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**The Idea  
of a Nigerian University:  
A Revisit**

**Nigerian Philosophical Studies, III**

Edited by  
*Olatunji Oyeshile*  
*Joseph Kenny*

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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## INTRODUCTION

Almost a decade ago, specifically in January 2002, scholars within the University of Ibadan held a seminar with Professor George Mclean, founder of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (RVP), Washington D.C., which eventually appeared as *The Idea of an African University: The Nigerian Experience* (Washington D.C.: RVP, 2007). Much has happened since on the Nigerian university scene, most notably the foundation of many more universities, the majority of them private.

This, and many other factors, convinced a group of scholars of the need to go back to the drawing board: What is expected of a university in Nigeria today? Which problems are entailed by this expectation, and how do we move forward?

Accordingly, the Dempsey Centre, Dominican Institute, Ibadan, with the RVP sponsored a Seminar: "The Idea of a Nigerian University: A Revisit" the Dominican Institute President, Professor Anthony Akinwale, delivered a welcome address. He was followed by Professor Edward Alam who briefly introduced the work of RVP and Dr. Francis Isichei who delivered the keynote paper, "The Idea of a University, Past, Present and Future: Whither Nigeria?" The following is an overview of the seventeen papers which appear in this volume.

### Part I: Foundational Issues

Francis Isichei (chapter 1) begins with a survey of the two classical models that have dominated university orientation for two centuries: the Humboldt model, emphasizing research and its communication to students, and the Newman model, emphasizing a liberal exposure to the universe of knowledge. He tells of the reshuffling these models went through, particularly at the University of Chicago, before they were exported to Nigeria. He touches on the decline of standards in universities, the reasons for this, and moves to remedy the situation.

Josephat Obi Oguejiofor (chapter 2) then tackles the central problem of this book, how to structure a university in Africa, and Nigeria in particular. He examines the university system brought by the British, and finds that, like the economy, it was aimed principally at British, not Nigerian development. It also alienated students from their own traditions and identity.

Kolawole Owolabi (chapter 3) continues where Oguejiofor left off, facing squarely the issue of universality or parochiality of a university, whether in content or personnel. He rejects both the Europe orientated model exported to Africa and the neo-Afro model, which wishes to purge everything European. With the same option for universality, he rejects the exclusive choice between liberal and technical education. The two should go together, and address the aspirations of their host communities.

Joseph Ekong (chapter 4) assesses the current discussion on standards and, with reference to Newman's stress on a liberal exposure to universal knowledge, shows that a chief reason for their decline is the isolation of academic research. Researchers in different disciplines do not make a community, and have no communication with one another. That is the problem which Oyewo and Olawale (chapter 9) address in part, under the aspect of the Internet, and its indispensable role in today's university.

Joseph Kenny (chapter 5), facing the problem of overlap, uses Aristotle to argue that the designing of a university is a task of wisdom, belonging properly to the metaphysician. In the light of this, he proposes a general blueprint for the structure of a university today.

## **Part II: Historical and Political Factors**

Anthony Akinwale (chapter 6) makes an in-depth examination of the conflict between raw power and reason. He argues that central government regulation, instead of enhancing standards, is stifling initiative and the blossoming of academic life.

Segun Odunuga (chapter 7) continues the problem of autonomy, showing how it has eroded over the years, and what must be done to restore it.

Francis Egbokhare (chapter 8) takes up the grave shortfall of supply versus demand for quality university education in Nigeria. He traces the response to this demand to the foundation of new universities, especially private ones, and their extension by distance learning. At the same time, he shows the problems this educational explosion faces, and recommends solutions.

Oyewo and Olawale (chapter 9), as mentioned above, discuss the use of Internet, as a partial solution to the problems Egbokhare raises.

Afisi Oladosu (chapter 10) surveys Islamic education, calling attention particularly to the informal sector, whereby students sought not an institution, but a noteworthy teacher.

## **Part III: The Moral Dimension**

Jude Mbukanma (chapter 11) makes use of the Greek tradition to argue for moral education, consisting in formal courses, but more importantly in the attitude and example of the lecturers.

Olatunji Oyeshile (chapter 12) examines the same issue, focusing on the situation of Nigerian universities, where a moral crisis is rampant at every level: students, lecturers and administrators. He likewise asks who should be responsible for moral education, observing that no one in the university is totally exempt from this responsibility.

Chinyere Ukpokolo (chapter 13) examines the particular problem of sexual harassment, which constitutes a major manifestation of the moral crisis.

#### **Part IV. National Development**

Ike & Christy Odimegwu (chapter 14) take up the problem scholars face of reconciling their academic vocation with the call to business or public service. To solve the compromised identity of many scholars, they propose a harmonious interflow between research, interdisciplinary cooperation, teaching, and practical application.

Adebola Ekanola (chapter 15) addresses the proposal of a “developmental university” as the solution to national development. He rejects it, arguing rather in favor of the traditional role of a university as conducting research and teaching in a moral context.

Emmanuel Ogu (chapter 16) argues for the necessity for universities to produce graduates who are capable of surviving economically.

Mary Bosco E. Amakwe (chapter 17) continues this theme, integrating it with the need for a sound intellectual and moral formation.

#### **Professor Olusegun Oladipo (1957-2009)**

Readers familiar with our first volume, *The Idea of an African University, The Nigerian Experience*, will notice that six of the authors who appeared in that volume reappear in this one.

There is one gap we very much regret. That is Professor Olusegun Oladipo, who presented the lead paper of the first volume. May he rest in peace.

*Olatunji Oyeshile*  
*Joseph Kenny*



**PART I**

**FOUNDATIONAL ISSUES**



## CHAPTER I

# **THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE: WHITHER NIGERIA?**

*FRANCIS M. ISICHEI*

On the issue of the idea of a university, one does not get far in contemporary discussions before being caught up in complex questions of social justice. Differences in participation rates —among countries, among social classes, among ethnic groups— raise important questions about the justice of systems of higher education. There are complex practical problems about funding and related issues concerning inequalities that limit access to opportunity. In a mixed economy, questions arise not only in relation to the respective responsibilities of individual and state but also concerning the roles of private (commercial) and state sources of remuneration. These questions relate, it is clear, to the issue of the autonomy and independence of universities, which is of direct academic import. As many students are compelled to support themselves, a university education can no longer provide “the space of an interval,” but is rather an experience that must be juggled, perhaps not entirely to its detriment, with work and other commitments. The issue of social justice does not stop with the issue of opportunities to participate, however. There are questions about the content of a university education which, in their essential form, are expressed in terms of the nature and justifiability of the canon. Surely, in an idea of a university, some of these questions have greater purchase than others.

With the dramatic demand and increase in scale of higher education, and with decline in direct funding particularly in developing countries, which were generally features of the closing decades of the twentieth century, universities and other providers found themselves facing increasingly complex managerial tasks. There has been the seemingly inevitable tendency to see these tasks in quasi-technical terms as if this might divert attention from the real ethical issues that they almost always involve. Where the ethical has been more directly broached, this has generally been in terms of these questions of distributive justice. I shall not have space for some of these issues here. Rather I take as my starting point the discourse on education, and on the university especially. For all the earnestness of the main protagonists here, there is a perplexing absence of an appropriate language within which to speak of the idea of a university. It is not just there is no John Henry Newman or Von Humboldt now, but that one can scarcely fathom anyone writing in this way.

Essentially, voices have been raised in recent decades addressing the question of the idea of a university in terms beyond the managerial and political issues that have become the norm. Thus, in a number of essays some 30 years ago, Oakeshott (1972) provided a moving defense of the importance of the university and of a liberal higher education. Some of the writings point to the conditions that must be met if the academic pursuits of the university are to thrive. In what was to become a surprise bestseller, Bloom (1987) presented a provocative defense of the values of the elite university, and in the process spawned a sometimes heated debate. At a slightly different and in some ways meta-textual level, Pelikan (1992) sought to pose again Newman's questions. Works such as these have been accompanied by a stream, though never a torrent, of articles that have explored philosophical issues in higher education. At the same time there has developed a growing literature, which positions itself somewhere between philosophy, sociology, and policy studies, within which the several books have an exceptionally high profile (Barnett and Standish, 2003).

In a number of essays, Jacques Derrida has addressed the place of humanities in the university, and in one case in particular (Derrida, 1992) has provoked an eloquent and sometimes profound set of responses. Perhaps the more salient figure here, however, is Lyotard (1984) who, notwithstanding his denial that his text is strictly philosophical, produced in *The Postmodern Condition* a work that showed remarkable prescience regarding the development of the university in an era dominated by the rise of information technology. I shall trace the idea of a university to Wilhelm von Humboldt's memorandum, which inspired the creation of the University of Berlin in 1810 and John Henry Newman's Idea of a University based on his Oxford teaching experience.

## **HUMBOLDT'S UNIVERSITY**

The idea of a university in which teaching and research were combined in the search for impartial truth reached classic form in nineteenth-century Germany, and eventually became the dominant model. Wilhelm von Humboldt's memorandum, which inspired the creation of the University of Berlin in 1810, showed a university based on three formative principles: unity of research and teaching, freedom of teaching, and academic self-governance. The first of these principles – the unity of teaching and research – answered those systems in which research goes on independently, by private scholars or in separate research institutes, without the stimulation of sharing those investigations with young minds, and in which higher education was carried out by scholars who failed to engage in original inquiry. The second principle, freedom of teaching, meant that professors should be free to teach in accordance with their studiously and rationally arrived convictions. The principle of self-government was only implicit in Humboldt's memorandum, but became increasingly apparent as an integral component of his vision, was meant to protect academic work

from distortions of governmental control (Levine, 2011). The Humboldtian university can be seen as the characteristic form of the university idea until the growth of mass higher education in the late twentieth century. According to Anderson (2009), it had a number of interlocking features, some new, some inherited from the past, and was inevitably marked by the deep forces of the age, including nationalism, secularization, the growth of modern state, and the shift of social power from aristocracies to the middle classes, on the basis of merit, intellectual expertise, and professionalism.

The central Humboldtian principle was the union of teaching and research in the work of the individual scholar or scientist. The function of the university was to advance knowledge by original and critical investigation, not just to transmit the legacy of the past or to teach skills. It was a university where teaching should be based on the disinterested search for truth, and students should participate, at however humble a level, in this search. This is where the classic view originated, that the university was a community of scholars and students engaged in a common task. Humboldt's influence is still felt in the assertion that research must be an integral part of every university's activities. But for Humboldt, research was a helpmate to teaching; the specialized research which became the basis of the German universities' reputation was a later development. It was only in the twentieth century that research came to be seen as vital activity in itself, contributing to industrial progress, military strength, and social welfare, and requiring collaborative rather than individual effort. In Britain, this came quite late; even in the 1960s, the "plateglass" universities were most notable for their experiments in teaching. The current emphasis on research as the primordial purpose of universities is a recent phenomenon, reinforced by British obsession with league tables; but the international research university, at its wealthiest and most formidable in the United States, is a model which only a few institutions in any national system can sensibly emulate (Anderson, 2009).

With the Humboldt model of intellectual freedom in research and teaching, university autonomy, the growth of independent disciplines with their own standards and priorities and internationalism became the hallmark of the idea of a university. This concept of the university flourished when education was the preserve of social elite. In Britain, the Robbins report (1963) sought to democratize the model without radically changing it, and until the 1980s university expansion was contained within this pattern, with polytechnics providing an alternative ideal. According to Anderson (2009), in Britain, unlike many other advanced countries, policy is opposed to the recognition of hierarchies within the higher education system (though in reality there are wide variations of social and intellectual prestige). This came as a result of the report of Robbins' committee on higher education proclaiming that university places should be available to all who were qualified for them by ability and attainment. In line with the idea of a university the report discussed the nature of higher education, and defined four objectives essential to any proper balanced system. The objectives

begin with the utilitarian one, i.e., instruction in skills; but universities must also promote the general powers of the mind, to produce not mere specialists but rather cultivated men and women. The objectives recognize that while the balance between teaching and research might vary, teaching should not be separated from the advancement of learning and the search for truth, since the process of education is itself most vital when it partakes of the nature of discovery. The objectives admit the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship. Anderson (2009) admits that this part of the objectives, social cohesion, remains a political preoccupation today, though it was easier in the 1960s to assume that Britain had a common culture and that everyone knew what it was.

To all intents, the Robbins' committee did not envisage any fundamental change in the nature of university education, and was criticized in later years for promoting a luxury university model, based on Oxbridge, which emphasized residence and the close relations of teachers and students, a model which proved financially unsustainable once higher education moved from expansion of elite privilege towards mass entitlement. The Robbins-Oxbridge model represented a very English idea of the university, also embodied in the 'plate-glass' or campus universities of the 1960s, the first of which, Sussex, opened in 1961. At that time, it was an almost universal assumption that universities should be communities, in which the moral influence of residential life and social interaction outside the classroom were as important as formal instruction. The redbrick universities founded in the Victorian era, and the Scottish universities, were now condemned for their nine-to-five character, and conformed to the new ideal by building halls of residence and adopting more personal methods of teaching. Leaving the home became an essential part of the student experience and remains a cherished feature of the British university ideal today.

The influence of Humboldtian model was visible in the University Movement of the United States of America. To this, Levine (2011) asserts that as is well known, before the 1880s all American universities had grown out of liberal arts colleges designed originally to educate young men for the ministry and then the professions of law and medicine. The American University Movement followed the vision of planting on American soil the type of research universities that had grown so lustily in Nineteenth-century Germany. In the United States, this movement was inspired by the visits of many hundreds of American scholars to Germany in the decades after the Civil War. It was pioneered by the founding of John Hopkins University as a graduate research institution in 1876, and grew together with comparable efforts at Stanford and the University of Southern California. In the University of Chicago, as elsewhere, the mind of the founding president envisioned an institution shaped by the notion of what Edward Shils has aptly called the "Humboldtian's university". Levine (2011) tells us how William Rainey Harper seized Humboldt's vision and landed at Chicago running with it and in one bound strove to create a research university

without peer. Harper's zeal for research was shared by the faculty, which recruited stellar scholars eager to make Chicago the premier research university in the world. Accordingly, the brimming self-consciousness about this mission has disposed Chicagoans to reflect with special intensity about the goals, concepts, and methods of disciplined inquiry. One expression of that intensity is that these reflections often engendered distinctive schools of thought.

As Milton Friedman remarked on the quality of University of Chicago as a school: to economists the world over, "Chicago" designates not a city, not even a university, but a "school." The term is used sometimes as an epithet, sometimes as accolade, but always with fairly definite-though by no means single-valued-meaning... One impression that I have formed... is that the University of Chicago is particularly fertile breeding ground for "schools" (University Chicago Records, 1986). A contemporary of the founding generation of the University of Chicago, philosopher William James at Harvard, was struck that Chicago so quickly managed to produce what historian Darnell Rucker has described as the first authentic school of American philosophy (Rucker, 1969). William James said this after reading the volume of papers that emerged in 1903 from John Dewey's seminar. This was James' remark: "Chicago University has during the past six months given birth to the fruit of its ten years of gestation under John Dewey. The result is wonderful – a real 'school' and real thought. Important thought, too! Did you ever hear of such a city or such a University? Here [at Harvard] we have thought but no school. Yale has a school, but no thought. Chicago has both" (Levine, 2011).

The impact of Humboldt's idea of a university reflected in the University of Chicago, historians of science described the early years of biology at Chicago with the same understanding of James (Pauly, 1987; Maienschein, 1991). The Divinity School produced what are recognized as the "Chicago Schools" at two different periods: an early phase that blended the social gospel, pragmatism, and social-historical method; and later, a florescence of theological work inspired by Whitehead's process philosophy. The Chicago Schools have had such an enduring impact that for generations later, scholars continue to talk about them. The Chicago School of literary criticism made its mark in the 1930s, yet continues to form a key point of reference for literary intellectuals in modern times. The Chicago School of Sociology flourished in the 1920s, yet a bibliography of writings about it in the past quarter-century numbers in the dozens; one of the first of these asserted: "Chicago sociology had a major impact on the profession world-wide by institutionalizing collaborative sociological research that stimulated theory and research interacting in the same university department" (Bulmer, 1984). In the last few years alone, scholars from England, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Switzerland have researched in Regenstein, organized conferences, and issued publications about the only "school" in the discipline to be named after an institution (Levine, 2011).

Even when their work has not been tied to schools, Chicago departments and schools have often manifested a distinctive cachet. The extraordinary women who founded the School of Social Service Administration made it distinctive by fusing rigorous social research with spirited social reform. It is on record that the Department of Physics has been noted for inventing experimental methods that achieve optimal results with the simplest and most economical tools and techniques. This was true from Albert Michelson's investigations into the nature of light and how it fit into the frameworks of Maxwell's electromagnetic theory and Einstein's relativity theory (which made Michelson the University's first Nobel Prize Laureate), through the work of Enrico Fermi and his young colleagues on the Manhattan Project, to the more recent work of John Simpson, whose laboratory for many years was the only university laboratory in the United States to design and build NASA experiments. I have tried to show that Humboldt's idea of a university came to life in the University of Chicago and this university, in the past and present, has promoted a culture of research in all human intellectual enterprises.

The American experience of the Humboldt model of a university in which teaching and research were combined in search for impartial truth raised the issue of undergraduate problem in a university. In accord with this model, all elements of the university's curriculum are geared to the kinds of committed, specialized work that produced either future investigators or future professionals whose work depends upon a sophisticated knowledge base. The worry was that this model would rid the university of the responsibility to teach undergraduates, at least in their first two years as the case in Germany, the birth place of the model. The University of Chicago faced the problem for soon after the University was opened, the President of the University, Harper, observed that "if the income of the university is used in providing suitable instruction for the great army of undergraduates, it will be impossible . . . to make provision for the . . . more important body of graduate students" (Harper, 1892). Later on, he tried repeatedly without success to farm out the first two years of college work to academies in the area, so that the faculty could "devote its energies mainly to... strictly University work"(University of Chicago, 1891). It is interesting to note that responding to swelling College enrollments after World War I, both President Judson and the University Senate bemoaned the diversion of University resources to the undergraduate teaching function. On the University of Chicago experience concerning undergraduate enrollments and financing in the mid-1920s, graduate dean and university press director, Gordon J. Laing, lamented that the burden of teaching undergraduates at Chicago "probably cuts the productivity of many departments in two" (PR 1926-27,7).

In his inaugural address of November 1929, President Robert Maynard Hutchins noted that many faculty members wanted the university to withdraw from undergraduate work, or at least from the first two years of it; and a few years later, Hutchins tried in vain to relocate the bulk of the

undergraduate body to the Northwestern campus in Evanston. Indeed, in 1969, following a protracted student 'sit-in', there was talk about reducing the College enrollment to around 500, which never happened. There was no turning back the hand of the clock, because at the beginning of the 1920s, according to Harper's own and others' statements on the matter, the University embarked on what became perhaps the most radically imaginative program of undergraduate liberal education the country has ever seen. The University of Chicago did so by moving to an idea of a university that differed from the one propounded by Humboldt toward John Newman's model, and by so doing blended the two models in one university system (Levine, 2011).

### **NEWMAN'S IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY**

John Henry Newman gave the title "The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated" to a series of lectures originally given at Dublin in the 1850s. Newman thought that knowledge should be pursued 'for the sake of knowledge'. But by this, he did not mean pure research. For him, the search for truth was part of an educational ideal which shaped the personality of the cultivated man, and inseparable from moral and religious education. This ideal form of education in his mind required a pastoral relationship between teacher and student, and it derived from Newman's early experience as a college tutor at Oxford. In his lecture on knowledge as good in itself, he asserts:

I consider, then, that I am chargeable with no paradox, when I speak of a knowledge which is its own end, when I call it liberal knowledge, or a gentleman's knowledge, when I educate for it, and make it the scope of a University. And still less am I incurring such a charge, when I make this acquisition consist, not in knowledge in a vague and ordinary sense, but in that knowledge which I have especially called Philosophy or, in an extended sense of the word, Science; for whatever claims has to be considered as a good, these it has in a higher degree when it is viewed not vaguely, not popularly, but precisely and transcendently as Philosophy. Knowledge, I say, is then especially liberal, or sufficient for itself, apart from every external and ulterior object, when and so far it is philosophical, and this I proceed to show (Newman, 1907:100).

He showed that philosophy or science is related to knowledge in a way that knowledge is called by the name of science or philosophy, when it is acted upon, informed, or impregnated by reason. Reason being the principle of that intrinsic fecundity of knowledge, which, to those who possess it, is its especial value, and which dispenses with the necessity of

their looking abroad for any end to rest upon external to itself. Knowledge, indeed, when thus exalted into a scientific form, is also a power; not only is it excellent in itself, but whatever such excellence may be, it is something more, it has a result beyond itself.

Newman thought that the personal gifts needed for research and teaching were quite different, and that research was best conducted outside universities. He also described the university as a place of ‘universal knowledge’, in which specialized training though valid itself was subordinate to the pursuit of a broader liberal education. These ideals, later developed by other Victorian apostles of culture like Matthew Arnold, became the basis of a characteristic British belief that education should aim at producing generalists rather than narrow specialists, and that non-vocational subjects –in arts or pure science– could train the mind in ways applicable to a wide range of jobs (Anderson, 2009). The British understanding of Newman’s idea of a university is not different from the American standpoint.

Maritain (1943) points to this fact when he asserts that: If, according to the European habit, we reserve the name a university for higher learning in advanced and graduate studies, we might say that the aim of the university is to achieve the formation and equipment of the youth in regard to the strength and maturity of judgment and the intellectual virtues. As Cardinal Newman puts it, a university “is a place of teaching universal knowledge.” He adds; “Whatever was the original reason of its adoption, which is unknown, I am only putting on its popular, its recognized sense, when I say that a University should teach universal knowledge (Newman, 1907).

The decision to advance to Newman’s model happened in 1923 when President Burton appointed an educator, Ernest Hatch Wilkins, as Dean of the Colleges. “The very reasons that require us to retain the colleges . . . require us also to make them the best possible” (Burton, 1923, 22). They incorporated Harper’s idea of dividing the four undergraduate years into two segments, two years to acquire a general intellectual discipline, in what he called the Academic or Junior College; and two years to prepare for the specialized training of graduate work, in what he called University College. They reasoned, as did Harper, that to do its job well the junior college presumed special kinds of curricular principles and faculty qualifications. In this arose the intriguing question of how a junior college curriculum could be formulated in ways that measured up to the University’s standards. Levine informs us that the undergraduate education in the U. S. during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century reflected changes promoted by Charles William Eliot of Harvard. Reacting to complaints about the traditional liberal education based on classical languages and literatures –its failure to accommodate new kinds of knowledge, its association with an aristocratic elite, and its apparent neglect of the diverse talents of students and the capacities for choice essential for free citizens– Eliot’s forceful rhetoric transformed the common liberal curriculum into a field for freely

chosen electives. In order to afford faculty and graduate students more time to engage in original scholarship, Eliot rejected a prescription of a common curriculum.

In the idea of a university arising from Newman's model, there was a need to fashion out an educational program grounded on the notion of appropriate ends of learning by constructing the most suitable means to those ends. The result was to recast the notion of general education in ways that captured the attention of educators globally. The hallmarks of this program were four: (i) a curriculum geared to the end of cultivating human powers; (ii) pedagogical methods geared to that end; (iii) examinations geared to that end; and (iv) procedures for periodic experiment and assessment of all these elements. The University of Chicago in pursuit of the ideals of the idea of a university focused attention on an undergraduate curriculum constructed to develop specific habits of the mind. The formulation of the curriculum broke new ground in curricular thought by rejecting any definition of the aims of general education "in terms of units, courses, majors, [or] any standards of mechanical measurement such as grades and degrees." Instead, it demanded a definition of aims couched in terms of human powers. Ernest Wilkins and Henry C. Morrison's report on the issue describes human powers, not in terms of pre-professional preparation, but as "the three types of power necessary to a proper adjustment of the individual to modern society": independence in thinking, aesthetic appreciation, and moral understanding (Levine, 2011).

A follow up from this stance is the three blocks of general education sequences. The sequence in natural sciences was devised to promote capacities for conceptual and empirical analyses of natural phenomena; the humanities sequence was devised specifically to cultivate capacities for appreciation and critical judgment of works of art; and the science sequence was designed to promote understanding of social problems and dimensions of practical judgment. Each of these sequences, as well as the capstone courses which sought to integrate them, was designed and taught by a staff of faculty drawn from different departments. One of the powerful inventions in the history of the University, the multidisciplinary staff, is to general education what a Chicago school is to scholarship: a collegial forum where persons of different backgrounds and opinions join, "one in spirit," to realize a part of the University's mission. The level of discourse such staff attain at their best may be illustrated by a look at the committee that designed the three-year sequence in natural sciences between 1942 and 1946.

After a row of strenuous meetings, the Schwab committee formulated their insights about the diversity of scientific methods and the best ways to help students acquire scientific understanding. They identified something that was needed for selecting materials for such a curriculum, conducted library searches, and subjected the materials to small-scale trials in classes. The course that emerged from their deliberations departed radically from the customary science course by dispensing with lectures and

textbooks entirely. In their place it substituted three hours per week for discussions, and two for laboratory work. For course materials it substituted research papers, monographs, and chapters that represented the sciences by means of problems. It also provided a set queries and problems designed to draw the papers together and to show students how to pursue inquiry in natural sciences. As this shows in an idea of a university Chicago's attempt to cultivate intellectual powers involved more than the selection and organization of materials. It also led to the invention of novel teaching methods. In particular, through trials, errors, and measured successes, the Chicago faculty hit in a distinctive pedagogical approach to which it has adhered to this day, involving a marked preference for original sources in place of textbooks, and teaching by what they have called "structured discussion" instead of through formal lectures (Levine, 2011).

The quest to mention Newman's model by devising programs geared to the cultivation human powers has led to distinctive forms of examinations. The focal point of this was the Office of University Examiner. The work of this office fits the general project of upgrading liberal learning in two respects: by giving the testing function to professionals properly equipped for the task; and, in removing that function from classroom teachers, by making the latter less menacing and so better able to elicit the affection and collaborative friendship essential for the most effective teaching. Besides creating distinctive curricula, teaching methods, and examination forms, the University organized periodic attempts to evaluate those elements and experiment with new ones. "Unity of teaching and research" takes on new meaning in this context. Of the numerous assessments projects of this sort, perhaps the most consequential was that carried out under Benjamin Bloom. In the early 1940s, Bloom investigated ways and means of assessing the extent to which the curricular practices of new College attained their stated objectives. Before long, he expanded his study from its original goal of examining the Chicago's college only, to studying three groups of matched students elsewhere. Bloom's studies culminated in a *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, perhaps the most famous schema ever devised for this purpose (Bloom, 1954; Anderson and Sosniak, 1994). More recent projects of this sort include investigations by the Little Red Schoolhouse writing program, which examined hundreds of student papers with an eye to identifying differences in papers written by first-year or fourth-year students, and determining qualities associated with papers graded as honors. According to Levine (2011), in sum, with efforts adumbrated in Harper's notion of junior college and the faculty reports of the 1920s, and continuing throughout the Hutchins presidency and onto the present day, the university has labored creatively to pursue the kind of vision articulated by Cardinal Newman.

## **THE ELITE UNIVERSITY**

The union of teaching and research reflected the restricted social mission of the elite university. It was based on the assumption that the subjects taught in universities had a corpus of theory and knowledge which needed to be kept up to date by current research. This model suited training for the 'learned' professions – law, medicine, and the Church – to which 'liberal' education gave a distinctive ethos of service and social responsibility. Universities, recruited mainly from academic secondary schools which excluded the masses, controlled access to elite posts and higher social status. This credentialing function was strengthened by the growth of professionalization, and it has steadily expanded as new occupations have become professionalized. The rationale for this was based partly on the prejudice against merely useful or money-making occupations, thereby excluding vocational or technical subjects which did not fit the professional model from the university.

In Britain at the time of Robbins reform, university education still reached only four or five percent of the age group, and mainly for the professions or public services. It was not until the 1980s that the participation rate passed 15%, which is generally seen as the tipping-point between elite and mass education. The notable period of expansion, was fuelled by lateral expansion to a wider range of middle-class careers as much as by the democratization of access, to the point where graduation has become the badge of middle-class status itself for both men and women. The university education having reached forty or fifty per cent, the question arises whether the older university model was so bound up with elite education that it is no longer relevant. The relevance of an elite education in the modern university system is a question that higher education reforms cannot ignore. It seems a worthwhile venture to revisit because of the quality of scholarship and research.

## **UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

This is one of the features in the idea of a university, at least in Humboldt's model. Since their earliest days universities have been operating as international institutions. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they did not escape the powerful force of nationalism, and politicians looked to them to shape national identity and serve national interests. Yet the cosmopolitanism of science and learning survived. This would not have been possible if the model did not possess some vitality. Another feature was that universities enjoyed a measure of corporate identity and autonomy, even when as expected the central state appointed and paid professors and dictated the curricula. As we all know, it was in response to this pressure that the modern idea of 'academic freedom' appeared, and in many countries today it has been included as a specific freedom in national constitutions. The idea really has two aspects. First,

individual scholars and scientists should be free to pursue the truth, and teach and publish their findings; objective science, following rigorous intellectual criteria and subject to what is today called, 'peer review' would immunize universities from religious or political interference. The professionalization of science and scholarship, and the organization of knowledge through specialized disciplines, created internationally accepted standards and gave scientists and scholars, wider loyalties. In democratic governments, academic freedom came to include the right of academics to be active citizens, and to pronounce on political questions, making universities the home of public intellectuals and a creative and independent cultural force.

Secondly, universities should enjoy autonomy as institutions, governing their own affairs internally and making their own decisions on academic matters. Humboldt argued that universities did their work best, and were most useful to society and state, when they were isolated from immediate external pressures. Although the nineteenth century was the golden age of laissez-faire capitalism, no-one then suggested that universities should be run as commercial organizations. It was seen as a virtue that, like the professions, they stood outside the system of market relations and cultivated values of a higher and permanent kind. The sort of autonomy was an aspect of classic liberalism, which saw the best protection of liberty and diversity in a pluralist civil society of self-governing institutions. Neo-liberalism, which seeks to dismantle all barriers against the operation of pure market forces, has proved rather different.

The most authentic and authoritative affirmation in modern times of Humboldtian idea is the Bologna declaration of 1988, signed by the heads of most European universities, and described as 'the Magna Carta of the European universities'. The first Bologna principle was that the university is an autonomous institution, with the distinctive mission of embodying and transmitting the culture of its society: 'research and teaching must be morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic powers'. The second principle was that teaching and research must be inseparable, and third that, 'freedom in research and training is the fundamental principle of university life'. Finally, the charter declared that the university is 'the trustee of the European humanist tradition', a European version of the Robbins view that the university must transmit a common culture.

Anderson (2009) noted that while the British heads of universities were signing the Magna Carta, the British government was undermining university autonomy. The Education Reform Act of 1988 abolished the University Grants Committee (UGC), which had acted as a buffer between state and universities since 1919, and which shared the university ethos. After 1988, though there were still funding councils as a more feeble barrier against direct state control, the way was open for political priorities to be enforced more directly. Other aspects of the 1988 Act, which followed a business-minded White Paper of 1986, reinforced managerial policy within

the universities at the expense of academic self-government, making them more responsive to outside pressures, from corporate funders, donors, and the media as well as the government.

### **THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE**

Historically, the idea of a university in Nigeria may be traced to the Asquith and Elliot Commissions (1943), given the mandate and responsibility to establish educational institutions for the promotion of higher education, learning and research and the development of universities in the colonies; and to explore means whereby universities and other appropriate institutions in the United Kingdom may be able to cooperate with institutions of higher learning in the colonies. These two commissions recognized the need for human growth intellectually through higher learning for manpower development and self-actualization. Before the advent of these commissions, the highest educational institution in Nigeria was Yaba Higher College, established in 1932, (later raised to College of Technology and now University of Technology), to provide the educational program of a university or professional standards. There was a flaw in the system for lack of in-depth specialization, especially in theoretical aspect which was not adequate for university standard in the United Kingdom. It was to remedy these inadequacies in the structure, methodology and processes of learning in Yaba Higher College that the Colonial government set up the Asquith and Elliot Commissions.

It was evident then that the idea of a university prevalent in Europe and the United States of America informed the development of a university in Nigeria based on the two models discussed so far—the Humboldt and Newman’s ideas of a university. The universities in Nigeria that have followed the pattern of the European and American systems at the time of their establishment were University of Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University, Obafemi Awolowo University, University of Nigeria, Nsukka and University of Lagos, Lagos, with the mission to:

- (a) Provide liberal general education for undergraduates;
- (b) Offer graduate and professional education;
- (c) Combine teaching and research;
- (d) Offer service and contribute to society’s intellectual culture;
- (e) Advance and transmit knowledge for the immediate gratification values of the marketplace;
- (f) Promote the growth of mass higher education for the national economy.

The idea of a university the Nigerian experience is documented in the *National Policy on Education* (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). In this document, it is said that tertiary education is the education given after

secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, etc. Accordingly, the goals [No. 59] of tertiary education shall be to:

- (a) Contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training;
- (b) Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individuals and society;
- (c) Develop the intellectual capability of individual to understand and appreciate their local and external environments;
- (d) Acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
- (e) Promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
- (f) Forge and cement national unity; and
- (g) Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

The document states that tertiary educational institutions shall pursue these goals through:

- (a) Teaching;
- (b) Research and development;
- (c) Virile staff development programs;
- (d) Generation and dissemination of knowledge;
- (e) A variety of modes of programs including full-time, part-time, block-release, day-release, sandwich, etc;
- (f) Access to training funds such as those provided by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF);
- (g) Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES);
- (h) Maintenance of minimum educational standards through appropriate agencies;
- (i) Inter-institutional co-operation;
- (j) Dedicated services to the community through extra-mural extension services.

On governance, it states:

- (a) The internal organization and administration of each institution shall be its own responsibility;
- (b) The traditional areas of academic freedom for the institutions are to:
  - Select their students; except where the law prescribes otherwise;
  - Appoint their staff;
  - Teach, select areas of research; and
  - Determine the content of courses.

## **REFORMS IN THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

A reflection on the “good old days” of university education in Nigeria in line with the ideal idea of a university (up 1970s), the NUC *Monday Memo* (March 27, 2006) observes that the quality of delivery was no different from what Oxford, Harvard and Cambridge had to offer. Tutorial classes ran without fail. Schools closed in June, results were sent to students and their parents shortly after and resumption was in September/October. There were expatriate teachers and foreign students in large numbers. Laboratories and workshops were well-equipped. University libraries had the latest books and journals. Halls of residence were like 2-star hotels. The point here is that today’s public university education in Nigeria is a far cry from the idea of a university compared to early years of university education establishment; it is hoped that private universities coming up at this time may restore the past glory of university education in Nigeria.

A critical examination of the performance of public universities in Nigeria as institutions of teaching and research and a means of cultivating the general powers of the intellect since independence paints a picture of inefficiency. This is indicated by the relatively high rate of failure and collapse occasioned by corruption. The fact that public institutions are not doing well propels the current move towards privatization of public institutions (telecommunications, aviation, energy, power, transportation, etc). The structural decay that afflicted those public institutions also affected educational institutions at other levels. At the secondary education level, for instance, the public schools which were models in the past, such as Kings’ College, Lagos, Queens’ College, Yaba, and the government colleges spread throughout the federation, are today the shadows of their past glory. This is disturbing when one realizes that today’s university populations are drawn from the products of these schools or dare one think of state public secondary schools?

Added to these problems is: what is the true position of the state of academic freedom and autonomy in the Nigerian university system, as embedded in the idea of a university in the two models under consideration. These plaguing problems feature prominently in this seminar, seeking away forward for a better university system in Nigeria.

At present, the Nigerian government has taken some bold and remarkable steps to reform the Nigerian university system, to enhance quality and ensure that Nigerian universities regain their past glories and rank among the world class institutions (Ibidapo-Obe, 2009). There has been a significant increase in the funding of the federal universities, evident in the quantum of funds allocated to the federal universities which increased from about ₦8 billion in 1999 to over ₦53 billion in 2006. Staff emoluments have also quadrupled during the same period (National Universities Commission, March 27, 2006). Private sector participation has also seen the inflow of funds from the private sector into the education

system, thus enabling the government to optimize its limited financial resources for better funding of existing public universities.

A major reform in the university system implemented of recent by Nigerian government is the opening up of the system for private participation with the licensing of private universities. The first set of private universities that got their licenses to operate in Nigeria, were Babcock University, Madonna University, Igbinedion University and Bowen University licensed in 1999. Since then, the number of private universities in Nigeria has increased rapidly to 41, in addition to the 62 public universities (27 federal government-owned and 35 states government-owned). Government has also restructured and re-opened the open and distance learning (ODL) mode through the National Open University of Nigeria.

Ibidapo-Obe (2009) assessing the reform that introduced the private sector participation states that the reform has yielded some positive results, including more opportunities for people to realize their ambition and desire for university education, and more choice in university selection. The National Universities Commission (NUC, 2004) notes that private universities have also been able to solve some of the problems plaguing the public universities such as cultism and an unstable academic calendar.

## **CHALLENGES**

The challenges facing the idea of a university of Humboldt and Newman's models in contemporary world are numerous. The developed nations face the challenges of a submarine in the ocean; the emerging nations face the challenges of a diver's kit in the ocean, while the developing nations face the challenges with millstone round their neck. These challenges are the contemporary social developments that conspired to weaken the commitment of universities to their historic mission of teaching and research. These include:

- Expansion in size, which is pure "massification" of the university system
- An increased demand to provide public services
- The politicization of academic work
- The growing intrusion of government constraints
- Expansion of bureaucratic administration
- Reduction of financial support from government
- Distortions due to the quest for publicity
- Obsessive assessment of academic performance by research productivity
- Disaggregation of universities as communities
- Demoralization of intellectual life (Shils, 1997)

To these issues or challenges, the real question is how far the response to economic demands, for example, should be driven by priorities determined outside universities, rather than by curiosity, originality and the internal development of disciplines. A knowledge economy depends on the quality and independence of knowledge, and the intellect can only be a creative force when it is free. Thus this question involves classic issues of academic freedom and autonomy. Today's university system cannot close its eyes on "government social engineering", the selection of candidates as essential to university autonomy. Neither can we ignore marketization with the hope that demand and competition will re-mould universities in a new pattern. But it requires great faith in the powers of the market to believe that demand – whether of students for qualifications, of employers for skills, or of the economy for innovation – can produce a coherent shape for such complex institutions as universities, which operate in the realm of values and culture, which are concerned with key political issues like citizenship, identity and social mobility, and which are the only organizations equipped to produce fundamental research free of short-term pressures (Anderson, 2009). It is time to raise the "idea of a university" as cosmopolitan, and in the contemporary world, especially in the sciences, to see that research priorities and prestige are defined by international disciplinary community, not by national governments.

## **CONCLUSION**

The idea of a university as presented so far which combines teaching and research and develops the 'general powers of the mind' as well as giving specialized training has three possible trends. First, it could be extended with only minor compromises to all parts of a mass higher education system. This was the case of the British system as presented in Robbins vision, but it makes excessive demands on resources, and seems unnecessary for much vocational training. Second, one may declare the Humboldtian university idea dead, consigned to the past, and fit all universities into a utilitarian managerial mould; that is how pessimistic critics see the trend of policy under recent governments. Thirdly, there can be more open acceptance that universities have different missions, interpreting the idea of a university in different ways—on condition that access to research-led universities is fair and democratic, a stipulation unlikely to be met if they are privatized or allowed to charge market fees. The American example – the Californian tripartite system in particular – suggests that embracing differentiation is healthier than denying it. The disinterested pursuit of knowledge and the ideal of liberal education seem currently in better shape there than in Europe and Nigeria.

If we seek guidance from the past to consolidate the present in an onward march to the future, it is better to understand the 'idea of the university' not as a fixed set of characteristics, but as a set of tensions, permanently present, but resolved differently according to time and place.

Obviously, there are tensions between teaching and research, and between autonomy and accountability. Further, there is the tension between universities membership in an international scholarly community, and their role in shaping national cultures and forming national identity; tensions between the transmission of established knowledge, and the search for original truth; between the inevitable connection of universities with the state and the centres of economic and social power, and the need to maintain critical distance; between reproducing the existing occupational structure, and renewing it from below by promoting social mobility; between serving the economy, and providing a space free from immediate utilitarian pressures; between teaching as the encouragement of open and critical attitudes, and society's expectation that universities will impart qualifications and skills. To come down too heavily on one side of these balances will usually mean that the aims of the university are simplified and distorted.

There may be some who claim that neither kind of excellence that the ideal university strives for, the excellence of pursuing fundamental intellectual problems because of their intrinsic interest and the excellence of cultivating the intellectual powers of human beings and citizens, can last much longer in "the age of money". For the survival of the university this must be resisted by determined efforts to clarify and voice our authentic purposes and reclaim the legitimate authority about the aims and goals of higher education, about its intrinsic goods, about the kinds of institutions we need, about the kind of graduates we should produce, particularly in developing nations of the world if they will ever develop.

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**CHAPTER II**

**THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN THE MAKING OF  
A VERITABLE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY**

*J. OBI OGUEJIOFOR*

Against the background of long discussions on African identity, African difference and African authenticity, it is most surprising that concentrated discussions have hardly been devoted to the Africanization of our universities. This lacuna points directly to ambivalence in African cultural consciousness. While there appears to be a quasi-general agreement on the importance or necessity of cultural revival or survival in the whole of Africa, there is at the same time an almost inexorable movement away from what can be called the African pristine cultural heritage.

In a way this movement is inevitable, without prejudice to the positions of Wambadia Wamba and Ben Mogobe Ramose, but most often, the drift away from our culture is a result of an absence of positive action or political will, or again lack of adequate cultural pride that is necessarily an underlying foundation of such actions. In this respect, the pivotal place of the university makes it a very useful and necessary instrument in any move to influence personal beliefs and social actions. Thus to make serious the idea of an African University, it is very necessary to:

1. Review the origin of the dominant educational systems in Africa which as they are today are veritable instruments of alienation from the African culture.
2. Explore the psychological state created by this education system and what occasioned its influence in Africa.
3. See how giving a central place to African philosophy can provide a stepping stone towards making universities in Africa responsive to the African quest for authenticity and identity.

**WESTERN EDUCATION SYSTEM AND AFRICAN CULTURAL  
ALIENATION**

The prevalent system of formal education in the whole of Africa derives wholly from its colonial inheritance (Taiwo, 1980: 4-10). Before the advent of colonialism, most parts of Africa had informal education systems very different from the current and operative western system (Fafunwa, 1974, pp. 17ff). This means that the practice whereby children or students left their homes for greater parts of the day and year in order to acquire education was not generally obtainable. What was common was informal

learning through apprenticeship or mere prolonged observation. By the time the universities came to Africa, the university system had undergone centuries of development and formalization (cf. Haskins, 1923). It had also become a costly and highly organized system, first reserved to the well to do and intelligent members of the society; only with the modernization of the society did the university system become popularized and affordable to larger segments of the society. The university system had developed to be the apex of formal education as well as the fulcrum of diverse and ever increasing specializations. Through the universities, experts in the sciences, in religion and in administration were prepared for services in the higher rung of social organization. This underscores the great importance of universities in providing experts in different spheres of life in a fast specializing and globalizing world. It also explains why the colonial administrators were not quick in establishing universities in Africa since the required experts in colonial administration were supplied from Europe. What it needed was to source the lower rung of qualified staff through primary and secondary education which in time also provided the materials for university admission when universities were eventually established in countries of Africa.

On account of the high level of development of the university system, it came into Africa with predetermined structure and practice. It was one of the institutions transferred to Africa in all its westernness. But beyond that, university education in Africa was part of the operative educational system that epitomized the cultural denigration against the African that was the hallmark of colonialism (Ayyittey, 1992: 4). Thus by the beginning of the twentieth century, Bishop James Johnson had criticized “the effect of Western education in vogue” while advocating “an education that will leave undisturbed our racial peculiarities.” For instance Johnson decried the abandonment of the mother tongue as medium of instruction which would result in increased alienation of pupils from their cultural heritage (Akinpelu, 1981: 91-92). Formal western education in Africa at its inception was a programme designed to make Europeans from Africans. Its best result was to raise the African, colonized people to the level of the European with all its implications. This means transferring Euro-based knowledge as purely as possible from what obtained in parts of Europe. That is why the curriculum was almost completely European. History was that of Europe, of Napoleon, the wars of Europe, Reformation, etc. When Africa was the issue, one heard of David Livingstone, Mungo Park, the Lander Brothers, Vasco Da Gama, and others who were Europeans in their exploit to “discover” Africa. It was like reading the history of Africa from the European perspective, and limiting it to mere contacts with European explorers and traders. It was thus history with one-sided content and point of view, and that was what the African intellectual was supposed to imbibe. In the same way, geography was that of continental Europe and North America and England. All conceivable European languages were given space in colonial education but not the African languages. Religion was the

study of Christianity and Islam, and up till today, African secondary school certificate programmes do not feature the study of African Traditional Religion. Music was the study of European instruments, and the rhymes transmitted to toddlers in school were the same as those transmitted in England and France.

The working of colonial education is best seen through the assimilation policy of French colonial administration (Vaillant, 1990: 37-42). The end of French assimilation was complete change of the human psyche and ultimately the human person. It is debatable today how much remains of the African cultural heritage after such a systematic re-schooling in foreign cultures. But it suffices for our purpose to note that university education when it came to Africa was a prolongation of the pristine colonial system of education. That system was a veritable instrument of alienation. Its best product was the one who remained as far away from his cultural ambience as possible. Worse still, this alienation was for some reasons turned into a sign of superiority. It became as Joseph Nyasanyi says, the creation of superiority in a situation of inferiority (Nyasanyi, 1994: 186-187).

#### **SUCCESS OF WESTERN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN AFRICA**

The obvious denigration led to what we would call the inferiorization of all that is African. There was initially the denial of African history and civilization. In the scheme of G. W. Hegel (1952: 92ff), the whole continent should not be subjected to any standard that was human. When such histories and civilizations were recognized, they were taken as inferior or they were excised from the rest of Africa as it is in the case of North Africa by such authors as Hegel in the Modern period of philosophy or D. Westermann (1952: 50) in contemporary African studies in Germany.

The position in which colonialism placed the African reality appeared to be backed by the disposition of power available to the West. It was power made possible by scientific advancement and the accompanying industrial revolution. This appears to have been translated into cultural superiority or cultural pride. Because practical effects were used to support conceptual and cultural schemes, these schemes were taken to be wholly superior. The cumulative outcome was the abandonment of the African cultural paradigm which was originally founded on the effectiveness of the deities or spirits to exert influence in practical affairs. The overwhelming consequence of the undeniable scientific superiority of the West led to the almost complete collapse of the paradigm supported by the gods and propped up by very cohesive traditional societies.

The ultimate demise of this paradigm was however sealed by the denigration of the being of Africans by Africans themselves: "Thus in almost the same degree, the colonial masters pooh-poohed the African for his backwardness; the Africans themselves poured scorn on each other and

in effect created haloes and auras of superiority in inferiority around themselves according to their colonial experiences and the locale of oppression” (Nyasanyi, 1994, p. 187). In this respect, new factors of superiority among Africans became familiarity with the results of Western education. The ability to imitate the colonizers turned to be something of pride. Leopold Sedar Senghor lamented this situation when he stated that the unfortunate thing about the current African reality was that the oppressors of Africans succeeded in making them to despise themselves. Owomoyela (1996: 37) echoes the same view when he said that “Africans have not been the only people overrun by rampaging Europeans but Africans are unique in their belief that their future lies in becoming, in thought, speech and habit, like their erstwhile colonizers.”

### **AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES: INSTRUMENTS OF ALIENATION**

It is within this intellectual and cultural ambience that African universities sprouted. Most of the first universities started with independence of African states. It was a period of confidence and this was marked by efforts to blaze the trail in many directions. The first wave of universities started in the 1960s. But even though these universities were established after many African nations had gained what Nkrumah called the political kingdom, they were still loaded with the accretions that already marked African educational systems. At this point in time, there was hardly any effort to indigenize or even to lend African coloring to the new universities. Thus in terms of curriculum, physical and administrative structures, language of communication or education, emerging African universities were as near as possible to their counterparts in Europe and America. Because these universities did not grow with the communities in which they lived, they were built as campuses, which was the practice popularized first in the United States of America. These campuses contrast with older universities especially in Europe which grew with their host towns and where different units of the universities were housed in different parts of towns.

In terms of curriculum, most disciplines tried to keep abreast with what was obtainable outside their countries and indeed outside Africa. Professors were as a rule assessed by colleagues working outside one’s country, and outside the African continent. It means that the then universities needed the stamp of authenticity delivered by colleagues working in other cultures. Some literary disciplines developed local input. One saw a gradual shift from literature in English to African literature, history of the world and Europe was largely replaced by history of Africa. Geography was no longer the memorizing of facts about European and American continents. The same tendencies were noticeable in law, sociology, philosophy, education, etc. But in all these, the operative standards remained the ones that developed in erstwhile colonial countries. Thus the first universities in Africa remained, with few exceptions,

completely foreign to the ambience in which they were located and which they were supposed to serve.

One important symbol of this foreignness is the language of instruction. Most universities used and still use colonial languages. In fact in much of Africa South of the Sahara, a prospective university student requires proficiency in these languages as essential qualification for admission, while the native languages are hardly ever raised to the level of necessity. The normal excuse for this practice is that the African languages are not developed as languages of science. They have limited vocabularies having developed in contexts without many objects used in the sciences and in literary studies (Ogunmodede, 1998; Oguejiofor, 2002). Again, there is the issue of African languages as *lingua franca*. Since hardly any African state has an African language as its sole *lingua franca*, it would be dysfunctional to choose one these languages as language of instruction, especially given the possible negative political fall-out of such a move. But such arguments can hardly hold water. Many European languages borrowed their so called scientific terms from other languages, especially from Latin and Greek, and the fact is that unless a language is employed at the level of scientific discussion, it will never develop the terms necessary for such discussions.

The issue of *lingua franca* is of course a very divisive political one, but it does not thereby mean that Africans cannot decide to use their local languages as languages of instruction. This can be done for instance in countries where there are numerous universities and where millions speak the local language. For example, a university located in Igboland can as well use Igbo as language of instruction with the more than 30 million Igbo speakers in Nigeria. The same can be said of Yoruba language and Hausa with around the same number of speakers. Swahili with great regional spread in Eastern Africa is even a better example. But the major point is that, as we have said above, as a consequence of colonization, Africans themselves accepted the denigration of their cultural heritage which they regard as inferior to European cultural heritage including language. Languages spoken by much smaller populations are used in European universities as languages of instruction. Such languages as Dutch, Swedish, Danish etc., with a few million native speakers, are used in Belgium and Holland, Sweden and Denmark respectively. It does not thereby stop their foreign learning. What such practices achieve is that products of these universities are versed in their native languages which are their languages of instruction at all levels of formal education. It is clear that what is lacking in the case of African languages is the political will and sufficient cultural pride to use African languages as languages of instruction (Zabus, 2007).

**AFRICAN ALIENATION: A PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM**

The absence of political will or what one can call cultural pride is an indication that in a very general sense, the African collective psyche is deeply alienated (cf. Oguejiofor, 2001: 46-56). The universities as they are at the moment are not solutions to the problem, but are rather positioned to toe the lines already traced by our colonial past and its fallouts and thus they rather worsen the problem. In this regard, the thought of the Ghanaian philosopher Kwasi Wiredu on cultural change is very relevant. Wiredu (1985) distinguished three types of culture change:

1. Culture change that originates from the will of the people and where indigenous artifacts are used to replace the old ones,
2. Culture change based on the will of the people but in which imported materials are used to replace the indigenous ones,
3. Culture change that is based on compulsion and imported materials are used to replace the existing ones.

The case of most of Africa appears to be the one in which change was imposed and the replacement was arbitrarily with foreign things. This means that the African had no choice in the most momentous culture change in his history. It is thus a question of freedom and choice. In a way, Africans had no hands in creating the problem, but must have a strong hand in solving it. Thus for our feeling or sense of cultural alienation to be reversed, it is necessary that there be a purposive choice mediated by an enlightened consciousness about the state of the problem. However a difficulty in this issue is that choice cannot be pre-determined. What is the current conviction of the generality of Africans about the question at issue? Do they really think that what we have as our universities, for example, are acceptable in terms of indigenization? Are they ready for a change? Are they really convinced that changing what we have now will bring anything positive?

The problem zeroes into that of freedom of choice. But this must not be burdened by what Kwasi Wiredu described as the fallacy of specificity, where every socio-politico-cultural reality must have an African adjective to qualify it. Must we have an African university and why must we have it? Is it necessary that an African university be strongly if not completely different from the general tendency of other societies of the world? Can we, structurally speaking, construct a university that can be really African? Where is the Africanness of such a university to be located? Is it in its structure, curriculum or administration? It seems arguable that the issue is squarely linked with the issues of African identity or African authenticity. How do we become Africans again? In what sense do we need to do so? What do we really mean by being Africans in addition to being human? Are the indices of Africanness, where they are still identifiable, still desirable to Africans themselves? If not, what then should be the contents

of an African university? In what sense will such universities that are specifically African be able to serve the current needs of the African better than the existing universities which are modeled on foreign university traditions? What are the specific requirements of the African identity that will then rub off on African universities? Given this complex that has become a burden to Africans, how do we even begin the moves that make for an authentic African university?

### **THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY**

It goes without saying that these questions and more that follow the very idea of veritable African university are such that can only be asked in the terrain of philosophy, and thus the most meaningful way to approach the issue of African university is that of philosophy. Hence the starting point of building an African university is serious and sustained reflections on issues of African identity, African alienation and the inferiorization of his psyche. It is through such philosophical engagements that the undergirding problems can be exposed, and it is only when these are exposed that any meaningful steps can be taken towards the construction of a really African university. For instance, it is a serious inquiry to ask why, in spite of political independence which Kwame Nkrumah presumed to be the basis of all other independence, no university in African can really be said to be indigenous in structure, in curriculum and in administration. It points to a deeper problem that, while imitating the western university tradition, Africans did not imitate the fact that all western universities make the local language their language of instruction. To go really into the root of such problems is the task of well-conceived African philosophy.

Such a philosophy must be hermeneutical in the sense that it is an interpretation of the symbols of the African culture (cf. Okere, 1983). As hermeneutics, the type of philosophy we are proposing as necessary for the conception of a veritable African university must be all embracing. It must therefore take all the factors that impinge on African humanity as part of the plank of its reflection. Hermeneutical philosophy is a reflection on the total African condition: historical, political, socio-economic, religious, etc. Only by so doing can we really begin to approach the root of the problem of the foreignness of our current universities and the desirability of veritably African universities. In this way that the question of African university is fundamentally a philosophical question.

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## CHAPTER III

# **IDEA, IDEAL, IDEOLOGY: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY**

*KOLAWOLE A. OLU-OWOLABI*

In his book, *The Uses of the University*, the American scholar, Kerr Clark made an interesting comment about the university in our society today. His observation is that, despite the long history of the university as an institution in human society, it still needs to redefine its mission in conformity with the contemporary realities and challenges: “Instead of platitudes and nostalgic glances backward to what it once was, the university needs a rigorous look at the reality of the world it occupies today” (Clark, 2001: xii). Earlier on, precisely in 1930, another important contributor to the discourse of the university, Abraham Flexner, refers to the university “as an expression of an age, as well as an influence operating upon both present and future.” (Flexner, 1930: 3)

The main thrust of the present essay is to appraise the concept of the university as an idea and ideal, and also as an institution which plays a crucial role in the training of human potential and the holistic development of the society. It is interesting for us to understand, in this essay, how the interplay of the idea and ideal of university is generating a cluster of ideological orientations about the mission and responsibilities of the university. Just as society is largely driven by change in ideology, technological innovation, scientific paradigm shifts, and modes of doing things, so also is the idea of a university shaped by the ideals which are considered sacrosanct at various periods of social transformation. Thus, our operating assumption in this essay is that the modern day university needs not continue to bask in the euphoria of its universal essence, because times are changing and society’s needs are changing fast with it. In order to stay in touch with the reality of the times, and continue to have positive impact on society, the university today needs to re-awaken to its social responsibilities. This fact was underscored by James A Perkin:

But of course we know that the university and society are involved in a close reciprocal relationship. In the long run (and sometimes in the medium run), society gets the university it needs. And at the same time the university instructs society on what society would want if it were wise enough to ask for it. And from this point and counterpoint

the university gets less than it wants and society probably gets more than it deserves (Perkins, 1973: 18)

As an instrument of both knowledge and cultural production, it is clear that the university is ahead of the society in the development of new ideas. But it is also the responsibility of any university to generate innovations and inventions. Innovative ideas may be produced by the academe for the particular interest of a given society, but invariably they become the heritage of the whole human society. This is precisely why the university remains an institution of the entire humanity, and not of a particular place or time. Paradoxically, in order to achieve this mission, today's university must first respond to immediate social demands, if it expects to be given its due regard as an institution worthy of preservation and support in this age. But even in response to this parochial demand, the university will be performing a task that will become relevant and useful for the entire humanity and its history.

Although the idea of a university as the highest body of knowledge production and transmission has its origin in the Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum, the exact antecedent of today's university came into existence with the so called "*Studium Generale*" in medieval Europe. This institution is precisely a place for teaching universal knowledge. However, the meta-theoretical discourse of the university, as the epitome of scholarly interaction and knowledge dissemination, did not take place until the publication of a comprehensive and systematic discussion of the essence and mission of the university, by the English scholar: John Henry Newman in 1852. Simply titled, *The Idea of the University*, Newman's classical text, opened up the flood gate of theoretical and critical reflections and polemics on the very idea, essence and mission of the university, as the apogee of humanity's efforts to engage in a collaborative scholarly production and dissemination. Expectedly, the book, written precisely to defend and chart out a new philosophy of education for Catholic universities, generated a polemic and a drastic and critical revisit of the very purpose of a university. Prominent among the debated issues were pedagogy, the nature and utility of the products of the university, and especially, the the mission and responsibilities of the university to its immediate society and indeed the human community.

Undoubtedly, the debates generated by Newman's publication have become perennial and dynamic. They underscore the fact that by the very nature of the university as a theatre of discourse, the very idea of the university itself shall be reexamined by every generation, and every society. But the discussion of the nature of the university is ever guided by the theme of what should be the ideal university. This search for an ideal university has generated many models of a university namely, the Oxbridge-Newman model, the Humboldtian-American model, the Robbins model of the university and many other models of the university, with the number of paradigms of the university increasing on a daily basis.

The discourse on the dialectical engagement between the idea and ideal of a university has been generating divergent ideological orientations since the medieval times. Without any doubt, this discourse is essentially about ideology. Ideology as a concept refers to the systematic organization of ideas, notions and belief systems. It is a concept that is constantly changing its meaning. But consistently, the word “ideology” has been used in reference to the model and ideal that an idea should conform to. In essence, there is a morphological and etymological connection between the words “idea” “ideal” and the word “ideology”. This is because ideology can be conceived as the scientific study of the relationship between an idea and its ideal. Ideology is simply the systematic articulation of the real meaning and essence of an idea.

In this essay, the idea, ideal and ideology of the university are important, because the mission of a university can only be realized after a due recognition of the connection between the three related concepts: idea, ideal and ideology. The systematic and dialectical interaction of the idea and ideal of a university constantly generates a cluster of beliefs or philosophical orientations about what should be the mission and responsibilities of a university at any time and historical context.

This issue of the social responsibilities of the university needs to be addressed today not only because of the crisis of the university—which Perkins refers to when he compares the university to “a discordant orchestra without a conductor” (Perkins, 1973: 18-19)— but particularly because of the precarious situation of African society that is putting pressure on the African universities and the entire African academe. To revive the theme of the mission and responsibilities of the university by any generation, at any time in history, is not out of place, neither is it repetitive. What Frantz Fanon said of society, applies also to the idea of a university: “Every generation must out of relative obscurity discover its own mission: fulfill it or betray it”.

What is the mission of the university today at the second decade of the twenty-first century? What roles can the institution of the university play in the process of cultural integration taking place in the name of globalization today? Conceding that indeed, unlike before, we live in a society and an age of extra-ordinary power of knowledge and information, what role can the university play in moderating this process of knowledge and information exchange that has become the defining characteristic of our epoch? What role can the university, as an institution of culture production and reproduction, play in the challenge of attaining a moral rebirth in today’s morally debased global community? In relation to Africa, and especially within the context of the overwhelming crisis now facing African society, it needs be asked: what role can the institution of an African university play in producing a body of knowledge that can quicken the resolution of the problems facing the continent and its people today? Retrospectively, what are the social responsibilities of the university in our

present world, given its distinctive and uniqueness character? These are the issues that shall inform our discussion in this essay.

### THE IDEA AND THE IDEAL OF A UNIVERSITY

The university, as an idea and institution serving as a forum for discussing universal subjects in an atmosphere of unfettered accessibility to all relevant information, gained popularity in the middle ages. In the medieval period, the university evolved from the “*Studium Generale*”, literarily, “a school of universal learning”. This institution is the predecessor of the contemporary university. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century that the word “university” was employed to designate this institution devoted to the study of general and universal knowledge, and at the same time transmitting knowledge to emerging scholars expected to contribute to the advancement of humanity (Kenny, 2007: 22).

The poet and linguist, Professor Niyi Osundare, in a lecture rhetorically titled “*The Universe in the University: A Scholar-Poet’s look from inside out*”, attempted an etymological analysis of the concept of the “university”. The concept “university” is a combination of two Latin words which can be literarily translated to mean “turning one into a whole”. In its original connotation, it refers to both the indivisibility of knowledge and the dynamism of the epistemological process that the university as an idea and as an institution ought to depict. Professor Osundare then explains:

With this kind of etymological pedigree, it becomes fairly clear how (and where) the word “university” got its name, and more important, the semantic and pragmatic implications of that source, of that name. For a uni-versity, in name and in truth, is a curious and complex mix of the one and the all, the unique and the universal. Its “uni” indicates its intellectual concentratedness, its singleness of purpose in the pursuit of knowledge, learning and wisdom, and the science of being and becoming, its insistence on the individuality of the integrity of the intellect/ knowledge, its cultivation of the capacity to see the universe in a grain of sand, the ocean in one drop (Osundare, 2005: 8).

Osundare’s conception of a university presents us with a paradox, manifested most graphically in the phrases “universe in a grain of sand” and “the ocean in one drop”. These imageries are precisely meant to underscore the paradox in the quest of the individual to understand the entire universe, which the institution of the university is essentially about. But, as an idea, it is also of the essence and mission of a university to reconcile these tensions and contradictions. The university, therefore, as an idea, is a place of exchange and intermingling of ideas, where the imaginary boundaries of ideas collapse; where all knowledge from divergent agents are melted to

produce a unified substance in the mind of the scholar. It is a melting pot for multiple ideas with the products of the melting process transmitted to the students, who are constantly deployed as impartial ambassadors and salesmen of the products of the epistemological enterprise that the university is supposed to be.

But, while the university as an idea and a concept experiences changes in purpose and direction, its essence lasts throughout the ages. It is an institution of free and unfettered access to information about the universe and its numerous occupants. Its commitment to freedom of inquiry, though frequently challenged, is persistently defended by virtually all its adherents. The universality of its curriculum and the scope and focus of its subjects and objects remain constant and unchanging, in spite of their polemical questioning. Its function throughout history as the theatre of inventions, innovations and ingenious discoveries—which popularized the institution during the Renaissance—remains even today. It is the dream and aspiration of all institutions that pride themselves with the enviable title of “university”.

“The universe in the university”, to use the language of the scholar, Osundare, or rather the eternal essence of the university as an idea, whether in the ancient Greece, medieval Paris or contemporary Nigeria, is the devotion of that institution to the extension of the frontiers of knowledge for the genuine transformation of all humans. The pursuit of universally applicable ideas for the human community, rather than the promotion of parochial interests, is the hallmark of the idea of the university.

For a university is a city, an institution, with walls which refuse to remain walls because they are so porous, so adaptable to the wind of the mind. Its community transcends narrow personal, ethnic, national, geographical and professional strictures; its intellectual landscape is wide, diverse sometimes unmapable; its reach and range are far beyond the visible horizons. Its attitude to received truth and ideas is almost invariably problematic: for what is an immutable verity in one place or one age is but a tentative, undecidable supposition in another; what is scrupulous science in one age may be egregious superstition in another (Osundare, 2005, 8)

How then do we explain the paradox of the university presented in the statement of Osundare that we have just quoted? How do we reconcile the tension between the universal and the specific; the immutable and the tentative in the very idea of the university? The university as an idea and a concept presents us with an equivocation, if not an intrinsic contradiction. But the very practice within the university does not shy away from contradictions or confrontation of ideas. The university is established in recognition of this contradiction in the enterprise of knowledge production,

and it is the mission of the university to moderate the various divergent ideas produced by the motley assemblage of scholars that inhabit the university. We have indicated earlier that the university in its essence is supposed to be an avenue of melting diverse metals of ideas. It is for this reason that John Henry Newman defines the university as “assemblage of learned men, zealous for their own sciences and rivals of each other, brought together by familiar intercourse and for the sake of intellectual peace, to adjust together the claims and relations of their respective subjects of investigation. They learn to respect, to consult and to aid each other. This is created a pure and clear atmosphere of thought” (Newman, 1960: 76).

The university then is essentially an institution created for synthesizing the often contradictory ideas of humans into a unified and systematic whole that can pragmatically contribute to the transformation of humans and the universe they inhabit. It is indeed the receptiveness of mind that is considered the true quality of a scholar, and this explains the association of the university with liberal education, rather than vocational, technical or professional education. The university is conceived to create and propagate the varieties of ideas that humanity is potentially capable of assimilating and deploying for transformation and utilitarian ends. The scholars who ought to constitute the leadership of the university must ensure that the values of openness and tolerance of the diversities of ideas is cultivated. They should also ensure that these become transmitted to the incoming generations of scholars, who will first be students, and later propagators of the products of the university. The scholar either as an icon or as neophyte must “possess the knowledge not only of things, but also of their mutual and true relations, knowledge not merely considered as an acquirement, but as philosophy” (*Ibid.*: 101).

From our discussion so far, the essence and ideal of the university is becoming apparent. But we can also conclude that, though the essence of the university is constant and perduring, the social milieu at all times refines the social responsibilities of the university. It is our intention now to address the issue of the dialectic of ideologies in relation to the ideal and responsibilities of the university.

## **DIALECTICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY**

The two issues that we intend to discuss in this section are: first that the idea of the university has been developing in a dialectical manner throughout history. The second is that this dialectical development has been generating ideological positions about what should be the mission and responsibilities of the university.

As we have indicated in this essay, the idea of the university, like the idea of formal education in the Western world was initiated by early Greek thinkers, particularly Sophists. They first popularized the idea of propagating and disseminating knowledge. As itinerant teachers they

taught certain skills to their pupils for a fee. It was Socrates, a dissident Sophist, who went against the tradition of the other Sophists to teach his pupils without charge. It is from him that the vocation of discovering new ideas and inculcating these in budding students was first manifested. His successor and pupil, Plato took this commitment to a higher level by further formalizing this process of teaching, with the establishment of an institution, the Academy, which is regarded as the first university in the Western society. The earliest universities of Plato and Aristotle, the Academy and the Lyceum, respectively, were created and guided by the Socratic philosophy of the correlation of epistemology and ethics. The responsibility of these Hellenic universities was a dual one: to inculcate in scholars both knowledge and morals. The operating slogan of those universities was the Socratic injunction: "knowledge is virtue".

Very early, the issue had been raising his head whether knowledge should be transmitted only to those who had the means to pay for it, or also to those who have the ability to acquire the skill and employ it for their daily operations in the polity. This budding issue later on became a full blown ideological issue regarding the university and education in general. We should not lose sight of the historical fact that at its inception, the university in Hellenic society was a private initiative rather than a public one. Education then was considered an affair of an established scholar, often self taught, engaged by the interested and, therefore financially able students, who could pay for his services. As with the Sophists, this idea informed the hiring of Plato by Alexander the Great. The institutions of the Hellenic age were private schools, established by the renowned teachers without any support from the government.

The political situation of the Hellenic age readily confirms government's disinterest in formal education. Educational institutions were controlled by the scholars who were often antagonistic to the despotic tendencies of the agents of the state. An example of this tendency was the hostile relationship between Athens and Socrates, which culminated in his elimination by agents of the state. Plato and Aristotle also never enjoyed a good relationship with the government. The members of the so-called early universities were still like their mentor, Socrates. They remained gadflies, criticizing the state and demanding that it live up to its responsibilities and purpose.

For all intents and purposes, the Hellenic institutions of learning, pioneered by Plato and Aristotle were really not universities in the formal and contemporary sense of the idea. "Some historians have applied the term, 'University of Athens', to this collection of schools, but this is a misnomer, for few of the institutional forms associated with the modern university were present" (Butt, 1955: 109). In actual fact, those institutions of higher learning regarded themselves as antagonists of the despotic state, and they performed the responsibility apportioned to them by fate and the situation of the time, that of being the conscience of the society. There was a wide gap between the interests of the promoters of these institutions and

those in control of the apparatus of the state. The responsibilities of these institutions to society was a non-issue, apart from the fact that those institutions, by virtue of the interest of their creators, regarded themselves as critics of the government of the day.

Our historical excursion into the genesis of the university has exposed us to certain ideological issues generated by the discourse of the university. These are:

- Should the university be elitist or populist? That is should university education be available to only a few who have the means and the capacity to acquire it or should the university education be available to all members of the society?
- Should the university be privately funded or publicly funded? What will be the implication of a publicly or privately funded university?
- What should constitute the curriculum of a university? Should the curriculum be limited or should it encompass all available knowledge?
- Should the university be at the service of the state or should it remain neutral, at times serving as the conscience of the society?

There is no doubt that very early, at the inception of the university, certain ideological issues are becoming apparent which later became more serious and a threat to the very existence of the university. But before we go into a detailed discussion of these, let us examine the development of the university in the medieval period and the ideological issues generated by this epoch.

As we have consistently maintained in this essay, it was in the 13<sup>th</sup> century that the idea of the university in the present form had its debut. It was precisely in France rather than elsewhere that the state and the church began to show interest in the university. But scholarship and the institution of the university at this time were still more ecclesiastical than secular. The university in its medieval connotation was expected to play more of the role of evangelization than epistemological advancement. The universities were essentially financed by the church, with the expectation that the curriculum would be dominated by theological subjects; with the focus of the teaching being more on turning the mind of the students towards the eternal being rather than the project of developing the kind of knowledge that would facilitate the transformation of the human society.

One feature of the medieval university that has been well identified by historians of ideas, apart from its ecclesiastic orientation, is the strong attachment of the university, during this period, to the state. Unlike in the ancient Greek society where the university or the advanced institution of learning was a private initiative, the state showed tremendous interest in supporting and even establishing universities. But this state interest in university education has come with a huge price. As Joseph Kenny rightly observes:

The 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 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 university and soon the old became bastions of nationalism. Students were discouraged from travelling to other countries to study... the universities enjoyed government patronage and became well endowed with buildings and funds. This had the effect of eroding and eventually eliminating their independence (Kenny, 2007, 24)

The point needs be reiterated here that though the medieval period witnessed the formal debut of the university as an institution for the development of the most noble and novel of ideas and their dissemination, the expectations of medieval society, particularly the expectations and demand of the financiers of the university were not as altruistic as one would expect. The university, therefore, rather than being universal in its knowledge production, became more parochial in both its research and recruitment of students. Rather than facilitate the realization of the academic freedom, that is the hallmark of a university in its ideal sense, the university became a means of compressing the horizon of the scholars and ensuring that this noble institution served myopic national interests, rather than universal human purpose.

Be that as it may, one cannot deny the fact that even during this period of limited access to knowledge and strict control of scholars and the university by both the state and the church, the university was still able to release itself from these shackles by living up to its responsibility in employing knowledge for cultural transformation and social change. One cannot deny the fact that the university as an institution played a very significant role in the enterprise of epistemological transformation that characterized both the Renaissance and the Enlightenment periods in the history of the Western society. The point that we are making is that, in the advancement of society to the modern epoch, the university played a prominent role.

To start with, we need to say that some of the ideological issues prominent in the medieval period were peculiarities of medieval society. The ideological issues of the modern epoch relate to the question of the ecclesiastical or secular control of the university. Simply put, what type of knowledge should the university produce: should it be the knowledge that would advance the cause of the church or that of the secular society? Again, at this moment the issue of academic freedom began to raise its head. As we know, this ideological polemic has since then been a perennial theme in the discourse of the university.

Although the university as an institution had its debut in the medieval epoch, it was really in the modern era that the university as an idea for the advancement of human knowledge gained its prominence and

popularity. Just as the modern epoch was a product of the advancement in knowledge, so can we say that modernity, through the encouragement of the transmission and propagation of knowledge, facilitated the prominence of the university as a necessary institutional component of modern society. The reciprocal relationship between the university and the modern cultural milieu is underscored by the historical fact that the university not only became a significant aspect of the modern epoch, but also because the discourse and ideology of the university also graduated into a prominent aspect of the public discourse of modern society. Universities were not just being established, but questions relating to the essence, mission and responsibilities of the university became legitimate and popular. The ideological issues generated in relation to the idea of the university were issues of:

- whether the university should be secular or religious: whether the university should be free from the shackles of the state or should be at the service of the state;
- whether the university should be responsible to humanity in general or to the immediate society hosting it;
- whether the university should produce universal knowledge and refuse to show interest in the transformation of its immediate environment;
- whether the curriculum should be for cultivating the mind of the students or should also train their physical body for technical competence;
- whether university education should be reserved for the elite who have the means and mental faculty to cope with the sophisticated ideas disseminated by the university or whether the university should be a mass project of enlightenment that should turn the rabble into an elite.

This cluster of ideological questions about the university has produced in the modern era the ideological models of the university, three of which we need to consider in this essay. They are the Oxbridge-Newton model, the Humboldt model and the Robbin model. But we should rather warn that the identification and discussion of these three models do not preclude the presence and prominence of other models too. We have chosen these three because we consider them as truly representative of the plethora of divergent positions on what the university is and ought to be.

### **IDEOLOGICAL MODELS OF A UNIVERSITY**

As we have said earlier, Newman's classic, *The Idea of a University*, presented what he regards to be the model of an ideal university. But this model saliently or explicitly was informed by his ideological commitment and his philosophy of education, which are all products of his

personal development, particularly his many years of learning and tutorship at Oxford. The series of essays that culminated in the book were presented as a justification for the establishment of a Catholic university at Dublin. The ideological content of the book represents a fusion of both the Oxbridge and Catholic educational ideologies. For him, therefore, the university is a place for learning universal knowledge. The purpose of the university still remains teaching and not research. To him, the university is essentially out to inculcate liberal education. This may be ethically and religiously biased, but that does not mean it can serve purely the task of evangelization. As it is said:

Newman distinguishes between what a university may purport to do as a university and what the Roman Catholic faith may do as true religion. Newman sees the university as a human institution that may and should produce a person of broad knowledge, critical intelligence, moral decency and social sensitivity, but not as an institution that can fundamentally transform fallen sinful human beings. The university can produce through liberal learning the person Newman describes as the Gentleman (Levine, 2000: 4).

Newman's model of the university is really, in a neo-traditional sense, a place for inculcating universal truth by way of teaching. His own function of the university does not include the process of research. It is, in the Oxbridge sense, a place of teaching knowledge. The university is a place for disseminating culture and cultivating the mind, not a place for research; neither is it a place for teaching professional knowledge. The curriculum of the university for Newman should be essentially liberal subjects. Indeed, to Newman, the university is meant to train students as generalists not as specialists. In all, according to Cardinal Dulles, Newman opposed four tendencies that were preponderant in his time about the mission and responsibilities of the university, namely, utilitarianism, fragmentation, secularism and rationalism (Dulles: 2001, 1).

Newman's notion of the university is opposed to the utilitarian belief about the university as an institution that shall provide useful skills and knowledge for the material benefit of the society, a view that would necessarily dethrone the classics as a significant aspect of the curriculum. In a way, Newman's position is that knowledge is an end in itself and not a means to an end. "Newman was convinced that the mental refinement that comes from literacy and philosophical training is something good in itself, quite apart from its utility" (Dulles: 2001, 2).

Newman was also opposed to fragmentation in the university, that is the attempt to departmentalize knowledge and refused to see knowledge as a whole rather than in fragments.

Newman opposed the third threat to the survival of the university, secularism, because this would eliminate theology from the curriculum of the university. To eliminate theology is to remove an aspect of the truth that university education is supposed to teach. This, according to Newman, “would throw the other branches of knowledge out of balance” (Dulles, 2001:3).

Finally, Newman abhorred a celebration of reason in an absolute sense and advocate for a cautious operation of reason within the university system for the purpose of tolerating other sources of knowledge.

The second model of the university came in opposition to the neo-traditional model of Newman. It was propagated by Wilhelm von Humboldt and put into practice at the inception of the University of Berlin. This model of the university is clearly a kind of antithesis to Oxbridge-Newman’s model. This model challenged and overthrew the Oxbridge-Newman model as the model for American universities to emulate. As we know, the early universities in America, like Harvard, were patterned after the Oxbridge-Newman’s model of the neo-traditional university. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was a “paradigm shift” in the idea of the university in America and the German model introduced by Wilhelm von Humboldt became the new paradigm. This new model of the university was guided by three principles, namely, (1) unity of research and teaching (2) freedom of teaching (3) academic self-governance (Levine, 2000: 4). This model of the university regards the university as the institution designated for knowledge production and dissemination, with both knowledge creation and transmission going on *pari passu*. This idea of the university is predicated on the belief that research cannot be separated from teaching and also that in the same vein, the very act of teaching involves a process of research.

The Humboldt model signifies the starting point of the modern university with its manifestation of the modernist features of secularism, rationalism, nationalism and professionalism. Most importantly, the Humboldt’s model established the fact that the university as an institution of research will be the pivot of the transformational programme of modern society. The phrase “knowledge and development” aptly captures the importance of the new model of the university for the modern society. The phrase establishes the interconnection between knowledge produced by innovative research and the transformation of the society. But Humboldt’s university is still not different from Newman’s university in its essential philosophy that the university education should be for the few who have the innate capacity or means to acquire it. It is precisely this elitism that generated another model of the university, the Robbin model of the idea of a university.

The Robbin model of a university is an offshoot of the Robbin report to the British government in 1963. The essential feature of this model is that university education should not be a monopoly of the elite, and it should be democratized. This new model calls for an expansion of the

university, with university education being seen as no more a luxury but a necessity that is highly expedient for the daily performance of the responsibilities and duties of an average citizen in a modern nation state.

According to Robert Anderson, the Robbin model of a university was propelled by four objectives (Anderson, 2009: 19).

- The university, in the conception of the members of the committee, must perform the utilitarian function of arming the students with effective skills that will guarantee their economic survival in the highly competitive modern society.
- The university should perform “a civilizing mission” of cultivating the minds of its students.
- It should ensure that research and teaching are interfused because “the process of education is itself most vital when it partakes of the nature of discovery” (*Ibid.*, 19).
- The last function of the university according to the Robbins model is to ensure social cohesion by transmitting to its students a common culture and values.

Despite the fact that the Robbin model of the university is a clarion call for the democratization of education, it is still believed that this model has been unsuccessful in its aim of realizing a non-elitist university. The reason for this failure perhaps may be due to the fact that the university cannot be an institution for the performance of mass education. Intrinsically, as an idea and as an ideal, and despite the desire to ideologically retune it for the purpose of class eradication, the university remains an elitist institution that cannot be rendered democratic or accessible to the generality of the people.

Our discussion of the models of a university needs to end on a cautious note because they still do not represent all the notions of a university that global society subscribes to. Many African nations, in the early days of independence, regarded the institution of the university as a colonial heritage which was unsuitable for them. They conceived it as a kind of foreign burden and indeed a luxurious poison being forced down their throat by colonial masters to propagate Western cultural values and further alienate the African peoples from their own indigenous cultural ethos. To them, the alien institution that is called a university could not meet their immediate developmental challenges; rather the university was regarded as ploy by their Western colonial masters to deepen their already precarious existential dilemma.

Reacting to the heavy burden that the then colonial University College of Ibadan was putting on the new Nigerian nation, the eminent nationalist, Nnamdi Azikwe, commented that it “is becoming a million dollar baby... Every time the baby cries he is given a kiss worth 1 million pounds, and so the baby has found out that it pays to cry, and crying has become its pastime” (Tamuno, 1978: 23). This statement represents the

view of most Africans that the idea of the university foisted on Africans by their imperial masters is not sustainable, not only because it is for a few elite—and therefore not useful as an instrument of emancipating the generality of the populace—but also because it can not realize the immediate developmental needs of the African peoples.

The models of the university that we have examined above emerged in Western society through a dialectical and historical process. The historical evolution of those models may make them acceptable to the Western society, but their ideas and ideals of the university may be repugnant to other, non-Western societies. African society, for instance, may not wholly adopt these models, if it considers the university as an instrument of culture production and dissemination, and if African nation-states are conscious of the fact that Western models can only propagate Western culture and marginalize African cultural values. It was in the light of this need for an African university responsive to the African cultural values that T.M. Yesufu asked for an African university that is free of Western influence. According to him:

The African university must in the 1970's not only wear a different cloak, but must also be differently motivated. It must be made of a different attitude and different approach to its task. The truly African university must be one that draws its inspiration from its environment not transplanted tree, but growing from a seed that is planted and nurtured in the African soil (Yesufu, 1972: 40).

The inference that can be drawn from Yesufu's statement is simple. It is that models of the university are generated by socio-historical experience, and that every society can develop its idea and ideal of a university based on many factors. These include culture, socio-political exigencies, economic challenges and the ideological persuasion that is dominant in the society. This leads us to the next issue of our discussion which is that the responsibilities of the university are ever changing, just as the idea and ideal of a university fluctuate, depending on time, culture and the ideology that is holding sway in the society at a given historical context.

### **DYNAMICS OF THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF A UNIVERSITY**

The discussion of the models of the university has become necessary for the purpose of further realizing the changing functions and responsibilities of the university. From those models we have seen change and continuity in the idea, ideal and ideology of the university. This has made us realize that the university as an idea is never in a state of being, but perpetually in a state of becoming. The responsibilities of a university are ever dynamic and it behooves each such institution to recognize this. This

point has been succinctly made by Robert Anderson in this manner:

If we seek guidance from the past, it is better to see the 'idea of the university' not as a fixed set of characteristics, but as a set of tensions, permanently present, but resolved differently according to time and place: tensions between teaching and research and between autonomy and accountability, most obviously; but also between university membership of an international scholarly community and their role in shaping national cultures and forming national identity; between the transmission of established knowledge, and the search for original truth; between the inevitable connection of universities and the centres of economic and social power, and the need to maintain critical distance; between reproducing the existing occupational structure, and renewing it from below by promoting social mobility; between serving the economy, and providing a space free from immediate utilitarian pressure; between teaching as the encouragement of open and critical attitudes, and society's expectation that universities will impart qualifications and skills. To come down too heavily on one side of these balances will usually mean that the aims of the university are being simplified and distorted (Anderson, 2009: 11).

The long and short of this elaborate quotation is that the issue of the responsibilities of the university is not only a dynamic but also a balancing act between contending interests and responsibilities. These responsibilities are never static, because social demands are ever changing. It is, therefore, important for any institution worthy of the name university to continue to maintain the pull from the contending forces in the society. The relevance and usefulness of a university is determined by how the university is able to sustain and maintain this precarious balance without tilting to one side of the pull and incurring the anger of the advocates of the other position.

We cannot ignore the fact that the social responsibility of the university is ever fluid, dynamic and responding to socio-cultural exigencies. The historical review that we have carried out in this essay reveals that the university is supposed to be an instrument of transformation, knowledge and culture production. But we need also to recognize the polemic about whether knowledge should be the end or means to an end; the debate over whether the university should be seen for its utilitarian end or as the end itself needs to inform every discourse of the university at any period of its history. The utilitarian position, appealing as it is, may not easily defeat the other view that the pursuit of knowledge for

knowledge sake is worthy of being pursued. That is why there is the need to take a position that is at the middle of the extremes.

In the same vein, we should also realize that as an instrument of culture production, some people have seen the university as essentially meant to facilitate the civilizing mission. But we cannot forget that the discourse of civilization has had an ideological and imperialistic connotation that has informed the hostility of some non-Western people to the so-called Western-oriented universities, particularly as it is serving as an agent and facilitator of Western imperialism and means of acculturating students of this university into Western cultural practice, a culture that they consider not apolitical but a means of subjugating and dominating the non-Western peoples. To them, therefore, the university is supposed to liberate people of the periphery from the shackles of Western imperialism. The liberation responsibility of the university, we need to say, was a popular demand among African scholars in the colonial and immediate post colonial period.

This demand for an African university that will be responsive and responsible to the imperative of liberating the African peoples has been expressed by me in this way:

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 (Owolabi, 2007, 89).

The desire for a university that will liberate the African peoples from the hold of the West was a popular demand in the immediate post colonial period. But today, we can ask whether this demand is still a pressing option in the face of the necessity of globalization, a process that has made the multiculturalism a value for emulation and so integrated the divergent cultures that the demand of society is for a university that can facilitate the project of global integration and ensure the production and dissemination of an emerging world culture. The demand of the contemporary society is that the university today must facilitate the propagation of the global cultural values, values of tolerance, respect for human and democratic rights, justice for all, gender equality and other related values that are consistent with the ideal of a global integration and mutual coexistence of all peoples. The university must produce genuine citizens rather than subjects, people who can participate effectively in the

democratic global space that we inhabit today. The universities of the moment should respond to the need to produce the citizens of the world who are not citizens of any nation. As Osundare has recently said of the emerging responsibility of today's university, "the universe in a university resides in its ability to globalize the local and localize the global" (Osundare, 2005: 9).

The university's responsibility is changing rapidly today. It is responding to the demands of the moment. It is becoming a "multiversity" rather than a university, or, as Bill Readings calls it, a "post-historical university" (Readings, 1996: 118). a university that is motivated by the ideology of economism rather than the pursuit of culture. Antony Appiah says that everything in this contemporary world is for sale and without any doubt that includes the university and its productions and products. The utilitarian responsibility first initiated by Francis Bacon has gained popularity today to such an extent that the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge sake may sound irrational. The university is expected to be an important fabric of the economic machinery of any country. The reality of the moment is, therefore, to have a university that is responsive to this aspiration. It is indeed the demand of today and it is a desire to which every university of the twenty-first century must give expression to.

Our university is indeed a "multiversity" (Flexner, 1930: 13). This conception of the modern university is especially a reflection of the more effective and faster means of communication, which aptly defines the new electronic university that has overcome the burden of spatial distance and expanded the horizon of today's university, with classrooms that are boundless and students that are international and intercontinental. In a university or a multiversity of scholars of diverse and multicultural backgrounds, as is the electronic university of the twenty-first century, the immediate target, market and community is indeed far wider, and the responsibility of such a cyber university will be very different from the university of old. The immediate host of the university is the entire humanity and not a particular ethnic or national or even racial group. This new university must, at all times, be able to integrate the divergent interests of its community into an aggregate of interests. It is obvious that this kind of university will be responsive to humanity rather than to any group. It is this kind of university that is responsive to the demands of technological advancement, and the cosmopolitan and democratic values that are in demand today.

## **CONCLUSION**

The major claim of this paper is that the idea, ideal and ideology of a university which determine the responsibility of the university are ever challenging in a dialectical manner depending on the socio-economic and cultural exigencies. Our review of the idea of the university and the historical evolution of the institution in this essay has confirmed that this

idea and its quest for its ideal are always carried out in an ideological context. This ideological context is ever dynamic, so the idea of a university is consistently fluid and culturally determined.

The medieval period desired a university that is knowledge-driven, while the modern university is utility-driven. The idea of the university as an elite institution with its knowledge preserved for the few has changed completely today, to the extent that we now have a multiversity or a post-historical university that is essentially floating in an electronic age, without anchoring itself to any socio-cultural setting. The university today has global society as its social contest, and that is why we have a university today that is responsible to humanity. But to what extent will this present idea of a university prove its worth? This cannot be answered now. It can only be determined by the dialectics of social interactions which cannot be foretold now but will be known only in the future.

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**CHAPTER IV**

**ACADEMIC STANDARDS  
IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC AND  
PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES**

*JOSEPH T. EKONG*

There is complaint, both in the job market and in international academia, of the worth of Nigerian degrees. The issue of falling standards requires:

- an examination of standards in the light of what we should expect of a university,
- and evaluation of how public and private universities meet or fail to meet our expectations, and what should be done to improve standards.

To accomplish this task, I take inspiration from Cardinal John Henry Newman's classic: *The Idea of a University* (1852).

**WHAT IS A UNIVERSITY?**

A university is “a universe of knowledge,” a “market place of ideas”—after the manner of the *Agora* and *Academy* in the time of Socrates and Plato, and the *Lyceum* of Aristotle. These were renowned centers for scholarly dialogues and disputations, in the ancient Athenian society.

A university is a corporation that provides both undergraduate and postgraduate education. It is an institution of higher education and research, which grants academic degrees in a variety of subjects or disciplines. The word *university* is derived from the Latin *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, roughly meaning “community of teachers and scholars.” The original Latin word “*universitas*” was used at the time of emergence of urban town life and medieval guilds, to describe specialized “associations of students and teachers with collective legal rights usually guaranteed by charters issued by princes, prelates, or the towns in which they were located” (Wikipedia: “University”).

**JOHN HENRY NEWMAN’S IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY**

Cardinal John Newman’s famous lectures were delivered in Dublin in 1852, and published in England in 1859, under the title: *The Idea of a University*. But, what exactly did he consider as the normative role of the university? Newman (1859: 129) argues that in a University, a habit of

mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom; or what he calls “a philosophical habit.” This then is the special fruit of the education offered at a university, as contrasted with other places of teaching or modes or teaching. This is the main purpose of a university in its treatment of its students. For Newman, an ideal society is one that has a “valid intellectual culture”. The university is valuable to society to the extent that it enables an intellectual culture. A culture of university-trained “intellectuals” differs fundamentally from the one in which the university trains “professionals” for vocational pursuits. A complex society demands rational beings that can engage their intellects to the demands of such a society. The university that eschews intellectual cultivation in favor of professional training merely creates a class of individuals who have been “degraded as rational beings” (Newman, 1859: 183), preventing them from performing their duty in a society that requires, deserves, and demands rational beings. The consequences of the university neglecting its responsibility in cultivating the intellect of students, is perilous. Newman (1859: 134-135), says:

A university training aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life. It is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit and to master any subject with facility. It show him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them. He is at home in any society, he has common ground with every class; he knows when to speak and when to remain silent; he is able to converse and able to listen; he can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson seasonably... He has the repose of a mind which lives in itself, while it lives in the world... He has a gift which serves him in public, and supports him in retirement.

There are three major issues that seem put Newman at odds with the contemporary research universities’ understanding of their mission:

1. the pursuit of highly specialized knowledge,
2. the secular universities' understanding of what it is to be secular, and
3. the universities' self-justification by appeal to considerations of social utility.

Newman claims that intensive specialization and narrowness of intellectual focus deform the mind, that the qualities characteristic of the minds of successful researchers are qualities incompatible with those of an educated mind. Newman was careful to emphasize that it is not just the study of a number of disciplines that educates (Newman, 1859: 98). What educates is knowledge of several disciplines, such that one comes to understand both the indispensability of each for an overall understanding of the order of things and the limitations of each. Thus, the "superficial generalist" is as much the product of a defective education as the "narrow specialist." The very multiplicity of disciplines suggests the need for a principle of order, governing the whole, so that the student would be able to perceive the significance of each particular branch of knowledge in relation to the rest.

He insists not only that theology should be among the disciplines that must be taught in any university worthy of the name, but that it is the key discipline, that unless theology is given its due place in the curriculum, the relationships between disciplines will be distorted and misunderstood. This was, admittedly, his response to the threat of secularism (reflected in the exclusion of religious knowledge from higher education) during his time. But, it must be noted that the theology of which Newman spoke, was not specifically Catholic theology, but a theology shared with all theists, with all those for whom, as Newman put it, the word 'God' 'contains... a theology in itself' (Newman, 1859: 27). Without recognizing theology as the key discipline, the university curriculum, Newman argued, would disintegrate into a fragmented multiplicity of disciplines, each self-defining, and claiming its own autonomy, in its own sphere. Theology is needed, he argues, to keep the secular disciplines within their proper limits, and deal with questions that lie beyond their scope, to avoid "suicidal excesses".

Some disciplines will of course continue to draw on each other, as physics does on mathematics, geology on chemistry. But, there will be no conception of a whole to which each discipline contributes as a part. And this is just how it has become in the contemporary university, a condition whose symptom is the great difficulty that university teachers generally have nowadays in arriving at an agreement on what general education requirements should be imposed on students. Ortega y Gasset (1993: 58) suggests that modern European culture predisposed its members to eschew reasoning altogether, and the chief culprit in this de-intellectualizing process was the European university system. Faced with a mass of humanity dumped upon it, liberated by the western democratic project, it found out that it was just impossible to cultivate their intellects. Thus, it

resorted to merely instructing them in using the tools of modern civilization. In effect, the triumph of liberal democracy, created new possibilities for the “common man”, but also new limitations. With the close of the modern age, the emphasis on interbeing, intersufficiency, interweaving of the seen and subtle, intergenerational time, intercollaborative doing, provide a glimpse of some qualities of a truly post-modern university, which constitute our focus and aspiration.

### **WHAT IS AN ACADEMIC STANDARD?**

A standard is a level of quality or achievement that is considered acceptable. It is a guide used to measure or estimate the quality or degree of something, for example, how good a piece of work. In the field of education, *standard* is a term which defines a cumulative body of knowledge and set of competencies that provide the basis for quality education (Johnston, 1999: 35). Standards are statements regarding what the students should know, and be able to do. Standards describe the goals of schooling, the destinations at which students should arrive at the end of the term or semester. For example, most standards expect students graduating from tertiary institutions to be able to write for different audiences in different formats (things such as reports, instructions, literary criticism, and persuasive and reflective essays) and to demonstrate a command of standard written English.

In a standards-based curriculum, assessment is viewed not only as a final product (summative), but also as a continual process (formative) that provides students' performance data to teachers and students regarding their progress towards achieving the standards. Therefore, it is necessary to move beyond testing methods which concentrate on memory, and develop those which measure understanding and application (Genesee, et.al., 1998; Winters, 1995). Teachers need to determine which benchmarks to assess, define the evidence of learning, create a context, decide on an audience, develop a scoring guide, review and revise their pedagogical task, etc.

### **RELEVANCE OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

Standards provide a focus for reform efforts, and all students must reach them. Also, teachers can see how well they are doing, by looking at their progress towards standards. Focus is one of the greatest benefits of standards, and publication is another. When the standards are properly developed, everyone can see what the schools are aiming to teach and what the students need to learn. Thus, what must be learned is not a secret, kept for a small portion of the student population and hidden from the rest. Since standards provide a focus, they also provide a yardstick for evaluating all aspects of schooling, ranging from the textbooks in use, the staff development, to schedules, and personnel assignments (Winters, 1995:77).

## CRITICISMS OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Those who criticize academic standards can be placed in three broad categories:

1. One group is concerned about the fact that standards will force teachers to “teach to tests” and focus on rote-learning rather than on more creative and individualized education.
2. Another group is concerned about how the standards are set: too high and low achievers (particularly in disadvantaged communities) will become discouraged and drop out, since they will not be challenged properly.
3. The third group has no objection to standards *per se*, but believes that they should be set by local school boards, not by federal or state authorities.

Those who worry about “teaching to tests” express many of the same concerns leveled at standardized testing in general: that it measures test-taking ability rather than real-life skills, that it is biased against students from disadvantaged backgrounds, or that it promotes memorization of facts and interpretations rather than creative thinking.

Though these concerns may be valid when related to some of the standardized tests used at benchmark points, standards-based teaching does not only or even primarily rely on such tests. It must be kept in mind that academic standards are “value-oriented.” They aim at adding substantive value to the academic life of the students. Thus, in an academic programme, the expression “value added” refers to the enhancement that students achieve (in knowledge, skill acquisition, capacity building, etc.), as a result of their higher education experience. “Value added” is about what value, has been accumulated, by the student, as a result of a period of time in higher education. Institutions may be evaluated or assessed on the basis of the cumulative value that they add to their students, and it can even be argued that the status of an institution should be judged by their “value added” contribution. Bennett (2001: 26) defines “value added” as follows:

By “value added” we mean what is improved about students’ capabilities or knowledge as a consequence of their education at a particular college or university. Measuring value requires having assessments of students’ development or attainments as they begin college, and assessments of those same students after they have had the full benefit of their education at the college. Value added is the difference between their attainments when they have completed their education, and what they had already attained by the time they began.

## **CURRICULUM**

The word “curriculum,” as it is defined from its early Latin origins, means literally “to run a course.” If one thinks of a marathon with mile and direction markers, signposts, water stations, and officials and coaches along the route, this initial definition is a metaphor for what the curriculum has become in our education system. A curriculum is a structured series of intended learning experiences (Longstreet and Shane, 1993:22). It is a logically connected set of conceptual and pedagogically analyzed knowledge and value claims, the process adopted by schools to determine and pursue set objectives or goals of the society in which they are situated. In its broadest sense a curriculum may refer to all courses offered at a school. This is particularly true of schools at the university level, where the diversity of a curriculum might be an attractive point to a potential student. There is a subtle distinction between curriculum and syllabus.

A curriculum is typically a guideline set out for educators that prescribes what they need to teach their students. It tends to outline the subjects that need to be taught, as well as methods for ensuring that each student has indeed learned the necessary materials (Markee, 1994:66). The curriculum is usually developed by the administrative body of the school, so that teachers are aware of what they are expected to teach throughout the year. It typically breaks down what needs to be taught, as well as ideas on how it should be presented to the students. In addition, it lets teachers know how to measure the effectiveness of their teachings, often through standardized testing. It can be used as a guideline for teachers, as many depend on it to develop their coursework.

On the other hand, a syllabus is a more descriptive list of the concepts that will be taught in a particular class. A syllabus is typically created by each individual teacher, so it focuses on a particular class. It usually offers an overview of the goals of the course so that students know what is expected of them by the end of the term. One of the most useful aspects of a syllabus is that it frequently gives students an idea of the course schedule, listing the dates and descriptions of assignments and tests. The contents of a core curriculum should involve a range of new courses and programmes that are relevant to contemporary and existential needs and problems.

## **KINDS OF CURRICULUM**

Since curriculum reflects the models of instructional delivery chosen and used, it can be suggested that the curriculum should be categorized according to the common psychological classifications of the four families of learning theories: Social, Information Processing, Personalist, and Behavioral.

There are also common philosophical orientations that undergird curriculum development, such as: *Idealism*, *Realism*, *Perennialism*,

*Essentialism, Experimentalism, Existentialism, Constructivism, Reconstructivism, and the like* (Olivia, 1997: 44).

But, whatever classification one gravitates to, the fact remains that at one time or another the curriculum in the Nigerian Educational System has, been impacted by some, if not all of the above. To a large extent, the Nigerian educational curriculum is hard to pin down, because it is quite layered, highly eclectic, and even “gerrymandered”.

### **THE VALUE OF UNIVERSITY DEGREES/CERTIFICATES**

Of course, there may be some doubts over the pecuniary and career benefits of getting a university degree/certificate. But, higher education is not just about boosting job prospects; it is also about personal development and intellectual curiosity. And let us not forget that it can also be fun. But, the rising cost of getting a degree has certainly focused attention on the profit and loss columns in any calculation of the personal value of a university education (Keams, 1998: 52). The “loss” is made up of tuition fees and the delay in starting to earn, while the “profit” comes, in theory, from better jobs and higher salaries.

The importance of a university degree is widely evident. In general, such a degree may allow for further advancement of one’s career. A university degree shows that a graduate has knowledge in a specified field and can follow instruction, meet deadlines and constitute an overall asset to any given establishment. A University degree demonstrates interest in a chosen field, knowledge and experience.” When applying for job openings in various competitive fields, candidates who have a degree hold the advantage over those without (King, 1996: 22). When job opportunities are limited and candidates are many, a university degree could be a real difference. In addition, holding a university-level certificate, in some way, demonstrates one’s dedication to continued education. Education is the one tangible product that the whole world respects. Once achieved, it can never be taken away (Martinez, 2000:67). It opens doors, and offers more opportunities than any other single achievement. Ample evidence supports the personal, family and societal benefits of advanced education (Martinez, 1999:44).

### **FACTORS THAT UNDERMINE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

A gradual decline in research output in higher education became noticeable in the late 1980s. The National Universities’ Commission (NUC) noted that in terms of quality and quantity, the research output of tertiary institutions in Nigeria was about the best in sub-Saharan Africa, just before the late 1980s (Karani, 1997). The foundations for research are good research training and motivation, availability of equipment, and good library facilities. With the onset of the decay in the academic system, these

ingredients faded away. By 1996, the quantity and quality of research had declined to an exceedingly low level (Okebukola & Solowu, 2001).

Summarizing the factors that contributed to this decline from late 1988 to 1996, and subsequent collapse from 1997 to date, Okebukola (2002) lists the following:

- Lack of research skills in modern methods;
- Lack of equipment for carrying out state-of-the art research;
- Overloaded teaching and administration schedules which leave little time for research;
- Difficulty in accessing research funds;
- Diminishing ability of seasoned and senior researchers to mentor junior researchers due to brain drain.

There was a general feeling of disappointment when the NUC reported that no Nigerian university (or other tertiary institution) was listed among the top 1,000 schools around the world, in terms of publication of research output. The panacea proposed is for institutions to begin to develop websites and post their research reports online for the world to see. Other factors that have seriously undermined academic excellence, in Nigerian universities, include:

(a) Academic dishonesty—plagiarism, which is the use of another person's work (this could be their words, products or ideas) for personal advantage, without proper acknowledgement of the original work, with the intention of passing it off as one's own. Plagiarism stifles originality, and may occur deliberately (with the intention to deceive) or accidentally (due to poor referencing). Plagiarism can take many forms. It includes copying materials from books, and from the internet; and even copying answers from a fellow student during an examination (presuming the copied work is not acknowledged). Thus, students need to learn how to be artfully discerning about the usefulness and appropriateness of certain types of information. And, like other forms of social interaction, students need to know that there are inherent lessons to be learned about appropriate and acceptable online behaviour, to differences between "fair usage" and plagiarism.

(b) Cultism is a destructive influence to academic pursuits in Nigerian universities. For instance, many lecturers have been subjected to threat, and even torture, by some students, who are cultists, in order to compromise certain academic standards.

(c) The spate of forgery of academic credentials has increased astronomically, in recent times. This reveals a certain mediocrity that needs to be addressed in all our citadels of learning, especially the tertiary institutions.

## **UNIVERSITY EDUCATION DELIVERY: THE PERCEPTION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA**

Universities in Nigeria are required to prepare an academic brief (or plan) which documents the philosophy, mission, aims and objectives, academic pattern, curriculum, organizational structure as well as future growth and development. Institutional development (academic and physical) should be based on plans outlined in the academic brief. Such plans must take cognizance of the essential elements of university education (NPE, 1977:10). Elements of university education delivery are composed of those structures and services that must be in place, to enable a university successfully carry out its functions of teaching, research and community service (Utulu, 2001: 60). Such elements include: adequate funding, adequately qualified and experienced staff, a well provided library, suitable lecture spaces (classrooms and theatres), clinics, studios, laboratories, well appointed staff offices, and recreational facilities. All these are crucial for effective teaching and learning. Good planning and management are essential ingredients in the enthronement of quality in an educational establishment (Verharen, 1993: 17).

Basically, any University that aspires to achieve global standards must take institutional and programme rankings seriously, because according to the World Bank, ranking defines what “world-class” is to the broadest audience. Ranking cannot be ignored by anyone interested in measuring the performance of tertiary education and the institutions. Although international rankings vary in selection criteria, our Nigerian universities have rated low in global rankings because of poor quality of intellectual development and infrastructure, low presence in electronic and top quality internationally indexed journals and publications, almost zero presence of top class foreign academic/research staff and students and very low installation and penetration of ICT.

Regarding the perception of public and private universities in Nigeria, the most visible difference is the cost of tuition, which is much higher in private universities. In general, private tuition is approximately 9-10 times higher than it is at a public tuition. This is because private universities rely directly on student and alumni funding, and other privately generated capital, in order to operate (Fincher, 1993: 19). Unlike a public state university, the private school receives no direct subsidy from the state in which the school is located.

Public universities are much easier for a student to gain admission to, especially if the student is a resident of the state in which the university is located in. In some instances, public universities have programs that automatically accept transfer students that have completed a certain level of outside credits in a different state University.

Public universities are much larger and more diverse than the average private university, and students may feel more comfortable around the larger student population that it offers. The larger size of public

universities may distance the student from the educational atmosphere, making them feel more anonymous among the student population. In private universities, students generally build stronger, more personal relationships with their professors and instructors, as there are special programs designed to increase communication and dialogue between the two.

In the country's public schools, only a very small portion of all those who apply, are admitted in a given year. The admission process is therefore intensely competitive. Also, the tuition can be prohibitive for lower-income students, although many universities offer financial aid packages to those students who excel academically in spite of their financial backgrounds.

However, although some private universities may be more prestigious and well-respected, they are not necessarily superior, in every way, to public universities. In each case, there are instances or areas of strengths and weaknesses. Overall, the most important factor of a successful education is how well-suited the school is to the individual student's needs and career interests. Thus, students should rate their ideal university's unique programs and course offerings before deciding on which school to attend, and not simply on the basis of popularity.

However, a careful observation of current trends in Nigeria in terms of parents' preferred choice of educational institution for their children would reveal a strong leaning towards privately run educational institutions, as opposed to public institutions. Regardless of whatever level of education one considers, be it primary, secondary or tertiary, the trend seems to be the same. It seems that there is a persistent and wide-spread loss of confidence in public educational institutions.

Other important reasons for loss of confidence in our educational system include poor planning and consistent lack of investment in the education system. A casual visit to any public school in Nigeria would reveal the extent to which these educational institutions have decayed. Educational facilities at all levels are in a terrible shape; schools are littered with battered structures; worn out equipment (where they are available at all); junk and unserviceable vehicles; raggedy classroom buildings; overcrowded classrooms; inadequate manpower in quantity and quality; instability in the academic calendar owing to strikes; very low teacher (staff) morale due to poor remuneration and working conditions.

With the public educational infrastructure in this condition (and very little is being done to remedy the situation) parents who are concerned about giving their wards the best available educational options will obviously be looking for viable alternatives. Many parents seek quality education at whatever cost, regardless of who is providing it. Therefore, given the level of decay and the pervasive conditions of ineptitude and lack of professionalism in the public schools, many parents feel let down; but they cannot give up their dream of giving their children the best in terms of education. This is precisely where the private universities come in, with the

promise of overcoming the deficiencies found in most of the public universities. Of course, it is no longer news that academic degrees/certificates from certain universities in Nigeria are seriously derided, and do not compete well in the labour market, because of undeniably poor academic standards.

## CONCLUSION

Let me bring this discussion to a close, by showing the relevance of Newman's proposal to the actualization of the academic goals in an ideal university, be it private or public. The university's responsibility to promote intellectual work is based on the process of learning: empirical observation, study, and research; and on an intellectual atmosphere, a human "give and take," that either is, or is not there. Everything seems to flow into one great stream of technological organization, which for reasons which escape adequate historical understanding, began to flow several years ago, and to this day continues to swell steadily, flooding everything. In its pursuit of science, human development, and scholarship, the university depends on its ability to attract the best people and provide them with the most favorable conditions for research, communications, and teaching.

But, it is always dangerous when an institution tries to reproduce artificially something they can only grow organically. Thus, an appropriate idea of a university should include a sense of intellectual quality and an attitude toward intellectually creative people, comparable to that of a horticultural expert toward precious plants. In some universities, intellectual achievement tends to assume an air of finality, and the institution seems to consider itself as an *end unto itself*. But, constant re-examination is necessary to ensure the proper functioning of institutional structure, on behalf of the ideal it is meant to serve, for there are various reasons that can cause the failure of academic institutions.

An academic institution may fail because the freedom of communications has degenerated into a quarrel between conflicting personalities in the system. Furthermore, certain academic institutions may fail because their scholars are isolated as specialists in a given field, and do not interact or collaborate to share ideas on issues, with their fellow colleagues in the academia: *a situation which may be likened to the tendency of a monkey who protects only the territoriality of his own palm tree* (Cameron, 2000: 5).

Newman pointed out that the fragmentation of the educational curriculum is a condition that needs to be remedied, and that the acknowledgment of theology as the key unifying discipline, can adequately remedy it. Consequently, he suggested that the knowledge of God is a part of our secular knowledge, and such knowledge is the key to understanding the affronts of the secularized thinkers of our time, just as he affronted the secularized thinkers of his own time (e.g. the agnostics, atheists/religious sceptics).

At any rate, to maintain high academic standards/excellence in our Nigerian Universities, a serious overhauling of the entire system is needed, one that will effectively and comprehensively impact on the scholarly and existential needs of our contemporary age, and remain relevant to the yearnings of future generations of scholars in the academe. This is the challenge before us, and there are no justifiable reasons for further delays or procrastinations, in carrying out this urgent and very important task.

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**CHAPTER V**

**PHILOSOPHY,  
BRIDGING THE ARTS AND SCIENCES**

*JOSEPH KENNY*

Sixty-fourty, the National Universities Commission decreed, will be the ratio of Science to Arts, that all universities must follow. Arts may fall below 40 percent as in universities of Technology. The reverse is not allowed—there can be no university of Liberal Arts.

With scanty resources, Science complains it cannot perform up to standard. Arts, in turn, complains of marginalization, resulting in dehumanized education, in graduates who cannot express themselves, who know nothing of history, and its lessons. For instance, most Nigerian youth don't know who Nnamdi Azikwe was.

**THE PROBLEM**

The problem boils down to: What principles should guide education planning? And which discipline specializes in these principles?—That discipline deserves the name “First Philosophy”, and should be commander in chief of education planning. Which should it be?—There is a turf war.

- The first contender is Faculty of Education, with its courses in Philosophy of Education. It offers “Library Science”, with cataloguing systems that arrange all branches of knowledge. It also offers courses such as “Introduction to the History and Policy of Education” and “Sociological and Philosophical Foundations of Education”.
- A bigger player is Political Science. Its preserve is national interest and priorities, and how to realize them. The other social sciences, like Economics, Geography, Sociology, and even Psychology (in so far as it treats behavioral dynamics) are mere instruments to realize the objectives set by Political Science.
- Arts makes its own case. Its preserve is the humanities, what has to do with man. Man holds the highest rank, while science is at the service of man. Which part of Arts takes priority is another question.
- Science retorts: Our preserve is all physical reality, including man, both the chemistry of man and, in psychology, his spirit. Science, therefore, should preside over educational planning.

- The DVC Academic speaks up. The Senate Curriculum Committee speaks up. NUC silences both, and says: We are the arbiters of all higher education. We know best. We decide what should and should not be part of university education.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATION PLANNING**

Educational planning requires a vision of the whole, and the order of all the parts. Along with wide knowledge of the components, it requires wisdom. It is the job of wisdom, Aristotle says, to sort and put order in chaos.

That reminds me of scavengers or waste managers. They can go through a refuse dump, sort it and recycle it, leaving nothing to go to waste. Like refuse, there is no useless knowledge. The problem is to find its place in the total scheme of knowledge.

Specialists in each field sort and arrange the knowledge of that branch of knowledge. They cannot lay claim to wisdom, because they do not see what is beyond their own field. The wise man must have his feet on the ground. He must have a gentleman's familiarity with all branches of knowledge. But he need not, and cannot have a specialist's knowledge of every field.

The wise man is on the lookout for fundamental principles. Whether in Physics, the Social Sciences, Linguistics, or other fields of study, there are certain underlying driving forces, formulated as principles, which give meaning and unity to that branch of knowledge.

There are other forces, also formulated as principles, which give meaning to all reality and all sciences, taken as a whole. These common principles are the sphere of, what Aristotle calls, "First Philosophy".

First Philosophy should see the connectivity of all branches of learning to these first common principles. First Philosophy should see the harmonious interrelationship of diverse parts of knowledge. It should provide the basic guidelines for academic planning.

## **WHERE DOES FIRST PHILOSOPHY RESIDE? CONFLICTING CLAIMS**

From the name, we might think first of all of the Philosophy Department. But we saw, above, other contenders, vying to host First Philosophy. Let us examine their merits first, and do some short-listing.

- The Faculty of Education exists to show students how to teach. It does not teach them what to teach. Their teaching subjects they borrow from other departments. It does not devise library cataloguing systems, but borrows them from others who have concocted them. Its "philosophy of education" does not determine the purpose of education, but gives basic principles of how to go

about it, such as stimulating student initiative. This Faculty, therefore, cannot claim to host First Philosophy.

- Political Science would like to be the training ground for future politicians, who dictate educational policies, but most politicians do not take that route, just as most actors do not pass through Theatre Arts. Political Science's candidacy to be First Philosophy has one basic flaw: It is a practical science; it is about how to organize society so as to realize the common good. What is the common good? What does it consist of? That is not for Political Science to answer, but for another theoretical science. In this, Political Science resembles Medicine, Agriculture or Animal Science, which borrow from the theoretical sciences of Chemistry and Biology.
- In the Faculty of Arts, we have Linguistics, Languages, and Communications, which are only tools. We have History, which is really a tool of Political Science, providing the data and "lessons" of history. Only Philosophy or Religious Studies have some semblance of being First Philosophy. We will come back to their claim later.
- The physical sciences do investigate the root of physical reality. What is matter, its ultimate constituent parts or forces? What is the origin of the expanding universe? What is its future course? What gives unity to a chemical, to an organism? What accounts for its behavior or functionality? What makes man unique? These questions are common concerns of "Natural Science", but treated in detail in its branches, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Natural science, as a study of ultimate reality, has a good semblance of being First Philosophy. We shall see.

### **THE SHORT-LISTED CANDIDATES FOR FIRST PHILOSOPHY**

It is now time to interview the short-listed candidates. They are (1) Physical or "Natural" Science, (2) Religious Studies, (3) Philosophy.

*Physical Science:* In support of its claim, I quote Aristotle: "If there is no substance other than those which exist in the way that natural substances do, the philosophy of nature will be the first science; but if there is an immobile substance, this substance will be prior, and [the science which investigates it will be] First Philosophy, and will be universal in this way" (*Metaphysics*, VI, chapter 1, 1026a 28).

Aristotle goes on to show that First Philosophy deals not merely with immobile, i.e. immaterial or spiritual, substance, but with the being that straddles the material and the immaterial worlds. The two are not equally being, because the immaterial is superior. Hence, "being" is predicated of them analogically. Thomas Aquinas comments:

According to the ancients, who knew no other substance except the corporeal and mobile, it was necessary that the philosophy of nature be First Philosophy (*Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, I, lectio 1, #78).

However, among substances there is also a hierarchy, for the first substances are immaterial ones. Hence the study of them belongs properly to first philosophy, just as the philosophy of nature would be first philosophy if there were no other substances prior to mobile corporeal substances, as is stated below in Book VI (1170) (*ibid.*, III, lectio 6, #398).

[Aristotle] says that if there is no substance other than those which exist in the way that natural substances do, with which the philosophy of nature deals, the philosophy of nature will be the first science. But if there is some immobile substance, this will be prior to natural substance, and therefore the philosophy which considers this kind of substance, will be first philosophy. And since it is first, it will be universal; and it will be its function to study being as being, both what being is and what the attributes are which belong to being as being. For the science of the primary kind of being and that of being in general are the same, as has been stated at the beginning of Book IV (533)" (*ibid.*, VI, lectio 1, #1170).

The problem Aristotle faced, and which the modern world faces, is whether, in fact, there is any reality beyond the physical, and whose job is it to ascertain this.

Is it the job of First Philosophy, in the guise of Metaphysics, to establish its own subject: being inclusive of the immaterial world? For Aristotle, no science proves its own subject. That is a given. He devoted the 8<sup>th</sup> book of his *Physics* to establishing a first, immaterial mover. That was his gateway to Metaphysics. Metaphysics thereby became First Philosophy.

The philosophers of science in Aristotle's day, like most of them in our day, saw no evidence for the existence of anything immaterial. Traditional religion taught them otherwise, but that was a matter of faith, not reason based on hard evidence.

*Religious Studies:* Of all departments, only Religious Studies overtly asserts the existence of the immaterial world. There is the human soul, the spirits of the deceased, various benevolent or malevolent other spirits, and finally a supreme deity. Religious Studies researches empirical evidence of the activity of these beings.

Most of this evidence, however, is not in the public domain. Communication by dreams may be evident to the participants, but not to

outsiders. Spirit infestation may take place, but can also be ascribed to psychological disorder.

The only public evidence Religious Studies can point to are verifiable signs: for example, the miracles of Christ attested by the Gospels, or the cures certified at Lourdes or in processes of canonization.

Such signs cannot be dismissed, and are evidence of causality that transcends the physical. Nevertheless, they are an extraordinary avenue to the immaterial, because they cannot be duplicated at will. There should be an ordinary avenue, using evidence that is accessible to any observer, at any time, anywhere. Religious Studies, therefore, can only provide a peripheral foundation for Metaphysics.

Furthermore, with the evidence it has of a spiritual world, Religious Studies differs from Metaphysics, because it does not study the attributes of being (as common to spiritual and material things), or the first principles of knowledge. Rather, it studies spiritual phenomena, and that from a phenomenological standpoint. From this point of view, it should be grouped with Metaphysics.

Religious Studies thereby differs from its cousin, Theology, which studies God as its primary subject, and that from the standpoint of revelation. Theology studies all of creation as well, but only in so far as it relates to God. It thereby differs from Metaphysics, which has the being of material and immaterial creation as its subject, whereas God is an extrinsic principle of being. Theology, however, uses Revelation, not observation, as its fundamental principle of argumentation. Therefore, it stands apart not only from Metaphysics, but from all the human sciences. It also has an important input to offer all of education, as well as all of life and society.

Religious Studies and Theology, therefore, cannot host Metaphysics or do its job on its own terms and method. They can only touch on it indirectly.

*Philosophy:* If Physical Science is incapable of discovering immaterial being, then there is no ground for Metaphysics. In that case, Physical science becomes First Philosophy, the arbiter of all reality. Metaphysics is the cornerstone of the Philosophy Department. Without it, other courses, like Philosophy of Mathematics, Philosophy of Law, could be dispersed to their corresponding departments. Epistemology and Philosophy of Science could be handled in the methodology of Physical Science. The Philosophy Department, now melted down to bankruptcy, could shut its doors.

On the other hand, if Physical Science can discover immaterial being, it has provided Metaphysics with its subject. That is a task, Aristotle complained, the physical scientists ran away from. He endeavored to do it, and his intellectual heritage persisted through Arabic and European philosophy to the Middle Ages. Modern science, however, like its ancient predecessors, for the most part dodges the task.

How can Physical Science do so? There are two principal ways. The first is by examining evidence for the survivability of the human soul. This can be shown from its knowledge of material things in an immaterial, universal way. That indicates that the intellect is an immaterial power, of an immaterial soul.

The second way is to show the dependence of the physical universe on an immaterial cause. This is not the place to elaborate on these arguments. It is simply to observe that without them, Metaphysics has no foundation, and tumbles. But if any of these arguments stands, then Metaphysics stands, as an independent science, above all other human sciences, the arbiter and queen of them all. It is First Philosophy.

First Philosophy, however, comes last, in the order of learning, as Thomas Aquinas puts it:

So the proper order of learning will be the following. First, boys should be instructed in logical matters, because logic teaches the method of the whole of philosophy. Second, they are to be instructed in mathematics, which does not require experience and does not transcend the imagination. Third, they should be trained in the natural sciences which, though not transcending sense and imagination, nevertheless require experience. Fourth, they are to be instructed in the moral sciences, which require experience and a soul free from passion, as is said in the first book. Fifth, they should be taught matters concerning wisdom and divine science, which go beyond the imagination and require a vigorous mind (*Commentary on the Nichomachean Ethics*, Book 6, lect. 7).

### **METAPHYSICS AT WORK: ACADEMIC PLANNING**

Aristotle's division of sciences is still useful for contemporary academic planning. He recognized four broad areas:

- (1) theoretical science,
- (2) the combination of theory and art to modify matter, like engineering, medicine etc.,
- (3) the combination of theory concerning man with prudence to modify or regulate human behavior,
- (4) the adjunct science and art of organizing thought, found in logic in its many branches.

Then too, he distinguished phases within a science. The first is exploratory or dialectical. The second is synthesis, the formulation of results and conclusions. In our time, these phases are sometimes allotted to distinct disciplines, as we have pointed out with regard to history and the social sciences.

- (1) Theoretical sciences, for Aristotle, are fundamentally three, based on the way matter is involved in the definitions and principles of the science:
  - a. Natural Science considers things in their full materiality. It only abstracts from individual variations in order to deal with things in the universal. Fundamentally one science, Natural Science has many branches and sub-branches, the first being:
    - i. Physics
    - ii. Chemistry
    - iii. Biology
  - b. Mathematics strips material things of all sensible qualities except shape and number.  
Aristotle also made provision for “mixed sciences”, that is, the study of physical reality in the light of mathematics mathematical measurement—the hallmark of modern science. We could add the study of human society in the light of statistics.
  - c. Metaphysics starts with spiritual beings totally separated from matter, and considers what these have in common with material beings. Taking this analogically common being as its subject, it analyzes its intrinsic principles, its transcendental properties, and finally its extrinsic principles.
- (2) Sciences applied to matter are innumerable.
- (3) The sciences of human behavior revolve around:
  - a. the individual—in ethics, and now in practical psychology and psychiatry (with medical means)
  - b. the family—for Aristotle, “economics” (now metamorphosed into money management)
  - c. the “city” or wider society
- (4) Logic (Kenny, 2010):
  - a. formal, with regard to:
    - i. Terms/concepts (*Categories*)
    - ii. Judgments/statements (*Interpretation —Peri Hermeneias*)
    - iii. Reasoning/syllogism (*Prior Analytics*)
  - b. applied, to:
    - i. Science, starting with Dialectics (*Topics*), refuting errors (*Refuting Sophistry*), leading to demonstration (*Posterior Analytics*)
    - ii. Drama, encompassing the fine arts (*Poetics*)
    - iii. Persuasion (*Rhetoric*), now part of Communications.

#### **HOW THIS APPLIES TO PLANNING OF FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS**

The Philosophy Department, which hosts Metaphysics, should be a unit apart from all Faculties. It should work hand in hand with the

university administration, and senate curriculum committee, in academic planning. It should provide the theoretical input, while administration takes care of practical details of implementation.

The Philosophy Department should also work closely with the Science Faculty, assisting it with “philosophy of science”, and its own methodology. That job really belongs to science, but science seems to find it intimidating.

Similarly, the Philosophy Department should work with other faculties, for the same purpose.

A faculty of Physical Science is a key component of a university. Its content is theory. Standing near each of its components are faculties or departments that apply this theory.

At the base of Physical Science is Physics, with many sub-branches. A certain knowledge of Physics is presupposed to Chemistry and Biology, and to all their practical applications.

As its applied counterpart, Physics has Engineering, with all its branches and aspects, such as Architecture.

Biology has important sub-branches, each with application correlatives, giving rise to considerable chance of overlap:

- Botany                      Agriculture (Forestry is both theoretical and practical), Food production, Landscaping etc.
- Zoology                      Veterinary Science, Fisheries
- Human biology              Medicine

Human biology is related not only to Medicine, but also to the Social Sciences, since they all assume certain postulates about the nature of man, his capabilities, requirements and destiny. Human biology can and should go as far as demonstrating the existence of spiritual powers in man, but what they are and how they operate belong to Metaphysics.

The Philosophy of Man, in his rationality, therefore, belongs in the Philosophy Department. It should consider the questions Aristotle raises in his *De anima*, and correlate these with modern discoveries. It is the key link between Biology and the Social Sciences.

The Social Sciences, as said above, are concerned with human behavior. The term “social” is somewhat a misnomer, since it includes individual behavior. Ethics, therefore, should accompany Psychology, in one Department. Social Sciences should also have a Department of Family Studies.

The chieftain of Social Sciences, however, is Political Science, which has to do with society as a whole. Law, though usually in a separate Faculty, is subservient to the goals set by Political Science. So also is Economics, while Sociology and Geography serve Political Science as their dialectical arm, providing facts and data for Politics to work with. History, too, belongs in Social Science, not Arts, because it provides data for Political Science.

Philosophy of Politics is really part of Political Science, but, as we have seen elsewhere, it tends to neglect the theoretical foundations on which it is based, and we find Philosophy Department stepping into the gap.

Classics and European studies, in so far as they stray from languages into culture and history, really belong in Social Science. If they want to retain their status in Arts, they should confine themselves to language and literature.

Arts, then, having to do with tools of Science, finds its strength in Language, Linguistics, and Literature. It should also take up all the branches of Logic, as it does with Theatre Arts and Communications. Communications includes Journalism, the use of Radio, Television, the Press and Internet. Theatre Arts embraces drama, film, music, dance, and beautiful scenery, in a word, all the fine arts, apart from their technological aspects.

Likewise, the art of teaching, i.e. the whole of Education, belongs in Arts, as a form of Communications.

### University Organogram

THEOLOGY ———- PHILOSOPHY ———-ADMINISTRATION  
(based on Revelation)    Metaphysics (incl. Epistemology)

Man as rational  
Religious Studies

SCIENCE	TECHNOLOGY	SOCIAL SCIENCES	ARTS
Physics	Engineering, Architecture	Individual: Ethics	Languages/Linguistics
Chemistry	etc. Pharmaceutics	Psychology	Classics
Biology	etc.	Family Studies	English
Botany		Society: Political	African
Zoology		Science	Others
Human	Agric, Forestry	Law	Logic
biology	Veterinary,	Sociology	Theatre Arts
	Fisheries	Geography	Communications
	Medicine	Economics	Media
		African Studies	Education

### CONCLUSION

Universities are notorious for their politics. Before making compromises, accommodations, swaps and deals, let us have a clear vision of the rational connection of all the parts.

In discussing 60/40, let us keep a vision of man in mind, as provided by Philosophy and Theology. Science and Technology are vital, but are at the service of human life. Human life requires social order and

harmony —hence the importance of the Social Sciences. Above all, it requires a life of the spirit. Arts provides tools not only for all the other faculties, but above all, for the contemplation of truth, for reaching, through philosophy and religion, to the supernatural. —“Man does not live by bread alone.”

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## **PART II**

### **HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS**



**CHAPTER VI**

**KNOWLEDGE, POWER  
AND THE STATE OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION**

*ANTHONY AKINWALE*

More than six decades since the inception of university education in Nigeria, there still hovers a thick cloud of uncertainty about how universities are to be established and run. Yet, addressing these and related questions is a task that must be accomplished if Nigeria is to benefit from the fruits of university education. It is my contention in this paper that Nigeria's university system is in chains and needs to be liberated. The enslavement of university education in Nigeria is one of the consequences of misguided military incursion into Nigerian politics. Experience shows that military rule distorted the figure of academic communities in Nigeria turning them into extensions of military barracks.

Every society has its own share of geniuses, and Nigeria has more than a generous share of her own. But in the confrontation between knowledge and power, a confrontation which has become a recurring decimal in the history of university education in Nigeria, the imprisonment of knowledge by power incapacitates the genius partially or otherwise. It becomes a herculean task for the genius to survive and actualize his or her potentials without being suffocated unto death. But a country that incapacitates its geniuses places an almost insurmountable hurdle on the path to its own attainment of authentic development.

I shall argue in this paper that a liberated academia is a prerequisite for authentic development. Such liberation will have to take the concrete form of taking the university—its foundation, management and curriculum—out of the sticky and strangling hands of an overbearing government bureaucracy. In Nigeria, this has become an urgent necessity.

**WHEN KNOWLEDGE CONFRONTS POWER**

It is the most potent strategy of tyrannical regimes to sustain themselves by using all the powers of state—legitimately and or illegitimately acquired—to suppress all opposition. History testifies to the fact that in their rise and fall, tyrannical regimes remove or curtail fundamental human rights. Tyrants prey on thinkers, especially thinkers who are apt to express their thoughts in the public square such as media practitioners, jurists, academicians, social scientist, poets and philosophers. Examples abound to buttress these assertions.

The trial and subsequent execution of Socrates was a confrontation between knowledge and power. Socrates, in his love of wisdom and in his

exercise of the pure and unrestricted desire to know characteristic of the human intellect, asked questions where some would neither ask nor allow themselves to be asked questions. Socrates had the courage to challenge holders of power to fall in love with wisdom and to allow their cherished but unexamined presuppositions to be questioned.

Another case to be cited involved a man of science and the Church at a time new discovery in the natural sciences was perceived as inimical to the faith. Knowledge confronted power when Galileo Galilei published his telescopic findings regarding motion, nature and the cosmos and found himself on a collision course with a religious establishment that transgressed its area of jurisdiction. The scandalous confrontation resulted, first, in the humiliating condemnation Galileo, whose doctrine turned out to be right, by a court of Catholic theologians; and then into series of gratuitous condemnation of a Church wrongly accused as mounting an onslaught against scientific progress. See for example, Gerald Dickler, *Man on Trial* (1962).

This is not an essay on the Galileo case. Yet the mere mention of it throws up a very complicated issue that is not often given the treatment it deserves. I recognize that citing it as an example of the confrontation between knowledge and power imposes the imperative of caution. It requires that one take a number of factors into consideration. In this regard, I cautiously align myself with Jerome L. Langford's reading of the facts surrounding it in his work of enormous importance, *Galileo, Science and the Church* (1995).

The Galileo affair was complex because Galileo was himself a complex person. Langford's description of Galileo reveals this.

Galileo was not infallible: not a great errorless crusader. Nor was he a conceited, obstinate troublemaker. He was a man of scientific genius, an extrovert, and an optimist. His temperament shows through in his writings; he was independent, quick-witted, scornful of his opposition. He did not think himself greater than he was, but neither was he one to underestimate his own ability (*Ibid.*: 159).

Yet, Langford would write:

By challenging the traditional view of the universe, Galileo upset the psychological security that derived from the neatly ordered inter-related hierarchies of astronomy, philosophy and theology. His opponents were afraid that if the geocentric concept fell, the whole construct of cosmology, the truth of the Scriptures and the anthropocentrism of creation would have to fall with it. Galileo showed no sympathy for the sensitivity of hierarchic relations. He plunged ahead with a process of

demythologizing that even on a non-religious, purely human level, caused a psychological vacuum. Like nature, the human psyche abhors a vacuum. The solution is not that Galileo should have kept silence. But a more humble and realistic man might have proceeded with a better understanding of the monumental implications of the new astronomy (*Ibid.*: 161).

While this reading may not be unacceptable, it does not, in my opinion, remove the fact that this was a confrontation between knowledge and power. However, the fact of this confrontation between knowledge and power is one that calls for cautious and sober interpretation as against its tendentious interpretation as a confrontation between a man of science and a power-hungry Church. While this might have been a confrontation between knowledge and power, Langford cautions against what would amount to a pathetic misreading of facts surrounding the case.

For centuries, Galileo's name has been invoked against papal infallibility and to 'prove' that the Roman Catholic Church is a vicious enemy of science and progress. These claims can be refuted by an objective study of the facts. But the refutations have never been as attractive as the accusations to that part of the human temperament which more readily believes scandal than fact. But there is no doubt that the condemnation was the result of an unnecessary conflict, the *entire* circumstances of which we may never know (*Ibid.*: 158).

One must therefore refrain from drawing hasty conclusions.

Undoubtedly the major fault of most writings on the subject is oversimplification. To see the condemnation as the logical move of a power-hungry Church is as false as to say that Galileo was wholly to blame because he would not confine his statements to the logical limitations of his evidence (*Ibid.*: 161).

The unfortunate condemnation of Galileo would elicit a regret at the Second Vatican Council and an apology by Pope John Paul II. It is also to be noted that, about the same time, Giordano Bruno would be burnt at the stakes for expressing what he found to be true but was declared untrue because unacceptable by power, while the works of Copernicus were placed on the Index until 1822.

The example of Thomas More, the first English voice of the Renaissance, also comes to mind in a discussion such as this. While his *History of King Richard III* can be described as a critique of the corruption

and tyranny of the monarchy, his *Utopia* was a Renaissance version of Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Ethics*. His insistence in these and other writings on the imperative of bringing ethics into politics characterized his relationship with King Henry VIII. From the exalted position of Lord Chancellor he was persecuted and prosecuted before he was executed under the same Henry VIII. In an environment of repression when power pretended to be knowledge More dared to think aloud. As an intellectual, More was a seeker of truth who spoke the truth to power so that power would enable and not disable the people. Gerald Wegemer's portrait of Thomas More is quite revealing of the character of the man:

To understand Thomas More, and the entire Renaissance project of which he was the first major English figure, one must understand the central role that education of the whole person played in the quest of Renaissance humanists for international peace and prosperity. The education they proposed aimed at both mind and character, the same type of education that had also been the pre-eminent concern of the classical Greek and Roman authors that More, Erasmus, and others wished to see reborn. Why this classical and Renaissance concern for 'character', in Greek, *ethos*? Quite simply because, as Aristotle put it, 'as we are, so do we judge'. Experience shows that persons enslaved by uncontrolled anger or burning ambition or blinding greed cannot judge clearly; they lack the integrity of self-government that human beings need for consistent sharp-sightedness and, consequently, for prudent action.

The concept of 'integrity' is immensely important in understanding Thomas More – as well as the classical and Renaissance projects – because integrity describes actions of character that conform to conscience. And conscience More knew to be the metaphysical foundation for justice and law, arising from the very structure of our being. More was the first to use the word 'integrity' as we use it today, and he shows that integrity is impossible without a conscience guided by just law and long reflection upon the character of just law" (Thomas More Institute).

Adolf Hitler in Germany made life difficult for intellectuals who questioned the morality of his policies (Koonz, 2003). Many were killed. Those who were not killed lost their teaching positions and were hounded into exile. The Nazi regime as well as the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini determined what was to be taught and what was to be learnt. In other words, power controlled the flow of knowledge.

In the neighboring country of Chad, there is only one university. In that university, the teaching of philosophy is not allowed. If you are a

young Chadian and you wish to study Philosophy, you either go outside Chad or enroll in a Catholic Seminary. But why enroll in a Catholic Seminary if you are not studying for the priesthood? In any case, Philosophy can breed political turbulence. It can create a volatile society where people begin to question the usual way of thinking, the usual way of doing things. To allow the teaching of Philosophy is to pave the way for the emergence of Chadian versions of Socrates, Aristotle, Thomas More etc. But you do not need to cross the northeastern border of Nigeria to go to Chad. In virtually all our government-run universities in the north of Nigeria, Philosophy is conspicuously missing from the curriculum. Philosophy questions power, and rightly so. Power must be used wisely, and it takes Philosophy to inculcate values in the acquisition and use of power.

Nigeria experienced two bouts of pestilential military tyranny. The first began on January 15, 1966 and ended on October 1, 1979, while the second lasted from December 31, 1983 to May 29, 1999. Casualties of this ambiguous military adventure were the people and the institutions of the land, particularly the academia and the entire education sector. The strategy of rendering the academia impotent took various forms, some of which will be mentioned here:

1. Academicians, since they belonged to the class of “bloody civilians”, were treated with contempt and offered pittance as salaries. A lot less was budgeted for education in successive fiscal years. Over the years, this affected staffing, libraries, laboratories, and other facilities needed in order to make an academic community conducive for research and teaching.
2. The Nigerian military inaugurated the tradition of appointing (imposing) “politically correct” principal officials, such as Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Registrars, Deans and Heads of Department. This has since degenerated into a situation where there is an unwritten law, according to which principal officials of federal or state-run universities must be indigenes of the areas where such universities are located. Thus, ethnic, regional and religious affiliations were privileged over other criteria, especially the criterion of competence, in the process of appointment.
3. The most potent attack on the academia is its subjection by the military to political considerations by making the academic community subservient to an ever-expanding government bureaucracy. The National Universities Commission, at its inception in 1962, was a desk in the Federal Ministry of Education. Under military rule, by the promulgation of military decrees, the powers of the National Universities Commission increased astronomically from an advisory to a regulatory body, to the point

where a government parastatal has effectively usurped the powers of the University Senate.

4. With the enormous powers conferred on the National Universities Commission by the military, and the elastic interpretation of such powers by officials of the Commission, the process was completed whereby Nigeria's university campuses became extensions of military barracks with the "Supreme Headquarters" at the National Universities Commission in Abuja.
5. The decimation of the Nigerian academia began with the strategy of co-opting university lecturers. To provide military tyranny with intellectual legitimacy, some top ranking professors and lecturers were offered ministerial appointments or appointments as heads of government parastatals. Their poor conditions of service made such tempting offers almost irresistible.
6. Those members of the academic community who refused to be co-opted with juicy appointments exposed themselves to intimidation, incarceration and torture. Such was the case of Wole Soyinka, the 1986 Nobel Laureate for Literature, during the Yakubu Gowon era.
7. Those who refused to be co-opted but were lucky to be spared incarceration and torture were hounded into exile. Those who were unlucky were eliminated by way of assassination or judicial killing. Such was the fate of Ken Saro Wiwa in the hands of the Sani Abacha military junta in 1995.

### **IN SEARCH OF A DEMOCRATIZED CURRICULUM**

In the wake of the attack on America on September 11, 2001, many American colleges and universities designed courses and programmes to study the phenomenon that carried terrorism to a more dangerous and dehumanizing level. Such courses and programmes did not require the approval of a centralized regulatory body based in Washington, DC. In most cases, all that was needed was departmental approval. Here in Nigeria, such programmes would be described as "illegal" unless they passed the litmus test of the only regulatory body for university education. We have our own version of terrorism. Nigeria is being attacked by Boko Haram. Addressing the issue is not a matter to be left to security agencies and government officials alone. Needed also is the contribution of the academia in addressing the problem.

But university education in Nigeria is shackled by government regulation. Nigeria calls itself a federation and university education is listed on the concurrent legislative list in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. But her system of university education neither reflects federalism nor reflects democracy. That is why a university located in a remote corner of Nigeria would be compelled to have its academic brief, university law, Master Plan and curriculum approved by a regulatory body in the federal capital. In the uniformity imposed by federal

government bureaucracy, a uniformity that is inconsistent with the tenets of democracy and federalism which we profess, Nigeria is left with a university system that is inflexible and lacking in innovation, a university system incapable of responding as and when due to the challenges of nationhood and development. In this regime of uniformity that began with, but did not end with, military rule, universities are practically compelled by accreditation teams to clone what is written in the curriculum approved by the central regulatory body in the name of meeting the “Education Minimum Standard”.

But the minds of academicians are always at work. They must constantly seek ways of improving on what they are doing. That is why there is need for change in the university system. It is in this respect that I propose two sets of requirements that a curriculum must meet. First, a curriculum must be flexible, innovative, deep and wide. And, secondly, curriculum for university education must itself reflect the nature of a university as a universe of knowledge.

Regarding the first, the flexibility of a curriculum is in its ability to facilitate an ever wider exploration of the ever expanding, even though already vast, field of knowledge. The opposite of a flexible curriculum is a rigid curriculum. A rigid curriculum cannot serve the developmental needs of the polity because time and tide wait for no people. A curriculum must be ready to confront the problems of the day as soon as they rear their heads. It must be ready to include newfound truths. This cannot happen if a university has to wait for a central regulatory body in the federal capital each time it sees the need to run a programme. This can only happen in a clime where the powers of the University Senate are respected and not usurped.

A curriculum that is ready to confront new issues as soon as they show themselves is one that is innovative. The opposite is a curriculum that is lethargic and outdated. Unable to address new questions, it turns out graduates who are not up-to-date in what is supposed to be their area of competence.

A curriculum must have breadth and depth. Its opposite is a curriculum that is narrow in scope. The breadth and depth of what it offers is seen in the various possible specializations it offers. And this is what leads to the second point I wish to make.

Going by the second set of requirements, a university curriculum must reflect the character of a university. A university, by its very nature, is a universe of knowledge. Knowledge is itself a vast field in which physical, metaphysical and human sciences find a home. No province of knowledge is to be excluded from a university curriculum if the university is to be faithful to its vocation and denomination. But Nigeria’s university system favours science and technology to the detriment of the arts. It is in fact the case that you may be able to establish a university of science and technology or a university of agriculture or even a university of petroleum technology. But you may not run a university of arts. As I have argued

elsewhere, the genealogy of this bias in favour of science and technology to the detriment of humanities goes back to military rule (Akinwale, 2007). If we are battling with corruption and theft of our resources today, we must call to mind that it is this bias that has deformed Nigeria into a country without values, a gigantic beehive of moral depravity. In its preference for science and technology, university education is designed by government bureaucrats—some of whom were co-opted from the academia to make things look like the handwork of academicians—to impart technical education without ethical education. In this regard, I went on to remark:

The marginalization of the humanities in our system of education has led to untold consequences. History is the memory of a people. Without it, they are like computers without memory. When the teaching of history is considered less important, citizens are formed who can neither enter into the network of relationships that human existence is, nor act collaboratively and responsibly in the task of working for the common good. Neglect of the study of literature breeds a generation of human beings who are violent and vulgar in their use of language. The neglect of the arts has dulled our collective sense of beauty, and it is manifest in pervasive urban decay in Nigeria, the continuous deterioration of our cities into unplanned and over-populated junkyards. Beauty has deserted our cities because we have banished her by marginalizing art (*Ibid.*).

These sets of requirements need to be met if a country is to meet her developmental objectives, that is, if development itself is not reduced, by way of a monstrous misconception, to the accomplishments of science, technology and the economy but as the creation of a polity inhabited by peoples of actualized potentials and fulfilled aspirations. It is impossible for university curriculum to meet these sets of requirements when university education is still run as if Nigeria were still under military rule. But the laws regulating university education in Nigeria were made by the military. To paraphrase Walter Carrington, a former US Ambassador to Nigeria, Nigeria is no longer under military rule, but she is governed by military rules. Nigeria's university system, like many other institutions in the land, and indeed the psyche of the Nigerian, suffer from a military hangover. Tyranny deforms institutions of civil society to promote the self-serving political agenda of the tyrant, and the academia is always the first target of tyranny. The military made laws to silence the academic community. Yet, we and our elected legislators have not seen the need to repeal such laws.

Not only do the laws governing university education in Nigeria reflect the command and control culture of the military, they are very much consistent with the logic of tyrannical regimes that insist that power must

control knowledge, and that the government must control what is taught and what is learnt in the academia so that academicians do not overthrow government with their ideas. This paper is being written twelve years after military rule. Yet, as vast and diverse as Nigeria is, she still has one regulatory body licensing and overseeing Nigeria's one hundred universities and all their faculties, departments and programmes.

The diversity and size of Nigeria call for reconceptualizing and decentralizing of the process of licencing universities in Nigeria. In other democratic climes, granting a university licence (charter) is a legislative act. But because in Nigeria, the military collapsed and usurped executive, legislative and even judicial functions, the granting of a licence became an executive act. It remains so even after the military left. The fact that the process is controlled by one regulatory body in a country as vast as Nigeria, and the fact that the requirements were made difficult to attain by the military has left us in a situation where it is a lot easier to start a university in Benin, Kenya or Ghana, countries with much smaller population of students, than it is in Nigeria. Furthermore, a situation where a government agency oversees the process of accreditation leaves the academia at the mercy of government and makes it easy for power to regulate the flow and the quality of knowledge. In concrete terms, a government that does not want you to teach a course or run a programme that is considered capable of making young minds "volatile" may use its bureaucracy to deny you accreditation. That is why Nigeria should discard the present process of accreditation. Accreditation should not be in the hands of government but in the hands of private professional bodies who should be able to ascertain that a programme, as it is designed and taught, is capable of producing graduates whom they can admit into their circle of professionals as colleagues.

It is my submission that the related military decrees need to be repealed and new laws made to regulate university education in Nigeria bearing in mind that there is a difference between regulation and suffocation. In practical terms, there is an urgent need to free university education, and indeed education in general, from the shackles of government. Government control of education is a double disadvantage. First, it makes government bigger, and big government is expensive and unresponsive, inefficient and corrupt. Secondly, it slows down university education in a world where universities compete across national boundaries. Do we still wonder why Nigerian universities do not come near the best universities in the world when it comes to ratings?

## **CONCLUSION**

I have attempted to show, by citing some examples, that the intervention of power in the academia has been to the detriment of the latter. Knowledge must speak to power, for knowledge itself is power. But what we have here in Nigeria is a situation where tyranny insists that power

must silence knowledge. The situation reflects the type of relationship that exists between the government and the governed in Nigeria. In this relationship, government is more powerful than the people. When government is more powerful than the people that is when government determines what is taught and what is learnt. The role of government is not to fix curriculum but to ensure that every Nigerian student studies in an environment that is conducive to learning.

Curriculum should shape policy of governance. Policy of governance should not determine what is taught, what is learnt, and the modality of transmission of knowledge. But for as long as the powers of the University Senate are usurped by a government parastatal power will continue to control the flow of knowledge in gross violation of the fundamental right of expression. There is a danger in such an arrangement; it impedes authentic development.

A developed polity is an association of persons of actualized potentials and fulfilled aspirations. A country where the academia is subservient to government bureaucracy is a country where power controls knowledge. A country where power controls knowledge is a country where freedom is abbreviated or altogether denied. Where there is no freedom, and here we are talking of academic freedom, potentials cannot be actualized. Where potentials cannot be actualized aspirations cannot be fulfilled. Where personal and collective potentials are not actualized, and personal and collective aspirations are not fulfilled, there can be no authentic development. That is why an academia freed from the bureaucratic shackles of power is a prerequisite for authentic development.

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## CHAPTER VII

# UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY AND CONSTRAINTS THEREIN

SEGUN ODUNUGA

There is a global concern about the university system: the gradual erosion of autonomy. Our discourse on the issue is apt and in concert with the worry being expressed all over the world. The autonomy of the university lies in nothing else but the freedom of the faculty members and students to inquire into various aspects of knowledge in order to advance society. University autonomy, therefore, is the unfettered effort of the scholar within the system to teach, conduct research and communicate facts as available to him or others, without any external interference. After all, staff are employed purely in the light of their professional ability as teachers and researchers so as to benefit society with the results of such activities. If this view in centuries past had led to the university being labelled the 'ivory tower', this is changing fast in the light of the intrusion into how universities are now run.

Since state funds are being injected into the universities, politicians who control legislatures demand that there should be some rationalization of courses and in a number of cases some subject areas have been merged while others have been scrapped as not economically viable. In that respect, the acquisition of knowledge in tertiary institutions like the university is being denied some citizens who are now forced to look for other options in order to be able to acquire university education. This is a departure from the 19<sup>th</sup> century German notion of university system: *Lernfreiheit* for students and *Lehrfreiheit* for professors. The notion was to remove any sort of 'coercion' in the learning situation, whereas to be forced to choose a discipline other than one's desire, entails coercion.

What we witness in a number of countries is delimitation between "financially sustainable universities" and the financially weak ones. In certain cases there is a reluctance to inject public funds into the weak ones whereas they are the ones in need. This is not a matter of the academic capability, but because some authorities contend that the universities themselves have not been able to attract funds outside state grants sufficiently well to keep them afloat. In midst of all this there is still the loud acclaim that governments recognise university autonomy.

In New Zealand in 1989 the authorities tried to pacify academia by associating academic freedom with universities' role as "critic and conscience of society" and this was enshrined in the Education Act 1989. In September 1997, the Ministry of Education stated that the government should use the Crown's ownership interest in tertiary education institutions

(TEIs) to ensure, among other things “protection of the tradition of academic freedom”, which was defined as “the role of academic staff to act as critic and conscience of society under which they question and test received freedom, put forward new ideas and challenge orthodox, or state unpopular, opinions (Kerr, 1988:3).”

Almost a decade later the Council of the European Union affirmed its belief in the academic autonomy of universities as “not only crucial to the achievement of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) but as also a determining factor in the completion of the European Research Area (ERA) as stated in the European Commission Green Paper “the European Research Area: New Perspectives” (Estermann and Nokkala, 2007). The European Union believes in a knowledge-based economy and society. But the relationship between the state and higher education institutions has become tenuous and the subject of much debate. In recent times student protests are being staged on the streets of European capitals in disagreement over cuts in funding of higher institutions of learning and the closure of a number of departments.

In the United States the clamour over university autonomy is sometimes beclouded under the First Amendment which states that Congress shall make no law curtailing the freedom of speech, or of the press. Its interpretation by the Supreme Court of the United States is that the university can “determine for itself on academic grounds”:

- i. who may teach,
- ii. what may be taught,
- iii. how it should be taught, and
- iv. who may be admitted to study.

The First Amendment thus is applicable to the institution, not the individual, in that the Court has never recognised that professors possess under the First Amendment the right of academic freedom to determine for themselves the content of their courses and scholarship. While the First Amendment is applicable in public institutions, it may not apply to private institutions (Wikipedia, Academic Freedom).

In the case of Nigeria all universities hold their existence to law. Therefore, there is no need for any constitutional amendment being involved through court decision.

## **THE NIGERIAN CRISIS AND UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY**

When at the University of Ibadan convocation on Foundation Day on November 17, 1967, the Visitor, General Yakubu Gowon, in his address referred to the Nigerian crisis, he highlighted, according to Oloruntimehin, “the tribal chauvinism” which had been a feature of life in the university as well as the role of former members of the university in planning the secession of the Eastern Region from the country. The secession plan, he

said, was hatched at Nsukka University “with the active assistance of some of the senior staff who were once with you on this campus” (Oloruntimehin, 1973:110).

At that point in time little did many realise that the military had pencilled down the university for action in that the sanctity of university autonomy was still very much believed in. When on November 30, 1967 the Visitor at an Emergency Council Meeting at Dodan Barracks “settled” the Dike-Adamolekun rift, the intervention was viewed as benign. The Governing Council of the University had failed to effect a settlement, and the University was polarized. Therefore, it seemed a solution had to come from outside, if the court to which Adamolekun had turned was the only way out. In the end it was a political decision, though subtle. It was evident that the military had identified the universities as factors in the Nigerian national crisis.

In the course of years following, the military decided to influence events in the universities by ensuring that the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor was made by the Visitor (the Head of State). Perhaps having a premonition of resistance from the ivory tower that whoever was appointed by the military would not enjoy the support of fellow academics, the Federal Military Government by decree amended the University of Ibadan Act 1962 as follows:

1. In section 6(2) of the University of Ibadan Act 1962 (herein referred to as “the principal Act”) there shall be inserted immediately after the word “shall” where it occurs in the third line thereof, the words “to the exclusion of any other person or authority”.

In effect section 6(2) then read thus:

2. Subject to the two last going sections and the provision of this Act relating to the Visitor, the Vice-Chancellor shall, to the exclusion of any other person or authority have the general functions conferred on him by this Act or otherwise, of directing the activities of the university.

With this decree the democratic system within the University was set aside for the political expediency of the military regime. The erosion of university autonomy had started in earnest and when in 1973 the academic staff thought they could seize the opportunity of a strike to demonstrate their resistance to the erosion, the military regime hit them hard by urging them to vacate the staff quarters they were occupying. It was an unexpected turn of events and caused dissent among the academics.

The university system had not recovered when the Udoji Commission report came with its merging of the public and civil service in 1974. This is where the resistance to erosion of university should have

come at the national level. Instead, the attraction was the new salary scale and the arrears. Further palliative steps were taken by the military with setting up of the Cookey Commission. A year later the Murtala Muhammed /Obasanjo purge further shattered any hope of regaining university autonomy. Since then things have not been the same in the system.

The shock of the purge was such that academics, particularly medical doctors, quickly closed down their private clinics and private enterprises rather than resist. But while academics rushed to comply with the instruction that they could not have private enterprises, two technicians in the University of Ibadan stood their ground that they were University of Ibadan employees and not civil servants. Their firm, Patex Benz, was kept functioning and they were made to face trial in 1976 at the High Court in Ibadan. Their lawyer entered a no case plea which the judge upheld. The prosecution appealed and the Court of Appeal upheld the judgment of the lower court. Still dissatisfied the prosecution went to the Supreme Court which sent the case back to the High Court for fresh hearing.

At this point in time there was a democratically elected government in Oyo State under the governorship of Bola Ige. When the case came up the Attorney-General of the State entered a *nolle prosequi*. That closed the case. Allusion has been made to this because the academics did not go the length the technicians went. Rather most of us complied.

There is still much external interference with the university system, particularly from the politicians. Recently, the Senate of the country passed a motion declaring illegal post-UTME examinations by Nigerian universities. That highest body of legislation failed to take cognizance of the fact that in order to re-establish the norms that made Nigerian education competitive with the other parts of the world decades ago, there should be some screening of candidates to discern those that are real university material from the others. While there is nothing strange in having a joint matriculation body, each University still reserves the right to screen candidates claimed to have successfully passed the UTME. As Afe Babalola notes, "There is... nothing illegal in universities setting up guidelines and giving effect to such guidelines. Giving effect to the guidelines of each university is only possible through screening by each university. This is a task that is beyond the JAMB, and cannot in any case be undertaken by it. If university certificates are awarded based on character and learning, the quality assurance for these must be instituted right from the beginning (Babalola, 2011:19). The time has come for the university system to re-assert its autonomy in that regard.

## **FUNDING**

It is a common knowledge that another way of putting pressure on the university is through funding. Our Vice-Chancellors and Bursars know what it takes in shuttling between their locations and Abuja or the state capitals, as the case may be, virtually begging for the release of their

allocations. The NUC gives the impression that federal universities rely almost exclusively on Federal Government sources, and that is incorrect. Most of the time the allocations are not enough and are irregular. If the Federal Government still maintains its stance that “no student shall be denied access to university education on the basis of financial inability” it should not only increase its grants but provide scholarships to those who are financially handicapped. In a number of countries such students are granted loans which are payable on graduation and while employed. What applies to the Federal Government equally applies to state governments.

A cursory look at NUC figures released for the period 1997-2006 shows the ebb and flow of funding by the Federal Government but those in administration know that those allocations did not meet the needs of the institutions.

Anyone who learns that the University of Ibadan, for instance, has a current budget allocation of ₦1 billion would be amazed at how generous the Federal Government has become. But the monthly subvention of ₦752,071,367 is grossly inadequate. The headship allowance is still ₦2,000 while successful lecturers for overseas conferences are given about ₦250,000 and a little above, those for local conferences are given between ₦50,000 and ₦70,000. Happily there is some allocation for research, but how adequate is that is another matter.

The condition in state universities is appalling. In Ogun State, the Olabisi Onabanjo University on paper has a monthly subvention of ₦148,000,000 and ₦1.25m running cost. The wage bill is ₦180,000,000. Therefore, ₦32m has to be sourced internally every month. As if that was not harsh enough, the allocation from October 2010 to May 2011 has not been released; that is ₦1,332,000,000 outstanding. Half was released for June to August 2011, leaving a deficit of ₦222,000,000.00, and full for September and October 2011. TASUED has ₦61,236,845 as monthly subvention against a wage bill of ₦104m. Before now a total of ₦6m was deducted at source as tax but now ₦19m is being deducted leaving only ₦42m. How can the authorities cope? For political expediency, both the Federal and State Governments, except Lagos, would not welcome substantial increase in tuition fees, and there are no working and capital grants. We have decaying infrastructure throughout. There is lack of scientific experiments and practicals, and universities are a shadow of what the system was decades ago. In spite of all this more universities are being established by both the Federal and State Governments.

Conscious of the decay in the system, many Nigerian parents have resorted to sending their children abroad. According to the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, “there are about 71,000 Nigerians in Ghana paying about ₦155 billion annually as tuition fees as against the annual budget of ₦121 billion for all federal universities... the tuition paid by Nigerians students studying in Ghana with a better organised

system is more than the annual budget of all federal universities in the country (Sanusi, 2011:25).

**Table 1: Trend of Federal Government releases to Federal Universities for Ten Years (in Naira, 1997-2006)** — source: NUC records

**a. Recurrent**

YEAR	REQUESTED	ALLOCATED	%	RECEIVED	%
1997	10,522,155,501.00	4,929,093,300.00	47%	3,697,819,940.00	35%
1998	17,427,030,158.00	5,415,461,292.00	31%	7,295,447,523.50	42%
1999	34,695,109,125.00	7,568,388,580.00	22%	10,362,430,271.98	30%
2000	47,346,272,832.00	28,206,218,865.91	60%	28,206,218,865.91	60%
2001	49,150,259,219.11	26,948,001,227.42	55%	28,419,719,502.84	58%
2002	57,545,682,641.00	26,425,549,500.00	46%	30,351,483,193.00	53%
2003	65,516,123,727.00	34,411,319,280.00	53%	34,203,050,936.33	52%
2004	199,677,706,206.00	41,051,218,783.61	21%	41,492,948,787.01	21%
2005	42,604,258,068.00	50,961,971,536.00	120%	49,453,098,168.72	116%
2006	71,090,382,041.00	75,400,267,475.00	106%	75,400,267,475.00	106%

**b. Capital**

YEAR	REQUESTED	ALLOCATED	%	RECEIVED	%
1997	5,298,000,000.00	2,130,085,265.00	40%	1,650,354,002.00	31%
1998	5,340,500,000.00	2,781,050,000.00	52%	2,502,945,000.00	47%
1999	6,189,000,000.00	2,939,000,000.00	47%	1,469,500,000.00	24%
2000	18,233,724,860.00	5,582,721,446.00	31%	1,936,785,632.00	11%
2001	19,761,500,000.00	4,896,323,619.00	25%	4,226,691,359.00	21%
2002	4,609,802,000.00	7,352,901,000.00	160%	—	—
2003	13,246,000,000.00	—	—	—	—
2004	16,945,000,000.00	11,973,338,699.00	71%	11,973,338,699.00	71%
2005	10,112,800,000.00	11,253,660,000.00	111%	8,822,869,440.00	87%
2006	6,976,417,723.00	6,976,417,723.00	100%	6,976,416,815.00	100%

Notes: A: The Federal Govt. also made direct releases to some universities from approved budget allocation in some years without reference to NUC. NUC therefore has no record of such release. B: The allocations represent approved allocations based on the Approved Budget. C: Receipt excess of allocation implies supplementary grants released to the University/centre on receipt.

**Table 2: The stark reality**

S/ NO	INSTITUTION	MONTHLY SALARY	RUNNING COST	SOURCE
1	UNIV. OF IBADAN	752,071,367	70.4m quarterly	NUC
2	UNIV. OF LAGOS	621,984,417	66.1m quarterly	NUC
3	UNAAB	354,608,908	52.8m quarterly	NUC
4	DELSU	368,000,000		MIN. EDUC
5	OOU	148,000,000	1.25m monthly	
6	TASUED	61,236,845	----	
7	ALL TERTIARY INST, OGUN	348,000,000	----	
8	MAPOLY	62,438,000	----	
9	ALL POLYS & COEs, DELTA	350,000,000		MIN. EDUC

According to the Network of Migration Research on Africa (NOMRA) some 10,090 Nigerians granted visas in the U.K in 2009 paid tuition fees of ₦42billion. All these are admission of the loss of confidence in the university system in Nigeria. While some parents and students campaign against increase in tuition fees in the country others pay for overseas training for their children. There are those who prefer to send their children to private universities, costly as we presume they are, rather than have them in public universities because of the state in which they are.

The way out of this is financial autonomy for the universities. In the 1980s, under the Vice-Chancellorship of Professor S. O. Olayide, the University of Ibadan established the Centre for Resource Management and Consultancy (CEREMAC) under which the Iyan Project was started. The University was to build a five-star hotel for which a loan of \$10 million dollars was sourced in Canada with the approval of the Shagari administration, but was thwarted by an official of the Ministry of Finance. There was to be a Bank, and members of staff who had consultancies were to pay between 10-15 per cent to the University since they were employees on full-time basis. There was a change in administration and CEREMAC was abandoned. It is worth noting that the person who started the Iyan Project is today making a success of it. In most of our universities today

there are new ventures to generate revenue internally. How successful they are is not known because university officials are not transparent about the returns, except in the Olabisi Onabanjo University. Many bursary officials regard internally generated revenue as a secret which should not be divulged. Universities should be allowed to set adequate tuition fees, to borrow money on the financial markets, invest in financial products and to own land and estates.

In the endeavour to have financial autonomy, the universities should enter into partnership with the private sector to effect the notion of gown and town. In a number of countries industries collaborate with higher institutions in areas of research and industrial training for students, thus enhancing the system in the universities. Also, a lot can be gained through exchange with foreign universities willing to partner with their Nigerian counterparts.

The public universities in Nigeria have to be made more comfortable in regard to funding, and if allocations are made on quarterly basis instead of monthly, the universities, under proper leadership, would be able to plan and utilise resources to the fullest. There is a misconception on the part of the governments that if subventions are made quarterly the universities may invest and thus make extra money. The universities really should have investment businesses that should relieve them from over-reliance on federal or state subventions on issues they can handle internally.

## **AUTONOMY**

Is Nigerian society willing to grant the university the ability to decide, as in the case of the European Union, on:

- organisational structures and institutional governance – in particular, the ability to establish structures and governing bodies, university leadership and who is accountable to whom?
- financial issues – in particular the different forms of acquiring and allocating funding, the ability to charge tuition fees, to accumulate surplus, to borrow and raise money from different sources, to own land and buildings and reporting procedures as accountability tools?
- staffing matters – in particular the capacity to recruit staff, to settle terms of employment, such as salaries and issues relating to employment contracts, such as civil servant status?
- academic matters – in particular the capacity to define the academic profile, to introduce or terminate degree programmes, to define the structure and content of degree programmes, to define roles and responsibilities with regard to the quantity assurance of programmes and degrees, and the extent of control over student admissions?

What does autonomy require?

- i. The Chancellor whose position is honorific should be appointed by Government after consultation with the university community.
- ii. Freedom of the university to choose its leaders without external influence. The Government has the right to set up the Governing Council with a Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council with a number of members of Council.
- iii. The choice of Vice-Chancellor should be the preserve of the university community alone. The Visitor, out of courtesy, should be informed of the choice.
- iv. There should be freedom for the faculties to determine the choice of disciplines the university can make available to students, and this is subject to Senate approval.
- v. There should be relative financial autonomy for the university, with the Government providing sufficient grants to keep the university afloat.
- vi. The democratic nature of the university with the committee system should be strictly adhered to.
- vii. Academic freedom under no circumstances should not be used by faculty members to shield themselves from inadequacies.
- viii. Teachers should serve as role models to ensure high morale within, and raise the standards of scholarship.
- ix. There should be financial autonomy, with university itself generating sufficient funds to enable it invest in businesses that are lucrative. A lot can be achieved if agricultural faculties are not engaged in theory alone but in practical production of food that can be sold to the immediate community.  
The Department of Agric Engineering should design tools to enhance farming and relieve our farmers from the age-long burden of tilling the land with hoes and cutlasses.  
Recently a university in Uganda developed an electric car and is currently working on an electric bus. When will we as Nigerians wake up to such a challenge? And are we willing to enter the world stage as having institutions of higher learning to reckon with, i.e. universities of world ranking?
- x. There should be transparency in all transactions in the university

## **CONCLUSION**

The path to the restoration of university autonomy lies in the ability of the academics and other staff to insist on going back to the old system through which the leaders of the universities were chosen from within. While governments have the right to choose the Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor and some members of the governing councils, the choice of the Vice-Chancellor should be left to the university community. In that regard, if the

committee system becomes an organ of decision making, and academic power and responsibility are decentralized to the Departments and Faculties, apathy will disappear.

With financial autonomy, the university will be able to provide a conducive environment for conducting research and disseminating proper information. Such an enabling situation assures job satisfaction and better results from the staff. There will be fewer disruptions in the academic calendar, and students going through the system will be better placed to rub shoulders with counterparts anywhere, while teachers themselves will earn national and international acclaim.

Under no circumstance, should university teachers allow themselves to be covered by politicians in government. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee once noted:

University academics themselves are under an obligation to bring to public attention, through public debate, issues on which they have a contribution to make, informed by their research. Not all criticisms need be adverse. But the tension between universities being on the one hand funded by the state, and the other free to challenge the state, is an accepted and important tradition to be maintained (Kerr, 1988).

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**CHAPTER VIII**

**THE MYTHS AND REALITIES  
OF THE CRISIS OF ACCESS  
TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

*FRANCIS EGBOKHARE*

Higher education in Nigeria faces two basic problems. The first is the assurance of quality standards. The second is lack of access to the vast majority of applicants. This paper addresses the second problem. For the problem of access, two solutions are in the process of implementation. The first is the licensing of new universities, particularly private ones. The second is distance learning.

**WHAT IS DISTANCE LEARNING?**

The United States Distance Learning Association defines it as “the acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction, encompassing all technologies and other forms of learning at a distance.” “It is instruction that occurs when the instructor and the student are separated in time and space or both” (Western cooperative for Educational Telecommunications).

Moore 1966 defines it as planned learning that normally occurs from a different place as teaching and as a result, requires special techniques, special methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as special organizational and administrative arrangements”. Here are examples:

- Correspondence education
- Educational television
- Educational radio.
- Online Learning using the Internet
- Computer based learning
- Web based learning.

These media may be used exclusively or in combination, in what has come to be known as blended learning.

Distance learning, like any learning, entails information sharing on three complementary levels:

- among teachers

- from teachers (and publishers) to students
- among students.

Information sharing requires organization of its content in descending levels, as follows (Bamiro & Adedeji, 2010: 24)

- Program
- Course
- Module
- Lesson
- Component.

Distance learning requires assessment, according to the following criteria:

- Governance
- Relevance
- Access
- Quality
- Cost.

On-line Distance Learning in Nigeria faces the following, among many other problems:

- Poor enrolment capacity due to inappropriate models of ODL, inadequate infrastructure and poor technology outlay.
- Poor understanding of the concept and practice of ODL.
- Poorly trained staff and inadequate technical capacity and skills in e-learning technology, online tutoring, ODL management and delivery.
- Poor quality output of the basic education level of people who constitute the new majority of distance learners.
- Paucity of good quality content.
- Poor internet penetration and low computer literacy skills of learners.
- Rigid and outmoded regulatory environment.
- Lack of collaboration, partnership and synergy between institutions and private sector organisations involved in ODL.
- Unsustainable low enrolment levels.
- Inability to conduct continuous assessment at a distance.
- Poor business model.
- Lack of institutional support of centres engaged in ODL in dual mode Universities.
- High cost of access, bandwidth, computers and accessories.

- Lack of classroom space.
- High level of poverty of distance learners.
- Impersonation at examinations.
- Delay in marking and processing of results.
- Inconsistent scheduling and academic instability.

### THE CRISIS OF ACCESS

The following is evidence of a crisis of access to higher education in Nigeria:

- the number of candidates applying to Nigerian universities contrasted with the number of those admitted
- the number of Nigerians seeking overseas undergraduate training
- the number of overseas student recruitment operations in Nigeria
- the operation of satellite campuses and illegal universities in Nigeria.

This evidence becomes more apparent when we consider the following statistics:

#### Secondary School Enrolment on Zonal Basis (2006)

(*Ibid.*: 20)

Zone	No. of Schools	JSS Enrolment	SSS Enrolment	Total Enrolment
North Central	2,859	439,794	367,185	806,979
North East	1,079	285,597	201,112	486,709
North West	2,253	481,453	337,086	818,539
South East	2,153	318,134	310,167	628,301
South-South	2,874	427,893	394,274	822,167
South West	3,724	785,456	656,409	1,441,865
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,942</b>	<b>2,738,327</b>	<b>2,266,233</b>	<b>5,004,560</b>

#### Candidates' Performance at UTME

(Vanguard, 2111)

	No of Application	No Admitted/ Available Space	% Admitted
95/1996/1997	512, 777	37,498	7.3.
96/1997/1998	472,362	76,430	16.2
97/1999	419,807	72,791	17.3
99/2000	418,928	64,718	15.4

2000/2001	550,399	60,718	11.0
2001/2002	749,727	90,769	12.1
2002/2003	994,381	51,845	5.2.
2003/2004	1,046,103	104,991	10.1
2011/2012	1,493,604	300,000	20%

### Candidates' Performance at 2011 UTME

(Ibid.)

Year	Total No. of Candidates	Score 200-249	Score 250-269	Score 270-299	Score Below 200
2011	1,493,604	495,426	67,732	31,444	842,851

### Supplementary Admissions into U.I., 2008/09 session

Total no. invited for interview after due processing of JAMB/SSCE/WASC/NECO results	1,564
Total no. interviewed	1,310
Total no. recommended for JAMB admission	1,129
Rate of Attrition	13.8%

Note that the National Open University of Nigeria's failure, coupled with the fact that the 45 private Universities account for about 3% of the admitted candidates, accounts partly for the constraint of Access.

What is the role of economic disparity? Detailed statistics of the economic background of students in higher institutions are not available. Yet the glaring fact is that the poor mostly patronize government universities, where the expense is less. The rich prefer private universities or study overseas.

Consider that over 71,000 Nigerians are in Ghanaian Universities, 10,090 in European Universities. The total amount paid yearly in visa fees and tuition is in excess of the amount spent yearly by the Federal Government on its Universities.

### Growth of the Nigerian University System (source: NUC)

Period	Federal	State	Private	Total
1948	1	-	-	1
1950-59	-	-	-	-
1960-69	4	-	-	4
1970-79	8	1	-	9
1980-89	9	7	-	16
1990-99	3	5	3	11
2000-07	2	17	29	48

2008-12	9	6	18	33
TOTAL	36	36	50	122

**Growth in Student Enrolment** (source: NUC)

Year	No. of Universities	No. of Students	No. of Students/ University
1979	14	57,542	4,110
1999	36	300,618	8,351
2006	80	810,132	10,127
2007	89 ( 91 )	1,096,312	12,318

What has been the government’s reaction to the crisis of access? So far, it has been:

- The creation of New Universities
- The creation of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)
- The creation of Innovation Institutes
- Licensing of Polytechnics to award Degrees
- Approving affiliation Programs
- Licensing of Private Universities
- Creation of dual-mode Universities
- Creating Parity between Polytechnics and Universities
- Merging of Matriculation examinations into tertiary institutions

**Comparative Lessons from Numbers of Universities** (source: NUC)

COUNTRY	POPULATION (Millions)	NO. OF UNIVERSITIES
India	1000	8,407
USA	290	5,758
Bangladesh	138	1,258
Argentina	39	1,705
Indonesia	238	1,236
Japan	127	1,223
NIGERIA	140	122

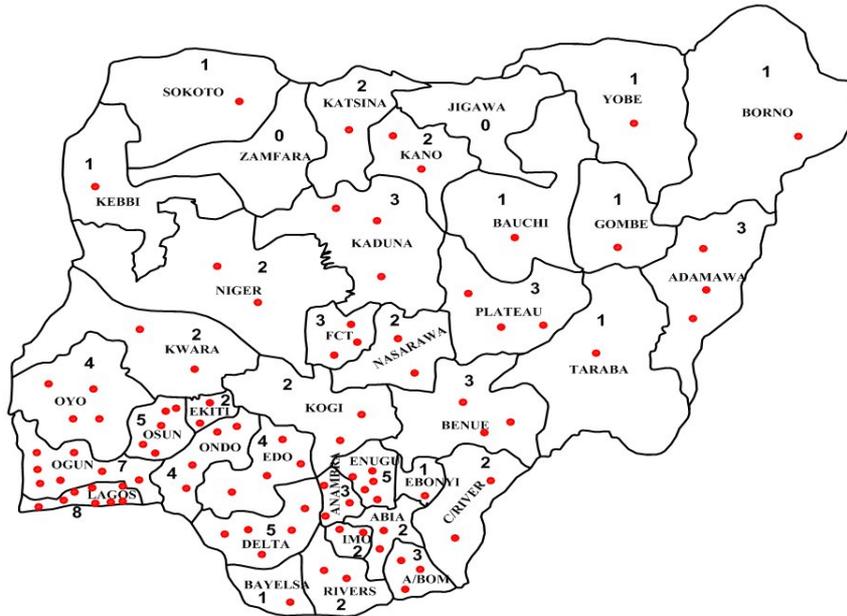
Are there too many Universities in Nigeria? No, but we must pay attention to available resources and capacities. There is a shortfall of over 24,000 academic staff.

**Geographical distribution of universities in Nigeria**

Regarding the distribution of universities, match university density with the number of applications for JAMB. The Federal Government creates new Universities even in places where demand for higher education is non-existent.

Several critical issues remain concerning the crisis of access. This crisis is not general. It plays out along the following lines:

- The gender factor
- The state factor



- Age—Most of the applicants are between 18 and 23
- Discipline
- Poverty—While private universities are struggling for students, there is oversubscription to universities owned by the Federal Government
- An apparent over-exaggeration of the crisis; from the school certificate and Post UTME pass rate, it is clear that a high percentage of those who apply to Universities are not qualified.
- The failure of the Polytechnics and Colleges of Education system as alternative to university education exaggerates the crisis.
- The incidence of private tuition operations
- The increasing role of high profile consultancy organizations who now represent foreign universities. While NUC is closing down satellite campuses and so called illegal Universities, no one is regulating high profile consultancy outfits which are running programs on behalf of foreign Universities. This is class based regulation. Let us not forget tutorial centers that have sprung up.

## CONCLUSION

1. There is a critical need for research before intervention.

2. The fact that Nigerians are willing to pay for education abroad, notwithstanding the availability of private university options, shows that it is equally a crisis of confidence as it is a crisis of access.
3. The creation of new universities should address demand in terms of location and courses to offer.
4. The response to the crisis by universities and government is not well informed: The former are creating part-time programs in spite of shortage of staff and content, while the latter are multiplying universities without regard for resources and capacity.
5. The closure of satellite campuses and campuses of overseas universities is treating the symptoms of a more fundamental problem, since Government itself is the most guilty party of creating degree mills. State universities are a scandal.
6. The real crisis is at the primary and secondary levels.
7. Education is now commoditized, and demand and supply principles apply.
8. The role of technology cannot be ignored. We are in a global village. Closing satellite campuses will not work since candidates can have access to universities abroad through the internet.
9. We recommend an integrative ODL framework that will harness private sector capacities and public infrastructure and assets, such as broadcast media, mobile infrastructure, academic collective, and library resources, cyber-café, electronic test centers, the postal system etc.

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## CHAPTER IX

# THE INTERNET AS COMMUNICATION STRATEGY BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES AND THE PUBLIC

*OLUSOLA OYEYINKA OYEWO and MOSHOOD OLAWALE*

The business of communication exempts no human being. Either intentionally or unintentionally, human beings communicate. One can choose not to talk, but one cannot choose not to communicate. (Gamble and Gamble:1999). Communication is very vital, as it aids social interaction among human beings (Burton and Thaka, 2006). Communication involves the interaction of meaningful messages between/among the communicators (Wikipedia, 2011).

The rapid change in technology advancement has not only affected development across the world, but also communication, especially in institutions and corporate organizations where the importance of communication, formal or informal, downward or upward, cannot be ignored. “Good communication is the lifeblood of my enterprise, large or small. Communication is essential to keep our entire organization functioning at maximum levels and to make the most of our greatest management resource—our people” (Ojo and Umera-Okeke, 2010, quoting Hersey, et al, 2006). Hall (2002:165) adds that such communications must be “accurate information with the appropriate emotional overtones.”

The importance of communication to managers in an organization, according to James (2006), as quoted by Ojo and Umera-Okeke (2010), includes provision of a common thread for the management processes of planning, organizing, leading and controlling. Effective communication skills can enable managers to draw on the vast array of talents available in the multicultural world of organizations. Many theories have been developed to ensure that there is free flow of information between an institution or corporate organization and its public. However, Baker (2002) argues that many communication theories are not so relevant in today’s service world as well as today’s technologically globalized world. New technology is also responsible for the University of Leicester’s comment that “databases supporting management and corporate information (such as student and staff information) will be phased out and replaced by centrally-supported systems” (University of Leicester:1).

### THE NEED FOR CHANGE

Web-based access to services and facilities for users is on the increase. Due to a high competitive environment and many expectations

from users of services, it is vital that the University provide a high quality professional service to members of its public ([www.le.ac.uk](http://www.le.ac.uk)). Failure to develop effective system integration and service delivery could have serious implications for a university's public image, the development of teaching and learning, the dissemination of research findings, and internal and external communications. "The University could also be seriously disadvantaged in terms of marketing, particularly with respect to recruitment of students and the quality of service provided to its public at large" ([www.le.ac.uk](http://www.le.ac.uk), 4).

There is a strong need for better information management within university systems in order to meet expected developmental goals. The change being talked about involves a fundamental review of the way that corporate information (such as student records) is handled across the University. "The changes will not only impact on IT services, but will also challenge established processes and procedures, and are likely to lead to broader changes within the University". ([www.le.ac.uk](http://www.le.ac.uk).)

Another very important factor responsible for the change from the old system of communication to the modern, within and between the university and its public, is that the old systems can be very expensive and therefore restrict development. "In recent years the level of investment by the University in its IT services and infrastructure has restricted development capability" ([www.le.ac.uk](http://www.le.ac.uk)). The ability to centralize such data and information will definitely reduce the financial cost of management of the university

Other factors that necessitate the shift from the old system to the new system include overlapping functionality between systems, limited inter-operability between systems giving rise to requirements for data to be re-entered manually, and data that are updated on one data base not automatically being updated on other databases, duplication of data across the University, inconsistent and poor quality data in some areas, underdeveloped, inefficient, high-maintenance system interfaces, and inconsistent user experience.

## **FEATURES AND FACILITIES**

The use of the mass media, broadcast and print, has contributed immensely to the process of communication between the university and its public. "Implementation of information and communication technologies (ICT) such as radio, television, computers, and the emergence of Internet proved to be sufficient tools to minimize the gap" (Gultom:2006). The use of the Internet seems to be gaining much attention.

The use of websites has brought in a lot of new features developed to meet modern challenges. New features of communication include voice mail, coaxial cable for video distribution, and fiber-optic cable for high-speed data communication (Rood:1991), instant messaging, text messaging, social networking, podcasts, photo galleries, video, social bookmarking,

virtual reality sites, social networks such as Facebook, You Tube, and MySpace (Chase:2008).

University websites allow users to have access to a variety of information, such as class registration, billings such as school fees, financial aids, housing contracts, meal plan options, information about other students such as their profiles, and the creation of a personal profile to share with other students (Chase:2008).

### **NEED FOR TRAINING**

The introduction of information dissemination through the Internet has brought universities new challenges, such as technical know-how. In order to meet such challenges, ICT training and education are needed. Gultom (2006:2) reports that, in order to stay in touch with the new developments in ICT, UNIMED has sent several academic staff to attend a variety of workshops. Rood (1991:5) adds that:

To acquaint everyone on campus with the new system, each department appointed a telecommunications representative as a liaison for the project's duration. Each representative received early training to provide him or her with the knowledge and skills necessary to translate departmental requirements into the service orders for the technicians... Departments relied on their representatives to help them learn the capabilities of the new equipment and services.

### **BENEFITS OF MODERN METHODS**

The purchase of new telecommunications systems has brought a number of benefits. In the opinion of Chase (2008), web based communication has the advantages of reaching a new audience almost anywhere and at any time, keeping existing audience engaged, providing audience voices, offering self-service opportunities, engaging students with the campus community, and building solid relationships. Rood (1991:4) states that "the university can support distribution of video programming from its media center and access three university-owned satellite dishes to distribute programs to other sites." He adds that, "our new telecommunications system benefits everyone on campus by adding both convenience and capabilities."

According to the University of Leicester's Information and Communication Strategy, the benefits expected from the modern way of communication include the following:

- enhanced reputation,
- marketing opportunities and advantages,

- streamlining of access to, delivery and monitoring of, learning (learning resources, assessment, administration of courses etc),
- improved learning experience,
- remote and 24/7 access to a broader range of services,
- greater efficiency in processing of data and information,
- reduced costs through standardisation of processes,
- possible scope for cost savings arising from elimination of duplication,
- a significant improvement in the quality, integrity and timeliness of information,
- improved management information,
- greater ability to meet external demands for information,
- removal of barriers to development at a departmental level through central service provision,
- more efficient and effective use of existing resources both centrally and within departments.

In spite of the broad advantages offered by this modern way of communication, any communication issued by the university still must be guided by “the principles of openness, transparency and consistency” (Corporate Communications Unit, University of St. Andrews:1). Under normal circumstances, a university should “maintain an effective and open dialogue with a diverse range of audiences”. (Corporate Communications Unit, University of St. Andrews:1) The achievement of projected objectives or otherwise lies with the management of the university, with appropriate governance from the University Court or the Governing Council. The Corporate Communications Unit, University of St. Andrews (2009) further argues that:

A reliable, flexible and innovative Information Communications Technology infrastructure will be fundamental to the successful delivery of the Communications Strategy. Improvement of information management systems is identified as a priority in the University’s ICT Strategy. The role of the web as the institution’s primary communications tool and central store of consistent fact and information will also become increasingly important.

## **THE UNIVERSITY PUBLIC**

According to the business dictionary, “public” refers to “Communities of people at large (whether or not organized as groups) that have a direct or indirect association with an organization: customers, employees, investors, media, students, etc.” The public of a university is responsible for why such a University communicates. According to the

University of St. Andrews Corporate Communications Unit (2009), their public includes staff, students, prospective students and staff, press and media, politicians, local residents, business and community groups, policy makers, funding bodies and research councils, alumni, donors and employers.

Adegoke (2001) better enumerates the public of a university. According to him, they include:

#### **Internal Public**

- academic and non-academic staff
- trade unions: ASSU, SSANU, and NASU, Student Union, and Social Clubs
- Pro-chancellors, Council members of the University Senate, members of the Congregation of the University, etc.

#### **External Public**

- Parents, Guardian, Sponsors
- Visitors to the University
- Government Agencies
- Banks, Publishers, Newspapers and Magazine Vendors
- Food Vendors
- People Offering Secretarial Services
- NNPC, PHCN, Water Corporation, Telecommunications Operators
- Affiliated Institutions of Learning
- Examination Bodies such as JAMB, WAEC, and NECO
- Opinion Leaders
- Suppliers
- Road and Building Contractors
- Landlords
- Private Cab Operators
- The Police
- Potential Staff and Students
- The National University Commission
- Professional Bodies: NUJ, NIPR, APCON, NBA etc
- The Directorate of the NYSC

The Corporate Communications Unit, University of St. Andrews (2009) further reasons that even though the use of the Internet as a means of communication is in vogue, the roles of the press/media must not be neglected as there is the need to:

- Maintain a dedicated Press Office to manage the University's dialogue with external print, broadcast and electronic Press and media.
- Proactively source and regularly present news and feature stories which demonstrate the University's strengths in research and teaching and its relevance to academia, industry and public life.
- Support Schools in presenting research and teaching achievements to the media.
- Support the University's student and staff recruitment strategies by maintaining a positive profile in external media.

From the foregoing, the best option appears to be the combination of the mass media and the use of the Internet. This is because each of the mass media and the Internet can complement the weakness of the other.

## CONCLUSION

The mass media, since its inception, has performed a variety of roles and used to achieve a lot of aims. The reality now is that the universities rely more on the use of the Internet to communicate to their various public. This does not mean that the mass media has been neglected. This gradual shift reduces the cost spent of communication, allows one on one interaction with the audience, among others. Therefore, when used along with the mass media, better results can be realized.

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## CHAPTER X

# ISLAM AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

*AFIS A. OLADOSU*

“Seek knowledge even if in China.”—Prophet Muhammad

“Higher education in Africa is an artifact of colonial policies.”—Altbach and Selvarantnam (1989)

“No other community (Ummah) has a continuous historical transmission (isnād) like ours.”—Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889)

### ANAMNESIS

In modern European cultural history, Leonardo Da Vinci (Gardner, 1980:50-456; Masters, 1996), some of whose rare paintings were auctioned in Europe in November 2011, is regarded as one of the most glorious figures of the renaissance period. He was not only a painter and a sculptor but also an architect, a physicist and an inventor. Scholars of European history would attest to the fact that Da Vinci was actually not a product of the renaissance era, nor was he a star which emerged from the scholasticism of Middle Ages. Rather he probably emerged from an intellectual and scholarly tradition which, while basking in essentially European milieu, had its precedent in Arab-Islamic scholarly tradition.

In other words, Da Vinci’s discovery of Latin works which served as a foundation for the sprouting of the genius in him was probably made possible by Arab translators whose contribution to the preservation of the Greek intellectual legacies has been widely acclaimed. It was the translated texts of Greek works into Arabic, later re-translated into European languages, that geniuses like Da Vinci probably accessed and perused as a foundation for their individual intellectual development. According to al-Attas, it was the “Muslims (who) passed on the experimental method of science” to the West. They stimulated European thought, reacquainted it with Greek and other classical cultures and thus helped bring about the Renaissance... They preserved Greco-Persian thought when Europe was intolerant of pagan cultures” (Al-Attas, 1980:62).

But my interest in Da Vinci is not limited solely to how the works of Arab-Muslim writers probably served as basis for his learning and exceptional achievements. Rather, his *persona* is being retrieved here mainly for two reasons:

- One, his works call attention to the shared origin of scholarship between the East and the West (Haliday, 1993:145-163).
- Two, contrary to modern conception of learning, the birth and the emergence of the intellectual, the polymath, particularly in medieval Arab-Muslim world, largely took place outside what is contemporaneously known as the academia or the University.

In other words, biographers of Muslim philosophers, scholars and polymaths such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd and al-Ghazālī (Bakar, 2006:10) have documented no known university from which these great scholars acquired their learning and erudition. Yet their contributions, in almost all fields of human endeavours, their landmarks in almost all fields of learning, remain unrivalled. Thus the following questions become highly pertinent and urgent:

- Exactly what is the philosophy of education in Islam?
- What trajectories existed in the classical or medieval period with reference to demagogy and pedagogy, such that it produced geniuses like al-Baṭṭānī (877-918ce), al-Rāzī (866-930ce), al-Ṭūsī (d.851) and others for the world to behold?
- How did the university emerge in Muslim annals?
- How might we begin to assess Nigerian universities of today and to what extent might Islamic cultural heritage benefit the former?

Despite its patronage of learning and scholarship as the core of worship, the religion of Islam is often pleaded by non-Muslim critics of the Muslim world as a major factor for the hiatus in Muslims' educational fortune particularly in the contemporary period. It usually does not matter to such critics that with reference to Islam, acquisition of knowledge and learning is *sine qua non* not only for terrestrial success but equally for celestial glory. Non-Muslim scholars of the Muslim world who subscribe to this opinion usually find no attraction in such categorical-scriptural writs as "Allah raise in degrees those of you who believe and those whom knowledge is given" (Qur'ān 6:30), nor in the tradition of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (upon him be peace) which enjoins Muslims to seek knowledge even if its locale is as distant from Madinah as China was during the 7<sup>th</sup> century. They usually use the disconnect between Islam in the text and the Islam in the contexts of Muslim realities as premise for their conclusion.

The above has led to the occlusion of the true position of education and learning in Islamic *Weltanschauung*. It has equally generated another fundamental problem: the assumption by non-Muslim critics of Islam that "there is no single entity known as Islam, but "Islams" of local contexts and often rapidly changing historical circumstances"( Graham, 1993:495-522). But a perceptive reading of the religion, and one which is conscious of and attentive to the inner fissures and trajectories in religious practices across

the world, might be inclined to consider this opinion only if the other but less popular assumption is taken together in the argument. This is that there is no single entity known as Christianity but “Christianities” of different local contexts and that, using the argument of Graham (1993:496), to speak of a Christian society or civilization is “to speak of myriad of local or regional traditions of sharply differing forms.”

Thus the attempt to deny the existence of an independent construct known as Islam based on the hiatus that is evidenced in Muslim existential realities would become valid once it is divested of its identities and fundamental features; once we succeed in denying the existence of the Qur’ān and the eternal socio-cultural and spiritual geographies it has mapped across centuries and climes (al-Alwani, 2005:11). Put differently, the tendency to focus on Islam in context and not in the text, the attempt to use Muslims to negate Islam and the temptation to use men as benchmark for the truth and not vice versa appear imperiled by its weak logic and slippery underbellies.

With particular reference to education, a more objective reading of Islam would discover and appreciate the indelible contributions of Muslims to the world’s cultural history. Such an approach would likely affirm Islam’s abhorrence for ignorance and illiteracy, its elevation and reification of the status of the intellectual and how education became a cardinal principle of its worldview.

In other words, education, otherwise known in Arabic as *tarbiyah*, operates at the core of Islamic epistemology. It refers to the means, the methods and the processes by which accumulated values, skills, experience and knowledge of a given human society or community are transmitted, both formally and informally, by human societies or its representatives, from one generation to the other. According to UNESCO, education is equally that process which works towards “awakening the enormous potential that lies within each of us, enabling all of us to develop to our fullest potential and better contribute to the societies in which we live” (Akinkugbe, 1994:7).

But the goal of education in Islamic culture goes beyond the UNESCO remit. It aims towards the production of a balanced and righteous community of humanity on earth—a community that will deploy its acquired experience, skills and knowledge to the realization of the better life on earth and assist its members attain eternal success. In other words, as far as Islam is concerned, the utilitarian purpose of education is only a means towards a higher purpose: the establishment of a sustainable harmony between humans —*KhalīfatuLLĀH* (Qur’ān 2:32 designates all humans as “vicegerents of Allah” on earth)— and other entities in the cosmos. The communiqué issued at the end of the First World Conference on Muslim Education which was held in Makkah in 1973 speaks to this. It says, in part, as follows:

Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total

personality of man through the training of man's spirit, intellect, rational feelings and bodily senses. Education in all its aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific and linguistic, both individually and collectively, and motivate all aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection (cited in Mustafa, 2003:24).

The religion of Islam strives to achieve the above through its division of knowledge into two: revealed and acquired. While revealed knowledge refers to that granted unto humans by Allah through His prophets, acquired knowledge is that which is obtained by humans through the study of the natural phenomena and human societies (Bakar, 2006:23). The Islamic epistemology is therefore hinged on the assumption that the "better life", either the terrestrial or celestial, is attainable subject to the acquisition of both strands of knowledge. Knowledge, in Islamic hermeneutics, foregrounds the search for the Truth (*al-Haqq*) and defines what becomes proper action (*al-`amal al-ṣāliḥ*). It is upon its plank that a balance can be evolved, by humans, between the spiritual and the terrestrial. It is the benchmark for determining ethics and morality (*al-akhlāq*) in contradistinction to debauchery and immorality and, without it, wisdom (*ḥikmah*) runs the risk of becoming folly.

In other words, education in the Islamic *Weltanschauung* is hinged on the notion of the inseparability of the profane and the sacred, and on the idea that knowledge which is divorced from faith in the Supreme Being is not only partial knowledge but also acute ignorance. This becomes pertinent when consideration is given to trends "outside" Islam where faith in the eschatological and the preternatural is not a condition for the ascension to and recognition of an individual as scholarly. As far as Islam is concerned, the man who has no knowledge of revelation but is well apprised of the other knowledge (acquired through reason) is like the blind man who touches only the trunk of the elephant in the dark and goes on to pontificate and celebrate his erudition.

Put differently, whereas "outside" Islam, an overarching separation between *naql* and *`aql* (revelation and reason) occupies the core of [secularist] intellectualism, and in fact the very fountain of creativity, Islam sees both spheres of knowledge like the two wings of a bird. Whereas outside Islam, knowledge vouchsafed by revelation is viewed with distrust and outright rejection, the Islamic perspective to knowledge sees the two as having the same source—Allah. Whereas outside Islam, the tendency is to privilege reason over revelation, the Muslim philosophy of education would, in certain instances, give priority to the knowledge essayed by revelation.

The above discussion further calls attention to at least four features of education as far as Islam is concerned. These are:

- practicality,

- universality,
- historicity and
- comprehensiveness.

To describe Islamic philosophy of education as *practical* is to underscore its relevance to the contrarities of human status and circumstances across ages and climes.

To cloak education in Islam with the robe of *universality* is to retrieve the Prophetic axiom: “Look for knowledge even if it be in China.

To foreground knowledge acquisition inside Islam in the *historical* is to establish the strong link that binds the whole of Muslim education in contemporary times, notwithstanding its negative trajectories, with its medieval and classical roots.

Now when reference is made to the feature of *comprehensiveness* in the Islamic philosophy of education, it is to the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity of its disciplines. In other words, when Allah, in the very first revelation of the Qur’an enjoins His prophet and by extension, humanity, to read —“Read in the name of your Lord who creates” (Qur’ān 96:1-5)— there appears to be a decisive lack of referent to the thing to be read. But exegetes would argue that the referent is actually embedded in the Qur’ān; that by commanding the Prophet to read, he is actually being enjoined to read the whole of creation, to read and derive meaning from the universe in its cadence and symphony, in its chaos and order. Thus to believe in the injunction that humans should read, is to call attention to all fields of learning from the soft to the hard, from the “wet” to the “dry”, from the humanities to the sciences. This explains why, according to Daud, “The Qur’ān becomes transparent only to those who have studied the sciences, which are extracted from it. For example, “who, when I am sick, gives me health” could not be properly understood without the knowledge of medicine (cited in Hilgendorf, 2003:63).

But how did the Muslims in the medieval period go about acquiring knowledge, even before the first university was established in Cordova (Spain) in 967, and long before the founding of the al-Azhar in Cairo in 970?

In Islam, the acquisition of knowledge usually takes place in the mosque. This was a tradition established since the era of Prophet Muhammad. He was the first teacher of the Qur’ānic community established in the cities of Makkah and Madinah. His followers represented the archetype of the very first group of students that Islamic history record for posterity. From the latter emerged a select group known as *Ahl al-Ṣuffah* who dedicated themselves completely to learning and diffusion of the knowledge they acquired from the apostle of Allah to the Muslim ummah. In other words, access to the teacher – the Prophet – was open to all gender and races notwithstanding their status in the city of Madinah. This system is therefore reminiscent of the one earlier invented by Pythagoras of Samos (around 530) BC in Southern Italy. Pythagoras’s

method, it should be kept in mind, was subsequently followed by Plato's academy except that the latter "almost totally excluded women" (Kittler, 2004:244).

The knowledge which was available during the period of Islam and one at the head of which the Prophet occupied the position of the Grand Master is understandably *sui generis* in its attachment to the Qur'ān. It is equally that which is hinged on the theory that knowledge cannot but be value-laden: that it is greatly influenced by the value system within which it develops, by the sources used in extracting or developing the same and by the methodology deployed to both its extraction and dissemination. This has been buttressed by Harris who says: "knowing the world, or coming to know the world, is not a matter of learning or coming to possession of a set of facts or truths about the world, which are there in the world, and which the world yields up to those who are able to see them; it is rather a matter of coming to perceive the world in particular ways, from particular perspectives and from particular viewpoints which are largely determined by and arise out of one's interaction with a particular historical and social context" (in Galadanci, 2000:9).

Sequel to the injunctions on Muslims, both in the Qur'ān and the traditions of the Prophet of Islam, to search for and obtain knowledge wherever such may be found, the Islamic intellectual tradition has become inundated by what may be termed the borderless Muslim intellectual caravan. This refers to Muslim travelers in search of knowledge. Belonging to different tribes and races and notwithstanding the disparity in their age, experience and exposure in life, those who belong to the caravan were usually seen at the feet of renown scholars of the epoch in which they lived. Often desirous of obtaining insights into all fields of knowledge including law, philosophy, theology, language, history, exegesis and mysticism, Muslim annals are full of anecdotes of the multiple interface between such itinerant students and their—and this is quite uncanny—iterant teachers and scholars, men of learning whose academy is spatial and borderless. Once a student is certified competent in Islamic knowledge and deemed capable of imparting same to others, his teacher gives him what is known as an *ijāzah*. This, according to Nashabi, is like a script or writ that affirms the "consciousness on his (the teacher's) part of the fact that knowledge is essentially cumulative" (Graham, 1993:500). The receipt of the *ijāzah* by the student usually signaled not the end, but the beginning of the search for more knowledge.

In other words, before the emergence of what came to be known as the university in Muslim annals, the geography of education was mapped by the *riḥlah* — students in search of teachers and teachers in search of new frontiers of knowledge. The *riḥlah* was peopled by students seeking not just one certification in one particular field of knowledge, but those with seemingly unquenchable thirst for all knowledge, sacred and profane, soft and dry. Specialization in one field of learning often occurred after years of tutelage at the feet of a number of scholars whose pedigree, using the

instrumentality of the *isnād*, is traceable to the Prophet of Islam (Graham, 1993:501). Evidence in this direction is the establishment of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence (See Doi and Abdassamad, 2008).

One other important feature of Islamic concept of education is what is contemporaneously known as intellectual freedom (*ḥurriyat al-`aql*). Even though Islamic tradition reifies the position of the scholar-teacher — “He who taught you a letter is your father in Islam” (*man `allama-ka ḥarfān fa-huwa abū-ka fī al-dīn*) so says an ḥadīth— it nonetheless recognizes and affirms the subjectivity and agency of the student. Islamic tradition demands that the teacher treats his student with respect and decorum. The teacher is expected to work with the certainty that the future of his scholarship is hinged on the success of his student. He should neither muzzle the student’s opinion nor close the door against scholarly disagreements. This became evident in the famous disagreement between Shaykh al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and his student, Wāṣil ibn `Atā’.

The story goes that one day Imam al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was imparting instruction to his pupils in a mosque. Before the lessons were finished someone turned up and addressed him thus:

Now, in our own time a sect of people has made its appearance, the members of which regard the perpetrator of a grave sin as an unbeliever and consider him outside the fold of Islam. Yet another group of people have appeared who give hope of salvation to the perpetrator of a grave sin. They lay down that such a sin can do no harm to a true believer. They do not in the least regard action as a part of faith and hold that as worship is of no use to one who is an unbeliever, so also sin can do no harm to one who is a believer in God. What, in your opinion, is the truth and what creed should we adopt? (Al-Shahrastani, *Kitāb al-Milal Wa al-Niḥal* cited by Wensinck, 1932:62)

Imam al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was on the point of giving a reply to this query when a long-necked pupil of his got up and said: “The perpetrator of grave sins is neither a complete unbeliever nor a perfect believer; he is placed midway between unbelief and faith—in an intermediate state (*fī manzilatayn bayn al-manzilatayn* —See Sharif, 1963). Having spoken, he strode to another corner of the mosque and began to explain this belief of his to fellow students. Imam al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was said to have contemplated his student and marveled at the confidence and audacity displayed by him. He eventually said: “*I`tazala `an-na Wāṣil*” (“Wāṣil has withdrawn from us” — Wensinck, 1932:62). The incident is said to have led to the emergence of the Mu’tazilite school in Islamic jurisprudence.

Such was the trend in Muslim education before the establishment of the first university in Cordoba (Spain) in 967. The above equally fore-

grounded the establishment of al-Azhar University in 970 and the Niẓāmiyyah University in Cairo and Baghdad respectively 1065. These were universities which developed out of the mosque and were emblazoned by Islam's architectural-spiritual template. They were established not by business men, but scholar-statesmen like Abdulrahmān III and al-Ḥakam. (Hitti, 1970:530). The curriculum these early Muslim universities ran was premised on the necessity to impart functional knowledge to students. The latter, it must be borne in mind, represented the very best that the medieval period could boast of, and featured Muslims, Christians and students of other religious persuasions.

Since the universities emerged from strictly religious (Islamic) background, the academy was populated by teachers who combined competence in ecumenical knowledge with mundane expertise, teachers and scholars whose writings were the touchstone of the panoramic world, intellectuals who were prolific and encyclopedic both in imagination and the quality and quantity of works they bequeathed to posterity.

One other important feature of early Muslim universities is the establishment of libraries. Here two elements may be mentioned: the sheer quantity and quality of books in the libraries of the era, some of which featured not less than 400,000 titles, and the quality readership it attracted. Historians would relish instances in Islamic annals when Muslim rulers not only established universities and libraries, but also patronized book-shelves like ordinary citizens, pore through pages of encyclopedic works and left marginal notes on manuscripts (Hitti, 1970:531). Thus the university, as far as the Islamic tradition is concerned, is not meant to cater only to the educational needs of the laity but equally to the intellectual development of the ornaments of the society —leaders whose vision, in its rich or poor textures, usually determine the prosperity or otherwise of the educational system of human society as a whole. Perhaps it is the absence or non-patronage of the library by contemporary leaders of the modern nation states, particularly those of Nigeria, which has led to the comatose state of the university system today.

## **DIAGNOSIS**

Altbach and Selvarantnam would, however, disagree with the above. According to them, whatever ills may be assailing the university system today is traceable to the fact that “higher education in Africa is an artifact of colonial policies” (Teferra and Altbach, 2004:22). This assumption is right from the perspectives of philosophy and administration of contemporary African universities. For example, an ordinary university in Nigeria is established to carry out three main functions: teaching, research and community service. But hardly is it known in the academia that this trinity upon which university is grounded owes its origin to the first trinity in Euro-American intellectual history: Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment. Specifically, the three streams of

consciousness took place at different times in Germany, Britain and in the United States of America. The Germans started out in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by emphasizing teaching and research as the cardinal functions of an ordinary university. The British intervened later to promote liberal education. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Americans added the third angle in the “trinity”, community service. The 20<sup>th</sup> century eventually saw the adoption of the trinity as the *Grundnorm* with reference to the *raison d’être* of the university in any given state (Akinkugbe, 1994:257).

The colonial experience later added strength to the stream and trend. Western universities established in the colony were not only based on the enlightenment philosophy of Euro-American universities, but particularly to assist in the production of the personnel that the colonial machinery gravely needed for the administration of the colony. In other words, unlike the trend in Muslim medieval history when universities were established based on the genuine interest in the dissemination and diffusion of knowledge, universities were established in Africa during the colonial period as a means by which African natives could be turned into things and tools in the hands of the colonial masters. The universities that were established during the period were therefore not meant to compete with the best in the metropolis. Tayyeb Salih, the Sudanese writer persuasively captures this when he says: “the ships at first sailed down the Nile carrying guns not bread, and the railways were originally set up to transport troops; the schools were set up to teach us how to say “yes” in their language” (Salih, 1965:60).

A critique of the contemporary malaise besetting contemporary universities in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, could be expanded to the problematic of bias in methodology and pedagogy in favour of Western academy even when the reality in African societies negate the imposition or the reification of same. This relates to the spirit of the Enlightenment upon which Euro-American education is premised. Thus universities in Africa particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa were established on the philosophy of secularism, the notion of the primacy and centrality of humanism, the supremacy of reason to revelation which, by implication, implies that nothing is sacred, absolute or teleological (Elmessri, 2006).

When viewed as relics of colonialism, contemporary African universities, including those of Nigeria, have equally become exclusivist in nature, while internal politics and conflicts now take place between those in the humanities and those in the sciences. In other words, if it is true that during the colonial period access to higher education was limited—that, for example, the Belgians forbade higher education to the colonized, that the Spanish and the Portuguese deliberately kept to the minimum the spaces that were available to prospective Africans; that to be properly literate, Africans who lived under the French suzerainty had to go to France—post-independence African universities, excepting some in North-Africa, have largely travelled the same path. For example, in Nigeria admissions to universities by eligible candidates have become increasingly difficult due to

limited facilities on university campuses. The situation has been worsened by the rarefaction of certain courses, particularly in the sciences. In the latter, there appears to be a policy of deliberate reduction in admission of prospective candidates as a strategy to sustain the elitist toga of members of the profession. The smaller the number of personnel in the profession, goes the popular notion, the more their prestige and value in the society.

Aside from the above, and in negation of the Islamic conception of the academia, the growing trend which favours the commoditization of knowledge and the excessive patronage of the physical sciences to the detriment of the humanistic disciplines image perhaps a more fundamental malaise confronting African educational system as a whole. Nowadays, admission and funding for programmes in Nigerian universities favour the sciences to the advantage of humanistic disciplines. But this does not mean there has been an improvement in funding of education by governments across Africa. Rather, the contrary is ironically the case. According to Altbach, “the total yearly expenditure for higher education in Africa as a whole does not even come close to the endowments of some of the richest universities in the United States” (Teferra and Altbach, 2004:24). In Nigeria, allocation to education in the 2012 budget proposal is less than 10%, contrary to the UNESCO standard and in complete disregard of the demand of the stakeholders in the sector.

Perhaps the greatest challenge confronting the university in Nigeria and probably others, which were established on Western libertarian philosophy, is moral perversion and their potential to inflict on humanity an intellectual class which would glory in social apostasy and spiritual bankruptcy. Evidence for the ascendancy of these nihilistic, atheistic and hedonistic ideals in the university system in Nigeria includes the emergence of cultism, examination malpractices, adoption and reification of Western cultures, such as homosexualism and lesbianism, and the consequent loss and elision of the role of the university as the bastion of humanity’s loftiest ideals and the repository of greatest values and standards. Thus there is no denying the fact that “the most important single goal of a University and therefore the best measure of its excellence, (which) is the intellectual growth of its students, their initiation into a life of the mind, their commitment to the use of reason in the resolution of problems, their development of technical competence and intellectual longevity” (Akinkugbe, 1994:258) has become imperiled.

In relation to the above, at least two responses are discernible from within the Muslim segment of the Nigerian population: the rejecters and the pragmatists. The rejecters, some of whom often predicate their views on the negative histories of colonialism in Nigeria, now cite lack of good governance and the pervasive incidences of corruption in governance as evidence against university education. A combination of socio-cultural, economic and political disaffection in the Nigerian polity has only recently led to the emergence of a group known as *Boko Haram*. Hinging its discourse on extremely weak jurisprudential bases, the group began by

declaring conventional as distinct from Qur'ānic education (often erroneously referred to as Western education), as unIslamic. It consequently declared "Western" education as *ḥaram*. The resultant violent interface between the group and agents of the Nigerian government has led to the birth of a state of anomie and chaos in the northern parts of the country and is presently threatening the corporate existence of the country.

The pragmatist response from a section of the Muslim populace in Nigeria to the malaise in the university system has taken, at least, two trajectories. The first consists of Muslim participation in the available university programs, notwithstanding its inherent ills and inadequacies particularly from the standpoint of the Islamic concept of education. The plank upon which this posture is hinged is the theory of *ḍarūrah* (necessity).

The second trajectory, however, consists of the establishment of private Muslim universities which, according to their founders, would combine the best which the "colonial" or conventional universities can offer its students with the Islamic *Weltanschauung*. The private universities strive to implement the theory of Islamization of knowledge in its operation. They purport to rescue humanity as a whole from the neo-liberalism, mercantilism and materialist monism of the Western system of education even as they endeavour to retrieve Muslims' cultural heritage from the stranglehold of western philosophers. As at 2012, the number of Muslim private universities in Nigeria is still less than ten.

Much as the emergence of private universities could be regarded as a solution to the myriad of problems currently assailing the university system in Nigeria, recent experience has underscored the need for circumspection. Private universities in Nigeria are fast becoming avenues for the children of the affluent in the society to access tertiary education which they would otherwise have been denied at the public universities because of their low academic and intellectual competence. Apart from turning the said universities into elite institutions, some of them are also known for their predilection to muzzle academic freedom and student unionism and associations. The opinion is rife that most of them have become extensions of their founders' business outfits and empires. This is contrary to the trend during the medieval period, when universities were established by genuine lovers of knowledge and intellectualism.

## PROGNOSIS

It is evident from the above that the university system in Nigeria is still far away from achieving its destiny. It is torn between the Western ideal which, on a daily basis, appears far from reach, and the Islamic option which, despite pretences to the contrary, remains distant.

The conclusion then becomes inevitable that until we witness the emergence of ornaments like Abdurrahmān III, and until education begins

to enjoy a pride of place in the scheme and plans of government, the gap between African universities and others in the West shall continue to widen.

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**PART III**

**THE MORAL DIMENSION**



## CHAPTER XI

# DECLINING MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: A PHILOSOPHER'S SEARCH FOR REDEMPTION

*JUDE O. MBUKANMA*

My aim in this paper is to examine the importance of moral education and the cultivation of the moral virtues, in pursuit of intellectual life and how failure in this regard is primarily the cause of moral corruption in the university campuses.

The curriculum of studies in the universities is part of the problem—it is clearly defective because it lacks moral education.

There is an added problem to this defectiveness which dates to the time of Plato. In Plato's moral theory, there is an assumption that to know is the same thing as virtue. In other words, to be an intellectual is to be virtuous. Thanks to Plato's more developed psychology which enabled him to escape the difficulties created by this Socratic identification of virtue with intellectual insight. A. E. Taylor explains how Plato overcame this difficulty. According to Taylor, since the human soul itself contains "a non-rational as well as a rational factors, complete moral excellent must consist in the maintenance of the proper relation between the two, and the attainment of the proper development of each (Taylor, 1922:95). The attainment of this "complete moral excellence" is the result of moral education and the practice of the moral virtues, something extremely important but hardly considered in intellectual life.

What do I mean by moral education? Education is the training of the moral and intellectual faculties of a human being for the purpose of achieving a more perfect degree of knowledge and character. According to the *Catholic Dictionary*, education must be directed to definite ends. The principle ends are four and they follow in this order:

- First, for the moral education of the citizens of the state;
- Second, for the religious knowledge of God;
- Third, for the civil circular state and since human beings are social beings and must be trained in his relations to the state and the society, education is to be directed to enhance this relationship and
- Fourth, because a human being is a member of a family, he/she is to be trained so that he/she may fulfill in the society his responsibilities, not only to the society but to his family; for the last reason, education is to be domestic.

### **THE EARLY UNDERSTANDING OF EDUCATION AMONG GREEK PHILOSOPHERS**

Education is a teaching of useful knowledge. Among the early Greek thinkers (Aristotle and Plato, great proponents of education), education is a training whose aim is principally the production of virtuous citizens. This consideration was uppermost among the Greek Legislators. So, politics was concerned principally with “the question of the morally fine and the just” (NE, Bk 1:3). In the Greek city-state of Aristotle’s time then, where a noble and virtuous life was considered necessary for the well-being of the society, education was mainly a training in moral behaviour, and the psychological focus on cultivating virtues was to help towards the organization of the passions, for where people fail to act well, it is precisely because of the dominance of the passions over reason (the practical intellect).

The Greeks might have taught that without moral education a state can easily turn to a mad-house. For this reason, “to make good of their fellows by making good behaviour habitual with them” was what mattered for both politicians and the city’s constitution. “This is the aim of every lawgiver, and when he is unable to carry out this effectively, he is a failure; nay, success or failure in this is what makes difference between a good constitution and a bad one” (*ibid.*, Bk 2:1). According to Aristotle, “the highest good is the end which is sought by political science”. What the statesman is most anxious to produce is a certain moral character in his fellow-citizens, namely a disposition to virtue and performance of virtuous actions” (NE, Bk 1:9).

This is not the preoccupation and concern of modern university systems of education. Moral education is not part of the syllabus of studies. Unfortunately, although universities are entrusted with the education of the adult minds, which involves “the simultaneous development of man’s psychological and moral consciousness”, this aspect of intellectual formation is not given a due share of attention as is science education.

### **EDUCATION REFINES THE MIND AND ENHANCES ITS POWER TO THINK**

One of the questions Plato raised in the *Republic* is: what is the foundation by which the human mind may be brought nearer to that truth which is at once the key stone of knowledge and the moral law. The answer to this question is: education.

The question is: what is the way out of human ignorance which keeps the mind from advancing and how can the inherent capacity of the mind be developed and regulated? The answer, for Plato, is education.

This remains true today. The education that makes a person truly human is not the knowledge and control of nature; it involves the cultivation of a person’s moral and scientific faculties.

For the Greeks, from whom we inherited the science of education—as an organized intellectual formation of citizens of the state—there was one pre-occupation, and this was moral education and the moral well-being of the society. Technical education was not part of this training. Technical skill was a natural thing like talents. While gymnastics was for physical fitness, music and poetry were the means to inculcate morals. Technical education, which has become the primary interest of modern policy makers in education, was not in the forefront.

Looking at education today, one may say that the prevailing philosophy of education is defective, for the reason that it has no room for the development of the whole person. It is helpful to human development to discover what is there in nature for our own good. Education in natural science helps towards this discovery. However, the modern stress on the physical sciences, and the rejection of metaphysics and of moral instruction is a defect in education.

### **THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL CHARACTER ON POLITICS AND THE ECONOMY**

Among the ancient Greeks, the influence of personal character upon society and politics was more direct and pronounced than it can be in the vast organization of a modern cosmopolitan and industrial society, where the “members at the circumference may be almost unconscious of their connection with the centre” (Nettleship 1948:45). Ultimately, as in the times of Plato and Aristotle, the character of a people is responsible for their social and political life.

Moral education is equally important as science education, because it restrains many interests that do not foster national development. Modern democratic governments ignore that aspect of political life and treat it as if it had no connection with each other or the whole. The problem today is that few people can see the connection between moral evil and national development, and can proffer no remedy for a morally corrupt society. The best government can do is to set up ethical and judicial agencies to monitor moral behavior.

Universities which are entrusted with the education of the adult minds, are not bothered about “the simultaneous development of man’s psychological and moral consciousness” (S.C.C.E.: 15 Oct 1982). Their primary preoccupation with science education is the cause of the death of moral consciousness and the experienced moral corruption in some the universities.

### **THE WAY OUT**

Because of the achievements of science and technology, there are people who now believe that the supreme value in life, which educational institutions should promote, is science and technology. Having this

conviction, they scorn morality in the pursuit of the good life. This is a great mistake for this will give rise to the growth of moral evil.

Let me put the relationship between corrupt moral situations and political disorder in a logical form: If I say that 'P' (moral corruption) is the cause of "Q" (i.e. political disorder), the only way to falsify my statement that 'P' (moral corruption), is not the cause of 'Q' (political disorder), is by putting a stop to 'P' (moral corruption) and wait to see whether there will be an end to political disorder.

Moral training assists persons to form good moral consciences and this impacts favourably on the society. A true love of virtue will lead to a genuine love of neighbor. Love of virtuous life is the foundation of justice: Virtue cannot do wrong to a neighbour. This is the central moral doctrine of social history, and I believe, of any authentic political society, a teaching that can help to create a good environment for a nation's development. If human beings desire to live happily on earth, they should learn to live well —i.e., obey the moral law.

Moral corruption, or vicious life, makes a happy society impossible. The pursuit of a good life and happiness requires that we take the pain to cultivate the virtues. There is no other ways of resolving the problem of moral conduct and achieving the goal of human activities, namely happiness. St. Thomas rightly stated: "If there is a definite way of reaching a fixed end, they who travel along a road leading in the opposite direction or who turn aside from the right road, will never reach the goal... There is a definite way of arriving at happiness... Nothing will reach its end unless it performs well the operation proper to it" (*Compendium theologiae*, I:172). The way to the fixed end (happiness), is living the virtuous life.

Nations without morality are in trouble. Unfortunately, destructive moral attitudes originate from pop-psychology which promotes moral autonomy in their theory of human freedom. Most people today, caught in the charms and superficialities of life, (materialism, consumerism and utter hedonism) make fun of virtue. Karol Wojtila (Pope John-Paul II), in his book, *Love and Responsibility*, referred to the work of M. Scheler, entitled *The Rehabilitation of Virtue*. In that work, Scheler "saw a need for the rehabilitation of virtue because he discerned in modern man a characteristic spiritual attitude which is inimical to sincere respect for it. He called this attitude 'resentment' (Wojtila 1994:143). Wojtila compares this moral attitude to what St Thomas Aquinas calls 'sloth' (*acedia*) —"a sadness arising from the fact that the good is difficult". Temperance is difficult! Justice is difficult! Chastity is difficult! Humility is difficult!

Frederick Nietzsche mocks humility as the virtue of the weak. Sigmund Freud (with all respect to some of his brilliant discoveries about the constitution of the human mind) put sexual morality in disarray. In his psycho-analysis, a renunciation of genital sexual fulfillment is impossible. His work is not to teach moral restraint where it is required, but that persons succumb to temptations when wrestling with sexual urge.

The psychology departments in universities believe and teach his insights, and we continue to wonder at the prevalence of sexual harassment. David Pears, in his "Motivated Irrationality" says: "truth can only be retained at a price" (Pears 1984:133). The price we must pay for sanity, or good moral behaviour, in academic communities in Nigeria, is living the moral life and the inclusion of moral science in the syllabus of studies.

Some one might say: "Oh, we have moral philosophy in our philosophy department". Moral philosophy in philosophy departments cannot solve the problem of immorality in the university campuses, because moral philosophy is a critical science of moral principles and stipulations. In other words, moral philosophy examines the validity of moral standards, determining their place in the whole scheme of things. This, in itself does not make anyone live a morally upright life.

Let me outline here what is involved in a moral philosophy class. The moralist or student of moral science has not to create moral standards *ex nihilo*. There are certain generally accepted moral standards which serve as his data. These he has to examine and classify with a view to ascertaining what general principles (if any) underline them. He must then try to assess these principles so as to determine their validity and to find which of them deserves universal acceptance. He should also find out those which rest on intuitions that lead to self-contradictory or absurd consequences. These must be given up.

This is not how to become morally good. We become morally good by practicing the moral virtues. If the academic communities do not have moral instruction in their curriculum of studies, the curious question is: Where do the students and their masters learn to live the moral life? If masters of learning are not practicing the moral virtues, we should not expect to see an end to sexual harassment, student victimization and occultism in universities.

## CONCLUSION

In modern times there is a resentment against select moral virtues, such as chastity, virginity and temperance. In such a climate, is it a surprise to find that sexual harassment and abortion are common-place? The prevalence of such detestable moral behaviour has its roots in a resentment against moral virtue.

In universities, those virtues are not for term papers and doctoral thesis, but are to be lived out. Human beings must choose virtue, or drift into a morally-fragmented world in which bestiality, or irrationality, is the norm.

The truth is: when the moral virtues are scorned, immorality is inevitable; for good moral behaviour does not occur by chance. We cannot become morally good by practicing vice. To expect good moral behavior from someone who does not practice the virtues is analogous to expecting someone to speak a language he or she never learnt. We cannot expect

people to live the right sort of life when they do not practice the virtues. The philosopher, Aristotle, remarks very appropriately: “The man, then, must be a perfect fool who is unaware that people’s characters take their bias from the steady direction of their activities; and having hardened their hearts in moral evil and wishing that they will act aright in a moral community, you might as well expect a sick man to get well by wishing it” (NE BK 3:5).

There is an attitude here, moral life which is paradoxical: “In theory, most people resent virtue, perhaps because of the difficulties in its practice. In that case, why should a thief protest when his money is stolen? The solution to immoral life-styles and corruption in our universities, is moral education and the practice of the moral virtues.

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**CHAPTER XII**

**MORALITY IN NIGERIAN  
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES**

*OLATUNJI A. OYESHILE*

Almost a decade ago, specifically in January 2002, scholars within the University of Ibadan, including Professor George Mclean, founder of Centre for Research in Values and Philosophy (CRVP), Washington D.C., brainstormed a theme which eventually appeared as on *The Idea of an African University: The Nigerian Experience* (Washington D.C., 2007). Considering the period in which this interaction took place, it is now necessary to re-examine the ‘Nigerian Experience’ concerning University education since a lot has changed especially with the proliferation of more public and private universities.

Our attempt in this brief paper would be to examine the issue of morality within Nigerian public and private universities. This is important because it directly impacts on the human capital which any nation needs in order to develop and sustain her development. Another major reason why morality is important in the university system, whether private or public, according to Oladipo, 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 —as Oladipo quotes Benoit Verhaegen— “restructuring around new values, new order of life, new social structures” (Oladipo, 2007:13-14). This implies that our universities should play a central role in achieving this task of creating a viable new order of social life.

This question of morality then cannot be taken for granted. In fact, it must be confronted headlong. This anxiety is poignantly expressed by Joseph Kenny thus:

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 wrongdoings, particularly violence (from cults), dishonesty in exams, and prostitution (Kenny, 2007:27).

In a similar vein, Ogbo Ugwuanyi in his paper “The University and the African crisis of morality” (2007:99-107) had focused extensively on the moral crisis of cultism within the Nigerian University system.

Suffice to say at this juncture that much as these attempts have been insightful, they have been very restrictive and narrow on the impact of

morality on university education in Nigeria. Thus, my discussion would be pursued from a broad perspective interrogating that which is moral and the obligation to be moral from the perspectives of government, university proprietors and management, staff, students, parents and the society, which is the end user of knowledge production. In achieving our objectives, this paper will be discussed under the following subtitles:

- (1) Morality and human society,
- (2) The goal of university education,
- (3) A multi-dimensional approach to resolve moral problems in Nigerian universities, public or private.

### **MORALITY AND HUMAN SOCIETY**

In every society it is believed that it is necessary to distinguish right or good conduct from wrong or bad conduct in order to ensure harmonious living. Harmonious co-existence is important not only to ensure the continued survival of the society, but also to guarantee its qualitative development. When we are concerned with good or bad conduct, we are in the realm of morality.

Due to the importance attached to morality, men have internalized the principles and values that would guide them in choosing the right course of action from time to time. Morality is therefore concerned with human conduct. Put differently, it is concerned with right and wrong actions, judgments and beliefs about what is good or bad, without which the society (any human society) cannot develop. It is obvious then that morality is necessarily tied to human behaviour or conduct, because, if this was not the case, there would be no need for praising or blaming people for their actions or training them to behave in a certain desirable way in the society (Oladipo, 1987:44-45).

The question that arises here is this: What makes an issue a moral one, and how do we distinguish between a moral issue and a non-moral one? Moral issues arise in everyday life when we are presented with such questions as: What should I do or not do? How should I act or what kind of person should I be? These are questions that concern both the individual's behaviour and character (Barcalow, 1994:3). Though these questions can be seen to emanate from an individual's point of view, a careful analysis would show that they affect the well-being of others in the society. We can say therefore that moral issues arise "fundamentally when the choices people face will affect the well-being of others by either increasing or decreasing it, causing either harm or benefit" (*ibid.*:4).

With regard to the above analysis, wearing a blue shirt instead of a red one, drinking beverages rather than coffee, playing football rather than baseball are not moral issues, because, whatever choices are made, they do not affect the well-being of other people. They can only become moral issues if it is established, for instance, that by playing football rather than

baseball, the well-being of others would be affected. On the other hand, the selling of drugs, the beating of a spouse are moral issues because, the choices which individuals have made concerning these issues affect the well-being of others. For instance, the selling of expired drugs or drugs to teenagers without prescriptions by a physician can cause physical and psychological harm to others. We must note, however, that moral issues are not restricted to matters that concern the well-being of others, they also arise in cases where only the agent's well-being is affected (*ibid.*). For instance, an individual's choice of committing suicide or continuing to struggle for survival in a desolate environment is a moral issue, not because the act of suicide indirectly affects the well-being of others in the society, but also because it affects the agent's well-being. This is better appreciated when we realize that the ultimate goal of morality is human well-being or the good life.

From our analysis of morality, we have seen that choice, freedom and well-being are important concepts. We have also shown that others matter when an agent makes a choice. This perhaps shows that morality is a social phenomenon.

Human beings cannot just accept the natural world as it is, they need to compliment it with an idea of their own self importance and self preservation, hence the need for morality. Russell put this in a comical manner when he wrote:

The great world as far as we know it from the philosophy of nature, is neither good or bad, and is not concerned to make us happy or unhappy. All such philosophies spring from self-importance and best corrected by little astronomy. (Russell, 1961:371)

While we may not join issue with Russell concerning the role of astronomy in correcting such philosophies of good and bad, happy and unhappy lives, it is true that due to our instinct of self-preservation, space must be given to self-importance since it is when we regard ourselves as such that the goal of self-preservation can be attained. The circularity of our argument notwithstanding, mankind cannot gloss over good and bad conduct as well as happy and unhappy life without putting their own existence in jeopardy. Hence, the need for morality in any human society. Since we live together, a sense of right and wrong, good and bad are germane for the sustenance of society. An action is thus moral if the consequences, either positive or negative, will affect the well-being of others even though actions that threaten the self or agent are also considered immoral. It then bears pointing out following Pettman that:

Morals are social products, held out of habit and self-interest to be sure, but motivated also by emphatic urges like love, and a sense of what is right and due. Human

beings learn to prefer particular ways of relating to each other and standards by which to assess their relationships and to endorse or censure what appear to be sociable or anti-social acts, as part of the general educative process whereby they assimilate expectations of how the world is meant to be. (Pettman, 1979:19).

From our extensive reference to Pettman, we easily discern that morality is born out of the needs of society, to protect the interests of members through emphatic urges like love and honesty. In arriving at this situation, education also plays a vital role in the transmission of moral values from one individual to the other and from generations to generations. The ultimate aim would be human survival which depends, not the least, on reciprocal obligations which are situated in certain communitarian values which make this goal possible. So what we call morality itself is embedded in the whole idea of community.

Moral values then encompass those ingredients that would make a moral situation achievable. They would include such values that would not only make self-preservation possible, but also such values that would ensure the preservation of others by enlightened self-interest on the part of various individuals. They include honesty, avoidance of greed, avoidance of lying, trust, keeping of promises when we are not presented with a dilemma, altruism, that is, placing others first, love and obedience, cooperation, integrity, avoidance of social vices such as corruption, embezzlement of public funds, cultism, examination malpractice and fraudulent admission process and the respect for the other person, in other words, treating a person as an end not a means to the satisfaction of our needs.

Extrapolation from the above shows that we cannot but see morality as an inextricable part of human existence within society, be it at the level of individual, family and institutions. It is therefore obvious that morality is *sine qua non* to the survival of our educational system, especially university education. The acquisition of knowledge without the moral resources for its management is futile and counter-productive.

## **THE GOALS OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION**

Although it may be difficult to state all the goals of university education, we can identify some important ones. Making allusion to John Henry Cardinal Newman's *The Idea of a University* in particular, Kenny states the central goal of the University thus:

The purpose of a University is not research (research doesn't require students) not religious or moral training, but to teach universal knowledge embracing all knowledge: literature and history as the story of man; science as the

story of nature; and theology as the story of God. This requires 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. (Kenny, 2007:19)

It bears pointing out from the above excerpt that the main goal of university education is the teaching of knowledge in all its ramifications from a broad perspective or what may be referred to as a universal perspective. This informed the title of the valedictory lecture delivered by Prof. Niyi Osundare at the University of Ibadan on July 26, 2005 titled, "The Universe in the University: A scholar-Poet's look from inside out".

Many other scholars have identified a combination of goals for university education. This combination of goals is made up of: self-education, practical education, industrialization, leadership, development of arts and letters, technology, science and so forth. But central to the goals of university is knowledge. According to Osundare, "Newman was a staunch proponent and defender of the University as a place for the teaching of universal knowledge" (Osundare, 2007:12). Newman is quoted by Osundare on the meaning of knowledge thus:

When I speak of knowledge, I mean something intellectual, something which grasps what it perceives through the senses; something which takes a view of things; which sees more than the senses convey; which reasons upon what it sees, and while it sees; which invests it with an idea (Newman Quoted in Osundare, 2007:13).

Above all, the development of human societies and cultures through the production and utilization of knowledge constitutes the major goal of the university.

While one cannot but appreciate the search for knowledge from universal perspective, Newman's analysis of the goal(s) of the university leaves out the moral dimension. According to Kenny,

Newman insists that moral formation is not the purpose of a university. The task of University is academic, and, while maintaining staff discipline, its officers cannot be weighed with the responsibility of looking after the moral behaviour of students (Kenny, 2007:27).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The passage continues: "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

The question that then looms is this: Can the University achieve its main goal of knowledge acquisition without moral framework that will sustain the knowledge? The answer is obviously in the negative. The recognition of the importance of the moral framework in acquiring and dispensing knowledge informs many universities, especially Nigerian universities, to add the character factor to that of learning in the award of degrees. For instance at any convocation ceremony at the University of Ibadan, the following proclamation is usually made by the Dean of the respective faculties who will present the graduates before the Vice-Chancellor thus:

Vice-Chancellor, in the name of the faculty of Arts and by the authority of the Senate, I present to you the persons standing and those absent for sufficient cause, who have been found worthy both in character and in learning to be admitted to the Degree of Bachelor of Arts of the University of Ibadan. (UI: Convocation order of proceedings, 2008).

From the above, we can say that morality encapsulated in the term ‘character’ is not only a precondition for attaining knowledge, it is also one of the goals of the University.

### **A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO RESOLVE MORAL PROBLEMS IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

From the previous section we have seen that morality is germane in achieving the goal of University education, which is knowledge production and utilization. We have also shown that morality, in terms of character formation, is also an end sought by university education. In this section, we take a panoramic view of what constitutes moral problems in contemporary Nigerian Universities and how they hinder the goal of university education and the quest for a better society. Although, the attempt at cataloguing moral problems in our Universities is not a new one (see Akinpelu, 2005; Ugwuanyi, 1998; Akinsanya, 2008. Dzurgba, 2004; Jegede *et al*, 2001) our approach is a bit different in the sense that it is multi-dimensional — in the sense of seeing moral problems from a holistic perspective involving students, the University management, the family, government and society in general.

#### *Moral Problems among Students*

The moral problems among students in the University results

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managed by the university. The main impact of religious groups has been through campus chapels or mosques.”

mainly from the fact that the University environment, which of course is new to the students, provides new challenges, new opportunities and different reaction from students. All these have impression on the human mind—either for good or bad. Ugwuanyi explains:

Indeed the University is “all of them”. Virtually everything this world can offer the human mind is available in the university. In the same vein, all calibres of people are present in the University. This great intellectual world is so large and all-embracing that it epitomizes the very broad nature of human society (Ugwuanyi, 1998:9)

The import of the above then is that moral problems and moral dilemmas arising for the University students have their ontological foundation in the broad nature of the University. The lack of strength of character to manage this new environment results in what Dzurgba has described as ‘the University agony’ (Dzurgba, 2004:9). The University students go through agony because of violence, weapons, money, politics, property, human rights, narcotic drugs, secret cults, rape, sexual harassment, boy-girl relationship and tuition and accommodation fee (Dzurgba, 2004:9-16). These problems listed above are given different connotations, for instance, the problem of examination malpractice, indecent dressing, attitude to academic work, stealing and the violation or flouting various rules of etiquette.

In order to control and curtail these attitudes, more often than not the universities set up various institutional mechanisms such as counseling units, the student affairs office and a students’ disciplinary committee. When found guilty, students are sometimes strongly reprimanded, rusticated or expelled.

In the private universities, especially the Christian based ones, the faith approach is employed to instil morality into students. A typical approach is the *Baylor University Model of Faith and Learning*, recently being proposed at Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji, Osun State. The objective of this model (developed at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, USA.) is described thus:

Faith and learning is a concept that focuses on educating the ‘whole man’. To integrate faith with learning, the institution should seek to train the student in a holistic manner that includes the student’s spiritual, religious or moral life. In educational institutions, it is imperative that faith is brought into the classroom. As a teacher, integrating faith and learning means modeling the subject one teaches with one’s faith. As an institution, the vision, mission and philosophy constitute the basis of its faith, which are

extracted and systematically infused into its curriculum. (Tijani, 2011:1)

It states further:

It means the foundation of realizing the institutional mission, goals and heritage. It connotes involvement of all stakeholders within and without the institution emphasizing inclusion as its philosophical guidance. We should note that the complexity of defining “faith” should not hinder the practicality of “goodness”, integrity, and the creation of a life long relationship with our students. (Tijani, 2011:1).

The above attempt shows that there is a special need to go beyond the conventional approach at addressing the moral disequilibrium within our universities. Although, the Baylor approach is predicated on the Christian ways of life, one major problem is that of individual freedom concerning the secular nature of our society and religion indoctrination.

#### *University Management*

A major stakeholder in the issue of morality in our universities is the university management. The contributions of the university management in this regard have to do with style of leadership, the enforcement of rules of conduct and response to student problems. It should be noted that the university management can only discharge its moral duties effectively if it has moral credibility. A situation of bad leadership, corruption, lack of accountability on the part of the management can only contribute to the breakdown of moral norms. It is partly because of this situation that crisis within the university system degenerates. Therefore, “the ideal university administration is that which is able to carry out its obligations in terms of duties to staff and students” (Oyeshile, 2011:273).

#### *University Lecturers*

In engendering the required standard of morality in our University System, the lecturers play and continue to play crucial roles. They act in various capacities to guide the students in the production and dissemination of knowledge. In many ways they are teachers, parents, guardians, friends, confidants, brothers and sisters of the students. Most of these roles except that of teaching are carried on from an informal perspective.

Sometimes, lecturers are constrained in carrying out the duties and thereby fall into abyss of immorality. Situations leading to these may include but not limited to crass materialism, lack of sense of duty, industrial dispute, sexual immorality, incompetence, and lack of commitment. We should be quick to note that there can be no university without students, just

as there can be no university students without lecturers. Lecturers therefore have primary responsibility towards their students. Research by lecturers should go hand-in-hand with teaching. The promotion syndrome and its attendant requirements in many Nigerian universities have encouraged research narrowed down to publications at the expense of teaching. The university system is not better for it and there is therefore the need to address this situation.

#### *Government*

Government plays a crucial role in establishing enduring role in the moral stabilization of the university system. Although, the Nigerian government is the major financier of the public universities, this role has been disrupted due to the misconception of the role of education sometimes, on the part of people in government. For instance, the tendency to see the university as a 'business enterprise' where the universities are supposed to be self-funding through Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) has encouraged corruption, stagnation and all sorts of moral vices in our universities.

Coupled with the tendency to see the University as a 'business centre' is the problem of poor funding and crisis management. Some other factors in this direction include: the undemocratic culture within the country with all its ills have direct and indirect effects on the university system; the use of parochial political considerations as a basis for establishing and running universities; and government's inability to manage crises, for example, the non-implementation of agreements voluntarily entered into and signed with various university unions such as the Academic Staff Union of Nigerian Universities (ASUU).

#### *Family and Society*

The family and the larger society do influence the moral fibre of the university due to their conception of the idea of the university. A large segment of the Nigerian society today sees knowledge mainly as the basis for acquisition of wealth. Although the acquisition of wealth itself is one of the products of knowledge, this factor is pursued to the detriment of other factors such as culture, civility and development. This tendency is usually attributed to poverty. It is also disheartening to note that some major aspects of the African culture which contribute to moral stability have been neglected, all in the name of being called 'a learned person'. For instance, the practice of greeting, helping the elders, serving others first, perseverance and care are hardly observed by our university undergraduates. In other words, the cultural dimension to knowledge acquisition is gradually being eroded. All the issues considered so far are moral issues because they have implications for the goal of morality, which is human well-being.

## CONCLUSION

We want to conclude this paper with the question: Why education, particularly university education?. Education has little or no meaning if it does not lead to a positive change in attitude for the development of human society. A joint-stakeholders approach involving all is the only veritable way of achieving a morally viable university education in Nigeria. In this regard, the government should take the lead through positive governance.

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**CHAPTER XIII**

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND  
THE VIOLATION OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

*CHINYERE UKPOKOLO*

In July 2010, the global community was hit by news and pictorial reports on the Internet of a case of sexual harassment involving a male professor in Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria and a female student from the institution. The initial reaction of the state government was to request for a probe of the incident.

In August, 2011, a similar incident, and now more horrendous, was perpetrated in Abia State University involving five male students, and the victim, a female student. The perpetrators were reported to have conducted a video coverage of the incident and circulated the same round the university campus. It later found its way to the Internet. The initial reaction of the school authorities was to deny the existence of such students in the institution, but later insisted that the reported violence and ‘brutal violation’ took place outside the school campus.

This paper is neither an attempt to initiate investigations into those stories nor to declare the degree of culpability of any of the parties – the perpetrators or the victims. However, one thing is clear, to borrow the terminology of Noam Chomsky in his work, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965), these are ‘surface structures’ of ‘deep structur[al]’ understanding. In other words, those incidents are reflections of a bigger picture of the workings of the human mind.

What those incidents represent is a climax of the nature of the interactions that exist in many institutions of higher learning in the country, though often surreptitiously. In any case, these two incidents share certain commonalities: erosion of the values of the university. But there exists a difference. While in the Ambrose Alli university incident the victor became a co-victim and begged to ‘live’, and was in fact ready to pay for that ‘life’, in the Abia State’s case the victim was driven to the point of rejecting life, begging to be killed. Undoubtedly, what happened in these two institutions are cases of gross sexual harassment and sexual violence, which distorts the university culture. Whatever the nature sexual harassment takes in higher education institutions (HEIs), it distorts the learning process, and violates the academic freedom of the victim.

This paper explores how sexual harassment in HEIs constricts the spaces of knowledge production and acquisition in the university, and consequently violates the academic freedom of the victim. Although various scholars have paid attention to the issue of sexual harassment in tertiary institutions in Africa (see Adedokun, 2005; Denga and Denga 2004;

Ogunmaberu, 2006; Idowu and Yahaya 1993), not much scholarly space seem to have been given to the interconnectedness between sexual harassment and academic freedom in the Nigerian university system, and this has created a gap in our understanding of the challenge sexual harassment poses to the essence of the university. The basic questions this paper sets to answer are:

- what do we mean by SH, and who are the victims?
- Which aspects of the tenets of academic freedom are violated by sexual harassment?
- How does sexual harassment hinder knowledge production and/or obstruct access to knowledge?

These questions are explored for the intersections of sexual harassment and academic freedom. Empirical data collected in 2010 and 2011 was utilized for this study. The research design is case study typology. This study was carried out at a public university in Nigeria here referred to as 'Rose Mill University' (pseudonym).

#### *Research Context and Methodology*

Rose Mill University (pseudonym) is one of the many public universities in Nigeria. Located in the southern part of the country, the institution is one of the top ten universities in the country. Academic staff strength is high, reaching a little over 1,000 with female academics less than 40% of the figure. Undergraduate students' enrolment by 2009/2010 session is about 13,000, with higher male students' enrolment though the number of female students in recent years is increasing progressively. As the subject matter of this research is a sensitive one, I have concealed the names of the informants and the institution, without undermining the accuracy of the facts being presented. The employment of fictionalization as a strategy in ethnographic research is not a novel development (see for instance, Wallot 2009; Ukpokolo, 2010).

Both primary<sup>1</sup> and secondary sources of data were employed for this study. The primary data were collected using semi-structured interview questions. A total of 46 informants participated in this study comprising of 17 female students, 17 male students, 5 men academics and 5 women academic staff, the institution's Counsellor and a social worker. The interview questions generally focused on capturing the perception, prevalence and experience of sexual harassment in the institution studied, and how sexual harassment violates the academic freedom of the victims.

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<sup>1</sup> Data for this paper was generated from field report carried out in 2011 augmented with earlier situation analysis report on sexual harassment in a public university in Nigeria carried out by the writer and a team of academic staff from a Nigerian university.

Students and lecturers interviewed were randomly selected while purposive sampling was adopted in the selection of the social worker and the university counsellor. Male students were interviewed separately from the female students. Also, five focus group discussions were carried out. The interviews were taped recorded and later transcribed. Journals, books, and the Internet were also consulted for documentary evidence. Collected data were subjected to critical analysis utilizing context analysis, descriptive and interpretive techniques. Direct quotations of informants' voices have been included in the analysis to allow the readers gain insight into the thoughts of the informants and further generate their own meanings. Academic staff and undergraduate students of Rose Mill University constitute the research population.

The major methodological challenge encountered in this study is the unwillingness of the informants to recount their personal experiences of sexual harassment. Rather, they all claimed that their friends or someone they know were victims of sexual harassment. This 'culture of silence' is a major challenge in dealing with the issue of sexual harassment in HEIs. Findings from this study cover heterosexual relations, and are not an attempt to deny the existence of other form of sexuality that may also exist in the institution, and where sexual harassment cannot be ruled out. This study does not cover post graduate students, and sexual harassment among staff. The terms 'teachers' and 'lecturers' have been used in this study interchangeably.

## **CONCEPTUALIZING SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is a global phenomenon not only at the HEIs but also at the workplace. Sexual harassment can be classified into three categories: (i) verbal, (ii) visual and audio, and (iii) physical. Some of the acts that constitute sexual harassment are presented under these sub-heading and discussed below:

- (i) **Verbal:**
  - Sexist remarks directed at an individual
  - Use of force/intimidation/threat to get someone into having sexual affairs with a person
  - Demanding sexual favours in exchange for employment, promotion, admission or any other benefits or entitlements
  - Offering sexual favours in exchange for higher grades
- (ii) **Visual**
  - Taking and sending unwholesome pictures, making recordings for the purpose of blackmail.
  - Indecent dressing and seductive postures

**(iii) Physical conduct**

- Unwelcome fondling or caressing of a person
- Brushing against someone with the purpose of deriving sexual favours
- Touching or pinching someone to elicit sexual feelings.
- Rape

Although the list above is by no means exhaustive, there is a general agreement that sexual harassment is ‘unwelcome sexual overtures’. Sexual harassment can be categorized under what Stephen P. Heyneman termed “education corruption” which, according to him is “the abuse of authority for both personal as well as material gain” (Heyneman 2009: 1). He identified four ways in which education can be said to be corrupt (i) through its functions (ii) through the supply of goods and services (iii) through professional misconduct, and (iv) in the treatment of taxation and property. In the light of the above, one that applied to the discussion in this paper is ‘through professional misconduct’, which he again identified, among other things, as:

- Accepting material gifts or rewards in exchange for positive grades, assessments or selection to specialized programmes.
- Bias in grading or assessment because of family or other private requests
- Assigning of grades or assessment biased by a student’s race, culture, social class, ethnicity, or other ascriptive attributes
- *Sexually or otherwise exploiting, harassing or discriminating against particular students* (emphasis mine)
- Adopting an inadequate textbooks or educational product because of a manufacturer’s gifts or incentives
- Forcing students to purchase materials where profits accrue to the instructor (Heyneman, 2009: 3).

On her part, Pereira (2002) describes sexual harassment as “sexual corruption”, and concludes that the higher education institutions in Nigeria are characterized by “sexual corruption” (Pereira, 2002: 29). In the same vein, Mama (2003) observed that in Africa, “sexual pervasions are a pervasive feature of academic life” (Mama, 2003: 118). The prevalence of sexual corruption in HEIs distorts the processes of assessment in the educational sector, and further destroys the trust on the lecturers that those students with excellent performances sincerely represent what their certificates reflect. Bennett *et al* (2007) identified certain concerns that have been consistent in studies on sexual harassment and sexual violence on campuses in southern African universities and her neighbouring countries as follows:

- multiple zones of power and seniority which according to the authors reflects hierarchical nature of the university and patriarchal cultures of leadership which expose the 'juniors' to vulnerability to harassment by the 'stronger'.
- The existence of transactional sex in HEIs in the continent which could include provision of higher grades (higher CGP) from men academics to women students. In this case women students offer themselves willingly to men academics in exchange for higher scores or even for access to financial gains.
- Women's overt or covert harassment of men lecturers through provocative dressing, and
- The inability of victims of sexual harassment to divulge their experiences of the incident due to the fear of stigmatization and/or victimization (Bennett *et al* (2007: 56).

The above observation not only indicates the pervasive nature of sexual harassment on our campuses but also opens up space for us to begin to imagine the possible consequences of sexual harassment in Nigerian higher education, particularly in a country where the instruments and mechanisms for addressing sexual harassment in HEIs are lacking. Bennett *et al* (2007) affirm that:

What campus-based research on sexual harassment and sexual violence has offered is one window into the cultures of heterosexuality within higher education. While it is critical to note that such cultures may offer people access to important life-enhancing pleasurable relationships, a focus on sexual harassment and sexual violence allows certain tensions of gendered dynamics to be brought to the surface, possibly named as 'abusive' and identified as core zones for intervention, both for the sake of those likely to become abused and for the sake of higher education itself (Bennett *et al.* 2007, 87).

Implied in the above is that sexual harassment is a gender issue and as such gender and academic freedom in HEIs in Africa is not only about leadership issue, access to higher education but encompasses what Barnes (2007) termed "the bodily expressions of inequitable power relations" (Barnes, 2007: 18) which is, in the words of Hallam (2001), "antithetical to the ideals of the university as a collegial community of aspiring and credentialed scholars" (Hallam 2001 as cited in Barnes, 2007: 18). The prevalence of sexual harassment in HEIs in any country raises a fundamental question, which borders on the quality of certificates emerging such country. Besides, sexual harassment distorts the culture of the university and fundamentally violates the rights of the victim to engage in

knowledge production, the individual student's right to the pursuit of knowledge.

### **ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THE ENTERPRISE OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION**

The concept of 'academic freedom' which has gained currency in discourse on the university today dates back to the period "spanning the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century" (Pak, 2007: 83). Although the issue that thrust up the question of academic freedom, as Pak (2007) noted, was the case of a faculty in a British University who was being persecuted for his position in a dispute between the administration and the academic staff, the major foundation-laying epoch that instituted academic freedom as a pillar in the discourse of university autonomy, took place at the International Conference convened by UNESCO in 1950, in Nice, where and when the universities in the global community stipulated three categorical principles for which every university should stand. These, according to UNESCO policy Statement, are:

- The right to pursue knowledge for its own sake and to follow wherever the search for truth may lead;
- The tolerance of divergent opinions and freedom from political interference;
- The obligation as social institutions to promote, through teaching and research, the principles of freedom and justice, of human dignity and solidarity, and to develop mutually material and moral aid on an international level (extract from UNESCO Policy Statement).

In Africa, academic freedom became a buzz word in the discourse on HEIs in the 1990s following the policy Statements that have come to be referred to as *Dar as Salam Declaration* and *The Kampala Declaration* (1990). The interest since then has been on how the neoliberal policies of the government interfere with (i) knowledge production within the university space, including curricula development and the issue of harmonization and standardization; (ii) administration of the university (iii) autonomy of knowledge production and finally, though not directly implied in neoliberalism, and often treated by some scholars as unserious, (iv) gender issues.

Although gender is conspicuously missing in the English version of *The Kampala Declaration* on academic freedom, an unexplainable oversight, in the French version, the reverse is the case. Despite this omission gender issues have continued to be a problematic that cannot be avoided in the discourse on academic freedom (see Sall, 2000). The issues articulated in *The Kampala Declaration* and the way each interferes with

the processes of knowledge production continues to generate reactions and counter reactions from different groups ranging from academic staff union, civil society, to the students. Often times, most reactions come from the academic staff's rejection of interference, which they perceive to be counter-productive to the goals of the university or opposed to the processes of qualitative education.

Despite some achievement recorded since the formulation of *The Kampala Declaration* (1990), diverse challenges, some of them new, have continued to undermine the value and quality of the university as the 'ivory tower' (see for instance Sawyerr, 2004a; 2004b; Teferra & Altbach, 2004; Nwagwu, 2010). In recognition of this reality, The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), in collaboration with *Centre de Recherche en Anthropologie Sociale et Culturelle*, Algeria (CASCA), in 2010 organized an international conference in Oran, Algeria, termed 'Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics and Researchers in Africa: What are the New Challenges?' The goal of the conference was to review the journey so far with regard to academic freedom in the continent, and articulate other challenges that have emerged since the formulation of *The Kampala Declaration*. The consensus at the end of the conference was the conclusion, through both empirically and theoretical based scholarly works presented by seasoned African scholars<sup>2</sup> at the conference, that the violation of academic freedom in HEIs in Africa has moved significantly away from government interferences which the teachers often agitate against.

In recent times, the majority of the participants noted, threats to academic freedom emerge from within the university. For instance, Ogachi (2010) explored the corporate cultures that are threatening academic freedom in many public universities in Eastern Africa. Professors, rather than engaging in teaching and research, are co-opted to function as directors of various units and centres (some of which are duplicated) aimed at generating money for the universities (Ogachi, 2010).

Other issues threatening academic freedom from within include ethnicisation of the university (Munara & Wako, 2010), the complexities of intra-group interaction which often obstruct access to formal and informal spaces in the university as a result of gendered practices (Ukpokolo, 2010) *et cetera*.

What these studies suggest is that the violation of academic freedom from within calls for a closer look at how spaces of knowledge

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<sup>2</sup> Some of these scholars include Thandika Mkandawire (London School of Economics), Mustafa Raufu (Oxford), Jimi Adesina and Fred Hendricks (Rhodes University South Africa), Amina Mama (California), Hocine Khelifaoui (Canada) and other stake holders such as Scholars At Risk (SAR, New York), Academic Staff Union of Nigeria University (ASUU) represented by the president of the association, Ukachukwu Awuzie. This list is by no means exhaustive of the scholars that took part in the conference.

production are being constricted through practices within the university, practices which include sexual harassment.

As defined in *The Kampala Declaration* (1990), 'academic freedom' is "*the freedom of members of the academic community, individually or collectively, in the pursuit, development and transmission of knowledge, through research, study, discussion, documentation, production, creation, teaching, lecturing and writing*" (*The Kampala Declaration* 1990, emphasis mine). The university, as an 'ivory tower' typically represents a free space where teachers can produce knowledge, carry out research, interrogate ideas through writing, and be able to disseminate their findings through seminar presentations, discussions, teaching and lecturing. The students on their part are expected, without restriction, to access and harness this knowledge which lecturers possess. Accessing knowledge also implies freedom of movement within the university community for the purpose of study, research and utilization of academic facilities such as libraries, Internet facilities, laboratories *et cetera* at all times wherever they are located in the university environment. Constriction of intellectual spaces, therefore, includes practices that interfere with and challenge the achievement of any of these goals.

Although much debate on academic freedom tends to focus on the area of knowledge production, which definitely is one of the core issues, the often neglected area of the declaration is the part which challenges African academics not only to freely engage in knowledge production, but to act responsibly in their bid to produce knowledge, disseminate or teach. For instance, Chapter III, Article 21 of the *Kampala Declaration* states categorically that: "No one group of the intellectual community shall indulge in *harassment, discrimination, or oppressive behaviour* towards another group" (emphasis mine). Students are not excluded from the intellectual community; as such, acts that restrain the production and/or pursuit of knowledge in the university violate the principle of academic freedom whether from the teachers or the students. Students' unethical conduct can hinder their teachers from performing their statutory duty or make the university environment un conducive to any meaningful learning processes for their colleagues through vices ranging from cultism, unwelcome sexual overtures to sexual violence such as rape.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT ROSE MILL UNIVERSITY**

To a casual observer, sexual harassment is not prevalent in RMU. However, that does not seem to be the case. Findings from this study demonstrate that there is a general belief among members of the university community that sexual harassment is prevalent in the institution. The informants were quick to point out that although generally women tend to be victims, men are not exempted. According to a male undergraduate student:

Guys also fall victims of sexual harassment from female students, especially some girls in secret societies. These girls [in secret societies] go to a guy and say “it’s you I want to date, you like it or not”. “It’s either you drop out of school or you date me”. Through all that, the guy is already undergoing sexual harassment. But his ego won’t allow him to tell his classmate that, “that girl is harassing me” (Fieldwork, 2010).

Apart from their colleagues, students also harass their teachers as one of my informants observed: “Some girls also go to the lecturers’ offices and harass them sexually through their dressing and appearance or even verbally” by openly saying, “You give me that mark and sleep with me” (Fieldwork, 2010). Many male informants are of the opinion that provocative dressing and seductive postures by female students constitutes sexual harassment of male teachers and students. A male Senior Lecturer argued that some female students deliberately dress in such a manner as to seduce their lecturers, visiting them at late hours in the office with frivolous discussions with the intention of endearing themselves to their lecturers and in the process seduce them. Besides, female students can harass their teachers through video recording of conversation with sexual connotations with the intention of blackmailing such teachers. Female students that initiate sexual harassment do so with the intention of using “sexual favours to gain academic favour” (Heyneman 2009: 12), a case of ‘transactional sex’. The belief that female students are hapless victims of male teachers seems to wane against actions such as these.

The poor economic condition of many students was suggested as a contributory factor to incidents of sexual harassment. While poor girls stand vulnerable to sexual harassment from more comfortable male students, ‘rich’ girls can harass poor male students. Though informants are unanimous that power has strong influence on sexual harassment, they seem to disagree on the nature of this power. Sexual violence such as rape is a clear evidence of power where the stronger, physically, takes advantage of the victim’s weaker stature as exemplified in the incident in Abia State University narrated earlier. According to an informant, “Using rape as typical example, within RMU, it’s all about power... maybe because the perpetrator is physically stronger than the victim” (Fieldwork, 2010). But power need not always be physical. According to Bakari & Leach (2009) “Men in position of power may not need to use physical violence to maintain their control over subordinate groups” (Bakari & Leach, 2009: 13 citing Hearn, 1998). Power asymmetry existing between the teachers and the students naturally underscores students’ subordinate positionality. For instance, an informant observed:

This [sexual harassment/rape] happens mostly to people who are at disadvantage. Probably they are below people who have power. I think it has to do more about power or status or authority that the person feels he can exercise on somebody else making the person to be disadvantaged.

That is how it mostly goes. It's just about power (Fieldwork, 2011).

Basically, power is one's (or a group's) ability to cause others to do what the individual (or group) wishes the other to do. Shively (1997), for instance, observed that power can be exercised in various ways, such as through coercion when we force a person to do something he or she did not want to do, as persuasion when we convince someone that a particular action is what he or she really wishes to do, or as the construction of incentives when we make the alternative so unattractive that only one reasonable option remains (Shively, 1997: 6). Viewed from this perspective, power becomes complex, elusive and can, indeed, take varied forms. For instance, an informant concluded that "in cases of lecturers harassing students, it has to do with the power that the lecturers can use on students... So, I think it's all about power (Fieldwork, 2011). The indication is that some students perceive themselves as helpless as the statement below indicates:

If a lecturer tells me "if you don't sleep with me, I will not pass you" and he does it this year, I have a carry over, and the next year, the same is about to happen, I will succumb! (Fieldwork, 2010).

A male undergraduate student in Faculty of Science has this to say:

Most times, the object would have no choice but to succumb, because the subject has power to do anything to you. From the onset, he uses this as a weapon against you. Most times, they put it in a way that the object feels all she or he has to do is just to do it once and get over with it, but over time, the person comes back because the subject has power over you and keeps using the power to have his way every time and gradually, the object loses his or her self esteem (Fieldwork, 2010).

Men and women exercise power over the other either covertly or overtly. Chinweizu in his widely celebrated book, *Anatomy of Female Power* (1990), puts it this way:

Whereas male power tends to be crude, confrontational and direct, female power tends to be subtle, manipulative and indirect. Whereas aggressiveness is the hallmark of male power, manoeuvre is the hallmark of female power. From a male-centred point of view of what power is, it is easy to be misled into thinking that a female form of power does not exist at all; and even when female power is recognized, it is

easy to dismiss it as power of inferior type, just because it is not hard, aggressive or boastful like the highly visible male form (Chinweizu, 1990: 12).

By implication, a female student that harasses her lecturer does so manipulatively, making her lecturer to do her biddings or what an informant describes as turning the lecturer into her 'boy'. Her sexuality is here employed as instrument of exploitation. An instance was given of a lecturer that went to the extent of changing a female student's scores even in the course he never taught. Of course, when the matter came into the open and was investigated, he was found culpable and he eventually lost his job.

With regard to lecturer student relationship, findings suggest that academically weak students tend to be more prone to sexual harassment or even harassing their lecturers in a bid to upgrade their performances. This view is supported by a Senior Lecturer in College of Humanities who argued that:

Because such students need to improve on their Cumulative Grade Points (CGP), such lecturers catch in on that by threatening her that her poor performance could lead to her withdrawal from the institution. So the effect is more on the very weak students. In fact, that is the major weapon the lecturer has on a student, marks (Fieldwork, 2010).

Although participants generally acknowledged that unwelcome sexual overtures when carried through is a trauma that the victim may live with for life, some students succumb because "I need to graduate". However, instances abound where a few students have dared to challenge the seemingly hegemonic power the teachers have over their marks by reporting to the constituted authority, but the processes are daunting. For instance, a student who is convinced that his/her performance has been compromised may request for a remark of his/her script. But this takes a long process and is often viewed as an indictment on the integrity of the lecturers.

### **THRIVING IN SECRECY, SUSTAINING CONTINUITY**

The indication is that sexual harassment thrives in an environment where victims do not 'speak out'. An informant notes:

The victims [of rape] are usually afraid to speak out especially rape victims. If the news has not broken out, they won't be able to say anything but if they find the courage to talk, they are ashamed, most of the time. They feel it was something they did that caused some of the things that happened. Then, apart from that, sometimes the remaining

students pity the victims; sometimes some students say the victims caused it (Fieldwork, 2010).

When the researcher sought to know the reason for this 'culture of silence', an informant resorted:

Aaaa, even if I am being sexually harassed by a lecturer I will not say it. I won't even tell my friend. Because people will label me... "This is the girl that lecturer is harassing"...aaa *Olorun ma je* [God forbid].

Although in RMU, there is institutional mechanism for general disciplinary issues, the social worker in the institution is of the opinion that the students themselves have a strong role to play in availing themselves of the opportunity offered by this redress mechanism. He notes:

Before it [a case] gets to the disciplinary body, the ladies themselves are the ones that can determine what will happen. If they want to stop sexual harassment, a lot has to do with the victim. For example, it is the lady that would say, "I have not done anything to this lecturer to sexually harass me and I want the authority to do something about it to rescue me from this injustice". So, it is the lady that would make herself available. First, she has to make a formal report and you know the committee has to work with data and facts. A lecturer can even say that "This lady wants to spoil my career"... But it is the case that is reported to them [the committee] that they can investigate (Fieldwork, 2010).

A male lecturer, however, reasoned that most victims of sexual violence, that is rape, do not report because they too are culpable. In his words, "they are not completely innocent" (Fieldwork, 2011). Obviously, the inability of the victims of sexual harassment and sexual violence to make formal report to institution's authorities due to stigmatization and/or their culpability constitutes further hindrance to any attempt to curtail the prevalence of the phenomena. This position was supported by the university social worker who on occasions encouraged victims to make a formal report. According to him:

Because of the societal stigma, they don't want to be stigmatized that this is the person that was raped because they would ask questions such as "Where was it? What was she wearing? Was she the only one that has been raped?" You know, all these things put a setback. And when the

perpetrator did it and goes away, he has the tendency to do it to another person (Fieldwork, 2011).

Every individual is interconnected in a web of social relationships, which has effect on one's choices. For the victim of rape, the protection of her identity and her right to privacy surpasses her right to seek justices against the harasser. The Social Worker further hinted:

Some of them even say they don't want their fiancé to know and we respect the right and confidentiality of our patient. If we say, do you know in Rose Mill University we can assist you to get justice, they may say 'I don't want any of my mates to know'. Some of them would tell you when they are in the hospital, and their mates come to visit them, they would say they are in the hospital for another sickness, instead of that one (Fieldwork, 2010).

Insisting on the right to privacy on the part of the victims renders efforts at giving assistance ineffective. As the Social Worker further observed, the social work unit is most interested in the patient's recovery, therefore, would not do anything that would harm her or make her experience another shock or trauma.

#### **THE INTERSECTIONS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The UNESCO Policy Statement on the university states:

Neither Academic Freedom which encompasses the freedom to enquire and to teach as well as the freedom of students to learn, nor University Autonomy are privileges but that they are the basic and inalienable conditions which enable the University as an institution of scholarship and learning, as to its individual members to meet, fully to assume and optimally to fulfil the responsibilities Society confides to both (UNESCO Policy Statement (IUA)).

Education generally functions to "certify the acquisition of knowledge and skills and to identify those who may deserve more specialized training" (Heyneman 2009: 5). When the processes of acquiring knowledge, Heyneman added, are prejudiced as a result of ascriptive considerations such as gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation *et cetera*, the very purpose for which educational institution is established is jeopardised (Heyneman 2009: 5).

Gender here has to do with how gendered socio-cultural dynamics intersect access to knowledge and knowledge production. For the female

students, the most prevalent form of insecurity they experience in RMU campus is sexual harassment, which at times manifests as rape. Informants observed that the fear of falling victim of rape restrict their movement particularly during examination when they need to study late in the library and classrooms. A study of students' utilization of ICT centres on the university campus reveals that the space is populated by male students late in the evenings, making access to technology a gendered issue. With this apparent constriction of such spaces of knowledge acquisition, female students become disadvantaged, as they retire to their halls of residence earlier than usual as a result of the fear of sexual violence. Commenting on this reality a 400L female student observed:

When we are in our rooms, hardly do we read because of the distractions we face with our roommates, and activities going on in the hall. So, what we do is, at night, we find it easy to read and assimilate. Some would go to any lecture theatre that is close to the hall to read. *But, as of last semester, I discovered that people didn't go out to read the way they ought to, because they are scared of being sexually harassed* (Fieldwork, 2010, emphasis mine).

In their paper, "*I Invited her to my Office*"; *Normalising Sexual Violence in a Nigeria College of Education*, Bakari & Leach (2009) observed that female students in their research noted that the greatest threat to their studies was sexual harassment (Bakari & Leach 2009: 31). Findings from the current study give further credence to that conclusion.

Reactions to the experience of sexual harassment varies, depending on (i) the form of sexual harassment the individual experienced, e.g. verbal, physical such as rape, (ii) the psychological disposition of the victim of sexual harassment and, (iii) the programme the victim is pursuing in the university. An informant observed:

Someone who is a victim of rape will find it so difficult to adjust. If she is not open to some good guidance or counselling and allows her emotions to control her, she might have a problem with continuing her education... I've seen a lot of people that psychologically, have been affected by this kind of a situation. I have a friend that has to withdraw from school because she has been sexually harassed by some guys around her. She couldn't cope with the situation so she has to change school to continue her studies (Fieldwork 2010).

An institution where there exists healthy interaction among students, on the one hand, and between students and teachers on the other, engenders positive intellectual culture. According to a female Senior Lecturer,

“students can go to the library without fear. They can approach their lecturers without fear. Accessibility to lecturers will be a given” (Fieldwork, 2011). She further noted:

Sexual Harassment weakens knowledge production itself. The knowledge production is distorted. The student will not pay attention. ... It lowers the integrity of the lecturer. On the part of the student, the knowledge he/she will be acquiring will not be complete (Fieldwork, 2011).

Informants also noted that some of the survival strategies victims adopt include avoidance of classes or courses of the harasser, particularly when such courses are optional. Concerning such a lecturer a 300 Level female student observed:

I may not be free in his class. He has my Matric number and it can affect my performance. I won't be free with him at all. If the course is a borrowed course I will delete the course (Fieldwork, 2011).

A Lecturer in Faculty of Science corroborated this position when he noted:

It's clear that students normally don't go for courses of lecturers who are known to be harassing students. If the course is optional, students will avoid the course... as a way of avoiding contact with the lecturer-in-charge... and this will affect their career-building (Fieldwork, 2011).

Where such courses are compulsory, the students may choose to be self-effacing in class, avoid asking questions when the need for clarification arises, and this reduces student's classroom participation. Another male lecturer observed:

Students may not have the full meaning of what they have read or taught and they may have reasons to once in a while come back to their lecturer for clarification and interpretation. But where sexual harassment exists, the student will be discouraged to go or ask for further clarifications or the lecturer's position on an issue (Fieldwork, 2011).

The above narratives reveal how sexual harassment can constrict spaces of knowledge acquisition, and subsequently violate the academic freedom of victims. Chapter I Section A of the *Kampala Declaration* on academic freedom states “Every person has the right to education and participation in intellectual activity”. Such rights are violated as the

dynamics of sexual harassment threatens the victim's right to actively participate in "intellectual activity". In essence, sexual harassment affects the quality of knowledge impacted on the victim as a result of constriction of intellectual spaces.

### **REDRESS MECHANISMS IN RMU?**

Presently, HEIs in Nigeria are yet to formulate sexual harassment policies although disciplinary committees exist in all schools. This absence constitutes a challenge to dealing with the issue of sexual harassment in HEIs in the country. The existing general disciplinary committees such as Students Disciplinary Committee and, Senior/Junior Staff Disciplinary Committees also handle cases of sexual harassment in most institutions. The implication is that procedures and processes required for handling a delicate matter like sexual harassment is absent. This further restrains victims who wish to seek redress.

In RMU, the existing procedure for reporting a case of sexual harassment is through the Head of Department (HOD) who will investigate and establish the fact that there was a case of sexual harassment, to the Dean of the Faculty who will also do the same, then to the Registrar and finally to the Vice Chancellor Academics, if it is a case involving an academic staff. The institution then sets up a panel excluding members of the Department of the harasser to establish the *prima facie* of the case. According to an academic staff, "though the process is complex, this complexity allows for thoroughness and eliminates biases and the tendency for someone to hijack the process". Another academic staff who was a member of the RMU Disciplinary Committee maintained: "My sister the procedure is long but that is why RMU disciplinary resolution has integrity" (Fieldwork, 2011). A case of sexual harassment involving students, depending on where it took place, goes to the Dean of Students from where it is sent to the Students' Disciplinary Committee for final investigation and verdict.

Beside the disciplinary committees, other redress mechanisms available to victims include the Counselling Unit in the Students' Affairs Department, the Social Work Unit, and the Law Clinic where victims can seek justice and redress. Interestingly, victims of sexual harassment hardly seek redress at these places, except a few cases that get to the general disciplinary committee through a panel's recommendations. Fear of stigmatization and victimization keep many victims away from reporting their experiences, which may indicate the students' lack of confidence or limited trust for the available procedures. An informant asked a rhetorical question: "Will they act on my letter or I will end up putting myself in trouble" (Personal Communication, 2011). For some informants, the university authority is biased in handling sexual harassment issues. A male undergraduate student observed:

Sometimes the authorities are partial with their judgement...  
If the perpetrator is their relative, sometimes the judgement is not actually what we like. But we believe that the school authority should actually put in some strict punishment on the perpetrators (Fieldwork, 2010).

This allegation is contradicted by instances where lecturers have been indicted or out-rightly dismissed as a result of their involvement in sexual harassment. According to a male Lecturer who had sat on a case of sexual harassment by a male lecturer:

There are cases of lecturers who have lost their jobs in this university because of sexual harassment. For instance, one happened in Faculty of Education recently. So it is not true that the university does not do anything. The issue is that the students are afraid to make formal report (Fieldwork, 2011).

It, therefore, may not be correct to assert that the institution is relaxed in dealing with the issue of sexual harassment. The facts seem to suggest that while the university is willing and ready to deal with the issue of sexual harassment in the institution, the 'culture of silence' that characterise sexual harassment is a challenge. The absence of a gender unit with a counselling gender clinic in the institution is a missing link in overcoming this challenge. A 400 student hinted:

If there is a centre where complaints can be made and... those ones will take it up, may be that will help those that are shy and ashamed to come out. Let fresh students be aware of it. Give them advice. Innocent girls that are admitted are ignorant, coming from their parents' watch where they don't know anything about tertiary institution (Fieldwork, 2011).

In recent sessions, the school authority has been inviting gender scholars during orientation of new students to speak to the in-coming students on gender issues, including sexual harassment, with the intention of inculcating in the students the right value – freedom and the respect for human dignity. This is a welcome development. Presently, RMU is working on the formulation of gender policy and sexual harassment policy which are intended to impact on the values in the institution. However, the security situation on campus needs to be improved upon. Installation of Close Circuit Television (CCTV) at various 'danger spots' on campus can enhance security on campus and puts a check on those students and visitors to the campus that may attempt to engage in anti-social behaviour such as

rape. This, the management has started doing. But, there is still need for improvement.

### **CONCLUSION AND FINAL REMARKS**

This paper attempted an exploration of the relations between sexual harassment and academic freedom. It argued that sexual harassment constricts intellectual spaces and, thus, violates the academic freedom of the victim. Discussions in the paper demonstrate that sexual harassment is a question of power which males and females exercise in diverse ways. For female students who engage in harassing their lecturers sexually, the act is usually subtle, indirect and manipulative, making their victims psychologically terrorized or oppressed and disposed to sexual exploitation. Conversely, male lecturers and male students exercise their powers in aggressive, direct, and confrontational manner, and are often easily identified as cases of sexual harassment underrating the former. Obviously, the prevalence of incidents of sexual harassment in universities in Nigeria signals to the stakeholders in the educational sector the erosion of the values and culture of the university.

In any case, findings from this study provide opportunity for the management in HEIs to look deeper into the mode of interaction in the university space in order to begin to redesign processes and structures that could engender a more positive mode of interaction, between staff and students, on the one hand, and among students themselves on the other. Institutional mechanisms specifically designed to deal with gender issues, including sexual harassment, need to be put in place in all tertiary institutions in the country. Findings from this study further demonstrate that school authorities need to make the matter of sexual harassment a public issue for the staff and students, including institutional provisions for tackling sexual harassment. This can function as a preventive mechanism. It is obvious that the existing disciplinary committees both for students and staff cannot adequately deal with the issue of sexual harassment and, therefore, engender the 'culture of silence'. Gender unit can, indeed, fill this gap. The university education is meant to enhance the development of the individual and any action that works contrary to this vision constricts the intellectual spaces and, is a violation of the much needed academic freedom in any learning process.

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**PART IV**  
**NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**



## CHAPTER XIV

# SCHOLAR'S IDENTITY AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

*IKE ODIMEGWU and CHRISTY ODIMEGWU*

In 1810, Wilhelm von Humboldt issued his famous memorandum in which he projected his vision of a university founded on three fundamental principles: “unity of research and teaching, freedom of teaching, and academic self-governance.” In 1852, considering the idea of a university, John Henry Newman declared that it is a place where “students come from every quarter for every kind of knowledge” (Boulton & Lucas, 2008: 3). The principles of von Humboldt and the idea of Newman have provided the models for universities in the contemporary world. Consequently the university is considered the quintessential centre for knowledge production and dissemination.

With the shift from “mode 1” knowledge production which emphasizes disciplinarity in knowledge production to “mode 2” knowledge production with its emphasis on transdisciplinarity, heterogeneity and socially accountable and reflexive practices (Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Trow, 1994; Moravac, 2007), new demands are made on university education and the academia. If we visualize the university as a farm, its primary produce will be knowledge. Its primary worker, the farmer, is the scholar. The state of the farmer affects the state of the farm and of its products. To effectively operate within this new knowledge production milieu, scholars are expected to display an integrated identity that incorporates the three basic functions of the university and the four domains of scholarship suggested by Boyer in 1994 (Austin & McDaniels, 2006).

This paper explores the link between the three basic functions and the four domains of scholarship with the current knowledge production roles of Nigerian university academics. It further presents the crisis of research and problem of scholar identity in Nigeria and posits integrated role identity as a frame for rediscovering scholar identity among Nigerian academics for more effective knowledge production.

## **KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION: FOUR DOMAINS OF SCHOLARSHIP**

Society demands different forms of knowledge production. While the initial modes of knowledge production in the academy emphasized individual research and academic-oriented research, the presently prevailing

mode of knowledge production emphasizes interdisciplinarity, teamwork, increased collaboration and practical application of knowledge. This is no doubt linked to the four scholarship domains proposed by Boyer (1994), and extensively studied and developed by Austin and McDaniels (2006). Boyer held that rather than just research as hitherto conceived, scholarship, especially at the university level, involves four different but related fields. He classified these as follows:

- Scholarship of *Discovery* —which refers to the traditional research role of the university academic.
- Scholarship of *Integration* —which is akin to the interdisciplinarity of knowledge referred to above by which a scholar should be prepared to work across different disciplinary contexts to generate knowledge as a team.
- Scholarship of *Teaching* —which is anchored on the scholar generating new knowledge in the course of teaching in order to improve teaching.
- Scholarship of *Application* —which emphasizes that the scholar is expected to apply knowledge in the service of the community.

Some analysis of the possible relations between the domains may yield enlightenment. Research as the foundation on which the business of scholarship stands and grows requires that the scholarship of discovery be the entry point and aperture into the domains of scholarship. From discovery to the communication of that which is discovered, the scholarship of teaching follows necessarily upon the scholarship of discovery. The scholar is the learner, one who is thoroughly schooled, and one who can do the work of the school. The next step does not show itself as clearly however, because what is discovered and taught seems ready for application —even as the need of integration for effective application presses the argument for placing the scholarship of integration before scholarship of application. And we think that the function of integration presents itself as the overarching domain which shows the comprehensive framework for scholarship even as discovery serves as the foundation for the entire enterprise of scholarship.

If however the “primary goal of the scholarship of integration is to make new connections with and among disciplines (Austin & McDaniels, 2006: 53), its position among the domains may shift as such integration will be necessary for effective teaching. And since the synthesis, interpretation and connection of disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge introduce “new insight to original research” (Braxton, Luchey, & Helland, 2002, cited in Austin & McDaniels, 2006: 53), the scholarship of integration becomes a means to or a form of scholarship of discovery. Of course, it stands to reason that effective teaching, as a consciously thematized application of research findings, provides opportunities for

testing these findings, and many a time such test environments yield new knowledge and lead to further discovery.

The forgoing reveals the interweaving relations of the domains of scholarship. A good concept of scholarship requires an adequate understanding of the unique characteristics of the domains, their interconnectedness and mutual impacts on each other. The integrated concept of scholarship that emerges from such an understanding has significant implications for the scholarly identity that will evolve as the future scholar develops.

It is also important to observe the connection between these domains and the three basic functions of a university and the academic: research, teaching and community service. While three of the domains address these functions, the function of integration addresses the re-orientation from the uni-disciplinary to the multi-disciplinary modes of knowledge production.

Being a balanced scholar in the contemporary conception of the university as a center for knowledge production entails maintaining a balance among these domains of scholarship. This is achieved by seeing the connection between the four domains and constantly being committed to performing the respective roles aligned to each. Also required is a consciousness of the connection between the domains and the three basic functions of the university. The process of achieving this may be well understood within the framework of role identities to which we shall return later.

### **THE CRISIS OF THE NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY AND THE LOSS OF SCHOLAR IDENTITY**

Nigerian universities, like universities elsewhere, are expected to perform the three basic roles of research, teaching and community service. However, the research role is expected to be the arrow-head through which knowledge can be created and disseminated in order to achieve the other roles of teaching and community service. What affects the university at this level therefore affects it also at the other levels. A negative effect on the research role ultimately reflects on the teaching and community service roles of the university. The decades up to the late 1970s have been noted as a time when true scholar identity was validated in Nigerian universities by the high level of knowledge production through quality research and publications. This period witnessed a marked presence of Nigerian scholars and scholarship at international conferences and publications. It also saw the growth of attention by Nigerian scholars to indigenous problems and subject matters. Particularly in the humanities, but also in the sciences, Nigerian scholars were emerging as strong voices in international academic gatherings through quality research and ingenious creative works.

The economic crisis that hit Nigeria from the early 1980s affected every aspect of the nation's life. Education generally, and tertiary education

in particular, suffered neglect and tragic reduction of funding from the government. The consequent crisis in the universities and continuing face-off between government and the unions in the universities left a lingering deleterious impact on the quality of scholarship. Bako (2005: 17) notes about this period that the “contribution of researchers from Nigerian universities to global publication and production of knowledge has declined.”

While some of the causes of the problems are traced to the government, the researchers themselves are not exempt from responsibility. Indeed, the unbecoming conduct of a number of scholars contributed to the deterioration of standards and quality of scholarship. Such conduct, as overt interest in the production of half-baked publications for promotion, exchange of marks with various forms of self gratification, poor quality of postgraduate research supervision and consequent low quality of graduates, and the older generation of scholars’ inability to prepare the younger generation in the culture of research and publication, add to the already bad state of affairs ( Olukoju, 2002; Bako, 2005; Omotala, 2008; Aluede, 2009). All these cast doubt on the identity of Nigerian academics as scholars. Hence Omotala (2008; p.138), notes that “the Nigerian academy is enmeshed in a deepening crisis of integrity, which has taken heavy tolls on intellectual responsibilities of scholars.”

#### **SOCIAL ROLES, IDENTITY THEORY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOLAR IDENTITY**

The human being as social finds himself existing in a network of social relations. These relations establish positions which are therefore social positions. Every such position is defined by the roles assigned to it by virtue of its belonging to the network of social relations. Individuals acquire aspects of their social identity by occupying such positions and performing the concomitant roles. While the roles are externally assigned, individuals define their own identities internally as they accept or reject the social role assignments (Stryker & Burke, 2000). However, once an individual has accepted and internalized expectations for a role as part of his or her identity, that identity becomes a cognitive framework for interpreting new experiences (Colbeck, 2008, p.10).

Social identities however presuppose an identity on the level of being, or metaphysical identity, for identity is not a mere aggregate of qualities but the integrated presentation of the being of an individual that exists as such and knows himself as such. Thus, identity is constituted by the interplay of being, doing and perceiving. While being refers to the fact that identity belongs to a being, this being, in search of identity, must perform certain actions or roles that belong to the particular position of its being. These roles arise from the network of relations to which the person belongs, i.e. from the expectations other members of the network have of the position, or the perception wherewith they perceive the position.

However, the perception is not the exclusive preserve of the “other” or even of the significant “other.” Because identity is established as the product of belongingness or relatedness, the perception that ultimately constitutes identity is mutual or multi-dimensional. There are at least four significant dimensions of perception. These may be categorized into two levels or groups or perspectives of perception:

- Who perceives?
- Who/what is being perceived?
- 

Analyzing these groups, the following dimensions come to sight:

- my perception of myself
- my perception of the other
- the other's perception of me
- the other's perception of him/herself.

The ‘of’ dimensions above may be restated as ‘by’ dimensions as follows:

- the perception of me by the other
- the perception of me by me
- the perception of the other by me
- the perception of the other by the other

These perceptions are affected by performing the roles as they also affect role performance. However, the coalescence of the perceptions and their interplay with role performance affect the development of identity. An integrated scholarly identity incorporates the four domains of scholarship in a dialogical framework that recognizes the reality of multiple identities and that these need not result in crisis or fragmented identity. Such an identity also requires an agreement between the being, the doing and the multiple dimensions of perception of the scholar, his position and his roles.

Identity, according to Burke (2003a cited in Colbeck, 2008: p.10), is “what it means to be who one is.” The perception of “who one is” is related, most of the time, to the label derived from one's social position. As earlier observed, every social position has a role with its emergent expectations. The more one performs the expectations, the more the role is confirmed and legitimized. And so it is with the roles of scholars in the academic arena. Discrepancy in role performance and role expectations/perceptions leads to two possibilities: “to simply exit the role” (Colbeck, 2008) or to “create the impression that the role is indeed legitimate” (Jazvac-Matek , 2009). Some academics have simply adopted identities of businessmen, politicians and other identities that are at variance with the core scholarly roles. As a result, instead of exiting from what

would not be validated in the academic environment, the scholar identity is forced to suffer a syncretism of discordant roles.

A basic element of developing identity is “looking for one’s chosen community for recognition and establishing position or status within the community (Stets & Harrod, 2004). Thus for a particular identity to be claimed, relation with others must be consistent with that role identity so that identity is not disconfirmed. Going by this argument, the peer review mechanism should be one of the scholar-identity confirmation processes – a process whose efficacy in the Nigerian context has been questioned by a number of scholars (Olukoju, 2002; Omotala, 2008). This situation presents a marred identity of Nigerian scholars. A number of remedies have been proffered for the problematic situation. However many of these seem to expect salvation from outside the universities. While we acknowledge the relevance of external remedies, we believe that the Nigerian scholar could arrest and redirect this negative tilt in identity. Indeed it stands to reason that unless the solutions are internal to the system or at least have the collaboration of the scholars themselves, no significant progress may be made in addressing the problems which defective scholar identity poses for the knowledge production capacity of Nigerian universities.

If scholar identity is the reality of the professional scholar, then its potency must be sought in the period before this stage of license or profession. The period of studentship is the stage of potency for scholarly identity. And yet not all of this period constitutes the potency equally. There is the need to distinguish between remote and proximate potential periods. In this wise, the period of postgraduate studies is the proximate potential stage while the stage of doctoral research constitutes the most developed stage of the proximate potential period of scholarly identity. An avenue for confirming and developing the scholar identity therefore is the doctoral programme. Expectedly, it has been variously observed that participation in scholarly activities among faculty was best predicted by demonstrated scholarly productivity while still in graduate school (Weidman & Stein, 2003). Consistent with the foregoing argument, Austin & McDaniels (2006) note that the faculty learns about scholarship and scholarly roles through the doctoral programme. Consequently, they identified the development of professional identity as a scholar as one of the five foundational competencies a doctoral student should possess.

Opening a window into an understanding of how scholar identity may be developed in both academic and doctoral students, Jazvac-Martek (2009) noted that “it is the conversations, interactions and exchange of feedback that PhD students associated with the feeling of being an academic.... Thus, construction, development or changes to any particular role identity is interactive, based on continuous reflexive dialogue and relations with significant others, and remains a dialogic process throughout the doctorate.”

## **DOMAINS OF SCHOLARSHIP, MULTIPLE IDENTITIES AND INTEGRATION OF IDENTITY**

If the four domains of scholarship are necessary elements in constituting scholarship, the relations of the four domains are also necessary elements in the constitution. The four domains of scholarship apparently call forth the issue of multiple identities and the possible crises of relations across identities. Because humans organize their roles in hierarchies, more commitment is given to the prominent ones to the detriment of others, otherwise conflict and stress may result. Colbeck (2008) suggests that because individuals fail to create a link between multiple identities, crises and fragmented identities arise. Many scholars who adopt fragmented identities fail to see the link between their teaching, research and community service roles. Specifying what it means to have an integrated professional identity, Colbeck (2008: 13) notes that the integrated scholar "is able to apply research skills to improve his teaching and his students' learning; to derive penetrating questions that advance his research agenda from thoughtful communication with students; and to define, analyze, and resolve real-world problems in partnership with interdisciplinary colleagues, students and community members." This no doubt cuts across the four domains of scholarship proffered by Boyer within which the scholar is expected to work.

## **IN THE NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY: SCHOLAR IDENTITY AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION**

In the farm which the university is, the scholar is the farmer, the primary worker and the principal producer. The extent and quality of the product of this farm depends largely therefore on the scholar. One may say then that there is a significant correlation between the identity of the Nigerian scholar and the knowledge production capacity of the Nigerian university. Let us look at some of the relations and ways of these relations.

If identity is "what it means to be who one is," as Burke would aver, then the identity of the Nigerian scholar in the Nigerian university requires us to raise the question of what it means to be a scholar in the Nigerian university. The question of meaning, of course, is both semantically multi-dimensional and existentially multi-referential. The question breaks forth into the questions of meaning to and meaning for: What does the term scholar mean to the Nigerian scholar, the student, the university, the community? How does each of them understand the term scholar? Secondly, what does the Nigerian scholar, in his position and roles, mean for himself, for the student, the university, and/or the community? That is, how does the fact of his being a scholar impact on their lives? What difference does his being a scholar and the how of this being make in the lives of all concerned?

A thing in its best state requires not explanations but admiration, not excuses but praise, not apologies but display. The identity of the Nigerian scholar seems ever in need of apology, explanations and excuses. That the crisis of the economy and the failure of political leadership have left traumatic effects on Nigerian education generally and tertiary education in particular has been well documented. And yet these are explanations for an unpraiseworthy state of universities and Nigerian scholars. A number of factors regarding the identity of the Nigerian scholar that affect the capacity for knowledge production require attention.

The deficient funding of the universities and the scholarly activities of the Nigerian scholar has adversely affected his research productivity, publication profile and quality. As will be expected, this effect on research affects the other domains of scholarship. Consequently, the quality of teaching, collaboration and community service has also deteriorated.

Again the social perception of success and happiness emphasizes utility. This has effects on scholar identity in a number of ways. The scholar deigns to mould himself into this social image and expectations. Of course such a scholar is thus hamstrung in his research. He is diverted from the search for depth of understanding and speculation of ideas that should characterize university scholarship to the hunt for immediate practical results. Further, if the research and creative products of the scholar are not present-utility oriented, they are not recognized as contributing to the knowledge pool of the university and society.

The scholarly identity from the perspective of performance contributes directly to knowledge production as it involves the scholar in knowledge production through research, and knowledge dissemination through teaching and application.

The perspective of perception also contributes to knowledge in a number of ways. The scholar's perception of himself as a scholar whose *raison d'être* is knowledge production actuates him to knowledge production. Where, however, society disposes the scholar to perceive himself more desirable in an identity other than that of a scholar, he will suffer from an identity crisis, which will be resolved in exit or in dishonest, uncommitted belonging. This will not motivate the scholar to optimum knowledge production. The resolution through exit has given rise to the brain drain syndrome while dishonest and uncommitted belonging is at the root of the many cases of inefficiency and corruption of scholarship in Nigerian universities. This situation has been a major source of crisis between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Federal Government in Nigeria.

The students' perception of the lecturer's scholar identity also has implications for knowledge production. While a positive scholar identity is expected to inspire scholarship in the student, a negative identity is also expected to de-motivate the students' desire for knowledge. Indeed, a negative scholar identity, as perceived by the student, will constitute an impediment to knowledge production. Beyond demoralizing the students

from pursuit of knowledge, it will also discourage them from approaching the scholar for knowledge acquisition, and generally discourage students from communicating with the scholar. All these factors have adverse effects on the capacity of Nigerian universities for knowledge production.

## **CONCLUSION**

Using the model developed from the principles of von Humboldt and Newman's idea of a university, we have examined the situation in Nigerian universities with particular attention on the relations of scholar identity and knowledge production. This examination reveals that, in the decades leading up to the 1970s, Nigerian universities had vibrant scholars who impacted positively on the international scene. It was also noted that the nation's economic crisis since the 1980s has left a deleterious imprint on scholar identity and the universities' capabilities for knowledge production.

We recognize the university as the quintessential industry for knowledge production. Conceptualizing the university as a farm where the scholar is the farmer, we contended that whatever happens to the farmer affects the farm and its productive capacity. By analyzing the relations of Boyer's four domains of scholarship, we concluded that harmonizing the various roles of the scholar within an integrated identity is necessary for effective scholar identity. While the achievement of such an identity will enhance the knowledge production capacity of Nigerian universities, we also observed that such an identity is largely lacking in Nigerian universities because of the economic crisis, the failure of political leadership, and the anti-scholarly conduct of some Nigerian scholars.

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## CHAPTER XV

# DEVELOPMENTAL UNIVERSITY AND THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*ADEBOLA BABATUNDE EKANOLA*

In recent times, there has been a global hype about how to facilitate development in the nations tagged as “developing”. Central to this is the postulation of the Millennium Development Goals in the year 2000. Several theories have evolved over the years in an attempt to provide a viable framework for sustainable development in the nations where this is urgently required (Ekanola 2005, 134-136). These theories, over a period of forty years, have yielded four major conceptions of development:

- (1) the ethnocentric notion of development as synonymous with westernization;
- (2) the economic notion of development as economic growth, a more sharply focused “critical variable” version of (1);
- (3) development as the measurable amelioration of poverty, unemployment and inequality under the rubric of “the realization of human personality” and
- (4) development as a basic structural transformation from an “interdependence based on hierarchy and Western charity to an interdependence based on symmetry and mutual accountability (Sklar 1994, 342).

However, the conception of development that seems to have gained much acceptance in the last decade or so holds that development consists in an effective and responsible coordination of all available resources for the enhancement of the capabilities, freedoms and overall wellbeing of people through an increase in GNP per capita, life expectancy, access to education, health care services, housing, sanitation, drinking water and food. (Sen 1999, 3). As such, the notion of national development may be rightly construed as a process of effective and responsible coordination of all the resources available to a nation for the improvement of the capabilities, freedoms and general wellbeing of its citizens. With this understanding of national development, the central question this paper seeks to address is: what is the role of the university in the quest for national development? However, in answering this question, we shall begin with an analysis of the idea of a university and more particularly, the idea of a developmental university.

**WHAT IS A UNIVERSITY?**

A university is a social institution that provides the highest level of formal education. As a social institution, it is part and parcel of the social fabric of a given era that is committed to the education of members of society. According to Newman, a university is a School of Universal Learning, a school of knowledge of every kind, consisting of teachers and learners from every quarter. (See <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/newman/newman-university.html>.) Its primordial function is to produce educated citizens that are equipped with appropriate skills and qualified to fulfil defined roles in the number required by society (Sklar, 1994, 343-344). As specified in Nigeria's National Policy on Education, universities are supposed to provide high-level manpower for national development.

Since its inception in the medieval era, four basic conceptions of a university have evolved (Sklar, 334):

- The first maintains that the primary objective of a university is to teach and educate for the sake of education, without any emphasis on any other utilitarian end. This conception underlies the Ivory Tower image of the university as a community of scholars searching for and propagating knowledge for its own sake. (Egbokhare 2007, 59). It can be traced back to Aristotle who advocated that knowledge should be sought for its own sake in an attempt to escape ignorance and not for any external utility (See <http://library.thinkquest.org/18775/aristotle/knowar.htm>).
- The second conception of a university, while it is hostile to public or societal service, holds that it should focus primarily on advanced research.
- The third idea is that of a multiversity, which is omnifunctional by being all things to all people. This basically combines the two conceptions of a university identified earlier, and also lays emphasis on public service.
- The developmental university is the fourth idea of a university. This upholds the view that a university should, in all aspects, be primarily concerned with providing solutions to the concrete problems of societal development. This concern is to be fulfilled through teaching, research and community/public service.

The substantial difference between the third and the fourth conceptions of a university is that while the third advocates that a university should give attention teaching, research and community service equally, the fourth maintains that the primary concern of a university should be to provide solutions to the practical problems of social development.

## **THE IDEA OF A DEVELOPMENTAL UNIVERSITY**

The prevalent conception in virtually all developing societies is that of a developmental university. It insists that universities in developing countries “must be demonstrably relevant for and totally committed to national development” (Sklar, 1994, 335). In the words of Julius Nyerere, “the role of a university in a developing nation is to contribute; to give ideas, manpower, and service for the furtherance of human equality, human dignity and human development” (1966).

The idea of a developmental university is reflected in the Nigerian National Policy on Education, especially where it is stated that “the curriculum will be geared towards producing practical persons, and the course content will reflect *our national needs, not just a hypothetical standard*. (NPE 1981, 24). Likewise, the drive towards making Nigerian universities essentially developmental is evident in the University of Ibadan Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Here, it is stated explicitly that the basic objectives of the University include making University of Ibadan more responsive to global demands, the national needs of the country, as well as those of other universities and graduates.

Several factors underlie the wide acceptance given to the notion of developmental university in many developing countries (Sklar 1994, 336). One of these is the sense of national responsibility expressed, either collectively or individually by university authorities and academic staff that the intellectual and physical resources of the university should be placed at the service of the nation as long as this pursuit is consistent with the teaching and research objectives of the university.

Second is that the idea of developmental university is encouraged by government. This is achieved by commissioning contract research and consultancies on specific development problems, sponsoring civil servants for in-service trainings programmes to equip them for development projects, and prescribing national service for university students in an attempt to instil in them basic development orientation.

A third factor is financial in nature. There is the general perception that universities would justify the huge amount of money expended on them by ensuring that they address the pressing problems that hinder social development. Nyerere expressed this view by contending that academics in poor societies can only justify expenditure on a university –of any type – if it promotes real development (1966).

From a different perspective, universities also tend towards issues of development in order to attract or compete favourably for allocation of resources from government. The underlying assumption here is that because universities have high costs, they need to be practically relevant to the problems of development as well as other areas of social needs. This fact is further accentuated by the fact that the pressure of allocation of resources among the three tiers of education: the primary, secondary and tertiary levels necessitate that universities always demonstrate that they should have

access to the scarce resources. This need is intensified by the fact that “governments often give priority to primary education, resulting in the starvation of higher learning” (King and Sall 2007, 12).

The interests and focus of the international donor community constitute the fourth factor that pressure universities towards developmentalism. Donor agencies are mostly only interested in giving aids, grants and other forms of support to those universities that are relevant to national development by adopting a problem-solving approach to social problems as well as those problems peculiar to the system of education itself. Hence, universities, in order to access foreign grants, tend to focus more on issues pertaining to development.

### **CHALLENGES FOR A DEVELOPMENTAL UNIVERSITY**

As identified earlier, the traditional function of a university is to produce educated citizens that are equipped with appropriate skills and qualified to fulfill defined roles in the number required by society. Beyond this, however, a developmental university is expected to provide solutions to concrete problems of societal development. It is in this regard that more emphasis seems to be laid on community/public service than on teaching and research. Community service is to be pursued by (Sklar 1994, 343-346):

- (1) Ensuring that the developmental plans of the university are integrated with or linked to national development plans;
- (2) Coordinating its activities with public and private agencies, including other tiers of education;
- (3) According recognition to academics who engage in developmental activities;
- (4) Providing necessary infrastructure for developmental activities;
- (5) Emphasising the developmental role of the university; and
- (6) Facilitating national integration by reducing or eliminating all forms of inequalities.

A challenge confronting developmental universities, however, is how to effectively combine the traditional functions of a university with its developmental responsibilities. This challenge is well depicted by Sklar in the following question: What are the tolerable and feasible limits of involvement consistent with the university’s basic mission of teaching and research? (1994, 347). He identified a number of factors as obstacles that hinder a university from contributing effectively to national development while it remains faithful to its traditional functions.

First is the lack of commitment of government in many developing countries to national development. Rather, many of the political leaders and government officials in these countries are more committed to their survival and continuation in power, and personal enrichment. These tendencies are

clearly inimical to development and would definitely frustrate any development initiative taken by any university.

Another complication relates to the question of competence. The argument here is that academics in most universities were not specifically trained to pursue development the way they are being required by the advocates of developmental university. As such, for them to be effective in this pursuit, there would be a need for retraining, which would require time and sufficient motivation. Besides, many academics are conservative and are quite impervious to change. For instance, the ego, self-esteem and professional self-image of academics hinder the kind of retraining and transformation that is requisite for academics to be positioned to contribute to national development the way they are expected to by advocates of developmental universities. Many of them rather prefer to defend, protect and perpetuate their academic integrity and the form of training they have always known and from which they derive their professional legitimacy.

A further complication for developmental universities is revealed when we consider the principles of freedom and autonomy generally acclaimed to be central to the existence of universities. According to Egbokhare, "the university must be founded on the twin principles of academic freedom and autonomy. When these principles are eroded or interfered with, the university idea cannot be sustained" (2007, 59). While the idea of academic freedom creates room for the free pursuit of knowledge and its dissemination by individual academics without any interference, either from the state or public, university autonomy allows for institutional independence in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge (2007, 62). However, it must be noted that the freedom of academics in teaching and research as well as the institutional independence of universities need not and cannot be absolute. For instance, while academics should not be indifferent to prevailing social realities, universities as institutions of learning are financially accountable to government and other agencies that provide them with funds.

One problem for developmental universities, from the perspective of the principles of academic freedom and autonomy, is that by being primarily concerned with providing solutions to the concrete problems of social development they tend to be closer, more dependent and accountable to government. This inevitably hinders universities autonomy and objectivity in the pursuit of truth. For instance, as academics and university administrators either get co-opted or appointed into policy positions in government or are awarded research consultancies by government, as a salary augmenting activity, they lose their freedom to pursue the truth or to be critical of government. Besides, universities' primary concern for development in a fundamental sense restricts their research and teaching focus in ways that might be inimical to a broad based knowledge generation and dissemination. It takes academics off their statutory function of teaching and research.

Closely related to the above is the problem described as functional overload (Sklar 1994, 350). This is the problem of being overloaded with so many responsibilities with the consequence that none of them are fully met in the final analysis. The additional burden to be developmental in focus is often very alluring for its associated financial benefits. Academics are able to attract funding from donor agencies or contracts from government and non-governmental organisations for commissioned research on issues relating to development. Hence, they are quick to engage in these income augmenting activities that are time consuming, energy sapping and which distract them the essential academic services of teaching and research. Such developmental interests and projects come with other benefits for academics such as public recognition and greater exposure to real life problems of development. It also helps universities to retain competent hands who otherwise would have been lost to either internal or external brain drain. But this has its flipside, which includes commercialisation of research, externalisation of the locus of research from universities and scholars, over commitment to development issues and diffusion of interests and attention which leads to superficiality, erosion of academic and specific professional norms as the scholar's reference group is no longer his academic community but external donor agencies.

With the above complications besetting developmental universities, the fundamental question to address now is: how can universities remain faithful to its traditional functions of teaching, research and community service and at the same contribute effectively to national development? To answer this question effectively, it would be helpful to examine what precisely is the bane of development in Africa.

### **THE BANE OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

Africa, for all practical purposes, remains largely underdeveloped in spite the availability of vast human and natural resources. All the development plans and structural adjustment programmes have failed to yield expected results. The two most touted reasons for the continuing state of underdevelopment in Africa are its colonial experience (See Walter Rodney 1981 and Olufemi Taiwo 2010) and the scourge of bad governance and inept leadership (Ekanola 2004, 98-109). Given the wide array of literature on these issues, I would not belabour them here.

However, while these factors contribute to the underdevelopment of many of the countries in Africa, there appears to be a more fundamental factor responsible for its state of underdevelopment: a moral deficit in the psyche of both the general citizenry and also the people who are to execute the development plans and programmes. This manifests in various forms of vices that include dishonesty, greed, discrimination and injustice across virtually all spheres of social existence. These vices in turn generate a lack of focus, accountability and insufficient dedication that fuel underdevelopment in Africa (Ekanola 2011, 12). Oladipo in this regard

contends that sustainable social development is dependent on an asymmetrical relationship between the level of control human beings have achieved over the physical world and the mastery of their world of politics, religion, culture and interpersonal relationship (2009, 27). He observed that while humans have achieved an impressive level of control over the physical world, as is evident in the innumerable scientific and technological achievements, we have not achieved the same level of success in terms of human morality and spirituality. Hence, many people are still enslaved to basic instincts, personal desires, emotions and prejudices (Oladipo 2009, 27) that impede the readiness of people or groups of people to actually cooperate with one another, undertake requisite actions and make the necessary sacrifices for the kind of development that is both inclusive and sustainable.

In addition to the above, there is also what I would call a general technical deficit in many African nations. Accounts abound on the fact that Africa is backward scientifically and technologically, and how this contributes to its general state of underdevelopment (Oyeshile 2007, 87-89). The realisation of the important role of science and technology in the process of development accounts for the technical conception of development as the acquisition of scientific knowledge and technical know-how with their associated material and economic benefits. This implies a significant control over the natural and social environment, increase in agricultural production, improvement in the provision of essential services and social infrastructures like schools, roads, dams and the establishment of industries (Nyerere 1978, 28). From this perspective, a society is described as developing as more and more of these facilities and institutions are provided.

It is in an attempt to correct the technical deficit that more emphasis is being laid on the teaching of science based courses than humanity based courses in universities. In Nigeria, as an example, the National Policy on Education stipulates that the ratio of Science to Liberal Arts students in Nigerian universities should be 60:40 (NPE 1981, 25). In addition, several universities of technology and agriculture have been instituted in a further attempt to rectify the technical deficit in the country. Similar policies have been adopted in other African countries. For instance, in former Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo, the policy of compulsory enrolment and preferential treatment for students in the physical and natural sciences was adopted (Sklar 1994, 343).

## **THE UNIVERSITY'S ROLE IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

With the above understanding of the bane of national development in Africa coupled with our understanding of the primordial function of a university as the production of educated citizens or high-level manpower equipped with appropriate skills to fulfil defined roles in the number required by society (Sklar 1994, 343-344), we can now address the question

of how universities can affectively respond to pressing national developmental needs while at the same time remain faithful to its primordial functions. The position of this paper on the above question is distilled from the views on Plato on the ideal society and the idea of the invisible hand in the free market economy (Friedman 1988, 349-350).

Taking our cue from Onigbinde's analysis, Plato's idea of justice shows that the overall wellbeing of society is predicated on each individual, class and social institution focusing on the function he or she is specialised in, and in an harmonious cooperation with one another. The principle of division of labour is central in this. (Onigbinde 1991, 28). This suggests that for social development to be recorded in society, individuals, classes and institutions must focus on the functions that they are specifically trained and equipped for, and also maintain an harmonious relationship with others without interfering in the area of specialisation of others in society. Speaking specifically within the context of the economic system, Milton Friedman, drawing inspiration from Adams Smith's idea of the invisible hand, similarly argued that the best way to enhance the interests and wellbeing of society as a whole is to allow each individual, and if I may add, each social institution, to freely pursue its own wellbeing. (1988, 349).

Bringing the above considerations to bear directly on the role of the university in national development, it follows that universities would be in a position to contribute more effectively to national development if they concentrate on those functions they are designed and equipped to carry out while they maintain a harmonious relationship with other social institutions without interfering in their areas of specialisation. The rationale of this position is better appreciated if it is considered against the background of the problems of competence and functional overload identified earlier in this paper with regards to the idea of a developmental university. The developmental university is faced with the problem of competence in the sense that it embarks upon developmental tasks for which it is not specifically trained and equipped. The challenge of functional overload hinders a developmental university from being maximally productive with regards to both its traditional functions and its developmental pursuits.

The university as a social institution that provides the highest level of formal education, traditionally, is designed and equipped to produce educated citizens and high-level manpower equipped with appropriate skills required for social development. The fact that two of the major problems responsible for the underdeveloped state of many African countries have been explained in this paper as a combination of moral and technical deficits suggests that universities have not been very successful in producing the kind of educated citizens equipped with all the competencies (technical, political, economic, and moral) required for social development in African nations.

Indeed, education, at all levels, should focus on the moral and spiritual development of individuals (Ekanola 2009, 142) as much as it concentrates on technical skill acquisition and cognitive competence For

instance, Anyiam-Osigwe avers that education should aim at the inculcation of such personal values as honesty, probity, equity which would crystallize into what he describes as a mindset that is suitable for social development (Ekanola 2009, 144). Thus, contrary to the position that the purpose of a university does not include religious or moral training (Kenny 2007, 19, 27), there should be added to the generation and dissemination of universal knowledge attention to the knowledge of and practical acquisition of those personal values that are essential for the social development of a nation.

Hence, Anyiam-Osigwe proposes what he calls holistic education as a means of overcoming the problems of underdevelopment. This goes beyond mere acquisition of cognitive competence and practical skills in order to earn a living (Ekanola 2009, 139). It includes enhancing the capacity of all to exert a regenerating and creative moral vibration on the social system (Anyiam-Osigwe 2002, 18). This would invariably result in the spiritual, moral, intellectual, technical, economic and socio-political enhancement of both the individual person and ultimately society as a whole (Ekanola 2009). This form of education, according to Anyiam-Osigwe, is highly essential to regenerate the social system and cleanse it of much of the ills afflicting it and impeding social development today.

Contrary to the position of the advocates of developmental universities that individual academics and universities, as social institutions should pay a primary attention to the varied socio-economic and socio-political problems that hinder the much desired development in Africa, a better result would be achieved if they concentrate on their areas of specific competence: engage in research and teaching, that is, generation and dissemination of both practical and theoretical knowledge with the primary object of producing educated people and high-level manpower equipped with appropriate skills required for social development. These products of universities, once they are properly trained and adequately equipped, would in turn function in the various spheres of social existence they have been specifically trained for and the overall effect, in line with the postulations of Plato on justice and the ideal society, and Milton Friedman on how to enhance the common good in society would be an improvement in the overall wellbeing of all in society.

As such, the general shift of focus of universities and their faculty from their traditional functions to specific developmental issues would, for one, result in a neglect of these traditional functions due to functional overload. Indeed, this neglect accounts, in part, for the falling standard of education our universities as academics tend to devote more time, energy and other resources to those “very rewarding” commissioned or contract developmental researches and projects than to basic research for knowledge generation and teaching. And obviously, students that are not well taught would end up as half-baked graduates who would go into the larger society to further complicate the already grievous problems besetting development by their incompetence and dearth of appropriate personal values.

However, this paper's point of departure from the positions of Adam Smith and Friedman is on their assumption that as individuals pursue their self interest, an invisible hand would coordinate these disparate pursuit of interests in a way that the overall interest of society is generated (Friedman 1988, 349). The coordinating function of the seemingly disparate pursuits and functions by the various social institutions that concern themselves with only their areas of training and competence would be the reserve of government. And once universities are faithful to their traditional functions, there would a positive ripple effect on society as it would result in the enhanced competence and productivity of people in the diverse domains of life requiring university training, including those who would eventually occupy government positions.

## **CONCLUSION**

The basic thrust of this paper has been to identify the role of the university in the process of national development. The paper defines national development as a process of effective and responsible coordination of all the resources available to a nation for the improvement of the capabilities, freedoms and general wellbeing of its citizens. Also a university has been described as a social institution consisting of teachers and learners from every quarter and committed to the education of members of society so as to produce educated citizens equipped with appropriate skills, and qualified to provide high-level manpower and fulfill defined roles in the number required for national development.

After an examination of the idea of a developmental university and a number of the challenges besetting it, the paper identified technical and moral deficits as two fundamental hindrances of development in Africa. And, with this understanding, the thesis of this paper is that the ideal role of universities, contrary to the position of those advocating development universities, is to remain faithful to their traditional and primary functions of teaching and research. This would invariably produce educated people and high-level manpower equipped with appropriate skills required for national development.

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## CHAPTER XVI

# THE ROLE OF A UNIVERSITY IN NIGERIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*EMMANUEL N. OGU*

University education is a pillar of progress in many societies. As such, a bright future for many nations and individuals depends on university education. Numerous education scholars have referred to education as the process of learning and acquiring knowledge and to the school as a form of formal education. University institutions have faced the pressures of a tremendous increase in enrollment in recent years. This clearly shows that many institutions are facing common contemporary challenges due to the changes that technological developments have created. As such, the impact of university education cannot be over emphasized. Universities today are used as a tool for effective economic and social acceleration for both young students and entire societies.

Research clearly shows that a person is limited in the pursuit of career if some basic education skills are lacking. Therefore university education can be considered as a key force for modernization and improvement in the socioeconomic welfare of people (Teferra and Altbachl, 2004; Stampen and Hansen 199). Today elementary students have the opportunity of learning different subjects, reading, writing, simple mathematics and an understanding of how the world works. University education then opens up many new opportunities. For example, a student gains confidence that the education obtained will enable him or her to use it in different life situations. Furthermore, students are exposed to many new technologies which they can utilize to express themselves and learn about the other ideas (Teichler, 2001).

According to Abdulkareem (2001), a nation's growth and development is determined by its human resources. The provision of the much needed manpower to accelerated the growth and development of the economy has been said to be the main relevance of university education in Nigeria (Ibukun, 1997). In the light of this the National Policy on Education (2004) highlighted the aims of university education as follows:

1. To contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training
2. To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society
3. To develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments

4. To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society
5. To promote and encourage scholarship and community service
6. To forge and cement national unity
7. To promote national and international understanding and interaction.

The belief that university education is a powerful instrument of development has led many nations to establish educational institutions. Hetland (1984: 72) calls for universities to serve their societies by contributing to their countries cultural and socio economic development and stop being “ivory towers”.

### **THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT**

The term development is a concept with several meanings. It is defined in actual context in which researchers use it. Some researchers said development and growth are interchangeable (Malchup, 1970). Others use words like social change, evolution, progress, advancement, and modernization as synonyms of “development” to mean fundamental changes in social attitudes and institutions. Some philosophers, scientists, social scientists and planners identify development with the social structure found in highly industrialized and advanced nations in education, science and technology (Rowstow, 1990). Writers like Harrison (1988); Inkeles and Smith (1974) regard development as the process of changing a basically traditional society into modern one (Agbo, 2005). While Harrison (1988) said that development is the same as modernization, *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* defines development as a recent, important event which is the latest in related events. National development can be defined by the citizenry as improvement of their lives (Addo 2010). In all there is no agreed definition of development.

The international community adopted the term “development” to describe the sequence of economic growth of the nations of the Third World (Huq, 1975). In 1971, the United Nation declared the following elements as basic for development: (1) a minimum standard of living compatible with human dignity (2) underpinning improvement of the wellbeing of the individual; (3) sharing of benefits by society at large; (4) more equitable distribution of wealth and income (5) a greater degree of income security (6) the safeguard of the environment. Thus from the point of view of this paper, development is viewed from the standpoint of building of human resources of a nation.

The human capital theory contends that an educated population is a productive population. Education contributes directly to the growth of the national income of societies by enhancing the skills and productive abilities of employees. It is also suggested that investment in education has a very high socio-economic return for a country. Theodore Schultz(1961) said that

education provides the category of labour force required for industrial development and economic growth. He (1980) maintains that education is an investment that produces the quality of the population that can propel economic development and welfare of a nation. Singh and Manuh (2009) add that most education and policy frameworks in developed and developing countries acknowledge that basic education is a right, and that it plays a crucial role in promoting social and economic development, especially in relation to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) and the education for all (EFA) targets.

### **THE ROLES OF THE UNIVERSITY**

The most important roles of a university are teaching, research, innovation and service to the community. One core function of a university is training—a term that refers to two main responsibilities, namely: creation and production of human resources through transmitting and inculcating of information, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to the people.

The second is research, the deliberate and continued search for new or improved knowledge and skills. “Universities have long been recognized as providers of basic scientific knowledge for industrial innovation through their research and related activities, where “industrial” connoted the agricultural and manufacturing sectors” (Guston, 2000; Smith, 1990; Hart, 1988).

A university must take the process of production — research and transmission of knowledge — to its logical conclusion by way of innovation. The ultimate purpose of research is to help mankind find solutions to its problems or enhance its capacity to satisfy its needs. Farrant (2001) held that any university intent on playing a strong role in economic development beyond simply the theoretical will have a sustained, positive impact on the regional economy only when its activities are guided by a reflective and on-going institution-wide and region-wide discourse (p.614). It also requires community service on the part of the university to prepare the manpower level of an economy

### **THE NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE, STARTING WITH STATISTICS**

The National examination council (NECO) reported that out of 234,682 candidates that sat for the last year’s NECO organized senior school certificate examination (SSCE), only 4223, i.e. 1.80%, passed the exam. Passing here means getting credits in five subjects including English and Mathematics. The West African Examination Council reported that 75% of candidates of its secondary school certificate examination failed. That means they got neither a credit nor a pass in Mathematics and English. There is something worrisome in a pattern of an examination result which starts with 100% in 2001, gets to 97.2% in 2001; 27.74% in 2008; 10.53 in

June/July 2009 and ends with 1.80% in November/December 2009. Below are the statistics of WAEC Examination results for May / June, 2008.

**TABLE 3.11f: STATISTICS OF WAEC EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR MAY/JUNE, 2008.**

STATE	TOTAL NUMBER OF CANDIDATES WHO SAT FOR THE EXAMINATION			CANDIDATES WITH MINIMUM OF FIVE (5) CREDITS (INCLUDING ENGLISH LANG. & MATHEMATICS)			PERCENTAGE OF CANDIDATES WITH MINIMUM OF FIVE (5) CREDITS (INCLUDING ENG. LANG & MATHEMATICS)		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	M	F	M&F	% M	% F	M & F
Abia	14036.00	17618.00	31654.00	2868.00	2637.00	5505.00	20.43	14.97	17.39
Adamawa	19037.00	11187.00	30224.00	232.00	104.00	336.00	1.22	0.93	1.11
Akwa-Ibom	26324.00	28557.00	54881.00	4122.00	4073.00	8195.00	15.66	14.26	14.93
Anambra	11898.00	16804.00	28702.00	2320.00	1830.00	4150.00	19.50	10.89	14.46
Bauchi	7614.00	5906.00	13520.00	1145.00	619.00	1764.00	15.04	10.48	13.05
Bayelsa	7030.00	4341.00	11371.00	242.00	147.00	389.00	3.44	3.39	3.42
Benue	24549.00	16861.00	41410.00	1316.00	563.00	1879.00	5.36	3.34	4.54
Borno	14384.00	8781.00	23165.00	472.00	335.00	807.00	3.28	3.62	3.48
Cross River	18178.00	15365.00	33543.00	1496.00	1023.00	2519.00	8.23	6.66	7.51
Delta	13810.00	12955.00	26765.00	2741.00	1779.00	4520.00	19.85	13.73	16.89
Ebonyi	18434.00	16141.00	32575.00	890.00	736.00	1626.00	5.42	4.56	4.99
Edo	47636.00	45154.00	92790.00	9243.00	7393.00	16636.00	19.40	16.37	17.93
Ekiti	11215.00	10224.00	21439.00	797.00	718.00	1515.00	7.11	7.02	7.07
Enugu	18155.00	13389.00	41544.00	2874.00	2541.00	5415.00	15.83	18.98	13.03
Gombe	4005.00	2714.00	6719.00	75.00	49.00	124.00	1.87	1.81	1.85
Imo	12897.00	15722.00	28619.00	1835.00	2063.00	3898.00	14.23	13.12	13.62
Jigawa	8661.00	2037.00	10698.00	70.00	35.00	105.00	0.81	1.72	0.98
Kaduna	33065.00	23877.00	56942.00	2867.00	1934.00	4801.00	8.67	8.17	8.46
Kano	28672.00	14216.00	42888.00	2065.00	1324.00	3389.00	7.20	9.31	7.90
Katsina	16486.00	6407.00	22893.00	532.00	232.00	764.00	3.23	3.62	3.34
Kebbi	7100.00	2587.00	9687.00	75.00	24.00	99.00	1.06	0.93	1.02
Kogi	26618.00	20156.00	46774.00	1351.00	769.00	2120.00	5.08	3.82	4.53
Kwara	12486.00	10027.00	22513.00	369.00	320.00	689.00	2.96	3.19	3.06
Lagos	86473.00	86443.00	172916.00	11916.00	8792.00	20708.00	13.78	10.17	11.98
Nassarawa	22208.00	12638.00	34846.00	322.00	112.00	434.00	1.45	0.89	1.25
Niger	17513.00	10480.00	27993.00	622.00	298.00	920.00	3.55	2.84	3.29
Ogun	26131.00	24176.00	50307.00	1917.00	1555.00	3472.00	7.34	6.43	6.90
Ondo	18346.00	16405.00	34751.00	1521.00	1171.00	2692.00	8.29	7.14	7.75
Osun	20654.00	18630.00	39284.00	1295.00	1188.00	2483.00	6.27	6.38	6.32
Oyo	32926.00	30408.00	63334.00	1642.00	1262.00	2904.00	4.99	4.15	4.59
Plateau	22866.00	18242.00	41108.00	1001.00	624.00	1625.00	4.37	3.42	3.95
Rivers	48655.00	50616.00	99271.00	10331.00	7832.00	18163.00	21.23	15.47	18.30
Sokoto	11265.00	3678.00	14943.00	311.00	213.00	524.00	2.76	5.79	3.51
Taraba	14515.00	7576.00	22091.00	211.00	85.00	296.00	1.45	1.12	1.34
Yobe	10211.00	3541.00	13752.00	125.00	65.00	190.00	1.22	1.84	1.38
Zamfara	10378.00	3281.00	13659.00	104.00	31.00	135.00	1.00	0.94	0.99
FCT	4710.00	5070.00	9780.00	803.00	553.00	1356.00	17.05	10.91	13.87
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>747161.00</b>	<b>612010.00</b>	<b>1359171.00</b>	<b>72118.00</b>	<b>55029.00</b>	<b>127147.00</b>	<b>9.65</b>	<b>8.99</b>	<b>9.29</b>

Source: West Africa Examination Council, Lagos

Mr. Ike Onyechere, the Chairman of Exam Ethics International, reports that Nigerian examination bodies cancel an average of 429,000 results annually because of examination malpractices. Such cancellation costs the nation about 21 billion Naira. Another statistic shows that female enrolment in primary schools in Nigeria is 44.5% which puts her as the 156<sup>th</sup> of 168 countries in the world with similar data. Nigeria spends 0.85% of its gross National income (GNI) on education, making her the 167<sup>th</sup> of 168 countries in the world in terms of public expenditure in education.

Another grave problem of university education in Nigeria today is the failure of ethics. Nigerians have abused the underlying ethics of education characterized by excellence and nobility. Education is simply a relentless pursuit of certificates not a quest for knowledge. Today, universities award hundreds of degrees to students who do not enter classrooms. Most Nigerians boast of Master's degrees without making the effort to participate in academic discourse and preparations that should define such degrees. Some individuals hire mercenaries to write the exams for them or connive with lecturers to get degrees they never worked for. You have also the popular / notorious cases of female students who basically prostitute to poor and immoral lecturers, so as to earn excellent grades. Some male students have joined, posing to be bi-sexual. Then there are the rich and highly placed parents who use financial clout and official privilege to secure admission for their wards who have no disposition to engage the habits of scholarship.

#### **THE LINK BETWEEN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

The World Bank's world development report 2000 observes that economic growth alone is not sufficient to lead to economic development. Quality education and good health care have multiplier effects on economic development. The fastest way to economic development in the modern world today is education.

The role of university education in society is critical. The products of university education form the core of nation building. Every country needs competent and experienced people for development, and such people must be well trained. University education prepares the manpower that drives an economy. This manpower must be seen in qualitative and quantitative terms. Education develops people's skills, knowledge, competency, technical know-how and reasoning capabilities. These, in turn, raise their productivity and income level. This raises the total output of a nation and is a measure of its economic growth. The development of the human resources of a nation comes from quality university education. Increased educational attainment levels results in a greater rate of overall consumption of goods and services.

University education is important to the individual as well as the nation. Weisbrod (1962), as cited in Blaug (1970), identifies the benefits of education to the individual as having direct financial returns through university education. His or her increased income has impact on the nation, by the payment of more tax, and on other beneficiaries, such as parents, brothers, sisters, relatives. A person with a university education is also broadminded, and hence more easily adjusts to any situation or change. Every country requires competent and experienced people for development, and such people must be well trained. An educated person is able to contribute to his well-being and subsequently to economic and social

advancement of the nation. Increase in an individual's productivity increases the total output of an economy. And any increase in total output is a measure of the economic growth of a nation.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

For universities to act as propellers of development in Nigeria, they, in collaboration with industry, government agencies and policy makers, must attempt to meet the following needs:

1. Adequate links between universities and the job market
2. Sufficient enrolment in disciplines that act as engines of growth
3. Elimination of geographical area based admission and employment policies
4. Reduction of the cost of state and private university education by adopting higher priorities in educational planning
5. Promotion of international cooperation
6. Effective links to the cultural and social environment to enhance nation building
7. Ensuring competent and honest management of financial and educational institutions

It can be said that national development is the capacity of a nation to improve and sustain growth in all aspects of national life, and the means to achieving this is to provide university education to the citizenry. Educational programs therefore should be planned to inculcate in students creative initiative, an entrepreneurial spirit, the capacity to analyze complex situations, and a sense of responsibility.

The success of university education in promoting the well-being of individuals is very crucial. It is likewise a pillar for the cultural and socioeconomic development of Nigeria and any nation.

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## CHAPTER XVII

# THE ROLE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

MARY BOSCO EBERE AMAKWE

I have always believed that the role of university education (Intellectual development, preparation for workforce, personality development, and a window to the outside world) whether received from a public (government owned) or private (individual, organization or church owned) is transformational. The above factors automatically become the goals of universities—public or private. One may rightly argue that these functions have to do with the individual and not the society. But let us not forget that this individual is not an island. He/she is dependent on the society and in fact, makes the society. So education forms a person (*ad intra*) vis-à-vis the society (*ad extra*). The 2004 Nigerian Policy on Education sums up this concept beautifully by highlighting the aims of university education as:

1. To contribute to national development through high-level relevant manpower training;
2. To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society;
3. To develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment;
4. To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals be self-reliant and useful members of the society;
5. To promote and encourage scholarship and community service;
6. To forge and cement national unity; and
7. To promote national and international understanding and interactions.

Because of these aims and importance of university education, there is a high demand for university education in recent years in Nigeria as well as other parts of the world. This results in a high percentage of unsatisfied demand every year. As we shall discuss later, this is one of the reasons why there is the tendency for the proliferation of private universities or what Ajayi and Ekundayo called “fourth generation universities” (2008: 214) in Nigeria.

To highlight these double and important functions of university education (*ad intra/ad extra*) with particular reference to private universities is the task of this paper. In doing so we shall first of all look at the process of accomplishing these functions which we refer to as 'transformational development (TD)', the defining characteristics of private universities in the Nigerian context, their roles as listed above, and finally why Nigeria needs more new private universities.

### **THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The framework for this paper will be borrowed from the Principle of Double Effect (PDE); also known as the Rule of Double Effect (RDE); the Doctrine of Double Effect (DDE), Double-Effect Reasoning (DER); or simply Double Effect (DE). This is a set of ethical criteria for evaluating the permissibility of acting when one's otherwise legitimate act (for example, relieving a terminally ill patient's pain) will also cause an effect one would normally be obliged to avoid (for example, the patient's death). Double-Effect originates in Thomas Aquinas' treatment of homicidal self-defense in *Summa Theologiae* in which he states that an action having foreseen harmful effects practically inseparable from the good effect is justifiable if the following conditions are present: "the nature of the act is itself good, or at least morally neutral; the agent intends the good effect and not the bad either as a means to the good or as an end itself; the good effect outweighs the bad effect in circumstances sufficiently grave to justify causing the bad effect and the agent exercises due diligence to minimize the harm" (Cavanaugh, 2006: 36).

The problem with the above concept of Double Effect is that the good effect of a thing causes the bad effect of the same thing or *vis-à-vis*. But in this paper, our idea of Double Effect is different in that we argue that the good effect of university education (intellectual and human development of an individual – *ad intra*) causes another good effect of the same thing - university education (the social and economic development of the society – *ad extra*) and I call this concept the Double-Effect Theory (DET).

### **WHAT IS TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (TD)?**

TD is value-loaded, which makes it difficult for scholars to come up with its precise meaning, and therefore it has no single definition. However, for the purpose of this paper, we shall formulate a working definition. No matter from which perspective one looks at it, the concept of TD denotes "empowering change" (Schultheis, 2005: 98). I like the word "empowering" because any idea of change that is not meant to empower is not transformational. For instance, Neal, borrowing from Organization Theory, explained that transformation is "high spread, large-scale processes that occur within a single organization like caterpillars turn into butterflies,

the organization retains its identity yet it transforms into something new” (2006: 80). Also borrowing from human development theory, transformational human development is all about what one has the “power to change” (CDSForum, 2011: 1): ways of thinking, feeling, life style, and consciousness. May be Getu gave the most comprehensive definition of TD when he says:

TD concerns change in all aspects of life – economic, social, political, spiritual and emotional – with a clear understanding of the ultimate purpose and goal of such development. TD deals with the whole person. Every person is inherently an economic, a political, a social and a spiritual being at one and the same time. The transformation of the whole person means the simultaneous death of the old and the living of the new (2011: 2).

This is exactly what happens to an individual after going through a university. As soon as the person is transformed within (*ad intra*), he/she is then ready to get into the society to make the required difference (*ad extra*). The transformational development that takes place in the individual through university education helps the person to see him/herself as a being who transcends self, who moves forward and looks ahead, “for whom immobility represents a fatal threat, for whom looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who” (Freire, 2009: 187) he/she is, so that the person can more wisely build the future. This is the *ad intra-ad extra* or “human-world relationship” (Ibid.) that the university (private/public) creates in people.

#### **DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT**

In searching for a clear definition of a university, the most comprehensive I found was that given by Capen which states:

A university is an institution in which the advancement of knowledge is deliberately and officially fostered, an institution which is committed not only to the higher forms of instruction but also to research, and which rests its reputation on the quality of its scholarly output. The institution may be large and of complex organization. It may be very small and confine its teaching and investigation to a few fields, or even to a single field... [This] is of no significance in determining its university status. It does not have to be called a university in order to be one.... A university, then, is distinguished chiefly by its

polarization; by its devotion to inquiry and to intellectual creation (1933: 58).

This duty of intellectual creation is very important because it is said that knowledge is power, knowledge is wealth. A careful reflection on the word 'university' shows that it represents "a prophecy and a hope" (Ibid.). The concept of university for a typical Nigerian is just this. We often hear parents say 'I am sending my child to the university so that he/she will learn, become a rich person and then will take care of me.'

Today in many countries of the world, "the institutions of greatest national and international prestige are still the great private universities" (Davidson, 1996: 19) and Nigeria is not an exception. As a result, private universities in that country have been growing steadily from 24 in 2006 to 46 in 2011. At this ratio, it appears that there may be more private than public universities in the near future. This rapid growth of private universities is a result of the difficulties with which public universities are confronted, by which the 'strengths' of private universities become evident. These then form the characteristics of private universities and can be summarized as follows:

- their enrolment is small (selective or elitist) but growing
- they have small class size
- they offer limited programs but that are market friendly
- they tend to be very expensive
- they tend to rely on part-time lecturers many of whom come from public universities.
- Many of the private universities are church-owned and their mission statements proclaim Christian vision that seeks to provide an education that is in line with that vision.
- They give sound formation to individuals which will contribute to the development of the society.

All these put together define the roles and benefits of private universities.

## **THE ROLE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES**

### *Intellectual Development (ad intra)*

It is a commonly accepted view that the cardinal function of universities is the "molding of intellectuals" (Jie, 2006: 383) or the intellectual development of students. This can be defined as the process of "mental development and learning" (Jary and Jary, 1995: 327) that leads to the acquisition of an academically accredited certificate of excellence in an area. This is why according to Frank, *et al*, one and the most important function of university education is its "strong emphasis on intellectual achievements, objectivity and mastery. Schools often make demands for

sustained study and academic achievement and expect students to be actively interested in various subject matter” (1953: 205) By so doing, education subjects a person to “mental discipline,” (*Ibid.*: 210) which is a measure of his/her academic level.

In this intellect-developing-process, students begin with an awareness of uncertainty and advance toward “integrating and evaluating data, relating those data to theory and well informed opinions, and ultimately creating a solution to the problem that can be defended as reasonable and plausible” (King and Kitchener 1994: xvi). This is why the intellect-developing-process according to Shields “will provide a foundation for a life-time of intellectual adventure. It will promote ongoing learning, growth, and creativity” (2011: 49). And Coffman explained that “a university, if it be worthy of the name, no matter whether it be a State or a private university, is fundamentally and primarily dedicated to the freeing of the human spirit, to the improvement and the advancement of culture, and to the liberalizing of the human mind through learning and the search for knowledge” (1933, pp. 25-26). No wonder Guthrie sees intellectual development as a “precursor to moral development” (Guthrie 1997: 26) which we prefer to call personality development.

#### *Personality Development (ad intra)*

The goal of universities is not only to impart knowledge, but also to develop in the students the “dispositions to seek and use knowledge in effective and ethical ways” (*Ibid.*: 24). Today higher education is so dominated by an overwhelming emphasis on the “scientific paradigm” (Jie, 2006: 383) that we tend to forget the ‘person’ of the student even though many university logos and “mission statements contain specific references to the development of students’ character, integrity, morality, or ethics” (Guthrie, 1997: 25). This is why Sandeen asserts that, the “value development of students” (2004: 25) is the principal responsibility of institutions of higher learning. This is because it is these students who will go into the world to transform it. Among the obligations of universities according to Coffman is that “of training those of superior gifts for special leadership” (Coffman, 1933: 24).

Affirming this, Bok states that the primary obligation of higher education is “helping students understand how to lead ethical, reflective, fulfilling lives” (Bok, 1988: 50) because he believes that moral issues offer opportunities for learning since “they present puzzling and ambiguous problems that create educational dialogue” (*Ibid.*). In fact, I have heard many parents cite acquisition of moral values as their main reason for sending their children to private universities. This is rightly so because according to Bok:

universities should be among the first to affirm the importance of basic norms such as honesty, promise-

keeping, free expression, and helping others, for these are not only principals essential to civilized society; they are values on which all learning and discovery ultimately depend. There is nothing odd or inappropriate, therefore, for a university to use them as the foundation for a determined program to help students develop a strong set of moral standards (Bok, 1990: 100).

These moral standards comprise four dimensions according to Guthrie's typology. First is moral sensitivity—the “awareness of different possible courses of action and how each could affect the welfare of all the parties involved. It entails interpreting the situation and identifying a moral problem” (Guthrie, 1997: 31). The other moral standard is moral judgment which “involves a method of figuring out what one ought to do by justifying choices about which line of action is more morally just, or right. It consists of formulating a plan of action that applies the relevant moral standard or ideal, what ought to be done in the situation” (*Ibid.*: 31-32). This is why when people (even though educated) behave in a way not appropriate for a particular situation, people say he/she acted like an illiterate. Then comes moral motivation – the “importance given to moral values in comparison with competing values” (*Ibid.*: 32). When such a situation arises, moral values are given “priority over other values such as political sensitivity, professional aspiration, legality, public relations impact, financial security, self-actualization” (*Ibid.*), etc. The last of the moral standards is moral character itself which involves:

ego strength, perseverance, backbone, toughness, strength of conviction, and courage. It is the psychological toughness and strong character needed to execute and implement a line of action identified as morally desirable. This involves figuring out the sequence of concrete actions, working around impediments and unexpected difficulties, overcoming fatigue and frustration, resisting distractions and other allurements, and not losing sight of the eventual goal. Inner strength, the ability to self-regulate and mobilize oneself to action, is vital for producing moral behavior (*Ibid.* p.33).

Capen sees moral behavior to have “spiritual value” too when he asked: “are the duties of a university fully discharged when the development of the intellect alone remains the chief consideration and when the spiritual value of learning is ignored? My answer is *no*” (1933: 56). The author advised that “a university has to deal with individuals who are prepared to dedicate themselves to learning and to the eternal pursuit of truth” (*Ibid.*).

In carrying out this role of personality formation, the university helps people develop the power to perceive critically who they are, the way and why they exist in the world “with which and in which they find themselves (*ad intra*); they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” (Neal, 2006: 186)—*ad extra*. In so doing, the graduate becomes a critical thinker. Therefore, we can say that the second role of universities is the training of critical minds.

### **PREPARATION FOR THE WORKFORCE (*AD EXTRA*)**

In recent years, in Nigeria and in fact, globally, there is the problem of what I may call ‘diminishing returns’ in the labour market. Why? Because with the rapidly expanding education system “coupled with sluggish economic growth, the number of those with university education has grown more than the labour market can quickly absorb” (Oketch, 2009: 18). Again, according to Daggett, “the changing nature of work, technology, and competition in the global job market has far outpaced what... education system provides for students” (Daggett, 2005: 1). So for the author, “what is important is that students enter the global economy with the ability to apply what they learned in school to a variety of ever-changing situations that they could not foresee before graduating. That is the mark of a quality education” (*Ibid.*). This is why it is believed that education is an important instrument for promoting the socio-economic, political and cultural development of any nation. In fact, Szablowski said that “a basic condition for modernizing the economy is the modernization of the qualification and knowledge level of society” (2001: 412). In short, a nation’s growth and development is determined by its human resources because “the provision of the much-needed manpower to accelerate the growth and development of the economy” (Ajayi and Ekundayo, 2008: 214) is said to be the main relevance of university education in Nigeria and not there.

This is the reason why Alter placed the “training for the professions” (Alter, 1966: 1) as the number one function of higher education. Even going a little back in the history of educational development in Africa, one will notice that this developmental process was mostly influenced not by the “edicts of the colonial powers” but mainly by the economic and social forces, occupational structures, and manpower plans that have been exogenous to educational structures (Foster, 1985: 217). Then and more so now, educational credentials are of overwhelming importance because “university education commands access to enhanced social mobility” (*Ibid.*: 230) and it is the “gateway to the highest economic rewards” (*Ibid.*: 234). How does this happen? Because universities declare people ready for the labour market through the issuing of credentials and whatever the future holds for these people depends on these academic qualifications. For example, Baker and Perkins Jones explained that “the social logic and imagery behind students’ participation in the long and, at times, difficult

enterprise of schooling is that advanced training and associated educational credentials are connected to their opportunities as adults” (1993: 92. See also Saal and Moore, 1993: 107). What then are the real rather than fake educational credentials? Simply defined, credentials/qualifications are papers/documents (certificates) given to individuals at the completion of a program/course, which shows that a person is fit for a certain office or function in the society. They show:

- (a) a school a person attended,
- (b) the area of specialisation, and
- (c) the overall academic score.

These factors are important because the kind of school, area of specialisation and the academic score are determinant for one’s entrance into the labour market. This is why Giddens confirms that “professionals, managers and higher-level administrators gain their position largely from their possession of ‘credentials’ – degrees, diplomas and other qualifications” (1997: 256). Similarly, Moultrie and Rey affirmed that “internationally, a PhD is generally considered a normative entry requirement for many of the high level positions” (2003: 407). Therefore, the university by issuing credentials or certificates equips a person (*ad intra*) for the society (*ad extra*).

The question here will be ‘how well do Nigerian universities carry out this function? The answer is not farfetched. I once saw a title on *The Punch* online which read “60 per cent of Nigerian graduates not employable” (Soriwei, 2008) attributed to the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria - Soludo. As we can see, this comment was made in 2008; in 2011 the Minister of Education herself made a similar but more troubling statement: “over 70 per cent of Nigeria’s graduates are not employable” (Oyetimi, 2011: 4). This is a great challenge for Nigerian universities, but the private universities should succeed in changing this conception.

#### *A window to the Outside World (ad extra)*

No doubt then, these qualified/certified individuals as described above will have better and sound knowledge of the world around them. An educated mind is a critical mind. In giving sound education, private universities help in awakening in their students that critical consciousness about the world and in turn, as graduates they become transformers of that world. This is what Freire referred to as “conscientization ... learning to perceive social, political, economic contradictions” (Freire, 2009: 179) of our world and be able to take transformational action. According to the author, this is what it means to be “conscious of” (*Ibid.*: 183) one’s world. This critical consciousness is most needed now with the phenomenal scientific evolution of the 21<sup>st</sup> century commonly known as globalization. This concept no matter how sweet it sounds has huge negative and positive

aspects as we all know and studies testifying to this abound (See Veliyath *et al*, 2007; Manda and Kunal, 2004 and Kaya, 2010). There is no better place to acquire the exact and proper knowledge of these different aspects of globalization than in the university which will lead to “critical intervention” (Neal, 2006: 184) on the part of the graduates when need be. No wonder Coffman warns “any university that loses step with current movements, that fails to give consideration to the sweeping changes that are occurring in every part of the world, will soon become archaic and incompetent to educate youth for the exercise of leadership” (1933: 29). It is said that humans must know and depend (*ad intra*) on the world for existence (*ad extra*), “and the most essential relation between human being and the world is the survival relations of mutual affiliation” (Jie 2006: 389). This is why people go to university, not only to acquire knowledge but to get “the codes of knowledge” (*Ibid.*: 390). They believe and hope that these codes will help them go anywhere they want without fear and also help them possess whatever they like. Education then becomes the first passport that makes one a “global citizen” (Pashby, 2011: 429).

#### **WHY NIGERIA NEEDS MORE PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES**

The long and short reason is because of the precarious situation of educational system in the country. The best way to explain this is by using the Russian analogy as Coffman presented it:

Russia deprived her professors – many of whom were among the really great scholars of Europe – of everything they needed; she exiled some of them; she reduced her support of the universities to a mere bagatelle. Salaries disappeared; teaching became unattractive, research impossible, and the fellowships and scholarships that should have been filled with the most talented young men were filled with the stupid and the ignorant. To bring the teaching staff of any level of education nearer to the level of mere subsistence means fewer books, fewer magazines, less science, less progress, a weakened professional interest, and it makes the profession itself less attractive. The social gains that we think we are acquiring by such a procedure are always accompanied by heavy corresponding losses (1933: 30).

Every Nigerian will agree that the above description is a replica of the reality in this country. Urgent action is needed, and hence the establishment and proliferation of private universities. Yet these ‘savior institutions’ are not without defects. The loudest criticism is that private universities are “profit-making ventures” (Ajayi and Ekundayo, 2008: 216) as a result of the high tuition which many Nigerians cannot afford. Again,

there is the risk that quality may be sacrificed for profit since many proprietors are business owners who want big returns on their investment. Hence, “cost and returns-recovery plan may jeopardize quality” (*Ibid.*). Another argument the opponents of private universities have is that this system will bring about greater inequality in access to university education and widen the existing gap between the “‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’” (*Ibid.*) in Nigeria. But as a solution to this problem Alter advised that private universities “must seek ever greater scholarship funds so that talented young people will not find cost a barrier to attendance” (Alter, 1966: 5). Despite this, the benefits of private universities are immense, as we shall now discuss.

#### *Seat of Moral Values*

In a country where immorality/corruption of all kinds and at all levels is institutionalized, private universities are needed. It is only in these institutions that educators are ‘forced’ (because the identity of the institutions must be protected) to help students “identify the non-moral values that often compete with their moral values and help them learn to weigh these contrasting values in a more explicit ... manner, rather than automatically” (Guthrie, 1997: 40). This is why Shields believes that “education should develop intellectual character, moral character, civic character, and performance character, along with the collective character of the school” (Sheilds, 2011: 49).

Therefore, because of the disciplinary nature of private universities, individual members of the campus community should support and encourage students’ development of moral character by modeling ethical behaviors themselves. Then as ethical advocates, they will be able to raise “relevant ethical questions, challenge reasoning, and advocate compelling ethical positions” (Guthrie, 1997: 41). So in private universities there should not be stories like students being asked by their professors to give bribes in order to pass their papers or the other extreme and dehumanizing stories of female students forced into sexual acts by their lecturers for the same reason. In addition, the practice of professors selling handouts at exorbitant prices should not be found or heard in private universities.

#### *Secure and Friendly Environment*

With the traumatic phenomenon of cultism in Nigerian universities, private universities are and should be safe havens for students. As mentioned above, we know that apart from the family, school is and should be the second home for students and private universities mirror this fact. The student-professor informal interaction is better in private universities than in public universities. In fact, Halawah found a positive co-relation between “students’ academic achievement, satisfaction with college,...

intellectual and personal development” and “student-faculty informal interpersonal relationships” (Halawah, 2006: 670). He believes that “teaching goes beyond transmitting knowledge to students” and advised that “faculty members must help to develop their students emotionally” by interacting with them “not only in the classroom but outside the classroom as well” (*Ibid.*: 671).

By so doing, professors create friendly, safe and homely environment for the students. The campus automatically becomes another home for students. Hopkins and Robinson’s study among successful students affirms this fact. These scholars found that “successful students consistently rated their teachers first as friends, second as helpers, and third as teachers” (1993: 187). They concluded that the students who primarily saw their teachers as friends made the greatest overall academic progress and “displayed a strong level of commitment of course work” (*Ibid.*). Similarly, the study by Chepchieng, Mbugua and Kariuki among Kenyan students shows that “healthy relationship between the lecturers and students does influence students’ academic, personal and social integration into higher education” (2006: 80). This is as a result of “the fact that lecturers’ contact with students in and out of the classroom is very important in students’ motivation and involvement in all facets of life” (*Ibid.*). This “resulting sense of community is one of the most important attributes” (Davidson, 1966: 24) of private universities which is made possible because of the small or controlled-number-policy with which they operate.

#### *Academic Excellence*

Academic “distinctiveness and uniqueness” (*Ibid.*) is an important culture of private universities. In fact, apart from moral values as explained above, academic excellence is always the second reason Nigerians give for opting for private universities for their children. As mentioned earlier on, the fact is that most universities in Nigeria have inadequate resources, which eventually jeopardizes the academic performance of students. For instance, Utulu noted that, “the universities in Nigeria operate in adverse conditions: overcrowding and deteriorating physical facilities, lack of library books, educational materials and so on” (2001) Similarly, Ilusanya and Oyebade found that public universities in Nigeria are faced with multiple problems such as “access, quality, funding, strikes, cultism and stability of the academic calendar” (2008: 71). The consequence being that “Nigerian graduates lack acceptable level of competence in their areas of specialization” (Omoregie 2008: 335) and therefore are losing their “global academic respectability and acceptability” (*Ibid.*).

In private universities the important factors leading to the achievement of academic excellence are present. There are no endless strikes. Again, in private universities, there is qualified and serious academic staff, a secure and friendly atmosphere, and good infrastructure – libraries, classrooms, recreational facilities, canteens, etc.

*Increase Access to University Education*

As mentioned before, in recent years, the demand for university education in Nigeria has sky-rocked creating enrollment difficulties in public universities in spite of their extraordinary increase from 1 in 1948 to 63 in 2010<sup>1</sup> and the “massification of university education” (Anyanwu, 2006: iii) introduced by the Federal Government. Again, Imhanlahimi and Maduwesi affirmed that the “admission crisis into Nigerian universities” (2006: 575) is a serious problem. Also Ajadi noted that prior to 1999, and I would say till now, “many qualified candidates are being denied admission as a result of problems of space and facilities in the existing universities” (2010: 19-20). But Owoye described this situation better when he said:

the Obasanjo administration’s UBE children of September 1999 would begin to exit secondary education and a minimum of 10% will knock on the doors of the existing universities for admission. The estimated total absorptive capacity for fresh admissions of the 104 universities is about 500,000. Simply put, if 6.3 million eligible candidates come knocking, the existing universities can hearken to the knock of only 8.5%. We can best imagine what the situation would have looked like without some help from the private sector. Public universities would have been forced to practically double admission rates with its attending consequences. Quality would have been thoroughly eroded in overcrowded campuses providing veritable breeding ground for cultists and all forms of social misfits. Thus the private universities have relieved their public counterparts who are now beginning to attain improved service quality (2010: 7).

It is fair to argue then that the license given to private investors in university education by the Federal Government of Nigeria “is meant to address the problem of excessive demand over supply” (Oyebade, 2005).

**CONCLUSION**

So far, we have argued that private universities play an important role in the social, cultural, economic and even religious transformation of

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<sup>1</sup> I did this calculation based on Prof. Jide Owoeye’s speech titled “The Place of Private Universities in Nigeria’s Educational System” on the occasion of the 76<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of Chancellor Chief Sir, Gabriel Osawaru Igbinedion, The Esama of Benin Kingdom, 2010: 8, pp. 1-11. <http://iuokada.edu.ng/News/Birthday%20Lectures/The%20Place%20of%20Private%20Universities%20in%20Nigeria.pdf>.

individuals (*ad intra*) and society at large (*ad extra*). As the second “socialization agent,” (Sara, *et al*, 2008: 382) to carry out this double-face function well, private universities should provide quality academic programs in a learning environment that will promote “academic and personal excellence in students, as well as appreciation of intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic values” (Guthrie, 1997: 25). This is important because “school is a miniature society” (Sheilds, 2011: 53) and the “quality of graduates produced becomes a means of social progress, transformation and survival” (*Ibid.*). So in our universities, especially those that are private, there should exist the “culture of critical thinking, culture of love and justice, culture of service and engagement, culture of quality and excellence” (*Ibid.*: 51). Because of the continuous religious tension in Nigeria, private universities should also “create a culture of communication and dialogue - inter-religious and inter-cultural, as a vehicle for the understanding of shared values and the attainment of the common good” (Schultheis, 2005: 103). All these ‘cultures’ should be engraved into the students (*ad intra*) for the transformation of the Nigerian society so that it becomes a better place for all (*ad extra*).

For this to happen, private universities should “give a central place to the formation of the human person and the promotion of human development that is beyond the perspective that education is an investment in human capital with emphasis on productivity and efficiency” (*Ibid.*: 104). Angell also advised that private universities should safeguard “against any impairment of their devotion to the conception of the highest excellence, for it is at this point that they make their unique and invaluable contribution, and especially... be protected against the essential vulgarizing of their methods and ideals” (1933: 23). Coffman concludes that if private universities are faithful to their purpose, they “will be dynamic institutions to which society will look with increasing frequency and pride for advice and assistance in political matters and economic affairs, as well as in the consideration of things of a purely intellectual character” (1933: 38). The author also advised “it is infinitely better that social change should be guided by trained and informed intelligence rather than by untutored emotion or uninformed politics” (*Ibid.*). This is why Nigeria is in such great administrative distress, and here lies the challenge of private universities.

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