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George F. McLean

The Idea of an African University: The Nigerian Experience

Nigerian Philosophical Studies, II

Edited by
Joseph Kenny

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Introduction

For these global times this is a most important work.

On the one hand, the West, convinced of its economic and political values, seeks to shape the rest of the world in its image. It cannot understand why the world resists; this book tells why. On the other hand, post-colonial countries search to develop, but find that the means and modalities force them toward abandoning their identity for a new colonialism. They refuse; this book also tells why. Further, as a problem well understood is half solved, this book focuses on the university as the central point for wedding scientific and cultural progress. It can contribute greatly to relating universal science to the values and goals of the people of Nigeria; this book suggests how.

The Prologue by Olusegun Oladipo, “**Liberal Versus Practical Orientation of Curriculum Development,**” develops a strong critique of reducing university education to a “meal ticket,” i.e., to simply being employable upon graduation. While this is important and jobs must be provided for, the country will depend upon the mental horizons of its best or most educated citizens. It is necessary then that the university generate a sense of human and social growth and development. To prepare solely servants of the machine would be ultimately to enslave the Nigerian people as a whole.

But the attempt to conceive this seems difficult. An older more objectivist and scientific schema would substitute a culture of belief by one of inquiry, and therefore would focus on the rational, the analytic and the scientific. This supposes that the answers to human issues are already there to be discovered, rather than being dependant upon human creativity which the university must develop.

There is recognition of the importance to society of a rhetoric that binds rather than blinds. Does this suggest a direction toward the analytic or toward the synthetic and creative, the free and constructive? The author recognizes that the universities need to play a national role in restructuring around new values, new orders of life and new social patterns, but regrets that this has not happened. Thus he sets the question: “whether Nigerian universities can live up to the challenge of being at the vanguard of efforts to recreate the structural characteristics of the society.”

Part I concerns the history of Nigerian Universities. In Chapter I “Lessons of World History of the University for Nigeria Today” Joseph Kenny lays the ground work for this important study by reviewing the history of the formation of the human intellect and hence of universities. For this he reaches back into ancient times and follows the development of philosophy as the mother of the sciences, identifying the great academies and lyceums of Greece and Rome. He follows with the medieval monasteries and their work in integrating the wisdom and science of the ancients with the new discoveries of human dignity and meaning found in the great monotheisms of Christianity and Islam. This work came to fruition in the great universities of the high Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Some of

these specialized in law or the mathematical sciences, but gradually their goal became universal, namely, to integrate all knowledge; thus they came to be called “universities”. In addition he notes the more recent history first separating national academies dedicated to research from universities dedicated to teaching, and now the trend toward uniting research with teaching in the universities.

To this he adds a brief history of the present day university in Nigeria, thereby introducing some of the main themes to be treated in detail in the following parts. These reflect in large part the change going on in universities throughout the world. Seen in this light this work is not only the story of the difficulties being faced by Nigerian universities, but directs attention also to the cultural resources which Africa can contribute to the resolution of the broader educational challenges being faced as we cross the threshold from Western hegemony to newly global times.

Chapter II by Ifeanyi Onyeonoru, “Human Capital in Nigerian Universities: The Presence of the Past and the Thrust of the Future,” is an admirably detailed analysis of the struggles of the universities during the turbulent post colonial decades. Nigeria had inherited an educational structure modeled on that of England. In British times this was extensively populated by expatriates who formed a highly favored – and paid – elite. The model is described as ivory tower and has not survived, even in England. The first Nigerian University, Ibadan, was founded in 1948 and in 1962 Nigeria had only 2000 university students. The nation was totally unprepared for the deluge to come. There are now 37 universities with 8,000 academic staff and 200,000 students – affectively the addition of one new university and 5,000 students each year. How to plan, how to train, and how to do so in the midst of political instability as the country was overwhelmed by deepening financial and administrative crises.

Chapter III by Francis Egbokhare, “University Decline and its Reasons: Imperatives for Change and Relevance,” takes up the story and notes the failure to organize, to develop and to harness university research capabilities through appropriate training, interdisciplinary interfacing and institutional networking. He lists in conclusion as related “imperatives for change”: transforming the adversarial relation between government and unions and engaging more in community promotion.

Earlier, Professor Onyeonoru had pointed out that these problems are not all homegrown. As we enter ever more into global times the actions of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund exercise a controlling influence on the poverty stricken parts of the world. These institutions founded at The Bretton Woods Conference at the end of World War II are controlled by boards whose votes are proportionate to the founding funders. As only the United States was then in position to make substantive contributions, it remains the preponderant voice. Its neo-liberal free market approach has imposed Structural Adjustment Programs which have insisted on exports and debt repayment measures at the cost of social welfare programs, education and the development of human resources. Internally, it urged that educational funds be shifted toward technical education and downward to secondary and primary education. A notably neo-colonialist attitude considered master degrees programs to be useful in order to train technicians able to run imported technology. But doctoral programs for

creative innovation and the development of adapted technology were not seen as important. What doctoral level competencies are needed can be trained, it was thought, in northern countries. These anti-university attitudes would assure that the Third World remain technologically dependent and subservient for the future.

Part II, on the curriculum challenges now faced by Nigerian universities, takes up directly the question of what is to be taught in Nigerian universities. Government directives have specified that 60 percent of university students be in technology and agriculture, with only 40 percent in the liberal arts and social sciences. The National Education Policy specifies that the goal is “producing practical persons, ... the course content will reflect our national needs, not just a hypothetical standard.” (1981, p. 24)

Chapter IV by Kolawole A. Owolabi, “Knowledge Production, Cultural Identity and Globalization: African Universities and the Dual Challenge of Authenticity and Transformation in Twenty-First Century Africa,” states the basic challenge with particular clarity. He notes that the structures of rationality in the physical and human sciences with their universality and necessity were developed in Europe and the U.S. (the North and the West). The present economic and political sciences concern human welfare from their point of view and for their benefit. For the South these are not only ill adapted, but oppressive and exploitive. Yet the African university must educate a new generation in these sciences.

At the same time, the university is expected to develop ways of living which promote African identity and culture. Yet the drive for objectivity, universality and necessity too often become the enemies of the creativity and hence of the cultures of diverse peoples. “The crisis of the University in Africa today, as never before, is precisely that of employing a Western oriented institution to challenge and dethrone Western values.... Without any doubt the essential purpose for the establishment of universities in Africa is to pursue epistemological goals and tools that may be universally relevant, but will also come out forcefully to dispel the ethnocentric claims” which devalue the African contribution. He asks, “to what extent are our academic institutions designed to meet the challenges of emancipation and transformation in a world contrived to favor the integration of cultures neglecting the peculiar social exigencies of the poor South?”

Chapter V by Olatunji A. Oyeshile, “Individualism or Pragmatism in the Production of Knowledge in Nigerian Universities,” studies this in greater detail, examining the idealist elements in British thought as well as the pragmatic orientation of the government directives. Paradoxically he concludes that in one sense the policies have not been pragmatic enough for they have not recognized that the humanities help to define the goals and ends to which science and technology must be directed. As human values direct human development it does no good to attempt to advance science by stagnating the humanities.

Chapter VI by Ogbo Ugwuanyi, “The University and the African Crisis of Morality: Lessons from Nigeria,” points out a dangerous underside of neglecting the humanizing concerns in the university context. In Nigeria this had led to the development of cults which begin by students taking the moral standards of the

university into their own hands. But they proceed gradually to turn ancient modes of African comity into dehumanizing modes of control and oppression.

We find ourselves then at the conclusion of Part II regarding the effort to solve the problem of Nigeria by directing the university to the pragmatic service of job preparation for the student and to the utilitarian concerns of the society. Upon examination all would appear to recognize that this is not sufficient to form a livable university community, to respond to the needs for a socially enlightened future citizenry and to enable them to find the path ahead for Nigeria in global times.

Part III concerns the response to the cultural challenge of Nigerian Universities, namely, to shape physical, social and cultural progress in ways consistent with a Nigerian identity and vice versa.

Chapter VII by George F. McLean, "Subjectivity, Hermeneutics and Culture," opens the way for a response to this challenge by exploring the enrichment of objective knowledge by subjectivity. By opening a scientific approach to human subjectivity, phenomenology has led to a new hermeneutic awareness. This, in turn, enables the university to develop the means to attend to the cultural identity of its people and to relate this to its many disciplines as we enter into global interchange both within and between nations.

Chapter VIII by Francis M. Isichei, "The Values System and Interest Groups of a University," responds to the needs cited in Chapter VI by Ogbo Ugwuanyi regarding the need for a moral context. It studies the dynamics of interest group formation which has special reference to the phenomenon of cults on campus. Moreover, it develops a list of basic values needed as part of the moral formation of future leaders

Chapter IX by Anthony A. Akinwale, "The Place of Theology in the University Curriculum," responds to the searing questions raised in Chapter IV by Kolawole A. Owolabi, namely, how a Nigerian university can be a Western innovation that is truly scholarly by world standards, and at the same time reflect, integrate and, where necessary, defend Nigerian values against a Western cultural imperialism. The goal is for the university by joining the two to liberate Nigeria from the new cultural imperialism and to enable it to make its unique contribution to our global times. He pointed out that the analytic scientific techniques recommended earlier were not adequate for promoting needed human and social progress, and hence that the Western structures which enslave could not be counted on to liberate: we have, he concluded, to think for ourselves. But how does one do this?

As A. Toynbee and S. Huntington point out, civilizations are built on their religions. In order to take account of one's civilization and its religious roots and to relate these to the means of contemporary progress it is necessary to develop an epistemology adequate for the task. Yet we saw in Part II that a reductionist empiricist and materialist attitude in modern times has tended to militate against taking account of values, cultures and religion.

Prof. Akinwale identifies three responses to this in the university curriculum. One is comparative; it works in objective empirical terms but is not capable of taking account of the interior human realities of values and religion. Another is phenomenological. I would not agree that this too remains at the empirical

level. Indeed it would seem that with Husserl and Heidegger it is characteristic of phenomenology to explore human interiority and subjectivity with its order of intentionality. This provides a new approach to values and to religion. It is ultimately in these terms that H.G. Gadamer developed his work in hermeneutics on culture. Paul Tillich developed a two track systematic theology which, along with considering God as absolute Being, considered him also in phenomenological terms as “man’s ultimate concern.”

But Akinwale would go further in ways important for the university. If the university is not able to take up theology itself, which reflects the reality of human faith, it will not only fail to be universal in its knowledge, but will leave the basic religious key to civilizations without critical and comprehensive discussion. This would abandon the basic motivational forces of the people to demagogues and fundamentalists, whether Christian, Islamic or other. His approach to this is first to show that the positivist limitation of science to empirical data omits the fact that most of our knowledge is not empirically verified by us, but held by belief or trust in another’s word. Second, W. Quine showed in his famous article, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” (*Philosophical Review*, 60 [1959], 20-43), that the very principle that ‘all scientific knowledge must be empirical in nature’ could not itself be empirical. As a result Logical Positivism as a philosophy died immediately; yet it lives in scientific practice.

But the great achievement of Akinwale is to show with B. Lonergan how theology is a science if that is recognized as a critical and productive process that moves ahead with human history to integrate human diversity. Theology is needed for a proper interaction of peoples within the nation and for their relationships with other nations in global times.

In sum, Part I of this analysis of the present of the Nigerian University brings us through the many concrete challenges of the last 50 years of university development. It recounts the bitter history of building a university system in the midst of a population explosion, a civil war and a revolution in the very nature of a university.

Part II began by restating this challenge in its sharpest form. Professor Owolabi formulated the question: how can the university which is Western as an institution liberate Africa from Western domination? It identified the need for the scientific competencies imparted by the university in order to train the technologists needed for the implementation of human life. But it should also the need for the humanities in order to provide and appropriately adjust the goals and means for human life. Both needs, but especially the later, remain unfulfilled.

Part III indicates some lines of enriching the usual university fare with African and particularly Nigerian cultural contexts. Our newly global times, by forcing us beyond modern boundaries not only of place but of mind, enable us to take up this challenge of opening the mind not only to what is universal and necessary, but to the diversity of cultures which are characteristic of the world’s many peoples. This pointed toward human subjectivity with its sets of values and a hermeneutics of cultures. It pointed also to the need to include theology in order

to enable the university to work with the deepest human insights and motivations essential to laying a firm pathway into the future.

This book points the way for the African university, by being truly universal in scope, to mediate between an ancient wisdom and the present global age. This is true service to its people.

George F. McLean

Prologue

Liberal Versus Practical Orientation of Curriculum Development

Olusegun Oladipo

A feature of the Nigerian social landscape today is that university education no longer confers “career advantages” on its recipients. Abroad is a situation in which a large number of university graduates find themselves unemployed after the completion of their one-year mandatory National Youth Service. The poor state of the economy is easily recognised as a key factor in the explanation of this situation. However, not quite a few Nigerians also see in the nature of the courses and programmes offered in Nigerian universities a crucial factor in this situation. For these Nigerians, many of these courses and programmes are not particularly relevant to the society. Consequently, they would want to see a university system that has immediate relevance to the needs of the society, in particular the need for professionals: doctors, engineers, economists, bankers, architects, and so on.

The Nigerian *National Policy on Education*¹ would seem to have the anxiety of these Nigerians in mind when it proclaims that:

1. The education of higher professionals will continue within the university system, and it will be rooted in a broad-based, strong, scientific background.
2. The curriculum will be geared towards producing practical persons, and the course content will reflect *our national needs, not just a hypothetical standard*.²

This concern with national needs can also be seen in the fixing of the ratio of “Science to Liberal Arts Students in our universities at 60:40³ and the establishment of some universities of technology and agriculture in the late 80s.⁴

This idea of “relevance in education” is given expression in the *University of Ibadan Vision for the 21st Century* document under the sub-title “Objectives of the Visioning Exercise” thus:

1. To make the University of Ibadan more responsive to the needs of the country, other universities and our graduates.
2. To update and modify our curricula for relevance to both national needs and global demands.⁵

Finally, in this regard, there is a more glaring deference to the practical developmental needs of the country in the orientation of some of the new private universities in Nigeria, which pay more attention to courses in Medicine, Science and Technology and Agriculture or structure their programmes in a manner that

reflects so-called national needs. A good example is Covenant University, located in Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. Reproduced below are its current programmes, which are spread across three colleges, namely: College of Business and Management Studies, College of Arts and Humanities and College of Science and Technology.⁶

A. COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES

1. Department of Accounting
 - i. Accounting
 - ii. Banking & Finance

2. Department of Business Studies
 - i. Business Administration
 - ii. Public Administration
 - iii. Marketing
 - iv. Human Resources Management
 - v. Industrial Relations
 - vi. Health Services Management

3. Department of Economics
 - i. Economics
 - ii. Development Studies
 - iii. Financial Economics

4. Department of Political Science
 - i. Political Science
 - ii. International Relations
 - iii. Policy & Strategic Studies

B. COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

1. Department of Human Development
 - i. Human Development Studies
 - ii. Psychology
 - iii. Social Works
 - iv. Demographic Studies
 - v. Philosophy

2. Department of Languages & Communication Arts
 - i. Mass Communication
 - ii. English Language
 - iii. French
 - iv. Public Relations
3. Department of Ministerial Arts

- i. Christian Religious Studies
- ii. Christian Education
- iii. Guidance & Counselling
- iv. Church Growth Strategies
- v. Mission Administration

C. COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Department of Computer & Information Technology
 - i. Management Information Systems
 - ii. Computer Science
 - iii. Information Technology
 - iv. Computer Engineering

2. Department of Environmental Sciences
 - i. Architecture
 - ii. Estate Management
 - iii. Urban & Regional Planning
 - iv. Land Surveying
 - v. Quantity Surveying

Here is a typical attempt to make university programmes “reflect the practical requirements for economic and social development”!⁷

In all, it would seem that there is now a national consensus that university education should be geared towards the cultivation of certain skills, which would make our graduates have immediate relevance to the needs of the society. In all this, very little attention is given to the idea of education as a means of self-discovery, involving the development of the capacity of the individual for creativity and innovation. More than this, is the palpable neglect of education as a tool of self-mastery and social refinement.

The argument of this essay is that, although it is true that university education in Nigeria is grossly ineffective, the reason for this is not the one that enjoys popular acceptance, namely: that the course content of many of the programmes is irrelevant to national needs, or more specifically, “the needs of the economy”. (On the contrary, most, if not all, Nigerian universities have tried to reflect these needs in their programmes.) The most crucial reason is the failure to approach university education in a manner that makes the graduates flexible, broad-minded, imaginative and creative, and also quite appreciative of their role as citizens, namely, people who have imbibed those beliefs and attitudes that make a worthwhile communal life possible.

THE MIND AS A STOREHOUSE

At issue, then, is a conception of education “as the acquisition of a given body of information and knowledge and/or set of techniques.”⁸ What is important

in this conception of education is the ability of its recipients “to perform some skill or craft.” This makes university education simply a means of producing “efficient careerists” – doctors, engineers, bankers, journalists, teachers, and so on. Underlining this conception of education is the belief that “the mind is a storehouse to be filled rather than an instrument to be used.”⁹

The kind of education based on this philosophy can only nurture a culture of belief.¹⁰ The culture of belief is a culture of almost passive observation of things and processes in nature and society. It is one in which certain ways of knowing and doing things are taken for granted and ideas, even social practices, are received from other cultures without considering their adequacy for a given human situation or throwing them into new combinations to suit prevailing circumstances.

This culture is easily allied to the tendency to stick to familiar ways of doing things, even when it is obvious that those ways have not been effective in enabling us to deal with the problem(s) at hand. We find a good example of this attitude in the unwavering commitment to the belief that the achievement of the goal of socio-economic development in Nigeria would necessarily require “the free circulation of commodities” and “non-interference by government in economic activities” – core pillars of *laissez-faire* political economy. But about two decades of sustained application of this prescription have not brought Nigeria closer to the achievement of economic salvation. It is the same attitude that makes us believe that the problem of political order in the country is simply that of democratization, when it should be clear that this process cannot succeed unless it is accompanied by a conscious attempt to nurture those beliefs, values and attitudes that compel people to cooperate. Little wonder, then, that five years of another round of democratic transition has exacerbated our differences rather than bring people closer in the achievement of common goals!

The above are just two examples of the kind of dangerous beliefs and attitudes that the culture of belief has perpetrated in Nigeria. Add to these the clear demonstration of helplessness in the face of the enormous challenge of post-colonial reconstruction confronting the country, then it would not be difficult to see that education, particularly university education, has been grossly ineffective in meeting the challenges of development in the country.

Implicated here is not what many Nigerians would wish to consider the primary problem of university education in the country – namely, failure to make employability a central factor in curriculum development. On the contrary it is overemphasis on this factor – which has led to undue fragmentation of knowledge and narrowness of focus – and the neglect of civic education as an important aspect of education for life (more on this later) which are the primary culprits.

AN ALTERNATIVE ORIENTATION

There is, thus, an urgent need for a new orientation in university education in Nigeria. This education would see education as “exploration, an unceasing inquisitiveness, even about that which is familiar.”¹² It would have two main components. First, it would be broad-based and multidisciplinary in nature.

Second, it would have a strong methodological content. Let us discuss each of these components in turn.

With regard to the first one, the shift in focus would be from the current practice in which students graduate in one discipline, say, “Economics or Political Science, Geography or Sociology”, to use the example given by the late Professor B.J. Dudley in his Inaugural Lecture,¹¹ to one in which they are, again to cite Dudley’s example, graduates in “social science, where social science constitutes a balanced mix of sub-sets of the set of disciplines we presently call the Social Sciences.”¹² The point here is to draw attention to the need for graduates who have the capacity to relate to a broad range of problems, rather than so-called specialists who are unable to see that social or human problems do not occur in neat packages to which certain stock solutions can be applied.

It should be noted, of course, that the course system, which requires that students take certain elective courses outside their major or core disciplines, is an attempt to broaden the scope of university education. It is doubtful though that this system has succeeded. In the first place, courses in the various disciplines have not been primarily designed to promote “the intercourse of the disciplines”, to borrow an apt phrase from Professor Obafemi Kujore.¹³ Second, the elective courses most students are inclined to patronise are those they think can enhance their grades, thereby improving the face value of their certificates. Implicated in all this is a crude instrumentalist conception of education which emphasises the certificate as a meal ticket more than anything else.

This takes us to a crucial reason for the failure of our system of education in bringing about the desired change in our society. This has to do with its weak methodological base. This is a crucial factor in the underdevelopment of the capacity of logical analysis, the spirit of inquisitiveness and the rationalist temper (the definition of which is provided in the quotation below) in our graduates. One of the remedies that has been provided for this problem is the stipulation by the National Universities Commission (NUC) that each student must pass at least six units of General Studies Courses. These courses include among others: Use of English, Philosophy and Logic and History, Philosophy of Science, the last two being the ones with a methodological component in their design.

Nonetheless, it is doubtful that the NUC stipulation can meet the need for:

Minds eager and able to test claims and theories against observed facts and adjust beliefs to the evidence, minds capable of logical analysis and fully aware of the nature and virtue of exact measurement.¹⁴

There are two main considerations for this judgement. First, the NUC stipulation leaves out courses which can enhance the capacity of our graduates for discernment, good judgement and logical articulation. These are courses (which can be given various titles anyway) relating to Arguments and Critical Thinking, Methodology of Rational Inquiry, Principles of Scientific Reasoning, and even Basic Statistics. Second, emphasis on the teaching of the only course whose content is largely methodological – History and Philosophy of Science – is on “the mere

furnishing of minds with facts from the sciences.”¹⁵ This is why it is the case that what the General Studies Programmes of our universities have achieved is some veneer of exposure to one or two other disciplines other than their core disciplines, not the propagation – which is what is required – of “the rational, analytical and scientific orientation”¹⁶ Yet it should be obvious that the latter is an important foundation for the build-up of a critical mass of graduates who can respond to the challenges of modern times.

The point in all this is to emphasise the mind as an agent of social transformation and the quest for a better life in any society. It is, as Alfred North Whitehead emphasised in *The adventure of ideas*, the master-key to the understanding of nature and society. It is also the basis of the sense of criticism, which is, in the words of Whitehead, the gadfly of civilisation.”¹⁷ The kind of mind that would fulfil the mandate just mentioned would be one whose orientation can only be “rational, analytic and scientific.” Hence, the need for a general scheme of education whose methodological orientation is along the lines suggested above. But in emphasising this point, are we not underplaying the need of society for a skilled labour force (professionals) who can respond to the challenges of today?

This is not the case. The point being made is not that professional training is not important. Rather, the suggestion is that this kind of training can only be efficacious if it is based on a general scheme of education that promotes the seeking spirit which animates the culture of inquiry. This culture, which is the antithesis of the culture of belief discussed earlier, involves the systematic investigation of natural and social phenomena and the use of reason to conceive of possible explanations to problems or situations. It is essentially a problem-solving orientation, which involves seeking and attempting to create a better world. What is required, then, is a more robust conception of university (undergraduate) education as a process involving a clear awareness of the intercourse of disciplines and a strong appreciation of the need for a rational, analytical, and scientific orientation in education.

It cannot be denied, however, that society needs a skilled labour force to drive its development effort. This need can be met through carefully packaged postgraduate (professional) courses. Related to this is the need to provide “ample opportunities for continuing education and updating of knowledge and skills throughout the productive career.”¹⁸ The proposal here implies that those who want to acquire certain specialised skills would need to walk an extra mile on the educational highway. This is as it should be. The task of education anywhere is one in which there are no easy victories. Failure to appreciate this fact is one of the crucial factors in the definition of the Nigerian predicament today.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This takes us to another dimension of education, which is often neglected in our society – namely, education as a tool of social refinement. This is the aspect of education that deals with the cultivation of humankind’s second nature, which, according to Walter Lippmann, “rules over the natural man [and] is at home in

the good society.”¹⁹ If the purpose of the general scheme of university education discussed above is the liberation of the human spirit, that of civic education is to promote “active, public-spirited” citizenship.²⁰ This being the case because the primary purpose of civic education is to inculcate in individuals those beliefs, values and attitudes, which foster social cooperation. Unfortunately, this is an aspect of education, which is almost totally absent in the development of university programmes.

Conspicuously absent in the formal curriculum are those courses which can engender an appreciation of the nature of society as a cooperative endeavour and also promote an awareness of the rights and obligations of citizenship. This, no doubt, is one of the reasons for the difficulties the society is facing in entrenching those values needed for building and sustaining a civic order – the values of freedom, tolerance, trust, compassion, and so on.²¹

The analysis of the nature of these values is beyond the scope of this essay. It suffices to note that the university curriculum in Nigeria does not show an appreciation of the role of education in the inculcation of these values. For example, there is no provision for the study of Nigerian History and Government in the curriculum, nor a requirement that students acquire some credits from the study of the Nigerian Constitution. The consequences of this situation are clearly noticeable. One is the absence of that “intuitive awareness of the flow of time and of the sequence and interrelationships of events”²², which is a necessary ingredient of social transformation, hence, the failure of self-understanding, which is one of the factors responsible for our inability to build a community of people united by shared aspirations and values. Another consequence is the predominance in the society, particularly among the so-called university graduates, of the me-first attitude, which is antithetical to the entrenchment of civic order.

The yawning gap in university curriculum mentioned above is made worse by the kind of educational environment in which students live and learn. This is an environment that loathes dialogue as a means of arriving at rational consensus on issues of common interest and routinely denies students the opportunity for self-rule, which is quite central to the entrenchment of a democratic culture. It should not be surprising, then, if the predominant situation on our campuses is one in which the dialogue of force and violence is more eloquent than the force of dialogue or if, as Wole Soyinka would put it, “rhetoric that blinds” is more pronounced than “rhetoric that binds”²³

In all, university education in Nigeria does not prepare students for life in an orderly community whose fabric is sustained by those beliefs, values and attitudes, which make social cooperation possible. Small wonder, then, that the Nigerian society today is best described as a normless society, that is, a society in which there is little or no regard for those values which promote “responsible citizenship”.

THE UNIVERSITY AND SOCIETY: A CONCLUSION

Underlying this essay is a basic assumption. This is that Universities in Nigeria have a crucial role to play in the process of social transformation in the country. This process requires, among other things, “restructuring around new

values, new orders of life, new social structures”.²⁴ The expectation is that the universities would be central to this process by defining “its norms and stages”. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. What obtains at the moment is a situation in which our universities have become overwhelmed by the pathologies of a society whose destiny they should at least strive to shape. The result is a society without a clear vision of its destiny, nor a sustained sense of mission to (re) discover it – in short a disoriented society. The question of how Nigerian universities can live up to the challenge of being at the vanguard of efforts to recreate the structural characteristics of this society, in order to make it orderly and functional, is one of the crucial tasks of our time.

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Ibandan, Nigeria*

NOTES

1 *National Policy on Education (NPE) (Revised)* Lagos: Federal Government, Press, 1981.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

4 Out of a total of about fifty universities, Nigeria has ten universities of technology and three universities of agriculture. This in spite of the fact that almost all the universities run courses in science, technology and agriculture.

5 *University of Ibadan: The Vision for the 21st Century*, University of Ibadan: 2004, p. 2.

6 See Covenant University advertisement for “Vacancies for academic posts” in *Saturday Punch* (Lagos), 23 February 2002.

7 See section on the section on “Programme Development and Curriculum” in T.M. Yesufu (ed.) *Creating the African University: Emerging Issues in the 70s* (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 50.

8 Billy Dudley, making a distinction between education as information and education as exploration. See B.J. Dudley, *Scepticism and Political Virtue*, An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Ibadan on Friday, 4 April 1975 (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1975), p. 25.

9 John W. Gardner, *No Easy Victories* (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row Publishers, 1968), p. 68.

10 See B. J. Dudley, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid.*

13 See Obafemi Kujore, “The Intercourse of the Disciplines”, *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies*, Number 1 April 1981, pp. 1-11.

14 Kwasi Wiredu, *Philosophy and an African Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 15-16.

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Ibid.*

17 Alfred North Whitehead, *The Adventure of Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 19.

18 *The Challenge to the South: The Report of the South Commission* (Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd., 1993), p. 278.

19 Water Lippman, *The Public Philosophy* (New York: Mentor Books, 1955), p. 105.

20 Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues: Rights, Citizenship, and Republican Liberalism* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 6.

21 An awareness of this gap in Nigeria's university education is demonstrated in the *University of Ibadan Vision Document* (Cited in Note 5) when it is proposed, on p. 19: "As part of the effort to produce well-rounded students, the *General Studies Programme* will be radically reviewed. In particular, the following courses will be incorporated into the GES syllabus: Nigerian/African History, Basic Economics, Computer Literacy, Simple Ethics and the Principles of Philosophy, Basic Entrepreneurial Skills and Rudiments of Law.

22 J. F. Ade Ajayi, "Towards a More Enduring Sense of History", *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies*, No. 3, 1983, p. 153.

23 Wole Soyinka, *Climate of Fear: The Reith Lectures 2004* (Ibadan: Bookcraft, 2004).

24 Benoit Verhaegen, "The African University: Evaluation and Perspectives" in V.Y. Mudimbe (ed.) *The Surreptitious Speech: Presence Africaine and the Politics of Otherness, 1947-1987* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 338.

Part I

The Challenges to Building a University System in Nigeria

Chapter I

The Lessons of World History of the University for Nigeria Today

Joseph Kenny, O.P.

ABSTRACT

The first part of this paper will be a survey history of universities since that of Athens, focusing on the points in the outline below. This is the “historical wisdom” which I defend. I will proceed by presenting the arguments for and against these positions as they were debated in their historical context.

The second part will compare how these same points are being debated in Nigeria today, and briefly suggest how “historical wisdom” can contribute to a solution of problems more fully discussed in other papers.

The main inspiration for this paper is John Henry Newman’s *The Idea of a University*, and *University Sketches*, completed by other literature on the history of the university and on its contemporary role.

OUTLINE OF FOCAL POINTS

1. The purpose of a university:
 - not research (research doesn’t require students)
 - not religious or moral training
 - but to teach universal knowledge:
 - embracing all knowledge:
 - literature & history: the story of man
 - science: the story of nature
 - theology: the story of God
 - with interdisciplinary dialogue, to go beyond professional skills such as specialized cramming of facts to a liberal, synthetic, critical mind
 - embracing students and masters from everywhere
2. Site:
 - place of concourse and communication
 - yet an ambiance of garden campus peace
3. Role of the Church in university:
 - apart from the teaching of theology,
 - particularly providing the “home away from home” moral environment, in the form of hostels or “fellowship” and chaplaincy. This function has also been provided by national or tribal halls or associations (or now cults) which lack the moral authority to constrain brawls.

4. Social role of university:

Genesis by

not decree of establishment (if that is all, it is worthless)

but the attraction of a master/professor, who generates enthusiasm and progress.

From humble personal beginnings it acquires a legal status, which gives it stability, though at the same time limiting the flamboyant freedom of the professor

The professorial corps (as opposed to specialist tutors) is the autonomous intellectual conscience of society (as the Church is the autonomous moral conscience), always at odds with a tyrannical government

The bonds forged by student fellowship translate later into political interest groups which may drag the country in good or bad ways, but will seldom defy the *alma mater*.

HISTORICAL SURVEY

A good resumé of the history of universities and the issues involved in what a university should be is found in John Henry Newman's *The Idea of a University* and his *University Sketches*. But the most thorough study of universities from their Greek roots up to 1860 is Stephen d'Irsay's *Histoire des uiversités françaises et étrangères*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1933 & 1935). The following is a summary of the main points of the latter work, except where I refer to other sources.

*Ancient Times*¹

If Plato can be given the credit of inventing the university by founding his Academy, he was building upon an already established movement of many people dedicated to the pursuit and communication of wisdom. Socrates was only his immediate preceding master in this enterprise.

How did this movement get started? Aristotle, at the beginning of his *Metaphysics*, says it is wonder. Wonder, the curiosity and desire to understand the universe of which we are a part, led men to study and philosophize. Plato's Academy represents the coming together of people with experience in this, people who can share their ideas with critical colleagues and challenge one another in the process of refining their knowledge.

The pre-Socratics were pioneers in the science of nature. Wondering how one thing could be transmuted into another, that is, the constituent elements of things, they came up with theories of these constituent elements of physical things and the forces that are responsible for change. Socrates changed the focus to the study of man himself, and his conduct, happiness and life in society — themes which Plato developed.

After the Academy came the Lyceum of Aristotle, with a more thorough study of ethics and natural science in all its branches, and the invention of logic and metaphysics. There followed the Stoa, the Museum founded by Ptolemy in Alexandria, and Hadrian's Athanaeum in Rome.

All these schools had the liberal arts as their foundation. These varied in number and name but, through Boethius, Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville, came to be fixed as the *Trivium* of grammar (with literature), rhetoric and dialectics, and the *Quadrivium* of arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy.

Of all these schools, it cannot be doubted that Aristotle's Lyceum had the broadest curriculum, embracing all knowledge available at that time, and held together in a synthesis by certain basic principles. In Rome, on the contrary, rhetoric was the apex and limit of knowledge, even as it included moral and political philosophy.

The driving force of the Greek schools was the influence of their masters, which attracted students from far and wide. The Roman schools, however, became government establishments with a fixed curriculum (such as that of Quintilian) for the training of future senators and other state officers.

Medieval

Both the Greek and the Roman schools came to an end with the invasions of the Vandals, Huns and other tribes, who ushered in the Dark Ages—but not before an outpost of learning was established in Ireland and Britain. From these islands of culture came the personnel for Charlemagne's (d. 800) restoration of learning in Europe.

The Carolingian restoration did not include all ancient Greek learning. The seven liberal arts were there. Medicine, theology and law were added, but the natural sciences, mathematics and metaphysics were missing. A transmuted version of Platonism was present in the great corpus of St. Augustine's writings, and this was amplified in other patristic and pre-scholastic Church writers. The new study centres were the monasteries and the episcopal schools for the training of clergy. But Charlemagne also founded schools open to the laity as well as the clergy.²

At the same time that Charlemagne was inaugurating a restoration of learning in Europe, the 'Abbâsid caliph al-Ma'mûn inaugurated al-Hikma University in Baghdad. It was a university in the true sense by the fact that it gathered scholars from every background — Christians, Jews and Muslims — and it introduced and advanced the study of all available learning. Greek mathematical, medical and scientific works, particularly of Aristotle, were systematically translated into Arabic, and new original studies were made. Unfortunately, this university was short-lived, having to close down in the face of fanatical mobs led by Ahmad ibn-Hanbal. The philosophers had provoked the pious by some of their teachings, such as the eternity of the world and the denial of the resurrection of the body, but the Hanbalites saw heresy in the very pretension that there can be anything true or worth knowing outside the Qur'ân. Arabic philosophy then found refuge and patronage in Muslim Spain, which was its gateway to Europe, until it was banned there also, putting the Muslim world into an intellectual slumber until it was rudely awakened in the 19th century by a giant Europe at its door.

In Europe, the chaos of the Dark Ages gave way first to the relative peace assured by military strongmen turned feudal nobles, then to the greater security of larger kingdoms which for the most part had a *modus vivendi* of free interchange

among themselves. In these conditions arising in the early middle ages, cities sprung up, a new bourgeoisie of traders and craftsmen developed, international trade and travel became common. The open schools of the cities now became universities in the proper sense. Learning from all parts of the known world was introduced, and students from all parts of Europe flocked to them. Paris and many more universities not only flourished, but became a new force to reckon with in the politics of that time, since from them came the ideas that shaped people's minds and motivated them.

The term "university", up to the early 13th century, did not have the meaning it has today. It simply was a common noun designating the assembly of schools and masters that formed the *studium generale*, the proper technical term. Only later in the 13th century did the term "university" replace *studium generale*. The idea of a school to teach all knowledge was also reflected in the patronage King Louis IX gave to Vincent of Beauvais to produce an encyclopedia, *Speculum majus*, that covered all branches of learning then available, and was the first European work to introduce Arabic numerals.³

The 13th century saw the height of European medieval intellectual effervescence with the introduction of Aristotle and his Arab commentators. Just like the pious Muslims, the Church was upset at the teaching of the eternity of the world, the denial of bodily resurrection, and the Spaniard Ibn-Rushd's teaching that there is just one intellect common to the whole human race and that this alone remains after bodily death. After some condemnations and projects to sift the wheat from the chaff in the new learning, Thomas Aquinas single-handedly did this very sifting in commentaries on all the major works of Aristotle. He offered the world an Aristotle ready for Christian consumption, one which could also serve as a platform for theology better than Plato. Philosophy and science survived in Europe, autonomous from theology, yet at the service of theology and sometimes steered or corrected by theology.

Theology already had extensively used dialectics as a method of elucidating the truth by contrasting it with alternative errors. Abelard's *Sic et non* pushed this further, giving rise to the "disputed question", in which all possible answers are considered and weighed before a conclusion is reached. The "new logic", Aristotle's rules for syllogisms (*Prior analytics*) and for demonstrative argument (*Posterior analytics*), was used in monumental new *summas* of theology and philosophy.

Paris was the most prominent of the medieval universities. It was an outgrowth of an episcopal school for the training of the clergy, but the fame of its teachers of liberal arts, philosophy and theology attracted students, cleric and lay, from all around. It outgrew the narrow confines of the Cathedral island and spread to the west bank of the Seine. Various crises in the 13th century led to its gaining a papal charter making it independent both of secular authority and the local archbishop and his representative, the chancellor.

Bologna, another important university, specialized in law, both Roman and canon law. Medicine was pursued, first at Salerno in the 12th century and then at Montpellier, which attracted great numbers of Jews fleeing persecution at the hands of the Muwahhid regime in Muslim Spain. In England, Oxford and Cambridge achieved university status in the 13th century after humble beginnings in the previous century.

The popes supported the autonomy of these universities against intervention by the king. In contrast to Paris, the chancellor for Oxford was not a representative of the bishop of Lincoln (since Oxford was in that diocese), but a member of the academic staff. His authority became ever stronger as the University's chief executive, who could stand up to the king.

Some universities were founded by dissident groups separating off from others. Most of them did not survive, but one that did was Padua, which broke off from Bologna. In Orléans a university arose around the study of canon law, a subject Paris was prohibited from teaching. The University of Naples, founded by Frederick II, did not prosper at first because it was under the emperor's firm thumb. Only later in the century, under different rulers, did it begin to blossom. At Toulouse a university was founded with a papal charter under the sponsorship of the count of Toulouse and the king of France. A papal charter, thereafter, became a requisite for the foundation of a university; no longer could a spontaneous group of scholars establish a university. Yet university government followed two different models: One was the Paris model, where the masters were in control; the other was the Bologna model where the students governed (d'Irsay, I, 146).

In Spain and Portugal there were many famous schools, some of which grew into universities. One of these was Coimbra, an outgrowth of the cathedral school and some monastic schools, which was recognized around 1288. Another great university was Salamanca, founded by Alfonso IX with a papal charter around 1220, but also an outgrowth of previous schools. Valladolid, founded in the 13th century, began to flourish only a century later. Spain was the first to introduce government regulation of university standards.

The universities through most of the 13th century were financially poor, with no salaries or fixed buildings. Students were the first to receive the support of endowments, in the form of scholarships and more importantly in the form of "colleges" founded to house and care for them. Colleges, sometimes belonging to different "nations", multiplied in all the universities and extended their role to providing some of the teaching. One of the 13th century colleges at Paris, the Sorbonne, eventually gave its name to the entire university.

The 14th and 15th centuries saw a multiplication of new universities. Every prince wanted to have a university in his territory as a mark of prestige. This, however had its dark side. The new universities, and soon the old, became bastions of nationalism. Students were discouraged from traveling to other countries to study. Paris itself succumbed to nationalism, driving out foreign students and joining the cause of the king and his anti-Pope during the Western schism. While national colleges at universities disappeared, the universities enjoyed government patronage and became well endowed with buildings and funds. This had the effect of eroding and eventually eliminating their independence.

Academically, the pessimism engendered by the black death of the 14th century found expression in Nominalism (under William of Ockham). This was a lack of faith in the power of human intellect not only to save people from the plague, but also to know anything at all but names or words. Later, Luther, with his nominalist training, saw both the human intellect and the human will as corrupt and resigned himself to reading the Bible and waiting for the inspiration of the Holy

Spirit. The spread of Platonism in the Renaissance was another factor undermining confidence in reason and science.

Modern Times

In the meantime, away from the disputations of Nominalist or Aristotelian classrooms, new winds were blowing. Italy, with its tradition of jurisprudence and consequent emphasis on rhetoric, became the birthplace of the Renaissance, with the introduction of a mostly forgotten world of Latin and Greek classics; at the same time vernacular literature, art and music flourished. Greek masters from the east, where there were no real universities because of Byzantine autocracy, came to Western Europe to teach, especially after the fall of Constantinople. The new humanists had a bond among themselves which transcended the new nationalism.

Besides, a brave new world of scientific experimentation was underway. It was not an outgrowth of scholasticism, but its very existence would not have been possible if the Church, thanks to Thomas Aquinas, had not once and for all recognized the principle of the autonomy of science. Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Kepler and others worked entirely outside the universities. Only Galileo was an academic. A skirmish arose when he temerarily dismissed the Biblical assertion (e.g. Psalm 19) that the sun goes around the earth — a position already published by Cardinal Nicholas of Cues in 1432. This time it was the theologians who, in time, had to revise their Biblical exegesis.

The Church was not slow in appropriating the new science. Jesuit universities were abreast with the latest discoveries, while still imparting the Latin classics.⁴ With the Council of Trent, diocesan seminaries were re-established, after the medieval universities had absorbed them. In the Lutheran parts of Germany, however, the princes took control of the universities and imposed Lutheranism. Most of the staff and students fled, and many universities closed down. Others, however, survived or were newly founded with the endowment of confiscated church property. These for a long time emphasised religious studies and discouraged science. German wars in the 16th and 17th centuries further devastated the universities. The same sad climate prevailed in England, where Henry VIII and Elizabeth I would not tolerate any independent religious or intellectual establishment. Cambridge and Oxford bowed to their wishes, and as a result the university as such became non-functional, as the colleges took over the teaching that survived.

The Spanish in the 16th century founded universities in Mexico City and in Lima, Peru. Dominicans founded the University of Santo Domingo in 1538 (which later fell into other hands), and that of Santo Tomás in Manila in 1611. In the 17th century Protestant territory saw the establishment in Edinburgh and Leyden of two eminent universities orientated towards the new science. These led the way in the enormous advances made in anatomy and medicine in the 17th century.

Before these sciences were seriously adopted in the universities, the Enlightenment pioneer, Descartes, published his *Méditations de la première philosophie* and *Principes*. An outgrowth of Renaissance Platonism, these were popular because mathematical thought, together with poetic imagination and mysticism, were very marketable at the time. Descartes quickly displaced Aristotele

in most universities, but his thought was resisted in Church quarters because of its incompatibility with some Christian teachings. In France the University of Paris (at that time in a very decadent state) and the King opposed Descartes on political grounds, because he was associated with the Jansenist heresy which threatened the unity of France. Louis XIV patronized the Jesuits as allies against Jansenism, but the Jesuits were equally opposed to Gallicanism, which was French nationalism against subordination to the Pope. Later the Jesuits were suppressed for a time because of their position. In Protestant theological faculties, where Descartes was accepted, theological rationalism was the result, while those who opposed this trend moved towards Pietism.

The world of science made its greatest development at this time in the new academies, such as the *Academia dei Licei* in Rome, the Royal Society in Britain and the *Académie Royale des Sciences* in France. These were purely research institutes, with no teaching engagement, and they, too, received government patronage. In the 17th century, research was the exclusive domain of these academies, while universities confined themselves to teaching. In the 18th century, with the foundation of the University Göttingen, research and teaching began to converge in the universities. German universities dropped all Protestant mistrust of philosophy and science and opened up to all the new horizons of learning. In Britain the mathematics and physics of Newton gradually took over. At the same time university teaching was expected to be utilitarian.

The Enlightenment of the 18th century, promoted by Voltaire in France and Kant in Germany, led to the French Revolution with its destruction of all education, and in Germany to the irrational romantic pantheism of Hegel, Fichte and others. Napoleon spread the ruination of French education to the other European territories that felt his rampaging. The intellectual world of the 19th century, rooted in centuries of developing tradition, had a momentum of its own, but it constantly had to deal with harassment from totalitarian governments, in spite of their liberal rhetoric, especially in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Russia, where universities were first founded in that century. Universities also suffered from recurrent wars, revolutions and intensifying nationalism, with which they often were involved.

In the latter half of the 19th century, Romanticism gave way to Positivism, which was fascinated by the ever-accumulating discoveries about the world of nature. Its theoretical side was a rationalist religion of mechanist materialism, which occasionally verged towards idealism, but the 19th century was noted not for its theory but for the quantity of factual knowledge it amassed. Specialization became more and more prominent, and no satisfactory synthetic vision was found.

In the 20th century, United States universities held the lead both in teaching and research, as liberal funding for every area of specialization attracted the best scholars. These enjoyed an atmosphere of academic freedom and competitiveness, where the best talent was rewarded.

NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES IN THE LIGHT OF THE WISDOM OF HISTORY

Universities have just over 50 years of existence in Nigeria, from the foundation of University College, Ibadan, in 1948. It is common knowledge that in the early days standards were higher, and that the present multitude of universities, poorly funded, teeming with students and beset by constant strikes, have fallen on hard times. In my 22 years at the University of Ibadan there was never a year that we kept to an academic calendar, because of one disruption or another.

What can history teach us in planning for better times?

The Purpose of a University

Teaching or Research? Newman, in his own survey of the history of universities, stated the purpose of the university simply as that of teaching universal knowledge. For him, research was not the focus, because there were at his time the continental “academies” and the British “societies” dedicated exclusively to research. The 20th century largely brought the two together under the single umbrella of the university, even though Newman had a point in saying that the good researcher is not necessarily a good communicator or teacher. Nigerian universities have rightly adopted the principle that its academicians must not only teach, but also be engaged in serious research and communicate the results of their research in publications that meet world academic standards.

Universality of Knowledge. Newman was simply echoing the wisdom of the ages in saying that the university must embrace all branches of learning. Nigerian universities have kept this principle but, because of poor funding, have had to curtail some areas of study or give them minimal attention. Considerable pressure has been exerted to curtail arts in favour of science, in the interests of national development, but the value of a broad, liberal education has been retained.

The arts, particularly literature and history, are recognized as the story of man, while science is the story of nature, and theology the story of God. Nigerian universities commendably teach all three areas of learning, even though not always with the same degree of success. Students in Nigerian universities are expected to do more than cram facts in view of gaining professional skills. By taking subsidiaries in other subjects, they are expected to engage in interdisciplinary dialogue in order to develop a liberal, synthetic and critical mind.

Universality in Personnel. The universality of a university implies a mixing of students and masters from everywhere, so as to avoid inbreeding and expand cultural and scientific horizons. Over the course of history, universities were at their greatest when this was the case but, as we have seen in the first part, this was more the exception than the rule. Nationalism in Europe greatly hampered the universality of universities. United States universities in the 20th century owe their greatness to the latitude of their student and staff intake.

Nigerian universities at first were dominated by British lecturers. A Nigerianization policy was understandable, but unfortunately present policy provides no quota for foreign staff, African or otherwise, to receive appointments under the same conditions as Nigerians. They have to take two-year renewable contracts, with no security, pension or sabbaticals. The effect has been to discourage non-Nigerians from entering the system, and the result is an increasing homogeneity of the staff. This is accentuated when regional, and not national criteria are brought in, and when there are fewer opportunities to get degrees abroad. The extreme result, contrary to the spirit of a university, is a staff all of one tribe who have done their Bachelor, Masters and Doctorate all in the home university.

Universality in Ambiance. To attract masters and students, a university must be within reach of major population centres. It must also have the amenities of modern life, as well as the tranquility of a garden campus. In Nigeria, we should also add security from armed robbers. In modern times, a good road, basic infrastructures and a market can make almost any beautiful site suitable. Most Nigerian universities have good sites, but lack adequate internet service, now an essential avenue to knowledge in its universality.

Moral Training

The morals of students (especially) in universities has been a problem throughout history. In Nigeria, there has been much discussion about the role of university authorities in prohibiting some wrongdoing, particularly violence (from cults), dishonesty in exams, and prostitution.

Newman insists that moral formation is not the purpose of a university. The task of the university is academic, and, while maintaining staff discipline, its officers cannot be weighed with the responsibility of looking after the moral behaviour of students.

There are other institutions more suited for moral training, particularly religious bodies. In the history of European universities, church-run colleges, which were halls of residence, provided the “home away from home” moral environment. In Nigeria there are a few church-run hostels for university students, but most of the halls are owned and managed by the university. The main impact of religious groups has been through campus chapels or mosques. In medieval Europe there were also colleges run by national associations, equivalent to our tribal or home-town associations. These never had the moral authority to constrain brawls, and in the present Nigerian scene they are unable to deal with the menace of cults.

The social Role of the University

Government Recognition or Interference? The genesis of a university is not a decree of establishment. If that is all there is, it is worthless. But it is the attraction of a master or professor, who generates enthusiasm and progress. From humble personal beginnings it eventually acquires a legal status, which gives it stability, though at the same time limiting the flamboyant freedom of the professor.

Some form of accreditation, like the papal charters of old, is needed for general recognition of the university's degrees. The question is which sort of accreditation, and particularly what should the government role in this be.

We have seen how, in Europe, the autonomy granted by a papal charter gradually ceded to government control in many places. In Britain, although universities gave way to the government, teaching colleges kept their autonomy. The greatest system of university autonomy, however, is in the United States where accrediting associations are made up of member universities; the government has no supervisory role whatsoever, except to exclude discrimination on the basis of religion, race, sex or age. In Nigeria, the complaint has been that the National Universities Commission (NUC) has eroded university autonomy. Political appointees who are academic upstarts come into universities with established traditions and procedures and try to dictate changes. This is unacceptable.

But what is the alternative? There must be some control to stop, for instance, weak new universities from establishing low-standard, money-making study centres in the big cities. With the corruption and lack of experience in these universities, it would make no sense to create an accrediting association in which each university has one vote. I do not have the answer, but one must be found.

The University's Influence on Society. University professors, both singly and as associates, have had a considerable influence on public opinion and policy making in their countries. These are men who are not mere specialists or tutors in their field, but have a broad understanding of man and society in all their complexity. Their wisdom may also be enriched by a good sense of history and metaphysics. The university intelligentsia has traditionally been the autonomous intellectual conscience of society, just as the Church has been its autonomous moral conscience. The first priority in the agenda of any tyrant will be to muzzle the voices of the Church and of the universities.

In Nigeria, as in the England of Henry VIII, some university professors have been collaborators with tyrants, eager for good paying jobs in Abuja, while others have been martyrs for the truth.

Universities make their influence felt on society also through the solidarity established among alumni or "old boys". The bonds forged by student fellowship translate into powerful political interest groups. These may drag the country in good or bad ways, but the one constant is loyalty to the alma mater. In these days of university financial distress, successful alumni have rallied to appeals for assistance. Unfortunately, Nigerian universities have not yet established a system of endowment investments with security and transparency that could be the financial backbone of the universities as they are in the U.S.

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NOTES

1 Cf. E.B. Castle, *Ancient education and today* (Penguin, 1961).

2 See G. Paré, A. Brunet and T. Tremblay, *La renaissance du XIIIe siècle. Les écoles et l'enseignement* (Ottawa, 1933)..

3 See Astrick I. Gabriel, *The educational ideas of Vincent of Beauvais* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1962; cf. also Lawrie Daly, *The medieval university* (N.Y.: Sheed & Ward, 1961).

4 See Robert Schwickerath, *Jesuit education* (St. Louis: Herder, 1903); George Ganss, *St. Ignatius' idea of a Jesuit university* (Milwaukee: Marquette U.P., 1956).

Chapter II

Human Capital in Nigerian Universities: The Presence of the Past and the Thrust of the Future¹

Ifeanyi Onyeonoru

The presence of the past can lead us to broader interpretations to
involve contemporary history. – Otite 1992

It was Professor Onigu Otite who in his inaugural lecture in 1983 sensitized researchers to the significance of the past in understanding the present and by implication for constructing the future. The university system in Nigeria has been passing through crisis, which has threatened the ideals of the institution. The crisis is historical and constitutes parts of a wider governance crisis in Nigeria – mismanagement of public utilities and funds, poor policy execution, environment, authoritarian rule and the under-funding of social services, especially since the neo-liberal reforms in Nigeria. The wider crisis has affected Nigerian universities in specific ways, related to three broad areas: inadequate university funding, lack of respect for university autonomy or academic freedom, and poor conditions of service. These have tended to jeopardize the basic objectives of excellence in teaching, research and community development associated with the university. The efforts made by Nigerian intellectuals to restore the system often pitched the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) against the government and its agencies, both at the federal and state levels. The conflicts have had a devastating impact on the university system in Nigeria.

A combination of decline in funding and facilities, largely due the neo-liberal state policies (Onyeonoru forthcoming), authoritarian administration, poor conditions of service, non-rational admission of students, and the depletion in academic staff strength through brain drain led to a fundamental decay in the university system on the social, infrastructural, institutional, and intellectual levels. Signs of collapse which began to show by the 1980s became evident in the 1990s in the form of acute shortage of research and learning facilities for both staff and students, dilapidation of existing but often outdated infrastructure, and unmotivated workforce (academic and non-academic). The arbitrary interference in university governance by military governments and their authoritarian handling of university matters – often without regard to constituted statutory structures of the system also aggravated the problems of university autonomy (Tamuno 1991, 1998; NUC 1994; Ojo 1995; Asobie 1996; Awopetu 1998; Onyeonoru 2000a, 2001a; Onyeonoru and Adeyinka 2001) – made ASUU embark on several national strikes, in 1973, 1988, 1992, 1994 and 1996, 1998, 2001 and 2003.

The 1992 strike of ASUU, in particular, culminated in negotiations on the issues in dispute and the signing that year of a collective agreement between ASUU and the Federal Government of Nigeria regarded by ASUU as being of great value. The agreement was to be reviewed every three years to reflect social and economic changes including inflationary trends and costs of living. The Agreement freely reached and duly signed by the government and ASUU unfortunately became a basis for intensive contest between the parties, so that up to 2003 there has rarely been a session without an industrial conflict, sometimes protracted, such as those of 1996 and 2002-3 that stretched for about six months.

The 1996 ASUU strike was basically carried out in defense of the 1992 agreement following violations of some of its sections by the Federal Military Government and university authorities. The Government for instance refused to review the agreement when it was due in May 1995, contrary to the agreement, while the then Minister of Education, Mr. Ben Nwabueze, argued that the agreement was a document of limited obligation, only binding in honor. The Government's position at variance with the reports of three different panels of investigation set up at different times by the Federal Government itself – all of which urged her to honor the agreement. These were the Kayode Eso Panel (1993), Ibrahim Dasuki Panel (1993), and the Kalu Anya Panel Report (1993-94).

In a bid to avert the 1996 strike, ASUU was reported to have made several attempts between May 1995 and May 1996 to get the government to renegotiate the 1992 agreement with its team, but to no avail. After about eleven months of unsuccessful soliciting, ASUU began its “warning strikes” which were staggered through the week – an interesting innovation in labour relations in Nigeria. When all these failed to bring the government to the negotiating table, ASUU called out its members on a nationwide strike, which began on April 9, 1996. This eventually compelled the Government to commence negotiations with the union.

On May 15, 1996, however, the then Minister of Education, Dr. M.T. Liman, unilaterally aborted the negotiations and announced the proscription of ASUU at the national level, to the shock of all and sundry. This was later followed by a directive that the local unions should negotiate with their respective councils – a form of deregulated collective bargaining structure. The directive was resisted by ASUU while the strike continued. In a bid to coerce the intellectuals back to work (rather than embark on negotiation), the Government, in alliance with university administrators, subjected the university teachers to several forms of humiliation, harassment, physical violence, starvation and job losses. In some universities, the lecturers were sacked on the basis of which they were ordered out of their residential quarters on the campuses while their salaries were stopped. Irrespective of all these, the strike lasted for more than six months.

As has often been the case, the immediate effect of the strike was the distortion of the academic calendar in most universities. Some institutions responded to the situation by compressing the calendar to accommodate the lost period, leading to lowering of standards and staff fatigue. Others, like the University of Ibadan that insisted on running the full calendar, had to lose a whole session to normalize the calendar. By implication, the authoritarian response of government to the strikes of the Union caused the conflicts to drag on, transforming them into a vicious cycle of crises.

The overall impact on the university system relates to value distortion and system dissonance (Onyeonoru 2001b).

The major objective of this chapter is to trace the remote and contemporary causes of the incessant industrial conflicts in Nigerian universities as a framework for understanding the prevailing tensions in the university system and their implications for the future of Nigerian universities. The key argument is that the deep-seated problems that underlie the ASUU-Government conflicts have remained fundamentally unresolved, irrespective of about three decades of struggles by ASUU, while the Government has preferred cosmetic solutions and authoritarian approaches in dealing with the problem, with implications for conflicting ideas of a university: that of the Government and that of the academics.

THE REMOTE CAUSES OF THE GOVERNMENT-ASUU CONFLICTS

Society cannot do without history – not to go back to it, but to refer to it to explain the present phenomenon and find pointers for future development. The 1992 Agreement between ASUU and the Federal Government of Nigeria was a landmark document. The signing of the agreement between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff of Nigerian Universities (ASNU) took place on Thursday, 3rd September 1992. The Agreement was described by the Union as a “jewel of inestimable value” to the university community and to the nation at large. According to the Union:

The Agreement halted the brain drain from the universities, at least temporarily. It raised the quality of teaching and research in the Universities, at least for a while. It kept the mobile police and soldiers out of campuses because student demonstrations and protests against poor conditions of hostels, etc. reduced drastically in number and frequency between 1992 and 1995 (ASUU, 1996).

Given its envisaged significance for the recovery of the university system that was neck deep in crisis by the 1990s, the 1992 Agreement was to become a reference point in the ASUU struggles of the 1990s and 2000s.

The Agreement entitled “Agreement Between The Federal Government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Of Nigerian Universities” was negotiated in two phases. The first phase began on 31 March 1992, and terminated in a deadlock in July 1992. The second phase began on August 20, 1992, and ended in an Agreement on the 3rd of September 1992. The Agreement was signed on behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria by Owelle Gilbert P.O. Chikelu, the Honorable Minister of Establishment and Management Services, and on behalf of the Academic Staff of Nigerian Universities by the then President of ASUU, Dr. Attahiru M. Jega. President Ibrahim B. Babangida also endorsed it on behalf of the Federal Government, while ASUU’s National Executive Council (NEC) did the same on behalf of the Union. Thus the agreement became a valid contract within the meaning of the Trade Dispute Act of 1976 and Cap. 437 of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990. The signing of the

document by the two parties marked the end of the protracted negotiation between the government and the ASUU, which was aimed at revitalizing the university system.

Shortly after the signing of the document, it became evident that the Federal Government was bent on violating several aspects of the Agreement. According to ASUU (1996):

The first attack was launched on Chapter Six of the Agreement. The University Academic (Staff) Salary Scale (UASS) was first surreptitiously, then openly and more brazenly, merged with the Elongated University Salary Scale (EUSS). Second, the Agreement was declared by the Secretary of Education as a mere “gentleman’s agreement” – a contract of “imperfect obligations” which would be implemented “only so long as overriding public interest or other compelling circumstances do not make it impracticable or inexpedient to do so”. The third assault on the agreement was in 1994. The areas attacked this time were Chapters Four (dealing with funding of universities) and Five (concerning university autonomy and academic freedom).

On the UASS for instance, a communiqué of the meeting of Ibadan Zone of ASUU held at the University of Maiduguri, on Saturday February 27, 1993, ASUU communicated in strong terms the objection of the Union to the unilateral cancellation of the University Academic Staff Salary (UASS) by the Secretary for Education and Youth Development, Professor Ben Nwabueze. The Union described the cancellation as a breach of Section 6.1 of the Agreement with the Federal Government and that the action would impede the ability of the nation to protect the endangered academic and to halt the brain drain, which had devastated the universities. The Union drew attention to the fact that “the importance of a separate academic salary structure does not lie in its monetary value. Its value, we state categorically, is its guarantee of a base from which to sustain and protect the essential function of the university, to attract and to retain academic staff now and in the future. It has nothing to do with denigrating other workers in the university sector, or with denying other categories of workers whatever they deserve.” Consequently, a widely publicized communiqué issued by the Union after the meeting stated among others that:

the decision by the Secretary for Education and Youth Development to cancel the UASS is unjustifiable, unacceptable and totally condemnable... In pursuance of this, we call on the government to act to avoid a needless crisis in Nigerian universities. We, therefore, expect the government to correct the error of breach of the agreement within four weeks from the date of this announcement (ASUU 1993).

Little surprise, therefore, that a major conflict ensued between ASUU and the Federal Government that led to a long strike in 1996. The remote causes of the 1996

ASUU strike, however, preceded but embraced the issues related to the ASNU/FGN 1992 Agreement. The root causes lay in unresolved grievances in previous ASUU-Government conflicts spanning from 1970s – which became issues for dispute in the 1992 strike and led the 1992 ASUU/Federal Government Agreement. However, the dominant authoritarian tendency of the Federal Government in industrial relations (Onyeonoru 2001a; Onyeonoru and Adeyinka 2001) led to violations of the Agreement by the Government – which precipitated further strikes. This section will endeavour to trace these remote links with the 1992 strike as the issues relate to the three traditional areas of conflict between the Federal Government and ASUU as follows: funding, conditions of service and university autonomy and academic freedom.

FUNDING

Writing on the university crisis in Nigeria, a former Vice Chancellor of two federal universities in Nigeria² stated:

Central to decay and desecration is funding and it does not need a gift of prophetic wisdom to surmise that unless this is addressed positively and aggressively there can be no turnaround in the status of Nigerian universities (Akinkugbe 2001:3).

The history of university education funding in Nigeria can be traced back to the establishment of the University College Ibadan in 1948, which marked the beginning of university education in the country. In his historical outline of university funding in Nigeria, Ukeje (2002) noted that Ibadan was funded initially from two main sources. First, the Nigerian government provided 70 percent of the funds while the United Kingdom provided 30 percent of the total recurrent cost. In addition to the above named sources, private sector organizations also made financial contributions to the university. The Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board, for instance, made an endowment to the Faculty of Agriculture at Ibadan which was used for the Faculty building (Omeregbe 1995), while the United African Company (UAC) Ltd, made donations that were utilized for the building of Trenchard Hall in the University of Ibadan. With the establishment of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, on 7 October 1960 as the first regional university, the institution received its funding from the then government of Eastern Nigeria. The Eastern Nigerian Marketing Board also complemented the government's funding. Nsukka was followed by the establishment of three more universities in Lagos, Zaria and Ile-Ife – the first as a federal university and the rest regional – following the Ashby Commission's Report. In 1972, the Mid-West Region established the University of Benin and this brought the universities in Nigeria to six – two federal universities and four regional universities. The six universities that later became known as “first generation universities” were well-funded. In the case of the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, for instance, Ukeje (2002:5) observed that:

from the beginning in 1962 to 1975, there was no substantive difference each year between the amount requested by the university and the amount received from the Regional Government. In fact it

was reported that there were years in which the amount received was slightly more than the amount requested.

With adequate funding, the universities were able to maintain internationally reputable standards, as graduates from Nigerian universities were easily admitted into post-graduate studies in reputed universities abroad. Then in 1975, the Federal Government unwisely established seven more universities at Jos, Sokoto, Kano, Maiduguri, Ilorin, Calabar and Port Harcourt and went further to take over the four existing regional universities. Hence, while the establishment prior to 1975 was based on rational considerations related to need, as indicated by the various commissions that recommended them, the post 1975 universities were established more or less by military fiat. The year 1975 thus marked the beginning of the problem of university funding in Nigeria. The case of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, is a case in point. After the 1975-76 session, for the first time ABU recorded a shortfall of 20 percent in the amount requested, and since then the funding of the Nigerian universities has been on the decline (Ukeje 2002). This was followed up in 1978, with the abolition of tuition fees for undergraduate studies in Nigerian universities by the Federal Government. The above situation was made worse by the third phase of university expansion in Nigeria, which resulted in the establishment of seven more federal Universities of Technology and eight State-owned universities by the Second Republic politicians between 1979 and 1983. This expansion was guided by political considerations; funding implications were rarely given due consideration.

By 1986, the funding of Nigerian universities had declined by between 30 percent and 35 percent at a time when inflation had risen between 400-500 percent. University funding dropped from 416 million in the 1985/86 session to 316 million in the 1986/87 session, leading to the payment of salaries being in arrears (ASUU 1987a). The effects were stifling for university administrators. At the University of Ibadan, for instance, the administration invited the staff unions on December 10, 1987 to inform them of an impending retrenchment of staff due purely to lack of funds to appropriately run the university.

The government grants for the current academic year were put at about 31 million and internally generated revenue at 4 million. The 35 million revenue was estimated to be 11 million short of what the university required to maintain a reasonable standard of operation. (ASUU 1987b).

The above experience was not limited to Ibadan, but was universal to the Nigerian universities. Hence, by 1991, the gap between the request of the National University Commission (NUC) that dispenses funds to Federal universities and the Federal Government budgetary allocation to the universities was as high as 87.2 percent (FOS, 1995). This was associated with collapse in teaching and research facilities and activities and led to frustration of teachers and students. The high increases in student intake, which rose by almost 100 percent between 1987 and 1991, without commensurate expansion in facility (Onyeonoru, 2000a), also exacerbated the problem.

The issue of funding is compounded by the assertion of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that the public sector in Nigeria was over-bloated, resulting in high wage bills. This informed their insistence on gross reductions in public sector expenditure by the Federal Government as part of the conditionality for debt re-scheduling and financial assistance. With particular reference to Nigerian universities, the Bretton Woods Institutions argued that African countries do not need universities, since their brilliant students could always embark on their university training abroad, in Europe and America (Awopetu 1998). There was also the claim by the Bank:

that the reduction of the number of universities /polytechnics will help to channel resources to intermediate level technical manpower development which is lacking in much of Africa. Such rationalization might also enable resources to be freed for support to the primary education sector (Olukoshi 1998:33).

Confirming the above, Ade-Ajayi (2001:2) stated:

Since the 1970s the World Bank has been pushing the heretical idea that the return to the state as compared to the return to the individual beneficiary is highest in elementary education and lowest in higher education. And, therefore, the state must, in the name of structural adjustment, increase the allocation of resources to elementary education at the expense of higher education.

University funding was also adversely affected by lack of accountability, misappropriation of public funds, wasteful spending, corruption and the misplacement of priorities by the ruling (military) classes and university administrators in Nigeria (Gboyega 1996; Onyeonoru 2001b, 2002). The funding aspect of the agreement covered the recurrent, capital, stabilization and education tax funds.

Considering the recurrent vote, for instance, while the calculation of required monies for the recurrent fund was made in 1992 on the basis of a 60 percent rise in basic salary for academic staff, the government went ahead to extend the 60 percent pay rise to other categories of staff in the university without providing the additional funds to back the pay rise. An additional 15 percent pay rise was granted academics in line with the Longe Report and the white paper on it, again without the provision of additional funds to back this increase. This led to a severe shortfall of funds meant for recurrent spending. In the case of the Education Tax Fund,³ ASUU alleged that Government was not sincere in the management of the funds. Contrary to the Government's claim that it had not been collecting the tax, ASUU discovered that several companies had been paying the tax as far back as 1992. This included the Nigerian Breweries PLC that paid 18.357 million in 1992, and 35.46 million in 1993. The implication of poor funding exacerbated by the above scenario for the occupational health of staff and students is noteworthy:

Many of our laboratories are health hazards to our students. Fume chambers are non-functional, exposing the students to toxic fumes.

Students and staff are exposed to ultra violet rays when working with inoculation chambers, for example. Lecturers and students are exposed to agents that cause cancer and trigger mutation in genes. Students come to study and earn degrees but leave permanently damaged (ASUU 1994).

Table 1: Public Spending on Education in Selected African Countries: Total Spending as a Percentage of GNP

Country	1980	1985	1990	1995	1996	
Botswana		6.0	6.2	6.9	8.6	10.4
Ivory Coast		7.2	A	7.7	5.2	5.0
Ghana	3.1	.6	3.3	NA*	NA	
Kenya	6.8	.4	7.1	6.8	6.6	
Nigeria	6.4	1.2	1.0	0.9	NA	
South Africa		6.0	.5	6.8	7.9	NA

Source: adapted from World Bank 1999 World development Indicators.

*Data for the year is not available

Table 1 above indicates that educational spending as a percentage of Gross National Product (GNP) in selected African countries except Nigeria witnessed remarkable increases compared with the 1980 figures. Educational spending in Botswana, for instance, rose from 6.0 in 1980 to 10.4 in 1996; Ivory Coast from 7.2 in 1980 to 7.7 in 1990; Ghana from 3.1 in 1980 to 3.3 in 1995; Kenya from 6.0 in 1980 to 7.1 in 1995; and South Africa from 6.0 in 1980 to 7.9 in 1995. In the case of Nigeria educational spending nose-dived from 6.0 in 1980 to 1.2 in 1985 and subsequently declined steadily to a dismal 0.9 in 1995. Meanwhile total enrollment in Nigerian universities witnessed sharp increases from 174,123 in 1989 to 253,121 in 1995 – as represented in Figure 1 below.

Part of ASUU's demand that led to the 2002-3 strike was that the Government should emulate other developing countries to work towards achieving a 26 percent budgetary allocation to education as recommended by UNESCO – a demand regarded by the Obasanjo administration as impossible. This was irrespective of the fact that countries such as Ghana had almost attained that target as early as 1991 (GDHS 1993). As late as 2001 under the Obasanjo Administration, the Committee of Vice Chancellors observed:

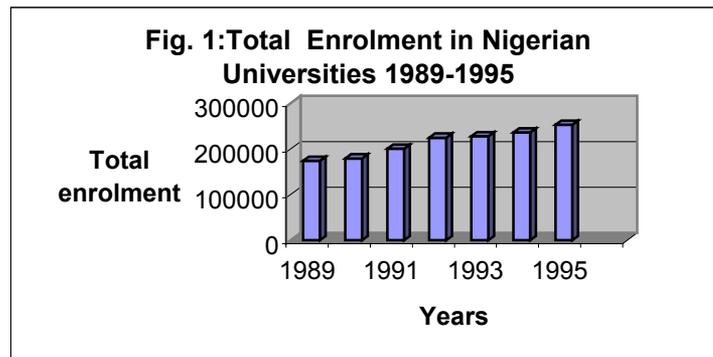
From the beginning of this year, the universities have received only 40 percent of what is required to pay salaries monthly. Consequently, universities have been unable to pay salaries and allowances as and when due. Many universities have exhausted their reserves and borrowed money from financial institutions in order to sustain

payment of emoluments. Moreover, only 30 percent of year 2001 capital grant had been received by the universities. The result of these is that many projects are either stalled, abandoned or put on hold (CVC 2001).

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

The problem of conditions of service in the Nigerian university system can be traced back to the immediate post-independence era. With regard to basic salaries in the Nigerian public service and the university system, Adekanye (1993) observed:

Source: Nigeria, Federal Office of Statistics, Annual abstract of statistics, 1995 and 1997.



At independence in October 1960, the salary of the Prime Minister of the Federation of Nigeria was only eight hundred pounds (£800) more than that of the Principal (that is the future Vice Chancellor) of the University College, Ibadan, while the latter certainly earned more than the Nigerian Army Commander and General. The Prime Minister’s personal emolument was put at £4,500, while the Principal of University College, Ibadan, was paid £3,750, and the Army Major General and Commissioner £3,580.

From the above it is easy to deduce that employees in the university system occupied a high status in the pay hierarchy relative to their counterparts elsewhere in state bureaucracy. A combination of the 15 January 1966 coup that marked military occupation of Nigerian polity and the bubble of new oil wealth started “distorting both the old parities and relativities in the system of rewards as between the various occupational groups” producing status incongruence. By 1966, irrespective of salary reviews that tended to favour the military, the university professor was paid £3,000. This was higher than the £2,700 paid a federal Prime Minister or a Federal Permanent Secretary (group 4). A federal Cabinet Minister took between £2,700 and £3,000. A federal top civil servant of the rank of Permanent Secretary, Group 4, received between £2,500 and £2,940. An assistant lecturer (often first class or second class

upper division) was offered £950, while his counterparts who went into the federal civil service received £720 (Adekanye 1993).

The 1970s were marked with events that may have remote bearings with the 1996 ASUU strike in the area of the condition of service. These include the trade dispute between the Governing Councils of Nigerian universities and the local branches of the National Association of University Teachers in 1973, which led to a strike by the university teachers. The dispute was about the review of conditions of service. In spite of the efforts of the university councils to secure improved pay and conditions centrally, the Federal Ministry of Education prevaricated. Even after the Councils and individual local teachers' associations had agreed on specific increases in 1973, the Ministry refused to accept the outcome of this collective bargaining. The violation of the power of the Council to negotiate and determine the conditions of employment at the local level became the point of contention in the strike of April 1973.

The government's handling of the 1973 conflict was coercive. The then Head of State would not differentiate between the functions of the Visitor and those of the Head of Government and Council. The university teachers were ordered back to work during the conflict and the widely reported humiliation engendered by this had a profound effect on the morale of the university teachers. University professors had to queue up to sign registers, and write their VCs, promising to be of good behaviour at the pain of being sacked or ejected. The sense of security and of total commitment to academic pursuit was irretrievably shattered. That was the beginning of the loss experienced by the university teachers in their relative position in the pay structure of Nigeria. That loss was to be formalized in 1974 when the university teachers' conditions of service was brought under the civil service structure following the recommendations of the 1974 Udoji Commission Report on the Review of the Public Service (Adesina 1998).

Udoji was a former distinguished public servant and his views seemed to tally with those of a crop of influential civil servants – the so-called Super Permanent Secretaries. Discussions regarding the evaluation, comparison and remuneration of the respective responsibilities of civil servants and university staff paid from the same government coffers led to the view among the Super Permanent Secretaries that the responsibilities of senior civil servants were a lot heavier than those of university professors. This view that seemed to be a product of rivalry (by this crop of civil servants) with the university professors may have influenced the Udoji Commission Report.

As part of the review, the government offered public sector pensions to the university employees in place of the Autonomous University Superannuation Scheme responsible to the university staff themselves. Such a major steering away of the autonomy of universities was not even debated in the universities, much less being resisted. Ade-Ajayi (2001:3) pointed out the implications:

In accepting Government pension without so much as even a debate, university staff ceased to be employees of different autonomous University Councils, and became in effect, second-class civil servants. The universities ceased to be autonomous self-regulating corporations, and became Government parastatals monitored by

Government Ministries, with conditions of service that thenceforth had to be negotiated with the government.

The apathy with which the change was accepted may be a reflection of the 1973 “defeat” of the academics. According to (Ade-Ajayi, 2000: 3-4):

The capitulation of the universities without even a contest was probably due to the continuing trauma of the treatment they had received in 1973 when they dared to go on strike. The Minister of Education was an experienced university man, a university Registrar, who knew the Achilles’ heel of the universities and advised the government to use troops if necessary to eject striking staff from their government-provided university accommodation. The strike became a rout as the university staff rushed to dissociate themselves from the strike so as to beat the deadline of the Government ultimatum and secure their families from the threat of forced ejection from their houses. It then followed as a matter of course that the purge of the Civil Service in 1975 was applied to the universities. In order that this centralized management should be more effective, the Federal Government took over the control of all the state universities in 1975 and established more in 1976-7 under the aegis of the new NUC, without the benefit of the usual consultations and planning committees.

Adekanye (1993:17) made a noteworthy observation on the reversal in the pay structure and status relativities between the universities and the public bureaucracy in the post 1975 era:

Harmonization of the universities with the civil service under the “unified public service”, which had been recommended by Udoji and Williams & Williams, was responsible for this. Thus by the end of the first period of military rule in 1979, the university professor’s basic salary was fixed at £11,568 which placed him/her at par with the permanent secretary on grade level 16 at the State level, but on a lower salary scale than the latter’s counterpart at the Federal level. A Federal permanent Secretary formerly on group 3, who had been converted to GL 17, post-Udoji was placed on the salary of £12, 996 with effect from April, 1, 1979.

According to Adekanye (1993:18)

Nigerian academics were to fight for and get the university system “de-harmonized “ from the unified public as a first step towards re-establishing the pre-1966 relativities in status, pay and conditions of service vis a vis the civil service bureaucracy. But the improved

salaries and conditions of service won by the university staff under the Cookey Commission in 1981 proved short-lived. By the end of the Shagari civilian presidency, the top echelon of the civil service bureaucracy had succeeded in wiping out those modest academic gains of 1981 and re-established themselves as an occupational group with superior salary claims.

In comparison with the remuneration of the members of the armed forces the erosion of the pay of the university staffers become clearer:

At Nigeria's independence in 1960, an Assistant Lecturer was paid more than both a Sub-Lieutenant and Lieutenant; a Lecturer II more than captain; a Lecturer I more than a Major, a Senior Lecturer more than a Lieutenant Colonel, a Reader/Associate Professor more than a Colonel and Brigadier. The Major General's salary placed him a few incremental steps on top of the University Professor, but certainly lower than the University's Chief Executive, the Vice Chancellor (Adekanye 1993:18).

The overturn was evident in the 1975 post-Udoji period, as

an Army Captain was now being paid more than the university Lecturer I, a Lieutenant-Colonel more than Senior Lecturer, a Colonel more than a Reader/Associate Professor; an army Brigadier, whose salary in 1966 had been lower than that of a Reader/Associate Professor, now earned more than even a full Professor. The salaries of both the Lieutenant General and full General out-distanced that of a Vice Chancellor (Adekanye 1993:19).

The reversal in the conditions of service of the university staff was to be the starting point of the implementation of a class ascendancy project of the Nigerian military class in the wider Nigerian society. The Cookey Commission of 1981 was to reverse the uniform salary structure created by the Udoji awards by establishing a separate (more attractive) pay structure for the university employees, through the University System Scale (USS), partly to shield the system from the exigencies of the wider economy. But this was to be distorted in the course of the management of the economic crisis and Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) under the Elongated University Salary Structure (EUSS) implemented by the Babangida regime (1985-1993). The wage crisis that accompanied SAP (Onyeonoru 2001a) led to a situation in which corporate private sector wages became more attractive than those of the public sector, thus defeating the whole essence of the USS.

One of the attempts in the 1980s to rescue the university system from imminent collapse was made through the 1988 strike of the university teachers in which the conditions of service of university staff reverberated. One of the demands of the university teachers that led to the strike was that the 20 percent differential in the

University Salary Structure (USS), enjoyed by university staff comparative to other public sector employees but which was largely eroded by the implementation of SAP, should be restored. ASUU's position was to be confirmed by all Accreditation and Visitation Panels on the university crisis set up by the Federal Government, including the Longe Commission Report, which stated that "the problem of brain drain was primarily a result of the erosion of the status and income of academics in the unified salary grading systems in the 1970s". What was left of the disparity, which served to attract bright minds to the system was closed up in the Elongated University Salary Structure (EUSS), then implemented by the Babangida administration. Hence, conflicts located in the loss in pay and status of the university employees consequent upon the Udoji awards were to reoccur in the 1983 negotiations with the Federal government and became a matter for dispute between the Federal Government and the university teachers in 1988.

One of the demands of the university teachers that led to the 1988 strike was the restoration of the pay differential in the USS, which served to attract bright minds to the university system – contrary to the Elongated University Salary Structure (EUSS) then implemented by the government. Not much resulted from the 1988 strike, as the Babangida administration succeeded in coercing the strikers back to work. The affiliation of ASUU with the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), obviously to increase the former's power base, was resisted by the Federal Government through the promulgation of Decree No. 17 of 1986.

Poor conditions of service, heavy workloads and inadequate facilities and working environment, all led to a state of frustration for university staff. Poor pay of academics was pinpointed by the Report of the Study Group on Brain Drain in Nigerian Universities (1982-1993), carried out by the World Bank Project Implementation Unit of the National University Commission. The development was clearly epitomized in the popular ASUU slogan of the 1990s: "My Take Home Pay Cannot Take Me Home" (Olukoshi 1998; Onyeonoru 2000b).

Before the 1992 ASUU-FGN Agreement, the average Nigerian Professor's pay as a percentage of his counterpart in Botswana stood at an embarrassing level of 0.005 percent. As a result of the Agreement, the corresponding relative percentage came to 32 percent. But by 1996, inflation and related unfavourable socio-economic environment relegated the Nigerian professor's relative position to about 4 percent of his colleagues' pay in Botswana. The claim by Nigerian academics that their condition of service was the worst in Africa was driven home through a comparison with that of their colleagues in West African countries. While a Ghanaian Professor earned about 228,534.00 per annum, his Nigerian counterpart earned 49,922.00 (Asobie, 1996). As a result, some lecturers engaged in moonlighting and private practice (some completely outside their training, such as scurrying for supply contracts) to subsidize their income. Hence, while the depletion of lecturers due to brain drain continued, even those academics that were in the system were not really available (NUC 1994:43).

The conditions of service were to improve first under the Abubakar regime and then with the Obasanjo administration following the new national minimum wage of 6,500,000, such that a Nigeria university professor now earns a minimum of 100,000. Part of the reason why ASUU insists on a separate salary scale is the

historical experience with falling public sector wages that engender corruption in Nigerian institutions (Onyeonoru 2002a).

UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

University autonomy and academic freedom are highly significant substructures that are integral to the idea of a university. Professor Ayo Banjo, formerly a Vice Chancellor of a first generation University in Nigeria,⁴ noted this significance as follows:

If we accept that one of the most important functions of any university is to seek the truth, any constraint on that search reduces the value of the university. If also we agree that a university has a duty constantly to reduce the area of the unknown socially and physically, a university is excellent to the degree that it is not only free but also empowered to do so (Quoted in Akinkugbe 2001:2).

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has always insisted on the sanctity of university autonomy and academic freedom, and that state responsibility in the area of university funding must not translate into undue government interference and meddling in university affairs:

Education has to do with the unfettered acquisition of knowledge and its use for the benefit of society. Universities as schools of education should be committed to this twin freedom in relation to the search for and use of knowledge. To be faithful to this commitment, a university worth its salt is duty bound to recognize the connections between knowledge and the innumerable dimensions of the concrete realities of our time, by allowing a free interplay of different opinions in the pursuit of learning (ASUU 1979:20).

The forgoing views are widely held. According to the Dearing Report which reviewed Higher Education in Britain:

Institutional autonomy should be respected. While we take it as axiomatic that government will set the policy framework for higher education nationally, we equally take it as axiomatic that the strategic direction and management of individual institutions should be vested wholly in the governance and management of autonomous universities (Quoted in Akinkugbe 2001:2).

The essence of insisting on university autonomy is that in certain circumstances governments tend to place unnecessary limits on the scope and/or the nature of knowledge acquisition in the universities to the detriment of scholarship – as the case of Canada historically shows (Abbott, 1984, 1986, 1991, Kuhlberg 2002a and b).

This tendency is higher under military regimes, as the Nigerian case discussed below indicates.

The nature of events that created the university crisis in Nigeria was initiated in the 1960s, with the unsuccessful attempt of the First Republic politicians to change the pre-independence sanctuary image of the university system by bringing universities under undue government control. This bid was, however, successfully carried out by the military regimes in Nigeria. Three aspects of the violation of university autonomy are particularly noteworthy: the violation of procedures for the appointment of University Vice Chancellors; the erosion of the powers of the university councils as statutory employers, and the erosion of the powers of the senate as the supreme organ in academic matters.

Following the strike embarked upon by the university teachers in 1973 for improvements in the conditions of service in the aftermath of the deplorable conditions left behind by the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970), the then Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, in a national broadcast, ordered the striking university staff to return to work or face dismissal and ejection from their official residences. That singular incident epitomized the most fundamental aspect of the university crisis. Its socio-psychological and symbolic implication was national humiliation ruinous both for the system and the staff, resulting in the lowering of prestige, self-esteem, dignity of labour and job security. The event signaled the beginning of the bid by the military ruling class to “capture” the university terrain.

The altering of the enabling laws of the universities in Nigeria, especially in the area of appointment of Vice Chancellors, which has implications for other aspects of university autonomy, began in the Yakubu Gowon era. In 1975 when the Federal Government took over the regional universities it promulgated Decree No. 23, which vested the power to appoint Vice Chancellors on the Head of the Federal Military Government, in contrast with the Joint Committee of Council and Senate which was exercising the responsibility on behalf of the Council in the universities.

In the case of the then University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), for instance, the law providing for the establishment of the Provisional Council of the University was passed by the Legislature of the Western Region on June 8, 1961, and on June 26, 1961, the Provisional Council of the University was formally inaugurated. On June 11, 1970, the University of Ife Edict, 1970 was promulgated by the Government of the Western State to replace the Provisional Council Law of June 8, 1961. Thus far, the appointment of the Vice Chancellor remained the primary responsibility of the university community, as provided for in the enabling laws.

The scenario, however, began to change in the post-1970 era. The Federal Government amended the 1970 University of Ife Edict by the University of Ife (Amendment) Edict No. 11 of 1975 and the University of Ife (Transitional Provisions) Decree No. 23 of 1975. The new Decree, which effected a takeover of the University of Ife by the Federal Government, also vested in the Head of the Federal Military Government the power to appoint the Vice Chancellor. In the same vein, Schedule 1 Section 2 (2) of the University of Port Harcourt Decree 1979

provided among others that “the Vice-Chancellor shall be appointed or removed from his office by the Supreme Military Council after...” Similar provisions existed in other Nigerian universities until the 1992 ASUU strike when the question of university autonomy became one of the major issues of contestation.

After the Governing Councils of universities lost their power to appoint and remove Vice Chancellors, the role of the visitor became substantially altered from a largely ceremonial one to one of intervening in the day-to-day running of the universities. As a result of this change, Vice Chancellors over time became increasingly accountable to the Head of Government (Federal or State) instead of the university community as expressed in such institutions as the congregation, senate and council. We will demonstrate this further with the following narration.

The Federal Military Government (FMG) in 1978 (under the General Obasanjo government) made wholesome changes on matters relating to students’ welfare without reference to the university authorities. From the beginning of the 1977/78 academic year, the Federal Government, through the National Universities Commission (NUC), reduced the fees payable for meals from between 70k and 75k per day to 50k per day and accommodation from between 36.00 and 72.00 per session to 30.00 per session. Six months later the NUC recklessly raised the corresponding fees threefold to 1.50 per day for meals and 90.00 per session for a room. The result was that the hopes of both students and their sponsors, which had earlier been raised so high, were dashed badly. To add salt to injury, the FMG about the same time announced its decision to shelve its direct commitment to the students’ loan scheme and transferred the responsibility to State Governments. This led to a nation wide student protest, as a result of which the FMG set up the Mohammed Commission of Inquiry into the crisis.

Following the Commission’s report on the incident, the Federal Government on August 25, 1978 announced the dismissal of eight staff of Nigerian universities. Out of these, five were from the University Ibadan, namely Dr. Bade Onimode, Wale Adeniran, Dr. Amafume Onoge, Dr. Akin Ojo, and Comrade Ola Oni. At its meeting of August 29, 1978, the Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASNU⁵) set up a committee headed by Professor F.M.A. Ukoli to explore all peaceful means of convincing the FMG to reverse its decisions. The dialogical perspective rather than conflict was the organizing principle of the Union as was evident in the Committee’s letter dated September 1, 1978, to the Vice Chancellor which stated the resolve of the union: “The most effective reaction is not confrontation with Government but the exploration of all avenues to persuade Government to review its decision” (ASNU 1979:27). In pursuance of the above the ASNU Committee wrote letters to:

1. The Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters; through the Vice Chancellor and Chairman of Council,
2. The Chairman of Council, University of Ibadan, through the VC and,
3. The Vice Chancellor.

But despite the fact that all these letters were delivered by hand (by the Chairman and another member of the Committee) there was no response, either

from the Government and University officials to whom the letters were addressed or from other influential members of the society that were contacted by ASNU to mediate in the crisis. In the circumstance, and in view of an emergency meeting of the University Council where the decision to implement the FMG's directives was to be taken, the ASNU Committee approached members of the Ibadan Council directly. The members, however, expressed the view that the Council was powerless to influence the FMG's decision on the affected staff. Ultimately the Chairman of Council effected the directives, notwithstanding the fact that it was impossible for the Council to form a quorum at the meeting (ASUNU 1979).

Given the orientation to dialogue adopted by the Union, ASUNU Ibadan branch took the case of the dismissed staff to the university Senate, which observed among others: that the removal of the affected members of the teaching staff was in gross violation of section 4 of the University of Ibadan Act on the function of the Council and section 1 Sub-Section 3 of the Act dealing with the removal from office of staff, and that the action had adverse effect on the morale of the university academic staff and was capable of having long-term adverse effects on the high standard of the university that had gained worldwide recognition at the time. The Senate also expressed dismay at the Council's abdication of its responsibility on the sensitive issue, observing that Council's readiness to implement FMG's directives without charging the affected lecturers with any offence, giving them the opportunity to defend themselves or even setting up a joint committee of Council and Senate to investigate the matter according to the University Act, had generated a genuine feeling of insecurity among members of the teaching staff. The Senate also expressed surprise that the honorable mediatory role played by some of the affected lecturers during the crisis, which had earned them commendation by the Vice Chancellor Professor Tamuno on the floor of the Senate, ironically earned them dismissal from the FMG through the Council. The Senate therefore resolved:

1. to convey to Council its deep appreciation of the meritorious contributions of the aforesaid five members of the academic staff, and
2. to express dismay at the unsatisfactory way in which Council handled the Government's directives.

The foregoing event, shocking as it was at the time, was to become an albatross of the university system – an illegitimacy legalized by the relative ease of enacting decrees. The dismissal incident was one of the deliberate attempts by the FMG to discredit the universities and reduce them to a state of cowed subordination. The frustration that resulted from the 1978 incident for the academic community, and which in the following decades led to a more militant academic staff union in Nigerian universities, was evident in the following lamentation:

This is how much the peaceful approach of the University of Ibadan Branch of the ASUNU has achieved. In the final analysis the future of university education in this country depends on the amount of interest shown to university affairs by the public. We will not get a better university system than we all deserve (ASUNU 1979:30).

With the advantage of hindsight, the foregoing observations, predictions and resolutions of the Academic Staff Union and the Ibadan Senate in 1978 can be viewed as “prophetic” of the events of the 1980s and 1990s: the deplorable state of staff morale, institutional decay and poor state of facilities and infrastructure in Nigerian universities (Bollag 2002) by the turn of the 21st century which led to the six-month strike of ASUU in 2002/2003. The erection of governmental power at the citadel of learning resulted in the systematic politicization and gross corruption of the university system, particularly under military rule.

In 1980, in the University of Lagos an internal dispute between the Vice Chancellor and about six professors led to all of them (and the registrar) being fired by the government, again without due process. In 1990 one of Africa’s most outstanding historians (Professor Obaro Ikhime) was arrested and detained because of what he said in a pulpit in church. When he was released from detention, his appointment with the university of Ibadan was terminated; again no formal charges were brought against him. A professor of botany and a senior lecturer were similarly detained, and their appointment terminated at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. In such cases ASUU’s insistence on the rule of law in dealing with disciplinary matters is hinged on the fact that people have freedom of speech, and where they break the law, formal charges should be brought against them through the law court or lawful disciplinary process, rather than treat them arbitrarily.

The arbitrary conduct of the FMG with regard to staff matters was replicated in several Nigerian universities as vice chancellors increasingly took laws into their hands, provided they had the support of the FMG. At the University of Abuja, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Isa Baba Mohammed turned himself into a demi-god (ASUU 1995), with his arbitrary employment, suspension and dismissal of staff (and students), disobedience of court orders, vandalization of houses and property of staff adjudged disloyal to the Vice Chancellor, and a forced oath of staff allegiance.⁶ Similar events were recorded at the Ogun State University (now renamed Olabisi Onabanjo University), where ASUU complained of the dismissal of 200 academic staff without due process – mainly those perceived to be critics of the Vice Chancellor, Professor O.Y. Oyeneeye (ASUU Ibadan Zone).

In the specific area of academic freedom, the Mohammed Commission vaguely acknowledged the existence of differing philosophies and views within the university set-up, but went ahead to imply that such views have to be supportive of the social order – in effect limiting the search for knowledge and its expression to aspects that are in coherence with the perspective of government in power at a given time – irrespective of public interest. This informed the recommendation of the Commission for a re-definition and delimitation of the frontiers of academic freedom, in a bid to check the activities of “extremist organizations of students and staff” on university campuses, as well as the working out of a code of conduct for approval by the FMG. By accepting the recommendation, the FMG displayed culpable over-zealousness in its attempt to stifle the universities’ initiative in determining their own procedures of self-management and self-monitoring:

It is clearly improper for government to appoint Vice Chancellors and impose them on the academic communities in clear violation

of one of the most cherished principles of university administration and its code of conduct. It is equally improper for government to appoint its own nominees to Councils of the Universities established under laws, whether decrees or edicts, enacted by it, and then proceed to usurp the powers of these councils by arrogating to itself the right to discharge the legal responsibilities of the university councils in relation to the appointment, disciplining and removal of their staff. With this kind of bare-faced sabotage of its own laws, government has maneuvered the university communities into a paralytic state of insecurity and powerlessness in which any code of conduct, however high-handed is bound to become meaningless in execution (ASUNU 1979:21-22).

The powers of the Senate have also been eroded by the FMG over time. In 1978, the senate of the University of Ibadan was queried by the Federal Ministry of Education – asked to explain why so many students failed in the 1977/78 academic year – the names of the students having been published in the Daily Times, notifying them to come for their re-sit examination (Adesina 1998).

The Academic Staff Union also described as alarming the inability of the FMG to restrain itself from usurping the power of the University Senate to assess the academic merit of the university teachers and the content of the programmes, noting that this would be fundamentally unfavourable to the maintenance of any credible university culture in Nigeria:

A straightforward device for reducing the universities to such sycophancy and toadyism as to make them a laughing stock in every quarter where there is still a modicum of respect for the cultivation of minds that are free, independent, and critical” (ASUNU 1979:22).

In a similar light Ade-Ajayi (2001), observed that the integration of the universities into the civil service, which was achieved by the Udoji Commission, lowered the prestige, status and effectiveness of the universities. As Government parastatals, the Federal Ministry of Education sees itself as the supervisory Ministry. Another more severe by-product of this integration of the universities into the Civil Service Structure was the wooing of the Visitor by university authorities and substituting him for the Chancellor as the head of the university:

It began in the 1970s with one or two universities inviting the Head of State as Visitor to attend every meeting of convocation. The universities concerned proceeded to adapt the Chancellor’s academic gown for military Heads of State to wear, rather incongruously, on top of army uniform, and the Heads of State, in the absence of parliament, enjoyed using the convocation platform to address the nation... This distortion in the status of the Visitor was given some legal backing in the 1966 amendment

to the University of Lagos Act, which introduced the notion of the Visitor's court as part of the domestic arrangement of the university for resolving disputes that council fails to resolve. The Visitor was also authorized to set up a Visitation Panel into the affairs of the University at least once a year. That opened the floodgate to regular interference (Ade-Ajayi 2001:4)

The Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) also eroded the power of the universities to determine the level of student intake and the criteria for admission. The use of population size rather than need to determine the funding of universities induced the institutions to increase student intake beyond the capacity of available infrastructure that could support quality teaching and learning.

The National University Commission (NUC) especially under military rule severely violated university autonomy. The NUC was established in 1962 following the recommendation of the Ashby Commission of 1952. The primary objectives were to ensure an orderly development of university education in Nigeria, maintain standards and ensure adequate funding. Since then, however, the NUC has undergone major reconstruction that has expanded its scope of influence over the universities. With time, the government gave wide supervisory powers to the National University Commission through which it perpetuated its interference mission. As part of the take over of regional universities in 1975, the NUC was reconstituted, through Decree No. 1 of 1974, as a statutory body with the added responsibility of receiving block grants from the Government for disbursement to the universities and inter-university organs. Decree 16 of 1985 promulgated by the Buhari/Idiagbon regime led to a highly centralized university system that invariably gave the government power to arbitrarily dictate what to teach and the number of students to be admitted into Nigerian higher institutions. With this the government insisted on a change in university laws, with the Federal Ministry of Education calling the shots. The Decree (and its 1988 amendment), therefore, nailed the coffin of university autonomy by expanding the function of NUC by the provision in section 10 of the Decree the vesting in the Commission, the "power to lay down minimum standards for all universities and other institutions of higher learning in the federation and the accreditation of their degrees and other academic awards", after obtaining prior approval through the Minister of Education from the Head of the Federal Military Government – the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

This provision, which was viewed by the University of Ife Senate as in conflict with the law establishing the University, accepted the Report of its Legal Review Committee which stated:

The Committee was of the opinion that the National University Commission (NUC) might not be able to carry out its statutory assignment satisfactorily under the Decree. It suspected that the NUC, in its present set up, might be so overstretched and thus become inefficient and ineffective in the discharge of its functions under the Decree. The Committee then recommended that Senate might wish to make representations to Government on the matter

by pointing out the conflict... and by proposing an amendment to the Decree so as to designate the Committee of Vice Chancellors (CVC) as the prescribed authority to lay down minimum standards for universities, in the belief that CVC would have access to, and in fact, make use of the expertise available in the exercise of the powers under the Decree (ASUU, UNIFE 1987).

By the early 1990s the crisis had reached an alarming proportion. Between 1992 and 1998, for instance, sole administrators were appointed for the following Nigerian Universities: Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria (a retired General), University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), Federal University of Technology (FUT) Minna, University of Maiduguri, Ladoke Akintola University (LAUTECH) Ogbomosho, and Edo State University, Ekpoma. The decrees that brought the sole administrators into power conferred upon them wide powers which, according to one of the Vice Chancellors, enabled them to combine the roles of Senate and Council with that of the Vice Chancellor.

With the incremental expansion of the scope of operation of the NUC, the powers of the university senate to regulate the content and structure of curricula in the universities have been usurped by the Commission. In several areas, universities have lost their power to develop new programs, realign their courses and the content of their curricula to match labor market requirements. Changes in undergraduate programs, introduction of new degree programs and even changes in the names of university departments must attract the approval of the NUC. Where the NUC's position conflicts with that of the senate and experts in the field within the universities, the opinion of NUC will prevail – no matter how wrong or unappreciative of rapid development in the field (Adesina 1998, 2000). The foregoing is corroborated by Ade-Ajayi (2001:5) who stated:

The Government refashioned the NUC as the weapon of its centralized control. The NUC was originally an Advisory Committee to act as consultant to the Government on university policy. To accord it necessary high profile, it was not placed under any Ministry but in the Presidency, and the Chairman operated like a Minister for Higher Education, with direct access to the Head of the Government then called the Prime Minister. The Government enacted a new NUC Decree in 1974-75, making the NUC initially, like the universities, an autonomous body. The aim was that the NUC should protect the autonomy of the universities by acting as the buffer between the universities and the government especially in matters of funding. But the manipulation started immediately.

Professor Akinkugbe in Nigeria similarly noted:

The epidemic of amendments to erstwhile well-intentioned Decrees has wrecked havoc on the sanctity of academic freedom and institutional autonomy in many areas. Take the National

University Commission Decree 1 of 1974, that took care to spell out the spirit and intent of an ideal intermediary between government and universities, whereas subsequent amendments, embodied in Decrees 49 of 1988 and 10 of 1993, consolidated its powers. The Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions Decree 16 of 1985 and a subsequent Amendment of this in 1993 further empowered the NUC and eroded university autonomy. Then there is the classic case of the Academic Staff Union Of Universities (ASUU), regarded through the 90s as a thorn in the flesh of government. Decree 26 of 1988 proscribed it, Decree 36 of 1990 revoked that proscription, and Decree 24 of 1992 again proscribed and forbade it from participating in trade union activities (Akinkugbe 2001:3).

The Government could not get itself to act in line with the above. Instead, pressures put on her by the university teachers' union to relinquish its authoritarian tendencies and its insistence on unduly controlling the universities, were often viewed as "insubordination" and hence, resisted:

Academic freedom and university autonomy, these two phrases seemed before 29 May 1999 to be an anathema to government, and to express them vigorously in the 90s was to attempt to throw the red rag to the bull (Akinkugbe 2001:2)

Chiding the relentless efforts of Government to reduce academic freedom in Nigerian universities, Professor Ayo Banjo taunted the idea of a nationally agreed set of minimum standards for the nation's universities as "good though not enviable". He emphasized that where such explicit formulations were considered necessary, care must be taken to express them in more abstract terms than virtually handing down syllabuses to the universities. An institution that lacks the capacity to innovatively design its own curricular and syllabuses, he emphasized, does not deserve the title of a university. The senate of a university is capable of performing the duty without detracting from the status of a university or distorting its historic mission. The fear of "abuse" that may result from academic freedom could be handled by the council of the universities within established laws (Akinkugbe 2001:2). The truism that every freedom goes with responsibility is applicable. The fact that the issue of university autonomy is far from settled is evident in the fact that university autonomy was one of the knotty issues in the 2002-3 ASUU strike that lasted about six months.

CONTEMPORARY TENSIONS AND THE FUTURE OF THE NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

So far, we have been dealing mainly with the past and the present situation of Nigerian universities. Part of what we have endeavored to establish is that the current crisis-ridden state of Nigerian universities is a creation of the past which has

lingered unredeemed. This raises the question of the future of Nigerian universities and the sustainability of the ideals that inform the system.

Critical views both within and outside Nigerian universities, however, indicate that long strikes by university unions have had rather damaging effects on the system. These include the loss of academic sessions, irredeemable distortions in university calendar, longer than normal duration of academic programmes and distractions from teaching and research by staff and students. From this viewpoint, strikes are destructive, and within the university context it constitutes inflicting self-injury. While not denying the mess within which the university system is enmeshed, this school of thought believes that the solutions to the university crisis should be sought within the framework of continuous dialogue. With regard to the dominantly authoritarian nature of Nigerian governments and university administrators and their aversion to dialogue, this school would express hope that a messiah would one day emerge who would effect the necessary changes (ethical and financial) that would restore the glory of the universities. This messianic view is easily associated with the older generation of university teachers.

However, ASUU insists that the modest improvements visible in university funding, condition of service and university autonomy came through the union's struggles. Put otherwise, that strike is the only weapon that is effective with the governments and university authorities in Nigeria. The younger generation of university teachers tends to hold this view. They often emphasize the fact that historically ASUU has never gained any concession from the governments through dialogue. Hence, it would be foolhardy, they emphasize, to rely on an approach that has proven to be ineffective. These two perspectives have led to speculations of a generational conflict among the academic staffs of Nigerian universities.

One of the outstanding indications of the 2002-3 ASUU strike, is that much change in the area of government funding should not be expected in the future, particularly with Government's increasing emphasis on cost-sharing. There are strong indications of a paradigm shift in Government's policy direction in favor of the deregulation of the university system. The demand of ASUU for university autonomy seems to have earned her a boundless autonomy in the spirit of the on-going neo-liberal reform policies of the Obasanjo Government – given that the Nigerian state has been changing rapidly from being a buffer to globalization to being the agent of globalization (Mamdani 1993). Commenting on autonomy, the Federal Ministry of Education (FME), represented by the Honorable Minister of Education under the Obasanjo administration, stated: "Under the new dispensation, universities will enjoy administrative, financial and academic autonomy." The policy has also encouraged private sector participation in university education delivery which led to the establishment of seven private universities by the year 2002, with several others awaiting approval. (FME 2002). But ASUU insists that while government must show less passion for the control of university administration, it must nevertheless fund the sector as part of its fundamental responsibility for national development.

The students under the aegis of National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) are suspicious that the Government's notion of autonomy would result in the introduction of tuition fees, which would create exclusionary tendencies in

the access to university education in Nigeria. Partly for this reason, they render their support to ASUU in its struggle. An analyst captures the implicit dilemma as follows:

University leaders commend the president, a man with no university education, for taking the lead in autonomy. Yet many are angry that the government has shirked from taking responsibility for introducing tuition payments, a very unpopular step seen by the university leaders as absolutely necessary (Bollag 2002).

Expressing its deep regrets over the Government's notion of autonomy, ASUU stated:

The Federal Government, by shifting the responsibility for generating most of the funds for running the universities to Governing Councils in the name of full autonomy, intends to abdicate its responsibility for the education of the Nigerian people. It is an illusion to suppose, as Government, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, which it serves faithfully, do, that the Governing Councils of the Nigerian Universities will raise enough funds to sustain and develop a credible university system after Government shall have abrogated its responsibility to the Nigerian people. The essence of this bogus idea of university autonomy is to execute the World Bank's plans of disengagement, cost recovery, and downsizing of universities, involving the cancellation of programmes and drastic reductions in the number of universities. After most Nigerian universities would have folded up, due to this new fangled IMF/World Bank inspired autonomy, the universities that are left, if any, like the economy, will be in the hands of the money property/owners in Nigeria who will run them on behalf of the rich, and our education will be handed over to full control by the IMF/World Bank and the western powers which are not interested in developing Nigeria (ASUU APRIL 18, 2002).

The implications of the above for liberal education elsewhere have been a subject of critical analysis (Axelrod 2000, 2002).

The autonomy struggle has been re-located to the national Assembly with two bills – one introduced by the Federal Government and the other sponsored by ASUU. If Government's autonomy bill sails through in the present circumstance, the Nigerian university of tomorrow would have to seek its funds mainly from external sources within and outside the country, and there is doubt about the capacity of the universities to do so. Even where the capacity exists, it would invariably involve the politics of funding (Olukoshi 1998), since the piper dictates the tune. This also involves the dilemma that, unlike elsewhere where universities depend on partnership with the private sector for their funding, (Axelrod 1981, 1982, 1998), the Nigerian economy is yet to be capitalized to play such a role effectively. Given

the rentier status of the economy, the private sector in Nigeria is highly dependent on government patronage.

If the Government's autonomy bill fails, as it is likely to, under the intensive lobby of lawmakers by ASUU, the Nigerian university system will remain an intensely contested terrain by both internal and external interests, the result of which will determine the future thrust of the system and its capacity for development.

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NOTES

1 An abridged form of this chapter by Dr. Ifeanyi Onyeonoru has appeared as an essay titled "Industrial conflict in Nigerian universities: The presence of the past and the thrust of the future," in *The National Scholar*, a publication of Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), vol. 4, n. 5 (April 2004), a special NDC edition on industrial conflict in Nigerian universities, pp. 2-12.

2 Professor Akinkugbe was the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

3 The Education Tax Fund (ETF), which consists of 2 percent of assessed profits of all companies operating in Nigeria, was negotiated in the ASUU/FGN 1992 Agreement as part of the private sector's direct contribution to the funding of education in Nigeria. The Education Tax Decree No. 7 of 1993 was promulgated on the 1st of January 1993, to give effect to this aspect of the agreement.

4 Professor Ayo Banjo was the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan.

5 The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has borne different names due to the Federal Government ban of the Union, at different times, especially under military rule. This includes, Academic Staff union of Nigerian Universities (ASUNU), Academic Staff of Nigerian Universities (ASNU) and Association of University Teachers (AUT).

6 Blood-Chilling accounts of the authoritarian activities of the Vice Chancellor are documented in a publication, by ASUU titled the "Destruction of the University of Abuja".

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Chapter III

University Decline and Its Reasons: Imperatives for Change and Relevance

Francis Egbokhare

The classical conception of the university is that of “a community of scholars searching for and propagating knowledge for its own sake”. This is the “Ivory Tower” image of the university. Modern conceptions diverge from this significantly. One view sees the university as a “public service corporation provided by government” (Jega 1994:2). Another view sees the university as an “enterprise in the knowledge industry, selling whatever mix of academic services it is most profitable to produce to whomever is willing and able to buy them (Ibid.). Yet a third view, and one held by some paid Nigerian Governments, sees the university as a government parastatal – another arm of government. While opinions may differ as regards the definition of a university, it is, however, clear that the university must be founded on the twin principles of academic freedom and autonomy. Where these principles are eroded or interfered with the university idea cannot be sustained.

The role of the university in Nigeria is defined in the National Policy on Education (NPE). Universities are supposed to provide high-level manpower for national development. They are to engage in teaching, research and public service. Universities are supposed to stimulate cultural, technological and social development and change. How well a university is able to carry out its mission is a function of several factors. The university exists in a socio-political, historical and cultural milieu. It is a collection of individuals with interpretations of the university mission and philosophy. The university is not insulated from the forces that shape society or the mentalities, ideological and psychological dispositions of society and those who constitute its pivot. It follows, therefore, that the performance of a university is inextricably tied to forces working within, around and about it. Situating these forces in the context of Nigeria, one is tempted to conclude that their performance of the university in Nigeria is a mirror image of the developments of the larger society.

In the following sections, we shall examine the decline of the academy. This assessment shall be made against the background of the universal and specific missions of the university. Our argument is that the decline in the academy was inevitable – given the “poverty of will”, conflicts of perception, persistent crises and instability, socio-economic upheaval and civil unrest arising from the collapse of the middle class, political pressures and interference with university autonomy, and proliferation of universities, among other reasons. It is imperative for us to mention that, in spite of the good intentions of the NPE, without necessary socio-political and historical anchoring, without re-orientation and discarding the negative

historical baggage of mentalities (from slavery and colonisation), without dealing with the crisis of identity from inherited psyche and consciousness, universities are merely going to create a new class of “deluded hybrids”, individuals with “cerebral education” but which are socio-culturally irrelevant.

THE DECLINE OF THE ACADEMY

Nigerian universities have continued to supply the manpower needs of the country. From 1948 to 1999, the number of universities increased from one to about thirty-seven (this figure includes private universities but excludes affiliated institutions). Student population has also increased from one hundred in 1948 and about two thousand in 1962 to well over two hundred thousand. Each of the existing universities has continued to award degrees, diplomas and certificates. In this regard, universities have continued to meet the human resource needs of Nigeria. The question however is at what level? Certainly not a high-level. Without attempting to get into a controversy with those who do not believe that there has been a meaningful decline in the academy, we will simply highlight some indicators of the vitality and health of the academy in Nigeria. Degrees and certificates from Nigeria’s universities are no longer competitive.

Professor Oyeneye, former Vice-Chancellor of Ogun State University, Ago Iwoye, on a Network programme indicated that the alarm raised about standards in Nigerian universities is unnecessary; he stated that the universities are doing fine internationally. Nevertheless, Nigerian degree holders are now required to undertake a one year remedial programme before they are admitted to foreign universities. In the private sector in Nigeria, graduates have to undergo mandatory retraining before they are hired to do what they were supposedly trained to do in the university.

The research capacities of universities are almost at a zero level. Most equipment is not functional and what is functional is outmoded. Many practical classes are taught as if they were theory classes. Classes are generally overcrowded. In some cases, over two thousand students register for one course, which is taught by a single individual in a space that can seat no more than two hundred students.

Less than 10 percent of university teachers are computer-literate. A lesser percentage have access to the internet. Less than 10 percent have been to an international conference in the last fifteen years. Among those employed in the last ten years, not more than 20 percent have been to a local conference. Local conferences, where they occur, have become like secondary school debating meets. At least 60 percent of those currently teaching in our universities were trained with poor facilities and in out-moded laboratories. They are, in turn, training others under worse conditions. Access to international publications and journals is almost nil for libraries cannot afford foreign publications. Individual academics are too poor to afford these publications, the salary of the professor being less than \$250 per month.

Other noticeable indicators relate to the collapse of intellectual activities such as seminars, symposia, debates, workshops, etc. Normal intellectual gravitations

have been replaced by social, ethnic and religious ones; ideological divides have been replaced by ethno-religious ones. The universities are now graveyards of ideas. A civil service mentality has crept in as academics have now adopted the prevailing opening and closing time of the civil service. Finally, one must point out that between 1992 and 1999, a period of seven years, most universities in Nigeria have been closed for a total of three years due to industrial disputes and student protests. But a semblance of normalcy has been created by most universities through the award of degrees and the truncating of the academic session.

We have highlighted the above to show that all cannot be well with the academy. Of course, one recognises that there is an urgent need for a study to determine how far down it has gone. What follows logically from the above is the question: How did the academy get this far? In the following sections, we shall present an exposé, leading to specific conclusions.

CONFLICT OF PERCEPTION

The classical conception of the university as an Ivory Tower is the inherited view from the colonial, British definition. This has had its implications for the relationship between universities and society. In the setting of universities, a conscious effort was made to isolate them from society: university campuses are far removed from habitations and are fenced in. The physical isolation has created also a mental, socio-cultural and psychological distance between universities and society. Society sees universities as some form of exclusive facilities for privileged people. It does not see itself as a stake-holder and cannot comprehend their problems. University workers, on their part, consider themselves as a special breed who deserve the best from the land. In their dealings with society, they are often arrogant. Given the above, universities have become irrelevant to the society which they are meant to serve; hence, they fail to enjoy meaningful support from the society.

The perceptions of the mission of the university by Nigerian governments and academics are diametrically opposed. Whereas successive governments have argued that universities are organs of state bureaucracy, parastatals of a kind which should be loyal to the national interest as defined and interpreted by the state (Jega 1992), the Academic Staff Union (ASUU) holds a contrary view. ASUU sees in the university the role of a “people’s” tribune, a critical watchdog for society striving to contain the excesses of the ruling class and the state (Jega 1994:6). By this view, ASUU unwittingly constituted itself into an “opposition force” and was perceived as an “opposition party” by successive military governments. The adversarial mentality that emerged from this was to become the basis of protracted conflicts, crises and instability in Nigeria’s universities.

One of the early actions of Government that spelt trouble for university education in Nigeria was the indiscriminate establishment of universities. The first university, the University College Ibadan (UCI) was established in 1948. It had a population of about 100 students and staff. By 1962 there were five universities, with about 250 Nigerian academic staff and well over 2,000 students. In the 1970s, six

more universities were established, five of them on the same day. Between 1980 and 1982, there was “the great university rush”. At least twenty-three universities and several degree awarding institutions were established. There are now about thirty-six universities with a student population of over 200,000 and about 8,000 academic staff. It is instructive to note that, while government was busy establishing new universities, it claimed that there were insufficient funds to maintain the older ones. If universities were meant to provide the nation with high-level and qualitative manpower, the proliferation of universities clearly defeated this goal. It was not so much the number that did the damage, but the fact that there was no discipline and order in their establishment.

The establishment of new universities was without regard to available human resources. New universities often attracted the staff of older ones, sometimes with outrageous appointments. The teachers were predominantly young graduates and inexperienced academics lacking academic tutelage and the norms of university traditions. Perhaps a more serious problem was that full independence was granted these institutions at inception. Because they lacked the benefit of the experience, the intellectual culture and traditions of older and established universities, they easily became agglomerations of intellectuals in pursuit of nothing.

VIOLATIONS OF UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Academic Freedom creates room for the free pursuit of knowledge and uninhibited dissemination of ideas. It allows for professional independence and personal initiative in the business of searching for and disseminating ideas without public and state control. University autonomy, on the other hand, allows universities institutional independence in the pursuit of the business for which they were established.

Successive governments did not respect these principles. In the 1970s Government interference took the form of imposing Vice-Chancellors, interfering with student and staff discipline, unilateral imposition or cancellation of tuition, feeding and lodging fees, etc.¹ The National Universities Commission (NUC) is one organ through which government violates the autonomy of universities. It is empowered by decree 46 of 1985 and decree 49 of 1988 to close down academic programmes and to establish minimum academic standards for all universities, as well as to carry out accreditation of their degrees and academic awards. These decrees empower the NUC to usurp the functions of Senate, Council, Faculty Boards and professional accreditation bodies. The strategy of these decrees is that rationalisation and minimum requirements are imposed on universities without consultation and without due regard to funding, staffing, infrastructure etc.

The Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board was established in 1971 and manages entrances and admissions into higher institutions in Nigeria. Since the inception of JAMB examinations in 1978, universities have lost their rights of determining entry standards. The JAMB admission process is beset with fraud and

malpractices. According to Jelili Omotola, Vice Chancellor of the University of Lagos, “What happens in examinations conducted by JAMB can only be described as blanket-cheating. The papers always leak before they are taken. During the examination, a lot of students have foreign materials that are not supposed to be officially brought into the examination hall.” At least a third of those admitted through JAMB cheat their way in, another third come in through an ubiquitous discretion list, leaving just a few who come in by merit. JAMB admission process is often a barter process where favours are traded by university officials and the examination body. JAMB has also led to overcrowding in our universities. Admissions are done without regard to facilities. Under this condition, very little or no learning takes place. Unqualified students who have cheated their way into the universities enlist in cults in order to obtain the power coverage to influence their way through the university. Many students become truants because of shortage of classroom space. In many cases desperate students employ others to sit for examinations for them, if they find it difficult to get through to teachers and administrative staff. Some students employ their teachers to give them private lessons and write theses and projects for them.

The appointment of Vice-Chancellors has become one of the most contentious issues. Successive governments have failed to adhere to due process for such appointments. Government’s interference with the appointment of Vice-Chancellors is motivated by political expediency and the need to exercise control over the academic community. Vice-Chancellors appointed by the government do not feel accountable to their constituents. They are often dictatorial, corrupt and misappropriate scarce resources. Because they lack popular support, they introduce ethnic and religious politics into university administration. Some Vice-Chancellors promote cults as underground security outfits. They employ such cults to perpetrate crisis when it appears expedient. Others subvert Senate and university organs, as was the case of Professor Isa Mohammed of Abuja, who unilaterally sacked thirty-five lecturers, dissolved the Senate, created programmes and altered the academic structure of his university. He ran his university like a chiefdom and with unbelievable brutality. The negative activities of Vice-Chancellors have led to the collapse of esprit de corps, and a breakdown of authority in several universities. The appointment of Sole Administrators in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, marked the high point of government violation of university autonomy. In the former case, the administrator was an army General.

Decrees 16 and 49 were deployed to censor ideas and provide a legal basis for dismissing teachers who appear critical of the establishment. Another instrument of intimidation was the Teaching, ETC (Essential Services) decree of 1993. The decree placed teaching and provision of educational services as essential services. It empowered the government to sack striking teachers who are “deemed to have resigned” after more than one week of a strike. The government tried to enforce this decree in 1993 when, after a few weeks of strike, all teachers were deemed to have resigned.

The first attempt by University teachers to unionise was in 1955 when the

Association of University Teachers (AUT) was formed at the University College, Ibadan. By 1966, AUT became a national body following the creation of more universities. Between 1977 and 1978 NAUT was reorganised to accommodate new challenges and the changing disposition of its members towards popular struggle. At its national executive meeting, it was renamed Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). Subsequently, it was registered as a trade union.

Between 1948 and 1973 confrontation between ASUU and government was hardly known. According to Beckman and Jega (1994), this was not because there were no grounds for such confrontation, but because the concern of universities in the 1960s and 1970s conformed largely to a conventional picture of academics as an elitist, conservative and vacillating segment of the middle class, preoccupied with conditions of service in a narrow sense. It tended to seek accommodation with the authorities and was easily repressed.

In 1958, proposals were submitted to government in respect to a review of salaries. This was accepted in 1959. In 1965 there was a crisis over conditions of service. At that time, the university professor was the second highest paid public servant, after the Chief Justice of the Federation. The inception of military rule witnessed a reversal of the fortunes of academics. In 1972, Government rejected a request for a pay rise by ASUU. A strike was declared in 1973 to force a raise. This ended abruptly when the government of General Yakubu Gowon threatened to evict the academics from university housing. Once more, in 1988, another strike over conditions of service failed. ASUU was proscribed and its membership was intimidated and terrorised. By this time, the university professor earned less than \$100 a month. In terms of pay and conditions of service, he was much less than a director in the government civil service. In the 1980s, the middle class, to which academics belonged, was wiped out through the economic policy known as the Structural Adjustment Programme. The second tier Foreign Exchange market was introduced, leading to hyper-inflation and massive devaluation of the naira.

In 1990, ASUU was de-proscribed. By this time the decadence in the universities had become very visible. Academic standards had plummeted to the point that employers of labour were beginning to sound an alarm. On the economic front, the standard of living of the average Nigerian had plummeted to the extent that their very survival was threatened. More important was the eroding of the middle class to which lecturers belonged, the marginalisation of the intellectual class and the growing irrelevance of the educated elite in the scheme of things. ASUU called attention to the state of the universities and submitted a set of demands for negotiations. The union was ignored. Two years later, in 1992, a strike was declared. ASUU was proscribed, and its members terrorised. Hunger was deployed by the government to break the resolve of the striking teachers (through the stoppage of salaries). The measures failed because of massive support from the Nigerian public who saw in the strike the first real opportunity to defy an unpopular, fraudulent and wicked regime. Three months later, the government was forced to negotiate with ASUU, leading to a new package of conditions of service and an arrangement on funding and university autonomy. Ironically, the agreement emanating from the

strike of 1992 led to what came to be known as “parity strikes” by sister unions and unions of Polytechnics and Colleges of Education staff. The former argued that the creation of different salary scales for teachers and administrators in the university system and the introduction of a 15 percent differential in salaries between both categories was not only unjust but also a slight. The Polytechnic and Colleges of Education teachers argued for parity because, in their opinion, they perform exactly the same functions as university teachers.

Interestingly, in 1993 and 1994, ASUU went on strike for four and six months respectively to defend sections of the 1992 agreement. The 1993 dispute was initially over funding, salaries and autonomy. A new dimension was introduced when the Secretary of Education, Professor Ben Nwabueze, called into question the status and legality of the 1992 agreement. He described it as an “agreement of imperfect obligation”. In 1994, the strike was about funding, autonomy and democracy. The government failed to implement several areas of the 1993 agreement; it was manipulating the appointment of Vice Chancellors and undercutting university funds. There was a strike in 1996 which lasted over six months, during which period the salaries of teachers were stopped. In August 1999, ASUU once more called out its members on a strike following the refusal of the new regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo to accept an agreement reached between ASUU and the Abdulsalami Abubakar administration on 25 May, 1999. Failing to secure government attention through the declaration of a trade dispute, ASUU called its members out on strike in a move unanticipated by the Nigerian public because of the nascent democracy. The government of Olusegun Obasanjo explained first that ASUU had no agreement with General Abubakar’s regime because the said agreement was not contained in the records of the Provisional Ruling Council. ASUU argued that the government negotiating panel, led by the Minister of Education was a legal entity duly constituted to negotiate with it. Moreover, it berated the government for disowning the agreement since the government is a legal continuity. Later, President Obasanjo’s government, represented by the Special Adviser on Economic Matters, Chief Philip Asiodu, acknowledged that an agreement was indeed reached, but stated that it was rushed. After weeks of posturing and showmanship by Chief Asiodu, the government negotiated and signed an agreement with ASUU on Tuesday 26 October 1999, after over six weeks of strike. The essential points of the agreement were indistinguishable from the “rushed” 29 May, 1999 agreement.

Between 1992 and 1999, ASUU has prosecuted several strikes for a total of about two years over issues related to funding, university autonomy, collective bargaining, academic freedom and conditions of service. If we add the periods when sister unions and student unions struck, the average Nigerian university may have been shut for at least three years. Some universities lost a session in the process. Many more avoided this by ridiculously truncating the academic session. The effects of the instability on staff morale and academic standards are better imagined than discussed.

Poor crisis management, insensitivity and, sometimes, calculated mischief account for the instability in the universities. The military administrations saw

ASUU as an “opposition party” which must be crushed. They set out to destabilize universities deliberately by creating crises and sustaining them. In 1993, 1994 and 1999 ASUU was asked to call off its strike as a precondition for negotiations. Government had earlier ignored the union’s declaration of trade disputes. It also rebuffed all its overtures at dialogue. Government chose to intimidate and blackmail ASUU. The instrument of hunger was employed to break the will of the striking teachers and force them back to work. These measures failed; a general sense of despair and helplessness pervaded. Lecturers found themselves under siege and a siege mentality developed. After months without salaries, and given the humiliation and indignities which they suffered, lecturers felt too vulnerable. A new thinking emerged which hitherto did not exist. The sense of job security was lost completely, and lecturers for once began to reorder their priorities towards material fulfillment. The emergent discourse was “coping strategies”. The ivory tower fell and in its place was built a temple to the worship of mammon.

DINOSAUR COMPLEX

Part of the problem which universities have faced is what is referred to as the Dinosaur Complex. This refers to the ability of the universities to respond to changing environment and times. It also has to do with their rather bloated size. At about the same time as universities were complaining about funds, several of them were opening new programmes and faculties.

Nigerian universities are virtually being run like parastatals. They are overstaffed, overpopulated and are being administered as against being managed (Onosode 1987:154). As in 1991, the University of Ibadan had neither a master plan nor an action plan after about 43 years of existence (NUC Annual Report 1991: 16). The same university has a staff population of about 6,000 workers, out of which only 1,200 are academic staff. It spends most of its resources (774 million annually) on salaries. For a University that prides itself as being the “first and best” it has nothing to offer by way of leadership. With such an over-bloated population of staff, it is not surprising that there is virtually nothing left for research and goods and services. In modern times universities are striving to adapt and be relevant. Adaptation can be possible only with a lean and efficient workforce. A workforce cannot be efficient if it is not well-trained and technology-friendly. Nigerian universities have failed to trim down and modernize, which lies at the base of their financial difficulties. Universities have failed to develop and harness their research capacities through appropriate training, interdisciplinary interfacing and networking. They are virtually cut off from one another and the external world (as institutions) because they lack basic telecommunication facilities. The administrators themselves are satisfied to travel in FGN cars, collecting estacodes from repeated visits to Abuja and reading speeches at ceremonies. One would expect to see a merger of programmes to enhance operational efficiency, research capacity and interdisciplinary interfacing. One would also like to see the promotion of computer literacy so as to cut cost and wastage and promote efficiency. One source of headache in the universities is the

institutional structure which creates unlimited opportunities at the top levels. For instance, there are all kinds of Deputy Registrars in some universities. There are numerous ad hoc committees and task forces. Most of those leading these bodies are professors who should be giving academic leadership. The University of Ibadan has more professors than other cadres and thus “too many chiefs and not enough Indians”. With such a top-heavy situation, empire-building, in-breeding, power tussle and rivalry overshadow the need for research and academic leadership.

CONCLUSION: IMPERATIVES FOR CHANGE

From the foregoing, it is obvious what are the prerequisites for change and relevance. We have avoided the issue of funding because one believes that it is a dead issue.

Government and universities must take steps to ensure stability on campus. This is a non-negotiable imperative. An open three-way communication channel is a good step in this direction. This will involve university administration, government and the unions. Universities must proceed immediately to downsize where necessary. Downsizing may involve reducing staff strength, programmes through closure or merger as the case may be, and reduction in student population to avoid overcrowding. There will then be a need to provide funding to enhance research capacity and efficiency through modernization and provision of communication facilities, computers and laboratory equipment. Universities must become involved in relevant programmes in communities around them and cast off the Ivory Tower image. To boost morale of staff, improved wages and conditions of service should be negotiated.

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NOTE

1 This was often through Judicial Commissions and Panels such as the Abisoye Panel of 1986, Akanbi Judicial Commission of Inquiry, Uthman Mohammed Commission, etc.

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Part II

The Need for Humanities in the Nigerian University Curriculum

Chapter IV

Knowledge Production, Cultural Identity and Globalization: African Universities and the Challenges of Authenticity and Transformation in the Twenty-first Century

Kolawole A. Owolabi

There are two possible dangers facing a university in a developing nation: the danger of blindly adoring mythical “international standards” which may cast a shadow on national development objectives, and the danger of forcing our university to look inwards and isolate itself from the world. – *Julius Nyerere*

The idea of the university in its medieval origin and contemporary form refers to that apex institution of learning devoted to the objectives of knowledge and culture production. In a sense, the idea of the university connotes that body endowed with the mandate of an unfettered critical inquiry into the nature, culture and essence of humans and the natural environment they inhabit. The university is thus expected to acquire information and develop it into a body of knowledge to be disseminated for improving the situation of humanity and also to confront the peculiar challenges facing each society. From this point, we can affirm that the university in its original conception and present manifestation plays two roles. The first is that of universal development of human knowledge, while the second is that of applying this to the production of a culture that will meet with the demands and aspirations of the society where the university is located. The essential purpose of the university, therefore is to produce a body of knowledge that will elevate the human condition in general and also in particular help the host community to resolve those problems preventing the society from realising its aspirations.

This dual mandate of the university, that is the epistemological and the cultural, may be interrelated but also can become contradictory. For while knowledge in its pure form is considered apolitical and universally relevant, culture most often denotes the resource of a particular society generated by the peculiar social and historical experience of that society. Knowledge most often refers to those ideas that are universally valid and relevant. It is for this reason that the university gets its name as the body committed to the quest for universally valid truth.¹ It is also in this respect that the French philosopher Voltaire talks about the commitment of scholars to the development of socially neutral and universally valid ideas. As he says, “He who seeks truth should be of no country.” But while knowledge may be regarded as essentially objective and immutable, culture most often refers to something that is dynamic and relative to space and time. Culture is “man’s inventive adaptation to his

geographical and social environment, biologically, emotionally and intellectually.”²² It is the application and adaptation to peculiar situations of the ideas generated in the universal project of knowledge production.

There is therefore a sort of ambivalence surrounding the idea of the university, particularly in relation to its dual role of knowledge and cultural development. The university is always faced with the choice of either serving human interests generally or serving the particularistic interests of its host community. This tension of the university being torn between the demand of humanity and that of the immediate society is at the center of every discourse of the university in the modern world. This dilemma is also becoming more pronounced today, particularly in Africa. In fact, the African universities were created essentially for the purpose of helping their immediate society to affirm their authentic cultural identity. This affirmation of the unique African culture is necessary in order to boost the morale of the people after the dehumanising and depressing experience of colonialism and most especially to be able to adapt the universal knowledge for meeting the peculiar problems of African society. As the legendary Emperor Haile Salassie admonished the University of Ethiopia at its inception: “A fundamental objective of the university must be the safeguarding and the developing of the culture of its people.”²³ It is this same spirit that informed the founding of the first indigenous university in Nigeria. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka, was conceived with the expectation that apart from transforming Nigeria into a modern state by promoting science, technology and other vocational skills, it will also perform the task of “conserving and refining the people’s authentic culture and values.”²⁴

This dilemma of the African universities, which is that of helping the society to attain modern skills and knowledge as well as preserving the traditional culture of the people, is getting more complicated in recent times because of the globalization process that is being witnessed throughout the world today. Radin Paulous rightly describes it: “The drama of our times is the exodus from particularity and the advent of universal community.”²⁵ The prevailing homogenization of world cultures that has been defined as globalization is making it appear as if human beings are presently one, with common interests and desires. But the truth is that globalization instead of promoting the unification of the multitude of contending values in the world, is rather making the disparities more obvious.

In this paper we need to question the possibility of the African University participating in the universal quest for knowledge at the same time as it seeks to affirm an authentic cultural identity for the African people. Should the quest for authenticity by African peoples be jettisoned in the light of the integration of culture that globalization is effecting? Or is the need for authenticity more expedient now than ever before because of the negative effect of the absence of this cultural autonomy on the developmental process in the continent? “How can Africa become once again African at the same time that it becomes modern, at a time when the forces of modernity throughout the world are working to reduce the major differences among all men to minor variations in marginal aspects of human life?”²⁶

CULTURAL IDENTITY AND THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

The issue of whether Africa ought to affirm her authentic culture in the era of globalization needs to be addressed now. The authentic culture of Africa needs to be affirmed even today because it is an effective defense against the ethnocentrism of the West that for so long has weakened and demoralized Africans. There is still the need for a critical reflection on the indigenous culture of the African people, not only to defend it against the onslaught of the West, but also to expunge the negative and anachronistic aspects of it. This critical attitude in relation to African culture is a means of preparing the African people psychologically and otherwise to compete effectively in the globalized world. Critical reflection on African culture is also necessary because of the role that a people's indigenous value-system plays in the process of development. There is the need for African scholars to understand the mind-set of their people before they can introduce certain ideas and technological materials to them. Development is not something that must always be given a universal connotation. In as much as values vary from society to society, so is the idea and conception of development different from one society to the other. Every society has its own conception and idea of development, which is necessarily a product of its value-system. Development has been defined as "the multifarious and multi-factorial process through which a given society is moving towards the achievement of what the people living in it consider as being the conditions for their happiness, their freedom and their self-actualization as human beings."⁷ It is in this respect that any form of technological idea or material that is being transferred to another cultural context needs to be critically examined, in order to know whether it will be suitable to the receiving culture.

Development in whatever form needs to be adjusted to the aspirations of a people. In this respect, we can see clearly that every society ought to determine what it considers to be development. Forcing a foreign conception of development on a society is an easy way of putting that society in crisis. This precarious situation has been the lot of African society since her contact with the West. There is a way in which Africa's reliance on a Western notion of development has contributed to the crisis of development that the society is presently witnessing. If Africa continues to operate on the basis of a borrowed culture and a foreign idea of development, the entire development process becomes counterproductive. This temptation is present today in this age of globalization when the wrong impression is being created that every society should embrace the Western value system. It is in this respect, that the globalization process is being described as a new ploy to make the rest of the world dependent on the West.

Our argument in this paper is that a neglect of Africa's cultural identity and conception of development in our project of transforming the African society is not only unrealistic, but defeats our objective of changing the condition of existence in the society. This, in fact, could be seen as a means of encouraging the perpetuation of Western imperialism. This argument of the cultural nationalists cannot be faulted.

We subscribe to this line of their argument without necessarily accepting all their other positions.⁸ Cultural identity is necessary to maintain a situation of self-reliance and economic independence of the African nation-states.

The issue of development has been addressed particularly in relation to Africa concerning the goal of self-reliance of a nation-state. In the early days of independent Africa the issue of development was consistently associated with the idea of self-reliance. This is because when a nation is dependent on another for her entire material and mental existence, economically there will not be balance of trade and balance of payment. And once there is balance of payment deficit the economy goes into crisis, because the foreign exchange needed for her international trade will be in short supply. This will definitely cause the nation to resort to borrowing, leading to indebtedness and further dependency. The emerging nation-states of Africa recognized the importance of self-reliance for the survival of their economy and the issue became a very important one in the early days of independence. But rather than becoming self-reliant, Africa has been in a state of dependency. The position has been taken that the dependency of Africa on Western society has to do with her failure to address the issue of cultural authenticity. The point being made is that the dependency of one society on another is best achieved through cultural imperialism. And cultural imperialism is best realised when the oppressed society is subtly disallowed from affirming its cultural authenticity.

The fact that culture includes knowledge production and its adaptability is indubitable. That certain Western-produced knowledge has not been effective in Africa also has to do with our inability to carry out an effective adaptation to our peculiar socio-cultural situation in Africa. In this respect African culture needs to be affirmed because it is only through such that the knowledge adopted from the West can be easily adapted for effective utilization in Africa. This is where the African university and the entire process of knowledge production become relevant. The task of the African university, even in this period of globalization, is to identify our cultural peculiarities and see how the scientific and technological knowledge produced in the West can be adapted to the African situation in order to get the best for the African society. Too long in Africa's history, we have witnessed how Western borrowed knowledge has further underdeveloped the society rather than meet her needs. It is, indeed, for this reason that it is necessary for the African university, as the apex institution for knowledge production, to be careful of certain Western-produced knowledge. In fact, the African university still needs to continue to affirm Africa's cultural difference and identity and avoid the type of knowledge produced specifically with Western culture in mind. The type of knowledge that will foster the development of the continent in the twenty-first century is one specifically produced to suit the peculiar situation of Africa, notwithstanding the present effort at making the Western ethos a universal culture.

GLOBALIZATION, WESTERNIZATION AND THE AFRICAN CRISIS

The world in which we live today is one in which the divergent peoples of the universe are being brought together to share a common experience, basically due to the advancement in communication, information and transportation technologies. The phenomenon of globalization refers to the interpenetrating of ideas, images and institutions in such a way that the whole world seems to warrant the metaphor of a global village. The process of globalization is precisely a reference to the diffusion and exchange of ideas, ideologies, and finance in such a way that everywhere there prevail the “conditions of intensity, proximity, and even almost intimacy with what used to be faraway worlds.”⁹ As Win van Binsbergen says, “Globalization is not about the absence or dissolution of boundaries, but about the dramatically reduced fee imposed by time and space, and thus the opening up of new spaces and new times within new boundaries that were hitherto inconceivable.”¹⁰

How is this dissolution of boundaries possible? It is essentially through the hitherto unimaginable capacity of science and technological knowledge in the present world. The integration of the world through the breakdown of barriers of space and time is made possible through the advancement of science and technology. This point about the interface between technological innovation and global integration was aptly explained in this manner:

What we think of as “globalisation” – a high degree of integration of world production, markets, finances culture, politics, at the expense of the local or national – only exists because of what new technologies like electronics, bioengineering, “smart materials,” etc. make possible. That is, in the absence of new technologies, what we think of as globalization could not be possible. Or to put it in another way, globalization describes capitalism in the age of electronics.¹¹

Globalization is, indeed, multi-dimensional. It has its political form, facilitated by the collapse of communism and the projection of Western liberal democracy as the survivor of the terrible dialectical struggle between the two dominant ideologies that characterized the Cold War era. Liberalism is therefore presented, after the collapse of communism, as the ideal system of social organization that can bring out and give the best to the individual and the community. In the discourse of this phenomenon of global inter-penetration, Western liberal democracy is being foisted as the ideal political system which must be adopted by all human societies. Globalization is therefore considered by the ideologues of the left as a project set out “to combat socialism and wipe out the efforts of the socialist and revolutionary patriotic states in the world to create an alternative international economic system to that of capitalist imperialism.”¹²

Economically, globalization is about the presentation of the neo-classical liberal economic policies to all the indebted countries of the world by Western-

controlled Bretton Wood institutions like the I.M.F and the World Bank, and the adoption of these by the powerless non-Western nations. This policy was manifested most significantly in the name of Structural Adjustment Programme (S.A.P), and the attendant incapacitation of the state. The creditors have cleverly lured the third world countries into the debt trap and, through this, advocate measures they consider as benefiting the debtors, but which experience has shown to be in the interests of the creditors. These measures include a process of deregulation of the economy, devaluation of the currency, import liberalization, privatization of state institutions and withdrawal of all forms of subsidies for social services in those debtor countries. The political and economic aspects of globalization have generated a serious social crisis. Tade Aina rightly said: "Globalization is therefore not the positive happening some authors would have us believe, marking the dissolution of old inefficient structures, agents and orders. It accompanied the economic crisis, carrying its basketful of problems"¹³

When Hosbawn describes this period as the age of extremes,¹⁴ he has in mind the uneven and inequitable process of development instituted by globalization. This phenomenon has created a strong difference, "an obvious divide between a cohesive, prosperous and peaceful bloc of liberal states and the instability and chaos of the rest of the world".¹⁵ What we are saying is that this integration of cultures and peoples has put the Western culture at the vantage point in relation to other cultures. The Western world has become the producer of technological materials, knowledge in its divergent forms and even culture, while the non-Western society remains at the receiving end as mere consumers and importers of everything, including the social values that direct the process of social engineering. This take-over of the rest of the world by the West definitely gives her an undue and unjust advantage. It is this that makes the ethnocentric scholars from the West see globalization as the triumph of the West in an undeclared contest of cultures.¹⁶ In reality, we are not in a world of effective and healthy inter-penetration of values across national barriers. Rather we have a world in which the homogenization of cultures is being orchestrated to favor the West and further perpetuates her age-long undue advantage over other peoples.

While the West seems to be the obvious beneficiary of this cultural imperialism masquerading as homogenization of cultures, Africa is definitely its worst victim. It is not merely coincidental that the continent of Africa is passing through a serious crisis of development at the same time that the world societies and cultures are being integrated. In actual fact, empirical evidence has confirmed that the crisis being experienced in Africa today has to do with the strong hold of Western society and institutions on the continent. This, as we know, has been made possible through the interdependency that the experience of slavery, colonialism and recently globalization has facilitated. The preponderance of Western culture, ideas and values in non-Western societies that globalization is promoting has gone a long way to put the African society in a position of dependency in virtually every aspect of life. This situation can be described at least in a metaphorical way, if not in the literal sense, as that of enslavement.

THE AFRICAN PREDICAMENT AND THE CRISIS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN AFRICA

The crisis of development that Africa has been witnessing in the past two decades has been putting pressure on all institutions of the society. The universities in Africa are not left out of this. The crisis of the African University is multi-dimensional. While the economic situation has reduced its capacity for performance, its immediate society consistently looks on it as capable of producing ideas and knowledge that can alleviate the crisis. The African university daily hears the desperate distress calls for measures to bail out the continent and its people from the woods, while the university itself steadily descends down the abyss. Financial starvation, breakdown of research facilities and migration of its manpower for greener pastures in the Western countries have rendered the university incapacitated and unequal to the task that society expects it to perform. But is it not a tragic irony that, at the time that the African university is seriously incapacitated by the crisis of its host community, so much is being expected of the institution? Indeed this should be expected, as Ashford has rightly said that universities are always under pressure to serve the immediate society in time of crisis, and it is a challenge that they must appropriately respond to.¹⁷ This era of globalization in the world and extreme depression in Africa will definitely put the higher institutions under serious pressure. The reason for this should be clear. The globalization project is essentially a process of intermingling of cultures with the most persuasive of these holding sway. Also, as we have carefully explained, global integration has been facilitated by a sophisticated and advanced technological innovation. These two – the production of an enviable culture that will attract the foreign societies and also the fabrication of technological materials and ideas that other social groups and nation states cannot resist – depend on the university as the citadel of knowledge and culture production. It is therefore not misplaced if African peoples look upon their universities to champion their cause and meet their aspiration in respect of producing knowledge and culture capable of helping them meet the challenges of the global transformation and their own precarious predicament.

As we mentioned earlier, the essential challenge of knowledge production in Africa since independence, has been how to attain and sustain the freedom and identity of the formerly enslaved and colonized peoples of the continent. This is expedient in order to put Africa on the path of transformation and bring the good life to the individual. Africa's interaction with the West and the disadvantages this has produced for her people has made it imperative for its knowledge industry to confront this Western epistemology and strive vigorously to deconstruct it. Abiola Irele described this polemic situation of the intellectual life in Africa: "Our modern expression has had to develop as a form of discursive confrontation with the West."¹⁸ This perennial challenge of the African university has become more pressing and complicated in this age of globalization. The clamor for a socially responsible university consistently challenging the Western cultural imperialistic ploy, presents Africa with a paradox and a dilemma. This is because our polemic

confrontation with the West must not neglect the practical needs of African peoples for the benefits of modernity, of which Western society has already given Africa a small taste. In this respect African universities were conceived and even expected today to reconcile the two roles, those of cultural liberation and modernization. E.A. Ayandele appropriately describes the situation of the African university as that of a predicament: "African universities, on the other hand, were born into a society desperately in search of self-identity; a society trying simultaneously to recover and reassert traditional values and to enter the mainstream of global culture being created by Western technology."¹⁹

The crisis of the university in Africa today, and ever before, is precisely that of employing a Western-oriented institution to challenge and dethrone Western values. But the failure of this institution to perform its allotted assignment has to do with the ambivalence of African society itself about this foreign value system. The material benefits of Western modernity have been so much enjoyed that the very quest for authenticity can not be fully effected by African universities without incurring the wrath of the ordinary people whose lives have so much been dependent on this modern culture. This ambivalence of the society about Western culture is a justifiable excuse for our universities to neglect the call for cultural autonomy. For cultural autonomy may imply cultural insularity and African society can not afford to pay this price.

But there is a way out of this logjam in which the African universities and, indeed, the entire African society have found themselves. The way out is to steer a middle course between what Paulin Hountondji recently calls the two temptations of cultural nationalism and cultural imperialism.²⁰ In essence, for the African university to realize its essence and meet the challenge of transforming Africa in this new millenium, it must strive to avoid the project of defending African culture by all means even when the need for serious criticism of the culture is expedient. This type of dogmatic defense of African culture is the bane of cultural nationalism and it is for this that the nationalists' viewpoints need to be received carefully and selectively. The higher institutions, in the pursuit of the mission of knowledge production, cannot therefore, ignore Western epistemology for the mere reason of nationalism. To do this is to work against the interests of the people they are supposed to be representing and protecting.

Africans know and should always acknowledge that the West, in terms of scientific and technological knowledge, has done a lot, which we can only ignore at our own peril. It will be sheer folly for us to choose to start afresh our own project of scientific and technological knowledge acquisition in the name of authenticity or nationalism. This will rather delay the development of the society and harm the very people the scholars are striving to serve. The truth is that we can benefit from the work done so far by the West. There is in fact nothing wrong with technological borrowing and transporting across cultures. What we need do is to consciously adapt them to our peculiar situation in Africa. The problem in the past is that such a wholesale adoption of Western science cannot work for our purpose. But we also need to mention that the African scholar in the service of Africa owes it to his

society to avoid or even reveal any type of knowledge that is designed to serve the imperialistic objectives of the West. It is by so doing that cultural nationalism can be purposeful and useful.

Edward Said, in his book, *Culture and Imperialism*, said much about how the West has deployed her extensive knowledge to foster her hegemonic interests.²¹ It is the duty of the African universities and scholars in this era of globalization, when cultural imperialism can be subtle and yet more effective, to watch out for such politically induced epistemology that can make Africans not only dependent, but subservient to the West. This is the reason why we scholars need to be all out to challenge the other extreme of cultural scholarship, which Hountondji calls 'cultural imperialism'.²²

Just as wholesale adoption of Western epistemology can be detrimental to our development, if conscious effort is not made to adapt it to our experience, so can development elude us in Africa if we neglect the repository of scientific and technological knowledge possessed by the West. From inception, the various universities established in Africa were expected to confront and manage the paradox of imbibing the Western intellectual tradition without losing sight of the authentic cultural values of Africa. The African universities were conceived essentially for the production and reproduction of knowledge that will be relevant to and useful for developing African society and ultimately enable her to catch up with the rest of the world. African universities were considered relevant and expedient not necessarily because of the universal quest for epistemological advancement, but essentially because of their capacity to understand the knowledge already produced and how this can be turned to the service of Africa. African universities were expected at their birth to master Western epistemology and, if possible, improve on it and employ the entire package for the liberation and development of the continent. Indeed, the African university, as a means of transformation and emancipation, must not only recognize the role of imperial knowledge in the subjugation of Africa, but also needs to acquire the appropriate tools from the same Western culture for redressing this imbalance.

The first generation of statesmen and politicians in Africa acknowledged that the dual mandate of the university, which is that of knowledge and culture production, could be manipulated to suit the exegesis of a society. In essence, these managers of African countries seem to believe that a society in a critical state needs a university not necessarily committed to the goal of producing a kind of knowledge that is universal and apolitical. Rather, the university in such society should channel all its efforts and capacities to the task of producing the type of knowledge that will be prompt in relieving society in its pressing needs.

African universities were conceived, with not only the linkage between knowledge and power in mind, but also in view of the relationship between culture and development. By this we mean two things: first that the creation of African universities was for the purpose of challenging the Western project of using knowledge as an instrument of power to incapacitate the African people. Secondly, African universities also need to respond to the fact that the cultural dislocation

effected by the West through colonialism has had serious implications for Africa's effort of development. In presenting to Africa a Western cultural mind-set and notion of development, the quest for development has been compromised from the start by the imperial powers.

In response to the appreciation of the role that knowledge and culture play in the imperial project, African universities were meant to perform the role of producing knowledge and culture that would be effective in liberating the society. To a great extent African universities were founded to serve as vanguards of the quest for an African identity, an identity that needs to be reaffirmed in order to project Africa's authenticity. This projection of an African identity will give the people of Africa the appropriate frame of mind to pursue their developmental projects.

Without any doubt, the essential purpose for the establishment of universities in Africa is to pursue epistemological goals and tools that may be universally relevant, but will also come out forcefully to dispel the ethnocentric claim about the inferiority of Africans' mental capacity. This can be done in two ways: ideologically and materially. Ideologically, it can be done through the producing of arguments and ideas that will counter the ethnocentric claims of the West, materially by producing the type of technological materials that will enable African people to enjoy the conveniences that their Western counterparts have presented to her people and other dependent societies in the modern age.

In essence, the African university has been set up as an institution for the production of a kind of counterculture effective enough to neutralize such Western knowledge and culture that are not apolitical, but instruments of imperialism. The mission of these institutions in post-colonial Africa is to rediscover the authentic African cultural ethos and also to have an adequate understanding of Western epistemology. All these will be necessary in order to make a suitable adaptation of this epistemology and through it to transform Africa and put an end to her dependency on the West. African scholarship, therefore, is essentially for two purposes, for the liberation and for the development of Africa.

But the failure of African academic institutions in affirming and projecting African values has become part of the lamentable history of Africa. For so long, by virtue of the nature, form and positioning of these institutions, their performance has been contrary to the interests and philosophy of their originators. African universities, due to the overwhelming and overbearing influence of Western culture, have grossly neglected this challenge of social responsibility to the immediate society. "The very fact that the protocols that govern scholarly activity in the modern world are still largely determined by the Western tradition and practice", makes it difficult for the African university to realize its essence and purpose. Paulin Houtondji in his two essays on the politics of knowledge production in the world has maintained that African institutions have not been able to liberate the continent from her dependency on the West because those institutions themselves are victims of this same situation.²³ The African universities are helpless, he argues, because the indigenous knowledge – that they ought to employ as a springboard for the development of the unique African epistemology that will foster the continent's

development and independence – has been integrated and subordinated to the Western-dominated global system.²⁴

AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES AND THE CHALLENGES OF AUTHENTICITY AND TRANSFORMATION IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

But the imperative of social responsibility and promotion of African interests by the African academic institutions becomes more pressing today, when the whole world seems to be fully integrated or unequally yoked together in the name of globalization. It is, therefore, more pressing now to address the question of how African universities can rise up to the challenges of cultural identity and development in the new millennium. We need to raise the question: To what extent are our academic institutions designed to meet the challenges of emancipation and transformation in a world contrived to favor the integration of cultures neglecting the peculiar social exigencies of the poor South? How can African institutions be redefined to meet this pressing challenge of authenticity, identity and freedom, which are the means of realizing the transformation of African society? The essential fact that ideas and knowledge can play very significant roles in the dialectical struggle between the oppressed and the oppressors demands that our institutions of ideas cannot afford to be neutral in the present power struggle manifested subtly as globalization.

The idea of the university that Africa inherited from the colonial powers is definitely one produced to sustain the hegemonic interests of the West. In terms of knowledge production, those universities have manifested their failure by remaining cultural consumers rather than producers. In this respect, the ideas produced in the various disciplines often merely mimic the West or are deliberately neutralized so as to be ineffective in the struggle of African peoples for authentic existence and genuine emancipation. The project of freedom and identity which have become essential to Africa's survival cannot be realized unless the African university is redefined and refocused to be responsible to the demands that necessitated its creation. As a writer said:

We cannot in all seriousness study ourselves through other people's assumptions. I am not saying we must not know what others know or think of us. I am saying we must think for ourselves, like others do for themselves.²⁵

The challenge of social responsibility and authenticity for the African university is even more pressing in today's globalized world than ever before. We seek to maintain that, contrary to the belief that the university should promote universal values, especially in this era of globalization, the real imperative is for the African universities to respond to the precarious situation of its immediate society. African universities today ought to create authentic values, appropriate technology,

adequate and relevant capacity building projects, and cultural identity that will promote self-confidence rather than mere insularity for African peoples. It is only when African Universities live up to this challenge that they can change the status of the African people as “beasts of burden” that has been reserved for them in the present unjust global community. And it is only when the universities are responsive and responsible to their essence and purpose that their survival and sustenance can be guaranteed.

The African University as the center of knowledge production ought to be the vanguard of the present aspiration of African leaders and peoples for an African renaissance. The rebirth that Africa is presently thinking about can only take place when there is a conscious effort to produce the kind of knowledge that will guarantee their authenticity and development. Renaissance, wherever it is taking place, is a process of epistemological renewal. The critical element in this revolutionary event is knowledge.²⁶ It is in this respect that the African university is very relevant to produce the type of innovative ideas that can effect the liberation and transformation in Africa. It is part of Africa’s unending crisis that the knowledge we need in Africa is in the hands of non-Africans.²⁷ But this task of taking control of our epistemological tools rests with our universities. These institutions must be conscious of their mission and responsibility which is first to their immediate society that is presently going through serious crises of identity and development.

African universities must deliberately change their philosophy and orientation against this background of overwhelming depression in society. Knowledge production should be effected with a mind to affirm our independence, which is a condition for self-reliance and overall development in Africa, especially in this age of globalization when progress depends on the command of modern knowledge. It has been said that investment in knowledge or what is presently called “human capital” is strategic in the present world, and that universities are the fundamental tools of transforming Africa from a situation of destitution to that of prosperity.²⁸ This is, indeed, very true. Africa today needs to reflect on her knowledge industry – the universities – and strive to make them equipped to meet the present challenges.

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NOTES

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Chapter V

Idealism Versus Pragmatism in the Production of Knowledge in Nigerian Universities

Olatunji A. Oyeshile

Some questions can be answered in the laboratory, while others cannot. One cannot measure happiness in the laboratory.
– *Harry Schofield, 1972*

The challenge of advancing scientific and technological frontiers became an inescapable one for most African countries, especially Nigeria, in the third quarter of the twentieth century. The reason for this is very obvious as many statesmen, scholars and educationists believe that science is the major sovereign that determines a nation's destiny in the comity of nations in an era largely defined as a "technological age". Science and technology have infiltrated all aspects of our endeavours, be they personal, public, religious, political, social and cultural.

The attempt to meet up with the advancements and developments of the scientific and technological era prompted the Nigerian government in the 1980s to adopt a policy which favours the increase of enrolment of science-related courses to the disadvantage of the humanities-based disciplines. To be precise, the sciences were allotted sixty percent while the humanities were to take forty percent of total enrolments.

Let us note at the outset that we are not concerned, in this paper to evaluate the successes and failures of this policy, although allusion may be made to it in passing. Our major focus is to engage in a wider scrutiny of the philosophical presuppositions on which the advancement in science and technology can be based, especially in a developing world. In this vein, we try to examine the pragmatism and idealism that inform government policy in the production of knowledge in our universities given the Arts – Science ratio. This exercise will further put us in a better frame of mind to determine the adequacy or otherwise of Schofield's assertion that human happiness, which is fundamental to human existence, is not what can be solely determined and arrived at in the laboratory.

EDUCATION AND THE QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE

We may start by noting that the aim of education is knowledge. The type of education a person acquires also determines the kind of knowledge one has. In this regard we can talk about technical education, moral education, political education, and scientific education, among others. Knowledge on the other hand

can be for two major purposes. First is knowledge for its own sake, that is, the intrinsic knowledge, and secondly, knowledge for the sake of other things, and this is the extrinsic dimension of knowledge. Invariably whatever form of education one receives combines both the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of knowledge.

While we do not intend to go into a terminological interlude as to what education means, let us attempt some definitions of education. According to *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary*, education means “bringing up or training, as of a child: instruction: strengthening of the powers of body or mind: culture”¹ Plato introduced the moral dimension of education by describing education as:

That training which is given by suitable habits to the first instincts of virtue in children, when pleasure and pain are rightly implanted in non-rational souls. The particular training in respect of pleasure and pain, which leads you to hate and love what you ought to hate and love is called education².

We are not surprised about the moral dimension from which Plato defined education because, like his Master Socrates, his aim was how to achieve the good life. This goal even formed the basis of his *Republic* in which the members of the guardian class are to be given sound moral education in preparation for the future governance of the Athenian society. We could also see that what differentiates the guardian class from the auxiliary (soldier) and producer classes was the moral education which serves as the basis for other kinds of education such as combative and agricultural education.

Milton takes a step ahead of Plato by seeing education from the utilitarian perspective. He says:

I call, therefore, a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully and magnanimously, all the offices, both public and private, of peace and war³.

The definition by Milton seems to encompass the moral, technical and socio-political aspects of human life. It also presupposes that an educated person should have knowledge about all spheres of human endeavour. Of course, this is a tall dream.

Etymologically however, education is from *educare* (Latin root). This means to form or train. Among the various schools of thought in education are the formalists and the naturalists⁴. The formalists believe that education is a discipline and that children learn what is good for them. The children are seen but not heard, and are made into a specific people by their education. The naturalists on the other hand believe that education should merely ‘let the child develop’. The three definitions of education from the Chambers perspective, from Plato and from Milton all suggest the need for training, the ability to be able to acquire certain skills, technical and political, and the need to apply the skills so acquired in the development of society. This would mean by inference then, that education must imply the transmission

of what is worthwhile, and we should not be oblivious of the fact that culture or society determines most of what is worthwhile. Perhaps, this is why Max Black suggested that all serious discussion of educational problems invariably involves the consideration of educational aims and a conversation about the good life, the nature of man and the varieties of experiences.

In spite of our utilitarian conception of education and the role of culture in shaping such education, Alfred Whitehead notes that whatever ideas are received by the child, it is important that he makes them his own and should realise how such ideas apply to the situations of his own life.⁶ In this vein he writes:

From the very beginning of his education, the child should experience the joy of discovery. The discovery which he has to make, is that general ideas give an understanding of that stream of events which pours through his life, which is his life.⁷

It is from the perspective above that Whitehead defines education as the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge.⁸

SCIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

At this juncture we are sufficiently prepared to examine the reasons, justifiable or otherwise, which have been responsible for the imbalance in enrolment in the sciences and humanities. One cannot but appreciate the urge of the government to move the society forward through the acquisition and utilization of knowledge. This is mainly due to what we can refer to as “the challenge of scientific and technological development in Nigeria and other African countries”.

It is believed that it is mainly science education that can usher in the much needed development especially through the production of material things, the development of needed technologies which are to be applied in agriculture, health, housing and even warfare. This constitutes the major reason why government believes that there is need to encourage more and more pupils in science education.

According to Sogolo, the sciences are defined based on their description and explanation of phenomena, as well as the structure of organic and inorganic processes in the case of the natural sciences and of the structure of society and the individual human being in the case of the social sciences⁸. Sogolo is however quick to point out the utility derived from science education. He writes:

But the aims of science education surely go beyond mere understanding. Scientists also aim at controlling nature in order to direct change toward some desirable ends. And it is for this reason that technology and social engineering have come to be regarded as the offspring of science education⁹.

Let us note that technology, such as civil engineering and computer science on the one hand, and medical sciences such as medicine and physiotherapy, fall

under applied sciences. They are all the application of theoretical findings in the natural sciences to concrete life situations. One cannot but acknowledge the utility and universality of science. It is a phenomenon that knows no geographical boundary and, because of its universality among diverse human cultures, it has almost collapsed the natural and artificial boundaries among nations, turning the world into a global village.¹⁰

Science and technology, it must be noted, have made immense contributions to virtually every sphere of human endeavour¹¹. In agriculture and manufacturing for instance, there have been acceleration and improvement of production techniques and primitive implements have been replaced by refined machines such as automation and cybernetics. Science and technology have also facilitated easy communication and transfer of information from one extreme part of the world to another. The radio, the television and the Internet are all products of science and technology.

Further to the above advantages, science and technology have also helped tremendously to improve the sphere of health and hygiene. In this direction hitherto deadly diseases such as tuberculosis, cholera, chicken pox, diabetes, asthma and sickle cell anemia are now combated with modern drugs. They are no longer seen as the manifestation of evil spirits or as the result of the anger of the gods¹². Given all these real and possible benefits of modern science and technology, it has become highly contentious whether any nation today can make meaningful progress in development without imbibing the scientific spirit and culture¹³.

However, one cannot but identify some of the dangers of science and technology. It has been argued that it has been the source of destructive technology that manufactures nuclear and arsenic warheads capable of ending the lives of a sizeable population at a time¹⁴. For example, the bombing of Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the Gulf war, the Iraq-Iran war, the fratricidal wars in African countries and the September 11th, 2001 bombing of the World Trade centre in the United States of America are a few examples of the ugly side of a technological culture. It should also be noted that modern science and technology are sources of industrial, chemical and automotive pollution of global environment which pose real threats to human, animal, vegetative and aquatic lives. Apart from this, it is believed that science and technology have a totalitarian effect because they tend to determine *a priori* their political universe and run against social, intellectual, aesthetic and moral values.¹⁵

AFRICA'S BACKWARDNESS IN SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

There is no doubt that Africa is still backward in many spheres of human endeavour, particularly in science and technology. Although, we use and enjoy the products of science and technology, we are more or less consumers. The consequence of not devising our own technology is that we lose at both the political and economic frontiers. At the political frontiers, we are more or less spectators at the international political scenes. Terms are dictated to us on the choice of leaders, and we exercise little or no choice because we lack the technological power necessary to support

our political leaders. At the economic level, not only is there a huge capital flight into technologically developed countries for the procurement of new technological appliances, but our economic systems are directed through the whims and caprices of the technologically developed nations because the latter have the technological where-withal to cripple any economy. By and large we are still immersed in neo-colonialism¹⁶.

Some of the reasons for Africa's backwardness include the failure of the traditional African world view which made it possible for the Europeans to conquer us through their superior scientific worldview. Another reason was the fact of colonialism which was a necessary consequence of the earlier reason and lastly the lack of a coherent system of thought in some areas of our endeavour. One way which Africans have attempted to overcome this scientific - technological backwardness is through the notion of technological transfer.

Technological transfer has been described as the buying or importation of foreign technology by a particular country or state without due regard to the question of whether or not it suits the environment of the buying country or state¹⁷. According to Abiola Irele, "transfer of technology" denotes a current obsession. This is because it implies that we can domesticate science and technology by a quick arrangement of rapid industrialization by buying and installing machines, training the manpower, and all will be well¹⁸. Apart from the problems of capital and finance which come into question and which cannot be neglected, transfer of technology will not take us out of the woods. This stems from the fact that "there is the scientific spirit itself which governs the whole functioning of the scientific and technological civilizations we now wish to appropriate"¹⁹. According to Abiola Irele:

What we now recognize as the scientific spirit is the product of a whole movement of ideas by which what we now refer to as the West sought to understand man and the universe: the ground for modern science was a matter of historical fact prepared by the development of Western philosophy²⁰.

The emphasis above is that development in science and technology needs to be well grounded on a system of ideas which, for now, is absent in Africa. The West have got to this present enviable stage of scientific development because their value system was grounded in philosophical and other general ideas that are conducive to the emergence of a scientific and technological culture. It is for the reasons above, and mistakenly too, that the Nigerian government has tended to effect a discriminatory educational policy between the sciences and humanities, favouring the former. To what extent is this move desirable? To answer this question let us briefly describe the humanities or the humanistic disciplines.

THE HUMANITIES

The domain of the humanities covers courses that have to do with the Culture, History and Arts of a people. Such courses include but are not limited to Literature,

Languages, History, Classics, Religion and Philosophy. These courses hardly use the methodology of the natural sciences. They depend mostly on rationalization, evaluation and arguments mostly done from the background of culture and human interest. It is often ridiculously claimed that these disciplines in the humanities do not readily place 'bread and butter' on the table. In other words, their utility cannot easily be quantified, unlike what obtains in applied sciences. Thus many African leaders believe that these disciplines are not relevant to the present developmental process. According to Sogolo²¹, Herbert Spencer was one of the early critics of the humanities in his classification of areas of activities as the following statements show:

First, those activities which directly minister to self-preservation; second, those activities which, securing the necessities of life, indirectly minister the self-preservation; third, those activities which have as their end the rearing and discipline of offspring; fourth, those activities which are involved in the maintenance of proper social and political relations; and fifth, those miscellaneous activities which make up the leisure part of life, devoted to the gratification of tastes and feelings²².

The fifth of the activities is where Spencer thinks the humanities belong. He could not be totally right for two reasons: First, the preoccupation of the humanities certainly involves more than the satisfying of taste and feelings, as they constitute the pivot on which culture and civilization are based.

Secondly, all disciplines whether in the sciences or humanities try at one point or the other to satisfy human feelings and tastes. It therefore means that the humanities themselves are only fulfilling some of the imperative of the product of human intellectual enterprise, which is the satisfaction of tastes and feelings. Perhaps, this function falls within the purvey of the intrinsic function of education.

A major importance of education in the humanities lies in the fact that it satisfies certain needs of man, which are beyond the physical and material needs which science and technology are concerned with. According to Sogolo:

The satisfaction of such needs ... is beyond the reach of science because these have to do with phenomena which are not explicable in terms of some laws of natural processes. The sciences seek, through the formulation of law and theories, to create order and uniformity out of apparent diversity, to apply such laws in adapting the environment to suit man's needs. Paradoxically, however, in doing all this for man, science seems to stand indifferent to the fate of this very object it purports to serve. This aspect, according to the history of education, has long been assigned to the humanities.²³

The extensive quotation from Sogolo is important because it shows that there are fundamental aspects of man that cannot be grasped by natural science. Such aspects include the human mind, human values, culture, happiness, the goals of scientific

innovations and the place of man in the universe. The most fundamental question about man is man, and therefore a naturalistic methodology cannot fully grasp the dimension of this phenomena. Perhaps, this is why J.S. Mill suggested that “men are men before they are lawyers, or physicians, or merchants, or manufacturers”²⁴. To extend this position further we can ask: Does being an engineer, a bio-chemist, a medical doctor, an economist solve the problem of happiness, justice, life after life, human destiny and the crisis of existence? The answer would definitely be *No*.

The above argument is not to undermine the relevance and utility of science. To the contrary it is to suggest that the goals of science are better achieved from a complementarist approach. In this instance, other intellectual approaches in the humanities are obviously needed in order to provide sustainable answers to the question of Man’s flux of experience and the problem of the meaning of existence.

According to Macebuh, a major problem in contemporary Nigerian education, as fostered by the tilt towards total science education, is lack of grounding in conceptual paradigms which the disciplines in the humanities provide. This has resulted in the “deterioration in the commitment to intellectual life all in the name of ‘functional education’, which is thought to hold the key to our rapid development”²⁵.

Macebuh notes that a one-sided pursuit of mechanistic and science education (popularly tagged utilitarian disciplines) all in the name of relevance and development may result in lack of consideration for the human condition. Thus, according to him, such issues as development, environment and other related issues are tasks not for the sciences and the so called utilitarian disciplines, but can only “be understood within the perspective of some moral and philosophical discrimination, of some knowledge of man’s history and the lessons that may usefully be learned from that history”²⁶. The humanities have a special task of humanizing in a naturalistic setting, because through imagination, they put the scholar in contact with what may be referred to as the storehouse of values, out of which he chooses which of them to live by. The humanities, through the varieties of experience which they provide, serve to enrich the lives of the individuals and deepen also their sense of community and duty to the group to which they belong.²⁷

IDEALISM VERSUS PRAGMATISM IN PRODUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE

Let us at this juncture examine some philosophical issues arising from the government’s conception concerning (and indeed similar orientation) the production and utilization of knowledge based on the Science and Arts dichotomy. We shall consider the issues of idealism and pragmatism and show that government’s policy is based on some form of idealism and not pragmatism to which it thinks it supposedly hinges its argument.

What is idealism? In everyday life an idealist is seen as somebody who contemplates perfect things even though what he contemplates may be far from reality. The idealist is always after the ideal as opposed to the chaotic, limited and uncertain aspects of everyday life. Sometimes an idealist is seen as a dreamer who

tries to forget the “crude reality, which relentlessly destroys his most cherished ideals”²⁸. Philosophically, idealism has to do with the spiritual as opposed to the material. It tries to take man beyond the empirical realm in order to contemplate reality in unison. So while the materialists hold that matter is primary and that consciousness is its product, the idealists, to the contrary, maintain that the entire world is as a result of the mind’s activities.²⁹

The philosophical idealists are opposed to both the philosophical naturalists – who hold the view that mind and spiritual values have emerged from or are reducible to material things and processes³⁰ and the philosophical realists who claim that physical objects exist independently of being perceived. The idealists however insist that for any object to exist it must be perceived by the mind. F. Hegel is an example of an absolute idealist, for he maintains that the mind is the only real entity. He conceives the mind as a spirit working towards its unity through the Absolute spirit. The absolute spirit or idea strives to perfection through the dialectical process which encompasses three stages – thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. George Berkeley is an example of a subjective idealist, for he maintains that the existence of objects depends on their being perceived by an active mind. His popular dictum is “To be is to be perceived” “*Esse est percipi*”. To Berkeley therefore neither our thoughts, nor passions, nor ideas formed by the imagination exist without the mind.

A pragmatist in everyday life is somebody who believes that an idea is only useful if it has practical utility. That is, if such an idea works and helps to solve the problem at hand. In this guise a pragmatist will be opposed to an idealist who is seen as a dreamer. Within the philosophical context, pragmatism has American origin. It is said to have developed in America as a revolt against what thinkers like William James, C.S. Peirce and John Dewey felt to be a sterile philosophical tradition in the American colleges, and the useless metaphysical tradition which was flourishing in Europe³¹.

The pragmatists rest their method and theory on the principle of utility, believing that their method and theory can be used not only in solving intellectual problems but also to advance the frontiers of human progress. The pragmatist theory or principle is applied in the areas of ethics, science, politics, economics and even education. Experience, it should be noted, remains paramount in the formulation of theory. According to the pragmatists a theory is true if it works. And a true belief is a belief which has been verified and has been found to deal successfully with experience, while a false idea is determined by showing that attempts to verify it fail or that such an idea does not work in our experience³².

Dewey’s postulation concerning pragmatism serves as the veritable basis for determining the direction of knowledge production. He believes that the personal and positive character of thought must be taken into account in the formulation of any philosophic theory. This will help the individual to adapt to new situations. According to Dewey, the individual’s environment is both natural and human, and the individual should value the human environment just as much as he values the natural environment³³. In similar view A.N. Whitehead suggests that a technical, or technological education ought to be conceived in a liberal spirit³⁴.

Given the brief analysis of idealism and pragmatism, can we really say that government is propelled by idealism or pragmatism in its policy concerning the Science/Arts admission ratio? It appears that the government's stance on the Science-Arts ratio is driven by some form of idealism, for the government desires to be scientific and technologically developed overnight, without considering the necessary ingredients for such development. Contrary to popular view, the government has not been pragmatic enough to recognize the preconditions to scientific and technological development based on two major reasons among others. The first reason is that there must be an enabling environment, for teachers, researchers and students alike, for the growth of science and technology. The second reason is that the humanities are not antithetical to the growth of science and technology, contrary to government's belief. In fact, it is the humanities that provide the foundation on which science and technology should rest. This is because they help to define the goals or ends to which science and technology must be directed. In other words, human values and sustenance, in terms of growth and development to which science and technology are directed, are determined by humanities. Therefore, stagnating the humanities does not and cannot do any good to the advancement of science.

Talking more about the enabling environment for the growth of science, the emphasis should not be so much on the number of science students and graduates, rather it should be on the quality of graduates so produced. It is these qualitative science graduates, whether in large number or otherwise, who will launch the country into the enviable state of scientific advancements. And this is the case in many of the scientifically advanced countries. For this feat to be achieved however, there must be will power on the part of government, not just a rhetorical commitment to the pursuit of science. In this regard, there must be adequate provision of science infrastructures from the primary schools to the secondary schools and then to the tertiary institutions, such as the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. Science teachers and teachers generally must be given conducive teaching environments and adequate incentives through regular payment of living wages, periodical and focused in-service training and the provision of learning materials that will help to generate interest in the teaching and learning of science voluntarily. Neither can we force science on people nor force people on science. It is a process that comes willingly. Above all, there should be a stable political and economic environment that can sustain the development of science. It is in a situation of political stability and economic prosperity that people can be encouraged to engage in scientific research.

On the second issue pertaining to the humanistic background to science development, we must be guided by the concept of human survival and social transformation. Science education and development can be meaningful not only if they help man survive in this thermo-nuclear age, but also when their by-products are used in social transformation concerning politics, economics, communication and religion. It is in this regard, for instance, that the technological innovations of the internet can be used in promoting human values instead of destroying them as exemplified in some fraudulent economic activities and obscenity to which the

youths are exposed on the internet.

Furthermore, whatever education one receives, be it scientific or otherwise should, according to Plato, help us to achieve the good life in a good society. Even in achieving the good society and the good life, individual's experiences and ingenuity must be taken into cognizance. Perhaps this is why the existentialists stress that the child's raw and uninterrupted experience must be taken into account to allow full development. A good educational philosophy accordingly should be such that allows the individual to develop his full potentialities. This also informs the need to capture knowledge from different perspectives, since reality is arrived at through technical, moral, anthropological and literary dimensions. This is aptly captured in the following poetic lines from Wallace Stevens:

Twenty men crossing a bridge into a village. Are twenty men
crossing twenty bridges, into twenty villages³⁵.

Looking at these poetic lines, it may even be difficult to agree on what constitutes the fact, since there is the issue of subjective experience which science itself cannot unravel completely. For instance, the facts presented to us include a bridge, a village, and twenty men who encountered this situation within a distinctively fashioned, human frame of reference³⁶. The fact that life presents itself to us as humans should presuppose that we give all experience the chance of interpretation, as knowledge itself is holistic. Making allusion to our poem, the bridge may mean to one of these twenty men, not primarily a means to cross a river but the spot where he kissed his first love. The bridge may signify to another where he saw his father leap into the water and drown and to another the bridge leading into a village where his worst enemy lurks to fulfill his pledge of revenge. Further, another may see the bridge as a quaint example of rustic architecture, while his companion may see it as a project which needs work done on it quickly and the village is just a spot where he can find a place to sleep, something to eat, and a bit of companionship while he works until the project is completed³⁷. The interpretation can continue to any level. This poem underscores that science is not the only avenue through which nature and human experience can be interpreted. Hence the need for a complimentary approach to knowledge.

We can apply our above inferences to the role of science and humanistic education to African development by noting that development itself is a complex, multi-faceted enterprise. Oladipo puts this succinctly when he writes:

The problem of development is a complex, many-sided problem. True, it has a technical side which we can tackle by developing the appropriate scientific and technical education for our people. It also involves the search for abiding values in terms of which we can make sense of our experiences and develop the right kind of attitudes to our society and its institutions.³⁸

The import of the above is that the Nigerian system of higher education should be understood in the context of society and culture. Although one is a firm believer in science education, moral and cultural education which the humanities champion is a basis for development. Hence, educational curricula should be framed given this is mind.

CONCLUSION: THE WAY FORWARD

We want to note that government should be more realistic in the quest for scientific development by seeking development in an inclusive manner. To attain scientific advancement we should start with the right attitude of mind by appreciating the complementary nature of the sciences and the arts. The proliferation of science and technological institutions cannot on their own guarantee the required scientific development unless they are pursued from the perspective of the totality of human advancement. Otherwise, we would also fall into the same error as the logical positivists who thought that only scientifically verifiable propositions are worthy of philosophical attention.

Furthermore, if we consider the limitations of science and technology in spite of their numerous advantages, we will be quick to realize that other methods of knowing are as important as the scientific method. Granted that the body needs material things, the soul also needs nourishing. Bertrand Russell captures this, using the discipline of philosophy, when he writes:

If we are not to fail in our endeavour to determine the value of philosophy, we must first free our minds from the prejudices of what are wrongly called 'practical' men. The 'practical' man ... is one who recognizes only material needs, who realizes that men must have food for the body, but is oblivious of the necessity of providing food for the mind. If all men were well off, if poverty and disease had been reduced to their lowest possible point, there would still remain much to be done to produce a valuable society.³⁹

We want to say that the task of producing a valuable society is largely in the enclave of the humanities.

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Chapter VI

The University and the African Crisis of Morality: Lessons from Nigeria

Ogbo Ugwuanyi

The great begins great, maintains itself only through the free recurrence of greatness within it, and if it is great ends also in greatness.
– *Martin Heidegger*

THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY

What is a university? Gilbert Ryle, renowned English philosopher, once made a good analogy that takes care of this question. It goes this way:

A foreigner visiting Oxford or Cambridge for the first time is shown a number of colleges, libraries, playing field, museums, scientific departments and administrative offices. He then asks “But where is the university? I have seen where the members of the Colleges live, where the Registrar works, where the scientists experiment and the rest. But I have not yet seen the university, in which reside and work the members of your university.” It has then to be explained to him that the university is not another collateral institution, some ulterior counterpart to the colleges, laboratories and offices, which he has seen. The university is just the way in which all that he has already seen is organized. When they are seen and when their co-ordination is understood, the university has been seen. (Ryle, 1949:23-24)

Ryle’s analogy is a short but articulate attempt to show that the university is a system, an operational device. The meaning of Ryle’s analogy is that the university is basically an idea and nothing else.

Evidently, there are such things as a land mass, structural edifice, human beings, sign posts, cars, halls, etc. that constitute the university environment, but what qualifies these for the name university is the activity taking place there. The activity that unites all these items is what is referred to as the university. This is why all the activities are connected, such that the functions that take place in the community are intended to serve the same purpose of achieving a common result referred to as university training.

The university, therefore, is that operational device whereby distinguished people of high academic ambition come to learn and impart knowledge. It is a small community of academically talented minds who devote their attention and time to the quest for knowledge. According to Murray G. Rose, it is “a small community of intellectually talented people separated from the larger society and united internally by a respect for knowledge and love for learning, that is, involved in search for truth and a perpetuation of high culture and civilized learning” (Murray G. Rose, cited in Odoziobodo, 1991). The university, in bringing these people together, documents the ideas and ideals of the human society and gives the society the intellectual leadership it desires. Because of this leadership imperative of the university, it serves as the intellectual vanguard of the society. Karl Jaspers, the Western philosopher of repute, puts it that “to be permeated by the idea of a university is a way of life. It is the will to search and seek without limitation, to allow reason to develop unrestrictedly, to have an open mind, to leave nothing unquestioned, to maintain truth unconditionally, yet recognizing the dangers of “*separate aude*” (dare [to go] on your own) (Jaspers, cited in Odoziobodo, 1991).

The Igbos, a prominent linguistic group in Nigeria, has a word to translate “university”. Wanting an indigenous version of the word university in their language, renowned experts in the Igbo language came out with the word *mahadum* to stand for “university”. The English equivalent of *mahadum* is “know all of them”. This expression that summarizes the diversity and broad nature of the learning that takes place in the university has since come to stand as the Igbo equivalent of the word university.

The motto of some of the universities in Nigeria can also help understand the idea of a university properly. In Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria the motto reads: “knowledge for advancement”. At the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, the motto reads: “for learning and culture”. The motto of University of Nigeria, Nsukka, is “to restore the dignity of man.” All of these are thematic expressions of the ambition of the University.

In 1991, at a television interview with Enugu Broadcasting Service, Nigeria, the Registrar of the University of Nigeria was asked which man the university wanted to restore to his dignity and he replied: “The dignity of the black man exploited and humiliated by slavery, imperialism and colonialism”. His answer gives an insight into the basis of the university of Nigeria. Similarly, from the goals and aspirations of various universities, it is clear that the university comes out with a certain vision and goal. This goal or vision often reflects its fundamental duty to shape the cause of human society and advance human civilization.

Some people are more engrossed in man’s quest for knowledge than others. Such people feel called to a life of learning and are thus much more dedicated to the search for knowledge. The university sets out to promote and support the cause of this quest. Hence, Nisbet asks: “What is the dogma that the university is built on? Knowledge is important. Just that “not relevant” not “practical” knowledge; not the kind of knowledge that enables one to wield power to achieve success, or influence others, knowledge” (Robert Nisbet, as cited in Odoziobodo, 1991).

What Nisbet is saying is that the university is primarily devoted to the search for truth and knowledge in the absolute sense of the term. His position does not suggest that university education does not have a practical value. His position is that the university attaches a great deal of importance to knowledge as an end more than knowledge in its technical sense or as mere skill acquisition. The university invents, creates and expounds ideas and ideals in the highest and truest sense of the term. It is, indeed, man's desire to fulfill the divine call to know at its peak.

The university stands as an invaluable asset of any society, so that if the society wishes to take stock of herself, to assess her level of development, she could simply do this by assessing the level of the development of her university, since it is here that future leaders, political or economic, intellectual or moral, etc, are made. The university, indeed, is a great institution.

SECRET CULTS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

The idea of secret cults invented some years ago in Nigerian universities, suggests that some students, feeling bound by a common vision or goal, unite themselves to protect or promote this goal. The idea is that these students feeling the urgency of this goal take certain measures, spiritual or material, to ensure that these goals are realized. It goes further to suggest that these goals are so important to the students in question that they would even sacrifice as much as their lives for it. The idea further suggests that, based on the sanctity of these goals, some of the activities of these students remain secret for the best interest of the students involved. Thus membership is strictly limited to a few who are ready to bind themselves by cultic oaths or rituals.

Much of the activity of the members is done in secret. The few activities they perform in public are largely characterized by violence, ruthlessness, sheer brutal display of bravado. In many cases these organizations fight one another. They stab and kill perceived enemies or opponents.

Secret cults account for many deaths in Nigerian universities. They have membership in almost all the universities in Nigeria and operate through a network for members who serve as mercenaries to avenge or revenge. Members of one cult are often invited from one university to another to kill or maim a perceived enemy to a cult member in the university. The result is that at least five hundred students have died as result of secret cult activities in Nigerian universities between 1990 and 2000.

On 24 May 1999, this author witnessed what could be called the official victory of cultists over the university idea. At the Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria, several masked cultists numbering six in all, emerged from the bush and shot live bullets in search of their perceived opponents. They drove the entire university community out of school, and the university was shut at noon, several hours before the official closing time.

The secret cult syndrome is usually linked to the Pyrates Confraternity founded at the University of Ibadan by the Nigerian Nobel laureate, Professor Wole

Soyinka, and six other colleagues in the early sixties. This organization, which was formed to reenact the egalitarianism of traditional African society, also assumed the position of a moral agent devoted to curbing immorality through a terror-bent measure. While the moral philosophy of the organization gave it credibility then, the corruption of this moral focus soon gave rise to similar organizations who saw the Pyrates Confraternity as a terrorist group that needed to be countered. These organizations invented their own ideology to provide justification for their existence. The result is the emergence of a host of these organizations, notably: the Black Axe Movement, the Eye Confraternity, the Vyckins, the Maffiates, etc., all of which sprang up in Nigerian Universities. There were also female cults, such as the Daughters of Jezebel, the Sharonites, etc.

CULTS AND THE UNIVERSITY IDEA: A STUDY IN CONTRAST

The question that arises from the above incidence is: why should the university, where knowledge is supreme, turn into an empire of cultists where violence is supreme? Is there any spiritual union between knowledge and violence? And if there is, which kind of violence?

I begin to address these questions by arguing that knowledge has some moral imperatives, which might lead to violence, but that the action that stands in fulfillment of knowledge is not the kind promoted by cultism in Nigerian university. The action that leads to violence must have within it that reflective and interrogative potential that invites the actor to a level of submission to moral imperatives. Such action must set out, first and foremost, to protect and promote life, and therefore serve only as one of the best ways to do this. The emergence of secret cults in Nigerian universities was therefore the failure of the imperative to put duty side by side with morality, and action side by side with thought. The conjunction of thought and action not only makes an action submit itself to constant purification through criticism; it also makes it achieve its end in the most proper way. As Austin Fagothey puts it: "It is morally wrong to seek a good end through evil means" (Fagothey, 1963: 458).

To examine this issue further, let us look at the factors that saw the emergence of secret cults in Nigerian universities. One of the reasons advanced by student cultists in Nigerian universities is that their action is a search for justice. Many of the secret cults argue that their organization sets out to fight the unjust oppressor who holds that might is right in the university community. This explains why they come with arms and ammunitions, axes, guns, machetes, etc to fight this perceived aggressor on human freedom and happiness. This is again in line with the perceived weakness of legal structures, such as the police, the law courts and other institutions that promote justice in Nigeria. This position has some merit, for justice is certainly one of the important themes of life, and it is possible that it can pull some students together to constitute themselves into a cult in search of, or in defense of, its ideals. But a more serious question in this regard is why should this search for justice be done secretly? Would this not affect the quality of justice achieved since what is

done in secret suggests fear? What sort of justice would some students seek at the exclusion of others?

In any case can we talk of justice without the means of seeking it? When we look for civil justice with military justice is that not wrong? The justice human beings seek with the target to kill and maim the other cannot qualify for justice. And this goes for the justice sought by cultists in the Nigerian university. Such jungle justice cannot be human justice but animal justice. It cannot be the type of justice that morality demands.

The other reason that has been advanced by cultists in Nigerian universities is that it is a way of re-enacting the egalitarianism of traditional African society. This position is evident in the music that provides entertainment during the meetings of secret cult members. These meetings, variously known as a convocation, converge or consultation, vary from one secret cult to the other and are often accompanied with background music that re-enacts traditional African society and inspires the passion to kill in defense of brotherhood. Judging by the music and the pattern of the gathering, there is a lot of credibility in this thesis. First, the organizations normally converge in the bush or in villages, calling to mind African traditional living arrangements. Secondly, the items in their musical entertainment are usually musical instruments of African origin. Thirdly, their instruments of harm or vengeance are normally instruments of African origin: axe, bows, arrows, charms, etc. Again, the music often has a war-like rhyme and rhythm, all of which reflects attempts at re-traditionalization of African culture.

All these substantiate the claims of the cultists that their organization aims at re-enacting the ideals of traditional African society. Ali Mazrui, Africa's prominent scholar, has clearly argued that, "the gods of African traditional religions were often gods of bravery, hence the warrior values of Africa—courage, endurance, manhood, and even purposeful ruthlessness" (Mazrui, 1979:52). In the light of the above, it is plausible to argue that secret cults in Nigerian universities, which are essentially characterized by a form of ruthlessness in dealing with perceived enemy students, are a re-enactment of these values.

The problem, however, is why this re-enactment would be in a very negative direction. Is ruthlessness the central ideal in traditional African society? What of the rich humanism always associated with the society? Traditional African society had "a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty" (Acheby). Thus the modern African who sets out to re-enact this philosophy should do so at significant and relevant depth. Traditional African society was not a vengeful society entirely. It had a way of arbitrating cases before implementing any punitive measure. Here, those who claim innocence are made to swear oaths as basis for vindication or otherwise. Again, there were certain elements of boldness, forthrightness and courage associated with the cause of justice in traditional Africa, which is completely at variance with the secret cult syndrome.

In 1992, as a post-graduate student of the University of Nigeria, this author witnessed a horrific scene where some students were axed, with different parts of the body chopped off, by secret cult members believed to have come from other

universities. The perpetrators of the act, who were masked, fled the university after the incident. Apart from mirroring the petty nature of the secret cult affair, this incidence served to portray the depth of cowardice in the entire phenomenon. Justice and vengeance in traditional Africa is not a cowardly affair. It is an issue for the bold and the courageous. This puts secret cults out of any relevant traditionalist position. Indeed, most of what constitutes the theme of vengeance for Nigerian university students involved in secret cults would not pass among elders in traditional African society, and this shows the unjustified character of the secret cult syndrome.

In face of the failure of this logic of justification, the plausible way to locate the underlying cause of secret cults in Nigerian universities is the failure of Nigerian morality and the militarization of Nigerian society. This position sounds credible given the fact that secret cults are a more regular feature of the Southern Nigerian universities where liberalism reigned more, in contrast to the northern universities with their rigid attachment to Muslim culture and religion. While Christianity dominates the southern part of Nigeria, the practical day-to-day life of this part of Nigeria is dominated by a post-Christian philosophy of pride and arrogance. Again we find some justification for this claim, given the fact that although secret cults originally had a positive orientation, their later regression into an instrument of harm became more spectacular during the era of military rule. The long years of military rule in Nigeria and the absence of a reliable ethical standard fashioned a destructive ethical norm founded on boldness, intimidation and egoism as an ethical standard in Nigeria, and most remarkably in the southern part of Nigeria. The South African journalist, Thandeka Gqubule, captures this superman philosophy of life for this part of Nigeria when he argued:

The word “*shakara*”, made popular by the late national musical legend, Fela Ransom Kutu... aptly captures the national character of Nigeria and no single English equivalent can contain its full meaning. *Shakara* means chutzpah, gumption, *joie de vivre* and audacity” (Thandeka Gqubule, 2000).

In a word, *shakara* is the summary of Nigerian morality, especially for people of the Christian dominated southern part of Nigeria. It is a disposition to pride and arrogance, which abhors modesty and humility as virtues. Secret cults are a rude consolidation of the vice of *shakara* in Nigeria, which the journalist further described as a country of the “brave, free and bold.”

The other factor that has promoted the culture of cultism in Nigerian universities is the militarisation of Nigerian society. For twenty-six years of her post-Independence history (1966-1979, 1983-1998), Nigeria passed through military dictatorships. These regimes promoted force and coercion as a social value equal to none, as a result of which reason was subordinated to the rule of force. This culture of militarism also affected the university to the extent that some Nigerian universities were, during these periods, ruled by military laws and principles. Indeed, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in 1996 came under the rulership of a general of the Nigerian

army. In the same vein, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and the Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, respectively came under the government of an individual with a military structure under the tag of “Sole Administrator” during the period. This official militarisation of the university gave prominence to the secret cult syndrome, as it gave it an aura of respectability and relevance, to the extent that university administrators invited the service of the cultists for administrative reasons. It was easy to accuse a vice chancellor of a Nigerian university of membership of secret cult; or of being privy to the activities of cult members in the university.

At the moment secret cults are on the decline in Nigerian universities, following the gradual de-militarisation of the Nigerian society. However the relevant question is, what can the university world-over learn from the incidence of secret cults in Nigerian universities? What are the lessons in the Nigerian conquest of the university through the secret cult activities?

CULTS AND THE UNIVERSITY IDEA: LESSONS FROM NIGERIA

The first lesson that the Nigerian example presents to the world is the need to place the university at a truly rational height. By this we mean, the need to set the university far above the society, since the society can only be the child of the university. A society cannot give the university its revered place as the ivory tower unless it considers itself inferior to the university. Such a society would inevitably drag the university idea down to a level where it begins to dictate the pace for the university, and not vice versa. This was the case with the Nigerian university as exemplified in the secret cult phenomenon. Our definition of the university above gives it a superior quality above all human institutions in matters of knowledge. This means that the university must humble the society, the nation or people by providing the environment that makes it difficult for people without a strong disposition to civility to thrive. Any society or people which does not keep the university at a height where the society would see herself inferior to the university will always end up dragging the university idea to a level where it becomes a captive to society. Thus, while the cult syndrome in Nigerian universities can, to a large extent, be traced to the moral degeneration of Nigerian society, as is evident in the ideals of *shakara*, the truth is that a university should invent and re-invent morality.

But to do this, the university idea must be held sacrosanct at all times, especially by members of the university world. Thus the wonder is how the university itself failed to perform this duty and collapsed morally. Interestingly, the African crisis of morality is not peculiar to Nigeria. Several other African countries suffer the moral dislocation arising from a sudden discontinuity with the past and the inability to re-define the present to provide focus and direction to the African state. Similarly, the long years of romance with military rule is not peculiar to Nigeria. Countries like Ghana, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, etc. also experienced military rule. Paradoxically, none of these universities have had the Nigerian experience. The point therefore lies in the level at which Nigeria has kept the university idea and the failure to recreate this idea in the face of moral challenges.

The second lesson from the cults' conquest of Nigerian universities is the need to provide a periodic review of organizations in universities. All over the world universities make provision for membership of non-governmental and non-profit organizations. These organizations promote human society in one way or the other. There is, however, the need to review the activities of these organizations from time to time to ensure that they do not lose their relevance and focus.

The third lesson from the situation of Nigerian universities is the need to have a cumulative process of moral evaluation for graduation in the university. Part of the cause of the evil of the secret cult syndrome in Nigerian universities is that there is no provision for constant moral appraisal of students. As a result students are always sure of graduation once they gain entry into the university. In addition to this, there is no legal provision for a moral review of the student's performance. The university should be able to provide measures that review student performance according to certain established moral and intellectual standards.

Finally, the university must evolve effective legal institutions to forestall the kind of harm that befell Nigerian universities. Until the incidence of secret cults in Nigerian universities, it was an anathema to see police posts in Nigerian universities. This is understandable, given the noble height at which the university existed. But while the university no doubt is a civilized community, the presence of law enforcement agents should be accommodated. This is because in a world of freedom there are certain variations in moral persuasions which can only be resolved with recourse to the legal option. The case of the University of Ibadan is again a reference point. In 1986 Nigeria's premier university the University of Ibadan witnessed unrest arising from a protest by Muslim students against a cross mounted at a church above their mosque. The argument of the students was that the cross, which was visible from the mosque, is inimical to their faith. The protest arising from this was so intense that it took a strong intervention of the authorities to save what would have been a deadly religious clash in a Nigerian university. Although the tension was brought under control, the incident was a classic example of the failure of reason in a university.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the African crisis of morality in relation to the university, taking Nigeria as a case study. It has discussed the effects of this state of affairs as evident in the birth of secret cult syndrome in Nigerian university, a phenomenon whereby students form clandestine organizations aimed at fighting perceived enemies in the university. It has outlined some of the effects of the secret cult syndrome and gone ahead to proffer solutions, some of which may be useful for any similar institutions in need of moral re-armament.

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Part III

The Cultural Challenge of Being African Universities: Nigerian Identity and Contemporary Progress

Chapter VII

Subjectivity, Culture and Hermeneutics

George F. Mclean

The previous chapter formulated the heart of the dilemma of the Nigerian University. To serve the nation it must have the highest standards of curriculum and research. Yet as developed in the first world and from its perspective these are perceived to lock in the third world to an inferior position and to lock out the other half of the mission of these universities, namely to continue and adapt the cultural identity of the Nigerian peoples. How then can this essentially Western institution serve to liberate the Nigerian nation from the West and enable it to be itself.

This would indeed be impossible if university standards were to reduce the cultures of the people merely to the status of folkloric music and dance with no engagement of the ecological and socio-political sciences, philosophy and theology. But with the emergence of global interchange it becomes clear that universities can no longer retreat into a Western mindset which represses the variety of cultures and civilizations. Indeed it has been characteristic of thought since the reflection of the ideologies of the 1930s to enrich its objective content with the dimension of human subjectivity and thereby to become aware of culture to develop hermeneutics as the science of their interpretation and inter-communication, and thereby to come to a deeper understanding of the identities of peoples and civilizations and their religious roots.

This chapter will study these developments as context for the last two papers of this volume on values and on the place of religion and theology in the university.

FROM OBJECTIVITY TO SUBJECTIVITY

With Plato Western thought took a decisive turn. Seeing the need for norms and orientation he proceeded to make the virtues, which Socrates sought, into stable things – like stars in the firmament – according to which people could guide their lives. Thus Plato gave them the ontological status of ideas existing at another level of reality or in another world beyond that of humans. They were unable to be shaped by human history, but able to provide stable guidance as norms of the human good. People were then challenged to live in time but in accord with this principle of unity, truth and goodness.

It was essential that human life be directed by and according to this principle seen precisely as higher than and not subject to humankind. Indeed, the transcendence of this absolute reality over and above humans was so essential that the Greeks could not understand how this principle could know anything less than itself. It was as if it were turned away from humankind as a reality over against or it ob-ject.

To a degree this would change with Christianity and its sense of divine love and providence for humankind, and indeed for all creation. As Augustine would observe: we did not first love God; God first loved us. Nevertheless the transcendence of God reinforced the attention to the objective character of knowledge. God was understood as creator and saviour, with man created in His image, serving as His vice regent. The Aristotelian emphasis in Christian theology pointed to God beyond man; the Augustinian pointed to God within or the immanence of God. But whether to God or neighbor the direction of thought and concern was to the other or objective, rather than to the human subject.

There remained, however, something inconvenient for human pride, for man was ever subject to the objectively higher one, which could never be exhaustively understood or controlled. Hence, in the reformation and Renaissance which initiated the modern period an effort was made to reduce the field of concern to objects which could be grasped clearly and distinctly; all else was removed from consideration. Not God and infinite truth, but human reason would be the measure of all. Our world became not what man could do with and in the infinite truth and love of the creator, i.e. the world of nature inhabited by man, but what he could construct in terms which to him would have the clarity and certainty of science. This was not the living world of nature and human beings, but the artificial world of robots and mechanics, the economic world of profit through competition or exploitation, and the political world of power mutually applied. Reality, rather than being opened toward infinity, was assiduously shrunk to objects which humans could control.

By mid 20th century, in the face of suppression by the great ideologies of fascism, Marxism and colonialism the existentialists rightly called out for a recognition of human freedom. I believe that Sartre missed the mark in saying that if God existed man could not be free. Man is free in infinite and transcending love; only when restricted to limited human mind is there no room for freedom.

SUBJECTIVITY AND A NEW AWARENESS OF CULTURE AND RELIGION

The Recovery of Subjectivity

But if there is more to human consciousness and hence to philosophy, in analogy to the replacement of a tooth in childhood the more important phenomenon is not the old tooth that is falling out, but the strength of the new tooth that is replacing it. A few philosophers did point to this other dimensions of human awareness. Shortly after Descartes Pascal's assertion "Que la raison a des raisons, que la raison ne comprend pas" would remain famous if unheeded, as would Vico's prediction that the new reason would give birth to a generation of brutes - intellectual brutes, but brutes nonetheless. Later Kierkegaard would follow Hegel with a similar warning. None of these voices would have strong impact while the race was on to "conquer" the world by a supposed omni-sufficient scientific reason.

But as human problems mounted and were multiplied into world wars by technological achievements the adequacy of reason to handle the deepest problems

of human dignity and purpose came under sustained questioning. More attention began to be given to additional dimensions of human capabilities.

There has been a strikingly parallel development in philosophy. At the beginning of this century, it had appeared that the rationalist project of stating all in clear and distinct objective terms was close to completion. This was to be achieved in either the empirical terms of the positivist tradition of sense knowledge or in the formal and essentialist terms of the Kantian intellectual tradition. Whitehead wrote that at the turn of the century, when with Bertrand Russell he went to the First World Congress of Philosophy in Paris, it seemed that, except for some details of application, the work of physics had been essentially completed. To the contrary, however, it was the very attempt to finalize scientific knowledge with its most evolved concepts which made manifest the radical insufficiency of the objectivist approach and led to renewed appreciation of the importance of subjectivity.

Wittgenstein began by writing his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*¹ on the Lockean supposition that significant knowledge consisted in constructing a mental map corresponding point to point to the external world as perceived by sense experience. In such a project the spiritual element of understanding, i.e., the grasp of the relations between the points on this mental map and the external world was relegated to the margin as simply “unutterable”. Later experience in teaching children, however, led Wittgenstein to the conclusion that this empirical mapping was simply not what was going on in human knowledge. In his *Blue and Brown Books*² and his subsequent *Philosophical Investigations*³ Wittgenstein shifted human consciousness or intentionality, which previously had been relegated to the periphery, to the very center of concern. The focus of his philosophy was no longer the positivist, supposedly objective, replication of the external world, but the human construction of language and of worlds of meaning.⁴

A similar process was underway in the Kantian camp. There Husserl’s attempt to bracket all elements, in order to isolate pure essences for scientific knowledge, forced attention to the limitations of a pure essentialism and opened the way for his understudy, Martin Heidegger, to rediscover the existential and historical dimensions of reality in his *Being and Time*.⁵ The religious implications of this new sensitivity would be articulated by Karl Rahner in his work, *Spirit in the World*, and by the Second Vatican Council in its Constitution, *The Church in the World*.⁶

For Heidegger the meaning of being and of life was unveiled and emerged - the two processes were identical - in conscious human life (*dasein*) lived through time and therefore through history. Thus human consciousness became the new focus of attention. The uncovering, unveiling or bringing into the light (the etymology of the term “phenomenology”) of the unfolding patterns and interrelations of subjectivity would open a new era of human awareness. Epistemology and metaphysics would develop - and merge - in the very work of tracking the nature and direction of this process.

Thus, for Heidegger’s successor, Hans-Georg Gadamer,⁷ the task becomes uncovering how human persons, emerging as family, neighborhood and people, by exercising their creative freedom weave their cultural tradition. This is not history as a mere compilation of whatever humankind does or makes, but culture as the fabric of the human consciousness and symbols by which a human group discovers

and weaves a pattern of relations which is life giving, a way of cultivating the soul, and thereby unveils being in its time and place.

With this new interior insight into the working of human consciousness it is as if a whole new world opens before us as we become self aware of the free inclinations and decisions by which we open new horizons, and of the preferences and commitments by which we give shape to the realm or ambit of our life in its relations and engagements. In these terms the reality of cultures and their diversity can be seen, and also the significance of their basic relatedness in terms of their religious foundations. What had been lived intuitively if intensely in totem and myth now becomes the delicate and deliberate center of human responsibility.

Culture

This search to realize the good had been manifest objectively as the object of desire, namely, as that which is sought when absent and which completes life or renders it “per-fect”, understood in its etymological sense as completed or realized through and through. Hence, once achieved, it is no longer desired or sought, but enjoyed.

In this manner, things as good, that is, as actually realizing some degree of perfection and able to contribute to the well-being of others, are the bases of an interlocking set of relations. As these relations are based upon both the actual perfection things possess and the potential perfection to which they are thereby directed, the good both attracts when it has not yet been attained and constitutes one’s fulfillment upon its achievement. Hence, goods are not arbitrary or simply a matter of wishful thinking; they are rather the full objective development of things and all that contributes thereto.

However, if this be taken not exteriorly or objectively about what fulfills, but interiorly in terms of the realization of being itself it is reflected in the manner in which each thing, even a stone, retains the being or reality it has and resists reduction to non-being or nothing. (The most we can do is to change or transform it into something else; we cannot annihilate it.) For a plant or tree, given the right conditions, this growing to full stature and fruition. For an animal it means protecting its life — fiercely, if necessary — and seeking out the sustenance needed for its strength.

But in the light of this new awareness of human subjectivity being as affirmation, or as the definitive stance against non-being central to the work of Parmenides, the first Greek metaphysician, can now be understood also as the drama of free self-determination, and hence of the development of persons and of cultures.

As human this is the work not only of the chemical or biological laws, but of the human intellect working with the active imagination to conceive, evaluate and decide. In this work values and virtues come to the fore and with them the shaping of a culture and a tradition.

Values. The moral good is a more narrow field, for it concerns only one’s free and responsible actions. This has the objective reality of the ontological good noted

above, for it concerns real actions which stand in distinctive relation to one's own perfection and to that of others - and, indeed, to the physical universe and to God as well. Hence, many possible patterns of actions could be objectively right because they promote the good of those involved, while others, precisely as inconsistent with the real good of persons or things, are objectively disordered or misordered. This constitutes the objective basis for what is ethically good or bad.

Nevertheless, because the realm of objective relations is almost numberless, whereas our actions are single, it is necessary not only to choose in general between the good and the bad, but in each case to choose which of the often innumerable possibilities one will render concrete.

However broad or limited the options, as responsible and moral an act is essentially dependent upon its being willed by a subject. Therefore, in order to follow the emergence of the field of concrete moral action, it is not sufficient to examine only the objective aspect, namely, the nature of the things involved. In addition, one must consider the action in relation to the subject, namely, to the person who, in the context of his/her society and culture, appreciates and values the good of this action, chooses it over its alternatives, and eventually wills its actualization.

The term 'value' here is of special note. It was derived from the economic sphere where it meant the amount of a commodity sufficient to attain a certain worth. This is reflected also in the term 'axiology' whose root means "weighing as much" or "worth as much." It requires an objective content — the good must truly "weigh in" and make a real difference; but the term 'value' expresses this good especially as related to wills which actually acknowledge it as a good and as desirable.⁸ Thus, different individuals or groups of persons and at different periods have distinct sets of values. A people or community is sensitive to, and prizes, a distinct set of goods or, more likely, it establishes a distinctive ranking in the degree to which it prizes various goods. By so doing, it delineates among limitless objective goods a certain pattern of values which in a more stable fashion mirrors the corporate free choices of that people. For some peoples the highest good may be harmony while other considerations are ordered to this; for other peoples competition may be primary and other considerations such as courage are interpreted and ordered quite differently.

This constitutes the basic topology of a culture; as repeatedly reaffirmed through time, it builds a tradition or heritage about which we shall speak below. It constitutes, as well, the prime pattern and gradation of goods or values which persons experience from their earliest years and in terms of which they interpret their developing relations. Young persons peer out at the world through lenses formed, as it were, by their family and culture and configured according to the pattern of choices made by that community throughout its history - often in its most trying circumstances. Like a pair of glasses values do not create the object; but focus attention upon certain goods rather than upon others.

Virtues. Martin Heidegger describes a process by which the self emerges as a person in the field of moral action. It consists in transcending oneself or breaking beyond mere self-concern and projecting outward as a being whose very nature is to share with others for whom one cares and about whom one is concerned. In this

process, one identifies new purposes or goals for the sake of which action is to be undertaken. In relation to these goals, certain combinations of possibilities, with their natures and norms, take on particular importance and begin thereby to enter into the makeup of one's world of meaning.⁹ Freedom then becomes more than mere spontaneity, more than choice, and more even than self-determination in the sense of determining oneself to act. It shapes — the phenomenologist would say even that it constitutes — one's world as the ambit of human decisions and dynamic action.

This process of deliberate choice and decision transcends the somatic and psychic dynamisms. Whereas the somatic dimension is extensively reactive, the psychic dynamisms of affectivity or appetite are fundamentally oriented to the good and positively attracted by a set of values. These, in turn, evoke an active response from the emotions in the context of responsible freedom. But it is in terms of responsibility that one encounters the properly moral and social dimension of life. For, in order to live with others, one must be able to know, to choose and finally to realize what is truly conducive to one's good and to that of others. Thus, persons and groups must be able to judge the true value of what is to be chosen, that is, its objective worth, both in itself and in relation to others. This is moral truth: the judgment regarding whether the act makes the person and society good in the sense of bringing authentic individual and social fulfillment, or the contrary.

When this is exercised or lived, patterns of action develop which are habitual in the sense of being repeated. These are the modes of activity with which we are familiar; in their exercise, along with the coordinated natural dynamisms they require, we are practiced; and with practice comes facility and spontaneity. Such patterns constitute the basic, continuing and pervasive shaping influence of our life. For this reason, they have been considered classically to be the basic indicators of what our life as a whole will add up to, or, as is often said, "amount to". Since Socrates, the technical term for these especially developed capabilities has been 'virtues' or special strengths.

Cultural Tradition. In their concrete circumstances and histories peoples working together with both intellect and imagination set a pattern of values and virtues through which they exercise their freedom and develop their pattern of social life. This is called a "culture". On the one hand, the term is derived from the Latin word for tilling or cultivating the land. Cicero and other Latin authors used it for the cultivation of the soul or mind (*cultura animi*), for just as good land, when left without cultivation, will produce only disordered vegetation of little value, so the human spirit will not achieve its proper results unless trained or educated.¹⁰ This sense of culture corresponds most closely to the Greek term for education (*paideia*) as the development of character, taste and judgment, and to the German term "formation" (*Bildung*).

Here, the focus is upon the creative capacity of the spirit of a people and their ability to work as artists, not only in the restricted sense of producing purely aesthetic objects, but in the more involved sense of shaping all dimensions of life, material and spiritual, economic and political into a fulfilling pattern. The result is a whole life, characterized by unity and truth, goodness and beauty, and, thereby,

sharing deeply in meaning and value. The capacity for this cannot be taught, although it may be enhanced by education; more recent phenomenological and hermeneutic inquiries suggest that, at its base, culture is a renewal, a reliving of origins in an attitude of profound appreciation.¹¹ This points one beyond self and other, beyond identity and diversity, in order to comprehend both.

On the other hand, “culture” can be traced to the term *civis* (citizen, civil society and civilization).¹² This reflects the need for a person to belong to a social group or community in order for the human spirit to produce its proper results. By bringing to the person the resources of the tradition, the *tradita* or past wisdom produced by the human spirit, the community facilitates comprehension. By enriching the mind with examples of values which have been identified in the past, it teaches and inspires one to produce something analogous. For G.F. Klemm, this more objective sense of culture is composite in character.¹³ E.B. Tylor defined this classically for the social sciences as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits required by man as a member of society.”¹⁴

In contrast, Clifford Geertz focused on the meaning of all this for a people and on how a people’s intentional action went about shaping its world. Thus to an experimental science in search of laws he contrasts the analysis of culture as an interpretative science in search of meaning.¹⁵ What is sought is the import of artifacts and actions, that is, whether “it is, ridicule or challenge, irony or anger, snobbery or pride, that, in their occurrence and through their agency, is getting said.”¹⁶ This requires attention to “the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs.”¹⁷ In this light, Geertz defines culture rather as “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of intended conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.”¹⁸

The development of values and virtues and their integration as a culture of any depth or richness takes time, and hence depends upon the experience and creativity of many generations. The culture which is handed on, or *tradita*, comes to be called a cultural tradition; as such it reflects the cumulative achievement of a people in discovering, mirroring and transmitting the deepest meanings of life. This is tradition in its synchronic sense as a body of wisdom.

The cumulative process of transmitting, adjusting and applying the values of a culture through time is not only heritage or what is received, but new creation as this is passed on in new ways. Attending to tradition, taken in this active sense, allows us not only to uncover the permanent and universal truths which Socrates sought, but to perceive the importance of values we receive from the tradition and to mobilize our own life project actively toward the future.

The Genesis of Tradition in Community. Because tradition has sometimes been interpreted as a threat to personal and social freedom, it is important to note that a cultural tradition is generated by the free and responsible life of the members of a concerned community and enables succeeding generations to realize their life with freedom and creativity.

Through the various steps of one's development, as one's circle of community expands through neighborhood, school, work and recreation, one comes to learn and to share personally and passionately an interpretation of reality and a pattern of value responses. The phenomenologist sees this life as the new source for wisdom. Hence, rather than turning away from daily life in order to contemplate abstract and disembodied ideas, the place to discover meaning is in life as lived in the family and in the progressively wider social circles into which one enters.

If it were merely a matter of community, however, all might be limited to the present, with no place for tradition as that which is "passed on" from one generation to the next. In fact, the process of trial and error, of continual correction and addition in relation to a people's evolving sense of human dignity and purpose, constitutes a type of learning and testing laboratory for successive generations. In this laboratory of history, the strengths of various insights and behavior patterns can be identified and reinforced, while deficiencies are progressively corrected or eliminated. Horizontally, we learn from experience what promotes and what destroys life and, accordingly, make pragmatic adjustments.

But even this language remains too abstract, too limited to method or technique, too unidimensional. While tradition can be described in general and at a distance in terms of feed-back mechanisms and might seem merely to concern how to cope in daily life, what is being spoken about are free acts that are expressive of passionate human commitment and personal sacrifice in responding to concrete danger, building and rebuilding family alliances and constructing and defending one's nation. Moreover, this wisdom is not a matter of mere tactical adjustments to temporary concerns; it concerns rather the meaning we are able to envision for life and which we desire to achieve through all such adjustments over a period of generations, i.e., what is truly worth striving for and the pattern of social interaction in which this can richly be lived. The result of this extended process of learning and commitment constitutes our awareness of the bases for the decisions of which history is constituted.

This points us beyond the horizontal plane of the various ages of history and directs our attention vertically to its ground and, hence, to the bases of the values which humankind in its varied circumstances seeks to realize.¹⁹ It is here that one searches for the absolute ground of meaning and value of which Iqbal wrote and which we will examine with Paul Tillich as a way of appreciating religion. Without that all is ultimately relative to only an interlocking network of consumption, then of dissatisfaction and finally of anomie and ennui.

The impact of the convergence of cumulative experience and reflection is heightened by its gradual elaboration in ritual and music, and its imaginative configuration in such great epics as the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. All conspire to constitute a culture which, like a giant telecommunications dish, shapes, intensifies and extends the range and penetration of our personal sensitivity, free decision and mutual concern.

Tradition, then, is not, as is history, simply everything that ever happened, whether good or bad. It is rather what appears significant for human life: it is what has been seen through time and human experience to be deeply true and necessary for human life. It contains the values to which our forebears first freely gave their

passionate commitment in specific historical circumstances and then constantly reviewed, rectified and progressively passed on generation after generation. The content of a tradition, expressed in works of literature and all the many facets of a culture, emerges progressively as something upon which personal character and civil society can be built. It constitutes a rich source from which multiple themes can be drawn, provided it be accepted and embraced, affirmed and cultivated.

Hence, it is not because of personal inertia on our part or arbitrary will on the part of our forbears that our culture provides a model and exemplar. On the contrary, the importance of tradition derives from both the cooperative character of the learning by which wisdom is drawn from experience and the cumulative free acts of commitment and sacrifice which have defined, defended and passed on through time the corporate life of the community.²⁰

Ultimately, tradition bridges from the totemic age, through philosophy to civil society today. It bears the divine gifts of life, meaning and love, uncovered in facing the challenges of civil life through the ages. It provides both the way back to their origin in the *arché* as the personal, free and responsible exercise of existence and even of its divine source, and the way forward to their divine goal, the way, that is, to their *Alpha* and their *Omega*.

RELIGION

In one sense we have been speaking in horizons that are increasingly restricted to the human: from objective dimensions which in modern terms come to be restricted to sciences totally constructed by, and at the disposition of, man to human subjectivity which could become reduplicatively self referential in terms of human whims and desires.

Yet another path is also opened by human subjectivity and it is precisely one which leads to the other term of our theme, namely, religion. Mohamed Iqbal points to this in his *Reconstruction of the Sciences of Religion* when he distinguishes between religion and the philosophy of his day when awareness of subjectivity was only beginning to emerge. He saw philosophy as more objective, abstract and coldly rational, whereas he located religion in the realm of human subjectivity as alive and relational.

The aspiration of religion soars higher than that of philosophy. Philosophy is an intellectual view of things; and as such, does not care to go beyond a concept which can reduce all the rich variety of experience to a system. It sees reality from a distance as it were. Religion seeks a closer contact with Reality. The one is theory; the other is living experience, association, intimacy. In order to achieve this intimacy thought must rise higher than itself, and find its fulfillment in an attitude of mind which religion describes as prayer – one of the last words on the lips of the Prophet of Islam.²¹

Metaphysics is displaced by psychology, and religious life develops the ambition to come into direct contact with the ultimate reality. It

is here that religion becomes a matter of personal assimilation of life and power; and the individual achieves a free personality, not by releasing himself from the fetters of the law, but by discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depths of his own consciousness.²²

This does not remove religion from rationality but enables rationality to expand to the unique and ultimately personal savoring of being and truth of which al-Ghazali speaks in his *Deliverance from Error and Mystical Union with the Almighty*.²³

For Parmenides it had been a highly rational exercise of abstract reasoning which identified the basis of being as one, eternal and unchanging. For Aristotle at the culmination of his metaphysics this was life divine, contemplation on contemplation itself (*noesis noeseos*), but unable from so exalted a position to know our world of multiple beings with their tragedies and triumph.

All this is reversed when we review these issues with the new sensibility to subjectivity and in ways that bring us directly to culture. For if, as we have seen, cultures are most radically the values and virtues of a people then we must ask what is the basis of valuing by a people. Using an early form of phenomenology Paul Tillich sees this not only as their external or objective interests but their inner concerns, indeed their ultimate concern in terms of which all has meaning.

This appears in the thought of Paul Tillich in both the thesis and the antithesis of his dialectic. In the former he speaks of God not only as absolute being but phenomenologically as man's "ultimate concern". This approach notes that we are never indifferent to things, simply recording the situation as does a light or sound meter. Rather, we judge the situation and react according as it reflects or falls away from what it should be. This fact makes manifest essence or logos in its normative sense. It is the way things should be, the norm of their perfection. Our response to essence is the heart of our efforts to protect and promote life; it is in this that we are basically and passionately engaged. Hence, by looking into our heart and identifying basic interests and concerns — our ultimate concern — we discover the most basic reality at this stage of the dialectic.

In these terms, Tillich expresses the positive side of the dialectical relationship of the essences of finite beings to the divine. He shows how these essences can contain, without exhausting, the power of being, for God remains this power. As exclusively positive, these might be said to express only the first elements of creation, that they remain, as it were, in a state of dreaming innocence within the divine life from which they must awaken to actualize and realize themselves.²⁴ Creation is fulfilled in the self-realization by which limited beings leave the ground of being to "stand upon" it. Whatever be said of the negative or antithetic step about this moment of separation, the element of essence is never completely lost, for "if it were lost, mind as well as reality would have been destroyed in the very moment of their coming into existence."²⁵ It is the retention of this positive element of essence that provides the radical foundation for participation by limited beings in the divine and their capacity for pointing to the infinite power of being and depth of reason.

Such participation in the divine being and some awareness thereof is an absolute prerequisite for any religion.

After the tragic stage of the antithesis or the contradiction of the human exercise of freedom, Tillich returns to the ultimate concern as experienced in true ecstasy. There one receives ultimate power by the presence of the ultimate which breaks through the contradictions of existence where and when it will. It is God who determines the circumstances and the degree in which he will be participated. The effect of this work and its sign is love, for, when the contradictions of the state of existence are overcome so that they are no longer the ultimate horizon, reunion and social healing, cooperation and creativity become possible.

Tillich calls the cognitive aspect of ecstasy inspiration. In what concerns the divine, he replaces the word knowledge by awareness. This is not concerned with new objects, which would invade reason with a strange body of knowledge that could not be assimilated, and, hence, would destroy its rational structure. Rather, that which is opened to man is a new dimension of being participated in by all while still retaining its transcendence.

It matters little that the contemporary situation of skepticism and meaninglessness has removed all possibility of content for this act. What is important is that we have been grasped by that which answers the ultimate question of our very being, our unconditional and ultimate concern. This indeed, is Tillich's phenomenological description of God. "Only certain is the ultimacy as ultimacy."²⁶ The ultimate concern provides the place at which the faith by which there is belief (*fides qua creditur*) and the faith that is believed (*fides quae creditur*) are identified.

It is here that the difference between subject and object disappears. The source of our faith is present as both subject and object in a way that is beyond both of them. The absence of this dichotomy is the reason why, as noted, Tillich refuses to speak of knowledge here and uses instead the term 'awareness'. He compares it to the mystic's notion of the knowledge God has of Himself, the truth itself of St. Augustine.²⁷ It is absolutely certain, but the identity of subject and object means that it is also absolutely personal. Consequently, this experience of the ultimate cannot be directly received from others:²⁸ Revelation is something which we ourselves must live.

What does this mean for our issue of a dialogue between religion and culture; for recognizing the vast and rich diversity of cultures and the uniqueness of the divine? Tillich distinguishes the point of immediate awareness from its breadth of content. The point of awareness is expressed in what Tillich refers to as the ontological principle: "Man is immediately aware of something unconditional which is the *prius* of the interaction and separation of both subject and object, both theoretically and practically."²⁹ He has no doubt about the certainty of this point, although nonsymbolically he can say only that this is being itself. However, in revelation he has experienced not only its reality but its relation to him.³⁰ He expresses the combination of these in the metaphorical terms of ground and abyss of being, of the power of being, and of ultimate and unconditional concern.

Generally, this point is experienced in a special situation and in a special form; the ultimate concern is made concrete in some one thing. It may, for instance, be the nation, a god or the God of the Bible. This concrete content of our act of belief differs from ultimacy as ultimacy which is not immediately evident. Since it remains within the subject-object dichotomy, its acceptance as ultimate requires an act of courage and venturing faith. The certainty we have about the breadth of concrete content is then only conditional.³¹ Should time reveal this content to be finite, our faith will still have been an authentic contact with the unconditional itself, only the concrete expression will have been deficient.³² (Here it is important to keep in mind Buber's caution with regard to the thought of Max Scheler. Is it enough to change the object; is indeed the act of concern the same if the object is different? Or is a concern that is essentially relational in an I-thou rather than an I-it manner not differentiated in quality by its object?)

Tillich sees two correlated elements in one's act of faith. One is that of certainty concerning one's own being as related to something ultimate and unconditional. The other is that of risk, of surrendering to a concern which is not really ultimate and may be destructive if taken as if it were. The risk arises necessarily in the state of existence where both reason and objects are not only finite, but separated from their ground. This places an element of doubt in faith which is neither of the methodological variety found in the scientist, nor of the transitory type often had by the skeptic. Rather, the doubt of faith is existential, an awareness of the lasting element of insecurity. Nevertheless, this doubt can be accepted and overcome in spite of itself by an act of courage which affirms the reality of God. Faith remains the one state of ultimate concern, but, as such, it subsumes both certainty concerning the unconditional and existential doubt.³³

Can a system with such uncertainty concerning concrete realities still be called a realism? Tillich believes that it can, but only if it is specified as a belief-full or self-transcending realism. In this, the really real — the ground and power of everything real — is grasped in and through a concrete historical situation or culture. Hence, the value of the present moment which has become transparent for its ground is, paradoxically, both all and nothing. In itself it is not infinite and "the more it is seen in the light of the ultimate power, the more it appears as questionable and void of lasting significance."³⁴ The appearance of self-subsistence gradually melts away. But, by this very fact, the ground and power of the present reality become evident. The concrete situation becomes *theonomous* and the infinite depth and eternal significance of the present is revealed in an *ecstatic* experience.

It would be a mistake, however, to think of this as something other-worldly, strange or uncomfortable. It is *ec-static* in the sense of going beyond the usual surface observations and calculations of our initial impressions and scientific calculations, but what it reveals is the profundity of our unity with colleagues, neighbors and, indeed, with all humankind. Rather, then, than generating a sense of estrangement, its sign is the way in which it enables one to see others as friends and to live comfortably with them. As ethnic and cultural differences emerge, along with the freedom of each people to be themselves, this work of the Spirit which is

characteristic of Tillich's dialectic comes to be seen in its radical importance for social life.

HERMENEUTICS

As religiously based these cultures in turn have a number of characteristics essential to our times.

First, *each culture is unique and hence diverse* from all others. As a culture is created by the free self-determination of a people it is unique to that people, and like each act of freedom it is their responsibility; it could be done by no other. That is, each culture is the distinctive manner in which a specific people realizes its life or *esse* according to its own formative decisions and commitments, for which that people alone is responsible.

Cultures then are truly unique inasmuch as each people realizes its life or being, not as an univocal instances of the same specific type, but in its own existentially proper manner. Cultures are shaped over time not only by their circumstances, but even more by the freedom of peoples in making their own decisions and commitments in response to the challenges of their environment and history, but even more in relation to their own goals. It is crucial to human freedom then, indeed it is essence, that the cultural uniqueness of each people not be compromised, but rather maximized. There must be no cultural dismissal of human creativity, no lobotomy of peoples in search of a common or universal least-common-denominator. The real challenge now is rather to be able to live fully our unique and distinctive identities in this newly global context.

Second, *similarity in the diversity between cultures*. This lies paradoxically in the effort of each people to live its own proper culture in its own way. Where before philosophers spoke of an abstract, universal and univocal nature (e.g., rational animal), now it is possible to take account from within also of the long exercise of freedom by a people in their concrete circumstances. The nature according to which we live is not a generic freedom, but the actual cumulative freedom that has constituted our culture as the pattern in terms of which we see, judge and act. Similarity in these existential terms cultures are realized not by diminishing or compromising their distinctive identities or cultures, but in living them to the full.

Third, *complementarity between cultures*. The unity here is one of complementarity between diverse cultures. As each acts according to its nature, all reflect in their own way the One divine source and goal which is unlimited, infinite and hence unique. In Plato's terms all else are its limited effects, participations or images. But if each is a limited yet unique manifestation of the One, they must in turn be complementary one to the other.

Fourth, *convergence of cultures*. This relationship must moreover be one of convergence. Living is a matter not of theory, but of teleology. As noted above, all are not only from the One by the efficient causality of the creator, but also are a pursuit of that One as goal and Omega: each culture, in pursuing its own unique and limited perfection, pursues more ultimately the one, infinite good or perfection

which it imitates. Thus all cultures are convergent in that each in its own distinctive manner tends toward the same infinite divine perfection.

To help in this redirection of the sense of tolerance there is a relatively new dimension of philosophy called “hermeneutics”. The term comes from Hermes, the messenger whom the gods on Olympus sent down with instructions to men. Essentially it is thus a science of interpretation of the message of the Prophet: how to understand the message from God to man.

Here the horizon is very important, that is, one’s vantage point and all that one can see therefrom. Concretely this is constituted of one’s culture as constituted of the cumulative experience and creativity of one’s people in responding to the challenges it encounters in life. Like a pair of glasses this does not close one’s eyes or blind them but enables one to peer out at the world with a special ability to see.

Still, as ours this horizon is perspectival or only what can be seen from our particular position in space and time. Hence, there is need to meet others and to hear their stories and those of their prophet in order to extend one’s horizon. In this one’s attitude is all important. It must be neither opinion, that is, asserting one’s own position; not sureness, that is, unwillingness to consider any other viewpoint; nor argument, that is, looking for the weakness in the other’s statement. All of these leave one trapped in one’s own horizon, unable to learn or grow. In contrast the hermeneutic attitude is rather that of willingness to revise my position or horizon, not by abandoning it, but by enriching it. It is then a devout listening as one of awe before the message of another of God’s prophet, a readiness to experience this and take it to heart.

Surprisingly, the orientation here is not so much to the other, for that would mean adding alien factors from without. It is instead an opening of self, that is, being stimulated to draw more out of one’s own culture such that there be an organic growth and expansion of one’s horizon. The deep conviction here is that my religious tradition has more to say to me: in this lies the real fidelity to our traditions.

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NOTES

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17 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 85.

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Chapter VIII

The Value Systems and the Interest Groups of a University

Francis M. Isichei, O.P.

This paper examines and analyzes interest groups from the perspective of ethnicity, religion and patronage as these affect values on the one hand, and on the other hand as they are a basis for corrupt practices.

Interest groups have come to have a place in modernization and social causation of the bureaucratic system. Interest groups, being a significant trend toward bureaucracy and toward bureaucratic society, are part of the broader evolution called modernization (Schneider, *et al* 1981). Modernization is a process for social and human changes taking place in societies moving from agricultural to manufacturing and then to service-based economies. This process has a values-based atmosphere. Interest groups in a modernizing, bureaucratic trend embrace ethnic, religious, patronage and fraternal organizations, civic clubs, political groups, lobbies, etc. Valuation and interest groups from the perspective of values orientation are a form of interest theory which is governed by the notion of unity, as a value. From this perspective, the “good” is any appropriate unifying “end” under the circumstances of need or demand.

Value is then seen as a function of choice or selection of “ends”. These selected ends or values control and define activity for interest groups. It is interesting to note that another essential notion in value treatment is “importance”. The individual immersed in society is subject in part to the directive character of the values prevalent in his or her groups (Goheen, 1951). A due consideration of interest groups in relation to values and corruption necessarily calls for a reflection on morality. From this point of view, morality controls the “end”, which finds its realization in the life of the individual as satisfaction achievable through the interest groups. Therefore the act of valuation is subject to control; for the likes and dislikes, the aversions and aversions of the individual are directed to certain ends as appropriate under the circumstances involved, while morality always aims at their harmonious union.

GROUPS

In order to understand interest groups as a type of grouping, with special concern for religious and ethnic grouping under some form of patronage, it would be pertinent to ask why people gather in groups and what is a group? Gathering in groups no doubt is a phenomenon that characterizes human existential conditions to satisfy the human desire for a “sense of belonging”. It is an experiential reality

that people gather in a variety of groups: religious, ethnic, in or out of work, each providing different benefits to their members and satisfying various needs. These various needs necessarily cover the ranges of security and protection, affiliation and status and power. As for security and protection, “there is strength in numbers,” for the mere presence of another person when life is threatened gives a greater feeling of security. “A problem shared is a problem halved” is another relevant saying that explains why groups exist. Affiliation and status from the perspective of the group reveal, at a deeper level, friendship and self-worth with regular interaction. As for power, that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” reveals a seductive component of groups in that they satisfy power needs. The unachievable becomes possible through collective human action (Davenport, 1999).

Since not all gatherings of people make up a group, what then is the distinctive nature or meaning of a group? Handy (1993) defines a group as any collection of people who perceive themselves to be a group. The nature or meaning of a group is something that would be familiar to human beings in the process of socialization, which transcends mere living, working or playing together or aggregating as individuals. One may think of persons standing at the bus stop or in a queue as a group, but not in the strict sense. An essential unique feature of a group is that its members regard themselves as belonging to the group, convinced that they have a common “sense of belonging”. This essential feature comes to light when Schein (1988) identifies the group in psychological terms. A group is any member of people who:

interact with one another;
all psychologically aware of one another; and
perceive themselves to be a group.

According to Brown (1971), the term group is reserved for those aggregates of people which have psychological effects on, and implications for, the individuals composing the group. This implies a psychological process of affiliating to others and interacting with them. Groups may be formal or informal. Formal groups are readily seen in organizations, where people consciously come together to accomplish the organization’s collective mission and achieve specific organizational and departmental objectives. They are primarily concerned with the co-ordination of work activities and are task-oriented, embedded and entrapped in the fabric, hierarchy and structure of the organization with defined roles (Davenport, 1999). There are obvious reasons why formal groups are consciously created and organized. According to Davenport (1999) they assist people to:

- accomplish goals much less haphazardly than they would in informal groups;
- co-ordinate the activities of the functions of the organization;
- establish logical authority relationships among people and between positions;

- apply the concepts of specialization and division of labor; and
- create more group cohesion as a result of common set of goals.

Handy (1993) recognized and identified some organizational purposes achievable by groups assisting people, such as to:

- distribute work, having brought together a particular set of skills, talents and responsibilities,
- manage and control work,
- facilitate the problem-solving process by bringing together all of the available capabilities,
- gather ideas, information and suggestions,
- pass on decisions or information to those who need to know,
- test and ratify decisions,
- co-ordinate and facilitate necessary liaison,
- increase commitment and involvement,
- resolve arguments and disputes between different functions, levels and decisions.

The informal group is significant in creating a strong sense of belonging as a collection of individuals who become a group when members develop certain interdependencies, influence one another's behavior and contribute to mutual needs and satisfaction.

Informal groups are based more on personal relationships and the agreement of group members than on any defined role relationships. They simply emerge in the organization, from the informal interaction of the members of the organization. They may be born out of shared interests, friendship or some other social aspect. What informal groups satisfy, in a way that the formal group may not, is that sense of belonging. We can be wanted, needed and included for what we are and not because the organization has put us to work with these other people (Davenport, 1999:80).

Informal groups can also satisfy needs of members when they:

- reduce feelings of insecurity and anxiety and provide each with social support,
- fulfill affiliation needs for friendship, love and support,
- help to define sense of identity and maintain self-esteem,
- pander to one's social nature by providing entertainment, alleviating boredom and fatigue, boosting morale and personal satisfaction,
- provide guidelines on generally acceptable behavior to shape group and organizational norms,
- cater for those often ill-defined tasks which can only be performed through the combined efforts of a number of individuals working together.

With the increasing focus on ethnic and religious development, there is a growing need to understand how interest groups form, grow, develop, mature and change. There are a number of models and frameworks, which have attempted to encapsulate some, if not all, of the thinking in this realm. These frameworks and models show that interest groups form and finally adjourn, or undeveloped groups become mature, or groups pass through a variety of stages from mutual acceptance and membership to controlled organization. Whatever the nature of the model and framework, most start with a newly formed, undeveloped group of people who end up being a fully formed, structured and cohesive group. The essential point is that, whatever the model, each provides a framework, a point of reference, a shared affinity for mutual coexistence. The models are a vehicle for aiding discussion and understanding; it does not matter exactly what the stage is called. What does matter is that ethnic, religious or patronage interest groups identify and recognize the stages and where they are along the group development continuum.

There are three outstanding models by which ethnic, religious and patronage interest groups could be assessed. The Bass and Ryterband (1979) model has four stages: (1) developing mutual trust; (2) communication and decision making; (3) motivation and productivity; and (4) control and organization. The Woodcok (1979) model also has four: (1) the undeveloped group; (2) the experimenting group; (3) the consolidating group; and (4) the mature group. The third model, Tuckman (1965), is probably the one most often remembered, maybe for the rhythm of its sequence: forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. In this study we shall use the Tuckman (1965) model to illustrate some patterns in ethnic, religious and patronage interest groups.

Forming: This stage begins with the coming together of a number of people with common ethnic, religious or patronage interest, who may be somewhat anxious, wary and insecure. At this first coming together there are few, if any, ground rules. Ambiguity and confusion reign over the group. It is a free-for-all scenario, to say the least; everybody is busy finding out who the other people are, seeking to know one another's attitudes and backgrounds. Members are keen to establish their personal identities in the group and make a personal impression, and it is for this reason that considerable anxiety, and even fear, may be generated. Consequent upon this anxiety is a potential lack of focus and clarity around the purpose of the group and uncertainty about the task ahead and its terms of reference. This anxiety reveals itself in hesitant behavior, defensiveness and "scapegoating" aimed at factors outside the group. Nigerian youth interest groups are often faced with this forming group model that often ends up in violence and crime.

Storming: After the obvious problems of forming, the group faces the next stage, which is storming. This period is marked with disagreement, frustration and potential confrontation, which every member of the group must go through. Out of manageable conflict can come good, and the group needs to cling to this sentiment at this moment. The potential conflict is obvious because members now feel more

confident to challenge each other and to express their views more openly and forcefully. Some may reject earlier ground rules. At this time there will be the likely jockeying for positions of power and frustration at apparent lack of progress. The storming stage is important, as it raises the energy (and activity) level of the group and can lead to significant changes in creativity and innovation. The success of this stage lies highly on critical thinking and effective communication.

Norming: After the first two stages, this stage brings a clear sense of group identity, and guidelines, standards, procedures, roles and structure become formally established. Emotions are now expressed constructively and listened to. In the case of ethnic, religious and patronage, it is at this stage the government or authorities concerned should intervene if they looking to influence the interest groups, because it is at this stage that those all-important group norms (the rules for all sorts of behavior within the group) are developed and established. Intervention is highly essential because it should not be taken for granted that what is put in place by the group will automatically lead to order and progress in society. It is important to mention that if dysfunctional groups become full developed, with entrenched culture and norms, it is more difficult to alter or influence their members' attitudes, behavior and operations.

Performing: By the progress made through the earlier stages, the group will have created some structure and cohesiveness to work effectively. With structure and cohesiveness in place, the group can now concentrate on the achievement of its objectives. It is at this stage that task performance is at its most effective level in interest groups. The group should now be close and supportive, open and trusting, resourceful and effective.

Adjourning: As some groups have a limited span of life, Tuckman and Jensen (1977) added a further stage to their model, which they refer to as adjourning. The group may disband, either because the task and objectives have been achieved to a satisfactory level or because the members have left. But before disbanding, it is essential for the group to reappraise their time together – to seek to discover what went well, what did not go so well and what might they do differently next time and how? Appraisal of this nature may be a great source of growth and learning both for the individuals concerned and the group.

INTEREST GROUPS

People ordinarily are members of a particular ethnic and religious group as individuals in their attitudinal and value orientation, but growth and developmental needs make them become members of one or more interest groups. According to Dawson (1996), the term interest group is used to describe a collection of people who believe they share common objectives and viewpoints either in ethnicity, religious or work-related matters. Not all their objectives and viewpoints will be identical,

but those that are different will not normally be in obvious conflict. Members of interest groups within an ethnic or religious group will necessarily share political, educational, economic and other social values within the group.

This is one of the distinctive differences between workplace interest groups and ethnic or religious groups. Workplace interest groups will not necessarily share political, educational and other social values outside the workplace. Ethnic and religious interest groups may not formally acknowledge their “group-ness”; they nonetheless must feel some communality of interest. They must feel a need for attention with a sense of concern, lively sympathy or curiosity, also the power to excite or hold such attention. The communality of interest is that which is of advantage, profit or benefit to its members. It embodies the power to procure favorable regard and influence. Therefore the term interest group should not be applied from outside to a collection of disparate individuals who objectively may appear to have a common interest, but who are subjectively unaware that this is so (Dawson, 1996).

Members of interest groups, whether ethnic or religious, are likely to share similar views of the following issues:

- the equitable division of economic profits and benefits,
- the struggle for ethnic or religious identity recognition,
- a vigorous pursuit to avoid ethnic and religious marginalization,
- a firm belief in active participation in leadership in the wider society,
- total involvement in discretion versus control of national resources, and
- concern for the future of group.

The issues that bring about the origin of ethnic and religious interest groups cannot be exhaustive; therefore it suffices to mention the above. Generally the contours of interest group formation are drawn in relation to the five dimensions of: (1) relation to external groupings, (2) hierarchical level (3) functional divisions, (4) geographical/national boundaries, and (5) individual characteristics, deriving in part from wider social experience.

External Contacts

The extent and nature of contact between an internal group in a nation and some wider grouping outside, such as patronage or international religious groups is often a vital ingredient of interest in group formation. Interest groups which have a collective external identity are often easier to identify within the national framework, especially if such groups have strong external patronage. This is true of religious interest groups. Ethnic interest groups may be less willing to act collectively in the open, fearing that this may undermine their individual status as a people, but nonetheless for certain issues they may be prepared to join forces nationally to push their particular interests.

Level and Function

The second dimension of interest group formation is the distribution of the membership between levels in the hierarchy, and the third is their location in different functional groups. Sometimes level is the overriding dimension. At other times functional differences may be critical, and the elders of an ethnic group or different categories of religious denominations may form interest groups. Whether alliances are on either or both of these dimensions will depend on the issues which are currently at the forefront of concern. The identity of interest groups in relation to particular issues is important. Issues of ethnic and religious interest groups are often involve political, economic and religious freedom and autonomy. When interest group issues of this nature are not properly managed, experience has shown them as a national disaster, with a breakdown of law and order. The formation of interest groups in relation to hierarchy and function is obviously heavily influenced by strong radicals and could be dangerous to the well being of any nation if they are extremists or religious fanatics.

Geography

With the ethnic diversity and multi-religious affiliation in Nigeria, the hierarchical and functional dimensions are often overlaid by the fourth dimension of geography. This is obviously very important for ethnic and religious interest groups, given the acceptable concepts of minority and majority tribes or orthodox and non-orthodox religions. Affinity between different geographical categories is maintained and strengthened through interest groups, as the case may be. In Nigeria and elsewhere this is evident in religious riots and ethnic cleansing and agitation for equitable distribution of national resources (cake). At this point, what readily comes to mind is the Ogoni tribe struggle, the OPC (Yoruba youth front), BAKASI (Igbo vigilante group), the Niger Delta youth front, and Islamic Fundamentalists (Sharia northern front).

Individual Characteristics and Social Context

It would be unbelievably naïve to assume that interest groups in ethnic and religious groups are formed in a vacuum apart from the characteristics of the individuals involved: for example their education and skills, aptitude and experience, their perceptions of self-interest and their perceptions of appropriate strategies and operational tactics for the group. These individual characteristics are the fifth dimension of interest group formation. Individual characteristics are strongly embedded in wider social influences, particularly social class and family background. Dawson took the consideration of the individual characteristics in the formation of interest group seriously when she wrote:

Let us state a proposition: individuals are not just crude tape recordings of their surroundings, but neither are attitudes randomly held. To appreciate the derivation of attitudes to work, one has to keep in mind the interaction between individuality, born of uniqueness in terms of genetic structure (except for identical twins) and social experience derived from mass media and associations with family, community, work and other groups. The interaction between individuality and social influences is overlaid by an interaction between the characteristics of an individual's experiences outside and inside the workplace... , the important influence of the social, economic and political scene, which includes industrial and employment structures, forms of government, national policies relating to industry and employment, and dominant belief systems among different national, regional and social class groupings. All these wider factors will have influence within the workplace on such characteristics as culture, strategy, technology, products, structure and size (Dawson, 1996:5).

Although the consideration was based on interest groups in organizational settings, it cannot be negated of ethnic and religious interest groups, since it is present in all human affairs and realizable within every existential milieu.

CORRUPT PRACTICES

It is the belief of the present writer that interest groups, whether they be ethnic, religious or in the workplace, have a trend towards value orientation, but they are not free from corrupt practices. It is clear that corrupt practices in some interest groups are an abuse of their objectives and goals.

We shall be looking at corrupt practices from the perspective of politics and government, which fall under several headings: bribery, the sale of offices, letting of public contracts to favored firms or individuals, and grants of land or franchises by public officials in return for monetary rewards. These have been common throughout history and are mostly perpetuated by interest, pressure or lobby groups. In Nigeria today the influence of interest groups is very evident in election fraud, whether by influencing or intimidating voters or by tampering with the ballots or election tally, in spite of laws made to discourage these practices.

Values arising from the formation of interest groups are sometimes distorted by social problems, the very problems that necessitate forming one interest group or the other. Such social problems are prejudice, discrimination and social injustice. Any negative attitude toward a particular ethnic group as a group is prejudice. Behavior directed toward an ethnic group which is motivated by prejudice is discrimination. Experience has shown that where there is prejudice and discrimination there is social injustice, too. There are a number of theories of prejudice on different levels (Wrightman, 1977). For the purpose of this study "belief prejudice theory" would

suffice. Rokeach's theory (1968) suggests that race or ethnicity by itself does not evoke prejudice but rather the perception that people from other groups differ in basic beliefs and values from those of one's own group. Study has shown that some persons who seem to be race prejudiced, in fact, choose to be with and work with a person from a racial minority with values similar to their own rather than a majority group member with values different from their own (Schneider *et al.*, 1981). It is therefore important to show that some values are universal and if all pursue such values the world will be a better world for all to live and be happy. With universal values there would be no need to form interest groups to fight prejudice, discrimination and social injustices.

UNIVERSAL VALUES

The concept of universal values implies that the twelve values to be mentioned, with brief descriptions, are values that all peoples of the world need to accept, irrespective of color, race, religion or status, to live a meaningful life. These values are peace, love, freedom, honesty, tolerance, cooperation, respect, responsibility, simplicity, unity, humility and happiness.

Recently, the writer attended a workshop on "Living Values: An Educational Program" and was trained as an educator of the living values. "Living Values: An Educational Program" is a partnership among educators around the world, supported by UNESCO and sponsored by the Spanish Committee of UNICEF, the Planet Society and the Brahma Kumaris, in consultation with the Educational Cluster of UNICEF (New York). The following description of the above universal values is the result and fruit of their work:

Peace: In its purest form, peace is inner silence filled with the power of truth. Peace is a qualitative energy. To stay peaceful requires compassion and strength. Serenity is not the absence of chaos, but peace in the midst of it. Peace is the prominent characteristic of what we call "a civilized society". Peace consists of pure thoughts, pure feelings, and pure wishes. When the energy of thought, word, and action is balanced, stable, and nonviolent, the individual is at peace with himself, in relationships, and with the world. Interest groups need to know peace in the pursuit of their objectives and goals and settle for nonviolent operations.

Love: This is the principle which creates and sustains human relations with dignity and depth. Spiritual love takes one into silence, and that silence has the power to unite, guide, and free people. Love is the bedrock for belief in equality of spirit and personhood. When love is combined with faith, it creates a strong foundation for initiative and action. Love is the catalyst for change, development and achievement. The basis of real love as a value between people is spiritual. To see another as a spiritual being is to see the spiritual reality of the other. To be conscious of that reality is to have spiritual love; each person, complete within himself, independent, yet totally interconnected, recognizes that state in the other.

As a result, there is constant and natural love. True love is when the soul has love for the soul. Love for the soul is eternal; the soul never dies. Such love is righteous, and brings joy. Attachment to that which is perishable is unrighteous, and brings sorrow; therefore interest groups must pursue the love that is eternal.

Freedom: Freedom resides within the mind and heart. People want freedom to lead a life of purpose, to select freely a lifestyle in which they and their children can grow healthily and can flourish through the work of their hands, heads and hearts. Freedom can be understood mistakenly to be a vast and unlimited umbrella, which gives permission to “do what I like, when I like, to whomever I like.” That concept is misleading and a misuse of choice. True freedom is exercised and experienced when parameters are defined and understood. Parameters are determined by the principle that everyone has equally the same rights – the rights to peace, happiness and justice, regardless of religion, culture or gender. These rights are innate. Full freedom functions only when rights are balanced with responsibilities and choice is balanced with conscience. Inner freedom is to be free from confusion and complications with the mind, intellect and heart that arise from negativity.

Honesty: Honesty, simply put, is telling the truth. A person worthy of confidence is honest and true. Honesty means there are no contradictions or discrepancies in thoughts, words or actions. Honesty is the awareness of what is right and appropriate in one’s role, one’s behavior and one’s relationships. With honesty, there is no hypocrisy or artificiality, which create confusion and mistrust in the minds and lives of others. Honesty makes for a life of integrity because the inner and outer selves are a mirror image. Honesty is to use well what has been entrusted to you. There is a deep relationship between honesty and friendship. Greed is sometimes at the root of dishonesty because there is enough for a person’s needs, but not enough for his greed. To be honest to one’s real self and to the purpose of a task earns trust and inspires faith in others.

Tolerance: Peace is the goal, and tolerance is the method of being open and receptive to the beauty of differences. Tolerance recognizes individuality and diversity while removing divisive masks and defusing tension created by ignorance. It provides the opportunity to discover and remove stereotypes and stigmas associated with people perceived to be different because of nationality, religion or heritage. Tolerance is mutual respect through mutual understanding, sowing the seed of love, compassion and care. Through understanding and open-mindedness, a tolerant person attracts someone different, and by genuinely accepting and accommodating that person, demonstrates tolerance in a practical way.

Cooperation: Cooperation exists when people work together toward a common goal. Cooperation is not a bargaining game in which one person’s success is achieved at the expense or exclusion of the success of others. The constant aim of cooperation is mutual benefit in human interactions; it is governed by the principle of mutual respect. Courage, consideration, caring, and sharing provide a foundation

from which cooperation as a process can be developed. One who cooperates receives cooperation. The way to provide cooperation is to use the energy of the mind to create vibrations of good wishes and pure feelings for the others and for the task. By remaining detached, objective, and influenced by inner values and not external circumstances, subtle cooperation in the form of wisdom emerges.

Respect: To know one's worth and to honor the worth of others is the true way to earn respect. Respect is an acknowledgment of the inherent worth and innate rights of the individual and the collectivity. These must be recognized as a central focus to draw from people a commitment to a higher purpose in life. The beginning of all weakness is the absence of one word – self. When the word self is removed from self-respect, the void is filled by a variety of desires or expectations, each specifically designed to claim regard or respect from others. The individual, having become dependent on external forces rather than internal powers, then measures respect by physical and material factors, such as caste, color, race, religion, sex, nationality, status, and popularity. The more respect is measured on the basis of something external, the greater the desire for recognition from others. The greater the desire, the more one falls victim and loses respect for the self and from others. The power of discernment establishes a respectful environment in which attention is paid to the quality of intentions, attitudes, behavior, thought, words and actions. Arrogance damages or destroys the uniqueness of others and violates their fundamental rights.

Responsibility: A responsible person fulfills the assigned duty by staying true to the aim. Duties are carried out with integrity and a sense of purpose. Personal responsibility in life comes from many expected and unexpected sources and involves partnership and participation, commitment and cooperation. Social and global responsibility requires all the above, as well as justice, humaneness, and respect for the rights of all human beings. Some interpret responsibility as a burden and fail to see it as personally relevant. It becomes convenient to project it as someone else's problem. These people deny their responsibility, yet when it comes to rights, they are the first in line. When there is the consciousness of being an instrument or a facilitator, a person stays neutral and flexible in his role. One remains detached yet has a clear understanding of what needs to be done. When the role is played accurately, there is efficiency and effectiveness, which result in satisfaction and contentment at having made a significant contribution.

Simplicity: Simplicity as a value calls on instinct, intuition, and insight to create essenceful thoughts and empathetic feelings. It is conscience which calls upon people to rethink their values. Simplicity is to enjoy a plain mind and intellect, appreciating inner beauty and recognizing the value of all actors, even the poorest and worst off. It is the precursor of sustainable development. Simplicity teaches us economy to use our resources wisely, keeping future generations in mind. To be simple is to ask whether we are being induced to purchase unnecessary

products, for psychological enticements create artificial needs. Desires stimulated by wanting unnecessary things result in value clashes complicated by greed, fear, peer pressure and a false sense of identity. Once fulfillment of basic necessities allows for a comfortable lifestyle, extremes and excesses invite overindulgence and waste. Simplicity helps decrease the gap between “the haves” and “the have-nots” by demonstrating the logic of true economics: to earn, save, invest, and share the sacrifices and the prosperity, so that there can be a better quality of life for all people regardless of where they are born.

Unity: Unity is harmony within and among individuals in the group. It is sustained by concentrating energy and focusing thought, by accepting and appreciating the value of the rich array of participants and the unique contribution each one make, and by remaining loyal not only to one another but also to the task. It is built from a shared vision, hope and altruistic aims or a sense of the common good. The stability of unity comes from the spirit of equality and oneness. The greatness of unity is that everyone is respected. One note of disrespect can cause unity to be broken because interrupting others, giving unconstructive and prolonged criticism, keeping watch over some or control over others are all strident chords which strike harshly at relationships. Unity creates the experience of cooperation, increases enthusiasm for the task and makes the atmosphere empowering. When the individual is in harmony, it is possible to stay stable and work more effectively with the group. Till now humanity has not been able to sustain unity against the common enemies of civil war, ethnic conflict, poverty, hunger and violation of human rights.

Humility: A person who embodies humility will make the effort to listen to and accept others. The greater the acceptance of others, the more that person will be held in high esteem, and the more that person will be listened to. Humility is based on self-respect and with self-respect there is knowledge of one’s own strengths. With the balance of self-respect and humility there is an acceptance and appreciation of one’s qualities from the inside. Humility as a value allows the self to grow with dignity and integrity – not needing the proof of an external show. Humility is staying stable and maintaining power on the inside and not needing to control others on the outside. It creates an open mind and recognition of the strengths of the self and others. Arrogance damages or destroys valuing the uniqueness of others, and hence is a subtle violation of their fundamental rights. The tendency to impress, dominate or limit the freedom of others in order to prove yourself diminishes the inner experience of worth, dignity and peace of mind.

Happiness: Through the power of truth there is wealth, and through the power of peace there is health. Together they give happiness, and happiness as a value is earned by those whose actions, attitudes, and attributes are pure and selfless. Some choose certain professions, believing that they will give happiness. Others seek happiness through relationships. Yet, however much happiness such measures may

bring, they are temporary and limited sources coming from the material world, and in many instances, they bring equal amounts of sorrow and unhappiness. Happiness as a value is prosperity, which comes from self-sovereignty. Self-sovereignty means being master over one's mind, intellect, personality traits, and the physical senses of the body; being complete with all powers and virtues, and attaining a perfect balance between masculine and feminine characteristics. It is a state of perfection within the human soul. In the spiritual quest for such perfection, the intellect goes through a process of discovering its divine origin. In other words, the quality of the consciousness and activities of individuals determines the riches of life, which is true happiness.

CONCLUSION

The aims and objectives of interest groups, whether ethnic or religious, are worthwhile endeavors for their empowerment and advancement in a bureaucratic society. As earlier noted, such endeavors have brought enormous gains in enhanced economic and spiritual welfare, increased leisure, and improved health welfare. It has also been pointed out that the bane of modern politics traces its root to corrupt practices resulting from the activities of pressure, lobby or interest groups. It is to this that the paper bemoans the abuses resulting from such groups and recommends that interest groups be oriented towards the twelve universal values of peace, love, freedom, honesty, tolerance, cooperation, respect, responsibility, simplicity, unity, humility, and happiness. To be value-oriented in one's actions, attitudes and beliefs is to pursue and promote the worth and dignity of human life. All groups should be fully conscious that social order and harmonious co-existence require a total commitment to a common essential set of values shared by individuals in society, where the behavior of the individual is ultimately determined not by what they know (as a group), but perhaps more importantly by what they believe as rational beings (Isichei, 2000).

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Chapter IX

The Place of Theology in the University Curriculum

Anthony A. Akinwale, O.P.

This essay is prompted by two observations. The first concerns the curricula of most Nigerian universities, while the second concerns the disturbing state of religious beliefs and practices in Nigeria. One observes that, with the exception of some newly established private universities, Nigerian universities, while hosting departments of religious studies, do not include theology in their curricula. This is not to deny that some theology courses feature in the curricula of departments of religious studies. But it is one thing to make an incidental inclusion of theology in religious studies; it is another to host a theology department. The distinction between the two can be easily recognized when different approaches to the study of religion are examined. Here, I recognize three such approaches: the phenomenological, the comparative and the theological.

- In the phenomenological approach, religion may engage a scholar as nothing but a phenomenon studied through the lenses of a philosopher, anthropologist, historian, psychologist, sociologist or of any other member of the academia.

- In the comparative approach, religion is studied by way of comparison, whereby one religion is studied alongside another religion or other religions. The goal then would be to inquire into what the religions have in common, what they do not have in common, and what explains their similarities and differences. The comparative approach sees a religion as a phenomenon to be studied alongside another religion also seen as a phenomenon.

- The theological approach goes beyond studying a religion as a phenomenon. It has what can be referred to, in the Augustinian sense, as an *initium fidei*, a starting point of faith. The theological approach I am referring to here is summed up by Anselm's *fides quaerens intellectum* or Augustine's *credo ut intelligam*. Whereas the study of religion in most Nigerian universities combines the phenomenological and comparative approaches, theology, while not ignoring the phenomenological and the comparative approaches, sees religion as more than a mere phenomenon. Whereas other approaches see religion as a mere phenomenon explicable by unaided human intellect, theology sees religion as a revealed phenomenon. It sees and accepts what is to be studied as revealed or, if it is not revealed, related to the revealed. Theology is the approach of a scholar whose starting point is adherence to the doctrines and beliefs of the religion, and whose intent is to demonstrate the conceptual possibility and intellectual honesty in adhering to such doctrines and beliefs. It requires taking seriously a supernatural source of revealed truths. But it does not just do that, lest it falls into fundamentalism or fanaticism. It requires the

use of the intellect to understand what is believed to be supernaturally revealed. Consequently, it implies belief in and reliance on a supernatural sublation of the human intellect in its quest to understand the religion in question.

The position being taken in this essay is that the non-inclusion of theology in the university curriculum in Nigeria is neither in the interest of the academic community nor in the interest of the common good. The contention here is that the very notion of a university; the often unacknowledged but real scientific status of theology; the notional, scientific and methodological differentiation of religious studies from theology; and the state of affairs in the multi-religious entity that is Nigeria, all call for the inclusion, in the university curriculum in Nigeria of theology and not just of religious studies, that is, not just the phenomenological and comparative approaches to religion.

It is not far fetched to assert that the non-inclusion of theology in university curriculum in most Nigerian universities is itself indicative of the history and philosophy of university education in Nigeria. The birth of university education in Nigeria was facilitated by the British whose philosophy of education was inspired by empiricism. While an empiricist philosophy of education may accord scientific status to the phenomenological and or comparative study of religion, it will not recognize theology as having such status since the latter lays claim to a supernaturally revealed starting point which is beyond the scope of empirical verification.

This paper argues that, while there is an implicit collapse of the differentiation between religious studies and theology in the state of university affairs in Nigeria, there is in fact a very important distinction between the two. The phenomenological and comparative study of religion, which is the approach of religious studies, does not require the presupposition of faith in a revealed God on the part of the scholar. It presupposes that good use of the unaided human intellect is possible and sufficient in studying religion. Theology, however, presupposes faith in a revealed God on the part of the scholar. This raises a question: does that mean a scholar must belong to the religion concerned before he or she can be regarded as a theologian of that religion? In concrete terms, can a Christian teach Islamic theology? Or, can a Muslim be a Christian theologian?

Going by the methodological presupposition of *initium fidei*, I am logically bound to answer the first question in the affirmative and the second and third in the negative. But that which is logically binding can be expressed with a nuance. In this regard, one may be called theologian *properly speaking* or *courteously speaking*. The one who teaches the theology of a religion with the *initium fidei* of the religion is, properly speaking, a theologian of that religion. Yet, I recognize that there are scholars whose knowledge and competence in speaking about the God or the faith and devotional practices of religions to which they have no adherence are not in doubt. I maintain, however, that a scholar who does not share the faith of a religion is not, *properly speaking*, a theologian of that religion. *Courteously speaking*, recognition of the intellectual competence of such a scholar justifies calling him or her a theologian of such a religion.

The recurrence of religious conflicts in Nigeria calls, not only for faith, but also for the *intelligentia fidei* of theology. And that is where the contribution of the theological approach is indispensable. There is urgent need for an intelligent study of faith—by those who adhere to the faith in question—which endeavors to show why and how the religious act of faith is a human and therefore intelligent act. In the absence of an intelligent appropriation and practice of religious faith, faith without reason results in religious fundamentalism at best, or religious fanaticism at worst. In a polity where such is the case, civil disturbance is not distinguished from religion, public nuisance is not distinguished from piety, and suicide may be mistaken for martyrdom.

The different religious traditions represented in Nigeria, and indeed Nigerian society, deserve scholars who, while being attached to their respective belief systems, are so attached in an intelligent way. Only such intelligently attached representatives of venerable religious traditions are equipped to facilitate the intelligent inclusion of religion in public discourse. The formation of an intelligently devout populace is an antidote to the recurrence of violent religious disharmony in Nigeria. That emphasizes the place of theology in the university curriculum.

The case I am making for the inclusion of theology in the university curriculum hinges on three arguments – first, the consistency of the inclusion with the very idea of a university; secondly, its consistency with the scientific status of theology, which is different from religious studies; and thirdly, its consistency with the common good. Hence, this essay is of a tripartite division. In the first part, John Newman’s idea of a university is presented as an argument in favor of the inclusion of theology in the university curriculum. In the second part, borrowing insights from Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and Bernard Lonergan, an argument will be made for the inclusion of theology in the curriculum by attempting to erase doubts as to the scientific status of theology. Finally, inspired by David Tracy’s description of the social portrait of the theologian, the relationship between theology and the common good will be discussed and presented as a justification for the inclusion of theology in the university curriculum in Nigeria.

ARGUMENT FROM THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY

John Henry Newman’s argument for the inclusion of theology in the university curriculum begins with what the name “university” signifies, and what, by that very name, the institution that the university professes.¹

A University, I should lay down, by its very name professes to teach universal knowledge: Theology is surely a branch of knowledge: How then is it possible for it to profess all branches of knowledge, and yet to exclude from the subjects of its teaching one which, to say the least, is as important and as large as any of them?²

For Newman, therefore, the case for the inclusion of theology in the university curriculum is consistent with the nature of the university itself. Given the nature of

a university, the non-inclusion of theology in its curriculum would amount to an intellectual absurdity in which knowledge itself is compromised.

If a University be, from the nature of the case, a place of instruction, where universal knowledge is professed, and if in a certain University, so called, the subject of Religion is excluded, one of two conclusions is inevitable—either, on the one hand, that the province of Religion is very barren of real knowledge, or, on the other hand, that in such University one special and important branch of knowledge is omitted. I say, the advocate of such an institution must say *this*, or he must say *that*; he must own, either that little or nothing is known about the Supreme Being, or that his seat of learning calls itself what it is not.³

Authorities are cited by Newman to buttress the premise of this argument:

Johnson, in his Dictionary, defines it [university] to be “a school where all arts and faculties are taught;” and Mosheim, writing as an historian, says that, before the rise of the University of Paris—for instance, at Padua, or Salamanca, or Cologne—“the whole circle of sciences then known was not taught;” but that the school of Paris, “which exceeded all others in various respects, as well as in the number of teachers and students, was the first to embrace all the arts and sciences, and therefore first became a University.”⁴

But if the *raison d’être* of the university is to render it possible to gain access to a universe of knowledge, and if, on this score, a case is made for the inclusion of theology in its curriculum, it is imperative to establish if theology communicates any knowledge. That is the sense in which the scientific status of theology becomes a subject matter of inquiry. The question is: whether theology is a science? Three main issues are pertinent in this regard: the notion of science, its application to theology, and the subject matter of theology. These shall be taken up in the section that follows.

ARGUMENT FROM THE SCIENTIFIC STATUS OF THEOLOGY

The Notion of Science

The Latin word *scientia*, from which the English word “science” was derived, makes it permissible to adopt the notion of science as a body of knowledge. But this would only be a provisional notion that prepares the way for a more technical notion. While Aristotle provides such a technical notion in his *Posterior Analytics*, Thomas Aquinas, who played an active role in the pioneering academic institution that was the University of Paris, appropriated and applied that technical notion to theology in order to provide an argument for its scientific status. Bernard Lonergan, in turn,

went beyond this notion by clarifying it in his poignantly descriptive account of the emergence of theology as a science.⁵

According to Aristotle, all knowledge proceeds from pre-existent knowledge. This is true not only of the mathematical sciences, but also of all other speculative sciences. It is true of the two forms of dialectical reasoning – of syllogism and of induction.⁶ The pre-existent knowledge which provides a foundation and springboard for subsequent knowledge is of two kinds. It is either the assumption of a fact, or the assumption of the comprehension of the meaning of a term, or both.⁷ Scientific knowledge, therefore, is the production of a syllogism whose premise is “true, primary, immediate, better known than and prior to the conclusion, which is further related to them as effect to cause.”⁸

Having adopted Aristotle’s position that every science proceeds from pre-existent knowledge as its principle, Aquinas applied it to theology by postulating that theology is a science in so far as it proceeds from principles revealed by God. Like every science, theology is the production of pre-existent knowledge attained through revelation.

We must bear in mind that there are two kinds of sciences. There are some which proceed from a principle known by the natural light of intelligence, such as arithmetic and geometry and the like. There are some which proceed from principles known by the light of a higher science: thus the science of perspective proceeds from principles established by geometry, and music from principles established by arithmetic. So it is that sacred doctrine is a science, because it proceeds from principles established by the light of a higher science, namely, the science of God and the blessed. Hence, just as the musician accepts on authority the principles taught him by the mathematician, so sacred science is established on principles revealed by God.⁹

Furthermore, says Aquinas, the unity and integrity of a science is provided for by its formal aspect, that is, that which is the unifying principle of all that is to be studied in the science being considered. In theology, things are considered under the formality of what has been revealed.¹⁰ God is the subject matter of this science since in theology “all things are treated of under the aspect of God; either because they are God Himself; or because they refer to God as their beginning and end.”¹¹ The God who is the subject matter of theology is not the conclusion of a syllogism. On the contrary, it is a God who reveals himself. That is why Aquinas says that theology is a science established on principles revealed by God. But if there can be no knowledge where there is nothing to be known; if, on the ground of its criterion of science, empiricism denies the possibility of knowing God; and if the possibility of speaking about a subject is contingent on the speaker’s knowledge of the object — then it would seem the possibility of theology is already denied by the empiricist — denial of God. Aquinas’ five ways anticipated this denial. But the cogency of the five ways has itself been subject of debate in the history of philosophy. The mere fact of the debate is not a simple denial of validity, but an expression of doubt

concerning its self-evidence. Whereas entering into the debate would take this essay beyond its intended scope, the empiricist challenge to the scientific status of theology cannot be ignored. Here we touch on an issue that helps to appreciate the intellectual relevance of Bernard Lonergan.¹²

Lonergan provides a clarifying commentary on Aquinas' notion of theology as a science in his explanation of the emergence of theology as a science.¹³ But to clarify a subject is to bring it into a new light. Hence, the one who clarifies moves beyond what had been known in so far as he uses new and prevailing ideas to bring out a new understanding of that which he seeks to clarify. This was what Lonergan did when he offered a notion of theology as science following the epistemological imperatives of empiricism.

For Lonergan, "A science emerges when thinking in a given field moves to the level of system".¹⁴ Citing antecedents in the histories of geometry, mechanics and chemistry to corroborate this position, he wrote:

Prior to Euclid there were many geometrical theorems that had been established. The most notable example is Pythagoras's theorem on the hypotenuse of the right-angled triangle, which occurs at the end of Book 1 of Euclid's *Elements*. Euclid's achievement was to bring together all these scattered theorems by setting up a unitary basis that would handle all of them and a great number of others as well.

Similarly, mechanics became a system with Newton. Prior to Newton, Galileo's law of the free fall and Kepler's three laws of planetary motion were known. But these were isolated laws. Galileo's prescription was that the system was to be geometry; so there was something functioning as a system. But the system really emerged with Newton, which gave him tremendous influence upon the Enlightenment. He laid down a set of basic concepts, definitions, and axioms, and proceeded to demonstrate and conclude from general principles the laws that had been established empirically by his predecessors. Mechanics became a science in the full sense at that point where it became an organized system.

Again, a great deal of chemistry was known prior to Mendeleev. But his discovery of the periodic table selected a set of basic chemical elements and selected them in such a way that further additions could be made to the basic elements. Since that time chemistry has been one single organized subject with a basic set of elements accounting for incredibly vast numbers of compounds. In other words, there is a point in the history of any science when it comes of age, when it has a determinate systematic structure to which corresponds a determinate field.¹⁵

There is a science, therefore, where there are things to be known, where the things to be known are in a determinate field, and where the things to be known in the determinate field are ordered by a unifying structure. According to Lonergan, the emergence of theology as a science took place about the year 1230, when Philip, Chancellor of the University of Paris, did for theology what Euclid, Newton and Mendeleev did for geometry, mechanics and chemistry respectively. With Philip the Chancellor's discovery of the systematic notion of the supernatural

order, “theology became a unified subject with a sharply delimited field distinct from any other subject”.¹⁶ It is in the nature of a science to have fundamental modes of conception, fundamental methods, and fundamental criteria which make subsequent developments possible in the science. These are not absent from theology. Consequently, theology has the status of a science.

But the issue is not fully resolved by this assertion. This description of the scientific status of theology still raises a problem: Given the Enlightenment suspicion and negation of the supernatural and of revealed religion, can the center still hold for theology? In the essay being quoted here, Lonergan recognizes the problem but chose not to emphasize the word “supernatural”. Instead, the idea of an order is emphasized. But this objection cannot be ignored in an essay such as this – an essay which seeks to make a case for the inclusion of theology in the university curriculum – considering the historical role of empiricism in the emergence of university education in Nigeria. It is worthwhile to consider this role before pointing out how Lonergan further addressed the challenge empiricism poses to the claim of a scientific status of theology.

The foundation of the University College, Ibadan, in 1948 by the British colonial administration marked the emergence in Nigeria of an academic institution where religion would be studied at the university level. Empiricism would play a role here through the British founders of the university. But the stance of empiricism on religion and the supernatural is well-known. The advent of the Enlightenment, the ascendance of empiricism to epistemological sovereignty in the course of the Enlightenment, and the attendant suspicion and negation of the supernatural and of Revelation occasioned the marginalization of philosophy, metaphysics, and any religion that laid claims to revealed truths. Michael H. McCarthy gives a good account of the situation of the state of philosophy at this point:

In the course of the enlightenment, the prestige of the natural sciences had clearly eclipsed both metaphysics and theology. According to the positivists, the superior “sciences” of the ancients were primitive forms of belief incapable of commanding rational assent in an enlightened age. The ideal of empirical science became the norm against which all candidates for knowledge were measured. The traditional regulative function of philosophy was jeopardized by this epistemic revolution. Not only had the empirical sciences become emancipated from philosophy, but their very success had disclosed philosophy’s nonscientific character, its lack of consensual agreement and historical progress, and its capacity to adjudicate conflict. Until the nineteenth century, the scientific revolution had been confined largely to the investigation of nature. Moral science, the study of man, continued to provide philosophy with a respectable theoretical task. But the achievement of Darwin in biology and the conversion of Hegel’s historical concerns into empirical disciplines put philosophy severely on the defensive. If empirical science had the exclusive investigatory rights for both humanity and nature, what cognitive responsibility could

philosophy possibly claim? The crisis of philosophy experienced in the nineteenth century turned on the following question: How could philosophy become scientific, and thus intellectually reputable, without becoming an empirical science?¹⁷

Given the empiricist stance that the unique criterion of truth is that which can be apprehended by the senses, the foundation on which the scientific status of theology has been constructed is not merely weakened, but altogether taken away.

The emergence of university education in modern Nigeria coincided with this period of crisis of cognitional theories in philosophy. It is my contention that the underlying philosophy of education that came with university education was itself affected by the prejudice of the Enlightenment in general and of empiricism in particular towards any body of affirmations founded on or related to non-observable assertions such as theology. For the empiricist, God is not an observable phenomenon. No one can claim to have known God or to have known of God since such a claim cannot stand the test of empirical verification. But whereas God cannot be the object of empirical investigation, religious devotions are observable. That people practice one religion or the other means religion is a phenomenon in public life.

Consequently, while the empiricist stance on the impossibility of empirical verification of creedal statements of religions implies the impossibility of theology as a science, the observable fact of religion can be the object of phenomenological studies. A philosophy of education of empiricist inspiration can therefore grant the possibility of religious studies while ignoring or altogether denying the possibility of theology. One can therefore see why most Nigerian universities host departments of religious studies, whereas they do not host departments of theology.

But there is a notional, scientific and methodological distinction between religious studies and theology. From the perspective of notional differentiation, religious studies concern the study of religion as a phenomenon, while theology is concerned with God. Such notional differentiation is itself descriptive of a scientific differentiation which is the differentiation that concerns what is to be studied and under what formal aspect it is to be studied. While the subject matter of religious studies is religion *per se*, the subject matter of theology is God who reveals himself. By way of methodological differentiation, it is proper to religious studies to use reason alone. The use of unaided human intellect suffices. But theology uses neither faith alone, nor reason alone, but faith and reason. This is not to deny that theologians study religion. Rather, it is to point out that the theologian does so, or ought to do so, under the matrix of faith in a revealed God. Consequently, while it is the case that every theologian studies religion, it is not the case that every student of religion is a theologian. The one who studies a religion without allegiance to the beliefs of the religion being studied may be studying philosophy of religion, or psychology of religion, or sociology of religion, or anthropology of religion, or even politics of religion. That does not legitimize the designation of such a person as theologian. There have been and there still are thinkers who have written extensively and provocatively on the subject of religion. But that does not transform such scholars of religion into theologians. For example, Karl Marx was writing on religion when

he characterized it as opium of the people. Hume, Freud, Nietzsche and Durkheim wrote on religion. That did not make them theologians. Their critique of religion cannot be ignored in the study of religions. The questions they raise ought to be taken seriously and addressed intelligently. But it must be recognized that they were not theologians.

Yet one must go further than these assertions on differentiation of subject matter. For what sets these scholars of religion apart from theologians is not just their subject matter, but also their point of departure, that is, the point at which they begin to ply the *hodos* (the route) that leads to knowledge in their area of interest, and their manner of travelling on the way to knowledge. As far as these are concerned, the starting point of their studies is the human intellect. Theirs is an attempt to understand the phenomenon of religion through unaided human cognitive capacity. This approach can be depicted by one of the titles of Immanuel Kant: *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*. At the same time, this approach is to be distinguished from that which is exemplified by Anselm of Canterbury, when he wrote in his *Proslogium*: "I no longer want to understand before I believe. I believe in order to understand." But the priority Anselm accorded belief over understanding serves as a reminder that the empiricist objection is still pending.

Empiricism inaugurated a regime of suspicion of beliefs. Knowledge and beliefs were contrasted and antithesized to the point where it was considered intellectually fashionable to repudiate beliefs in favor of knowledge. Yet, it is my contention that a critical examination of what beliefs are exposes such a position to be an unnecessary dichotomy. As Lonergan would put it, much, if not all of what we know would not have been known without beliefs.

To appropriate one's social, cultural, religious heritage is largely a matter of belief. There is, of course, much that one finds out for oneself, that one knows simply in virtue of one's own inner and outer experience, one's own insights, one's own judgments of fact and of value. But such immanently generated knowledge is but a small fraction of what any civilized man considers himself to know. His immediate experience is filled out by an enormous context constituted by reports of the experience of other men at other places and times. His understanding rests not only on his own but also on the experience of others, and its development owes little, indeed, to his personal originality, much to his repeating in himself the acts of understanding first made by others, and most of all to presuppositions that he has taken for granted because they commonly are assumed and, in any case, he has neither the time nor the inclination nor, perhaps, the ability to investigate for himself. Finally, the judgments, by which he assents to truths of fact and of value, only rarely depend exclusively on his immanently generated knowledge, for such knowledge stands not by itself in some separate compartment, but in symbiotic fusion with a far larger context of beliefs.¹⁸

The attribution of absolute cognitional sovereignty to empirical verification is the adoption of a self-inhibiting and self-annihilating epistemological stance that can hardly withstand commonsensical scrutiny. Its self-inhibition is evident in the fact that, for every human being, no day can begin without beliefs. The day begins when he jumps out of bed without knowing but believing that the floor beside his bed has not collapsed during the night. He boards a flight from Ibadan to Abuja

without knowing but believing that the plane will not crash during the flight from its *terminus a quo* to its *terminus ad quem*. He boards the flight making an act of faith because there is no empirical mode of knowing that the plane will not crash. What applies to flying in airplanes is applicable to intra or inter-city rides in a car or bus or train. It equally applies to many ordinary things that human beings do. A Nigerian eats his pounded yam with relish without knowing but believing that the cook has not put some poison in it. A man and a woman who vow to marry each other for life do so without any empirical verification that they will bring each other happiness and not misery. They believe without knowing. Remaining within the four walls of one's room all day, not venturing out because of fear of one misfortune or the other, amounts to taking a risk in place of another risk. It is risky to stay indoors in the absence of an empirically reliable assurance that neither the walls nor the roof will collapse. Beliefs are cognitional risks that every human being has to take at existentially crucial moments. Like all risks, not to take it is itself a risk, provided there are reasonable and intelligent grounds on which taking the risk is based. Not to take such cognitional risks is to inhibit oneself, one's desire to know, to love and to grow, since the one who is locked up in fear in his room will neither accomplish any progress nor acquire any knowledge of what goes on outside his narrow world.

Thus, one knows the relative positions of the major cities of the United States. After all, one has examined maps and seen their names plainly printed beside small circles representing their positions. But is the map accurate? That one does not know, but believes. Nor does the map-maker know for, in all probability, his map was just a compilation of the many maps of much smaller areas made by surveyors that had been over the terrain. Knowledge, then, of the accuracy of the map is divided up; part is in the mind of each surveyor; but the accuracy of the whole is a matter not of knowledge but of belief, of the surveyors believing one another and the rest of us believing the surveyors. It may be urged, however, that the accuracy of maps is verified in countless manners. It is on the basis of maps that planes fly and ships sail, that highways are built and cities are laid out, that people travel about and that property is bought and sold. Over and over in myriad ways transactions based on maps prove to be successful. But only a minute fraction of such verifications is a matter of one's own immanently generated knowledge. It is only by belief that one can invoke to one's support the cloud of witnesses who also have found maps satisfactory. It is that belief, that dependence on countless others, that is the real basis of one's confidence in maps.¹⁹

So much for the self-inhibition of empiricism. Its self-annihilation becomes evident when one considers the fact that empiricism has not provided an empirical justification of its own exclusive claims to cognitive responsibility. In the absence of any empirical evidence to validate the empiricist stance that the empiricist enjoys exclusive possession of the sole criterion of truth, empiricism ends up rejecting itself on the same grounds on which it rejects theology. The paradox of empiricist self-annihilation lies in the fact that the empiricist denial of theology turns out to be the self-denial of empiricism.

Theology as Science

In this essay, I have so far attempted to describe the role of the empiricist philosophy of education that underlies university curriculum. This philosophy challenges theology's claim to scientific status. Lonergan responded to this challenge by going beyond the Aristotelian notion of science which Aquinas used as analogue in his own reflection on the scientific status of theology in the medieval school.²⁰ He found the move necessary because of the status of Aristotle in philosophy today. First, as he put it, Aristotle and the systematic substructure he provided for the use of medieval theology has been superseded. Secondly, certain defects have been noticed in the substructure.²¹ This weakens the Aristotelian aptitude to adequately address the epistemological problematic exemplified in the fact that the English word "science" is today restricted in its application and signification to the natural sciences. Such a restrictive use of the word logically excludes theology from the comity of sciences. It is to the credit of Lonergan to have arrived at a notion of method in theology by describing what method is in the natural sciences. By applying the notion of method in the empirical sciences to theology, Lonergan has been able to show that theology is not by any means a science less than the empirical sciences. According to this notion, in the natural sciences,

a method is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results. There is a method, then, where there are distinct operations, where each operation is related to the others, where the set of relations forms a pattern, where the pattern is described as the right way of doing the job, where operations in accord with the pattern may be repeated indefinitely, and where the fruits of such repetition are not repetitious, but cumulative and progressive.²²

The fact that, as Lonergan puts it, "The wheel of method not only turns but also rolls along", yielding cumulative and progressive results, makes method, so conceived, to be in contrast with the Aristotelian notion of science.²³ For, whereas the latter's notion is such as to concentrate on the necessary and immutable, what Lonergan describes in his preliminary notion of method takes cognizance of the fact that a science is not static. Rather, it develops. This development is accounted for by the nature of the human mind which itself undergoes development. The development of the human mind takes place irrespective of the field where the mind seeks to fulfill its unrestricted desire to know – the field of natural science or of human science or of dogma or of theology. In other words, the operation of the human mind in one field of cognition is fundamentally the same in every other field. What the mind does in the cognitional enterprise that is empirical science does not differ from what the mind does when it theologizes. Concretely, theology is a science because the human mind operates in theology in a way that is fundamentally identical with the way it operates in other sciences. One begins to appreciate this only when one is attentive to the question of cognitional theory which is: what am I doing when I am knowing?²⁴ At this stage in the history of philosophy, the recognition of the

scientific status of theology begins with the ability to describe what I am doing when I am knowing. Such is the description of the transcendental method whose function is to advert to the fact that theologies are produced by theologians, that theologians have minds and use them, that their doing so should not be ignored or passed over but explicitly acknowledged in it itself and in its implications.²⁵

Theology is a science because it involves the use of the mind in its journey on the *hodos* from the gathering of data through its investigation and judgment to the classification, differentiation and separation of the results of investigation. But a cognitional enterprise must be at the service of the common good if it is not to degenerate into idle speculation or fraudulent practice. How the mind that theologizes travels on this *hodos* is what Lonergan accounts for in his work *Method in Theology*, especially in the discussion on functional specialties. That is outside the scope of this essay. But how theology serves the common good is not. That must now be considered.

ARGUMENT FROM THEOLOGY'S POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMON GOOD

The human being is a being with a natural inclination and desire for what is good and for what is true. Neither fraud nor wars nor wickedness nor any of the human family's self-inflicted tragedies obliterate this fact. On the contrary, commonsensical observation of human behavior buttresses it. The dishonest person is displeased when he is has told a lie. Dishonesty may diminish his humanity, it does not destroy that same humanity. It may reduce the sharpness of the inquisitive instinct of the dishonest person's intellective power, but that same instinct does not go into oblivion. With this spontaneous power of inquiry, the human intellect institutes an inquiry, not only into the proximate but also into the ultimate cause of things. In the same vein, the wicked person not only desires to choose what is good for himself but also desires to be shown acts of kindness. Every act I pose with deliberation is posed because I perceive it as the good to be done. Every human act has the good as its goal even when, as is often the case, the acting subject, in an existence that falls short of the authentic, fails to transcend the pleasure principle and thereby mistakes what appears to be good for what is really good.

In these preceding remarks, the postulations of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* assumed and expressed by my attempts to paraphrase Bernard Lonergan cannot be divorced from the Greek philosopher's position that friendship or common life is a prerequisite for the attainment of excellence.²⁶ In the steps we take to human fulfillment, excess and deficiency are avoided when we enter into common life with others who, like us, seek excellence by avoiding excess and deficiency. The human quest for what is true and for what is good is an inter-subjective quest. The quest for the truth is good, and the good is that which is sought in collaboration with others. That is why the quest for goodness is itself inter-subjective.

But while the quest for truth and goodness is common to all human beings, and while there is inter-subjectivity and collaboration in this quest, the fact of divergent notions of the truth and the good often renders this collaborative venture very painful. Human beings are not relieved of this pain through the relativization

of the truth and the good. This pain can only be alleviated by a genuine pluralism which recognizes and celebrates the potential in every human being to speak the truth in a variety of ways without distorting the truth, as well as the potential to manifest goodness in manifold acts without mistaking that which appears to be good for that which is really good. It is in the interest of the common good to find a common ground where relativism will not be mistaken for pluralism. Nowhere is the finding of such common ground as urgent as in the sphere of religion. As I wrote elsewhere:

Religious pluralism challenges all lovers of humanity to seek a common ground. Human reason points to the way to that common ground, a common ground which is a meeting point of the religions where what is venerable in their traditions and acknowledged to be so can be brought together to contribute to the promotion of the dignity of the human person.²⁷

The university as an academic community is or ought to be seen as an instance of the inter-subjective quest for the truth and the good. In consonance with this character, the university is to provide a common ground where ideas that arrest the attention of the human mind and shape the human being – and religious ideas are among them, if not chief among them – are exchanged and, if possible, reconciled. Being a universe of knowledge, knowledge coming from various knowing subjects, it provides a *locus* of interaction of human inquirers who seek to acquire knowledge for the fruition of the *propensitas ad veritatem* common to every human being and for the attainment of the common good. Every science exists to be at the service of the human being whose intellectual instinct it is meant to satisfy. A science loses its *raison d'être* when it no longer functions to satisfy the human desire to know the truth. In the universe of sciences that the university is, the human person is placed at a vantage position where knowledge can be sought in friendship.

Human knowledge, then, is not some individual possession but rather a common fund, from which each may draw by believing, to which each may contribute in the measure that they performs their cognitional operations properly and report their results accurately. A person does not learn without the use of his or her own senses, own mind, own heart, yet not exclusively by these. One learns from others, not solely by repeating the operations they have performed but, for the most part, by taking their word for the results. Through communication and belief there are generated common sense, common knowledge, common science, common values and a common climate of opinion. No doubt, this public fund may suffer from blindspots, oversights, errors, bias. But it is what we have got, and the remedy for its short-comings is not the rejection of belief and so a return to primitivism, but the critical and selfless stance that, in this as in other matters, promotes progress and offsets decline.²⁸

If the argument in favor of the scientific status of theology which I put forward in the preceding section is anything to go by, then it can be said that, as a science, theology is at the service of the human family in the religious community and in the society. It is not just at the service of the religious tradition it represents,

it is also at the service of the academic community, as well as at the service of the society. This formulation of the triple function of theology takes its inspiration from David Tracy's description of what he calls "a social portrait of the theologian".²⁹ As Tracy rightly observed, every theologian addresses the most serious and difficult questions which every person and community must face: the ineluctable question of whether or not existence has a fundamental meaning.³⁰ The addressees of the theological reflections, as well as the conflict within each addressee are several. This pluralism of addressees and of conflicts within each addressee, give rise to what Tracy calls "the three publics of theology". Hence he wrote:

Each theologian addresses three distinct and related social realities: the wider society, the academy and the church. Some one of these publics will be a principal, yet rarely exclusive, addressee. The reality of a particular social locus will, to be sure, affect the choice of emphasis. The tasks of a theology in a seminary, in a church-related university, in a pastoral setting, in a program for religious education, in a small community, in the secular academy, in an involvement in a particular cultural, political or social movement – each of these realities and others – will affect the self-understanding of any theologian. Sometimes that influence will prove so powerful that it will effectively determine the theology. More often a social location will provide "elective affinities" for a particular emphasis in theology, including the emphasis on what will count as a genuinely theological statement.³¹

Questions of existence and co-existence are inseparable. The way we understand co-existence flows from the way we understand existence. It pertains to theology to communicate and explain religious beliefs that address the fundamental existential questions. The way fundamental questions of existence are addressed determines the way the question of co-existence is addressed. Our understanding of why we live inspires our project of the best way to live together. Every attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible person is pre-occupied with the questions of existence and co-existence. Such persons are found not only in the place or community of worship, but also in the community of scholars and in the public square. It is precisely in these places that these existential interrogations are addressed to them. The academician does not have to go to a place of worship before being confronted with the question of the meaning of existence and the mode of co-existence. The question confronts him right there in the academic community. In the same way, the man or woman on the street is confronted with existential questions right there on the streets. Such questions do not wait until you enter or join a religious gathering. Therefore, in so far as the questions that theology addresses preoccupy persons in these three communities, these three publics, as Tracy would say, the theologian has these three publics to address.

Theology, therefore, has a triple task to perform: for and in the *ecclesia*, for and in the *academia*, and for and in the *societas*.³² As far as its function for and in the *ecclesia* is concerned, theology endeavors to provide the meaningfulness and

how-is-it-ness of the beliefs and belief system of a religious tradition for those who belong to that religious tradition. As far as its academic function is concerned, it strives to show how the content of faith does not represent an assault on the human intellect. Theology is better placed to do so when its inclusion in the university curriculum offers the possibility of its encounter, interaction and conversation with other sciences, even as it brings representatives of different religious traditions together in the academia. Since the university itself exists for the formation of intelligent participants in the human project of looking for the best way to live together, the inclusion of theology in the university curriculum has the potential of facilitating the encounter between the religious tradition it represents and the society in which the religious tradition is a lived experience. Hence, as far as its social function is concerned, theology facilitates the intellectual formation of religious adherents in view of the intelligent regulation of common life for the sake of the common good. Theology provides a meeting point of religious tradition and the society in which the tradition is a lived experience. And the *intelligentia fidei* which theology contributes to the society bears the great potential of fostering the religious harmony and tolerance necessary for stability in a multi-religious polity. The inclusion of theology in the university curriculum provides a forum where faith and reason meet, and where piety learns from the rationality of religious discourse. This encounter between faith and reason and the corresponding elaboration of rational creedal discourse is ultimately at the service of the common good. For by providing the rational grounds of faith, theology exposes the irrationality of religious fanaticism. It thus frees religion from those who are wont to place it at the service of their own quest for power and from all that hinders it from re-enacting the positive contributions it has made to civilization in the past.

CONCLUSION

In this essay, I have, on three grounds, attempted to make a case for the inclusion of theology in the university curriculum in Nigeria. First, I have argued, following Newman, that the very idea of a university as a universe or marketplace of ideas from which no idea ought to be excluded calls for it. Secondly, I have made the case by pointing to the scientific status of theology. In this regard, I have highlighted the move made by Lonergan from the Aristotle-inspired case made for the scientific status of theology by the medieval thinker, Thomas Aquinas, to a case that seeks to respond to its denial by the empiricist paradigm of knowledge. From Aquinas, we learn that theology is a science because it has a unifying formal aspect which gives it its character. From Lonergan, we learn that this unifying principle takes the forms of fundamental modes of conception, fundamental methods, and fundamental criteria which do not render the science static but rather ensures its dynamism and openness to further development. In presenting the argument for the scientific status of theology, I have referred to the notional, scientific and methodological differentiation between religious studies and theology. Thirdly, I have hinged my case on Tracy's description of the social portrait of the theologian as one whose audience is ecclesial, academic and social. The theologian listens and speaks in, for, and with the Church, the academy and the society.

David Tracy's plea for an end to the marginalization of theology from the academy and from the Euro-American technologically advanced society is informed, among other things, by the need to avert what he calls the danger of instrumentalization of reason in the all-embracing technocracy of a techno-economic structure. According to Tracy:

Except for the strict technocrat, most observers agree that instrumental rationality becomes dangerous to the wider society when its evident successes in the technoeconomic realm encourage us to employ only instrumental reason for articulating and resolving value questions for either the polity or the culture... For if instrumental rationality provides the sole paradigm for public, reasoned discourse in society, then we are not dealing only with a technological society but with an emerging technocracy, where the eclipse of practical reason for political decision and action is assured. Then the more usual alternatives for rational, public discourse on societal issues too often turn out to be either unexamined and naïve intuitions on value issues by a technological and bureaucratic or Hobbesian elite, or the conflict of special-interest groups. In either case, a truly public discussion of issues of value for the whole society on other than either an intuitive or instrumental basis is quickly short-circuited.³³

Mathew Lamb adverted to the same danger of instrumentalization of reason when he wrote:

The Enlightenment promised human emancipation through reason. But it naively trusted in a pure reason embodied (supposedly) in mathematical hard-headedness and natural scientific technology. Such a pure reason not only created ever more wondrous machines but also became increasingly assimilated to its own mechanistic creations.

The "success" of mathematics and natural sciences meant their methods became the canon of all exact knowledge for the human sciences – what could not be quantified somehow lacked meaning. The "success" of technology meant that the machine became the model of rational order – what could not be programmed somehow should not exist. Human sciences began to treat humanity as made in the image of its own mechanized products. Organic and psychic processes were no more than highly complex physical-mechanical events. Mind and consciousness were dismissed as illusory, sooner rather than later to be mapped out in cybernetic, bio-computer input-output schemata. Work was "Taylorized" into mechanistically regulated assembly line productivity. Interpersonal relations became techniques of successful role playing. Community values

took a back seat to the demands of mobility with urbanization and industrialization.³⁴

One may ask: You call for the inclusion of theology in the University curriculum. But which theology? Catholic? The many theologies coming from the Reformation? Pentecostal theology? Islamic theology? Or, theology of African traditional religions? Before I address the question, it will not be out of place to refer to what obtains elsewhere. For example, the city of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has a Catholic Faculty of Theology and a Protestant Faculty of Theology. The University of Tübingen has a Catholic Faculty of Theology and a Protestant Faculty of Theology. And, within the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Kinshasa, there is a department of theology, which takes care of the theological approach, as well as the department of theology and human sciences. But in order to respond to the question for a Nigerian university, I would envisage three different options.

The first option envisages the establishment of a faculty of theology within a university with different departments representing different theological traditions. Where the option of a faculty is not feasible, a second option could be the establishment of a department of theology with options for specialization in the different theological traditions. A third option would be to have within existing departments of religious studies specializations in any of the approaches specified at the beginning of this essay, that is, phenomenological, comparative or theological. Since the theological approach ought not to ignore the methods and findings of the phenomenological and comparative approaches, its curriculum should require of students a practical knowledge of these methods and findings. Whatever the case may be, a theological tradition wishing to be represented within a faculty or department must submit its curriculum to competent authorities within the University for approval.

Almost throughout this essay, I have cited Euro-American and Anglo-Saxon authors whose concerns may not totally coincide with my Nigerian concerns. Perhaps the Nigerian society, which is still at the opposite end of the spectrum of technological advancement, does not have the concerns articulated by Tracy and Lamb at this point in her history. If and when she catches up with the rest of the world, such may one day be her concerns. But neither the Nigerian society nor any African society can afford to wait for the advent of technology before heeding Joseph Ki-Zerbo's similar plea to Africa to avoid a science without conscience.

My own concern in this essay has been to make a case for the inclusion of theology understood as *intelligentia fidei* in the university curriculum as a way of meeting the challenge that religious fanaticism—in its Christian and Muslim manifestations—poses to the stability of the multi-religious polity that Nigeria is. For when religious beliefs and practices are divorced from the realm of intelligence, they easily become tools in the hands of those who seek to acquire and or consolidate political and economic power at any cost. They become means of implementing an agenda of politicization and commercialization of religion. In this respect, one can neither deny the spiritual quest that animates the Nigerian nor the fact that piety can

be used to camouflage a propensity for power. Religion in Nigeria can no longer be examined without reference to her politics and economy.³⁵

It is my submission that while, in the heat and confusion of the *Sharia* controversy, the political elite of the far north of Nigeria is often accused of using religion as a means of recovering and securing the political relevance it purportedly lost in the “power shift” of May 29, 1999, the south, where Pentecostalism booms, can equally be accused of commercializing religion—through its many merchants of miracles and prosperity who parade themselves as preachers—so as to maintain the south’s real or imagined command and control of the Nigerian economy. That, in the final analysis, opens the way for the infelicitous metamorphosis of religion into a toxic product that threatens life, liberty, property and prosperity. Thanks to the extra-constitutional implementation of a particular version of the criminal code of Islamic *Sharia* in some of the states of Nigeria, and thanks to the merchandization of miracles by an exuberant and irrational but ubiquitous Pentecostalism—for there can and ought to be an authentic Pentecostal piety that neither assaults the intellect nor disturbs the public with noise pollution in the neighborhood and traffic congestion on the expressway—it is now beyond reasonable doubt that contemporary Nigeria is a case in point.

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NOTES

1 Read the nine discourses on university teaching in his *The Idea of a University* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1960).

2 John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* Discourse II, 1: “Theology a Branch of Knowledge”.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 Read Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, 1.2 Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947); Bernard Lonergan, “History” in *Topics in Education: Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume 10*, edited by Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 233-257.

6 Cf. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* I, 71a1-10 translated by G. R. G. Mure in *The Basic Works of Aristotle* edited by Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941).

7 *Ibid.*, I, 71a11-14.

8 *Ibid.*, I, 71b17-35 [17-22].

9 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theol.*, I, 1.2 *respondeo*.

10 *Ibid.*, I, 1.3.

11 *Ibid.*, *Summa theol.*, I, 1.7.

12 I perceive a powerful restatement of the argument of the five ways in the recent publication of the physicist, Gerald L. Schroeder, *The Hidden Face of God: How Science Reveals the Ultimate Truth* (New York: Free Press, 2001). While

the work is worth reading in its entirety, its third chapter, “The Working of the Universe: The Physics of Metaphysics” merits particular attention. See also his *Genesis and the Big Bang: The Discovery of Harmony between Modern Science and the Bible* (New York: Bantam, 1990). An equally articulate response to the challenge of rationalism and empiricism can be found in the writings of John Henry Newman. I shall single out, in this respect, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*. Introduction by Nicholas Lash (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1979). Read also his *Fifteen Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford between A. D. 1826 and 1843*. Introduction by Mar Katherine Tillman (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1997).

13 Cf. Bernard Lonergan, “History” 241-250.

14 *Ibid.*, 241.

15 *Ibid.*, 241-242.

16 *Ibid.*, 242.

17 Cf. Michael H. McCarthy, *The Crisis of Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990) 31-35 [32].

18 Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 41-47 [41-42]. See also his *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding: Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Volume. 3*, eds Frederick Crowe and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 452-453, 726 and 734-735.

19 *Ibid.*, 42. Another illustration of the self-inhibition of absolute empiricism can be found in John Newman’s account of his December 1860 conversation with his friend, the distinguished scientist, William Froude. According to Newman, “He [Froude] said that no truth had been arrived at without this habit, viz that of sceptical caution – it was the parent of discovery. I said no great thing would be done without the very reverse habit, viz that of conviction and faith... He said that in his own life, he had suffered from believing too much – never from believing too little. I agreed to his position so far as to allow that much harm came from easiness of belief; but this only showed that faith could have an excess – whereas scepticism and faith were both good in their place, and both admitted of abuse. I might apply what Aristotle says of the mathematician and rhetorician – faith being necessary in matters of practice and conduct, scepticism in matters of speculation” (“Memorandum of Conversation with William Froude” in Charles S. Dessain, ed., *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. 19 (London: Thomas Nelson, 1969) 441.

20 For another discussion that attempts to move beyond the Aristotelian paradigm of science as a basis for recognition of the scientific status of theology read David Tracy’s *Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1991) 14-21. Using Stephen Toulmin’s classification of rational enterprises into “compact” disciplines, “diffuse” disciplines, and “would-be” disciplines, Tracy came to the conclusion that: “Theology, like the humanities and the social sciences in the modern university, must and can presently content itself with a ‘diffuse’ or ‘would-be’ disciplinary status” (*Analogical Imagination*, 20). Whether or not this position reduces theology, the humanities and the social sciences to second-class citizens of the academic community will depend

on a critical study of Toulmin's classification, an undertaking which is clearly beyond the scope of this essay.

21 For a critique of the Aristotelian substructure of medieval theology read Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 310-311.

22 Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 4. Emphasis mine.

23 Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 6.

24 While it would be overly ambitious to attempt to expose Lonergan's account of cognitional activity in this modest essay, it would suffice to mention that it is an activity which Lonergan characterizes as conscious intentionality at the four levels of experience, inquiry, judgment and decision. For a brief description of the basic pattern of cognitional operation read his *Method in Theology* 6-13. A fuller account is to be found by thoroughly studying his *Insight*.

25 Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 24.

26 For Bernard Lonergan's discussion of the human good read his *Method in Theology*, ch. 2.

27 Cf. Anthony Akinwale, "Religion and Politics: Philosophical Origins of a Separation" in *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* XXXII1/2 (June and December 2000) 115-141 [138].

28 Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 43-44.

29 See his *The Analogical Imagination* ch. 1.

30 Cf. David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* 4.

31 *Ibid.*, 5.

32 The term *ecclesia* is used in a loose and unrestrictive sense here to mean a community whose membership is based on a shared belief system which is manifested in their mode of cult and conduct.

33 David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* 8.

34 Matthew Lamb, *Solidarity With Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation* (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 15-16.

35 A lot has been written on the politicization of religion in Nigeria. But such studies need to be complemented with studies on its commercialization. On the politicization of religion in Nigeria see for example Matthew H. Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria* (Ibadan: Spectrum, 1993) and Iheanyi M. Enwerem, *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria* (Ibadan: IFRA, 1995).

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THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

PROJECTS

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976

in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development*. A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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