bringing about the necessary change that will be a reflection of truth especially in our world today.

For example, we know that sometimes a specific finding may provide information to the level of ecological disaster that the erection of an oil rig may have on the environment, but the considerations of other things like economic benefits, employment opportunities, taxes accruing to the government coffers, dividends from investment opportunities, may adversely affect the implementation of such a report. In the process the means of livelihood of the people and their natural environment may be destroyed by the oil spillage as in the delta regions of Nigeria and no one would dare stand to confront the situation in order to bring about the desired change. Those who dared to challenge the multinational corporations are either discredited by the powerful government information machinery or framed and killed on trumped up charges like the case of Ken Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni leaders.

Again in the desire to seek political patronage and get lucrative government appointments, the academics have very often compromised the self-critical nature of the universities thus creating a gapping lacuna between the critical self-reflection, pursuit of truth and the condition of human life in the society. Until we can separate such economic benefits to certain powerful interest groups from the overall wellbeing of the society or people concerned, then the pursuit of truth and freedom of thought would always be sacrificed on the altar of political expediency or personal gains.⁶²

The critical question that is raised by this analysis is how do we maintain the integrity and self-critical image of the Universities and higher institutions which are supposed to be the highest centers of teaching, research and learning if such integrity is capable of being compromised by economic considerations? If the putatively free environment for research and expression of thought is compromised by other factors, what is the specific academic and intellectual to do and what happens then to our objective search for truth?

CONCLUSION

Africa is part and parcel of the committee of nations in the world and we can no longer afford to go it alone. In the past it was a lot easier when communities had to contend with a

⁶¹ Ibid., p.53

⁶² Olivier, Bert, (2011), “Truth, Power, Intellectuals and Universities” in Gerard Walmsley ed., African Philosophy and the Future of Africa, USA: Library of Congress Publication, pp.26-30.

monoculture and with individuals who grew up never having to question or challenge the traditions that were handed down to them and the values that guided behavior. The reality of our modern world as I contended requires a total trans-valuation of our values to reflect the reality of a new world order that is both global and multicultural. I argued that the uniqueness of Africa's problems is such that they would not allow the application of some universal laws of economics, politics or the measures of a cultural hegemony. For example, the Marxist/Leninists postulations that human economic development was subject to some invisible laws of economics arising from the conflicts of class interest and leading to a classless society made a lot of impression on the African leaders who in an attempt to divest Africa of all former colonial vestiges, wholeheartedly embraced the socialist principles, which did not quite suite the African culture, worldview or nature. By following doggedly the Marxist Socialist ideologies, in their attempt to lead its citizens away from the Capitalists ideology, which came to be closely associated with colonialism, many African leaders superimposed a new order economic system, which was basically untested on the African continent. It was a failure of translating ideology to praxis not to realize that there are no universal absolutes that are the same for all times and societies. In this they fell into what I would describe as "the fallacy of historical structuralism". This is the tendency to structure the historical process and development into a pre-determined evolutionary pattern, which presumably cannot be altered, and necessarily tending towards another pre-determined goal. One of the most poignant criticisms of Structuralism is its tendency to put all development, within a straightjacket iron clad laws of history. In the process the subject loses his place as the agent of history to an abstract invisible construct as if history is doomed to travel on a uni-linear course and this is hardly is a reflection of reality. To attempt to build a new African society on the ideological foundation premised on the same universally applicable economic principles is to fall into the error of structuralism.

It is pertinent to mention that Karl Marx was non-committal about what would happen when societies have passed the socialist-state-transition stage into communism. Does that mean the end of the historical process and development itself? Or does the process dissolve into the abyss of absolutism in the circularity of the Hegelian Absolute Spirit and begin the whole process afresh? The African writers were too much in a hurry to provide a soothing balm to the already agitated citizens who no longer had a common enemy to fight in the colonial officials. It was a mistake to presuppose that history was following a certain unchangeable economic rules leading towards the dissolution of differentiations of classes. Communism was basically an untested ideological proposition, the end of which was to be a utopia of some sort. However desirable and attractive this may have appeared, following the Russian revolution, the Marxian socialist ideology at best was a procedural analysis of economic history, which as it appears today from the collapse of the Soviet Socialist Republic has not been able to stand the test of time. It suffices to say that an ideological position is not tested unless it has been put to work in concrete human existential situation.

As Mahmood Mandani would argue, "the endeavor to restore historicity, agency, to the subject has been the cutting edge of a variety of critiques of structuralism. But if structuralism tended to straightjacket agency within iron laws of history, a strong tendency in post-structuralism is to diminish the significance of the historical constraint in the name of

salvaging agency.”⁶³. While we cannot run away from the fact of civil societies as conceived today in the modern world and the implication of an information technology age, we must however proceed cautiously by first trying to understand the most basic issues that face the continent and its peoples before deciding on what principles to adopt in the attempt to create for the modern Nigerian and African societies values of a good life that are adaptable to the new age. Some of these issues which range from ethnic rivalries, fear of domination, educational imbalance between the regions, poverty, religious extremism, urban migration and cultural and linguistic crisis, gender bias, intolerance toward people who do not share our moral convictions etc., are part and parcel of the post-colonial African societies which were bequeathed to the African peoples by the forceful creation of geographical boundaries that were not sensitive to the ancient language and ethnic divisions already in place prior to the advent of colonialism.

What we need therefore is a unity in ideology and praxis which is not only liberating but also has the power to regenerate a new consciousness built independently of the emotions of inequality and inadequacy. This is where the whole project of deconstruction becomes a necessary step towards this new consciousness. This deconstruction process must necessarily and always address the question of African liberation within the undertone of the dignity and equality of all persons irrespective of race, gender or sex.

If the hermeneutical question be addressed then we must go back to the very root of the crisis of identity as a whole and ask the salient question of being i.e., what does it mean to be a Nigerian, living the reality of a country with a colonial historical past and a present state of economic of inertia? The hermeneutical task must involve bringing into question this reality and how it is to be seen and understood in the history of the economic underdevelopment of the continent of Africa as a whole. The uniqueness and significance of this reality can never be over emphasized or ignored for that matter for Philosophy as we know in general whether in its objective or subjective presuppositions is a reflective activity on the human experience. To borrow Hans Georg Gadamer’s expression, what we seek is a “fusion of Horizon” between a concrete historical reality and the ontic process that occurs in engaging real life issues and problems with the context of a specific historicalness. This experience as Gadamer points out belongs to the historical nature of man; it is the experience of one’s own historicity, which he calls “his Heritage”⁶⁴

It is my contention that any examination of the present Nigerian reality, whether in its political, economic, social or ideological orientations must seek for a unity of meaning which encompasses a reconstruction of the facts of history (epistemological), to the understanding in all ramification of its significance and meaning for the existential reality of the people (meta-ethical) and how the lessons learnt from the mistakes of the past can help us build on the epistemological foundations we already have for a better future of growth and development (Praxis).

⁶³ Mandami, op. cit., p. 56

⁶⁴ Gadamer, Hans Georg, (1969), *Dialectical Hermeneutics*, in John Wild et al ed., *Hermeneutics; Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Hiedegger and Gadamer*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, p. 37.

THE QUEST FOR ONENESS AND STABILITY AND THE CHALLENGES OF RELIGION AND ETHNICITY IN NIGERIA

Being the Department Lecture of Philosophy on the 23rd of January 2015

By
Rev. Msgr. Francis Ogunmodede

1. Introduction

It is said that a man without a history is like a Computer without a Memory. Sequel to its inception, Nigeria has been a very complex country. She is socially and economically dynamic, multi-ethnic and divergent cultures, languages and religious systems. “Now, these people were ethnic groups or nationalities, which differ in history, culture, language, religion and mythologies. They were, also, as many as 250 in number, but the main groups were Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo, Tiv, Idoma Bini, Efic Urhobo, Itsekiri, Ijaw, etc. These nationalities were autonomous and had governments of their own and trade as partners with one another, but they never for once thought of amalgamating.” Hence, our national problems did not start today, or yesterday, but “yester-years”. We shall see how this came about as we go on.

However, the quest for oneness and stability in Nigeria cannot be complete without the mention of some these prevalent fundamental problems facing the Country: Ethnic diversity; the forced British political amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates to become Nigeria in 1914 and the interest of the Europeans in Africa and indeed Nigerian resources; the problem of Coup d’etat and Military dispensations;

the emergence of divergent socio-politico- cum-religious conflicts; Electioneering and the Geopolitical Zoning; the perennial and pervading system of Bribery and Corruption, selfish and porous leadership, the emergence of ethno- religious Militia sects and Boko Haram Terrorisms, to mention a few. In fact, these form the scope of this paper.

Having given a brief description above, I shall attempt also, a brief history of Nigeria, then precisely comment on some of those factors while stating their effects, too. Afterwards, I shall propose a relative panacea for curbing these challenges and engendering unity and stability in Nigeria.

2. Evolution of Nigerian Society And State

Nigeria is essentially an artificial creation, which, like most other African states, is a product of colonialism. By now, understanding of the history of Nigerian people has matured sufficiently that writing a national synthesis is at least empirically possible and remains extremely daunting.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica and Wikipedia:

The Nigerian history can be traced to prehistoric settlers living in the area as early as 11,000 BC. Numerous ancient African civilizations settled in the region that is today known as Nigeria. An example of one of the civilizations that settles in Nigeria is the Nri Kingdom. [Islam reached Nigeria through the Hausa States during the 11th century. The Songhai Empire also occupied part of the region. Nigeria was colonized by Britain in 1885, and later became a British protectorate in 1901. Colonization lasted up until 1960, when an independence movement succeeded in gaining Nigeria its independence.

Nigeria became a republic at the time it gained Independent in 1960, but succumbed to military rule in 1966 after a bloody coup d'etat. A separatist movement later formed the Republic of Biafra in 1967, leading to the three-year Nigerian Civil War. Nigeria became a republic once again after a new constitution was written in 1979. However, the republic was short-lived, when the military led by Major General Muhammadu Buhari seized power again four years later. Buhari was overthrown and a new republic was founded in 1993, but was dissolved again by General Sani Abacha afterwards Abacha died in 1998 and a fourth republic was later established the following year, ending three decades of military rule. Today, Nigeria is in the process with rebuilding its petroleum-based economy and/igbtng the Islamic militant group, Boko Haram.ⁱⁱ

Obviously, the recurrent tempo of national dailies and other media quagmire attest to the fact that the atmosphere is densely pregnant and poised with another Electoral uncertainty in Nigeria, perhaps, the 8th one since the advent of the 1st Republic. It is 16 years now (since 1999) the new democratic dispensation ensued. Many Nigerians, like me, have taught it would bring back our lost glories, but, unfortunately, the reverse is the case, Today, in Nigeria, the case has been years of bad leadership, insurgencies, corruptions and economic stagnation in a country blessed with great natural resources enough to eater for everyone but for which few elites preposterously accrued to themselves and their cronies the wealth of the nation, Taiwo Adetiloye of the Sahara Reporters rightly opined that:

When there exist wide gap between the rich and the poor, there comes a breaking- point where there is bound to be a class conflict that materializes in various forms of revolution such as the Arab spring, Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Biafra and others. It can be said that whenever the rich man living inside his mansion peeps out his glass window, he sees the poor man living outdoors. The poor man looks up and wishes he could at least have a small shelter, get if possible one meal a day and have a cloth from the rich man. On the other hand, the singular wish of the rich man is never to lose his wealth and become a pauper. It is reasonable then to have something close to a mid-point between these two desires such that neither have to worry about the Other.ⁱⁱⁱ

Hence, the problem militating against the quest for oneness and stability in Nigeria.

3. Problems or Factors Affecting Oneness and Stability In Nigeria

To be precise, among the various factors or problems enlisted above, I shall focus and discuss only five salient ones: the British Conquest and Amalgamation; Military Interventions; Constitutional development and Islamic Agenda; Divergent Ethno-religious-cum-socio-political crises, and the Corruption and Lack of Charismatic Leaders. Others factors may be interwoven in these. Much of what will be discussed here are drawn from my earlier Work on Sovereign National Conference and the Nationhood of Nigeria (2004).^{iv}

i. Before And After the Forced Amalgamation of 1914

Prior to the Amalgamation of 1914 of Nigeria, the British forces had conquered the following cities and people: Lagos (1861); the acquisition of Nigerian territory by Britain in Berlin Conference (1885); Subjugation of Benin Kingdom (1897); Exile of Oba of Benin to Calabar (1897); Formation of West African Frontier Force with 90% coming from North and especially, from the Middle Belt Region and Exile of King Jaja of Opobo (1898); Amalgamation of East and West as the Southern Protectorate in January 1st, 1900; Nigeria became a British Protectorate (1901), Subjugation of Sokoto Caliphate of Usman Dan Fodio (1903); Subjugation of Oyo and Ijebu territories (1902-1906); Amalgamation of people of the North (1908); Order in Council to amalgamate signed in November (1913); and forceful Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates by Lord Lugard, in 15th January, 1914. This was solely for the administrative interest of the Colonial Masters, who favoured the poor North and hated the rich South from where they get the means to administer the country. In fact, civil servants from the Christian South were not allowed to mingle with the Muslim North for fear of domineering and pollution.

According to Prof Ochonu of African History at Vanderbilt University and the author of “Colonialism By Proxy: Hausa Imperial Agents and Middle Belt Consciousness in Nigeria” (2014):

The amalgamation made little sense otherwise and has since been invoked by Nigerians as the foundation of the rancorous relationship between the two regions of Nigeria. Northern Nigeria, now broken into several states and three geopolitical blocs, is largely Muslim. It was the center of pre-colonial Islamic empire called the Sokoto Caliphate, and its Muslim populations, especially those whose ancestors had been part of the caliphate, generally look to the Middle East and the wider Muslim world for solidarity and

sociopolitical example. The South, an ethnically diverse region containing many states and three geopolitical units, is largely Christian. The major sociopolitical influences there are Western and traditional Africa. These differences have been a source of political disagreements and suspicions between the two regions since colonial times.

To add to this cauldron, each of the two regions contains ethnic and religious minorities who harbor grievances against ethnic and religious majorities they see as hegemonic oppressors. These grievances are sometimes expressed through bitter political complaints, through sectarian crises stoked by political elites and incendiary media rhetoric, and through violent insurgencies.

Between 1947 and 1959 Nigerian nationalist leaders from different regional, ethnic, and religious communities came together in a series of conferences and parliaments to negotiate the transition to self-rule and to map out a common future. During these interactions and in the first few years after independence in 1960, the jarring effects of arbitrary colonial unification manifested as seemingly irreconcilable adherences of aspirations, priorities, and visions. So deep were these religious and ethnic antagonisms that one Northern Nigerian Muslim nationalist leader declared Nigeria “the mistake of 1914” while a prominent

Southern Nigerian Christian nationalist figure called Nigeria “a mere geographic expression.”

In Nigeria’s national politics, Christian anxieties about Muslim domination of the national political space and the accompanying fear that politically dominant Muslims would use their privileged perch to Islamize national institutions and impose Islamic Sharia law on non-Muslims date back to colonial times. Muslims, especially those from Northern Nigeria, for their part, have sought to fend off what they regard as unbridled Westernization and have sporadically sought refuge in parochial religious reforms. ^v

It was observed that religious peace existed in Nigeria generally among all religious groups in the pre-Colonial era. The British protected the Islamic North against the South by introducing Indirect Rule system in the North and not allowing the Christian preachers to penetrate Muslim areas of residence, as stated above.

Pathetically, also, during the Nigerian Independence in 1960, the Colonial Masters favoured the Northerners. Hence, the seed of this potential rift between the South and the North was sown. To spite the Western educated Southern leaders, the control of the Federal Power was manipulated through a false Census in 1956 and rigging the Elections in 1959 and given to the Northern leaders. These took it as a birth-right since then, and want to rule always. Thus, political advantage given to the North by the British is the fundamental root cause of the ethno-religious- cum-political crisis in the Country, today. This explains why the 1st government in 1953 was led by the North (NPC) until Independence in 1960 and even upto 1966 when there was a Military Coup d’etat led by Major Nzeogwu, a Southerner. A Northern-inspired counter Coup occurred after only Six months when an Igbo (Gen. Irons) ruled Nigeria.

Consequently, in Nigerian history, only Two Southerner (and Christian) Presidents, Matthew Olusegun Obasanjo (a Yoruba man from Ogun State) 1999-2007 and Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (from Otuekpe-Ogbia kingdom in Bayelsa State) 2010-2015, have democratically ruled for a totality of 13 years. So in all, and since 1953, when Federal

Government started in Nigeria, both in Military and Democratic eras. But many Northerners have emerged as Presidents ab initio and ruled for a totality of 36 years while the South ruled for only 17 % years (including the Military dispensations of Aguiyi Irons between January to June 1966; Obasanjo, 1976-79 and Interim Government of Ernest Shona an, between 26th Aug. to 17th Nov., 1993). Is these politically justified? Is the Presidential Seat meant only for the North? I guess these are not rhetorical questions. What about the era of Military interventions that disoriented our unity and stability?

ii. Military Interventions

In Nigeria, Military coup by my definition is a veritable source of political instability. The road to democratic governance was characterized by countless coups and counter coups by the military, mutual suspicion on the part of the ethnic nationalities that make up the Nigerian State with activities leading to increase of the disunity of Nigeria, political apathy as a result of the lack of confidence in the electoral cum democratic process to mention a few.

Coups and counter coups, the electoral crisis of the first republic 1964/1965 no doubt constitute one of the factors that led to the termination of the republic and brought about military dictatorship. The counter coup by the North which gave power to Yakubu Gowon's led military administration in 1966 snowball into the Nigeiran civil war (Nwosu et al, 1998)^{vi}, the poor electoral process of 1983 and the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election paved way for military take-over in the Nigerian democratic experiment of those dispensation (Falola and Ihonvbere 1985; Akinboye 2004).^{vii}

On mutual suspicion amongst the ethnic nationalities that constitute the Nigerian state, the pattern of politicking and the nature of ethnicization of political parties could be associated with the de-democratization of republics in Nigeria. In the first republic, the ethnic and fragile nature of political institutions brought the republic to an end through military Intervention in governance. Although the intervention which brought an Igbo officer into office as Head of Government was bloody with mostly politicians from the North as casualties. This scenario created a wide gap and distrust between the Hausas of the North and the Ibos of the South-East, a situation which fuelled the counter coup of 1966 and eventually culminated into the Nigeria civil war.

In addition, the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election had negative implication on national integration in Nigeria as the Yoruba's from the South felt that the annulment was a calculated attempt by the Northerners not to accommodate non northerners to be in charge of political power in a democratic dispensation.^{viii} In fact, tracing the emergence of the Military Coups is to give an account of stewardship in Nigeria. Nigeria was scheduled for Independence from Britain in 1960, and three main political parties ran in the preparatory elections in 1959. The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) which had control of the Eastern Region (Igbo) was led by Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) which had control of the Northern Region (Hausa-Fulani) was led by Ahmadu Bello. And the Action Group (AG) which had control of the Western Region (Yoruba) was led by Obafemi Awolowo. When no party won a majority during the 1959 elections, the NPC combined with the NCNC to

form a government, and when independence arrived in 1960, Abubakar Balewa was made the Prime Minister, and Nnamdi Azikiwe was appointed Governor-General.

Thus, in 1963-1966, Nnamdi Azikiwe (Civilian President tipped off, died in 1996) and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (a Civilian, Prime Minister, Killed in 1966). In January 16, 1966 - July 29, 1966, Johnson Aguiyi-Irons (Military, Killed in 1966) overthrow the government and killed Balewa, Bello, Akintola, and some senior officers; Azikiwe was outside of the country at the time. Though Aguiyi-Irons gave some concessions to northerners, many Hausa-Fulani felt the coup was a plot to make the Igbo dominant in Nigeria. Then, in the same year, July 29, 1966 - July 25, 1975, Gen. Yakubu Gowon (a Military) staged a counter coup, killing Aguiyi-Irons and many other Igbo officials. The Muslim officers chose Yakubu Gowon (who was a Christian from the Middle Belt) as the new ruler. His first steps included restoring Federalism, and releasing Awolowo from prison.

Gowon vowed to start Nigeria along the road to civilian government. However, when Gowon moved to split the 4 existing regions into 12 states in 1967, Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, the leader of the Eastern Region refused to accept this and declared that the Eastern Region would become its own independent republic named Biafra. In June 1967, civil war broke out which lasted until Biafra surrendered in January of 1970. In July 25, 1975 - February 13, 1976, Murtala Muhammed (Military, killed in 1976) took over through another unbloody coup. This was supposedly because, in 1974, Gowon broke his promise to return the nation to civilian rule. Having taking over, Murtala promised the continuation of the federal system of government with constitutional laws guaranteeing fundamental human rights, maximum democratic participation, and an orderly return to civilian rule. Plans were made to move the national capital from Lagos to Abuja, but this became a tremendous drain on the economy. To his great discredit, he initiated the Sharia Law and Islamic agenda to dominate and Islamize the country in the Draft constitution of 1977, as we shall see.

In February 13, 1976 to September 30, 1979 there was an attempted coup by Buka Dimka, and though it was unsuccessful, it was very bloody; Murtala was killed. Olusegun Obasanjo was chosen to continue what his predecessor had started. However, in 1978, a new Constitution was written that would return the country to civilian rule, and elections were held in 1979.

And then, in October 1, 1979- December 30, 1983 - Shehu Shagari (Civilian) was named the new President in the 1979 elections, though with midst feelings, as many people were felt hat the elections were rigged and that Obafemi Awolowo had actually won; violence erupted in many areas, and every election was contested in court to keep Shagari as the President.

And then, December 31, 1983 - August 27, 1985 - Muhammadu Buhari (Military, Still alive and Contesting 2015) with Gen. Idiagbon as his Deputy, his inflexibility led to increasing discontent among the populace. Although, he was stern and disciplined, with the aim of sanitizing Nigeria with his "War Against Indiscipline." Moreover, it is important here to state that Buhari and Babangida are known to be the agents of Sharianization of Nigeria, as we shall see.

And then, on August 27, 1985, came the regime of Ibrahim Babangida (Military) - the evil genius called Maradona who with Abacha wrecked Nigeria. On April 22, 1990, another attempted coup by Gideon Orkar that failed. A new constitution was set up in 1990, and the country was to return to civilian rule in 1992. As the date approached, there were suspicions that this promise was not going to be kept. Pressure started mounting, and finally, in 1992, the Federal Council allowed an election to take place. However, the Babangida government annulled the results of that election, claiming fraud, and postponed additional elections for a year. Another election was held in June of 1993 and the winner was presumed to be Chief Moshood Abiola. Babangida again claimed fraud, and annulled the results of the second election, which was believed to be the first free and fair election held in the history of Nigeria. Hundreds were killed in demonstrations, human rights and pro-democracy activists were arrested, and opposition newspapers were shut down. Internal and external pressure mounted, and finally on August 27, 1993, Babangida resigned. Ernest Shonekan, a Yoruba civilian, was appointed President, presumably to appease the Yorubas who have now been rigged out of power again at the Federal level by the Hausas.

Shonekan's tenure lasted till November 17, 1993, when Sani Abacha (Military) who died on June 8, 1998. He is presumably (apart from Goodluck Jonathan) the most 'famous' President of Nigeria if only because of his brutality. Notably catastrophes of Abacha are: The 25 years sentence of Gen, Yar'Adua and Obasanjo; the arrest and life sentence for treason, in 1995, of Dr. Beko Ransome-Kuti, a human rights activist; the Ogoni people saga and death by hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa (an environmentalist and playwright) and 8 others, on November 10, who criticized the Nigerian government for the environmental damages being inflicted by the oil industry on the land inhabited by the Ogoni people. This stunned the world, and led to the suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth; Nelson Mandela called for international sanctions against Nigerian oil, which account for more than 90 percent of the foreign currency earnings. In fact, Nigerians cannot forget in a hurry the problem posed by Military dispensation. The sentence, in April of 1998, of Oladipo Diya, 4 other officers, and a civilian to death, while many others to prison terms of varying lengths.

But, as God may have it, on June 8, 1998 Abacha died. Then, from June 8, 1998- May 29, 1999, Abdulsalam Abubakar (Military), set up a transition government that led the country back to democracy by May 29, 1999. Although, the national reserves nosedived from 9 Billion to 4.5 Billion in his rule of 9 months only. He handed over to Obasanjo (May 29, 1999 - May 29, 2007). Recall, that Obasanjo was a military dictator from 1976-1979 and was commended to be the 1st General in Africa to hand over power freely to civilian. But, as absolute power corrupt absolutely, this time around, he wanted to change the constitution via his "Third term" agenda and rule Nigeria for 17 years. But, in 29 May, 2007, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (Civilian) emerged as the 2nd President of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Having died in the office, Goodluck Jonathan (who is incumbent) assumed office via constitutional basis. Thus, it is said that "without Law we are savages". Evidently, it can be said that the Military era was characterized by bunch of savages. They

are years eating by Locusts. No wonder, Obafemi Awolowo said that the best of Military rule is inferior to a civilian and democratic rule guided by the constitution.

iii. Constitutional Development & The Islamization Agenda Sequel to the period extending from amalgamation in 1914 to independence from colonial rule in 1960, Nigeria had four major constitutions, each named after the colonial governor who formulated it: the Clifford Constitution (1922), Richards Constitution (1946), Macpherson Constitution (1951), and Lyttleton Constitution (1954). Although the first 'two constitutions were virtually imposed on the country, the latter two involved some consultations with representatives of the people through constitutional conferences. At the Ibadan General Conference of 1950, Nigerian leaders agreed that only a federal system that allowed each of the three regions (north, west, and east as created by the Richards Constitution) to progress at its own pace would be acceptable. Until that point, the constitutions had a unitary orientation. In creating three regions and delegating some powers to them, the Richards Constitution was a forerunner of the later federal constitutions. And later on, the 1979 and 1999 Constitutional Amendments by the Military Government.

According to Prof Omo Omoruyi, in his Paperix, it is evident that Shariatization history in Nigeria has it that it was the Murtala's plan for the Islamization of Nigeria, which formed the basis of the Sharia provision in the Draft Constitution (1978); Obasanjo reluctantly accepted it, while Babangida, Abacha and Co-Islamic Northern leaders, registered and tried to enforce its agenda. How? But the determination of the members of Constituent Assembly from the Middle-belt Paul Unongo working with the members from the Southern minorities of then Bendel, Rivers and Cross River States and Gen. Danjuma that successfully put a check on the planned Islamization of Nigeria after the death of General Murtala. Also, Nigerians of today are faced with the Sharia crisis. But let it be noted that for whatever reasons, Southern Lawyers failed to warn their people of the implications. Do the southerners know that it was the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) headed by the eminent Lawyer, Chief Rotimi Williams, and constitutional Lawyers Nwabueze and Dele Ige that first translated Murtala's plan into what appeared in the Draft Constitution?

Finally, granted that General Olusegun Obasanjo had no alternative than to follow the footsteps of General Murtala his former boss who was assassinated on February 13, 1976 in supporting the Murtala's Shariatization of Nigeria in 1977/78. But no President has any reason whatsoever to follow the footsteps of Generals Babangida and Abacha in turning Nigeria into an Islamic State by becoming an Islamic leader in the process. What was in the mind of Obasanjo (a Christian and a President of a Secular State of Nigeria) when he was attended the Meeting of the 8 Conference of Islamic States in Cairo?

Before positing, the basis of the relation between several religions and the Government, I will like to state here that the preponderance and obnoxious lacuna created in our supposed Military Constitutional Amendments of 1979 and 1999, further led to the next factor, ethno-religious- cum-socio-political instability.

iv. Divergent Socio-Politico-cum-Religious Conflicts

Ab initio, Traditional Religion obtained in both North and South of Nigeria before any other religion came. Before the advent of Christianity, Islam came to Nigeria through the North much early in the medieval period of 9th century, from the Sahel Region of North Africa. It established in the Kanem-Bomu Empire during the reign of Humme Jilmi. Although, some Muslim scholars like Sheikh Dr. Abu-Abdullah Abdul-Fattah Adelabu have argued that Islam had reached Sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, as early as the 1st century of Hijrah through Muslim traders and expeditions during the reign of the Arab conqueror, Uqbaibn al Nafia (622-683) whose Islamic conquests under the Umayyad dynasty, in Amir Muavia and Yazid periods, spread all Northern Africa or the Maghrib Al-Arabi, including present-day Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Morocco.^X

Meanwhile, Christianity came to the South in 1472 in Warri through the Portuguese Merchants. Culturally, as earlier stated, the Northern people had nothing to do with the Southern nations. It was the British who forcefully married the poor Islamic North with the Rich Christian South in 1914 under Lord Lugard for their own administrative convenience. The Middle-Belt accepted Christianity more than the core North after the British came. The Yoruba have been Christians since 15th Century but accepted Islam more than the Igbos and Effiks and Ibibios.

Nigeria, after 1914 became a mixed religious people of: traditional, Islamic and Christian religions. In the 1966, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the Sadaina of Sokoto and the Supreme leader of Muslims in Nigeria boasted that he would soon carry the Koran from the North and bury it in the Atlantic Ocean in the South. Thus, he meant to continue and extend the Caliphate of Usman dan Fodio to the whole of Nigeria. That was the beginning of the Islamic design to Islamize Nigeria. Nigeria has been featuring regularly in the Breaking News since then. In the year 1981, inter-religious riot occurred in Kano in the Northern part of the country. This first organized religious riot was caused by the Islamic group from the Cameroon led by Maitatsine.

What was at first an intra-Islamic riot between the reformist group led by Maitasene and Alhadji Gumi and other Islamic groups would blow out in the advocacy of a theocratic Islamic state governed by Sharia Law (for all Muslims) in multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, like Nigeria! It was Gen. Babangida who signed the part of Nigeria to join the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1986. The religious crises and violence caused by the Sharia advocates grew. But, thanks are to God, they were effectively put down by President Obasanjo in his first tenure in office as a civilian leader (1999-2003). It is not out of place here to state some obvious Militia and Secession attempts in Nigeria. Secession Attempts: This is one serious sign of instability in any polity. Secession is the act of withdrawing from an organization, union, military alliance or especially a political entity. Threats of secession can also be a strategy for achieving more limited goals.” According to *The Library of Congress Country Studies; CIA World Factbook*:

The colonial heritage produced a country that was only weakly united. At some points, the regional leaders threatened to secede from the federation: in the early to mid- 1950s northern leaders contemplated separation after their humiliation by southerners because of their refusal to support a motion for achieving se# government in 1956; in 1954 the Western Region threatened to separate itself if the colony of Lagos were not made a part of that region. ^{xiii}

Again, during the wake of 1st Republic, precisely in 1967, the Eastern Biafrans attempted to secede due to marginalization factors. But this proved abortive, due to the fact that there were strong countervailing factors that prevented breakup of the federation: First, British colonial rule had held the country together as one unit. Second, the regions had economic complementarity. In particular, given the export orientation of the colonial economy, the landlocked northern region depended greatly on the southern regions that had access to the sea. Third, in the latter days of colonial rule, Nigerian leaders recognized the advantages conferred by the country's large size and population. However, there are still lingering rumours of the attempts of Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB).

Militia Groups, Domestic Terrorism and Insurgencies: The Islamic forces and disciples of Sharia were not yet done; they re-organized later when President Y'ardua was in office. Boko Haram was the mode in which they have re-emerged. This time, it became military in character. When the leader Shakau was killed by the State, these fellows decided to retaliate his death by waging war against the State and to break up the Country and form a separate Islamic state in the north-eastern states of Nigeria. Consequently, over 230 Chibok girls are yet to be found after about 8 months and most people and churches have been displaced in the North.

Currently, the Boko Haram fundamentalist Islamic group is the first insurgent organization in Nigeria to be classified as a terrorist organization by the United States of America and its allies. Since 2009, the violence the group has unleashed on the Nigerian State is unprecedented in the history of insurgency in the country. Several studies have intellectualized the origin, motive and other activities of this infamous rebellious group. Almost on daily basis, we hear the menaces of this terrible sect. Just few days ago over 2000 persons were massacred in Baga. Yet, nothing serious has been advance by the Nigerian government to curb their treat.

Prior to Book Haram, mentioned above, there have been other Militia groups, like the Biafrans (1967), Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) 2007-2009, etc., these attempted to fight for their just rights and protect their territorial interests. However, there is great difference between the prior militia crises and the terrorist insurgencies of Boko Haram. While the former is a rebel group fighting for their just right and prone to negotiation, the latter is a terrorist group that threatens and disturbs the peace of the masses and causing panic and pandemonium and state of insecurity and anarchy in the society. Even though the Boko Haram claims to be against Western Education which they claim to be the basis of corruption, immorality and socio-religious decadence, they use their guns and bombs to fight and kill others.

v. Corruption and Lack of Charismatic Leaders

Corruption like Cancer or Canker worm has escalated and eaten deep into the fabrics of our nation. It is one of the basic problems every civilian government has to contend in order to stabilize the nation and keep the military in their barracks. Obviously, corruptions among politicians these days are being justified. This is one of the factors that have led to various coup witnessed in Nigeria as earlier stated. Take for instance the 1985 coup of

Babangida, which occurred in a military regime of Buhari. Gen. Babangida accused Buhari led administration of failing to revamp the nation's economy that has declined during the civilian lead administration of President Shehu Shagari 1979-1983. Hitherto, there is no credibility, transparency and accountability. Good examples are the missing \$20 Billion, \$9 Million Arms deal scam, NNPC scam, J.P Morgan Account scam, our excess crude oil money scam, oil subsidy removal mismanagements, Police Pension scam, Immigration scam, Stella Oduah Aviation scam, not to talk of the prevalent uncompleted ghost projects, and so on and so forth.

A little wonder, then, why Fr Ehusani would say that:

What we have as leadership at various levels today in our society is open a pollution of the very concept of leadership and a bastardization of the values and attitudes associated with it. What we have as leadership today is often an adulteration of courage and valour and a shameful display of spineless acquiescence. What we have as leadership is join an uncharitable display of material arrogance and a distasteful reminder of group exploitation and manipulation. The bottom line for good leadership is not across the foot of the lineage ladder up the royal genealogical tree, but a transparent identification with the aspirations and expectations of the people. The bottom line for good leadership is not the guile of the mercurial politician who succeeds in hoodwinking his way to public office and proceeds methodically to strip the public treasury for his own pocket and for those of his fellow travellers. With the recent developments and decadence on Nigerian situation, it is evidently obvious that there is need to checkmate our aspiring leaders. ^{xiii}

In my opinion, I think a sophisticated technological, scientific and psychological screening should be employed to checkmate politicians and corrupt practices.

4. **Proposed Panacea To The Problems And Challenges Of Ethnicity And Religion**

In Nigeria, the twin problems of Ethnicity and Religion are seen to be interrelated and have given birth to that of the problem of domination by the alleged largest ethnic groups in the country - the Hausa-Fulani, the Igbos and Yorubas. But, the claim of the Hausa-Fulani group especially to be the largest is the greatest cause of domination has always been contested by the following arguments:

a. Emergent Of A New Credible Census^{xiv}

Water brings life and people around it. In demography and regional geography, it has been observed that the nearer Communities are to the desert, the sparser their Population becomes. How come then that Northern towns like Kano, Katsina, Maiduguri and Sokoto which are near to the arid Sahel region have high dense population whereas towns and cities in the Southern forest region have low density populations. This obnoxious population census has been traced back to the evil manipulation of our Census conducted by the British Colonial masters.

Since Census figures are used for division of Local Government areas, projections of growth and development, allocation of funds according to localities, etc, then, its manipulation and falsification in favour of the North, like the forced amalgamation of 1914 have been the veritable root-cause and sources of the political and social crises and instability Nigerians have been experiencing.

Therefore, it becomes necessary, now, to establish a scientific, thorough, correct and just Census in order to have peace and stability in Nigeria.

b. Transparent And Good Leadership

As affirmed above, the second panacea to the chronic problem of oneness and instability are accountability, transparent, good and charismatic leadership and management of the natural and human resources that abound in Nigeria. We have regional leaders but no national leaders. So far, we lack men and women at the helm of our administration and governance that are dedicated to solving our socio-economic problems and that can attract followership from the various segments of the multiple and diverse people of Nigeria. Nigerians are still in search of the national leader and Messiah. Perhaps, one would emerge at the next Presidential Election on 14th February, 2015. According to Fr Ehusani, *Those who wish to be recognised as genuine leaders of Nigeria in Twenty-First Century must demonstrate a capability to reconcile divergent views and harmonise disparate interests in the land, since a house divided against itself cannot stand. Aspiring leaders in the Nigerian society of tomorrow must show a score-card of performance and accountability in the services previously rendered to the people, on the local, state or national level. Those who want to be acknowledged as leaders in our land must demonstrate their nationalism and patriotism by their sacrifice, their generosity, their sensitivity and their commitment to the common good of all Nigerians. Having said that, then, how did the ethno-religious conflict emerge?*^{xv}

c. Respect For The Rule Of Law

It is not enough to have a good leader but equally important that the populace adhere to the Rule of Law and the Constitution of the country. Respect of the Rule of Law and the Constitution by all is the kernel of a modern democratic and developed nation that we want. Nigerians must have a change of attitude and be law-abiding.

I believe very strongly in Nigeria as an indivisible nation. As a dictum goes, "In union we stand and progress, but in division we scatter and perish." However, no union should be forced on anybody.

Indeed, it is because we all have fundamental rights to engage in social contract to co-exist as human and as groups is what should always be foremost in our minds. Consequently, let us learn to agree to agree and agree to disagree. In effect, if one nation of Nigerian people feels strongly either on the basis of religion or ethnicity or on some other grievance that she does not want to belong to Nigeria anymore, that nation should be allowed to make an exit peacefully instead of engaging others in warfare, killing and destroying lives and properties. The history of Countries and empires in Europe is full of alignments, alliances and pacts among ethnic groups and nations. Empires come, empires go. But, mankind remains. Egyptians, Assyrians Empires, Islamic Caliphates and Soviet Unions, Yugoslavian, Mali, Songhai, Oyo Empires are examples of extent empires that have come and passed away and now re-emerged in form of European Union, ECOWAS, Arab Union, Organization of American States (OAS), etc. Where are they today? Instead, we have today, the European Union, West African Union, Union of American States. So, humanity will continue to align, readjust and re-align. That is the reality of life

in General. The peoples of Nigeria will outlive any parasitic group anti-social and groups that is incompatible to keep others to ransom.

d. **Secularism: Separation Between Religion And State Relationships**

There is separation and a dichotomy of roles and functions between the two domains and spheres of State and Religion, and this should be maintained while it is the right and privileges of the individual and groups to believe in God and practice their faith in whatever way. It is the duty of the Government to be impartial to all regions within the polis. This policy maintains oneness and stability. The contrast brings division and crisis.

Christ taught us that Christians should respect and be loyal to their Government and pay their Taxes, when he said, “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God” (Mk.12:17 & Mtt.22:21). He exemplified this by even paying His own tax (Mtt.17:24-27). By this act, He affirms peaceful relation with the society and others. In fact, He charged His Disciples to Love and Pray for their enemies and do good to those who hate you (Lk.6:27-28 & Mtt.5:44). This is because, we are all Children of God. Although, Jesus advised his disciples while sending them to Mission, that “if anyone will not receive you or listen to **your** words, **shake off the dust from your** feet when you leave that house or town as a testimony against them, and depart in peace” (Lk.9:5 & Mtt.10:14). He never told them to fight and kill anyone who fails to accept their teachings.

On the other hand, according to some scholars, the supposed “religion of peace” - Islam, contains in her Quran at least 109 verses that call Muslims to religious war (Jihad) with nonbelievers for the sake of Islamic rule. Some are quite graphic, with commands to chop off heads and fingers and kill infidels wherever they may be hiding. Muslims who do not join the fight are called ‘hypocrites’ or ‘infidels’ and warned that Allah will send them to Hell if they do not join the slaughter.

The context of violent passages is more ambiguous than might be expected of a perfect book from a loving God, however this can work both ways. Most of today's Muslims exercise a personal choice to interpret their holy book's call to arms according to their own moral preconceptions about justifiable violence. Apologists cater to their preferences with tenuous arguments that gloss over historical fact and generally do not stand up to scrutiny. Still, it is important to note that the problem is not bad people, but bad ideology. Below are some verses in the Quran that instigate Muslims to fight:

...And kill them wherever you find them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out. And Al-Fitnah [disbelief] is worse than killing...but they desist, then lo! Allah is forgiving and merciful. And fight them until there is no more Fitnah [disbelief and worshipping of others along with Allah] and worship is for Allah alone. But U” they cease, let there be no transgression except against Az-Zalimun (the polytheists, and wrong-doers, etc.) - (Quran 2.'19]-193)

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His messenger and strive to make mischief in the land is only this, that they should be murdered or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides or they should be imprisoned; this shall be as a disgrace for them in this world, and in the hereafter they shall have a grievous chastisement. - (Quran 5:3 3) I will cast terror

into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them. - (Quran 8:12)

Obviously, no reasonable person would interpret this to mean a spiritual struggle or quest for peace.

Therefore, different religious groups should curb their excesses and fanaticisms. Government has the duty to protect the lives of citizens in her care. Nigerian Government has delayed too much in acting against insurgence and terrorism of Boko Haram, etc. We have a right and obligation to self-defence. Just few days ago over 2000 persons were massacred in Baga, near Chad. Thus, the Government should embark on total war against Boko Haram sect to protect the lives and properties of her citizens. The United Nation Organization (UNO) and other international bodies should be allowed to assist Nigeria, too. More so, Sharia or the Islamic fundamentalist agenda should be disoriented and disallowed since all religions reserved their rights to freedom of worship.

e. **Sovereign National Referendum**

In order to achieve the afore-mention panaceas, I want to propose here as I have echoed before in my book, *Sovereign National Conference and the Nationhood of Nigeria* (2004), that there is cogent and urgent need to have a Sovereign National Referendum in Nigeria this 2015, instead of a Presidential Election. This will eventually lead to a redefinition and re-adjustment of our “Military Constitutions” of 1979 and 1999. And correction of the obnoxious ‘immunity from prosecution clauses’, British bewitchment of demographic and political predominance of the North over the Western and Eastern Regions, the federal system instituted in 1954 also reified and entrenched the interests and identities of the Northern Hausa-Fulani, Western Yoruba and Eastern Igbo nationalities in the three regional units. In fact, you will agree with me that Nigeria’s current challenges in the area of leadership have essentially, to do with how we govern ourselves. In my view therefore, Nigeria now, urgently needs a constitutional amendment that will reform our electoral laws, expunge the ‘immunity from prosecution clause,’ as enshrined in section 308 of the Constitution of Nigeria in 1999. This amendment to expunge and excise the immunity clause will remove and put to rest, the vexatious cloak and shield that some elected officials have turned into impunity of actions and into a sorts of protection racket, for their corruption, pillaging and plundering of Nigeria’s public treasuries, at both local and national levels. Some extravagant allowances are to be checkmated and expunged, too.

A constitutional amendment should also address practice of true federalism, rotational presidency in accordance with the existent 6 Geopolitical Zones or revival of the parliamentary system which I suppose is cheap to maintain. A rotational presidency or such other arrangements, that assures, and ensures, that all Nigerians are vested in the outcome of Nigeria. All actions that are reasonable must be undertaken to guarantee a sense of belonging by all Nigerians.

No Nigerian or group of Nigerians or geopolitical subdivision of Nigeria, must be made to feel marginalized, or irrelevant in the Nigerian national scheme of things. All Nigerians therefore, must be assured and reassured, of each and every Nigeria’s geopolitical subdivisions’ substantive, significance or importance, and relevance to the over health, wealth and happiness of the continued corporate existence of

Nigeria. We must elicit every Nigerians' continued commitment and dedication to Nigeria.

5. Conclusion

By and large, one should advocate, because of its obvious advantages, a united Nigeria. For our diversity brings about economic power through a dense population and natural resources. On the other hand, if no possible consensus is reached, then, renting the third via eight of the clauses of the British-American Atlantic Charter (of August 14th, 1941)^{xvi} that, "Rights of self-determination, of all people to live in freedom from fear and want, and of freedom of the seas, as well as the belief that all nations must abandon the use of force and work collectively in the fields of economics and security", any ethnic group or nationality (like the Biafrans, Arewas or Oduduwas) that wants to secede should not be disallowed, and be inserted in our Constitution. Thus, if the Islamic North-East or the entire North wants to secede for reason best known to them, let them do so quickly and in peace, but not in pieces (as Zik of Africa once advised in 1964). The experience of humanity is alignment and re-alignment of nations as well as the rise and fall of empires in the world.

Again, I say, to determine our unity and stability in Nigeria, let there be a Sovereign National Referendum in Nigeria this year 2015. This will pave way to a formidable and systemic structure necessary for popular Democracy - a direct type based on referendums and other devices of empowerment and concretization of popular will. Thank you and God bless.

Notes and References

¹ Cf. Francis Ogunmodede, *Sovereign National Conference and the Nationhood of Nigeria* (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 2004, p.13.); paraphrasing P.C Loyd, "Ethnic Background to the Nigerian Crisis" in S.K Panter-Brick (ed), *Nigerian Politics and Military Rule: Prelude to the Civil War*. London: Athlone Press, 1970, p.2.

² Cf. "History of Nigeria", In http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria

³ Taiwo Adetiloye, "The Root Cause Of Boko Haram And Other Insurgent Groups In Nigeria", Q <http://saharareporters.com/2014/04/21/root-cause-boko-haram-and-other-insurgent-groups-nigeria> (April, 21, 2014).

⁴ Cf. Francis Ogunmodede, *Sovereign National Conference and the Nationhood of Nigeria, op. cit., pp.14-15, 18f*

⁵ Cf. Ochonu, "The Roots of Nigeria's Religious And Ethnic Conflicts", Analysis: A British colonial decision brought the northern and southern halves of modern Nigeria together. One hundred years later, they still don't get along. In <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/nigeria/140220/nigeria-religious-ethnic-conflict-roots>.

⁶ Nwosu, *et al.*, *An Introduction to Constitutional Development in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Sudan Publisher Limited.

⁷ Falola, T. and Ihonvbere, J. (1985). *The Rise and Fall of Nigeria's Second Republic, 1979-1984*. London: Zed Press. And, Akinboye, S.O. (2004). *Democratization and the Military: Challenges and Possibilities for Nigeria's Fourth Republic*. In: L. Olurode and R. Anifowose (Eds). *Democratization and The Military in Nigeria*. (Lagos: Frankad Publishers), p.88.

⁸ S. Dauda, *Nigeria's Foreign Policy* (Ibadan: Daily Graphics, 2006), 12.

⁹ Cf. Omo Omoruyi, "AN APPEAL TO PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJC): Nigeria: Neither an Islamic nor a Christian Country", A Paper Presented in African Studies Centre, Boston: University Boston, USA (Wednesday, March 7, 2001). In <http://www.biafraland.com/islamizationofnigeriahtm>.

¹⁰ Works of Sheikh Dr. Abu-Abdullah Adelabu at Awqaf Africa, Damascus: Islam in Africa - West African in Particular, and Missionary and Colonization in Africa, In http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_Nigeria#cite_note-8

¹¹ Cf. Allen Buchanan, "Secession", *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2007.

¹² The Library of Congress Country Studies; CIA World Factbook, "Nigeria Government and Politics", In http://www.photius.com/countries/nigeria/government/nigeria_government_and_polit-10019.html

¹³ George Ehusani, "The Challenge of Leadership in Contemporary Nigeria", An Address delivered at the gathering of the Friends of the Lagos Resource Centre, (Tuesday March 20th, 2007).

¹⁴ The Statistic of the CENSUS HISTORY IN NIGERIA (1866-2006) are as follows:

1. The first Census in Nigeria before independence held in 1866
2. The second General Census in Nigeria was held 1952 - 1953
3. The first Census after independence was held 1963
4. The second Census after independence was held 1973
5. The Third Census after independence was held 1991
6. The Fourth Census after independence was held 21st March, 2006

The Least Census Figure for Regional

South Eastern Figure 16,381,729

North Western Figure 35,786,944

South Western Figure 27,581,992

North Eastern Figure 18,971,965

North Central Figure 20,266,257

South southern Figure 21,014,655

The CIA World Factbook est, 174,507,539 (July 2013.); and 162,471,000 (July 2011 United Nations est.) In <http://reportsonnaija.blogspot.com/2012/07/census-history-in-nigeriahtml>

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ The joint declaration was issued by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill on August 14, 1941. http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/history/atlantic_charter.shtml.

**INTEGRITY AND CHARACTER FORMATION IN THE ACADEMIC
FORMATION OF FUTURE PRIESTS**

Being the Inaugural Lecture of the Seminary of Ss. Peter and Paul on the 5th of October
2015

By
Rev. Fr. Dr. Daniel Aigbona C.Ss.R.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone is born in a specific place and time and raised in a particular social environment with its attendant political and economic structures, educational institutions, cultural influences and a host of other extenuating agents, which help to shape a person's character and worldview. People desire to be many things in life; while some want to be pilots others want to be engineers or doctors or politicians or musicians or sports men and women and not the least of all, religious men and women. Parents also have plans and wishes for their children to become important persons in society, and this is often expressed subtly during the traditional naming ceremonies of little infants. While such hopes and expectations are not misplaced, it goes beyond reason to argue that it is not the mere hopes and expectations that turn dreams into reality but a deliberate, concrete and conscious effort in assisting to translate all our God given potentials, capacities, energies, abilities and the concomitant moral values inculcated in the child as part of the ongoing process of formation. This may be achieved by adopting either a formal or not so formal approach, to the education or formation of the child in order to enable him develop the necessary tools and values for survival in the society. As a matter of fact philosophers from Socrates to Plato, Aristotle and many others after them have made a strong case for the pursuit of knowledge, which according to them, provides the most permanent source of value and satisfaction for man.⁶⁵

As members of a Catholic institute of formation, we have being drawn by the demand of our faith and calling to live a religious and morally centered life devoted to the missionary spirit of teaching, spreading and living as witnesses to the good news of Christ in a world that is at once complex as it is anti-established religion. The dividing line however is the point where knowledge confronts ignorance, faith challenges doubt, clarity melts fog, success upturns failure, ability defeats inability, discipline shames indiscipline, and dreams become a reality.

⁶⁵ Cukwudum B. Okolo, *Philosophy of Education and Education of Philosophy*, Enugu Nigeria: Snap press, 1989, p. 53

This is the essence of our formation programme tailored specifically for the education and formation of future Catholic priests with the hope that they will turn out to be, men of proven character and learning imbued with a great sense of integrity.

ACADEMIC FORMATION IN THE SEMINARY OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL

The Seminary of SS Peter and Paul is not just any other institution set up for the award of Bachelors degrees in Philosophy and Theology but it is first and foremost and uniquely so, a formation institution dedicated to forming young men for the role of the Catholic priesthood. It is a uniquely tailored formation system such that is aptly captured by W.O. Lester who points out that the formative training or education of the human individual does not only consist of:

Whatever we do for ourselves and whatever is done for us by others for the purpose of bringing us closer to the perfection of our nature: it does more: in its largest acceptance, it comprehends even the indirect effects produced on character, and on the human faculties, by things of which the direct purposes are quite different: by laws, by forms of government, by the industrial arts, by modes of social life, nay, even by physical fact not dependent on human will; by climate, soil and local position... the culture which each generation purposely gives to those who are to be its successors, in order to qualify them for at least keeping up, and if possible for raising the level of improvement which has been attained.⁶⁶

The poem titled “The Blind Man” written by Finbar O’Connor will underscore the significance of our paper today.

“One day I met a blind man
Walking through the park.
He said, “I love these sunny days
When it is not dull or dark.”

I asked him how a blind man
Knows when the weather’s fine
He said, “Though I can’t see the sun,
It warms me when it shines.”

I picked a pretty flower,
I thought it was a rose.
The blind man took it from my hand
And held it to his nose.

He said, “This is a lily”
I asked, “How can you tell?”

⁶⁶ W.O. Lester, Education, New York: penguin Books, 1962, p.9

He answered, "Don't be silly,
I know it by its smell."
I said, "I see a blackbird"
The blind man said, "You're wrong
That bird is a cock robin.
I know it by its song"

I said, "I have an apple
You're welcome to share."
He said, "This is not an apple, boy
It tastes just like a pear."

For though he was a blind man,
He was so very wise,
For he could taste and hear and smell
As well as you and I"⁶⁷

The human individual is seen by Aristotle and this was reaffirmed by St. Augustine, as possessing within him the potential of becoming something other than what he is, given the enabling environment. It is in pursuance of this belief that Plato would advocate in the Republic, a system of Education and a process of formation that would prepare the individuals to assume the roles proper to their status within the social strata. His conception of the ideal state where only the guardians who were educated were to be in charge of state affairs, slaves, craftsmen and merchants were to know their place and change of social status was to be avoided (540c-d), has been heavily criticized.⁶⁸ Even though his position is too limiting and does not allow room for social upward movement, we grant however that the task of education and formation is a moral enterprise where individuals are taught to understand that every social office or position does require a certain expected pattern of behavior needed to fulfill the roles proper to its particular state of life.

As a result the kind of education and formation given in this institution is uniquely tailored to produce men of proven integrity, strength of character and imbued with an added spice born out of the wisdom of the ancients as espoused both in the scriptures and in the teaching authority of the church which is dedicated to the service of God and his people.

INTEGRITY AND CHARACTER FORMATION

The Webster dictionary defines integrity as the condition of adherence to a code of values with its corollary terms of soundness and completeness in relation to one's character, decency, goodness, honesty, honor, morality, probity, rectitude, righteousness, uprightness, virtue etc. In essence Integrity can be seen as a quality of being honest and having strong moral principles i.e., of being forthright both with oneself and with others.⁶⁹

The French and Latin roots of the word, emphasizes the quality of wholeness. Personal

⁶⁷ See Sean Mcentee et al ed. "Show Us the Father," (Dublin: Veritas Publication, 1976) pg. 33

⁶⁸ Plato, The Republic, London: Penguin Books (translated by H.P.D. Lee, 1955

⁶⁹ Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus, p. 567 and Hornby (2010), p. 781

integrity is thus about having a whole, undivided self. In life people generally integrate certain values such as love, compassion, honesty and justice, which act as a measure of integrity. These values need to be integrated into a coherent and consistent working core of values such that we are not only disciplined and responsible individuals but such that people can also see us as trustworthy and dependable. Without such coherent core of values, whatever social, religious or professional status or success one may acquire in life will mean nothing. As Warren Buffet, Chairman and CEO of one of the biggest investment company in the world (Berkshire Hathaway) would say, “In looking for people to hire, we usually look for three qualities; Integrity, intelligence and Energy. If they don’t have the first, then don’t even touch the others.” Personal integrity is therefore a most significant virtue that we cannot do without if we truly intend to succeed in our life’s pursuit for “he who walks in integrity, walks securely.” (Proverbs 10:9).

Another key notion embedded in the concept of Integrity is consistency. Integrity requires a person to be consistently honest, moral, and trustworthy and adopt values consistent with his\her own self. As Spencer Johnson, the author of several New York Bestsellers, puts it, “Integrity is telling myself the truth. And honesty is telling the truth to other people. According to Dr. Henry Cloud, a renowned clinical psychologist and leadership consultant, people with integrity are consistently capable of doing the following:

1. Build and maintain trust: People must be able to trust you
2. Be able to see and face reality
3. Work in ways that bring results
4. Embrace Negative realities and solve them
5. Cause growth and development
6. Achieve Transcendence and meaning in life⁷⁰

Integrity also presupposes a steadfast adherence to a strict code of ethics. The lure of popular culture values is often hard to resist, all the more so today that the liberal ethics and the values it encompasses do not carry as much weight as they once did. This is precisely where the strength of character and integrity comes to play. While integrity and Character are not the same, they are however closely connected in defining the wholeness of a person’s personality traits. Our Character subsumes the whole of our attributes, qualities, traits, etc., which help to form our personality and guide our actions. This may be largely shaped by our personal experiences, environmental conditioning, parental and peer influences, society etc. Integrity on the other hand flows from a personal conviction to live by and adhere to a strict moral or ethical code, which consistently makes us seek to do the right thing for the right reason even when no one is watching. Once developed, it will live with you all your life and no one can take that from you.

For example, it is in the nature and character of every human individual to succeed in whatever he\she is doing. No one goes into an examination and plans to fail. But what happens when one is faced with the choice of cheating in order to pass, or stealing, peddling drugs or engaging in any form of corrupt practices in order to succeed in life? It is only our sense of integrity that would make us choose the path of honor rather than take the risk of forever destroying our reputation and bringing to disrepute our family name and the institution we

⁷⁰ See Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Safe People: How to find Relationships that are Good for you and avoid those that Aren’t*. New York: Christian Life Publications 2008

represent. On campus you may sometimes be tempted to follow your own whims and caprices and refuse to heed the counsel of your teachers and formators, whose charge it is to help you develop a character disposition that is firmly grounded on a strong moral integrity.

The desire to choose is unarguably innate in every human individual. Ironically while the power of choice lies in its ability to unearth the best option possible, sometimes the desire to choose is so strongly pulled in the direction of the popular culture that sometimes we do not exercise enough caution or scrutiny in the choices we end up making in life. Our choices may be driven by a number of options, our initial upbringing, education, religious affiliations, environmental conditioning, value system, popular culture, peer influence, the desire to fit in with the current trend, opportunities available to us and a host of other factors. The desire to choose is not only natural to every human individual, it is also a very crucial aid and an important tool of survival and adaptation in a sometimes, hostile environment. It is always better to choose the path of honor and integrity than the follow the inordinate whims and caprices to succeed at all cost even if it is dishonorable. While it is indeed a nice thing to seek to be important in life, it is even more important to be nice. For us the end never justifies the means, the means to the end always has to be good and just. The freedom to choose either to do good or evil is totally within our power to exercise. In the exercise of the choice to consistently do good consists wisdom; for wisdom is the ability to know right from wrong and to understand that there are consequences for all the choices that we make.

FORMATION: A NECESSARY TOOL OF LIFE

Formation may therefore be seen as the deliberate attempt, structured or unstructured, at molding, shaping and aiding the developmental skills and attitudinal responses of the individual in the society, such that the individual acquires the necessary tools and morals to adapt to roles of expectations which other individuals and society demands of him. Apart from the expectations of others and society, the skills acquired are also expected to assist the individual in realizing his dreams and aspirations in life. A formation based education programme, is always carried out with the view of helping the individual live a fulfilled life because the more adapted the individual is to his environment, the more the freedom and liberty he enjoys. To this end, Steve M. Cahn would therefore advocate for a constant improvement in the educational measure such that,

“Each succeeding generation will advance one step towards the perfecting of mankind: for with education is involved the great secret of the perfection of human nature. It is only now that something may be done in this direction, since for the first time, people have begun to judge rightly, and understand clearly, what actually belongs to a good education. It is delightful to realize that through education, human nature will be continually improved, and brought to such a condition as is worthy of the nature of man. This opens out to us the prospect of a happier human race in the future”⁷¹

AGENTS OF FORMATION

⁷¹ Steven M. Cahn, *The Philosophical Foundations of Education*, New York: harper and Row Publishers Inc., 1970, p.180

The most significant and easily identifiable agents of formation are the family, peer groups, the School, the Church, the Civil Society\ State and environmental conditionings, which are sometimes beyond the control of any individual. Edward Fitzpatrick does a great job in his attempt at compartmentalizing the proper roles that accrue to the various agents of formation. According to him,

The home from the beginning had a very definite educational function in the training and upbringing of children... it is the generation and formation of offspring; for the civil society in its broadest sense – wider than the state – it is temporal well-being of the community; for the church it is the eternal salvation of individual men in a “better world than this.” For the industrial (including the agricultural society) it takes as its objectives the provision of food, shelter and clothing for men as part of the temporariness of life. The school is the instrument that formally aims to transmit what men should know and do, rather than leave it to the chance of individual experience or to informal means. It is an instrument that may be used by all the social institutions to guarantee the transmission of the social inheritance.⁷²

THE FAMILY

The family is the first and the most basic unit of the formation of the child. The home creates a natural environment wherein the child gets to develop his relational skills, evoking from the child the right and adequate responses to different situations and problems. So the family becomes the first, though informal school for the education and formation of the child. It is in the family that the child is first exposed to the reality of religion and faith and the place of God in relation to life’s pursuits.

THE PEER GROUP

Though sometimes not very noticeable, the peer group exerts a lot of influence on the formation of a child and in a way reshapes, remolds, re-informs the morals and attitudinal responses of the young adult in such a way that it may sometimes be in conflict with the values that the child is being taught at home. Every human individual feels the need to belong and be accepted by his social group or play mates and this need will often lead the young person to readjust their values and behavior so that they are in consonance with those espoused by the peer group. I recall how in my undergraduate days in the then University of Ife, I tried to smoke once a Cuban cigar in one hand and had a bottle of beer in the other because this was what it meant to feel cool and most of my friends did the same. I wanted so much to be accepted by my friends and if this is what it took to be cool, then I was going to be cool. This is usually the stage in life when the young person experiences what I may describe here as a crisis of identity, which can either make or mar the person in question. It is only those who have been truly grounded in values of faith, morals and integrity, not forgetting the grace of God who sometimes may come out unscathed.

THE CHURCH

The church as an agent of formation takes its significance from the purview of faith derived from the sacred scriptures, especially as it is drawn from the teachings of Christ, a long history of tradition and the teachings of the fathers of the Church. Christ addressed every aspect of

⁷² Edward Fitzpatrick, *The Philosophy of Education*, Wisconsin / Milwaukee: Bruce Publication (1953), p.53

human existence but more especially his social teachings was centered on the need to liberate the people from all forms of social and spiritual oppression which do not only alienate them from living to the full the dignity of the human person but also equally alienate them from enjoying the freedom and happiness of the sons and daughters of God. While it is unquestionable that one needs to be liberated from his own sins, which makes us unable to enjoy the benefits of life to the full, it is equally true that one needs to be saved from the sins of those who oppress him. For example, the Hebrew slaves had first to be liberated from the oppression of Pharaoh, King of Egypt and in the context of their journey in the desert, they also needed to be liberated from their own alienation from God in choosing to worship a golden calf, a demonstration of their lack of faith and inconsistency.

So within the context of formation, the church in its social teaching and catechetical formation, equips the individual persons with the necessary moral consciousness not only to live their own lives well but also to give equal and due consideration to others. In its dynamism of evangelization, the church in its missionary character does not only wear the toga of a prophetic voice calling people to reform their ways it is also an agent of formation that challenges and awakens the conscience of society and indeed of all humanity to be more humane and compassionate to the needs and sufferings of the less privileged thus resulting both in a personal conversion and social transformation.⁷³

THE CIVIL SOCIETY/STATE

The state in its administrative role encompasses the social, political and economic dimensions of life within the society. It is a much more complex agent of formation. It is the function of the agents of the state to create, protect and promote the atmosphere of peace and cooperation that will enable its constitutive parts fulfill their goals and plans in life. Society is a complex social structure of various governmental, public and private institutions and people in so many forms of interdependent roles of relationships. Society is essential to the fulfillment of the human vocation and pursuits in life and since the state controls the organs of social organizations, its role as an agent of formation cannot be overemphasized.

FORMATION THROUGH THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The school according to Ralph Turner in the wildest social sense is “the place where the oncoming generation goes to learn and participate in that spiritual inheritance of literature, science, art, institutions, and religion, which past generations have passed on to their successors in the relay race of civilization.”⁷⁴ Formal education is therefore an effort to do explicitly and systematically what the family and community had long accomplished in an undifferentiated fashion before society became so complex that the task had to be performed by specialists.⁷⁵ In the words of C.B Okolo, formal education is today a fundamental value in practically all nations of the world, more so, since our age has increasingly become that of

⁷³ cf. Documents of the Puebla Declarations no. 362.

⁷⁴ Ralph Turner, p.348

⁷⁵ See David L. Sills (ed) International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences Vols 3 and 4. New York: Macmillan Company and free Press, 1968 p.152

science, scientific research and specializations, guided missiles, push button technology etc. According to him, to be educated is thought by many to be a desirable condition of mind.

It is noteworthy to point out that formal education is done primarily with the aim of helping the individual develop his physical, intellectual, emotional and volitional capabilities. So the place of a formation process that takes in the total individual in his entire personality cannot be overemphasized. Thus the system of education which is embraced by this institution of Ss. Peter and Paul major Seminary and indeed all seminaries is not just meant to prepare men to obtain University degrees and acquire the requisite knowledge and skills necessary for adaption and survival within a complex social structure, but it is also to form future priests who would not only become leaders of peoples but who would also through the example of their own lives bear witness to truth, honesty and justice. Let me proudly add as an alumnus of this great institution that our graduates should be men of proven intelligence and moral probity, reliable and dependable, men who can be trusted to mean yes when they say yes and no when they say no; for in this consists the overarching sense of personal integrity and good character.

CONCLUSION

In the world we seek for knowledge, which gives us certain assurances of a future that is built on some stable edifice of a successful carrier based on the values of Integrity and Justice. However let me quickly add here a note of caution by quoting the words of Samuel Johnson (1709 -1786), an English Writer and Lexicographer who said that, "Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless and knowledge without Integrity is dangerous and dreadful. So while we do need knowledge, which is the purpose of education, this knowledge must be imbued with a deep sense of Integrity. Socrates points out that knowledge is virtue and thus it may be presumed that the truly knowledgeable man is the one who has wisdom enough to differentiate between the morally upright actions and the immorally despicable acts. Such a person is equally expected to be virtuous for that is the power of possessing knowledge.

Socrates believes that those who do morally objectionable acts do so out of ignorance since no one strictly speaking would deliberately do anything that is wrong or evil if they had the knowledge or wisdom to see clearly that what they do is inherently evil and unjust. However when they insist on doing what is wrong, they act out of ignorance, because that which they insist on doing, appeals to them as the pleasurable. While the pleasurable is not always good, the good is always pleasurable. Knowledge becomes for Socrates the sine qua non for living a good and morally upright life.⁷⁶

Thus the aim of the formative process one may contend (more especially one that addresses the multifaceted aspects and complexities of the human person), is not only to imbue the individual with the power and knowledge to discern between right and good actions but also to give him the requisite intelligence to choose the good and to refrain from doing the opposite. The individual is said to possess a sound body in a sound mind, if all his constituent elements are working harmoniously together such that the individual is dependable and responsible enough to consistently follow the path of justice and fair play. Such a person is said to possess

⁷⁶ Plato, Republic IV, 441d-443c-e, translation by Francis Macdonald Conford (London: Oxford University Press.

integrity. This is of course not forgetting the fact that ever so often, the advantages of a person's birth, environmental and social conditionings which are beyond the control of any individual may sometimes accord to such a person the needed boost or setback in life.

Thus as students in formation and training as future priests, what should be our appropriate responses to a situation that greatly challenges the very foundation of our Christian moral values and integrity? Perhaps the paramount question then is how can I as a future priest, a graduate of a Christian Institute of Philosophy and theology dedicated to the formation of intellectuals with the right philosophical, pedagogical and theological tools, be of service to a multicultural world, with differentiations of opinions, religious orientations and worldviews without renegeing on my values?

At a practical level, this question is even more urgent because our search and vision is often blurred by the inordinate pursuit of material wealth within an attendant culture of consumerism. You only need to listen to the sermons of some priests and pastors and look at their lifestyles to confirm our contention here. There is too much competition for financial success and material gains in a world where success is now greatly measured by how much you have in your bank account. The whole culture of consumerism and exploitation and the appropriation of the common goods are all direct consequences of our loss of value and a sense of Integrity and the inordinate desire to enthrone individualism as against communal consideration and concern. Financial success is only an aspect of a person's life and a very minute part. The most important and enduring aspect is the attitudinal and character formation of the individual. This is for me the most basic and primordial building block that helps to define the characteristic of a person's total personality.

The crisis affecting the modern world, argues the statement of Vatican II, is a reflection of the symptom of the deeper dichotomy that is in man himself. He is a meeting point of many conflicting factors. He is only too aware as a created being of his limitedness and weakness and in another sense he finds this compelling drive to reach for a higher goal devoid of the obvious limitations of the human life. Faced with these numbers of options, he is forced to choose some and to reject others while at the same time realizing that very often he ends up doing those things that he does not want to do.⁷⁷

Let me end this talk with the story of an American local news station, which was interviewing an 80-year-old lady because she had just gotten married -- for the fourth time. The interviewer asked her questions about her life, about what it felt like to be marrying again at 80, and then about her new husband's occupation. "He's a funeral director," she answered. "Interesting," the newsman thought. He then asked her if she wouldn't mind telling him a little about her first three husbands and what they did for a living. She paused for a few moments, needing time to reflect on all those years. After a short time, a smile came to her face and she answered proudly, explaining that she'd first married a banker when she was in her early 20s, then a circus ringmaster when in her 40s, later on a preacher when in her 60s, and now in her 80s, a funeral director. The interviewer looked at her, quite astonished, and asked why she had married four men with such diverse careers. She smiled and explained "I married the first one

⁷⁷ The Documents of Vatican II (Lumen Gentium) 5, 9 ff. See also Michael Schaus (Chapter 2) Dogma 4: The Church, Its Origin and Structure (London: Shed and Ward, 1972).

(the banker) for the money, the second one (the Circus ringmaster) for the show, the third one (the preacher) to get ready, and the fourth (the funeral director) in readiness to go."

The woman in this story is a person who had planned her life out well. She knew what she wanted and she lived it out to the full in the hope that she will always have the fulfillment and happiness that life could offer. She did not also forget to prepare for the life-after. In the standards of the world she was not only clever but she was also a wise person by any measure, one who had planned and carefully crafted every moment of her life in such a way that she will have the very best of it all at the end i.e., the ultimate satisfaction and happiness –all that life could offer her and one also for the end of life. Thus it is paramount that the various institutions charged with the education or formation of the youths should be open not only to adopting measures that have been known to work in the past but also amenable to new ways which will position the individuals in an increasingly advanced information and technological age.

THE NIGERIAN STRUGGLE IN THE WIND OF NEO-COLONIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION: DEFINING OUR OUTSTANDING SELF-IDENTITY

Being the Inaugural Lecture of the Department of Philosophy on 13th of November 2015

By
Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Okechukwu Okorie, SC

Being an Inaugural Lecture given at the Seminary of Saints Peter and Paul to officially mark the beginning of the new academic/formative session of the 2015/2016 calendar year of the philosophy department of the Seminary.

INTRODUCTION

The great and erudite Greek philosopher, Socrates, left us with a famous quote: *Man, know thyself*. An unexamined life, says Socrates, is not worth living. Each human being is unique and has qualities that distinguish him/her from other human beings. Man from a unique point of view has features or traits by which or through which he is identified. His identity is that which makes him what he is. Being a being in his original environment which shapes him, his uniqueness cannot be over-emphasized. So it is with cultures. If culture as defined by the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, signifies a way of life (the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group; or the beliefs and

attitudes about something that people in a particular group or organization share), then each group, people, nation or country has a culture.⁷⁸ History has shown the phenomenon of inter-cultural exchange. In other words, people from a particular culture, nation or country can learn something from another culture or even to an extent be influenced by it. But the borrower (of a foreign cultural trait) should not lose his or her own cultural identity. He should be mindful of what to borrow and what not to borrow. If not, this can lead to identity crisis or loss of (self) identity.

It is in line with this thought that our Country Nigeria is presented as a case study in this inaugural paper. Many years ago, the British came to this part of the world and they encountered people of different ethnic groups with already established Kingdoms, for each ethnic group had its own system of government, values, ideologies, moral principles traditional religion and so on. In some cases (if not in many cases), the people, who later became a British colony as a result of the presence of these British colonial masters, were made to 'jettison' their original values in order to pave way for the assimilation of western values and ideologies. Although one could say that some of these foreign values are still useful to our society (given the fact that colonialism has its own positive effects such as the introduction of western education and urbanisation), yet the negative impact of westernization of our traditional societies cannot be overemphasised.

Following the historic 1914 amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates, what we have and have come to accept today as Nigeria was given birth to. Our country Nigeria, being the most populous in Africa, is blessed with both human and natural resources. Besides, Nigeria is according to the United Nations July 29, 2015 (Revision of World Population Prospects) report, the seventh most populated country in the world, with a staggering population of more than one hundred and seventy million inhabitants. This United Nations report states that Nigeria is one of the six countries whose population will exceed the 300 million mark in less than two decades. China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and the United States (US) are the other countries.⁷⁹ Furthermore, excerpts from this United Nations (UN) report says thus:

Among the 10 largest countries in the world currently, one is in Africa (Nigeria), five are in Asia (Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan), two are in Latin America (Brazil and Mexico), one is in Northern America (US), and one is in Europe (Russian Federation). Of these, Nigeria's population, currently the seventh largest in the world, is growing the most rapidly.⁸⁰

Consequently, says the UN report, the population of Nigeria is projected to surpass that of the United States by about 2050, at which point it would become the third largest country in the country.⁸¹ This makes Nigeria a country to reckon with numerically and even

⁷⁸ Cf. Hornby A.S., Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (7th edition), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p.357.

⁷⁹ connectnigeria.com/article.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*: The report was prepared by the Economic and Social Affairs department of the UN.

⁸¹ *Ibid*.

economically. Besides, another estimate puts Nigeria's 2015 population at One hundred and eighty five 185, 424,457. This was given by Worldometers' RTS algorithm, which processes data collected from the United Nations Population Division.⁸²

Interestingly, Nigeria has been identified as one of the ten most important countries in the 21st Century by Bill Clinton, the Ex-President of the United States. Mr Clinton made this known in Abeokuta, Ogun State in February 2013, when he was speaking at the awards ceremony put on by *ThisDay* Newspaper. These were his words:

When I became President, my Secretary of Commerce did a lot of work in Africa before he was tragically killed in a plane crash in 1995. I said he should make a list of ten most important countries in the world for the 21st century. Nigeria was in that list. Imagine the future of the entire continent if Nigeria fails. So you are a country of great potential. I will say you have about three challenges: Oil money, economic distribution, brain drain. First of all, like 90 per cent of the countries which have one big resource, you haven't done well with your oil money. You should have reinvested it in different ways. Now you are at least not wasting the natural gas. You are developing it in pipelines but you do a better job of managing natural resources. Secondly, you have to somehow bring economic opportunity to people who don't have. This is not a problem specific to Nigeria. Almost in every place in the world, prosperity is heavily concentrated in and around urban areas. So you have all these political problems: violence, religious differences, and all the rhetoric of Boko Haram. But the truth is, the poverty rate in the north is three times greater than what is in the Lagos area. To deal with that, you have to have both powerful stake in the local governments and a national policy that work together. As you keep sharing power, you have to figure out a way to have a strategy that will help in sharing prosperity. The third thing is, there has to be a way to take the staggering intellectual and organisational ability that Nigerians exhibit in every country in the world in which they are immigrant and bring it to bear here, so that the country as a whole can arise.⁸³

Interestingly, Mr Clinton's utterances about Nigeria are a depiction of how great (and potentially great) our country is. His message to us Nigerians is that we independently have what it takes to be great as a nation. The paradox is the fact that such an acclaimed Great Nation allows herself to be influenced by the designs of Neo-colonisation and globalisation imposed from outside. What do these (seemingly interwoven) concepts mean and how does their influence menace our outstanding self-identity as a people and as an independent nation? Can the ugly situation be remedied? If yes, how? As a matter of fact, the diagnosis of an illness

⁸² www.worldometers.info/nigeria-population.

⁸³ www.vanguardngr.com

is a *sine qua non* for its cure. That is why clarification (explication) of concepts is deemed necessary in this work.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

i. Neo-colonization

One cannot understand the seemingly modern concept of neo-colonization without a prior understanding of terms like *colony*, *colonize*, *colonization* and *neo*.

A **colony** is defined as a country or an area under the full or partial political control of another (more powerful) country and occupied by settlers from that country.

To colonize means to send settlers to (a place) and establish political control over it (Example: Greeks colonized Sicily Southern Italy); to settle among and establish control over (the indigenous people of an area); in Ecology (of a plant or animal) establish itself in (an area).⁸⁴

Colonization (an act or instance of colonizing) is simply defined as the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area. For instance, we talk of western colonization in Africa. Colonization is equally the act of appropriating a place or domain for one's use. Example: the complete colonization of television entertainment by reality shows.⁸⁵ Moreover, colonization could be described as the establishment, maintenance, acquisition, and expansion of territories (or colonies) by people from another territory. The act of colonization always involves an external force that is seemingly powerful. History indicates that the colonial period ranges from 1450s to the 1970s, beginning when several European powers (Spain, Portugal, Britain and France especially) engaged in intensive exploration of the world and established colonies in Asia, Africa and the Americas. The Social theory philosopher, Karl Marx viewed colonialism as part of the global capitalist system which has led to exploitation, social change, and uneven development.

Dependency theory argues that countries have developed at an uneven rate because wealthy countries have exploited poor countries in the past through colonialism and today through foreign debt and trade.⁸⁶

Neo as a concept has its origin in the Greek *neos* which is akin to new. It is a combining form meaning *new, recent, revived, modified*, etc.⁸⁷ Neo-colonization ipso facto entails colonization in its new, revived and modified form. It is equally identified as Neo-colonialism (or neo-imperialism). Neo-colonialism (neo-colonization) is defined as the dominance of strong nations over weak nations, not by direct political control (as in traditional colonialism), but by economic and cultural influence.⁸⁸ It is equally identified as the continuation of the economic model of colonialism after a colonized territory has achieved formal political independence. This concept was applied most commonly to Africa in the latter half of the twentieth century. According to the New Dictionary of the History of Ideas, European countries had colonized many African countries in the late nineteenth century, instituting a system of economic exploitation in which African raw materials, particularly cash crops and minerals, were expropriated and exported to the sole benefit of the colonizing power. The idea

⁸⁴www.oxforddictionaries.com > definition.

⁸⁵*ibid.*

⁸⁶ [//www.bundless.com/s](http://www.bundless.com/s)

⁸⁷Dictionary.reference.com> browse>neo...

⁸⁸*ibid.*

of neo-colonization, however, suggests that when European powers granted nominal political independence to colonies in the decades after World War II, they continued to control the economies of the new African countries.⁸⁹ One danger of neo-colonization is that its *propeller* is not visibly seen unlike in the case of western colonisation that took place in Africa and Asia years back. This non-visibility makes it possible for neo-colonization to gain entrance and spread like an insidious evil.

Regrettably, neo-colonization gave rise to the above-mentioned dependency theory; a theory that first gained prominence as a way of explaining the underdevelopment of Latin American economies in the 1960s. It proclaims that underdevelopment persisted because highly developed countries dominated underdeveloped economies by paying low prices for agricultural products and flooding those economies with CHEAP MANUFACTURED GOODS. Consequently, there was a perpetually negative balance of payments that prevented underdeveloped countries from ever becoming competitive in the global market. Economic theorists of post-colonial Africa, such as Walter Rodney and Samir Amin, combined the Marxist-Leninist concept of colonialism as a stage of capitalism with the concept of underdevelopment to create the concept of colonialism, which Kwame Nkrumah nicknamed “the (dangerous) last stage of imperialism.”⁹⁰

ii. Globalization

While the term *globalization* is said to be relatively new, the word *globalize* was coined only in 1944. To globalize means to make global; especially to make worldwide in scope or application. It is the act of globalizing, or extending to other or all parts of the world. In other words, the term entails worldwide integration and development. It involves action and interaction, across borders and across continents, and the spread of cultural, economic and political ideas (particularly by way of trade, industry, technology, the arts, letters, music and religion) throughout the world.⁹¹ There is an argument that perhaps the earliest genuinely worldwide wave of globalization was not, as some claim, the series of economic, social and political changes which followed the Second World War or the recent collapse of the Soviet Union, but that of the empires of western Europe—Spain, England, France and Portugal—in the 16th and 17th Centuries and the concurrent missionary activities of Christianity. Since then, other waves of globalization have sprung up such as secularization, which originated in Europe around the period of the French Revolution, and which according to some pundits, has had and is still having an impact in almost every country in the globe. However, the contemporary notion of globalization is its economic undertone. In other words, globalization is today thought of as predominantly economic. This means that it is mainly focused on trade and investment, and particularly, global competition and deregulation.⁹² Thanks to globalization, different cultures and economic systems around the world are becoming

⁸⁹Cf. New Dictionary of the History of Ideas, Falola Toyin; Heaton, Matthew, the Gale Group. Inc.: www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Neo-colonialism.

⁹⁰ Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd, 1965: <https://www.marxists.org> › subject › Africa.

⁹¹Cf. John P Morgan, *Cultural Identity, Pluralism and Globalization—Volume 1*: <https://books.google.it>> books

⁹²Ibid.

connected and similar to each other because of the influence of large Multinational Companies and of improved communication.

Globalization, as a concept has been defined and described in various ways. It is defined by the Online Business Dictionary as the worldwide movement toward economic, financial, trade, and communications integration. Globalization is said to imply the opening of local and nationalistic perspectives to a broader outlook of an interconnected and interdependent world with free transfer of capital, goods, and services across national frontiers. However, it does not include unhindered movement of labour and, as suggested by some economists, may hurt smaller or fragile economies if applied indiscriminately.⁹³

Besides, globalization is said to be the process of increasing the connectivity and interdependence of the world's markets and businesses thereby making the world a global village. Notably, this process has speeded up dramatically in the last few decades as technological advances make it easier for people to travel, communicate and do business internationally. The business world has identified two major recent driving forces of globalization. They are advances (the progress) in telecommunications infrastructure and the growth of the internet and mobile phones which are seen as the modern offsprings of the telegraph. It is noted that as economies become more connected to other economies, they have increased opportunity as well as increased competition. Thus, as globalization becomes a more and more common feature of world economics, powerful pro-globalization lobbies and anti-globalization have arisen.

Expectedly, pro-globalization lobby argues that globalization brings about much increased opportunities for almost everyone, and increased competition is a good and favourable thing since it renders agents of production more efficient. The two most prominent globalization organizations are the *World Trade Organization* (a pan-governmental entity that was set up to formulate a set of rules to govern global trade and capital flows through the process of member consensus, and to supervise their member countries to ensure that the rules are being followed) and the *World Economic Forum*, a private foundation that does not have decision making power but enjoys great deal of importance since it has been effective as a powerful networking forum for many of the world's business, and government.

The anti-globalization group argues that certain groups of people who are deprived in terms of resources are not currently capable of functioning within the increased competitive pressure that will be brought about by allowing the economies to be more connected to the rest of the world. Some of the important anti-globalization groups include environmental groups like *Friends of the Earth* and *Greenpeace*; international aid organizations like the *G-77*; business organizations and trade whose competitiveness is threatened by globalization like the U.S textile and European *farm lobby*, as well as the Australian and U.S trade union movements. The criticisms directed towards globalization would direct this work towards examining the challenges of globalization (and neo-colonization) in our own Nigeria context.

In 2000, the *International Monetary Fund* (IMF) identified four basic aspects of globalization: trade and transactions, capital and investment movements, migration and movement of people, and the dissemination of knowledge. Further environmental challenges

⁹³www.businessdictionary.com

such as *global warming*, cross boundary water and air pollution, and *over-fishing* of the ocean are linked with globalization. Remarkably, globalizing processes affect and are affected by business and work organization, economics, socio-cultural resources, and the natural environment.⁹⁴

THE CHALLENGES OF NEO-COLONIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION IN THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

Before taking a look at the Challenges of Neo-colonization and globalization in the Nigerian State, it would be worthwhile to dig into some of the merits and demerits of globalization in the global context. Despite the challenges that globalization poses to the global society, one cannot easily deny its advantages as a societal phenomenon. The world has become smaller and closer, all thanks to globalization. Seen as a modern blazing word, globalization is said to be the amalgamation of the home country with the world economy; for it pulls out countries from their detachment into the competitive world. Journeying towards new collaborations and unity, globalization has changed the world into a global village. Some of the identified merits of globalization are: employment opportunities (companies are moving towards the developing countries to acquire labour force), education, integration with different cultures, enhancement of quality products thanks to the competitive market, cheaper prices of goods and services (since there are varied products to select from), free movement of capital (such as the easy transfer of money through banks owing to the electronic transfer that has made life very comfortable), communication (seen in the Information technology which plays the vital role in bringing countries together in terms of communication), transportation (considered as a wheel of every business organization and even intercultural experience), international trade (thanks to globalization, international trade has broadened its horizon), Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Increase (GDP-the money value of the final goods and services produced within the domestic territory of the country during an accounting year increases even in developing countries because as the market has widened, the scope and demand for a product has increased) and so on.

Besides, globalization has regrettably its global demerits (challenges). Below are some of them:

a. Health Issues.

Globalization is known to have given rise to more health risks and presents new threats and challenges for epidemics. A very customary example is HIV/AIDS which has spread like wildfire throughout the globe in no distant time because of easy transportation and contact. Moreover, food items are transported to various countries, and this is a matter of concern, especially in case of perishable items. The safety regulations and standards of food preparation differ according to countries, and this may pose some health challenges.

b. Loss of Culture/Identity

Conventionally, each culture is unique. That is why people of a particular culture or country follow and stick to their culture and traditions from time immemorial. But with a large number of people moving in and out of the country (migration), a people's culture takes a backseat and its identity suffers a setback. The colonial history of Africa testifies to this. When people begin to adapt to the culture of the resident or foreign country, they may lose their roots and as a result create a cultural conflict and an identity crisis.

⁹⁴<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization>

c. Uneven Wealth Distribution

It is commonly said that the rich are getting richer while the poor are getting poorer. In the real sense, says anti-globalization proponents, globalization has not been able to reduce poverty. On the contrary, it has led to the accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of a few developed economies (countries). Therefore, the gap between the elite and the underprivileged continuously widen, eventually leading to inequality.

d. Environment Degradation

The industrial revolution has adversely changed the look of the economy. Industries use natural resources by means of mining, drilling, etc. which puts a burden on the environment. Natural resources are depleting and are on the verge of extinction because of the non-availability of land, deforestation is practiced, thereby drastically reducing the forest cover. Consequently, this creates an imbalance in the environment leading to climate change and occurrence of natural calamities. In other words, the Eco-system is harmfully affected.

e. Disparity

There still exists disparity in the development of the economies even though globalization has opened new avenues like wider markets and employment. Structural unemployment owes to the disparity created. For instance, developed countries are moving their factories to foreign countries where labour is cheaply available. The host country generates less revenue, and a major share of the profits fall into the hands of the foreign companies who make humongous profits to the detriment of the host country. As a result, a huge income gap between the developed and the developing countries is conspicuously seen.

f. Cut-throat Competition and Conflicts.

Opening the doors of international trade has given birth to intense and even unhealthy competition. This has drastically affected the local markets. The local players thereby suffer losses as they lack the potential to advertise or export their goods on a large scale. Therefore, the domestic market shrinks.

Since every economy wants to be at the top, the fast-paced economies, the developed and industrialised countries are vying to be the supreme power. Unfortunately, this has given rise to terrorism and other forms of violence followed by loss of human lives and economic losses. The war in Iraq, Libya and Syria can be taken as a case study.

g. Monopoly

It is said that monopoly kills interest. Monopoly in the business world is a situation wherein only one seller has a say in a particular product or products. Since there exist no close competitors, there may be illegal and unethical practices from the one who takes full advantages of the sale of his or her product. Monopoly disastrously widens the gap between the rich developed countries and the developing ones.

Neocolonization and globalization: The Challenges they pose to the Nigerian Society

Globally speaking, Neo-colonization and globalization are fraught with challenges despite what their proponents posit as their merits in the global society. The Nigerian contemporary society is not left out. Below are some of the challenges that this *new wave* poses in our own Nigerian environment.

a. Loss of cultural values

Although Nigeria is a multi-ethnic State, there are certain cultural values that cut across the different ethnic groups. One of them is solidarity (communalism) which even begins right from the family. With the new wave of globalization (and neo-colonialism) where digital communication exemplified in smart phones, iPads, the internet, and so on hold sway, the culture of genuine interpersonal relationship is regrettably and sorrowfully being eroded. In some cases, if not in many, we now hold on to our communication gadgets as if they are our second gods thereby forgetting the words of the psalmist which says that those who choose other gods increase their sorrows (Psalm 16:4). In some families, members have become addicted to these small but ‘powerful’ communication gadgets to the extent that they (the gadgets) have taken the place of important family activities like domestic chores, family meetings, prayers, counselling, *get-together* and so on. Imagine a minor who wakes up in the morning and the first thing he grabs is his phone. He or she does not even remember to say ‘Good morning to the elders of the household. There is an edifying saying that goes like this: *Your phone has replaced your alarm clock, your camera and your calculator. Don’t let it replace your family.*

It has been observed that notwithstanding the positive side of technology (especially the mass media and other means of communication), its negative influence is affecting our society, replacing the traditional love and harmony in our homes. Some couples no longer hold hands and talk to each other. Instead they hold their phones or other means of communication or they are attached to other products of technology to the detriment of traditional solidarity and interpersonal relationship for which we are traditionally known as Nigerians and Africans in general. If this dangerous *digital* trend continues unchecked and unabated, our present-day Nigerian society will relapse into more serious decadence that will cause our fore-fathers to be *weeping from their graves*. Unfortunately, our cultural heritage is being eroded in the name of modernism through neo-colonization and globalization and many of our citizens seem to be oblivious of this fact and its concomitant evil.

b. Moral decadence

The scourge of Individualism replaces altruism which exemplifies the *I-Thou* relationship of Martin Buber (Buber holds that human life finds its meaningfulness in relationships, and all of our relationships bring us ultimately into relationship with God, who is the Eternal Thou). Individualism, though menacing our present-day Nigeria, is alien to our culture as a people and it militates against our outstanding self-identity. The inflow of foreign goods into our country has not helped matters. Weapons of warfare such as guns and other dangerous devices are said to be continuously and illegally smuggled into this country thereby causing the geometrical increase in crime rate. Our land has become a dumping ground for dangerous weapons manufactured in the western world and in Asia. This breeds all kinds of violence that are manifest in armed robbery, assassination, murder, dangerous cult groups, even in our tertiary institutions (varsities, polytechnics), etc.

Our social cum mass media (television, internet, etc) despite playing positive roles in the world of communication have also become channels through which our youths perpetrate all kinds of sexual and human vices ranging from pornography, sexual harassment (rape), internet fraud/scam (cyber-crime) popularly known as *yahoo* or *419* (in common Nigerian parlance). Sometimes, there are cases involving our young ladies who take permission from their parents

or guardians to go to the public cyber café at night to do what they call *all nights browsing* which they claim is purely academic and positively informative. History has shown that in some cases, the so called *all nights browsing* (which may not have taken place in the real cyber café) results in unwanted pregnancy, sexual and physical violence, contacting of diseases, etc. Some of the crimes and vulgar expressions such as sexually explicit and violent movies, gutter language (swear words) and so on, that our youths commit and learn today are learnt from the social media-. Indecent dressing that our modern society glorifies is not left out.

A Latin adage says that the love of having (*amor habendi*) grows by having. The influx of foreign goods into our society has enlarged our appetites. Human wants are insatiable, says the economist. But we need to discipline our appetite for wants by applying temperance.

h. Negligence of our local languages

Language, an important and natural medium of communication could be described as the first identity of a people. In human society, the human species is identified by this means of communication. Through the language we speak, one can discover where we hail from. Our language exposes our root. It is an out-standing self-identity of a person, community, group, tribe or nation. It is true that in Nigeria, we have English as our official language (*lingua franca*) owing to the fact our country is a former British colony. But this does not presuppose that we should relegate our native languages to the background. Our native languages are being neglected to the detriment of our own cultural stability and harmony. (It is a fact that no World power speaks the language of another country).

i. Unhealthy Economic Dependence

There is a French adage that says that *the hand that gives is always on top (la main qui donne est toujours au dessus)*. In other words, he who plays the piper dictates the tone. Our continuous and perennial economic dependence on the West and the outside world in general is not a good omen. One of the tricky designs of neo-colonization is the perpetual economic (and even political) subjugation of the consumer country or state. Our market is flooded with foreign products thereby hindering the manufacture and progress of local products. When our land becomes the dumping ground for everything from outside, it makes us look like the proverbial *Obi*; who is always a boy and never grows into adulthood. However, *Obi* must grow.

THE UNFAVOURABLE WIND OF NEO-COLONIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION: ANY REMEDY FOR THE NIGERIAN SOCIETY?

As earlier stated, the diagnosis of an ailment is the prerequisite (*conditio sine qua non*) for its cure. This work would be incomplete if possible recommendations are not made on how our Nigerian society can be salvaged from the contemporary menace of neo-colonialism and globalization. These recommendations will help our society in its respective sectors of life such as in politics, economy, religion, the family, the schools, markets and so on. Below are the possible solutions to the problem.

i. Education and re-education of the Nigerian masses

Our people should be educated on the adverse effects of neo-colonisation and globalization even though globalization has its positive effects as enunciated above. Judicious use of the means of communication is very necessary since they are needed in most cases. Daily experience shows how globalization has made communication, traveling and education easily. People are now easily informed because of the globalized easy digital communication. That is the more reason why the conscientisation of the Nigerian masses is of paramount importance. This should be done in families, schools, churches, mosques, and in all public places. We need to learn the ethics of the use of the means of communication (knowing what to with it and what ought not to do with it), for virtue lies in the middle. This conscientisation should touch all spheres of life in our society.

ii. Rebuilding our cultural (traditional) values and heritage

Culture is simply defined as a way of life of a people. It is the nucleus of a people's life, for a people without a culture is a *de-rooted* people (without roots). One disadvantage of colonization and neo-colonization is the degradation or loss of culture vis-à-vis the people that it (colonization) was imposed on. Given the corrosive nature of globalization and neo-colonisation, our traditional values are now been corroded on a daily basis, paving the way for alien harmful foreign cultures and ideologies. Unfortunately, we are invaded everyday by these foreign ideologies through the mass media. The *renaissance* of our original values does not mean that we should throw away everything that is foreign given the fact that western colonization has its advantages (formal education, contact with the outside world, etc). It means that we should strike a balance without losing what is really and proudly ours. Culture is dynamic, says the cultural anthropologist. But in the dynamics of culture, vestiges are retained, even for the sake of worthwhile continuity. Most importantly, our beautiful cultural values should be conspicuously seen in our politics, economy, religion, and so on. They should permeate our social and religious life. For instance, it is against our traditional values for somebody to steal. Stealing remains stealing whether it was perpetrated by a highly placed politician (shouldered with an Executive responsibility) or by a beggar on the street. As earlier noted, the influx of the *material* (as the philosophers would say) in our Nigerian society has enlarged and keeps on enlarging the appetitive tendency of man who cannot but keep on acquiring the goods of the earth by all means to the detriment of his neighbour. This is morally reprehensible.

One cultural value that we have is language. Our local languages should be brought to limelight. In addition to reaching them in schools, parents and guardians should make their children or wards to speak their local languages. It is not enough to speak English which is the lingua franca of the Republic of Nigeria. We should strive to speak our local languages irrespective of where we are. That somebody was born in Abuja or Lagos is not an excuse in favour of why he or she cannot speak his or her local language. I was positively scandalized the day I saw a Nigerian lady (presently married) who was born and bred in Italy (and who is still there), speak Igbo, her native language fluently. Nigerians in diaspora should be sensitized to teach their local languages to their children. That our language is our outstanding identity cannot be over-emphasized.

iii. Imparting the spirit of patriotism/nationalism to our citizens

Patriotism is defined as devoted love, support and defence of one's country; national loyalty.⁹⁵In other words, patriotism is love of your country and willingness to defend it. Do Nigerians love Nigeria? This question is left to each one of us to answer. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, defines patriotism as an emotional attachment to a nation which an individual recognizes as their homeland. This attachment, also known as national feeling or national pride, can be viewed in terms of different features relating to one's own nation, including ethnic, cultural, political or historical aspects. Patriotism is not xenophobia (which is a strong feeling of dislike or fear of people from other countries), chauvinism (known as exaggerated patriotism manifested in the aggressive and unreasonable belief that one's own country is better than all others) or jingoism (a strong belief that your own country is best, especially when this is expressed in support of war with another country).

It is observed that the only area in which many Nigerians show collective patriotism is that of sports (especially when Nigeria wins, as is seen in the just concluded edition of the Under 17 FIFA World Cup in Chile, which Nigeria proudly won for an unprecedented fifth time). But sports is just an aspect of our life as a people. Nigerians should be taught the importance and spirit of patriotism, and this crusade should start (and be inculcated) from infancy as Americans do. Countries that are today identified as industrialised and developed reached that level of progress and eminence thanks to imbued patriotic spirit in the citizens. Any country with unpatriotic citizens and leaders is still miles away from growth. For Nigeria to stand and quench the *tempest* of neo-colonization and globalization (identified as modern slavery), she needs patriotic leaders and citizens. Nigerians, both young and old should be genuinely encouraged to love Nigeria. The local atmosphere should encourage and build talents in different sectors of our life (politics, religion, education, sports, health, citizens' welfare, to mention but a few). Local production should be enhanced and encouraged. The moment we are able to produce most of the goods and commodities that we need as a nation, we would be able to forestall the flow of foreign goods championed by the crusaders of neo-colonialism and globalization. They are the modern slave masters, and the earlier they are stopped, the better for our country and our continent. This will make our country self-sufficient and far-less dependent. If not, ours will remain a banana republic perpetually dependent on the so-called super powers. It is the patriotic spirit that will enable us to build strong institutions, respect the rule of law and fight corruption to an appreciable level. A patriotic citizen cannot conceive of stealing his country dry. How can a civil servant who is owed salaries in arrears love the Nigerian State? Is it possible? Most importantly, love for Nigeria entails love for fellow citizens, for united we stand, divided we fall. Arise, O Compatriots!

iv. Economic independence (necessary for liberation).

According to Kwame Nkrumah (one of the founding fathers of modern-day Africa), the essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, says he, its economic system and its political policy is directed from outside. Nkrumah notes that the methods and form of this direction can take various shapes. For instance, in an extreme case, the troops of the imperial power may garrison the territory of the neo-colonial State and control the government of it (as is seen in some African countries). In the words of Kwame Nkrumah,

⁹⁵Dictionary.reference.com>browse>patriotism

more often, however, neo-colonialist control is exercised through economic or monetary means. The neo-colonial State may be obliged to take the manufactured products of the imperialist power to the exclusion of competing products from elsewhere. Control over government policy in the neo-colonial State may be secured by payments towards the cost of running the State, by the provision of civil servants in positions where they can dictate policy, and by monetary control over foreign exchange through the imposition of a banking system controlled by the imperial power.⁹⁶

Kwame Nkrumah's patriotic stand has said it all. Without a considerable economic independence, our freedom from the invasion of neo-colonialism and globalization would be an uphill task. Neo-colonization which carries with it globalization, is a continuation of the economic model of colonialism, says the Science Encyclopedia. On the economic history of Nigeria, colonialism has been identified as a major feature of the country's economic history. After independence, when the British left, the Nigerian economy seemed very promising. Many saw Nigeria, with 25% of Africa's population, as an emerging economy. However, this potential never materialized. As a matter of fact, a series of unfortunate political and economic events stalled Nigerian growth. But our country still plays an important economic role in the world especially as an oil producing nation. That is the more reason why she ought to assert her independence economically and even politically by shunning sinister and unwholesome economic (and political) re-colonization.

The Nigerian government should make and implement policies that will encourage economic independence. Our best brains in diaspora should be encouraged to come back home join the ones here in order to build an enviably great nation. Our local manufacturers should be given the necessary opportunities to excel. Truly speaking, our country is full of (unharnessed) talents. We just need to have the right frame of mind. An independent nation is a nation that can sustain itself. It is a nation that does not solely depend on what comes from outside in order to live. That is the only way we can repel economic predators who wear the cloak of neo-colonialism and globalization. We should genuinely improve on infrastructure and on the other sectors. Steady power supply is indispensable. Our national grid (the electricity supply in our country) has not improved simply because of national greed. China and some other countries took the bull by the horn and today they are forces to reckon with. We can do it.

v. People-oriented politics

The philosophy of Politics teaches us that politics should aim at serving the people. This entails that politics should be people-oriented. In other words, patriotic and people-centred policies should be made. In truth, politics should be genuinely anthropocentric. Interestingly, politics and economy go together. Man is a political animal, says Aristotle. Politics permeate every fibre of our mean. He, who controls us economically, controls us politically. International politics has proved this right. To define our outstanding identity in the eye of the storm generated by neo-colonialism and globalization, the right politics is needed. Patriotic, good-hearted and people-focused leaders are needed to achieve it. Bishop Matthew Kukah of the Catholic diocese of Sokoto got it right when he recently stated that (Nigerian) politicians

⁹⁶<https://marxists.org/introduction>

should make politics a noble and cleaner engagement in order to motivate the younger generations to emulate their footsteps. Said he; “politicians must strive to make politics noble. When people get a chance to serve, my prayer and hope is that people coming after them would learn from them because politics has become a career.”⁹⁷ Bishop Kukah condemned what he described as a visible disconnection between Nigerian leaders and their subjects (which is contrary to Plato’s view in the *Republic*, that there must be a logical connection between the State and the citizens) and called for provision of an enabling environment to prepare youths for leadership positions in future.

This is where I think that the Church should come in by even setting up leadership schools and programmes so as to groom future leaders who will be focused, God-fearing and masses-oriented. The Church, though non-partisan, is in society and cannot shy away from human realities that stare us in the face. It is part of her prophetic mission to intervene and stand on the side of justice, for justice delayed is justice denied. She should encourage the leadership of the Nigerian State to genuinely fight corruption by first of all living above board. The presence of true leaders will go a long way in saving us from the clutches of neo-colonization and globalization. The Church, being in the sphere of religion, has a very important role to play in this fight for an outstanding self-identity in the midst of identity crises engineered by the proponents of foreign ideology.

CONCLUSION

An identity is who or what somebody or something is. It is the characteristics, feelings or beliefs that distinguish people from others. In our own Nigerian context, it is worthwhile to have a sense of national, cultural, personal or group identity. If philosophy is the search for truth, then the search for one’s true identity as well as its affirmation is truth itself. Loss of one’s self-identity is equivalent to loss of the self. Throwing away one’s real identity for the sake of embracing a foreign one that is harmfully alien to one’s personality and culture is akin to annihilation of the self. (That is what neo-colonialism does to us) It is here, Leopold Seghor’s Negritude, the pride of being an African, comes into play. We can avail ourselves of modern-day technology including the means of communication without losing ourselves in the process. In all these, we should be mindful of who we are and who we should be. That is our outstanding self-identity that should remain unique, indivisible and indissoluble.

⁹⁷Bishop Matthew Kukah made this assertion when he recently paid a courtesy visit to the governor of Anambra State, Chief Willie Obiano.

DESCARTES AND THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE

Being the Inaugural Lecture of the Department of Philosophy on the 11th of November 2016

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1. PREAMBLE

One of the enduring contributions of Descartes to philosophy is Descartes' response to the challenge of scepticism.⁹⁸ In addressing the challenge of scepticism Descartes understood that scepticism was a philosophical challenge which needed to be answered by taking into account its inner logic.⁹⁹ It is not surprising therefore that Descartes sought to demonstrate as a counter-point to scepticism that there is at least one truth we can know with certitude, namely, the truth of the self.¹⁰⁰ By fulfilling the demand of indubitability the emergence of the truth of the self, as it were, signals certain victory for Descartes in his fight against scepticism. Yet so far as we can say that the truth of the *cogito* is objective unless God guarantees it objectivity, it remains to be seen whether Descartes' victory over scepticism is conclusive.

Conclusively, while the discovery of the *cogito* represents a key moment in Descartes' effort to contain scepticism so far as it furnishes him with an indubitable foundation, his effort to reconstruct the edifice of knowledge ends in failure so far as it witnesses a resurgence of

⁹⁸ John Cottingham (Editor), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*, Second Edition (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 21-22

⁹⁹ See Hiener F. Klemme, "Scepticism and Common Sense" in *Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* edited by Alexander Brodie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 117-135

¹⁰⁰ Roger Scruton, *A Short History of Modern Philosophy*, Third Edition (London: Routledge, 2001), Chapter 3

scepticism in respect of our knowledge of the external world.¹⁰¹ The argument of this paper is that Descartes' appeal to God as the guarantor of the objective certainty of the truth of the *cogito* grossly undermines the overall success of Descartes' response to the challenge of scepticism.

For sake of convenient exposition, we develop our argument in terms of the following procedure. First we consider Descartes' methodological scepticism in quest of indubitable foundation and how it affiliates Descartes with scepticism. Second we consider the discovery of the *cogito* and how it constitutes a provisional victory in the fight against scepticism. The final moment of our reflection interrogates the overall adequacy of Descartes' response to the challenge of scepticism by considering Descartes' appeal to God as guarantor of the objective certainty of the truth of the *cogito* in the light of the demands of the ideal of epistemology as first philosophy.

2. METHODIC DOUBT, QUEST FOR CERTAINTY AND THE CHALLENGE OF SCEPTICISM

Despite contrary perception in some circles, commentators point out consistently that Descartes was not a sceptic but an enthusiast of knowledge who invested so much energy into combating scepticism.¹⁰² From the start Descartes understood the inner logic behind the assault of scepticism on knowledge. He knew that the battle to save knowledge could not be won unless the demand of scepticism that knowledge cannot co-exist with doubt was met.¹⁰³ Armed with a concept of knowledge predicated on absolute certitude, doubt becomes a philosophical tool in the hands of the scepticism in deconstructing knowledge, given that the possibility of knowledge stands questionable unless we can demonstrate that our knowledge claims are free from doubt.¹⁰⁴

With this development, scepticism immediately assumes the upper-hand in the confrontation between knowledge and scepticism laying down as it were the conditions under which knowledge must subsist, if we are to speak of knowledge coherently. In this scenario, the burden falls on the enthusiast of knowledge to meet the stake set by scepticism as a condition for ceasefire in respect of the assault on knowledge.¹⁰⁵ This no doubt is really a difficult situation – one that brings immense pressure on knowledge. It is not surprising therefore that the problem of knowledge became the central focus of philosophical discussion at the beginning of modern philosophy especially with the revival of ancient scepticism in the works of Bayle and Montaigne.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ See Bryan Greetham, *Philosophy* (London: Macmillan: Palgrave Foundations, 2006), pp. 100-103. See also Peter Sedgwick, *Descartes to Derrida: An Introduction to European Philosophy* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), pp. 3-11

¹⁰² See Hiener F. Klemme, "Scepticism and Common Sense" in *Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, pp. 117-135

¹⁰³ Cf. Georges Dicker, *Descartes: An Analytical and Historical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 3-8

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Rene Descartes, "Meditations on First Philosophy" in *Descartes: Key Philosophical Writings*, translated by Elizabeth Haldane and G. R. T. Ross and edited with an introduction by Enrique Chavez-Arviso Wordsworth *Guide* (London: Routledge, 1987), pp. 57-60

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. see also D. W. Hamlyn, *The Theory of Knowledge* (London: Macmillan, 1970), Chapter 1

¹⁰⁶ Ullrich Langer, "Editor's Introduction" in *Cambridge Companion to Montaigne* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 1-8; See also Ann Hartle, *Montaigne and Skepticism*, pp. 183-206; See Hiener F. Klemme, "Scepticism and Common Sense" in *Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, pp. 117-

The genius of Descartes in this context consists in articulating an approach to the challenge of scepticism that meets scepticism on its own terms by taking into account the importance scepticism attaches to the phenomenon of doubt in its argument against knowledge. On Descartes' approach, the battle to save knowledge will be settled on the stage set by scepticism in respect of the condition for the possibility of knowledge. In this sense, Descartes' approach is philosophical and not dogmatic.¹⁰⁷

Whereas doubt plays a deconstructive role in the argument of scepticism against knowledge, so far as the claim is that we can never attain the ideal of certain knowledge, doubt plays a constructive role in Descartes' defence of knowledge against scepticism. By philosophically exploiting the logic of doubt, Descartes will seek to turn the table against scepticism. Consequently, as a stratagem, Descartes will temporarily align with scepticism in assuming that all our beliefs are dubitable.¹⁰⁸ Position of scepticism by using doubt to overcome doubt and thus vindicate the standpoint of knowledge.

As against the deconstructive role doubt plays in the scheme of scepticism, the emerging constructive hermeneutics of doubt at issue in Descartes' defence of knowledge suggests that we need not always move from doubt to negation of that which is doubted; we could also move from doubt to affirmation. In other words – but with specific reference to the situation of knowledge – the overall point is that affirmation can be generated from doubt, meaning effectively that the relation between doubt and negation is contingent and not necessary, so that not all cases of doubt warrant the negation of knowledge.¹⁰⁹

Thus, one could begin with doubt and end up with the affirmation of that which is doubted rather than its negation. Nonetheless, the truth is that in cases where doubt leads to affirmation of knowledge we are really dealing with a case of double negation, so that from inside the negative is dialectically transformed into affirmation. The desire to dialectically transform doubt into affirmation, defines the chief motivation behind Descartes' method of doubt. Descartes' conviction that negation could yield affirmation explains Descartes' confidence in taking on the challenge of scepticism. In other words, Descartes believes he could start with doubting as scepticism does and end up with the affirmation of knowledge.¹¹⁰

135. See also Norman Melchert, *The Great Conversation: Volume 1: Pre-Socratics through Descartes*, Second Edition (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1995), pp. 292-297

¹⁰⁷ See Hiener F. Klemme, "Scepticism and Common Sense" in *Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, pp. 117-135

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Rene Descartes, "Discourse on Method" in *Descartes: Key Philosophical Writings*, translated by Elizabeth Haldane and G. R. T. Ross and edited with an introduction by Enrique Chavez-Arviso (Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 1997),

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Rene Descartes, *Meditations 1*. See also Michael Williams, "Descartes and the Metaphysics of Doubt" in John Cottingham (editor) *Descartes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 28-49

¹¹⁰ Hegel's dialectic arguably is a refinement of Descartes methodic doubt as far as the demands of philosophical methodology is concerned. Like its predecessor Hegel's dialectic thrives on a peculiar hermeneutic of the relation between doubt and affirmation, such that negation is affirmation just as affirmation is also negation. The full effect of this hermeneutics is evident in Hegel's claim in the *Phenomenology* that the Absolute is also subject and not merely substance, so that a proper understanding of the nature consciousness implies that no opposition can subsist within consciousness given that the dialectical consciousness has the power to overcome all opposition in its attempt to achieve absolute grasp of the object of knowledge. Following from this appropriation of Descartes method of doubt, Hegel's account of absolute knowledge is a sophisticated appropriation of Descartes' philosophy of subjectivity. See W. G. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, translated by A. V. Miller (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969); See also *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller and foreword by F. N. J. N. Findlay, especially paragraph 10 of the Introduction in

2.1. THE QUESTION OF THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE METHODIC DOUBT

Thus, in describing the motivation behind his engagement with scepticism, Descartes tells us in the *Discourse on Method* that, “I do not imitate the sceptics who doubt for the sake of doubting and pretend to be always uncertain. On the contrary, I am looking for grounds, for assuring myself. I will reject the quicksand and mud and hold on to the rock and clay.” (Discourse of Method)

From what Descartes says here it is evident that Descartes’ ultimate purpose in doubting is constructive rather than destructive. Descartes’ point in doubting is to use doubt to arrive at knowledge and to this extent his deployment of doubt as a philosophical method is strategic. Yet so long as doubt is deployed as a methodological procedure, Descartes’ procedure cannot be divorced from certain scepticism. Perhaps this is why some are quick to conclude that Descartes is a sceptic.¹¹¹ But, if we take into account Descartes’ explanation of the motivation behind his doubt we could not say he was really a sceptic, since he only deploys doubt as a tool to prosecute his battle against scepticism.¹¹²

Little wonder Descartes’ universal method of doubt has been described as methodological scepticism.¹¹³ As a methodological device with the ultimate aim of vindicating the standpoint of knowledge by walking in the footsteps of scepticism, the universal methodic doubt evinces a double moment which are predicated on the phenomenon of doubt. The first moment is more or less a concession to scepticism and represents the critical backdrop of the method so far as Descartes is prepared to go along with the sceptic in doubting any belief unless the belief is indubitable.¹¹⁴ The second moment represents the constructive twist in Descartes’ method of doubt, for in aligning with the sceptic by casting doubt on his beliefs, Descartes’ implicit conviction is that knowledge is possible so that his overall resolution is that the process of doubt will uncover something that is resistant to doubt.¹¹⁵

What both moments of the method of doubt suggest is that right from the start Descartes was positive about the project of knowledge, so that properly understood the method of doubt involves a sort of bargaining with the sceptic.¹¹⁶ Of course scepticism apparently enjoys an upper hand in its confrontation with knowledge as should be evident from the fact that scepticism exclusively determined the standard of knowledge by insisting that knowledge cannot co-exist with doubt.¹¹⁷ Descartes grants this concession. Indeed, granting the implicit standard of knowledge as legislated by scepticism is part of the concession Descartes makes

which Hegel submits that the Absolute must not only be conceived as substance but also as subject and then of course the chapter on Absolute Knowledge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). See also William Barret, *Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 15-20

¹¹¹ Cf. W. T. Jones, *A History of Modern Philosophy, Hobbes to Hume*, Second Edition (New York: Harcourt Bruce Jovanovich, 1969), pp. 154-160

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ See Hiener F. Klemme, “Scepticism and Common Sense” in *Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment*, 2003, pp. 117-135

¹¹⁴ Rene Descartes, Meditation 1

¹¹⁵ Michael Williams, “Descartes and the Metaphysics of Doubt” in John Cottingham (editor) *Descartes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 28-49

¹¹⁶ Ibid

¹¹⁷ Norman Melchert, *The Great Conversation: Volume 1: Pre-Socratics through Descartes*, Second Edition (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1995), pp. 292-297

to scepticism. The concession concretely expresses itself in the overall dynamics of the universal method of doubt in the sense that Descartes is prepared to continue to doubt any belief unless it proves itself resistant to doubt.¹¹⁸

Thus, in deploying the method of doubt as a philosophical method, Descartes is all the time convinced that there is some truth that is indubitable.¹¹⁹ His bargain with scepticism consists precisely in striking a balance between the two moments of the universal methodic doubt such that it is evident that Descartes is not wholly one with the sceptic but is on a voyage of discovery. Indeed, it is like Descartes is saying to scepticism, “yes we are right to withhold assent unless our belief is indubitable. Yet in truth there is something indubitable regarding which we cannot withhold assent. We will try to establish this by casting doubt on everything and then through the process of doubt, we derive that which is indubitable.”¹²⁰

So right from the start the *telos* of the method of doubt is to uncover something indubitable and not merely to persist in doubting. Descartes’ bargain with scepticism consists in the claim that if we find at least one thing that is indubitable, then ceasefire will be declared in favour of knowledge otherwise the standpoint of scepticism is unassailable. Seen in this way the universal methodic doubt is a sort of ideal experiment in which Descartes assumes the philosophical responsibility to uncover at least one truth that is indubitable in response to the challenge of scepticism by calling all his beliefs into question. To this extent Descartes’ methodological scepticism is constitutive of his response to scepticism.

In turning our attention now in what follows to how Descartes deploys the method of doubt in the *Meditations* in addressing the challenge of scepticism, it is important to take into account the double aspect of the motivation behind Descartes’ deployment of the method of doubt. For unless we understand that the method is not merely a negative exercise but one aimed at discovering certain knowledge, we run the risk of missing the entire point of Descartes’ project. Unfortunately, the positive aspect of Descartes’ motivation is not always explicit in the overall unfolding of the argument of the *Meditations*. Indeed, the *Meditations* begin by accentuating the negative aspect of the exercise in a manner that could easily obscure the positive vision behind the exercise. In an autobiography tone, Descartes tells us at the start of the *First Meditation* that,

Some years ago, I was struck by the large number of falsehoods that I had accepted as true in my childhood, and by the highly doubtful nature of the whole edifice that I had subsequently based on them. I realised that it was necessary, once in the course of my life, to demolish everything completely and start again right from the foundations if I wanted to establish anything at all in the sciences that was stable and likely to last. But the task looked an enormous one, and I began to wait until I should reach a mature enough age to ensure that no subsequent time of life would be more suitable for tackling such inquiries. This led me to put the project off for so long that I would now be blame if by pondering over it any further I wasted the time still left for carrying it out. So today I have expressly rid my mind of all worries and arranged for myself a clear stretch of free time. I am here quite alone, and at least I would

¹¹⁸ Rene Descartes, See Meditation 1

¹¹⁹ Meditation 1

¹²⁰ Cf. W. T. Jones, *A History of Modern Philosophy, Hobbes to Hume*, Second Edition (New York: Harcourt Bruce Jovanovich, 1969), pp. 154-162

devote myself sincerely and without reservation to the general demolition of my opinions (Meditation 1)

2.2. THE QUESTION OF DESCARTES' IDIOSYNCRATIC STYLE OF EXPOSITION

The story of Descartes tells here a personal story. Nonetheless, we must see immediately that in keeping with the well-known idiosyncratic style of the *Meditations*, the story is characteristically intended to reflect on the situation of knowledge *vis-à-vis* the challenge of scepticism. Obviously influenced by scepticism, Descartes is seemingly dissatisfied with his past.¹²¹ Indeed having realised that he had been in error in respect to the beliefs he held in the past, Descartes is clear that they could not serve as a sound basis for any construction, so that whatever he had built on them previously stands questionable as well.¹²²

Indeed, not only are the beliefs wanting in themselves but the edifice they support is also unsure. Not surprisingly therefore Descartes immediately commits himself to the task of demolition of his beliefs. Descartes' commitment to demolish his beliefs reflect his concession to scepticism so far as the chief motivation behind the exercise is the fact that these beliefs are dubitable and thus in keeping with the legislation of scepticism that knowledge cannot co-exist with doubt, these beliefs could not really serve effectively as the foundation of knowledge.¹²³ Indeed Descartes makes clear in the *Meditations*:

...To accomplish this (the general demolition of opinions), it will not be necessary for me to show that all my opinions are false, which is something I could perhaps never manage. Reason now leads me to think that I should hold back my assent from opinions which are not completely certain and indubitable just as carefully as I do from those which are patently false. So, for the purpose of rejecting all my opinions, it will be enough if I find in each of them at least some reason to doubt. And to do this I will not need to run through them all individually, which would be an endless task. Once the foundations of a building are undermined, anything built on them collapses of its own accord; so I will go straight for the basic principles on which all my former beliefs rested. (Meditation 1)

If we recollect the moral of Descartes' personal story about the "large number of falsehood he accepted as true in his childhood" and how the story bears on the situation of knowledge, the inevitable conclusion is that scepticism cannot be dismissed with a wave of the hand.¹²⁴ The challenge it poses regarding the possibility of knowledge must be taken seriously; taking it seriously means we cannot assume the truth of any belief uncritically without prior interrogation. In this sense, as it were, scepticism urges us to be careful in taking in any belief as true unless we have evidence for its truth and the evidence is credible and sufficient.¹²⁵

Descartes' decision to critically scrutinize his beliefs and demolish them unless they proved indubitable indicates that Descartes takes seriously the challenge of scepticism. The decision more or less implements the attitude of circumspection that scepticism urges in

¹²¹ William Barret, *Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer*, pp. 14-18

¹²² Meditation 1

¹²³ Cf. Peter K. McInerney, *Introduction to Philosophy*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992), pp. 48-54

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

respect to our beliefs.¹²⁶ But, as noted, in carrying out this exercise Descartes' hope and conviction was that the process would uncover at least one belief that is indubitable such as to serve as a counter point to the pessimism of scepticism regarding the possibility of knowledge.¹²⁷

But to satisfy himself that he has implemented the recommendation of scepticism regarding the need to be circumspect about our beliefs and their truth, Descartes will elect to consider all possible grounds on which our belief can be doubted, hence the *First Meditation* is instructively sub-titled, "What can be called into doubt".¹²⁸ The formulation of the sub-title is suggestive in the sense that by way of anticipation it strategically encapsulates the architectonic of the *Meditations* in respect of the double aspect of the motivation behind Descartes' methodological scepticism.

On the one hand the subtitle gives the impression of certain open-endedness, meaning that everything can be called into doubt and should be called into doubt as scepticism recommends. But on a closer consideration, the sub-title also appears to convey the impression of certain limit in respect of what can be called into doubt, meaning that even as we try to doubt certain beliefs that may prove themselves resistant to doubt.¹²⁹

In undertaking to address the challenge of scepticism Descartes is open to both possibilities in respect of the constructive equivocation implicit in the formulation of the sub-title. In other words, in aligning with the sceptic, Descartes will vigorously implement the recommendation to call everything into doubt. Retrospectively, however, it will emerge that Descartes also make the dialectical case that in calling everything into doubt the truth of the self yields itself as resistant to doubt.¹³⁰ This consideration, as noted, represents the constructive moment of Descartes' deployment of the methodic doubt. But this is the conclusion of the application of the methodic doubt, foreshadowed, as it were, at the beginning of the process. To gain a full conspectus of Descartes' case we must begin systematically with the premise of the methodic doubt, namely, that everything must be called into doubt in keeping with the recommendation of scepticism.

3. SCEPTICISM AND THE QUESTION OF GROUNDS FOR DOUBT: DIALECTIC OF EMPIRICISM AND RATIONALISM

In deploying the universal methodic doubt in reviewing his belief in the *First Meditation* in order to determine whether any of them is indubitable, Descartes examines different classes of beliefs, beliefs deriving from the senses and beliefs deriving from reason. Beliefs deriving from the senses will always yield empirical knowledge, whereas beliefs deriving from reason will yield a priori knowledge.

With respect to beliefs deriving from the senses Descartes commences his review of these set of beliefs by telling us that "Surely whatever I had admitted until now, as most true I received either from the sense or through the senses. However, I have noticed that the senses

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ John Cottingham (Editor), *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*, Second Edition (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 21-25

¹²⁸ Meditation 1

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

are sometimes deceptive; and it is a mark of prudence never to place our complete trust in those who have deceived us even once.”¹³¹

3.1. THE METHODIC DOUBT AND THE STATUS OF BELIEFS DERIVING FROM THE SENSES

The last statement appears to suggest that Descartes will take the fact that the senses are sometimes deceptive as a reason not to trust the senses as sources of knowledge. It means effectively therefore that beliefs that derive from the senses cannot be said to be indubitable for the reason that the senses are deceptive and experience has shown in the past that the senses are truly deceptive. For that reason, we cannot rest reliably on what the senses report to us about the situation in the world.

This argument for the possibility of doubting beliefs deriving from the senses is usually regarded as argument from sense perception.¹³² The point simply is that the senses are deceptive. The deceptiveness of the senses thus becomes a ground for doubt and with this development we have a provisional result with regard to what can be called into doubt. Beliefs deriving from the senses can be called into doubt because the senses are sometimes deceptive and for that reason we cannot accept to trust the senses since we have been deceived once by them.¹³³

3.2. ARGUMENT FROM SENSE PERCEPTION AS GROUND FOR DOUBT

But notice that this argument is rather general – general in the sense that it will apply to any belief at all deriving from the senses. The argument is not original to Descartes. It is an argument that already occurred in Plato’s analysis of sense perception.¹³⁴ It is the same reason that Descartes gives here that Plato gave in denying that sense perception is knowledge. So this argument regarding sense perception is a fairly well known argument.¹³⁵ And Descartes is merely recalling it to memory. So it means he endorses the argument. The senses are not reliable sources of knowledge.

But apart from this general expression of the problem of the status of beliefs deriving from the senses, Descartes is a bit particular with certain species of beliefs deriving from the senses. And he will want to find out whether the general argument that the senses are deceptive also applies to this more particular species of belief deriving from the senses. Thus he says, “But perhaps even though the senses sometimes deceive us when it is a question of very small and distant things, still there are many other matters concerning which one simply cannot doubt even though they are derived from the same very senses.”¹³⁶

Here, Descartes appears to suggest that it is possible that there are certain beliefs deriving from the senses that are not affected by the general argument that the senses are deceptive. Thus, he concedes that such beliefs that involve objects that are small and distant are universally acknowledged by everyone as untrustworthy.

For example, consider you were coming towards the auditorium from the orchard and you pass through the fields. But from this distance you take it that the object ahead of you is

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Meditation 1

¹³³ Meditation 1

¹³⁴ Meditation 1

¹³⁵ Meditation 1

¹³⁶ Meditation 1

the auditorium. This is an instance of a small and distant object. What you see from the orchard is clear to you as delivered by your senses. Yet as you move close to the object, it might also be clear that you are mistaken in some of the properties you have attributed to the auditorium. For example, from that distance it may appear to you that the colour of the auditorium is grey, but by the time you approach it and observe it more closely you realize that the colour is not grey.

True everyone seems to accept that the general rule will apply to distant object. Yet Descartes will question whether there are other matters concerning which one cannot doubt, even though they derive also from the senses. With this submission he offers an example to buttress his point. The example he gives is the following. Consider that “I am sitting here next to the fire, wearing my winter dressing gown; that I am holding this sheet of papers in my hand and the like. But on what grounds?”¹³⁷

All the time he is looking for grounds for doubt. So, for the case of distant and small objects there is a ground to doubt since the senses are generally deceptive. But what about for such beliefs as: “I am sitting here next to the fire wearing my winter gown. That I am holding this sheet of paper in my hands and the like?”¹³⁸ You can multiply the examples. So, what grounds would I have for example to deny that I am here in front of you and that I am holding this cassette player in my hands and I can feel that I am looking at it? Of course I believe I am here in front of you; I believe I am holding this cassette player with my two hands; and I believe that the cassette has a very hard texture. All these beliefs derive from the senses.

Now the question is: even though the senses are generally accepted to be deceptive, will this provision apply to the foregoing beliefs? Will they also be vulnerable to the argument that the senses are deceptive? That is the question Descartes is raising. In other words, Descartes is asking whether it is not appropriate to treat these sets of beliefs and the likes differently. Are there really grounds for doubting things that are close to you; and not things that are distant, although both derive from the senses?

The example he gives us is that “I am sitting here next to the fire”. So imagine yourself during the harvest period when you set up a bon fire and roast some corn on the spot before taking it to the distribution points, the question is: in this sort of situation where I am standing here right next to the fire roasting the corn, is there any ground to doubt that I am beside the fire? This belief appears too close. Surely it is not the case of distant objects. I see them several kilometers away and say they are palm trees but when I get closer to them I see they not palm trees.

Or again, think of the case of a mirage. On a sunny afternoon you are driving fast on the road and then suddenly you think there is water on the road ahead of you. You are convinced there is water on the road from the distance based on the deliverance of the senses. But as you approach the spot you see there is nothing on the road. It is your senses that have deceived you.

Yes, we can say that the general argument that the senses are deceptive applies to the case of the mirage as presented above. But will the argument apply to the case of the belief that I am here right beside the fire and that the corn is roasting? At first sight the object in question can appear so close that it seems evident that they cannot be doubted.

¹³⁷ Meditation 1

¹³⁸ Meditation 1

In taking a similar example Descartes underscores the paradox in denying such seemingly obvious truth by asking,

But on what ground can one deny that these hands and this entire body are mine? Unless perhaps I were to liken myself to the insane, whose brains are impaired by such unrelenting vapour of black bile that they steadfastly insist that they are kings when they are utter paupers, or that they are arraigned in purple robes when they are naked, or that they have heads made of clay or that they are gourds or that they are made of glass. But such people are mad; and I would appear no less mad, were I to take their behaviour as an example for myself (Meditation 1)

3.3. THE DREAM ARGUMENT AS GROUND FOR DOUBT

So Descartes' initial conclusion is that there are no grounds to doubt these species of beliefs except we are mad. Yet he will transcend this initial submission and come to a later submission that a close scrutiny of the matter will reveal that this species of beliefs deriving from the senses are not immune to doubt just like the first set of belief he has disposed off, except, of course, that the ground for doubting this later species of beliefs is not the ground for doubting the first species of belief.

The ground for doubting the first species of belief deriving from the senses is the argument that the senses are deceptive. But for this latter species of beliefs deriving from the senses, there is a further ground – and probably a much stronger ground for casting doubt on the authenticity of the knowledge claims of beliefs deriving from the senses. The name for this second argument is the dream argument.

Notice that he suggested the hypothesis that for one to deny such obvious truths means that one is insane. But he comes round eventually that when you look at it thoroughly we cannot rule out the possibility that in assuming that X is close to us we may as well be dreaming. Unless we are sure we care not dreaming, it will be difficult to say that such beliefs cannot be doubted.¹³⁹

So the point here is that Descartes is distinguishing between sleeping and waking. That is the core of dream argument. And his contention is that we do not have a criterion for differentiating whether we are awake or asleep. And so long as we cannot maintain a clear distinction between those two states of consciousness, it will always be possible we might be dreaming in regard to that which we are so sure of.

So for example, that I am holding this sheet of paper in my hands and that I am wearing my winter dressing gown and that I am sitting here next to the fire. This could be a dream situation. It could also be a real life situation. And indeed sometimes we can dream that we are naked and that there is fire beside us and that we are holding this paper in our hands.

But it is also possible that we are dealing with a case of real life experience: that X is actually naked and that, I am holding a piece of paper in my hands and standing by the fire. Now the point is that even in those cases where you are dreaming, sometimes you wake up and take it to be real. And you start looking at the fire that has burnt you. Maybe you mistakenly put your hands in the fire and the fire burns you and you wake up. And by the time you are looking for the fire, “where is the fire, where is the fire”, and you suddenly realize you are dreaming. Oh it is not real. It is a dream! It is a dream!

¹³⁹ Cf. Peter K. McInerney, *Introduction to Philosophy*, pp. 51-55

So the point is that if you cannot distinguish between the two states, it means it is always possible that even with regard to these beliefs that are so obvious that when you claim that you have them, it is always possible that you are dealing with a dream situation. And so long as there is no way to determine whether or not you are dealing with a dream situation or a real life situation, it means you cannot be sure of the status of those beliefs.

And Descartes says very clearly, “as I consider these matters more carefully, I see plainly that there are definitive signs by which to distinguish between being awake and being asleep and as a result I am becoming quite dizzy and this dizziness nearly convinces me that I am asleep.” (Meditation 1)

So he comes to the conclusion, “Let us assume then for the sake of argument that we are dreaming and that such particulars as these are not true; that we are opening our eyes, moving our heads and extending our hands. Perhaps we do not even have such hands or any such body at all. Nevertheless, it surely must be admitted that the things seen during slumber are as it were like painted images, which could only have been produced in the likeness of true things, and that therefore at least these general things – eyes, heads, hands and the whole body – are not imaginary things but are true and exist.” (Meditation 1)

This argument we should note is not original to Descartes. He is more or less reviewing familiar grounds for casting doubt on our beliefs. He is again saying he fully endorses it. Indeed these two arguments – the argument from sense deception and the dream argument – are classical arguments that sceptics use to negate the possibility of knowledge.¹⁴⁰

So we can see that so far Descartes is still very closely allied with scepticism and he is making all the concessions. You say that the senses are deceptive and so we cannot trust beliefs deriving from the senses. I agree with you. You say that we cannot trust even those things that are so close to us because it is possible we might be dreaming. He says I agree with you. But the question still remains: is there nothing that cannot be doubted. The senses in these two expressions have proved they can be doubted. Is there anything that cannot be doubted? Consider the matter yourself! Do you think there is anything at all that cannot be doubted?

Of course with the way Descartes has handled the senses if you say yes, make sure your beliefs are not derived from the senses for he has closed this route to knowledge. So the senses cannot inform you reliably of anything because the senses are deceptive. This is true even in those cases that things are close to you, for it is always possible that you might be dreaming. So long as you cannot have a criterion for distinguishing from being awake and being asleep, there will always be grounds to doubt such beliefs.

Recall here the position of the sceptic. Once there is doubt we have a basis to negate the possibility of knowledge. So it means that so far the sceptic seems to be right. In a show of self-righteousness, he is more or less saying by the way sarcasm: “Did I not tell you. Now you have conducted your ideal experiment and you have seen for yourself. You said you will investigate the truth about the matter of knowledge. When you started I told you it is not possible to find anything certain. Now you have reviewed your beliefs and you can confirm the truth for yourself.”¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Norman Melchert, *The Great Conversation: Volume 1: Pre-Socratics through Descartes*, Second Edition (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1995), pp. 292-297

¹⁴¹ Cf. Larmore’s interpretation of the First Meditation which accentuates the fact that the battle is really between scepticism and empiricism and the sceptic emerges victoriously with Descartes not siding with either positions but using the occasion to set up his position which celebrates the supremacy of reason. See Charles

But Descartes is still thinking that there might be some way to secure certain knowledge and so prove the sceptic wrong. The sceptic is already celebrating but Descartes is not quite satisfied that the matter has been resolved conclusively even now that he has reviewed all his beliefs deriving from the senses.

Of course he cannot pin his hope at all on the senses anymore, following his experiment so far. The ideal experiment so far has shown that he cannot overcome the skeptical challenge by celebrating the claims of the senses. Yet the question is: is there no other means of showing that we can know something with certainty. Beliefs deriving from the senses may have been disqualified on the count of the argument from sense deception and the dream argument. Yet the question is, is there no other route of arriving at this goal of certain knowledge?

So it is clear that Descartes will not bring the exercise to an end at this point. He will continue to search to see if there is any other route. In doing this let us note that he will not abandon the tool he has set up till now. He will not arrest the application of the method of doubt. This tool enables him to review the status of beliefs deriving from the senses relative to the ideal of certain knowledge. In the wake of the consummation of this itinerary, he will continue to rely on this same tool in making a further trial in search of certain knowledge. In the same vein the assumption remains the same as before to the effect that so long as anything presents itself as doubtable, it should be doubted. This is the morale of the method of doubt and that is the basic principle that Descartes is applying in reviewing all his beliefs.

3.4. METHODIC DOUBT AND THE STATUS OF BELIEFS DERIVING FROM REASON

Thus in keeping with the spirit of the methodic doubt, Descartes' assumption is that everything can be doubted. He has already confirmed through the application of the methodic doubt that beliefs deriving from the senses are not indubitable irrespective of their species. His attention now is on beliefs deriving from reason, that is, such beliefs as the arithmetic proposition that $2+2=4$, or again the geometric proposition that the sum of the angles of a triangle is 180 degrees. These truths and several others are truths of reason. The question is: are they also indubitable? Initially Descartes expresses some reservation in dealing with the matter as evident from the following passage.

Thus it is not improper to conclude from this that physics, astronomy, medicine; and all the other disciplines that are dependent upon the consideration of composite things are doubtful and that on the other hand, Arithmetic, geometry and other such disciplines which treat of nothing but the simplest and most general things and which are indifferent as to whether these things do or do not in fact exist, contain something certain and indubitable. For whether I am awake or asleep, two plus three makes five; and a square does not have more than four sides. It does not seem possible that such obvious truths should be subject to the suspicion of being false (Meditation 1).

Descartes does not say outright here that the foregoing beliefs can be doubted. Just like he did with the second species of beliefs deriving from the senses, Descartes will propose the thesis as the *Meditations* further unfolds that these can actually be doubted. Usually they should not be doubted; one should accept that $2+3$ makes five. Nobody will question this

Lamore, "The First Meditation: Skeptical Doubt and Certainty" in *Cambridge Companion to Descartes' Meditations*, edited by David Cunniff, pp. 48-67; See also his "Descartes and Skepticism", pp. 17-31

ordinarily. But now Descartes is saying that when the matter is scrutinized thoroughly, even this truth that should be ordinarily difficult to doubt can be doubted nonetheless.

But the more important concern is to provide grounds for why they can be doubted. The exercise of the methodic doubt is looking for grounds in terms of which everything can be called into doubt. So, it is not a dogmatic kind of doubt, but philosophical doubt. Scepticism, as noted, is a philosophical position that uses doubt as a premise to arrive at the negation of the possibility of knowledge. And if the sceptic must be met on his own grounds, it means the response has to be philosophical. What Descartes is doing provisionally here is to find out whether there are adequate grounds for calling anything or everything into doubt. In this specific context, truths such as $2+3$ makes 5, what on earth will be the ground for doubting the truth of such proposition?

3.5. THE EVIL GENIUS HYPOTHESIS AS GROUND FOR DOUBT

Descartes insists there is ground for doubting it. The argument he advances in effect is usually regarded as the evil genius hypothesis. This evil genius hypothesis is perhaps the highest level of doubt we find in the *Meditations*. This argument unlike the previous arguments we have seen regarding the grounds for doubting everything is original to Descartes. The other two arguments we have seen are classical arguments that feature prominently in the various epochs of the history of epistemology, that is, the argument from sense perception and the dream argument. They are not original to Descartes. But the evil genius argument is original to Descartes and it involves the elevation of the possibility of doubt to the radical level. So how does this argument proceed?

This argument proceeds by saying that even truths such as $2+3$ makes 5, they can be doubted, because it is quite possible that in making that assertion, we are invariably under the manipulation of an evil genius such that even as we make the affirmation we are so sure of the truth of our assertion but in actual fact, we not ultimately responsible for making those assertions. We make the assertion under the suggestion of a higher but deceptive agency. The thoughts we entertain are not our own thoughts.

On the contrary they are put in us by this higher agency. Interestingly, this higher agency does not mean well. The higher agency is malevolent. This higher agency, the evil genius is a deceiver. It makes us believe that $2+3$ makes 5, but in actual fact, we are dealing with a case of manipulation and deception. And so long as we cannot be certain whether or not we are under deception or manipulation when we make such affirmation, we cannot in turn be sure that the truth of the affirmation is beyond doubt. So unless we overcome the suggestion that we are possibly under manipulation or deception, we cannot be sure that we are right in claiming that $2+3$ makes 5.

So the argument as we can sense immediately is rather tricky. When we look at it closely it is also very troublesome. It is like saying you are under the influence of a spirit – call it an evil spirit if you like. And sometimes when people are under the influence of evil spirits, they will do something they are so sure of. They are so sure they are correct. Look at Hitler for instance. Do you think he was in doubt he got it right? He was probably very sure he was in the right. Yet he may wake up on the other side of the divide when he is about to render his account to the Almighty and discover: “Oh, I have been under deception” He will then see the truth of the matter as it is in itself. But while he was here on earth, he was probably utterly convinced that his course was right.

4. DISCOVERY OF THE COGITO: THE QUESTION PROVISIONAL VICTORY EPISTEMOLOGY OVER SCEPTICISM

From what we have seen so far as far as the unfolding of the *First Meditation* is concerned, it appears that scepticism is correct, since the deployment of the methodic doubt cannot uncover any belief beyond doubt; hence it apparently ends on a note of scepticism, thus signaling a rather hopeless result for knowledge and epistemology.

4.1. THE PESSIMISTIC ENDING OF THE FIRST MEDITATION AND THE START OF THE SECOND MEDITATION: QUEST FOR CERTAINTY AND THE IDEAL OF PERSEVERANCE

The hopelessness that pervades the consummation of Descartes' voyage of discovery in the *First Meditation* continues in the *Second Meditation*. At the start of the Second Meditation the question that recurs is "could it be that the sceptic is right, considering all the efforts so far made to find a belief that is indubitable. If much effort has been invested and with no breakthrough, should we not conclude that knowledge is not possible?" Instructively Descartes is not the sort of person that gives up easily, so that despite the apparent setback he is ready to continue to search. In this respect he says concerning his positive resolution:

Yesterday's meditation has thrown me into such doubts that I can no longer ignore them. Yet I fail to see how they are to be resolved. It is as if I have suddenly whirlpool. I am so tossed about that I can neither touch bottom with my foot, nor swim up to the top. Nevertheless, I will work my way up and once again attempt the same path I entered yesterday. I will accomplish this by putting aside everything that admits the least doubt, as if I had discovered it to be completely false. I will stay on this course until I know something certain or if nothing else until I know for certain that nothing is certain. Archimedes sought but one firm and immovable point in order to move the entire earth from one place to another. Just so great things are to be hoped for if I succeed in finding just one thing however slight, that is certain and unshaken. (Meditation 2)

The above passage brings us right into the heart of the *Second Meditation*. Amidst the hopelessness of the situation of knowledge, Descartes retrieves his commitment to the project of the methodic doubt with its telos and motivation intact. Despite the provisional failure he has experienced with regard to this project, he will still assure himself of the absolute importance of being careful with what he accepts. But over and above all he will assure himself it is quite in order to apply the methodic doubt rigorously. Yet the question as always is whether or not there is anything at all that is resistant to doubt.

Indeed, in further applying the methodic doubt Descartes will stumble eventually on one belief, which proves itself indubitable, namely, the belief that the self exists – that is, belief regarding the existence of the doubter. On Descartes view, the very experience of doubting confirms the truth regarding the existence of the doubter. Thus having uncovered the truth of the existence of the self (the doubter) as indubitable, Descartes will adopt it as the foundation that he had sought for. He will adopt it as the foundation of his philosophy and this effectively brings to an abrupt conclusion the application of the methodic doubt.

But notice that the discovery of the one belief that cannot be doubted comes though the very process of doubting; so that it is like consciousness turns against itself. Before now it has been an experience of deflation for consciousness; consciousness is constantly deflated

in attempt to find something to rest on. But in this one instance consciousness overturns itself into something positive in affirming that through the process of doubt, there is one thing that cannot be doubted and every effort to doubt it reveals that it is beyond doubt.¹⁴²

The discovery of this one truth resistant to doubt is a pivotal moment in Descartes' project in the *Meditations*. Of course the moment presupposes all the previous moments of the application of the methodic doubt, particularly the evil genius hypothesis, which represents the most radical level of doubt. Descartes expresses the entire trajectory consummating in the ground-breaking discovery of the *Cogito*, as its often called, thus:

But I have already denied that I have any senses and anybody. Still I hesitate for what follows from this? Am I so tied to a body and to the senses that I cannot exist without them? But I have persuaded myself that there is absolutely nothing in the world: no sky, no earth, no mind, no bodies. Is it then the case that I too do not exist? But doubtless I did exist, if I persuaded myself of something. But there is some deceiver or other who is supremely powerful and supremely sly and who is always deliberately deceiving me. And let him do his best at deception he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I shall think that I am something. Thus, after everything has been most carefully weighed, it must finally be established that this pronouncement, "I am I exist" is necessarily true every time I utter it or conceive it in my mind. (Meditation 2)

4.2. THE DISCOVERY OF THE COGITO AND THE TERMINATION OF THE METHODIC DOUBT

As noted the discovery of the *Cogito* brings to an end Descartes' application of the methodic doubt. But in another sense it marks an important beginning in Descartes' effort to provide justification for the possibility of knowledge. The first moment is the resolution to doubt everything in order to see whether or not there is something indubitable. In bringing this moment to a conclusion the discovery of the *cogito* marks the start of another moment, namely, the moment of reconstruction of the entire edifice of knowledge. But there is still a long way from that. Nonetheless by way of conclusion to this aspect of our discussion, we should remark a number of points with respect to Descartes' application of the universal methodic doubt.

We should see immediately that at the heart of the application of the methodic doubt is a central question in epistemology, namely, the question regarding the sources of knowledge and how reliable they are. This is a common battleground between empiricism and rationalism. The *First Meditation* provides abundant resources for receiving the tussle between empiricism and rationalism as the various grounds for doubt considered here indicates.

Indeed, there is certain dialectic of empiricism and rationalism in Descartes' exposition of the matter. From the outset the impression is that Descartes is not partial in his reception of both philosophical possibilities. The motivation behind the methodic doubt suggests such impartiality; for Descartes is prepared to review both beliefs deriving from the senses and beliefs deriving from reason, meaning that neither is special or sacrosanct.

4.3. THE DIALECTIC OF EMPIRICISM AND RATIONALISM

¹⁴² James Richard Mensch, *Knowing and Being: A Postmodern Reversal*, (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), pp. 11-65

Of course Descartes begins by considering beliefs deriving from the senses and then beliefs deriving from reason. The highest expression of the claim of rationalism implicate the evil genius hypothesis. For the truths involved in the consideration of the evil genius hypothesis as a ground for the possibility of doubt are truths of reason - truths of pure reason.¹⁴³

Nonetheless, there is tension between the senses and reason as sources of true knowledge. It is well possible that Descartes terminated the methodic doubt after investigating beliefs deriving from the senses. If he did so without investigating beliefs deriving from reason, he would have been biased in favour of rationalism and assumed its validity. But instead of assuming the truth of rationalism, Descartes begins with the assumption that both empiricism and rationalism require vindication before the tribunal of methodic doubt.

However, it is evident that Descartes is in sympathy with rationalism even as he raises the level of doubt to a hyperbolic degree.¹⁴⁴ This is clear from the discovery of the *cogito* which is a truth of pure reason rather empirical truth. Thus, the emergence of the *cogito* effectively resolves the dialectic of empiricism and rationalism at issue in the *Meditations*. In resolving the dialectic in favour of rationalism, the emergence of the *cogito* not only indicates that Descartes is a rationalist *par excellence* but it also signals certain victory for epistemology over scepticism. For, the contention of scepticism all along is that we cannot possibly find any belief that is indubitable.

5. FROM FOUNDATION TO EDIFICE: APPEAL TO GOD AS GUARANTOR OF THE OBJECTIVE CERTAINTY OF THE COGITO

Thus, the emergence of the *cogito* serves as counter-point to the standpoint of scepticism at the same time it vindicates the standpoint of the enthusiast of knowledge (epistemology) in respect of the question of the possibility of knowledge.¹⁴⁵ Given the ground-breaking nature of the discovery of the *cogito* relative to Descartes' projected reconstruction of the edifice of knowledge, it is not surprising that Descartes immediately adopts the *cogito* as the foundation of the new edifice of knowledge he has in view.¹⁴⁶

5.1 THE COGITO AND THE QUESTION OF CRITERION OF TRUTH

Two qualities of the *cogito* entitle the *cogito* to the status of foundation and Descartes uncovers them upon the interrogation of the *cogito* in the Second Meditation. First is the quality of being perceived clearly and distinctly. If the truth of the *cogito* is indubitable, it is because the self is present to itself such that its self-presence and the clarity and distinctness with which it is perceived entails that its reality cannot be doubted.¹⁴⁷ In view of its mode of self-presence and communication, the *cogito*, as it were, forces itself intuitively upon us.

¹⁴³ Cf. Nicholas Capaldi, Eugene Kelly and Luis E. Navia, *An Invitation to Philosophy* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1981), pp. 168-173

¹⁴⁴ Charles Lamore, "The First Meditation: Skeptical Doubt and Certainty" in *Cambridge Companion to Descartes' Meditations*, edited by David Cunniff, pp. 48-67

¹⁴⁵ Christia Mercier, "The Methodology of the Meditations: Tradition and Innovation" in *Cambridge Companion to Descartes' Meditations*, Chapter 1

¹⁴⁶ Descartes, Meditation 2

¹⁴⁷ Alan Gewirth, "Clearness and Distinctness in Descartes" in *Descartes*, edited by John Cottingham, pp.79-100

Because of clarity and distinctness with which its self-presence is received, we cannot deny the reality of the self without contradiction.¹⁴⁸

In maintain this standpoint, Descartes is clear in the Second Meditation that he speaks of the self as pure thought and not the self as bodily reality. Invariably the celebrated definition of the essence of mind as pure thought and body as pure extension serves to demarcate the domain of body from the domain of mind as realms with opposing natures. If the cogito as pure thought excludes bodily reality, it means that the indubitability of the cogito applies only to mind and not to body.¹⁴⁹ Thus, while we cannot doubt the reality of the thinking self, we can doubt the reality of the bodily self, since the bodily self does not enjoy the feature of clarity and distinctness that defines the perception of the thinking self in its self-presence and communication. This means invariably that in speaking of the cogito as foundation, Descartes refers to the thinking-self and not the bodily self.¹⁵⁰

The second quality of the *cogito* that entitles the cogito to the status of foundation is the fact that it furnishes us with a criterion of truth, thus enabling us to distinguish between what is true and what is false.¹⁵¹ This quality of the cogito derives from its first quality in the sense that given that the indubitability of the cogito is predicated on the clarity and distinctness with which it is perceived, the cogito becomes the model for determining what is true and what is false.¹⁵² The situation is such that any belief that resembles or approximates the cogito in respect of the distinctness and clarity of perception attributed to it is true otherwise it is false. Thus, clarity and distinctness of perception – or, if you like, certainty – becomes the criterion of truth, allowing us to determine the truth claim of beliefs to the extent they resemble the cogito.¹⁵³ In this sense the truth of the cogito is foundational in its incorrigibility while other truths are derivative thanks to their association with the cogito.¹⁵⁴

5.2. COGITO, CRITERION OF TRUTH AND THE QUESTION OF RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EDIFICE OF KNOWLEDGE

Armed with a sure foundation of knowledge in the cogito as well as a criterion of truth, Descartes is ready to assume the task of reconstruction of the edifice of knowledge. Hitherto under the influence of scepticism and in keeping with the demands of the methodic doubt, Descartes had bracketed several beliefs such as belief in the external world and belief in mathematical truths upon finding them indubitable. However, with the emergence of the cogito as foundation Descartes will now attempt to rehabilitate these beliefs.

Their rehabilitation is fundamental for the success of Descartes' reconstruction effort. For, unless they are successfully rehabilitated the victory that the emergence of the cogito secures for epistemology over scepticism is merely provisional. In other words, it means there is no ceasefire yet in the ding-dong affair between epistemology and scepticism. For, the emergence of the cogito only guarantees that we can know the cogito with certainty; it does

¹⁴⁸ See Peter Mackie, "The Cogito and Its Importance" in *Descartes* edited by John Cottingham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 50-78

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Lilli Alenen, "The Second Meditation and the Nature of the Mind" in *Cambridge Companion to Descartes' Meditations*, pp. 68-87

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Descartes, Third Meditation

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Descartes, Third Meditation

¹⁵⁴ Peter Mackie, "The Cogito and Its Importance" in *Descartes* edited by John Cottingham, pp. 50-78

not guarantee that we can know any other thing with certainty, so that we are faced with the prospect of a world inhabited by only the cogito.

Yet to translate the victory of epistemology over scepticism into a permanent victory requires that we know with certainty that there are other things apart from the self; it requires that we know with certitude that there is an external world beyond the cogito. Thus, the rehabilitation of the beliefs hitherto bracketed in the moment of the deployment of the methodic doubt is imperative. Descartes is aware of this and that is why he sees the rehabilitation of the beliefs as integral part of the reconstruction exercise, so that once the foundation is in place the immediate task is to erect the edifice from ground to top.¹⁵⁵

In assuming the task of raising the edifice from ground to top, Descartes' reconstruction effort runs into a fundamental difficulty. Beyond putting the foundation in place and deriving the criterion of truth from the cogito it emerges that the transition from the foundation to the edifice can hardly be negotiated. The difficulty stems from the definition of the cogito as thinking-self in exclusion of the bodily-self. For, the definition sets up the thinking-self as the dualistic opposite of the bodily-self, so that, if the thinking-self is pure thought and the bodily-self is pure extension, the question is: how can one relate with the other, given their antithetical nature.¹⁵⁶

The situation is not helped by the fact that in this dualistic scenario the truth of the cogito emerges as fundamentally problematic. That the truth of the cogito is certain is not in doubt, for as we have seen, the indubitability of the cogito is what makes it a resourceful tool in the fight against scepticism. However, what is questionable is whether the truth of the cogito is objectively certain or it is mere subjective certitude. Given that, as pure thought, the cogito is the dualistic opposite of the bodily self, or the non-self, there is no guarantee that the clear and distinct ideas of the cogito have any objective reference in the real world; on the contrary, they relate merely to the subjective world of the cogito where they are true but beyond the world of the cogito they lack objective validity.¹⁵⁷

The situation really confronts the cogito with a solipsistic crisis such that the cogito amidst its subjective certitude is caught up in a *solipsistic cul-de-sac* in which it finds itself enclosed in its world and cut off from the object-world. Unless the cogito in its certitude can relate objectively to the world beyond it, there is an immediate throwback to scepticism such that it can be legitimately asked whether there is any other reality apart from the self, and in the event that there is an external world whether we can know it.¹⁵⁸

5.3 THE COGITO, CRISIS OF SOLIPSISM AND RESURGENCE OF SCEPTICISM

Descartes is aware of the implication of the solipsistic crisis of the cogito for the problem of knowledge, that is, the fact, that it makes nonsense of the gains he has secured in a bid to contain the challenge of scepticism. In assuring us that there is at least one truth we can know with certitude the emergence of the *cogito* may have given epistemology a provisional victory over scepticism. Yet the victory now pales into insignificance in the face

¹⁵⁵ See Meditation 2 and 3

¹⁵⁶ See. Anthony Flew, *Introduction to Philosophy*, (Bristol: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), pp. 61-68

¹⁵⁷ See Meditation 3

¹⁵⁸ Flew, *Introduction to Philosophy*, pp. 61-68

of the solipsistic crisis of the cogito, as there is a new species of scepticism that threatens the citadel of knowledge, namely, external world scepticism.¹⁵⁹

We must distinguish external world scepticism from scepticism regarding the possibility of certain knowledge. As we have seen the discovery of the cogito dissolves the latter kind of scepticism while it paradoxically generates the former on account of the manner in which the nature of the self is conceptualized. External world scepticism is virtually inconceivable without Descartes' dualistic articulation of the nature of the self. Once the mind is defined as *res cogitans* and body as *res extensa* we witness the birth of the problem of subject-object relation that has bedeviled philosophy since the start of modern philosophy.¹⁶⁰

The issue here is to objectively validate the idea-reality relation, or the subject-object relation. In formulating the problematic in the Third Meditation, Descartes distinguishes between three categories of ideas, namely, innate ideas, fabricated ideas and adventitious ideas. Unlike innate ideas and fabricated ideas which are internal, adventitious ideas are caused in us by external objects and so have their source outside us.¹⁶¹ In pressing his case, Descartes is careful to point out that of the three categories of ideas, adventitious ideas constitute the most fundamental challenge.

As Descartes makes explicit in respect of the burden that must be addressed in this context: "I must inquire particularly into those ideas that are believed to be derived from things existing outside me? Just what reason do I have for believing that these ideas resemble those things?"¹⁶² in answer to this question, Descartes continues, "Well I do seem to have been so taught by nature. Moreover, I do not know from experience that these ideas do not depend upon my will. They are not creatures of my will nor consequently upon myself. For I often notice them even against my will."¹⁶³

Descartes may be responsible for creating the problem of our knowledge of the external world. But interestingly he was also the first to propose a solution to it. As the above passage indicates, he was clearly aware of the need to objectively correlate our ideas with reality. We do not experience the external world directly; we experience it through the ideas they provoke in us. Thus, ideas point back to the external world as their source, meaning that there is a connection between representation and reality. But the question is: what is the basis of the link between idea and external reality? Is the ground the external object or the subject?

Of course both of these possibilities are feasible. But for reasons internal to the motivation behind the deployment of the methodic doubt, Descartes will not ground the connectivity in the external object. But will he ground it in the cogito? Can the cogito guarantee the link between representation and the external world such as to secure the possibility of objective knowledge? This option may be quite appealing but in view of the *solipsistic crisis* confronting the cogito in the wake of its adoption as the foundation of knowledge, Descartes will rescind from grounding the link between idea and external reality

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. pp. 63-65

¹⁶⁰ James Richard Mensch, *Knowing and Being: A Postmodern Reversal*, pp. 15-27

¹⁶¹ See Third Meditation. See also Norman Melchert, *The Great Conversation: Volume 1: Pre-Socratics through Descartes*, Second Edition (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1995), pp. 292-297

¹⁶² Descartes, Third Meditation

¹⁶³ Third Meditation

in the subject.¹⁶⁴ But if the cogito cannot objectively ground the link between idea and external reality, the question is could there be some other ground?

Of course Descartes' answer is affirmative. In seeking to resolve the problem of our knowledge of the external world, Descartes' strategy is to look beyond the object and the subject as guarantors by appealing to God as the guarantor of the clear and distinct ideas of the cogito. Having learnt the lesson from the *solipsistic crisis* of the cogito to the effect that the cogito cannot guarantee its own objectivity, Descartes makes God the guarantor of the cogito and, by implication, the guarantor of the link between representation and the external world.¹⁶⁵

But in order to establish his case in respect of God's guarantor-ship of the connectivity between ideas and the external world, Descartes will first establish the existence of God and having done so, he will argue, that given that God is good, God cannot deceive us.¹⁶⁶ Armed with this premise he will consequently argue for the objectivity of the link between representation and the external world, the point being that if God is good and cannot deceive us, we can afford to rely on our ideas as true representations of reality.¹⁶⁷ In other words, so long as we use our faculties properly, there is no reason to doubt that what they tell us about external world is accurate, since our faculties are not our creation but natural endowments guaranteed by God's goodness as creator.¹⁶⁸

What is clear therefore is that Descartes' appeal to God within the overall framework of the problem of knowledge becomes the premise for proving that we have a valid objective knowledge of the external reality. To this extent God saves the cogito from its solipsistic crisis.¹⁶⁹ But in delivering the cogito from its epistemic predicaments, God also saves knowledge from the sword of scepticism and serves a means of legitimizing epistemology in its face off with scepticism.¹⁷⁰

6. GOD AS GUARANTOR OF THE OBJECTIVITY OF COGITO AND THE DEMANDS OF EPISTEMOLOGY AS FIRST PHILOSOPHY: QUESTION OF ADEQUACY OF DESCARTES' OVERALL RESPONSE

At this juncture it is pertinent to raise the question as to the adequacy of Descartes' overall response to the problem of knowledge. From our account of Descartes' response to the challenge of scepticism, it is evident there are many ramifications to the case he puts forward in defence of knowledge. Consequently, to adequately assess the success of his effort will require that we take into account the several aspects of the matter.

6.1. BETWEEN CERTITUDE AND EXTERNAL WORLD SCEPTICISM

¹⁶⁴ See Damian Ilodigwe, *Bradley and the Problematic Status of Metaphysics*, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006), Chapter 1

¹⁶⁵ See Third Meditation. See also Lawrence Nolan, "The Third Meditation: Causal arguments for God's existence" in *Cambridge Companion to Descartes*, edited by David Cunning, pp. 127-148. See also John Cottingham, "The Role of God in Descartes' Philosophy" in *A Companion to Descartes*, edited by Janet Broughton and John Carriero, (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 288-301

¹⁶⁶ See W. T. Jones, *A History of Modern Philosophy: Hobbes to Hume*, Second Edition, pp. 162-172

¹⁶⁷ See Descartes, Third Meditation

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ See W. Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations: Rethinking Hegel*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), Chapter 4 and 5

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

If we approach the matter from the standpoint of his strategic deployment of the mechanism of the methodic doubt in meeting the challenge of scepticism we cannot but salute his courage. Indeed, his methodological alignment with scepticism in order to deconstruct scepticism from inside seems to pay off with the emergence of the *cogito* as a counter point to the claim of scepticism. If the contention of scepticism is that certitude is the condition for knowledge, as knowledge cannot co-exist with doubt, the emergence of the *cogito* apparently fulfils this demand and in doing so it vindicates the standpoint of knowledge.

Understandably it is on account of this development that the discovery of the *cogito* is rightly viewed as signaling a provisional victory for epistemology in its ding-dong affair with scepticism and to this extent Descartes' effort arguably enjoys a measure of success. This should be evident from the fact that the emergence of the *cogito* immediately put an end to the application of the methodic doubt suggesting, as it were, that the menace of scepticism has been contained.¹⁷¹

Yet if the matter is approached from the standpoint of the resurgence of the skeptical challenge in the form of scepticism about our knowledge of the external world, following the installation of the *cogito* as the foundation of knowledge, it remains to be seen whether Descartes' effort could be said to be successful. Indeed, so far as the provisional victory secured with the emergence of the *cogito* is not converted into a permanent victory, Descartes' effort arguably ends in failure.¹⁷²

This negative assessment is reinforced by the fact that the external world scepticism is wholly a creation of Descartes, stemming from his dualistic conceptualization of the nature of the *cogito*. Without Descartes' definition of the essence of mind as *res cogitans* (pure thought) and body as *res extensa* (pure extension) such as to oppose the world of the self to the world of the non-self, the *cogito* would not have been engulfed in a *solipsistic crisis*. Indeed, with a *cogito* that is not self-enclosed in its world but is genuinely open and constructively engaged with the world beyond it – the world of the so-called non-self – there will be nothing like scepticism about our knowledge of the external world.¹⁷³

Thus, if Descartes' dualistic conception of the *cogito* were to be replaced with a non-dualistic conception, the problem of knowledge will assume a completely different configuration.¹⁷⁴ Against this backdrop it seems proper to blame Descartes for failing to convert into permanent victory the initial victory secured with the emergence of the *cogito*. For once the misguided turn of dualism is negotiated the problem of knowledge was always bound to be complicated and even insurperable in the end.¹⁷⁵ This is evident from Descartes' handling of the problem of the external world once the solipsistic crisis of the *cogito* had become full blown.

6.2. COGITO, EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE PROBLEMATIC STATUS OF GOD

¹⁷¹ Descartes, Meditation 2

¹⁷² See Anthony Flew, *Introduction of Philosophy*, pp. 66-68

¹⁷³ Flew, *Introduction of Philosophy*, pp. 61-69

¹⁷⁴ Apparently this is a common strategy in post-Cartesian philosophy as should be evident from pragmatic and existentialist criticisms of Cartesian dualism in such philosophers Heidegger, Sartre, James and Dewey. See Mark A. Wrathall, and Max Murphy, "Editor's Introduction: An Overview of Being and Time" in *The Cambridge Companion of Heidegger's Being and Time*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 1-53 but especially p. 20

¹⁷⁵ See Norman Melchert, *The Great Conversation: Volume 1: Pre-Socratics through Descartes*, Second Edition (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1995), pp. 292-297

Commentators have consistently pointed out that the introduction of God into Descartes' epistemological scheme is an *ad hoc* arrangement in which God is brought in to sort out the *solipsistic crisis* of the cogito and re-open the cogito to the external world.¹⁷⁶ The idea is that without God coming to the rescue of the cogito, the entire Cartesian scheme dissolves into scepticism as the cogito cannot save itself.

Again, it is easy to see that the problem here is associated with Descartes' problematic definition of the cogito as pure thought. As pure thought and self-enclosed, the cogito is supposed to be sufficient unto it-self.¹⁷⁷ Yet the *solipsistic crisis* in which the cogito is enmeshed exposes the vulnerability of the cogito. If the cogito is *self-sufficient* as Descartes' definition of its essence suggest, it should be possible to resolve the crisis wholly in terms of the resources of the cogito without needing God to come to the rescue of the cogito.¹⁷⁸ That Descartes can bring God into the matter does not square up with the portrait of the cogito as self-sufficient unto itself. The introduction of God into the equation signals that there is something wrong somewhere as far as the internal coherence of Descartes' architectonic is concerned. It is either the Cogito is not self-sufficient or the introduction of God into the scheme is superfluous.¹⁷⁹

In short the introduction of God into the scheme focuses attention on the problematic status of Descartes' conceptualization of the cogito; for, it is like he wants to eat his cake and have it at the same time. Indeed, it is an attempt to shore up a system that is at the verge of collapsing. If the move is accepted as philosophically cogent, the salvific benefits that it purportedly obtains for Descartes' philosophy of knowledge, is secure. But, if found wanting the Cartesian system collapses on its head. As we have maintained the introduction of God into the scheme runs contrary to the inner logic that drives Descartes' concept of the cogito, so that the move cannot save the cogito from epistemic shipwreck unless the entire scheme with its associated dependence on God for its salvation is re-thought.¹⁸⁰

Yet beyond the disparity between Descartes' concept of the Cogito and the place of God in his philosophy of knowledge, perhaps there is a more fundamental problem with the Cartesian philosophy of knowledge that explains the pressure that legislates the introduction of God into the system even though it contradicts the inner logic of the *being* of the cogito as defined by Descartes. I refer here to what I call the principle of rationalism, the view that reason is the only true source of knowledge.¹⁸¹

To be sure the principle has always been considered important in philosophy and perhaps it will always be considered important, hence the usual definition of philosophy as a critical enterprise that rationalizes experience.¹⁸² We can see this emphasis already at work in the ancient philosophies of Parmenides, Plato and Aristotle.¹⁸³ In medieval philosophy the

¹⁷⁶ See William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations: Rethinking Hegel*, Chapter 4

¹⁷⁷ See *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, especially his statement that the Absolute is not only substance but also must be subject

¹⁷⁸ William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations: Rethinking Hegel*, Chapter 4 and 5

¹⁷⁹ We can think here of the celebrated Cartesian system. See Norman Melchert, *The Great Conversation: Volume 1: Pre-Socratics through Descartes*, Second Edition (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1995), pp. 292-297

¹⁸⁰ Cf. William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations*, Chapter 11

¹⁸¹ Cf. John Cottingham (Editor) *Western Philosophy: An Anthology*, Second Edition (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 21-25

¹⁸² See. Anthony Flew, *Introduction to Philosophy*, pp. 61-68

¹⁸³ Cf. W. T. Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy: Hobbes to Hume*, Second Edition, pp. 154-162

principle is moderated, as the voice of faith is recognized as a vital player in the matter of knowledge.¹⁸⁴ With the collapses of the medieval synthesis and the emergence of the modern world however, the marriage between faith and reason comes to an end with pure reason emerging as the sole means of knowing.¹⁸⁵ This development coincides with the emergence of epistemology as first philosophy with the sole mandate of defence of knowledge against the menace of scepticism.¹⁸⁶

Epistemology as first philosophy relies solely on the resources of pure reason in prosecuting its project of justification.¹⁸⁷ Descartes is a foremost exponent of this ideal of philosophy; indeed Descartes is the pioneer; hence he is generally regarded as the father of modern philosophy.¹⁸⁸ We cannot understand the architectonic of the *Meditations* unless we take into account Descartes' commitment to rationalism. This commitment runs through the various moments of his voyage of discovery in the *Meditations*.¹⁸⁹

Even though there is a dialectic of empiricism and rationalism in the whole unfolding of Descartes' application of the methodic doubt, the dialectic is arguably set up for the triumph of rationalism as absolute principle of knowledge, given that right from the start, Descartes is convinced there is at least one thing that can be known with certainty.¹⁹⁰ Of course, as we have seen, in order to satisfy the demand of the sceptic which incidentally asserts the principle of rationalism in its negative form, Descartes will submit the principle of rationalism whole and entire for scrutiny.¹⁹¹ But the ideal experiment consummating in the emergence of the cogito as indubitable will vindicate the standpoint of rationalism.¹⁹²

We must qualify the statement by saying the moment of the emergence of the cogito is a moment of triumph for exaggerated rationalism, since the truth of cogito is purportedly truth of pure reason par excellence.¹⁹³ This qualification and emphasis is apposite in order to recollect the import of Descartes' commitment to the ideal of epistemology as first philosophy; in other words, a commitment to resolving the problem of knowledge squarely in terms of the resources of pure reason.

Invariably the emergence of the cogito celebrates the commitment. But more importantly the commitment to excessive rationalism drives Descartes' conceptualization of the cogito as pure thought such as to dissociate the cogito from the bodily self. If Descartes is committed to resolving the problem of knowledge in terms of the resources of pure reason, it is understandable that when faced with the burden of defining the essence of the cogito he will elect to define it as *res cogitans*.

6.3. THE QUESTION OF THE PROBLEMATIC STATUS OF EPISTEMOLOGY AS FIRST PHILOSOPHY

But nothing suggests that the claim of epistemology as first philosophy is beyond question; nothing suggest that the principle of rationalism should not be moderated. Indeed,

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ See Damian Ilodigwe, *Bradley and the Problematic Status of Metaphysics*, pp. 61-68

¹⁸⁷ Hamlyn, *The Theory of Knowledge*, Chapter 1

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Richard Schacht, *Classical Modern Philosophers*, (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 8-39

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Descartes, Meditation 2

¹⁹¹ Meditation 1

¹⁹² Meditation 2

¹⁹³ Ibid.

the claim of epistemology as first philosophy should be questioned and the principle of rationalism should be moderated. But of course Descartes does not question it or does he moderate it because he is a die heart rationalist; hence concept of the cogito he comes up with. But suppose the claims of epistemology as first philosophy are questioned and as a result the claims of excessive rationalism moderated, Descartes' concept of the *cogito* that pitches the *res cogitans* against the *res extensa* will break down as it emerges that the dualism is uncalled for.¹⁹⁴

The point we should hold unto in all this is that Descartes' commitment to excessive rationalism drives the entire architectonic of the *Meditations*. We must see therefore that Descartes' philosophy of the cogito is a child of the ideal of epistemology as first philosophy he subscribes to. Similarly, the dualism that ensues from this philosophy of the cogito by proxy is also privative on his commitment to excessive rationalism. So too is the *solipsistic crisis* that ultimately engulfs the *cogito*, if as suggested, Descartes' dualism is inconceivable without his concept of the cogito.

The moment we grasp the correlation between Descartes' commitment to excessive rationalism, his concept of the cogito and the solipsistic crisis that ensues from the dualism of mind and matter we begin to understand why Descartes' introduction of God into the system is questionable even though it is intended to shore up the system and save it from crashing.¹⁹⁵ If the ideal of epistemology as first philosophy, to which Descartes subscribes, is committed to resolving the problem of knowledge in terms of the resources of pure reason, we have to ask whether it is proper to introduce God into the scheme within the same frame of reference of the ideal of epistemology as first philosophy.

Yet this precisely what Descartes does; hence the contention that the move is inconsistent with the inner logic behind his concept of the cogito. But the more fundamental truth is that if the introduction of God into the scheme is inconsistent with the philosophy of the cogito, it is also inconsistent with the ideal of epistemology as first philosophy since this is ideology that undergirds Descartes' philosophy of the cogito.

So it emerges that the culprit in all this is Descartes' subscription to the ideal of epistemology as first philosophy – in other words, his commitment to excessive rationalism. This commitment is at the heart of the many inconsistencies that bedeviled Descartes' system. The commitment accounts for the instability within Descartes' philosophy of knowledge. It accounts for the apparently inconsistency between Descartes' philosophy of God and the place of God in Descartes' system. Indeed, above all it accounts for the inconsistency in Descartes' philosophy of the cogito itself.

¹⁹⁴ This is a key point that several strands of thought that constitute contemporary philosophy make in different ways against rationalistic idealism. This is true of Phenomenology as it is true of existentialism and deconstructionism in their various expressions in Heidegger, Sartre, Ponty and Derrida. They all start by mounting an attack on Cartesian dualism and then proceed to offer alternative account of the nature of the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity, the intent all the time being to obviate the reduction of objectivity to subjectivity. See for instance Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness, An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes, Introduction by Mary Warnock with a new preface by Richard Eyre (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 3-16. See also, Martin Heidegger, "Being and Time" in *Basic Works of Martin Heidegger*, edited by David Farrel Krell, London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 3-35. See also my Sartre's Account of Subjectivity, A Paper presented at the International Conference on Jean Paul Sartre at Nippon Meeting Halls in Istanbul, Turkey, 21-22nd October, 2016

¹⁹⁵ Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations*, Chapter 2.

If pure reason is our only access to true knowledge, as Descartes' commitment to the ideal of epistemology as first philosophy implies, it means there is no room for God in the matter of how the problem of knowledge is to be sorted out. If recourse must be made to God in sorting out the problem of knowledge, as Descartes does, we must jettison our commitment to excessive rationalism. So long as we do not do so, appealing to God will always be problematic. But were we to moderate the claims of excessive rationalism, appealing to God may not necessarily be problematic for what it confirms immediately is that pure reason is not sufficient unto it-self but must combine with other sources of knowledge in the matter of pursuit of truth and knowledge.¹⁹⁶

Invariably to make such confession will immediately warrant a revision of our concept of the cogito to allow for rapprochement between autonomy and heteronomy. Such rapprochement deconstructs the *apotheosis* of the cogito at the same time it renders superfluous the dualism of *res cogitans* and *res extensa*.¹⁹⁷ But more fundamentally such concession also invites a moderation of the claims of epistemology as first philosophy since this is the over-arching frame that legislate the sort of rationalism that makes possible the *apotheosis* of the cogito.¹⁹⁸

To make such revisions mean that we stabilize Descartes' philosophy of knowledge and invariably reconcile his appeal to God with his philosophy of the cogito. But as should be evident this is at the expense of toning down the claims of epistemology as first philosophy such as to open reason to other sources of knowledge especially faith. Were we to succeed in making such revision, faith and reason will emerge immediately as important voices in the determination of the problem of knowledge.

In other words, we cease to have a situation whereby reason is pitched against faith, or faith is reduced to reason. With this sort of revision, it means God can be introduced into the epistemic scheme right from the start and not at the summit of the matter as Descartes does and in this case it will not appear as if God is a *Deus ex machine* that is surreptitiously brought in to sort out a matter that is beyond the reach of the cogito. With nature and God in the picture from the start no matter how implicit this presence may be, the cogito and God are seen as ally from the start of the itinerary even though our attempt all the time is to secure the matter from the standpoint of reason.¹⁹⁹

Only the moderation of the claim of excessive rationalism can allow such a beginning with respect to the demands of philosophy of knowledge. Such revision might as well reassert the classical insight of Aristotle and Plato that philosophy begins with wonder and in wonder.²⁰⁰ As a result of the triumph of reason at the start of the modern philosophy with the collapse of the medieval synthesis, what we have is a situation where philosophy begins with doubt. Invariably this is the mechanism at work in Descartes' methodic doubt.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. William Desmond, *Ultimacy and Perplexity*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), Chapter 2

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Cf. W. T. Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy: Classical Mind*, Second Edition, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. 1969), pp.2-13

²⁰¹ Cf. Ephraim Podoski, "Editor's Introduction" in *Cambridge Companion to Michael Oakeshott* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

The toning down of the claims of epistemology as first philosophy and the moderation of excessive rationalism may well lead to a situation where there is a better understanding between epistemology and scepticism such that both are not seen as dualistic opposites, so that one must overcome and absorb the other. Such understanding will also mean that there can be better co-operation between epistemology and scepticism in the matter of understanding the nature of knowledge, so that it is not just that doubt can serve as a means of dialectically attaining knowledge, but doubt can also serve to underscore the limit of knowledge without necessarily implying that the unknown undermines our epistemic possibilities.²⁰²

The point is that while nothing is wrong with the ideal of knowledge as certain knowledge it is one sided to assume that this is the paradigm of knowledge. Invariably this is the concept of knowledge behind the debate between Descartes and the sceptic. This explains why nothing short of overcoming doubt can satisfy the sceptic. This explains also why Descartes goes all out to demonstrate that we can fulfil that condition. The problem if not so much that he demonstrates that we can fulfil that condition and so secure the possibility of certain knowledge, the problem is that in a moment of failure to moderate the principle of excessive rationalism the ideal of certain knowledge is erected into the paradigm of knowledge.²⁰³

The same problem we find here bedevils the classical definition of knowledge as justified true belief. While the definition is sustainable within certain limits, the definition self-deconstructs once justification is taken as the be-end-and all of knowledge.²⁰⁴ While we cannot underestimate the import of rational evidence for knowledge, the point is that knowledge after all may not be co-extensive with evidence so that the relationship between epistemology and scepticism properly understood is much more elastic than traditional epistemology allows.²⁰⁵

So it is clear that once we tone down the claims of epistemology as first philosophy and moderate the principle rationalism, a new concept of knowledge emerges that allows for rapprochement between faith and reason. As the Cartesian system stands, with its commitment to the ideal of epistemology as first philosophy and principle of rationalism, there is no room for rapprochement and that is why appeal to God within the Cartesian scheme comes across as inconsistent. But, as we have suggested, rendering such appeal consistent will require that the whole of the Cartesian system is re-thought with particular reference to its grounding commitments, namely, commitment to the ideal of epistemology as first philosophy with its associated principle of exaggerated rationalism.

If this line of interpretation is correct, Descartes' appeal to God arguably exposes the limits of his philosophy of cogito as well as the limits of the ideal of epistemology as first philosophy. In this sense his appeal to God could be read as an invitation to rethink the ideal of epistemology and the philosophy of the cogito along the lines we have suggested above.

²⁰² This is arguably the model of knowledge that Bradley articulates in his philosophy of the Absolute as should be evident from the concluding chapter of his magnum opus *Appearance and Reality* which carries the title *Ultimate Doubt*. See also Damian Ildigwe, *Bradley and the Problematic Status of Metaphysics*, Chapter 6 especially.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Norman Melchert, *The Great Conversation: Volume 1: Pre-Socratics through Descartes*, Second Edition (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1995), pp. 292-297

²⁰⁵ See Sean Sayer, "F. H. Bradley and the Concept of Relative Truth" *Radical Philosophy*, 70

But suppose we chose to ignore such a plea to rethink the Cartesian system in order to reconcile its apparent inconsistencies, especially the inconsistency between his commitment to the ideal of epistemology as first philosophy and his recourse to God as a sort of *deus ex machine* that performs the miracle of saving the cogito from crashing we will have a different estimation altogether.

7. CONCLUSION

Indeed, if we chose to consider Descartes' appeal to God superfluous and improper, it means that the Cartesian philosophy is in serious trouble for there will be no way to deliver the cogito from the path of self-destruction that its crisis of solipsism has plunged it. In other words, once the support that God provides within Descartes' philosophy of knowledge is withdrawn, the problem of our knowledge of the external world resurges with even greater vengeance, leaving knowledge even more vulnerable in the face of the challenge of scepticism. Indeed, this is the estimation that some commentators reach and the implication is that Descartes' effort to combat scepticism leads to the exacerbation of the problem of scepticism.²⁰⁶

However, as we have maintained, if we approach the question of the adequacy of Descartes' response to the challenge of scepticism from the standpoint of the issue of certain knowledge and the question of its possibility we can attribute a measure of success to Descartes' effort to address the problem of knowledge since the emergence of the cogito indeed serves as a counter point to the claim of scepticism.²⁰⁷

On the other hand, if we approach the matter from the standpoint of external world scepticism it is difficult to say that Descartes' effort is successful overall. Aside from the fact that he is responsible for creating this species of scepticism his solution to the matter not only witnesses the resurgence of scepticism but also invites serious questions in respect of the internal coherence of the Cartesian system. The contributions of Descartes to the problem of knowledge surely cannot be overestimated. But given that the prime motivation behind his philosophy of knowledge was to sort out the problem of knowledge once and for all in view of the menace of scepticism, we cannot say he is successful in the end, if his project issues into scepticism. Nonetheless, Descartes' influence remains a glowing tribute to the stature of his contributions.

²⁰⁶ See Damian Ilodigwe, *Bradley and the Problematic Status of Metaphysics*, Chapter 1

²⁰⁷ Cf. W. T. Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy: Hobbes to Hume*, Second Edition, pp. 154-162

One Hundred Years after Amalgamation: Nigeria at Crossroads; the Way Forward

Being the Departmental Lecture of Philosophy on the 24th of March 2017

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Before the Amalgamation

In the beginning, there was no Nigeria. Rather, there were Ijaw, Igbo, Urohobo, Itsekiri, Yoruba, Hausa, Fulani, Nupe, Kanuri, Ogoni, Gwari, kataf, Jukun, Edo, Ibibio, Efik, Idoma, Tiv, Birom, Ogoja and so on. There were also kingdoms like, Oyo, Lagos, Calabar, brass, Benin, Sokoto caliphate (with loose control over Kano, Zaria, Ilorin etc) Bonny, and Opobo. Prior to the British conquest of the different nations making up the present day Nigeria, these nations were independent nation states and communities independent of each other and

independent of Britain. This, however, is not to say that the peoples of the area that later became Nigeria were, before the amalgamation of 1914, strange bed fellows. Indeed, it is wrong, historically speaking, to assume or claim that those who became citizens of the British created Nigerian state had nothing in common, or that in 1914, they were entirely strange people brought together by British fiat. The point here is that, long before the amalgamation common bonds existed between and among the peoples of what later became Nigeria.

In fact, there is a sense in which we can talk of a 'Nigeria' as being in existence before the 1914 amalgamation. Put differently, the geo-political edifice that emerged as Nigeria in 1914 was not entirely fortuitous.

It is pertinent for our purpose in this paper to highlight two major historical developments of the 19th because of the significance of their role in preparing the background against which the 1914 amalgamation was concocted. Indeed, it is not often realized how these developments unwittingly laid the foundation for some of the problems of development and national integration which now confront the Nigerian state. One of these developments was the Jihad which began in 1804 in the north of what later became Nigeria, while the second is the coming of the Christian missionaries and their hand maiden, European Western education, in the southern part of what was to become Nigeria.

The Sokoto Jihad resulted in the flowering of Islam in Hausaland and the consolidation of Muslim culture, first in Hausa land and then in non-Hausa areas like Nupe, Ilorin and parts of the Benue valley region. Islam supplied the ideological base and acted as the cement that held the caliphate together and gave its inhabitants a sense of belonging that earlier imperial system did not possess.

Meanwhile, as the jihad was raging in Hausaland and its environs. Christian missionaries were among in-roads into different parts of what was to be called southern Nigeria. The coming of the Christian missionaries had two important consequences; it introduced Christianity into what became southern Nigeria. It also introduced Western European education Christianity and Western education thus introduced new differentials into the society of what became southern Nigeria.

The differentials introduced by the Jihad into what became northern Nigeria on the one hand, and the dichotomies occasioned by the introduction of Christianity and western European education in what became the southern on the other have constituted major problems in Nigeria's search for true national unity. It was against the background of these differentials that the 1914 amalgamation was contrived.

The Amalgamation, British Colonial Policies and National Integration

At the beginning of the colonial period, Nigeria was made up of four entities: Lagos Colony, Lagos Protectorate, Oil Rivers Protectorate, and the Niger Territories. The four entities were in 1906 constituted into two – the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria. In 1914, the two protectorates were constituted into the colony of Nigeria by Frederick Lugard.

Lord Lugard started his career in what became Nigeria from the North as an agent of the Royal Nigeria Company. He was brought to Northern Nigeria in 1895 from Uganda for military campaigns by George Goldie of the Chartered Royal Niger Company and was the man who conquered Northern Nigeria military. It was in recognition of his successful military campaign in the north that he was appointed the first British High Commission for Northern Nigeria in 1899, when the Charter of the royal Niger Company was abrogated. In 1900, Lugard was

appointed Governor General of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria, which were still totally separate entities, with a mandate to amalgamate the two totally foreign territories together as one country. The intention, it must be emphasized, was to unify the administrations of the two Protectorates and not its people.

The Northern Protectorate was not economically viable. It had become a great drain on the British tax payer. On the other hand, the Southern Protectorate was not just economically buoyant; it was producing surpluses every year. The British design was therefore, to remove the northern financial burden from its own neck and hang it on the neck of the hapless Southern Protectorate. According to Lord Harcourt, the then British Colonial Secretary, unification of Nigeria demanded both “method” and “a man”. The man was to be Lord Lugard and the method was to be the “marriage” of the two entities. In the words of Lord Harcourt; *We have released Northern Nigeria from the leading stings of the Treasury. The promising and well conducted youth is now on an allowance on his own and is about to effect an alliance with a southern lady of means. I have issued the special license and Sir Frederick Lugard will perform the ceremony. May the union be fruitful and the coup constant.*

Having installed the North as the “husband” of the South and master of Nigeria via the so-called amalgamation of the colonial territory in 1914, the British imperialists made no effort at integrating the peoples. Indeed, the architect of the amalgamation, Lugard, left the country in 1918, barely four years after the amalgamation.

In effect, he had only four years to give effect of the amalgamation and introduce a central administration which was claimed to be the cardinal objective of the amalgamation. Besides, he also had some preconceived and erroneous ideas about how the ethnically diverse people of the territory were to be ruled. This undermined the basic objective of his administration. In fact, the territory continued to be governed separately as the Colony of Lagos, and the Northern and Southern Protectorates. The colonial authorities could not provide the financial and human resources needed for the purpose of bringing the huge territory under a single administration. In addition, the First World War that started in 1914 diverted attention from British colonies in Africa. And then in 1939, another World War broke out. It was not until after the Second World War That Britain began to turn its attention to its African Colonies, particularly Nigeria, the largest. Hence, it was not until 1946, under the Richards’ Constitution that a feeble attempt was made to bring representatives of the various administrative units together at an Assembly in Lagos. This situation was inimical to the forging of national unity. For, by the time the different leaders in the two regions were brought together in 1947, they had evolved a particularistic and primordial consciousness which exacerbated inter-group tension in Nigeria.

Lugard was succeeded by Sir Hugh Clifford. Clifford introduced the 1922 Constitution, which provided for Elective Principle and a Legislative Council for the administration of the country. However, the Elective Principle was restricted to the Southern Provinces alone. The North was left out. Similarly, the Legislative Council also made laws for the Southern Provinces alone. The North continued to be governed by the Proclamation of the British Governor. Part of Clifford’s argument was that the Muslim Emirates ‘were self-contained native states and they should therefore not be disturbed in their splendid isolation’. From the point of view of national unity and integration, the confinement of legislative authority to the South created a perpetual wedge between the Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria. Thenceforth, the two parts of the country had to move at different rates of development. This helped to strengthen bonds of suspicion and disunity between the North and the South.

Again, the Elective Principle gave rise to the growth of political parties and consciousness in the South. In effect, the North developed political consciousness very late. This is one of the major causes of political instability in Nigeria. Also, by excluding the North from the new set-up, the Northerners did not feel that they were part and parcel of Nigeria. The effect of this was to make the future unity of the North and the South very difficult. Even today, the suspicion between the two parts of Nigeria has become traditional.

Wittingly or not, the British sowed the seeds of future instability in Nigeria in 1933 when they divided Nigeria into three regions, with the North large enough to exercise political domination over the East and West combined. This division paid scant regard to the history and cultures and of course the will of the people. The excuse of Governor Bourdillon was that the South was too heterogeneous to remain one unit. And that there were communication problems between Enugu, the headquarters of the Southern Provinces, and its component parts. By contrast, the same Bourdillon argued that the North was culturally more homogenous, and that the centrality of Kaduna, the capital, reduced communication difficulties to the minimum. However, anyone who knows the myriads of peoples and cultures in the 'Middle-Belt' alone would immediately recognize the fallacy in Bourdillon's argument. This arrangement ensured that whereas the North increasingly developed into a meaningful political entity, dominated by the Hausa–Fulani the South has never really had any meaning politically.

Arthur Richards succeeded Bourdillon as the Governor General of Nigeria. He introduced the Richards Constitution of 1947. The Constitution established a tri-regional framework for the three Provinces in colonial Nigeria. Thus, the three Provinces earlier created by Bourdillon became legitimized under the 1947 Constitution. Richards's argument was that Nigeria falls "naturally" into three regions and that the people of these regions differ widely from one another. He further contended that his regionalism was fortified on the ground that the North wanted little or nothing to do with the South. In effect, no Northern members were elected to sit in the legislative Council in Lagos. This moved Margery Perham, the Oxford don and friend of Lugard, to complain that "*British Colonial officials had become more northern than the northerners, fostering of the local sense of difference, even of superiority towards the south*"

The British also adopted the Hausa language as the language of Native Administration in the North. This aided the spread of the Hausa language through the length and breadth of the old North. In effect, there was a greater degree of cultural homogeneity in the old Northern Nigeria than in the old southern Nigeria.

Also, the British colonial administration, for fear of religious conflict, was hostile to Christian proselytizing and educational enterprises in the North. And, having kept out the missionaries who were the pioneers of education, the British took no steps to develop Western education in the North. Indeed, the impression was created that Islam and Western education were incompatible. The implication of this British policy was that for a very long time, the north did not benefit from Western education, while the south was receiving a substantial dose of Western education. This resulted in a wide gap in education between the North and the South in Nigeria with profound political and economic implications for the country. Indeed, Boko Haram is a direct consequence of this educational neglect in the North.

In 1947, more than three decades after the amalgamation, and 14 years after Nigeria was constituted into three regions, Chief Obafemi Awolowo stated flatly in his book *Path to Nigerian Freedom* that Nigeria is not a nation but "a mere geographical expression." The term 'Nigerian,' he wrote, "is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within

the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not.” Awolowo went on to identify political, cultural and religious differences among the various national groups inhabiting Nigeria – “incompatibilities,” as he called them – which militated against unification, and by implication, national unity. Incidentally, it was in that very year – 1947 – that representatives of the peoples of Nigeria met for the first time in 1947 under the Richards Constitution.

The 1951 Macpherson Constitution was designed to accelerate the pace of integration, but it soon exposed the fragile roots of the polity. Southern representatives demanded a rapid path to self-government. Northern representatives called for a more gradual approach. The controversy spilled on to the streets, and demonstrators mocked and jeered at the Northerners as they boarded the trains to return home. An exasperated Sir Ahmadu Bello, Premier of Northern Nigeria, declared that “the mistake of 1914” – the amalgamation, in other words – “has come to light.” In the same vein, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, later Prime Minister of Nigeria, echoed Awolowo in 1952, in a speech before the Northern House of Assembly, Kaduna, complaining that “the Southern people who are swarming into this region daily in large numbers are really intruders.”

He went on: “We don’t want them and they are not welcome here in the North. Since the amalgamation in 1914, the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country but the Nigerian people are different in every way including religion, custom, language and aspiration. The fact that we are all Africans might have misguided the British Government. We here in the North, take it that ‘Nigerian unity’ is not for us.”

When it was time for political parties to be established, little wonders that, political parties evolved and developed along ethnic lines. Then came the All Nigerian Constitutional Conference aimed at preparing the people for self-rule held in Ibadan beginning from 1950. First, considering the turn of events in the course of proceedings at the Conference, it is difficult not to conclude that the British who were the umpires had some stake in ensuring that the North dominated the other regions in post-colonial Nigeria. For, at the Conference, the North demanded that half of the seats in the Federal House of Representatives be allocated to it, as a condition for remaining in Nigeria. The West on their part demanded that the Yoruba speaking areas of Offa, Igbomina and Kabba be returned to the West. In the end, the North got half of the seats in the Federal House of Representatives and retained the Yoruba speaking areas of Offa, Igbomina and Kabba. Thus, at the end of the Conference, the seats in the Federal House were allocated as follows: Total elected members: 136= North – 68 seats ; East – 34 seats ; West – 34 seats. Total – 136

The usual explanation that the seats were distributed in accordance with population is spurious and vexatious. For, if population was the guiding principle, the question is why was the East and West granted equal seats? Were they equal in population? Therefore, a situation or arrangement whereby the North had as many seats in the central legislature as the West and East put together was hardly calculated to promote inter-regional accord and such could only be productive of strife. That arrangement and other development since independence have created a political culture in which a particular group considers that control of Nigeria’s central government is its birth right. Naturally, other groups are bound to resent this situation which is clearly one of the factors that inhibit Nigeria’s search for true unity.

Independence and its Discontents

Independence and the competition for power sharpened the cleavages of the union. The assumption of emergency powers in Western Nigeria by a Federal Government that should have

played honest arbiter in the conflict convulsing the region, “elections that were no elections and censuses that were not censuses,” deepened and widened the fissures and culminated in the military coup that overthrew the government of Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa on January 15, 1966.

General J. T. Aguiyi-Ironsi who subsequently became head of the military regime and his advisers took the widespread rejoicing that greeted the coup as a mandate to unify Nigeria by decree. This was a tragic misreading of the situation. In the North, where the coup had claimed the life of the Premier and the lives of senior army officers of Northern origin, the coup came to be regarded as a plot by the ethnic group to which the coup leaders belonged, the Igbo, to lord it over the North. Demonstrations calling for *araba*, or separation, broke out in the North, followed by killings of the Igbo on an industrial scale.

Northern officers overthrew the Ironsi regime and installed Colonel Yakubu Gowon as Head of State and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. General Gowon voided Ironsi’s Unification Decree and declared in his maiden broadcast that there was “as yet no basis for Nigerian unity.” Another round of killings in the North led to the massive flight of the Igbo from the North to their homeland in Eastern Nigeria, where they proclaimed the sovereign independent state of Biafra compassing the entire territory of Eastern Nigeria, which was home not just to the Igbo, but to the Ibibio, the Efik, the Ijo and the Kalabari, who had for years been yearning for autonomy.

In a masterstroke designed to undermine Biafra territorially, and to assuage fears of Northern domination, Nigeria was reconstituted from four regions into 12 states, with six in the North and six in the South. The territory over which Biafra claimed sovereignty was split into three states, one of them for the Igbo, and the other two for other ethnic groups in the former Eastern Nigeria. A 30-month civil war fought to preserve the unity for which General Gowon had said there was no basis, eight years of unbroken military rule during which intimations of a national renaissance were in the end dissipated, five years of rule by an elected government that was distinguished by its ineptitude, eleven more years of military rule, five Constitutions and 24 additional states later, plus all manner of social engineering schemes like the Unity Schools and the National Youth Service Corps later, it is clear that Nigerian unity rests on a shaky foundation. However, two shiny moments in what was otherwise a period of unrelieved social and political regression deserve to be acknowledged.

The first was the end of the civil war and the speed of reconciliation that defied wide predictions of a bloodbath and contained intimations of national renaissance. Petrodollars poured into the national treasury faster than the authorities could manage. As General Yakubu Gowon said memorably, money was no longer the problem but how to spend it. This new wealth fuelled massive development projects across the country. Nigeria found its voice in the international community and Nigerians everywhere walked tall, proud of their country as they had never been. Everything seemed splendidly possible. Nigerians studying abroad rushed home on completing of their programmes, persuaded that home was where they could find fulfilment. But the intimations of a renaissance evaporated with the coming into office of the Shehu Shargari administration. The new wealth, it should be said, also paved the way for access to the easy money and the corruption now choking Nigeria.

The second shiny moment was the sweeping victory of the Muslim-Muslim ticket of Moshood Abiola and Babagana Kingibe in the 1993 presidential elections, adjudged by many the freest and fairest ever held in Nigeria before or since. The election was the culmination of a political

transition programme that had been eight years in the making and advertised as the final act that would set Nigerian firmly and irrevocably on the road to democracy.

Its annulment by the regime of military president Ibrahim Babangida with help from the judiciary and the political class, for reasons he has never been able to explain coherently, plunged Nigeria into turmoil and retarded its political development. Today, almost 24 years later, reverberations of that crisis can still be heard and felt in the political landscape.

One Hundred Years after Amalgamation

One hundred years after amalgamation and in spite of abundant natural and human resources, Nigeria has been unable to institute or to run a semblance of a modern state. Ordinarily, the Centenary should have brought forth dancing in the streets, moving Nigerians to take joyous pride in the achievements of decades past, and to look to the future with confidence and optimism. But there is nothing ordinary about Nigeria. And so the Centennial meant different things to different persons.

In the corridors of power, especially in Abuja, there was a great deal of formal celebration. But just as Lugard gave no thought to the peoples of the territories he was amalgamating, the organizers of the Nigerian Centenary gave little thought to the people – except as dancers and entertainers and passive spectators. It was a celebration of the elite, by the elite, for the elite.

Those who feel ill-used and thwarted by the arrangement being celebrated did not exactly call the anniversary a day of infamy, but they spent it in lamentation, contemplating what might have been if their history had not been so rudely interrupted. To them, commemorating the Centenary amounted to conscripting them to glory in their own subjugation. To Boko Haram, the Centenary was an occasion to ramp up its campaign of mayhem and murder. Some of the signature events of the Centenary were taking place when its operatives broke into one of the symbols of “national unity,” the Federal Government College, Boni Yadi, in Yobe State, and killed at least 29 and perhaps as many as 40 students, in yet another orgy of bestiality. On the whole, then, this was hardly an inspiring note on which to celebrate the first Centenary.

One Hundred Years after the Amalgamation.

The Nigerian Condition is at once parlous and precarious.

Corruption perfuses every branch of government and every aspect of national life. Not even the judiciary, the so-called “last hope of the common man,” has been spared. Too much power is concentrated at the Centre. This is a legacy of decades of military rule. But elected officials have embraced this arrangement and seem in no hurry to change it, even though in a democratic setting, it breeds ferocious and oftentimes destructive competition for power. The national infrastructure is in serious disrepair. The railway network belongs in an age that has long passed. If Lugard were to come back today, he would still recognize the railway network as the one built in his time. Even at full throttle, the oil refineries cannot meet local demand for petroleum products. As a result; petroleum products have to be imported through a system riddled with corruption on a scale almost beyond belief. Electricity supply remains epileptic, despite billions of Naira poured into building new plants, upgrading older ones, instituting administrative reforms, and privatization. The health sector is no less dispiriting. Once described as “mere consulting clinics,” the best hospitals are now mere clinics. Mass unemployment has blighted the life chances of millions of Nigerians willing to work and able to work. Hardest-hit is the younger population, ages 25-35, of whom, going by official

figures, 50 percent are unemployed. In this group are young men and women who obtained university degrees three years ago or longer. Educational standards have fallen precipitately. Ethnic animosity is at fever pitch. Anyone who doubts this has only to visit Nigerian sites on the Internet. The abuse which supposedly educated Nigerians hurl at those they disagree with is coarse and vile almost beyond belief. And it is patterned along ethnic lines for the most part. Religion is gaining an increasingly disturbing salience in national affairs. We analyze every issue not on its intrinsic merit but whether it favours Muslims over Christians or vice versa.

Much more troubling than the political and economic discontinuities of Nigeria however, is a comprehensive collapse in the value system. Many a parent will stop at nothing to procure by corrupt means an advantage for their children in public examinations. Teachers often aid and abet the process. In one state, a school principal was dismissed for making it impossible for his students to cheat in the Senior School Certificate Examinations. The school authorities said that, by preventing his students from cheating when everyone else was doing so, he had placed them at a competitive disadvantage. These days, nothing is intrinsically right or wrong. If you can get away with it, it must be right. With the exception of the 1993 presidential poll, every election at the Centre since 1959 has been worse than the one preceding it and the outcome has often been decided by courts more concerned with narrow technicalities than with the spirit of the laws or with justice.

Censuses that defy the rules of demography continue to be staged every 10 years, so that, today, nobody knows Nigeria's population to the nearest 25 million. And yet, policy-makers continue to plan without facts and without reliable data.

All over the land, there is a general feeling of insecurity, heightened not just by Boko Haram but by syndicated kidnappers and ritual killers.

At least one generation of Nigerians is growing up believing that this is the way things have always been done in Nigeria. Because History is no longer taught as a discipline, the only Nigeria they know is the one they are living through. According to one report, high schools students in Ogun States knew more about Obafemi Martins the international soccer star than about Obafemi Awolowo, one of Nigeria's pre-eminent political leaders. In that same generation, many think that the *West African Pilot* is a periodical for airline pilots in the sub-region.

This abbreviated litany of woes is dispiriting enough to shake even a legendary optimism in a united and progressive nation. It remains to add that it is not a product of the dereliction or incompetence of any one president, administration or institution but of the cumulative acts and omissions, the complicity and indifference of the collectivity.

The Way Forward

A re-structured Federation, based on a new Constitution truly warranted by the preface "We, the People", has been the recurrent demand of recent times. Without substantive restructuring, the Nigerian state will continue to wallow in malaise. In the overall analysis, Nigeria has three options in the long run.

The first option is for Nigeria to continue headlong on the course it has been following, praying that God would intervene to rescue it from the consequences of its folly. The second is to take concrete steps to restructure the Federation, granting a substantial measure of internal self-government to the nationalities and groups of nationalities, and returning to collective self-government. The third option is for the nationalities and groups of nationalities to disband

the Federation and go their separate ways. However, in whatever case, it seems unlikely that the nationalities or groups of nationalities that can hardly agree on anything will agree to disband the Federation especially when some of them are profiting so much for its dysfunction.

The structure most likely to make for the greatest happiness of the greatest number of Nigerians is one in which state boundaries would be coterminous with ethnic and linguistic categories. Calling such an arrangement “ethno-nationalism,” the eminent political scientist, argued that it provides a people a chance “to affirm their humanity against the forces of homogenization, and to claim a social space and a cultural milieu in which they can feel at home, assert their cultural identity and self-determination for their ethnicity or nationality.” Any restructuring that ignores this fundamental truth can only perpetuate the agonies of Nigeria’s nationalities.

As I see it, what is more likely in the absence of substantive re-structuring is that, as the Centre faces growing challenge from Boko Haram and other forces, its legitimacy and authority will weaken to the point that those nationalities strong enough or determined enough or mobilized enough to break away will do so.

In other words, without substantive re-structuring, the Nigerian state will wither away.