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Impact Factor: 4.428

Reinventing and Conserving the Role and Value of Philosophical Studies in Higher Education

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Abstract

This paper attempts to reinvent and conserve a concise yet compelling vision of the role and value of philosophical studies or humanities in the development of higher education curricula and pedagogic methods. It is motivated by the fact that materialistic and scientific tendencies have created a certain skepticism that continues to marginalize philosophical studies in a world dominated by Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and business. Considered as purely speculative with hair-splitting endeavours, many contend that philosophical studies or humanities in general, have no practical bearing in solving life's problems. In seeking to deconstruct this materialistic view and to avoid the danger of academic imperialism, the paper proposes and critically analyses liberal education which embraces all kinds of knowledge as the scope of university studies. A good understanding of the concept university and the role and value of philosophical studies therein can provide adequate competencies for the competitive world of business and STEM.

Keywords: Humanities, STEM; philosophical Values; liberal education; University

Introduction

There is much controversy in discerning the place and value of philosophical studies or humanities in the advancement of science, technology and educational development in higher education in Africa. Philosophy ensures a critical or rational explanation of the grounds of beliefs, values and institutions (Fonlon, 1978). Since philosophy is a custodian of truth and wisdom, it can enable university students to respond to questions in all walks of life especially in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and business. Although liberal education allows students to choose courses that excite their imagination and enable them to enter the profession they are really meant for, there is a pressure to enter a profession that is remunerative and instrumental. That explains why many undergraduates in Cameroon are involved in hands-on activities or business majors that can easily provide them employment.

The main problem of this paper is the decreasing interest in philosophical studies or humanities in general in favour of STEM. This is reflected by the few students enrolled in the humanities and the disdain and prejudice of school administrators and other teachers towards them, especially Philosophy. Although most students want to study business and marketing or get skills such as STEM learning in contemporary society, this is not the entirety of what ancient Greek thinkers considered as requisites for the best and most well-rounded person. For the Greeks, the acquisition of virtue and wisdom is the highest good which is distinctly different from acquiring practical skills for job performance. Education was meant for future job-training and governance

and not for any broader purpose (Zakaria, 2015). In order to convert our institutions into vocational schools, the humanities must be valued as vehicles for imparting not merely information, but competences in critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving. Philosophical studies enable students to develop the ability to communicate effectively, to form informed opinions and impart wisdom.

Nevertheless, modern society continues to marginalize philosophical studies or studies in the humanities in a world dominated by Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and business. Philosophical studies are considered as purely speculative with hair-splitting endeavours that have no practical bearing in solving life's problems. We contend that philosophy is no longer a speculative discipline. As Cicero argued; "Socrates, however, called Philosophy down from heaven and placed it in the midst of our cities, even introduced it into our homes, and forced it to ask questions about our life, morals, and the good and bad in things" (Heng, 2013:45). Thus, philosophical studies or humanities find its weapons in the environment and living conditions of the people. They are a sign that speaks to our being-in-the-world through universalising voices of reason (Lavngwa, 2019).

Yet apart from the conspicuous absence of philosophical studies in most African universities, Cameroon higher education also faces problems of harmonising the two bicultural and bilingual traditions. It is flawed by the poor link between education and the business world; low teaching output; inadequate infrastructure and teaching staff; lack of scholarship and welfare services; and, poor governance (Fonkeng, 2010:206-208). Most African universities focus on means and not ends; methods not objectives; and, secular culture rather than an overall teleology (Konings, 2002:23). Thus, what is the role of university studies in society? Can philosophical studies provoke changes in higher education and enlighten its products to serve as moral and intellectual agents of society? Can philosophical studies and humanities ameliorate the standards of scholarship in African universities?

It is also imperative to note that we cannot assess the value of philosophical studies or humanities only by its enrolment figures. Philosophy seems initially to be more esoteric, considering its invisibility in most tertiary institutions. Apart from Catholic seminaries that require Philosophy for its future priests, many universities in Africa consider Philosophy to be an intriguing elective as they fail to see its practical application to the resolution of daily life problems. So, Departments of Philosophy are being marginalized within institutional priorities.

In a critical style, this article argues that higher education in Africa must put emphasis on philosophical studies, humanities or liberal education that develop a sense of right, duty, and honour. In the modern world, large businesses rest on rectitude and honour as well as on good judgment (Zakaria, 2015; Vliedge, 2016). Philosophical studies can train culturally literate, articulate, critically minded, and well-informed citizens who can engage responsibly and creatively with the global social, economic, political, and cultural problems. Since the human intellect is more restless and critical, the relevance of Philosophy in universities cannot be overemphasized.

Conceptual and Historical Framework

From its etymology, Philosophy derives from two Greek words: "*philos*" meaning love and "*Sophia*" meaning wisdom. Literally, philosophy means love of wisdom. It is "the science of all things naturally knowable, without man's unaided powers insofar as these things are known in their deepest causes and reasons" (Glenn, 1944:14). Philosophy embarks on a critical, analytical and systematic explanation of the grounds of beliefs, values and views. As philosophers articulate and defend controversial positions they hardly flourish in oppressive regimes. They must emulate Socrates, who became a "gadfly" or irritating pest stinging society to wake up from lethargic slumber into moral self-examination (Plato, *Apology*, 38a).

For the Greeks, the link between philosophical studies and liberty is important. Romans prefer 'liberal' education because a free people must be educated to govern and to liberate. Education searches for the truth that liberates. One can arrive at virtue and make a good living through liberal arts of rhetoric, language and morality. The dialectic of liberal education is instrumental and constitutive of goals like virtue and wisdom (Zakaria, 2015).

The word University derives from two Latin words, *unus* meaning ‘one’ and *versus* meaning “in the direction of”, “towards”, “into”. *Uni-versus* means “towards one”, “into one”. It is a movement, a combination of many things into one, the outcome of a whole. The Latin suffix, *itas- itatis* refers to a state of being. *Unitas* means being one, united or unity. *Universitas* is a state of things united to form a whole (Fonlon, 1978:27).

Historically, University meant an assembly of masters and students from all over the world into one spot and one city, for the aim of imparting or imbibing knowledge (Fonlon, 1978:28). In Greece, Plato’s Academy (387 BC) and Aristotle’s Lyceum (335 BC) were the first Universities. Karl Jaspers says; “From the beginning of the university, ideas of ancient Greece have been the elements of western tradition. The University is aimed at pursuing truth and human progress to present the essence of human virtue” (Wei et al., 2015:5).

In 1088, the first real university in Europe was opened in Bologna then followed by Oxford, Padua and Paris. By the 1300s, the balance between practical and philosophical knowledge shifted. Italian scholars held that universities were too specialized and looked to return European education to its Greek and Roman roots by reviving the arts, letters, eloquence and study of ancient literature and history. This was the beginning of humanism in Renaissance Europe (Zakaria, 2015).

With contemporary demands, the understanding of University has evolved from a place of imparting or imbibing knowledge, to a forum for the construction of knowledge. University dons can only facilitate or guide the acquisition of knowledge through research. Students are part of the teaching process when they freely mix and exchange new ideas and views, fresh matter of thought, and distinct principles for judging and acting (Newman, 1976:129). What then is the vision of the university?

The Vision of the University

The vision of the university is holistic or integral. The university must transmit moral, spiritual, intellectual, social and physical lessons which fit different developmental stages of the student (Lavngwa, 2019). The mind is fed by critical thoughts and the heart is filled with eager love for what is good, true, and beautiful. The hand is trained through handwork; the head through reading, writing, and reasoning; and, the heart through refinement of emotions, social relations, morality, and spirituality (Lavngwa, 2012). The University develops the intrinsic potentials and prepares students for full integration into society. Its graduate is a mutable agent, a mover and shaker of society. A university’s soul lies in the mark it leaves on its students. True education requires the influence of teachers on students (Newman, 1976).

The University cultivates the intellect. There, knowledge is something more than a sort of passive reception of scraps and details; knowledge does something which never will issue from the most strenuous efforts of teachers without mutual sympathies and intercommunion. The university is to give birth to self-education offering students more philosophy and more true enlargement that prevents the devouring premise and conclusion with indiscriminate greediness. Through personal research, a philosophical and independent mind can range through a library at random to gain genuine education or liberal education (Newman, 1976).

Fonlon opines that higher studies must produce the best brains morally and intellectually endowed to articulate scientific and philosophical growth. They should help in the quest for truth and specialized knowledge that benefits the common weal. The University disseminates scientific, ethical, and professional skills (Fonlon, 1978:30). Recently, African Universities are beginning to show great interest in philosophical studies and as an integral part of their academic activities (Okolo, 1993). The character of a University is such that:

L’université est l’une des sources principales des changements scientifiques et techniques qui sont la cause essentielle des mutations affectant les sociétés modernes. Elle est un centre d’activité qui n’épargne pas, directement ou indirectement, les structures de la société globale (Balandier, 2014:270).

This description presents the University as the main source of scientific and technical changes; an institution for critical development and broadening of one’s horizon of knowledge.

If then a practical end must be assigned to University studies, it must be that of training good members of society to have a clear and conscious view of their own opinions and judgments. It must give them a truth and eloquence in expressing themselves and being able to detect what is sophistic and discard what is irrelevant

(Newman, 1976). Thus, Universities must jealously protect academic freedom from all non-academic or political interferences. They must remain sacred places and spaces for the training of genuine intellectuals imbued with skills and zeal to assume and promote social responsibilities with self-abnegation. The staff must comprise men of intellect and integrity, with cultivated hearts, a sense of duty and self-sacrifice, love for humanity, sterling humility, and self-effacement (Fonlon, 1978:14).

In Cameroon, its vision is to produce, organize, and disseminate scientific, cultural, professional, and ethical knowledge while ensuring the quest for excellence and social progress. Its studies must promote ethics, national consciousness, democracy, law, justice, human rights, freedom, patriotism, peace, and dialogue. They must promote advancement in research and cultural exchange at all levels. Its studies must develop creativity, initiative, a spirit of enterprise, and self-reliance (MINESUP, 2001, Art. 2/6). Yet, the absence of professional training facilities inhibits this objective and higher education ends up imparting cognitive skills which transform citizens into efficient machines designed exclusively for export (Lavngwa, 2019). So, survival of the fittest becomes the object of African Universities.

Cult of Excellence as Narrow Objective of University Curricula

The cult of excellence refers to the modern trend of simply studying to succeed in examinations, obtain certificates and gain a job. This tendency is apparently a spill over from the French sub-system to the English sub-system of education. Many English students sit for the GCE/O and A levels in four or six years respectively. Why spend more time while their French counterparts spend less time to obtain the *brevet d'études de premier cycle* (B.E.P.C), *Probatoire* or *Baccalaureate* which are in the same competition (Ngalim, 2014). This quest for success is a cankerworm in education. Thus, “the curricula at all levels are largely geared towards covering set syllabuses” (Fonkeng, 2010:167).

With multiple choice questions where all students encircle the right answers without much critical reflection and subjective self-expression, some may succeed and think they have learned. This format of evaluation fails to measure the ability to think or create. These tests encourage a narrowed curriculum, out-dated methods of instruction and retrogressive educational practices of retention in grade and tracking (Fair Test, 2002; Ngalim, 2014). This evaluation approach is gradually gaining grounds at the University level for those having many scripts to correct.

We contend that this form of evaluation should be discouraged in the Anglo-Saxon sub-system of education. Testing drives the curriculum and what is tested is taught. Although no teacher or institution wants the students to fail in public examinations since institutional performance is reported in radio, television and newspapers like football or basketball standings, quality assurance is compromised. It is unfortunate that schools advertise their next admissions based on their percentages in final exams and the number of A grades obtained. Thus, to maintain success and publicity, schools gear instruction to test. Hence, material not tested is hardly taught in secondary schools and emphasis is on subjects tested at the GCE examinations while others are de-emphasized or eliminated in both private and public schools (Ngalim, 2014).

From the problem raised above, national testing has become a national obsession. The tendency to market one's institution compromises educational standards by destroying the curricula and promoting educational malpractices (Ngalim, 2014). Yet the general aim of Cameroon education is to train children for their intellectual, physical, civic, and moral development towards their smooth integration into society bearing in mind the prevailing economic, socio-cultural, political, and moral factors (*Law No. 98/004*, Section 4). With this obsession for success, one wonders if this objective can be attained considering that hard work and academic excellence are constantly sacrificed on the altar of mediocrity and complacency (Lavngwa, 2019).

The reality is that this examination-oriented culture sorts students out into winners and losers rather than help them to get high quality education (FairTest, 2002). This argument, serves the purpose of counteracting the “*testocracy*” experienced in most institutions. The observation against standardized testing does not necessarily sacrifice accountability in learning. There is a need for an antidote to this form of testing. Each school system needs to select appropriate content based on students' interests, needs, experiences, goals and desires (Dewey, 1966; FairTest, 2005; Ngalim, 2014). Hence, teachers must teach this content adequately and

evaluate the extent of student learning with a wide variety of instruments. Schools at all levels have to encourage written exercises, verbal expressions and informal papers for students to demonstrate their ability to think. Assessment of student learning requires educators to develop a broader, richer array of measures (Ngalim, 2014).

Educational legislation should not limit student's achievement to a single numerical score. Multiple Choice Questions cannot tell the story of academic success. Some students do not test well and democratic education requires that all students are given the opportunities in multiple ways to demonstrate what they have learned. In secondary as well as tertiary education, assessment programs need to be designed to improve student learning instead of measuring one student against another or measuring students against arbitrary standards (Ngalim, 2014).

Assessment programs must focus on the individual students and what they have produced. A student's record should include a rich portfolio of papers, essays, videos, poems, photographs, drawings and tape-recorded and not simply test scores (Nelson et al., 2006). A review of a student's portfolio should enhance an appropriate understanding of the students' performance. Good assessment requires multiple forms of evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, that is, numbers and human judgment. Academic decisions require multiple bases and not a single base of one piece of information. An interpretation of intelligence solely on standardized tests scores is deceptive and misleading (Ngalim, 2014). Tests scores are limited sources of students' ability and achievements and menace educational improvement.

In Cameroon, there is also the problem of misguided priority of the values of education which leads to academic malpractice arising from the cult of excellence in public examinations in both sub-systems. Examination leakages pose a threat to the credibility of the certificates obtained. This undermines equity and quality education in the evaluation of the learners (Ngalim, 2014). The advent of examinations is characterized by the buying and selling of questions between some students, parents and teachers. Such a practice violates moral principles and inhibits quality assurance. The students who succeed through this malpractice end up in our Universities with the same mentality of success at all cost.

Due to this problem, one wonders the values meant to inculcate in the minds of the youths. Is schooling limited to success in examinations and acquisition of certificates? Is it meant to transmit values and competencies for nation building? This problem is directly linked to the management of the curricula at the level of evaluation in the various examination boards. If Cameroon really wants to fight corruption, this should seriously begin from our schools which are nurseries of the kind of citizens we want. Misguided priorities with regard to education and the division and extension of resources limit the possibilities of effective follow-up. With this scenario in mind, what is the scope of University studies? How can one avoid intellectual imperialism?

Scope of University Studies: Avoiding the Danger of Intellectual Imperialism

A University by its Latin origin *Universitas* (united to form a whole) professes to teach universal knowledge or all branches of knowledge. Although not to be taken too literally, a University in principle must be open to teaching anything that is knowable. All branches of knowledge are implicitly its subject-matter. Its threefold mission is teaching, research and outreach. But research is paramount because, "What an empire is in political history, such is a University in the sphere of research" (Newman, 1976:9). Fonlon (1978) paints a picture of the real university as a centre of research and proper examination of ideas as in ancient Greece.

Although some subjects are more important and some indispensable, a University must be hospitable to any kind of genuine knowledge. Special attention may be given to one branch of knowledge over the other; but all branches are implied based on its fullness, wholeness and unity. All knowledge that is contemplated by the human mind forms one large system that moves towards another and possesses a correlative character (Newman, 1976:38).

The reason why all knowledge forms one whole is that its subject-matter is one and so intimately knit together to an extent that we cannot separate off portion from portion, except by a mental abstraction. The interaction and interdependence of the various branches of knowledge lends credence to the conception of

liberal education. One branch of knowledge should intrude into the sphere so that specialists in one field are not bigots and quacks, scorning all principles and facts which do not belong to their own pursuit (Newman, 1976).

Often, the more narrow a person's knowledge is, the more immodest and obstinate he is in adhering to his/her beliefs and making generalizations on them. Those cultivated in one science tend to have more ambition to generalize upon their field. Each branch of knowledge only studies its own aspect of reality. The neglect of any important branch of knowledge does not mean that subject simply slips out of the totality of knowledge. The more ignorant the specialist in a particular subject is, the more likely they will be academic imperialism which leads to narrow convictions and conclusions. He becomes a man of one idea or a man of one book (*homo unius libri*). St Thomas Aquinas cautions us to fear the man of one book (*Hominem unius libri timeo*) when referring to scholars who limit themselves to a single specialty. Such intellectual arrogance enables them to make their field the centre of all truth.

No subject is competent enough to evaluate its importance. Such an evaluation must come from ethical and teleological questions or a philosophical mind trained by a liberal education (Ker 2008). Thus, questions from any specialised field inevitably impinge on others because different branches of science are intimately connected with each other (Newman, 1976:84). A University student like his/her professor must have at least something to say on every subject. Thus, the very name of University is inconsistent with restrictions of any kind.

The danger of academic imperialism is accentuated when the specialist works outside the university community of researchers. He could become absorbed and narrowed by his pursuit. Although Newman would prefer a more specialized education to a general education, there is also a danger in over-specialization that contracts the mind of the researcher. Yet thorough specialization is better than a smattering of many things that do not lead to a philosophical habit or comprehensive view (Newman, 1976). The large scale information in the internet has made people so mechanical in its passive dissemination. But a student open to other branches of study would be saved from academic imperialism.

Thus, in a University, an assemblage of learned men and women, zealous for their own sciences, and rivals of each other, are brought by familiar intercourse for the sake of intellectual peace to learn to respect, to consult, and to aid each other. This creates a pure atmosphere of thought for the students to breathe freely. Such students profit from an intellectual tradition called 'liberal', which is independent of the particular. When exposed to it, a habit of mind is formed whose attributes are freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom. This is called "a philosophical habit" (Newman, 1976:96).

University as Laboratory of Liberal Education or Philosophical Habit

Here, we seek to know the role of philosophical studies in higher education and how the University can become a laboratory of philosophical habit or liberal studies. The findings of Philosophy provide a critical guidance to selecting University curriculum goals, objectives, subject matter, teaching methods and the rapport between the University and society. This is the field of Philosophy of Education which focuses on the application of philosophical principles and analyses in educational thinking and practice. What is education all about? Can there be both quantity and quality education? Are human needs and interests in education universal or particular? Should all students learn the same subject matter via methods that are valid for all? Can university studies be narrowed to the talented few? Is education meant for intellectual probity or acquisition of skills? Should educational goals be religious or secular? Should schools promote change or preserve tradition? These questions create the basis of University studies and set the critical avenue for a 'philosophical habit'.

Nevertheless, the University also has something to offer to this philosophical habit. From a pedagogic viewpoint, University studies can also impact a philosophical habit. Pedagogy is a *praxiological science*. When the philosopher proposes an idea, the educator puts it in practice. Every action owes its origin to philosophical thinking. With pragmatists like Charles Sanders Pierce, William James and John Dewey, true ideas are those that work. University education serves as the laboratory for the test and verification of philosophical hypotheses. Thus, University studies can offer Philosophy the opportunity to affirm or deny the truth of its

hypotheses (Dewey, 1966; Ngalim, 2014). The University thus becomes a fertile ground for the justification of philosophical hypotheses.

According to Newman, the principal end of University studies is liberal education or a philosophical habit which is a comprehensive view of truth in all its branches and of the relations of science to science and their respective values. It is not that the heart of the curriculum will be courses in Philosophy or some mysterious ‘special’ kind of philosophy or some super-philosophy but a “real cultivation of mind whereby the intellect is properly trained and formed to have a connected view or grasp of things” (Newman, 1976:11).

For lack of a proper term, ‘special Philosophy’ here refers to the perfection, enlargement or illumination of the mind (Newman, 1976:103). It is not the academic subject we call Philosophy, but knowledge when it is acted upon, informed and impregnated by reason more than the senses can convey. The ambition of Philosophy is to map out the universe and not just a search of more wonderful facts or brilliant discoveries. A philosophical habit provides the “most robust and invigorating discipline for the unformed mind” (Newman, 1976:xxv). At the heart of Newman’s Philosophy of education is simply the capacity to think. The more the mind is formed, the more philosophical it becomes and it can possess the knowledge of things and their true association with their component parts (Newman, 1976).

Philosophy presupposes knowledge. But mere knowledge is not Philosophy because to ‘know’ is not to be educated. An educated person actively cultivates the intellect. Newman’s philosopher is not a genius who originates vast ideas or dazzling projects. A genius exhibits a natural gift which no culture can teach. Liberal education perfects the intellect to make it clear, calm, accurate and comprehensive of all things, as far as the finite mind can embrace them. A cultivated intellect can grasp things as they are, discriminate between truth and falsehood and arrange them according to their real value (Newman, 1976).

That is why University studies must complement secondary education. The problem in Cameroon hinges on the absence of a harmonized educational curriculum between the two sub-systems. Each sub-system jealously guards its values. Thus, secondary education does not adequately prepare students for careers in life. This situation reinforces the observation of some thinkers and analysts that there is no provision of meaningful centred practical training in Cameroon educational system (Ngalim, 2014). The separation of education from the world of work is due to lack of motivation, poor planning and constraints in resources (Ngalim, 2014). Such a system is suffering because it is bereaved of a philosophical habit.

As such, school programmes are not related to the geographical and socio-historical circumstances of life. The participative process of the cognitive enrichment strategies should be holistic by encompassing motivation from the perspective of needs and interests, talk, action, activity and learning at the same time. Children should be involved at an early age through cooperation, engagement, collaboration and being committed (Tchombe, 2011). The dichotomy between education and real life frustrates the teaching of national languages, yet much effort is concentrated in sustaining the bicultural nature of Cameroon despite its multi-ethnic diversity with over two hundred and fifty national languages (Lavngwa, 2016).

The official languages of English and French are values of colonial heritage that remain relics of colonial exploitation and depersonalisation. The educational politics of promoting local languages naively remains at the level of seminars, conferences and papers. The mother tongue is the basic and primary language of learning. Studies on intelligence development have proven that when a child’s learning is based on the mother tongue, then that child stands a better place of acquiring knowledge faster. According to Nelson Mandela, foreign languages affect the head, while the mother tongue goes to one’s heart (Nyamnjoh, 2004). Any educational policy that excludes local languages only consolidates foreign language superiority and retards children’s cognitive development (Lavngwa, 2019). This is in accord with the pedagogic strategy of moving from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex. In this philosophical and educational habit, the basis of learning is on needs, experiences, interests and aptitude of the learners (Dewey, 1966).

Till recently, science was seen as the path to abstract knowledge. It had no practical purpose. Oratory, civics and history were useful. One could function well at that time if he was so equipped. Now, corporate leaders value the broad, flexible, basic preparation for the workplace via liberal education. The value of an education is to make people free, capable, and wise. The seven classical liberal arts included the *trivium* –

grammar, rhetoric, and logic – and the *quadrivium*: arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. These had a bit of practical/science and basic/humanities dualism (Zakaria, 2015). Now, the trend is changing and emphasis is gradually shifting from the humanities to STEM and business.

In order to have balanced products, every University should champion the study of cultural heritage, ethics, liberal arts (grammar, rhetoric), logic, geometry, astronomy, music, business, science, technology, engineering, mathematics. Mathematics and philosophy refine and enrich the intellectual powers. Science leads to mental cultivation or training of the mind. Such a blend enables students to proceed to a professional degree. Through it, students have a connected view of things which manifests itself in “good sense, sobriety of thought, reasonableness, candour, self-command, and steadiness of view” (Newman, 1976:10).

In sum, a philosophical habit guarantees knowledge which is scientifically and philosophically profound; the cultivation of minds instilled with an instinctive, scientific, and philosophical approach to questions that confront them; the forgoing of wills dead to private interest, but alive and fervently dedicated to the public service; and of character courageous enough to become trusty. Such an education produces “intrepid keepers of the public conscience” (Fonlon, 1978:148). Can the Catholic university guarantee such an education?

Philosophy liberates the University of Political Meddling

The impending danger is that some higher education institutions in Africa today are so riddled with political meddling. When appointments of University administrators are motivated by political leanings and inclinations, this beclouds the dispensing of their duties and their sense of judgment. It is often said that he who pays the piper dictates the tune. Such a University administrator feels obliged to support his political God father even if such a decision compromises academic standards and excellence. Of course, he/she cannot bite the finger that is feeding him/her. In such cases, the University environment could easily be transformed into a political arena and the students cannot afford to be indifferent of that scenario.

It is an unfortunate reality for the University milieu to serve as a forum for demagogic politicking of who gets what, when and how! The misconception of politics today is no honour to humankind. Deception in the name of politics contaminates a scientific and philosophical disposition. For instance, a University that neglects the intellectual and moral upbringing of its students is susceptible to political interference and violence.

When University lecturers and students are preoccupied with partisan politics, uncritical *Alleluhia* motions of support, then the primordial objective of research and truth is neglected. This political virus in question is more dangerous because it does not only destroy the body but it also destroys and misleads the soul. The puzzling issue is to question whether genuine intellectual enterprise can blossom and bloom in such an environment.

It is therefore the role of philosophical studies to liberate scholarship from political prejudices and manipulation. Philosophy must rescue the University from the “political fiat of glossy prestige” (Fonlon, 1978:10). This is to enhance an academic initiative to satisfy a genuine thirst for learning. That is why only seasoned academics should run the University and not some high academic who prostitute themselves with political affiliations thus becoming “*Machiavellis*” in the Academy (Fonlon, 1978:10). This is to enhance an academic initiative to satisfy a genuine thirst for learning. In order to promote a philosophic turn of mind in students devoid of political meddling, amphitheatres should never be used for political propaganda. This will free them from precipitated decision-making, sentimental politics, fundamentalism and prejudices springing from demagogues or political charlatans.

That is why Universities must jealously protect academic freedom from all non-academic interferences. Our Universities have to be sacred shrines and spaces for the training of genuine intellectuals imbued with skills and zeal to assume and promote social responsibilities with self-abnegation (Kezar, 2004; Collini, 2012). The staff must comprise men of intellect and integrity, with cultivated hearts, a sense of duty and self-sacrifice, men with love for humanity, sterling humility, and self-effacement (Fonlon, 1978).

Conclusion

Most students who acquire higher education want their investment to pay off by improving their prospects for employment. Although many graduates of Philosophy in Cameroon end up teaching, it may be surprising to discover that the discipline of Philosophy can confer a number of marketable skills. What students find most significant to their future employment prospects are the transferable skills acquired during their undergraduate philosophical studies like in writing, analytical, critical, and creative thinking and public speaking. Such basic skills are portable across many job areas like in the Law School. A good lawyer needs basic skills of logical thinking to conveniently argue his/her case in court. In areas as public service, consultation, public visibility, and employment prospects, philosophers can excel in furthering the interests of their institutions.

Many philosophers have been consultants to institutions, agencies, and businesses in framing policies in the medical, business, legal fields and with respect to scientific experimentation. Hospital ethics committees often include a professional philosopher. We cannot underestimate the impact of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in framing public policy in education and governance in ancient Greece. In fact, American thought was heavily influenced by philosophers like Charles Sanders Pierce, William James and John Dewey, whose distinctive views affected not only Philosophy but also Psychology, Education, Political thought, Religion, and Aesthetics. They were prototypes of the so-called public intellectual scholars.

In global issues, Philosophers are urgently needed to make significant contributions to on-going debates such as environmental pollution, global climate change, the status of global ecosystems, global trade, national exploitation, human rights, humanitarian intervention vs. national sovereignty, war, international law, terrorism and the status of combatants and non-combatants, foreign aid and famine relief, medical experimentation in third-world countries, and the repatriation of illegal immigrants and of cultural objects.

Therefore, philosophical studies develop human critical ability, independent thought and social attitudes even though some schools of thoughts are seemingly detrimental to the well-being of society like the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx and its impact in social discontent and the nihilist approach of the sophists, Sartre and Nietzsche and their moral implications in the history of thought. All the shortcomings of the philosophical enterprise only call for caution in our appropriation of philosophical ideas. Yet Philosophy is like a double-edge sword that a contemporary student must employ with care in order to reap its benefits both at the University level and for society in general. Its search for the objective truth cannot be undermined.

The main thrust of this paper was that despite the contempt for philosophical studies in the world of STEM and business, they have an invaluable role in the construction of knowledge which needs to be reinvented and revalorised. Philosophy, the humanities and liberal education enlightens and clarifies the role a genuine intellectual in the world of business and STEM. Therefore, the University should be able to fuse the practical, the research-orientation, the liberal, and the progressive (Whitehead, 1929). It should distinguish carefully between a skills-based and a liberal education and to know when emphasis is supposed to be laid on any of them.

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