

**A REVIEW OF CHARLES C. NWEKE AND CHUKWUGOZIE D. NWOYE'S
AN INQUIRY INTO HABERMAS' INSTITUTIONAL TRANSLATION PROVISIO**

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Jugen Habermas is one of the contemporary but controversial figures in the field of Contemporary Philosophy. The controversies around him and his philosophical postulations make for his credit as a philosopher. The authors structured their inquiry in five sections:

Their inquiry into Habermas' translation proviso rightly captured Habermas in the sense that there could be no public sphere without the private sphere. For them, there is no civil society without individuals. Hence, whatever happens in the public sphere is a synthesis of individual use of reason for the social and common good. Historically, the authors delved into Habermas' thoughts and showed that the feudal representation was a wrong notion of representation before the people not for the people. It is therefore a representation in a specific sense.

Since all things are in a state of flux (as Heraclitus professes), "the feudal States germinated the elements of political prerogative into organs of public authority" the authors observed. This gave rise to a type of private autonomy. Hence, it was this private autonomy that gave birth to civil society. The inquiry further observed with Schelling's (2011) that the advent of finance, capitalism and news occasioned public sphere all the more, even as Habermas noted that commodities among merchants and new items became gradually exponential. As Chinua Achebe would say that *he who fetched ant-infested firewood invited lizards for a feast*. However, the authors noted that, it was the Governments' and their Authoritative involvement, in the seizure and regulation of the news agencies for their own selfish and not public interest that aroused individual cum public curiosity. Equally there was an indirect control of taxation by the authority on the bourgeoisie. The result was a kind of "domain of critical opinion initiated by the bourgeois against the authority". The *Press*, however, opened up the public affairs society, hence the indirectly space and platform for criticism.,

It was latter that critical thinking surfaced and was as usual hijacked by the authorities. However, the bourgeois had to think their own thoughts, directed against the authorities; Habermas (1989:25)

The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere was echoed as a solution to unacceptable interests lingering on. This review of the inquiry observed with Habermas that the collapse of the genuine public was occasioned by divergent and pocket interests of the *Press* and *Mass media*. This necessity occasioned the need for structural transformation. For them (Habermas and the writers), public sphere in the strict sense is nothing but public use of reason. Whatever personal opinion should, therefore, go to democratic principle of rational-critical debate on the public, and crystallize into public opinion. Publicity therefore is a principle and integral part of democracy.

This inquiry recognised Habermas' understanding of the nature and importance of religion in the public sphere. He did not neglect religion but assumed it to be a force on its own; infact a reality on its own. The enquiry noted Habermas' stance on the fusion of religion and politics in the public sphere even though religious foundation is independent of politics. There is therefore need for religious participants in public sphere. Nweke & Nwoye(2015) submit that:

In mind of our increasingly pluralistic society, there is need for common understanding of religious potential truth contents for general agreement and unity of purpose. Hence, we say that anyone who wants to bring religious potential truth contents into the public sphere seems to have no option other than to translate them into secular language for common understanding.

To this end, there is an admission for the hermeneutics of religious utterances before rolling them out from the occult into the public sphere.

It is understandable that different schools of thought criticized Habermas' position that religious utterances lack neutrality and objectivity hence do not measure up in the public sphere. This inquiry via an indirect opposition to Habermas' postulation arrived at an appreciation of Habermas through his view on paranormal experiences and conception of intuition as a higher kind of knowledge by some philosophers, this inquiry, therefore, raises critical issues which seemingly reveal the inadequacy of *Habermas Translation Proviso*.

This inquiry asserts that Habermas is truly vindicated because, in our pluralistic world, with attending individualism and subjectiveness, if the paranormal and religious utterance are allowed to filtrate into the public sphere *un-translated* and people do go scot free with their crimes. This ensures common ground for argument and understanding specifically based on forceless force of better argument.

Whatever goes to the public passes through public screening. Even in politics, the election processes is a process of screening. Hence, Alonzo L. Homby remarks that “the ability to gain election was after all only the first test of political leadership; the ultimate tests involved the achievement of goals in the pursuit the public welfare...”¹

Indeed Charles C. Nweke and Chukwugozie D. Nwoye (2015) in this critical inquiry affirm occult and paranormal realities owing to the pluralistic nature and cultural diversity of our society today. Thomas McCarthy argues that ...Habermas seeks to ground his discourse ethics in something more universal than given cultural norms (as varying from culture to culture). He does so by grounding discourse ethics in empirically-based understandings of the praxis and conditions of discourse”². Chambers equally argues that “if we step back from the model of single conversation, we see that people do in fact change their minds; they do find new arguments, positions and perspectives more convincing than the old ones; They are swayed by argumentation”³

It is, therefore, paramount that proponents of these ideas should make those paranormal realities such as *ogwu* and mystical powers accessible and of course understood by all or at least by the majority. *Habermas Translation Proviso* still stands in great need for clarity amidst criticality of expression and utterances in the public sphere.

References

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