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## Living with the Past: Ancient Greek Philosophy in Twenty-First Century Nigeria

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### **Abstract:**

*Ancient Greek philosophy is important for an integral human development in the twenty-first century as it was in the ancient Greek world. For one, it helps in developing critical thinking ability, a virtue needed to survive in human society; it also helps in building and improving morals since philosophy teaches the psychological factors that help motivate people to be moral. The 20th and 21st centuries, which saw a paradigm shift in the areas of emphasis in Nigeria's higher education began to disregard the foregoing as not being of any serious importance. One of the major victims of this shift was humanistic studies that became regarded as a useless field. This was done in favour of the sciences. Classical Studies and Philosophy, therefore, suffered double jeopardy as they became victims of society's search for meaning and direction within the fold of the Social Sciences and other professional courses. Both disciplines, unfortunately, were misconstrued and erroneously conceived as majorly concerned with abstract realities lacking human contemporary touch. This seriously affected the fortunes of the discipline. This paper focuses on ways in which students in the present context address the questions of relevance and their future. Then, it evaluates pertinent questions such as: what role does philosophy play in contemporary Nigerian society? How can the instructors of the course (ancient Greek Philosophy) make it relevant to both the student and society at large? This paper also discusses the challenges encountered by both the teachers and students of the course in the global age.*

**Keywords:** Classics, ancient Greek philosophy, Nigeria, contemporary

### **1. Introduction**

Since the twilight of the twentieth century, Classics has been considered the underbelly of humanistic studies in much of sub-Saharan Africa. The Department of Classics at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria's Premier University, was established as one of the pioneer Departments in the university in 1948 sharing the honour with English, History and Religious Studies Departments that, today, constitute the Faculty of Arts. The Department of Classics was also one of the first Departments to procure recognition for Honours degree courses under the scheme of Special Relationship with the University of London. The Department, under this scheme, conducted B.A. Honours and B.A. General Courses from 1950 to 1964.

Out of about one hundred and fifty-five universities, both public and private, in Nigeria, Classical Studies is only being offered at the University of Ibadan. Although, earlier, when the University of Jos in Plateau State, Nigeria was established as a satellite campus of the University of Ibadan in 1975, Classical Studies was one of the important courses offered in the Faculty of Arts. Presently, with only one university- University of Ibadan - offering the course in the whole country, the Department is faced with the problems of recognition and relevance. It has since then faced a battle for survival. Compounding this problem is the antiquity of courses taught which included Greek and Latin Languages, Ancient Greek Philosophy, Greek and Roman Histories and Literature. This necessitated in recent times, the introduction of some courses, both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, to keep the Department going. The introduction of these courses did not in any way nullify the previous courses offered by the Department, for these courses are what defined the intellectual direction and stature of the Department, the Department of Classical Studies. Without these courses, the Department will lose its merit. More than ever, the discipline of Classical Studies today in Nigeria is under severe stress.

### **2. Ibadan Classics at the Beginning**

The configuration of the Department of Classics in its early years was at first rudimentary. Until 1951, E.A. Cadle and K.L. McKay were the only members of staff<sup>1</sup>. During this period, the Department concentrated on teaching thereby laying the basis

<sup>1</sup>The departmental historical background used in this paper was gathered from University of Ibadan, Department of Classics Student Handbook and records kept in the Department of Classics, University of Ibadan.

of a strong teaching department particularly in the areas of Languages (Latin and Greek) and Literature. Between 1951 and 1955, additional members of staff in the persons of A.T. Von, A.R. Hands, A.I. Bowman and J.A. Kemp joined the Department. With these new hands, attention shifted to other courses. The teaching of ancient history was given greater emphasis, and a new course on the Roman rule in North Africa was added to the General Degree Syllabus. By 1955/56, the Department was already well known for its excellent teaching. However, according to the departmental record, research facilities "practically non-existent". The appointment of the first Professor and substantive Head of Department, Professor John Ferguson, in 1956 marked a turning point in the history of the Department. Members of staff were encouraged to engage in research and publication of their research works. The publications of the teaching staff of the Department immeasurably enhanced the image of the Department as a veritable research centre of antiquity. The Department came to be recognised as an excellent centre not only for teaching but also for research. In addition to this, the Classical Association of Nigeria inaugurated in 1957, and the Journal, Nigeria and the Classics was founded in 1958. This Journal, Nigeria and the Classics, served as a means of presenting to the public some of the papers read at annual conferences of the Association, it also gave impetus to research in the Department.

Earlier, the focus of the Department had been on conducting B.A. Honours and General degree. In 1957/8, the Department experimented on postgraduate teaching on a limited scale; only one student enrolled during this session and obtained his M.A. (London) in 1959. This experiment was not repeated until 1962/63 when the special relationship with the University of London was terminated, and the University's postgraduate program started in earnest. Two promising students were sent abroad for their postgraduate study between 1959 and 1961.

In 1962, the Department witnessed another important landmark. The Department attained the University autonomy. With this achievement and as a response to further reorganisation the of syllabuses within the now independent University of Ibadan, the Department refashioned its courses, with greater emphasis given to Ancient Philosophy, Literature and Ancient History while a compulsory on Africa in Classical Antiquity was added to the degree program. In order to encourage students from other departments, who had no knowledge of the Classical Languages, to offer courses in Classics Department, courses on Greek and Roman Civilisation were introduced. A few years later, efforts at reorganisation of the departmental syllabuses were the adoption of the Course System of teaching within the Faculty of Arts as a whole. A chief objective in the adoption of this system was to create and provide more variety and flexibility in the range of courses offered to students. In compliance with this adoption, in 1967, the syllabus of the Department was modified. More emphasis was given to the literary, historical and cultural aspects of Classical antiquity whereas; less emphasis was attached to the Classical languages. In the reversed program, it was clearly stated that the two ancient Languages, Latin and Greek would be studied primarily as a basis for the study of the literature, history, society, philosophy and culture of the Greek and Roman world. The scope of Africa in Antiquity course was greatly extended. With the cooperation of the members of staff in the Department, well planned and highly effective intensive courses for the beginners in both Latin and Greek set in motion.

As a result of these moderations, there was a considerable increase in the number of students in the Department. In 1968, due to the nature of the Course, enrolment of students had fallen to the lowest level since the earliest years of the Department and staff workforce reduced to five. However, with the adoption of the Course System, the number of students admitted to the Department increased tremendously beyond the teaching capacity of the five staff. It is noteworthy that at this period, effort on the postgraduate programme was intensified and the first University of Ibadan PhD in Classical Studies was produced. Research work was encouraged and the Journal, *Nigeria and the Classics*, was modified into a regular learned journal under the guidance of Professor L.A. Thompson, but with an international editorial committee.

It is not surprising that the years that followed proved to be a decade of productivity in terms of PhD graduates – Ilevbare and Ikurite (1971), Mamudu (1973, Classics combined with English), Ifie (1976), Osho (1977, Classics combined with French), Ndubokwu (1979). In 1976, with further development in the Department, it became imperative to add to the teaching staff in the Department, two new lecturers were recruited from outside the country: Dr R. Ball and Mr Nigel Henry. Unfortunately, Dr Ball met with a premature death the following year, 1977. Some of the PhD graduates of the 70s later became lecturers in the Department and contributed immensely to the development of the Department. Professor Ilevbare, after becoming a member of the teaching staff in the Department, rose rapidly and served as Acting Head, and later head of Department. Professor Ifie served twice as Acting Head of Department before his sad demise in 2004. Dr Ndubokwu was a diligent teacher and served meritoriously until his retirement in 2002. Dr Osho regularly assisted with the teaching of drama courses. These meticulous teachers left their indelible marks in the Department.

### 3. Classics in the Age of Neo-liberalism

In recent years, despite the total demise of Latin Language as a teaching subject in schools, the Department of Classics has continued to play an invaluable role in the work of the Faculty. The courses offered in the Department are directed to the study of the civilisation of the Greeks and Romans. Two of the great civilisations of historical record that have made a significant effect on the development of many great nations of the world, including Africa. The enrolment of students in the Department was enhanced by the introduction of a new course titled Latin for Lawyers offered by all Law students in the University of Ibadan in 1996. In 1998, two new courses – Roman Civil Law and Jurisprudence in Roman law– which forms the basis of the western legal system were also introduced. The Classics major students take two compulsory courses on the Ancient History and Archaeology of North and North-East Africa. At the same time, they get first-hand acquaintance with the great

philosophers of antiquity particularly Plato and Aristotle, dramatists such as Sophocles and Euripides, the historical masterpieces of Herodotus, Livy and Tacitus, the oratory scholarship and humanism of Cicero and the poetic genius of Virgil and Horace, all of whom continue to have great influence on modern thoughts.

The Department has produced numerous graduates, both earlier and more recent, who have been renderings excellent service in a wide variety of professions. Classics Department has produced teachers, headmasters and several university dons, some of whom have moved to other fields like philosophy, Education and Linguistics. The list includes educational administrators like S.F. Edgal and J.O. Arodudu; top civil servants such as T.A. Akinyele and Uduehi, Foreign Service personnel like J. Iyalla, J.A. Akadiri, B.A. Clark, Edward Martins, J.G. Olaitan, D.S. Omatone, R.J. Adibuah and E.C. Anyaoku formerly of the Commonwealth Secretariat; leaders of Commerce and Industry like G.T.S. Adokpaye of Mobil Oil, and G.O. Onosode. Lawyers are not left out among the products of the Department and the most prominent among them being the late Chief Bola Ige; creative writers such as the late Christopher Okigbo, Isidore Okpewho; journalists like A.A. Okpanku, P.A. Ogundele, O. Osunde, O. Ogunwusi, Edward Dickson; Librarians like S.I. Ifidon, C.C. Aguolu; a radio and television executive, Bankole Balogun; and a former commissioner of police and lawyer, F.S. Shado are all products of the Department of Classics. Majority of the Department's recent graduates are in banking and finance, commerce and industry.

The Department of Classics has continued to forge ahead as one of the foremost centres of research in Nigeria and Sub-Sahara Africa that explores Classical Antiquity as well as the interface between the ancient and contemporary times. The programs in the Department from the onset are tailored to produce humane graduates of the humanities with the ability to observe, explain and connect fundamental phenomena of the Greco-Roman world, the origin of modern civilisation, with current universal developments.

Some Classicists both past and present interviewed express their fears, expectations and feelings toward studying Classics. Many of them did not choose Classics as their primary course of study, others though with little or no knowledge of what Classics entails chose to study Classics. For instance, the present Head of Department of Classics, Professor Folake Onayemi, in an interview explains that she was admitted to study Language Arts, but her interest was in Classics, thus, she registered for Classics instead of Language Arts. Explaining what motivated her to study Classics while many who had been admitted to study Classics originally were thinking of the way out, she explains:

I have been in love with Classics from my primary school days when my father made me read most stories about the Greek heroes. Another reason was that I thought I would do Law and Classics would be a good background for it. But by the time I graduated, I realised that Classics is my destiny.

She however, found Latin and Greek languages challenging and the fact that the Classics is offered only at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria makes it difficult to get external examiners for moderation of results. Adding to these problems is that lecturers in the Department have to expend a lot of money to attend Classics Conferences outside the country.

Dr Oyegoke Akinboye, a lecturer in the Department talks about his expectations and challenges as a student and lecturer in Classics Department thus:

I had personally chosen to study Classics because of my interest in Literature-in-English during my secondary school days. I never knew that Classics was an entirely different field of literature, which involved ancient Greco-Roman. My expectations of concentrating only on Literature were not fully fulfilled because I had to take other courses in ancient Philosophy and History as well as Latin. These courses were not taught with modern approach and as such, my expectations were not met. There was also the great challenge of having to explain to everyone – family members, friends, employers the actual meaning of Classics. Classics was offered only at Ibadan and did not generally appeal to much younger generation to which I belonged. As an ancient historian in the Department of Classics, I have often been troubled with the challenges, which we were confronted with many years ago. The Department urgently needs to overhaul its curriculum and name to make up with contemporary realities and relevance. Students need to be helped to become truly humane, relevant, current and useful for both their society and the nation.

Another graduate of Classics, Ayantola, who made a First-Class Honour, explains what motivated him to study Classics:

Gaining admission into the University of Ibadan to study Classics ushered in an elating feeling for me, particularly because I had spent some time researching on some alumni of the Department. I had found many of them excellent and outstanding in their various fields of endeavour. Hence, I came into the Department with the common hope in the mind of every student that you could become anything with Classics (an assertion which is quite true but somewhat loosely made by many). Having read the stories of the likes of Bola Ige, Emeka Anyaoku, Ambassador J.T Iyalla, and G.O Onosode, among others, who made tremendous marks in their respective industries of Law, Foreign service, and Business, I was self-motivated, upon commencement, to excel in giant strides, with the instrumentality of my course of study; Classics.

Explaining the challenges of studying Classics, he states:

The challenges, however, were numerous. First, was the challenge of having enough time to study Greek and Latin, which required a minimum of 2-3 hours everyday, while not leaving other courses out. Furthermore, was the challenge of getting study materials, there are few bookstores who sell books on this ancient subject! A primary challenge also was the need to have to explain to everyone what the course 'Classics' means, as its popularity is still very vague to many outside the Humanities, despite its many years of existence.

In recent time, there has been a conscious and deliberate shift away from the discipline to the more considered lucrative courses of the Social Sciences: Management, Accounting, Business Administration, Political Science and Law. All of these were courses that either conferred practical skills or high visibility. The decline in the study of Classics became one of the "social costs of adjustment." The need for such shifts became more obvious as the effects of economic adjustment bit harder. As more and more people are thrown into the already glutted labour market, parents and students became sceptical about the courses to be taken in the university. In view of these changes, there is the need for the Department, according to Dr. Akinboye in the interview, to "overhaul its curriculum and name to make up with contemporary realities and relevance." One of the courses taught in the Department of Classics is Ancient Greek Philosophy. The next part of the paper focuses on how Ancient Greek Philosophy is being taught in the Department as well as how it can be made significant and valued in the 21st century Nigeria. Thus, this aspect of the paper addresses the issue of making Classics as a Course and Department more appealing and relevant to the students studying the Course and the society in general.

#### 4. Who Needs Philosophy?

Philosophy, as a course and discipline, is generally held in derision and misconceived as being irrelevant to contemporary human society. It is viewed as mere speculation without any human touch and practical value. As a result of this misconception, many regarded the study of philosophy as a waste of time and also consider the students of philosophy as pursuing a course that lacks significance in contemporary human society. Even, the students of philosophy ask what they stand to benefit by studying philosophy and whether or not philosophy as a career can put food on their table or provide their essential needs. And more importantly, they question the significance of philosophy to the contemporary society, though it was greatly relevant in the ancient Greek society. However, studies have shown the important role played by philosophy in the human society which cannot be overemphasised. Before further discussion on the relevance of ancient Greek philosophy to Nigerian contemporary society, it will be of interest to know what philosophy really is.

What philosophy is having always been a debated issue and has been accorded various definitions by various scholars depending on the perspective and the cultural background of the one defining it. Some define philosophy simply as what philosophers teach and learn in the department of philosophy in colleges and universities. This definition is deficient in portraying the significance of philosophy, even as an academic discipline because it lacks the essential attributes of the term being defined and is circular in nature. From its etymology, Philosophy simply means love of wisdom and as used by earlier philosophers; it means the pursuit of wisdom. Wisdom, according to Azenabor (2010), "is an affair of value and judgment" which "involves the intelligence conduct of human affairs and interpretation of experience". In other words, wisdom can be regarded as the proper application of human reason to human experience. Then, Philosophy as love or pursuit of wisdom aims to have a proper understanding of man and his world. Contemplating the nature of Philosophy as being geared towards understanding human experiences, some expect Philosophy to provide meaningful answers to life's profound questions; others regard it as a meaningless gibberish.

Thus, the complication associated with philosophy makes it difficult to assign it a specific definition. Wiredu (1980: 139), observing this problematic situation, asserts:

Philosophy is, indeed, a well-established subject, but its issues are so riddled with the controversy that there is hardly a single question to which there can be said to be an established answer. Not even on the question of what philosophy is apt to be personal.

Although the definition of philosophy seems to be problematic, this, however, does not imply that philosophy cannot be assigned a comprehensive definition. For instance, Krishnananda (1992) describes philosophy as follows:

Philosophy is a well coordinated and systematised attempt at evaluating life and the universe as a whole, with reference to first principles that underlie all things as their causes and are implicit in all experience... an impartial approach to all problems and aspects of life and existence and its studies are not devoted merely to the empirical world, as in the case of the physical and biological sciences; not restricted to the provinces of faith and authority or to the questions of the other world, as is the case with theological disquisition; not confined to investigation of mind and its behaviour, as in psychology; not given over merely to casuistry and aetiology, as in the normative science of morality and ethics; not taken up with the consideration of civic duties and problems of administration and constitution, as in the case of politics; not concerned with the solution of problems and techniques of adjusting and

ordering and discovering the origin of organisation and development of human society, like economics and sociology...

From the above description, Krishnananda contrasts philosophy with other disciplines as being restricted to particular aspects of human life. Philosophy, on the other hand,, encompasses all aspects of human life. Hence, Krishnananda (1992) defines philosophy as a "rational enquiry into forms, contents and implications of experience, the most inclusive of all branches of learning." He further states that:

It (philosophy) is an attempt at a complete knowledge of being in all the phases of its manifestation in various processes of consciousness. The discovery of ultimate meaning... It is the art of the perfect life, the science of reality, the foundation of the practice of righteousness, the law of the attainment of freedom and bliss.

A logical analysis of this definition shows that the central drive of philosophy is the essence of existence itself, acting as a touchstone to all other aspects of human thinking and knowledge.

### 5. The Components of Ancient Greek Philosophy

Ancient Greek Philosophy is one of the fundamental courses taught in the Department of Classics, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. The course explores the philosophical concepts and doctrines of early Greek thinkers from its inception in 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. Ancient Greek Philosophy developed in a cultural world that was dominated by poetic mythology. Ancient Greek Philosophy started with a serious inquiry into human and divine realities; pioneering many of the great ideas of humanities. Thus, ancient Greek Philosophy laid the foundation for classical, Hellenistic, medieval and modern philosophical discourses. Traditionally, Ancient Greek Philosophy is classified into pre-Socratic and post-Socratic.

Pre-Socratic philosophers flourished between 7<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C, this was a period marking a shift in intellectual focus, it was a shift from biological to rationalization. The pre-Socratic philosophers were interested primarily in the study of nature. They tried to investigate and explain analytically the natural phenomena; answering questions in terms of the power of the elements rather than just the gods. Almost all the major elements of western thought are found in ancient Greek Philosophy, and considering the nature of their investigation; these early Greek thinkers are viewed not only as philosophers but also as scientists. They made no distinction in their research; they did not separate enquiries that could be best answered conceptually through rationality and those that could be tackled empirically through examination and observation. They based their philosophical pursuit on the supposition that nature is well-ordered and can be examined, explained and understood systematically. The pre-Socratic philosophers believed that there are certain principles guiding nature, thus, they set as their major goal the discovery of the guiding principles.

Ancient Greek Philosophy is a course taught to inspire the student to ask themselves some fundamental philosophical questions the sort asked by the Greeks as well as formulating their own answers. However, it is important for the students to understand the rationale behind the philosophical and scientific investigation of the early Greek thinkers, it is important for the students to know where the early Greek philosophers were coming from. The instructor of ancient Greek Philosophy, therefore, introduces the students to the traditional contrast between myth and rationality (*mythos* and *logos*). The instructor does not only explain the emergence of ratiion inquiry in the ancient Greek world but also what myth means in the case of students. For example, the teacher explains to the students that before the appearance of Thales, the first philosopher of historical record, ideas that became the living heritage of Greek philosophy were conceived and developed in mythical form by Homer and Hesiod. The Greek mythical thinkers approached nature with a non-scientific and uncritical imagination; their thoughts had little or no intellectual content. Myths as the vehicle of reason contained the key issues and insights that philosophy was to explore scientifically.

### 6. Ancient Greek Philosophy: A Critique

Earlier, the ancient Greek philosophers had opined that the best rulers in the state are the philosophers. Plato emphasizes that for "the desired transformation" to be realised, it is important for either philosopher to be appointed rulers or the then rulers to study philosophy, hence Plato states:

Unless, said I, either philosophers become kings in our states or those whom we now call our kings and rulers take to the pursuit of philosophy seriously and adequately, and there is a conjunction of these two things, political power and philosophical intelligence, while the motley horde of the natures who at present pursue either apart from the other are compulsorily excluded, there can be no cessation of troubles... for our states, nor... for the human race either. Nor until this happens, will this constitution which we have been expounding in theory ever be put into practice within the limits of possibility and see the light of the sun (*Republic*, V. 473a-e).

Plato further states that philosopher rulers are rightly motivated to participate in politics not for amassing wealth but to ensure good governance. Plato strongly believes that only philosophers will seek the good of the whole city when they rule whereas if people without philosophical knowledge rule, they will not seek the good of the people they rule, but will

pursue political office simply for their own benefit, and will thus engender civic strife. To Plato, only philosophers have a life that they prefer so strongly to the political life that they "look down on" that life (*Republic*, VII. 520e- 521b). Thus, wrong leadership leads to bitter, intractable, and destabilizing conflicts between social and economic elites and the masses. Rule by philosophers, Plato at least sometimes suggests, can forestall such controversy. The proposal of Plato that rulers should pursue philosophy in order enhance their political power was taken seriously in the ancient world. For instance, King Philip, the father of Alexander the Great employed the service of Aristotle, the famous disciple of Plato, to tutor his son from a very tender age.

The collapse of the Greek city-states and Alexandrian empires after the death Alexander the Great and Aristotle in the ancient world caused the socio-political disorder. This depressing situation led to the formation of different schools of thought like Cynicism, Epicureanism, Stoicism, Skepticism. The political theories of these philosophical schools of thought are considered invaluable that medieval and modern philosophers like Nicola Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Locke were "inspired to propound their political theories because of the socio-political climate of their time" which was marked by insecurity, devastation and anarchy (Nisbet, 1983). A situation similar to that of the ancient Greece.

Echoing the mind of Plato over the present predicaments facing the country, Iwuagwu (2016) stresses that:

It is not out of place therefore that in the face of the current ethical, social political and economic challenges facing Nigeria, contemporary philosophers should step in and take the bull by the horn and bail the country out of these pressing problems. Moral, socio-political and economic theories should be propounded and practised to provide guidance out of the disturbing and unbearable situation the country is experiencing.

From the foregoing, it is glaring that philosophical intelligence is what can bring about the expected transformation in the society. Nigeria as a nation needs a total change that will produce patriotic behaviour, self-sacrificing spirit, dedication to duty and most importantly, love of goodness. Philosophy can provide the guidance needed to achieve the desired changes. In line with this, Iwuagwu (2016) states:

If ideas change the world, and philosophical ideas are the catalyst of social positive change, the time has come therefore for Nigerian philosophers to provide the hub for social re-engineering, to articulate urgently the philosophical theories that will keep afloat the sinking Nigerian state. The time for philosophers to salvage the situation is at hand and this must be done through the sound educational program at all levels.

Iwuagwu also emphasises the need to introduce philosophy as a teaching subject, not only in Nigeria's tertiary institutions but also at all levels of Nigerian educational programme.

## **7. Making Ancient Philosophy Relevant in the Twenty-First Century Nigeria**

Throughout the history of civilization, the impact of ancient Greek philosophical schools of thought cannot be overemphasized. Philosophers have made substantial contributions to their philosophical systems and theories such as Monism, Pluralism, Platonism, Idealism, Realism, Rationalism, Stoicism and Epicureanism just to mention a few. These philosophical ideologies greatly influenced the ancient world in shaping the life of the people. In the same way, in the medieval, modern and contemporary periods, philosophical creeds like Empiricism, Positivism, Pragmatism, Existentialism and many others have been instrumental in moulding the society through the individual comportments.

Different philosophical theories have developed and maintained individual moral behaviour and ensure a better system of government that protect freedom and human rights of the people as well as safeguarding peace and security in the human society. Economic progress and well-being are not left out. Thus, without philosophers and their sundry political theories in the ethical, socio-political, economic and other areas to guide man in the course of his history and development, the human society would have remained stagnant and man's condition would have been deplorable. Then, it is not an overstatement to declare that Western civilization came into a reality on the account of philosophical theories put forward by philosophers. Stressing the importance of philosophical theories in shaping the society, Omoregbe (2007) says, "Philosophical ideas are dynamites which can explode, shatter things and bring about a radical transformation of structure."

The truth that is glaring from the foregoing is that no human society can exist without philosophers. The value of philosophy is so great that one can infer from Plato's words that without philosophy and philosophers, the human society will be in serious trouble, in fact, Azenabor (2010) strongly believes that without philosophy, human society cannot exist. Ewelu (2009) in line with this thought construes that:

the relevance of philosophy is unquestionable in the face of the multifarious problems it enables man to solve in his life. Even when it does not actually solve the problem, it guides man on the best approach to adopt to avoid being weighed down when faced with such problems.

It is impossible to quantify or measure the important role played by philosophy in every society. Given that philosophy intelligence can bring about the expected transformation in the society, the question at this point is: how can philosophy intelligence affect the contemporary Nigerian society?

Over the years, Nigerian state of affairs has been sailing on a troubled and sinking ship on a turbulent sea being tossed up and down without any shore to anchor in sight. The situation in the country, as described by Iwuagwu (2016):

paints a picture of a jingle state where everything goes, where the highly placed individuals and organizations can commit any crimes and go scot-free; where plundering and looting of the public wealth are allowed and even considered a blessing and the life of its citizens are worthless and the destruction of it inconsequential.

Nigerian society is confronted by myriads of problems, which include insecurity of life and property, kidnapping, terrorism, the collapse of infrastructures such as epileptic power supply; bad roads, poor health care services, poor educational facilities and economic recession causing great hardship just to mention a few. The unbearable situation in the country has been blamed on selfishness and insensitivity of bad leaders, corruption, unpatriotic behaviours and the spirit of over-tolerable of the Nigerians. Presently, in order to get some respite from the increasing tension in such a sinking ship, Nigerians have adopted the attitude described by late Fela Anikulapo Ransom-Kuti in one of his Afro-beat songs as suffering and smiling, praying and hoping that one day the ship will get to an anchor.

In the face of Nigeria's present predicament, drastic actions must be taken to preserve the remaining dignity and resources the country might still possess. The current situation in the country requires urgent attention, Nigeria, like other nations, needs a philosophical identity that will guide both private and public life. In the ancient world, philosophy was able to address the situation similar to what Nigeria is passing through and restore order in the society. Philosophy has important roles to play in contemporary Nigerian society to restore law and order as highlighted and discussed as follows.

### 7.1.

Nigeria as a nation is constituted of thirty-six states with over 250 ethnic groups with distinct languages that typify a particular group. Although, people from different ethnic group can be found among other ethnic groups, yet, there is a feeling of insecurity. For instance, there is a recent development in the country, a group in the Northern part of the country called AREWA declared war on the Igbo speaking people living in their midst, ordering them to pack their baggage and vacate their land on or before the 1st of October, 2017. This issue points to the fact that there is a division, hatred and rancour among the ethnic groups in Nigeria, such that no one 'feels at home' unless with one's ethnic people or in his 'own land'. With this, it is not an overstatement to say that there is a kind of natural hatred among the ethnic groups in Nigeria. The political leaders clamour for One Nigeria, One Nation where resentment and acrimony are the order of the day.

Nigerian society is plagued with terrorist groups and those who refer to themselves as freedom fighters such as Boko Haram, Niger Delta Militants, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC). Some of the activities of these groups have led to a distortion of peace, kidnapping, child abuse, sexual harassment, armed robbery and many other ungodly events. Philosophy has a vital role to play in this regard for the study of philosophy has shown that man cannot exist as an individual by himself; he is by nature a social animal. On the issue of human relation, ancient Greek philosophers laid a precedent. Plato and Aristotle emphasize the fact that man is basically a social animal, a communal being. These ancient Greek philosophers reiterate that for a society to thrive, certain virtues must be cultivated by its citizens, especially, the four cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance. Plato, while discussing the character of a good city-state in the *Republic*, identifies four cardinal virtues with the faculties of man, declaring that people in an ideal city will be "wise, brave, temperate and just" (427e-435b). Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, 1366b1) identifies the forms of virtue as justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence and wisdom.

These cardinal virtues are interconnected serving as practical principles that guide everyday life, covering a large part of the realm of human life perfected by habit. These cardinal virtues denote the qualities of full humanity: strength, courage, capacity, worth, manliness, moral excellence, as well as moral goodness. Russell (1982) considers the four cardinal virtues as a guide to the practice of moral duties and conformity of life to the practical law; uprightness, and rectitude. The cardinal virtues are there to help man realise active and moral life by the exercise of practical reasoning. In every society, if everyone both educated and uneducated, lives in conformity with the philosophical thoughts that promote peace and security, the issue of tribalism, ethnicity, racism and prejudice will have no root in human society, and especially in the multi-ethnic Nigerian society.

### 7.2.

Religious practices in Nigeria, today, are marked with fanatical doctrines leading to religious violence while youths are instigated by many religious leaders to cause mayhem in the society. Women and girls are abducted in the name of religion such as the crises of Boko-Haram (Book is a curse). The youths initiated into these fanatical groups have no philosophical knowledge that would have furnished them with the needed determination to question certain doctrines and commands of the so-called groups and religious leaders that are not in accordance with human rationality. Philosophy as a subject of many

values helps to develop advanced analytical skills; the ability to think well about philosophical questions fosters the ability to think well about things in general. Philosophy helps to criticise assumptions, beliefs and theories. With philosophical intelligence, people, especially the youths, are equipped to query certain religious orders that promote violence given by religious leaders before accepting it. Basic philosophical knowledge will protect Nigerian youths from being lured into causing violence and confusion in the society and many homes that have been broken because of messages coming from the so-called "men of god" would be saved. Many atrocities committed in the name of religion will be curbed if not totally eradicated. Women, young and old, will be free from sexual harassment and abuse. Children will be liberated from different forms of child-abuse because their parents have enough courage to challenge the rationale of their children being accused of witchcraft and devise other ways to discipline their children against the verdicts of the religious leaders. Thus, philosophy will help the society not to accept anything dogmatically in the name of religion without concrete justification. People from different religious groups will be helped to respect the views of one another in every aspect of life, to tolerate one another without any form of violence or hatred, and to see themselves as collaborators and not as enemies.

### 7.3.

Economic development is crucial in every human society because it deals with the production and distribution of goods for the good of the society. For a society to develop economically, special analytical skill is required in the field of entrepreneurship. Philosophy will go a long way to help in developing the economy of Nigeria. Azenabor (2010) argues that:

Philosophy may not be a practical study or of immediate practical ability, but it contains what is finest and noblest in human life because it is concerned not with the production of material wealth, but with the advancement of the wealth of the mind.

It is glaring from Azenabor's statement that a clear developed analytical mind is what translates to a developed economy establishing the fact that a philosophical mind is needed in the field of entrepreneurship. Onwuka et al. (2006) explain that "entrepreneurship has to do with the process of generating ideas and venturing into business risks for the purpose of making profit." Explaining the relationship between philosophy and entrepreneurship, Ejikemeuwa-Ndubisi (2015) opines,

It takes only a reflective mind to generate ideas, and it also takes a reflective mind to actualize these ideas. Philosophy has to do with creativity... We need philosophy to sharpen our creative mind for the purpose of economic growth and development in Nigeria. It is clear that all developed economies of the world have basic philosophical foundation. There is no doubt that an average Nigerian needs some philosophical training in order to bring about national economic development.

Considering the nature of philosophy, the importance of philosophical intelligence is vital to the economic growth of all developing society like Nigeria.

Nigeria as a nation has witnessed and experienced various political dispensations. Politics, as played in Nigeria, is considered a dirty game tainted with many unscrupulous activities such as vote selling and buying, political violence and many other sacrilegious activities with a capacity of defiling any spiritual individual. Philosophy intelligence is required to play important role in Nigeria's political arena if good governance is to be ensured, and if good policies that would affect the lives of the people positively is to be realized. Azenabor (2010) argues that philosophers are in the better position to govern a state successfully, he asserts:

With their concern for values, goals, end of human society, human activity and the means of achieving these, the philosophers are better qualified to play the role of helping to determine societal value, development and progress.

Ruminating over the way politics is being played in Nigeria, Ejikemeuwa-Ndubisi (2015) states that "philosophy will go a long way towards helping Nigerian politicians to desist from the politics of acrimony and bitterness."

## 8. Conclusion

Considering the importance of philosophy to Nigerian society, it is vital for the instructors of the course to teach it in such a way that the students will see how it affects their individual problems. It is equally important to take into cognizance that ancient Greek philosophy lays the precedents for medieval and modern philosophy. Teaching ancient Greek philosophy in the twenty-first century Nigeria presents a great challenge to not only the instructor but also to the students of the course. Various methods of teaching have been adopted but generally, the conventional method used by many instructors of ancient Greek Philosophy to make the study of the course relevant to the interest of their students is by presenting and explaining the views of historically important philosophers and their philosophical tenets. The instructors introduce the students to the theories and arguments presented by these Greek philosophers. Ordinarily, this teaching method is suitable for the students who are interested in history, ancient and medieval. On the other hand, if the students fail to ascertain the significance of such historical studies in relation to their personal life, their interest in the course may possibly diminish if not totally lost.

Since philosophy deals with fundamental life important questions, it is imperative for the tutor to use a technique that will avail the students to integrate into their lives the real perception of the ancient Greeks on the fundamental philosophical

questions concerning life. This method focuses on assisting the students to acquire the wisdom necessary that makes meaningful life possible. Analysing this method, Duerlinger (2011) considers it as an approach that is "relevant to the goal of changing the society in which students live." This is important, according to Duerlinger, because "significant change in society is likely to occur when its youth is provided with a truly liberating education of the sort envisioned by Plato's Socrates." Students of this course should be taught in a way that will encourage, inspire and stimulate them to ask themselves the fundamental philosophical questions which they must have asked prior to their becoming students and such as those asked by the Greeks as well as studying different ways the Greeks employed reason to answer the questions which will help them to formulate their own solutions.

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