

**THE PRINCIPLE OF “REFL-ACTION” AS THE BASIS
FOR A CULTURE OF PHILOSOPHY IN AFRICA**

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1. Introduction

This essay is a child of deep and concerned worry that the continent of Africa, the acknowledged “cradle of civilization”, has continued to sink deeper into the myth of the “civilizing mission”. Africa’s cultural fixation has refused to be amenable to both piecemeal and holistic solutions. This paper argues that the concern of philosophy in Africa in the past 3 or 4 decades has centered on the philosophy of culture, but that the greatest challenge facing contemporary philosophy in Africa is for Philosophers and other scholars to develop a culture - “culture of philosophy”. This imperious need for a culture of philosophy would be brought about by the principles of “refl-action” – thinking-to-act! The paper argues that in the philosophy of culture, philosophers have spent time, energy and intellectual resources “reflecting” on culture. However, the paper suggests that the best way to UNDERSTAND all we have done within the sphere of the “philosophy of culture” is to DEVELOP a “culture of philosophy” the essay shows that the type of rot and decay in Africa demands that philosophy bridges the hiatus between violence and passivity in order to motivate the kind of reasoned-action from the citizenry, which would bounce the continent out of inferiority complex social-political fixation, forever. This would make philosophy in Africa to transform from a *discipline* (or a subject) *into a way-of-life*. And what does culture mean but the way of both essence and existence for and of a people?

Philosophy, academic philosophy, is a trapped discipline; trapped in its own vicissitudes. Academic philosophy has become an attempt to enthrone controversy and weirdness in an attempt to remain relevant. Unfortunately for us in Africa, many of us have been caught-up in the spinning web of the theoretics, while some of those that navigate towards praxis in their thoughts and writings have no idea how that praxis would become practical productive purpose. The saddest part of our scholarship odyssey is that some of us are still trying to outdo the western scholars in clumsy, difficult and unintelligible diction. Unlike the Cartesian desire for “clear and distinct” perception, we have tended to imagine that it is more philosophical when it is more sophisticatedly couched in bombastic words (am I falling into the same pit?)

In his book, *The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection In And Beyond African Philosophy*, Innocent I. Asouzu captures the need to draw a synergy between ideas and action in the following words:

The ultimate aim of any authentic philosophizing subsists, therefore, in changing ideas such that through the possession of new and better ideas, human beings can affect changes in the world through their actions . . . expressions can easily turn to empty and worn out cliches unless we are able to translate these ideas into action and match words with deeds. (6,10)

There is no doubt that Asouzu here displays, like some of us, that we are students of Karl Marx, who, in the 11th of his *Theses On Feuerbach had* written that “the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it” (65). If there is anywhere this “change” should transit from “made-point” to ‘carried out action’, it is in Africa, where political, religious, economic, scholarly, in fact, cultural processes and institutions have been deliberately created to encourage (and sustain) a culture of docility, indifference, ignorance, surrender

and fear. For over four decades, philosophizing in Africa has been a battle over/with/about culture, especially Africa's own cultures. While we lamishly accepted western cultures as their philosophies, it took time, excruciating efforts and energy to bring our own to the lofty pedestal erected by academic philosophy

This essay would briefly look at some of those things we had to do in order to "show" or "prove" that Africa "has" a philosophy. Our discussion thereby would not submit that it was unnecessary while it lasted. Rather our interest would be to note that what Africa needs now is no longer a philosophy of culture (a philosophizing on culture), but a culture of philosophy. This desire and demand for a culture of philosophy is given a fillip by the cultural ("culture" understood in its totality) fixation and quagmire which Africa finds herself, and (more importantly) by both the perpetrating and the victims. Their lamentations there so been have permeating and recurrent that they have almost acquired the status of being solutions *as such!* It has become such that to solve a problem in Africa, all you need is to complain and lament about it!!! It has become a refrain in the dirge over Africa-he acknowledged cradle civilization.

Of course, a part of this essay will (unfortunately, inevitably, and painfully) capture some of what we have called "cultural fixation". But the difference is that it would do so by looking at the institutions, processes, structures, and occurrences that have conspired to maintain this state of affairs in Africa. The aim of the seeming rehash of what we all know, and which gnaws at the liver of the citizens of Africa is to note specific areas and issues which make a culture of philosophy inevitable

David Walsh, in his paper, "Reflections on the Nature of Modernity" writes about 'making efforts to break free of the tyranny of conventional perspectives. "Without such detachment we run the danger of misreading or disrespecting the prolific historical studies available to us" (107). And the truth is that the

tenacious hold of “conventional perspectives” on our psyche has been overbearing. Some of our musings in this essay may appear unconventional, even unorthodox, but they are geared towards motivating actions, actions grounded on practical attitudes. Like the postmodernists, we call for a thousand flowers to bloom; we call for pluralism; instead of subjecting ourselves to the hegemony of modernity.

After capturing in brief the characteristics and content of the philosophy of culture, we shall proceed to expose and explore the cultural fixation in Africa. We believe that the philosophy of culture, we shall proceed to expose and explore the cultural fixation in Africa. We believe that the philosophy of culture has circulated around the truncated activities of *interpreting* and *analyzing* our cultural fixation, when we believe that only a clear statement of *what to do* and *how to do it* is required to bounce us out of inferiority complex, forever. We equally believe that philosophy is (obviously and inevitably) crucial in this attempt. However, for philosophy to play this role successfully, it must transit from its questioning and interrogating of culture to become a culture as such.

However, while the philosophy of culture has largely been undertaken via reflection, the culture of philosophy is anchored on our novel philosophizing principle of “refl-action”, the “think-to-do” principle. This principle is not absolute, but it is ultimate enough to constitute the basis for the type of conscious action required for *change* in our condition. We hope to significantly get the African to “think downwards”; that is, to think towards his hands and legs. In other words, to think actionable thoughts, instead of just lamenting. This paper discusses the strategies and the institutions that can help create this culture of philosophy/philosophizing in Africa. Refl-action harmonizes and bridges the lacuna between idea and matter. In the process of reflection on idea and matter, a hiatus usually appear in the sequence; refl-action

transforms (or better still, transfers) the former into the latter, and makes the former a concrete objectivized reality. On the other hand, refl-action enables matter to provide for idea a basis/ground/focus for thought, without which thoughts would not only be concept-less, but equally content-less.

2. Philosophy of Culture

In a recent essay, “A Re-Evaluation of the Relation Between Culture and Philosophy”, we have ruminated on (questioned) the ground upon which we stood to make the usually sweeping statement: “culture is not philosophy”. Our hermeneutic and phenomenological analysis of this expression showed that if we swallow that position, hook-line-and-sinker, if we accept it without modification and exception, while of course, agreeing with the proposition that “philosophy can be culture”, we could find ourselves, in many instances, with the bizarre conclusion that “philosophy cannot be philosophy”! The relation between culture and philosophy has been the subject of philosophical reflection for a long time, especially in Africa, during the dawn of the famous Great Debate on the possible existence of African philosophy.

The understanding of “philosophy” in terms of an academic discipline that arrived in Africa only via the ship of colonial education, helped to both encourage and discourage different perceptions of the relationship between culture and philosophy. In an attempt to prove to the Caucasians that philosophy is not an academic discipline, that philosophy is a critical reflection on the problem of existence in any and every society, some African philosophers were compelled to beat a sort of intellectual retreat to pristine Africa in search of philosophical specimen, which would show that traditional Africa, uninterrupted by slavery and colonialism, also “had” or “did” philosophy. And in doing so, cultural elements became readymade conceptual tools. It was a response to the exigency of the time. However, the results were not absolute truths!

On the other hand, the return to traditional Africa in search of philosophy by the modern professional philosophers led to the rejection of cultural elements from yore by the analytic modern African philosophers and western philosophers, on the ground that they were mere myths, legends and dynastic fables.

Olusegun Oladipo was one African philosopher that tried to bridge the divide between the “traditionalists” and what he called “the analytic challenges. In his book, *The Idea of African Philosophy*, he argues that although the African should not surrender to ‘cultural imperialism”, he should also recognize the fact that his culture could be assessed with alien frameworks. He separates two issues relating to the attitude of the African philosopher to his people’s heritage. For him:

The two issues which the traditionalist conflate are the question of whether modern African philosophers should be engaged in the study of the traditional beliefs of their people and that of whether there is any justification in employing so-called alien criteria in assessing these beliefs. (52)

He grants the traditionalists the right to pursue the first issue, but on the second, he argues that traditional beliefs/ cultures should submit to assessment by alien conceptual criteria. Of course, the former relates to philosophy as a cultural particularity and philosophy as a universal activity.

However, Oladipo’s insistence that African culture submit to alien assessment meets with a paradox: the attempt to bring African philosophy into a universality by allowing it submit to alien evaluation is not done via a universal criterion/criteria; the evaluation is carried out by another philosophy “born of” another culture; that is, it is done with a particular cultural framework. However, this paradox is not a condemnation to the radical relativism that makes communication and dialogue impossible. What we reject, because of the conflicts which regimentation has

engendered globally in the past is a situation where one culture becomes a measuring moral ruler for the others. Assessment, appraisal and evaluation are better done by each culture, but on the basis of our common humanity.

We have decided to behave like postmodernists and save ourselves the torture of definitions, especially of philosophy and culture. We may, like Socrates, feign ignorance and say that we do not know what both philosophy and culture mean, but that we have ideas of what they may mean, which we can only lay bare in the process of our discussion. Culture is so total (and totalizing) that it appears to embody everything. Do we go way back to 1871 and to Edward B. Taylor's conception of culture as a "complex whole" (7, *Primitive Culture*)? Or should we go with Clyde Kluckhohn and Alfred I. Kroeber in their conception of culture as "patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinct achievement of human groups . . ." (357, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*)? But our interest is not really to join the infinite horizon of definition and understanding of what the term "culture" is. That would be an endless search. In the paper, "On the Question of Culture: A Critical Examination of the Odo and Ezeugwu Cults in Enugu State, Nigeria" as well as in the book, *Odo Occultism in Enugu State: Confronting A Contrasting Culture*, I have tried to capture some of the nuances in the conception of culture. However, according to William Sweet, in his "Human Rights, Social Responsibilities, and the Preservation of Cultures".

By "culture" I do not mean just the artistic and intellectual work of a group, or ethnicity or race; culture also includes that group's customs, its mores and moral principles, its laws, its manner of educating its citizens and its understanding of the nature of the spiritual life. Moreover, culture is not simply that which exists in a group or society at a particular moment. It is something that refers

to the past, characterizes the present, and which normally is open to a future and thus is dynamic and growing. (20)

Our interest here is to note the fact that philosophy in Africa has been a battle with and over culture. Isaac Ukpokolo states it obviously when he titles his work *Philosophy Interrogates Culture!* Of course, his main purpose is to show that philosophy is the standard meter for measuring reality, and if it can “interrogate” culture, of all totalizing realities, it means it can as well interrogate the present by forwarding and *backwarding* to the future and the past, respectively. Or doesn’t philosophy interrogate divinity? And even absurdity? To “interrogate” is to “question closely and aggressively”, and it creates the mental picture of a boss “demanding” immediate, unequivocal answer from a subordinate. But philosophy did not just interrogate culture in Africa; African philosophy had to fight a war of survival, not just interrogation, with its western variant. The latter vehemently argued that the former became possible when it (the latter) arrived via the instrumentality of colonial education. Or have we forgotten so soon that E.A. Ruch, in his popular essay. “Is There An African Philosophy?” had spoken of “a more future-oriented philosophy, based on past history and traditions . . .” (19) that would create the possibility of an African philosophy, rather than what he derogatorily referred to as “the details of ancient myths and anthropological peculiarities of African rituals and social structures . . .” (20).

The “why” and “how” of the idea of culture (philosophy of culture) created a gigantic edifice of philosophizing that dissipated a lot of energy on concepts/terms, with each trying to outdo and out pace the other, in a bid to present the best interpretation and understanding of the various issues that occupied our thoughts and demanded attention. For e.g., in his “Phenomenology and the Exposition of African Traditional Thought” Barry Hallen notes how the concept of “Traditional society” was a problem to those

caught up in the web of the phenomenology of Husserl's type. He examines the role that the descriptive tilt of the phenomenologist could play "in helping to describe or characterize traditional thought" (68). With his examination of the transcendent universalism inherent in Husserl and the idea of *experiencing* as the universal and necessary characteristics of every one categorized as "human being", which is characteristic in existentialist phenomenology, Hallen concludes that "by combining these with other phenomenological methods, it is possible to produce a novel and potentially valuable approach to the exposition of African traditional thought, and indeed all human beliefs. This approach is provisionally called "*cultural thematics*" (69, italics Hallen's). Of course, we see here that, although Hallen is trying to speak for the so-called "traditional thought", we notice a heavy dose of westernization in this attempt. Again, it does appear that the distinction between "thought" and 'philosophy' was of imperious necessity then.

This is the nature of the *philosophy of culture Africana*: a descent (or is it degeneration?) into playing with words, a "battle" of some sort, over culture. In a relatively recent conference (2010) Hallen, again continues the battle with concepts, especially in relation to Africa. In his presentation, "More than the Sum of its Parts: Holism in the Philosophy of Emmanuel Onyekwere Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe", he battles an explication of words like holism, globalization, etc., in an attempt to consider whether Africa is tilting towards individualism, *a la* West.

No wonder, in his interesting essay, "The Need for Conceptual Decolonization in African Philosophy", Kwasi Wiredu calls for an avoidance or reversal of what he (negatively) referred to as "the conceptual frameworks embedded in the foreign philosophical traditions that have had an impact on African life and thought"; while on the positive side, he sees the idea of conceptual decolonization as "exploiting as much as judicious the resources

of our own indigenous conceptual schemes in our philosophical meditations on even the most technical problems of contemporary philosophy” (22). Listing a plethora of about 58 concepts, Wiredu gives a recipe for decolonization to the African: “Try to think them through in your own African language . . .” (23). But unfortunately, as he notes, many African thinkers are not competent in their own indigenous languages!

There are several expressions of such battles over culture via the philosophical axis, but our interest is that over and above the philosophy of culture is the need, an urgent need, to develop philosophy itself into a culture; that is; to develop a culture of philosophizing in Africa, which would affect the entire gamut of culture itself-politics, economy, religion, etc. However, before this, we have to (painfully and briefly) capture certain of the conditions in Africa that have made the development of a culture of philosophy inevitable.

3. Africa’s Cultural Fixation

How I wish I do not have to write this section! This is because Africa’s cultural problems have become the refrain of a dirge song in (dis) honour of a ravaged continent. But should we not continue singing this song until we see definite changes in the destiny of the “cradle of civilization”? That Africa is in social, economic and political quagmire is very much obvious. Also, certain reasons have been advanced for this state of affairs — some sociological, some historical, some philosophical, some even biological and religious.

Of course, all the “whys” for Africa’s deplorable condition does (and indeed should) depend on what Stephen Korner, in his, *Metaphysics: Its Structures and Functions*, calls “immanent metaphysics”, which refers to the principles to which propositions about the world must conform to for acceptability. The desire to transform the beliefs of one’s subjectivity into intersubjectivity

constitutes one's "transcendent metaphysics". I do not intend to offer any explanation, interpretation or (understanding that will essay to be intersubjective, or to be truth. The important thing is that it is acceptable to me; and if it is acceptable to the "other", or "some other", it would only make it more acceptable and not more truthful. After all, in *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Robert Nozick had written that "the usual way of presenting philosophical works puzzles me. Works of philosophy are written as though their authors believe them to be the absolutely final words on their subjects" (xii). If what I am saying is understood, whether accepted, believed or rejected, my job would have been done. But I hope to transfer them from subjectivity to intersubjectivity.

The historical reason for Africa's state of cultural fixation is hinged on the twin humiliation of slavery and colonialism. These two stages Africa's existence have become ready-made "romanticized" excuses for why we have not been to (and sometimes will not) go beyond our present state. But how long will this lamentation last? Are we the only people who are always in a "learning process", but who never learns anything? Will someone who remains in Class 1 after ten years be still seen as being in a learning "process" or was India not colonized? Although, these two epochs had (still have) monumental impact on Africa's mental and physical development, we must note that they (especially slavery) did not just "happen" from without. They were propelled and standardized by accomplices from within. In *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Walter Rodney captures this in the following words:

The question as to who and what is responsible for African underdevelopment can be answered at two levels. Firstly, the answer is that the operation of the imperialist system bears major responsibility for African economic retardation by draining African wealth and making it impossible to develop more, rapidly the resources of the continent. Secondly, one has to deal with those

manipulated the system and those who are either agents or unwitting accomplices of the said system.. .None of responsibility for development form the shoulder of Not Africa only are there African accomplices inside the imperialist system, but every African has a responsibility to understand the system and work for its over throw. (33-34)

To continue our current spate of lamentation is to join the betrayal of some of our fathers. Unfortunately, about 40 years after Rodney wrote these lines, we have not only “not overthrown” the “system”, we have joined in building it into a fortress. This construction has been boosted by the activities of the “black skin, white mask” (apologies to Frantz Fanon) who took over leadership, nay rulership, at the dawn of- independence in almost all African states. For Chinweizu, in *The West and the Rest of us*, backwardness and weakness are man-made. And the contributions of Africans, past and present, to our backwardness today cannot be honestly and fruitfully erased from consciousness and our polemics” (399).

In my paper, “The Crisis of Identity and the Quest for Development in Africa: The Place of Leadership in creating in Creating a Culture”, I had laid the fault of the lack of development in Africa squarely on the type of those that politically manage African States. Citing examples with the founding fathers of the United State of America (Washington, Jefferson, Adams) and Abraham Lincoln (the civil war leader) as well as the Meij Dynasty of Japan, I noted how sheer leadership skill and commitment to the future bounced the two nations out of looming underdevelopment. The leadership question in Africa is made critically worrisome by the “imported” democratic system we operate. In fact, it is impossible for the democratic system to throw-up the type of leadership that is required to arrest the cultural decay bedeviling the continent; not with leaders who are changing their countries’ constitutions to enable them return to the

era of the Bandas, Mobutus, Eyademas, etc of yesteryears, not with leaders who siphon their countries resources abroad, not with leaders who deliberately create situations of injustice and then turn around to vote billions for security, not with leaders who have privatized governance in order to corner the profits there-from in the manner of Democracy's twin brother, Capitalism. In my essay, "Mercenaries in Governance: Towards a Philosophy of Punishment for Africa's Development", I had argued that the level of decay in Africa requires a Leviathan-like leader to arrest it, since the level of "kleptomanism" in Africa and the culture of impunity that characterized political and beaureacratc servants are similar to (if not worse than) the situation in the Hobbesian "state of nature" I further argued that the manipulative irrationality of democratic majority would ensure that attempts at "democratic arrest" would always crumble. I therefore, following my principle of maximum self-preservation, suggested that capital punishment for corruption should be retained in Africa. The crucial need for visionary and just leaders comes to the fore when we remember that people do not live life with the kind of rational rigor we express in philosophical works. So, it is the leaders that articulate the heart-beat of the people. Ike Odimegwu, in his book *Philosophic Foundations of Politics* captures this thought when he says that:

A cursory search among the midst of men may discover that few men are mostly aware with the awareness that is conscious of itself Some men are mostly aware with an awareness that is unconscious of itself Most men are mostly unaware with an unawareness that is unconscious of itself— regarding the philosophic principles that form the ground of their lives generally and their politics in particular. (112)

It might be that the people that constitute the first group in Odimegwu's characterization are the ones with the volitional dexterity to follow abstractions, to see what others are not seeing;

in a word, they are the leaders of men. Where are the Martin Luther King Jnr's of our world, who would stand at the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963 (before the famous "March on Washington D.C".) and "Have A Dream" of Barack Obama in 2009 as the first Blackman to occupy the White House as President of the U.S.A.

4. Between Democracy and Capitalism

In fact, the link between democracy and capitalism is known by any scholar who dares to visit the libraries and devour the literatures available. In my paper, "The Ontological Basis for the Failure of Liberal Democracy in Africa: A Phenomenological Rescue", I had argued that: one, democracy, especially the liberal variant, would continue to fail in Africa because it foists the individualist ontology of the West on the egalitarian, communalist ontology of Africans; and two, that the clamour for Africa to "democratize or be doomed" is actually a subtle way of telling the continent to continue to be "capitalistic or be capitulated"! Democracy has never been and will never be the best form of government — that is if there is anything like the "best" form of government.

The idea of the "best" form of government may have begun with Aristotle's classification of governments into 3: Monarchies, Aristocracies and Democracies. He, however, observed that the issue of which is the best is both cultural and experimental since it must depend on how the men (and women- even though Aristotle didn't believe women should rule) who carryout daily governmental power exercise it. No wonder, in his "Is there a 'Best' of Government?" Karl Loewenstein, argues that the works of sociologists such as Mosca, Pareto, Michels and Weber have shown that "no connection whatsoever exists between form of government (institutional arrangements) and social forces (the objectives for which they are, or can be used).... Both Monarchy and republic, as regards social determinants of political power, can

be and are — militaristic, phitocratic, capitalistic, bureaucratic, oligarchic, feudal” (320). African leaders have fallen for the blackmailing intimidation that democracy is not only the “best” form of government, but a *conditio sine qua non* for development — a position and claim which the Asian Tigers and Japan would debunk with understandable jocularly! As far as I am concern, Liberal democracy and capitalism are veritable sources of Africa’s current cultural grounding. Our continent has become a theatre of economic and political amusement. Imagine this: leaders, deceived by the bogos claim of democracy, turn around and deceive the people, steal the resources that are meant to take care of them, and then turn around to buy up state- owned corporations in the name of privatization and commercialization — two viruses of monopoly capitalism. If everyone would be rational in looking at democracy and capitalism, no one would touch them with a 10-foot pole.

In C.S. Momoh’s syndicated piece, “Critique of Democracy”, he jeered at democracy, by calling it unnatural. For Momoh;

In the entire gamut of social relations, matters and issues, democracy seems to be the odd man out. Who talks of democracy in a family or marital relationship? Who talks of democracy in cult matters? Is there any democracy in religion? Where is democracy in employer-employee relations? May be the military can boast of democracy? Or can anyone take a vote to bluff hunger, ageing and death? Even nature is not democratic. (24)

What we are doing is to point out and paint picture of institutions, ideas and practices that have put Africa in a fix which has necessitated the call for a culture of philosophy in the continent. The desire to find solutions to Africa’s ailing existence must go beyond practices because these practices have been founded upon certain ideas and propelled by certain institutions perceived as sacrosanct.

5. The State and the Society

The challenge of capitalism, democracy and leadership appear to centre around the state, while the synergy between it and the society is ignored. Everyone wants to control the state which is in existence for a few people. The Marxists have continued to insist that the state is an instrument of class oppression. And despite the anarchical nature of the Marxist interpretation of the origin and function of the state, their analysis appears, indisputable when we look at the economic situation on ground in Africa. The state has become a “necessary evil”. In Ludwig Feuerbach and *The End of Classical German Philosophy*, Frederick Engels writes that:

The first ideological power over mankind appears to us in the form of the state. Society creates for itself an organ for a safeguarding of its common interests against internal and external attacks. This organ is the State power. Immediately after its birth, this organ makes itself independent vis-à-vis society, and indeed increasingly so, the more it becomes the organ of a particular class and the more directly it enforces the rule of that class. (53)

There is, therefore, a tilt away from society that has become inimical to national integration. The strength of traditional, pre-colonial Africa was societal. In fact only from within the domain of the “societal” can a “culture of ...” anything be created. Only within society is the cultural meaningful and useful. This is why in his *A Matter of Principle*, Ronald Dworkin argues that members of a culture have “a shared vocabulary of tradition and convention” (231). As far as we concerned, the state is a subjective (mental) attempt to describe the “out there” of society. A state apparatus poorly organized and exercised usually would have that poverty revealed by societal forces. These societal forces emerge against negative values created by the state. This is why Frederick Engels, in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* writes that “[t]he forces operating in society work exactly like the forces of nature — blindly, violently, and destructively, so long as we fail to understand them and take them into account” (92). Part of the

cause of the crisis within African states is the utter neglect of society, from where and within which the state emerged and thrives, respectively.

6. Pretentious Religiosity

One of the greatest problems facing Africa today is the preponderance of the spirit of religion and the docility which it breeds. The misinterpretation of the place of religion in our society has led to monumental error, deception, and passivity. The error emanates from many religious leaders who patronize government houses, collect cars, land allocations and “brown envelopes” (money), and then keep quiet in the face of unimaginable maladministration. They forget that Jesus had to call Herod a “fox”, not “Your Excellency” (Luke 13:32). Jesus was so annoyed with what he saw in Jerusalem that He did not just try to “pray them out” (like we pretend to do in Africa), He had to take a whip to drive out those merchandising in the Temple (Matt. 2 1:12-13). It was not just by “preaching” and teaching” that Reverend Martin Luther King Jnr changed America. After preaching and teaching, Luther would normally mobilize Americans non-violent demonstrations and marches. Although, Luther abhors the use of violence, he does not accept docility either. In a paper written before and which appeared shortly after he was assassinated by James Earl Ray in Memphis, Tennessee, on 4th April, 1968, titled “Showdown to Non-Violence”, Luther wrote:

...violence is not only morally repugnant, it is pragmatically barren. We feel that there is an alternative, both to violence and to useless timid supplications for justices. We cannot condone either riots or the equivalent evil of passivity. And we know that non-violent militant action in Selma and Birmingham awakened the conscience of white America and brought a moribund, insensitive congress to life... we are taking action after sober reflection. We have learnt from bitter experience that our government does not correct a race problem until it is confronted directly and

dramatically. We also know, as official Washington may not, that the flash point of Negro rage is close at hand. (65)

The quotation above reveals that the idea of “showdown”, “militancy”, “confrontation”, etc are not strange bedfellows to non-violence. There is nothing that says that Africans must be violent in order to bring about change. All they need, as Luther’s words and works showed, is adequate planning and the preparedness to suffer some degree of inconvenience, or even death. Or, didn’t Luther pay the supreme prize?

Religious deception is used by leaders to cover-up their corrupt activities. Why should religion, a purely private affair, become a state concern? What do all these Pilgrim Boards exist to do? Why must leaders spend public money on pilgrimage? Why are our leaders stealing in the name of God? The result is that the citizens are cajoled into docility and passivity. They are told to “pray” and do nothing else! We are told to “pray for our leaders” and then allow God to punish them! The size of our religious spread is a million kilometers wide and only an inch deep! Religion is used to massage and opiumize our ego and we groan to the gavel as our exploitative rulers jockey for positions and our God-endowed commonwealth. But where are the Elijahs, Isaiahhs, John the Baptists, Desmond Tutus, and Tunde Bakares, of Africa? Where can we find the religion of liberation? And the theology of liberation?

However, it does look like there is something religious, something mystical, mysterious, unphysical, other-worldly about Man. The problem does appear to be man’s application, conception and exploitation of that “something”. Walter Rodney argues that “the Christian Church has always been a major instrument for cultural penetration and cultural domination” (32). One of the most shocking observations I ever made was at the Emma Castle in Cape Coast, Ghana. This Castle was the final point from where

millions of Africans were shipped to Europe after being abducted from their land. Yet, high above the Castle was a Church, where the slave masters from Europe pretentiously “worship” God. But have we seen what men do under and in the name of God? Again Rodney puts it clearly when he says:

The Church’s role was primarily to preserve the social relations of colonialism, as an extension of the role it played in preserving the social relations of capitalism in Europe. Therefore, the Christian church stressed humility, docility and acceptance. Ever since the days of slavery in the West Indies, the church had been brought in on condition that it should not excite the African slaves with doctrines of equality before God. In those days, they taught slaves to sing that all things were bright and beautiful, and that the slave master in his castle was to be accepted as God’s work just like the slave living in a miserable hovel and working 20 hours per day under the whip. (32)

In the midst of all these cases and dimensions of cultural fixation, what should Africa do? How do we forge ahead?

7. A Culture of Philosophy

What does it mean to develop “a culture of...” anything and what would be the goal of such developing? To develop a “culture of ...” anything would, of course, require time, institutions and processes. A culture of philosophy will integrate and reiterate our communalist ontology by ensuring that society does not continue to exist in both isolation and overdependence. In this position, we are not imagining that communalism is exclusive to Africa, rather, it is predominant. To create a culture of philosophy is to make philosophy a “societal” affair. But for those who have been weary of the numbness of philosophy, this philosophy (which culture we intend to create) is a “practical” philosophy.

We shall briefly sketch out what is meant by a “culture of philosophy”, then we shall look at the method(s) through which that can be achieved, and finally, we will discuss the Purpose or goal of this “culture”. To create a culture of philosophy is to diffuse the idea, knowledge and content of philosophy or the philosophical throughout a society. This may not be a call for a single culture, but one calling for the domination of a philosophy culture. Here, we are talking about the predominance of philosophy via cultivation. *The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 5th edition*, captures the type of “culture” we mean in the phrase “a culture of philosophy”, when its 3rd understanding of culture renders it as “development through regular, training, exercise, treatment, etc”. This offers us an interpretation of culture that is both localized and broad. It is localized because it is in this context that we talk about, for e.g., a “gay culture” or “student culture”. However, a “philosophy culture” would, perhaps, be the broadest culture characterization available, because in this sense, the comprehensiveness of philosophy and the philosophical, when it is cultured and nurtured, would cobweb the entire society.

By the phrase “culture of philosophy”, we intend to convey the impression that philosophy should become a “common perspective, custom or ethos” of the society. Considering the intricacies and complexities of our modern world, this conception urges philosophy to diffuse from the Ivory Tower to the town. Ronald Dworkin argues that the United States (U.S.) has a single common culture or what he calls “cultural structure”, which he says is based on a “shared language” (232-3). Although what he says is better understood as dominant instead of single culture, he captures what we mean. What we mean is that philosophy should become our culture. That is to say, we need to create that culture of philosophy. According to Will Kymlicka, “for culture to be embodied in social life means that it must be institutionally embodied- in school, media, economy, government, etc” (76).

8. The “How” of a Culture of Philosophy

Kymlicka’s view takes us straight to a consideration of how we can bring about a culture of philosophy in Africa. Through what medium or media can we create the institutions on which a culture of philosophy can be anchored? The school is a potent medium through which the “spirit” of philosophy can be spread. The creation of a culture of philosophy could (for obvious reasons) begin within the schools through the “studying of the discipline called “philosophy”, but it cannot be circumscribed or localized within that discipline, in particular or the schools, in general. In other words, it is neither constitutive nor exhaustive of a school or discipline. In the book, *Philosophic Foundations of Politics*, Ike Odimegwu says that “the fact should be noted that philosophy is, in some sense, not just a subject of study, but also (quoting A.E. Health’s “Introduction” to H. Hawton’s *Philosophy of Pleasure*) “a way of studying all subjects” (33). Our concern, however, is not the studious nature of philosophy, both of itself and other disciplines, but the fact that philosophy does not have to be “studious” in the sense of “bookish” or “schoolish”! For example if we remember that Gabriel Almond, in *Politics of Developing Area*, defines “political culture” as the “psychological dimension of the political system” (253), we understand this to mean the attitudes, beliefs, values, propensities which we develop towards, in and around politics. Philosophical culture, consequently, would refer to the attitudes and beliefs we have about the philosophical. A culture of philosophy involves the development of a certain mindset or attitude towards the philosophical; the latter itself referring to the critical, the holistic and the presuppositionless.

However, creating a culture of philosophy from the schools is an inevitable option. But we need to go beyond the level of “General Studies”. Some years ago in Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC) introduced two courses in philosophy which every undergraduate in any Nigerian University must pass in order to graduate. They are GST 102 (Philosophy and Logic) and GST

104 (History and Philosophy of Science). However, owing to certain a pecuniary interest, the latter (GST, 104) has, in many Universities, been hijacked by the Faculty of Science, defeating, in the process, the philosophic (critical) purpose for which it was introduced. Unfortunately in Nigeria, for example, all the students encounter “philosophy” for the first time at the tertiary level. But if we must create a philosophy culture, we need must, at least, begin at the post-primary school level.

Martin F. Asiegbu, for e.g. has wondered why there is such a limited number of Courses dealing with African Philosophy in many Philosophy Departments in Nigeria. He argues, in his paper, “The Paradigmatic Status of Western Philosophy in Africa: Hindrance to the Contextualization of African Philosophy” that the study of African realities are seriously undermined in these Philosophy Departments. But Asiegbu’s worry is of little size! For how many Universities in Northern-Nigeria have Departments of Philosophy? And why do they not have them? The answer is not too far-fetched: philosophy would give the monarchical North a radical jolt, which the conservative society is not willing to accept, accommodate or promote. The implication of this is that to desire, demand and declare a culture of philosophy is to get ready for intellectual and physical battles.

The single most influential institution in our world today is the media. The battle for the institutionalization of a culture of philosophy must equally (and mostly) be waged at the media level—radio, television, telephone, print, internet, etc. Someone once said that the Cable News Network (CNN) has made it impossible for a man and his wife to converse in the privacy of their room! This is a hyperbole expressing the permeating nature of the media. Philosophy in the media would lift the fear of examination prevalent in the schools and then create a free and relaxed atmosphere for the impartation of philosophical knowledge to the citizenry. The idea is to keep invading the citizen’s privacy

through the media with philosophical knowledge until it becomes a way of life. Anita Frankline and Ray Love, in their paper “Whose News? Control of the Media”, says that, “what is considered worth knowing about the world is defined and controlled by the West. And the Media in all its globalized form can be seen as an agent in this enterprise” (546). At least, we can, to some extent, control what goes on air in our media in Africa today. If we remember that the acquisition of knowledge by our post-independent leaders was the singular most-important motivation for decolonization, we see that this point is very germane.

They may not be many in comparison with the population, but the Priests of the Roman Catholic Church are crucial in the creation of this culture. When we check the number of people that listen to them daily and realizing that they all have at least first degree in philosophy, they must be part of this indispensable army of philosophy sensitizers. This would be a more significant mission and goal to pursue, instead of cajoling the people into docility and passivity, and struggling to go for Pilgrimage in Jerusalem with an intensity that dwarfs the desire to go to heaven. No where is in dire need of a theology of liberation more than Africa. Interestingly, the term “Liberation Theology” was first used in 1973 by a Peruvian Roman Catholic Priest, Gustavo Gutierrez, and the whole idea was for the Gospel of Jesus Christ to arise to confront the poverty and oppression that was ravaging Latin America. Although some people in the church rejected the idea of a Theology of liberation they all appear to agree that something sinister is going on in today’s unjust economic and social conditions created by industrialized societies. In their paper, “Towards a New Paradigm for Christian Education in Nigeria”, J.C.A. Agbakoba and Emmanuel Ibuot underscore the central role played by the Catholic Priests in the early missionary days, for the evolution of both Christian and secular education in Nigeria, both at the formal and informal spheres. For them, the Christian education process “ideally aims at building up the totality of the

human being, enabling the individual to function effectively, spiritually, morally, socially, politically, scientifically an according to that person's capabilities" (141). Our contention is that the philosophical dimension of this education; both formally and informally, should become a cardinal part of their preaching, for we need to survive on earth first before going to heaven. These priests should exploit the influence and respect they enjoy from their followers to spread the philosophy "fever" and create the culture of it.

If the priests reach out to those who are within the high and low rungs of the society, the teachers (University lecturers) are saddled with the task of raising the men and women that would control the machinery of the state in the nearest and farthest future. And so, what these youths imbibe while in school will determine, to a large extent, how they would relate to society using the state instrument. They imbibe these things from what we say to them and how we relate to and treat them. Vincent

Harding, writing an "Introduction" to a 2009 edition of Walter Rodney's magnum opus, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, tells us that "with Rodney the life and the work were one, and the life drives us back to recall the essential themes of the work... Rodney envisioned and worked on the assumption that the new development of Africans and other dependent peoples of the 'periphery' would require what he called 'a radical break with the international capitalist system'..." (xii,xiii). Our values must reflect in words and actions, so that the young people can get out of school to rebuild a polity yawning for salvaging. We must not cheat what we teach! We must make our listeners and readers politically aware, sensitive and active. We must get them to get involved, to "do something"!

9. Refl-action and the Culture of Philosophy

This leads us to consider the crux of this paper — the purpose for a culture of philosophy. A culture of philosophy is necessary because the philosophy of culture has been “interpreting” culture, but for us in Africa, we need to “change” culture! The culture of philosophy is built around the practical philosophical principle of “refl action”. To “refi-act” is to think to act. It is to “think-downwards”, not to “think upwards”! It is a commitment to think-out a practical solution, to think of what to do, how and when to do it. Refi-action is not to think before acting, neither is it unguided action! It is an admission that thoughts without action or thinking without acting is docility while acting without (simultaneously) thinking is foolhardiness and arbitrariness! In his book, *The Method and Principles of Complementary Reflection*, Innocent I. Asouzu writes that the goal of any philosophizing or philosopher is to be “capable of translating changed ideas into action.., in changing ideas such that through the possession of new better ideas human beings can effect changes in the world through their actions”(6).

The crucial role “refl-action” would play in developing the type of philosophy culture through which Africa would change for the better, becomes evident when we remember Heidegger’s musings on “thinking”. For Heidegger, in his “What is called Thinking”? Heidegger argues that sometimes, it may happen that “man wants to think, but can’t” (345). It is the desire to “act”, to “do something” that gets us thinking. Our interest, however, is not just on “what is called thinking” but on “what calls for thinking?” What calls for thinking is actionable things, issues, experiences, etc. written between (1944 and 19459) at a period when the world was at war (World War II 1939-1945), some of Heidegger’s thoughts are explicitly relevant for us in Africa today! For him:

What is most thought-provoking? How does it show itself in our thought provoking time? Most Thought-Provoking is that we are

still not thinking- not even yet, although the state of the world is becoming constantly more thought-provoking. True, this course of events seems to demand rather that man should act without delay, instead of speeches at conferences and international conventions and never getting beyond proposing ideas on what to be, and how it ought to be done. What is lacking, then, is action, not thought. (346)

From the above, it is obvious that this is what is facing Africa today, how to go beyond meetings, conventions, grand-speeches and more thoughts, to articulate actions.

The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 5th edition, defines “reflect” in various ways but it is the 4th definition that is important for our discussion: “to consider or think deeply about something”; and goes on to define “reflection” as “long and careful consideration of something”. In the “philosophy of culture”, we have been involved in a tortuous and long consideration of the challenges in Africa. We have been in “deep thoughts”, without results. It does appear that these thoughts have been what they are – just thoughts, mere speculating thoughts about the nature, dimension, causes, etc of Africa’s crisis. It is time, therefore, for us to move from “refl-ection” to refl-action”, i.e., to “think -to-do”! This should be the dawn of a “culture of philosophy”.

The major difference between philosophy in Africa and in, say the West or East is in the way in which theory finds expression and application in practice in the latter duo. An average American President, no matter the Party or ideological orientation, would always remember, recognize and pay allegiance to the legacies of John Locke, Benjamin Franklin and the Pragmatist-trio of John Dewey, Charles Sanders Pierce and William James. In France, Rousseau and Voltaire loom larger than life! Only a development of “refl-active” (active thinking) can lead to the emergence of a

culture of philosophy, which will in turn make us to distill what crosses our social, economic, political (in a word, cultural) space.

“Refl-action” would lead to the exertion of popular pressure, without which our leaders would continue with “business as usual”. Our leaders always get terrified whenever the word “revolution” is mentioned. In Karl Marx, revolution is the means through which the modern proletariat would smash the oppressive capitalist machinery, seize the means of production from the bourgeoisie, transform it into public ownership and then liberate the entire society in the process. In Frantz Fanon, the African revolution was to free Africa from the shackles of colonial and imperial domination.

Today, Africa is in dire need of another kind of revolution, a revolution that would liberate them from themselves and the bondage and burden placed on her by her own children, acting as agents of the capitalists in the West. Our leaders are always afraid of revolution because they don't want their claws to be dislodged from where they have dug them into the people's resources and psyche! They blackmail us with peace and the evils of violence, yet they don't count the number the people who die because they have stolen the money meant to equip our hospitals, build roads, provide clean water, etc. How many people die on the road because the man who was given the contract embezzled the money? In an earlier paper, -“The End of History and the Crisis in Marxism: What Future for Ideology Revolution?” I had been skeptical of both the possibility and need for a bloody revolutionary uprising in the world because of what happened to the Marxist movement. However, in Africa today, as we see our leaders alienate themselves more and more from society and subject the people to avoidable pauperism (in the midst of plenty), the idea of forcefully sweeping these cabals out, has become not only possible, but needful, urgently needful!

In that paper I had penned down the following thoughts: “...violent revolution-not strictly for socialism and capitalism-can, and in fact should, occur in the developing countries, especially in Africa, where the masses are continually getting tired of decades of economic deprivation and wealth siphoning by their so-called political leaders, nay, rulers...” (90). About 15 years after I penned down these thoughts, the revolutionary sweep that is now known as the “Arab spring” began in Tunisia (December 2010) and consumed Tunisia’s sit-tight ruler, Zine Abidine Ben Ali on January 14, 2011. In my paper, “An Orthodox Marxist’s Interpretation of the Revolutionary Dynamics in North Africa”, I had ex-rayed these developments, from Tunisia to Egypt, from Libya to Syria, and concluded that although these revolutions do not classically “Marxist”, they have proved that revolution do not have to be dressed in Marxist toga to be given a hearing. Africa’s corrupt and/or sit-tight rulers need to be swept away by masses-led revolutionary tides!

It is easy to call the Niger-Delta militants, in Nigeria “terrorists”, but those who have ravaged their land and stolen their oil wealth are “honourables”, honourables who would (within one week) pass bills allocating funds to themselves long after they have finished “breathing down our necks”, yet they would not (in 8 years) pass the Freedom of Information (FOI) Bill. Let no one blackmail as again with democracy and peace. Ghana is sober today because of the action of John Jerry Rawlings. This is what all the states in Africa needs. Now, even if the violent change is not implemented, its possibility must be seen to be in the air. It would keep our leaders on their toes. That was exactly what the MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) Game achieved during the period of the Cold War between the U.S.A and the then U.S.S.R. The fear of a nuclear confrontation produced a balance respect that ensured that the two super-powers never acted with impunity. And aside from the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 and the U.S. invasion of Grenada in 1983, no major incidents occurred between

them. We must project the spectre of revolution to make our leaders realize that we are infuriated by what is going on in the society.

In *The West and the Rest of Us*, Chinweizu captures the need for militancy when he says that it was the foundation of what we now, enjoy as “independence”. He says that although up till World War II, anti-colonial struggle was basically an elitist “genteel petitioning”, but after 1945, another generation emerged that promised to be “aggressive”, and combative like all ranks and files, they promised to be impatient, rowdy and loud, to be militant and even violent” (115). I don’t know why our present day generation should not arise and threaten these agents of neocolonialism that call themselves our rulers the same way Mau Mau treated the colonial rulers in Kenya.

The truth is that this is no time for speculative philosophy. It is a luxury we cannot afford in these days and occurrences. We must “refi-actively” think of what to do, and immediately. We refuse the romanticized reforms that they are offering us in order to placate the poignant pounding of our pulses. Writing an “Introduction” to George Bull’s translation of Nicolo Machiavelli’s classic, *The Prince*, Anthony Grafton writes that “Machiavelli’s political life, in other words, began and ended in revolution. No wonder he saw the political order as so fragile, and insisted that its preservation must take precedence over the scruples of tender, traditionalist minds (xx). This is sheer conservative, traditional recession. It is this traditional backwardness that made some paid Oghara youths in Delta State, Nigeria to rise up in defense of James Ibori, the ex-governor of the State who was wanted by Nigeria’s EFCC (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission) to answer charges of corruption! Unfortunately for the Oghara youths, their sponsored protests could not affect the British authorities who had jailed not only Ibori but equally his wife for corruption.

Everyone does agree that Africa does need urgent socio-political surgery, but just what to do appears to be the big issue. For those who may wonder why we cannot go by, say, Mahatma Gandhi's "satyagraha" (non-violent struggle), we can only respond by saying that the principle of "refi-action" is not rigid. If non-violence would dislodge the cabals that are running Africa like a capitalistic business, then no problem. But it is highly improbable, unless we are not interested in arresting the decay. For according to E.K. Ogundowole, in his book *Echoes of Social Change*:

A social reform plays a negative role, especially if it intends to disunite the radical social groups in the society, twist their political consciousness, divert them from social-political struggle. Experience shows that the ruling group in any society always strive to give that type of direction to social reforms. Such is the nature of their reform traps! (33)

But despite the urgency of the need, "refl-action" insists that thinking-acting must avoid opportunism, since it has the capacity to disrupt what has been set in motion. Opportunism is the exercise of subjectivity without a correlation with objectivity. Indeed we cannot understand nonviolence unless we can also (simultaneously) articulate the concept of "violence".

It is necessary at this point to say few words about the non-violent solution that has been proposed to save the Nigerian state, which the powers that "be" do not want to accept. This non-violent but revolutionary approach has come in the form of the suggestion to re-federate the country and enshrine resource-control, though the convening of a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) that would draw a new Constitution (charter of existence) for the federating units. I have tried to look at the issues involved in this concern in my paper, "Transforming the Formless: the Inevitability of a New Constitution for the Survival and Development of Nigeria".

Those who reject the idea of an SNC argue that the National assembly constitutes “the sovereign” in Nigeria. They argue that the SNC is not tenable. But the issue is: has the National Assembly become “the Sovereign” in Nigeria or is it the People? And, why should Nigerians be compelled to accept the National assembly’s existence when the basis and grounds of their emergence and existence has not been justified? Or do we have to accept the measurement brought about by a ruler, when we are still questioning the validity of the ruler used for the measurement? How can we be “mouthing” *transformation* when we have not been properly *formed* (Constituted)? How can the Nigerian people be told to amend (or emend) a constitution they did not author? Who are the beneficiaries of what Deputy Senate President in Nigeria calls “feeding-bottle federalism”? Are we running a federal or a central Republic? In his paper, “Constitutional Transformation without the People” Roposekoni wonders how a President that calls on all Nigerians to be security officers would exclude the people from making the constitution by which they would live. The truth is that those who, using the powers of the state, deny the people the chance to re-federate are all the ones that hate Nigeria. We cannot continue to patch the leaking Nigerian state by a combination of deceit, blackmail and force, and expect that Nigeria would continue surviving. Or have we forgotten the Soviet Union, and Winston Churchill’s metaphor of an “iron curtain”? The SNC is a revolutionary demand. Can the National Assembly give us fiscal federalism?

A culture of philosophy would diffuse philosophical thinking from philosophy departments to departments of history, sociology, political science, communication, agriculture, medicine, literature, anthropology, etc., where they would begin to question the values, practices, mores, etc by which we have lived, not only when they are studying for Ph.Ds, but at all times. A culture of philosophy would make philosophical knowledge move from schools to homes, offices and religious organs and groups. In “refi-action”,

belief and intention receive external expression. For too long we have ruminated on the philosophy of culture; now, as historical needs demand, its time to create a culture of philosophy. And our society is waiting! I have made evaluations by looking at what I believe is the problem of Africa that has thrown up a challenge for philosophy or philosophically-minded scholars: the challenge of social thinking through what I have called “refi-action”. After all, didn’t C. Wright Mills, in *The Sociological Imagination* say that “to detect practical problems is to make evaluations? (102).

10. In Lieu of a Conclusion

In this conclusion, I am lost for words. And so I leave you in the inquisitive mind of Vincent Harding. Reflect on his questions and then “refl-act” on his declarations: He says:

Beginning with ourselves, beginning where we are, what must we tear down, what must we build up, what foundations must we lay? Who shall we work with, what visions can we create, what hopes shall possess us? How shall we organize? How shall we be related to those who raise the same questions in South Africa, in El Salvador, in Guyana? How shall we communicate with others the urgency of our time? How shall we envision and work for the revolutionary transformation of our own country? What are the inventions, the discoveries, the new concepts that will help us move toward the revolution we need in this land? Neither rhetoric nor coercion will serve us now. We must decide whether we shall remain crippled and underdeveloped, or move to participate in our own healing by taking on the challenge to re-develop ourselves, our people, our endangered nation and the earth. No one can force us toward this. By conventional measurements, there are no guarantees of success- as the blood of our martyrs and heroes, known and less known, like Walter Rodney and Frantz Fanon, Ruby Doris and Fanny Lou, Malcolm and Martin, fully testify. But there is a world waiting for us: indeed, many worlds await us. One is the world of our children, not yet born, of just beginning, but wanting to live, to grow, to become their best possible selves. This

will not happen unless, as Walter suggests, the center is transformed and fundamentally changed. That will not happen unless we are transformed, re-developed and renewed. The future of our children depends upon these rigorous transformations. (xxv)

It is amazing how we have succumbed to what Segun Oladipo calls “cultural surrender”. We do not believe that we could re-address any part of our cultural quagmire. We have completely succumbed to the myth of the “civilizing mission”. All that we care about are foreign direct investments (the well-known FDIs) in human and financial resources. Capital, financial capital, criss-cross the continents faster than the speed of light. The way we in Nigeria celebrates the coming of the “white man” to Nigeria with the so-called “investments” makes we wonder if we ever leaders that think at all, let alone have vision.

The level of economic recession in Europe is so deep that Europe is invading the so-called “Third world” in search of opportunities to make capitalistic investments in order to salvage, no matter how minimally, the depression in her economy-which have resulted in monumental loss of jobs. Does Africa think that Western governments are representatives of “Father Christmas”, who have been dispatched from the North Pole to give to the continent monies for lustful consumption? The way Nigeria’s Information Minister, Labaran Maku, was relishingly celebrating the fact that 79 foreign companies bided for electricity distribution in Nigeria, as a proof that Nigeria is still an “investment haven”, smacks of palpable ignorance. Of course, why won’t Nigeria be an investment haven, when it is a country of impunity, an amusement park of some sort, where people do as they please, where companies, including foreign ones, do not pay taxes?

According to Rodney “The things which bring Africa into the capitalist market system are trade, colonial domination and capitalist investment... the investment in the African economy has been increasing steadily in the present century (30). Over 40years after Rodney penned down these words, the issue of western

investment in Africa is no longer discussed in terms of “increase”, but in terms of a “wholesale take over” of Africa’s economy. “Refl-action” is not just about thinking of what is do-able in principle; rather, it is a principle of not just what is do-able or can be done, but what should be done. It is a manifestation of an immanent metaphysical attitude of practicality.

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