



NIGERIA, A POSTCOLONIAL STATE IN THE FRINGES: HUMANITIES TO THE RESCUE?

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PREAMBLE

- There was an undeniable eagerness in me to accept to give this Public Faculty of Humanities Lecture of this fast –growing University the very moment that the offer came through Professor Olatunde Ayodabo, acting on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, The Rt. Rev, **Prof. Dapo Folorunso Asaju**, a Bishop Theologian.
- There is no way I will not grab any opportunity to be a part of any academic and intellectual endeavour embarked upon by my brother, kinsman and friend Dapo Asaju, who has related to me/or extended to me an avuncular intimacy, in a relationship which I was fortunate to have enjoyed with his late father, **His Royal Majesty, Oba Michael Asaju ...**
- What other excuse do I have for accepting to participate in his erection of an academic structure, literally. **Professor Olatunde Ayodabo, Dean of Humanities** of this great institution has moved from being a student of mine to an academic colleague in whom I harbour an unusual sense of fulfillment in his rapidly growing academic exploits...
- I am therefore most delighted to be picked to give this Public Lecture of the Faculty of Humanities.

INTRODUCTION

- Having chosen the above topic, I realized that I may have taken a mouthful—a little too much for a single Lecture, for each of the stems of the topic will be more than adequate for a full Lecture; *Nigeria, A Postcolonial State in the Fringe: Humanities to the Rescue?*
- Postcolonialism and postcolonial studies have become wide disciplines in the Humanities—which themselves, for the purpose of our Faculties in the letters and the Arts—have become quite expansive academic and curricular engagements.
- I do not intend to engage in rigorous theorization or in recondite postulations of theory. Yet, there is a great link between the Humanities and the essence of theory as different from the business of hypothesizing which the sciences engage in and coming out with models.

INTRODUCTION CONTD...

- For instance, we would not engage with postcolonial studies a la Edward Said, G. Spivak, Homi Bhabha and so on, but with postcolonialism as it relates to our economy; the failure of the dreams of fulfillment at independence through the growth of a parasitic, neo-colonial social order.
- For us in the Humanities, as we shall try to re-establish here, theory is of utmost importance for our academic and scholarly enterprise. But we must do so without losing our non-initiated audience for whom we often claim to speak.
- After all, in the pre-industrial civilization, before the age of microscope, even in Greece, in the 3rd and 4th centuries before Christ, science and philosophy, the Humanities in general, were largely indistinguishable.
- As all of us who engage in the business of discourse know too well, theories deal with the methods of interpretation of the way in which meaning is created, enabling and locating human identities, in infinite ways, as a 'generic term for the interdisciplinary combination of philosophy, literary criticism and sociology', and much more, as we in the Academy of Letters hope to expound, especially to minimize the on-going Balkanization of the Academies, into bewildering compartments

- We shall examine postcolonialism as a notion which defines the state of our neocolonial economy, which leaves us as a nation in the fringe of global civilization, which stresses the ' huge difference in power and wealth'.
- We are not yet fully an industrial society, not to talk of the **information economy— an economy in which production is no longer a factor of manufacturing, having propelled itself into the service sector.**
- In the US and many European nations, this knowledge economy has dragged physical industry largely into the backwoods of the production, distribution and exchange chain in the postmodernist age, fit-ably characterized in the pioneer works of Alain Turaine (1968) and Daniel Bell (1973), as the information economy.
- In passing, the perception of the Postcolonial, as long established by its leading intellectuals, earlier mentioned, is not just about the social economy that emerged after independence or after the imperial and colonial hegemonies.
- It has subsisted since the closing of imperialism in Nigeria at the end of the C19th and the first half of the C20th centuries—ranging from the growth of political nationalism/ independence struggle –from 1945 onwards after the end of the Second Imperial War, misnamed World War 11 up on to the transitional crisis of 1962-66 that led to the first military coup and the fratricide of 1967-70 until we waded, dizzily, into the current crisis of our combustible and violence-torn polity, insecure and receding economy.

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- So then, what is the place and role of the Humanities in the whole process of resuscitating the African and the Nigerian project from its present location at the edge of the precipice when it should be the defining nation of Africa as the continent of the 21st century? Do the Humanities have such a role?
- History must be called upon again for intervention—and we must go as far back as classical times, which has been erroneously placed on the burner of Greek civilization, but which, happily, the works of well established scholars and historians, including Basil Davidson himself and those of others like **Cheik Anta Diop** as well as Greek classical scholars like Herodotus, have informed us, should be appropriately located in Egypt, in Africa.
- Greek's proponents and shapers of the 'whole intellectual tradition of the West' (Tredennik, 1959, 1969)—the trio of **Aristotle, Socrates and Plato**, rested the building of their civilization on the shoulders of poets and philosophers. Tredennik, musing about Plato, affirmed that the whole of the 'extraordinary achievements' in economy, commerce and politics 'was carried with the most perfect flowers of art and literature.'
- These philosophers were endowed with 'outstanding grace, precision, flexibility and power of...prose'.

CONTD...

- Even though Plato refused to embrace partisan politics—as he was ‘disgusted by the violence and corruption’ of the Athenian political life, a situation which was worsened by the sickening effect of the execution of his friend, mentor and teacher, Socrates.
- Plato held, tenaciously to the belief that the panacea and curative balm for cleansing societal ills laid in philosophy and that the ills of the politics of the Greek society will not heal until philosopher rulers/kings take over the reins of political power (in his Republican imagination, having set up the first ever Academy, the prototype of all Western universities—ancient and modern).
- Basil Davidson, frontline revolutionary historian on the history of the African revolution, lauded and aptly described by the New York Herald Tribune (1969) as ‘one of the best interpreters for the public of its (Africa’s) history in his narrative of the ‘special features of nationalism’, noted that ‘just as European nationalism was the child of the Enlightenment and the Rights of Man’...it was still the poets and philosophers of the submerged nationalities...who sang most potently of human equality and therefore of human freedom.

- We must note that in talking about poets and philosophers, we are bracketing the whole disciplines of the Humanities. As it were, the great people of Letters of the Black world, from **Blyden to Hurton and Hayford, to Azikiwe, Du Bois, Awolowo, and on**, questioned rhetorically, with irrepressible nostalgia and optimistic wonder, ‘why should not the same race (Africa) who governed Egypt’, as written by Houton, ‘not ‘once more stand on their legs and endeavour to raise their characters in the scale of the civilized world?’ rather than remaining, standing still in the fringe of the civilized world?
- **Here lies the kernel of our proposal that the Humanities have a crucial role to play in the rescue of Nigeria and Africa from the stranglehold of its comatose neocolonial social economy.** Caseley Hayford, as far back as 1920, as spokesman of the National Congress of British West Africa roused the political thinkers of Africa; ‘the intelligentsia of our people, to promote unity among our people’, with the aim of attaining equality and freedom.
- Fast forward to the beginning from 1960, the call is valid. Post independence neocolonial economy, politics, reforms agenda since Nigeria’s independence, has not fallen short of Paradise Regained. This term is not a recourse to Milton’s title but a pun on Olatunji Dare’s title, ***Second Paradise Envisioned***, in a column essay of May 2, 2017, on the failure of the nation to consolidate/ consummate development and transformation policies and programmes it kept setting itself.

- An example he drew was the Second National Development Plan (1970-1974) which came after the initial governance vision launched immediately after the Nigerian Civil War, a period in our national history, a time of great expectations and 'giddy optimism' to borrow yet a phrase of Olatunji Dare, veteran, ace media intellectual with unsurpassed satiric capacities.
- That 'Development Plan' anticipated the entrenchment or construction of:
 - a) a strong, self-reliant nation,
 - b) a great and dynamic economy,
 - c) a just and egalitarian society,
 - d) a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens, and
 - e) a free democratic society.
- Rather than attaining this national Utopia, our development plans, reform agenda, transformation visions, operation feed the nation, and the green revolution, and so on, have left us at the edge of the precipice, the fringes. As Dare recalled for us, by the Second Republic, the civilian government of President Shehu Shagari, set up a Presidential Task Force on how to end hunger in the nation, through a policy of rice importation!

- Today, Nigeria is unable to properly feed itself and the richest men on our continent emerge from importation of rice, sugar, toothpicks, and from oil and money deals, some say it is illegal bunkering! The nation is sincerely in the fringe of development by any measuring yardstick and leaving in nearly uninterrupted darkness!
- After several development plans and visions, including the 2010 and 20:2020 ones!—**still**, on return of Democracy in 1999, and the one we still clutch to as the longest democratic aegis in our history, our governments have continued to wax incredulously optimistic, high hopes and lofty aspirations—**to make Nigeria join the league of the biggest world economies by the year 2020 when the nation will be a strong, diversified, sustainable and competitive economy which harnesses all the talents and energies of its citizens and exploits to its fullest—crop** its natural resources potential/endowments to catapult the living conditions of its people to a high level and to enviable standards.
- These remain a long, pipe- dream as we struggle with recession, in the era of change!

THE POSTCOLONIAL EXPERIENCE

- The story of the Nigerian experience with colonialism and postcolonialism has been retold over several decades of hopelessness and near-despondence amidst monumental uncertainties and immense paradoxes. Dieseruvwe (2014) notes that:
 - The story of Nigeria during the postcolonial era has been one of a search for the constitutional and political arrangement that, while allowing for the self-expression of its socially and culturally diverse peoples, would not hinder the construction of a nation out of this mosaic.
- This perception is palpably true, considering the relative political tension and chaos that defined this period, such as the incessant military coups and quite regrettably, the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970 that led to the loss of ethnic tolerance and the boil over of the nation's political temper of the 1970s up till the M.K.O Abiola Saga of 'June 12—the unconsummated electoral victory of 1993.

- Sadly, as much as the government wants the citizenry to believe that the country has overcome ethnic intolerance and the resultant violence, it is crystal clear that the nation is mired in escalating religious and ethnic tensions (the now abating, Boko Haram war, the herdsmen nightmare, the separatist movements, note that the folk-heroism and deified status that Nnamdi Kanu enjoys today, leading to the hugely stay-at-home order of workers and market people in many parts of the South East is no accident, a joke taken too far!), all of which continue to rock the stability of the country and threaten its very survival.
- Following the characterization and stance of the political scientist, Richard Skylar, on the African continent being a “workshop of democracy”; there are numerous and apt examples to capture the fragility of the nation’s democracy and the dystopia/ anomy that embed the nation’s governance structure (or structure-less-ness, nearly six decades after flag independence!
- Over the years, there have been experimental systems of governance with varying grassroots/local, state, and federal government systems. Each system has revealed the yawning gap between the nation’s crawling motion and her potential for greatness—as the tenth most populous in the world, incredible body of natural and human resources in the midst of a disillusioning failure of becoming. Each system yielded greater insight about the pertinent needs, resources, and constraints associated with the enormous humanity and growth capacity of the nation.

- As we all know, Nigerian became an independent state on October 1, 1960 after a seven-decade rule by the Imperialist-colonialist system. Before this incursion of the colonialists, there were thriving systems on ground that held sway and defined the possibilities of the nation's civilization; such systems include the Kanem-Bornu Empire, the Sokoto Caliphate, the Benin Empire, Old Oyo Empire, the Igala Kingdom, etc. (Dieseruvwe, 2014).
- These systems were well-organized and politically structured in ways that, paradoxically, made colonialism and its administration, a fait accompli. Take for example; the Emirate system of the North provided an easy platform for its absorption by the British imperialists, hence their rebranding it into the Indirect Rule system. It is safe to say that a great percentage of these admirable and successful indigenous systems went into extinction during the colonial rule and even after independence, yielding the neo-colonial character of Nigeria as a nation-state
- The submission of Kenalemang (2011) aptly describes the generic transmutation of the postcolonial intricacy that supports division rather than unity when he submits that:
 - Post-colonialism continues to be a process of hostility and reform. This is seen in the development of new elites in post-colonial nations that are often supported by neo-colonial institutions, as is suggested by the development of divisions within these societies that are based on discriminations as varied as race, language or religion.

Reading through Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, a pioneer postcolonial novel, one would begin to perceive the essential manifestations of the postcolonial state of Nigeria. Several studies have been carried out on this text as regards postcolonialism, and all have come out to appraise the intellectual conveyance of the postcolonial tendencies of Nigeria as packaged by the author Achebe, of blessed memory, even in spite of his loss of faith in the Nigerian nationhood shortly before his demise, a state of mind which produced his last work, **There Was a Country!**. Harrison (2012) summarizes the concerns and characteristics of the postcolonial literature, to include, but are not limited to:

- Reclaiming spaces and places
- Asserting cultural integrity
- Revising history
- Other characteristic features of the Postcolonial which she surmised/stated include:
 - Resistant descriptions.
 - Appropriation of the colonizers' language.
 - Reworking colonial art-forms.

From a different slant of focus and study perspective, the late Owomoyela (1993) asserted that:

- Achebe presents a thorough understanding of narrative organization and style, and a keen observation of and absorption with day-to-day happenings, not through the lenses of the anthropologist, but through the clear insight of one who was involved with and felt at one with his culture while at the same time inculcating western ideas. And it's for these reasons that Achebe is able to fully convince his audience of the ideas in his novel.

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- I truly believe that Owomoyela has aptly given good cause for the success of Chinua Achebe's classic, coming from a colonial experience to shape the postcolonial manifestations of an infantile polity.
 - The account of our postcolonial experience cannot, however, be complete without reference to the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970.
 - Apart from the history of military coups, this experience has remained a significant determinant of the present situation, not just because we have not, as a nation, learnt from that history, which is why it is repeating itself, but because we have not erected/constructed a counter-narrative or an alternative structure to the legacies that led to the war in the first place; this is in spite of the ideals of Gowon's 3Rs.

The Nigerian Civil War and Beyond

- The Nigerian Civil War was, among other latent factors, the result of ethnic and religious tensions/mistrusts, socio-economic inequity and structural disequilibrium in the Nigerian polity. I want to assume that many of us here are aware of the incidences that surrounded the civil war (at least the children of the pre- eighties) and so I would not want to overbeat the story but just go ahead to briefly elucidate some of the remote causes, for the children of yesterday whom recent government policies robbed of access to History in the curriculum.
- These remote causes have contributed in no small way to the situation where we find ourselves in this period. After I have stated this; I would like to find out if we have really overcome the burdens of division that characterized the pre-civil war and post-civil war era.
- Are similar instances of ethnic abuse and neglect not visible in recent times, albeit through other forms of manifestations? A part of the causative factors of the social tensions on the land, and one which featured boldly in the (bound for shelving?) 2014 National Conference, is the issue of restructuring, marginalization and self determination and socio-economic inequity.

- One major factor that ignited the Civil war was the allegation of huge electoral fraud and maladministration of the civilian government which were the ostensible reasons for the military coup on **January 15, 1966**, led by **Major Kaduna Nzeogwu** and other (mainly) Igbo junior army officers, mostly majors and captains.
- The North reacted to this in a counter- coup led by **Gen. Muritala Muhammed** and this subsequently led to the killing of Igbos across the country.
- In fact, much of the experiences back then have been well-documented in the numerous Biographies, historical studies and fictive works by Nigerian fiction and non-fiction writers, including some foreign journalists who came under various guises (altruistic or not) to report and experience the civil war.
- A very recent fictive account of the war was painted in **Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun***, although many have argued that it was a rather subjective creation, largely from the Igbo perspective. Yet, the work is a best- seller, with an impressive fictive texture, aesthetic worth and social relevance, which make the work attention -captivating as a literary account of an aspect of our social history. Undeniably, Nigerian citizens suffered tremendously from the war experience and the nation ought to have learnt its lessons from that fratricidal carnage.
- The civil war has long ended and the parties concerned have since “moved on” but our countrymen hold subtle reservations against one another based on ethno-sectarian inclinations.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLITY OF THE NATION

- After these years of gruesome experiences, the nation and indeed its citizenry have inherited a backlog of woes foisted by dysfunctional and visionless leadership which has positioned the already ailing nation on the precipice of total failure.
- The old trends that characterized the post-civil war Nigeria were **incessant military coup d'états, military vendetta, political oppression and enslavement, oil bunkering, galloping inflation and rabid corruption** operating beyond the fictive imagination of our storytellers!
- This has led to the recent issues that bedevil the **nation—recession, coupled with artificial inflation, has taken the place of our national anthem as everyone is grossly affected by the persistent whips of a failed economy. Insurgency, both in the North East and Niger Delta, high-level illiteracy of a teeming population, youth bulge and the criminal the scale of unemployment, political supremacy battle/power tussle, both on intra-party and inter-party domains,** have meshed to push the nation and its citizenry to the fringe of national development in a rapidly globalizing world.

- Quite disheartening is the reality that the conventional pivot point of development and reckoning all over the **universe—the Humanities—has been utterly neglected, with a near-total dependence on a monoculture economy, oil and gas, with only a superficial commitment to economic diversification.**
- One of such instances is the reality that the recommendations of the recently convened National Confab by the past administration of H.E Goodluck Ebele Jonathan have still not seen the daylight under the new Administration. This is another issue we must seek to address in the Humanities—**the issue of continuity in government**—if the country must indeed enjoy true progress.
- I hope that the nation will be gingered and repositioned to begin to witness sustained interest in the endless possibilities that the Humanities offers.

HUMANITIES AND ITS CREDENCES

- The Humanities generally refer to disciplines and/or subjects which concern themselves with the study and understanding of man in society and in all its spheres and ramifications—existence, culture, sociality and the many sides of reality.
- Oloruntimehin (2006) explains that the Humanities provide “understanding for life in its physical and spiritual dimensions... understanding man in relation to his socio-cultural environment, the essence of being, with life as a continuum between the spiritual and the physical, the seen or visible and the invisible or unseen”.
- Thus, the Humanities discipline which comprises Philosophy, Literature, Religion, History, media and communication studies, Social Sciences, and other related disciplines, promote our conception of the human condition from humane perspectives—life as lived and ought to be lived, with all the attendant problems, travails, plagues, aspirations, frustrations, hopes, dreams and fulfillment drives.
- The Humanities engage in the cultivation/production, distribution/dissemination of knowledge about who we are as individuals, as groups and as nations with regard to how we relate as the government and the governed, both in our immediate environment and at macro-social level. Humanities do not scorn science, its findings and technology. It simply gives humane values and expression to it—so that we do not create weapons, whose lethality consigns us, inexorably, to our graves.

HUMANITIES TO THE RESCUE.

- At a forum held at the University of South Africa on July 7, 2014 tagged *Reinvigorating the Humanities*, it was concluded that in the reinvigoration of Africa, the Humanities ought to be considered an important strategy for development. It requires a concerted, carefully targeted effort by a broad range of agencies and actors which include (as cited in the review):
 - The provision of the material conditions for the proper function of the academic sector,
 - The innovation and replenishment of academic cultures, and
 - Reforming entrenched, out of date practices.
- Nigeria is a country of great potentials and possibilities and these make it a great nation that should lead and propel Africa as a continent that belong right at the forefront of exploits in 21st century.
- This is why the topic of our discourse is quite apt considering the consequential need to transform the development index and state of affairs of country to meet the outer limits of our dream.

- The applied departments of the Humanities encapsulate the much-neglected creative and cultural industrial sector which the nation needs to embrace, quite urgently, at this time when the nation's economy is in a serious distress, laboring disingenuously under an oil monoculture, to the criminal neglect of the nation's abundant endowments in numerous material and human resources.
- The elements that compose cultural industries are; advertising, architecture, crafts, designer furniture, fashion clothing, film/home video/audio-visual productions, graphic designs, theatre and the performing arts, educational and leisure software, live and recorded music, and, of course, creative entertainment, television, radio, internet broadcasting, the newspaper, and the creative book/literature- writing and publishing, visual arts, antiques.
- As it is, the creative industries as components of applied humanities provide a large canvass which any nation craving for development in the 21st century should properly explore, exploit and fully harness, not side-stepped, as we are wont to do in Nigeria. In the contemporary world, the link of creative/cultural industries to the economy has become inexorable and imperative.

- There is a dismal over- government and an excessive dependence on the central purse for all our economic activities and at all the tiers of national governance.
- What we operate as an economy is government by patronage, what Soludo calls a “rented-entrepreneurial elite” of big men without any productive source of livelihood, what the late juju maestro, I. K. Dairo, referred to in a very instructive musical rendition and tone, if rendered in its original Yoruba form, as “contractors without office, without workplace.”
- Permit me to relay the words as sung:

Opolopo contractor lowa

Tio l’ofisi

Tio ni bi’sè

To bari won ninu Mercedisi

Won a satari palaba

Won a lujibiti dolowo

Won a sole ola dahoro

File, iwa ibaje teun hu, file

Awodi jeun epe sanra, file.

- Freely translated, the above song captures a situation in which many so-called directors of companies have no office, no working place. You find them in posh Mercedes cars (now it is at least the ugly machine called Hummer or private jets) as shameless rogues wrecking the dreams of families and nations.

- It is an economy in which government is the sole source of (un)productive livelihood and (un) employment. Recently, I found in my hardly visited WhatsApp an interesting posting of all-comers to the wedding of one of our past Presidents, where over 35 private jets harassed the skies, scrambling for landing space. The post says all the owners of these jets are no captains of any known industries, but profiteers from government positions, only—kleptocrats all! We all thrive on the Federation Account, from where revenue derived from oil sales flows; sharing goes on without let.
- Some of the other critical challenges of our neocolonial economy, which we will not find space to dwell on elaborately here are the Debt crisis, debt relief and structural reforms, mindless money-laundering, food security, the nature of our federalism (political and fiscal), the Niger Delta /Oil politics and militancy, insurrections and self-determination imbroglio, and the question of the disharmonious relationship among the tiers of governance, the rage of terror, the herdsmen's mortal menace, and so on.
- In a world of science and technology, many things have gone amiss with very little hope of revival unless the Humanities dare to mediate which its calling in the domains of passion anticipates.. At a period such as now when war and insurgences have become a major challenge in the world polity characterized by the proliferation of ammunitions (small and medium size), bombs and nuclear devices of warfare, we need to ponder on the ingenuity/rational of nations audaciously depending absolutely on the 'blessings' of science and technology.
- What further calls to question the efficacy of science and technology is the undeniable fact that after the engagement of the empirical and experimental tendencies, all parties come back to sit at a round table for dialogue and/ or negotiation just like the case of the Federal government's fight against the Boko Haram insurgents and the saga of the 201 Chibok girls who have recently been reduced by 82 due to a successful process of serial negotiations and not serial attacks—long after we have deluded ourselves with the outright termination of the Boko Haram warfare.
- No doubt, a recourse to the rescue by the Humanities-poor and applied is germane and urgent.

SOME TOOLS/DISCIPLINE OF THE HUMANITIES

Culture/Creative and Cultural Industries

As summed up by Nkom (2008), development, regardless of how it is defined, ultimately entails an attempt to build a better society with the following prescriptions, signifying cultural factors as critical in the attainment of national peace for the economic empowerment of a society:

Characterized by greater material prosperity and better life chances for the people

Characterized by significant improvements in the people's capacity to understand and to tap the resources of their environment for their own good and the good of humanity.

Opened to new opportunities for personal uplift and collective advancement; and

Providing situations in which creativity, productivity and popular participation are enhanced.

Formulate policies for the creation of employment centres with the training of youths in creative and cultural entrepreneurial skills.

According to UNESCO, "collaboration in regional 'creative clusters' is a strange approach that will enable synergies between countries and cities to promote the creative sector as a driver of development, able to penetrate even the most entrenched pockets of poverty.

SOME TOOLS/DISCIPLINE OF THE HUMANITIES

- As I have earlier stated in a recently published book, *Public Mediations*(2017, many studies, like Todaro and Smith (2001), affirm that the roles of culture in development and transformation tend to increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic necessities of life, which include but are not limited to food, shelter, and security; to elevate living standards that are contingent upon cultural and humanistic (core) values; and to elevate the range of economic and social choices available to individual(s) and nation(s), to free them from the Capitalist modus operandi of servitude and dependence.
- Furthermore, cultural industries are perhaps the least demanding in the diversification efforts of a country.
- Governments, corporate citizens and endowed individuals should pool resources to make the various cultural sites, tangible cultures, arts and crafts, etc. tourist destinations and cultural sources for rapid economic development and youth engagement.

THEATRE

- Let me discuss this in line with an earlier published discourse that the materialist thinkers have submitted that unless African literary drama and theatre show an acute concern with urgent contemporary issues by interrogating the popular economic contemporary issues and the political aspirations of the masses—urban and rural—our drama and theatre, as a vital arm of the cultural superstructure of the economy, stands the risks of consigning itself into permanent irrelevance.
- Thus, our theatre, like the rest of the Humanities, in this moment of national emergency, needs to take the lead in the search for an alternative, differentiated national/continental sense-making and identity.
- Hence, theatre (as a discipline in the Humanities) becomes a potential tool to be utilized for positively mediating the human, political and economic conditions of our people. I still submit that it is for the frightful awareness of the potential of the theatre to mobilize the libratory consciousness of people against state falsehood that politicians and apologetic state agencies show great reluctance across the world, especially the world of the Southern Hemisphere, to fund cultural expression and sponsor the arts.
- Several theatre contingents constantly push to impact the polity and sensitize the citizenry of the need to be at alert and avoid all the vices of old times that have caused the collapse of the system whilst also projecting the acceptable standards that are sure to make the socio-political landscape better. For instance, **the Ajon Players Troupe, which I founded in 1981, recently produced an adaptation of my play *Ogidi Mandate* and their focus was on the need for the society to embrace peaceful coexistence within inter-ethnic settings in the new world as a means of advancing peace over warfare, integration over separatism.** It is heartening that live theatre is coming back to life after being forced to beat an uncomfortable retreat by Nollywood.

FILM/NOLLYWOOD

- The role of film, and by implication, home movies, as a revenue earner for the country, is significant alongside its crucial role as the cultural carrier, noted, most strikingly by its originality and home-growth.
- As Onuzulike (2007) recounts, “the corpus of songs and oral literature, festivals, rituals, the traditional religion. Performing arts, music, dance, and indeed, the entire range of artifacts the constituting traditional oral performance of Nigerian culture, are represented in Nigerian movies”
- A cursory foray into the revenue generation capacity of the cultural industries would show how important they are to the economy.
- To confirm this point, Dominic (2009, p.222) asserts that “Home movies have become Hollywood’s biggest revenue source. In 2006, the combined income from the sales and rentals of DVDs topped the \$24 billion mark, more than double (and in addition to) the amount taken at the Box Office.”
- In the same vein, Hartley (2002) iterates that cultural industries generated for the United Kingdom up to £112.5 billion UK pounds and employed about 1.3 million people in 2001. Nollywood is now priced at an excess of \$5 billion and currently produces more films than Hollywood in the United States.
- This places Nollywood as the second largest producer of films in the world. I am aware of the input of film makers like Kunle Afolayan, Omoni Oboli, Kate Henshaw, and Kemi Adetiba, just to mention a few, who have taken vial steps to revitalize the Nollywood industries to bring it at par with the counterpart industries around the globe. For instance, I am also aware that Kemi Adetiba’s recent movie *The Wedding Party* raked in a gross profit of N450 million (which explains why she was been commissioned to produce *The Wedding Party* part 2).

- Film production, however, is an expensive business. Making a successful movie requires substantial amount of money. However, Dominick notes that *“as demand grew for full-length films, only very large companies were able to come up with the needed funds to pay production costs.”*
- Bright (2015) reveals that *“by 2009, Nollywood had surpassed Hollywood as the world’s second largest movie industry by volume, right behind India’s Bollywood. And in 2014, the Nigerian government released data for the first time showing Nollywood as a \$3.3 billion sector, with 1844 movies produced in 2013 alone.”*
- There are aesthetic and ideological limitations for the qualitative growth of the Nollywood. This requires technical and policy intervention by the regulatory authorities in Nigeria, given the critical national and international identity functions of Nollywood in the global landscape but this should not imply undue censorship.
- The value of Nollywood also rests on its entire indigenusness and nativism. As Jeyifo also recently affirms, there is no known influence Western or Easter on the Nigerian Nollywood which makes it an original product of the Nigerian creative cultural industry.
- Ditto for the rabid assault inflicted on the industries by syndicates of pirates about which the National Copyright Commission is presently taking observable and significant steps. Encroachment on the intellectual property rights of creative workers is the concern of the Reproduction Rights Society of Nigeria under my chairmanship.

ART

- Art is generally expressed as the product of human creativity. It is an important discipline in the Humanities which devotes itself to matters beyond **graphic representation of the human perceptions, feelings, emotions, anger, joy, and so on.**
- The dynamism of Art is expressed through two units of functions that have been found across time to be beneficial to societal existence.
- These are two functional departments of the Arts, as long established; **the *naturist*** (unmotivated) functions of art, and **the *naturists*** (palpably designed) functions of art.
- We will not devote much time to the naturist dimension of Art which are integral to the very essence of our being human—they are transcendent to the individual and the mere fulfillment of specific external purposes.
- This includes, as Aristotle established, “**imitation**” being ‘**one instinct of our nature**’ as human beings. It is in this vein then that Art, as creativity, becomes a part of human expression. It becomes a pattern of life and a voice in itself.
- We may categorize as non-motivated, naturist roles of art under **harmony, balance and rhythm— non-utilitarian, feelings and sense of mystery, imagination, concepts of beauty, and other ungrammatical and unspoken/unwritten forms of expression and communications of emotions, feelings and passion.**

THE NURTURIST FUNCTIONS OF ART

- These implicate the motivated purposes of art, referring to “intentional, conscious actions on the part of the artists or creator.”
- These are aimed at bringing about political change, social commentary and criticism, addressing personal psychology commoditization/commercialization of artistic products and sheer communication.
- This definition aptly captures the true essence of Art. These functions manifest in the following dimensions:
 1. **Communication.**
 2. **Art as entertainment. This is often the function of the art industries of Motion Pictures and Video Games as we have enunciated in the home video of Nollywood**
 3. **Art as engage activism for political change.**
 4. **Art for psychological and curative and recuperative purposes.**
 5. **Art for social inquiry, subversion and/or anarchy.**
 6. **Art for propaganda—as in agitational propaganda art of the theatre**

- All these functions as expressed, if recognized and utilized, will effectively go a long way in easing out the many controversies that rock the nation.
- A lot of these functions have been deployed by generations of Nigerian artists, especially the literary artists and cultural activists. You can take this as far back as the operatic theatre of anti-colonial struggle of **Hubert Ogunde** in the forties, fifties and sixties to the literary theatre of **Soyinka and Clark**, including their counterparts in the prose-fictional genre such as Chinua Achebe, **Cyprian Ekwensi** and **Onuora Nzeokwu**, and the poetry of **Christopher Okigbo**—all have long advocated the deployment of literature, as tools of illuminating, envisioning and enlightening society on the way out of the socio-political doldrums and decadence since independence.
- There is also the more deliberately, consciously radical, more dialectical and materialist literature of **Osofisan, Osundare, Jeyifo, Omotoso, Fatunde, Sowande, Obafemi, Ojaide, Onwueme, Ofeimun, Yerima, Gimbas, Alkali, Ezeigbo** and our counterparts in other disciplines of the Humanities—in history, philosophy, sociology, the media, religion, and so on. Ditto for the creations of the more recent regeneration—**Okediran, Okri, Garuba, the Adesanmis, Otionos, Ogochukwus, Habilas, Soleyins, Adetakuns**, Ododos, Ajimas, Ifowodos, Danganas, and others too numerous to list here.
- All of these members of the literary and humanist disciplines have committed their arts, their intellect, and visionary capacities as all humanists do, to social transformation and regeneration on a mission/crusade to rescue our society from the stranglehold of poverty, political chaos/dystopia and non-structured development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Let me start with established recommendations. I will state some of the recommendations of the African humanities scholars to national and higher education policymakers in July, 2014 which I find quite adaptive to the Nigerian system in their call for the reawakening of consciousness an emancipator drive, especially with regard to the place and role of the humanities in nation building. The leaders of government have been requested to deploy the humanities to:
 - Acknowledge and value the concrete contributions of history, languages, culture, the arts, and other humanities disciplines as an essential component of a comprehensive system of higher education for the betterment of the nation and continent.
 - Ensure that they meet the goals of higher education through robust funding, paying attention to needs of humanities scholars, students, departments, and institutes in fulfilling their roles in the process..
 - Actively encourage participation in national policy debates by humanities scholars, along with those in other disciplines and utilizing their contribution for national reconstruction.
 - Require that higher education institutions make decisions on promotions and funding for research and travel based on performance and merit, without discriminating against humanities scholars.
 - Ensure that laws affecting intellectual property which encourage knowledge access and dissemination, and that government policies encourage maximum visibility of local scholarship (e.g., support for national repositories), incorporating a focus on humanities scholarship in all initiatives

- Let me, however, add my voice again to these far-reaching recommendations. There is need for:
 - Conscious revitalization of the humanist industries for cultural, political, and economic restructuring which can be achieved through any of the arms of humanities.
 - Our humanists and the humanities must, in this democratic transition that we find ourselves, become more interventionist, more socially mediatory, in the dimension of mobilization and conscientization/enlightenment. They must take, and be allowed to take, the lead, in the search for an alternative, differentiated national sense-making and identity-retrieval for national development in a knowledge economy and society.
 - The Humanities Faculties must return to the practice of the 70s and 80s where robust ideological ferment, debates and discourses take place on a regular bases, providing platforms for generating and crystallizing growth ideas and visions for the macro-society. Faculties of Arts/Humanities and Social Sciences at Ife, Zaria, Ibadan, Lagos, Nsukka and Calabar provided the platform/hotbeds for awareness generation and the generation of development policies which governments utilized, at times unacknowledged, for socio-economic development. The present death of ideas, debates and argumentation along ideological lines is unhealthy and must be positively reversed. Let the Universities return to their erstwhile tradition of pointing the way, as the late Aboyade reminded us, to out-lining for society where it should be, at least a quarter of a century to come.



I thank you, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, being yourself a well-groomed social activist before becoming a soul healer, in the best tradition of spiritual worker, foremost intellectual and humanist. I also thank and challenge my colleagues in the Humanities to continue this debate on the importance of our disciplines to the task of rescuing our nation from the fringes of social transformation. I thank you all for your attention and I do hope that I have not wasted your valuable time.

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