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Editorial

Hello readers, AGORA Journal is here with its second edition! We keep thanking the Almighty GOD for our continual surviving of the impact of coronavirus 2019 (covid-19) pandemic, as well as, compulsory adaptation to the life of the ‘New Normal’ it has engendered.

From the feedbacks to the first edition of AGORA Journal, many wondered how St Albert the Great Major Seminary (SAGS) achieved a high standard and scholarly journal, AGORA, within a short space of time of their establishment? Thank you!! We can’t appreciate enough of your thoughts and prayers for the Journal. However, the truth is that AGORA Journal endeavors to provide good quality research works. The articles contained in it have been peer-reviewed; which means that experts in the field have assessed the articles and judged whether they are fit for publication, or for further refinement or not good enough for publishing. Thus ensures that only the best quality articles are published in AGORA Journal. Consequently, we mind our authors’ credentials, and focus on contributing new and original research. We adopt a quite technical and official language with complex ideas and arguments, in an objective tone, and in an analytical perspective. More so, AGORA is now fully indexed with high online visibility.

As we have them in this second edition, there are fourteen (14) articles as a whole: Nine (9) philosophical articles, four (4) theological, and one (1) article in Business Education. They are well researched articles, a product of a long process of screening and expert review by Internationally reputed Assessors and Consultants. The logic of the articles is easy to grasp and very interesting to follow.

Among the highlights of the Journal include: the need for a new anthropology based on St Thomas Aquinas notion of creation and intelligibility; the urgent need for ongoing formation of formators; a call on restructuring of the nation based on the Catholic Social Doctrine of participation and subsidiarity; a

re-awakening need for a more sympathetic approach towards the human right of the other, and many more. It is all about restructuring of human mind towards its destiny.

I use this medium to appreciate all our editorial board members, editorial consultants, our contributing scholars, the publishing press, and you our websites connectors and people of good will, for assisting us in making this edition a success. While promising more exciting publication subsequently, I invite you to share in this episteme herein, and please always feel free to supply us with feedbacks on the way forward. Thank you once more for participating in this intellectual banquet even as a distributor.

**Evarestus Igwe-Alufo, CM,
Editor in Chief.**

Evarestus Igwe Alufo, CM

**CREATION AND INTELLIGIBILITY IN THOMAS
AQUINAS: A VANTAGE-POINT FOR RE-THINKING
MODERN ANTHROPOLOGY**

By

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Abstract

This article on “Creation and Intelligibility in Thomas Aquinas: A Vantage-point for Re-thinking Modern Anthropology” is based on the perception that modern anthropology has become too anthropocentric; to the extent that modern man claims to create God, and to hold supreme dominance over the universe. But the challenges and lessons of universal solidarity that emerge from coronavirus disease 2019 (covid-19 pandemic) have necessitated the call for a new anthropology. Hence *eco-spiritual anthropology or Integrative anthropology*¹ is one such proposed new study on man that takes cognizance of God as the Creator, and man as having a common home with the universe, including the environment.

Therefore, it is the belief of this article that any enquiry of such kind, through a historical and conceptual analysis of Aquinas’ notion of “Creation and Intelligibility” may serve as a vantage-point for re-thinking modern anthropocentrism. Aquinas’ creation from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) implies that God as the Pure Actuality (Actus Purus) and in His freedom is the generative source of all things in being, including human beings.

Keywords: Creation and intelligibility, modern anthropocentrism, eco-spiritual anthropology, God, and human beings.

Introduction

As modern anthropology has been swallowed by anthropocentrism²- a belief that humans are more important than anything else³ including God, an enquiry into the notion of Creation and Intelligibility in Thomas Aquinas, in my thinking, is necessary for re-thinking modern anthropology. For an enquiry on “creation and intelligibility” in Aquinas, is ipso facto, a study on the cause of being as being. There is no gainsaying that things are in being, but how did they come to be, becomes the problem? Equally, it is true that everything that is, insofar as it is, is intelligible; but if being is intelligible, it must have a sufficient reason for being. Just like saying that there is a world, but how did the world come to be, becomes the problem? Perhaps, the world is not without an ontological explanation, and therefore an existential issue that demands a philosophical enquiry.

The need for a philosophical enquiry of this nature is inevitable if we recall that peoples’ lives are constantly being fashioned by their view about reality. As it is, reality is capable of justifying itself, of explaining itself to the intellect; of answering the question, why? Though the ultimate solution to such questions is not yet known, reality provides for a knowable answer. Now the issue is that the proof of God’s existence in Thomas Aquinas establishes the existence of the moving cause; the uncaused efficient cause. But the matter is, taken for granted the existence of God, why is God a cause? For the existence of the world postulates its cause, but the existence of the cause does not necessarily demand the existence of the world. But given that there is a God, why should there be a world?

The solution to this problem in Aquinas involves a reflection on the nature of God Himself. God is the Being who is Pure Act, and in whom essence and existence are the same and identical. Consequently, creation can be justified or explained

from the very fact of the intelligibility of being and nature of the cause as envisaged by Thomas Aquinas. Therefore, through a historical and conceptual analysis of Aquinas notion of “creation and intelligibility”, this paper is disposed to forming a new anthropology that may be all encompassing, integral, and far less of anthropocentrism. To achieve this feat, this enquiry will be explored in four sub-headings: First, to situate the idea of Creation and Intelligibility in Aquinas in the context of history. The second aims at a synthetic examination of the idea of Creation - ‘ex nihilo’. The third is on a metaphysical enquiry of the nature of God as the generative source. The last point is evaluation and conclusion: an invitation for re-thinking modern anthropocentrism drawing from creation and intelligibility in Thomas Aquinas.

Reviewing the Greek Position: Essentialism and Eternity of the World

The first thing to check here is the problem of Creation; of how and why things that came into being, have been at the root of most philosophical enquiries. For as it is with all philosophical issues, opinions vary as to the solution of the problem. Consequently, it becomes necessary to situate this work in the context of history.

Generally, for the Greek philosophers, things simply are but what are they? What are they made of? In other words, what are the natures or essences of things? This, simply, is a philosophy of essence, otherwise known as essentialism; that is, a philosophy of being without existence. But to enable us understand the ancient Greeks better, the thoughts of Plato and Aristotle would be vividly considered here.

The Demiurge of Plato

Plato is traditionally thought to have been born in 428 B.C.E., and to have died in 348 B.C.E in Athens.⁴ It is to Plato that the British philosopher Alfred North Whitehead famously said that “the history of philosophy is but a series of footnotes to him.”⁵ Plato’s account of the origin of the world is the main theme of his dialogue known as the **TIMAEUS**. For Plato, there are two worlds- the world of forms or ideas, and the visible world of changeable things. The real world is that of the forms which is equally eternal, necessary and unchangeable. The only world that needs to be accounted for, then, is the visible world of change and imperfection.⁶ This world of change, Plato believes is fashioned after the ideas, but the ideas alone cannot account for their existence. Hence, Plato introduced the idea of the *Demiurge*; a kind of craftsman who imposes order and purpose into the chaotic elements of the world of forms.⁷

Consequently, in Plato’s account of the doctrine of creation ‘*ex nihilo*’ is entirely out of the question because the *Demiurge* does not bring new things into existence but rather imposes form upon eternally pre-existent matter and brings the world out of chaos. The forms are the models at which the *Demiurge* looks to introduce order in the universe.

So the world is generated because it is something that becomes and due to its nobility, it is fashioned after a model. It is in this sense, a mere image of the model, hence only a probable account can be given about it. In the Plato’s sense, only the theory of the forms can be understood, because we cannot really talk of understanding the world but rather the forms which it embodies can be grasped. This is the essentialism embedded in Plato’s account of the origin of the world.

Now everything that becomes or is created must of necessity be created by some cause, for without a cause nothing can be created.⁸

Thus, since our world is that which is always becoming and never is, it necessarily follows that it was created in the Plato's sense. Platonic, in the sense that the existence of material out of which it was made was assumed. Therefore, strictly speaking it cannot be said to be created.

The *Demiurge* fashioned the world after the image of the gods and since the gods were eternal, Plato intended the world to be so. But this everlasting attribute is somehow impossible to be bestowed in its fullness upon a creature. Therefore, the *Demiurge* resolved to have a moving image of eternity.

.. he made this image eternal but moving according to number, while eternity itself rests in unity; and the image we call time.⁹

Time came into being with the emergence of the world; until then the universe was made in the likeness of the eternal gods. Thus far, the creator delegated his power to the gods to complete the minute details of creation to be guiltless of future evil. Although it is not clear how the gods originated, Plato urges to abide by tradition which held that the gods were equally created by the *Demiurge*. Evidently in Plato, the world ultimately is the product of the *Demiurge*. With this summation then, it becomes pertinent to see for whom Aristotle accounted for the creation of the world.

The Self- Thinking Thought of Aristotle

Aristotle (384-322 BCE) was born in Stagira, at the time in Macedonia. He was one of the world's greatest thinkers, whose profound influence on western philosophy and

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philosophical terminology continues till this day.¹⁰ However, following the line of our discourse; while Plato was uncovering the highest principles of intelligibility of the visible world, Aristotle was more on the problem of being; substance. The world of Aristotle is that of change, generation and corruption immersed in motion due to the love for the pure actuality of a Self-Thinking Thought: the Prime Unmoved Mover.

In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle is concerned with discovering the first principles of things (*arche*). The true essence of a thing consists in its function rather than in the matter of which it is made ... Aristotle was primarily interested in discovering how things are as they are, rather than why they exist as they do.¹¹

Strictly speaking, Aristotle had no notion of a created universe, but in his explanation of motion, he was led to the notion of the Unmoved Mover. His argument is that there is something which is the cause of motion, not necessarily an efficient cause or a creator of motion but rather “that which as first of all things moves all things”.¹² This is not a first mover because it is something actual in itself and that which is actual is prior to that which is potential. It is the unmovable substance which is quite radically distinct from the physical substances. But this would simply mean nothing other than the forms of Plato, unless it is a principle which can cause change and initiate movement outside itself.

“There must, then, be such a principle whose very essence is actuality”.¹³ The Unmoved Mover then is actual and makes motion intelligible. It is the eternal principle of motion since there is no potentiality in it. The world of things was always in process since motion implies an eternal activity. The world of Aristotle is, then, eternal though constantly in motion. It is eternal because that which moves it is also eternal. For

Aristotle states:

... Since that which moves and is moved is intermediate, there is something which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance and actuality. And the object of desire and the object of thought move in this way; they move without being moved.¹⁴

Now, the object of desire and the object of thought are necessarily the Unmoved Mover because it moves without being moved. It follows that the principle on which the world of nature depends is thought, because thinking is the starting point.

... thinking in itself deals with that which is best in itself, and that which is thinking in the fullest sense with that which is best in the fullest sense. And thought thinks on itself because it shares the nature of the object of thought; for it becomes an object of thought in coming into contact with and thinking its objects, so that thought and the object of thought are the same. For that which is capable of receiving the object of thought, that is, the essence, is thought.¹⁵

This needless obscurity is meant to show that the Unmoved Mover is a Self-Thinking-Thought. It cannot but think itself since it must think the best. The best is that which is simple and exists actually, but that which exists in actuality is the eternal principle of motion. It is the eternal Unmoved substance of Aristotle. It is pure Act, a self-Thinking -Thought, and the cause of motion in the world of nature; but it is wholly innocent of its existence or its act of being.

The Self-Thinking-Thought of Aristotle could not give the world its existence because it is only a substantial act, that is, self-contained; and other things are necessarily attracted

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to it as an object of thought and desire. But, then, in such a world, what truly is, is the form by which the existent is a substance. This is not strange because for Aristotle, being is the same thing as substance; and he uses the same word '*ousia*' to delineate form, reality, nature and essence when taken in different senses.

The danger, here, is that the form could be made the proper object of metaphysical speculation. If this is done, there arises a metaphysics of essence wherein the actually given world, while it remains the substantial world of Aristotle, can safely be dealt with as if it were the ideal world of Plato.¹⁶ In this lies the essentialism of Plato and Aristotle because they are talking of being without existence. Their main concern is the essence of things. For Plato and Aristotle, the first question that can be asked about anything is: what is it, and not whether it is?

So as we have mentioned earlier, essentialism is a metaphysics of being without existence. On that ground, Plato and Aristotle can be classified as essentialists while maintaining their eternity of the world. But their worlds are still not created because a pre-existing material is presupposed.

The Question Of Creation

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) was born at the castle of Rocca Secca near Naples. The problem for him at the time was to demonstrate that the world was created, and not just created, but created from nothing. It must be demonstrated that the act of creation is not a mere efficient causality but a prototype of efficient causality by which the entire being as being is caused. Specifically the causal relationship between the effect and the cause is '*secundum esse*'. This means that the effect depends entirely on the cause for its act of being and for its continual existence. But it has to be decided whether this creative activity is free or not.

Creation Out of Nothing- “Creatio Ex Nihilo”

Although Augustine’s distinctive doctrine was that God created all things *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, Aquinas strongly maintained that God created the world from nothing. By this Aquinas meant that the entire being of created things came from their creative cause; nothing existed prior to creation. There is in fact no pre-existing material out of which the world was created but all things came into being through the creative act. Being as being is the most universal effect; so it must come from the most universal, supreme, first efficient cause, which is God. Hubler and Soskice write:

Augustine gave *creatio ex nihilo* its first careful philosophical consideration in the Christian tradition.... He argued that as something capable of being formed into good things, matter itself was good and a creature of good God. But the major philosophical consideration of *creatio ex nihilo* came from Aquinas, who taught that *creatio ex nihilo* meant that nothing was presupposed to God’s creative act, not matter, forms, natures, essences, ideas, laws of nature or a hierarchy of being. The creature depended entirely on God’s creative act.¹⁷

Aquinas’ creation “*ex nihilo*” actually means bringing into existence of being as being from no pre-existing material. It is the emanation of all being from the universal cause of being, which is God. This is made possible through the existential act, that is, the coming into being of all being through the universal causal activity of God that is designated by the name creation. It is not about the coming into being of particular beings but the emanation of the whole universal being from the first principle and no being is pre-supposed to this emanation.¹⁸

It might be argued that ‘from nothing, nothing comes’. But Aquinas was of the opinion that the preposition “from” (ex), does not designate the material cause, but order.¹⁹ Like when one says that ‘from morning comes mid-day’. Besides, this preposition ‘ex’ could be understood in two senses. It can either include the negation conveyed when we say that word, “nothing” or can be included in it. In the first sense the order is affirmed by stating the relationship between what is now and its previous non-being; while in the second sense the order is denied when we mean that it is not made from anything.

The implication is that any notion of material cause is denied, while the fact that “ex” implies after, is maintained. It is a mere precedence. But this does not imply that once there was nothing and then afterwards there was something. It means that nothing is prior to reality by nature because since creatures received their reality from another there is nothing in them before being. Commenting on this point, Gilson states that:

... to create is to produce effects in the very act by which they are. In other words, it is to cause in them that in virtue of which they can be said to be, or to be beings. ... to be produced from nothingness, therefore, means to be produced completely, totally, integrally, starting from strictly nothing else than the creative efficacy of God.²⁰

Obviously then, apart from the act of creation, no created thing was in being. This at least makes the notion of a production of being as being from nothing intelligible.

The crux of the matter lies in the misunderstanding of the reality of creation ‘ex nihilo’; so further analysis is needed for a better ontological clarification. Creation is sometimes expressed in terms of making. Thus, in making something,

there is an agent which makes, and something which receives the act. Making in this context is the giving of existence to a non-being, since nothingness is the same as non-being as we mentioned earlier. But it might be argued that if there is something which receives existence and which is equally different from the agent, then the agent makes existence out of some pre-existing subject. No matter what this pre-existing subject is called it is conceived as waiting for the conferment of existence from the cause.

Now there is a contradiction inherent in this line of argument. If the position is granted then creation 'ex nihilo' is unintelligible and intrinsically impossible. "But existence is that which actuates the whole being of whatever is. Consequently, to give existence is simultaneously to produce that which receives it."²¹ This, in fact, proves the intelligibility of the reality of the act of creation. Prior to that act, there was no pre-existing material ready to receive existence. Only the source of that existence or the source of all being exists since it is *PURE ACT*.

God exists only prior to creation. He does not act upon any existing material since no such primary matter exists. Only God exists originally, and whatever comes to be, derives its existence from Him.²²

Prime matter could not have existed before creation because it is not something; that is, a reality existing on its own account. Prime matter is purely potential and in no way an actual principle. In itself, it has no actuality, so it cannot be said to have existed. However, it came to be in and with those things created since it is a constitutive principle. Moreover, if the end result of creation is indeed being in act then it participated in being; for being is analogically common to that which is, potentially and to that, which is actually.²³

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Therefore, if prime matter is only part of what is created, then, strictly speaking, it is co-created, because by definition, it has no being.

This emphasis on the ‘conferring of existence’, or the act of being should not be misunderstood. Creation is not the existence of the thing but precisely the thing which exists. The act of creation culminates in the thing and its existence. So what is referred to here is being as being and not ‘this’ or ‘that’ particular being; since creation is the emanation of all being from the universal Being. Consequently, creation is the production of a ‘particular thing’.

According to Aquinas:²⁴“Creation is the production of a thing in its entire substance, nothing presupposed.” To be created, therefore, belongs properly to subsisting being. As such the act of creation terminates in a subsisting being; for being belongs to that which has an act of being, that is, to what subsists in its own mode of being. This is so because properly speaking, created things are subsisting beings, but not self-subsistent because their act of being is caused. So in giving the act of being (*esse*), God gives that which actuates being as being. To create ‘*ex nihilo*’ then, is to make a thing in its totality.

The all important point to note is that creation is not any kind of change; not even a substantial change. For Aquinas creation is not change except according to our mode of understanding, because change is a kind of transformation or generation from something pre-existing.²⁵ Creation, rather, is the production of being, that is, the production of the whole substance of a thing. To be created is really to be a being, since to be created is to be caused to be. So creation is both the production of a thing absolutely from nothing and at the same time, the production of a thing in its entire substance- a production of being as being, absolutely and simply, because the act of being makes a thing to be.

The difficulties arise from confusing the mode of signification and the thing signified. While creation can be considered as change due to our way of understanding, it is not really change, but a coming into being, in its totality, of something which has no reality prior to its being caused. The problem is that we are so familiar with accidental and substantial change as a source of origination, that we find it hard to apprehend that nothing is presupposed in the act of creation.

But the distinguishing factor between creation 'ex nihilo' and substantial change, is that nothing whatsoever is presupposed in the act of creation because it is an effect of an infinite power. While in substantial change things are produced from pre-existing matter. This distinction is essential to the proper understanding of the problem Aquinas tried to solve. Whatever is produced in creation is from nothing because there is nothing on which the creative act was exercised. It is a total production of a previous non-existent. But in substantial change, a pre-existing material is presupposed. However, in creation, 'nothing' is not the material cause; it is rather a non-being. It is simply that the production of the universe is not out of anything.

The fact really is that creatures or finite beings would be non-beings if they were left to themselves. They would not be if they were not to be caused by the causal efficacy of God. So there is no contradiction or absurdity in saying that the world is created from non-being or nothing. The world received its being from God as its efficient cause. In doing so, God called into existence a reality external to Himself. But He also maintains it in being because the subordination in this case is 'secundum esse'. So the world had no existence apart from that conferred on it by the creative act.

We cannot deny the fact that the notion of a causality which produces the whole substantial reality of a thing, is

far removed from our daily experience. But in this lies the genius of Thomas Aquinas; to make intelligible that which is seemingly unintelligible.

So the next point is, granted that creation was an act of God; was God compelled to create; is creation a free act? It is necessary to examine this point since some hold the opinion that God was necessitated to act.

Creation As A Free Act Of God

Aquinas was confronted with the problem whether God was free to create the world or not? However, creation signifies that act by which God freely produced a reality other than Himself; a universe which had no existence of any form before this act.²⁶ In bringing into being a reality external to Himself, God was entirely free to act. He was not compelled in anyway whatsoever. The act of creation was done freely and out of pure love by God.

To substantiate this claim, to create, in reality, is the proper action of God alone. As Aquinas puts it, the more universal effects must be reduced to the more universal and prior causes. Since being itself is the most universal effect, it must be the proper effect of the first and most universal cause, which is God.²⁷ So if creation is the proper act of God alone, and we must realize that it is an agent's power to act or not to act, then God's act of creation is free.

Properly speaking, God is absolutely free. It is in Him to create or not to create. So His effects cannot but be freely willed since He is the cause of things by His intellect and will.²⁸ As He created, He did so freely. This fact is even more evident when we consider that God has no need of creatures because He is absolutely perfect and the act of creation adds nothing to His perfection; therefore it is a free act.

Aquinas observes that "... it appears that it is an act of much greater power to make a thing from nothing, than from its

contrary.”²⁹ The power in question here must be viewed in two ways. On one hand, the power of the matter must be weighed from the substance of the thing made. On the other hand, it must be considered from the mode of its being made. The substance created is an entirely new substance in its totality. It had no prior existence but only came into being through the power of the maker. If it is an entirely new substance, then, the power that made it must be an infinite power. For example, Aquinas rightly say that a greater heat heats not only more, but faster. For “to create a finite effect does not show an infinite power; but to create it from nothing does show an infinite power, which appears from what has been said”.³⁰

If power is required to bring something from potency to act then a greater and an infinite power is required to produce something from no presupposed potency. This is ultimately true because there is no proportion between non-being and being. Consequently such an infinite power must necessarily be free to exercise its power without constraint.

It follows also that since such a free infinite power is required in the act of creation, no creature of any magnitude can create. This is because creation which is the production of the very substance of a thing, is reduced to power.

Now the proper effect of God creating is what is presupposed to all other effects, and that is absolute being. Hence nothing else can act dispositively and instrumentally to this effect, since creation is not from anything presupposed which can be disposed by the action of the instrumental agent. Therefore it is impossible for any creature to create, either by its own power, or instrumentally - that is, ministerially.³¹

Moreover, Aquinas argues that it is absurd to suppose that a body can create because nobody acts except by touching or

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moving. In doing this, that body definitely requires some pre-existing thing which can be touched or moved. But as we can see this is entirely contrary to the very doctrine of creation. Even on the basis of finite beings participating in God's own being and perfection, such participation is ontologically unnecessary to God. Thus this is why God is free to create or not.

Therefore, God is so ultimately free to create because creation is His proper action. Hence, the act of being of any finite being is the proper effect of God arising from a free act. God, being so entirely free to create, can be maintained that this is the best possible world; since He has made the world as He wants it to be. Any limitation found in that arrangement, is due to the proper nature of creatures. Aquinas then attempts to find why God is the cause of the world including man, and nothing else.

God as the Generative Source in Aquinas

In the proof of the existence of God, Aquinas rightly pointed out that the fact that God exists is not self-evident, but can be demonstrated. So in his "*Quinque Viae*", Aquinas actually proved God's existence.³² As a Pure Act of Being, God is the generative source of all other realities outside Himself- a procession which is '*ad extra*'. It is of His essence to be. So in God, essence and existence are identical.³³ God is a self-subsistent Being (*Ipsum Esse*), and since every being is good, the source of their act of being is supremely Good and Self-diffusive. Perhaps, such reasons are why God created the world and conserved it in being. But this is entirely metaphysical, and must need a metaphysical explanation.

God as (Actus Puru)³⁴

Now the act of creation requires something that is supremely in act since it is the production of the whole

substance of a thing without any pre-existing subject. It is the bestowing of the entire act of being, nothing assumed except the source of that act of being. Added to the fact that in the order of efficient causality, every efficient cause acts in as much as it is in being. Necessarily, its mode of action depends on its mode of actuality. While the finite efficient causes act on presupposed subject to produce a new substance like in substantial change, the first efficient cause, which is quite outside that order, produces its own effect from nothing due to its own mode of actuality.

So God is able to bring things into being from nothing, because He is Pure Act of Being and the uncaused efficient cause. This is so, because, to be, is to act and as a being is so it acts. Moreover no agent can give that which it does not possess in itself.

... God is the first principle, not material, but in the order of efficient cause, which must be most perfect. For just as matter, as such, is in potency, an agent, as such, is in act. Hence, the first active principle must be most actual, and therefore most perfect; for a thing is said to be perfect according as it is in act because we call that perfect which lacks nothing of the mode of its perfection.³⁵

The first principle of all things is purely in act. God is Pure Act without any potentiality. It follows then, that He is in Himself supremely knowable. He is Pure intelligibility, since everything is knowable according to how it is in being. But what is supremely knowable in itself, is not knowable to some other intellect; on account of the excess of the intelligible object above the intellect. However, the rational creature because of the first principle of its being, could reach as far as the first cause of things.³⁶

This is ultimately attainable because it belongs to every being, in as much as it is act, to desire to communicate its own perfection. In communicating its own perfection the being cause effects which are somehow similar to itself. It is, then, of the nature of the Pure Act to communicate itself to its effects. In fact, creation is a kind of ontological generosity in which the Pure Act freely willed to communicate itself to the universe by giving it; an act of being from nothing. This is because God who is purely active without passivity does not work to acquire an end, but intends solely to communicate His perfection.³⁷ Indeed, it belongs to the nature of an act to communicate itself as far as possible.

Thus it is not inconceivable that ontological communication should be found in a pure state apart from all change or process, and therefore independent of any pre-existing subject.³⁸

The self-ontological communication of God as Pure Act makes creation 'ex nihilo' intrinsically possible. Since the act of being is the innermost thing in a being, it must necessarily be from a primary and absolute cause that has it in itself. So the existence of finite being has their adequate cause in the Pure Act of Being. Consequently, apart from God the finite beings are unintelligible in their own being because they only participate in the being of the Pure Act through a self-communication. Just as God has communicated existence to finite beings, He has as well communicated to them some causal efficacy; so that they can exert their own acts. This really means that the creatures received their existence through the operations of God 'ad extra'. It is not of their essence to be, while God is that Being, whose act it is to be. Consequently, in God essence and existence are identified, while in creatures, they are really distinct. Gilson writes:

... since creatures do not exist by themselves, they receive their existence from God. Their own being is not something that belongs to them ‘per se’; it is given to them ... and, precisely because their being is a received being, they are distinct from the only ‘per se’ Being there is, namely God, their creator. Now, if creatures do not have their own existence to themselves, there must need be in each of them some sort of composition of what they are with the very fact that they are. In short the distinction between creatures and their creator entails, in creatures themselves, a distinction between their existence and the essence of their being.³⁹

Indubitably, God is the generative source of all things because He is Pure Act. In Him essence and existence are the same. Therefore He could give that which He has in Himself ‘per se’, since an agent acts according to how it is in being or act. Moreover, since the Pure Act of Being is God, He is equally self-diffusive, causing things to be and to act without depriving of their own being and operations. In this way, God is said to be present to the whole creation by His essence but not as part of the essence of the world.

Evaluation and Conclusion

Having *examined Creation and Intelligibility* in Aquinas; it has enabled us to consider the cause of being as being. That is, studying the emanation of all being from the universal cause of being, which has set the vantage for rethinking modern anthropology. For modern anthropology has become anthropocentric: which means, that man is been studied by moderns in the light of man. Put clearly, “man has become the supreme being... and therefore, there cannot be any scope wider than it. Apart from man’s claim of inventing God, and

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turning around to worship what he had created in modern anthropology’, there is a critique of the worldview of humanity - of all- encompassing belief system of human supremacy and dominance, that is setting society on the precipice of self induced destruction”.⁴¹

In rethinking the modern anthropocentrism, Igwe-Alufo, CM, proposes, what he calls *eco-spiritual anthropology or integrative anthropology*: some kind of integral ecology, as he states, “therefore, it follows that for anthropology to re-define its goal, purpose and objective in the world, there is need for the human person to re-examine its relationship with God; its relationship amongst peoples and nations, and its relationship with the environment. All these dimensions are important for a holistic living.”⁴²

Igwe-Alufo further clarifies that *ecospiritual anthropology* is an invitation for new anthropology that recognizes God as the Creator of man and the universe, as we see in the notion of Creation and Intelligibility in Aquinas. Like in Eco-spirituality, Virginia Jones holds that “eco-spirituality enables people to experience ‘the holy’ in the natural world and recognize their relationship as human beings to all creation. It brings together religion and environmental activism.”⁴³

However, in an effort to discuss the real notion of Creation and Intelligibility of God in Thomas Aquinas, a recognition of some philosophers in the past that grappled with the issue were briefly reviewed. Though, they missed their target. We see that the ancient Greek position led by Plato and Aristotle centred mainly on essentialism and on the eternity of the world. They concentrated their speculation on essence as if essences are both reality and its intelligibility. Of course, in the Greek essentialism, there is only a metaphysics of essence without reference to the cause of the existential act in actual being. So that, in the final analysis, the Greek position was incapacitated to raise the philosophical problem of creation,

because it was a metaphysics of essence without ‘esse’, based on the pseudo-primacy of essence over existence. More so, the world was not created.

However, we maintain with Thomas Aquinas that the world is a freely created reality including man, which has God as the source of its existence and principle of its intelligibility. The world including man exists due to the free self-ontological communication of God as the Pure Act of Existence. This then throws away Ludwig Feuerbach’s naturalistic humanism that philosophically accentuate the modern anthropocentrism. This is because Feuerbach sees religion as nothing more than man’s objective consciousness of himself, and theology as an anthropology to understand itself. For he asserts:

“The divine being is nothing else than the human being... freed from the limits of the individual, that is, real physical man, made objective, that is, contemplated and revered as another a distinct being.”⁴⁴

The call for a new anthropology is overdue. Springing from the vantage point of “Creation and Intelligibility” in Thomas Aquinas is not revisionism. More so, coronavirus December 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic has beckoned us to open our imagination toward a new vision of humanity no longer obstructed by the worldview of human supremacy but that which is open to universal solidarity, which, of course, requires a new anthropology.

Endnotes

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ON THE SPIRIT OF MEDITATION

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Abstract

Recent scientific research in the area of the psychology and physiology of the human mind and brain reveals astonishing facts about the wisdom and philosophy; spirit and practice of meditation. The discovery proved that the human mind respond to real and imaginary situations indifferently. The danger-detecting system of the brain automatically springs into action when activated either by real life situations or at prayer and meditation.

The purpose of this paper is to encourage the practice of meditation common to Buddha, Socrates, and Jesus, the Christ who transcended their immediate situations and sufferings through the wisdom, spirit, and philosophy of meditation. The philosophical dictum “Man know thyself” implies mindfulness, and conscious meditation on both internal and external stimuli. Following the meditative movements of the masters, one can avoid the dead – end of “staying inward” or self preservation by “moving outward” or sacrificing for others and for a mission.

Several methods of meditation can produce similar results. In this research, we shall adopt the archetypal meditation of Jesus in the garden of Olives, hours before his arrest, suffering, and death. His poise, calmness, peace of mind and internal balance were certainly results of his meditative stance taken prior to the actual events. It is my belief that meditation can bridge the gap between potentiality and actuality. Meditation can breeds peace through mental rehearsal and consciousness *examen*.

The profile of a philosopher as a “disinterested spectator/witness” is recommended as the vintage point for meditation, for the unbiased observation and analysis of the content of the mind,

bodily sensation, nature, and the truths of religion.

Key Terms: Meditation, Spirituality, Awareness, Peace and Psychology.

Introduction:

The practice of Meditation has tremendous impacts on our body, mind, and spirit. Hence it is a subject for philosophy, science, and religion. Without meditation there could be no wisdom, no spirituality, no liberation, no freedom, or salvation; neither wholeness nor holiness is complete without the practice of meditation. The restorative power of meditation lies within and beyond each of us.¹ The human person is constantly pulled between past memories and future fantasies, (real or imagined) which deprive us of experiencing “the symphony of the now.”²

Meditation, awareness, and mindfulness help us in listening to the symphony of the moment, as well as in the processing and healings of painful past, current sufferings, and future anxiety. For that reason, the wisdom or philosophy (love of the wisdom) of meditation is crucial to unlock and restore “curative energy” to the body, mind, and spirit.

The purpose of this essay is to explore the spirit of meditation, the wisdom of the practice of meditation common to many faith traditions as remedy for pains and sufferings. Meditation has the panacea for our physical, psychological, and spiritual maladies because of its potential access to the conscious and unconscious self through its infinite connections to the secular and the sacred. To show that the wisdom of meditation transcends cultural and religious boundaries, we shall expand our discussions from the spirituality of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions to the Buddha-Zen, and Hindu-Africana religions and philosophies.

Meditation on Human Suffering

In one of my meditations on human suffering, following the guidelines of St. Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises*³, I was struck by “the Contemplation of the Passion of Christ.” Although the Gospels never left us detailed psychosomatic records on the

sufferings of Jesus, we can provide a meditative profile of what happened (spiritually and psychologically) moments before his actual and physical suffering. Christ's experience in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives⁴ is an infallible proof that physiologic changes occur (which affects our body, mind, and spirit) during prayers and meditations, and that the responses of the human body are largely undifferentiating between reality and imagination. The prayer (meditation) in the Garden has all the gamut of human emotional, physical, and spiritual overarching ingredients, to warrant using it as example for the practice of meditation and its potential for healing, wholeness, and holiness. It is also an excellent example of how we can spiritually connect with something within and beyond us in moments of fear, uncertainty, trials and tribulations.⁵ Furthermore, he shows that meditation is a means, a technique for dealing with fears, wonders, dangers, and threats to life (real or imagined), for seeking divine intervention, and for locating the centre of our being. As John of the Cross teaches, "God is the centre of the soul."⁶ These connections with something within or beyond us earmark the difference between Transcendental meditation and Christian meditation. While Transcendental meditation deals purely on human techniques for self improvement and self enhancement, Christian meditation on the other hand moves consciousness beyond self to the divine.⁷ This distinction is necessary because Christ in his meditation did not stop with the self, seeking how to prevent the imminent suffering or protect his life. Rather he embraced the passion for the sake of others as willed by the Father. Let us consider what happened within him; internally and externally as a result of his meditation and prayers.

Psychologically speaking Jesus in this meditation paid close attention and listened contemplatively to what is happening and to what was about to happen within, about and around him. Like other masters of meditation, he was aware of his bodily sensations and feelings: advanced worries, fear of death, anxiety, and abandonment. The fact that he "*knew all that was to happen to him*" (John 18:4) increases the mental agony created by the impending danger which activated the defense mechanism,

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common to living organisms. In reaction to his meditative awareness, the *amygdala*, the danger-detecting system of the brain automatically springs into action. When the amygdale identifies a real or perceived threat to our survival, we (living beings) enter a state of autonomic arousal called “fight or flight” mode.⁸ Driven by the aggressive urge to defend self⁹, the autonomic nervous system pumps more adrenaline into the blood stream and excessive energy is channeled away from the digestive and cognitive areas to the large body muscles in readiness for a self-protective fight or flight. The cascade of psychological/emotional and physical/hormonal reactions is likened to riding/driving on high/passing gear, with a relative reduction in rational processing (by the shut-down of the neo-cortex). The temptation is to throw caution overboard and ride the raging rivers of emotional arousal down the precipice. Once the primordial instinct has been activated, the drive for self preservation, ego flight, and narcissistic defences can be deactivated only by deeper interiority and alignment of the true self, with something/someone above and beyond, that is, awakening to the divine.

Meditative movements

In the case of Jesus’ experience in the garden, he travelled as man to the depth of interior awareness, felt the full weight of human fears as he said “*my soul is sad even unto death*” and he sweated blood. Following the meditative movements common to most classical spiritualities, traditions and philosophies, the masters were never fixated “staying inward” but rather rose to the surface, and accomplish missions that transcend the self. In a similar way, Jesus’ meditation flows through the archetypal meditative practice: “moving inward, staying inward, and moving outward”¹⁰ This practice of meditation involves the mobilization of faculties: thought, imagination, emotion, and desire for a personal reflection on the matter of the moment, such as the fear of death and annihilation. Unless a resolution or reconciliation is reached through divine mediation, meditation and mindfulness, the body language, the wisdom of the body will continue to experience and express an alarmed state of being;

which is chaotic, uncomfortable, tumultuous, and dis-ease. The unconscious retains awareness of such emotions even when the conscious (conditioned) mind chooses to denial, repress, or over-express them. When we get down to the brass task, to the bottom and depth of our being, where “*deep is calling on deep*” (Ps. 42:7), we are left with two options: to “stay inward” and remain fixated there or to rise to the occasion “moving outward” and call for assistance. Before considering the second option, let us investigate in-depth what happens in meditation “staying inwards.”

To staying inward, we need prayerful awareness, mindfulness, and meditation; otherwise there would neither be ceasefire nor cessation of hostilities from the negative energies. The practice of meditation bring into being calmness, stillness, peace of mind, and internal balance, needed to shift our physiology to “neutral gear,” or else we will suffer exhaustion, due to *polyphasic*, multitasking activism, the kinds of busyness that Mingyur Rinpoche calls the hyperactivities of the “crazy monkey mind.”¹¹ We require a meditative stance to stay inward, to stay connected to the core of our being. As it is impossible to drive a car from high gear to reverse gear without a brief neutral rest, so it is to move from the height of emotional arousal (fight or flight mode) to submission or letting go without the neutral gear stimulated by meditation. A recent research on humans, who practiced meditation by Dr. R. Keith Wallace and Dr. Herbert Benson, proved that mental concentration increases the flow of blood to the brain and skin while at the same time decreases the flow to the muscles. This state-of-rest elicited by meditation was termed “relaxation response.”¹² This movement from high to low gears evolved millions of years ago. Scientists know that the fight or flight mode was developed to prepare the organism for action at the slightest hint of danger just as “the relaxation response evolved as a means of protecting the organism from burnout.”¹³

The surplus energy gained from a heightened emotional arousal to a state of low energy expenditure produces a feeling of warmth and rested mental alertness, desirable for the reverse journey back to the benign universe. Either we stay inward, close

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down in fear or move outward, opening up in love. As we move from red-alert to calm danger-free awareness, there is a shift in consciousness, and meditation becomes the pressure valve that let out the negative energies and also the mean to reach out for positive energies within and beyond.

Through meditation, awareness, and mindfulness, we can reach an internal balance point where the mind becomes still, as commanded in scriptures “*be still and know that I am God,*” (Ps. 46:10). In the state of stillness the physiology shifts into relaxation response, the negative conditioning circuits are derailed, and the mind is open to the formation of more productive habits.¹⁴ The physiology of relaxation response involves a drop in both the heart rate and blood pressure. Breathing rate and oxygen consumption decline due to the profound decrease in the need for energy. Doctors who study body-mind interactions also revealed that the physiology of relaxation response was diametrically opposite to that in fight or flight mode where breathing was faster and shallow, with sweaty palms, tensed muscles, dilated pupils and skin covered with goose bumps.¹⁵ That’s why, the spirit and wisdom of meditation and mindfulness demands the practice of slow, deep, rhythmic breathing, which allows the unfolding of a relaxation response, a requisite for the transformation from egocentric to hetero-centric;¹⁶ from selfish to selfless state of being.

Meditation and Emotional conversion

As already noted above, Jesus was aware of his negative emotions, he stayed with them, reconciled and let go of them. This progression of his meditation is analogous to the spirit of meditation in Buddhist theology and philosophy. In his book *Peace Is Every Step* (1992), The Buddhist writer and meditation teacher, Thich Nhat Hahn outlined a five-step process for transforming negative emotions through the power of mindfulness, awareness, and meditation. Firstly, the one practicing meditation and mindfulness should “greet their negative emotions” of fear, anger, depression, sadness, or anxiety, rather than suppress the emotions, repress underground or deny and wish them away.

Secondly, they should “shake hands” with the emotions and engage in a process of “calming down” the negative emotions, like a mother holding her crying baby, and thirdly “comforting and soothing the negative emotions.” The fourth and fifth steps involve “releasing, letting go of the emotions” with the smile of emotional equilibrium and inner balance necessary to “identify and change the conditioned,” distorted perception that created the negative emotions in the first place.¹⁷ There is a spiritual shift about one’s models of the self, of others, the universe, and of the divine as one move through negative emotions and distorted mindset to a state of peaceful and balance selfhood, adopting a non-distorting perception with a non-judgmental stance. Jesus may or may not had gone through all these (physiologic and spiritual) gear shifting but the fact remain that I am meditating, wondering and philosophizing as a student without the hindsight of divine perception enjoyed by Jesus, Buddha, Muhammad, and the great masters of meditation.

Some critics may argue that Jesus was praying in the garden not practicing meditation. To this criticism, one might be justified to quote from the Roman Catholic Catechism which recognized and retained three major expression of prayer namely: vocal prayer, meditation, and contemplation.¹⁸ Meditation is defined over and above all as a quest, a seeking to understand the reality confronting us as well as *questioning* the how and why of religious faith, doctrines, and rituals, in view of adhering and responding to them accordingly.¹⁹ From this point of view, it is clear that there are many and varied methods of meditation as there are spiritualities and spiritual masters. The critics, who still argued whether Jesus was praying or meditating, should excuse me to combine the two, that Jesus was practicing prayer-meditation. This is the questing for divine interventions in life-threatening situations, as experienced by Jesus before, during, and after his prayerful meditation in the garden.

The “moving outward” completes the on-going cycle of the wisdom and spirit of meditation. It is coming again from the depth of the interiority of one’s life back to the surface, with the fruits of meditation. The result of the meditative dialogue

between the true self and an inner teacher, (whoever that teacher maybe according to faith or philosophic traditions), is to be integrated into our mission in the world. If we think meditation apart from its outward orientation, we would often equate it with “staying inward.” The saving passion of Christ, teaches us that his meditative movement followed the classical meditative cycle of “moving inward,” “staying inward,” and “moving outward” again, after silencing the critics. The golden chain, *catena aurea* of the spirit of meditation is silencing and quieting both inner and outer critics.

How do we silence the critic? Of what use is it? I came across the answer with an appropriate correlation in the story of how the “First Principle” was written on the gate of Zen Temple in Kyoto. The masterpiece calligraphic writing was done with a mind free of distraction, only after the critical censor was silenced, following eighty-four attempts. The master Kosen had a “bold pupil” who never fails to criticize his works. Once the critic stepped outside for a few moments, Kosen thought: “Now is my chance to escape his keen eye,” and he wrote “The First Principle” of Zen²⁰ The wisdom from this story teaches us that creativity, freedom, and salvation happens when distractions: internal and external, “noises,” and voices which conditioned the mind are silenced. Meditation brings to our awareness the critics and content of the mind. It is a “microscope through which the mind can be observed and analyzed.”²¹ In conformity with most schools of psychology, philosophy, spirituality, and religious traditions, Dr. Joan Borysenko, co-founder of the Mind/Body Clinic and teacher of meditation, understood and analyzed the human mind as four-part psychic instruments:

i. The conscious mind.

Like that of babies, it is the most basic consciousness we have through sense perception. The sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches that our senses take in *just as it is*, without inner comments or value judgments about things and data. At this level, a black cat is a black cat. It is neither a sign nor a symbol of any mystery in Africa metaphysics.

ii. The unconscious mind.

Every experience is encoded and stored as impression within the nervous system. That is why we don't have to relearn to drive a car every time we get behind the wheel. However, the filing method of storing data at the unconscious level is selectively "sticky." New data "sticks" to the negative or positive compartments according to our values, schema and conditioning.²²

iii. The intellect

This is the capacity to reason, using data both from the conscious (sense perceptions) and unconscious (stored impressions) parts of the mind. The purest form of intellect is "thinking by choice" rather than being trapped in unbidden rumination over "what ifs" and "if onlys." The intellect functions properly at its zenith when it is sensing new perceptions and creating new meanings, unclouded by fear or doubt, unhindered by old schema or conditioning.

iv. The ego.

This is the collection of opinions that we have about ourselves. The identity, *persona* we have created for ourselves in order to feel safe and secure against our conditioned fears. Personal growth requires first forming an ego, then understanding it, and finally transcending it.²³

Ego Role in Meditation

Since the ego is the judge, who is responsible for creating our unique sense of selfhood, it is important to understand its functions during meditation. The ego is also capable of linking conscious and unconscious facts with fictions. It can grab unfounded opinions, negative beliefs, and unproven perceptions which cut us off from an accurate view of life. But before much ado, let us first understand ego development, underdevelopment and malfunctioning. According to psychosocial and developmental theorists, the ego develops during childhood. At first the baby thinks that it is one with the mother, before beginning to develop

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the sense of a separate self. The developing ego often encounters a host of mixed messages that imprints positive and negative impressions on the mind. From childhood, “we are conditioned to equate security and pleasure with being good, and fear and danger with being bad.”²⁴ As a result the inner voice of critics or the “crazy monkey mind” is born in us. This socialization process begins the “shadow making process”. I am indebted to Robert A. Johnson, in his analysis of Jungian concepts for this insight.

Thus we “divide the self into ego and shadow because our culture insists that we behave in a particular manner.”²⁵ The shadow becomes the part of us, of our behavior or societal characteristics that are rejected, refused, and unaccepted or unacceptable. Our future behaviours and the thoughts that justify or condemn them are a complicated combination of responses to positive and negative corroboration of the shadow and inner critic. This is the origin of our inner dialogue about the good, bad and indifference. Following the counsel of Eastern theology, philosophy and psychology, the practice of meditation is to unmask the ego, to dismantle and break down its outdated walls as known as defense mechanisms or early maladaptive schema (EMS). A brief explanation of both concepts will be necessary here because of their influence on the ego and on the spirit of meditation. They have the capacity to condition our enduring beliefs about self, others, the universe, and even the divine. Besides, unmasking the ego, it is the stated goal of Buddhist meditation “to help the person discover that face they had prior to birth.”²⁶ What I will like to call our pre-Adam self, before the fall of Adam. We all were created whole like babies born whole and innocent but socialization, civilizations, and cultures takes away our simplicity and replace it with complicity and sophistication. Therefore the wisdom of the spirit of meditation requires the willingness to power-down one’s defenses, distractions and cultural legacies while embarking on meditation. Since we cannot go to God with borrowed image, false self or masked personality, it is necessary to identify our schemas and defenses.

The concept of defense mechanisms (a Freudian term) is one of the most valuable contributions of psychoanalysts to

the understanding of the human being. These mechanisms are “habitual, unconscious and at times even pathological mental process which the ego uses to face conflicts with external reality or/and internal affective reality.”²⁷ Self-defense is the oldest law in nature, it indicates self-protection against anything/person that threatens one’s life, vocation, values, or beliefs. On the other hand, a non-defensive person looks at the conflict and faces the problem *come what may*, as embodied by Jesus after his meditation and prayers in the garden.

The development of our early maladaptive schemas (EMS) begins earlier in life prior to the development of language. The body, like the psyche protects itself from negative stimulations; because primal wounds have domino effects and consequence across lifetime. In Erik Erikson illustration, we see how childhood wounding of the core self has a maladaptive ripple effect on the whole of one’s life span. He argued that the failure of a significant other to provide the child with a secure bond, dependable loving, and safety brings in its wake a damage to the core self. Resulting from our primal wounding, “trust gives way to mistrust, healthy autonomy to shame/doubt, initiative to guilt, industry to inferiority, identity to identity confusion, intimacy to isolation, generativity to stagnation, and integrity to despair.”²⁹

Both analyses are necessary if we are to come into the presence of divinity just the way we are, without masks or conditioning. The philosophic wisdom of the spirit of meditation is to help us to become aware of our here and now and of who we truly are and of our projected-ideal self. Without the awareness of our present bodily sensation, our mindsets, and spirit orientation, we will be operating from false selfhood. Through the spirit of meditation, we develop the ability to go back to our true self, the real self, the ideal self before ego defenses and social conditioning, before we eat the forbidden fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. We acquire a baby’s mind where consciousness equates sense perception without prejudices, biases, comments or judgments. Only the child-like perception is uncontaminated, as discussed above, the other three parts of the mind are built up through experience, socialization, and conditioning. S

Profile for Philosophy and Meditation

Although Jesus did not give us practical advice on the “how to meditate,” He did profiled the spiritual, psychological and philosophical dispositions for the practice of meditation that is still valid today as it was two thousand years ago when he uttered “*unless, you become like little children, you cannot see the Holy of holies*” and when he thanked the heavenly Father for “*revealing to babies what was hidden from the wise and learned*” (Matt.11:25). The question is how do we become like infants and babies? How do we go back to that pristine and immaculate period when we “witness” white as white and black as black, without misrepresenting, representing or symbolizing them for something else? Most teachers of meditation believe that it is through the practice of meditation that we can return to that innocent state of mind. Although meditation is the microscope through which we observe and analyze the mind, it also enables us to become aware of the workings and contents of the mind. To become like little children, we need to transcend the societal conditioning and limitation of the critic-ego. We need to develop the ability to become aware of the nonjudgmental stance of the mind, that of the Witness, and of the philosopher.³⁰ We need to become philosophers. The philosopher’s stance is not that of a mere witness but of a “disinterested spectator”³¹

The coinage of the term “Philosophy” is credited to the ancient Greek sage, Pythagoras of Samos. The philosopher, he said is the “lover of wisdom,” derived from philosophy, the love of wisdom: *Philia* (love, friendship) + *Sophia* (wisdom).

Pythagoras classified people into three groups following the analogy of the Greek Olympic Games: (i) lovers of gain, (ii) lovers of honor, and (iii) lovers of wisdom, respectively. In Pythagorean analysis, “the lovers of gain” are the merchants, the club owners, the money-lenders and the *Baba Ijebu’s* gamblers who facilitate gambling, buy and sell goods. The second types of people at the Olympic Games are the “lovers of honour,” the athletes participating in the games, whose honour, victory, defeat, or failure heavily depended on the outcomes of the games. Their vested interest is likened to that of the merchants and money-

sharks. The third category of people are the “lovers of wisdom,” the philosophers, spectators, observers, the witness, the fans-one might call them, “the meditators”. Although, spectators are all those who watches the games but not all spectators are meditators or philosophers. Some fans have vested interest like the athletes and merchants. Interest as inordinate attachment is capable of affecting our judgments, observations and emotions. The fans (*fan-atics*) are less likely to become philosophers because they are “interested spectators,” who gambled their money or pride supporting preferred athletes whose victory or loses are directly or indirectly propositional to their association.

The philosophers on the other hand are “disinterested Spectators” who sit back and higher up the stadium as unbiased observers. The non-judgmental stance enables the philosopher to see the games, athletes, fans, merchants and other related phenomena from a vintage point. This type of impartial witnessing is the proper analogue of “the meditator.” The ideal philosopher observes, meditates, contemplates and theorizes particular reality in relation to the essence of the whole. Figuratively, the true philosopher sees the games within and beyond the stadium in view of the wider world. In the example of Jesus sited above, we see how he spiritualizes and philosophizes both horizontally and vertically as he situated his impending suffering and death in the context of the salvation of others, (despite himself), and the divine purpose.

This attitude of the philosopher, the unbiased observer and the impartial Witness enables one to be open to new discoveries, unlimited possibilities, and miracles during meditation. It is likened to coming empty minded before the Almighty for re-filling. It is the Socratic way of saying “*I don't know*” in the presence of the all knowing Mystery. This sense of being a philosopher, a meditator, and a Witness is possible for everyone because it existed prior to experience and therefore not conditioned by any individual or collective shadows, unique experiences, faith, or philosophical tradition. At the heart of most spiritual traditions is “the recognition that there is an essential similarity in every human being; that the core of each of us consists of the same

consciousness.”³² This inner core, the philosopher or inner Self is capable of participating in divine consciousness through meditation. The neutrality of the Self, of the disinterested philosophical spectator frees one from unnecessary encumbrance and liberates one for “moving outward” toward something greater than the self. This awareness of the philosopher, the inner core of Self is the essence of the spirit of meditation. It is when we identify this inner core, befriend it, and also recognize it in others that our meditation becomes therapeutic within and life giving in its outward movement (beyond the stadium) to embrace other beings unconditionally including human beings, other creations and the Creator.

Conclusion

The final meditative movement of Jesus led him from the garden to the cross putting up with pains, suffering, tribulations, and humiliations with such equanimity and calmness that came from his philosopher’s stance at the meditation in the garden of Gethsemane. As we contemplated the poise and emotional balance with which Jesus left the meditative space to meet his critics and persecutors, we would come to the realization that the awareness and control over his inner critics precede that of the external critics, persecutors, and distracters. Once the ego, the inner critic, or the crazy monkey mind is recognized, befriended, and assigned its proper place and function, the mind, the body, and spirit are liberated to embark on superior mission without impediments. Thus Jesus embraced his vocation with courage. In the words of Ambrose Redmoon, “courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.” Human salvation was more important to Jesus than the fear of suffering and death.

Dr. J. Borysenko puts it beautifully well, “when we identify with that inner core, respecting and honouring them in others as well as ourselves, we experience healing in every area of life,” wholeness, holiness, and, by extension, world peace. I have a felt sense that this is the philosophic spirit of meditation, the wisdom and rationale for meditation. The quest for peace is common

to all faith traditions, psychologies, and philosophies, to gain inner peace, external peace, world peace, and eternal peace. For this reason Pope Francis says “we are united by our common humanity and a shared mission to care for society and creation.”³³ The Pope, with most advocates of peace: Dalai Lama, Rabbi David Rosen, Imam Jamal Rahman, Ed. Bastian, *et al* recognized and emphasized the importance of the core self, the philosophical stance, our common humanity, and human fraternity as the fundamental basis for advancing peace within and for peace in the world. The Holy Father, Pope Francis synthesizes this unanimous sentiment when he affirmed that “all other differences must be subordinated to our common humanity.”³⁴ It is our birthright to discover the inner peace, and through mindfulness, meditative living and to be aware of that peace in others, in creation, and in the Creator.

Endnotes

¹Meditation is one of the ten Techniques to achieve healing, outlined in Richard P. Johnson, *Body, Mind, Spirit: Tapping the Healing Power within You*, Mumbai: St. Paul Press, 2008, p. 163.

²Genjo Marinello Roshi, & Rev. Seifu Anil Singh-Molares, (co-host) “*Sun-Buddha ; Moon- Buddha: A Zen Response to the Pandemic*,” on YouTube, April 3, 2020, accessed on June 12, 2020, <https://www/sdicompanions.online>

³By the term “Spiritual Exercises is meant every method of examination of conscience, of meditation, of contemplation, vocal and mental prayer,” in George E. Ganss, ed. *Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, New York: Paulist Press, 1991. #1

⁴Luke 4, John 18-19, in The New Jerusalem Bible

⁵You can term it connecting with God, Yahweh, Allah, Self, Being, source of being or Nature depending on your faith/wisdom/meditative tradition.

⁶“Searching for the Beloved” in Janet K. Ruffing, *Spiritual Direction: Beyond the Beginnings*, New York: Paulist Press, 2000, p.97

⁷Michael Downey, *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*,

Bangalore: Theological Publications, 2013, p.650

⁸Michael C. Luebbert, *Jesus the Heart Whisperer: Forgiveness, Resurrection, and the Birth of the Beatitudinal Self*, Omaha: Heartland Psychologists, LLC Publication, 2017, p. 173

⁹This self with a small s represents the ego, the judge who safeguards our personal identity and historical values with all the limitations of our attitudes and fears. See endnote xxv.

¹⁰Francis Dorff, O. Praem, "Meditative Writing" in Wicks, Robert J. ed. *Handbook of Spirituality for Ministers*, New York: Paulist Press, 1995, p.157.

¹¹Mingyur Rinpoche, "Calming the Mind: The Practice of Awareness Meditation," on YouTube, Dec. 9, 2013, accessed June 18, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dG5ywwz8OGqo&list>

¹²Relaxation response is an innate, hypothalamic mechanism whereby the brain waves shift from an alert beta-rhythm to a relaxed alpha-rhythm. Cf. "The Science of Healing" in Joan Borysenko, *Minding the Body, Mending the Mind*, New York: Bantam Books, 1987, p. 13.

¹³Ibid., p.14.

¹⁴Ibid., p.26.

¹⁵Ibid., p.14.

¹⁶Heterocentric (other-centered) state of being is where love for the other dominates and subordinates fear for oneself. See. William A. Barry, *Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God: A Theological Inquiry*, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2004, p. 52.

¹⁷Thich Nhat Hahn, *Peace Is Every Step* (1992), quoted in Michael C. Luebbert, *Jesus the Heart Whisperer*: Ibid., p. 185

¹⁸The Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, §§.2699-2707

¹⁹The Catholic definition of meditation is similar to the ancient concept of philosophy. "Philosophy in ancient times was a life and death matter; it was the soul's search for salvation," hence the oriental student of philosophy is seeking answers to the turbulent world in which he lives. See, "The Task of Philosophy" in Harold H. Titus & Marilyn S. Smith, *Living Issues in Philosophy*, 6th. ed. New York: D. Van Nostrand Press, 1974, p. 4

²⁰F. D., O. Praem, "Meditative Writing." Ibid., p.153.

²¹"Mindfulness and the Discovery of the Self," in J. Borysenko, 40

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Minding the Body, Mending the Mind. Ibid., p.98.

²¹The limit and scope of this paper do not allow an exhaustive analysis of these concepts; however, they will be briefly treated later on.

²³I quoted elaborately from Dr. Joan Borysenko's classification and analysis of the four parts of the human mind, because understanding the mind as a tool can free us from mind-jailers, mind-traps, and inner critics. Moreover, the spirit and wisdom of meditation cannot be achieved from an erroneous mindset.

²⁴Ibid., p. 100

²⁵"How the Shadow Originates" in Robert A. Johnson, *Owning Your Own Shadow: Understanding the Dark Side of The Psyche*, New York: HarperCollins Press, 1991, p. 4

²⁶Michael C. Luebbert, *Jesus the Heart Whisperer*: Ibid., p.179

²⁷"Defence Mechanisms" in Cencini, A. & Manenti, A., *Psychology and Formation: Structures and Dynamics*, India: Pauline Press, 1986, p.347

²⁸The core self is our common humanity. It is the essential core of self whose nature is peace, whose expression is thought, and whose action is unconditional love. In similar words to that of Pope Francis, Dr. J. Borysenko advised "when we identify with that inner core, respecting and honouring them in others as well as ourselves, we experience healing in every area of life" and, by extension, peace in every corner of our globe. J. Borysenko. Ibid., p.4

²⁹Eric Erikson, in Michael C. Luebbert, *Jesus the Heart Whisperer*: Ibid., p.150

³⁰"The Witness," as used by J. Borysenko, (*Minding the Body, Mending the Mind.* Ibid., p.102.) is that part of our mind that watches and that is aware of thinking without judging. "Another name for the Witness is the Self, or the unconditioned mind."The Self with a big S represents the part of the mind with unlimited potential, the part that existed before experiences, conditioning and formation of Schemas.

³¹The differentiation between "*Interested and Disinterested Spectators*" appeared in *A Journal of Philosophical Research and Cultural Criticism*, Sept 22, 2017, <https://flitcraft.medium.com/the-ancient-greek-sage-pythagoras-of-samos-credited->

with-coining-the-term-philosophy-an-idiom-c70f27ee14bc, accessed Feb. 22, 2021.

³²J. Borysenko, *Minding the Body*. Ibid., p. 103

³³He said this when he delivered his speech on the occasion of receiving credentials from his Excellency Mr. Muyeba Chikonde accrediting him as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Zambia to the Holy See on Thursday, 19 May 2016, accessed June 17, 2020, https://www.zambiahc.org.uk/news_events/.

³⁴<https://zenit.org/articles/interview-rabbi-david-rosen-pope-francis-affirmed-all-differences-are-subordinate-to-our-common-humanity.>, accessed 18th June 2020.

Obi, Bibiana Irukaku & Ufondu Chidiebere Christopher
**CHALLENGES OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR
ENHANCING SKILLS ACQUISITION
IN BUSINESS EDUCATION**

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Abstract

The study focused on the challenges of experiential learning for enhancing skills acquisition in business education. It examines two research questions relating to experiential learning techniques utilized by business education students for enhancing skills in business education and challenges of experiential learning for enhancing skills acquisition in business education. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study consists of 102 full time business education students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The total number of registered students was 123 which consists of 53 students in 300 level and 70 students in 400 level of academic instructions respectively. The choice of these levels were informed because these students has experienced experiential learning at the different levels. A structured questionnaire of 35 items on gender and individual level of academic instruction and questions relating to the research questions was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts in business education and the internal consistency determined using Cronbach's alpha reliability technique which yielded a coefficient of 0.88. The questionnaire was administered through online platforms. A total of 102 business education students corresponding to 83% rate

of return responded to all the questions and were used for data analysis. The data obtained were presented and analysed with the help of frequency tables, mean and standard deviations. T-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). The decision rule for the research questions was that any item with a mean rating of 2.5 would be regarded as agreed while any mean below 2.5 would be regarded as disagreed. The hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance were accepted where $p > 0.05$ and rejected where $p < 0.05$. The findings revealed that experiential techniques adopted by business education students includes industrial training, discussion, role play, case study, simulation, brainstorming, group work for experiential learning and low participation of higher rank academics, low access to computer and internet at the laboratories and workshops among others are the challenges of experiential learning.

Keywords: Experiential learning, Skill Acquisition, Business education

Introduction

Higher education institutions are designed to develop employability skills in learners that would facilitate a smooth transition from graduation to obtaining a white collar job. This demand calls for dedicated pedagogical methods and instructional resources that would enhance the educational experience of students in and out of the classroom. Business education is aimed at creating autonomous learners, who are able to take responsibility of their learning and are capable of individualizing their experiences to obtain maximum benefit.

Obi and Arhueremu (2020) stressed that to achieve the objectives of business education which aims at eradicating skills deficiency among business education students. They must be exposed to experiential learning activities such as industrial work experience.¹Nwokocha cited in Eze, Ezenwafor and Igberaharha (2016) stressed that the aim of business education

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is the production of manpower that possesses the requisite knowledge, skill, and attitude for harnessing other resources and bringing them together into a cooperative relationship to yield goods and services demanded by the society for the satisfaction of their wants and needs.² Clark and White cited in Obi, Eze and Chibuzo (2021) emphasised that experiential learning has become more important especially in business education due to changing times and the increasing pressure to produce graduates with 21st century competencies.

Twenty-first century has placed increasing relevance on curriculum implementation that inculcate linking theory with practice that provides learner's skill acquisition and mastery of business education to make them as competent as graduates of other programmes (Ezeh, Obi &Ufondu, 2020). Experiential learning for skill acquisition involves all the activities which business educators perform to enhance business education students learning for skill acquisition. In a special way, to prosper grow and innovate in 21st century workplace, highly skilled business education graduates who recognize opportunities and prepare strategies that would help them embrace the increasingly sophisticated skills and digital competencies that lie ahead are needed and that would demand exposing business education students to experiential learning activities. This background underscores the need to conduct this study to identify the experiential learning techniques utilized by business education students for enhancing skills in business education as well as the challenges of experiential learning for enhancing skill acquisition in business education.

Statement of the Problem

The current work environment differs from the previous age which is characterized by change and increased competition for jobs. Researchers seem to be worried if business education students are taught to possess the relevant skills required in 21st century. Teaching should not just be about offering knowledge to students, but more importantly, about how to apply knowledge

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through learning activities that shape students' abilities to transform the process of learning into the process of developing creative thinking. One of the modern educational solutions that maximizes the capacity of learners is the organization of experiential activities in cognitive and practical situations. The questions are; has experiential learning been fully adopted in business education programme? What could be the constraints? Thus a study on the challenges of experiential learning for enhancing skill acquisition in business education becomes imperative.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the challenges of experiential learning for enhancing skill acquisition in business education. Specifically, the study proceeded to determine;

1. Experiential learning techniques utilized by business education students for enhancing skills in business education.
2. Challenges of experiential learning for enhancing skills acquisition in business education.

Hypothesis

1. There is no statistically significant difference in the experiential learning activities utilized by business education students for enhancing skills in business education across different gender.
2. There is no statistically significant difference in challenges of experiential learning for enhancing skills in business education across different level of instruction.

Review of Related Literature

Experiential Learning

According to John Dewey (1938)³, David Kolb⁴ (1984) and Simon Fraser University in their theories defined experiential learning as:

“the strategic, active engagement of students in opportunities to learn through doing, and reflection on those activities, which empowers them to apply their theoretical knowledge to practical endeavours in a multitude of settings inside and outside of the classroom”.

Experiential learning are the totality of opportunities that are expected to help business education students transform knowledge into true understanding which is lacking in the traditional classroom setting which offer students’ knowledge that comes from what others know. Consequently, Eze, Olumoko and Obi (2020)⁵ affirmed that the introduction of multimedia technology into the classroom has profound impact on the styles of teaching and learning, thus making the business education students to be motivated to learn. Obi, Eze and Chibuzo (2021) saw experiential learning as basically a dynamic view of learning based on a learning cycle driven by the resolution of the dual dialectics of action/reflection and experience/abstraction.

Skill Acquisition

Business education continues to adapt to universally recognize new expectations from technological development from business education students to equip them for the job market. According to Clark and White (2010), business education students need to build their skills through experiential learning.⁶ Obi (2018) maintained that business education students leave school without acquiring the prerequisite skills that foster individual, community or national development. Hence, the need to use experiential learning which is concerned with more concrete issues that are related to business education students and the learning context for the purpose of skill acquisition. According to Okoro and Ursula (2012), the first is the conditions which promote skill acquisition and the second is the change that will occur when the skill is acquired. However, when an individual set out to learn a

new skill, he usually starts with a communicable programme of instruction like experiential learning among others

Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential learning theory was propounded by David Kolb in 1984. Kolb's experiential model was a product that originated after extensive study of learning models proposed by Piaget, Lewin and Dewey. Learning is meant to provide learners with experience and it's the duty of the teacher to develop curriculum that has provided rich experiences to the learner. Experiential learning occurs when learner engage past experiences or related knowledge to enhance process of learning.

Experiential learning provides learners with knowledge created from experience which allows learners to adopt suitable learning styles, know areas of weakness and connect theories to real life situation. A working definition on the learning process coined by Kolb (1984) is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experiences. Kolb characterized learning as (i) a process (ii) a continuous process based on experience; (iii) a dialectic process; (iv) a holistic process of human adaptation; (v) a transaction between the individual and the environment; (vi) a process of creating knowledge.⁷ According to Kolb, learning is cyclical in nature. The four-component cyclical mode of learning is known as the 'Kolb Learning Cycle'. For successful learning, the learner should involve actively in all the four modes, i.e. Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC) and Active Experimentation (AE).

The first stage requires the learner to be open minded to gain knowledge from the experience. The second stage is reflective observation, the learner must reflect on the experience from various perspectives. This is followed by the abstract conceptualization stage where the knowledge gained from the two stages are integrated. In other words, integrate their observations with their past experience and create concepts. The last stage in

the experiential cycle is the active experimentation, in which the learner apply the new knowledge in making decisions and problem solving. According to Rubin (2007), learners reflect on previous experiences, then reviewing them, conceptualize them and trying to analyze ways on how to put into practice what they have learned.⁸Experiential learning enable learners select strategies suitable for specific tasks, allow learners take responsibility which facilitate autonomy in learning, provides flexibility for the teacher as well as the learner, independent in managing the learning process on their own.

Principles of Experiential Learning (EL)

The traditional classroom situations promotes competition among students thus makes students uninvolved or unmotivated, while in experiential learning students cooperate and learn from one another in a more semi-structured approach (Northern Illinois University Centre for Innovative Teaching and Learning, 2012). Instruction of experiential learning is designed to engage students in direct experiences which are tied to real problems and situations in which the instructor facilitates rather than directs student progress. (UC Davis, 2011). In experiential learning students are motivated to learn because they have a personal stake in the subjectmatter. The phases of experiential learning are experiencing (doing), reflection and applying or utilizing to solve present problems. In addition, “the stages of reflection and application are what make experiential learning different and more powerful than the models commonly referred to as ‘learn-by-doing’ or ‘hands-on-learning (UC Davis, 2011). Experiential learning principles as noted by the (Association for Experiential Education, 2011):

1. Experiential learning occurs when chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis.
2. Student are required to take initiative, make decisions and be accountable for results to gain experience.
3. The student is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious and solving

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problems, assuming responsibility, being creative and constructing meaning.

4. Students are engaged intellectually, emotionally, socially, soulfully and/or physically. This involvement produces a perception that the learning task is authentic.
5. The results of the learning are personal and form the basis for future experience and learning.
6. Relationships are developed and nurtured: student to self, student to others and student to the world at large.
7. The outcomes of the experience cannot be predicted so the instructor and student may experience success, failure, adventure, risk-taking and uncertainty.
8. Opportunities are nurtured for students and instructors to explore and examine their own values.
9. The instructor's primary roles include setting suitable experiences, posing problems, setting boundaries, supporting students, insuring physical and emotional safety, and facilitating the learning process.
10. The instructor and student may experience success, failure, adventure, risk-taking and uncertainty, because the outcomes of the experience cannot totally be predicted.
11. The instructor recognizes and encourages spontaneous opportunities for learning.
12. Instructors strive to be aware of their biases, judgments and pre-conceptions, and how these influence the student.
13. The design of the learning experience includes the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes and successes.

The Experiential Learning Process

Experiential learning involves a student getting involved, collaborating with other learners and reflecting on learning experience to learn new skills and knowledge (Haynes, 2007). Learning from the process is the goal of experiential learning. During each step of the experience, students will engage with the content, the instructor, each other as well as self-reflect and apply what they have learned in another situation. The following

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describes the steps that comprise experiential learning as noted by (Haynes, 2007; UC Davis, 2011) includes experiencing/exploring, here students carry out task with little or no help from the instructor like making products or models, role-playing. Sharing/reflecting, at this point students will share the results, reactions, observations, discuss feelings generated by the experience with their peers. Processing/analysing, students will discuss, analyze and reflect upon the experience. This enable them relate their experiences to future learning experiences. Generalizing, Students will connect the experience with real world, identify “real life” principles that emerged. Then finally Application, students will apply what they learned in the experience to a similar or different situation.

Instructor Roles in Experiential Learning

In experiential learning, the instructor guides rather than directs the learning process where students are naturally interested in learning. The instructor assumes the role of facilitator and this process is guided by a number of steps crucial to experiential learning as noted by (Wurdinger & Carlson, 2010) the teacher playing a less teacher-centric role in the classroom, adopting a positive and non-dominating way in the learning process, identify an learning experience which students will be personally committed and interested to undertake the teacher is expected to explain the purpose of the experiential learning to the students, share your feelings and thoughts with your students, tie the course learning objectives to course activities and the teacher ensures the students know what they are supposed to do, provide relevant resources to help students succeed in the learning process, allow students to experiment and discover solutions on their own, strike a balance between the academic and nurturing aspects of teaching, clarify students’ and instructor roles.

Student Roles in Experiential Learning

A good experiential learning is one in which students decide to be personally involved and committed in the learning experience.

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Students are actively participating in their own learning. The instructor assumes the role of guide, students are not completely left to teach themselves. The student roles in experiential learning adapted from (UC-Davis, 2011 and Wurdinger& Carlson, 2010) states that students are involved in practical experience to solve a social and personal problem. The students are given freedom in the learning process as long as they make headway. They are involved with difficult and challenging situations to discover the core means of assessment. Also they will be self-evaluation which the students use to monitor their own progression in the learning process, learning from the process as well as be open to change.

Studies Related to Experiential Learning

Antonio, Leal-Rodríguez and Gema Albort-Morant (2019) carried out a study on promoting innovative experiential learning practices to improve academic performance: Empirical evidence from a Spanish Business School. The study examines the impact exerted by an experiential learning based educational methodology on students' level of academic performance. This research was carried out within the specific context of a Spanish private business school, using a sample of students belonging to the Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration at a Spanish Business School. Pearson's correlation and structural equation modelling are applied to test the relationship hypothesized. Results derived from the analysis of an undergraduate business students sample suggest that getting involved in experience-based practices and managerial simulations constitutes an effective approach to develop their competencies. Thus, we may conclude that fostering experiential learning strategies favours the students' understanding of theoretical concepts and leads to the attainment of superior performance. This paper contributes to management education by empirically testing the value of innovative experiential learning based training.⁹

A similar study of Voukelatou (2014) investigated the Contribution of Experiential Learning to the Development of

Cognitive and Social Skills in Secondary Education: A Case Study. This paper is an attempt to approach the concept of experiential learning and describes the implementation of the project teaching method in a secondary school in Athens. In the framework of this study, qualitative research was carried out using the method of in-depth interview. The study aimed at recording the views, perceptions, feelings and attitudes of 20 students that participated in the project “Traditional dances from different parts of Greece.” The results showed the significant impact of experiential learning on acquiring knowledge and developing social skills and students’ attitudes, while contributing to the promotion of cultural heritage and the values of tradition. This is an original research study that depicts experiential learning in teaching as well as analyzing the teaching method of the project in combination with other different experiential/energetic educational techniques.¹⁰ In general, trainers and scientists of pedagogy and school psychology can use the results to design and implement educational programs in schools of all educational levels based on the experiential teaching method of learning.

Boggu and Sundarsingh (2016) examined the impact of experiential learning cycle on language learning strategies. The study examined the effectiveness of the experiential learning theory by David Kolb in enhancing language learning strategies in an EFL context. Kolb’s four-stage model enables the learner to learn by experiencing, reflecting, conceptualizing and experimenting. The experimental group were selected through purposive sampling technique and comprised of 60 Undergraduate students registered for a Business programme. A series of tasks were designed to facilitate the development of skills at each stage of the cycle. A pre and post strategy evaluation was done using the SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) devised by Rebecca Oxford (1990). In addition to the SILL, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and students reflections through reflective learning journals. Findings revealed that there was an extremely significant difference between the pre and post SILL survey results after the

period of intervention. It resulted in a rise in strategy use from medium to high. Implications for further research into innovative pedagogical approach that would develop high strategy users are discussed.

Kolb and Kolb (2009) provided a comprehensive review of studies that applied the experiential learning methods in various disciplines at the tertiary level. Cited in (A. Y. Kolb & Kolb, 2009), the 2008 Experiential Learning Theory Bibliographies (A. Kolb & Kolb, 2009,) include 2,453 entries” Practitioners evaluated, tested, adopted and measured the effectiveness of experiential learning method in an effort to enhance student learning. All in all, the studies conducted in the various disciplines is an evidence that experiential learning method is flexible and can be customized to different fields of education.¹¹ Laing(2009) studied the effect of an experiential learning activity on students understanding of concepts related to management accounting. For this purpose students were divided into focus group and treatment group. Data was analyzed based on the mid and the final exam tests, and the results were positive indicating a reasonable escalation in the performance of the treatment group. The study recommends incorporating experiential learning activity in accounting education since students are greatly involved in such activities and this facilitates better understanding of difficult concepts.¹²

Experiential learning model has also been employed by instructors to design online courses. One study by Ikuta (2008) examined the effect of Kolb’s learning style in designing online instruction. Kolb’s LSI was included to make the activity more learner centred. The findings revealed that creating an awareness among designers regarding their own learning styles, increased the use of learner centered activities in the online course which resulted in a rise in learner participation in the course.¹³ Lu, Clarke, and Gong (2007) trace the relationship between Kolb’s Learning styles and online learning behaviours and outcomes. Although KSLI was administered to 104 third year undergraduate students in the Department of Educational Technology at Shandong

Normal University in China, only 40 were selected based on their preferred learning styles for a better investigation into the relationship. The study revealed a significant effect of KSLI on the online behaviour, i.e. total reading and discussion time of the participants, however the effect was not significant between the KSLI and learning outcomes. The findings provide implications for instructors designing online learning modules for mixed ability students possessing varied learning styles. The current study differs from studies conducted previously on experiential learning. The present study provides insights into the potential of utilizing of instructional resources for experiential learning for enhancing skills acquisition in business education.¹⁴

Method

A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study consists of 102 full time business education students in Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The total number of registered students was 123 which consists of 53 students in 300 and 70 students in 400 level of academic instruction respectively. The choice of these levels was because these students must have experienced experiential learning at the different level. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection of 35 items including questions about gender and individual level of academic instruction and questions relating to the research questions. The instrument employed a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA=4 points); Agree (A=3 points); Disagree (D=2 points) Strongly Disagree (SD=1 point). The instrument was validated by three experts in business education and the internal consistency determined using Cronbach's alpha reliability technique which yielded a coefficient of 0.88 for the reliability. The questionnaire was administered through online platform. A total of 102 business education students (Corresponding of 83 % rate of return) responded to all the questions and were used for data analysis. The data obtained from questionnaire were presented and analysed with the help of

frequency tables, mean and standard deviations. T-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). The decision rule for the research questions was that any item with a mean rating of 2.5 would be regarded as agreed while any mean below 2.5 would be regarded as disagreed. The hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance were accepted where $p > 0.05$ and rejected where $p < 0.05$.

Results and Discussion

The survey involved 102 respondents from different genders and level of academic instruction

Table 1: Gender distribution of business education students across all levels of instruction

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Commulative Percent
Valid Male	27	26.5	26.5	26.5
Female	75	73.5	73.5	100
Total	102	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows a greater population of business education students are female which consisted of 73.5 while male consisted of 26.5

Table II: distribution across all levels of instruction

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Commulative Percent
Valid 400	60	58.8	41.2	58.8
300	42	41.2	100.0	100.0
Total	102	100.0		

Table 2 shows greater population of business education students are in 400 level which consist of 58.8 % while level 300 is 41.2 %.

Table III: Mean and standard deviation of the response on the experiential learning techniques utilized by business education students for enhancing skills in business education in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

SN	Experiential Learning Techniques	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
1	Students engaging in questioning and answers session	3.26	.74	Agreed
2	Students engaging in industrial training in companies	3.68	.48	Agreed
3	Students engaging in discussion to do assignment	3.70	.45	Agreed
4	Students learn through role play	3.70	.45	Agreed
5	Students participating in case study	3.95	.21	Agreed
6	Students learn through simulation to learn new content	3.79	.40	Agreed
7	Students learning through brainstorming	3.88	.32	Agreed\
8	Students interviewing experts	3.47	.50	Agreed
9	Students engaging in exercise	3.34	.95	Agreed
10	Students engaging in group work to acquire new knowledge	3.39	.61	Agreed
11	Students engaging in debate to learn	3.22	.79	Agreed
12	Students participated in field trip	3.33	.82	Agreed
Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation		3.56	.56	Agreed

The result of the analysis is presented in Table III above shows that majority of the respondents acknowledge that they utilize questioning and answers, industrial training programme, discussion, role play, case study, simulation, brainstorming, group work for experiential learning. The mean ratings of these adopted techniques ranged between 3.22 and 3.90. The standard deviations which were relatively low in most of the EL techniques listed, shows that the responses were homogenous. It is ranged from .45 to .95. This show the respondents were not wide apart in the mean rating. This result supported the notion that experiential learning is becoming widely used. This is in line with the findings of Silberman (2007) experiential learning activities are categorized into group of activities as such as watching movies, simulations, performances, practical objects, active learning comprises of group work, learning games, role play, and brainstorming which expose learners to real life experiences. In the same vein Sugerand and Kostoroski (2007) these activities

are organized inside and outside classroom, including practice at labs or Computer-Based Simulations; participate in creative competitions, student exchange programme, on the job training, internship and so on.

Table IV: Mean and standard deviation of the response on the challenges of experiential learning for enhancing skills in business education in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

SN	Challenges of Experiential Learning	\bar{x}	SD	Decision
13	Concentrating on passing courses than acquiring the necessary skills	3.22	.70	Agreed
14	Disproportion rate of the students and equipment	3.00	.28	Agreed
15	There is a limited content of learning skills	2.96	.39	Agreed
16	There is Low participation of higher rank academics	3.01	.19	Agreed
17	Low usage of complementary training materials	2.92	.21	Agreed
18	Lack of field trips	3.15	.48	Agreed
19	Obsolete equipment in the laboratories	2.98	.52	Agreed
20	Not discussing learning outcomes after industrial training	3.00	.28	Agreed Agreed
21	Insufficient transportation facilities	3.03	.17	Agreed
22	Students from different majors attending same course affect comprehension	3.16	.19	Agreed Agreed
23	Insufficient skilled technicians for teaching practical skills	3.17	.38	Agreed
24	Students not motivated to learn because of low chances for employment after graduation	3.17	.82	Agreed
25	Low access to computer and Internet at the laboratories and workshops	3.16	.38	Agreed
26	Lecturers are not motivated to update their practical skills due to poor working conditions	3.17	.37	Agreed Agreed
27	Irrelevant course outlines affects learning	3.15	.39	Agreed
28	Low access to skilful technician for maintenance of equipment	3.11	.49	
29	Unavailability of organization facilities	2.99	.22	Agreed

	due to time constraints			
30	Overlapping skills and repeating same experiments by different lecturers	2.79	.49	Agreed
31	Low quality educational aids, materials to facilitate learning	3.0	.22	Agreed
32	Insufficient spaces for doing practical activities	3.10	.48	Agreed
33	Not having practical courses in flexible times	2.97	.96	Agreed
	Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation	2.92	.42	Agreed

The result of the analysis is presented in Table IV above shows disproportion rate of the students and equipment, limited content of learning skills, low participation of higher rank academics, low access to computer and Internet at the laboratories and workshops among others are the challenges of experiential learning. The standard deviation which were relatively homogenous. It ranged from .17 to .96. This shows that the respondents were not wide apart in the mean ratings. This is in line with the findings of Oloruntoba (2008) revealed that the challenges facing students involving in experiential learning includes insufficient access to farm inputs, proper technologies, well trained instructors, and proper learning environment, insufficient on the job training for instructors, the challenge of making proper relationship between the theoretical, practical and the farm content and skills. The integrated content with proper quality make a guideline for better education of the university under graduate students. In the same vein Arnold and et.al (2006) in a research have found some of the experiential challenges need to be solved. These challenges are: unawareness of the faculty members about the practical experiences, paying less attention, registering for the class, timing of practical activities, supervision on practical courses and managing the students' activities in the plans of experiential learning.

Table V: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of respondents on experiential learning activities utilized by business education students for enhancing skills in business education across different gender

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Male	27	3.26	.22	100	-7.8	.000	Significant
Female	75	3.66	.66				

Table V shows the mean ratings of male students (mean=3.26, SD= .22) and female students (mean= 3.66, SD= .30).t(-7.8), p-value (.000) this means that there is significant difference on experiential learning activities utilized by business education students for enhancing skills in business education across different gender(Male and Female). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Due to the varying features of the different gender, they opt for some experiential activities which the other gender might not opt for.

Table VI: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of respondents on the challenges of experiential learning for enhancing skills in business education across different level of instruction.

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Male	60	3.02	.89	100	-3.75	.000	Significant
Female	42	3.12	.181				

Table VI shows the mean ratings of male students (mean=3.02, SD= .089) and female students (mean= 3.12, SD= .181). t(-3.75), p-value (.000) this means that there is significant difference on challenges of experiential learning for enhancing skills in business education across different level of instruction. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings is consistent with business education curriculum at Nigeria universities where students engage some experiential learning activities like internship, industrial training among others. This result corroborates the

findings of Hien and Onah (2018) that the older the students the more experiential learning activities they engage in. So level 400 students in business education programme are most likely to experience challenges in experiential learning due to their level of exposure.¹⁵

Conclusion and Recommendations

Experiential learning is clearly defined by these well-known maxims: *I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.* ~ Confucius, 450 BC. *There is an intimate and necessary relation between the process of actual experience and education.* ~ John Dewey, 1938. Experiential learning is a philosophy of learning through action, doing, experience, discovery and exploration. Instructors engage learners with real experiences with the soul aim of increasing their knowledge, developing their skills and competencies. Wurdinger and Carlson (2010) asserted that faculty should actively involve their students in the learning process through discussion, group work, hands-on participation, and applying information outside the classroom. Here students are involved in learning content in which they have a personal interest or need. Based on the analysis, it is concluded that business education students utilize experiential learning activities which includes group work, discussion case study, simulation, industrial training among others for skill acquisition. Some of the challenges faced for business education includes disproportion rate of the students and equipment, limited content of learning skills, low participation of higher rank academics, low access to computer and internet at the laboratories and workshops. The study has recommended that instructors in business education should adopt experiential learning in their instructional delivery. Synergy should be built with industries to ensure that business education students get experiences needed to be relevant at work place. Business education programs should continue instruction on the entire process of experiential learning to create concrete experience. Awareness of experiential

learning as a process to provide learners with the opportunity to responsibility of the learning should be encouraged. Further research into how experiential learning can be aligned more in business education should be carried out.

Endnotes

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METHODOLOGICAL SCEPTICISM IN DESCARTES' EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE IMPERATIVES OF EPISTEMIC CERTAINTY

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Abstract

Knowledge has both instrumental valuation functionality and an arguably anthropocentric operational and relational principle. Beliefs are arguably essential components of knowledge. However, beliefs have ambivalent undertones, for they can either be true or false. The possibility of falsity underscores the skeptical disposition and, syllogistically, the expediency of justification. Cartesian epistemology was an effort to foreground the enterprise of knowledge within a structure that is not only rational and foundational, but also incorrigible in such a manner that forecloses the challenges of skepticism. This paper sets out to appraise skepticism as a viable method and an essential framework in Descartes' epistemology and explicate its relevance in the human quest for epistemic certainty.

Key terms: Methodological scepticism, Cartesian scepticism, Cogito and Epistemic certainty.

Introduction

Questions relating to the definition, nature, and acquisition of knowledge are, perhaps, the most primordial and controversial. This is most likely due to the instrumental value¹ and intrinsically relational² nature of knowledge. In the first, knowledge enables us to fulfill our epistemic goals of upholding truth and also aids "understanding, rationality and utility."³ In the second, knowledge depends equally on both the subject and the object as co-relational existents within the ecosystem. The attainment of knowledge is therefore essential for human interaction with other beings in the ecosystem, towards the right valuation and

the ascription of “meaning and direction to the existential life of man.”⁴ This justifies the human unending epistemic quest.

Knowledge entails beliefs. This is especially so because existential meanings, norms and practices are fabricated upon and around beliefs. Beliefs, however, are usually deep-seated in the believer’s psyche, influencing knowledge claims and perceptions of reality. Thus, beliefs have been employed in formulating socio-cultural perspectives and political, economic and religious doctrines. Ironically, beliefs do not possess a truth-value that is certitude-laden, for beliefs can either be true or false. If false, knowledge structures and perceptions of reality stand the risk of being false too. The possibility of this underscores the skeptics’ arguments,⁵ and, syllogistically, the imperatives of justification.

Within the historicity of western philosophy, particularly epistemology, skepticism as an epistemological methodology was made popular by Renes Descartes, by doubting all the foundations of his beliefs. Realizing the falsity-proneness of some beliefs, he applied the skeptical analyses towards separating false beliefs from true beliefs, particularly those associated with empirical sources of knowledge such as the sensory organs and the external, phenomenal world.

This paper appraises skepticism as an essential and viable method in the epistemological enterprise. Particularly, it presupposes that the skeptical method constitutes the soul for the entirety of the epistemological enterprise as entrenched in Descartes’ epistemic account. Inherent in this epistemic account are some quite interesting features – a hierarchical epistemic structure which is hinged upon metaphysically basic truths, an intuitive deductionism and, most essentially, a methodic skepticism. Specifically, this essay explicates the centrality of skepticism in Descartes’ epistemology and its relevance in the quest for epistemic certainty.

This paper is divided into four segments. The first discusses the nature of knowledge, including issues bothering on definition of, and criteria for knowledge. The second analyzes the skeptical challenge to knowledge, tracing the historicity of the skeptical challenge from the sophists to Edmund Gettier, while the third discusses skepticism as obtainable and applied in

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Descartes' epistemology. The fourth explicates the imperative of (Cartesian) skepticism to the justification of knowledge claims and the attainment of epistemic certainty, and the development of epistemological philosophy.

On the Nature of Knowledge

Attempts at defining knowledge come with an immediate problem, which bothers on the different instantiations and conceptualizations of knowledge, and the attendant problem of criteria and/or defining characteristics of knowledge. Knowledge, construed within the precincts of English grammar, can be explained as the "information, understanding and skills' gained 'through education or experience.'"⁶ Knowledge also refers to direct perception or intuition with clarity/certainty, truth beyond doubt; practical/experiential understanding; familiarity/acquaintanceship; distinct differentiation or identification; or ability to detect the character or nature of something.⁷ Knowledge also implies "facts and ideas, understanding, and totality of what is known."⁸ In spite of all these, there are underlying conceptual issues.⁹

Perhaps the concept of knowledge is best understood from the various conceptualizations or typologies of knowledge. Let us examine a form of knowledge known as propositional knowledge. A proposition denotes what is "said or asserted by an utterance, a sentence, or a thought."¹⁰ Propositions express events or state of affairs, or, according to Roderick Chisholm, denote "an abstract object existing in every possible world."¹¹ However, it is important to distinguish the proposition from the event in which that proposition is expressed, or the affairs from which it is stated. Events and affairs are said to happen/occur and obtain respectively, at certain times. Propositions, contrarily, are either eternally true or eternally false;¹² and, resultantly, only declarative sentences form propositions. This accounts for propositional knowledge being also referred to as factual knowledge of 'knowing that.'

Practical knowledge, or 'knowing how' represents the ability equation in the discourse of knowledge¹³ in the sense that it obviates the possibility of the problem of linguistic

inexpressibility of propositional knowledge by situating further explanation on experience. Whereas propositional knowledge denotes one's cognitive repertoires, practical knowledge is more concerned with issues of competency. Therefore, propositional knowledge essentially correlates with practical knowledge because propositions may further be explained by and identified with demonstrative ability and experience.¹⁴ Practical knowledge is given credence by its explanatory power by implying that mere intelligence does not adequately satisfy the criteria for knowledge, but effective application and performance.¹⁵ It accounts for why it is appropriate to employ the terminologies of knowledge in discussing what an experience is like. In other words, it captures the expediency of using such terms as "discovering," "knowing," "remembering," "forgetting" what an experience is like because such expressions are used to speak about abilities.¹⁶ Practical knowledge, structured on demonstrative abilities and experiential undertones, is usually disseminated through imperative sentences.¹⁷

Inferential or demonstrative knowledge is the knowledge that is acquired while concluding a reasoning process.¹⁸ This type of knowledge emerges from logical inferences from other propositions which function as evidences and/or justifications.¹⁹ If deductive, the reasoning is from general principles to particular cases. If inductive, it comes from particular instances to general conclusions.²⁰ Theoretical knowledge is derived from abstract entities such as geometrical and mathematical axioms.²¹ Other knowledge typologies include perceptual or experiential knowledge; premonitory knowledge; mystical knowledge; and common-sense knowledge.²²

Possibly, the credibility of propositional knowledge over other types of knowledge lies in its anthropocentric presupposition, and its essentiality to the human person for proper valuation and manipulation of the objects in the environment for human betterment.²³ As such, questions bothering on human ontology and eco-relationality, particularly whether non-humans possess intrinsic values independent of human valuations and so on, are fundamental to our quest for knowledge and its consequential benefits for human and environment interconnectivity and a

better ecosystem.

Notwithstanding the discourses so far, central in the discourse on knowledge is the criteria question by which we mean the necessities of knowledge. Traditionally, the concept of knowledge has been infused with a trio of independently essential and mutually necessary conditions: “justification, truth, and belief.”²⁴ JTB presupposes that to have knowledge of something (for instance, X), one must, at first, believe it. This entailment of belief is known as the “doxastic condition.”²⁵ However, and instructively, epistemologists have attempted a conceptual comparison between knowledge and belief, thereby eliciting the differences. For some, the difference is only indgree of something or other and for others, they differ in terms of the manifestation of some introspectable criterion/criteria in knowing which is absent in believing.²⁶ Again, whereas knowledge depicts capacity, belief connotes tendency.²⁷ A belief is either true or false, right or wrong, correct or incorrect; and the second disjunct will disqualify it as knowledge. Therefore to know presupposes being equipped to getting something right and correct. This depicts another important fact about knowledge – the entailment of truth. This is the “semantic condition.”²⁸ Still, someone could believe a true proposition without knowing it. This implies that true belief is insufficient for knowledge. The true belief must be established upon some form of evidential justification, warranted or supported reason for it to give credence to the possibility of certitude.²⁹ This is the “epistemic condition.”³⁰ Thus, JTB contends that knowledge involves justified true belief which is “valuable in virtue of the action-guiding character of belief and in virtue of the intrinsic value of finding the truth” and justifying that belief.³¹

In 1963, Edmund Gettier attempted to restructure the knowledge edifice on a pedestal that warrants clarity than the Socratic/Platonian conceptualization of knowledge as justified true belief. He refuted JTB as knowledge, insisting on the possibility of an epistemic agent/subject to have a belief which is true, justifiable and evidential, and yet insufficient for knowledge. This is premised on the fact that what constitutes justification for a belief differs from what constitutes truth for the same belief.

Gettier gave two examples in support of this position.³²

Post-Gettier analyses³³ abound on the imperatives of construing knowledge as the cognitive aspect of consciousness with underlying implications for perception, understanding and comprehending; as signifying certitude predicated upon relevant and sufficient premises or evidences as against beliefs,³⁴ guesses or opinions; and as encapsulating a body of information about the phenomenal world such as implies truth, self-satisfaction and indubitability such that prohibits logical possibility at being false.³⁵ They argue that knowledge or knowledge systems, expediently structured upon and embedded with certainty-conditions, enhance epistemological and normative dimensions.³⁶ Notwithstanding, the challenge for a conclusive, error-proof condition for knowledge persists.

The Epistemic Quest and the Skeptical Challenge to Knowledge

By epistemic quest is meant the latent desire in humans and endless quest for knowledge with such assurance and indubitability that forecloses the possibility of error or even an iota of doubt; hence epistemic certainty. By epistemic certainty, we mean a property of propositional knowledge and a convincing medium through which the epistemic warrant for a proposition is measured and guaranteed in a manner that connotes indubitability and thus forecloses the possibility of doubt.³⁷ Thus the notion of certainty presupposes evidence in the sense that evidence, or an evident proposition, is such that “accepting it is epistemically preferable to withholding it”³⁸ in such a manner that it is apt in deciding the reasonableness or acceptability of other propositions. Whatever is certain is thus presumably evident. But the converse would be untrue. This is because a lot of things we are aware of beyond reasonable doubt may, in actual fact, be bereft of certainty. In other words, certitude becomes a condition for knowledge.³⁹ It is instructive to distinguish between saying that a person feels certain about a given thing or state of affairs and saying that that thing is something which is certain for him. The former implies the strength of his conviction or the felt strength of his conviction while the latter, though not

necessarily so, suggests some normativity and/or objectivity. The inevitability of justifying our beliefs and knowledge claims underlies the quest for epistemic certainty,⁴⁰ and the justification condition necessitates that a belief or knowledge claim be evidentially supported with adequate reasons or grounds so as to prevent lucky guesses, unfounded beliefs or speculations from counting as knowledge. These problematic issues have elicited traditional philosophical controversies over the study/analysis of knowledge and the phenomenon of skepticism with regards to knowledge and justification.

The question arises, then, to the effect of what it is for a state of affairs to be such that its occurrence necessarily presupposes certainty. This question essentially connects with the underlying epistemological question of whether and how the human person can attain the knowledge of anything at all, with certainty; and whether or not the thinking being or epistemic subject/agent can possess adequate knowledge of the epistemic object. In other words, what beliefs about the object of knowledge can the subject/agent of knowledge possess, and what ground(s) justify/legitimate those beliefs? What is the difference between the thinking being having a true belief about the object of knowledge on the one hand, and possessing a certainty of knowledge which transcends any iota of skepticism about the object of knowledge on the other hand? In what dimension(s) do these bear on human relationship with the environment or ecosystem? These are thematic issues underlying our concern.

The history of philosophy is replete with discourses on such matters as these. The ancient Greek pre-Socratic philosophers were bothered with the afore-mentioned problematic.⁴¹ However, the Socratic era and the medieval period seemed to be of a common mind in the quest for epistemic certainty – that nothing less than definite, eternal and absolute truth can avail for an adequate and sure knowledge. Modern philosophy, ushered by the renaissance, was also characterized with the question of the origin and possibility of knowledge across empiricist and rationalist traditions and the attendant skeptical challenge, and represented an obsessive search for the perfect method that guarantees epistemic certainty. Also, experimental science

emerged with a wave of enthusiasm and interest that cut across Europe, especially in Britain where empiricism was predominant. Subsequently, many scientists of the eighteenth century, attuning with Isaac Newton, strongly contended that the only suitable process for attaining epistemic certainty about the world was to formulate generalizations based on observation and the outcomes of experimentation processes.

Logical positivism was founded upon this premise, with a central epistemic agendum that bothered on the notion that the observational procedures enable science to provide general or theoretical knowledge.⁴² This led to the analytic/rationalist and synthetic/empiricist, a priori and a posteriori distinction and the differentials in the modal status between necessary and contingent truths.⁴³ Also, the emergent Vienna Circle ascribed epistemological priority to observation sentences as they are imbued with sense impressions and information about the external world.⁴⁴ Conversely and simultaneously, rationalist philosophy, as pioneered by Renes Descartes, Leibniz and Immanuel Kant, resurged in continental Europe,⁴⁵ proffering reason-based epistemic arguments. However, both the empiricists and the rationalists' perspectives were largely prejudiced, subjective and attended with skepticism.

Descartes' Methodological Skepticism

The skeptical disposition was in vogue in the transitional era of the seventeenth century.⁴⁶ Descartes also adopted the method of doubt. Being primarily a mathematician and a scientist, Descartes was so disturbed by the prejudices and traditionalisms that becloud human epistemic prisms that he sought for an indubitable foundation for an unprejudiced knowledge. His aim was to reduce natural phenomena to the geometrical quantitative and precise descriptions of arithmetic and simplistic reasoning, and thereby find a body of certain and self-evident truths, in a manner which aligns with his metaphysical commitment of depending on clear and distinct ideas.⁴⁷ He opined that once he discovered a foundation of knowledge that is beyond all doubts, it could be treated as a mathematical axiom which is accessible to conscious experience and a sense of rationality construed as

epistemically fundamental in a far-reaching manner that implies indispensability and derivativeness; that is, as that which is capable of deducing logical consequences. As such, he searched through all possible epistemic contents, examined and discarded all those claims which are uncertain, with a determined effort not to adopt less assuring ones.⁴⁸ Thus Descartes held that these prejudices can only be swept away by jettisoning pre-judgments and preconceptions, and applying the principle of methodic doubt towards eliminating the pre-reflective prejudices or preconceived opinions. According to him:

The first rule was never to accept anything as true unless I recognized it to be certainly and evidently such: that is, carefully to avoid all precipitation and prejudgment, and to include nothing in my conclusions unless it presented itself so clearly and distinctly to my mind that there was no reason or occasion to doubt it.⁴⁹

Descartes thus casts doubt upon the reality of the world. In doing this, he proposed a number of skeptical hypotheses – “scenarios which are undetectable from normal experience, but in which one is radically in error, such as that one’s experiences are a product of a dream – in order to discover which of his beliefs were immune to doubt.”⁵⁰ He set his face against accepted and revered authorities and emphasized the practicality of philosophy and the possibility of attaining knowledge certainty by adopting the mathematical model as his paradigm for philosophizing.⁵¹ His proposed agenda for the possibility of knowledge attainment include assembling a thought-system which would imbue philosophy with mathematical certainty, and thus making possible a knowledge system anchored upon a body of certain and self-evident truths.⁵² He not only refused to accept the authority of previous thinkers or his own previous reasoning, but also refused to accept the obvious evidence produced by his own senses based on his belief that conscious sense experience itself could be misleading and therefore should be doubted.⁵³ Both of these, according to Descartes, are subject to prejudice and therefore susceptible to doubt.⁵⁴

Descartes thus found it both possible and philosophically necessary to give this doubting activity an absolutely universal scope. He found it meaningful to guard the starting point of his philosophy against not just the mere possibility that some external perceptions might be deceptive or hallucinatory but even against the metaphysical possibility that all perceived ideas might as well be illusionary. Thus, he began to cast doubt upon all his beliefs by situating his entire beliefs into different categories, beginning with beliefs of sense perception which, to him, are the most deceptive⁵⁵ and untrustworthy.⁵⁶

The second set of beliefs he doubted were about material things or existents in the physical world which “must be doubted because they are based upon sense perception, which has been shown to be deceptive and therefore lacking in certainty.”⁵⁷ The third set of beliefs were from the natural sciences, including corporeal objects and the sciences that deal with their existence such as Astronomy, Medicine and others. These, too, are filled with the deficiencies of the second set of beliefs.⁵⁸

The fourth set of beliefs to doubt, according to Descartes, was mathematical beliefs. Although Descartes considers mathematics as the very sculpt of certainty, not susceptible to doubt being derived from reason and independent of sense perception; he posits that mathematicians “fall into error sometimes.”⁵⁹ Within a logical framework, Descartes postulates the likelihood of the existence of an evil and powerful genius or demon (a malign genie) who is continually deceiving the epistemic agent in all things the latter construe as knowledge. As such, it may be (at least logically) that the entire universe is a vast illusion and most of our beliefs are false such that even the quest for certainty is illusory.

Going forward, Descartes adopted the Archimedean method by hoping to at least discover one belief that would be certain and indubitable upon which the entire architecture of knowledge can be erected. It was in the process he realized and concluded on his mental activities as presupposing his existence. According to him, even if he was deceived in all his beliefs, the deception justifies his existence as it was his existence that made his being deceived

possible;⁶⁰ indicating each time he doubted, he must exist to doubt.⁶¹ Also, since doubting is an intellectual activity, a doubting being is an intellectual being. In addition, since intellection is a conscious activity, and consciousness presupposes existence, an intellectual-conscious being is therefore an existential being. This underscores his “I think therefore I am” – *Cogito Ergo Sum* dictum. This foundation of knowledge, according to him, lies within his conceptualization of the mind as an entity detached from the body and takes a pre-eminent position in knowledge acquisition. This position can be buttressed in the sense that it was through the mental processes that Descartes came to the realization of his position.

Being propelled by the exigency of epistemic certainty, Descartes provided a radical, firm, permanent, comprehensible and apodictic ground for a *fundamentum inconcusum* (an absolute foundation) that would aid the possibility of the attainment of the true science, the *mathesis universalis*. This, to Descartes, is embedded within the mental process he employed towards realizing his own existential consciousness and cognitive activities. As such, epistemic certainty presupposes three criteria: first, indubitability; second, ultimate truth; and third, an existent.⁶²

For Descartes, therefore, the methodic doubt has as one of its objectives the creation of a distance between prejudice and epistemic certainty, with the intent to establish an objective, unbiasedly tainted conception of reality. Here we see a construction of a philosophical system hinging on the possibility of epistemic certainty entrenched on the existentiality of the subject on a first-person account, so that by the systematic application of doubt the subject could discover and obtain an axiomatic, self-evident truth which would form the basis of an epistemological enterprise, from which the realities of the external world are to be inferred.⁶³ This philosophical system also gives the possibility of giving our critical thoughts or reflections a chance to operate.⁶⁴ Thus, the methodic doubt, fundamentally applied, reflects a systematic reductionist analysis of all existents, and this is done in the reflective order prior to discerning the tenacity of claims or beliefs which can withstand the greatest challenge of doubt.

Therefore, for Descartes, in spite of the possibility of the

existence of some sort of deceiver who employs all his energies at ensuring perpetual deceit, or the constant possibility of situating our knowledge structure upon false beliefs, the realization of one's own existence and the possession of ratiocinative capacities towards the possible attainment of truth affords the possibility of epistemic certainty.⁶⁵

The Imperative of (Cartesian) Scepticism in the Quest for Epistemic Certainty

From the above analysis, it is explicit that Descartes' skeptical exercise, unlike philosophical skepticism which aims at disproving the possibility of epistemic certainty, presents a systematic approach towards affirming the possibility of epistemic certainty. Underlying the Cartesian skeptical tradition are two epistemic paradigms: the mathematico-rationalistic and the deductivist-foundationalist paradigms.

In the first, there is an opposition to a sole dependence on the senses as a foundation for knowledge, deriving from the understanding that such dependence would pose as a key hindrance to knowledge attainment and intellectual development. Towards an inclusive, decisive and in-depth account of reality, Descartes' methodic skepticism employed the use of reason and its speculative procedures towards a knowledge-account of reality which can be rationally systematized. In the process, Descartes introduced a new ontological category to knowledge discourse in form of ideas construed as structural universals⁶⁶ because they stand in multiple relations to things that fall within their spectrum, with an immediate, unmediated knowledge. Descartes averred that these ideas, in their clarity and distinctiveness, are the principal data of knowledge; and are domiciled in the *cogito* which "is capable of knowing some truths about reality prior to any experience."⁶⁷ Systematically, it progresses from one or more assertions to another whose truth is recognized as being structured upon, and presupposed by the assertions already known.

Thus Descartes' rationalist inclination presupposes mathematics as an operational methodology with the aim of making knowledge attainable to universal human reason towards the possibility of attaining final and certain truth devoid of any

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iota of doubt and disputations, and this made him to posit that knowledge is attainable only through a *priori* means. In doing this, Descartes employed mathematical principle in his quest to attain epistemic certainty and the dream of a universal science, *the mathesis universalis*. To Descartes therefore, the method of mathematics is essential, beginning with axioms which are self-evident and deduce logical consequences.

The deductivist-foundationalist paradigms in the Cartesian skeptical tradition implies that for our knowledge to be certain and thorough, all indices of our knowledge must be scrutinized and analyzed within a coterie of thought which is unbroken, and they must as well be included in a stream of enumerations which must both be adequate and methodical. Inherent in Descartes deductivism is a continuous or an associated movement of thought or ideas such that the emerging constructive syllogism logically entails and explains the relations among the multilayered premises in a manner that the inherent truths must of necessity lead to a precise knowledge. For Descartes, this is essential if we are to attain truth, especially the truths which are not within the immediate deductions from primary and self-evident principles. Attaining this kind of truths requires a long process of deductions or inferences from grounds or premises to consequents or conclusions without the least difficulty in recalling the whole process.

The notion of consequent or conclusion explained above underscores the fact that before there can be any epistemic certainty whatsoever, there must be an absolute truth. This absolute truth, as indicated in Descartes' philosophy, lies in the *Cogito* or mind and presupposes deductive foundational knowledge.⁶⁸ To questions pertaining to what knowledge is and how it is attainable, Descartes posits a belief that is "either foundational' and as such 'about which mistake is inconceivable - or derived from foundational beliefs by appropriate principles of inference" in such a manner as would aid "clearness, distinctness and certainty."⁶⁹ Thus we arrive at a foundationalist implication in Descartes' philosophy.

The *Cogito Ego Sum* thesis rests on the notion that such inferential, deductivist and foundationalist beliefs enjoy a special

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status of indubitability and infallibility which make them non-susceptible to skepticism. Therefore, a belief is acceptable as knowledge only if it meets foundational requirements.⁷⁰ For Descartes, this is necessary because our epistemic claims largely depend on our capability to justify that such claims are not just packs of spurious claims; hence the necessity of an incorrigible foundation for knowledge. This incorrigible foundation would be firm and aid the discovery of an absolutely certain epistemological and unassailable justificational standpoint upon which further deductions and inferences could be made, and as such could be adjudged unscrupulously as the indubitable foundation and apodictic point of departure or grounds of knowledge on the basis alone of which epistemic certainty is possible.

Conclusion

This essay has carefully analyzed the functionality and expediency of skepticism in epistemology, particularly with respect to the quest for epistemic certainty specifically within the spectrum of Rene Descartes' epistemology which enters the discourse from a novel perspective – the examination of the possibility of epistemic certainty from the first-person subject of knowledge or epistemic agent/self perspective. It highlighted the essentiality of skepticism in the attempts to justify our knowledge claims. The discourse unearthed numerous philosophical problematics in the quest for epistemic certainty such as the definitional and conceptual issues in the conceptualization of knowledge, arguments for epistemic justification in the history of epistemological philosophy and the centrality of skepticism in the justificatory attempts.

More importantly, this discourse harps on the distinction between philosophical skepticism and Cartesian skepticism - whereas the former is hinged on the vacillating data of knowledge and thus concludes on the impossibility of epistemic certainty, the latter was aimed towards the attainment of an apodictic standpoint as key to the possibility of epistemic certainty. The rationale for this doubting activity of Descartes seems justified in the notion that the project of self-knowledge must take into consideration the possibility of doubt; and as the skeptical attitude has been

focused on our claim to know the minds of others, it is as such expected that a similar skeptical attitude be directed towards our claim to know our own minds. That is why Descartes' approach is basically first-person, and goes on to suggest that error occurs not just through failure to notice the inferences to be drawn, but especially through choosing as starting points or premises "poorly understood experiences;" that is, experiences that are not clearly and distinctly perceived. The point is not just that such "experiences" are not certain, so that nothing inferred from them by logical means can be certain either. What makes them downright "deceptive" beyond being merely unreliable is the fact that as epistemic agents human persons either suppose more to be contained in them than just that which is immediately present to consciousness, or fail to attend carefully to all that is actually contained in them. In the former case, they embroider upon what might be called "experiences perfectly understood," while in the latter they foreshorten these experiences. As such, Descartes arrived at his incorrigible, certain, self-evidential, foundational and indubitable first principle: the notion that it is a contradiction to suppose that that which thinks does not exist at the very time when it thinks; thus the *cogito ergo sum*- "I think, therefore I am" theory.

The question we have been dealing with bothers on an unquestionable account for the possibility of knowledge certainty, and its implications for skepticism. This essay has proposed to formulate it through a critical interrogation of Descartes' epistemology and its anthropocentric, foundational standpoint, which is imbued with the required attributes such as self-consciousness or self-awareness and rationality which are core criteria to knowledge attainment and affirmation of certitude. It also offers the possibility of a belief structured upon a certainty status such that it is devoid of the possibilities of doubt. Its inherent translucence, distinctness and self-dependence hinges upon an unquestionable, apodictic existent with epistemological normativities upon which knowledge about other phenomena – social, cultural, ethical, political, religious, economic, scientific etc – may be deduced in such a manner that warrants epistemic certainty.

Endnotes

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- ³ Sven Bernecker, *Reading Epistemology: Selected Texts with Interactive Commentary.* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 1.
- ⁴ Omotade Adegbindin, *Ifa in Yoruba Thought System.* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2014), 113.
- ⁵ Anselm K. Jimoh, *Certitude and Doubt: A Study Guide in Epistemology.* (Ibadan: Ebony Books, 2013) and Roderick M. Chisholm, *Person and Object.* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1967).
- ⁶ *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.* International Student's Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 827. Knowledge by experience is tantamount to what George Graham calls the optimistic science position. This position holds that knowing what experience is like amounts to knowing the intricacies of each and every physical scientific fact about conscious experience. See George Graham, *Philosophy of Mind: An Introduction.* (Oxford: Blackwell Publisher, 1996), 9.
- ⁷ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language.* 3rd Edition. (New York: Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.) 998.
- ⁸ *ibid*
- ⁹ Adegbindin, *Ifa in Yoruba Thought System...* 145.
- ¹⁰ Bernecker, *Reading Epistemology:*
- ¹¹ Chisholm, *Person and Object...* 122. See also George Edward Moore, *Some main Problems of Philosophy.* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1953), 57-71, 258-260; C. A Baylis, "Facts, Propositions, Exemplification, and Truth." *Mind.* (1948), 459-479; and R. Cartwright, "Propositions." *Analytical Philosophy.* R. J. Butler ed. 1st Series. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 81-103.
- ¹² Chisholm, *Person and Object...* and Bernecker, *Reading Epistemology.* Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz explains this point aptly. According to him, "Do you see, therefore, that truth is of propositions or thoughts – of possible ones, I mean – so that

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²⁵. F. Feldman, *A Cartesian Introduction to Philosophy*. (United States of America: McGraw -Hill Inc, 1986). 23

²⁶. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind...* 128

²⁷. *ibid*.

²⁸. Feldman, *A Cartesian Introduction to Philosophy...*

²⁹. Bernecker, *Reading Epistemology*:

³⁰. Feldman, *A Cartesian Introduction to Philosophy*...

³¹. J. L. Kvanvig, *The Value of Knowledge and the Pursuit of Understanding*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 204.

³². See Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Analysis*. (Vol. 23, 1963), 121-123

³³. Gettier-type counter examples include Keith Lehrer, "Knowledge, Truth and Evidence." *Analysis*. (vol. 25, 1965), 168-75; Alvin Goldman, "Discrimination and Perpetual Knowledge" in *Perpetual Knowledge*. ed. Jonathan Dancy. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 41-65 and R. K. Shope, *The Analysis of Knowing*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

³⁴. For Donald Davidson, "beliefs are either true or false, but they represent nothing. It is good to be rid of representations.... for it is thinking that there are representations that engender thoughts of relativism." See Donald Davidson, "The myth of the subjective," in *Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation*. ed. M. Kraus (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 165-166.

³⁵. J. B. Baldwin, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*. (Gloucester: Macmillan, 1960), 604

³⁶. Epistemologically, certain issues constrict and prevent the possession or acquisition of knowledge structured upon certitude.

³⁷. Chisholm, *Person and Object*... 176-177

³⁸. See J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*. 2nd Edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) 76-116.

³⁹. Adegbindin, *Ifa in Yoruba Thought System*... 115; C. J. Hookway, "Certainty," in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. ed. T. Honderich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 129.

⁴⁰. In the quest for epistemic certainty, there had been puzzling statements and characterization of specific beliefs, views and outlooks as subjective, and others as objective (detached, dispassionate and unprejudiced). For instance, an opinion or belief or judgment that is idiosyncratic or whimsical, capricious, biased or reflective of personal prejudice, or expresses suspicion or distrust, or disregarded the evidence could be regarded as subjective; while an opinion or belief or judgment that is detached, balanced and based fairly on the available evidence

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could be called objective. It is unarguable that the attainment of epistemic certainty would require some level of objectivity which must transcend the divergent points of view through critical examination and as such can explain the extent of their respective epistemic veracity. As such, the quest for epistemic certainty takes us beyond and above the clout of subjectivism.

⁴¹. See William F. Lawhead, *The Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. (Belmont: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2002), 17.

⁴². To put the quest of the logical positivists in perspective, the question boils down to “how is it possible that observing a finite number of instances of a generalization (law or theory) can enable one to know that the generalization holds in all the unexamined or unobserved cases (of which there normally is a potential infinity)? Being mainly scientists, mathematicians and science-oriented philosophers, they shared some general agreement about how this problematic may be solved by concerning themselves with basic and important scientific issues which have philosophical undertones and which were sprouted by ongoing scientific developments. See Frederick Suppe, ed. “Historical Background to the Received View,” in *The Structure of Scientific Theories*. ed. F. Suppe. (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 6.

⁴³. This distinction dates back to earlier philosophers such as Hume, Leibniz, and Kant. For Hume, propositions which relate ideas and have their truth-value dependent on the meanings of the terms employed are analytic while propositions which state facts and have their truth-value determined by experience are synthetic. For Leibniz, some propositions portray truths of reason and are self-explanatory and self-evidently true (analytic propositions) while others show truths of facts and are dependent on empirical verification (synthetic propositions). For Kant, analytic propositions or statements are arranged in such a manner that the predicate is entailed within the subject (which may have a larger spectrum of meaning) and such that the truth is situated within and determined by the meaning and relationship of its terms such that its denial would imply a logical contradiction. For example, “All bachelors are unmarried men.” This contrasts with

synthetic propositions or statements which are arranged in such a manner that the predicate adds more information to the subject which is not logically contained within it, such that its denial or falsity does not result in a logical contradiction. For example, "All bachelors are below thirty years old." For further studies, consult Francis Offor, "A Comparative Analysis of the Analytic-Synthetic Distinction: An African Conceptual Scheme." *Sophia: An African Journal of Philosophy*. (Vol. 2, No. 2, 2000), 12-15.

^{44.} See Rudolf Carnap, "Testability and meaning." *Philosophy of Science*. (Vol. 3/4, 1936/1937), 419-41/1-40.

^{45.} Hans Reichenbach, *The Rise of Scientific Thinking*. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 88-100

^{46.} The seventeenth century ushered in the modern period of philosophy which was characterized with a jettisoning of old philosophies and a rebuilding of the edifice of knowledge. Hence the seventeenth century exemplified a passionate concern with the method of knowledge acquisition. The attendant skeptical disposition was adopted by Renes Descartes in a systematic reconstructivist manner otherwise known as methodological skepticism.

^{47.} This metaphysical commitment of Descartes is aptly captured in his statement, "Whenever I conceive something clearly and distinctly, I am assured of its truth." For more information, see Anthony Kenny, *A new history of western philosophy*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 52.

^{48.} Enrique Chavez-Arviso, Op. cit. 86

^{49.} Renes Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations*. trans. L. J. Lafleur. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1960) 15.

^{50.} Duncan Pritchard, *What is This Thing called Knowledge?* 40

^{51.} Hans Reichenbach. *The Rise of Scientific Thinking...* 40

^{52.} See Paulin Hountondji's *Myth and reality*. Trans Henri Evans (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), 89

^{53.} The rationale for this doubting activity of Descartes seems justified in the following words of

David Dewhurst, "It would seem that if the project of self-knowledge is not to be an idle one, doubt, must be a possibility. And since so much skepticism has been exercised over our claim

to know the minds of others, one would have expected a similar skepticism concerning our claim to know our own minds.” See D.Dewhurst, *How can I know myself? Philosophy*. (Apr. Vol.59, No.228, 1984), 207. Cartesian skepticism must, however, be distinguished from that of the sophists in the sense that whereas the latter were skeptical only for the sake of being skeptical or vacillating, the former was aimed towards the attainment of greater certainty and assurance.

^{54.} See Murray Miles. “Descartes’ Method,” in *A Companion to Descartes*. eds. J. Broughton and J. Carriero.(Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2008), 155.

^{55.}T. Z Lavine, *From Socrates to Sartre: 230*

^{56.} *ibid.* 96

^{57.} *ibid.*

^{58.} *ibid.*

^{59.} *ibid.*

^{60.} *ibid.*

^{61.} This foreruns the phenomenologist’s dictum of “existence precedes essence.” Olatunji A. Oyeshile, *Reconciling the Self with the Other: An Existentialist Perspective*. (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 2006), 27.

^{62.} T. Z.Lavine, *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*. (London: Bantam Books, 1989), 95

^{63.} Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*. 18

^{64.} See Frederick Broadie, *An Approach to Descartes’ ‘Meditations.’* (Oxford: Alden &Mowbay Ltd, 1970), 1-2.

^{65.} Renes Descartes, “Meditations on First Philosophy,” in *The Philosophical Writings of Renes Descartes*. Vol. 1. eds. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff and D. Murdoch.(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 14. There is a strong suspicion that Descartes might, perhaps, have been influenced towards this postulation by St. Augustine. Frederick Copleston recounts the idea of St. Augustine to the effect that to doubt implies being conscious of doubting and having the certainty of the fact that he is doubting. As such, anyone who doubts the possibility of truth knows at least one truth - that his very capacity to doubt should convince him that there is such a thing as truth.” See Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Medieval Philosophy*. Vol.

2. (London: Continuum, 2003), 53

⁶⁶ Cartesian ideas are like universals in two respects. First, they are such that several individual entities fall under them. For example, each particular green falls under the idea 'green.' Representing thus is like exemplification or participation because the ideas and particular quantities stand in multiple relations. Secondly, they are like universals because they stand indifferently for all the quality instances.

⁶⁷ Omotade Adegbindin, *Ifa in Yoruba Thought System...*

⁶⁸ See Renes Descartes, *A Discourse on Method*. Trans. A.D Lindsay (London: Everyman's Library, J.M Dent and Sons Ltd, 1957), 94. See also Kolawole Owolabi, "Edmund Husserl's Rehabilitation of Cartesian Foundationalism: A Critical Analysis." *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*. (Vol. Xxii. No. 1. Jan. 1995), 13.

⁶⁹ See Renes Descartes, "Discourse on the Method of Right: Conducting the Reason and Seeking for Truth in the Sciences," in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*. Vol. 1. Trans. E. Haldane and G. Ross (New York: Dover Publications, 1637). See also Emmanuel Ola Akintona and Odozor Uche Samuel, "The "self" and "Others" in Cultural and Epistemological Pursuit." *Journal of Philosophy and Development*. (Vol. 16, No. 1, 2016), 14.

⁷⁰ Hilary Kornblith, "In defense of a Naturalized Epistemology," in *The Blackwell Guide to Epistemology*. eds. John Greco and Ernest Sosa. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1999), 159.

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**HARMONY: ESTABLISHING A POINT OF
CONVERGENCE FOR DIFFERING VIEWS IN
HUMAN INQUIRY**

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Abstract

To be human is to be philosophical and every human endeavour is teleological. Philosophy can be said to be the making sense out of one's own experience and leaving a legacy within a given milieu. Natural science is an effort at understanding and harvesting the hidden treasure in the universe. The history of philosophy sufficiently reveals a perennial state of consistent and recurrent dynamism. On the other hand, the progress of philosophy has also involved it in serious arbitrary fragmentations, such that there is a need to revisit its methodology and previously held opinions. This is the task of this paper. Harmony: an attempt to establish a point of convergence for differing views in human inquiry and above all in the philosophical circle. At the same time, it goes beyond specialised philosophical inquiry to advocate a methodological openness in the present-day and addresses the ever-increasing need of the synthesis of human investigation. Such effort will include a method that not only seek the formal way, but be conscious of the basic foundational nature of the human and the natural world which combines formality and ordinariness. The methodology will be phenomenological, historical, analytic. The goal is bridge phenomenology and metaphysics. The 21st century demonstrates in different areas of research the quest for a united and a rigorous method that leads to a better understanding of reality in its simple and complex dimensions. This is what this paper is addressing.

Key words: Bridge, Fragmentation, Harmony, Metaphysics, Phenomenology, Philosophy, Sagacity, Science.

General Introduction

The universe can be claimed to be orderly disordered. It encompasses innumerable rationalities and possibilities. Such can no doubt elicit confusion and spell dissonance. But that is only an *apparentia* that needs scrutiny that reveals a beauty that lies hidden in reality. It is a metaphysical issue. This is what this the aim of this paper – to demonstrate that reality is one and can be approached from different and reasonable perspectives. Harmony holds that the modern period brought a fragmentation that derailed philosophical inquiry. Hence, there is need for a methodology that is all-embracing and able to bridge the gap between phenomenology and metaphysics and allow the human mind to permeate reality in its natural and formal sense. The paper will adopt phenomenological, historical and analytic methodology. The different parts of the paper only corroborate the aim which has taken advantage of numerous researches that have been carried out to present a robust argument for a change. Our conclusion is that, by doing that, philosophy will, as it was in the beginning but with greater progress and development, continue to be the inextinguishable love of and search for wisdom.

An Overview of the Problem

The history of philosophy sufficiently reveals a perennial state of consistent and recurrent dynamism. It encompasses the claim of the Egyptian mystery experience¹ and in the west through the simple flux of Thales, the more complex eternal change of Heraclitus to the present-day post modernism that shows a mixture of high and low philosophical currents.² On the other hand, the progress of philosophy has also involved it in serious arbitrary fragmentations, such that there is a need to revisit its methodology and previously held opinions. The problem of the

divide between the perspectives in philosophical inquiry makes our effort an engagement inevitable.³ This is the task of *harmony*; an attempt to establish a point of convergence for differing views, in the philosophical circle. Harmony goes beyond specialised philosophical inquiry to advocate a methodological openness in the present-day and addresses the ever-increasing need of the synthesis of human investigation. Such effort will include a method that not only seeks the formal way, but conscious of the basic foundational nature of the human and the natural world which combines formality and ordinariness as there is no room for systematic disorder.⁴ The 21st century demonstrates, in different areas of research, the quest for a united and a rigorous method that leads to a better understanding of reality in its simple and complex dimensions. This is what this paper is addressing.

The field of epistemology has known much more discussions than all the other fields of philosophy that one can only compare its state to the earlier danger posed by the sophists that Plato and Aristotle dedicated most of their resources and energy to combating, leaving a legacy to history. A further reason why the present epoch needs an attempt like *harmony* is to respond to the desperate longing for a globalization in human effort and its attendant consequences from the philosophical legacy as it was in Husserl's time.⁵ This means a search for a culture of solidarity in the face of the numerous rationalities that exacerbate intellectual crisis. Attempt at the solution involves seeking a common ground which many refer to as common sense and that is philosophy.

Therefore, I would suggest that ordinarily it would be quite spurious to attempt to describe the 'actual' state of philosophy or to claim that 'philosophy' must be about this or that issue ... At the same time, I am convinced that there are certain fundamental issues that inevitably arise whenever human beings turn their attention to what we call philosophy.⁶

An attempt that takes investigation through the order of things:

moving from the concrete to its logic and then to the underlying principle of all that can be considered. The choice of methodology here is phenomenological as a background to metaphysical inquiry.

Questioning leads to discoveries both speculative disciplines and in the practical sciences. Philosophy being the one discipline that incorporates everything within its scope of investigations has the task of casting wider its prowess in attending to the issues that make novelty in the present moment. Its focus is not just on the present reality. It also has to look back into history⁷ and look forward into the future in its original role of the *mother* of all disciplines. It is therefore, the problem of the arbitrary fragmentation and disintegration in philosophical inquiry that this paper is dedicated to resolving. This, to a comfortable degree, is the crisis of western intellectual sterility, which is as a result of the divorce between the researcher and the material of inquiry. The effort is to provide an alternative to the hitherto mechanistic and materialistic approach to a synthetic and inclusive method. It does so by bridging the gap between what is apparent and its hidden background. Harnessing the harmony between phenomenology and metaphysics. *Harmony* advocates an integrated approach to the investigation of reality. "We face a great challenge at the end of this millennium to move from phenomenon to *foundation*, a step as necessary as it is urgent."⁸ Such challenge that faces the twenty-first century demands a broader based research method and calls for a systematic and historical approach beyond naturalism and psychologism.⁹

This paper welcomes and accepts as important the effort of Descartes at giving priority to the human person particularly as a rational being, it distances itself from Descartes' absolutizing the human person and consequently pure reason. Our view is in agreement with the Heideggerian understanding of the human person, *Dasein* - as the most appropriate place to start the study and understanding of being, but it is wary of the inconsistency of its hopelessness as a result of absolutising the human person. The

novelty of the project is the seeking of *harmony* in these seemingly discordant possibilities as groundwork of metaphysical inquiry. Metaphysics here should be understood more as the Aristotelian *philosophia prima*. “It seems to me that the beginning of a phenomenological theory of essences, as it is incorporated in the works of Husserl and his school, for the first time points the way to an understanding, a just appraisal, and a fruitful elaboration of the life work of Plato and the metaphysics of Aristotle.”¹⁰ In the same way it has to do with the experience of reality; which is both particular and at the same time universal.¹¹

Harmony and Philosophy

The questions may be asked: why is the idea of *harmony* crucial in phenomenological philosophy and its method of philosophizing? Secondly, why is *harmony* important for philosophical investigation in the 21st century? Philosophy and its efforts at investigations thrive in posing questions and attempting to resolve the ambiguity in human effort at knowing and living. Consequently, the question of the importance of *harmony* in phenomenology and in philosophy in general can be situated within this context of inquiry. It is the whole gamut of philosophy from the onset. But the application of *harmony* has not been the same all through history. Usage has spanned from arts to music, from astrology to cosmology and its implications discernible in history. Archimedes sought a fulcrum in science and Descartes implemented it in philosophy; therefore, it is one truth, but multi-dimensional.¹² One needs only to peruse the works of thinkers like Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz and Husserl among many others, to understand how it is laid out.¹³

Philosophy as a discipline is a result of human perplexity about unity and order in the seeming chaos or disorder and constant change observable by man – starting from himself to his immediate and remote environment. One only needs to call to

mind the Kantian wondering about the inner order of the human person and the physical world represented by what he designated as the moral law within and the starry sky above.¹⁴ Hence it holds without doubt that philosophy and in fact *harmony* ought to address the issue of order and finality in a systematic way.

Harmony, Philosophy and Science

The general opinion of the majority of philosophers from the time of Descartes is that philosophy should follow the pattern of the natural and empirical sciences. If philosophy does not operate in the way and manner of the empirical sciences, it could not be regarded as a true discipline of the honour it enjoys throughout till the Cartesian revolution, where objectivity gave way to subjectivity and objective ontology to pragmatic subjectivism. The foundation laid by Descartes' revolution resonates in Nietzsche's superman. According to W. V. O.,

Carnap, Lewis, and others take a pragmatic stand on the question of choosing between language forms, scientific frameworks; but their pragmatism leaves off at the imagined boundary between the analytic and the synthetic. In repudiating such a boundary, I espouse a more thorough pragmatism. Each man is given a scientific heritage plus a continuing barrage of sensory stimulation; and the considerations which guide him in warping his scientific heritage to fit his continuing sensory promptings are, where rational, pragmatic.¹⁵

The predicament of philosophy can be perceived in the above citation. The issue is no longer whether philosophy should be different from other sciences, but it is how deeply we can attain absolute relativism and pragmatism.

This emergence of the modern mind, rooted in the rebellion against the medieval Church and the ancient authorities, and yet dependent upon and developing from both these matrices, took the three distinct and dialectically related forms of the renaissance, the reformation, and the scientific revolution.¹⁶

The search for a way out of the quagmire of the arbitrary historical fragmentation of philosophy has led to many efforts. Philosophy can reflect the fragment nature of the human ability to acquire knowledge; but when it leads to fragmentation of knowledge it becomes inimical to its well-being and consequently to the point that “we have a philosophical literature growing beyond all bounds and almost without coherence.”¹⁷ This trend is not acceptable for a serious philosophical activity and there is an urgent need to act.¹⁸

Husserl sought a foundation in a broad-based experiential methodology to the transcendental ego. “The decline and confused fragmentation of philosophy since the middle of the nineteenth century demand a new beginning and new Cartesian meditations”¹⁹ For him philosophy is phenomenology and phenomenology is “an ‘a priori’ ‘eidetic’ science that makes possible a treatment [centered] on essences and the science of essences and assures the legitimacy of essential knowledge, as compared to naturalism and psychologism.”²⁰ Put in a different way, it is “an attempt to reach reality in a way that neither subsumes it within general concepts nor reduces it to elements.”²¹ This is an element that human investigation requires today – a collaboration between all possible areas of capability and an openness to a broad based approach which provides for all and becomes the Science being.

Harmony and the Beginning of Philosophy

The beginning of philosophical reflection some have claimed is clearer in documented history than the act itself. However, available facts reveal a problematic that forms part of philosophical dialectical activities. "The birthplace of philosophy was the seaport town of Miletus, located across the Aegean Sea from Athens, on the western shores of Ionia in Asia Minor, and for this reason the first philosophers are called either Milesian or Ionians."²² Thus, Western philosophy as specific discipline is said to originate from Greece.²³ There have also been claims about an African origin of philosophy in the Ancient Egyptian city of Alexandria.²⁴ One can further argue that even though the question of African origin of the Greek philosophy is not emphasised as a basis for intellectual disagreement, examples abound in western studies that indicate the perennial nature of philosophy as an act of man. Husserl has also acknowledged this in his earlier inquiry. "Here we encounter an obvious objection: philosophy, the science of the Greek, is not something peculiar to them which came into the world for the first time with them. After all, they themselves tell of the wise Egyptians, Babylonians, etc., and did in fact learn much from them."²⁵ It suffices nevertheless, for research purposes to leave the focus on Greece, for reasons of documentation and accessibility. It is however sufficient to point out the possibility of alternative arguments to the generally popular position held. Most, if not all of the protagonists in the earliest stage of history, did not necessarily leave behind any written works. Thus, philosophy in this era is often described as sagacity. Sages existed all over the world even before the idea of modern letters that constitute medium of communication and literal documentation as they exist today.²⁶ It is in the context of this reality that we advocate the intellectual integrity that distances itself from all forms of biases and seek the one point that binds the ecosystem.

Harmony and Philosophy as Sagacity in the West

Philosophical sagacity is a position that tends to see philosophy not only in the written form, but every proclivity for the knowledge of the ultimate. Thales one of the earliest philosophers that left nothing of a written document is a very good example. Socrates is popularly known as inventing one of the best methods of philosophical activities even today (the Socratic Dialogue) and he did not leave any written work. It could very well be expressed in the words of Stumpf,²⁷ that the remarkable contribution of these personalities is such a crucial and integral wealth that sagacity cannot be undermined in any philosophical activity.

Sage philosophy consists of the expressed thoughts of the wise men and women in any given community and is a way of thinking and explaining the world that fluctuates between popular wisdom (well-known communal maxims, aphorisms and general common sense truths) and didactic wisdom (an expounded wisdom and a rational thought of some given individuals within a community.²⁸

Philosophy in the most inclusive sense is an effort at making intelligible the totality of the human experience that can be shrouded many times in great complexities. Philosophy therefore, can be said to be the mirroring of man in a communicable way. "Philosophy, of course, is an intriguing and life-long study. It cannot be reduced to a finite number of propositions or concepts, nor can it be circumscribed by any philosophical system."²⁹

Harmony as a Project

From the time man began to reflect, the focus has been seeking unity in the midst of the chaos in the universe. In a way it can rightly be argued that philosophy in its very professional sense

about studying the organisation of the universe and consequent implications. This organisation is not just in its equilibrium but the puzzle of the harmony of and within the seeming conflicts visible in the apparent reality. What is this harmony? Explicating the meaning of harmony, especially within the anarchy³⁰ of views that characterize philosophy today, is the imminent task of this paper.

In a simple way, this is the task of this paper. option of resolution, the danger cannot be imminent and the need critical.

The pre-Socratic thinkers were concerned with whether reality was reducible to a single underlying substance, and, if so, what it was? In their different perspectives, they sought solution to the enigma of what they see as the secret of existence and its sustenance.³¹ Their observations of a seemingly superficial orderliness even in the apparent disorder, instigated a deeper and closer inquiry into how these things are in-themselves. The onus is on researchers to harness the riches of the human creative capacity to organise this newness in research method that the present century and beyond offers to humanity in any fields of study whatsoever. Therefore, *harmony* proposes both a philosophical disposition and an assiduous perseverance in every inquiry. As a philosophical inquiry *harmony* is dynamic and complex just as its object philosophy is. *Harmony* demonstrating that there is a basic dynamism, a basic principle of investigation the human mind adopts in the history of known researches. It is the effort to make intelligible the inherent order in nature and its accessibility to the human capacity.

Harmony is not uniquely an anthropological research, but it recognizes the importance of anthropology in every human investigation. This has been the disposition in the earliest human search for meaning and understanding of the way things are and their effect(s) on the development and concrete application of knowledge in the particular events of everyday life. *Harmony* therefore sees the broader view of the ancient with less particular

focus on the singularity of the human person and the almost absolute subjective perspective of the wake of the modern time as a positive development. But the excesses of modern polarity can be avoided and the wealth of human history be properly managed during this century and beyond.³²

This research is pertinent to the present moment because of the need for a philosophical method that makes it possible to harness the possibilities that the above analysis represent. Philosophers, and even scientist as well, have in their different ways justified the position that *harmony* advocates. Making it formal in an inquiry is only long overdue. “There is unity in the world, but it is a unity formed by the combination of opposites.”³³ This only brings to mind the Hegelian dialectics of the absolute, its dynamics in the parts and its synthesis in the one at the end of its process. “All things come out of the one, and the one out of all things; but the many has less reality than the one, which is God.”³⁴ But there has been a deviation from the initial research method that considered the link among things and such deviation led to negative fragmentation that has resulted in extreme particular schools advocating positions that are relativistic.

The need for a change and its prospects

The obvious truth of the investigation at this point is that the method of research and disciplinary drive of all fields of human inquiry need a change. The previous approaches have been characterised in many cases by one form of bias or another – logicism, theologism, scepticism among others.³⁵ A change in disposition will come and endure with the restatement of the whole question of philosophy.³⁶ Man is at the centre of all inquiry and a wholistic appreciation of his complexity will make investigation more rigorous, realistic and fruitful.

In this case, one can already point to some initiatives of insight into issues of research. The initiative of bringing to bare the importance of harmony between faith³⁷ and reason in

research will lead to a breakthrough in the present century and beyond. This is incumbent because any attempt to sever faith from reason or vice versa will lead to an incurable philosophical schizophrenia.³⁸ Such research programmes as the establishment of the *Science, Theology and the Ontological Quest (STOQ)* at the Vatican in the year 2000 and the first international conference held at the Lateran University in the year 2002³⁹ are positive efforts that one can argue go a long way to promote harmony between disciplines and will once again afford philosophy the opportunity of playing the disinterested role in human inquiry and fills the emptiness that drives the human person crazy.⁴⁰ The consequent imbalance of the problems of arbitrary fragmentation of philosophy, particularly in the modern period has been part of the focus of this inevitable investigation. There are two things to indicate about this: firstly, there is the need always to make efforts to reach the things-in-themselves. Secondly, it is important to put into consideration all available options and possibilities with all the rigour this requires about the individual things. Once these metaphysical dynamics that lie at the background of every endeavour is resolved, the antinomies of being will be understood within the framework of unity and multiplicity. This further emphasises an earlier point made here that *harmony* differs from the position of Maritain⁴¹ and suggests a third option in reconciliation.

Recent efforts like that of Cocchiarella,⁴² shows that the task of philosophy is realised as the disinterested discipline that investigates every possible experience of the human person. It is the lack of openness and willingness to encounter reality as it presents itself that has rendered philosophy and the work of philosophers over the centuries a kind of roulette wheel that is limited to a particular game circle buries the protagonists.⁴³

Remarks on the need for change

If *harmony* cherishes anything in speculative philosophy, it is recognising the importance of the various powers that make the human reality unique and striving to put them all to work in their most critical details however cumbersome it might be. The rigour that distinguishes philosophy is in the willingness of the philosopher to thoroughly examine facts and disinterestedly analyse them. The advantage of the phenomenological method in this regard singles it out as a veritable philosophical attitude that makes human inquiry integral and rigorous.⁴⁴ The only obligation that can bring that to fruition in man is seeking to give voice to his being in its most ontological sense. It is no doubt that the statements attributed to Socrates still remain valid in the present time: *what is man?* and after a series of reflections and self-dialogue then the dictum – *man know thyself*. Man needs to know himself because for Socrates again, *an unexamined life is not worth living*. This is why philosophy is inherent to man.

The important notice that is necessary to give at this point is that under the present circumstances of the injurious fragmentation that philosophy has known, such a task as *harmony* will at best be a suspect. However, there are similar efforts one can refer to. Four proposals by Gilson in the form of norms will be very appropriate to close this argument. It is his view that “the first law to be inferred from philosophical experience is: *Philosophy always buries its undertakers*.”⁴⁵ This is true throughout history and also proved extensively by Gilson. The second is that “*by his very nature, man is a metaphysical animal*.”⁴⁶ This is a common parlance in the philosophical discipline and has such implications for all other areas of human investigations as well. The third point is that: “*metaphysics is the knowledge gathered by a natural transcendent reason in its search for the first principles, or first causes, of what is given in sensible experience*.”⁴⁷ This has a logical consequence, content implication and a methodological proviso. Apart from the fact that the statement flows from the

previous two, it also makes the work of phenomenological studies a necessity for metaphysical investigations, a veritable truth of philosophy. The fourth point is that: “*as metaphysics aims at transcending all particular knowledge, no particular science is competent either to solve metaphysical problems, or to judge their metaphysical solutions.*”⁴⁸ The idea of the last proposal already set a programme for philosophical engagements. If researchers take seriously the fact that no particular science is capable of solving metaphysical problems no matter how proficient it may be, a lot of progress would have been attained in the long run. In the same way, metaphysical solutions cannot be subjected in an absolute manner to the whims of the particular sciences. Nevertheless, metaphysics cannot be an absolute and self-sufficient science as it stands in need of the help of the particular sciences. Without the help of the particular sciences, metaphysics can only at best be a product of mental conjecture that cannot stand the test of philosophical scrutiny.

Efforts in physical sciences are coming to terms in recent times with the wonders of the universe and of the human person in particular. Such awareness elicits caution about the hitherto omnipotent posture of science. A classical study of the human brain continues to make the dominant scientific research recognise its limitations. The truth of the complexity of the human system assayed by most scientists has proved to be almost invincible. A recent report by a popular news Magazine testifies to this position. In the February 12th, 2007 issue of Time Magazine, a report of further research on the working of the human brain is published. The following is a portion from that investigation:

Trying to map the brain has always been cartography for fools. Most of the other parts of the body reveal their workings with little more than a glance. The heart is self-evidently a pump; the lungs are clearly bellows. But the brain, which does more than any organ, reveals

least of all ... Finally and most elusively, we are learning something about consciousness itself-the ghost in the neural machine that gives you the sense of being in the moment, peering out at the world from the control room behind your eyes. If we can identify that cognitive kernel, can we one day endow a machine with it? But isolating a thing, do we in some way annihilate it too?⁴⁹

The meaning of this and many other results of investigations is that so much has already been done and a lot is yet to be done. The increasing diversity of specific areas of inquiry is very important. At the same time the danger is isolation and the claim to absolute dominance. Such mutual exclusion and claim to supremacy have not helped man in understanding reality. To solve the puzzle of search for the knowledge of reality to a reasonable extent, *harmony*, as discussed in this paper, is not only necessary but crucial and timely.

Conclusion

Philosophy has to be a synchronic and diachronic activity of human investigation. Philosophy cannot continue to be studied isolated both in time and space. Some believe that philosophers cannot have a unity of study in their investigative efforts. Such a position is at best a mistake. The contrary is the truth of what philosophical efforts should be. There are basic questions that must be asked by all and solutions proffered. Some of the questions are: about the existence of things, questions about the order that is present and can be perceived in both the physical world and within the human and of course questions about causality and finality. This becomes pertinent because in the first place the object of every research is one. On the other hand, lack of mutual cooperation will only complicate the resolution of the puzzle of reality.

The present moment can no longer continue with the arbitrary fragmentation of philosophical researches. Philosophy has to be communitarian but not homogenous.⁵⁰ The freedom of the human mind should be respected, and modesty that leads to thorough and dedicated research cannot be overemphasised. There is so much to incorporate from the phenomenological method as there is so much to be improved. Its dedication to rigour in paying attention to individual persons, events and ideas will help a great deal. This does not mean responding successfully to all the questions that bother the human imagination, but it allows an openness that gives emphasis to less prejudicial and parochial thinking. Its exploration into metaphysical grounds particularly in the efforts of Edith Stein and more recent authors needs more impetus. *Harmony* is proposing further that philosophical experience should be part of a study to foster the unity in response to the new era of globalisation. Particular investigations and results in the epistemological and metaphysical fields are only going to be on a continuous increase. But the question is: will this effort always retain the quality of human knowledge? It is to such an extent that the proposal of harmony is very pertinent as a way of carrying along all the essential residual deposit of human endeavours. This is not in a naïve mutual mediocrity, but rigorous efforts in search of the ONE⁵¹: the truth of every human longing. By doing that, philosophy will, as it was in the beginning but with greater progress and development, continue to be the inextinguishable love of and search for wisdom.

Endnotes

¹Cf. Innocent C. ONYEWUENYI, *The African Origin of the Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism*, University of Nigeria Press, Nsukka-Nigeria, 1993-1994.

²Cf. Richard TARNAS, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, Random House Publishing group, New York, 1991, XIII/XIV.

“The history of western culture has long seemed to possess the dynamics, scope, and beauty of a great epic: ancient and classical Greece, the Hellenistic era and imperial Rome, and Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment and Romanticism and onward to our own compelling time. Sweep and grandeur, dramatic conflicts and astonishing resolutions have marked the Western mind’s sustained attempt to comprehend the nature of reality – from Thales and Pythagoras to Plato and Aristotle, from Clement and Boethius to Aquinas and Ockham, from Exodus and Ptolemy to Copernicus and Newton, from Bacon and Descartes to Kant and Hegel, and from all these to Darwin, Einstein, Freud, and beyond.” Tarnas is a graduate of Harvard University. He is a professor of Philosophy and Psychology.

³Cf. Jacques MARITAIN, *Distinguish to Unite or The Degrees of knowledge*, trans Gerald PHELAN, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1995, 107. “Let us make this point once more: realism and idealism are not transcended. There is no higher position that goes beyond and reconciles them. A choice must be made between the two, as between the true and false. Every realism that comes to terms with Descartes and Kant shall see one day that it belies its name.”

⁴Cf. Antonio LIVI, *Metafisica e senso comune*. Sullo statuto epistemologico della filosofia prima, Casa Editrice Leonardo da Vinci, Roma, 2007, 8. If such basic presupposition is taken seriously the work of philosophers even though will not be homogenous (and should not be), will to a very great extent show a better level of reasonability and cohesion.

⁵Edmund HUSSERL, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, David CARR, trans., Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1970, 12.

⁶Cf. Philip LARREY, *Thinking Logically*, Pontifical Lateran University Press Rome, 2007, VIII/IX

⁷Cf. Etienne GILSON, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Charles Scribner’s Sons & Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1937-1992, xiii. “The history of philosophy is much more part of

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philosophy itself than the history of science is part of science, for it is not impossible to become a competent scientist without knowing much about the history of science, but no man can carry very far his own philosophical reflections unless he first studies the history of philosophy.”

⁸John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, 1998, no. 83.

⁹Cf. Etienne GILSON, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Charles Scribner's Sons & Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1937-¹⁰

¹⁰Edith STEIN, *Finite and Eternal Being*, Kurt REINHARDT, trans., Institute of Carmelite Studies, Washington, D.C., 2002, 561.

¹¹Cf. Angela ALES BELLO, 83 *Husserl. Sul problema di Dio, Edizioni Studium-Roma*, 1985, 83.

¹²Samuel E. STUMPF, *Socrates to Sartre- A History of philosophy*, 229.

¹³The Pre-Socratics, with particular reference to the Pythagoras have sought the harmony of all things through Mathematics and Music. Geometry and Astrology have been the products of such inquiry. Plato followed the Mathematic harmony and its basis found in the one and only ideal world of reality that harmonises everything. Aristotle agrees with the ideals but the union between these ideals and the concrete makes the difference and that is where the issue of harmony becomes a rigour. Combining the analysis of the concrete which Husserl will later see as the given or the life-world, with the ideals which transcend them. These are the basic ideas that run through history and form the crust of the investigation of this project. It is on the long run the opinion of the research that harmony is not just the particular connotations given in the analysis of these thinkers. Rather, it is an attempt to harness the legacy of history and propose a philosophical dialectics as a remedy for the already troubled water of philosophical activities.

¹⁴Kant

¹⁵Willard V. O. QUINE, *From a Logical Point of View*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, New York, 2003, 46.

¹⁶Richard TARNAS, *The Passion of the Western Mind ...*, cit., 107

282.

¹⁷Edmund HUSSERL, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion CAIRNS, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1999, 5. Later he expands saying: “The above citation was later modified to read: we have an indeed literary, but not seriously scientific, philosophical literature – growing beyond all bounds and without coherence.”

¹⁸Cf. Ivi, 4. “The splintering of present-day philosophy, with its perplexed activity, sets us thinking. When we attempt to view western philosophy as a unitary science, its decline since the middle of the nineteenth century is unmistakable. The comparative unity it has in previous ages, in its aims, its problems and methods, has been lost.”

¹⁹Edmund HUSSERL, *The Paris lectures ..., cit.*, 46.

²⁰*Ibidem*.

²¹Anna-Teresa TYMIENIECKA, “Phenomenology as the Inspirational Force of our Times”, in *Phenomenology World Wide – A Guide for Research and Study*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 2002, 1.

²²Samuel E. STUMPF, *Socrates to Sartre- A History of philosophy ..., cit.*, 3-4.

²³James A. GOULD, Robert J. MULVANEY, (eds.), *Classic Philosophical ..., cit.*, 1.

²⁴Cf. Innocent C. ONYEWUENYI, *The African Origin of the Greek Philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism*, University of Nigeria Press, Nsukka-Nigeria, 1993-1994. Onyewuenyi in this book argues with references and citations as to how philosophy was already been done in Egypt before the advent of the Greek philosophers. The view of Tarnas may seem repetitive in the following citation, but it is deliberately brought for the sake of corroborating the argument. See also: George Wilhelm Friedrich HEGEL, *The Philosophy of History*, J. SIBREE, trans., Revised edition by P. F. Collier & Son, New York, 1900, 198-219. Richard TARNAS, *The Passion of the Western Mind ..., cit.*, 23. “Originally from the Ionian island of Samos, Pythagoras
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probably traveled and studied in Egypt and Mesopotamian before migrating westward to the Greek colony of Croton in Southern Italy.”

²⁵Edmund HUSSERL, *The Crisis ... cit.*, 279.

²⁶Wallis Budge, trans. *The Book of the Dead: The Hieroglyphic Transcript of the Papyrus of ANI*, Bell Publishing Company, New York, (sine datum), A book of lost but living tradition in its most original form.

²⁷Cf. Samuel E. STUMPF, (et. al.), *Socrates to Sartre- A History of philosophy ... , cit.*, 7, 35. “Writing about Thales Stumpf puts it very simply- He left no writings and about Socrates- Socrates wrote nothing.”

²⁸Henry O. ORUKA (ed.), *Sage Philosophy Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*, Nairobi, 1991, 33.

²⁹William A. WALLACE, *The Elements of Philosophy ... , cit.*, xii.

³⁰Fayerabend.

³¹In the case of the Pythagoreans harmony pervades all human discipline and in fact it is the same principle that is responsible for the dynamism of the human interior life as in music. Samuel E. STUMPF, James FIESER, *Philosophy ...*, 12-14, 22-23, 243. “Harmony is the form that the limiting structure of numerical ratio imposes upon unlimited possibilities for sounds possessed by the strings of a musical instrument. In medicine the Pythagoreans saw the same principle at work. Health is the harmony or balance or proper ratio of certain opposites, such as hot and cold, wet and dry, and the volumetric balance of various specific elements later known as biochemicals.” Empedocles agreeing with Parmenides sees a consistency in the apparent discord that is observable. “He thereby discovered a consistent way of saying that there is change and at the same time affirming that reality is fundamentally changeless ... He writes that ‘from what in no wise exists, it is impossible for anything to come into being; and for being to perish completely is incapable of [fulfilment] and unthinkable;

for it will always be there, wherever anyone may place it on any occasion'." In the view of Leibniz, harmony is tied to purpose and it unites all realities in one singular order. He articulates this in what he refers to as *Monad* in Greek *Monas* which signifies unity. "These windowless monads, each following its own purpose, form a unity of the ordered universe." With these indications in mind one sees a clear cut case of philosophical undertone right from the beginning of the application of the term harmony. Nevertheless, further analysis will be made in due course.

³²Ramon L. LUCAS, *Man Incarnate Spirit: A Philosophy of Man Compendium*, Nikola DERPICH, et.al., Circle Press, Turin, 2005, 3. "The twentieth century is without doubt one of the epochs in which there has been the most talk about man and human rights. Yet it is one of the periods which have experienced the deepest anguish, the systematic violation of the rights, and the loss of what it means to be human."

³³Bertrand RUSSELL, *History of Western Philosophy*, Routledge, London, Edition 2000, 59.

³⁴Ibidem.

³⁵Cf. Etienne GILSON, *The Unity ...*, *cit.*, The entire book is dedicated to the problems and possible solutions regarding the history of philosophy.

³⁶Ivi, xiii-xiv.

³⁷Faith here not just mean a religious experience but encompasses it, but that disposition of openness to the all-dimensional capacity of the human reality.

³⁸Cf. The Pontiff's discussion during the Angelus of 28-01-2007, on *Faith and Reason in Dialogue*, published in the *L'Osservatore Romano*, January 31, 2007, in reference to the contributions of Thomas Aquinas, Benedict XVI gave a discussion on the relationship between faith and reason and reiterated that any attempt to separate both faith and reason will lead to schizophrenia. "At the same time, however, it is necessary to admit that the tendency to consider true only what can be experienced

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constitutes a limitation of human reason and produces a terrible schizophrenia now acclaimed, which has led to the coexistence of rationalism and materialism, hyper-technology and unbridled instinct.”

³⁹Cf. In this study published by the organization: *Science, Theology and the Ontological Quest*, in <http://www.stoqnet.org/mission.html>, accessed through the website of the Pontifical Lateran University, 10/06/2007. “The «birth date» of the Project can be identified with the celebration of the Meeting for the Jubilee of the Scientists. In fact, on May 25th 2000, in the Domus Sanctae Marthae within the Vatican Walls, the representatives of the main worldwide Institutions engaged in the dialogue between Science and Religion met, after their participation at the Jubilee Meeting. Afterward, the International Conference “*Foundations and the Ontological Quest. Prospects for the New Millennium*”, was held at the Pontifical Lateran University on January 7-10, 2002. It was organized by the IRAFS - International Research Area on Foundations of the Sciences of the Philosophy Faculty at the Pontifical Lateran University [www.pul.it/irafs/irafs.htm] -, in collaboration with the UIP - Université Interdisciplinaire de Paris (France) -, under the patronage of the PCC - Pontifical Council for Culture -, with the support of the JTF, the John Templeton Foundation.” See also activities reported on the 8th of May by *Zenit News agency*. in <http://zenit.org/index.php?l=english>, 12/05/2007.

⁴⁰Gerardus van der LEEUW, *Fenomenologia della religione*, traduzione di Virginia VACCA, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 1975-2002, 7-31; 464-513. Van der Leeuw shows how the necessity of the religious desire of man is a part of his existence despite of his flight from the idea by those who refuse to realise their religious endowment as human beings. The inability to realise to its fulness the dream of conquering nature and the desire to seek refuge in a higher force becomes a clear sign of the search of man for the infinite. It is here the work of philosophers and other disciplines become a necessity. Such interaction can conveniently be carried

out without diminishing the credibility of any discipline.

⁴¹Cf. Jacques MARITAIN, *The degree of ...*, Footnote no. 3 The fact is that there may be problems with the positions of Descartes and Kant as indicated by Maritain and that is true, but it does not stop the reconciliation of idealism and realism. The need of reconciliation of previous positions is more urgent now than ever before. New discoveries in the sciences have continued to prove that arbitrary fragmentations cannot be of good service to any meaningful human progress.

⁴²Nino B. COCCHIARELLA, *Conceptual Realism as a Formal Ontology ...*, cit., As has been seen above Cocchiarella is one of those who sees philosophy as an effort of reconciling and reconstructing the past and reaching a richer result, which naturally gets inquiry nearer the truth of being. One talks of approximation of the knowledge of being as it is impossible to comprehend being in its fulness. One can also refer to (<http://www.templetonprize.org/bios.html>, accessed 24-05-2008) efforts made by a modern thinker like Michal Heller who is a scientist, a philosopher and a theologian. He advocates a new way and did not hesitate to indicate the direction researches can move in our day. Michal Heller is the recent winner of the Templeton 2008 prize for his outstanding research in holistic inquiry. A glimpse of his view can be expressed in the following: “*Various processes in the universe can be displayed as a succession of states in such a way that the preceding state is a cause of the succeeding one... (and) there is always a dynamical law prescribing how one state should generate another state. But dynamical laws are expressed in the form of mathematical equations, and if we ask about the cause of the universe we should ask about a cause of mathematical laws. By doing so we are back in the Great Blueprint of God’s thinking the universe, the question on ultimate causality...: “Why is there something rather than nothing?” When asking this question, we are not asking about a cause like all other causes. We are asking about the root of all possible causes.*”

⁴³Cf. Etienne GILSON, *The Unity ...*, cit., 246.

⁴⁴Cf. Robert SOKOLOWSKI, *Introduction, cit.*, 198.

“Phenomenology understands philosophy very differently. It believes that philosophical intelligence ought to be left intact, that it has its own excellence and truth, and that philosophy contemplates the prephilosophical without replacing it. Thus, while phenomenology originates within modern philosophy, it also takes a distance from it.”

⁴⁵Etienne GILSON, *The Unity ...*, *cit.*, 246.

⁴⁶Ivi, 248.

⁴⁷Ibidem.

⁴⁸Ivi, 249.

⁴⁹Jeffrey KLUGER, *The New Map of the Brian*, in *Time Magazine*, February 12th, 2007, 37.

⁵⁰Cf. Philip LARREY, *Thinking op. cit.*, viii. “The fragmentation of what passes today as Philosophy (usually described as that activity carried out by professional philosophers, however vague that may be) is overwhelming even for well-trained philosophers. I would suggest that it is practically impossible for any one person to adequately encompass and track contemporary development in philosophy as a whole.”

⁵¹Cf. Edith STEIN, *Finite ...*, *cit.*, 11. “We shall earnestly strive to join our thinking to that of the ancient masters, and yet not only to these but also to those others who in our time have in their own manner and method resumed the identical inquiry. This latter procedure appears fully justified in view of the fact that these modern thinkers have out of an inner necessity— not under the influence of any traditional intellectual ties—penetrated anew to the depths of the problem of being.” See also 16-17.

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**“FORMATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD: URGENT NEED
FOR ONGOING FORMATION FOR FORMATORS”**

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Abstract

There has rightly been so much emphasis on formation to the priesthood. Whenever a priest performs his pastoral duties properly, the formators in the seminary are applauded. But when a priest fails in his pastoral ministry, formators in the seminary are queried for why they did not identify the flaw in the process of formation. Formators of candidates to the priesthood are very instrumental to healthiness of the faith of the people. How is it possible that a seminarian who was always faithful to the Church’s teaching in the seminary suddenly becomes a priest who is almost like a “soothsayer” in the name of prophecy? How is it possible that this priest no longer sees the need to observe the liturgical rubrics? From *‘alter Christus’* to an ecclesiastical entertainer. How is it possible that the priest trained to form others in the faith is almost becoming an instrument of “deformation” of the faith of others? There is a strong connection between the formation received and the life lived in the priesthood. The capacity of formators to accompany the candidates in the seminary in formation to develop a healthy personality and spirituality goes a long way to impact the quality of the life of the priest in ministry.

Our research will attempt to examine the formation of those responsible for the formation of these candidates. If the formators must discern and help in the conscience formation of the candidates to the priesthood, the formators also must be engaged in on-going formation to keep abreast with the new

challenges facing priests in pastoral ministry. What are some of the areas of on-going formation that may be helpful to formators to enhance their efficiency? This research will draw insights from magisterial documents and psychological findings on the need to form the formators. Failure to form the formators leads to deformation of the candidates for the priesthood.

Key words: Formation, Formator and Priesthood

1. Introduction

Every profession requires on-going formation in order to acquire knowledge and expertise that will make the persons more efficient in their various disciplines. It is even more important in the disciplines that have to do with human formation. The vocation to the Sacred Priesthood in the Catholic Church requires lengthen years of human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral formation. In all these areas of formation, the human formation is considered the bedrock upon which all other aspects of formations are to be built upon.

The Church holds that she has the exclusive right and duty to form those who are designated for the sacred ministries.¹ Every diocese is to have a Major Seminary and where it is not possible an inter-diocesan seminary is to be established. The establishment of inter-diocesan seminary requires the approval of the Episcopal Conference and the approval of the Holy See.² Since the formation of priests is intrinsically connected to the proclamation of the Gospel of the Lord, the Church claims the innate right to establish program for the formation of the candidates for the priesthood. Each nation is expected to establish its own program of formation but it must follow the template provided in the *RATIO FUNDAMENTALIS* of the Holy See.³

Anyone involved in the formation of candidates to the priesthood must be familiar with all four areas of formation. The person must have the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to assist the candidates to develop the necessary virtues and to drop the unhealthy vices incompatible with the ministerial

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priesthood.⁴ The changes in the method of the proclamation of the Gospel, the introduction of revised rituals for the sacraments and sacramentals, the evolution of the pastoral needs of the people of God, and the contemporary doctrinal challenges are just some of the few areas that require ongoing formation for the formators. Formators who are not familiar with the sociological changes and the “new mindsets” of the people of God towards reception of the proclamation of the Gospel will not be very effective in the art of formation.

2. Objective Of The Paper

This paper will therefore, attempt to show that it is as important to train the formators as much as it is important to train the candidates for the sacred priesthood. The possible areas of on-going formation of formators will be examined. The entire presupposition of this research is anchored on the fact that there is no fullness of knowledge in any human creature. Growth in knowledge is continuous until death. The Gospel of Luke 2.52 says Jesus grew in wisdom and stature. If Christ who is divine wisdom can because of his human nature be subjected to growth in wisdom, all those who are incorporated into Christ by baptism also have the obligation to seek ways to grow in wisdom and knowledge. For those who train candidates for the sacred priesthood, the ways to grow in wisdom and knowledge is through formation of the formator which is like training the trainer. Let us now briefly examine some possible obstacles to on-going formation of formators.

3. Forming The Formator

It is important to always keep in mind that every human being requires on-going formation. This on-going formation comes in two ways. First, it comes through practical knowledge acquired from years of initial formation and experience. The second way is through a formal or an organised program for the formator. The two should normally co-exist. The law established that all Christ faithful do have the obligation to ensure that the

message of salvation is spread to every part of the world.⁵ The direct implication of this is the fact that the Church must provide the means and the opportunity for the message of salvation to reach the entire world. Priests do have important functions in the fulfilment of this obligation of Christ entrusted to the Church. This is the context in which we must understand the great importance of the process of forming those who provide the leadership in the field of evangelization. Those responsible for the formation of priests take up very important a task that is at the heart of the mission of the Church. Making provision for the on-going formation of seminary formators should therefore be rightly seen as ecclesiastical obligation that flows from the mandate of Christ to the Church to go into the world and make disciples.

In a recent Symposium on the Gift of Priestly Vocation for Formators in English speaking Canadian Seminaries, The Archbishop Secretary of Seminaries for the Congregation for Clergy underscored the need for formators to be engaged in on-going formation.⁶ He noted that formation involves gradual and progressive stages as outlined in the *Ratio Fundamentalis*. This gradual and progressive formation requires formators to be well prepared to assist the candidates.⁷ In the same Symposium, Carlos presented a paper on how formators are to accompany and help seminarians discern their vocation.⁸ In this paper, Carlos writes: “**The high-quality formation of formators** (with on-going formation and of all priests, makes possible the integral formation of seminarians).(Initial formation) who are in the initial stages of their journey and gives it a sure footing.”⁹ The integral formation of seminarians will depend upon the quality of the formators. The quality of the formators improves as a result of on-going formation. Carlos explained thus: “The degree of growth achieved by the formator is what allows him to help the young seminarians in their own growth process.”¹⁰ Any seminary that has no space for on-going formation of the formators is doing a great disservice to the Church because of the quality of priests that will come out of such seminary.

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Two specific areas that formators must focus on-going formation are accompaniment and discernment. In the area of accompaniment, the formator must improve on establishing a true bond with God by listening to his Word. The formator must also have a systematic bond with the one who accompanies us in God's name.¹¹ Engaging in programs that enhances the listening capacity of the formator will help to make the formator more efficient in his work.

4. Priestly Formation

There have been several magisterial documents on priestly formation.¹² Our research will only deal with a few that we consider relevant to the area of our study. Priestly formation in this research refers to the preparation of candidates for the priesthood. Although, such preparation requires multiple intervention from the family to the parish, to the lay apostolate group the person may belong to, to the diocesan program of formation through pastoral work or other forms of formation, our research will however, be primarily based upon the seminary aspects of formation. It will be concerned about the four areas of priestly formation and how specifically formators are trained to be competent to help candidates in these areas of formation. Therefore, in dealing with priestly formation our attention will not so much be on the candidates for formation but on forming the formators.

5. The Second Vatican Council

On 28 October 1965 Pope Paul VI published the Decree *OptatamTotius*, on Priestly Formation. The Decree stated that the program of priestly training should be set up by Episcopal Conferences but always keeping in mind the Universal Law on priestly training.¹³ The Major Seminaries are the places where candidates to the priesthood are trained to be shepherds of souls after the model of Christ, the Chief Shepherd. All forms of the training in the seminary are to be ordered towards the pastoral end.¹⁴ The intellectual and spiritual training are for

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pastoral effectiveness. In order to be successful in the formation of candidates, seminary formators are to be obedient to their bishops.¹⁵

Given the high premium place on the formation of candidates to the sacred priesthood, the Fathers of the Council stated:

Since the training of students depends both on wise laws and, most of all, on qualified educators, the administrators and teachers of seminaries are to be selected from the best men, and are to be carefully prepared in sound doctrine, suitable pastoral experience and special spiritual and pedagogical training. Institutes, therefore, should be set up to attain this end. Or at least courses are to be arranged with a proper program, and the meetings of seminary directors are to take place at specified times.

Administrators, however, and teachers must be keenly aware of how much the success of the students' formation depends on their manner of thinking and acting. Under the rector's leadership they are to form a very closely knit community both in spirit and in activity and they are to constitute among themselves and with the students that kind of family that will answer to the Lord's prayer "That they be one" (cf. John 17:11) and that will develop in the students a deep joy in their own vocation. The bishop, on the other hand, should, with a constant and loving solicitude, encourage those who labour in the seminary and prove himself a true father in Christ to the students themselves. Finally, all priests are to look on the seminary as the heart of the diocese and are to offer willingly their own helpful service.¹⁶

The Fathers of the Council took on-going formation of formators seriously enough to decree that Institutes for forming formators be set up. Such Institutes will help to keep

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formators abreast in the new pedagogical ways of discerning and accompanying candidates towards the priesthood. The regular meetings of Rectors and other formators are to be focused on improving ways of on-going formation of the formators.

The Decree makes an important point by stating the strong connection between the success of the priests in the ministry and the nature of formation received in the seminary. It will also mean that to some extent, the failure of the priest in the ministry can be traced to the nature of the formation and discernment received at the seminary. This further underpins the argument for ensuring proper on-going formation of the formators.

Another essential element expressed by the Council Fathers is the community in which the seminarians are formed. Formators are to establish a closely-knit community in which they work in solidarity under the leadership of the Rector. Formators must keep in mind that the seminary environment is a community. One of the distinguishing factors of a community is a shared goal and a shared means of achieving it. The Rector is expected to help guide the formators to use a common means to achieve the common goal of forming candidates for the priesthood in the Church. Programs that will enhance community living should be provided from time to time for formators to access. This is one way of forming the formators to enable them provide and sustain conducive atmosphere for the formation of candidates for the priesthood. A formator who is manifestly unable to live in a closely-knit community should be assisted to develop the capacity to live in a community with shared goals. In the unfortunate situation where the formator is still unable to abide by community life, a pastoral solution that will strongly include the possibility of exiting the seminary formation system should be explored.

6. Pastoresdabo Vobis On Forming The Formators

St. Pope John Paul II in this famous post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation stated that without priests the Church will not be able to fulfil the fundamental obligation Christ entrusted to the

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Church, which is to go out and preach the Gospel to the entire world:

Without priests the Church would not be able to live that fundamental obedience which is at the very heart of her existence and her mission in history, an obedience in response to the command of Christ: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28:19) and “Do this in remembrance of me” (Lk. 22:19; cf. 1 Cor. 11.24), i.e., an obedience to the command to announce the Gospel and to renew daily the sacrifice of the giving of his body and the shedding of his blood for the life of the world.¹⁷

The Church must therefore place great importance on those who form candidates to the priesthood because they are participating in the core of the mission of the Church. The formation of the formators is therefore part of the essential mandate of Christ to the Church. PDV describes the work of the formators as follows:

The Church’s work of formation is a continuation in time of Christ’s own work, which the evangelist Mark illustrates in these words: “And he went up on the mountain, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons” (Mk. 3:13-15).¹⁸

The seminary community constitutes a sort of mountain place. It is a place of prayer and discernment. The process of identifying those who are suitable for the priestly ministry is one that should be done with all the seriousness it deserves. The formators in the seminary must have the necessary knowledge and skills to assist in the four areas of formation mentioned in PDV. The Document stated that the entire work of priestly formation rests on a solid human formation:

The whole work of priestly formation would be deprived of its necessary foundation if it lacked a suitable human formation. [...]. Future priests should therefore cultivate a series of human qualities, not only out of proper and due growth and realization of self, but also with a view to the ministry. These qualities are needed for them to be balanced people, strong and free, capable of bearing the weight of pastoral responsibilities. **They need to be educated to love the truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their word, to be genuinely compassionate, to be men of integrity and, especially, to be balanced in judgment and behaviour.**

Formators must first of all possess these qualities in themselves in order to be able to discern them in the candidates for the priesthood. On-going formation of formators should consider helping in the area of developing personal self-respect for the truth and respect for dignity of the human person and the diversities of opinions. A rigid approach to every aspect of human life is unhealthy. To have balance judgment, a formator will have to be capable of making assessments that are not influenced by their ethnicity. On-going formation of formators should also focus on how to work in a multi-ethnic diverse society.

The candidates for the priesthood are expected to display a great sense of affective maturity and sound human sexuality. This will enable the person to be able to minister as a celibate priest to everyone in the pastoral field. The life style of formators often times constitute the model upon which seminarians build their future upon. Formators should be role models in the area of affective maturity. The formation of the conscience of the candidates should be sound.²⁰

Spiritual formation requires that the candidates have a deeper communion with Christ who is inviting them to work in his vineyard. "Spiritual formation has its roots in the experience

of the cross, which in deep communion leads to the totality of the paschal mystery.”²¹ Formators are to be concerned with the spiritual life of the candidates for the priesthood. A spirituality that is devoid of communion with the suffering Christ must not be promoted. The current trend of seeking miraculous healings in almost every case of illness point to an unhealthy spirituality especially by priests who promote such beliefs. Although, Spiritual Directors are primarily responsible for the spiritual formation of the seminarian, all other formators must have some rudimentary knowledge on spiritual formation. The provisions of *OptatamTotius* should be observed in the area of spiritual formation:

Spiritual formation should be conducted in such a way that the students may learn to live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through his Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Those who are to take on the likeness of Christ the priest by sacred ordination should form the habit of drawing close to him as friends in every detail of their lives. They should live his paschal mystery in such a way that they will know how to initiate into it the people committed to their charge. They should be taught to seek Christ in faithful meditation on the word of God and in active participation in the sacred mysteries of the Church, especially the Eucharist and the Divine Office, to seek him in the bishop by whom they are sent and in the people to whom they are sent, especially the poor, little children, the weak, sinners and unbelievers. With the confidence of sons they should love and reverence the most Blessed Virgin Mary, who was given as a mother to the disciple by Jesus Christ as he was dying on the cross.”²²

The intellectual formation of candidates to the priesthood is rooted in the fact that human beings are called to participate in the Light of God’s mind.²³ Through this way, the human being is able to confront the new challenges that come up in evangelization. The educational formation of the formators is essential in the area of intellectual formation. It is expected that formators

continue to engage in further researches in their respective area of discipline. Attending conferences, seminars, symposiums, and so on, are some of the ways of ensuring on-going formation of the formator as it relates to intellectual formation. There should be reasonable financial budget to encourage formators to seek on-going formation in their respective disciplines. In this way, they will be able to proffer new solutions to contemporary pastoral challenges in an intellectual manner to the students.

In the area of intellectual formation, formators should be able to help with a balanced sense of inculturation of the faith. Christianity should not be presented as foreign to any culture.²⁴ The resurgence of many superstitious beliefs within the Christian community is a sign of lack of proper intellectual formation. The growing trend of exorcising none possessed persons, the preaching of prosperity gospel in order to raise fund to complete some projects that in some cases are not even essential to the life of the Church, and the personalization of sacramental celebrations are just a few indicators that the intellectual formation is deficient in these priests. Formators must engage rigorously the culture of the people and identify unhealthy elements and promote healthy elements as tools of evangelization.

Pastoral Formation is the goal of the entire formation. The formators must seek ways to truly prepare the candidate to be able to work effectively in the pastoral field:

Pastoral formation certainly cannot be reduced to a mere apprenticeship, aiming to make the candidate familiar with some pastoral techniques. The seminary which educates must seek really and truly to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being a shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems and establishing priorities and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith and according to the

Whenever there is a disconnect with pastoral theology and practical experience, the faithful are confused. Whenever there is a disconnect between magisterial teaching and the practices promoted by priests the faithful are confused. The parish life presents the faithful with various challenges regarding the faith. There are so many contradictory doctrines promoted outside the Church and unfortunately now even within the Church. The Churches moral teaching rooted in *Humanae Vitae*, the observance of well-formed conscience and spirituality that are in line with the traditional teachings of the Church are often being tactically discarded and replaced by new trends in doctrine. These new trends preach a life that is empty of the cross and one filled with abundant material blessings with a robust health. The new trend promotes spiritual destruction of ones' human enemies, supported with selective scriptural citations from the Old Testament.

Giving the constant fluctuation of life styles in behaviour, in taste, in fashion, and modes of living, the question has always been raised as to whether the formators should also change some essentials in the area of formations. The Nigerian society today is greatly saturated with prosperity gospel, proliferation of healing ministries and diverse style of programs. There are wide publicity through the various social media and banners where the pictures of the ministers dot every nooks and crannies of the city. The opinion of some Catholics have been; will the Church not change the method of training priests so that they can at least acquire the skills of these Pentecostal preachers. For such persons this is an existential question for the Church. They often argue that there is a constant migration of Catholics to the new ecclesial communities or churches because they provide them with the kind of spirituality that they like. Although, there is hardly any convincing statistics to back up such claims, the fact that they are constantly being made, demands attention of every well-meaning

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Catholic.

Formators in the Seminary must be conversant with on-going pastoral dimension. The seminary should not be so cloistered that the formators are completely unaware of the new developments in parish life. The goal of the formation process is to prepare candidates to becoming priests, who will work in the ministry. It will therefore be necessary that strict observance of the policy that require formators to spend some time in parish ministry during the long period of seminary vacation be adhered to. It is perhaps relevant to note the emphasis Pope Francis places on pastoral experience of members of the Vatican Diplomatic Corp. Pope Francis recently directed that those who are to become Papal Nuncio are to undergo at least one year of pastoral ministry. In this way, they will have personal experience of pastoral life. The same principle should be applied to formators in the seminary. At least a period of one-year pastoral work as a priest should be required before a formator assumes office in the seminary.

7. Obstacles To Forming The Formators

This research to a great extent assumes that seminary formators are priests. Although, this assumption is not absolutely true, because there are very good religious sisters and brothers involved in formation as well as highly-educated lay faithful. But our research will be primarily concerned about formators who are priests. Let us briefly highlight some of the challenges or obstacles to on-going formation of formators.

7.1. The “Final Goal” Syndrome

Many professions that have long years of training do have on-going education fatigue. When there is no financial remuneration for embarking on further education in the area of specialty, the person is further less motivated. Priests who are formators in the seminary have all gone through close to ten years of seminary formation and pastoral work. Many of them have also completed several post-graduate studies. Although, there are no well-known publications of the numbers of seminary formators with Doctorate

Degree, but a cursory look at the number of formators in most of the seminaries in Nigeria will indicate that close to 90 percent of these formators do have doctorate degrees. Those without it are in most cases in the process of obtaining the degree. This is expected in every academic community and the seminary should not be an exception.

However, the need for on-going formation still remains even after obtaining a doctorate degree in the various relevant disciplines. There is a general belief born out of perception that once a person is ordained a priest, the person has “arrived.” This arrival mindset can impede openness to further education and formation. For any priest to consider the priesthood as an end in itself can become a challenge towards growing in wisdom and knowledge as it was reported by the Gospel of Luke 2:52 regarding Christ human nature. The anti-dote to the final goal syndrome is to imitate Christ who grew in wisdom. There is no final goal for any human being on this earth.

7.2 Lack Of Mandatory Ongoing Formation Of Formators

There is hardly any well-articulated demand for on-going formation of formators. The knowledge of the formators in their respective disciplines such as Scripture, Systematic Study or Dogma, Moral Theology, Pastoral Theology, Liturgy, Philosophy, Psychology, Spirituality, Canon Law and other relevant ecclesial or secular disciplines is not sufficient to be effective formators. These disciplines do not in themselves provide the priests formators with all the necessary skills to accompany and discern the vocation of the seminarian. There should be mandatory on-going formation in the area of discernment and accompanying of the candidate towards the priesthood. We had earlier pointed this out when we discussed the presentation of Jorge Carlos Patrong Wong.

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7.3 Lack Of Proper Enforcement Of Promotion Based On Publication And Research

In the academic community, the people are concerned about researches and publications. Promotion is based upon publication of well researched papers on reputable Journal that enjoy blind rigorous peer review. Participation at international Conferences and regular on-going research are all taken seriously. In fact, it is sometimes put in sayings like: “publish or perish.” This goes to underscore the value placed upon on-going formation of lecturers. However, with a somewhat equal priestly status that the sacramental order establishes, there is less motivation to publish. The perception of a priest with several publications and one who has no publication is not different in the eyes of many faithful. It may be time to review establishing merit-based promotion following the Nigerian Universities Commission(NUC) regulation. Formators with more publication should have their papers assessed and the Appointment and Promotion Board of the Seminary should help to ensure that there is reward for such efforts of formators. The proper academic hierarchy should be well entrenched. The template provided by the Institutions that the seminary is affiliated to will help in this area. In other words, a formator who has enough publications to move from Lecturer II to Lecturer I, to Senior Lecturer to Associate Professor (Reader) and to full professor should be encouraged with corresponding financial remuneration. Although, priests are expected to live out the promise of poverty, it is nonetheless desirable to enhance their capacity to do charity to others from their legitimately earned income.

7.4 Performance Review

Most establishments do have performance review system. Performance indicators or indices are established to be used in the evaluation of persons. Some establishments will have indices such as productivity, punctuality, impact on the lives of the people, compatibility with fellow workers, health condition, mental fitness etc. It is true that all these indices may not be

Agora: Journal of Philosophical & Theological Studies applicable to formators in the seminary, but it will be of great service towards helping to form formators if a general template that could be adopted is established. Performance indices such as openness to pastoral availability, accessibility of a formator by students, readiness to comply with seminary statutes, moral uprightness of the formator, the psychological mindset, the physical health etc. It may also be of help if students are allowed to make objective impute in the process of this assessment.

8. Conclusion

The pastoral ministry of the priest is very essential to the fulfilment of the mission of Christ to the Church. Therefore, the formation of candidates to the priesthood is of great importance to the vitality of the Church. The quality of formators in the seminary greatly influences the quality of candidates for the priesthood that the seminary trains. The on-going formation of formators becomes essential to the faith formation of the faithful. If the formators impact knowledge that are relevant to the pastoral challenges the seminarians will face in the priestly ministry, the latter will be able to render effective pastoral services to the faithful. Forming the formator is part of the call to go out and make disciples of all nations. Part of the response of the Church to the mission of Christ therefore includes making provisions for on-going formation of formators. There should be clear program for formators. The curriculum for such program must include ways of accompanying students in the process of discerning their vocation. If the Church in Nigeria could establish a kind of template similar to the *Ratio Fundamentalis* for formators it would create the imperative for every formation house to embrace the call for on-going formation. A program of on-going formation must be funded for the Church to make it easier for formators. Such a program should be mandated.

In addition, a kind of performance feedback from the students should be gathered from time to time to help the formators understand the way the students perceive their formative skills. A questionnaire or other appropriate format may be used. This will

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be imitating Christ Jesus himself who sought for feedback when he asked his apostles: “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” (Mathew 16: 13). The need to constantly ask this question every time is clearly underscored by Christ in this passage. The sincere responses from the students will help the formators to improve on their formative skill. It must always be kept in mind that the Church is only as healthy as healthy as the formation houses are. The places where the leaders of the Church are formed and those who form them should be given the highest priority in the administration of the Church. When the Lord told Peter to feed his sheep (John 21:17), he also included in this command, the obligation to form those who will be feeding the sheep.

Endnotes

¹Canon 232. All citations from the 1983 Code of Canon Law are taken from, *Codex iuriscanonici, auctoritate Ioannis Pauli II promulgatus, fontiumasnotatione et indiceanalyticoalphabeticoauctus*, LibreriaeditriceVaticana, 1989, English translation Code of Canon Law: Latin-English Edition, prepared under the auspices of the CANON LAW SOCIETY OF AMERICA, Washington, Canon Law Society of America, 1999.

²Canon 237.

³See canon 247.

⁴For a comprehensive reading on formation of virtues during seminary formation, see, MercittaKannampuzha, “The Role of Virtues in Formation Programmes: Seminaries and Religious Houses,” in *The Living Word*, 124/3 (2018), pp. 123-142.

⁵Canon 211.

⁶See Carlos Patron Wong, “The Gift of Priestly Vocation,” Symposium for Formation Teams English-Speaking Seminaries of Canada 4-7 April 2019.

⁷Ibid.

⁸See Carlos Patron Wong, “Accompaniment and Discernment of Priestly Vocation,” Symposium for Formation Teams English-Speaking Seminaries of Canada 4-7 April 2019.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

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¹²See, Rajakumar Joseph, “Ministerial Priesthood and Integral Formation. Revisiting Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis (The Gift of Priestly Vocation),” in *Vidyajyoti*, 83 1/18, (2020), pp. 24-47; John McAreavey, “The Formation of a Celibate Clergy.” In *ITQ* 64 (1999), 261-275; Antony Valungal, “Spiritual Formation to Become a Missionary Disciple and Pastor in the Document of the Gift of the Priestly Vocation,” in *The Living Word*, 122/6 (2016), pp. 334-352; James J. Conn, “Reflections on some recent norms on priestly formation,” in *Periodical* 98 (2009), pp. 1-32; Gordon Read, “Seminary Formation and the Discernment of Priestly Vocations,” in *Canon Law Society Newsletter*, (2011), pp., 35-40; Rajesh Pollayil, “Psychological Dimensions of Priestly Formation,” in *The Living Word*, (2017), pp. 30-48; Mylo Hubert C. Vergara, “Pastoral Charity: Goal of Priestly Formation in the Light of Deus Caritas Est,” in *Immaculate Conception School of Theology Journal*, 9 (2007), pp. 5-15; Orlando B. Quevedo, “Notes on the Human Formation of Priests,” in *Philippine Canonical Forum IX* (2007), pp. 251-257; Michael Nobel, “Academic Aspects of Priestly Formation in the 1983 Code of Canon Law,” in *Studia canonical*, 42 (2008), pp. 437-471; J. Ponnore, “Spiritual Formation of the Diocesan Priest,” in *Vidyajyoti*, 68 (2005), pp. 595-605; Jobi Thomas Thurackal, “Role of Values in Personality and Spiritual Development of Catholic Seminarians in India,” in *The Living Word* 124/3 (2018), pp. 95-122; Mercitta Kannampuzha, “The Role of Virtues in Formation Programmes: Seminaries and Religious Houses,” in *The Living Word*, 124/3 (2018), pp. 123-142.

¹³*SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL*, Decree on Priestly Formation, *Optatam totius* 28 October 1965., no. 1. All citation of *Optatam Totius* Decree on the Training of Priests are taken from www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_optatam-totius_en.html.

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(=OP).

¹⁴OP. no. 4.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶O.P. no. 5.

¹⁷JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, On the Formation of the Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day, 25 March 1992, no. 1, from www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031992_pastores-dabo-vobis.html (=PDV).

¹⁸PDV, no. 2.

¹⁹PDV, no 43.

²⁰PDV, no. 44.

²¹PDV, no. 45.

²²OP no. 8.

²³PDV, no. 51.

²⁴PDV, no. 55.

²⁵PDV, no. 58.

Idahosa Amadasu

**INSECURITY, TERRORISM AND CHRISTIAN
MISSION IN NIGERIA TODAY¹**

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Abstract

While the problems of terrorism and insecurity in Nigeria have taken an ethnic and a religious coloration, this paper engages in a critical analysis of the country's historical founding, and the institutional acts and decrees of subsequent heads of state, to show that the root cause of these problems lies in the country's faulty architectural structure. This faulty structure, which concentrates power and resources in a central government and deprives citizens of their rightful voice in the governance of the country, presents an urgent task for Christians to foster a restructuring of the country based on the Catholic Social Doctrine principles of participation and subsidiarity in order to tackle the raging problems of insecurity and terrorism which daily threaten the lives and sense of wellbeing of millions of Nigerians.

Key words: Insecurity, Terrorism, Amalgamation, Catholic Social Doctrine, Participation, Subsidiarity, Restructuring, Christian Mission

Introduction

As a nation, Nigeria has witnessed much violence and insecurity in her brief history. In addition to intertribal and religiously motivated clashes, between 1967 and 1970, she suffered through a civil war which claimed the lives of more than one million persons. But never has Nigeria experienced so much insecurity and terrorism, ever on the rise and occurring with disturbing regularity, as she has in the last two decades.

Indeed, kidnappings, extortion, terrorist attacks, mass murders in rural communities, and all manner of banditry have now become a part of the daily existence and expectation of Nigerians. The plague of kidnappings began with Niger Delta militants targeting expatriates, soon they were also targeting wealthy Nigerians. In no time, kidnapping and extortion became widespread affecting Nigerians across the board in all parts of the country, and even as militancy in the Niger Delta waned, new gangs with different interests have become the perpetrators of this heinous crimes which cost the life of many Nigerians daily. The long-standing problems and struggles between herders and farmers became aggravated, degenerated, and persists with no resolutions, resulting in numerous deadly intercommunal clashes in the Northern and Middle belts of the nation. In the North, the Boko Haram terrorist group sprang up in 2009, first as a small group of agitators advocating for the imposition of Sharia Law in the country and the rejection of Western education, which they perceived to be the cause of our corrupt polity and a hindrance to the spread of pure Islam. But with time, especially after the extrajudicial killing of their leader, Mohammed Yusuf, they degenerated into a terrorist organization, taking over some parts of Northern Nigeria and regularly launching attacks on the populace, both civilians and military.² Their earlier attacks majorly focused on Churches and Christians, but Christians have not been their only victims.

The violence has marked religious and ethnic colorations. The members of the Boko Haram group are mainly from the North and are Muslims. The herders are mainly from the Fulani tribes of the North and are Muslims. A fleshy percentage of kidnapers who ambush their victims on the road and in farms are mainly from the North and are Muslims. There are also other kidnapers from the South linked to Niger Delta militants and other tribes. Armed robbery and other violent crimes continue to afflict the nation.

Many Christians have been victims of these criminal actions. Some have been deliberately persecuted or killed for their faith, as we find in the many instances of bombing of Churches and kidnapping of Christians.³ A notorious case among these is the refusal of the kidnappers to release Leah Sharibu, one of the 110 Dapchi school girls kidnapped in 2018. Even after releasing her other schoolmates, the then 14-year-old girl has been held hostage till date because she refused to convert to Islam. The latest that has been heard of Leah Sharibu is that she is suspected to have been delivered of a second baby.⁴

It would, however, be simplistic to think that the problem of insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria is primarily a religious or tribal one. It is rather a symptom of the breakdown of the architectural framework of the country capitalizing on ethnic and religious sentiments to flower. This paper shall elaborate on this root cause of our current crisis, show how it affects our mission as Christians, and the consequent challenge before us as Christians.

The Root Cause of Insecurity and Terrorism: A Faulty National Framework.

A nation that comprises a people should be an expression of their free association and their coming together to pursue common goals and objectives. At present, neither the element of free association nor the pursuance of common goals can be said to essentially define the fabric of the Nigeria nation. Nigeria still labours under a forced amalgamation that was birthed at the convenience of the British colonial masters. The immediate reason given by Frederick Lugard (1858-1945), the then British Governor-General, in a speech to proclaim the administrative act that invented the country, is that the amalgamation of North and South would facilitate rail transportation of raw materials like groundnut and cotton from the North to the port of the city of Lagos. This would ease transportation to Britain for their industrial revolution drive⁵. So, it was neither the wish of the people nor their common interest that was primary in the amalgamation that would constitute the newly invented Nigeria. It is little wonder

then that the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo would say that Nigeria is a mere geographical expression.⁶

This contraption, solidified by a constitutional framework that did not reflect the wishes of the people,⁷ enabled a Nigerian nation in which government was far from the people and the people did not majorly participate in governance. The self-serving interest that essentially defined the British colonial masters was immediately assumed by the Nigerian elites and oligarchs, both military and civilians. While after Independence, Nigeria began with a parliamentary system which gave some representation to the people, the unification decree of Aguyi Ironsi, the Nigerian military ruler in 1966, consolidated power and resources in a central government, taking away land, resources, and a just degree of self-governance from the regions and so further alienated the people from the state.⁸ Before and after the Nigerian civil war, the three-decade long reign of military rule, which was only interrupted by a four year spell (1979-1983) of civilian rule, effectively solidified the practice of governance as the wish of the rulers and for the sake of the rulers.

The current practice of democracy, inaugurated by the military government of General Abdulsalam in 1999, has not recovered from the years of military mis governance. This is because it was not established with a constitution that reflected the wish and common good of the people. As it has been said several times, the current Nigerian constitution, put together by a select few and decreed into existence in 1999, is one that lies against itself because it begins its proclamation with “We the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria”⁹. A constitution that neither consulted the people nor is ordered for their common good and aspirations cannot claim to speak for the people. It is rather, a constitution designed to serve a centralized government that gives power and resources to a select few even as it takes away resources from the people, emasculates the states, and enables the states to hinder efficient governance at the local government level. As long as states have to depend on a centralized federal

government for their main income, governors are chief security officers of their states without control over the security apparatus, the judiciary is tied to the apron strings of the executive, the head of the electoral body is an appointee at the beck and call of the president, Nigeria will remain, in the words of Anthony Akinwale, an “empire dressed in the stolen robes of federalism.”¹⁰

Governance that lacks the effective participation of its citizens and which is not ordered for the common good, such as has come to define the faulty architectural framework of Nigeria, can only have one outcome: a failed state evidenced in the breakdown of major societal institutions, in particular the frameworks for education, security, and justice, and in the chaos and violence that follows in the wake of this collapse. As Bishop Kukah so eloquently put it in his 2020 Christmas address – “A Nation in Search of Vindication”:

The prospects of a failed state stare us in the face: endless bloodletting, a collapsing economy, social anomie, domestic and community violence, kidnappings, armed robberies etc. Ours has become a house of horror with fear stalking our homes, highways, cities, hamlets and entire communities.¹¹

As the country’s resources have not been efficiently deployed, Nigeria has come to be the poverty capital of the world, and in a recent survey, the country with one of the highest rates of unemployment in the world.¹² About thirteen million children, mainly from the North, are out of school.¹³ They grow up uneducated. Over time, these children have become easy recruits for kidnappings, banditries, and other criminal activities.

The Role of Religion and Christian Mission

Nigeria is a deeply religious country. The average Nigerian breathes and smells religion. The two main religions of Christianity and Islam have been warmly embraced by the majority of Nigerians. The Nigerian landscape is dotted with

Churches and Mosques. But the practice of religion is not one that has significantly helped to address the ills of the nation. This is because religion itself has become a victim of the very selfishness that defines our current contraption as a nation. Just as our current “unity” as a nation is promoted to serve the interest of a few, the practice of religion has become an accomplice in fostering a parochial mentality where God is sought as a means to short-sighted material goals irrespective of the common good.

In other words, the practice of religion has largely been hijacked. Instead of helping its adherents to become good citizens serving the good of one and all, it has become a tool for the self-promotion and self-enrichment of the oligarchs, a means for the masses to seek “prosperity,” and a victim of manipulation of many ministers of religion, who have reduced themselves to fortune tellers for the ruling class and charlatans preying on the hopes of the common people. Needless to say, the current state of affairs in religion has not helped many Christians to realise their vocation to be good citizens, and to fulfill their roles of being the salt of the earth.

While many Christians are making well founded complaints of the threats of fulanisation and Islamisation, currently being entrenched by the present Fulani and Muslim dominated central government, we must, however, note that the architectural framework for this domination was laid when Christians occupied the reigns of governance in the country. The most significant acts which solidified the country’s concentration of power and resources in a central government were acts taken under presidents who professed the Christian faith.¹⁴ The ball was set rolling by the unification decree of the Military government of Aguyi Ironsi in 1966, and the Land Use Act of 1978, which took away land from the people and gave it to the government, was decreed by the military government of Olusegun Obasanjo. Current legislation being pushed by the present government to deprive the states of their water ways and make them the possession of the central government, is a continuation of the vision of government that sees itself to be greater than its

citizens.¹⁵ Since the resumption of Democracy in 1999, two failed attempts were made at constitutional reforms by presidents who were Christians. The first attempt was scuttled by the failure of the then President Olusegun Obasanjo to drive through his tenure elongation, and the second one introduced by the government of President Goodluck Jonathan came at the tail end of a six-year administration leaving its implementation to the next government which did not believe in it.¹⁶

What this shows is that our primary problem is not the religious affiliation of Nigerians, but a corrupt practice of religion that has become an accomplice of our social and political dislocation. Christians have not proved their worth in governance because they lack the formation to do so. If we do not take formation seriously, if ministers of the Gospel continue to brand themselves as fortune tellers and not prophetic figures that should re-awaken and form the consciences of persons, the practice of Christianity will not be a remedy, but an accomplice to our current problems. A corrupt practice of religion cannot drive the ethical project that is needed to help politics live up to its pristine motivation of intelligently ordering the society to foster the common good. *Gaudium et spes* captures this well when it notes:

The political community exists, consequently, for the sake of the common good, in which it finds its full justification and significance, and the source of its inherent legitimacy. Indeed, the common good embraces the sum of those conditions of the social life whereby men, families and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection.¹⁷

What we would have instead, as is the case today, is a machiavellian notion of politics that doggedly strives to grab power for narrow and selfish reasons that are far from, and often conflicts with, the common good of the people.¹⁸

The Way Forward: The Challenge Before Christians Today

One cannot deny that many Christians are being killed and martyred in the current spate of insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria. The targeted attacks on Christians and the number of those who have been killed for their faith should not be taken for granted. Such Christians should be listed in the Church's martyrology. But in addressing the current problem, Christians must know that the real betrayal lies within. It is their refusal to live up to their faith, their readiness to give it up for selfish reasons, the way Jesus Christ was given up, that is the greatest problem we face. Whenever there are disciples who selfishly love money and material things like Judas and are therefore ready to sell their Saviour for thirty pieces of silver, the amount the ancient Jews used for buying a slave (Cf. Matt. 26:14-16, Ex.21:32), then Christ will be crucified again and again, and the Christian mission can only be pursued half-heartedly.

The Christian mission in the realm of politics is a choice for an ethical stand that would promote right politics oriented to serving the common good. Within the context of Nigeria's particular problem, the urgent and never to be seconded task before the Christian mission in politics today is to drive the participation of citizens in governance. According to Catholic Social Doctrine,

Participation in community life is not only one of the greatest aspirations of the citizen, called to exercise freely and responsibly his civic role with and for others ...but is also one of the pillars of all democratic orders and one of the major guarantees of the permanence of the democratic system. Democratic government, in fact, is defined first of all by the assignment of powers and functions on the part of the people, exercised in their name, in their regard and on their behalf. It is therefore clearly evident that every democracy must be participative This means that the different subjects of civil community at every level must be informed, listened to and involved in the exercise of the carried-out functions.¹⁹

This can only happen when the country is returned to the people. Allowing Catholic Social Teaching to guide us further, the most practical way to ensure this participation is to foster the principle of subsidiarity, where every component of the society is allowed to perform its role, and larger bodies do not take over the functions of smaller ones. In its *Compendium*, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, summarizes the Catholic Church's vision of the principle of subsidiarity thus:

*The necessity of defending and promoting the original expressions of social life is emphasized by the Church in the Encyclical Quadragesimo Anno, in which the principle of subsidiarity is indicated as a most important principle of "social philosophy". "Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them"*²⁰

After stating this principle of subsidiarity, the *Compendium* thereafter states how this will facilitate an orderly functioning of the society:

On the basis of this principle, all societies of a superior order must adopt attitudes of help ("subsidium") — therefore of support, promotion, development — with respect to lower-order societies. In this way, intermediate social entities can properly perform the functions that fall to them without being required to hand them over unjustly to other social entities of a higher level, by which they would end up being absorbed and substituted, in the end seeing themselves denied their

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dignity and essential place.²¹

By way of reaffirming the indispensable benefit of the principle of subsidiarity, the *Compedium* shows how this principle protects smaller entities, and by implication their freedom and responsibility:

Subsidiarity, understood *in the positive sense* as economic, institutional or juridical assistance offered to lesser social entities, entails a corresponding series of *negative* implications that require the State to refrain from anything that would de facto restrict the existential space of the smaller essential cells of society. Their initiative, freedom and responsibility must not be supplanted.²²

From this explanation of what the principle of subsidiarity entails, where it states that it is an “evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do”, it is not difficult to discern the problem of Nigeria. In so far as power is concentrated in a central governing apparatus, the government cannot address the particular and diverse needs of the various ethnic groups in their communities, nor can it be a guardian of the common good of all the people of the nation and safeguard those institutions – education, justice, and security – that foster the unity and common aspirations of its people. Our current system of government is bigger than the people, and here lies the root cause of the problems of insecurity and the many challenges we face today. Nigeria is deficient and pathetically anaemic from a lack of practice of the principle of subsidiarity. The components of our supposed federating units should be made to function. The primary organs for the effective functioning of any society such as the institutions of education, security and the adjudication of justice should be restructured to primarily reflect the determination of the people at the local level, at the most basic community. People who do not enjoy the right of self-determination and the organization of

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their immediate community cannot exercise the freedom of free association.

The tendency towards centralisation of governance in the country is often promoted under the pretext of protecting the unity of our country, especially after the civil war experience. But this fear, *ab initio*, is misplaced. The true unity of people should be birthed from their free association. Long before the amalgamation and the self-serving apparatus of governance that it instituted, there have been interactions and cultural exchanges among the peoples of current Nigeria. The Ijaws have been in Lagos, the Igbos have been in the North, the Hausas have been in parts of current Western Nigeria etc. This association between tribes and communities was free and in service of the self-determination of the various tribes and peoples. As a result of an amalgamation that did not express the genuine aspirations of the different peoples, the ethnic differences which should have constituted strengths of diversity in the unity of the nation have become grounds for tensions and divisions. A response to these tensions that would reinforce the selfish motives that informed the 1914 amalgamation of our nation, rather than one that seeks a restructured polity that would serve the interest of all, would simply be disastrous. We need to protect the unity of our country by seeking how to make it useful for the benefit of all, and not for a self-serving few.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in order to tackle the root cause of insecurity and terrorism in Nigeria today, the mission of Christians is to allow their faith to help them foster an ethical project that would drive the participation of the people in governance through the principle of subsidiarity. This Christian mission must do this by first conscientising Christians to recognize the ills of the current self-serving Nigerian structural framework tailored towards the interest of a few oligarchs. Here, the martyrdom demanded from the Nigerian Christian today is to refuse to be an accomplice of these narrow interests. Those who have always resisted ills

Agora: Journal of Philosophical & Theological Studies have turned to be agents of change in the society. Vivian Ogu exemplifies this agent of change when she refused to be raped after being captured by armed robbers at her family home in Benin City in 2009. For her vehement refusal, she was killed by the bandits.²³

The late revered archbishop of Chicago, Cardinal Francis George, who died in 2015 said he will die on his bed, his successor will die in prison, while the one after his successor will die as a martyr.²⁴ What the Cardinal is saying here is that if Christians wish to bring about a social change in the society by being steadfast to their faith, they should be ready to endure persecution. At present, the entrenched interests that have held the nation captive would not let go. The endurance of the Christian today is to be tested by the willingness to be a good citizen who will allow his or her faith to guide him or her to stand for justice and a more secured Nigeria.

Endnotes

¹This paper is a modified version of a Virtual Conference paper presented at the 2021 Catholic Theological Association (CATHAN) Conference which was held from April 6-9, 2021.

² A study of Boko Haram explains their motivations thus: “While the overriding goal of Boko Haram is to wrest control from the Nigerian state and to impose Sharia across the country, the cocktail of political corruption, chronic poverty, and youth unemployment in northern Nigeria continues to fuel members and supporters of Boko Haram.” Daniel Egiegba Agbibo, “No Retreat, No Surrender: Understanding the Religious Terrorism of Boko Haram in Nigeria” *African Study Monographs*, 34, 2 (2013), 74.

³In response to the spate of killing of Christians in Nigeria, the French Philosopher, Bernard-Henri Lévy, exclaims: ““Will history be repeated in Nigeria?” “Will we wait, as usual, for the disaster to be consumed in order to be moved? And will we remain idly by while the Islamist international, contained in Asia, fought in Europe, defeated in Syria and Iraq, opens a new front

on this immense land where the sons of Abraham coexisted for a long time? This is what is at stake on this journey to the heart of the Nigerian darkness”. Bernard-Henri Lévy, “Au Nigeria, on massacre les chrétiens” *Paris Match*, December 5, 2019. Accessed April 3, 2021, https://www.parismatch.com/Actu/International/Au-Nigeria-on-massacre-les-chretiens-le-SOS-de-Bernard-Henri-Lévy-1662940?fbclid=IwAR3nUcTh3arWHI2-2hQ2oqXRJh-bBB8Nn34fIcJQIRCtdPAlln_wX4bvg7w. John Burger. “Bernard-Henri Lévy provides eyewitness testimony to killing, raping and mutilation by Fulani herdsmen”. *Aleteia*, December 18, 2019. Accessed April 3, 2021. <https://aleteia.org/2019/12/18/french-philosopher-documents-deadly-persecution-of-nigerian-christians/>.

⁴See Friday Olorok, “Leah Sharibu: Report of second baby heartbreaking, say parents” *Punch*, March 28, 2021. Accessed April 4, 2021. <https://punchng.com/leah-sharibu-report-of-second-baby-heartbreaking-say-parents/>.

⁵According to Lugard, “The construction of rival railways in Northern and Southern Nigeria accentuated the necessity having a single railway policy, with a single administration, and over a year ago the Secretary of State decided that the time had come to give effect to the scheme of constituting a single Government for Nigeria.” Cited in Teslim Opemipo Omipidan, (November 12, 2014). Speech by The Governor General of Nigeria, Sir Frederick Lugard On January 1, 1914 (Amalgamation Proclamation of 1914). *OldNaija*. Accessed April 7, 2021. <https://oldnaija.com/2014/11/12/speech-by-the-governor-general-of-nigeria-sir-frederick-lugard/>.

⁶“Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no “Nigerians” in the same sense as there are “English” or “Welsh” or “French” See Obafemi Awolowo, *Path to Nigeria’s Freedom*, (London: Faber and Faber, London, 1947) 47 – 48.

⁷The first written constitution of Nigeria is the Clifford Constitution of 1922, named after the successor of Lugard, Sir Hugh Clifford. See *West African Constitutional Development*, “Hugh Clifford Constitution” (1922). Accessed April 7,

2021. <https://nigerianscholars.com/tutorials/west-african-constitutional-development/hugh-clifford-constitution/>.

⁸The Decree 34 of 1966 was named the Unification Decree, which abolished the then regional and ethnic groups which existed in the parliamentary system. It dissolved 81 political associations and twenty-six tribal and cultural associations. Although later abolished by the successive government of General Yakubu Gowon with the promulgation of Decree 14 of 1967 which broke the country into twelve states and Military governors were appointed for each state, the concentration of power at the center which the Unitary Decree sealed has remained an abiding feature of the successive Nigerian military and civilian rules. As a result of the way the Decree 34 aborted the parliamentary system that operated since the country's Independence in 1960, decimated the free aspirations of the Nigerian peoples, critics labelled it the De-unification Decree. See Eric Teniola, "History and the Future of Decree 34 of 1966", *Guardian Newspaper*, September 4, 2017. Accessed April 5, 2021. <https://t.guardian.ng/opinion/history-and-the-future-of-decree-34-of-1966/>.

⁹Nigeria, *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, May 1999. Accessed April 4, 2021. <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/ng/ng014en.pdf>.

¹⁰Anthony Akinwale, "Corruption, Insecurity and the Christian Faith in Contemporary Nigeria" *Academia*, (2018), 9. Accessed April 4, 2021.

https://www.academia.edu/43586250/Corruption_Insecurity_and_the_Christian_Faith_in_Contemporary_Nigeria.

¹¹For the full text of the address, see Matthew Hassan Kukah, "Christmas Message 2020, A Nation in Search of Vindication". The Catholic Diocese of Sokoto. Accessed April 26, 2021. <https://catholicdiocese-sokoto.org/latest-news/nation-search-vindication>.

¹²According to the World Poverty Clock, over 89 million Nigerians out of an estimated 200 million live in extreme poverty, which is about 3million more than India which has a population

of about 1.3 million. See World Data Lab, “World Poverty Clock”, (2021). Accessed April 5, 2021.<https://worldpoverty.io/map>. See also Borgen Magazine, “Poverty Capital of the World: Nigeria”, August 28, 2020. Accessed April 5, 2021.<https://www.borgenmagazine.com/the-poverty-capital-of-the-world-nigeria/>; Ruth Olorounbi, “Nigeria’s Unemployment Rate Rises to 33%, Second Highest on Global List” March 15, 2021. Accessed April 6, 2021.<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-03-15/nigeria-unemployment-rate-rises-to-second-highest-on-global-list>.

¹³VOA, “UN: In Nigeria More Than 13 Million School-age Children Out of School”, December 11, 2018. Accessed April 6, 2021.<https://www.voanews.com/africa/un-nigeria-more-13-million-school-age-children-out-school>.

¹⁴See Federal Government of Nigeria, “Public Order Decree 1966”, May 24, 2021. Accessed April 6, 2021.<https://gazettes.africa/archive/ng/1966/ng-government-gazette-supplement-dated-1966-05-24-no-51-part-a.pdf>. For a copy and a critical review of the Land Use Act Decree, see A. N. Allott, Nigeria: Land Use Decree, 1978, *Journal of African Law* Vol. 22, No. 2 (Autumn, 1978): 136-160.

¹⁵A draft of the controversial “National Water Resources Bill 2020”, which was first rejected by the National Assembly in 2018 and reintroduced to the Assembly in 2020 by the Federal Government can be obtained here: <https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Committee-Report-on-the-National-Water-Resources-Bill-2020.pdf>. Accessed April 28, 2021.

¹⁶For a critical evaluation of both constitutional conferences, see Ben Nwabueze, “Between Jonathan’s National Conference and Obasanjo’s reform confab”, *Vanguard News*, December 17, 2013. Accessed April 6, 2021. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/11/jonathans-national-conference-obasanjos-reform-confab-prof-ben-nwabueze/>.

¹⁷Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. “*Gaudium et spes*, [Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World], December 7, 1965, sec. 74”. The Vatican Website. Accessed

April 7, 2021. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

¹⁸See Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Russell Price & Quentin Skinner, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Cf. Anthony Akinwale, “Religion and Societal Conscience Formation” *Academia* (2019): 3. Accessed April 7, 2021. https://www.academia.edu/40446961/Religion_and_Societal_Conscience_Formation. According to Anthony Akinwale, “In Nigeria, we have managed to build a society where politics is bedeviled by an acute deficiency of morality, and symptoms of this deficiency are too many to itemize. They are visible in anti-social behavior, in violence and in vote buying, fake news and propaganda, promises made while those who make them have no intention of keeping them, the manipulation of ethnic and religious diversity to attain selfish political interests. The objective is to get into power to enrich oneself so that one can buy mansions in Dubai, in cities in Europe and North America.” *Ibid.*

¹⁹Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church April 2, 2004, sec. 190”. The Vatican Website. Accessed April 7, 2021. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html. In the buildup to the 2019 election in Nigeria, the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN) published a *Vademecum* for electors in Nigeria. The document spoke about the indispensable role of participation of the people in government thus: “Participation is at the core of the realisation of the common good. It is not enough for one individual or group, however well-equipped, to saddle itself with procuring the common good on behalf of everybody else. All are invited to work for it and must be given every opportunity to participate in it, both as contributors as well as beneficiaries. The active participation of citizens in the electioneering process, including the possibility of voting and being voted for, in a free, fair and credible contest is a value

to be cultivated and encouraged. It is also an obligation whose fulfilment is a good indication of a society that is built upon, and respecting of, the common good. By their votes, citizens have the right and corresponding responsibility to determine the candidates who would govern them. Consequently, Christians are morally obliged to promote this common good, by voting for the right candidates. The conscientious exercise of the right mentioned here relies to a large extent on how well formed the consciences of the electorates are. The formation of consciences is a lifetime project, and this Guide is a small contribution to it, with regard to election.

As *bona fide* citizens of Nigeria, Christians have the same constitutional rights and duties as everyone else to participate actively in public life. It is in this light that Nigerian Bishops reiterate the teaching of the Council Fathers that it accords with human nature “that juridical-political structures should, with ever better success and without any discrimination, afford all their citizens the chance to participate freely and actively in establishing the constitutional bases of determining political community, governing the state, determining the scope and purpose of various institutions and choosing leaders. Hence, let all citizens be mindful of their simultaneous right and duty to vote freely in the interest of advancing the common good.” The Catechism of Catholic Church also lends credence to the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria’s assertion on active participation in politics in this pronouncement: “It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. Obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person. ... As far as possible, citizens should take active part in public life.” Being actively involved in the electoral process is to the mind of the Nigerian bishops a demand of patriotism, an important religious virtue of piety. True piety is tantamount to respectful and responsible devotedness both to one’s familial father, God and one’s fatherland. Our refusal to actively participate in the electoral process, pose great danger to our ability to truly practice

and carry out our mission or contribute to the common good, thus we might be forced to sacrifice our faith, our fundamental teachings and moral principles. Thus, the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria enjoin all to be active participants in the electoral process: “It is the noble right and serious duty of every responsible citizen to do what he can towards the establishment, maintenance and successful operation of a good government...everyone with the right to vote does have the opportunity, which should be exercised responsibly, to help form, mandate and direct his government.” Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria, *Vademecum for Electors in Nigeria: Manual for Responsible Citizens According to Catholic Social Teaching*. (Abuja: Pauline Publications, 2018), 9-10.

²⁰Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, sec. 186. Emphasis in original.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²*Ibid.*

²³See This Day. “Vivian Ogu, A Heroine in Death”, November 11, 2019. Accessed April 26, 2021. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2019/11/11/vivian-ogu-a-heroine-in-death/>.

²⁴Francis Cardinal George, “The Wrong Side of History”, October 20, 2012. *Chicago Catholic*. Accessed April 7, 2021, <https://www.chicagocatholic.com/cardinal-george/-/article/2012/10/21/the-wrong-side-of-history>.

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**AFRICAN CLAIMS TO CHRISTIAN ORIGIN II
ETHIOPIA¹**

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Abstract

Christianity started well over 2000 years ago. It spread quickly all over the then known world, especially Palestine and Europe. As a religion, Christianity is practiced in all over Africa. It has been said that it was introduced to Africa by European Missionaries beginning in the 17th and 18th centuries. Is this really true? If this is the case, how did the names of some African nations find their way into the Christian scriptures? Egypt and Ethiopia are mentioned in the Jewish scriptures from the very beginning. There was also the episode of the Ethiopian Eunuch recorded in the New Testament. Were they accidental? Were they intentional? These and more are the aim of this and the earlier paper, to trace the true origin of Christianity in these places.

Key words: Christianity, Jewish scriptures, Egypt, Ethiopia and African claims.

Introduction

In the first part of this article published in the maiden edition of "Agora Journal"² I traced the origin of Christianity into the continent of Africa in general and placed particular interest on Egypt. In the article, I started from the names of the places in Africa that were mentioned in the Scriptures, that is Egypt and Ethiopia. I concluded by concentrating on the former and establishing the fact that Christianity came into Egypt and

flourished until the advent of Islam in the 7th century when most of the ancient centers of Christianity were destroyed and taken over by Moslems. In this article I wish to conclude my search on the origin of Christianity in Africa with special interest on Ethiopia, the other location that was mentioned frequently in the Bible. The appearance of the name Ethiopia in the Bible does not necessarily imply that Christianity was practiced there. My task is to try to trace the source or origin of Christianity in Ethiopia. Did the Ethiopian Eunuch, that is, the court official, mentioned in the Acts of Apostles (Acts 8: 26-38) go back home to proclaim the faith? Did someone else bring the faith to Ethiopia? Who proclaimed the faith there and when?

Ethiopia in the Bible

In my earlier article I had written that the name Ethiopia did not appear until much later but another name had been used to designate the same place from the second chapter of the book of Genesis. Genesis 2:13 reads: “The second river is named the Gihon and this encircles the whole land of Cush”. ‘Cush’³ was the name that from the very beginning appeared even in the second creation story. The same name was used in 2Kg. 19:9, here a certain Tirhakah, king of Cush, who intended to fight the king of Assyria is mentioned (cf. Is. 37:9). Ethiopia is also said to have been referred to as “the South”. It is believed through an ancient legend in Ethiopian tradition that her kingship and priesthood are a legitimate continuation of the dynasty of King Solomon, the son of King David. The legend goes thus: “the queen of the Sheba” who visited king Solomon (1Kg. 10:1-13) was Makeda of Aksum (or Axum), she is said to have had a son with King Solomon named Menelik I who later became the king of Ethiopia.⁴

The scriptures have nothing of the content of the legend other than the fact that there was a visit by the queen of Sheba who was amazed at the Wisdom of Solomon, his administrative acumen, etc.; she offered him gifts, praised the God of Israel and returned to her country with her entourage. It is believed that the legend

was written much later to support the idea and authenticity of the Solomonic Dynasty and the source of the prevalent Jewish culture and religion in present day Ethiopia. It is said that “the Aksumite kingdom adopted Judaism and the law of Moses during the reign of King Menelik, son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba...”⁵ All these can be said to be allusions to the strong link between Ethiopians (Aksumites) and Jews which is still present in Ethiopia of today. It is believed that only members of the Solomonic dynasty have ruled Ethiopia until recently. Karbo said that the ruling descendants were linked to the Amhara and Tigre tribes: “In the ideological field, there was a concentration on the divine personality of the leader, the idea of “closeness” the official nationalism practically meant domination of power, resources, politics and economics by the Amhara. The Amhara and the Tigre are the two dominant Christian groups, as well as the groups that have controlled the political and social space the longest.”⁶

It was in the book of Esther that the name Ethiopia was first mentioned in the Bible: “It was in the days of Ahasuerus, the Ahasuerus whose empire stretched from India to Ethiopia” (Es. 1:1). This text also affirms the vastness of the territory that is usually referred to as Ethiopia. From this point on, the name Ethiopia appeared severally in the Old Testament. These include the following: Es. 8:9, Job. 28:19, Ps. 68: 31; 87:4, Is. 18:1; 20:3; 20:5; 37:9; 43:3; 45:14, Ezek. 29:10; 30:4; 30:5; 38:5, Nahum 3:9 and Zeph. 3:10. In most of the cases here mentioned, Ethiopia appeared alongside Egypt. It must also be noted that the fact that Ethiopia was mentioned in the Old Testament is no allusion to the presence of Christianity there. This can only buttress the link between Ethiopia and Judaism.

In the New Testament there was no mention of Ethiopia in the gospels, the conversion and baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch or court official, is the first and only indicator of any connection between Ethiopia and Christianity. The story is found in the Acts of the Apostles. Acts 8: 27-38 reads:

Now it happened that an Ethiopian had been on

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pilgrimage to Jerusalem; he was a eunuch and an officer at court of the *Kandake*, or queen, of Ethiopia, and was in fact he chief treasurer. He was now on his way home; and as he sat in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. The Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go up and meet that chariot.’ ... Further along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘Look, there is some water here; is there anything to stop me being baptized?’ he ordered the chariot to stop, and then Philip baptized him.

The Eunuch was passing time while on a journey with the writing of the Prophet Isaiah. What happened to the court officer? He is said to be returning home, but what did he do when he got home? Did he proclaim the Good News in Ethiopia? We do not know for sure but it is said that he was the first Christian evangelizer of Ethiopia, though there isn’t much indication of the success of his work.

Church Fathers on Ethiopia and Christianity

Since the Bible is not completely clear on the origin of Christianity in Ethiopia, I would like to recourse to the early Christian writers. Origen, talking about him “mentioned a legend which made the eunuch the first evangelizer of ‘Aethiopia.’ Yet there is no evidence of a Christian community at Meroë in the first century. Acts see the baptism of the eunuch rather as a symbolic act, announcing the future conversion of the Gentile world.”⁷

This is further affirmed by Jerome (a fourth century Father of the Church known for his translation and interpretation of the scriptures) in his interpretation of the above text: “For the purposes of his history, Luke has left out the religious status of the eunuch vague so as not to preempt the Gentile overture by Peter; but the deep African origin of this convert, conjuring readers’ vision of dark skinned hordes beyond civilization’s outer boundaries, gave expressive evidence that the gospel, having conquered Samaria, was truly on its way to “the ends of the

earth.”⁸As said earlier, the term Ethiopia is a representation of the whole of Africa south (black Africans) of the Sahara. The queen or *kandake*(Candace) is also a title that is common around the same area. It is not a proper name by chance. The journey made by the court official should not also be a surprise to anyone because of the long rapport that has existed between the Jews and the Aksumite. The Aksumites were also used to the Jewish scriptures.

Christianity in Ethiopia (Aksum)

Aksum or Axum is the name of the ancient capital of the Aksum kingdom, it is situated on the northern part of Ethiopia, west of Adwa. In the first century AD, Aksum became a political, cultural and economic centre, this was brought to an end with the spread of Islam in the 7th century when the city lost control over the Red Sea. It is now a religious and tourist centre known for the many tall granite obelisks. It is the setting of the 14th century work *KebrāNegast* (Glory of the Kings) which depicts the transfer of the Ark of the Covenant from Jerusalem to Aksum by Menelik I, the legendary son of King Solomon with the Queen of the South.⁹ It is also purported that the Ark of the Covenant is still present in a small chapel, called St Mary of Zion (Mariam Tsion) till date.

That there was communication between the Jewish nation and this part of Africa has so far been established and the visit of the eunuch to Jerusalem that we have discussed above is also a confirmation of this fact but how were they able to move? The well-established trade route from the Mediterranean through the Red Sea to Ethiopia and India, that was popularly known as the “Incense Route’ because incense, spices and exotic goods were the main commodities that were traded along the route is the most probable link between the two territories. The route is believed to have run from the Mediterranean ports of Levant and Egypt through Southeastern Africa and Arabia to India and beyond.

Strabo, a Greek geographer, historian and philosopher of the ancient world (63 BC – 24 AD), said in his geography that:

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“Again, since the Romans have recently invaded Arabia, Felix with an army, of which Aelius Gallus, my friend and companion, was the commander, and since the merchants of Alexandria are already sailing with fleets by way of the Nile and of the Arabian Gulf as far as India, these regions also have become far better known to us of to day than to our predecessors. At any rate, when Gallus was prefect of Egypt, I accompanied him and ascended the Nile as far as Syene and the frontiers of Ethiopia, and I learned that as many as one hundred and twenty vessels were sailing from Myos Hormos to India, whereas formerly, under the Ptolemies, only a very few ventured to undertake the voyage and to carry on traffic in Indian merchandise.”¹⁰ This is a firsthand piece of information, since Strabo was not reporting what he had been told, rather he was recounting a personal experience. There was the sea route and it was quite active during his own time.

The Royal Chronicles claims that the Apostle Thomas evangelized Ethiopia while Origen links the name of the Apostle Matthew to the presence of Christianity in Ethiopia.¹¹ There is no evidence to prove or disprove either of these claims. Rufinus of Aquileia, a church historian, mentions the same but also tells us the story of two brothers, Frumentius and (Aedissius) Edesius, who were travelling on the sea with their tutor (others said that he was their uncle). Their ship was wrecked and their tutor died or as some sources said that the ship stopped at a port for supplies and it was attacked by the indigenes. The brothers survived and were captured and taken to Aksum where they were treated well. They were said to have been well educated and very intelligent and were tasked with instructing the son of the king, the crown prince Ezana. Moore Dale gave the sequence of events as follows:

A merchant vessel, belonging to Meropius, a Syrian trader, landed on the Ethiopian coast for provisions. The natives attacked the ship and murdered its crew. Only two sons of the merchant, Frumentius and Edesius, survived and they were taken captive to Aksum, the ancient capital. In time they impressed the king so much

with their ability that they were released from slavery and given important position at court.¹²

SalaminiusHermias Sozomen (c.375AD – 447AD), a 5th century AD church historian, who used the work of Rufinus as his source (Rufinus is believed to have been told about this by one of the brothers, Edesius) puts the sequence of event in India as follows:

In emulation, Meropius, a philosopher of Tyre in Phoenicia, journeyed as far as India. They say he was accompanied by two youths, named Frumentius and Edesius; they were his relatives; he conducted their rhetorical training, and educated them liberally. After exploring India as much as possible, he set out for home, and embarked in a vessel which was on the point of sailing for Egypt. It happened that, from want of water or some other necessary, the vessel was obliged to stop at some port, and the Indians rushed upon it and murdered all. Meropius included. These Indians had just thrown off their alliance with the Romans; they took the boys as living captives, because they pitied their youth, and conducted them to their king. He appointed the younger one his cup bearer; the older, Frumentius, he puts over his house and made him administrator of his treasures; for he perceived that he was intelligent and very capable in business. These youths served the king usefully and faithfully during a long course of years, and when he felt his end approaching, his sons and wife surviving, he rewarded the goodwill of the servants with liberty, and permitted them to go where they pleased.¹³

Sozomen gives more details regarding how Frumentius and Edesius got to Ethiopia and the fact that though they were taken prisoners but they found favour in the sight of the king who saw in them intelligent and knowledgeable persons and also

entrusted them with very important roles in his administration of the kingdom. The same was continued by the wife after the death of the king. It was with this freedom that Frumentius was said to have proclaimed the Christian faith in Ethiopia, though this did not happen until the death of the king. According to Sozomen, it was towards the end of the life of the king that the two young men regained their freedom and the queen requested that they remain to take charge of the public affairs of the kingdom. There is no evidence that the king was converted before his death but immediately after regaining their freedom, Frumentius enquired about the presence of Christians in the kingdom and found some with whom he prayed and he also built a house of prayer. Who are and where did the Christians that Frumentius found in the kingdom come from? We do not know but he is said to have found some with whom he prayed and also spread the faith in the kingdom.

It was during the reign of the son of the king, Ezana, after attaining the age whereby he could take charge of the kingdom, that the two brothers were allowed to depart from Aksum. Edesius was said to have returned home to Tyre, where he remained and was later ordained priest. Frumentius on the other hand went to Alexandria where he conferred with Athanasius (295/300 - 373), the head of the church in Alexandria at the time. He reported on the situation of things at Aksum while requesting for a bishop to continue the proclamation of the good news in the kingdom. Thereafter Sozomen said that: "Athanasius assembled the endemic priests, and consulted with them on the subject; and he ordained Frumentius bishop of India, since he was peculiarly qualified and apt to do much service among those among whom he was the first to manifest the name of Christian, and the participation in the doctrine was sown."¹⁴ Frumentius returned to Ethiopia and it was at this point that he evangelized and converted the king Ezana and his court. In the work quoted above, Sozomen consistently referred to the place where Frumentius and his brother were taken captives as India, this only further confirms the confusion of terms referred to at the

very beginning of this article regarding the territory.

The following questions, however are yet to be answered: who is Frumentius? When did he proclaim the gospel in Ethiopia? When did the king and his court adopt Christianity as the state religion? These questions will occupy the remaining part of this research work.

Frumentius

Very little is known about him. The first time we heard of him was with his brother Edesius and his tutor/uncle Meropius, the Syrian merchant. What is the relationship between the brothers and Meropius? Were they, his sons? Were they, his students? Were they, his companions? We do not know for certain what they were to him but they were together in the ship when it was attacked at the coast of Ethiopia and the brothers were the only surviving passengers. Voicu referred to him as the apostle of “India interior” who was consecrated bishop by Athanasius. His traditional identification as the first apostle of Ethiopia has been contested by Altheim and Stiehl.¹⁵

Scholars generally believe that the two brothers, Frumentius and Edesius (Aedesius), were students of Meropius, who is said to be a Christian Philosopher from Tyre, a region of modern Lebanon. Some affirmed him to be their uncle while others simply said that he was their teacher. Their ship on a return voyage to Tyre seems to be the beginning of the lives of the two brothers who were the only survivors of the attack or ship wreck at Adulis. They were taken captives but were favoured by the king who made Edesius his cupbearer and Frumentius his Secretary. On his death bed, the king liberated the brothers but the queen pleaded with them to assist her in the administration of the kingdom because her sons, Ezana and Sheazana (Shai’azana) were not of age. The brothers were also said to have educated the princes. They heeded the queen’s plea and it was during this time that Frumentius gradually began the work of evangelization with the encouragement of Christian merchants to worship openly. If their uncle/tutor was a Christian Philosopher, he must have influenced

them. When the princes were of age and capable of taking charge of the kingdom, the brothers left Aksum, one for Tyre and the other for Alexandria.

At Alexandria, Frumentius narrated his experience to Athanasius, the Patriarch of the city and appealed to him to send a bishop to the people so that the work of evangelization can continue. Athanasius is said to have consulted and the decision was made for Frumentius to be ordained bishop and sent back to Aksum. He returned to Aksum where he proclaimed the good news, especially in the court, Frumentius was loved by the people and was called Abuna, that is, father.

Why Frumentius went to Athanasius in Alexandria instead of Antioch is not clear, was it for proximity or because the Antiochene church at that time was Arian? Was it a calculated move? We really do not know but it was to Alexandria that he went. This move and the fact that Frumentius was consecrated by Athanasius linked Ethiopia to Egypt and this has also remained the fact in the Monophysite faith of both cities. He returned to Aksum after his consecration as bishop to continue his work, this was affirmed in the letter of Constantius, the Emperor to the king of Aksum and his brother. The Emperor had favoured Arian Christianity who had denied the full divinity of Christ. In the letter which Constantius addressed to the king of Aksum, he had requested that Frumentius should be expelled from the kingdom and be replaced by an Arian bishop. It reads in part:

Send therefore speedily into Egypt the Bishop Frumentius to the most venerable Bishop George, and the rest who are there, who have special authority to appoint to these offices, and to decide questions concerning them. For of course you know and remember (unless you alone pretend to be ignorant of that which all men are well aware of) that this Frumentius was advanced to his present rank by Athanasius, a man who is guilty of ten thousand crimes; for he has not been able fairly to clear himself of any of the charges brought against him, but was at once deprived of his

see, and now wanders about destitute of any fixed abode, and passes from one country to another, as if by this means he could escape his own wickedness. Now if Frumentius shall readily obey our commands, and shall submit to an enquiry into all the circumstances of his appointment, he will show plainly to all men, that he is in no respect opposed to the laws of the Church and the established faith. ... And our fear is lest he should pass over into Auxumis and corrupt your people, by setting before them accursed and impious statements, and not only unsettle and disturb the Churches, and blaspheme the supreme God, but also thereby cause utter overthrow and destruction to the several nations whom he visits. (*Apologia ad Constantium imperatorem*, 31)

The above quotation affirms all the facts about the ordination of Frumentius by Athanasius and his return to Aksum. George of Cappadocia who was referred to in the text was the Arian bishop who occupied the seat of Athanasius at Alexandria between 356 and 361 AD. He was the controversial successor of Athanasius after he had been exiled by Constantius in February of 356 AD. The above quoted letter has been dated 356 AD.

When, then, was Frumentius ordained the bishop of Ethiopia? When did Christianity become the state religion in Ethiopia? The early part of the fourth century is the most plausible date, though some have suggested the first half of the fifth century. The date of the episcopal consecration of Frumentius is not certain but it has been fixed between 326 and 331 AD when he returned to Aksum. It was after his return that the king Ezana was converted and it was after his conversion that the King declared Christianity as the state religion. The conversion of the king and declaration of Christianity as state religion are fixed for 333 AD. A German-Aksum expedition of 1906 discovered two inscriptions made by the king Ezana, the first declaration was made when he was still a pagan, it reads: "committed himself to the protection of Astar, and Beher, and Meder." The second on the other hand shows

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a Christian king who severally made reference to “the Lord of Heaven.” There were also coins issued by the same king in the later part of his reign with the Greek cross inscribed on them.¹⁶

Those who proposed a later date were led by Littmann, who while speaking of the two inscriptions of the king claimed that they belonged to a certain Tazana in the fifth century. Littmann gave a definite date of 450 AD in his article on “Abyssinia” in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, for the conversion of the kingdom to Christianity. This date is not supported by some basic facts, such as, Athanasius, the bishop who consecrated Frumentius, he died in 373 AD; Constantius who wrote the above quoted letter to king Ezana of Aksum died even earlier in 361 AD. It was also the death of Constantius that facilitated the murder of George of Cappadocia in the same year. The Emperor could not have been writing a letter from the grave, neither could he have been encouraging King Ezana to send Frumentius to a dead man.

The beginning of the second quarter of the fourth century is the most plausible date of consecration of Frumentius, conversion of King Ezana and the declaration of Christianity as a state religion. Moore supports the same date with the following summary:

Rufinus refers to the tradition that Frumentius converted the king of Aksum. The Chronicle records the that Ethiopia was converted to Christianity in 333. Constantius’ letter about Frumentius and Athanasius was written to the king of Aksum in the year 356. The two inscriptions found in the German-Aksum Expedition clearly indicate that, in the early part of his reign, Ezana was a pagan and that, in the latter part, he was a Christian. This fact about Ezana is further corroborated by the discovery of coins which tell the same story. The history of their lives shows that Edesius and Frumentius were always serious Christians¹⁷

Rufinus is said to have translated the work of Eusebius “*Historia Ecclesiastica*” and added two books to it between 402 and 403 AD. The additional two books concluded with the death of Emperor Theodosius in 395 AD. This work was used by Sozomen and others. Rufinus died in Sicily in 410 AD. All these facts foreclose further discussion of any other date other than the beginning of the second quarter of the fourth century. We are sure now that Frumentius evangelized Aksum but how did he carry out his mission and what was the content of his mission are unknown to us. There is no evidence regarding these. Most probably what he did was the conversion of the king and the court which led to the declaration of Christianity as the state religion.

Monasticism in the late fifth Century

The close relationship between Egypt and Ethiopia regarding the faith was established by the visit of Frumentius to Athanasius, the Patriarch of Alexander. It was more a relationship of dependency, Ethiopia depended on Egypt even until recently for the appointment of her bishops. When Egypt chose the Monophysite faith (a doctrine that teaches that in the incarnate Word, that is, Jesus Christ there is only one nature, that is, the divine nature, invariably negating the consubstantiality of the humanity of Jesus with us. This doctrine was condemned by the council of Chalcedon’s acceptance of dyophysitism 451 AD) immediately after the Council of Chalcedon, Ethiopia also made the same choice. This was a disadvantage to the development of the Christian faith in Ethiopia. This closed the country completely from Europe. It was also from Egypt in the last quarter of the fifth century that a party of monks known as the “Nine Saints”¹⁸ arrived Ethiopia from Egypt. They are Abba Aftse, Abba Alef, Abba Aragawi, Abba Garima (Isaac, or Yeshaq), Abba Guba, Abba Liqanos, Abba Pantelewon, Abba Sehma, and Abba Yem’ata.¹⁹

The arrival of these monks, usually said to have all come from Syria but this has since been negated. They are from various parts of the ancient Roman Empire. Only two or three

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of them were from Syria, the rest were from Rome, Anatolia, Cilicia and Constantinople. Their arrival is said to have been of utmost importance to the development and growth of the church in Ethiopia around 480 AD. They were Monophysites definitely and were running away from the persecution that has ensued due to the rejection of their form of the faith by the Council of Chalcedon. They propagated the faith among the people and made Christianity known in the nooks and crannies of Aksum and environs. They learned the language of the people, founded monasteries especially in the Tigre region, made translations of sacred books into Ge'ez the native language, developed the liturgy and propagated the faith. Moore using the words of Kammerer puts it thus:

They completed the spiritual conquest of the country, and founded the liturgy. Tradition honors them with the introduction of liturgical music. Each of them became the namesake of a great monastery or a great shrine. They definitely established the Monophysite Church in Abyssinia. Their role in the local hagiography is immense. Each of the event remains happily attributed to them and it can be said that for fourteen hundred years they have dominated the religious life of countries.²⁰

Conclusion

With the work of evangelization carried out by the monks mentioned above and their disciples, Christianity spread far and wide in the kingdom and continued to flourish in the sixth century. However, the beginning of the seventh century saw the advent of Islam in Ethiopia. Between the seventh and the thirteenth century very little is known of the activities of the faith in Aksum but it was said that in the tenth century, Queen Judith of Samen seized and destroyed Aksum. The middle of the thirteenth century saw another round of evangelization in Ethiopia again by Monks from Egypt.

Christianity came into Ethiopia through the court official who was converted and baptized by Philip, in the first century but there was not much to show for it. Frumentius, the apostle of Ethiopia, proclaimed the faith to the court during the reign of Ezana in the fourth century, after he had been consecrated bishop of Ethiopia by Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria. With the efforts of Frumentius, Christianity became the state religion but did not spread beyond the court. With the advent of the ‘Nine Monks’ Christianity spread further to the hinterlands of Ethiopia, churches were built, monasteries were established, liturgical and sacred books were translated into the native language and liturgical music was also developed. The advent of Islam brought all these to a halt, just as it did in Egypt.

Endnotes

¹Baur John, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History*, 2nd Ed., Pauline Publications, Kenya, 2009. He said that: “The name ‘Aethiopia’ was later extended from Nubia to the whole of Africa south of the Sahara and by ‘Aethiopian’ was meant a member of the Negro race. Modern Ethiopia was rather associated with India and later called Abyssinia by outsiders but the country itself stuck to the biblical name Ethiopia, connected with its legendary origin.” P.31. There was also a confusion of terms regarding the geographical limitation of Ethiopia. In their usage, they could have been referring to Nubia or Egypt or even India.

²Lewis Emmanuel, “African claims to Christian Origin”, in *Agora: A Journal of Philosophical and Theological Studies*, vol. 1, Abeokuta, 2020, pp. 132-151

³Cush is believed to have extended from southern Egypt into much of Sudan on modern maps. In the Old Testament, Cush is associated with the countries south of Israel. “The Cushites appear to have spread along extensive tracts, stretching from the Upper Nile to the Euphrates and Tigris. At an early period there was a stream of migration of Cushites “from Ethiopia, properly so called, through Arabia, Babylonia, and Persia, to Western

India.”The Hamite races, soon after their arrival in Africa, began to spread north, east, and west. Three branches of the Cushite or Ethiopian stock, moving from Western Asia, settled in the regions contiguous to the Persian Gulf.” Cf. <https://christiananswers.net/dictionary/cush.html> viewed on 20/05/2021 @ 9.19pm. This hypothesis is currently been contested. The new argument is to the effect that it was the Greek translators of the bible that have used the term Aithiopia to represent Cush/Kush and this misrepresentation has been accepted by many as indicating modern day Ethiopia. cf. Unseth Peter, Hebrew Kush: Sudan, Ethiopia or where? I have decided to stick to the former argument for this article.

⁴The *KebreNegast* is the title of the legendary origins of the Solomonic Dynasty: “Queen Makeda, who took the Ethiopian throne in the 10th century BC travelled to Jerusalem to learn to be a good ruler from king Solomon, who agreed to take Makeda as his student and taught her how to be a good queen. Queen Makeda was so impressed with Solomon that she converted to Judaism and provided Solomon with many gifts. Before Makeda returned home, the two had a son together. Solomon had a dream in which God said that Makeda’s son would be the head of a new order. In response, he sent Makeda home but told her to send their son back to Jerusalem when he came of age to be taught Jewish lore and law. Makeda did as she was told and sent Menelik I, their son, to Jerusalem to be taught by Solomon, who offered to make him the prince of Jerusalem. However, Menelik declined and instead returned to Ethiopia, anointed by his father and God to be king of Ethiopia. Cf. Baur John, Op. cit., p.34 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Ethiopia (viewed 1/28/2021 @9.46am)

⁵<http://www.ethiopiantreasures.co.uk/pages/religion.htm> (viewed 1/28/2021 @10am)

⁶Karbo Tony, Religion and Social Cohesion in Ethiopia, in International Journal of Peace and Development studies, 2013, p. 45

⁷Baur John, Op. cit., p. 31

⁸Brown Raymond et al. ed., *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Theological Publications, Bangalore, 1992, p. 743

⁹<https://www.britannica.com/place/Aksum-Ethiopia> (viewed on 9/2/21 @ 8.30am). Cf. Karbo Tony, op.cit., p. 44

¹⁰Strabo, II, 5, 12 - http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Strabo/2E1*.html (viewed on 3/02/2021 @ 1.09pm)

¹¹Glas Anton, *Die Kirchengeschichte des Gelasios von Kaisareia*, *Byzantinisches Archiv*, Heft 6

¹²Moore Dale, *Christianity in Ethiopia*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 271-272, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3160789> (viewed on 28/01/2021 @ 9.27am)

¹³Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, (II. 24) in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol.2, Henry Schaff and Henry Wace ed., Hendrickson Publishers, Massachusetts, 2004, p.274. cf. Rufinus, H.E., I. 9 and Theodoret H.E., I. 23. H.E. here refers to *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

¹⁴Ibid. cf. Athanasius, *Apologia ad Constantium imperatorem*, 29-31. Frumentius was called Abba Salama of Axum (the Father of Peace of Aksum).

¹⁵Voicu S.J, Frumenzio, in *Nuovo Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane*, F – O, diretto da Angelo Di Berardino, Genova, 2007, pp. 2010-2011

¹⁶Moore Dale, op. cit., pp.272-273

¹⁷Ibid., p. 275

¹⁸Littmann Enno, “*Geschichte der äthiopischen Litteratur*,” in *Geschichte der christlichen Litteraturen des Orients*, p. 194

¹⁹Bhawaan Tatavarthy, *Ethiopian Saints in*

²⁰Moore Dale, op. cit, pp.276-277: *Ils sachevèrent la conquête spirituelle du pays, et fondèrent la liturgie. La tradition leur fit honneur de l'introduction de la musique liturgique. Chacun d'eux devint l'éponyme d'un grand monastère ou d'un grand sanctuaire. Ils établirent définitivement en Abyssinie l'église Monophysite. Leur rôle dans l'hagiographie locale est immense. Chaque événement heureux leur fut attribué et l'on peut dire que depuis quatorze cents ans il ont dominé la vie religieuse de pays.*

Ntui, Victor Ntui

**MAO TSE-TUNG'S SOCIO-POLITICAL THOUGHTS AND
CHINA'S BREAK-THROUGHS: IMPLICATIONS
FOR NIGERIA**

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Abstract

In this article, 'Mao Tse-Tung's socio-political thoughts and China's breakthrough', implication for Nigeria, I posit, that authentic development that is integral and holistic is not something that one just stumbles upon, or something that happens by accident. It is rather something that requires good vision, careful planning and great sacrifice on the part of all the stakeholders. The contention of this article is that China got her breakthrough through the visionary leadership of Mao and his foresight in planning. He carefully looked at agriculture, homo-culture and industry as areas that needed real attention. The three areas were key to China's breakthrough. The paper argues that Nigeria can take a clue from China to re-plan her developmental needs in the socio-political thoughts of Mao as highlighted in the paper. The paper uses the philosophical method of analysis.

Keywords: Mao Tse-Tung, Socio-political thought, breakthrough, implication, for Nigeria.

Introduction

Mao Tse-Tung: A Profile

Before us is an outstanding Chinese socio-political thinker. He is perhaps the most decorated Chinese philosopher, GREAT REVOLUTIONARY leader, who attempted to apply Marxism

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to Chinese situation. Emmanuel Hsu describes him thus, “to many Mao was personification of Chinese communism and China without Mao is inconceivable.”¹ Such is the caliber of the philosopher before us.

In this presentation, we intend to examine his philosophical ideas to see how useful they can be to us in our peculiar situation in Nigeria. As we do this, it may be necessary to look at his profile.

He was born on December 26, 1893 in Shao – Shan, Hunan province. As a child, he studied the traditional Confucian classics. He did most of his studies on his own because he lacked funds to pay his fees. In 1919, he started active political life in organizing groups and publishing political reviews, while supporting himself as a primary school teacher. He was married four times and was said to be a lover of women. Zhisui Li, Mao’s physician said of him, “Mao had aversion for bathing and was also a chain smoker.”² He was a founding member of the Chinese communist party in 1921 and the leader of the Hunan branch. He concentrated mainly on labour organizations, party organization, propaganda, and the peasant movement training institute. His 1912 “report on the peasant in Hunan” expressed his views of the revolutionary potentials of the peasantry. Though at this stage it was not yet phrased in the proper Marxian form. He empowered the masses and made them know that true power belongs to them and without them, the exercise of that power is impossible.

Later that year Chiang Kai-Shek took control of the Kuomintang after the death of Sun Yat-Sen, reversed the party policy of cooperation with the communists and purged all communist from the movement. This made Mao to flee to the country side. On the mountain of the Southern part of China, he established with Chu Teh a rural base defended by a guerrilla army. It was the singular innovation of the fusion of the communist leadership with a guerilla force operating in rural areas with peasant support that was to make Mao, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party, from now on, (CCP). In 1930,

following their growing military power they were able to resist the Russia – controlled CCP leadership. In 1931, despite criticism of his policies and his weak position in the party, a Chinese soviet was founded in Juichin, Kiangsi province, with Mao as chairman.

This was followed by a series of extermination campaign by Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist government that forced CCP to abandon Juichin in October 1934 and to commence the Great March. At Tsun-1 in Kwichow Mao for the first time gained effective control of the CCP, thus ending the era of Russia direction of party leadership. Remnant of the communist forces reached China in October, 1934 after a march of 10,000km (6,000 miles). They then established a new party headquarters at Yen-an.

In 1937, the Japanese invasion forced CCP and the Kuomintang to once again form a united front, the communist gained legitimacy as defender of Chinese homeland and Mao rose in stature as a national leader. During this period he established himself as military theorist and through the publication, in 1937 of such essays as "on contradiction," and 'on practice,' laid claim to recognition as an important Marxist thinker. Mao's essay "On New Democracy" (1940) outlined a unique national form of Marxism appropriate to China. "His talks at the Yen-an Forum on literature and Art" provided a base for party control over cultural affairs.

The soundness of Mao's self-reliance and the rural guerilla strategies accelerated the growth of CCP, during the Yen-an period, from 40,000 members in 1937 to 1,200,000 in 1945. The shaky relationship between the communists and the nationalist was broken at the end of the war. Efforts were made by the United State in particular to form a coalition government. This failed and civil war erupted that lasted for almost three years 1946-1949. At this war, Kuomintang was defeated and Chiang Kai-Shek's government was forced to flee to Taiwan leaving the Peoples Republic of China, formed by the communist in late 1949, in full control of the entire Chinese mainland.

Mao tried to re-establish relationship with the United States in the late 1940s but this attempt was rebuffed. Mao then concluded that China would have to “lean on one side” and a period of close alliance with the USSR started. The Korean war further helped to solidify China’s relationship with the United States. During the 1950s, Mao served in various capacities in the party as chairman of the communist party, chief of state, and chairman of the military commission. His international status as a Marxist leader rose after the death of the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in 1953.

In 1957, Mao showed his commitment to continued class struggle under socialism in his treatise, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People.” Dissatisfaction with the slow pace of development, loss of revolutionary momentum in the countryside, and the tendency for CCP members to behave like the privileged class, led Mao to take a number of radical and unusual initiatives in the late 1950s. In the Hundred Flower Movement of 1956-1957, he encouraged intellectuals to make constructive criticism of the party leadership. This revealed some hostility for CCP leadership, Mao then started the process of accelerating the transformation of rural ownership by calling for the last vestiges of rural private property and the formation of the people’s communes and the initiation of rapid industrial development through a programme known as the “Great Leap Forward.” The suddenness of these moves, like it is typical of all changes, met with stiff resistance and administrative confusion and lapses. Further, the situation was aggravated by adverse weather conditions that led to a drastic drop in crop production and severe food shortages. As a consequence of all these negative indices, Mao lost his position as the chief of state and his influence over the party was greatly curtailed. During this time also, Mao’s government began to reveal its differences with the USSR.

In the 1960s, Mao tried to make a comeback, by attacking the new party leadership and the chief of state through a programme known as “the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution between 1959 and 1966. This revolution was championed by Mao’s wife Chang Ch’ing. This revolution was perhaps Mao’s greatest

innovation and it was essentially an ideological struggle for public opinion, carried out in form of frantic public debates. In this, he proved to be a master tactician. Students mobilized as “Red Guards,” and became his avid supporters

On the popular level, the thrust of the Cultural Revolution was to teach the Chinese people that it was “right to revolt and that it was also their privilege to criticize those in authority and also to take active part in decision making. During this revolution, Mao’s sayings were printed in a little, Red Book and buttons bearing his image. These were distributed to the masses. His word was treated as an ultimate authority and his person the subject of ecstatic adulation. He continued to state his position and his belief in the Leninist’s notion of collective party leadership. In his humility, he asked that the number of statues of him be reduced.

Towards the end of his life, Mao put forward a new analysis of the international scene in which the world states are divided in three groups.

1. The under-developed nations
2. Developed nations
3. The two super power (USA & USSR). Both of which seek worldwide hegemony. In this analysis, China’s position emerged as the leader of the Third World (the under-developed).

In his foreign policies, since China’s relationship with USSR was beginning to normalise, he aligned with the United States. In 1972, Mao lent his prestige to this policy by receiving the US President Richard M. Nixon in Peking. Mao died on September 9, 1976. According to some sources, his last words were, “I feel ill, call the doctor”²³

After his death, the following month, Chang Ch’ing, his wife and her radical associates known as the “Gang of Four” were arrested. In the same vein his chosen successor, HuaKuo-Feng, was also stripped of his position and the party came under

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the control of moderates led by TengHsiao – P'ing. In 1981, the party criticized the excesses of the Cultural Revolution while praising Mao for his leadership in earlier years. The constitution of 1982 stated that, economic cooperation and progress were more important than class struggles and banned all forms of personality cult. During the 1980s, a general movement away from Mao's beliefs was noted and his status was removed from a number of cities throughout China. In 1989, a member of the central advisory commission to communist party wrote in an official newspaper the "Guangming Daily," that "Mao was a great man who embodied the calamities of the Chinese People, but in his last years he made big mistake over a long period and the result was great disaster for the people and the country. He created a historical tragedy."

Along with the founders of the Han and Ming dynasties, Mao Tse-Tung was one of only three peasants who rose to rule all of China in a single life time. Mao's greatest achievements were the unification of China through the destruction of Nationalists power, the creation of a unified People's Republic and the leadership of the greatest social revolution in human history. The revolution consisted in the collectivization of most lands and property, the destruction of landlord class, the weakening of the urban bourgeoisie and the elevation of the status of peasants and individual workers. As a Marxist thinker and leader of a socialist state, Mao gave theoretical legitimacy to the continuation of class struggles in the socialist communist development. He stressed the importance of land re-distribution for the benefit of the rural peasantry and his theories have had strong influence on the non-industrialized Third World. Mao was undoubtedly the key figure in China in the Twentieth century and one of the country's most important movers and reformers His ideas varied from flexible pragmatism to utopic vision. He published 40 poems written in classical tradition, political messages. He is worshipped by millions, but also considered as one of the most brutal dictators of the 20th century who undertook some of the most radical experiment in human history. Though dead and gone for years

now, his ideology is still hotly debated even today.

His Works

1. Chinese Revolution and the Communist Party, 1940
2. 'On New Democracy,' 1940
3. 'On the correct handling of contradictions among the people' 1957.
4. Strategic problems of China's Revolutionary War, 1963
5. On the Rectification of Incorrect Ideas in the Party, 1953
6. Mao Zedong "On People's War. 1967
7. Quotation from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, 1965
8. Essay 'On Contradiction,' 1973
9. 'On Practice' 1973
10. 40 poems

Mao Tse-Tung: His Socio-Political Thoughts

Mao Tse-Tung's political philosophy is Marxian in character. His vision was the "*Chinazation*" of Marxist socialism: Sino-socialism. He was a revolutionary thinker, a great economic theorist, political leader, poet, statesman and pragmatic philosopher. His ideas rotated around, the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the peasants, his economic policies; the Five Year Plan 1953, the Great Leap Forward, 1958, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966, the restructuring of democracy, New Democracy, the Fundamental Programme and the Specific Programme, the Politics of the Chinese Communist Party etc. All these are the areas we shall consider as we reflect on his political thought. Mao was a great revolutionary thinker. Edward Friedman raised the question, "was Mao Zedong a re-revolutionary?"⁴ In the answer he himself provided, he said "even to raise the question, was Mao a re-revolutionary? Seem perverse as virtually all through his political life, Mao self-consciously pursued revolution. He is universally recognized as a leading revolutionary both as theorist and an activist."⁵ Mao was a revolutionary communist and his communism was communism of war. He states, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a

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gun and on the pen”⁶ In another text he said, “A revolution is not the same as inviting people to dinner or writing an essay, or painting a picture. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which a class over throws another.”⁷ The thrust of the Cultural Revolution was to teach the people that they had the right and that it was right to revolt, to criticize the government, and to take part in decision making. This revolutionary trait accelerated participation in the reformation process. Lowell and Liu noted in this respect:

Only the thoughts of Mao Tse-tung is able to inspire us to go from victory to victory... if we want the revolution to succeed. This is impossible without the right leadership Mao Tse-tung is the greatest revolutionary leader of the people of China and we should learn from him⁸.

He was a revolutionary leader with a vision who inspired his followers. He preached in his revolutionary ideas the inequality of men; that only the poor are honest fellows and that to treat the rest as if they were entitled to the same right would be to abandon the class struggler which is the very motive and power of the revolution⁹. Mao was a revolutionary with great personal conviction, never giving up the fighting spirit and determination. This is a serious requirement for leaders today. Leaders need the foresight to embark on acts that are capable of changing the tides. African leaders have a lot to learn from Mao.

His Sino Socialism/Communism

Marxism according to the followers of Marx and Engels was necessitated by some conditions in the material process of history (Dialectical materialism and historical materialism). The collapse of capitalism which bears in itself the seed of its own destruction is the most determining of these conditions. Its own-throw ushered in socialism. Mao saw how viable this orientation was and modified it to suit the situation and problems of China. He believed that coping effectively with China’s fundamental

problems would be possible only in a socialist society in which the real interest of the people; long suffering and desperately poor, would be uppermost¹⁰ He noted that for socialism to take root in China, China needed to extricate itself from the shackles of foreign and feudal oppression.

It is impossible for the Chinese people to institute a socialist state system at the present stage when it is still their task to fight foreign and feudal oppression and the necessary social and economic conditions for a socialist state are still lacking¹¹

So the first challenge for him was to fight what he calls the foreign aggressor, (e.g. Japan colonial and semi colonial, feudal and semi-feudal structure). This is what he called the Fundamental Programme. It must be stated clearly, for any nation to accelerate the process of her growth, she must re-consider her internal policies against her foreign policies as a matter of priority. The home-needs must supersede the foreign needs.

The Fundamental Programme And New Democracy

The fundamental programme forms the general arm of the basic policy of the CCP under Mao. While the other arm consisted in what he called the specific. It is “a thorough-going bourgeoisie democratic revolution, led by the communist party... aimed at developing a new democratic economy based on three sectors – private – state – co-operation. All this is directed to create the development of the conditions that would form the foundation for socialism and communism¹² What Mao calls the new democracy which is a “united front and a democratic alliance based on the overwhelming majority of the people under the leadership of the working class”¹³ He outlined three ways to bring this about.

1. No big bourgeoisie led state system as the fascist, feudal or antipopular.
2. No purely national bourgeoisie state, a new awakening of the

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proletariat and its leadership has appeared.

3. Need to do away with the present foreign and feudal oppression¹⁴

He noted in the coalition government thus, “the politics of the new democracy which we advocate consist in the over-throw of external oppression and of internal feudal and fascist oppression, and then the setting up not of the old type of democracy but of a new political system which is a united front of all the democratic classes”¹⁵ Even when all this is done class struggle will continue but it would be peaceful and non-antagonistic.

The Elements Of A New Democracy

The politics of the new democracy will emerge with a new economy and new culture. It is not the bourgeois democratic revolution, but the proletarian social revolution not be dictated by the bourgeois with the aim of establishing a capitalist society and bourgeois dictatorship. It is aimed at establishing a new democracy and a joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes. The three major elements of the new democracy include:

1. Politics
2. New Economy
3. New Culture. This is equally based on the three people’s principles of new democracy, nationality and livelihood (socialism)

These principles were also upheld by Sun Yat-Sen’s party (The Kuomintang). According to Sun Yat-Sen nationalism should uphold the people’s solidarity or unity and sense of freedom from sovereign subjugation. Democracies uphold the people’s sovereignty and livelihood is meant to be the state socialism.¹⁶

Chinese Communist Party And Its Politics

Mao Tse-tung assumed leadership of the party when he was elected Chairman of the Central Committee) on January 13,

1935. In 1949, the communist party proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China; this set the stage for the implementation of the party's programme geared towards the establishment of Sino socialism (communism.) There were two fundamental programmes of the party; the minimum and the maximum fundamental programmes. Minimum programme was the starting point while the maximum programme was culmination leading up to socialism, through a democratic process. The first step was mass mobilization of the people to what CCP calls the government of the "people's – democratic united front," the government of the proletariat. This mass mobilization of the people as Wang opined is. "At the heart of Mao's political philosophy... the concept of "from the masses to the masses," commonly known as the mass line"¹⁷Briefly stated, the concept, of the mass line specifies that a party policy is good only if the ideas of that policy come originally from the masses¹⁸ This mass mobilization or mass line is considered as Mao's theoretical contribution to populism"¹⁹

In any truly democratic setting, the people/masses are the most important segment that should be given the attention. Any government that is not people driven, people-oriented, is no government at all. Friedman contends that, "whoever claims to represent the people's interest... must enter into dialogue with the people. Academic credentials are truly valuable, a degree worth even more, but without democracy, we don't have either"²⁰ Democracy must serve the public interest and all the time seeks after the public good.

This maximum programme whose culmination is socialism/communism also had an extended three phase socio-economic dimension. These are:

1. Land reform programme
2. The collectivization of peasant working class groups, mutual aid terms, (embryonic socialism)
3. The people commune – this undertook the common ownership of all property, the genesis of communal living. This includes

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eating together, common education and nurture.

What this portends for Nigeria is the need for reforms in all sectors to re-understand the meaning of developmental plans that are capable of transforming the polity if politics is to yield its dividends.

Great Leap Forward 1958

The Great Leap Forward which Mao introduced was an industrial as well as an agricultural programme which was aimed at revolutionizing and transforming the economy. The Great Leap Forward was Mao's attempt to modernize China's economy. It took place in 1958. His target was that by 1988, China economy should rival America's he had discovered that the Chinese people were capable of doing anything. He hinged on two tasks, industry and agriculture. He had a five years plan (1958-1963). It was this plan that was called the Great Leap Forward. China was thus divided into communes. Members of the commune gave up their ownership of tools, animals, land, etc. to communal ownership. People now worked for the commune and not for themselves. The Great Leap Forward was a movement geared towards self-reliance which drew inspiration from the voluntary spirit of the people motivated by a new moral discipline rather than upon monetary gains only. Mao wanted the people to go into agricultural and industrial activities. He urged the people to go into farming to cultivate enough food to sustain the growing population as well and for export, as a prime duty. In addition to this, he reasoned that for agriculture to thrive, farmers would need tools and implements to work especially in the mechanized farming system that he had in mind. He wanted the Chinese people to be able to manufacture and not import these machines. Though, this did not meet with the much desired success. It was nevertheless innovative and backed up with good will. The peasants were ill-trained for this kind of gigantic industrialization plan.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

When the Great Leap Forward could not produce its desired results, especially following the disasters that the people suffered; Mao tried to stage a comeback to popularity by introducing the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which peaked from 1966-1969. It was largely orchestrated by Mao's wife, Chang Ch'ing. It was seen as Mao's greatest innovation. It was essentially an ideological struggle for public opinion carried out in form of a frantic national debate. On the popular level, the thrust of the Cultural Revolution was to teach the Chinese people that it was right and their right to revolt; that it was also their privilege to criticize those in positions of authority and to take an active part in decision making. He was so explicit on his position of collective leadership. The cultural foolish, ignorant, un-informed, or deformed, mal-informed masses may be difficult if not impossible to govern. Political, civic and electioneering enlightenment are necessary today in Nigeria more than ever to properly prepare the people for active, meaningful and fruitful participation in the political process. An enlightened people are easier to lead.

This is a timely lesson for Nigeria, as we struggle to stabilize our democracy. This Cultural Revolution also did not yield the desired results. It was criticized after Mao's death. His politics in command was replaced by economy in command. His economic politics could not liberate China from poverty and backwardness. But this should not detract the veracity of its ideals. Though the fruits were not immediately visible, today China is a leading world power and a force to be reckoned with in all strata of development. China has an economy that is robust and stable.

Mao Tse-Tung: His Contribution To Chinese History

Mao, it is true, towers as an Iroko in Chinese history. Hsu says of him:

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The Chinese Lenin and Stalin combined was sanctified as an all-knowing, all wise, demigod, who could do no wrong. Million's waved the "*Little Red Book*" of quotation from Chairman Mao, chanting its passages like magic formula that could turn defeat into victory. He was an incredible cult of personality that surprised even Stalin's. The wonder was not so much that Mao permitted it, but that 900 million believed in it. Perhaps, they really didn't but for a time they acted as if they did²¹

A good leader must pull people to believe in him and his policies so that they harness the support that he needs to succeed.

Until his death, Chairman Mao, was a voice to be heard, a man to be seen, in China, he was worshipped as if a god. Chen says of him, "in the heart of many, Mao Zedong is still a mysterious figure, a god that appears only once every 500 years"²² He was indeed a mysterious as well as a mystifying figure, difficult to understand, looking good and bad at the same time. It is in this line of argument that, Bo Yibo exclaimed that, "how to evaluate Mao's thoughts and his historical position has been a very complex and sensitive problem"²³ Mao Tse-Tung appears to be a controversial man, a man of many sides. A college student put the official contrast between the good early Mao and the bad late Mao more pointedly, "he liberated China saving 400 million people. He mobilized the Cultural Revolution ruining 800 million citizens"²⁴ In spite of all the bad sides of him in his later days he is still venerated in China as a great socio-political philosopher. Even though, Wang sees him as much more complex person than has commonly been portrayed²⁵ Many have idolized him as a cosmic mystery. Friedman's fascination is exciting. He said of him:

He is moreover the emperor at the apex of new communist world, the vicar on earth of the new cosmic principles of Marxism – Leninism, which orders the universe.... His propagandists depict him as one whose

word is gospel on every subject.... He is in fact the latest of a long time of Chinese supermen²⁶

Along with the founders of the Han and Ming dynasties, Mao Tse-tung was one of only three peasants who rose to rule all of China in a single life time. His greatest achievements lay in the unification of China through the destruction of the Nationalist power, the creation of a unified People's Republic and leadership of the greatest social revolution in history. His theories have also influenced not only China but the non-industrialized Third World. In Nigeria, there are also leaders and heroes whose political convictions, ideologies and moral probity can inspire us to greatness as we grapple with developmental needs.

Mao Tse-Tung: His Other Side – Failures

Mao Tse-tung though innovative in his ideologies, met with some failures. He was criticized and his policies abandoned. In fact his death was seen as a welcome relief by many.

On the occasion of the 57th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist party, in 1978, a speech made by Mao in 1962, was reprinted to show that he confessed to mistakes and ignorance of economic planning, industry and commerce:

In socialist construction we are still acting blindly to a very large degree.... I myself do not understand many problems in the work of economic construction... or much about industry and commerce. I understand something about agriculture but only relatively and in a limited way... when it comes to productive forces I know very little.²⁷

This speech is very revealing of his inadequacies and incompetence in driving homes his programmes. Hsu says, "the underlying message could not have been clearer – Mao was not an omniscient deity, but a fallible human being."²⁸ And so if he is a human being then he must be fallible. Hsu also contended that

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Mao's mistakes were greater than people realized.²⁹

Mao, it has been said created a state that could not deal with modern challenges and his ideals and ideas were not intended to advance democratic freedom. His politics of command actually alienated society from the state rather than building a 'United Nation.'³⁰ A meaningful revolution ought to bring changes, freedom to the people; from all camps, (left, right) and making them see themselves as if coming from a concentration camp, reconciling our differences through our experiences.

Mao, from all these, it doesn't seem prepared himself sufficiently for the task ahead or perhaps, he did not consider the seriousness of the task before him. He is quoted to have said, "I am a person with many shortcomings... I have only begun recently to study economics, but... I study with determination, and will go on till I die... otherwise when the time comes for me to see Marx, I shall be in a fix, if he ask me question I can't answer, what shall I do (attributed to Mao Tse-tung, 159)³¹ Against this background Mao Tse-tung can be appreciated for his good will and honest effort to transform the socio-economic life of his people. Today, Mao is a great figure in Chinese history.

China After Mao's Death

A lot changed after Mao's death. China was greeted with fresh air that woke them up from their slumber, to the realization of the stark reality before them. Thus the imposing personality that Mao wielded, the superman figure that mystifies, suddenly evaporated. What followed was a period of *de-maofication* of Mao, his demigod status was questioned in public. An article in the historical journal remarked "that even the most far-sighted and resourceful of historical figures should not be considered as gods." He came to be seen as an ordinary human being with no extra-ordinary qualities. He was attacked in a number of ways some said he was a comrade, not a chairman, a mortal with earthly origin not a deity with heavenly origin. His statue and cult were destroyed, the Red Guard, a Symbol of Mao's cultural revolution was dissolved, his economic policies criticized as empty, and

incompatible with historical situation in China. His cultural revolution was seen as anti-cultural and he was held responsible for losses suffered in the agricultural, industrial, educational sectors etc. In education generations were left untrained, and scholars were denied years of teaching and research. It is as a result of all these short-comings in his policies, that his death was seen as a welcome relief.

Chairman Mao was a great visionary leader who knew exactly the practical demands of good leadership and its impact on the people and on all aspects of developments. He was a courageous leader with a very high sense of determination and conviction. Only a leader of that calibre can dare the revolutionary and transformative initiatives that he brought to bear on his administrative strategies. He was a leader who was far ahead of his contemporaries. Through hindsight and foresight, he read the handwriting on the wall and interpreted the signs of the time in his appreciation of the "*sitzimLeben*" (the situation at hand). He saw that only a revolution and transformative programmes through good planning can salvage China from the shackles of poverty, the grip of economic backwardness and technological and industrial advancement. All his programmes were carefully thought out. What perhaps was lacking was the nitty-gritty of its implementation. It appears China was not ripe for the kind of revolution and transformation that Mao clearly conceived. Though his last days were turbulent and tragic for him and for China, he nevertheless remained a colossus, an Iroko, an elephant and a giant, in his dreams and visions. Though after his death, a lot was done to *de-mao* (demystify) his cult and to discredit his initiatives, it is to his credit that China is where and what it is today. Today, there is basically no aspect of life that China has no influence on. That was the far dream of Chairman Mao.

Implication For Nigeria

Leadership is basic and central to any meaningful development in any country. It serves as a guide or pointer

in policy design and implementations. It appears Nigeria's leadership lacks both the vision and the determination. There are clearly defined developmental initiatives capable of transforming the country. What perhaps may be lacking is that our leaders are not purposeful in their drives and search for values and in their determination and political will to pursue their ideals set out in their policy frame work. Self-interest and egocentrism seem to be the "political god" of our leaders as they see their position as their opportunities to enrich themselves and not the masses and the society. The Great Leap Forward was Mao's thirty year plan for development. It was a movement geared towards self-reliance which drew inspiration from the voluntary spirit of the people who were motivated by a new moral discipline rather than money. This moral motivation is what is needed to move the Nigerian society forward. Mao Tse-Tung has offered us a clear vision of what leadership ought to be. In his Sino – socialism/communism, he outlined his policies and administrative plans. They laid emphasis on the masses as the principal driving force. For any government and for governance to be productive and efficient, it must be people based in what Mao called collective leadership and participatory governance.

Democracy should serve public interest and should all the time seek the people's welfare. The politics of the new democracy will emerge with a new economy and a new culture. Democratic culture and institutions are indispensable for good governance. These are grossly lacking today in the polity. Democracy has not yet become a culture. It is still built on personalities and not on institutions. Personalities come and go but institutions remain when these are solidly built.

The thrust of the 'cultural revolution' was to teach the people that they had the right and that it was right to revolt, to criticize the government and to take part in the decision-making process. Mao made it clear in his intra party structure that the intellectuals had the role of making constructive criticisms of the party's stewardship to create room for internal democracy. He

emphasized it to the masses that true democratic powers belong to the people and that without them the exercise of that power was impossible.

It is obvious from these considerations that Mao's democratic ideals and policies have strong influence in establishing democracy even in Nigeria today.

Furthermore, Chairman Mao in his Sino – Socialism/communism, has also left a lesson for Nigeria's leadership, that a time comes when our foreign policies must also look at the developmental aspect of the economy. Foreign policy is not all about, politics, power – influence, social reputation, 'big brother' where our resource are wasted in defense of other countries. During those trying moments, Mao, looked backward and inward and said that the development of China rested on the shoulders of the Chinese people. Though he drew inspiration from Marxian – Leninist socialism, he adopted it to the real situation in China. Nigeria can do the same. Socialism is foreign to us. We have always been, from antiquity a communal people. Privatization of core government facilities of public utility should be reviewed. Nigeria has all the prospects of becoming a rich and a great nation, if leadership and policies are well channeled.

Conclusion

For any meaning development to take place in any society, the leaders must have the political will that is backed up by a well ordered developmental plan. This developmental plan must align with the real needs of the society. In most African countries, these kinds of developmental plans are lacking. In places where there are, they are mostly too distract without bearing on the needs of the people. Developmental plans should not be stretched beyond measurable durations. This enables quick re-assessment and adjustments to be made. These plans should cut across the essentials areas required for development. Areas of comparative advantage are better in this consideration.

In the Nigerian society, these plans should be tailored along the lines of agricultural expansion and industrialisation. This

agricultural expansion and industrialisation should factor in the mechanisation and the building of small scale industries to utilise the abundant raw materials, to process them into semi-finished or even finished products.

In politics and governance, political will, selflessness are *sine qua non* on the part of the leaders. In doing this, the lessons from Mao Tse-Tung can chart the way forward.

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Chrisanthony Ndikani
**RECEPTIVE ECUMENISM IN THE THIRD
ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL
COMMISSION: RELEVANCE FOR ECUMENICAL
DIALOGUE**

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Abstract

Considering the apparent unrealistic nature of full visible Christian unity, Ecumenical Theology recently focuses on communion. Despite emerging differences, it demonstrates communion by embracing concepts like unity in diversity, differentiated consensus, reconciled diversity, and legitimate diversity. These [means of affirming diversity and plurality without destroying communion], are fruits of ecumenical dialogue. A difficulty of actualizing visible unity resulted in frustration and disappointment, partly due to what some attribute to approach/attitude to dialogue. Receptive Ecumenism emerges as an alternative approach with open possibilities for ecumenical progress. It emphasizes ‘receptive learning’ in a process of ‘explicit ecclesial self-critique’ to dispose churches to self-critical openness and conversion for growth and reform on which current ecumenical progress depends. Considering fundamental questions regarding ‘Church as Communion’, the Third Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III) applied this approach in a recent bilateral dialogue. ARCIC III identified common grounds, points of differences and tensions, and potentials for mutual receptive learning between the Anglicans and Roman Catholics. This article critically discussed Receptive Ecumenism, its application in the first agreed statement: *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to Be the Church – Local, Regional and Universal*, and relevance for ecumenical relations. We evaluated the document, critically

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analyzed RE as a new approach, considered possible challenges, and prospects for other ecumenical engagements. The discussion showcased Receptive Ecumenism as an ecumenical disposition and attitude.

Keywords: Reception, Ecumenism, ARCIC, Conversion, Communion, Self-Critique, Walking Together, Ecclesial Learning.

Introduction

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) has engaged in several bilateral and multilateral dialogues with other Christians of the Eastern and the Western traditions, always eager to explore options that may lead to the goal of visible unity.

The initial enthusiasm of ecumenists, after the foundation of the World Council of Churches and Vatican II, faced disillusionment as more church dividing issues persisted. These challenges are present not just in ‘dialogue’, but also in the daily life of Christian communities. Michael Root and Antonia Pizzey have described the current situation as “ecumenical winter,”¹ Gerard Kelly called it “road block,”² while Jon Nilson used “a dead end”³ to describe the disappointment of the ecumenical winter. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has a different perspective of this metaphor. Although he agrees with the challenges of ecumenical winter, he was optimistic with Walter Kasper that “it was a winter in which much fruit was harvested.” So, for him the situation is an “ecumenical spring.”⁴ However, this optimism does not completely remove the frustration but places the ecumenical movement at a crucial discerning edge. This leads to discouragement and lack of interest in ecumenism, and raises questions about the future of ecumenical movement. Alternative approaches have emerged as potentials for success amidst the ecumenical disillusionment.

This work examines a new approach, Receptive Ecumenism (hereafter RE), implemented in a 2018 Agreed Statement of a
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recent bilateral dialogue of the Third Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III), *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to Be the Church - Local, Regional, Universal*,⁵ and how this approach could enrich ecumenical dialogue.

Receptive Ecumenism: Meaning and Development

Receptive Ecumenism is a fresh ecumenical approach which is being explored by the churches to see what potentials it could bring that can promote ecumenical relations. With emphasis on receptivity, learning, and listening, Refocuses more on *learning or receiving from*, rather than *teaching or convincing* the other. It is about learning from other Christians in order to learn about ourselves. It highlights conversion and openness to the Holy Spirit.

This new strategy emerged recently in the ecumenical field to address the disposition of the churches engaged in dialogue in such a way that they are open to respectively enriching each other. One of the most prominent authors who had propagated the method in 2006 is Paul Murray.⁶ In his article “Receptive Ecumenism and Ecclesial Learning: Receiving Gifts for our Needs,” Murray observes that although previous ecumenical dialogues has increased mutual ecclesial understanding, their strategies were “incapable of delivering the self-critical openness to practical conversion, growth and development upon which real ecumenical progress depends.”⁷ Murray’s core concern is that too often churches approach dialogue with a predisposition to teach, expecting others to *learn from* them. Hence, Murray maintains that the fundamental principle in RE is that churches make a clear pragmatic shift by highlighting a rather self-critical question which would prioritize *learning from* others to facilitate ecclesial growth and ecumenical progress. ARCIC III identified this concept more in terms of “self-examination and inner conversion than convincing the other.”⁸

In this new ecumenical ethic, the purpose of the shift is for churches to address their own internal tensions in a receptive

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learning process called ‘explicit ecclesial self-critique’. Here, they see a possibility that what is weak or undeveloped in us, may be stronger or better developed in the other, and that taking a posture of ‘teacher’ instead of ‘receiver’ or ‘learner’ makes less progress in dialogue.

Roots and Development

Receptive Ecumenisms traced to John Paul II’s ecumenical encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*, which humbly reaffirmed the importance of ecumenism, emphasized ecumenism as “an exchange of gifts,”⁹ and places conversion as a central value that could help the churches in dialogue. This affirms the key assertion of Vatican II that “there can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without interior conversion.”¹⁰ John Paul II sees conversion as “a change of heart,”¹¹ which is synonymous with a change of mind, repentance, atonement, reformation, transformation, and renewal. When churches approach dialogue with these values, they view those still-dividing theological issues from different perspectives.

Five key relevant factors influenced the development of RE. First, Paul Murray was aware that the ecumenical movement requires a fresh ecumenical approach. He developed RE to respond to current ecumenical indolence by proposing a self-critical but simple method as a way forward. Second, Murray drew from an American idealist-pragmatist tradition, especially Nicholas Rescher’s positive approach to plurality and diversity, which believes that one does not compromise identity by recognizing the validity of another’s. Here, since no one has the whole truth, diversity becomes legitimate in a positive approach to difference. Third, RE develops from Spiritual Ecumenism, which articulates receptive ecumenical hospitality and fruitfulness, and extends emphasis from personal to structural, and further to ecclesial conversion.

The fourth is Daniel Hardy's description of Scriptural Reasoning as "one way of going deeper simultaneously into one's own faith and into the faith of others through study and mutual mentoring."¹² This involves "reading and reasoning scriptures together, where there is a high degree of mutually responsible hospitality and the possibility of achieving a complex harmony."¹³ This process is analogous to what RE seeks to do in the intra-Christian context and deepens Murray's approach to plurality. Finally, the Ignatian Spirituality influences receptive ecumenism's ethical emphasis on "continuing conversion as a principle of life, on humility as a key virtue..., creative imagination, critical testing and scrutinizing" as discernment processes.

As an on-going project, four International conferences had taken place between 2006-2017, with related themes and at different parts of the world. These conferences offer renewed disposition for churches to make a shift from former '*self-defending*' and '*convincing-the-other*' positions to an open-minded readiness and *less argumentative stances*. Here, differences become mutually recognized, respected, admired and received as gifts to enrich, rather than diminish ecclesial identity. Therefore, RE encourages the spirit of learning, and affirms that it is more dignifying to *learn or receive* than to give.

Bases, values and Criteria for Receptive Learning

As an ethical strategy of ecclesial conversion, RE is "both remarkably *simple in vision* and...*far-reaching in potential*." Again, its essence is "change in churches, not just other churches, but my own church changing."¹⁶ Embarking on a project with such unique and delicate character may not be easy. Therefore, some crucial values and criteria could go along with RE's fundamental pedestals to curb ecclesial mindset and dispose churches towards learning and reception. Churches need to understand that Christian unity is not a human project but God's; that change, as a long-term, slow and steady process needs time

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and patience; openness to challenges at the personal and ecclesial levels are vital steps to growth; and that reception and learning enhance and dignify, rather than diminish ecclesial fullness and identity.

Adopting these principles needs yet other values such as courage, hope, humility, patience, openness, honesty, deep listening, “walking in the other’s shoes, suspending judgment, appreciating others’ beliefs and values, being self-critical of one’s own beliefs and...transparency.”¹⁷ RE resonate these values, which in turn portray its ethical characteristics. If churches apply the above principles and values, then the result could be a transformed ecumenical dialogue. Certain criteria for authentic receptive learning are considered concerning “ecclesial identity and its preservation...truth and falsity...and prudent judgement.”¹⁸ This simply underlies proper discernment before considering any new learning from a dialogue partner. Consequently, these criteria (especially the question of ecclesial identity and dignity, and the preservation of truth and faith) pose the greatest challenges to RE as would be discussed later below. Meanwhile, we shall look at a practical application of RE in a bilateral dialogue.

Receptive Ecumenism in the Third Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission

Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) is a theological commission representing the two traditions, as they journey together towards ecclesial renewal and conversion, for the fullness of growth in communion. ARCIC sprang from the meeting between Pope Paul VI and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, in 1966. Its official dialogue started in 1970 and has completed two phases (1970-1981 and 1983-2005). ARCIC has been “exploring the deeper meaning of communion arising from their engagement with one another.”²⁰ Since inception, ARCIC’s three phases have been reflecting on

themes around the “question of authority and the ecclesiology of communion.”²⁰

Examining emerging prevailing issues, previous ARCIC phases have fruitfully increased mutual understanding in “series of Agreed Statements on dividing issues that still exist today?”²¹ ARCIC I applied the approach of “learning to recognize and receive the ecclesial presence of Christ”²² in each tradition. ARCIC II deepened this approach in a concept of “re-reception,”²³ using an eschatological method, which approaches the issues “afresh by considering them from God’s future ‘backwards.’”²⁴

However, issues of authority and lay participation make the ecclesial communion journey more difficult. So, a third phase of ARCIC dialogue began in 2011. This phase built on the methods ARCIC I and II, and sought for their continuity and further development by adopting RE as the approach. The document, *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be the Church Local, Regional, Universal*, is the first Agreed Statement of the third dialogue phase, whose task is “to consider fundamental questions regarding the ‘Church as Communion – Local and Universal’, and ‘how in communion the Local and Universal Church comes to discern right ethical teaching.’”²⁵

The commission reflected on issues around Anglican-Roman Catholic Instruments of Communion, lay participation (which reveals deliberative versus consultative authority), episcopal collegiality and the primacy/authority of the Bishop of Rome. They recognized their respective internal problems and the need for renewal and reform. So, to move forward towards communion, they suggested that each tradition is to look humbly at what is not working effectively within them, to ask whether they could develop and strengthen it through receptive learning from the understanding, structures, practices, and judgements of the other.²⁶ This is a receptive learning process through “explicit ecclesial self-critique,” which involves readiness

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...to discern what appears to be overlooked or underdeveloped in one's own tradition, to ask whether such things are better developed in the other tradition, and to inquire how such perceived strengths in the other tradition might be able, through receptive learning, to help with the development and enrichment of this aspect of ecclesial life within one's own tradition.²⁷

They used three practical steps to identify and analyze a) common grounds and points of agreement; b) points of internal tension and difficulties; and c) in relation to "what is weak or less developed in one tradition," to consider possibilities for fruitful, transformative, receptive learning from the other's strengths.²⁸ Although this research focuses more on the tensions, difficulties and possible receptive learning areas for the two traditions, *Walking Together* recorded several commonalities. Instances include shared sacramental views²⁹ and common awareness of global historical challenges, which led to including the regional level in the dialogue.³⁰ In summary, ARCIC identified certain potentials for receptive learning for both traditions, hoping that this learning, rather than diminish, could enhance ecclesial identity and dignity.

Mutual Receptive Learning Potentials

The RCC can learn from Anglicans, a) "the culture of open and frank debate at all levels,"³¹ as evidenced by the indaba process of 2008 Lambeth Conference. b) the "practice of granting a deliberative role"³² to synod of bishops, investing authority to regional structures for clearer articulation of episcopal conferences' authority; and c) "inclusion of laity in decision-making structures at every level," for a stronger development of *Lumen Gentium*.¹⁰ concerning "the participation in the threefold office of Christ of both laity and ordained."³³

Anglican Communion learning from the RCC could begin with a) appreciation of the depth of commitment to ecclesial universality. They could strengthen "commitment to this ethos

of unity through the use of common” liturgical documents, catechism, and Canon Law. b) the “practice of pilgrimage visits by bishops to meet with the Archbishop of Canterbury for prayer and consultation; c) the Roman Catholic expressions of episcopal leadership ”which include reflections on: i) various regional “communities in full communion with one another;” ii) “models of episcopal consultation and deliberation as seen in episcopal conferences and the Synod of Bishops as recently developed;” iii) “the normative presence of a voice from outside the province, representing the wider Church in the deliberations and life of a regional church; and clarity of recognized processes for discernment, communication, and reception of authoritative teachings and decisions.”³⁴

Evaluating the Document

The document: *Walking together on the Way: Learning to be the Church- Local, Regional, Universal*, is unique in content and character, and different as an approach. It also has some theological relevance and limitations as well. With the title: *walking together on the way*, the commission set out as *ecclesiae in via* (churches on the way) towards communion. According to the document, “this image of ‘walking together’ on the path of communion describes the ecumenical relations³⁵ between the two traditions. This sets them on a pilgrimage journey implying togetherness, responsibility, mutuality, interdependence, readiness and openness to change and growth. This “pastoral and dynamic”³⁶ title, which presents them as fellow pilgrims on the way to communion, implies an open-ended nature of ARCIC III’s approach, process and outcome. Pilgrimage is also a major focus of the World Council of Churches in her mission and vision.³⁷ In fact, “Walking Together”³⁸ is a current WCC ecumenical imperative and paradigm which IoanSauca described as “a journey with spiritual meaning and profound theological connotations and implications.”³⁹

Embarking on this pilgrim journey with “explicit ecclesial

self-critique,”⁴⁰ they discovered areas of receptive learning within each tradition. This approach shows the second character of the document: the movement inside out, suggesting an inward journey, which Paul Murray calls “open-ended.”⁴¹ It relates to the pragmatic shift that changes the “default instinctive question to prioritizing a rather self-critical question...”⁴² For Paul Murray, this move is a “necessary key for unlocking the potentials for transformation *within* traditions.”⁴³ It enhances honest acceptance of challenges, and the readiness to learn portrays an example of frank openness and objectivity. Ecclesial growth and renewal need this inward journey.

The document is different in content and character, shown in three kinds of layout and typographical arrangement. It represents discussions about the common heritage in the ecclesial understanding and practice of the two traditions with *whole-width normal* typing style; those areas where they are similar but with distinct ways of practice appear in *parallel columns placed side by side*; finally, the *sequential paragraphs* represent areas where they differ from one another.⁴⁴ This arrangement is helpful for easy reading and understanding their commonalities and differences.

The document’s theological relevance shows participants from a variety of theological disciplines, enriching the dialogue from different cultural and contextual settings.⁴⁵ This guarantees treatment of major theological questions on communion. The “interrelated notions of ‘Church as pilgrim People of God’ and ‘the Church as communion (*koinonia*),’”⁴⁶ portrays an ecclesiological framework. The dialogue paved way for deeper, mutual ecclesial understanding, and clarified ecclesial misunderstandings and prejudices. Another important relevance is its critical exposure of weak and undeveloped aspects of ecclesial life, faith and practice underpinning internal and external difficulties.

Several values could dispose each tradition for the “self-critical openness to practical conversion, growth and development

upon which real ecumenical progress depends.”⁴⁷ Aside openness, self-criticism and discernment required for renewal and reform, other values include hope and humility,⁴⁸ frank assessment,⁴⁹ mutual and deep listening, repentance.⁵⁰ These values concur with Paul Murray’s basic argument for proposing RE; that “the contemporary context requires a fresh ecumenical ethic and strategy...”⁵¹ They are ethical because they suggest behavioral principles of conducts that dispose partners for fruitful/peaceful learning. Considering these values, this research agrees with Paul Murray that RE is an ecumenical ethic and strategy.

Of these values, the commission emphasizes listening, which underlies “Pope Francis’s call for a fully synodal Church in accord with the vision of the Second Vatican Council.”⁵² Ormond Rush relates three levels of communion with Pope Francis’s vision of synodality, which prioritizes listening in those levels.⁵³ For the Pope, “a synodal Church is a Church which listens,” first to ‘what the Spirit says to the churches’ as in Rev.2:7, and then to the people of God at all the levels who share in the triamunera Christi (three offices of Christ). So, for Rush, three levels of church life entail three levels of ecclesial listening.⁵⁵ This listening could enhance fuller participation of all the faithful.

There are some gaps in the document. The commission raised some questions within the document for both traditions but left them unaddressed. One example is the question of the extent at which the “instruments of communion need to be both affective and effective”⁵⁶ in the service of mission and unity. Another is the question for Catholics concerning the priority of the universal or local church.⁵⁷ We expect that the commission could have suggested some practical steps for renewing and reforming collegiality, episcopacy and primacy, since their exercise has often been the subject of controversy and debate.”⁵⁸

References to the help of the Holy Spirit are clear in some parts of the document, but missing in others, especially in the last three sections. Paragraph 3 spelt out *ressourcement*(returning to

the great sources of the tradition)and *aggiornamento*(engaging the issues of our age)as twin streams for ecclesial renewal, and paragraph 19 stressed receptive learning as a source for that renewal. Going back to our roots while at the same time considering the ‘signs of the time’ is not a simple task, especially for some Roman Catholic conservatives. Therefore, the role and aid of the Holy Spirit, who alone could help the churches as they confront their self-critical and discernment challenges, could have received stronger emphasis there. It is to this same Spirit that the churches listen in their inward self-criticism journey. We observe only three mentions of the Holy Spirit in section IV, none in section V, and only one in section VI. These challenging sections could receive stronger pneumatological emphasis.

There was no reference to a pertinent document of John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Inuente*. This could have given solid grounds for communion ecclesiology and the approach of RE.⁵⁹ Paragraph 43 of this millennium document has a “spirituality of communion” that is a solid background for RE’s dynamism of exchange, sharing and receiving of gifts. Going further, the Pope stressed the need to develop, maintain and support communion at all levels of the RCC, because they are consultative rather than deliberative. Here, too, he noted that “the theology and spirituality of communion should encourage dialogue between pastors and the faithful.” Concluding, he emphasized listening between the pastor and the faithful and encouraged churches not to take this for granted.⁶⁰

ARCIC is a dialogue of learning. However, instances for learning from what is weak or unclear leaves a question for the commission. One instance is a suggestion for the RCC to consider possibilities of learning from the relationship between the Bishop of Canterbury and other AC structures. This contradicts paragraph 141 which stated that this relationship is unclear.⁶¹

‘Learning’ is a keyword for RE and ARCIC III. However, I disagree with the phrase, ‘learning to be the Church’ in the

document title. Christ, the Head of his Body, the Church, is perfect. By virtue of the paschal mystery, the Church is, *de facto*, a perfect entity. Both traditions believe that all faithful share in this mystery, and participate in the *triamunera Christi* through baptism, which incorporates them into this Body of Christ,⁶² making them *ab initio* the Church. Hence, we don't learn to be what we already are; rather we grow in our understanding of the mysteries through learning, discovering the deeper meaning of what we are, and develop our knowledge and understanding of being the Church. 'Learning to be the Church,' as ARCIC puts it, suggests imperfection for the Church, whose Perfect Head is Christ.⁶³ It also changes the task and aim of their walking together. In ecumenical dialogue churches aim at growing closer in communion with each other towards a perfect communion with the Trinity. It is rather the "imperfect communion that already exist between churches"⁶⁴ that develop through receptive learning. However, reflections around the perfect Church by virtue of Christ as the Head, the nature of members' identity as 'Church,' and how they grow to discover that identity, are issues of varying ecclesiological understandings.

Newness, Hopes and Challenges

RE claims 'newness'. Paul Murray introduced it both as 'third-phase strategy'⁶⁵ for the ecumenical movement generally, and particularly as a fresh strategy for ARCIC III. For him, both the ecumenical movement and ARCIC needed a new strategy to address the 'inertia' and 'hardwood' issues hindering progress. Its application in ARCIC III suggests hopes for other ecumenical engagements. The newness of RE is seen in the pragmatic and programmatic shift which it emphasizes: from theory to practice and from doctrinal histories to lived experience; from looking at other churches' wounds and weaknesses to seeking to discover the gifts in them; from applauding our own strengths and glories to discovering our vulnerability and the possibility of healing

them with others' strengths; from trying to resolve differences between churches to learning from them. It searches for realistic ways for ecumenical progress, moving away from producing similar agreed statements that "churches would keep at arm's length"⁶⁶ to one whose contents could affect their real-life situations practically and positively.

However, this newness is questionable as "learning... reception,"⁶⁷ and "re-reception"⁶⁸ were strategies of former phases. In his work, "The Reception of ARCIC I and II in Europe and Discerning the Strategy and Agenda for ARCIC III," Paul Murray agreed that these methods "have been highly influential in shaping the work of other bilateral ecumenical dialogues."⁶⁹ But he argued that ARCIC III requires a fresh strategic approach to "ecumenical, contextual challenges"⁷⁰ different from those of former ARCIC phases. In another work, "ARCIC III: Recognizing the Need for an Ecumenical Gear Change," he articulated four strategies of the theological methods: clarifying misunderstandings; acknowledging shortcomings; exploring conceptual understandings; and commitment to change of language and emphasis.⁷¹ These methods paved the way for overcoming differences, regarding them as "more apparent than real...as legitimately diverse ways of articulating same areas of Christian truth."⁷² Through clear and effective teaching, Churches now understand and express themselves clearly.

Although the usefulness and key roles of former methods continue to re-echo, Murray argued that they were rather limited as they remained theological clarifications, conviction, and explication strategies, lacking the necessary deeper conversion attainable through "self-criticism and attentive hospitality to the truth of the other tradition..."⁷³ So, Murray contended for "something more, a third way, and the only route possible"⁷⁴ to move forward. For Murray, this way is "that of prayer...grace-filled learning of how each is called to grow to a new place where new things become possible."⁷⁵ This way of learning, which possibly leads to continual growth, renewal and conversion,

is accessible through “explicit ecclesial self-critique,”⁷⁶ an exceptional and unique tool for cracking the hard nut.⁷⁷

Granted its possibility of paving the way forward, I disagree with Paul Murray’s usage of “only route possible” for RE as a method. Here he overstated the importance of RE. This usage portrays some kind of personal conceptual and contextual superiority. It also suggests finality, tending to block further possibilities for new discoveries and the dynamism of time. It suffices to have potential possibilities, but may not be the only way. Being the only way possible contradicts the pilgrimage dynamics of ARCIC, and the new possibilities which pilgrimages offer to pilgrims. Furthermore, considering the nature of the more difficult issues at hand between the RCC and AC, there may be chances of contextual irrelevance despite its seeming possibility.

Challenges

Because of its self-critical and inward nature, involving change and learning, RE faces some challenges which must be considered. One major challenge is the difficulty in embracing the openness to change for fear that this might involve change of cherished beliefs, doctrines, liturgical and sacramental practices. For most churches, these form the theological basis for ecclesial life and practice and must remain untouched.

Another challenge is the fear of losing ecclesial identity. Churches may feel that receptive learning would mean a gradual emptying of who they are and what they have. In fact, receptive learning keeps dialogue partners “at a crossroads.”⁷⁸ Incidentally, different stages of crossroads are evident for consideration. In the case of ARCIC III, reception of *Walking Together* at the local context of dialogue partners is the first concern. Others range from devising adequate language of presentation to the reality of addressing the challenges of explicit ecclesial self-critique. These include frankness in identifying ecclesial weakness and courage to ask for learning. Churches also need to grapple with criticisms from liberalists and conservatives among them.

Gerard Kelly recorded four key challenges to expect in adopting RE project. It is counter-intuitive, resistant to change, reluctant to approach other churches and ask for learning, and has a wide range and scope. This counter-intuitive nature challenges RE as moving against the current, out of the ordinary, and reversing the normal ecumenical bearings.⁷⁹ However, the positive side of this reversal lies in RE's relation to the Gospel 'Beatitudes' of Matthew 5:3-11 and Luke 6: 17-26. The Beatitudes embody 'attitudes of being,' rather than 'doing' in difficult daily experiences. Therefore, far from counter-intuition, RE portrays an attitude of 'being with Christ,' deep within and 'listening to what the spirit is saying to the churches'⁸⁰ (Rev. 2:29; 3:6, 13; 4:22).

Resistance to change, both from church leaders to the local people is another challenge that could hinder ecclesial learning. Reasons for resistance could be intolerance and indifference (owing to the difficult nature of RE's inverted focus), ignorance and identity issues.

Possibilities of Receptive Ecumenism in other Ecumenical Engagements

The possibility of RE in other ecumenical engagements is evident in the level of love and friendship which had existed between churches. Improved ecumenical relations and ecclesial understanding is a 'greenlight,' and could have prepared the way for the development of RE. The ecumenical movement and RE are dependent on each other. Aside ARCIC III, other bilateral, trilateral and multilateral dialogues within the ecumenical movement have initiatives and models for receptive ecumenical learning. These are inherent both in their methods and related terms that constitute major foci for RE. Prior to the development of RE project, tenets of mutual ecclesial learning are already implicit in the ecumenical movement. This offers hope for RE's flourishing within the ecumenical movement and vice versa.

Some instances are necessary.

The ‘differentiated consensus,’ approach of Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue produced the 1999 Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. Also, their common Reformation commemoration report offered some ecumenical imperatives related to the qualities of RE viz positivity, openness, mutual renewal and transformation, perseverance-enhanced learning, commitment to unity through ethical values, and dependence on the Holy Spirit.⁸¹ The final report of the International Methodist-Catholic Dialogue, focused recognizing elements of ‘the Church’ in the other which could be offered and received in the exchange of gifts.⁸² Donald Bolen explained further that the Seoul Report went beyond mutual recognition by adding three steps which served as models for ecumenical receptive learning.⁸³ First, they reached considerable agreement regarding ecclesial nature and mission. Second, they acknowledged authentic elements of Christ, and third, recognized other spiritual gifts that are more prominent in each other’s endowments that could be received in a mutual exchange.”⁸⁴ It is evident that these forty years’ dialogue paved the way for the tenets of RE.

The possibility of RE in multilateral dialogue concerns its relationship with the WCC Faith and Order Commission (FOC). The third World Conference of Faith and Order Commission, Lund, 1952 recorded significant changes as member churches moved from comparing each other to going back to study the scriptures together. The conference recorded the “degree of mutual understanding now reached...and calls on all Christians to throw off their apathy...and to be ready to receive what God is waiting to give us.”⁸⁵

Nonetheless, RE’s approach could be easier for bilateral and trilateral dialogues where each church receives and learns from one or two churches. A multilateral context faces challenges of sifting between complicated receptive learning options, takes much longer time than the far-reaching RE strategy, and makes discernment difficult.

However, the positive and objective stances of RE, its spiritual and affective dimensions, and the theological background of FOC are potentials for a balanced relationship between them. Sharing the same theological platform of communion ecclesiology, the FOC takes the path of theological study while RE takes that of practical dialogue. This combination of theory and practice shows how compatible they could be as they complement each other en route to full communion. The FOC, being a long-standing ecumenical instrument, could help RE as a reference point and platform for ecumenical orientation and inspiration.

RE has great potentials for ecclesial renewal and ecumenical vitality. Its interior drive and focus places the churches on an on-going pedestal of Spiritual ecumenism. As an ecumenism of hope and humility, it promises values that could overcome its likely challenges. Reflections around its dynamism show that RE offers renewed optimism that the ecumenical movement is gaining a fresh vitality to continue forward. With this self-critical tool, church could live in the face of differences and navigate through the roadblock to visible ecclesial unity.

Added to the practical dimension, RE emphasizes the spiritual side of ecumenical practice by taking the ecumenical movement along the path of ecclesial conversion for the purpose of renewal. Thus, it releases new potentials and offers an ecumenical strategy for managing some critical ecumenical challenges. By proposing this new way forward, RE calls the ecumenical movement to return to its spiritual roots.

Hence, this work argues that RE is an ecumenical disposition and attitude. It disposes churches to develop positive attitudes towards their differences, and to cultivate values for their basic ecclesial needs. RE's journey inside out re-motivates, re-energizes and re-directs ecclesial ecumenical enthusiasm. It is a disposition, with patience and courage, to take the rough path and the road less traveled. It is a disposition of stooping low in humility to address ecclesial tensions in the face of the other.

RE's conversion process disposes churches to take the Gospel imperatives seriously, to cultivate the positive 'attitudes' of the Beatitudes, and emulate Christ in his humble *kenosis*. In this self-emptying, they die to ecclesial superiority, self-sufficiency and criticism of the other, and rise up to ecclesial dignity, growth, development and renewal.

Conclusion

This article has examined RE's application in the Third Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission Agreed Statement, *Walking Together*, and its possibilities to ecumenical dialogue. RE emerged as an alternative ecumenical strategy with virtual, spiritual and practical potentials to address ecumenical disappointments. With explicit self-critique, RE takes the humble but hopeful path of ecclesial receptive learning, to discover areas of internal weakness and tension, and considers the prospects of helping them with the strengths of the other. The Holy Spirit assists the churches in this difficult inward journey. This is what ARCIC III did in *Walking Together*. We evaluated this document, criticized RE as a new approach, considered its possible challenges, and explored its prospects for other ecumenical dialogues. Findings reveal its relevance to the ecumenical movement, and an interdependent relationship between them as each complements the other.

Endnotes

¹Root, Michael, “Ecumenical Winter? The Ecumenical Movement has stopped Moving,” in *First Things*(2018), available at: <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2018/ecumenical-winter>, See also Antonia Pizzey, *Receptive Ecumenism and the Renewal of the Ecumenical Movement: The Path of Ecclesial Conversion* (Boston: Print force, 2019),180-1.

²Kelly, Gerard, “What is Receptive Ecumenism,” in *The Gift of Each Other: Learning from Other Christians*, ed. Gideon Goosen (Sidney: The New South Wales Ecumenical Council, 2013), 5-7.

³Nilson, Jon, *Nothing Beyond the Necessary: Roman Catholicism and the Ecumenical Future* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 2.

⁴Archbishop Justin Welby, “Ecumenical Spring,” A Speech at the World Council of Churches’ 70th Anniversary, (2018), 2, <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-and-writing/speeches/ecumenical-spring-archbishop-justins-speech-world-council-churches>. See also Walter Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue*, (New York: Continuum, 2009).

⁵ARCIC III, *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to Be Church-Local, Regional, Universal*; An Agreed Statement of the Third Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III), (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2018).

⁶RCC lay theologian; Professor of Systematic Theology, Dept. of Theology and Religion, Durham University, U.K; Dean and Director of Centre for Catholic Studies; President of Catholic Theological Association of Great Britain; Consultant to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace; and Member of ARCIC III.

⁷Murray, Paul, “Receptive Ecumenism and Ecclesial Learning: Receiving gifts for our Needs,” in *Louvain Studies*, 33 (2008), 33. Doi:10.2143/LS.33.1.2034334. Available at: https://poj.peeters-leuven.be/content.php?url=article&id=2034334&journal_code=LS&download=yes. Accessed 20 May 2020.

⁸Pizzey, Antonia, *Receptive Ecumenism and the Renewal of the Ecumenical Movement: The Path of Ecclesial Conversion* (Boston: Print force, 2019), 208.

⁹Pizzey, *Receptive Ecumenism*, 97.

¹⁰Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio*: Decree on Ecumenism, 7.

¹¹John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* (Committed to Ecumenism), Encyclical, 1995, no.21.

¹²Antonia Pizzey, *Receptive Ecumenism*, 29. Cf. Paul Murray and Andrea Murray's "The Roots, Range and Reach of Receptive Ecumenism," in *Unity in Process: Reflections on Ecumenism*, ed. Clive Barrett (London: Darton, Longmann and Todd, 2012), 82.

¹³Daniel Hardy, "The Promise of Scriptural Reasoning," in *Modern Theology*, 22/3, (2006), Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1468-0025.2006.00333.x>. See also: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230152504_The_promise_of_scriptural_reasoning Last accessed 30 April, 2020.

¹⁴Pizzey, *Receptive Ecumenism*, 30.

¹⁵Paul Murray, cited by University of Stockholm, in "About Receptive Ecumenism: The Basic Idea," last accessed April 3, 2020, <https://www.ehs.se/receptive-ecumenism/about-receptive-ecumenism>.

¹⁶Gerard Kelly, "A New Ecumenical Wave," A Public Lecture at the National Council of Churches Forum, Canberra (2010), 6.

¹⁷Ariane Hentsch Cisneros & Shanta Premawardhana, "Globethics.net Principles on Sharing Values across Cultures and Religions," in *Sharing Values: A Hermeneutics for Global Ethics*, edited by Ariane Hentsch Cisneros & Shanta Premawardhana (Geneva: Globethics.net, 2011), 34-36.

¹⁸Ladislas Orsy, "Authentic Learning and Receiving – A Search for Criteria", in *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism*, ed. Paul Murray (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008), 39-44

¹⁹ARCIC III, *Walking Together on the Way*, no. 3.

²⁰*Ibid.*, preface, xi.

²¹*Ibid.*, no. 2.

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²²ARCIC III, *Walking Together*, no. 16.

²³*Ibid.*, no. 16. cf., ARCIC II, Gift of Authority, no. 24-25.

²⁴ARCIC III, *Walking Together*, no. 16, cf., ARCIC II, *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ*, no. 52-53.

²⁵Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission III (ARCIC-III)

²⁶ARCIC III, *Walking Together*, no.78.

²⁷*Ibid.*, no.18.

²⁸ARCIC III, *Walking Together*, no.79.

²⁹*Ibid.*, no. 46-54.

³⁰*Ibid.*, no.11.

³¹ARCIC III, *Walking Together*, no. 157.

³²*Ibid.*

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴ARCIC III, *Walking Together*, no.158.

³⁵ARCIC III, no. 3, 21. Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin Welby used this image to describe Anglican-Roman Catholic ecumenical relations as “fellow pilgrims journeying at the summons of God’s Word, through the difficult terrain of a rapidly changing world...” See also Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 244, the Pope urges that “...we must never forget that we are pilgrims journeying alongside one another.

³⁶James Hawkey, *An Anglican Commentary on, Walking Together on the Way: Learning to Be the Church—Local, Regional, Universal of the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission* (London: Centre for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2018), v-vi.

³⁷World Council of Churches, *Come and See*, 9-10. The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) chose the “Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace” as the theme to guide the council’s efforts to foster greater unity among Christians and to respond...to the challenges facing the human family in our time.

³⁸Susan Durber and Fernando Enns, eds., *Walking Together: Theological Reflections on the Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Justice*

and Peace (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2018).

³⁹IoanSauca, “The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace-An Ecumenical Paradigm for Our Times: An Orthodox Viewpoint,” in *Walking Together: Theological Reflections on the Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*, eds. Susan Durber and Fernando Enns, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2018), 19-21.

⁴⁰ARCIC III, *Walking Together*, no.17.

⁴¹ARCIC III, *Walking Together*, no.7.

⁴²Paul Murray, “Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning,” 280.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 283.

⁴⁴ARCIC III., *Walking Together*, xii.

⁴⁵Grounded in ecclesiology of communion, *Walking Together* draws form several aspect of theology namely Trinity, Christology, Scripture, Sacraments, Ministry, Liturgy/Doctrine, Eschatology, etc.

⁴⁶ARCIC III, *Walking Together*, no. 3. The document regarded these two theological concepts as ‘twin streams of renewal.’ See also Ormond Rush, *A Catholic Commentary*, 3.

⁴⁷Murray, “Receptive Ecumenism and Ecclesial Learning,” 33.

⁴⁸Antonia Pizzey, *Receptive Ecumenism*, 155-173. Pizzey devoted chapter 7 of her RE volume in developing the virtues of “hope and humility as essential tools for the receptive learning” path.

⁴⁹ARCIC III, *Walking Together*,iv.

⁵⁰ARCIC III, *Walking Together*, no. 152; 155. See also John Pal II, *Ut Unum Sint*, no. 34, where the Pope emphasizes humility as the vehicle for examination of conscience on the road to conversion, which could enable ecumenical dialogues to become ‘dialogue of consciences.’

⁵¹Murray, “Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning,” 279. of ARCIC dialogue so far.

⁵²ARCIC III, *Walking Together*, iv. Cf. Pope Francis, “Address Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops” (17 October 2015).

⁵³Ormond Rush, *A Roman Catholic Commentary*, 16-17. See also Pope Francis's *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 171.

⁵⁴Pope Francis, "Address"

⁵⁵Rush, *A Roman Catholic Commentary*, 17.

⁵⁶ARCIC III, *Walking Together*, no. 71.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, no. 67.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, no. 72.

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Francis Fabidun

**RUSSELL'S CRITICAL THINKING AND SOCIAL
APPROACHES OF KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION**

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Abstract

The traditional concern in epistemic investigation is the attainment of genuine knowledge about reality. Consequently, mainline epistemology has witnessed the emergence of different theories by individuals conducting epistemic affairs as independent investigators on how we can acquire justified true beliefs. However, in recent times, there have been considerable recognition that aided individual endeavours capable of yielding significant results. Nevertheless, this approach is greeted with the uncertainty of the degree to which bias could be mere socially attained knowledge. This situation is further compounded by the fact that bias is an unconscious phenomenon that negatively distort people's judgement and perception irrespective of their intellectual ability. Through critical analysis and comparative method of investigation of philosophers' stands on knowledge acquisition, this paper argues that bias in social epistemic endeavour could be controlled. The paper recommended the application of Russell's notion of critical thinking as a possible way to overcome biases in the social approaches of knowledge acquisition. This entails a conscious rational combat to overcome biases.

Keywords: Bias, Critical Thinking, Justified True Belief, Knowledge Acquisition, Social Epistemic Endeavour, Critical Thinking.

Introduction

There has been a remarkable recognition of the impact of social dynamics in the conduct and focus of epistemology. This is done with the underlining belief that social factors are significant enough to aid the conducts of epistemic activities and their outcome. Some philosophers argued that the consideration of these social factors is necessary to complement or correct the traditional individualistic approach prevalent in the history of western epistemology. Consequently, an individual does not solely occupy the central position in the conduct of epistemic activities; it is very much permissible and accepted that such investigation be done in the consciousness and recognition of immense contributions from others. Such contributions are considered as enhancing epistemic endeavours, since it is ordinarily accepted that an individual could acquire knowledge from others. This development in knowledge acquisition buttresses the claim that epistemic agents are social, highly interdependent, information-using, information-sharing beings.¹ Recent discusses on these cognitive exercises are situated within the realm of testimony.

However, while not disputing that an epistemic subject could benefit from others, there is also the issue of the possibility of an epistemic subject inheriting prejudices and bias from others – individuals, social agents, social structures and the societal beliefs. In other words, social epistemic practice places an individual in a position of being susceptible to unconsciously inherited bias, prejudices and stereotypes from others or the group to which the epistemic agent defers. As such, the agent engages his epistemic object unconscious of the inherited bias which consequently determines his conceptions and perceptions. This may include his perception of self-identity and the identity of others, situations and reality, on the one hand; and how such perceptions determine his views on the other hand. This then becomes a possible breeding ground for epistemic injustice. Since the subject is unwittingly harmed by the social epistemic practices he is exposed to, he unconsciously discriminate others

in such biased state in epistemic matters.

To avert this, this work proposes that for testimonial belief to qualify as a justified belief and constitute a reliable ground that is freed of stereotypes, it is pertinent that an epistemic agent's belief be further subjected to a second degree of analysis and personal evaluation. In other words, every epistemic practice and interaction requires what Bertrand Russell refers to as critical habit of the mind in order to prevent wronging oneself as a knower.

Traditional Approach to Knowledge Acquisition

An individualistic approach to epistemic activities occupied the central stage for a long time in the history of philosophy. This personal dimension which involved an individual as a sole agent in epistemic activities was a common phenomenon. While some philosophers engaged in this practice without casting doubt on the validity of the contributions derivable from others, there were philosophers who considered what is derived from sources other than oneself as invalid and largely pruned to errors. For philosophers in this category, only what is derivable from a subject's internal states or reasons can qualify as knowledge. Consequently, this is an attitude that knowledge acquisition becomes limited to what is only attainable through an individual's singular effort. Rene Descartes is a key figure in this approach to knowledge.

Descartes believes that he had 'clear and distinct ideas' of his thought.² For him, only the self, particularly with the aid of reason, constitutes the only valid means of attaining indubitable knowledge. He maintains that introspection is an infallible source of knowledge. This internalist foundationalism which is couched in his popular maxim of "*Cogito ergo suum*" ("I think, therefore I am") prioritizes one's own state of mind in epistemic affairs more so as it pertains to certainty and justification. That explains why Alvin Goldman and Matthew McGrath aptly remarked that Rene Descartes created a roadmap for epistemology. The plan

was to meditate, reflect, and otherwise conduct one's intellectual affairs in a thoroughly self-adsorbed way. No consideration was to be given to other people's thoughts or opinions, to how their knowledge might inform one's own.³ In other words, Descartes seems to have charted a course that epistemic discourse followed for many centuries. Evidently, John Locke for instance, opines that knowledge can be acquired through intellectual self-reliance. According to him,

For, I think, we may rationally hope to see with other Men's Eyes, as to know by other Men's Understanding. So much as we ourselves consider and comprehend of Truth and Reason, so much we possess of real and true Knowledge. The floating of other Men's opinions in our brain makes us not a jot more knowing, though they happen to be true.⁴

He sums this up as "other men's opinions floating in one's brain" do not constitute genuine knowledge.⁵ This is a strong indication of the rationalistic approach to knowledge that flows from Descartes.

Rationalism as a doctrine pertaining to how knowledge is attained prioritizes reason over experience. It considers reason as the most reliable source of knowledge, and argues that we will understand a significant body of knowledge about the world and the way it operates through the application of reason. Following Descartes, rationalists consider the mathematical model as basis of human knowledge because these models are eternal, clear, certain and unshakeable.⁶ Consequently rationalism denied the necessity of experience in the attainment of knowledge, and social considerations are largely irrelevant to epistemological concerns.⁷ Others who hold this view include; Leibniz and Spinoza.

Empiricism as Partial Beginning for Social Dimension of Knowledge

However, empiricism deemphasized reason as the gateway to indisputable human knowledge. Its proponents advanced the claim that experience is a genuine source of what we know. There is a subtle acknowledgement in the tenets of the empiricists that an epistemic agent could be aided from objects out of himself. Empiricists give credence to what an epistemic agent accessed through his senses as valid form of knowledge. It also accepts experiential evidence as materials for the formation of ideas in place of inner ideas of the rationalists. This can roughly be considered an initial basis for the departure for Thomas Reid. He advocated a wise and beneficent Author of Nature who intended that we should be social creatures, and we should receive the greatest and most important part of our knowledge by information of others. The author of nature purposely implanted in our nature a disposition to confide in the veracity of others, and to believe what they tell us.⁸ Ever since then, and more pronouncedly in the twentieth century, some philosophers have emphasized this possibility of social interactions in knowledge acquisition.

Social epistemology is premised on the common practice of how epistemic activities are embarked upon on concrete experience, as there are evidences of social factors that inform our epistemic lives. An epistemic agent as a being in connection with others in a community participates in their social beliefs and are consequently influenced by others. Social epistemology gives credence to this phenomenon and emphasizes that individuals' conduct of epistemic inquiries are not devoid of what they have acquired through their participation in the social life of their communities. Rachel McKinnon opines that:

While the history of epistemology has largely focused on the individual knower in isolation, recent decades have seen a shift towards anti-individualism and the

recognition that knowledge is social. No knower is an island: we depend on social structures and other people for the acquisition, creation, and dissemination of knowledge.⁹

This approach is expected to enhance and develop how epistemic activities are embarked upon. According to Steve Fuller,

social epistemology implies that somehow the sole individualistic approach to epistemic issues is not the right way to begin the problem of what the issue about knowledge is. The point is that we need a collective understanding of how the world is before we can talk about it. This is what social epistemology is about in a basic way.¹⁰

Social epistemology is an enterprise concerned with how people can best pursue the truth (whichever truth is in question) with the help of, or in the face of others. It is also concerned with truth acquisition by groups, or collective agents.¹¹ Social epistemology focuses on our shared or common knowledge of the world, and how individuals benefit from each other's understanding of it. This is not a claim that what an epistemic agent knows depends completely on what is derived from others, rather, it is a view that others' testimony can enhance what an individual knows: Therefore, social epistemology examines the social and interpersonal dimensions of knowledge thereby emphasizing that most of our intellectual enterprises are interwoven with the intellectual enterprises of others.

This recent approach in epistemic endeavours that made it possible for an epistemic agent to complement his activities with what others have to offer in the particular area of interest seems to be common-sense based, as it is ordinarily believed that "two good heads are better than one". Through mutual critical

exchange of ideas in the form of alternative explanations and critical assessment of each other's conjectures, ideas are refined.

This approach in epistemology and social sciences has challenged, and seems to have enhanced traditional mode of conducting epistemic activities at least in recent times. Goldman identified two conceptions of social epistemology. According to his classification, a conception of social epistemology sees it as part of main stream or traditional epistemology that considers the impart of a group on the individual. This view recognizes an interaction between the individual and social bodies, and how such interaction could shape an individual's epistemic position. The other consideration he identified places social epistemology within the struggles of postmodernist movements geared at replacing traditional epistemology thereby redirecting the activities and issues of traditional epistemology.¹²

Nevertheless, the former is consistent with the progress in the mainstream epistemology whose project focuses on enhancing the individual from the dynamics that abounds in the social sector. In this sense, social epistemology does not strive to displace traditional enterprise in epistemology. Instead, it is an emphasis on the benefits that abound in the social conduct of epistemic endeavours.

It sees no reason to think that social factors or practices inevitably interfere with, or pose threats to, the attainment of truth and/or other epistemic desiderata, such as justified belief, rational belief, etc. There may indeed be identifiable cases (which we shall explore) in which specific types of social factors or social interactions pose threats to truth acquisition. But, conversely, the right kinds of social organization may enhance the prospects of truth acquisition.¹³

In that wise, the epistemic agent remains an individual conducting his activities within the purview of the principle

of normativity and focuses on some sorts of objective validity and resolved commitment to the central notions of knowledge, justification and truth that will inform his doxastic decision. However, one wonders that with the viability applause credited to social interaction, why have philosophers neglected such venture that is purported as portable in enhancing their activities? Other concerns include; the extent to which social dimension contribute to or improve epistemic endeavours. What is the justification of any belief garnered from social domain? Do such beliefs qualify as epistemic sources of knowledge? Since testimony is key in knowledge acquisition in the social sector, how reliable is testimony as a source of knowledge? How does one overcome prejudice and bias which are seemingly inevitable in social epistemic practices? Consequently, since the 1970s, philosophers have taken an ever-increasing interest in such topics as the epistemic value of testimony, the nature and function of expertise, the proper distribution of cognitive labour and resources among individuals in communities, and the status of group reasoning and knowledge.¹⁴

Testimony

In simple term, testimony implies that - If *S* knows that *p* and *S* asserts that *p* to *H*, and *H* accepts *p* on the basis of *S*'s testimony, then *H* knows that *p*. *H* comes to know a proposition as true through the testimony of *S*. Jennifer Lackey highlights the common place of testimony in the general life and epistemic practice as she avers that virtually everything we know depends in some way or other on the testimony of others - what we eat, how things work, where we go, even who we are.¹⁵ Like other sources of knowing like perception, memory, learning, and inference, testimony has come to be accepted in common place as a reliable source of knowledge. We usually accept what others say and act on them as reliable source for us to form what we believe and know. According to Axel Gelfert, in contemporary

epistemology, 'testimony' is used as an umbrella term to refer to all those instances where we form a belief, or acquire knowledge, on the basis of what others have told us. Whenever we believe what a trusted friend tells us, learn about world events by reading the newspaper, accept a stranger's answer to our request for directions, receive a medical diagnosis from our doctor (etc.), we rely on the testimony of others.¹⁶

In response to the epistemic status of testimony as source of knowledge justification, epistemologists are divided along the broad headings of reductionism and anti-reductionism. For the reductionists, a posteriori acceptance of testimony as a source of knowledge that relies on other sources like perception, memory and induction. This tension is expressed in line with the contention of both sides by Gelfert that considered from a perspective, testimony is not different from other epistemic sources such as; perception, memory, inference and introspection, as it furnishes us with beliefs we make our own. On the other hand, testimony is different from other sources of knowledge as it depends on the mental operations of another person.¹⁷ Hume, who is considered the pioneer of reductionism argues that: our assurance in any argument of this kind (from testimony) is derived from no other principle than our observation of the veracity of human testimony, and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports of witnesses.¹⁸ While anti-reductionists represented by Reid, posit the natural tendency in humans of "a disposition to confide in the veracity of others, and to believe what they tell us." Reid takes testimony as an independent source of knowledge.¹⁹ Despite these divergent views testimony has received considerable attention in epistemology, and the issue has since moved from (anti)reductionist debate to include 'how' and 'when' of learning from others.

Prejudice and Bias as Challenges to Social Knowledge

The possibility of prejudice accounted for Descartes' internalist approach to knowledge. According to Descartes,

there is no novelty to me in the reflection that, from my earliest years, I have accepted many false opinions as true, and that what I have concluded from such badly assured premises could not but be highly doubtful and uncertain.²⁰

To avoid prejudice and bias which are capable of colouring the object of knowledge, Descartes doubted all knowledge forms which include sensory perception, intellectual beliefs, mathematical demonstrations and self-evident truth, giving credence only to what he acquired through his reason. For him, "that way I shall take great care not to accept any falsity among my beliefs and shall prepare my mind well for all the ruses of this great deceiver that, however powerful and artful he maybe, he will never be able to mislead me in anything."²¹ As Shai Frogel opines:

Descartes is certain that the method he adopts in the *Meditations* fits his philosophical goal, not because it will necessarily lead him to truth, but because it will enable him to avoid false beliefs (imagining knowing what he does not know). In this respect Descartes is a follower of Socrates, who sees in the struggle against his own false certainties an essential step in the direction of true knowledge. This could explain Descartes' use of the hyperbolic doubt: it is his way of ensuring that his consciousness remains clear of false certainties.²²

It is evident from this that in epistemic parlance, prejudice or bias usually deters an epistemic agent from attaining the correct information of his epistemic object. This is instantiated

in Miranda Fricker's Epistemic Injustice. This is a moral social epistemology that argues that an epistemic agent may be wronged specifically in his capacity as a knower.²³ This is a situation in which an agent is deprived due to the coincidence of association and circumstance of lack of conceptual resources. According to Fricker, epistemic injustice means that statements by members of particular groups are systematically neglected or discredited, for instance because of negative social stereotypes associated with them. In this case, the hearer does not accept the content of what is being passed to him because he has developed an unconscious mechanism that discredit the speaker. Epistemic injustice is the idea that we can be unfairly discriminated against in our capacity as a knower based on prejudices about the speaker, such as gender, social background, ethnicity, race, sexuality, tone of voice, accent, and so on.²⁴

Fricker presents two types of epistemic injustice as testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. Fricker explains that testimonial injustice occurs when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word; hermeneutical injustice occurs at a prior stage, when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences.²⁵ The former occurs when a speaker is given less credibility than she deserves because the hearer has prejudices about a social group to which the speaker belongs; while the later occurs when, as a result of a group being socially powerless, members of the group lack the conceptual resources to make sense of certain distinctive social experiences.²⁶ These are two degrees of epistemic injustice and both are situated within the realm of credibility judgement. In both cases, the epistemic agent (the hearer) refuses to grant the required level of credibility to a speaker who provides testimonial form of knowledge. This becomes clearer in McKinnon's analysis of the conditions necessary for a hearer to know something from a speaker. These conditions are: (a.) what the speaker says is true (b.) the speaker

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is sufficiently reliable in their testimony (that is, when they assert some proposition, *p*, *p* is probably true), and (c.) the hearer has some reason to think that the speaker is reliable. Whenever these conditions are present, the hearer can lay claim to knowledge.

However, this situation changes due to the presence of prejudice in the form of either of the two epistemic injustices identified by Fricker. Among the three conditions identified for one to know, the second comes under attack as the epistemic subject fails, due to prejudice, to acknowledge that the speaker possesses what is required to be sufficiently reliable. Consequently, the agent arrives at deformed credibility judgement caused by failure to consider the speaker as credible. That is why McKinnon avers that judging the credibility of a speaker is a fraught task, rife with opportunities for prejudices and implicit (or explicit) bias to creep in.²⁷ The attention shifts from the immediate experience of knowledge acquisition to what has been previously conceived about the person passing the information and the misgivings of opinions surrounding the speaker.

Prejudice and Bias Explained

Etymologically, the word prejudice is from the combination of two Latin words *prae* which means “before” and *judicium* which means “judgment” Put together, the Latin root becomes *praejudicium*, and it means “previous judgment”. It is judging the present from the past. It is a feeling of unfair dislike directed against an individual or a group because of some characteristic (as race or religion). The immediate effect of this is that prejudice constitutes an obstacle to dealing with issues *prima facie*. This is out rightly against the focus of philosophy as a discipline that focuses on the attainment of truth.

There is a long history of discourse on prejudice among philosophers. In the classical era of philosophy, Cicero describes prejudice as the opposite of truth, associated with error not caused by ignorance but the outcome of manipulation. During the Enlightenment, prejudice covers all forms of erroneously

acquired stands, as aptly presented in Francis Bacon who represented these human cognitive frailties in the forms of preconceptions that block our attainment of truth of reality in *The Idols*. The French philosopher, Voltaire, along with other revolutionaries conceived prejudice as all forms of errors of the mind, and that they are almost impossible to eradicate. Hence, Hans-Georg Gadamer in line with Martin Heidegger posit that we have a pre-understanding which colours our conceptions of things.²⁸ Prejudice could be likened to a shield that prevents right perception of things. It could act as blockage to accessing the correct properties of an object. If likened to a screen, it determines the coloration that the object of perception gets.

In the same way, implicit bias is unconscious conception of a group of persons who are categorized based on unguided rational opinions. Persons in the group are stereotyped and considered more often in negative connotations that do not represent them. For the fact that it is usually unconscious, implicit bias manifests itself in an automatic assessment of persons and influences how we behave towards them which is often in discriminating manners. Both prejudice and implicit bias are mental associations that, though do represent true picture, but nevertheless present and inform our opinions of people and how we relate with them. Michael Brownstein opines that in most instances, the people are often not aware of the prejudice or bias. So, people can act on the basis of prejudice and stereotypes without intending to do so.²⁹ This is significant for social acquisition of knowledge.

Epistemic agents are participants of a social setting and structures. An epistemic agent being an integral part of society is exposed to the activities of the social group which to a remarkable extent shapes what he knows and how he conducts his epistemic activities. Alex Madva avers that the harms and inequities suffered by individuals on the basis of race and gender depend to a great extent on social-institutional forces. It seems that merely knowing what many others believe about a group leads individuals to act in some respects as if they themselves

believed it too.³⁰ This further shows the problematics associated with social knowledge of which stereotyping is at the center. These are not just epistemic but moral issues involved in social knowledge. An instance of this has been identified previously in epistemic injustice. In the light of these issues, how can we still validate knowledge from the social circle?

Russell's Critical Thinking as an antidote to Social Approaches of Knowledge Acquisition

As a specie of social knowledge, Fricker suggested the acquisition of necessary virtues that would help reduce the negative effects of the vices of testimonial and hermeneutical injustices. She opines; that considered purely as an intellectual virtue testimonial justice aims ultimately at understanding and more immediately at neutralizing the impact of structural prejudice in the collective hermeneutical resource.³¹ This virtue is both epistemic and moral in dimension. An epistemic virtue is a character trait that constitutes an epistemic advantage for the individual who possesses it and for those who interact with him or her. It is roughly a set of attitudes and dispositions that facilitate the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge.³² This is necessary to make the conduct of epistemic activities in social sphere more rational and more just. One who possesses these virtues will be able to focus on and process the object of knowledge without giving in to pre-conceived opinions. This portrays some resemblance with Husserl's phenomenological bracketing. Pre-conceived ideas are bracketed to pave way for direct access to the object of consideration.

Furthermore, in order for social epistemology not to be a breeding ground for prejudice and bias, it is pertinent to employ Russell's conception of critical thinking. Russell's notion of critical thinking consists in the development of specific rational abilities in the form of virtues of both epistemic and ethical imports. This consists of an attitude of subjecting the content of our epistemic investigation into critical analysis that is devoid of presumptions

and unfounded claims. This is because we live with various degrees of belief that we take their truth for granted neglecting, as Russell noted, that our most unquestioned convictions may be as mistaken as those of Galileo's opponents.³³ William Hare refers to the qualities as critical skills. He considers Russell's conception of critical thinking as consisting of a wide range of skills, dispositions and attitudes which together characterize a virtue which has both intellectual and moral aspects, and which serves to prevent the emergence of numerous vices, including dogmatism and prejudice.³⁴ These critical skills are expressed in the tripartite abilities which are:

First, the ability to form an opinion for oneself, which involves, for example, being able to recognize what is intended to mislead, being capable of listening to eloquence without being carried away, and becoming adept at asking and determining if there is any reason to think that our beliefs are true; Second, the ability to find an impartial solution, which involves learning to recognize and control our own biases, coming to view our own beliefs with the same detachment with which we view the beliefs of others, judging issues on their merits, trying to ascertain the relevant facts, and the power of weighing arguments; Third, the ability to identify and question assumptions, which involves learning not to be credulous, applying what Russell calls constructive doubt in order to test unexamined beliefs, and resisting the notion that some authority, a great philosopher perhaps, has captured the whole truth.³⁵

These constitute the mental activities and not a formulae necessary to arrive at unbiased knowledge. They are rather the constitutive elements of rational attitude or disposition or habit. To emphasize the importance of attaining unbiased knowledge, Russell further gave "The Ten Commandments of critical thinking" as follows:

- i. Do not feel absolutely certain of anything.
- ii. Do not think it worthwhile to proceed by concealing evidence, for the evidence is sure to come to light.
- iii. Never try to discourage thinking, for you are sure to succeed.
- iv. When you meet with opposition, even if it should be from your husband or your children endeavor to overcome it by argument and not by authority, for a victory dependent upon authority is unreal and illusory.
- v. Have no respect for the authority of others, for there are always contrary authorities to be found.
- vi. Do not use power to suppress opinions you think pernicious, for if you do the opinions will suppress you.
- vii. Do not fear to be eccentric in opinion, for every opinion now accepted was once eccentric.
- viii. Find more pleasure in intelligent dissent than in passive agreement, for if you value intelligence as you should, the former implies a deeper agreement than the latter.
- ix. Be scrupulously truthful even if the truth is inconvenient, for it is more inconvenient when you try to conceal it.
- x. Do not feel envious of the happiness of those who live in a fool's paradise, for only a fool will think that it is happiness.³¹

Conclusion

From the discussion and argument presented we can draw some necessary implications. One of such is that humanity would be denied an essential aspect of its nature and necessary mode of existence if the social dimension is downplayed or totally neglected. This is because, considered from the insertion of human existence, there is also a coming to play of a social union. Consequently, attempting to remove the dynamics of the social would also amount to a deliberate move towards an incomplete cognitive appreciation of humans as social beings. That being the case, and as pointed out earlier, epistemic transactions are inevitable in social relations.

Also, as breeding plots of knowledge acquisition, it cannot

not be fully ascertained that knowledge from anything external to the agent is free from prejudice. Thomas Hobbes's Idols testify to this. For instance, Nigerians as citizens of multi-ethnic groups hold strong views about each other based on their ethnic affinity. Therefore, it is important for epistemic agents to develop an epistemic "gauge" that would assist him in sieving pieces of information assessable to him. This is the precise point of Fricker which this paper recommends to be Russell's critical thinking.

Looking at the commandments of thinking postulated by Russell, we can also come to a conclusion that a subject has knowledge of a thing if and only if the subject is in some way aware of it such that he or she is in a position to think and talk about it. Therefore, we need to see this bias in perspective of awareness before we can make self-acclamation of that which we claim to know. Upon closer look at Russell's ten essential rules of critical thinking, we will see elements of social approaches to knowledge in them. Thus, Russell's critical thinking is indeed an antidote to social approaches in acquisition of knowledge.

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PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM

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Abstract

Since independence, Nigeria continues to struggle with cultural and religious identity crisis. Overtime, there have been a plethora of religious clashes among Nigerians who identify themselves first as Muslims or Christians before even classifying themselves as humans. In recent times, several religious and ethnic crises abound which often result in the denigration of national values, identity and ultimately, humanism. This paper identifies, as a result of recurrent religious crisis, the decay of our humanism and the corruption of patriotism, hard work and national values. This paper attempts to evaluate the peculiarity of religious fundamentalism as a bane to national development. It, however, does not attempt to go against the idea of religion, but it attempts to objectively discuss the debate between faith and reason as philosophers in the medieval era interrogated the activities of religious fundamentalists in their era. However, humanism is a philosophical activity that emphasises universal human dignity, respect for individual freedom, and happiness. This paper argues that since the immense influence of the medieval era on the activities of religious fundamentalists in the modern era cannot be overemphasised, there is an urgent call on religious fundamentalists on the need to move away from the rigidity of religious fundamentalism and embrace religious humanism.

Key Words: Philosophy, Religion, Fundamentalism and Humanism

Introduction

Human existence is believed to be a multi-faceted reality that can be understood in various contexts. In these contexts, we find the concepts of society, politics, education and religion. Since human life is wrapped around these concepts, man is unable to avoid them. For instance, religion proposes to make life more meaningful in terms of the purpose, significance, fulfilment, and satisfaction of life. Often times, religious doctrines are very difficult to shed off. Religion acknowledges the Supreme Being, who is The Absolute Other. In religion, there is a practice of worship, which plays a unified role in societies. Also, most human values have religious imports. Indeed, religion authenticates human experiences and legitimises what we do and how we live. While religion educates and informs human experiences, it also helps to make informed choices.

Looking at the core values of philosophy and its interconnectedness to other disciplines, one can argue, for example, that a habit of analytical ability as well as rational inquiry would enhance individuals to cope with the challenges of life. It is also pertinent to state that both religion and philosophy are concerned with how we live. However, the idea of dogmatism is quite prominent in religion with its practices. This idea is one of the prejudices of human existence that philosophy tries to fight. Now, a sort of divide between the ideals of philosophy and religion is being established. Although this divide does not necessarily lead to a problem but it becomes an issue when there is a use of brutish force from a part of the divide against the other. Even though the term, religious fundamentalism, did not become so prominent until the 1920s, religious antagonism and dogmatism have posed lot of problems to philosophy. This is traceable to a period in the History of Philosophy known as the medieval period. Religion did not only oppose philosophy; it refutes any form of enlightening ideas including science and innovations, which it had no ontological control of their affairs.

During this period, this divide was conceptualised as the debate between Faith and Reason.

The aim of this paper is not to go against the idea of religion, but an attempt to objectively discuss the debate between faith and reason; including the import of philosophers in the medieval era. In order to do this, an attempt is made towards a thorough conceptualisation of the two components of this paper namely: “Philosophy” and “Religious Fundamentalism”. Further attempt focusses on the dichotomy between faith and reason in the medieval era by taking into cognizance the activities of religious fundamentalists in this era. The activities of religious fundamentalism in the modern era are also investigated. The paper calls for the need to move away from the rigidity of religious fundamentalism and embrace religious humanism.

Conceptualising Religious Fundamentalism

Defining religious fundamentalism sometimes proves an important problem. For Western liberals, religious fundamentalism is believed to be an empty and meaningless term. It refers to a broad spectrum of religious phenomena with nothing in common.¹ The reason for this is that fundamentalism is often regarded as a stand against modernism, rationalism, liberalism, and secularism. All these have disregard for religious authority. This, however, cannot be the case as historical facts and events bear witnesses to the fact that tyrannical rulers are more comfortable with man as “homo religious”², the religious man then *ashomosapiens* and the reflexive man; the thinking man.

Thus, religion, like culture, is a phenomenon that is concerned with the “other”. It is a promise to bring man face to face with the idea of either a certain Divine Being or Divine Beings. Religion also recognises this Divine or Supreme Being. For instance, the idea of ‘God’ as the Absolute and the mysterious side of human experience evinces a religious belief. The practice of religion has

the duty to unite men, as it is an integral part of society. However, this is not wholly the case as we have had wars fought in the name of religion.³

The reason for this is fanaticism and religious fundamentalism. This is due to the fact that religion is sometimes manipulated and misused. Used by a Baptist journalist in 1920, the term “fundamentalist” was used as a badge of honour for Christians who championed the cause of the fundamental beliefs such as inerrancy of scriptures, original sin, the virgin birth, atonement, resurrection, second coming of Christ and so on.⁴ Claiming to be a corpus of universal and eternal truths, fundamentalists and religious fanatics exhibit certain traits. One of such traits is the acceptance of the view that the existence of other worlds does not permit the regard that religion is the custodian of absolute authority, which excludes others.

The implication of this is that they do not understand the fact that not accepting the plurality of religious beliefs means they do not acknowledge our collective humanism. This now makes them to kill those they tag as “infidels”. Fanatics believe that it is acceptable to their “most merciful and compassionate God”. It is also believed that Liberals began to use the word, fundamentalism, as a term of abuse by associating it with blind ignorance and obscurantism.⁵ The term identifies the forms of religious practices found in different religions. Thus, we now speak of Hindu Fundamentalism, Islamic Fundamentalism, and so on.

The quest to propagate and defend the truth of one’s religious views is what led to the term “fundamentalism”. Applied to strong anti-modernist’s reaffirmation of any faith. Fundamentalists are also known to oppose modernist and liberal views of their religions, and defend fundamental doctrines like the literal infallibility of their religious authority; they refer to their rivals as infidels, unbelievers, heretics or apostates. Also, central to fundamentalism is the element of faith. Fundamentalism is often

viewed with religious intolerance, violence and terrorism, which arise from unchecked fideism, exclusivist sentiments, based on fanaticism and extremism. Religion creates and encourages a receptive attitude and it demands a sort of blind obedience, which is explicated in the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, as presented in the Bible, for the Christians.⁶ A critically thinking man, however, is independent-minded and may at least likely obey without asking questions first.

It is worthy to note that no religion out rightly preaches fanaticism. However, there is a very narrow line between piety and fanaticism. Many fundamentalists have been known to give reference to their religion as they are taught. For them, it is rewarding to do this. We can find this in the confidence with which Islamic fanatics are confident in battle as they hold strongly to the promise of “paradise” with “certain number of virgins” when they die battling infidels. This also goes for the Christian fanatics in their numerous crusades, not just against apostates and heretics, but also against people of the Islamic faith in order to regain lands. This supports our claim that there have always been inter-religion conflicts. In short, fundamentalism undermines reason. It can be likened to a revolution without an ideology as it seeks to craze for power. This can be seen in the uprising in the North Eastern and North Central geo-political zones in Nigeria. The uprising is anti-development, anti-God and irrational. One question that comes to mind at this juncture is, does fundamentalism represent the inability of the mind to understand and communicate the divine or transcendental reality to other minds? Let us attempt an answer through philosophy.

Conceptualising Philosophy

Definitions of philosophy are varied and rooted in different scholarly traditions or orientations. Coined from two Greek words, “philia” meaning “the love of” and “Sophia” which means “wisdom”, which translates to philosophy meaning “the

love of wisdom”. The complexities of philosophical studies make it difficult to give acceptable definition of philosophy. However, as history continues to develop, more thinkers put their idea of philosophy into acceptable definitions. For the purpose of this paper, the definition given by H.S. Staniland is adopted. According to Staniland, philosophy is the criticism of the ideas we live by. This definition is encompassing as it presents an idea of philosophy, which even to the layman is not abstract. It shows that philosophy is practical to life. Philosophy puts under close examination the intellectual foundation of life, using the best form of knowledge, interaction and reflection. It is also a tool for learning, un-learning and re-learning the ideas we communicate daily.

Looking at the works and ideas of many philosophers overtime, it is noticeable that philosophy further gives better ways of thinking and coming up with critical evaluation of situations. For instance, philosophy is known to interact with various disciplines and by doing this, it (philosophy) discovers the good and ills and produces better ideas or ways of doing them. Staniland’s definition gives two basic terms namely: “criticism” and “ideas”. Accordingly, the word “criticism” as implied in the philosophical endeavour, does not mean a negative evaluation of ideas.⁷ Rather, it means a neutral form of assessing ideas. That is, criticism helps to treat all ideas equally and free it from undue bias or preconceived opinions. Also, being critical of our ideas does not imply we have to jettison these ideas. Further, it entails the application of one’s entire capacity for intellectual and imaginative engagement in order to search for an answer whether the idea in question should be accepted, rejected, or modified.

On the other hand, the term “idea” includes destiny, God, reincarnation, faith, freedom, justice, equality, development, religion, science, art, reality and other ideas we go through in live. Therefore, philosophy seeks to subject these ideas to proper critical evaluation to see if they should be accepted, rejected

or modified. In Staniland's opinion, "philosophising only occur (sic) when one is engaged in a train of thought with the ultimate purpose of criticism of certain vitally important ideas."⁸ This, therefore, means that the people who engage in the activity of critical evaluation of basic ideas are definitely philosophising. However, it should be noted that there is the activity of philosophy in the professional sense as an academic discipline and philosophy in the ordinary sense as a view of life that every person has.⁹ All philosophers are thinkers but not all thinkers are philosophers. The reason for this distinction is because philosophy and philosophising carries with it some tools which are quite technical in their application. Thus, ordinary thinkers may themselves think about some certain ideas which may, of course, be of great importance and value to human well-being, yet they cannot be referred to as philosophers.

The fundamental distinguishing factor between philosophers and ordinary thinkers is the application of the tools for philosophising. These tools include a critical analysis, which deals with the application of one's entire capacity for intellectual and imaginative intelligence to search for an answer whether the idea in question should be accepted, rejected or improved upon. There is also the tool of rationality; which entails the ability to justify an idea or a belief in such a way that it is logical and consistent. Then, there is conceptual analysis; which deals with the clarification of a number of concepts used in an argument by separating compound terms into various parts thereby analysing them and then recombining them more clearly.

Religious Fundamentalism in the History of Philosophy

The word "fundamentalism" was not coined until the 1900s. This, however, does not deny the fact that elements of fundamentalism exist in the history of philosophy. This period in the history of philosophy is known as the Medieval period. This period was also known to have embodied the period known as the

Dark Ages. It was a period, which was ushered in by wars and the fall of various empires. What was also prominent was that in the midst of the wars, uprising and unsettlement, the Catholic Church was an institution that was still able to stand the test of time.¹⁰

The Church in this period retained its cohesion and preserved its character as a central organisation and universal institution. The Church also had the organisational structure of a monarchy by declaring the Bishop of Rome, the “Father of the Church” or the “Pope” which translates from the word “Papa”. The Church, being the only institution, which is strong enough to endure the changes, had the responsibility of preserving the past and shaping the future. It also took over the responsibility of collecting taxes, handling food supply, repairing the city walls, maintaining courts of criminal law, hospital and inn among others. Furthermore, it became the centre of education, which was only limited to the clergy and monks. With so much authority, the Church controlled the institutions of the state and education and there was a feature of autonomy from the Church on every aspect of life.

Although, historians have tagged this period the least development was experienced, the medieval period is not without its own achievement. Historians also posited that the reason for slow development, especially in the area of thought during this period was not only due to philosophical texts of ancient scholars being discovered quite late. It was also due to the Church serving as a stiff opposition to critical thinking and trying to fight the controversies between orthodoxy and heresies, which arose. The church used her authority to shut down this controversy.¹¹ Although there was philosophical activity during this period, it was under the close scrutiny and authority of the Church.

One of such influences can be found in the practice of selling indulgences to raise money to rebuild St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. Pope Leo X sent John Tetzel, a Dominican friar and papal commissioner, to preach about the importance of indulgence; he went propagating the sale of indulgence instead of emphasising

its importance. An indulgence was the remission of punishment due for sins, which had already been confessed, absolution given and forgiveness granted by God.¹² The practice of selling indulgence was condemned by Martin Luther, a former member of the Order of St Augustine of the Catholic Church. Luther was ex-communicated by the Church for speaking against what was not even a doctrine of the Church. The pope did not order John Tetzel to sell indulgence. Historians have attributed the education and knowledge of the language of the Church in that period to a privileged few who understood Luther's ability to see the church as corrupt.

Luther's discovery made him wrote a scholastic objection protesting against the Church's practice of indulgency known as the 95 theses, where he denied the ability or the right of the Pope to forgive sins. He nailed a copy to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. The theses translated from German into Latin, were printed and distributed across Europe. Pope Leo X, however, dismissed Luther as "a drunken German" who "when sober will change his mind".¹³ Even with the threat of ex-communication, he did not recant until the latter stage of his life, where his actions proved that the words of Pope Leo X were true. He was not only ex-communicated; he was declared an outlaw. One might ask, why the reference to the medieval period?

Although fundamentalism was not used in the medieval era, the event exemplified above occurred at various points in this period. The antagonism and dogmatism, which religion posed against philosophy and any form of enlightenment could be seen in the medieval era. Apart from the instance of the Church against Martin Luther explained above, various instances of the Church stifling Enlightenment were highlighted at various times in this era. To understand the "Unquestioned Authority" of the Church against reasoning is also to make reference to the brutish manner, which the life of Hypatia, the Alexandrian female philosopher was taken to escape the wrath of the Church. She, in her

willingness not to denounce her belief in Philosophy as opposed to the Church, had to pay with her life. Same fate almost befell Galileo but for his willingness to recant. To better understand the workings of religious fundamentalism in the medieval era, instances of the church displaying features that are likened to the concept of religious fundamentalism will be highlighted in subsequent headings.

Orthodoxy

Literally, the term “orthodoxy” means right belief.¹⁴ One of the elements of fundamentalism that is seen throughout history is orthodoxy. This stands against anti-religious advances. Although orthodoxy merely connotes traditional beliefs, fundamentalism is the radical unconditional acceptance of traditional beliefs. This feature allowed the Church to reject any doctrine, which went against her originally chosen beliefs as heresies and termed such dangerous or false opinion. We can find a handful of these heretical declarations in history. Among such controversies is the nature of God and the Arian heresy, the problem of freewill and sin: the Pelagian heresy. Although the issue of the Arian heresy poses a lot of conflict, the orthodoxy, which generated the Nicene Creed, is still what is used in various churches today.

Absolutist Ethics

There is the recognition of certain authoritative source of ethics in fundamentalism like the canonical texts or by tradition - set of beliefs, customs, and practices in the medieval era. An example of this is pointed out in the controversy between the Church and Martin Luther as mentioned earlier. Today, churches, which extort churchgoers, use the idea of absolutist ethics.

Utopian Eschatology

Fundamentalism is also promoted by this futuristic approach of the Church; it dictates how fundamentalists interact with the immediate world. Almond and others declare that they interact either as world conquerors - using whatever means necessary to bring the world to become subjects of their religion; or as world transformers - using a sort of inner transformation, which is better than outward conversion. An undertone of imposition which characterised some medieval clergymen and churchmen during the medieval period is underscored. The Church, then and even now, is like a school. The first thing given to a student when he/she begins school is a prospectus. The student is expected to follow the code of conduct contained in it. Similarly, when one agrees to be a Christian or a member of the Church, certain expectations are demanded. The act of reminding one to keep to this expectation is not in any way a latent threat). Thus, an appeal to changing perspectives is made to the world creator. In this alternative world, God rejects sinners and invites others into His Kingdom. This makes sin decliner to withdraw from the world of sin and live a religious life. This is also evident in how Muslim Fundamentalists treat those they refer to as “infidels”; looking down on them and not even afraid to kill them because of the promise of eternity with “unnamed number of virgins. Fundamentalists also have faith in various conditions. These are discussed in sub-headings below:

Unconditional Subjection to Authority

This may be found in the scripture as it applies to religion. There is also the unconditional submission to the authoritative interpretation of these scriptures professed by the prevailing tradition and the authority of a spiritual leader. Basically, the authority to interpret the scripture belongs to the Church. This is one of the tools that were used to silence Hypatia, not only as a woman, but as a woman who believed in the power of critical

reasoning. Instituted by Christ, the Church preaches and teaches according to the Holy Spirit. While all believers are living testimonies to the truth, there is no justification of murdering Hypatia because she ought to have listened to the Church. A lesser measure of communicating the faith could have been deployed.

Existential Identity

The fundamentalist unquestioningly lives or dies for his or her ideals. In the case of the Roman Catholic Church against Galileo, the latter, in the face of death, recanted his claim about his scientific findings to save his life. However, for a fundamentalist, faith defines existence and, in this light, he is ready to lay down his life for his beliefs. This also comes with the promise of eternity in “Paradise”.

Closed Exclusivism

The fundamentalist also has a closed attitude towards life. There is the idea of a closed worldview disallowing any form of liberality whatsoever. Also, where dialoguing becomes fruitless, especially with people who do not share their faith, the fundamentalist might result to violence and murder. With the afore-mentioned features, which mostly point to reward or punishment, one might wonder whether those-called “religious faithful or fundamentals” would hold on to their religious beliefs if there was no anticipation of a reward or fear of punishment. Boko Haram terrorism in West Africa and especially North-Eastern Nigeria has brainwashed many who saw in the brutal acts of kidnapping and enforcing some misunderstood principles as essential to Islam has caused a heavy toll.

Philosophical Thoughts in the Medieval Era: The Debate on Faith and Reason

Although the works of philosophers in this era were largely tainted with the Christian doctrine, there are various philosophers

who lived in the medieval era whose works still serve as a point of reference today. One of the prominent and most popular topics these philosophers addressed is the debate on faith and reason. One of such scholars is Augustine (354-430 AD) whose works and thoughts gave rise to a speculative philosophy of history, claiming to uncover the purpose and pattern of history. During the Patristic era of the Fathers of the Church including, for example, Tertullian, Augustine describes the version of history given by the Greeks like Plato as fleeting with eternal, unchanging truth. Truth traps the human soul in an endless, cosmic “merry-go-round”.¹⁶ This, according to Augustine, is in contrast to the Bible that gives history meaning in a linear direction. The Bible is authored by God with human actions and it makes Augustine’s account of history fit in with the Christian vision. The Romans by not quickly turning to God witnessed the fall of the Roman Empire, which Augustine declared. He presents history in his work, “The City of God” as a moral drama in which the purpose of God and the moral decisions of humans are significant elements. According to him, “faith goes before, understanding follows after.”¹⁷

Another prominent thought pattern in this period was the rise of scholasticism, which was an intellectual movement that arose in Europe at this time. People of this class were called “Scholastics”. Charlemagne first ascribed the term to those who learned and taught in schools. It was later referred to as the intellectual project of integrating faith and reason. The scholastics sought to harmonise church doctrines and fruits of philosophical speculation. To them, theology was the “Queen of the Sciences” and philosophy was her handmaiden.¹⁸ In this school, faith guided reason, set its agendas and gave it the main outlines and landmark truths around where philosophers built their systems.

First, Christianity dealt with formulating and systematising the articles of faith.¹⁹ Scholasticism therefore had her foundation based on the teachings of the church. It provided the unquestioned

framework within which all philosophy had to find its place. The movement however depicted that scholars' mind was free to roam and compete with philosophical issues. The issues showed that theology did not answer all questions.

Second, scholasticism employed the method of dialectic, which was a term adapted from Aristotle's works²⁰. First, the discussion is formed like a question and arguments for and against the different answers are raised and resolutions arriving at either a balancing of the competing positions are reached and a position is defended, while others are refuted.

Third, the power of reason could reach truths but is balanced with the reliance on the accepted authority of the sacred scriptures, the Church Fathers (especially Augustine) and Boethius's logical commentaries.²¹ The philosophers are united in seeking to work out the philosophical implication of their faith and were provoked with controversies, which raged throughout Monasteries and Universities. Prominent among these is the relation between faith and reason, which could be taken as the two sources of knowledge in this era.

For the purpose of clarity, five approaches emerged. First, there were thinkers who let their intellect lead their faith like John Scotus Erigena and Peter Abelard. This position led Abelard into trouble and all his works were condemned. Second, there were those who favoured faith by prioritising it over reason. Monastic life reform at this period and resurgence of piety led to reason being seen as a threat. Peter Damian and Bernard of Clairvaux spoke for this position. They condemn the blind foolhardiness of pseudo-intellectuals who presume to diminish the power of God by trusting in reason. They saw philosophy as useless and a danger to the unwary. Bernard prosecuted Abelard at his heresy trial. According to Bernard, "I believe though I do not comprehend, and I hold by faith what I cannot grasp with the mind."²²

The third position held by Anselm was more moderate; he was seeking a sort of compromise. For him, reason cannot be autonomous so it must be led by faith. He, however, placed more confidence in reason but still made all his arguments operate within the bounds of orthodoxy. Thomas Aquinas, holding a fourth position, sought to synthesise faith and reason. For him, minds are limited and cannot perceive the rationality of some theological doctrines. He still held that reason was competent in its own boundaries and considerations of faith do not need to enter into philosophical arguments. He, however, believed both overlapped, as the light of reason can prove some beliefs, which were held on to by reason of faith.

After Aquinas, there seems to be more and more distancing of reason and faith. At the fifth position is philosopher like Siger of Brabant who claimed that faith and reason produced double answer. He did not attempt to resolve both. William of Ockham did a sort of separation of both to protect the truths of faith from scrutiny of human reason. Separation of faith and reason was fuelled by the resurgence of mysticism in the 14th century, which allocated knowledge of God to religious experience and placed it beyond the pole of rational and propositional knowledge.

Islamic philosophers in this era like Averroés also lent their voice to this debate. He used the double-truth theory. For him, the Qur'an was written for the masses that do not have powers of intellect to appeal to emotions and imagination of the uneducated. However, philosophers must strip away the surface meaning to uncover the true and inner meaning of teachings. Although there might be conflicting conclusions, this is only a conflict with the apparent meaning of the scriptures. Truth cannot conflict with truth.²³ So, the best of philosophy is consistent with the hidden meaning of the Qur'an.

What can be deduced from the above analogy is that, although reason tried to liberate the medieval men, little progress was made as it kept on competing and losing to faith. This was why, as

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stated earlier; this era had very little achievement. The next two sub-headings discuss the impact of religious fundamentalism in today's world. This is necessary to examine how religion interacts in today's world. Also, how reason can and should interact with religion in today's world will still be discussed.

Religious Fundamentalism in the 21st Century: Towards Humanism

The idea of religious fundamentalism reflects the depth of indoctrination people embrace in their practice of religions, which are imbued in the fundamental beliefs and assumptions that underlay religious practices. Fundamentalism, when placed within the context of religion reflects the dogmatic separation of reason or reflection from religion, and this implies the acceptance of certain religious beliefs without any sense of critical evaluation of such beliefs. Religious fundamentalist tendencies are prevalent amongst adherents to the tenets of Abrahamic religions such as Islam and Christianity in contemporary times, and there are implications this portends to human existence in the 21st Century.

Religious fundamentalists are often motivated by religious teachings, ethics, beliefs, and scriptures to abide only by the tenets of their religion, while disregarding other religious beliefs as counterfeit or false. According to John Mbiti, religion has pervaded all aspects of human life, to such an extent that it is not easy to separate man from it.²⁴ The implication of Mbiti's affirmation is that religion tremendously influences all human activities and belief-systems. The link between religion and religious fundamentalism is succinctly expressed by Ekeopara and Ekpenyong, who aver that religion generally teaches its adherents that evil, bribery, violence, crime, corruption, hate speeches, ethnicity, tribalism, and nepotism are proscribed, while fundamentalism stress practical adherence and loyalty to religious teachings.²⁵ Therefore, religious fundamentalism affirms strict adherence to the tenets, rules and regulations of a

particular religious group.

The debate between faith and reason gives a depiction of the dogma of religious fundamentalism, which confronts us today. Religious fundamentalism continues to be on the increase. Not just Christian fundamentalism alone but also Jewish fundamentalism; Hindu fundamentalism; Buddhist fundamentalism and one whose popularity seems to rival Christian fundamentalism is Islamic fundamentalism. Islamic fundamentalism from Africa to Asia, Europe to America, Australia and Oceania has been on the increase. What most of the followers of one religion or the other seems to share is the fact that they perceive religion as what Karl Marx has described as the “opium of the people”, which is quite reflective in this statement:

The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. To call them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call them to give up a condition that requires illusions. The criticism of religion is therefore, in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears of which religion is the halo.²⁶

This simply means that religion is an escape from the conditions of poverty and it helps to continue in the “spiritual sense”. Elizabeth Gabhart describes it better as religion creating a believer’s intense emotional experience, specific moral guidance, feeling of belonging to an exclusive group, satisfying ritual, assurance of heaven and enthusiastic commitment.²⁷ However, religious fundamentalism creates a dichotomy between strict adherents to religious beliefs and scriptures and those who do not entertain such beliefs, thereby tagging the later as unbelievers and pagans. Therefore, religious fundamentalism can be said to create a strict divide in humanity, thereby resulting in violence amongst opposing religious groups and the upsurge of insurgent groups in critical areas across the globe.

As in the medieval era, where religion took over due to unrest, in the modern period, poverty, strife and the decline in the economic welfare also make the turn to religion quite easy and attractive. As the opium of the people, it creates hope for the people, an association to fight repression. As Mohammed M. Hafez puts it in his book, “Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World”,²⁸ some Muslims rebel because they are denied access to conventional means of political participation. They also rebel because their organisations and members feel threatened by indiscriminate repressive policies. These people find solace in their religious organisation and they find the answers where the government has failed. It becomes easy to carry out any act of violent acts as long as their religion commands. By way of illustration, Islamic fundamentalism progressed from Saudi Arabia and Egypt in forms of Wahhabism and Salafism as reactions to colonial influences and political orders.

Indeed, there are noticeable features of fundamentalism of the medieval era in modern African society; the increasing number of terrorist activities especially the dreaded Boko Haram has left millions of people worried. It is quite clear that religious fundamentalism brings with it various ills retarding development and inhuman treatment and- all these have made Africa, unable to witness the high level of spiritual as well as economic development that African politicians, intellectuals and the masses have been struggling to attain.

Another recent and typical example of religious fundamentalism occurred in Nigeria. As a known fact, Nigeria has always struggled with sensitive issues of religion. In fact, Nigeria’s two main religions—Christianity and Islam, have become more delicate especially since May 1999. Indeed, political moves by various states in the North to implement the Sharia Islamic law continues to raise problems till date. The most recent of this can be seen in a state like Kwara, which sits on the boundary

of being either predominantly Islamic or Christian. Kwara has a large number of populations practicing both faiths. The heated debate continues among those practicing the different faiths on the implementation of Sharia in Kwara State. Recently, the state has been agog with the news of religious clashes between these two main religions, especially as regards dressing in learning environments in the state.

While many analysts are debating the risk of a state becoming affected by religious fundamentalist, many scholars have discussed why religious fundamentalism continues to thrive today. One of the reasons why religious fundamentalism thrives and the pews and mats continue to get filled especially in Africa is often linked to existential, sociological, ideological and economic reasons. First, by economic means, religion thrives mostly amongst economically disadvantaged people in the society.²⁹ These people have lost faith in their political and social activists alike. Turning to religion becomes a sort of last resort as there is promise of prosperity for members. However, only the leaders reap from the promise of this prosperity on earth. Members are blindly robbed of their tithes and special donations. The people are hardly getting by, but for the reward of a better life in paradise, there is no hope.

Also, religious fundamentalism thrives in Africa because of political instability and endemic corrupt political culture. We now have spiritual heads that come forward with political agenda and example of being able to run a government suitable for the people. As clearly argued in his book entitled: *Pentecostalism and Politics in Africa*, Adeshina Afolayan is of the view that there is disparity between different religious phases especially when religion is meddled with politics in addressing the issue of secrecy and divinity. Thus, there have been instances of religious leaders blaming the people's sins on the reason why the Supreme is punishing them with a cruel leader. There is also the lack of religious education. The idea of the Christian religion is

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an example of a religion foreign to the African society. For this reason, there is dependence on religious leaders for information, truth, and right doctrine without bothering to verify or critically review what they learn from these leaders. There is the belief in the authority and the infallibility of these religious leaders and religious scriptures like the Bible and Qur'an. This makes it easy for followers to be hoodwinked as they continue to follow blindly. It also projects a social imagery with a vision to birth a city of God on earth. All that has been mentioned above makes it easy for religion and religious fundamentalism to keep growing in our society. Despite the fact that many people are raising questions concerning the increasing number of denominations in Christianity, the problem of fundamentalism has not yet been resolved.

There is the issue of religious, political and cultural apathy³⁰ to consider as religion has successfully robbed people of their sense of reasoning. There is a strain religion has created on the smallest unit of the society; the family. There is conflict in religious doctrines and different views held by members leading to conflict. There is also inter-religious conflict caused by the difference in doctrines leading to violent outburst and in many occasions, loss of lives. Indeed, many of these disturb the social order of the society.

However, various challenges posed by religious strife have led to a call for inter-religious dialogue.³¹ This is necessary to promote human flourishing and healthy living in societies. The necessity of inter-religious dialogue would promote the ideals of civil societies like the United Nations' rights to life, religious liberty and free association. However, there is no way to sensitise religious fundamentalist to accept the idea of religious pluralism unless we advocate for religious humanism.

Conclusion

What to do now is to advocate a practice of religion that is much more humane. It is to switch to humanism. As stated in the introduction, this paper is not an attempt to displace religion but a move to call for a reasonable practice of religion. Like what Renaissance humanism explained as a pervasive cultural mode and not the program of a small elite, a program to revive the cultural legacy, literary legacy and moral philosophy of classical antiquity is necessary. Humanism is a philosophical and ethical stance that emphasises the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively; it generally prefers critical thinking and evidence over acceptance of dogma and superstition. It takes into cognizance the import of the definition of philosophy adopted in this paper as “the criticism of ideas we live by”. That is, calling to question, various religious practices and ideologies that blindfolded people and put them in bondage.

So, how can philosophy interrogate religious fundamentalism? According to Bertrand Russell, philosophy, the queen of the sciences, aims at knowledge which results from a critical examination of the grounds of our convictions and as freeing our minds from dogmas and the tyranny of customs. Philosophy provides critical education that can serve as an avenue for the people that have been brainwashed by the menace of religious fundamentalism. There will always be a person who shares a different religious view. We do not have to result to violence when others do not share our religious sentiments. We should not be quick to brand others who share different orientation from ours as “infidel”. We should learn that even above our beliefs, we have multiplicity of religions, cultures, races, political affiliations and we should realise that above all these we are humans first. From here, we draw the conclusion that we need philosophy to survive in this religious-tainted existence. Although human freedom and progress might be associated with religious movements, better results can be achieved by humanism. Using humanity as a tool of philosophy as explained above helps to interrogate religious

ideologies. It is also worthy of note that we cannot do away with the fact that pluralism is at the very core of our existence.

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CORONAVIRUS CLINICAL RESEARCH SUBJECTS IN NIGERIA: AN ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

Coronavirus made its way into our world in 2019. As the virus began to spread, the World Health Organization, WHO judged it to be a pandemic. Pandemic because it had spread to over 200 countries in a short space of time, leaving in its wake scores of dead persons. A virus is deadly by nature. The only option is to develop a vaccine that will help stem the spread of the deadly virus. Development of vaccine takes a whole lot of time. Besides, efficacy of the vaccine depends on a robust clinical trial enabling the investigator to have a wide range of volunteers as well as patients to participate in the clinical trial. Two things are of paramount value: keeping proper ethical protocols and good data. Good record keeping will be helpful in tracking the progress made in the development of the vaccine, and also noting the reactions of people during the clinical trials. Abuse of the research participants should be minimized as much as possible. There is need for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that the ethical principles are followed; and that research participants-patients and volunteers-are properly informed and so give their informed consent.

Keywords: coronavirus, pandemic, vaccine, clinical trials, research participants, ethical, informed consent

Introduction

Coronavirus, also known as Covid-19 has been ravaging and will continue to ravage the world. Wuhan Province in China was its entry point in the world. At the time it started, like a little

insignificant illness, the good Samaritan Chinese physician cried out for help. He was literally ignored by the Chinese government for reasons undisclosed to the public. Not too long, this medical practitioner, more or less a whistle blower, died having contracted the virus. Looking at his action, one can say that he acted in consonance with the Hippocratic oath he took while in medical school. The Hippocratic oath is attributed to Hippocrates of Cos (460B.C). He seemed to have been attributed with founding the empirically based western medicine. So much is in the credit of this man by way of medical text.¹Oath is an essential part of medicine that it continues to be part of the ceremony of medical as well as nursing students.²The medical texts attest to the nature of the practice of medicine in Greece at the time under discussion. Greece, it must be stated, was known for some of the great minds in philosophy like: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle. Understanding the gradual, but progressive development of philosophy, helps to provide the right frame of mind and disposition to medicine. Greece seems to have been the birth place for scientific medicine. It is not farfetched from the oath as part of the text reads: "...to regard him who has taught me this *techné*..."³*Techné* means 'art and science'. The point to take here is that medicine is an organized body of knowledge specifically directed for the human good. The highlight of this is basically the obligation such term places on the physician. There has to be a correspondence in his moral and professional life.⁴ Here it is expected that the physician's life be integral. Implicit is the physician-patient relationship that should be nurtured and safe guarded by the physician.⁵In this way the ground is prepared for trust relationship needed for effective clinical practice and research trials.

The goal of this article is to sensitize the Nigerian populace towards understanding their rights and privileges, in matters regarding clinical trials, in pursuance of manufacturing medication for the treatment of covid-19. For this reason, the

author shall simply address in the article the ethical framework for biomedical research. The article will take the following structure:

- a. History of clinical research
- b. Some ethical practices that enhance respect and fairness in the use of human subjects for research
- c. Poverty index of Nigeria
- d. Poverty and social inequality in Nigeria
- e. Recommendations
- f. Conclusion

1. History of Clinical Research

It is quite obvious that the present challenging moment is harassing research biologists, epidemiologists, virologists, research pharmacists to list just a few. Experts in these various fields are looking for a way forward. Laboratories in the world are collecting specimens and titrating chemicals, so that they produce substances that can be used for research. After this has been accomplished, their greatest and most challenging task becomes how, where and when to assemble the human research subjects. This has to be done in a moral, transparent, and accountable manner given the fact that in the past abuses have crept in. History as we know would often repeat itself. Record shows that in the past some horrible things have been done to research participants.

The Nuremberg Code (9th December, 1946-20th August, 1947) for instance did not only address clinical research issues, rather it also looked into “war crimes, crimes against humanity, and membership in a criminal organization, the S.S.”⁶ This has been adjudged the most comprehensive, authoritative code “informing all ethical codes on research with humans.”⁷

The Helsinki Declaration in 1964 by World Medical Association⁸ (WMA) was aimed at monitoring medical practices ensuring that international standards are met with regard to human

Agora: Journal of Philosophical & Theological Studies subjects.⁹ The document produced at the Helsinki declaration continue to be updated. The most recent known update was in 2004. Other guidelines include Belmont report (1979); while there are some countries and regional focused guidelines like 45 CFR 46 (1991) specific to the United States, National Health Council (1996) Brazil, Council of Europe (1997, revised in 2005) for Europe as the titles states, United Kingdom rolled out Medical Research Council Guidelines in 1998, Uganda produced a Guideline for Science and Technology research in 1998, Canada rolled out Tri-Council Working Group for human research in 1998 and has been reviewed and has the most recent cope in 2005. Other countries that deserve a mention include Australia (1999), New Delhi (2000), Tanzania (2001), and South Africa (1997 with a review in 2002). All these are useful guidelines protecting the human person as research subject.

In the face of this pandemic and given the urgent need for a cure either medication¹⁰ or vaccine, experimental research is a *sine qua non* (a necessary pathway). Here the human person must be used if the results are to be helpful in curbing the current health issue. If any lesson is to be learnt from the past, it is the need to reduce the level of abuse that will creep in as the researches are carried out. The author seriously advocates that the World Medical Association (WMA) in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO) overseen by United Nations Organization (UNO) draw up specific ethical requirements for the research using the human person as subjects. This is not far from the collaborative work of WHO and Council of International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) as they produced important guidelines on the use of human subjects for clinical research in the developing countries.¹¹The goal is to standardize practice by ensuring that all players are held by the same standard of practice. It is not sufficient to have such wonderful guidelines without a monitoring body. To ensure compliance, there has to be a monitoring body in each country to work with WMA, WHO

and UNO. There has to be constant and transparent reporting system. In the same vein, there is need to have a provision for a whistle blower, so that any nation disregarding the rules of the game would have to be called to order. An independent body¹² may have to be set up to look into the cases of abuses. The reason is this, history has shown that there are always people wanting to circumvent the rules. The times are hard and we need to have stringent norms. It is the only way to achieve the desired goal. Covid-19 is redefining the world. The world as we knew it in 2019 is no longer the same. There is need to have a level playing ground for all. By the way who is speaking a contrary word? Did the United States of America not pull out from funding the World Health Organization? This is a new world. Every nation has to be treated as equal, having equal voice at the decision making table. The days of ascribing the lower level to the developing nations, or even regard them as underdogs are over. This is part of the motivation for this article. There is no doubt in my mind that whenever a vaccine is discovered Nigeria will be attraction point of the western world. It is important therefore that the people are not left in their ignorance while being used as research subjects.

As has been previously mentioned, in the last 80 years or there about, human biomedical research has been suffused with myriad of guidance.¹³ In spite of the guidance provided, human research subjects continue to be abused, exploited and denigrated. Each of the guidance provided simply addressed issues raised in a specific research.¹⁴ On the whole, the guidance has to ensure that human rights are respected. To this end, there is the need to have an ethical framework on which human subjects are to be used as research subjects.¹⁵ This will ensure that the researchers respect research principles while recognizing the common humanity they need to protect. Further, one expects such to curb conflict of interest on the part of the researcher so that distrust does not set in between the researcher and the subject. What are some of the fundamental principles that are necessary for a clinical research?

Some ethical practices that enhance respect and fairness in clinical research using the human person as subject

These are collaborative partnership, social value, scientific validity, fair participant selection, healthy risk-benefit ratio, independent review board, proper informed consent, and autonomy and respect of research participants. These are important for a healthy clinical research.

Collaborative partnership

If there has to be a successful research, one cannot cast into the dustbin collaborative partnership. By this principle, the researcher does not assume a superior role and position over the research subjects even though they shall be compensated. It is a win-win situation for both if all goes well at the end of the day. Besides, generally it would also be beneficial for the world at large since it is a common enemy that is fought by all. However, more particularly, it should benefit the community. Nigeria is a peculiar nation. There are lots of issues bordering on mistrust. The society is suspect of things going on with the government. As a matter of principle, government should not get close to such a project if they want it to succeed. It should freely be run by an independent local body but supervised. Further, attention would have to be focused on a check and balancing system for sustainability. Covid-19 is currently in most countries of the world. Any research that is to be carried out in Nigeria must consider a viable community consultation.¹⁶In this way, the people will feel honored and respected while the exercise lasts. It undeniably calls for a quick response in the production of medication or vaccine to arrest the pandemic.

Social value

Health has a social dimension as well as medicine. Results from such research is not private and personal. One basic question that will come to mind would be, who will benefit from this research? A vast majority would have to be persons

who from that region. Say for instance, any research on the production of vaccine against covid-19 has to be done in such a manner that the beneficiaries will have to come from amongst the area the research participants/subjects live. Anything short of this would have been tantamount to exploitation. It goes back into society for its use in the attack of the disease. As has been seen, covid-19 is not restricted to one country or region. Rather, it goes to wherever place its victims move to. Describing it as a mobile disease would not be out of place. A research seeking for measures to cure or heal the disease will not be out of place. How can adverse impact of conducting the research be minimized?

Scientific validity

Since the research done is for the sake of good health, steps taken to arrive at a given result should be systematically explained and documented. There should not be any form of mystery surrounding the process of this research. It has little to do with the Bible or the Quran or the traditional religion. Any such conversation brings doubt and uncertainty into the entire research mechanism. If the research subjects begin to doubt and suspect the researcher, that will be an appropriate moment to terminate such a research. Conversely if a research participant pulls out a card of doubt and uncertainty, he/she has to be eased out of the process. The reason is that trust is a *sine qua non* if the purpose of the research is to be met. Having dealt with the trust issue, the stages employed in arriving at a given result must be scientifically explainable. It is not about mystery or magic or secrecy. Scientific research cannot be a secret. It is a *techné* (Art and Science)¹⁷ which will lead to knowledge and discovery.¹⁸ Discovery signals the success of the research but at the same time opens the pathway for even deeper research. Nigeria is a country where oversight may not be quite present. It is essential to mention here that profound care should be taken to see that what is performed conforms with known scientific methods

universally acceptable and approved. Any trado-medicine that is used in the process of the research as treatment deserve thorough explanation. Dosage, side effects must be clearly stated.

Fair participant selection

This forms the fulcrum of the research because it predisposes the research towards failure or success. Selection of the persons to serve as research subjects is often not quite easy. Here the researcher has to have clarity of mind in terms of what he hopes to achieve. A number of things come into play here. Determining the target population is quite important. Covid-19 has been identified as having a greater toll on person with underlying medical condition. The researcher may need to assemble a certain percentage of such persons and see how they respond to such materials and from there could work out the best way to manage the health of such persons in a medical facility. No group should be neglected or relegated to the background. Every group and different age brackets are important if the research is to arrive at a robust medical response. Hence, the research is one and the same time valuable to people across the continent. This too has to be put into cognizance.

Health risk-benefit ratio

Researching with patients who have medical precondition leaves one with some concern. You do not want to have a clinical trial with persons whose level of risk is higher than the benefit. The risk must not outweigh the benefit. Consequently Beauchamp and Childress state quite clearly: “in submitting a research protocol involving human subjects to an institutional review board (IRB) for approval, an investigator is expected to array the risks to subjects and probable benefits to both subjects and society, and then to explain why the probable benefits outweigh the risks.”¹⁹ These are often arrived at by using judgments of experts who must have had experience in the field for a long time.

All of this has to be based on a reliable data and not on guess work. Being a scientific work, a lot of data is important. This will mean good record keeping. Either electronically or through the filing system. Nigeria is one country that these may be difficult to get hold of. Electronic material is near impossible because the infrastructure is very much poorly developed. This is a country whose power supply is functioning at half capacity. She has not even ventured into developing wind and solar energies for its electricity power generation. The filing system stands the risk of going up in flames anytime those in charge decide to hide a few facts. It is a common place in the country. Recently the office of the Accountant General of the Federation was engulfed by fire. It happened after the office was quizzed about her transparency in accounting for the numerous donations made by locals as well as foreigners in pursuance of assisting persons worse hit economically by the covid-19 pandemic. It was a shock to the nation. Since then some other offices have been gutted by fire. Research of this sort would require great records so that research can grow on a linear progression.

Independent Review Board

It is made up of experts whose job will be to progressively follow the progress made during the research. Nothing is out of its purview. Members of the board will have to sign a non-conflict of interest form. Such a body will help check malpractice in the cause of the research. An independent review board satisfies this concern and curiosity. Its importance cannot be overemphasized. It is one way to check fraud as well as charlatans. Already in a country (Nigeria) that the world does not believe to be transparent in her activities, this is one way to gain the trust and confidence of the international bodies who may examine such research group. As it is, foreign agencies may sponsor such research in Nigeria. If it so be that there are multinational companies demonstrating interest to run a research programme in quest of a vaccine, an

independent review board (IRB) will create a lot of trust and confidence.

Proper Informed Consent

This is at the heart of medicine. It is made up of two essential components, first is information and second is the consent itself.²⁰ What does it mean to provide information to the research participant? What should get into the information? What are the subjects expected to be informed about? The information component is expected to deal with things like complete disclosure of what will take place; recommendation of what the next plans are; and asking for a feedback to make sure there is a sufficient understanding of the earlier two items. Having had everything explained and understood, the research participant is expected to make decision based on what he has come to know.²¹ The decision made bequeaths authority to the research professional in following the plan that is chosen by the research subject. It must be noted that some research may necessitate nondisclosure.²² Nondisclosure might sometimes be beneficial to the research participants. This is especially expected in therapeutic use of placebos. It supports non-transparency in disclosure to research subjects, incomplete disclosure, and intentional deceit.²³ Nondisclosure posture of researchers is for a good reason. It may be difficult for researchers to conduct a successful research in such fields as epidemiology and virology if they need to obtain consent from research participants for access to their records.²⁴ A successful disclosure would necessarily require establishment of a robust informed consent procedure. An informed consent form must be signed. It is to be presented in the language that the research participants understand. If need be translation of a similar form in the language of the research participant has to be made available. This does not cancel out the need for an interpreter or an intermediary who may have to explain certain unclear terminologies. This is a necessary step

because international ethical standards require it. The Nuremberg Code and the Helsinki Report already allude to this. It is a regular requirement at every patient-physician/care giver encounter. In this way the patient enters into a relationship with the physician and in this case with the researcher. Patient's autonomy is upheld and emphasized. It shows the fact that the patient is making a choice voluntarily.

Autonomy and respect of research participants

This is a way to uphold and restore human dignity in areas where it has been lost. It is important to keep in mind that the research subjects are to be treated as humans and not as underdogs. The research carried out 50 plus years ago abused the autonomy of the individual. Some researchers without disclosure to their research subjects administered radioactive substances to unsuspecting patients. They justified their action by claiming that dying patients as well as condemned criminals suffer no harm or injury.²⁵ Such an understanding breached United Nations principle on respect for the equality of all human person. The quest for human autonomy has biblical support and foundation. Hence, the human subject cannot be treated as mere objects without recourse to his spiritual dimension. Spiritual dimension of the human person is the spring board for things like "anger, courage, appetite and sensation..."²⁶ These are affections of the soul. As a matter of fact, "all the affections of the soul involve a body-passion, gentleness, fear, pity, courage, joy, loving, and hating..."²⁷ It is abundantly clear that at this point we are dealing with a human person composed of body and soul. Ancient philosophers understood the fact of the composite nature of the human person.²⁸ This precisely gives the human person such autonomous power that makes everyone relate at a level of equality. In this way Martin Buber's concept of 'I-Thou' makes a lot of sense. Any relationship that is not founded on it becomes exploitative. Hence, the principle of autonomy safeguards and

preserves the dignity of the human person.²⁹ Recognizing the force in each human person saves the world from undermining humanity. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case. Sometimes breach of this primary element in the human person symptomizes the world's bewilderment. Human interactions all over the world seemed to be plagued by some sort of misdemeanor. Disregard for autonomy represents a whole wide range of disproportionality in human behaviour. Human subjects who have submitted themselves as willing 'sacrificial lambs' deserve every respect. Indeed, they should be regarded as heroes of our time. Many more would be willing to submit themselves as research participants, if only the treatment meted out to former participants, could be termed wholesome. In other words, proper ethical conduct shall improve the relationship between research participants and research scientists. The sad thing is that the social inequality and the quest to satisfy the basic need for man has undermined the efforts of individuals and organizations to uphold human autonomy and respect for the individual. The deplorable nature of things in Nigeria and the wide social gap makes human research subject a victim of abuse.

The poverty index of Nigeria

Human research subjects are often the last group in the chain of research which seeks to develop medicine or vaccine that will be used on humans. At the stage of the human trials, it means the research is coming to a concluding stage. Besides, it indicates that some glimmer of hope hangs somewhere. Caution seems to be the word that should be constantly at play once this stage is reached. The poverty index of the country makes it even more mandatory for caution to be used while at this stage of the research. From 2019 statistics, we find the following report as of May 2020. The statistics show that 40.1% of the total population³⁰ have been classified as poor.³¹ This percentage if translated into the ratio has 4 out of every 10 Nigerians as having below per capita

expenditure of ₦137,430.00 Naira per annum. This percentage amounts to 82.9 million Nigerians who are considered poor by national standards. The number could be much higher than this since researchers could not get data from some Northern states as a result of insurgency, banditry, kidnapping and it's like. Such a huge number of poor persons in a country like ours means that abuse can easily set in if the government does not set up a functional machinery to monitor activities of persons in different fields. More importantly, the past history of clinical research has indicted research scientists of exploitation and non-professional sharp practices. We should not allow the same repeat itself in this 21st century.

Poverty and Social Inequality in Nigeria

Though Nigeria is the 6th richest oil producing country in the world, and the 3rd in OPEC, unfortunately it is hard to feel the wealth. Compared to other oil producing countries in the world, Nigeria's poverty index is shocking and alarming. The present situation may not be unconnected with poor administrative procedures and the fact of corruption. Even though the Buhari APC-led government got to power by promising waging war against corruption. Many who believed in the campaign days of the government have now lost hope. There is little that the government can do to fight corruption. Most people doubt the capability and ability of the leadership to steer the nation out of corruption. It does appear as though corruption has become part of the national programme. Certainly, the problem of the nation has corruption as its biggest challenge. In a nation where social amenities provided don't get to those who need it the most, one cannot expect improvement in the life of the masses. This is the story of Nigeria. During the #EndSars protest, a lot of discoveries were made. Palliatives provided to cushion the biting effects of the pandemic were traced to private ware houses. It is sad to note that the gap between the rich and poor is so wide. One often hears

the expression, it is either you are poor or rich in Nigeria. Middle class does not exist any longer. Any nation without the middle class cannot claim to be doing well economically. This is the sad story of Nigeria.

In a situation like this people are anxious to rake up money from which ever source, legitimate or illegitimate. Countries where the social inequality is reaching alarming rate, there is the fear of exploitation. The rich class will relate with the poor masses in an exploitative manner. Such a relationship places the poor masses at a huge disadvantage. Consequently, one may be right to suspect that scientific investigators may play foul during clinical trials especially with the human research subject. In the face of poverty and hunger humans can be abused. The financially disadvantaged person may yield himself/herself for use just for pecuniary reasons. On the part of the research investigator, he/she may carry out his/her research amongst such a class of people without due process. Due process here refers to all the protocols that should be observed with a human research participant. These protocols were developed to avoid abuse of the human person. The Helsinki declaration in 1964 provides rich material on this. I have already discussed this at the early part of the paper. It is the dignity of the human person that would require serious care be taken in dealing with the human person in such a research programme. Covid-19 is a serious pandemic. Efforts should be made to arrest its further spread and the cause of death of many people. Developing more vaccines in addition to the ones in use at the moment should be encouraged. In this way, covid-19 variants would have been arrested since more robust research will yield vaccines that can contain the new variant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has pointed out a few things that should be in place while involving the human person in a scientific clinical trial. For reasons of clarity, I wish to tabulate a few of the things all parties involved (research scientist and human subject) should be aware of.

1. Research investigators must provide free and informed consent to the human subjects (participants). This has to be documented. The document may be presented also in a language³² other than English. This will ensure free and informed consent on the part of the research participant. Component of true consent include voluntariness, disclosure of required information and determination of sound comprehension.
2. Ethics training for investigators should be mandatory. National Health Institute should have oversight of the activity of such investigators. IRB on its own part should coordinate the events since they give final approval to the application of the research investigator.
3. The research being performed must be beneficial to persons other than the research subjects. It has to be beneficial to future patients, to the research scientists and the society in general.
4. Vulnerable patients are to be protected so that they are not exploited; while the IRB ensures that the appropriate population is selected for the research trials either randomization or blinding.
5. Research subjects should not be attracted into the clinical trials on pecuniary grounds.
6. The research investigator must declare 'No Conflict of Interest'.
7. Transparency should stand out all through the process.

CONCLUSION

The author of this article has been able to explain the ethics of clinical trials especially as it involves the human subject. Clinical research history has shown that abuses were quite rife/plentiful

in the heyday of clinical research as the world of ethics was still in its infantile stages. Today, due to the ugly experiences, codes have been put together. Norms of behavior have been assembled as guide and check for all research scientists. The world of ethics will not tolerate disrespect of human life and dignity. All this has been highlighted in the article. It is to point out the central role the human person continues to play. Clinical research in this time of pandemic is a necessary instrument to curbing the spread of the virus. Developing necessary vaccines should be the moral obligation of all who have been entrusted with leadership. Most importantly during this time is the duty towards the weak and vulnerable. Research should not exploit such people. In fact, the goal of medicine overall is good health for all. Any meaningful research takes up that task and duty of ensuring that good health is provided through the use of adequate research means.

Endnotes

¹The medical texts include titles like *Ancient Medicine*, *The Art*, *On the Sacred Disease*, and *The Oath*.

²Martin S. Pernick. “Bioethics and History” in. *The Cambridge World History of Medical Ethics*, sRobert B. Baker and Laurence B. Mccullough (Eds.). (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.22. Cf. also Steven H. Miles, *The Hippocratic Oath and the Ethics of Medicine*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). Hippocrates must have lived around late 5th and early 4th century B.C.

³Steven H. Miles, *The Hippocratic Oath and the Ethics of Medicine*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.13.

⁴Steven H. Miles p.98

⁵Steven H. Miles p.101. Cf. also Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress. *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.331-340.

⁶George J. Annas and Michael A. Grodin. “The Nuremberg Code” in Ezekiel J. Emanuel; Christine Grady; Robert A. Crouch

; Reider K. Lie ; Franklin G. Miller and David Wendler. *The Oxford Textbook of Clinical Research Ethics*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.136.

⁷George J. Annas and Michael A. Grodin, p.136.

⁸The World Medical Association (WMA) has its origin in Paris. It was founded in Paris around 1947. Amongst other things the body was established to ensure that medicine was practiced in an utmost ethical, legal and humane way. It is with the overall mission of providing health to all universally.

⁹Richard E. Aschroft. "The Declaration of Helsinki" in Ezekiel J. Emanuel; Christine Grady; Robert A. Crouch ; Reider K. Lie ; Franklin G. Miller and David Wendler. *The Oxford Textbook of Clinical Research Ethics*. (New York: Oxford University Press 2010), p.141.

¹⁰It is well known in medical world that viruses are not really treated. The best one can have would be developing a vaccine.

¹¹Baruch A. Brody. "International Ethics of Human Subjects Research in the Late Twentieth Century", in *The Cambridge World History of Medical Ethics* Robert B. Baker and Laurence B. McCullough. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.578.

¹²Supervision is one thing that has to be emphasized. Globalization has turned the world into a village. Movement is quite easy and fast compared to a decade or more ago. The free movement made the spread of covid-19 faster than calculated. For this reason, serious and honest supervision should be emphasized. If this is not done, one will not really trust the transparency of action. Cf. the article by Barbara K. Redman "Research Misconduct and Fraud" in *The Penn Center Guide to Bioethics* Vardit Ravitsky, Autumn Fiester and Arthur L. Caplan (Eds.) (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2009), pp.213-222, which is specifically about researchers requesting for funding on a bloated budget. No one discovers this until after the fact. If there were supervision that would not have occurred. This time there has to be a global supervising machine to ensure compliance at all levels.

¹³Ezekiel J. Emanuel; Christine Grady; Robert A. Crouch ; Reider K. Lie ; Franklin G. Miller and David Wendler. *The Oxford Textbook of Clinical Research Ethics*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.123.

¹⁴Ibidem. p. 123.

¹⁵Ulrich Tröhler. “The Historical Development of International Codes of Ethics for Human Subjects Research” in *The Cambridge World History of Medical Ethics* Robert B. Baker and Laurence B. McCullough(Eds.). (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.570.

¹⁶Jill M. Baren. “Unique Aspects of Informed Consent in Emergency Research” in *The Penn Center Guide to Bioethics* Vardit Ravitsky, Autumn Fiester and Arthur L. Caplan. (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2009), p.238.

¹⁷Steven H. Miles. *The Hippocratic Oath and the Ethics of Medicine*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.26

¹⁸The American Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues in the work titled *Moral Science: Protecting Participants in Human Subjects Research*(Washington, D.C 2011) speaks about how research of such kind using human subjects are oriented towards bringing about knowledge and new discovery. These are important for enhancing health and thus prolonging the life of mankind. It is not far removed from the purpose of the search for a vaccine or medication to take care of covid-19 that is currently proving stubborn. The world is seeking for a way to come out of the present difficulty: health care is over stressed and the economy has worldwide collapsed. For more information about the commission look up <http://www.bioethics.gov>. ¹⁹Tom

L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress. *Principles of Bio-medical Ethics*.p.230.

²⁰Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress.p.124.

²¹Ibidem. P.124.

²²Ibidem. P. 127.

²³*Ibidem.* P. 128.

²⁴Cf. Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress. p. 130.

²⁵Albert Jonsen. p. 127.

²⁶Jonathan Barnes, p. 642

²⁷*Ibidem.* p. 642

²⁸Readers can recourse to the propositions of Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Plato, Diogenes, Heraclitus to mention but a few for further discourse on the Soul. A common trend in these philosophers is the fact that the soul has a locomotive force. It moves and propels the human person. This force individuates and hence becomes life giving force. In other words, each human soul is dynamic but incorporeal. Cf. Jonathan Barnes, p. 644.

²⁹Austin Flannery (Ed.). *Vatican Council II, Vol. I. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents. Gaudium et Spes*, Nos. 12-14. (New Delhi: St. Paul's, 2014), pp. 803-805.

³⁰Those who carried out the study did consider the sample from Borno state as non-random and non-representative.

³¹Cf. Nigeria poverty rate by State 2019. www.statista.com Accessed on May 1, 2021.

³²There are over 150 languages in Nigeria with their individual dialects. Experts should be commissioned to translate such important document in the different language of the people especially those participating in the clinical trial.

KANU, Ikechukwu Anthony
**IGWEBUIKE PHILOSOPHY AND HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATION IN AFRICA**

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Abstract

Human rights are moral principles which describe certain standards of human behaviour, and are regularly protected as legal rights in municipal and international law. They are commonly understood as inalienable fundamental rights to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being, and which are inherent in all human beings regardless of their nation, location, language, religion, ethnic origin or any other status. They are applicable everywhere and at every time in the sense of being universal, and they are egalitarian in the sense of being the same for everyone. This piece studies the anthropological consequences of the violation of human rights from an African perspective. This study is based on the Igbo-African philosophy of identity and alterity captured by Igwebuiké philosophy, which sees the other, not in terms of the 'I and the Not I' but in terms of the 'I and Thou'. This philosophy understands the other as a complement of the self, and to violate the human rights of the other who is a complement to you is to violate your own fundamental human rights. For the purpose of this research, the hermeneutic method of inquiry and Indigenous Wholistic Theory would be employed. This research anticipates to re-awaken the need for a more sympathetic approach towards the human rights of the other.

Keywords: Human Rights, Igwebuiké, Violation, Fundamental, Complementary, Alterity

Introduction

Human rights are moral principles¹ which describe certain standards of human behaviour, and are supposed to be protected as legal rights in law, both nationally, regionally and internationally. They are commonly understood as inalienable² fundamental rights “to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being.”³ These rights are inherent in all human beings⁴ regardless of their nation, location, language, religion, ethnic origin or any other status. They are applicable everywhere and are the same for everyone⁵. The doctrine of human rights has been highly influential within international and regional institutions. However, as a result of a community of events happening all over the globe, a chain of debates has been provoked, questioning the content, nature and universality of fundamental human rights. Such events include the many involvements of the developed nations in Africa, especially as regards biomedical research- “Is human rights the prerogative of Africans too or only of the West?”; the religious practices of some religions like Islam, precisely the Islamic Law which allows for practices such as stoning to death, beheading a person, cutting a person’s member, etc.; there is also the issue of the dehumanizing activities of the military among civilians. These issues, among others, raise questions as regards the authenticity of the universality of fundamental human rights: “Are there people with more human rights than the others?”

Events of this kind are an indication that circumstances have arisen for an interpretation of the ‘universality of Fundamental human rights’. This is precisely what Igwebuiké philosophy undertakes in this piece: an attempt to give an interpretation of the consequences of the violation of fundamental human rights. Igwebuiké philosophy springs from the African socio-cultural background which understands life as a participation in the life of the other or the community.

For Africans, to be human is to participate in life and respect the conditions that make life possible. To participate in life means ultimately to participate in the fellowship of the community. African community-based society does not designate a communal or collectivist society, but rather one reminiscent of an organism. The collectivist society inevitably places the emphasis on the individual and his or her needs. African society emphasizes solidarity rather than activity, and the communion of persons rather than their autonomy ... That personhood is identified by an individual's interaction with other persons does not eliminate personal identity ... It simply says that my personal identity comes to the fore in my interaction with, and place in, my community⁶.

It is from this perspective, therefore, that this work attempts at understanding the violation of the rights of the other as carrying resounding consequences on the humanity of all. This is because the being of one is ontologically linked to the being of the other. It is from this ontological relation that this piece, using the hermeneutic method of inquiry and Indigenous Wholistic Theory, establishes the need for a more sympathetic approach towards the human rights of the other, since the other's human rights is my own human rights, thus, the violation of the human rights of the other is the violation of my human rights.

The Linguistic Formation of the Concept “Igwebuike”

Igwebuike is the heart of African thought, and in fact, the modality of being in African philosophy⁷. It is taken from the Igbo language, which is a composite word made up of three dimensions⁸. Therefore, it can be employed as a word or used as a sentence: as a word, it is written as *Igwebuike*, and as a sentence, it is written as, *Igwe bu ike*, with the component words enjoying some independence in terms of space⁹. The three words involved:

Igwe is a noun which means number or population, usually a huge number or population. *Bu* is a verb, which means is. *Ike* is another noun which means *strength* or *power*¹⁰. Thus, put together, it means ‘number is strength’ or ‘number is power’, that is, when human beings come together in solidarity and complementarity, they are powerful or can constitute an insurmountable force¹¹. Its English equivalent is ‘complementarity’. At this level, no task is beyond their collective capability. It is a concept that was employed by African traditional philosophers of the complementary school of thought to discuss the nature of the observed African reality¹².

Igwebuiké is anchored on the African worldview, which, according to Iroegbu is characterized by a common origin, common world-view, common language, shared culture, shared race, colour and habits, common historical experience and a common destiny^{13s}. It is a complementary philosophy which understands life as a shared reality. Life is a life of *sharedness*; one in which another is part thereof. It is a relationship, though of separate and separated entities or individuals but with a joining of the same whole¹⁴. It is a relationship in which case the two or more coming together makes each of them a complete whole; it is a diversity of being one with each other. Thus, Mbiti classically proverbializes the community determining role of the individual when he writes, “I am because we are and since we are, therefore I am”¹⁵. This notwithstanding, *Igwebuiké* is an African philosophy of Complementarity.

The Underlying Principle of *Igwebuiké* Philosophy

The underlying principle of *Igwebuiké* philosophy is the principle of Complementarity. To complement means to bring together or to sum up distinct or similar things or words to make a new meaning or to form or produce a new outlook or phenomenon. According to Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary, complementary is all about “combining well to form a balance or attractive group or whole,”¹⁶ while to complement is simply “to add new or contrasting feature which show the

best qualities of something or which improve¹⁷it . What this means is that complementarily is simply the act of summing up fragments to make up a whole which become more attracting and meaningful than its former fragments¹⁸.It understands reality as being interrelated in all its segments, which works in mutual complementation and eventually lead to general well being of common good. Igwebuikwe is a school of thought that argues that a whole is greater, than any it's corresponding parts. It is also a view that maintains that by the coming together of the individual or parts, a viable and sustainable whole will emerge, and by this, the parts will get to the brim purpose of their existence. Finally, it is the view that holds that individualized views and individualized goals and desires will be attained fully if there is a mutual collectivity existing amongst them. Thus, to be is to be in mutual complementary relationship.

As the modality of being, complementary relations to the other, therefore, becomes the point of fulfillment for being, for it is in relation to the other that a being realizes itself. Every being needs the other for self realization- the self is not realized in isolation. It is said that “all fingers are not equal”, however, when they different fingers come together, they can achieve a lot. Some fingers are shorter, but they have their use; some fingers are taller, they have their use; some fingers are slimmer, they also have their use; the importance of each emerges when the time for application arrives. The other is needed others to complement our efforts and works. There is an African saying that says: “one finger does not carry a load on the head”, which means that we need others. Some work great jobs while some small, otherwise how do we exist?

The idea of corporate existence was communicated in Plato's political/ethical theory in relation to the realization of justice. Plato argues that for justice to reign in the state, the three parts that makes up the state, that is, the rulers (the philosophers) the guardians (the soldiers) and the artisans (the labourers) must work together in one accord with each person doing his or her

work efficiently to ensure a peaceful co-existence in the state. This is also evident in Hegel's philosophy which sees the conflict between thesis and anti-thesis as fundamental for the emergence of a thesis. Thus, everything that exists whether good or bad, positive or negative is in one way or the other part of an ultimate end. The concept also connotes that a whole will never be possible without its relative parts and on the other hand parts can only be known to exist if viewed in relation to its whole. Asouzu speaking on this note said that "all existent realities relates to each other in the manner of mutual service"¹⁹.

Indices of the Violation of Fundamental Human Rights

Three indices of the violation of human rights have been chosen for the purpose of this work. This is not to say that these are the only or the major violations of human rights in Africa. They are chosen at the researcher's discretion. These areas include: the violation of human rights by the state, the violation of human rights in religious practices and the violation of human rights during biomedical research in Africa. However, while the main theme points to the violation of human rights in Africa, the indices dealt with here are major Nigerian situations, with little reference to other African experiences; this is done on the basis that to collect the whole experiences in Africa would be tedious and nearly impossible; more so, experiences in Africa are strongly related, and thus an experience could be discussed as an African problem.

1. State Violations of Human Rights

It can be rightly asserted that one of the greatest objectives of the post independence Nigerian Constitutions is the protection and promotion of human rights. The preamble to the 1999 Constitution unmistakably set the tone²⁰ by dedicating itself to promote "good government and welfare of all persons on the principles of freedom, equality and Justice"²¹. Apart from the preamble, chapters two and four of the Constitution extensively

deal with human rights issues. While chapter two is captioned, Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, chapter four is entitled, “Fundamental rights”. In writing, these rights are well detailed in the Nigerian Constitution:

1. Right to life²²,
2. Right to dignity of the human person²³,
3. Right to personal liberty²⁴
4. Right to fair hearing²⁵;
5. Right to private and family life²⁶;
6. Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion²⁷;
7. Right to freedom of expression and the press²⁸;
8. Right to peaceful assembly and association²⁹
9. Right to freedom of movement³⁰
10. Right to freedom from discrimination³¹
11. Right to acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria³²
12. Right to receive prompt compensation for compulsory acquisition of property³³.

These rights enshrined in the Nigerian constitution notwithstanding, events in the history of Nigeria, as is in many African countries are worrisome. Presidents leave the country without constitutionally informing their people, a right that they possess. The court grants bail to people and the government sits on the bail. The president sends troops to wipe out a whole village³⁴. In 2001, the President of Nigeria invoked the emergency powers of the military against the town of Odi. Within forty-eight hours, the rural town of Odi was levelled. Only a church and a bank building survived the operation. Over 300 were reported killed in the most widely condemned military action since the General Sani Abacha pacifist troops overran Ogoniland. The action of the military as genocidal, brutish, reckless and a gross violation of the rights of the victims to life and to property. Describing the condition of Odi after the military invasion, the National Daily Newspaper reported that:

The destruction of Odi was comprehensive and complete; no aspect of the community was spared by what I saw in the pictures showed here. The respondents violated the fundamental human rights of the people of Odi, by the massacre. The people are entitled to fundamental rights to life, dignity and fair play, the destruction of Odi was not as a result of gun battle but clear bombardment, the destruction was malicious,” Justice Akanbi declared. The judge also quoted President Goodluck Jonathan as saying in a media chat on the National Television Authority (NTA), on November 18, 2010, that “only innocent people, including women, children and the very weak that could not run to escape were killed in Odi³⁵.

In 2001, the Federal government also ordered a military invasion of Zaki-Biam. The military operation began on Monday, October 22, when soldiers from the 23rd armored brigade of the 3rd armored division of the Nigerian army rounded up residents in Gbeji village for a “meeting,” made them sit on the ground, separated the men from the others, and then opened fire upon the men indiscriminately. Witnesses reported that some of the victims’ bodies were then set ablaze. Further killings took place as soldiers invaded the villages of Vasae, Anyiin Iorja, Ugba, Sankera and Zaki-Biam, all located in the two local government areas of Logo and Zaki-Biam. In the following two days, there was widespread destruction of property and buildings in these villages, after terrified residents had abandoned their homes. While the total number of victims has not yet been established, survivors and eyewitnesses have reported that at least 100 and possibly more than 200 people died at the hands of the soldiers³⁶. These raises questions as regards the universality of fundamental human rights: are there people who have it more than others? Are there times when it should be respected and at others disrespected?

2. Religion and the Violation of Human Rights

Religion, especially the Islamic religion has been accused of standing for class society and patriarchy, and thus undermining the fundamental human rights of women . Thus, religion has been accused of being an instrument of oppression rather than redemption. The introduction of the Sharia law in Northern Nigeria in the perspective of Titi Salaam does not in any way advance the rights of women³⁸. In the contention of Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi,

The implementation of Sharia Penal Codes in northern Nigeria is flawed in several respects. Firstly, it does not adequately protect the rights of women. Therefore abuse, violence and discrimination against women go unpunished as they are wrongly considered to be socially acceptable. In addition, the testimony of women is devalued and treated as that of a minor or person without necessary legal capacity. Often, these biases and attitudes also affect judges and therefore the judgment of the Sharia Courts. As a result the implementation of Sharia in Nigeria has placed some restrictions on the rights of women in Northern Nigeria.³⁹

The Sharia law considers sex out of wedlock a crime punishable by death, and under this law, pregnancy is a sufficient evidence to convict an unmarried woman of the crime. However, if a man takes an oath denying of having had sex with a woman out of wedlock, is often considered sufficient proof of “innocence” unless four independent and reputable witnesses testify to seeing him take part in the act. Unfortunately, most of the culprits of the Sharia law have been women⁴⁰. It is from this perspective that Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi further observes that,

These ... suggest that the thinking of the court and supporters of Sharia is that only women can be guilty of

the ‘offences’ of adultery or fornication. What happens then, in the case of seduction of minors, or rape? This suggests that men living under Sharia have been given a license to rape women and seduce or assault minors, or even impregnate them in the course of a relationship and then deny responsibility and watch them face a death sentence⁴¹.

In October 2001, court in Sokoto state convicted Safiya Hussaini of adultery, she was sentenced to death by stoning, because she became pregnant out of wedlock, even though the 35-year-old mother cried out that her daughter was raped by a neighbor. In the case of Safiya, Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, raises questions of gender bias on the following grounds: “Her pregnancy constituted the main evidence against her, but no scientific efforts were made to establish or disprove the paternity of the child. The onus of adultery was just pregnancy. The man named in the case was allowed to go free after denying responsibility for the pregnancy”⁴².

In Katsina, during the month of March, in 2002, Amina Lawal Kurami was sentenced to death by stoning for bearing a child out of wedlock. The man she identified as the child’s father denied the accusation and was acquitted for lack of evidence. However, she was later set free.

In Zamfara, there was a time women were for a period prevented from travelling in public transport, the reason being that women are not supposed to be seen in the public spheres of life, it is worst when found in the company of a man not related to them. This led to a protest from women, and the law was amended, however in practice it is evident that women are still discriminated against⁴³.

In an attempt to express the fact of women oppression under the Sharia law, Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, cites an instance in Tarata Mafara local government, where single women were given a three month ultimatum to get married or face being

sacked from jobs in the civil service. Some financial inducements were provided to encourage women to become married. These example, argues Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, constitute rights violations under Nigerian law. The criminalization of women and their rights diverts attention from the real causes of crime, lack of adequate transport and housing and so forth⁴⁴.

In December 2008, Thisday Newspaper reported that the Kwara State Sharia Council faulted the purported plan by some members of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state to present a woman as the 2011 governorship candidate. It said that such a plan was contrary to the Sharia Law which forbids leadership by women. According to the statement signed by the vice chairman of the council in the state, Sheikh Moshood Ibrahim, “We therefore vehemently oppose this plan in Kwara State where over 80% are muslims come 2011 as being contemplated and bandied about by some members of the ruling party in the state”⁴⁵. Events of this kind, once again raises questions as regards the universality of fundamental human rights: do men have more human rights than women? Or are men more human than women?

3. Biomedical Research and the Violation of Human Rights

The challenges of underdevelopment, poverty, disease, inadequate health infrastructure, etc., have made Africa to become a vulnerable group for the conduct of biomedical research⁴⁶. There is an increased migration of research companies (unethical researchers) to developing countries where there is a loosed regulatory framework, where inhabitants have no knowledge of their rights to compensation, etc⁴⁷. In 1996, United States Physicians and the University of Zimbabwe, funded by the Centre for disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO) and the National Institute of Health (NIH), made AZT trials on HIV-Positive African patients in Zimbabwe. The trial was done on about 1700 women for a medication that prevents mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. The subjects were

not duly informed about the procedures and consequences of the trial, and in fact were told about the trial under duress. The result was an estimated 1000 babies contracting HIV/AIDS⁴⁸.

During an outbreak of cerebro-spinal meningitis in 1996 in Tudun Wada in Kano State, Nigeria, where Children were predominantly the victims. At this point, Pfizer brought in a team to conduct a research on its test drug TROVAFLOXACIN (TROVAN) - a quinolone antibiotic. Pfizer recruited a total of 200 children into the study in two arms- one arm had the test drug Trovan orally and the control arm was given Ceftriaxone or Chloramphenicol. Pfizer did obtain ethical clearance before recruiting participants and administering the drugs conducting the study. Pfizer capitalised on the poor, illiterate and desperate situation of the people⁴⁹ and administered an unregistered drug; a clear case of the exploitation of the ignorant⁵⁰. During the research, about five children died⁵¹. There was the case of clinical trials in Uganda between 1997 and 2003, when women taking the anti-transmission drug Nevirapine experienced thousands of serious adverse effects (SAEs). These symptoms went unreported and testing was allowed to continue, resulting in the (also unreported) deaths of 14 women. In Hyderabad, India in 2003, eight test subjects died during the testing of the anti-clotting drug Streptokinase. The worst part, though, was that the subjects did not even know that they were part of a trial⁵². One would have expected that researchers from the West would have known that local people in Africa have fundamental human rights which needs to be respected. This also raises the question as to the fundamentality and universality of human rights.

Igwebuiké and the Hermeneutic of Human Rights

The question that Igwebuiké philosophy intends to attend to in this section of this research is on the interpretation of the violation of fundamental human rights is: how does the violation of another person's fundamental human rights affect me as a separate individual? When the issue of the violation of

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fundamental human rights arose at the heat of the Boko-Haram insurgency in the Northern part of Nigeria, some of those from the South were quiet, or simply thought, it's a Northern issue, let them sort themselves out. During the military invasion of the Eastern part of Nigeria, predominantly Igbo, opinions were widely different, while those from the South condemned it, most of those from the North saw it as the most appropriate thing to be done, and only a one-sided attention was paid to the tale of terror, bloodshed and tears as the helpless and armless IPOB members were crushed by the Nigerian military. Much has been said about the need to defend people's fundamental human rights in the United Nations, but these voices seem quiet and less aggressive when it comes to biomedical research in Africa which violates local people's fundamental human rights. If the west keeps quiet at the violation of the fundamental human rights of the African people, the Northern part of Nigeria keeps quiet at the violation of the human rights of the people from the South and the South keeps quiet at the violation of the fundamental rights of Northerners, how does this affect or affect the humanity of the one who is quiet?

Igwebuike philosophy sees the other as a part of me, and together, in our peculiarities, we make up the whole. If together we make up the whole, it then means that the other is a part of me and what affects the other affects me. To alienate the other is to alienate myself. Ewulu, therefore, writes that:

If the other is my part or a piece of me, it means that I need him for me to be complete, for me to be what I really am. The other completes rather than diminishes me. His language and culture make my own stand out and at the same time, they enrich and complement my own. In the presence of his language and culture, the riches and poverty of my language and culture become clear and I see that his own and my own when put together form a richer whole when compared to any of them in isolation⁵³.

Ekwulu (2010) further opines that the self is not only completed in relating with the other, but that it attains self-realization in the other: “I realize myself in the other because it is in the ‘Thou-ness’ of the Thou that my ‘Is-ness’ is realized. I am ‘I’ because you are ‘You’. Without Thou there is no I. We are ‘We’ because they are ‘They’, and without ‘They’, there is no ‘We’”⁵⁴. Thus, the Igbo would refer to the ‘Other’ as *Ibe*, which means ‘a piece of’ or ‘a part of’, as in *ibe anu* (a piece of meat) or *ibe ede* (a piece of cocoyam). The Igbo would, therefore, refer to the ‘other person’ as *ibe m* which means ‘my piece’ or *mmadu ibe m* (my fellow human being). This is the concept also employed in reference to relationships and reciprocity: love one another (*hunu ibe unu n’anya*), help one another (*nyere nu ibe unu aka*), respect one another (*sopuru nu ibe unu*), etc. Since the ‘other’ refers to my own piece, it would, therefore, mean that to love the other is to love oneself, to help the other is to help oneself and to respect the other is to respect oneself. Put the other way round, to hate the other is to hate oneself, to refuse help to the other is to refuse help to oneself and to disrespect the other is to disrespect oneself⁵⁵

Relating the principle of Igwebuike philosophy to the interpretation of the violation of human rights shows that silence at the face of the violation of human rights is the greatest disservice to humanity and yourself. To be quiet, is to be quiet about what affects you indirectly- fundamental human rights. If a person keeps quiet at the violation of another’s human rights, instead of being the voice of the oppressed, he is quiet at the violation of his own human rights. In Igwebuike philosophy, the person who speaks for the other, speaks for humanity of which he is a part; for if humanity is destroyed, the individual is also destroyed. Since every part plays a fundamental role in the universal human scheme, it then means that every part, no matter the colour or tribe, needs to be protected for the preservation of the whole.

Conclusion

The foregoing has studied the consequences of the violation of the fundamental human rights of the other from the perspective of Igwebuiké philosophy. It first established the linguistic formation of Igwebuiké as a concept and underpinned complementarity and solidarity as the underlying principles of Igwebuiké philosophy. It also studied the indices of violation of human rights in Africa, with more focus on the Nigerian nation of Africa. This initial study created the background for an interpretation of the violation of human rights with the principles of Igwebuiké philosophy. In Igwebuiké philosophy, the dynamics between identity and alterity is different and unique. The other is understood, not in terms of the 'I and the Not I' but in terms of the 'I and Thou'. The other is seen as a complement of the self, and to violate the human rights of the other who is a complement to you is to violate your own fundamental human rights. This work traces the ontological link between and among humanity, which makes human rights universal, whether rich or poor, developed or developing, poor or rich, etc., and within the context of the same ontological cord, establishes that the violation of the human rights of the other is a violation of your own human rights and thus, sees the fight for the preservation of human rights as a responsibility for all.

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