

# International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH)

Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

Vol. 9 (1), S/No 32, JANUARY, 2020: 140 -154

ISSN: 2225-8590 (Print) ISSN 2227-5452 (Online)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v9i1.14>

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## Implications of Hegel's Dialectical Evolution of the Spirit to the Problem of Shortcut Mentality in Nigeria

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### Abstract

This article focused on Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit and its implications to shortcut mentality in Nigeria. Hegel's evolution of the spirit is a process of change and human development, which moves from the individual to the state and then to the absolute. This process identifies and represents the world's civilization as a gradual realization of the absolute. The fundamental questions are: What actually is Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit? What is shortcut mentality? Has Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit any implication for shortcut mentality in Nigeria? This article argued and insisted that Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit has remarkable implications for shortcut mentality in Nigeria. A critical look at Nigeria today simply portrays a country beset by shortcut mentality in her quest for civilization. This is evidenced in many contemporary issues menacing our country today. The issues of get rich quick syndrome, quick fixes, examination mal-practice, Ponzi schemes, betting sites, corrupt practices, utopian prosperity gospel etc. are easily noticeable in almost every part of Nigeria. All these ills which have led to the malfunctioning of the economic, religious, educational, agricultural, and administrative sectors of Nigeria, are certainly the offspring of shortcut mentality. This shortcut mentality presupposes people not following the right and gradual path of change and development. It entails abhorrence of labour as well as suffering. Hence, the researchers employed analytical and hermeneutical methods to explore the implications of Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit to shortcut disorder in Nigeria. This article argued that application of Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit contributes enormously in combating the problem of shortcut mentality

in Nigeria. Hence, the researchers recommended creativity, mutual recognition as well as positive attitude to labour and suffering as solutions to the issue of shortcut mentality in Nigeria.

**Key Words:** Hegel, Spirit, Shortcut, Change and Nigeria

### Introduction

The reality of change in the world is an indisputable fact. Scientific as well as technological advancement is a clear evidence of change and development. History attests that despite the permanence in nature, there is also change in nature; for things come into existence, grow, develop and at certain point go out of existence. The issue of change is a very controversial issue among philosophers like Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Marx, etc. Such philosophers have made enormous contributions towards understanding the process of change. However, this article centres only on Hegel's account of the process of change, precisely his dialectical evolution of the spirit. According to Hegel (2001e): "[the] Spirit is at war with itself; it has to overcome itself as its most formidable obstacle. That development which in the sphere of Nature is a peaceful growth is, in that of spirit, a severe, a mighty conflict with itself. What Spirit really strives for is the realization of its Ideal being" (p. 71). This implies that the spirit is not stagnant until it realizes its Ideal being. Obviously, Hegel was greatly influenced by Kantian and Post-Kantian Epistemology and Metaphysics. A close look at his philosophy demonstrates the fact that he moved away from the discussion of change and permanence of the Greek philosophers, and traced the development of the spirit in a manner that represents the civilization of the world as a realization of the absolute or the Ideal being. For him, this process of development has an unfolding and unending nature. It does not just occur at once.

Hegel's evolution of the spirit really traces the course of human civilization from the individual self (subjective) to the society (objective) and tries to create a synthesis. The researchers argue that such should be the process of change. Hence, any meaningful change will be both personal and societal. Also, Hegel (2001e) stated that "the history of the world therefore, presents us with a rational process... and that the World of intelligence and conscious volition is not abandoned to chance" (pp. 22 - 23). This implies that there is a proper way or process of doing things. However, there are clear evidences of people not following the due process of doing things, especially in our country Nigeria. The basic questions are: Why do some people always grow impatient of following the due procedure? Why do people always wish to achieve their goals through easy means not minding the consequences of their actions on other people and society in general? These and other related issues are to be given serious attention in this article. Hence, this study uses analytical and hermeneutical methods to examine the following: Hegel's Dialectics and Organicism, the nature of Hegel's Spirit, the major outlines of the development of the spirit and the implications of Hegel's philosophy of the spirit to the problem of shortcut mentality in the world, particularly in Nigeria.

### Analysis of Hegel's Organicism and Dialectics

It ought to be noted that Hegel's philosophy of spirit is better understood from the perspective of organicism and dialectics. The questions that quickly come to mind at this juncture are these: What is organicism? and what is dialectics? For Hegel, organicism is the view that the universe is a single vast organism. The German Idealists, namely: Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel (of which Hegel stands as the most influential) tried to surmount all forms of dualism with organic philosophy. Hegel's organicism tries to bridge the finite with the infinite. It

emphasizes that only the whole is real. Hegel therefore sees the world as a one vast living organism.

Hegel uses Dialectics as a tool for his organic system. On this, Beiser (2005) opined that, “the dialectics is a metaphysics whose main task is to determine the general structure of being” (p. 161). This entails that dialectics has to do with the entire structure of a being, and not the isolated parts of a being. Describing further the nature of dialectics, Hegel states: “It is in this dialectic as it is here understood, that is, in the grasping of opposites in their unity or of the positive in the negative, that speculative thought consists.” (Hegel, 2001d, p. 21). From this perspective, it entails unity in the midst of oppositions. Commenting on Hegel’s dialectics, Lawhead (2002) noted that “dialectics refers to the way our ideas develop through a process of conflict and opposition” (p. 362). Hegel’s dialectics, therefore, consists in three movements or stages, popularly known as the thesis, antithesis and synthesis. These three stages ought to be followed in the process of change. They are the essential parts in the process of change and development. Hegel (2001a) further argued that any “Philosophical exposition, faithfully following its insight into the nature of speculative truth, must retain the dialectical form” (p. 25). Thus, the development of any organism including the absolute is “dialectical, consisting in three movements: inchoate unity, differentiation, and reintegration or unity-indifference” (Beiser, 2005, p. 265). Consequently, Hegel’s development or evolution of the absolute spirit incorporates the dialectical process or movement.

### **The Concept of Spirit or *Geist***

The term ‘spirit’ appears several times in Hegel’s philosophy. In the ordinary sense of the word, spirit means “a constituent element of an individual, something airy or vaporous” (Mautner, 2000, p. 537). It is seen as “a disembodied or incorporeal conscious being” (Runes, 1981, p. 299). Ordinarily, the spirit is quite immaterial and is opposed to that which is material.

The German word *geist* has been translated as ‘spirit’ or ‘mind’. Thus, in this article, both terms are used interchangeably. Many scholars have argued that the word *geist* as used by Hegel actually means ‘spirit’. Hegel is an idealist, and thus sees the spirit as the essential reality. In the words of Hegel (2001a):

Spirit is alone Reality. It is the inner being of the world, that which essentially is, and is per se; it assumes objective, determinate form, and enters into relations with itself, it is externality (otherness), and exists for self; yet, in this determination, and in its otherness, it is still one with itself—it is self-contained and self-complete, in itself and for itself at once, (p. 10).

Initially, Hegel thought of spirit as the spirit of a people or nation. Later, he treats spirit as that which underlay history, manifesting and revealing itself in history (world civilization). Actually, Hegel’s spirit is better understood from the point of view of the absolute, manifesting itself in the universe. For Redding (2015), “Hegel postulated a form of absolute idealism by including both subjective life and the objective cultural practices on which subjective life depended within the dynamics of the development of the self-consciousness and self-actualization of God, the *Absolute Spirit*.” However, it ought to be noted that Hegel’s spirit should not be seen solely as the externalization or manifestation of the absolute. Elaborating on this, Beiser (2005) stated that the “development of spirit, which proceeds through self-differentiation and self-opposition.... is higher than nature, because nature is only the externalization of the absolute, whereas spirit encompasses both its internalization and externalization” (p. 111). Thus, the spirit while revealing itself in the world is in a process

of development. Hegel treats the development of the spirit in three stages characterized dominantly by its dialectical movement. The stages are subjective spirit, objective spirit and the absolute spirit. These three stages are involved in the dialectical development of the spirit. These three stages are examined in the subsequent sections of this article.

### **Spirit in the Realization of the Individual**

The spirit comes into nature as the soul, because “Wherever there is Nature,” says Hegel, “the soul is its universal immaterialism, its simple 'ideal' life. Soul is the substance or 'absolute' basis of all the particularizing and individualizing of mind” (Hegel, 2001c, p. 5). The soul, which is an unconscious thought, is naturally determined to particularize, and this particularization of soul creates diversity in nature. The soul is particularized in the body, which is the antithesis and the externality of the soul. The result of this amalgamation of the soul with the body (corporeality) is the real soul, the individual subject ‘I’, which Hegel describes as consciousness.

According to Hegel, human consciousness starts the relation with the object with the categories of feelings (sensory) and then rises to the use of the categories of thought. And because it aims at raising the certainty of itself to truth, it rises to the level of self-consciousness, where the self realizes itself and the existence of others. So, “self-consciousness has its own feeling of self and its being for others, and has the general means of entering into relation with them” (Hegel, 2001c, p. 28). This results in the struggle for recognition among individuals, which leads to master-servant relationship. However, this struggle of self-conscious individuals grows to general self-consciousness, that is, “the positive knowledge of self in another self: each self as a free individuality has absolute independence” (Hegel, 2001c, p. 29). It is at this level that the unity of consciousness and self-consciousness, which Hegel calls reason, is achieved. Here, the individual can now clearly differentiate himself from others and as well appreciate the other as a free individual. Hence, the self can now be called spirit.

However, Hegel (2001c, p. 29) argued that the spirit, though it has recognized itself as an infinite generality (a free individual) is still finite, insofar as it is determined by itself. Thus, the spirit has to continue its process of realization in order to become infinite and attain its absolute fulfilment. What Hegel means is that though, the individual has recognized the existence of the other in the world; but still, its inclinations, passions, self-determination, interest, happiness and indeed the will are still at war with what Hegel calls ‘the practical ought’. Among various inclinations, feelings and passions, the will has to choose what is good for itself. Thus, the will makes happiness its goal. Furthermore, happiness, according to Hegel (2001c), “is the confused representation of the satisfaction of all drives, which, however, are either entirely or partly sacrificed to each other, preferred and presupposed” (p. 39). This means that the individual realizes its freedom from many inclinations by learning to choose between them, what is suitable to it as a subjective individual self. The individual has now realized himself and can exercise his freedom on himself and things which he can control, things which do not have their own self will. This is what Hegel calls the objective spirit.

### **Spirit in the Realization of the State**

As was already demonstrated in the previous section of this article, Hegel believes that the individual that knows his individuality as an absolutely free will, can only exercise this freewill on a thing devoid of subjective volition, that is, a property. The individual thinks that he can retain and give out as he wishes. But when two individuals, one wishing to give out

and the other to acquire the property coincide, a contract of agreement is needed. This leads to law governing the individual will.

However, the antithesis of this law arises as the morality of conscience. Here, “The free individual, who, in mere law, counts only as a person, is now characterized as a subject – a will reflected into itself so that, be its affection what it may, it is distinguished (as existing in it) as its own from the existence of freedom in an external thing” (Hegel, 2001b, p. 45). Elaborating further on this, Hegel (2001b) stated that:

...a man must possess a personal knowledge of the distinction between good and evil in general: ethical and religious principles shall not merely lay their claim on him as external laws and precepts of authority to be obeyed, but have their assent, recognition, or even justification in his heart, sentiment, conscience, intelligence, etc. The subjectivity of the will in itself is its supreme aim and absolutely essential to it (pp. 45 – 46).

The synthesis or the perfection of the above two contradictions (law and morality of conscience) is found in the moral life or social ethics. The social ethics, according to Hegel, is made up of the family, the civil society and the state. In the family, individuals are generated bonded by love and trust. However, these individuals grow independently and become persons. In order to satisfy their individual needs and wants, they move out to socialize in the society. In the course of this, they interact with other people in the society. Thus, the aim of the civil society is to help the individual to realize this system of wants in a universal general way. To do this, the civil society creates institutions such as the police and judicial administration. The State which is “the self-conscious ethical substance, the unification of the family principle with that of civil society” (Hegel, 2001b, p. 53), makes a constitutional law to assist the individuals and the civil society at large in the actualization of their goals. Obviously, laws are meant to maintain order in the society. Hence, Hegel (2001b) points out that, “The ethical substance is: (a) as 'immediate' or natural mind – the Family. (b) The 'relative' totality of the 'relative' relations of the individuals as independent persons to one another in a formal universality – Civil Society. (c) The self-conscious substance, as the mind developed to an organic actuality – the Political Constitution” (p. 48). All of these are very necessary in the process of development. Hegel further demonstrates how the individual will is realized in the organization of the state, such that the clash between various individual goals which begets chaos is avoided, and the state enables the individuals to realize their goals. Nonetheless, Hegel (2001b) argued that:

While the state is the organization and actualization of moral life... religion is the very substance of the moral life itself and of the state. At this rate, the state rests on the ethical sentiment and that on the religious. If religion then is the consciousness of 'absolute' truth, then whatever is to rank as right and justice, as law and duty, i.e. as true in the world of free will, can be so esteemed only as it is participant in that truth, as it is subsumed under it and is its sequel. But if the truly moral life is to be a sequel of religion, then perforce religion must have the genuine content; i.e. the idea of God it knows must be the true and real (p. 62).

Hence, since the moral life of the state lies in religion, whose essence lies in the true idea of God; Hegel moves his discussion towards the realization of the absolute. This realization of the Absolute seems to be the highest point of Hegel’s philosophy.

### **Spirit as the Realization of the Absolute**

Hegel argues that the consciousness of the Absolute first takes shape in art. For him, the desire for art ushers in the consciousness of the idea of the Supreme Being. But this art is still defective. In his words:

The artist's theme only is as the abstract God of pure thought, or an effort towards him – a restless and unappeased effort which throws itself into shape after shape as it vainly tries to find its goal... [and] it may be specially noted that beautiful art can only belong to those religions in which the spiritual principle, though concrete and intrinsically free, is not yet absolute. (Hegel, 2001b, p. 68).

He thus insists that the true or revealed religion, whose content is the Absolute has to be revealed by God. This revelation is of great importance. This is as a result of the fact that man's knowledge of God comes from God's revelation of himself to man. But for God to reveal himself, he has to know himself. Hence, Hegel (2001b) avers that "God is God only so far as he knows him-self: his self-knowledge is, further, a self-consciousness in man and man's knowledge of God, which proceeds to man's self-knowledge in God" (pp. 69 – 70). This revelation of God, which is dialectical in nature, begins from the moment of universality, the sphere of pure thought, where the absolute spirit is concrete individuality and subjectivity. The absolute spirit is the creator of the universe and the essential cause of everything. It is also an eternal being. Under the moment of particularity, or of judgment, it is "this concrete eternal being which is presupposed. – its movement is the creation of the phenomenal world. The eternal 'moment' of mediation – of the only Son" (Hegel, 2001b, p. 70). This mediation of the only Son brings about "the actual presence of the essential and self-subsisting spirit who is all in all" (Hegel, 2001b, p. 71).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Hegel conceives God as a self-thinking Being, a pure thought, not only an infinite subjectivity – knowing itself as absolute, but also is known objectively as self-unfolding, manifesting himself through the son, whose mediation brings about the indwelling of the Spirit in the world. This analysis, for Hegel, demonstrates how God reveals himself to man as Self-unfolding Spirit and pin-points as well the influence of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in Hegel's philosophical thought. Furthermore, it is Hegel's contention that the spirit at this level is revealed not only to faith but to thought and now should be the subject matter of philosophy. That explains why Copleston (1960) reflecting on Hegel's philosophy asserts that "the subject matter of philosophy is the absolute" (p. 207). This implies that the absolute occupies a central position in philosophical investigation.

Furthermore, Hegel argued that Art and Religion find their unity in Philosophy. Elaborating on this, he stated:

Whereas the vision-method of Art, external in point of form, is but subjective production and shivers the substantial content into many separate shapes, and whereas Religion, with its separation into parts, opens it out in mental picture, and mediates what is thus opened out; Philosophy not merely keeps them together to make a totality, but even unifies them into the simple spiritual vision, and then raises them to self-conscious thought. Such consciousness is thus the intelligible unity (cognized by thought) of art and religion, in which the diverse elements in the content are cognized as necessary, and this necessary as free, (Hegel, 2001b, p. 71).

Thus, philosophy becomes the unification of the subjective production of art and the objective speculation of religion. At this stage, Hegel extols philosophy as that in which the spirit reaches the realization of the absolute. Hence, he writes: “this cognition is thus the recognition of this content and its form; it is the liberation from the one-sidedness of the forms, elevation of them into the absolute form” (Hegel, 2001b, p. 71). It is philosophy that grasps the absolute and the truth, because the truth is in the whole (the absolute). For Hegel, the absolute inaugurates the entire process, the evolution of the spirit, and is also the realization of the spirit. This becomes the central point of philosophy.

Thus far, the researchers have analysed Hegel’s dialectical evolution of the spirit. There is need, at this juncture to examine the concept of shortcut mentality in order to ascertain the implications of Hegel’s dialectical evolution of the spirit to shortcut mentality in Nigeria.

### **The Concept of Shortcut Mentality**

The term shortcut entails not following the required procedure of doing things, but rather following the faster way that jumps certain stages in the process of doing things. It can be defined as “a way of doing something that is quicker than the usual way” (Hornby, 2000, p. 1092). This definition has a positive connotation with an implicit negativity. Positively, it connotes a faster means of achieving required result. The negative or default meaning surfaces when the word ‘mentality’ is attached to it. Hence, shortcut mentality can be seen as the attitude whereby people develop a mindset of always ‘cutting corners’; not following the due process of achieving a particular aim or goal. Shortcut mentality implies the mindset of not following the due procedure of doing things, and not taking the required pains to do things properly. This is as a result of the fact that one wants quick result without following the due process. It is closely associated with the avoidance of suffering and hard work that accompany positive result and success.

### **Shortcut Mentality and Nigerian Experience**

A close look at the behaviours of some people in Nigeria immediately discloses the fact that many Nigerians are cut in the web of shortcut mentality. Many Nigerians want quick result and do not want to follow the due process of doing things. Elaborating on this, Ita (2015) observed that Nigerian society likes quick successes as well as get rich quick projects. Thus, it looks down on projects that require patience and diligence. The problem of shortcut mentality as Kuhn (2016) pointed out is that many of us believe that there is an easier way, and thus want to avoid prolonged hard work. This shortcut mentality is an ill to the individual as well as the society. It destroys both the individual and the society.

In Nigeria, shortcut mentality can be seen as one of the underlying factors of the country’s problem. This shortcut tendency ranges from the common business men and women who rather than taking the arduous process of success in business, choose to deceive their customers; and even produce fake and harmful goods. It includes vehicles’ drivers who blast off their apposite route on the roads in a bid to avoid a little delay on their journey, most at times resulting to traffic jam and accidents. Political leaders are not left out of this menace. Some of these ambitious politicians instead of tackling the problem facing their offices resort to inefficient developmental strategies; or worst still bribe their way out, leading them to embezzlement and other corrupt practices. Some Students and lecturers who engage in examination malpractice and plagiarism are also victims of shortcut mentality. We cannot close the discussion, without making mention of religious fanatics and prosperity preachers, who deceive themselves by promoting an utopian world where sufferings and crosses do not exist, rather the Almighty provides everything to His creatures as they perfectly desire. To

concretize our discussion, there is need to expose and evaluate in greater details some examples as well as illustrations of this ugly trend in our country, Nigeria.

In **governance**, there are cases of this shortcut malady in some policies, decisions, projects, etc. For instance, Olanrewaju (2018) reported that:

The subsidy cul de sac that has been foisted on Nigeria is a result of taking shortcuts. Since 1989, the local refining capacity has not increased though the population has gone up to twice the 1989 figure. Besides, the local refineries are producing far below installed capacity which means that while demand for petroleum products has been increasing, supply has been on the decline. When the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) could not meet the demand, rather than build more refineries or increase the refining capacities of the existing refineries, the government engaged marketers to bring in petroleum products with a directive not to sell above specified prices despite the huge cost of bringing in the products. This naturally resulted in subsidy payment by the government to marketers.... Subsidy has cost the country so much. A conservative estimate puts the cost of subsidy to the country over the years at N20 trillion. This is money that could have been used to build more refineries, fix the rail system, ensure better education, improve the healthcare delivery system, improve the road system or improve the general wellbeing of Nigerians. How did Nigeria get into this rut? Those in charge could not project to realize that there would be increased demand for the products and make adequate preparation for same. When faced with the stark reality of their failure to plan, they sought a quick fix by resorting to importation rather than build new refineries.

Obviously, the above is a sure case of shortcut mentality. It involves not following the due process of achieving the required result. Likewise, the incessant thirst of our leaders to embezzle Nigerian oil money has made Chukwudum (1981) to describe Nigeria as a country in a hurry. Thus, he writes: "Consequent upon the rat race to grab oil money, observers from different parts of the world and from all works of life refer to us Nigerians as 'the people in a hurry'" (Chukwudum, 1981, p. 4). It is more often than not the case that one in a hurry may not follow the due process of doing things.

Shortcut mentality has adverse effects on different sectors of life in Nigeria. Writing on the adverse effects of this shortcut mentality on the **agricultural sector** of most African countries, Lele (1984) asserted that:

It is the short time perspective of the African expectations that poses a problem, especially given the poor institutional and trained manpower base that most African nations inherited at independence. This has led to the neglect of long developmental strategies. Even so, it is only long-term developmental strategies that can meet our expectations in agriculture (p. 442).

Accordingly, Nigerian leaders, knowing that long term strategies will take time and more resources to achieve enormous results, chose to invest in short term agricultural projects than long term projects. This explains the persistent decline of agricultural revenue in Nigeria. For instance, it is estimated that Nigeria has lost USD 10 billion in annual export opportunity from groundnut, palm oil, cocoa and cotton alone due to continuous decline in the production of these commodities, (FAO, 2017)

Again, it is a predominant issue in Nigeria that many forms of **churches** are proliferating. Most of these so-called churches, if not forms of business, are promoting a 'prosperity gospel'. This kind of prophetic message is not in the form of prayer that appeals to God for a better future, but that of deluding the people of God, that God has pre-determined good things for them in a very short time whether they work hard or not, whether they do good or evil. Worst still, some so-called 'men of God' use this false prophetic message and other ridiculous means to extort money from the people. They take advantage of people's gullibility. Hence, Oborji (2017) calls them "false prophets [who] pretend to be "miracle-workers", but that is only a way of seeking influence, wealth and recognition in the society. They are experts in the abuse of 'spiritual power' and essence of religion." Such people not only cut corners to make money, but also, tell their followers that they can become wealthy through the same slant.

Similarly, most Nigerian citizens aim for positions where they will embezzle money. This reiterates Okolo (1994) 'squandermania mentality', which he identified as the problem with Nigerians. For him, "Love for fast money and "overnight riches" makes the Nigerian shun those projects which call for protracted labour, initiative, patience, sacrifice, trial-and-error, etc." (Okolo, 1994, p. 38). Little wonder, most Nigerian citizens are victims of *Ponzi schemes* and Betting sites. Some who want it quick without labour invest all their resources in these schemes and regularly it clashes on them. In the words of Achebe (1983), this is "cargo cult mentality", which is, "a belief by backward people that someday, without any exertion whatsoever on their part, a fairy ship will dock in their harbor laden with every goody they have always dreamed of possessing" (p. 9). Nonetheless, Achebe (1983) argues that this is not the road for Nigeria's progress. Thus, he states: "I know enough history to realize that civilization does not fall down from the sky; it has always been the result of people's toil and sweat, the fruit of their long search for order and justice under brave and enlightened leaders" (Achebe, 1983, p.10).

Furthermore, in the **educational sector**, this same attitude is found in every form of examination mal-practice like importation of foreign materials into the examination hall, copying from the other person's answer sheet, lecturers auctioning marks to the students, bribing the lecturers in cash or kind currently known as the syndrome of "Sex-for-Marks" (Adeniyi, 2018, p. 52). This is characteristic of professors and students who are not apt to rigorous studies and spending hours in the research laboratories. Plagiarism, which is described by Aristotle as "appropriating the merits of others" (Aristotle as cited in Mckee, 2001, bk. II) is one of the fruits of shortcut mentality. Hence, Madueke (2018) writes that "when universities in Africa are beset with plagiarism and sorting, they are bunch of shortcuts, quick-fixes, and counterfeits. [And] genuine industry often goes unrewarded" (p. 2). If we allow such misconduct in our educational sector, then creative ingenuity will become a history in Nigerian educational system.

More so, in our **health sector**, it is recounted by Andrew Nevin that at least seventy percent of pharmaceutical products circulating in Nigeria are fake. He explains that it is saddening that Africa records at least 100,000 deaths, arising from fake drug-related ailments, annually. (Nevin as cited in Daily post, 2017). The reason why traders engage in such malicious practice is to cut cost and make profit. This is a shortcut attitude to wealth, which does not care for the welfare of the victims of the fake items.

These and many more reasons made Waldschmidt (2010) to infer that there is no shortcut to success. "Taking shortcuts", for him, "is a *flight* reaction; not you *fighting* for your own success." This recap and reiterates Mark Zuckerberg's words of encouragement, advising that success demands years of hard work, practice, determination and believing that you can

do it. In these words, he emphatically points out that there is no shortcut to success (Zuckerberg as cited in Lawes, 2018).

From the foregoing, it is clear that the features of this shortcut mentality (using Nigeria as a case study) include: lack of diligence and patience, selfishness, preference of easy but defective ways over difficult long but efficient ways, etc. It is the argument of this article that Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit can be of immense help in combating this vicious attitude in Nigeria.

### **Implications of Hegel's Dialectical Evolution of the Spirit to Shortcut Mentality in Nigeria**

This section centres on the application of Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit in combating the menace of shortcut mentality in Nigeria. A critical reflection on Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit unravels the fact that it could be of immense help in curbing shortcut mentality in Nigeria. For the sake of order and systematization, the researchers chose to undertake this discourse under some identified sub-headings.

In the first place, Hegel's philosophy encourages **positive attitude to labour, suffering and opposition**. Such is very evident in his philosophy. "The life of God and divine intelligence," says Hegel "then, can, if we like, be spoken of as love disporting with itself; but this idea falls into edification, and even sinks into insipidity, if it lacks the seriousness, the suffering, the patience, and the labour of the negative" (Hegel, 2001a, p. 8). By this assertion, Hegel extols the virtues of seriousness, patience, labour and suffering. These are the veritable tools of success which shortcut malady tries to avoid. In short, Hegel argues that it is extremely wrong to exclude the moment of suffering and negativity in our activities because it is a rightful significant moment in the process of development. Against the backdrop of shortcut mentality, Nigerians should learn to appreciate the dignity of labour and suffering. Such may be seen as oppositions or difficulties standing on our way to success. But as Hegel has pointed out, it is the moment of mediation to the realization of our goals. Positive attitude to suffering and hard work will help the government to make long term strategies that will accelerate nation building in the rightful manner. Those who rely only on *ponzi schemes* and betting sites as means of becoming wealthy because they abhor suffering should learn that hard work and labour are veritable and necessary means of success. Such productive and protracted labour leads to "all sorts of creative productions and inventions which ultimately make people self-reliant, self-sufficient, masters and controllers of their world and destiny" (Okolo, 1994, p. 39).

As was earlier demonstrated in this article, the issue of prosperity gospel that excludes suffering is a sure sign of shortcut mentality. Alluding to the falsehood and manipulations of the so-called 'prophetic ministers', Hegel (2001b) opines that:

...the non-spiritual style of praying – partly as mere moving of the lips, partly in the way that the subject foregoes his right of directly addressing God, and prays others to pray – addressing his devotion to miracle-working images, even to bones, and expecting miracles from them. It leads, generally, to justification by external works.... All this binds the spirit under an externalism by which the very meaning of spirit is perverted and misconceived at its source, and law and justice, morality and conscience, responsibility and duty are corrupted at their root, (p. 63).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Hegel believes that religion is the basis of moral life of the state, and as such, religious ministers are encouraged to live out the true nature of religion

and mobilize their followers to work hard and accept the sufferings on the path of their track to human development. In effect, they should desist from the “non-spiritual style of praying” that clamours for miracles only, and abhors sufferings at all cost.

Also, Hegel’s philosophy promotes **mutual recognition**. The researchers have demonstrated earlier in this article that Hegel’s philosophy centers on the concept of organicism. In such a situation, as represented by Mc Taggart (1896) that the individual manifests himself in the whole, and conversely the whole manifests itself in the individuals. Thus, there exists mutual determination and inter-dependence among people. Obviously, this is against the selfish interest of shortcut mentality. Here, the individual considers the plight of others because his good is realized in the good of others. Hegel’s synthesis of subject and object in the absolute, as discovered in his evolution of the spirit entails the mutual recognition of the other in the society. This is well represented in Hegel’s early reflections on love, which is the backstage and bears the same substance as his concept of spirit. Hegel proposes that love is the unity of subject and object. Thus, It is good to point out that:

Love is not simply a static structure or form; it is also a living experience, and as such a process. More specifically, love is the paradoxical process whereby the self both loses itself (as an individual) and finds or gains itself (as a part of a wider whole). Love contains therefore the moments of *self-surrender* and also of *self-discovery*. There is a moment of self-surrender in love because the self loses itself by renouncing self-interest as its ultimate value, and by ceasing to define itself in opposition to others. There is also a moment of self-discovery because in love the self also finds itself in and through the other; it sees that it is no longer something opposed to the other but the unity of itself with the other. (Beiser, 2005, p. 114).

This implies that love enables one to surrender oneself, and also rediscover oneself in others. Hence, Beiser (2005) concludes that “all the characteristics of love are incorporated into the theme of mutual recognition, which Hegel now sees as definitive of spirit” (p. 122). This philosophy, when put into practice goes a long way to combat the evil of shortcut mentality menacing our society, for the embezzlement of public funds, manipulation of the other and production of fake harmful materials are all signs of selfishness and lack of mutual recognition. We should accept the fact that “Man is necessarily recognized and necessarily gives recognition” (Rauch, 1983, p. 111). Mutual recognition is of great importance in the society.

Furthermore, Hegel’s philosophy promotes **Creativity**. It is very lucid that people who cannot think creatively resort to easy or manipulative ways to achieve their aims. One of the major aims of Hegel’s philosophy is to deconstruct Kant’s dualism of noumena and phenomena. Hegel argues that Kant initiated intellectual sloth by proposing that our knowledge is limited to the phenomenal world. Hegel thought that human reason is free and can attain knowledge of the absolute. Knowledge and the progress of spirit entails creativity. For him:

The progress of the spirit is development, because its existing phase, knowledge, involves consciousness in and for itself as the purpose or rationale. Thus, the action of translating this purpose into reality is strictly only this formal transition into manifestation. Insofar as knowledge is infinite negativity, this translation in the concept is creativity in general (Hegel, 2001c, p. 30).

Hegel's dialectics enables one to think creatively. Gaarder (1996) articulates this very well when he states that: "When we discuss something, we think dialectically. We try to find flaws in the argument. Hegel called that 'negative thinking.' But when we find flaws in an argument, we preserve the best of it" (Gaarder, 1996, p. 366). Thus, when one argues between two conflicting modes of thought, the synthesis or best of both arguments will often crystallize as the argument evolves. This explains why Olanrewaju (2018) concludes that, "those who can think creatively when they encounter a challenge do not resort to taking shortcuts. Instead, ... They keep tasking their intellect until they find a way out of the puzzle. But those who cannot travel this route go for the easy way out." Creativity is needed in different sectors of life in Nigeria. The educational sector in Nigeria is clamouring for creativity. Examination mal-practice can be ameliorated if creative and productive mindset becomes the motivating principle of our students and lecturers. Those who resort to production of fake goods can turn a new leaf by being creative and inventing original authentic items.

### Evaluation and Conclusion

Sincere effort has been made in this article to examine the implications of Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit to shortcut mentality in Nigeria. Having discussed the negative effects of shortcut mentality in Nigeria, it is good to point out that the idea of shortcut is not all negativity. Many people, by seeking for shortcuts or easier means of achieving their goals, have discovered many new scientific and technological applications. Certain shortcuts like e-banking, e-trading, etc. are plausible. This article is very critical of the idea of always seeking an easy route that follows a wrong means, abhors labour, creativity, mutual recognition and does not yield long term success, but fills the society with ills.

It ought to be noted that Hegel's philosophy is not without some flaws. One of the most controversial issues in Hegel's system is the problem of universal and the uniqueness of the individual. Many post-Hegelians believe that Hegel seems to attach the individual to the universal in a way that it loses its uniqueness. Hegel conceives the individual man as a particularization of the universal man. Thus, the existentialists, like F. W. J. Schelling, argued that "Hegel had failed to see that we live in this determinate world, not in an abstract or universal world that we so much enjoy deluding ourselves with by holding fast to the most *universal* properties of things, without penetrating to their actual relationships" (Schelling as cited in Stern, 2009, p. 359). Hence, the existentialists wish to restore the uniqueness of the individual.

Hegel's philosophy of spirit culminates in the absolute, and this absolute is referred to as God. Hegel has been applauded for his unity of opposites which constitutes his dialectics. But when he unites the infinite and the finite in his idea of God, he concludes that "without the world, God is not God" (Beiser, 2005, p. 143). Thus, God is a self-thinking thought that is still in the process of actualization. The dialectical evolution of the spirit, for Hegel, is a movement or process by which the absolute actualizes itself. This argument creates a sort of potency in God. From our knowledge of traditional metaphysics (Aristotle and Aquinas), potency implies a lack, a limitation that needs to be filled. But if there is potency in God, then he cannot be the first mover (pure act). (Gardeil, 1967, pp. 195 - 196). This implies that we will have to seek for another Being that is above God, the highest being, and this Hegel fails to provide. Thus, his postulation on God is defective.

Nevertheless, Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit is remarkable for reasserting the purpose of human existence. Hegel believes that the purpose of life is derived from fulfilling one's place in the divine order. Hence, he traces the perfection of the world's development to

the absolute. Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit culminates in the realization of the absolute. "And it does not appear ridiculous to say that the purpose of the universe is the complete realization of the mind of God in actuality" (Stace, 1955, p. 517).

Finally, it ought to be noted that Hegel encourages all to follow the right process of development. Hegel (2001b) postulated that the spirit of a nation "has essentially a particular principle on the lines of which it must run through a development of its consciousness and its actuality.... This movement is the path of liberation for the spiritual substance, the deed by which the absolute final aim of the world is realized in it..." (p. 59). But this process is not a smooth one. Hence, Hegel (2001a) avers that "The beginning of the new spirit is the outcome of a widespread revolution in manifold forms of spiritual culture; it is the reward which comes after a chequered and devious course of development, and after much struggle and effort" (p. 6). Thus, Hegel bids us to be creative, selfless, patient and diligent in following the development of our history or achievements. We can attain our goals in life if we follow the process of change outlined by the world spirit. We should avoid cutting corners, it is not the right way and it will in the long run yield negative results. This is what Okolo (1994) wants to reiterate when he writes: "Nigeria cannot develop or make any real progress, or even become great without creative effort, without "blood, sweat and tears" of the people and without the people's mastery and control of the environment and its needs through indigenous technology" (pp. 57 - 58).

Therefore, Hegel's dialectical evolution of the spirit stretches the process of change by which the spirit actualizes itself in the world. This makes us learn that the process of development and change is gradual. Also, it reveals that creation and indeed the entire world is progressing. The gross scramble for present goods and immediate pleasure, which leads to shortcut mentality with its resultant maladies does not help anybody. There are greater prospects in the future, because the world's development alludes to God's mysterious nature. Our knowledge of God is evolving and such is applicable to the world. Our experience of the world shows that things we never thought of in the middle ages have evolved or developed in the world's civilization. Hence, we should avoid quick fixes and shortcuts and follow the world's dialectical evolution till we attain perfection in the absolute.

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