

THE APPLICATION OF PHILOSOPHY TO NATION BUILDING IN NIGERIA: THE PROBLEMS AND THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the application of Philosophy to nation building in Nigeria. Philosophy as a discipline is critical and rational by default. It is being studied in Nigeria as a course of study but has little or no application to national life and nation building. Most developed countries of the world have been shaped by a sound thought system which is found in philosophy, leading to innovations and breakthroughs in Science and Technology. The reason for philosophical apathy in the Nigerian clime is the thinking by non-philosophers that philosophy is too abstract and out of touch with Nigerian citizens and reality. However, the key problem is rather in the poverty structure of the country which affects everything intellectual and only focuses more on survival and consumption rather than ideas and human development. Employing the philosophical method of analysis, the study seeks to understand these challenges in the application of Philosophy in Nigeria with the view of coming up with a soluble and practicable approach to engaging philosophy and applying it. The study concludes that the way forward is to adopt a catch them young policy for young citizens of school age between the brackets of 5-18 and inculcate a culture of philosophy and intellectualism in them. Philosophers should vie for political positions, so that they can effect true Change in the society and also to be practical with their works as philosophy professionals and lastly, for government to create an enabling environment to allow the philosophy enterprise to thrive.

Keywords: Philosophy, Applied Philosophy, Nation building, Nigeria.

Introduction

Nigeria is a very important country in Africa and known globally as the most populous black nation in the World. For the popularity such a country commands, one would expect the country to be up there in the developmental strides and having a socio-political culture imbued with a strong value system, that would give it a global face. However, from all assessment, it is not the case.

As mostly observed, people, especially non-philosophers, accuse philosophy of being too abstract, too speculative and out of reach with everyday people and reality. However, this may not be a correct perception of philosophy. It is this wrong kind of perception of philosophy, that makes it difficult for philosophy to thrive and be applied in Nigeria because majority of Nigerians do not believe in it. Majority of Nigerians, it seems do not live on philosophic principles or values-laden but rather built or structured for survival.

Applied Philosophy is essentially about putting philosophy into practice. It is the bringing to bear in everyday life, in places and systems, philosophic principles, beliefs and methods learned from doing philosophy. It is the halving of philosophical imprint on things of everyday life—be it technological, social, moral, economical, religious, political and otherwise.

However, to apply philosophy there must first be the understanding of the nature of philosophy and what it does or the benefits for individuals and society. Philosophy by its very nature is critical. It is reflective and analytical. It also interprets and observes reality in bracket. This criticality makes it beam search light into reality in order to abstract the essences or the deepest meanings of things.

Most nations of the World developed through a philosophic culture. Europe was shaped by a culture of philosophy and so was China especially with Confucianism. The French revolution, for instance, was influenced by the philosophers of the time like Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu and Rousseau. They played one role or the other influencing revolutionary ideas. John Locke too helped to influence America and their present day constitution. Matters on justice and rights have philosophical foundations even from the time of Socrates. Philosophy was so wide before now, that it has to be partitioned and hence, the multiplicity of disciplines, as we have them today.

So it does not augur well when a group of people begin to see philosophy as boring or not having practical effect on everyday life and thus, jettison it in the course of their existence. This can only lead to backwardness and the absence of a critical approach to life. It leads to the absence of values and the death of logical thinking.

Critical thinkers in Nigeria are in the minority and are mostly philosophers and other intellectuals. Majority of citizens do not value philosophy and thus, we have seen overtime, a culture of mediocrity, poverty, backwardness,

underdevelopment and lack of a national philosophy from where the ideological basis of statecraft in Nigeria can be built.

This present study seeks to interrogate such a national indifference towards philosophy and expose how such has greatly affected Nigeria, with the view of coming up with solutions on how Nigeria can be philosophically oriented and how philosophy can be applied in our quest for integral national development and progress.

Understanding Philosophy and Applied Philosophy

Descriptions of Philosophy

Unlike other disciplines, there are no clear-cut definitions of philosophy. Philosophy is elephantine; the part touched determines the interpretation given. Philosophy is as old as man himself and constitutes the medium through which he searches for meaning and interrogates reality and existence *in globo*. It is the wisdom man possesses by virtue of his being a unique and higher animal, able to articulate, able to speak, able to reason, able to question and to give probable answers. Etymologically, it is the Love of Wisdom and a Philosopher is a lover of Wisdom. From the Greek words of *Philia* and *Sophia*. However, *Philia* on its own means love or to love and *Sophia* means wisdom. In literal sense, if we go by *philosophia*, it becomes love Wisdom but as generally upheld globally, whenever and wherever philosophy is being discussed, it is known as 'Love of Wisdom.' Therefore, it becomes *Philein Sophia*. This correction was offered by P.O. Ejikeme. He noted that: "The meaning of philosophy is more directly derived when *philos* (in the nominative case) is placed in the genitive case, which is *Philein*, meaning 'love of.' Hence, the word philosophy from the above declension of its root word simply means 'love of wisdom.'"¹

According to Aristotle, *Sophia* is knowledge about certain principles and causes.² It was in this light that Ejikeme noted that M. Nwoko argued that philosophy is not just the love of wisdom, it means something more than that. It implies more intensely, the love for intellectual search for truth, that is critical- the love of exercising one's curiosity and intelligence.³ However, this wisdom is man-oriented. It is the wisdom of man in his nature and capacity as man. Philosophy is different from arm-chair thought because it requires a deeper thinking procedure or pattern. It carries more objectivity and less subjectivity (Although,

this is arguable. As seen from the multiplicity of the ideas of philosophers on various issues and the fact they do not agree on one particular thing, it points to the fact that subjectivity is also involved in the philosophic enterprise). There is the rational quest rather than instinctual drive. It goes for the core and essence of things, the “why” as against the “how.” For the researcher of this present study, he sees Philosophy as: “The critical and rational inquiry into reality in totality with the aim of interrogating, seeking and possibly finding what is and why it is.”⁴

This description carries some weights. First it says that Philosophy is a critical and rational inquiry. When something is critical, it points to strong assessment and judgmental approach to something in order to ascertain the truth value of it. Rational means that it involves reason and logic as against mere arm-chair thinking. This critical and rational inquiry, leads to interrogation, to seek to know and possibly finding what is intended to be known. Possibly was used in this description because it is a probability that the philosopher like a hunter would find answers to the questions one seek in reality(Just like the analogy of the hunter, it is not all the time the hunter hunts down a meat). This is because of the nature of philosophy as an open-ended enterprise. Philosophy is not mathematics. It has no end or definitive solutions. The corroboration or refutation of ideas leads to new orientation, school of thought, stand and review. The multiplicity of thoughts is what has kept philosophy going for centuries. For the fact that answers cannot be guaranteed in philosophy, questions become more important than answers. For instance, the question of Who is God is more important than the answer of whether God exists or not. Questions lead to the fact of an inquiry taking place. Answers of what is and why it is are to lead us to the fact of open-endedness and continuity. For one answer may be corroborated or refuted and thus, trigger a circle of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

Karl Jasper’s clearly understood this when he pointed out that :

The Greek word for philosopher (philosophos) connotes a distinction from sophos. It signifies the lover of wisdom (knowledge) as distinguished from him who considers himself wise in the possession of knowledge. This meaning of the word still endures: the essence of philosophy is not the possession of the truth but the search for truth. ... Philosophy means to be on the way. Its questions are more essential than its answers, and every answer becomes a new question.⁵

There are many other descriptions of Philosophy from philosophers and scholars. We used description because it is arguable to think that Philosophy can be defined. At best, such definition only describes in the many perceptions, what Philosophy or the Philosopher does or can do.

However, in the description and construct of Philosophy, there are those who felt the meaning of philosophy changed overtime. From having practical imports in antiquity to suddenly about jargons, only those high in learning can construe. In relation to a country like Nigeria and why philosophy is not so priced in it, we shall use it as an analogy in subsequent discussions and pin down one of the problematic from here.

Pierre Hadot succinctly captured the foregoing by noting thus that: "Ancient philosophy proposed to mankind an art of living. By contrast, modern philosophy appears above all as the construction of a technical jargon reserved for specialists."⁶ This was clearly glaring when Philosophy encountered the Vienna Circle; the otherwise contemporary analytic philosophers, who reduced philosophy to logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy became more about language and concepts employed in the hermeneutics of reality than about action and the quest for practicality or the place of man in the universe. This understanding of Philosophy as about practice and action was reiterated by Seneca when he noted that: "Philosophy ... molds and constructs the soul; it orders our life, guides our conduct, shows us what we should do and what we should leave undone; it sits at the helm and directs our course as we waver amid uncertainties."⁷

Philosophy for William A. Wallace is a type of perfect and even divine knowledge that enables one to judge all things in terms of their ultimate causes. As understood in the tradition of the church, philosophy is a habit of the mind or a body of natural knowledge that results from disciplined inquiry that enables one to explain in a more or less profound way the sum of human experiences.⁸

Titus, Smith and Nolan added more voice on the description of Philosophy. They anchored their ratiocinations on five pedestals. First, they noted that Philosophy is a set of views and beliefs about life and the universe, which are often held uncritically. This they explained as the informal sense of philosophy or having a philosophy. It is largely about a person's informal attitude and belief pattern held together overtime, in a way that it has become a trademark part of them.⁹ Secondly, they noted that philosophy is a process of reflecting on and criticizing our most deeply held conceptions and beliefs. This is the formal sense of doing

Philosophy. These two senses of philosophy –“having” and “doing”–cannot be treated entirely independent of each other, for if we do not have a philosophy in the formal, personal sense, then doing philosophy in the critical, reflective sense, becomes difficult. They noted however that having a philosophy is not sufficient for doing philosophy. Rather it is a genuine philosophical attitude that is searching and critical is what is ever required for the business of philosophy.¹⁰ Thirdly, They noted also that Philosophy is a rational attempt to look at the world as a whole. Philosophy, according to this view, attempts to bring the results of human enquiry –religious, historical and scientific–into some meaningful interpretation that provides knowledge and insight for our lives. ¹¹ Fourthly, they also saw philosophy as the logical analysis of language and the clarification of the meaning of words and concepts.¹² This however, became a problematic in the history of philosophy because of the role of the contemporary analytic philosophers of the twentieth century and their view of philosophy. Finally, they saw philosophy as a group of perennial problems that interest people and for which philosophers always have sought answers. These problems are important and the attempt to seek answers or solutions to them has given rise to theories and systems of thought, such as idealism, realism, pragmatism, analytic philosophy, existentialism, phenomenology, and process philosophy.
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For E. J. O Ndubisi, philosophy is ‘an activity in Criticality’ ¹⁴ Although, a look at these descriptions of philosophy, points to a major thing, the fact that true, pure, genuine philosophy must come with a critical nature or dimension. Although, everyone can have a worldview or beliefs to life, they are not what makes one a philosopher. A philosopher is rather someone who searches for truth within the prism of wisdom, and grapple with reality with a mind that is open and unbiased. He inquires into reality with the intellectual intention to interrogate, seek and possibly find whatever puzzles him or his environment, developing a strategy, methodology and systems for doing so overtime. Having made an attempt at exposing the concept of philosophy, let us equally look at what applied philosophy could mean.

Applied Philosophy

Applied Philosophy is all about applying the principles and tenets of philosophy to issues of reality. K. L. Rasmussen further laid credence to this when he noted that: “Applied philosophy is a form of philosophy, albeit one that differs from non-applied or, as some put it, “pure philosophy. “Presumably, the distinction

between applied and pure philosophy is exhaustive and mutually exclusive, though there might be borderline cases. What distinguishes the two?"¹⁵

To apply is an action word. It is a verb which takes on something. An object. From the ratiocinations of K. L. Rasmussen, it shows that applied philosophy is in contradistinction to pure or speculative philosophy. Another question is whether pure philosophy has no object but it does have. It is a philosophy applied to itself. It looks at the problems of philosophy and how to intellectually and interpretatively go about it.¹⁶ Like the study did with the description of philosophy in general, the study will also attempt to look at the deeper meaning of applied philosophy beyond superficial notion of it. Many thanks to K. L. Rasmussen, who did a good job of explanation and distinction, so that we do not fall into the errors of superficiality. For such error and ignorance could hinder a serious examination of the subject – applied philosophy under review.

This analysis came in seven-dimensional reflection. It contains the relevance meaning of applied Philosophy, the specification meaning, the practical meaning, the activist meaning, among others. Talking about applied philosophy, we learnt that it comes in broad spectrum and the study will look at them.

The relevance conception of applied philosophy is the relevance of philosophy to issues of everyday life and how they are applied.¹⁷ The specificity conception states that Philosophy is applied if, and only if, it addresses a comparatively specific question within the branch of philosophy, e.g., metaphysics, epistemology or moral philosophy, to which it belongs.¹⁸ The practical conception states that Philosophy is applied if, and only if, it justifies an answer to comparatively specific questions within its relevant branch of philosophy about what we ought to do.¹⁹

K. L. Rasmussen noted further that:

The practical conception is also different from the relevance conception because some practical questions in the present sense are relatively unimportant and some non-practical questions – for example. “What is bad about dying?” – are highly relevant, specific questions in everyday life. Also, on the practical conception applied philosophy seeks not just to be relevant to practical questions, but, more ambitiously, to answer them. The practical conception of applied philosophy is the one that comes closest to making applied philosophy roughly equivalent to applied ethics. Given such overlap, and given skepticism about the truth or justifiability

of moral judgments – or normative judgments in general – a skeptical stance toward the rational credentials of applied philosophy follows.²⁰

There is also the activist conception of applied philosophy and it states that: “Philosophy is applied if, and only if, it is motivated by an ambition of having a certain causal effect on the world.”²¹ K. L. Rasmussen noted that activist notion of applied philosophy can sometimes mean that a philosopher may end up focusing on issues rather than intellectually challenging substances. The fact of Karl Marx’s maxim of philosophers succeeding in interpreting the world instead of changing it lay credence to this activist notion of applied philosophy.²²

There is also the methodological conception of applied philosophy which states that: “Philosophy is applied if, and only if, it involves the use of specifically philosophical methods to explore issues outside the narrow set of philosophical problems.”²³ According to Rasmussen still, unlike the specificity conception, the methodology conception allows that a piece of applied philosophy addresses a topic that, narrowly construed, does not form a philosophical question.²⁴

In exploring the methodology conception further, K. L Rasmussen noted that:

Note, finally, that, on the methodology conception, what we apply when we apply philosophy is something quite different from what it is naturally taken to be that we apply when, on the specificity conception, we apply philosophy to something outside philosophy. On the latter conception, it is natural to assume that what we apply are substantive principles – for example, general moral principles or principles of rationality – that have been shown to be justified within pure philosophy. However, on the methodology conception what we apply is philosophical methods of analysis. Such application might modestly aim at no more than clarifying concepts and presuppositions behind a certain practice or set of beliefs without aiming to assess these aims or presuppositions or assess them only conditionally, that is, relative to assumptions that are not themselves posited, but might be accepted by the addressee of applied philosophy.²⁵

Next is the Empirical fact conception of applied philosophy. It states that: Philosophy is applied if, and only if, it is significantly informed by empirical evidence – in particular, that provided by empirical sciences.²⁶ Finally, there is the audience conception which notes as follows: Philosophy is applied if, and only if, its intended audience is non-philosophers.²⁷ For Rasmussen then, when non-philosopher get to have an idea of a philosophy-related issue and

accordingly, see the relevance of it to their lives or career, then, such can pass as an applied philosophy.

The good thing about Rasmussen's seven-dimensional analyses of the concept of applied philosophy is that it makes the understanding of applied philosophy, unique in a way never told. It is a journey into a better understanding of what applied philosophy could really mean *in globo*, in other for the concept to be fully grasped.

Nigeria and the problem of Philosophy

What qualifies a society is the ability of members to have a value system and things upon which their lives and environment are built. There is always an ideological basis for society, nation, governance, statecraft and so on. Although, it can be argued that some ideologies may not hold true to the realities on ground but at least, in cultural context it shows 1. An opinion 2. A belief system. For instance, in Nigeria, during the civil war of 1967-1970, the rebel leader of Biafra—Chukwuemeka Ojukwu boasted that no black power could penetrate Biafra. It served as an ideological boost to the secessionists to remain ever focused in ensuring they fight to the last man standing but the reality on ground remained that the Nigerian vandals had more sophisticated weapons and external aids.

Again, let us look at McDonald's as a fast-food company in America. Can we say they advanced over the years as a result of having a better hamburger? That may not be the case. Their profitable turn up over the years from over 6 billion dollars in 1970 to over 100 billion dollars as of today, coupled with the fact that over 4 million Americans eat fast food on daily basis,²⁸ points to the fact of an ideology. They have methods, systems, business culture which have enabled them soar and tower above the rest.

In these analogies, the first example shows that ideology or ideas remain a thing to be done or pursued or wished even if the reality is not reflected on ground. It could serve as a propeller to create what is not. The second example shows that an ideological basis of anything sustains it and keep it going and growing.

In relation to nation building and the execution of statecraft, every nation or human society has what may have shaped it overtime and kept it going. In America, for instance, the overriding ideology of their political status is liberalism. To be an American is to understand what it means to be liberal. It is not negotiable. This template sets the tone for justice, for free enterprise, for equality before the law, the rule of law and a strong democratic culture. America

is not a conservative society tied against itself as to close the borders of change, progress and modernity. Today, America is at the forefront of globalization and a world power.

There is a relationship between ideology and philosophy, especially when it comes to politics. However, at the epistemic level, there is a clear difference between them. One aims at change (ideology), the other targets truth (philosophy). Corroborating this difference, M. Kumar noted that:

There are very fundamental differences between philosophy and ideology. Ideology refers to a set of beliefs, doctrines that back a certain social institution or a particular organization. Philosophy refers to looking at life in a pragmatic manner and attempting to understand why life is as it is and the principles governing behind it. Ideology expresses dissatisfaction with the current state and aspires to be some future state whereas philosophy tries to understand the world in its current state. In other words, ideology is aimed at changing the world whereas philosophy is aimed at seeking the truth.²⁹

This however does not in total sense cut off a meeting point for both. Searching for truth should equally have a relationship with change especially when human beings are involved. If the truth is to set us free, being free means to change from being in chains or imprisoned to being changed and let loose from shackles cloistering or holding us back. From bad to good and worse to better.

For instance, this present study can be said to have an ideological undertone in the sense that it seeks to know the truth or the epistemic basis as to why philosophy does not seem to have a stronghold in Nigeria with the view or intention to change such an orientation. Thus, in one way or the other, there will always be a relationship between philosophy and ideology, especially when it comes to politics. It follows that all ideologies have underlying philosophies.³⁰

Why Philosophy is not valued in Nigeria

Now, in beaming an intellectual searchlight on Nigeria, it is difficult to pinpoint at a dual spectrum what can be said to be Nigeria's ideology or Nigeria's philosophy. What can we say is the philosophy of Nigeria, if any? The overall philosophy of Nigeria is to: live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principal of freedom, equally and justice; promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding.³¹ However, this seems more to be on paper rather than

practice. There is no observable unity in Nigeria. Over the years, Nigeria has suffered along ethnic and religious lines which often impede development.

The reason why philosophy is not valued in Nigeria is because of the porous nature of Nigeria as a country with the attendant socioeconomic structure. Only recently, Nigeria was christened the poverty capital of the world. It points to the fact that all is not well with Nigeria economically. Add this to the ever present problem of security and unemployment, it becomes clear that much is to be done. How then can someone who is hungry and not mentally stable or fit philosophize? Philosophy thrive in places of leisure, where people are not preoccupied with the material struggles of life. Nigeria is a place of hustle, where the priority is to put food on the table because there are not much social intervention and welfare schemes that help alleviate the existential problems of many. So it becomes a case of each man for himself.

More so, the psychological corollary of this kind of economic problem is to become cold towards anything that mentally stresses the brain to think straight because the focus is on survival than on ideas. Instead of academic engagements, it is sort in the things that help ease anything of rigorous and critical nature. Thus, instead of philosophizing or intellectualism, entertainment and things of hedonistic and consumeric values hold sway.

To think that those elected into positions who are supposed to define reality for the Nigerian people and help alleviate their problems are people who do not think out of the box but further aggravate the problems exposes the reality on ground. Out-of-the-box thinkers will definitely value philosophy because it involves criticality. Lax and lazy thinkers who only think of themselves while in power and how to amass and consolidate power will only run the state to expedient ends without far-reaching considerations.

Philosophy does not seem to be thriving in Nigeria in the open spheres because of not only the existential conditions of the people but the qualities they admire which tells of their spirit. Thus, it becomes more about appearance than reality; about accident than substance; about resemblance than identity.

In relation to ideology, politics and development, other thinkers who understood the matter have added their voices as to the issue and problematic of philosophy in Nigeria. O. R. Maduabuchi and E. Anowai highlighted the following:

Problems are associated with challenges. Every problem requires some challenges in order to tackle it. For instance, the problems of Philosophy in Nigeria constitute a challenge which Nigerian philosophers ought to

address and proffer solutions to them. In the first instance, philosophy is problematic in nature. Philosophy can be understood from different perspectives. In a way, philosophy is conceived as an ideology.³²

They noted further that “Nigerians are lacking good philosophical ideology in many spheres of life. For instance, in the area of politics some leaders in developing nations in Africa take advantage of their citizens by misappropriating and embezzling the available resources and converting them to personal gain.”³³ On a general scale, Plato’s admonition of Philosophers becoming kings or kings becoming philosophers has not been adhered to especially in Nigeria. For instance, many appointments have been made into government positions where the Nigerian philosopher has not been called to serve in any national capacity, in order to help bring criticality, original thought and creativity to the system. Take for instance, T.U Nwala who is a professor of philosophy at the University of Abuja, Nigeria. In 2011, during Jonathan's reelection into power, he was nominated for the position of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) but despite his qualifications and capability for the job, a two-time senator – Pius Anyim got the job. It is an indictment that philosophers and philosophy are not valued in government circles. In developed countries of the world, philosophers play prominent roles and have advisory positions in government outside the classroom. It is an example of applying philosophy in the public sphere.

Across the world, philosophy has shaped many western nations. American constitution and democracy was influenced by John Locke. The French revolution was also influenced by John Locke and other Philosophers of the time. In America, John Dewey, William James and Sanders Peirce all have influences. So it follows that no society can really do well without philosophical input.

In relation to development, a philosophical background in form of ideology or ideology in form of a philosophical outlook is always needed to pull through stagnancy and other things that prevent society from moving forward.

Understanding Development and the Importance of Philosophy to Nation Building

It is important to understand development and what it is. Development on its own has to do with growth and change. It is a sequential process of evolution and emergence that characterizes a being or a thing and also portrays the fact of existence and thriving. There are different types of development but our focus here will be on sociopolitical and socioeconomic development which also

combine to mean national development. M. Todaro saw development as: “a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty”³⁴

Thus, when we talk of national development, it is the ability of a country to have a people or citizens- oriented face especially in the areas of social welfare, infrastructural development, a good health system, sound technological hub and other social amenities that signify a good standard of living. The term ‘National Development’ is very broad and comprehensive. It includes all aspects of the development of a nation namely, political, social, economic etc. So, it is a dynamic and revolutionary development of the society. Moreover, it is both qualitative and quantitative.³⁵ National development takes into cognizance human and natural resources, change, social structure and culture. Once these things annex to create a holistic structure in form of ideas and strategy, such a nation would emerge. However, how can ideas come if there is no philosophic culture? It is in this light, we can say that philosophy is very important and should be an integral and ideological tool for national development, if harnessed in the quest to build Nigeria

Corroborating the dilemma of the philosophic condition in Nigeria, E. Onwuka noted the following:

There exists a generally held view among people, namely that “philosophy does not bake bread nor does it build bridges”. By this, I mean to refer to the widely held opinion that philosophy is purely abstract speculative reasoning or exercise about cosmos or reality and thus has no direct relevance or contribution to make in practical issues of human existence. There is no discipline that is generally misunderstood and misconceived as being irrelevant to human society as philosophy, especially in Nigeria. Some people erroneously see philosophy as a discipline that is concerned only with abstract realities. For such people, philosophy has nothing to do with the real world. It is seen as mere speculations that have no practical significance. Some say that philosophy is a study in futility. Others are of the opinion that the study of philosophy, especially in our tertiary institutions has no significant value.³⁶

However, E. J.O. Ndubisi noted that on the contrary, philosophy is very important for nation building. In his work, *The Role of Philosophy in Contemporary Society: The Nigerian Experience*,³⁷ he highlighted the various importance of Philosophy in political sphere, in religious sphere, in economic development and

in social change and opined among other things that philosophy can help to articulate a good government policy and governance. That philosophers can be called upon to fashion out what can be substantially viable for the state and same as in religious sphere, where philosophy can help reduce religious excesses such as violence. In economic development, he noted that it advances the wealth of the mind which informs a developed mind that can bring about development in economic terms. Social Change can also come about through philosophy because philosophy interrogates every aspects of human reality including culture and can bring about the intellectual capability to jettison what is no longer viable³⁸.

Concluding Reflection

In this study thus far, we have been able to beam searchlight into the place of philosophy or the application of philosophy in nation building. From observable trends in governance, public policies and way of life of Nigerians including the qualities they admire, we can say that the place of philosophy is almost dead. Apart from academic philosophers we have in Nigeria who restrict their impacts in most cases to the classroom and other intellectuals who engage critical thinking in their public and professional life, philosophy has no real place in Nigeria.

Without a philosophical disposition to life, it become impossible to have a culture of ideas and criticality to issues. It takes critical minds to push for the accelerated growth of their communities. A society with thinkers cannot lack in their approach to life and various endeavours.

However, since the burden of this paper is to investigate the role and application of philosophy to our national life, and since we have come to the conclusion that philosophy is struggling to thrive in our clime, the present study therefore recommends the following:

1. The only way to bring about a culture of philosophy or a society of ideas in Nigeria is to catch the young generations who are between the ages of 5-18 years. From primary school, some basic philosophic tenets and thoughts should be taught in schools. By the time they finish from primary and secondary schools, they would have become grounded in critical and logical thinking needed to pursue different careers as they embark on tertiary education. It is true that the National Universities Commission (NUC) has made Philosophy compulsory in the General Studies courses undertaken by all departments in Nigerian Universities, this is however, not enough. The intellectual fibre of Nigeria is on the decline and thus, it is

only catching them young and imbuing in them a culture of reading and critical thinking, can they rise to the occasion in the future. This problem is a critical one that needs to be addressed.

2. To execute the first and bring it to reality, the Platonian admonition of either kings becoming philosophers or philosophers becoming kings should be adhered to and applied in Nigeria. The kind of rulers Nigeria have had over the years are mostly misfits and people who ventured into politics for other reasons other than the desire to serve. If out and out philosophers consider political life with the intention to execute the Marxist point of not only succeeding in interpreting the World but also to change it, there will be a difference. Nigerian philosophers beyond the classrooms should come out in applied spheres and make open impact in the society. By so doing, it will rub off on the common man on the street and thus, enthrone a culture of values and accelerate development.
3. Government on their part should create an enabling environment for philosophy to thrive by engaging philosophers and given their training and critical disposition appoint them to positions where they can use their ideas to come about workable policies that can change society. The continued relegation of philosophy in Nigeria causes the Nigerian society no good and is at the base of the Nigeria's dilemma and problems.

Finally, suffice it to say that the place of philosophy in Nigeria can become relevant and applied, if philosophers not only restrict themselves to the classrooms only but also pay a deontic price of putting in place measures that can make philosophy to become appreciated in Nigeria, through their practical works and efforts. A society without philosophy is a society without ideas and without ideas or no values-laden approach to life, such a society will fail because ideas rule the world.

Endnotes

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4. The author's definition of Philosophy was borne out of the universal understanding of philosophy. It is the thinking that philosophy can permeate into anything so long as it is knowable. The process of these carries with it weights of interrogation, seeking and

possibly finding because sometimes, answers may still defy or elude the philosopher and the quest and search for meaning continue.

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