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**A PHILOSOPHER
INTERROGATES AFRICAN
POLIS: HOW CAN WE
GET IT RIGHT?**

By

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**A PHILOSOPHER INTERROGATES AFRICAN *POLIS*:
HOW CAN WE GET IT RIGHT?**

An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the University of Lagos
Main Auditorium on Wednesday, 16th May, 2012

by

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Dedication

To the memory of my parents
Zacheaus (Zaki) and Eunice (Oyin)

Preamble

Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Management Services), The Registrar, The Librarian, The Provost College of Medicine, Other Principal Officers of the University, Dean of Arts and other Deans here present, Members of Senate, Distinguished Academic Colleagues, Members of the Press, Old Igbobians and Grammarians, Invited Guests, Dear Students, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.

I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans,

and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:

Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

The Negro Speaks of Rivers

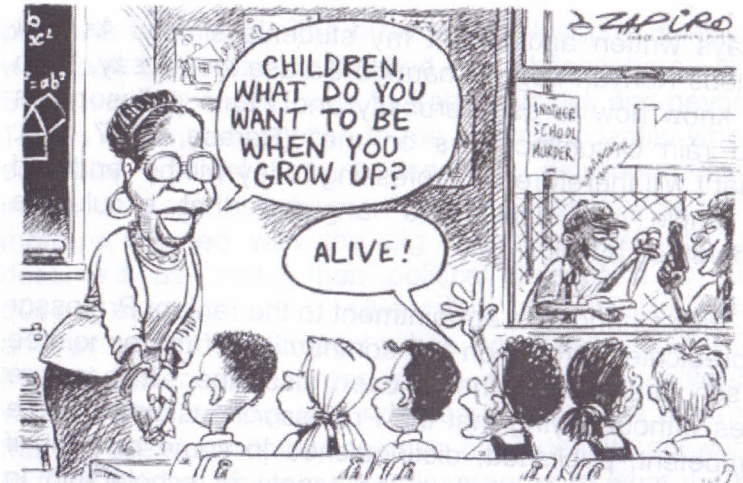
-Langston Hughes

Introduction

Nisi Domino Frustra (Without the Lord, all is in Vain)

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, I wish to commence this fourth inaugural lecture from the Department of Philosophy by admitting that my palm kernel has often been cracked by benevolent spirits and I have not forgotten to be humble. This week, I will be fifty years. Coincidentally, this great university is also fifty years this year. Most people will agree with me that this is a year and an age that deserves to be celebrated. For more reasons than one, I am happy to have achieved this mythical golden age. I am also happy to have reached the highest goal I set for myself, twenty two years ago, when I joined the academia as an Assistant Lecturer at the then Ondo State University, Ado-Ekiti. In the last fifty years, my soul has grown deep like the rivers. Like Langston Hughes, I built my hut near the Niger and it lulled me to sleep. But I have heard the singing of the people of the Niger area and beyond and I have woken up from my slumber. However, I should admit that I am not as happy today as I would have wished to be.

As a young boy growing up in Lagos, I had hope of a good life, a good country, populated by good people, governed by good laws, organized in accordance with civilized practices, ethical principles and political philosophy. I looked forward to an adult life that would reflect the tenets and principles of benevolence, equity, good conscience, justice and egalitarianism. Today, at fifty years, I am despondent, not necessarily for myself, but for our people and our continent. How did we get it wrong? How can we get it right?



The ambition of our children is just to be alive!

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, my inaugural lecture is a culmination of my over twenty two years of research in this direction. In all of these, I am convinced that an understanding of the pristine notions of Philosophy and indeed, African Political Philosophy is at the heart of any re-awakening of the African self, any form of development, be it economic, political or social. As Professor Kola Olu-Owolabi argues in his Inaugural lecture titled **My People Perish for Lack of Philosophy**, to neglect philosophy is to 'invite disaster, whether physically, as we have it in Africa, or psychologically, as we feel it in the Western dominated global society'(Owolabi, 2011, 4).

Let me assure the audience that I am not one of those academic philosophers who thrive in hiding the truth in a maze of esoteric language. I am of the school of thought that philosophy must transcend the bounds of pure thought, even if its raw material is pure thought. We should communicate and let others grasp our meanings and criticize our findings. There is no real virtue in finding a sanctuary in complicated academic jargons. I have

always written and taught my students simply. As that famous Kenyan sage, Chaungo Barasa would say, "I do not know how to use verbosity and I hate philosophers who rain circumlocutions on me" (Barasa, 1997, 21). What I will therefore be professing today will be rendered in simple and uncluttered language that should be understood by all.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, appointment to the rank of Professor is predicated largely on the contribution of the appointee to scholarship in his/her chosen discipline. It therefore goes without saying that the Professor is assumed to be competent, published, distinguished in some respect, if not in all and devoted to the tenets of scholarship in his/her discipline. This inaugural lecture is not to display my competence as an academic philosopher, it is also not an occasion to show off my contribution to knowledge, as this is taken for granted otherwise this great university would not have appointed me a full professor of Philosophy. My task today, Mr. Vice-Chancellor is to profess, and profess I would.

The Political Philosopher vs. the Political Scientist

The political philosopher is the architect, the designer. There is nothing on the ground that was first not in the mind (Huston, 2006: 45)

An important problem confronting the non-political philosopher is making a sense of the enterprise and distinguishing its task from that of a Political Scientist. As a teacher of political philosophy for over twenty two years, one of the greatest challenges I have faced has been drawing a line between the two for the benefit of my students. The argument that the distinction between the two is obscure and hairsplitting flies in the face of actual reality and common sense. The political philosopher is essentially a thinker of political ideas; his major task is to

prescribe the ideal. The history of philosophy is replete with political ideas prescribed by philosophers, from Socrates to Thomas Paine to Robert Nozick and beyond. This is in contradistinction to the political scientist whose essential interest is to **describe** existing political institutions and structures. Political philosophy is much more concerned with the big questions that may be described as '*meta*' than political science. It is such questions that often give rise to the so-called abstractness that philosophy has been associated with. Political science, in order to be exact and universal, waves aside the big or fundamental questions because the big questions do not seem to have definite answers. In fact, political philosophers disagree as to what the big questions are. So, political philosophy requires an effort of interpretation, of reading great books and trying to understand what they say; whereas political science is much easier.

For instance, the State, as we know it, the institutions and structures that sustain it, were prescribed by political philosophers. Its improvement, development and sustenance therefore depend on the political philosopher, and not the political scientist. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, we probably got to where we are today because the ideas prescribed by political philosophers have either been disrespected or ignored or both.

Is there an African Socio-Political Philosophy?

How can a black be "accepted" or "respected" by whites when he has rejected himself? The fact of the matter is that no one can call blacks "inferior" without their consent (Ayttey, 1992:31).

Fifty years ago, it would have been impossible for a philosopher to come before this kind of gathering to talk about an African Political Philosophy. It simply did not

exist! At least so did Eurocentric scholars and the people described by C.S Momoh as African Logical Neo-Positivists think (Momoh, 1989). Until very recently, the idea of an African Philosophy was itself repugnant to the sensibilities of many philosophers, be they African or European. Among P. O Bodunrin, Kwasi Wiredu, Paulin Houtoundji, and to some extent, Odera Oruka, some of the most compelling arguments against African Philosophy were developed.

In September 1999, I was a Schomburg visiting scholar at the Center for African Studies, University of Florida, Gainesville, USA. During my stay at UF, I had the privilege of being invited by the Department of Philosophy of that university to present a public lecture on any topic of my interest. When I told the Chair of the Department what my topic would be, he was sceptical about the possibility of such and whether the lecture would attract a good audience. My topic 'Who is Afraid of African Philosophy?' (Falaiye, 2003, 27-33) attracted a huge audience and was indeed, the first public lecture by any scholar on a topic in African Philosophy at the University of Florida. Lectures by Dismas Masolo (2000), Kwasi Wiredu (2001) and others were later to follow. In that paper, fundamental arguments were developed which showed that Africans cannot be denied the capacity to do second order thinking required in philosophy.

My researches in philosophic sagacity (Falaiye, 1997^A, 2006) have also continued to show that there are traditional Africans as didactic and cerebral as the very well-known philosophers in the West. If today, such traditional African philosophers are not very well-known or celebrated, it is not because they did not exist, it might simply be because they did not write. It may be true that writing is important for philosophy and philosophers to be

known, but surely, philosophy can exist and survive without it. Socrates is a very good example.

While it is true that Philosophy is and must remain a universal discipline (Bodunrin, 1985), this does not in any way diminish the possibility of cultural philosophies (Anyanwu, 1981, 98). For as long as African Philosophy is not projected to exist in the unique sense, then no one should deny Africans the capacity to think at the second order level (Oruka, 1990, 124). European scholars and philosophers such as Levy Bruhl (1923), David Hume (1956, 152) Mary Lefkowitz (1997, 1998), Stephen Howe (1998; 1999) etc, have been confronted with arguments for African Philosophy by, for example, Campbell Momoh (1991), Sophie Oluwole (1999, 29) Godwin Azenabor (2002) Segun Oladipo (1995, 65) Muiyiwa Falaiye (1997^B, 43), Molefi Asante (1990, 78), V.Y Mudimbe (1988, 76), Albert Mosley (1995:6), Dismas Masolo (1995, 49), Jim I Unah (1996), among others.

The African Studies community in Europe and America has been reluctant to accept the reality of African Philosophy in spite of all the efforts of scholars in Africa and beyond. I have raised this issue at the regular meetings and conferences of the African Studies community from London to Leiden, Leipzig to Uppsala. In all of these, many Eurocentric scholars remain unimpressed about the possibility of a philosophy that speaks to the African reality, preferring to spew venom at the ideas propagated as African Philosophy or sometimes, to heckle the advocates of such ideas at conferences. It is in the middle of this outright western scepticism about African Philosophy (supported by their African collaborators) that some of us have attempted to explain the inevitability of an African socio-political philosophy (Falaiye, 2005).

It is true that problems of political philosophy are universal in character (Nozick 1974). It is also true that the problems that confront the political philosopher have universal appeal. All of us may ask the same questions but we obviously do not give the same answers. The only thing philosophers agree about is that we disagree about virtually everything. Put differently, we agree to disagree about everything. Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, all Ionians, disagreed about the primary stuff of the universe, even though they lived about the same time and within the same community. This is why philosophy is full of dualisms and dichotomies.

African Socio-Political Philosophy is the answer to universal questions about politics as it relates to African experience and *weltanschauung* (Falaiye, 2002). It is the response of the philosopher to the different experiences of the African, and his interpretation of such experience. Socio-Political Philosophy is Applied Ethics in as much as it is normative and prescriptive (even if some of my colleagues will not agree). However, African Political Philosophy shares these characteristics, while at the same time recognizing the peculiar experiences of the African. The peculiar experiences of slavery, colonialism, racialism have made Africa the home of some political philosophies that respond to this kind of experiences. No where else in the world has there been the combination of the experiences mentioned earlier. At best, the other parts of the world would have one and not the other, or two, and not the third. This perhaps explains why the kind of political ideas that emerged in Africa at the turn of the 20th century were those of liberation and decolonization. It probably also explains why Africa found herself in deep trouble, shortly after independence.

Philosophies of Decolonization

One white man come and make book (treaty) and another white man come tomorrow and break it, white man be fool, because treaty is in my head –Dappa Pepple, Chief of Bonny (quoted in Wickins, 1981:274)

It was fashionable to blame colonial rule for the problems of Africa. Regrettably, it is still politically correct to blame colonialism for what Africa is going through today. Philosophers and historians have oscillated between Peter Ekeh (Ekeh, 1983) and Ade Ajayi (Ajayi, 1975) in their arguments about the effects of colonial rule. The so-called epochal and episodic schools have thrived simply because scholars have refused to see the problems of Africa beyond colonialism and refused to think outside of the cinder box. The Ibadan School of History's position that colonial rule was just an episode, one in a series of other episodes that characterized the history of Africa, seems to me the ideal perception of that event. Unfortunately, the position that colonial rule was more than an episode, but an epoch that left significant legacies of epochal dimension was the politically correct attitude among scholars and politicians. Because colonial rule was considered epochal, elaborate philosophies had to be constructed to eliminate it. While other parts of the world were prescribing philosophies for development, Africa was bogged down by schemes to prescribe philosophies for decolonization.



Did this happen without the connivance of Africa's leaders?

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Jomo Kenyatta, the former President of Kenya once declared:

When the missionaries arrived, Africans had the land and the missionaries had the Bible. They taught us to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened them, they had the land and we had the Bible (cited by Lamb, 1984, 58).

Today, our eyes are still closed, we still have the Bible, they and their African apologists and cronies still have the land. There have been attempts to rewrite the history of Africa to project the West as being responsible for all of Africa's failure. This has led to a bitter intellectual feud between Afrocentric and Eurocentric scholars. Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, Leopold Senghor, Sekou Toure, Kwame Nkrumah, Tom Mboya, Kenneth Kaunda,

Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe were all unwittingly part of the grand scheme to perpetuate the position I have chosen to call the "African Victim Syndrome" (Falaiye, 2008).

In the attempt to justify decolonization, some African leaders proposed a number of philosophies, essentially founded on wrongly conceived basic assumptions about the African self and personality. European Africanist scholars like Martin Bernal (1998, 134) have portrayed Africa as worthy of pity and in need of reinvention. There are also scholars in Africa who, for the same reasons as Martin Bernal, try to justify why Africa is as good as the rest of the world, if not better. They are quick to refer us back to a 'glorious African past' as worthy of wholesale recapture. This attempt at revisionism is sometimes at the heart of the philosophies of decolonization proposed by African political thinkers. The revisionists urge a return to traditional communalism, egalitarianism and cooperation, arguing that those were to be the basis of modern living and development. This revisionism has found expression in the maxim of Julius Nyerere in Swahili "Ngeni Siku Mbili, siku ya tatu mpe jembe" (treat your guest as a guest for two days, on the third day give him a hoe).

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, I will not deny the fact that there are good elements in the traditional African experience and that it is necessary to understand the past in order to appreciate the present and project into the future, I am however convinced that Africa will not be reinvented by a puerile idealization of the African past. Unfortunately, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, our leaders got it wrong. Most of the philosophies for decolonization merely idealized the African past (Falaiye, 1999^A: 182). A lacuna between development and decolonization was therefore created. Two fundamental issues arise here.

The first is whether indeed the African past was glorious and worthy of reinvention. I think not. Whatever the positives that came out of the African past were, they were not by design, but by accident of circumstance. Obafemi Awolowo, in his usual point blank manner argues;

...though there was, by and large absence of greed in primitive African communities for material acquisitions and extensive ownership of private properties, this, in our view, was not due to any adherence to the principle of socialism of which they were never conscious, but rather to insuperable physical obstacles to such acquisition and ownership.(Awolowo,1968: 209)

Awolowo's argument anchors on the fact that Africans could have been nothing else but communal in view of the situation which prevailed and not because they were consciously trying to recapture an innate communal tendency. Awolowo takes the argument further

...and in the absence of portable and durable means of exchange which, apart from anything else, could serve as store of value, the desire and the greed to accumulate the things of this world were reduced to the barest minimum (Awolowo, ibid).

Awolowo illustrates this with the example of 5 shillings being the equivalent of 'one sack' which requires one able bodied person to carry. Being wealthy meant owning several 'sacks' that will require an equal number of persons to carry. In emergency situations, Awolowo concludes, "it would be madness for anyone to possess too much of either perishable farm products or unwieldy cowries" (ibid).

The traditional past reconstructed in the philosophies of decolonization by our revisionist scholars and researchers

is what A. M Babu describes as "...a past which was drowned in the blood of the oppressed people and their past 'glory' was the glory of the powerful destroying the weak' (Babu, 1981, 53). While some of these descriptions of the past may not be exactly true, they are not exactly false as well. One needs to be weary of a past which made it possible for a handful of people to subjugate millions of Africans (Falaiye, 1999^A:15). The consolation is that every society had its past, good and bad. While some have transformed the past to a rewarding present and a promising future, others merely sit-by idealizing backwardness as if that is what is required to solve the existential problems of today. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, the time is right to break the jinx of revisionism.

The second issue is whether revisionism can solve Africa's myriad of problems. I am particularly concerned about problems of political instability and economic stagnation. I dare say, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, that all of Africa's other problems are symptomatic of these two. The magnitude of the problems confronting Africa today and the nature of the nation-states the colonialists left behind make it naïve for a return to the traditional political experience wholesale. The philosophies of Nyerere (Ujamaa), Sekou Toure (Communaucratique), Senghor (Negritude), Kaunda (Humanism), Kwame Nkrumah (Nkrumaism), etc were good for liberation and decolonization. They were useful tools for rallying the people against a common enemy. However, they were less than useful as tools for development.

There is no doubt that the failures of political experimentation in many African countries in the post-independence era as well as the tendency toward "maximum leadership," or, if the truth be explicitly told, toward authoritarianism, make it easy for critical and discerning scholars to downgrade the ideas that were

fashioned to inform their practice. It is as if scholars are saying that if, for example, Kwame Nkrumah's ideas informed his statecraft at Ghana's helm, then given the failure of his practice, it follows that the ideas could not have been that good to start with. (Taiwo, 2005: 67).

The ideas, skills and expertise required to wage a successful liberation struggle are not the same as those needed for successful economic development. It did not matter whether the colonial master was French, British or Portuguese, they all had the same goal, although the French appeared a little more liberal, if ever there was liberal colonial rule. It has been said that the French did not mind who made love to whom, provided the preliminaries were conducted in impeccable French (Mazui and Mazrui, 1998:14), this policy only had the effect of retarding the anti-colonial movement in post colonial French Africa. These are the lessons we ought to learn from the philosophies of decolonization.

The Fad of African Socialism

The wise learn from the mistakes of others, while fools repeat them. Idiots on the other hand, repeat their own stupid mistakes (Ayittey, 2005:23)

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, as an African, I know from historical experience that the West has committed atrocities and exploited our people. The West does not give a hoot about us (Africans) and the West is not alone. The Arabs do not give a damn about Africans; neither do the French, the British, the Russians, Japanese or Koreans. Certainly the Chinese are not in Africa simply because they prefer the name Salvation Army to the Peoples Liberation Army. Every foreigner or entity who visits Africa comes to pursue their interests, not ours (Africans).

On the whole, the French were more culturally arrogant than the British, refusing to mix cultures in colonial schools and insisting on the supremacy of French civilization. The British, on the other hand, were more racially arrogant than the French, insisting on the segregation of the races between schools but permitting the mixture of cultures in the curriculum. Unfortunately, we did not understand this in the immediate years after independence. Unwittingly, we have often repeated our own stupid mistakes.

At independence, most African States adopted Socialism of different kinds and variants for two major reasons. First, it was the only "reasonable" alternative to capitalism. Since colonialism was rejected, it was only logical to also reject capitalism. Second, the rapid development of the Soviet Union after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was attributed to the adoption of Socialism by the Soviet Union. The argument was that if the Soviet Union was able to catch up with the rest of Europe within a period of just thirty years after adopting socialism, then Africa could also do the same after independence. (Falaiye, 1999^A: 181).

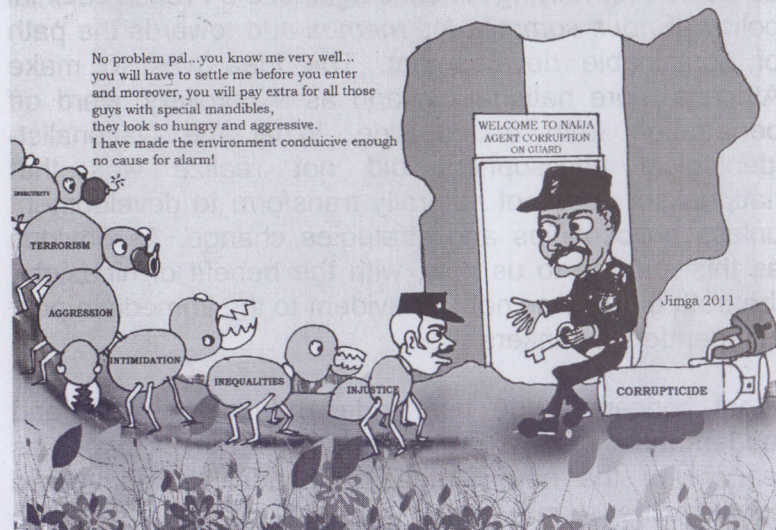
Some political philosophers have argued that the tragedy of the current African condition can be attributed to the kind of political philosophy adopted at independence. The early political thinkers, in an effort to do away with anything colonial, adopted socialism without reference to the actual problems that confronted emerging new states in Africa. Many of them confused the ideas used for national emancipation for ideas necessary for development. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, this is one of the reasons why we are where we are today. As ideas for decolonization, such concepts as *Ujamaa*, *Negritude*, *Communaucratique*, etc were very effective. However, after independence, when new ideas were needed to be

forged for national development, the leaders clung to the time-worn ideas of anti-colonial struggle. African Socialism became the fad.

During the 1960s, African Socialism emerged as a popular variant of socialism. It was very fashionable to be socialist. Every African leader propagated one form of socialism or the other. You really did not have to understand socialism. All you had to do was claim to be a socialist. Apart from views expressed on African Socialism by Senghor, Nyerere and Kenyatta, Nasser of Egypt also spoke eloquently about an "Arab Socialism". At independence, the contention of most African leaders was that economic development had to depend largely on the public sector or on the joint control of both the public and private sectors. Africa's economic development was therefore not to be entrusted to any capitalist class because 'it slows down progress' and in any case, 'Africa never had one'. African Socialism in the opinion of African leaders of this period would, through careful planning and coordination, resolve all of Africa's economic crises.

That was fifty years ago. Still Africa's economic and political crises remain unresolved. For many, Africa has further deteriorated. Socialism itself has lost ground. The collapse of the Berlin wall and the disintegration of the Soviet Union have ensured that socialism no longer has any attraction in Africa. Apart from China and a few other last out- posts of socialist regime, there appears to be no real apologetics of socialist way of life in the world anymore. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, I will not attempt to give details about the collapse of socialism. However, I am worried about the failure of socialist prescriptions to cure Africa's economic and political maladies. Or, can it be that Africa is so terminally ill that the doctor can only then wait for the report of a coroner's inquest?

Comrade could you please let us in ?



How did we get here?

The Philosophies of Development

One important dimension in the quest for development and mental liberation in Africa has often been seen in terms of a deterministic relationship between language, culture and cognition. Most of the philosophies that arose in Africa purporting to be harbingers of development were actually about bridging the gap between development, culture and language. The premise from which some of the advocates of new philosophies for development started was that 'the less nationalistic a society is, the more vulnerable it becomes to penetration from outside' (Mazrui, 1998, 5).

Nyerere's philosophy of Ujamaa was predicated on the abolition of colonial English language and the adoption of Swahili as the basis of nationalism in Tanzania. Leopold

Senghor had similar ideas. Together with Aime Cesaire and Leon Demas, they developed the idea of Negritude as a basis for rallying Africans against the French colonial policy of *nous sommes les memes* and towards the path of sustainable development. The idea was to make Africans more nationalistic and as a corollary, ward off penetration from the outside. What the Nationalist-ideological philosophers did not realize was that nationalism does not naturally transform to development unless philosophies and strategies change. As obvious as this may be to us now, with the benefit of hindsight, the truth of this was not self evident to the immediate post independence thinkers.

What concerned the post independence thinkers and leaders most was the protection of their new positions as leaders of the new States, promotion of nationalistic consciousness and fervour amongst the people, while they remained, in most cases, black skin, white masks leaders. These leaders were quick to blame all of Africa's problems on the white man, forgetting their own incompetence. The externalist orthodoxy, which began after independence and continues till today, portrays Africa as a victim and suggests that the solutions to Africa's problems must come from external sources. This was the politically correct position to take in the immediate years after independence. Unfortunately, this position has retarded the development of Africa. Rather than address issues of development, our leaders busied themselves with the unproductive task of finding scapegoats in others. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, one of the reasons we got where we are today is because our leaders were sucked into the stupid position that all of Africa's problems were and are induced from the outside.



Is this why Africa is underdeveloped today?

The Externalist Naivety

Before the Europeans came into relations with our people we were a developed people having our own institutions, having our own ideas of government (Casely Hayford).



Did I hear you say the West is to blame for this?

The externalist argument was the politically correct explanation about the situation in Africa until very recently. The argument, simply put, runs like this: Africa's economic and political instability, social injustice, violence (including Boko Haram, Niger Delta militants, OPC, Egbesu boys, etc), stagnation, censorship, extra judicial killings, poverty, illegal detention, abuse of human rights, in one word, 'underdevelopment', is the legacy left us by the Europeans. In other words, we are where we are in Africa today because of the Europeans. To the proponents of this position, Africa was developed before the coming of the Europeans and Africa would have been even more developed had the Europeans not visited Africa without obtaining proper entry visas. The externalists argue that the European forceful entry into Africa is at the heart of the continent's entire predicament today. Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* is the archetype of the externalist position. Ali Mazrui,

Martin Bernal, Basil Davidson are some of the other prominent scholars who accept the externalist explanation for Africa's underdevelopment.

Walter Rodney identifies two major ways through which Europe underdeveloped Africa. The first is the operation of the imperialist system which, according to him, drained Africa's wealth and made it impossible for Africa to rapidly develop her resources. The second deals with those who manipulate the system, and those who are agents or accomplices of the system. The slave traders who came to Africa started the process of underdevelopment. The Europeans retarded economic growth by taking away the productive class from African society (Rodney, 1972: 45).

The theoretical assumptions made by Rodney in establishing his thesis that we are where we are today because of Europe are that:

1. Africa was developed prior to the 15th century, albeit in a different direction from Europe's conception of development.
2. The European slave trade is at the root of black underdevelopment and technical stagnation.
3. Africans contributed significantly to European capitalism during the colonial period.
4. Black underdevelopment is as a result of Western colonialism (Rodney, 1972, 32).

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Rodney was right to the extent that when two different cultures meet, the culture that exhibits technological superiority tends to dominate the other. I do not think anyone has ever argued that contact with the West has not had negative consequences on Africa, as it also did in Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and the rest of the world. While the other parts of the world were busy weaning themselves off the negative legacies of the contact with the West, Africa in

the fashion of the externalists, continued to glorify and romanticize the role of the West in the continuing saga of Africa's backwardness. This is what I have chosen to call the **naivety of externalist dependence syndrome** in scholarship. Unfortunately, some of our prominent academics have fallen victim of this syndrome.

The Internalist Paradigm

Basic common sense tells one to look both ways before crossing the street or risk being hit by a truck. Africa is in bandages because its leaders and scholars looked only one way. (Aiyithey, 1992, 45).

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, the internalists are the ideological opponents of the externalists. Scholars who are of this ideological bent argue that the source of Africa's numerous problems can be traced to nowhere else but Africa. Those of us who belong to this school have always maintained that black neo-colonialism is as bad, if not worse, than white colonialism. George Aiyithey and my humble self have shown in more ways than one that the nationalists who took power after independence and the military despots who overthrew them have proved themselves to be even worse than the colonialists that they replaced (Aiyithey, 1992, 1998, 2005), (Falaiye, 1999^A, 1999^B, 2003, 2005).

True freedom never came to Africa after independence. What Africa had, according to Fanon was false liberation or flag-waving independence. Freedom never comes free and if ever it does, one needs to be wary of that kind of freedom because one will all too soon lose it. No gift is ever unconditional. The gift of freedom at independence had the flavour of Greek strawberry. What Africa had as freedom at independence was a prelude to the current situation in Africa. As Fanon would say:

Without that struggle, without that knowledge of action, there is nothing but a fancy dress parade and the blare of trumpets. There is nothing save a minimum of readaptation, a few reforms at the top, a flagwaving; and down there at the bottom an undivided mass, still living in the middle ages, endlessly marking time (Fanon, 1952, 76).

Africa has been endlessly marking time since independence partly because there was really no independence. True freedom never really came to much of Africa after independence. Despite the rhetoric and vituperations against colonialism, very little changed in the immediate years after independence. For many countries, independence meant only a change in the colour of the administrators from white to black. The new leaders began to act in the same manner as the colonialists. In fact, in many respects, they were worse. The nationalists were soon replaced by military rulers who seized power through military coups and whose 'legitimacy' to power was founded on their monopoly of the means of violence. Those whom Aiyithey has chosen to call 'military coconut heads' founded a new dynasty, a new orientation in African politics, an orientation that has created a class of ruling oligarchy bent on remaining in power forever.

Mr. Vice Chancellor, the greatest malady of African politics is the unwillingness of the rulers to relinquish power. Entrenched in power by constitutions that have virtually made them kings, opposition to them is treason. Now it seems the only way a change of government can be effected in Africa is by beheading the heads of states. It is a crude option which regrettably seems to be the only workable one for Africa (Hoeane, 1991:4). We are all privy to events in Ivory Coast and in the Arab world. What will happen to leaders like Robert Mugabe, Yaya Jammeh, Museveni, etc is anybody's guess.

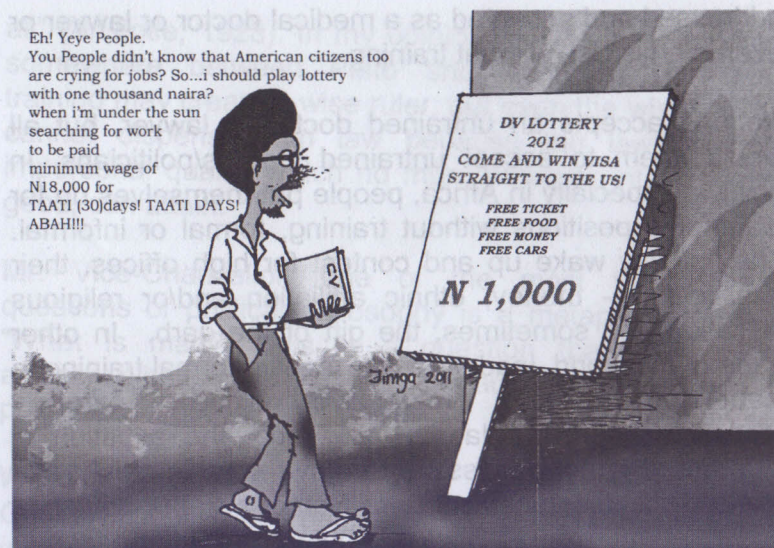


We may have to behead African leaders to get them to relinquish Power!



**Things can change and they are changing!
Philosophy must change the world!**

Eh! Yeye People.
You People didn't know that American citizens too are crying for jobs? So...i should play lottery with one thousand naira? when i'm under the sun searching for work to be paid minimum wage of N18,000 for TAATI (30)days! TAATI DAYS! ABAH!!!



How can we get out?

Leadership Question

I heard we have a new leader. It makes no difference to me. Here we have no light (electricity), we have no water. There is no road. We have no school. The government does nothing for us (Agbo, 1999:A19)

One of the reasons I am despondent at fifty years is the quality of our leaders. Those of us who belong to the camp of the internalists have always seen leadership as a key factor for where we are in Africa today. Plato's idea of the 'best man' is one key element in the vanguard for well- trained and focused leadership. Plato was not foolish when he emphasized the importance of knowledge and virtue through training. Although I do not agree with him that only philosophers should rule, I agree with him entirely that ruling is a skill that must be learnt. It is only in politics and leadership that people spontaneously claim to be qualified. I shudder at the idea of some nitwit claiming that he/she has a revelation to be

addressed and accepted as a medical doctor or lawyer or even a physicist, without training.

No one accepts an untrained doctor or lawyer, but all would seem to accept untrained leaders/politicians. In politics, especially in Africa, people put themselves up for leadership positions without training, formal or informal. They simply wake up and contest for high offices, their qualifications- money, ethnic affiliation and/or religious affiliation and sometimes, the gift of the garb. In other parts of the world, leaders either receive formal training in leadership or move progressively along a carefully prepared leadership ladder. In Africa, the situation is different. It is not impossible to move from a ramshackle primary six classroom in Kaura Namoda to the opulence and splendour of Aso Rock in Abuja or from the prison in Ado-Ekiti, to Government house in a State capital. In Plato's view, such would amount to injustice as leaders that emerge through this distorted process can only create instability and chaos.

Aristotle's idea of the 'best law' is opposed to Plato's 'best man'. Consequently, Aristotle accepted from the start the point of view of the *laws*, that in any good state the law must be the ultimate sovereign and not any person whatsoever. In other words, the good state need not necessarily have good men, as Plato suggests, but good laws. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, we have neither had good men nor good laws in Africa. This inaugural lecture will not delve into the festering argument between 'strong men' and 'strong institutions'. The logic for me is that strong men create strong institutions for weak men to sustain.

Leaders are humans. Humans are products of nature and nurture. "Man, when perfected, is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of

all" (Aristotle, 1923). In my opinion, good leadership lies somewhere between Plato and Aristotle. The best training may create a wise ruler, but even the wisest ruler cannot dispense with law because the law has an impersonal quality which no man, however intelligent or good, can attain.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, one of the most fundamental questions of political philosophy is a metaphysical one, "What is man?" This is a question that should be answered before the question of leadership can be put in proper perspective.

What is Man?

Genuine rationality begins with the recognition of irrationality, not its denial (Messy Kebede, 2004:62)

Philosophers at different periods have described man in different ways. One common denominator of man is rationality. It is also well-known that there are levels of rationality. Every rational man ought to accept that there is also irrationality. The irrationality of man has been very well described by Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes describes man as a selfish, wicked and egocentric being, whose sole interest is self-preservation and whose goal is to give himself the best life, regardless of what happens to others. For Hobbes, therefore, human beings are by nature self-seeking, deceitful and rapacious. In this circumstance, man is a wolf unto man. His life is nasty, brutish and short. Hobbes draws a very interesting conclusion from his analysis of human nature. The mind of man is so evil that he requires an iron hand to control his excesses. The *Leviathan* is the prescription Hobbes gave to check human excesses. The *Leviathan* was a modern version of the best man, a corrupted understanding of Plato's idea of the best man, without the key element of knowledge as virtue.

Although Hobbes was writing in 16th/17th century Britain, set in the background of crises of leadership, his conception of man was deluded by his intention to institute absolutism, supporting this intention with a warped interpretation of the nature of man. John Locke and Jean Rousseau were more charitable about the nature of man. Both gave man some measure of rationality and the capacity to determine right from wrong, even if such capacity was hindered by the absence of a political and legal superior to adjudicate during conflicts that often arise in social interactions among men. For the advocates of the Social Contract theory, the emergence of civil society marked the highest manifestation of man's rationality. It also, in more ways than one, signaled the beginning of man's quest to establish societies that were to be founded on the rule of law.

Experience has shown that societies that are founded on the rule of law seem to have a better grounding than those that rely essentially on the capacity of one man, or a group of men (even if the wisest) to rule. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, men are ruled by passion and desires. Laws are impersonal and objective when enforced without prejudice or bias. Leadership cannot, and should not, be left only to the passion and desires of men. The futility of doing this is even more acute in Africa where leaders have shown themselves more susceptible to certain destructive desires. Many African leaders have shown irrationality rather than rationality. What this has done is to play into the hands of the advocates of the 'primitive mentality thesis' (Falaiye, 2005:124). Mr. Vice-Chancellor, this is what we get when leaders are motivated by secondary desires.

Bertrand Russell (Russell, 1954) identifies two groups of desires-primary and secondary. Under primary desires, Russell lists food, shelter and clothing while the

secondary desires are acquisitiveness, love of power, vanity, excitement, fear, hate and rivalry. The kernel of Russell's argument is that the quest to fulfill primary desires is normal and natural and would ordinarily not lead to destruction of civil life or retard the development of any society. Unfortunately, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, human beings are never contented with the fulfilment of primary desires. We hanker after secondary desires, which, in most cases create so much conflict and tension in civil society. It is amazing that African leaders have placed too much premium on the secondary desires, especially the love of power and the desire to acquire power or wealth for the sake of it. It is my considered opinion that Africa is where it is today because of the love of power and the acquisitive nature of its leaders.

All human beings have the tendency to be swayed towards the destructive secondary desires. Human nature is such that the desires have to be controlled before man can engage in productive activities that will benefit a larger community. Some societies have succeeded in reducing the lust after the desires that are destructive to the commonwealth and to the individuals concerned. Philosophers have also been actively engaged in prescribing theories about how these desires can be controlled. Two of the major prescriptions of philosophers are internalizing morality and the rigid adherence to the rule of law. However, in Africa, there is more importantly the case for mental decolonization as the key to Africa's numerous impediments, continuous marginality and underdevelopment. In my view, two main factors militate against economic growth in Africa. The first is a lack of understanding of the true nature of man. Although man is man, irrespective of the colour of his skin and has the tendency to behave the same way, if subjected to similar conditions (see for example, Eddie Murphy's film, *Trading Places*). However, because conditions are never always

similar, man responds to different situations differently. This explains why the characters depicted in *Trading Places* had their lives turned around by simply placing them in different environments.

In the making of the character of a human being, nature is as important as nurture, if not more so. If a child at infancy was taken away from Africa and placed with foster parents in China, apart from the colour of the skin, at adulthood, the child is more likely to behave like the Chinese than an African. What this tells us is that the African is not consigned to be where he is by any natural forces, but by artificial conditions, created either by forces centripetal or centrifugal to him. The philosopher therefore does not merely look at the symptoms manifesting from those forces, but also at the forces themselves. Ayittey may have a good point that corruption is a major factor for Africa's underdevelopment (Ayittey, 2005:9); the reality is that corruption is a symptom of some more fundamental forces. There has to be some deeper explanation regarding why corruption seems to be very endemic in Africa.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, there is nothing inherently wrong in the nature of African leaders. What is probably wrong is the system and structure which produces them. The same system and structure has produced followers whose interest is simply to wait for their turn to do exactly what the leaders are doing, if not worse. If something must change, if we must get it right in Africa, the system and structures must change. Leadership can only be as effective as the followers want it to be. The vicious circle of moving from one bad leader to another is indicative of the fact that there are more bad potential leaders out there than the good ones. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, underdevelopment occasioned by bad leadership is neither in our genes nor in our stars, but in our lack of

understanding of the deep philosophical questions in politics. This is why philosophy must always interrogate politics.

Philosophy Interrogates African *Polis*

The argument that Africans have thought about the universe longer than any other people may not be misplaced. Philosophy itself, as a contemplative discipline, was first practiced by Africans in the Nile valley (Asante, 2000:123). In fact philosophy itself originated in Africa and the first philosophers in the world were Africans. However, along the line, Africa lost the plot about self examination and critical evaluation of basic assumptions about reality. While the West was busy constructing philosophical systems and creating a worldview that interrogated reality, Africa was left with a worldview that accepted the whole as the real. African thought system grew to be an appendage of the Western thought system. Even when Africans were capable of thinking differently, they were 'forced' to think in the tradition of Western philosophy.

For reasons well known to all of us in the academia, we prefer to put our case in the language and methodology accepted in Western scholarship. The consequence is the failure to think clearly either in the Western or African traditions. Responding to African problems and issues has become difficult without resorting to paradigms developed and suited to the West. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, unfortunately, many of us have become slaves to Western mode of knowing and analysis. Not even interrogating African *polis* is immune from this as we may still rely on some existing western precepts while subjecting them to some African models.

Democracy in Africa

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, there is a difference between Democracy in Africa and African Democracy. This is similar to the argument about African Socialism and Socialism in Africa. I have taken democracy as my reference point for two major reasons. First, all over the continent and beyond, democracy is very popular, just like socialism was in the 1960s. Every nation, rightly or wrongly, wants to be seen as democratic even when the political values bear no semblance with the concept. Secondly, albeit, surprisingly, only democracy is being justified as the political philosophy suitable for modern Africa. Those who argue for African democracy have more often than not hinged their defence on three major premises:

- a) Africa is by tradition democratic;
- b) Against foreign imposed colonial structure, we must return the right to govern to the people themselves;
- c) Africa must return to her traditional values which aim at consensus decision making (Falaiye, 1998:93).

What the premises here provide us is a 'proof' that democracy is not alien to Africa and that Africa had always been democratic even before the coming of the colonial masters.

I have always argued against any position that purports to situate democracy within the confines of cultural context. One of the reasons why democracy has floundered in Africa is because our leaders hide behind the façade of cultural differences to abuse the pristine notions of the concept. There can be only one type of democracy and that is the democracy that recognizes certain pristine notions which must be present before a system can be truly democratic (Falaiye, 2007:173).

If democracy is a value of governance under which people exercise the governing power directly or through representatives periodically elected by themselves, then it is easy to determine which country or society is actually democratic. The following conditions are therefore indispensable in a truly democratic society:

- a) The opportunity for political participation either directly or through representatives periodically elected.
- b) Political equality.
- c) The possibility of an alternative government (ibid).

A democracy that is purported to be African suggests that these universal conditions may not have been met. Indeed, many African countries have not met these conditions, yet, claim what they have as democracy, albeit, with African flavour. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, African Democracy is a euphemism for either oligarchy or gerontocracy. Little wonder African countries have failed to reap any reward from 'democracy' in the last few years.

While it may be true that some of the values of democracy may not be entirely alien to Africa and perhaps did exist in traditional Africa, what is obvious is that African leaders have chosen only those traditional values which have the capacity to maintain them in power, rather than the values of consensus building which existed in most traditional African societies.

expense of those universal notions and principles that make a system democratic. What we therefore have in Africa today, broadly speaking, is "cultural dislocation, lack of the material basis for social development and political incoherence" (Oladipo, 2007:149)

The Way Forward (Prescriptions)

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, the aim of this lecture is not to paint a gloomy picture about Africa and her future and then leave it at that. I have, up to this point, identified the core issues which militate against Africa's understanding of her real situation and why we are where we are today. In prescribing the way forward, I do not pretend that I have the final answers to any nagging problem confronting us in Africa. The truth is that philosophers never have final answers to any problem. Indeed, sometimes, philosophers concern themselves more with the questions and problems than the answers. Other disciplines derive pleasure in seemingly final answers to questions, until philosophers raise further questions that put the seemingly obvious answers in jeopardy. My prescriptions therefore are conjectures, open to refutations and further criticisms as knowledge expands, this is a well known principle in epistemology.

The following are my prescriptions that, without prejudice to potential refutations, are capable of changing the situation in Africa for the benefit of all.

1. An End to the Blame Game

The externalist/internalist diatribe is a source of worry to me. As a prelude to ending the rot in Africa, this diatribe must end. We can no longer wax eloquent blaming the West for all the problems in Africa. It is clear to all that the problems confronting Africa are largely self induced. Scholars and political leaders of our immediate past have

engaged in this fruitless exercise, generating more heat than light.

The new generation of Africans, those Ayittey has chosen to call 'the cheetah generation' (Ayittey, 2005: xxi) must move forward to confront the challenges posed by the crises of development. These young Africans should not just sit there, expecting Western or Eastern colonialists and imperialists to come and fix Africa's problems. Nor should they call upon government to come do everything for them. They must confront and challenge the 'hippo generation' (ibid, xx), the generation of our past and in many respects, our current leaders who have transformed themselves into semi-gods and can do no wrong. The 'hippo generation' is intellectually astigmatized and stuck in their colonialist pedagogical patch. They can see with clarity the injustices perpetrated by whites against blacks, but they are hopelessly blind to the more heinous injustices perpetrated right under their very noses against their own people. The 'hippos' only see oppression and exploitation perpetrated by other people and never their own atrocities against their own people.

Young generation of Africans must accept the reality that no one can solve Africa's problems but Africans themselves. It is the acceptance of this fact that will signify a serious attempt at solving the problems confronting Africa.

2. The Minimalist State

One major constraint to development in many African States is the overbearing power of government in the day-to-day activities of individuals. Too much of government with too little result has been one fundamental impediment to the realization of goals and aspirations. We all know that governments are poor managers of resources, yet they control everything. Like

the Big Brother, they tell us what schools to go, determine which airport should open and which should close, what the price of petrol should be, and much more. In Africa, governments are omnipotent in our lives giving little or no room to individual initiatives and limiting human freedom to the point of extinguishing them. Countries that have developed have reduced the role and power of government in day-to-day activities, allowing the private individuals and groups to take leadership role in matters of economic and social development. In Nigeria, the Federal government runs secondary schools, hospitals, build fire stations, markets, multiple radio and television stations, petrol stations, airports, bustops, motor parks, and other frivolous things that can be better dealt with by private individuals and groups. Rather than face the serious task of policy formulation, security and defence, micro-economic policies, immigration and customs and those other things that require the stability of the commonwealth, government is bogged down by irrelevant tasks. Government, the way it is organized in Africa leaves little or no room for development, but an attractive place for political jobbers and charlatans.

In many ways, I share Robert Nozick's (Nozick, 1974) idea of a minimalist state for Africa. The less the government interferes in our daily lives, the more our capacity to develop and the less the infringement on our individual freedom and capacity to create "...a minimal state, limited to the narrow functions of protection against force, theft, fraud, {and the} enforcement of contracts and so on, is justified; that any more extensive state will violate persons' rights...and is unjustified" (ibid ix). Government has to be made less attractive to those who see it as the fastest means to easy wealth. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, the surest way to do this is to minimize role of government in our lives. The 'cheetah generation' is

ready to fill the lacuna vacated by incompetent governments across Africa.

3. **Training for Leadership**

I am convinced that good leaders are not born, but made. Training is very essential for those aspiring to become leaders at all levels. The importance of training has been stressed by philosophers across ages. Plato is perhaps the most astute supporter of training for leadership. Ruling is a skill, just like any other skill, it requires training or tutelage to master. Elsewhere, I have recommended the establishment of a Center for Justice and Leadership Training as a panacea for redressing the obvious deficiency of leaders in Africa (Falaiye, 1995:252). The curriculum of the Center will include the following:

- (a) Principles of Justice
- (b) Ethics
- (c) The history of great world leaders
- (d) Economic Theories
- (e) Truth Telling
- (f) The Art of Public Speaking
- (g) Corruption
- (h) Physical Training

At the end of the six months' training programme, potential leaders are then to be sifted out of the group and made to pass through the ladder, moving upwards from lower to higher positions, depending on performance. The aim is to develop the skill and guile necessary for handling the day-to-day activities of leadership.

4. **True Democracy**

In spite of the theoretical and practical problems of democracy, it remains the best value of governance. Democracy recognizes the worth of the individual, while also accommodating the will of the majority. In countries

where democracy is grounded on the pristine notions of freedom, equality, justice, periodic elections and choice, development has been the result. Leaders with knowledge are more likely to function well in a democratic setting. The possibility of peaceful change is also a positive attribute of the democratic process. The idea that democracy breeds incompetence and enlarges differences holds true at places where the pristine notions of democracy have been sacrificed at the altar of different kinds of chauvinisms. I am yet to see any values of governance which cohere with human nature and his quest for freedom more than democracy.

5. **Mental Decolonization**

It is a shame that after over fifty years of independence, most African nations and their leaders are unable to take decisions independently of Western or Eastern orchestrated theories and values. They are unable to situate the problems confronting Africa within the context of Africa. They adopt Western models and paradigms without thinking critically. By so doing, they play into the hands of imperialists whose sole interest is the propagation of their own ideals and principles. No one is asking African leaders to re-invent the wheel. What I am advocating here is that African leaders must realize that no one can save Africa but Africans themselves. Africa must look inwards for solution to the myriad of problems confronting the continent. The West and others will only act when their interest is involved. We also need to act to protect our own interests. It is not in the interest of the West that Nigeria or Africa should develop. No one gives freedom or development to another on a platter. The price of freedom is eternal vigilance against those whose interest is to continue to keep us in economic and political bondage.

6. **Corruption**

Corruption is a symptom of a deeper malaise. Fighting corruption without first addressing the issues that give rise to it is a waste of time and energy. There is a great deal wrong with a system that allows a few people to be so rich and the vast majority, so poor. The economic and political structure must be redressed in such a way that the reward system is equitable and just. Nigerians are not anymore corrupt than anybody else. The fact is that others have found ways of structuring their societies in such a way that nobody is so poor as to be desperate. Economic and social systems are such that the poor do not lack those things Bertrand Russell describes as 'primary desires'. Besides, the law should be enforced in such a way that the cult of personality is not respected. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, the reason why corruption is not endemic in the West is simply because no one is above the law. It is not because the people are angels or saints.

I shudder when people come to public domain to blame others for corruption. I often ask myself the question- "Who then is the corrupt person?" Mr. Vice-Chancellor, here again, the blame game must end. It is human nature to acquire and to want to out do our neighbours. It is also the duty of the State to ensure that the values, structure and laws protect him from this nature. It is our collective responsibility.

7. **The Role of Language in Development**

Language influences the way in which we perceive reality, evaluate it and conduct ourselves with respect to it. Speakers of different languages and cultures see the universe differently, evaluate it differently, and behave towards its reality differently. Language controls thought and action and speakers of different languages do not have the same worldview or perceive the same reality unless they have similar culture or background.

Language and culture are interwoven in such a way that the deep thought of a people can only be understood when one is situated within that culture. Development begins from the thought process and this, in turn, is conditioned by the culture. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, I am at pains to find a developed country that speaks the language of another. The Germans, Japanese, Chinese, British, Koreans, Dutch, French, etc, all think in their languages and express their thought in them. Africans think in their local languages and express themselves in another.

There is no way we can express the thought in the inner recess of our minds and yet express them in another person's language and expect to capture the very essence of that thought. The Greeks rendered their deep philosophical thought in Greek, so did the Germans and others. Africans are consigned to render their thought in foreign languages. Mr. Vice-Chancellor, in the process of translating our thought to foreign languages, a whole lot is lost, including the technical details of our thought process (Falaiye, 2006:45). It is my considered opinion that Africa will develop the moment Africans begin to think and express their thought in the language from which the thought was thought.

Conclusion

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, in the last one hour or so, I have interrogated African *Polis* with the major aim of addressing what I consider as the basic questions confronting the development of Africa. I do not wish for those who will be alive in Africa in the next fifty years to be as despondent as I am today. My dreams about Africa are today being deferred. I hope our children will inherit from us a place better than we met. Then, I would not have been here, on earth in vain.

A Dream Deferred

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore—

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over—

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load

Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes-A Dream Deferred

I hope my dreams, though deferred, will not explode before my very eyes.

I thank you for your attention and the opportunity to share my thoughts with you.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to God for His infinite mercies. Without the Lord, all is in vain. (*Nisi Domino Frustra*). I am here today only because some supreme power has decided to keep me alive to see this day. I am grateful to Him for the gift of life and the knowledge to apprehend the truth and reality through His divine illumination. God I thank you.

With humility and respect I appreciate the devotion and dedication of my late parents, Chief and Mrs. Z. A. Falaiye. I do know that whatever I am today is a product of their nurture. My early exposure to the values of a good education is the greatest legacy they gave to me and my siblings. I attended some of the best schools available at the time. Both of you sacrificed time and money to see us through school, even when it was difficult for you to do other things you would have wanted to do. It is a shame both of you did not live long enough to see this day. Wherever you are today, I am sure your souls are highly lifted up.

I was born in Lagos and my early formative years were spent in Lagos. I was privileged to have attended Igbobi College, Yaba, Lagos for my secondary education. At Igbobi, we were taught the values of discipline, self-denial, self-reliance and respect for our seniors and elders. Those are values that have remained with me till today. I am proud of the quality of education I received at Igbobi College. I am eternally grateful to my late Principal, Mr. J.O. Olatunbosun, my teachers, Messers, Esubiyi; Adebiyi; Falaiye (my dad); Olawuyi; Oyediran, Talabi, Rev. Ajayi; Mrs. Dawodu; Odunsi; Aluko; Ms. Joacquist (now Mrs. Oyebode, wife of Prof. Akin Oyebode) and others that contributed to making me who I am today. The Igbobi College of my time was Ivy League, blessed with teachers of talent and dedication. Today, it is with

pleasure that I recognize the ICOPA Class of 73/78-80. I suspect you guys are surprised I ended up a Professor. I am surprised myself! But at Igbobi College, we were taught to be the best we could. Up IC.

My gratitude also goes to my teachers at CMS Grammar School, Bariga. It was at CMS that I met the teacher who encouraged me to take a degree in philosophy. Mrs. Akinluyi, my history teacher was an inspiration and a mentor, if ever there was one. The A level class at CMS Grammar school was a very competitive one, Prof Toyin Ogundipe, former Dean of the Post Graduate School can testify to this. I dare say, till date, I have never come across a more competitive set of students. My competitive spirit and determination to achieve set goals, against all odds were the result of my two year stay at CMS Grammar school. Up School!

Let me at this point register my appreciation to my lecturers at the Department of Philosophy, University of Lagos. Professors Joseph Idemudia Omoregbe; Sophie Bosede Oluwole; Ezekiel Kolawole Ogundowole; Late K.K.C Anyanwu; Late John Tucker; Late Campbell Shittu Momoh; Late Dagogo Idoniboye; Dr. Tanou Depita Bah; Mrs. Balachandra and late Mr. Adeyinka were great teachers of philosophy. My orientation in philosophy has been shaped in different ways by each of these scholars. Professor Sophie Oluwole taught me how to be critical and analytical. It was a tough task convincing her that my thesis was good enough for a PhD. Today, with the benefit of hindsight, I could not have wished for a better PhD supervisor. Thank you

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I have been blessed with wonderful colleagues and friends at the University of Lagos. I am afraid of listing names for the fear of leaving out some. However, I must mention the following, even at the risk of courting trouble. Professor Friday Nwankwo Ndubuisi (my twin brother) has been a friend since 1980. Together we have travelled the road of life, philosophy and African Studies. I am glad I convinced him to join the African Studies train. Our many trips to London, Leiden, Leipzig and Uppsala and soon, Lisbon bear eloquent testimony to our commitment to African Studies. Professor Godwin Azenabor, who like, Prof. Ndubuisi was also my classmate at the undergraduate level is also appreciated for always asking questions and raising issues about this and that. Professor Jim Unah, thank you for throwing up the challenge of publishing. I am sure we have lived up to your expectation.

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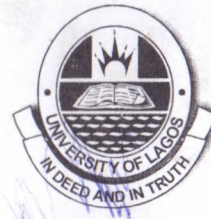
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