



PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE:

Interrogating the Nexus

Felix Ayoh'OMIDIRE
Jare Oladosu
Gbenga Fasiku
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Editors



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CHAPTER ONE

CULTURE AND THE BURDEN OF BEING AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Dele Layiwola

Abstract

This plenary chapter seeks to interrogate two conceptual issues behind the problems of cultural and political development either in Africa as a continent or in any of its disparate parts or countries, whether it is Nigeria, the Sudan, Gambia, Kenya, Zaire or Zimbabwe: culture and development. In so doing, it politically situates the context by adapting two definitional keywords: structure and culture. In the exposition on culture, society and development, I shall borrow arguments and definitions from Claude Ake's theory of political development, Peter Ekeh's theory of social development and cultural theorists like Sule Bello and Ishola Williams. The chapter will point out how culture and political events have not worked together in Nigeria and Africa as it should to produce anticipated development; why Nigeria must engage creative thinking and basic praxis to overcome the problems of underdevelopment; and concludes on whether development is still possible under the present political *structure* and *culture*. The chapter concludes on the grim question of whether the present debacle in Nigeria and Africa is not already a closed predicament. Though it closes on a pessimistic note, the chapter indicates that the only ray of hope is to continue to interrogate our human condition as the existential movement does. This being that existence not only precedes essence but that concrete human action for development is almost always preceded by historical anguish and disaster such as we presently have. That a closed predicament amounts to where we are now on a continent so blessed with human and material resources and yet much abused and thoroughly managerially bastardized.

Keywords: Culture, Development, Burden, Being, Political Culture.

Some historical Preamble:

In espousing culture as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, I shall like to draw on *The Burden of Being in Africa in the 21st century*

and its implication for culture and philosophy. The emphasis is not on the noun, *burden*, but on the verb phrase, 'Being in Africa', and more essentially on the infinitive, *to be*. That is, to live, to exist; to be alive or active in a geographical space called Africa through the agency of its present participle, *being*. But again, in conjugating the infinitive, *to be*, one is led into a Cartesian conundrum: *I think, therefore I am*; I think, I live, I exist, because I am in Africa. And then the rider: *but this is a burden!* Now, if we consider the nominal or normative case and the gerundival, *Being: existence; substance; essence; any person or thing existing*, then we are drawn far beyond the Cartesian considerations alone into so many other considerations which do not exclude the fields of history, archaeology, anthropology, performance, literature, politics and, perhaps, statistics. However, as in all things great and small, let us start with considerations of history and the past before those of the future in the present.

Africa, in the consideration of its land mass, is the second largest continent after Asia. Its oldest civilization - that of Egypt - had emerged from the 4th millennium BC. By 2000 BC, Egypt had opened up trade with the rest of the world. Since it is impractical, even unscientific, to discuss the whole of Africa in one single chapter, I shall just take a representative nation state - Nigeria - and trace, for the purpose of intellectual analysis, its debacle from about the 15th century. This should be sufficiently representative as the history of the various post-colonies show a marked similarity in form, in content and in tendency.

It was in late 1472 and early 1473 that Messrs Fernaodo Po and Pero de Cintra first navigated the Bights of Bonny and Benin (Crowder, 1978: 49). A decade after this, about 1481, the

booming slave trade caused rivalry between John II of Portugal and Edward IV of England over trade rights and monopoly in West Africa, particularly around the Atlantic coast of present-day Nigeria and her Niger delta creeks. Thereafter began the notorious expropriation of labour and human cargoes known as the Slave Trade.

The point I seek to emphasize here is that trade, travel and exploration had discovered the peoples of Nigeria either on the coast from the Atlantic sea or from the Sahara Desert with Arabs as middle men. The direct and indirect contacts with Europeans started with trade as articles of production and labour. The various cultures and civilizations that are now re-invented, and identified as Nigeria have always been in existence under separate forms of cultural organizations and governance. From available data and evidence, those nations evolved social structures and networks which guaranteed their survival. There was evidence of internal trade, conquests and colonization but it was the eventual opening to the outside world that gave rise to the development of the idea of a corporate nation invented as a country called Nigeria, four and a half centuries after the Spanish and Portuguese traders first began frequenting the coast of West Africa.

As early as 1483, John II of Portugal declared himself Lord of Guinea even though that country did not exist at the time and his treaties were signed with local chieftains along the coast. The Portuguese merely established strategic posts and settlements along the coast. For instance, Portugal had a small settlement on the Island of Sao Tomé, which had no indigenous population. It was from there that it traded with the kingdom of Benin from about 1485. Apart from the trade in pepper from Benin, the

Portuguese outsourced labour from there to work the plantations in Sao Tomé. The Portuguese effectively colonized the Island and the Benin labourers were joined by deported Portuguese Jews, exiles and convicts. This instance of slave trade was second to a first phase when African slaves were first sighted in Lisbon in 1441.

Ewuare 'the Great', as he was known, might have been the first indigenous monarch to encounter a European explorer, Ruy de Sequiera, when the latter arrived in Benin in 1472, but there are other accounts which claimed that Joao Affonso d'Aveiro was the first Portuguese explorer to reach Benin in 1486. Whichever is correct, the entry of Europeans hinterland marked a major turning point in Nigeria's history and politics. Hitherto Benin, Ife and Oyo had always traded among the various ethnicities indigenous to Nigeria away from the Atlantic coast to the north. External trade came from across the great Sahara Desert. The homelands of Ife, Benin, Oyo, Nri and Calabar were the last depots for the caravans across the Sahara and the Sahel regions of Northern Nigeria. There were trade interactions between kingdoms of Kanem Bornu, Nok, Idah and those of Southern Nigeria. The Portuguese arrival in Benin and the national and economic resources they saw encouraged further adventure hinterland along the river to the creeks of the Niger Delta. This robust trade eventually led to the establishment of British Protectorate over Northern Nigeria between 1900 and 1906. This marked the end of the trans-Saharan trade and the beginning of export of goods by road and rail to the Atlantic Coast. That was the real birth of Nigeria.

It is necessary to point out at this juncture that much as exploration leads to trade and prosperity, wealth in society

generates crime, corruption, kidnapping and brigandage. I shall like to cite an instance of very early incidence of kidnapping of expatriates before alien traders began cultural and material expropriation of which the Benin expedition of 1897 was a prime example. In 1830, Richard and John Lander, the successors to Mungo Park, who had earlier met his death in Bussa in 1806 trekked from Badagary to Bussa. Mungo Park and his contingent tried to trace the course of River Niger to the Sea. This would eventually open up the country for access and trade. The Lander Brothers arrived to continue with his work. At Bussa, they secured two canoes. They sailed down via Lokoja through to Asaba. When they arrived in Asaba, they were kidnapped by local Igbo vigilantes. They later negotiated to deliver them to the master of an English boat anchored at Brass on the estuary of River Niger (See Crowder, 1978:10).

Their indigenous captors took them downstream to Brass where they were happy that they had at last discovered the mouth of the Niger River. Here, the captors released only Richard Lander to go on board the British boat to negotiate the payment of a ransom after which John Lander would be released. Thomas Lake, the captain of the ship, hesitated to pay up the ransom. The Igbo men held on to John Lander as hostage. Later, he agreed to pay only on John's release. He tricked the local captors. As soon as he secured John Lander's release, he set sail without paying the promised ransom. The kidnapers had thus suffered a double jeopardy because they not only helped the British to navigate the Niger from Asaba to Brass; they lost out on their expected dividend of an illegitimate trade by barter. This unusual trade became an epidemic in the lives of Nigerians nearly two centuries later. We all know what the governors of

Edo and Imo states have recently done to stem the tide of that menace called kidnapping. My strong point here is that the menace had emerged as a game and a pastime feature of trade in the Niger Delta a long time ago. What we now see as an irritating menace in Nigeria is a recurrence of the trade game invented in the 1830 encounter with two British explorers.

The discovery of the connecting route of the Niger from the hinterland to the Sea thus opened up awareness for access and trade – legitimate and otherwise. I should emphasize that it also led to the conquest of Nigeria and her re-invention as a nation rather than as a mere natural and geographical expression. This has not only led to greater interaction with traders across continents, it has also begun a process of consensus building as a comity of nationalities within a pluralist nation. Thus began a profound interaction of cultures especially through trade, linguistic interaction and renegotiation of mores, in a historically verifiable and a geographically diverse space. In the last one hundred years – a long century indeed – the trial period ought to be over, so that national growth may translate to national development. Let us now talk more about Nigerians than about Europeans who have left us to govern ourselves from about 1960.

Nigeria as a nation has lived for a century, half of it under the rulership of her own citizens. By all standards, a century old man or woman is a very old person indeed. But in the lives of nation states, a hundred years is not quite as long, though it is considered long enough to give a demographic, fiscal or historical account. This is why in a December 13, 2013 edition of *The Punch*, the columnist, Ayo Olukotun, taking a cue from the 2013 Human Development Index (HDI) reports as follows:

‘that though Nigeria's growth rate of 6.5 per cent surpasses the global growth rate of 3.2 per cent; we have not made any impressive strides in terms of human development. In fact, this report rates Nigeria below hitherto embattled nations such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This indicates that in spite of the quantum growth of the economy and our natural resources, human and infrastructural development is still very low. Some other global league tables such as the Failed States Index (published annually by the Fund for Peace) and the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International have rated Nigeria as a failed state. Nigeria continues to witness reports of widespread cases of intolerance, wanton homicide, ethnic cleansing, kidnapping and insurgency. If there were arrests and apprehensions, the laws have an auto immune system against convictions and constitutional deterrents. In spite of the long century the country has witnessed, it has emerged as a weak state and an unfulfilled nation. It is the only nation of its size on earth (about 170 million persons according to the 2013 issue of the Population Reference Bureau) with such a history of dismal performance and dysfunctional statistics’. The logical question is: what do we do to achieve a better performance index?

From the critique and analyses in the Press and the social media, two basic principles are discernible. The first is that there is a major discrepancy between political systems and political development in Nigeria. That is, there is neither concrete agreement nor social contract between the leaders and the led; that is if we assume that we already have the right calibre of leaders. The second is that the component of the resources belonging to both strata of society is so badly managed that the

two parties in the game of governance live in great poverty even as their leaders ostentatiously wallow in vulgar riches and conspicuous consumption. The nation has failed a major theory of political development:

Political development entails an increase of one or more of the following attributes: structural differentiation, cultural secularization, equality and capacity (Ake, 2009: 1).

I shall not bother to go into definitions on culture, nationalities and the nation state as these are already given in our present understanding and theme but it is imperative to assert that culture makes human and technological development happen. It is patent from the lessons of history that cultural development is *sine qua non* for technological development. In other words, for technological, social and political development to take place there must be cultural development. That is why advancement rapidly takes place in settled societies rather than in dispersed or war-torn communities. Put in a different context, culture, in all its ramifications, is indispensable for development. A history of cultural development is a history of civilization. It is, however, clear from my preamble that the history of sustained cultural development had not been in our favour. We have been a nation and a continent labouring under conquest. It is, therefore, not only necessary to understand that conquest and subjugation but to also circumnavigate it.

One innate quality that differentiates humans from the lower animal kingdoms is that inalienable capacity to create; to culture

and to nurture. Creativity is key to adaptation and cultural development; from the invention of logic to that of craft-making and architecture. It is also clear that no creativity is possible without the capacity for reasoning. That is why the reasoning capacity is crucial to memory, innovation, culture and technology. Physiologically as we know, the human brain or mind is more highly developed than that of other mammals. Another intriguing factor of culture is that it is always contextual, unique and prototypal. The natural habitat is always in the particular modes of expression, the flora, the fauna and the landscapes of the geographical area. This is what provides the historical and evolutionary basis of the technological development we have had in diverse parts of our world. Each civilization, if given a fair chance, will produce its own art and technology. Before I provide an empirical illustration, let me re-echo the question raised by a former executive Director of the National Council for Arts and Culture, Sule Bello:

Can African cultures provide a basis, a frame of reference, some examples and possibly models, in short a paradigm, for the development of technology in Africa and Nigeria today? (1998: 6).

The truth is that with the level of development of our art, craft, performances and literature, there is clearly enough civilization base and capacity to evolve a technology that is home grown and can also be exported. I shall like to draw attention to the memoir of the Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe, *There was A Country* (Penguin, 2012: 157), where he described the technological ingenuity of the defunct Biafran state:

The first Biafran "tanks" turned out to be steel-reinforced Range rovers. By their third incarnation these armoured fighting vehicles, or AFVs had become quite sophisticated, with rocket launchers added....

We were told, for instance, that technologically we would have to rely for a long, long time on the British and the West for everything. European oil companies insisted that oil-industry technology was so complex that we would never ever in the next five hundred years be able to figure it out. We knew that wasn't true. In fact we learned to refine our own oil during the two and a half years of the struggle, because we were blockaded. We were able to demonstrate that it was possible for African people, entirely on their own, to refine oil.

In the same place, Achebe told another story of how a Biafran aircraft crew landed on a French African territory. The people of that country did not believe that there was no single European among the crew. They first arrested the Biafrans thinking that there was a mutiny on board until they discovered that the pilots were full-blooded Biafrans. Whilst Nigerians can pilot their own jets, if their country had an airline, and refine their own crude oil, it is a marvel that half a century after that civil war, Nigerian

crude is still being sent abroad for refining. If a secessionist country, under the doctrine of necessity was able to manufacture her own weapons - tanks and rocket launchers, why is it that a fully-fledged country, outside of war time is not able to manufacture her own weaponry? Why does a country twice the land mass of Thailand and three times Thailand's population wait on Thailand to feed her with rice? Is this a failure of leadership or a failure of followership? Is this a failure of vision or a failure of culture or civilization? To borrow a common Igbo phrase, where did the rain begin to beat us so that we can make efforts to dry our bodies and protect ourselves?

The Rise of Political Culture and Political Structure

It is clear from Claude Ake's passionate analysis of western political systems that though there are comparative structures for political development when the historical context is linear, autonomous and secular, it becomes a little more complex in societies which are not only amorphous, diffused and under different ideological orientations. The subtle point he makes in identifying predominantly secular cultures and predominantly magico-religious or traditional cultures is very crucial (1991: 7 - 8). The performance or capabilities of these two types of political systems on service delivery is markedly different. This distinction, in spite of colonization, neo-colonization and the generation of modern capital and ideas, explains why the Asian Tigers have moved ahead of African nations in the 20th and 21st centuries. For this justification, I shall like to cite the quotation that Ake borrows from Almond and Powell:

It is through the secularization of political culture that these rigid,

ascribed and diffuse customs of social interaction come to be overridden by a set of codified, specifically political, and universalistic rules. By the same token, it is the secularization process that bargaining and accommodative political action become a common feature of the society, and that the development of special structures such as interest groups and parties become meaningful (Almond and Powell, 1966: 60; Ake, 1991: 8).

This issue of secularization will always re-occur when we discuss what constitutes the political structure and culture of allegiance in 'godfatherism' and prebendalism; two key factors in 20th century Nigerian politics. It will also form the basis of the foreshadowing of this phenomenon in two literary texts by two of Nigeria's major authors: Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. The two literary works are: *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Madmen and Specialists* (1971). Since the ultimate goal of political culture and structure is to engineer political development, it is necessary to discuss the views of present political scientists on what constitutes political development and how it occurs. For Almond and Powell, development occurs when the structure or culture of a political system is unable to cope with the problems and challenges confronting it without it resorting to further structural differentiation and cultural secularization. A list of such challenges is:

- a) *State Building*: this occurs when a political elite creates new structures and organizations which are meant to regulate behaviour or draw huge resources from society. This is usually a means of establishing control and adjusting present conditions.
- b) *Participation*: This is the attempt to cope with group pressure for political participation or decision making. This often has to do with representation.
- c) *Distribution and Welfare*: This is always concerned with the domestic redistribution of income, opportunities, privileges, positions, gains, wealth or largess. This is akin to what, in vulgar Nigerian parlance, we term 'the national cake'.
- d) *Nation Building*: This generally has to do with rallying the citizens behind a leader, political party or inspiring loyalty for the nation.

There is an alternative classification of the crises of political development by Lucian Pye as follows:

- a) *Identity Crisis*: Where there is the problem of ethnicity, social and linguistic groups or classes, castes and creed, there is always the problem of translating loyalties to the level of the state or nation.
- b) *Legitimacy Crisis*: This is connected with the problem of reaching an agreement on the nature and exercise of authority and the responsibilities of government. This is sometimes connected with constitutional crisis or the conflict and interpretation of laws.
- c) *The Penetration Crisis*: This has to do with reaching down to the grassroots and effecting basic policies.
- d) *Participation Crisis*: This crisis is envisaged when there might be loss of control over influx and movement of new

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- c) *The Penetration Crisis*: This has to do with reaching down to the grassroots and effecting basic policies.
- d) *Participation Crisis*: This crisis is envisaged when there might be loss of control over influx and movement of new

participants within and between institutions. In Nigeria, there have been continual instances of carpet baggers between political parties.

- e) *The Integration Crisis*: This deals with the problem of integrating offices and agencies of government institutions and then among the various groups seeking to make demands on these institutions. This classification is superfluous in regard to the previous one on participation.
- f) *The Distribution Crisis*: This is usually in connection with how government power and machinery is to be used to influence or control the distribution of goods, services and values across the nation or society.

Claude Ake succinctly helped to present the theory of political development as analyzed in the context of western societies and political institutions by affirming that the concept of political development is crucial for the understanding of political systems. It lays out the peculiar characteristics of the systems in ways that help us evaluate their levels of performance and development. In granting preference to the analysis of Almond and Powell, the development of 'higher levels of system capabilities is dependent upon the development of greater structural differentiation and cultural secularization' (Almond and Powell, 323; Ake, 15).

1.4 Political Culture

In a political system, which is always co-terminus with a nation state, a nationality, a kingdom or any polity, a political culture (or patterns of political culture) is always evident. There are

established idiosyncrasies which give room for predictability. Claude Ake obviously agrees with the definition of Almond and Powell which can be summarized as follows:

- a) Political culture consists of individual attitudes or outlook towards politics in a political system;
- b) This set of attitudes gives meaning to political action, moves and motives;
- c) Political culture consists of at least three psychological components:
 - i. Cognitive orientation or the knowledge of political objects, action or belief
 - ii. Affective orientation or the feelings and tendencies of attachment, involvement or rejection of political objects and motives
 - iii. Evaluative orientation which involves the application of values, judgments and opinions on political objects, motives and events (cf. Almond and Powell, 1966; Ake, 2009; 18).

In my humble opinion, and with all due respects to the prevailing authorities in this field, it is sometimes impossible to clearly separate or differentiate these parameters as events happen rapidly in a complex political space. Besides, values and nuances of the greater cultural milieu often superintend particular historical moments.

1.5 Cultural Secularization

In considering the main bastions of political development, I shall now discuss the process of cultural secularization and structural differentiation. These being parameters that will help

establish the context of politics as a tool for social capacity and social development. There are three main considerations of cultural secularization. The secularization of political culture is the condition where men have become more rational, more analytic and empirical in their political thinking and action. This is clearly a far cry from the concept of *amala politics* or that of *stomach infrastructure*. These terminologies were invented across social and intellectual divides, irrespective of their implications. A second similar definition of cultural secularization goes thus: that it is a process in which traditional attitudes and orientation change and give way to radical and dynamic decision-making processes. There is thereby greater emphasis in the gathering and analyses of information, exploration of alternative sources of action and a more rigorous policy and data analysis. The essence of political culture is to have the bases by which we could all relate to institutions in a rational, logical and systematic way so that it is useful for the trust and participation of all and sundry.

Structural Differentiation

Political structure always refers to political roles. For instance, the court is a political structure consisting of a hierarchy of related roles as in that of the judge to that of an attorney; the role of a litigant to that of a court clerk or registrar etc. It is also within this structure that we identify those of the elected and their electorate. Political differentiation refers to change in political structure or roles. Role differentiation refers to change or adaptation of roles within a political structure. All these point to the fact that we expect that no political system is ever static and that differentiation may occur at any point in time or within various political structures whether it is ad-hoc or statutory. In a

way this helps to explain that human societies are never static and are always in a dynamic flux. New roles will always emerge and older ones will atrophy. The more important phenomena in political differentiation will not be in the social and political changes, which are inevitable anyway, but in the emergence of new roles and the changing interactive patterns among the roles, structures and subsystems (Almond and Powell, 1966: 23). The process of structural differentiation can thus be listed as follows:

- a) role change
- b) role specialization
- c) role autonomy
- d) emergence of new roles
- e) creation of new structures or organs
- f) creation of new subsystems
- g) transformation of older roles
- h) intra-systemic changes within and between roles, structures and subsystems
- i) the death or transformation of old roles (Ake, 2009: 26).

Barring some of the stylistic differences over which Ake takes on Almond and Powell, these can be safely taken as development variables in a political and cultural system. We must take full responsibility for assuming and understanding that the complexities of roles and societies differ and that each society differs on role ascription and their ideological differentiation. Societies also vary on whether they are more religious or more secular depending on the economy of scale laid out in each cultural system. But the point is well made in our historical experience that societies change, transform or develop based on the interactive scale of these processes.

Much as a major theorist like Claude Ake dwelt on the theory of political development as a comprehensive tool, he rightly observes that this model does not have the third world or developing economies in focus. For that reason, he believes that it is an ideology of imperialism. But I should have liked to ask him a few questions were circumstances kinder to his welfare and survival:

- a) If a developing economy like Nigeria cannot benefit from western theories of development, why did she retain the apparatus of western governance that colonialism had foisted on her?
- b) Or better still, when is she going to reinvent herself and propose a new theory of development best suited to her peculiar conditions?
- c) More than half a century after independence, can she trace her roadmap to where the rain started to beat her? But even more crucial;
- d) Can we invent a new theory of modernity or modernization which will help to gestate an organic political process relevant for our own growth and development?

But for what will continue to be a profound and deafening silence from Claude Ake, there are African, indeed Nigerian intellectuals, who have recently proposed that Africa must be modern for it to get on the development train (cf. Taiwo, 2011). The scope of this chapter does not permit an open philosophical response to this divergence or heterodoxy but it can make do with another perspective on the question of modernization in Africa vis-a-vis her indigenous cultures and the peculiarities of our colonial experience. I, at my intellectual peril, do believe that the inertia of colonialism is bad enough but that the stigma

of slavery had been most debilitating. Between colonialism and slavery is the nagging phenomenon of conquest. I have selectively adopted the term, conquest, because it is often tied to technology. The fact remains that Africa was conquered and enslaved because she succumbed to inferior technology. From the purview of history, a conquered people are a technologically inferior people. There is virtual science and there is empirical science. At the end of the day, the latter tends to attain superiority. This is why the attainment of technological development will, most likely, speed up emancipation than a thousand manifestoes and treatises on development. Let us reconnect to the earlier technological independence similar to that of the Nigerian civil war that Chinua Achebe listed. This time, I shall engage the ideas of a scholar from the culture industry - Sule Bello.

Modernization, Technological Development and the Collapse of Globalization

Both Olufemi Taiwo (2011) and Sule Bello (1998, 2011) agree and assert that the contemporary concept of modernization in Africa essentially equates westernization and what constitutes a view of the world through the lenses of western world; its intelligentsia and ruling elite. This is true; unfortunately so! To quote Sule Bello:

The most important assumption of the concept of "modernisation" is that it is the opposite of the inherited traditions and indigenous practices of other peoples on the one hand and the approximation of the traditions of the

West on the other. For our purpose here, it is enough to show that virtually all our perceptions of progress politically, economically and socially, approximate to the imitation of the West or the adoption of its abstract values and practices. This is particularly significant because it is done, not on the basis of our own needs, peculiarities, initiatives and culture, but rather in opposition to them (2011: 12-13).

Bello goes on to discuss that colonialism assumes that African culture and modes of organization and living do not exist and, where they are acknowledged, they are simply displaced and discounted. With that kind of attitude, development drives do not seek to adapt indigenous knowledge or to modernize existing institutions and values so that they are suited to modern or contemporary needs. The ideal is that development should be a cumulative and organic process where the past grows seamlessly into the future. He exclaimed that: 'What is today peddled as 'development' and 'modernity' in Africa is the total neglect and abandonment of Africa's historical experience, creative dimensions and useful traditions' (13). It is true that there are indigenous practices, especially in the fields of medicine and pharmacy which are completely ignored in spite of the fact that they have proved extremely benevolent in China, India and Southeast Asia. This is understandable because modern pharmaceutical industry has a strong global economic network and a grand monopoly. The question of mastery in the

post-industrial world is predicated on finance capital and economic domination. It is only a weak nation that will fail to promote her products and protect her currency and trade. What is being re-packaged and re-exported in the names of TIANSHI or KARGASOK are traditional medicines and therapies re-appropriated from the African subsoil. This amounts to the third phase of enslavement since the horror of the middle passage; the first two being colonialism and neocolonialism.

We must expect that to keep developing nations as underdogs, their viable historical experiences and their creative potential must be subjugated. This leads to three main implications of modernization theory:

- a) It makes complete irrelevance of indigenous and independent creative accomplishments and knowledge of Africans.
- b) It arrogates the development of Africa to exogenous initiative and agencies.
- c) It strips the African of his God-given self-confidence and ideologically classifies him as inferior. This appertains also to the persons of African descent in the Americas and the new world.

It is evident that both Claude Ake and Sule Bello have identified that western based academies such as the Princeton Development Study Series and the Chicago based Economic Development and Cultural Change Group would have no relevance to the politics and culture of African societies except as imperial organs. They feel that in the attempt to modernize Africa, these academic and Cultural agents,

conceal the ethnocentric nature of their studies...sought to present development not as a socio-cultural phenomenon but the result of certain "natural laws" which conveniently enough, are derived from, and reflect, Western tradition and values as well as serve their interests and companies (Bello, 2011: 14).

The observation of these scholars need no emphasis especially in the light of our experience with such modernization policies as 'Structural Adjustment', 'Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery' and the so called 'Poverty Alleviation Programmes' that Nigerian bureaucrats have so willingly touted. The striking irony, however, is that though the propositions are made by foreign agents, the real midwives are Africans or Nigerians! We have been regaled with such nerve-racking stories of Nigerian *neveux riches*, some of them former university teachers, who became millionaires by defrauding their own country as 'executive' officials of these agencies. My gentle warning in the service of worthy scholarship, indigenous knowledge and civic wisdom is that there is hardly a fraudulent transnational act without its local agency. Our own underdevelopments start and end with us.

Another ideological platform for failed development is *technology transfer*. I make bold to say, without fear of contradiction that each creative impetus in art or in technology grows on its own indigenous soil. There may be imported components but they cannot be wholly imported. If they were to be, they would not be sustainable and would not be, *sui generis*,

its own model. This is why the humanistic efflorescence of Greece preceded the technological advancement of Rome (Layiwola, 1994: 147). Many African nations, Nigeria inclusive, have dissipated hard-earned resources on the wholesale importation of manufacturing plants and finished products hoping that this would automatically result in the transfer of technology. The result has always been a foregone conclusion evident in the myriad of white elephant projects and abandoned initiatives. Not least among them are the several automobile and steel plants dotting the landscapes of our nation: Leyland, Peugeot, Volkswagen, Rover, Mercedes truck plants and steel rolling mills. Why have the imported industries in Africa disappeared and those of South Korea, India, Brazil and Taiwan still stand strong? Resources internally generated were thus reversed and put to flight. Each environment will determine, by its craft and artifice, what technology it can produce and adapt to such environments.

On the whole, modernization theories would seem to have dumped local initiatives for the imposition of foreign interests. This is why a host of the multinational establishments and stores which abound have subsumed local entrepreneurs and are carting away huge capital across national borders at the touch a button or the use of a media application. It is clear that modernization in its present configuration will promote neither technology transfer nor industrialization. A more recent outgrowth of modernization is globalization or globalism. Colonialism and its aftermath had not only exploited the economy of developing nations and integrated them into the world's capitalist system; their cultures had undergone some measure of hybridity having come in contact with a challenging,

overbearing culture seeking to subjugate or subsume indigenous cultures. These tendencies persist in the current wave of globalization. Though globalization appeared, by its current definition, to be an innocuous merging of cultures and civilizations, it is indeed a new extension and an intensification of global capitalism with its economic value systems of profit making, bargaining and labour exploitation. The consequence of class distinction, inequalities and social conflicts were inevitable. To draw a historical correspondence, colonialism pushed many African nations from their pre-capitalist eras but did not develop them into modern capitalist economies as in western nations. They continued to remain the sources for the exploitation of labour and raw materials and the expropriation of capital. In the case of Nigeria, railways were laid from the north to the coast for the export of raw and agricultural materials. Some of which were re-imported for consumption and trade. Colonialism as a stage of imperialism could not achieve a horizontal harmony among the political, social and economic spectrum within and across nations. Perhaps we should not forget that the purpose of colonialism was not to develop but to govern the host nation and to exploit her resources for mutual economic gains. Bluntly put, it is a master-servant relationship.

Again, as remarked above, the full responsibility for development rests with the leadership and citizenry of a post-colonial or developing nation. The economies have worsened since the end of colonialism because the emphasis is usually on one or two commodity export, for example crude oil or cocoa unlike the colonial government which focused on a diversity of economic crops - cocoa, palm oil, rubber, groundnut, cotton,

coffee etc. The result for us had been growth without development. Manufacturing had dipped and there is increasing food and material insecurity and poverty. This has resulted in the menace of robbery, insurgency and kidnappings. This is how a sociologist and a political economist at a globalization conference describe it:

For Nigeria and most African countries the tools for proactive participation in the global...arena are sorely lacking. While world exports have increased, Africa's share of world trade has never been more than 2 per cent for raw materials and zero for manufactured goods. Indeed its small share of world trade is further declining due to reliance on backward technology, inappropriate development policies particularly in relation to agriculture and, above all, the barriers imposed by the developed countries, especially the United States, whose farmers are protected from the unpredictable vagaries of the market through direct emergency aid, export premium and guarantees against falling prices of commodities (Kiipoye, 2001; Abdulrahman, 2004: 303).

Nigeria's globalization inequality is further compounded by poorly motivated skilled workers; emigration of skilled workers

and experts; and lack of employment for the unskilled. This, of course, is bad statistics for global competition. Perhaps in Nigeria as in most of Africa, globalization, as a phenomenon, has increased horizontal as well as vertical inequalities between groups and classes in society. It has thus become a tool of developed nations for exploiting weaker societies within the global network. This is why globalization, as a concept and as a tool for development has collapsed and failed.

Conclusion: Cultural values, Cultural Institutions and a Return to the Future

What I intend to do by way of conclusion is:

- to identify a fundamental decline in the status of our cultural values and institutions which also indicates a decline in the influence of philosophy.
- to identify the bane of this decline as corruption and violence, and
- to ask whether our culture can hope to overcome corruption as Ishola Williams had earlier asked (Williams, 2007).
- Finally, to illustrate these with two imaginative works: Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* (1966) and Wole Soyinka's *Madmen and Specialists* (1971).

In his book, *African Cultural Values* (1996), Kwame Gyekye affirms how importantly the African takes the value of social morality and rejects or condemns ethical egoism. He emphasizes the pervasiveness of fellow feeling as a primal and primordial communal value. These are sustained by artistic institutions as in the power of folk tales and stories as the

institutional flagship for memory and morality. The returns to the philosophical basis of imaginative and fictional works constantly remind the living that the legacies of morality must be sustained and upheld at every crossroad of experience. He affirms, among other things, that an illustrative tale 'clearly demonstrates the worthlessness and rational inconsistency of the doctrine of ethical egoism' (1996: 60). In addition, he affirms that seeking one's own interests to the total disregard of the interests of others leads to self-destruction. The *UNESCO Courier* published the same year warned that the central problem of politics since classical antiquity has been how to control individual and groups who are inclined to put their own interests before the common good. I shall presently reiterate the same phenomenon in the works of the two Nigerian authors cited above.

The first, *A Man of the People* is a narrative on the rudiments of politics and the polity debacle in a postcolonial state, a few years after political independence. It is a practical illustration of Almond and Powell's as well as Pye's crises of political development namely those of: identity, legitimacy, penetration, participation and distribution. The relative economic scale is drawn out by an old school teacher turned politician, Chief Nanga and a bright, idealistic university graduate who was his former pupil, Odili Samalu. Odili stands for the upcoming intelligentsia waiting to overthrow the old order. The interesting point is how statesmanship degenerated into bathos and the sensual generational tussle whereby the game is determined by who wins the heart of a mutual lover. The symbol of lust and moral decay is not lost on the reader and on the social setting of the narrative. Politics is relayed as a brutish game on the struggle

for scarce resources in rural, prebendalist environments. There were values but there were no social institutions or a sophisticated elite corps to sustain them. Lives were lived as they came – raw, nasty and brutish. Tradition, in its encounter with modernity, completely lost its head. At the end of the novel, violent crisis was inevitable and the military terminated the first republic with a coup d'état. The novel turned out to be a prescient road map to the demise of Nigeria's first republic. Not a few politicians and the military marveled at the delicate coincidence of the virtual, imaginative coup and the real, evocative coup a few months later. The technicality of the narrative or 'social story', as Victor Turner would have called it, is such that only a prose narrative could have done justice to it.

The second work of literature, Wole Soyinka's *Madmen and Specialists* is a dark piece of Existentialist drama which he conceived during his intense period of solitary confinement at the time of the Nigerian civil war. The drama was centred on a philosophical contrivance known as the 'AS' philosophy. The dramatis personae were victims of a holocaust who had lost their soul essence on account of extreme trauma and psychological distortion. The laboratory which became their stage was managed by a demented father, known simply as an 'old man' and his doctor son, Dr Bero. The old man is an identity block, a robotic figure remotely controlled by his son, 'the specialist'. Apart from the disabled players, there were two women herbalists, Iya Agba and Iya Mate. They represented primordial tradition at its meeting point with the post-modern. The Doctor and his father promote cannibalism through a wasting war. And they propose games where the characters put to stake whatever is left of their body parts. The play ends with an apocalyptic fire

which totally destroys the landscape. The play is an existentialist endgame which is cyclical in conception and ends in a liturgical cul-de-sac:

As - Was - Is - Now - As Ever Shall Be...

Bi o ti wa

Ni yio se wa

Bi o ti wa l'atete ko se... (pp 39 - 40)

This has prompted my question: Is the present condition of Africa a closed predicament? Would we ever get out of this dead end? If the answer is yes, then how? Retired General Ishola Williams, in a recent publication titled *Can Our Culture and Traditions Overcome Corruption?* (CBAAC, 2007) made a few suggestions which I shall précis here. He believes that we have subverted and abused the four key components of culture, namely: values, norms, institutions and artifacts. Our values are largely contingent on our moral and material priorities. Norms are codes of etiquette and accompanying sanctions. Our institutions help to sustain our values and norms. Our artifacts are tangible and intangible materials and objects; both aesthetic and spiritual which have been inspired by our culture, philosophy and conditioned by our historical experience.

It is clear both from our historical as well as our political experience that we must creatively engage modernity in a way that is empirical and rational, and perhaps shed some of our gregarious norms for more individualistic ones. Asian countries that have made technological breakthroughs are known to have imbibed these values. Above all, our corrupt tendencies are fuelled from two fronts, intangible and tangible: first we have not institutionalized our traditions, philosophies, ethics, law and

medicine so that they can be practiced as science rather than as myths ; second, we take pride in accessing wealth that we neither earn nor work for. Hence derived wealth is theft. I have not said like the Marxian scholar, Proudhon, that private property is theft but derived, unearned wealth is theft, with a capital T. The restructuring of the country and the economy will allow for genuine federalism and direct, productive derivation rather leaving unearned wealth concentrated in a few hands in a fluid centre where public servants can be tempted by the sheer quantum of such resources stacked in their purview. The Local Government or grassroots level is where infrastructural development should concentrate and be expanded. The most competent hands in the public service should be at the local government level where much development is needed.

Finally, I believe that the rule of law should be uniform to all citizens without exception. No one - no matter his or her position - should live above the law. But above all, we must consciously train and develop an elite corps with an elite consciousness and core values to uphold our moral and material institutions. Once these recommendations are effected, we would be on the way to turning our predicament to virtues.

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