

To What Use is Philosophy in an Age of Science and Technology?

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ABSTRACT:

Philosophy as a discipline of studies and as a form of knowledge is facing a lot of challenges today, even in the university systems and institutions where some have marginalized it or consigned it to the realm of general studies. The erstwhile mother of the sciences does not seem to have the dignity among the sciences. Since respectability has today been reserved to the sciences that appear to have more practical impart specifically the empirical sciences and technology. Thus, in this age of manufacturing and industry, men are either cynical about any form of knowledge that is merely speculative and does not talk of bread and butter issues or appear not to have any economic potency. No wonder, a book in French was titled "A Quoi Bon La Philosophie" (To What Good Is Philosophy). The goal of this article is to respond to this modern cynicism and interrogation on the utility of philosophy. It will be our contention that any knowledge and learning without the philosophical ingredient suffers fundamental impoverishment. Furthermore, that the empirical sciences and technology require a discipline like philosophy for their foundational legitimation.

Keywords: Philosophical Relevance, conscience, meaningful existence, Cultural Development, Original Thinking, Transferable skills

1. INTRODUCTION

WHAT DO CRITICS SAY?

Philosophy has from the beginning suffered some crises of relevance. Many people have brought in some prejudices that present philosophy as a flight from reality, and disconnected from the daily experiences and struggles of men, an ivory tower luxury. Hence the much quoted Latin adage "primum vivere deinde philosophare - first live before philosophizing. We have the widespread story of Thales, the first Greek philosopher falling into a pit while gazing at the sky. This created the image of the philosopher as an empty speculator, sky gazer, disconnected and disengaged from the real problems of man's everyday concrete life. One who occupies himself with what is in the heavens without seeing what is before him. We have also Calicles' critique of Socrates in the dialogue Gorgias, where he talked of Socrates wasting his life philosophizing. He said "philosophy does have a certain charm if one engages with it in one's youth and in moderation, but if one dallies over long, it is the ruin of the fellow. If a man however endowed, goes on philosophizing throughout his life, he will never come to taste the experience which a man must have if he is going to be a gentleman and have the world up to him."¹ This highlights the critique that philosophy is impractical and philosophers are incapable of relating or knowing the problem of people, a social misfit and not able to lead the people.

This critique of philosophy has even become harsher today especially in this age of science and technology. On this I have earlier written, "... in the present age of hype over the supremacy of science and technology, gadgets and computers, economic productivism and consumerism, people are less enthused about a discipline like philosophy which seems to offer neither bread or butter to a complaining stomach. Philosophy does not bring into being the latest in the technological

incubator".² So philosophy is being presented as a pre-scientific intellectual endeavour that has been superseded by science and technology. Technology has passed philosophy by.³

Another line of attack is what has been labeled the scandal of philosophy where it is claimed that there is no cumulative knowledge emerging from philosophy but an internal war of self-destruction and claims and counterclaims which make many to regard it as unintelligible and boring. In this respect, P.M.S Hacker claimed "... if one asks a physicist or biologist, a historian and mathematician what knowledge has been achieved in his subject, he can take one to a large library and point out myriad of books which detail the cognitive achievements of his subject. But if one asks a philosopher for even a single book that will summarize the elements of philosophical knowledge as one might ask a chemist for a handbook of chemistry- he will have nothing to present. There is no general agreed body of philosophical knowledge..."⁴

These are some representatives of the opinions that have been advanced to repudiate or impugn the relevance of the philosophical discipline. However, we will show that an informed appreciation of the philosophical culture will find there-in, a vast reservoir of values, insights, attitudes, skills and procedures that made it the "mother of the sciences", and a foundational accompaniment of any meaningful and serious human enterprise. No wonder all the world over, including Nigeria, the national policies in education have made the study of philosophy obligatory and a necessary background to studying anything whether in the humanities, in the sciences, in technology, in economics, in the medical sciences etc.

Let us therefore articulate the utility and relevance of philosophy as a necessary complementary factor in meeting the multi dimensional challenge to human existence, his aspirations and quality of life.

1.1. Philosophy and general problem solving capacity:

Philosophy and the philosopher may not be an active manufacturer, manipulating machines or directly exploring and mining the material and mineral resources, but confers something at the base of all successful human enterprise: the problem solving capacity. This problem solving capacity, lies in the capacity for accurate diagnosis of a problem, the power of analysis and synthesis, the capacity for ideas, the capacity for right judgment and right decision making. There is nothing that philosophy equips us better than these problem solving skills. Philosophy helps in developing the analytical spirit and delving into the why of things including problems. The capacity for analysis, for hard thinking, to seek precise definitions is necessary for any problem solving no matter the areas. All solutions start with the head before they become a matter for the hand. The first step in solving any problem is to discern the core or essential elements of the problem and synthesize the various elements. Philosophy trains the mind for such capacity. These are surely managerial skills. This is why the philosopher with an analytic and synthetic mind can be an effective manager in any area of human endeavour, for he is equipped to solve problems.

1.2. Development of communicative skills:

Philosophy contributes to the development of expressive and communicative power and skills. Self-expressive and communicative skill involve presenting ideas through well-constructed, systematic, well stated, logical, orderly and persuasive arguments. Philosophy trains in clarity and distinctiveness of our ideas. Thus it helps one to eliminate ambiguities, vagueness, incoherencies and confusions in his writings and speeches. These are what one learns from acquaintances with the work and wisdom of reputable philosophers. People with philosophical background are more adept in public speeches and forensic oratory. People of philosophical formation can find professional outlet, in responsibilities like publication and editorial works, public relations and advertising jobs, speech writing, special correspondences, features writing, politics, and in the legal profession.

1.3. Helps in independent and original thinking:

There is nothing more proper to philosophy than the generation and incubation of ideas. These are products of hard thinking and reflection which are very important elements in philosophical activity. Philosophy helps us to grow in liberty and hence in intellectual independence. Such independence makes us to be original in our thinking. It was Francis Bacon who said that knowledge is power and there is the popular saying that ideas rule the world. This means that most of the results of civilization and human achievement first arose as ideas. So those who are competent in the generation of qualitative ideas hold the key to human creativity, innovation and inventions. Philosophy helps to have a hard look at things, multiply alternative view points, and highlight the hidden dimensions of things and perspectives. So philosophy empowers us to have proper control over things. It is in this light that Jonathan Harrison would say “ the benefits of doing philosophy well are great- it broadens our mind... reduce slavish conformity, cultivate imagination and produce accurate thinking and lucid expressions.”⁵ Bertrand Russell commenting further on the liberating effect of philosophy on the mind would say that the man who has no tincture of philosophy goes through life imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense, from the habitual beliefs of his age or his nation, and from convictions which have grown up in his mind without the cooperation or consent of his deliberate reason. He declared “ philosophy though unable to tell us with certainty what is the true answer to the doubts which it raises is able to suggest many possibilities which enlarge our thoughts and free them from the tyranny of custom... it greatly increases our knowledge of what things may be”.⁶

History, has shown that it is through philosophical thinking that the sciences and developmental ideas that have brought the gigantic discoveries that have positively changed our world emerged. Philosophy midwived the sciences of today. Many questions that were opened by philosophy were subsequently handed over to scientists. Physics became independent of philosophy in the 17th century, psychology at the end of the 19th century, mathematical logic is happening today. The emergence of the sciences is not a poverty of philosophy but its genius. This shows that as long as society remains faithful to the philosophical culture, progressive ideas will continue to emerge, grow and if possible establish themselves in one form or the other. The scope of the contribution of philosophy can be measured in the gigantic achievements of science and technology which it originally generated. The birth of children is not the impoverish of the mother but points to her dignity.

1.4. Philosophy A Tool And Conscience Of The Sciences

Philosophy has not only midwived the sciences, but has also remained a constant tool and instrument for legitimating them, for better self-understanding and even self-control. A science cannot provide its foundational justification or legitimacy but requires a science that is more fundamental, a meta-science. Philosophy is meta-science for the sciences, investigating their presuppositions and assumptions. This is why we have such things as philosophy of science, philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of law, philosophy of technology, philosophy of environment etc. Philosophy develops and provides clarifications for some concepts used or presumed by the sciences and provides the necessary distinctions at times needed between the sciences. “Philosophy is concerned with questions that require for their resolutions and dissolution the clarification of concepts and conceptual networks. Both in the special sciences and in ordinary users of language; such words as ‘know, believe, doubt, certainty, mind, body, thought, understanding, true, false, good and evil, beautiful and ugly, justification, validity etc’”.⁷ So philosophy improves our understanding.

Furthermore, philosophy act as conscience and a check on the sciences; summons them to the tribunal of reason and preventing them from going beyond their legitimate bounds. The sciences are for man and not man for the sciences. Some sciences left to themselves, to their pure functionality could destroy man himself. Some sciences and technology have in themselves the possibility to cause maximum havoc to humanity. One’s mind can easily run to what happened at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. One can think also of the arms race and the stockpiles of nuclear bombs that pose a great danger to our world. One can think of the uncertain future which environmental pollutions created by the products of our manufacturing activities places our world. One can think of the area of genetic engineering where some of the activities like human cloning, gene

manipulations, in-vitro fertilization, test-tube babies, and other like activities which if not controlled could prove to be catastrophic to humans and society at the long run.

There is no doubt that science and technology and other specializations are necessary for our civilizations to advance and for the advancement of knowledge and learning in the various aspects of learning and scholarship⁸ However emphasis on mere technicity, efficiency and result will surely lead to the depersonalization and dehumanization of man and the promotion of mere utilitarian ends. Thus Pope John Paul 11, will say “ Certain scientists lacking any ethical point of reference are in danger of putting at the center of their concerns something other than the human person and the entirety of the persons life”.⁹ what this means that today more than ever we need a science of foundations and the science of totality which will situate all the achievements of science and technology within the total view of the good of man.

This is why it is necessary to have some control, some guideline and from time to time to pose questions on the limits of what the sciences and technology can do, summoning them to justify their activity and to provide some moral evaluation and justification on their practices. This role, of course belongs to a discipline with philosophical depth. Hence we have such philosophy-derived disciplines as: bioethics, business ethics, Applied Ethics etc. No wonder people with specialization in philosophy especially in the area of bioethics, social ethics, business ethics, industrial ethics; have been found very useful in hospital management Boards, in company management boards, environmental Boards, in trade unions, in legislative houses, in law, etc helping to provide the necessary ethical standards, regulations and guidelines, necessary for controlling the activity of the various scientific and economic institutions for the good and protection of man, practitioners and the total good of the society as a whole. Philosophy will remain at the forefront of the defense of the human person with the constant message that man should be the goal of any worthwhile human endeavour.

1.5. Philosophy in the promotion of research

Philosophy provides us with the ingredients for successful research: the capacity for analysis and synthesis, keen insight, holistic vision, sense of objectivity, intellectual discipline, systematicity, rigour and the pursuit of the truth. Any research project in which these qualities or attitudes are absent is doomed to failure. All the years, philosophy has provided man with methods and methodologies, many of which are still being used in institutions and in the field of scholarship today. For example inductive and deductive reasoning, hermeneutics, phenomenological analysis etc. we should not forget that Aristotle was the early father of scientific methodology and discovered the science of Taxonomy(the method of classification). So philosophy helps in the development of sound methods and research analysis by giving us the capacity to clearly formulate the problem, frame the hypothesis, posit the right questions, select the relevant data, analyzing results and the determination to pursue research to their objective conclusions. Philosophy tries to establish standards of evidence, create techniques for evaluating ideas and results. It offers the capacity to perceive the connection and relationship between various experiences and different fields. With this capacity, people with philosophical training can work in research institutes and groups, publishing houses, libraries, investigative journalism and policy analysts.

1.6. Philosophy in the Promotion of Human Dignity and Emancipation

Philosophy through many centuries of reflections has shown herself as a great authority in the understanding of man, human nature and human values, especially human dignity. Hence, the great statement of Socrates “man know thyself”, “the unexamined life is not worth living”.¹⁰ Through all the ages, philosophers and philosophies have evolved great ideas and values which promote human dignity and human freedom and other values of civilization paraded by modern society today. They have undertaken the task of rational reflection upon the ways in which human beings should live their lives and organize their societies, distinguishing the different values in human life and relationships and prohibiting other activities inimical to human flourishing and welfare. Thus there is no doubt that human dignity and human freedom are most promoted and enhanced within a philosophical climate and environment. Philosophy helps individuals to grow in individual

freedom and autonomy which enable man to refuse servitude in whatever guise. It enables and empowers man to say no to the given, to escape from the tyranny of public opinion, to combat policies and ideologies, inimical to the moral, social and spiritual welfare of man. Philosophers in their actions and writings have proved to be at the forefront in the battle for human rights.

Philosophy kills conformism, uniformism and ritualism; enhances creativity, sense of responsibility and personal responsibility. The philosophical spirit is the enemy of regimentation and suffocation of personal values and enables a thousand flowers to blossom and diversity of talents to flourish. Thus philosophy seeks to eradicate from our perspectives, every taint and vestige of ignorance, superstition, prejudice, blind acceptance of ideas and all forms of irrationalism. Philosophical empowerment makes man easy to live with and to control but very difficult to enslave. It helps in sound judgment by being a check on over-emotionalism, mob-mentality and frees man from the stranglehold of manipulators and demagogues by helping us, to think rationally and taking principled position on issues. The philosophical activity will continue to unveil the great mystery called man, indispensable for protecting and ensuring human flourishing, and securing the best life for him. People with formation in philosophy will be needed to work in human rights groups, humanitarian organizations, advocacy groups etc.

1.7. Philosophy and the Promotion of Political and Democratic values

Prominent and highly valued modern political theories, systems, values, conceptions, are the legacies of long years of philosophical reflections. Every institution of the society is based on some philosophical ideas whether in law, government, education, and economy. Philosophical differences are what differentiate one government from the other or one economic system from another. So political changes and reforms or revolutions, are possible if we change the philosophies which undergird the status-quo. Therefore, to bring any positive reform and change to any political, social, educational system or situation, one must introduce an enabling philosophical idea that can make such a change possible. Changes without any philosophical directions at times create a more problematic and chaotic situation.

To buttress the important role which philosophy has played in the emergence and purification of political systems and values, we must note, that the concepts of rights both moral and legal, of sovereignty, of the nation state, of the international law etc have been introduced by philosophers and then molded by fruitful dialogue over centuries between lawyers and legal and political philosophers. Similarly the development of the concepts of liberty, justice and democracy that were refined and elaborated by philosophical arguments, have informed political debates and stimulated political and constitutional reforms. In the domain of the rules under which we live, and the rule-governed organizations of societies in which we live, the development of the most illuminating, useful and practical concepts to describe and prescribe normative relationship, have been an integral part of philosophical reflection.¹¹

In relation to this, Ignatio du Ellacuria will observe that from Socrates we have seen that without philosophy one cannot know the way of things and one is not prepared to develop fully the locus of the fullness of human beings their character as citizens their character as political beings, their real self presentation to others.¹²

As long as man continues to live in a society and as long as society and human interests continue to change; as long as forces: demographic, economic, scientific, technological, cultural, religious continue to weigh in the human society; there will always be the need to pose questions of good governance, right, justice, leadership freedom etc. These are questions which only philosophy is best qualified to respond. The philosophical insights of Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Hobbes, Montesquieu, Tocqueville, Karl Marx, Adam Smith, Machiavelli etc; will continue to be reference points for all ages in the area of political leadership, constitutionalism, rule of law, political ethics and good governance, Nation building, political rights and responsibility. Thus CFM Joad would observe “ philosophy provides a man less with a faith by which to live than with a scale of values to regulate their living. These values for example truth, goodness, happiness can serve not only as ideas to guide

the individuals life but also as ends to direct the actions of communities thus providing the citizens with a goal for political efforts and a test by which to measure the worth or political programmes and politics".¹³ All these show that people trained in philosophy especially political philosophy and ethics, political anthropology can make great careers in politics, legislation, diplomacy, political Administration and Governance and public Administration, and in leadership in general. One may argue that we may not completely define Justice, goodness, right, equality, truth, knowledge, but is it possible for any society to exist without attempting to provide the best possible definitions of these concepts which philosophy tries to do?

1.8. Philosophy as the conscience of the society and Catharsis for Cultural development

A supplement to the role of philosophy in the promotion of political and democratic culture is role of philosophy as the conscience of the society in general. Conscience has always been the human faculty which directs us to do good and avoid evil; and judges us for actions done either good or evil. Philosophy in its ethical role and dimensions acts as conscience for societies. The philosophical mission is to propagate the truth and the good. There is a certain restlessness and uneasiness in the philosophical mind before the inappropriate, the inauthentic, the corrupting, moral excesses and deficiencies; the dishonest, the unjust etc; hence the reformist and revolutionary temper of philosophy. Socrates exhibited this temper in his moral attack against the moral excesses, indifference or complacency of the Athenian society of his time and was convinced of his moral vocation. Thus he claimed that God has appointed him to act like a stinging gadfly to awaken his compatriots from their moral stupor and complacency. In fact, in every age, we see the philosophers carrying on this moral reformist mission to their age. Even Plato will go further to say that there can be no justice in the state until philosophers become kings -his theory of the philosopher king. Karl Marx claimed that men have tried to know the world what remains is to change it, his rationale for opting for a communist revolution. This is not to say that the solution of philosophers are always right or perfect, but the image, intellectual and moral mission, to challenge the statusquo, to reform, and change situations have been some of the enduring mission of philosophy.

Who will doubt that in our society today, riddled with corruption, dishonesty, unbridled ambitions, oppression; that we need a discipline, a voice of moral temper to rise above the situation, pointing to what ought to be, to set the standard, to awaken the citizenry and call leaders to moral responsibility and accountability. Of course, to this discipline and voice belong the philosophical enterprise and engagement. This is why Plato argued that the philosopher is the most suitable to lead the people for he alone is capable to leading the people to true goodness, happiness and justice which the rest of men cannot grasp. For He alone can have an intellectual vision of the perfect forms or model of things, the good, the true, the beautiful; and drag them down to the society of ordinary men.¹⁴ Philosophers are men of deep insight who enlightens people with the ideal, with the true, the good not accessible to the ordinary people and help them to pursue elevated deeds and thoughts.

It is such men of philosophical culture who for all generations, are capable of showing the light and enlighten the people to the necessary values and attitudes that could bring the necessary changes and progress to the society.

This leads us to the role of philosophy as an agent of cultural development, by her cathartic effect, which is connected with the critical dimension. It is an accepted fact that cultures need to be dynamic in order to adapt to changing circumstances and complexities that may arise in the life of men and nations, the desirable change to progressive path that will enhance the quality of life of the people both in material, technological, spiritual and ethical directions. Philosophy in history has been shown to have potent positive impact on culture. For philosophy sought to eradicate from all our perspectives every taint and vestige of ignorance, superstition, prejudice, blind acceptance of ideas and any form of irrationalism, through its power of critique, which questions our taken-for-granted-attitudes, and subjects our beliefs and customs to the tribunal of reason in order to ascertain the truthfulness of their claims.

Philosophers are among those few individuals in civilization who live with a heightened intense awareness of what it means to exist. They are aware that institutions of societies are often more concerned with getting people to conform to acceptable

standards than thinking of themselves as unique individuals. They do not get lost in the everyday routine of life but realize there are numerous ways to organize a culture to make ends meet; that “ the concrete expressions given in law, economics, business, education and arts, are not given which cannot be altered, but feed to be re-chosen by each generation which defines for itself the meaning, purpose and process of living.¹⁵ This is how the modern scientific outlook emerged from long history of philosophical purification of the western cultural worldview. Philosophy has always exerted this purifying cathartic effect on cultures, which helped to increase the socio-cultural knowledge and moral base both quantitatively and qualitatively. It can rightly be said that the quality and progressiveness of a culture and the quality and level of her all-round achievement are proportional to the quality of her knowledge base.

African societies and cultures today are ravaged and infected with all sorts of irrationalism, prejudices, unwarranted assumptions, emasculating taboos which have kept our societies and cultures politically and technologically stunted and regressive. The lack of development in many sectors has been attributed to poor quality of our indigenous -knowledge base. There is no doubt that African societies and cultures must necessarily be philosophy friendly, so that her critical and analytic tools could challenge our indigenous cultures and beliefs to shed off her archaic and regressive elements, purify her knowledge base and empower what is relevant and authentic and use them for development purposes. For all cultures the criteria of distinguishing between the true and the false, the good and the bad, the legitimate and the illegitimate is essentially a philosophical task.

In the development of cultures philosophy as a critical and evaluative enterprise tries to challenge established view points and value systems and even institutionalized practices with the aim of entering into a critical engagement with them in order to identify their strength and weaknesses. The philosopher will surely be suitable in jobs in Development and Human Resources management, in Cultural ministries and Institutions, Cultural and Artistic Exhibitions, tourism etc.

1.9. Philosophy peace and conflict resolution

Philosophy can be a veritable instrument in peace and conflict resolution. This is because philosophy helps develop qualities and dispositions which make possible, peaceful, social and interpersonal relationships. This is because as we said before, the philosophical culture enables a thousand flowers to blossom because freedom is a necessary condition for the philosophical culture. A philosophical culture is a culture of dialogue, a debating culture which abhors dogmatism and imposition, and attitudes which normally cause a breach of peace and causes conflict. Philosophy recognizes that no one or group has the monopoly of wisdom hence the need for tolerance and freedom of opinion. It promotes the confrontation of ideas and perspectives, instead of the confrontation of weapons or mutual violence. It recommends that it is better to “jaw-jaw” than to “war-war”. It admits the limitation of men’s view points and recommends openness and humility before the strange and less familiar in order to understand and appreciate, and to learn if possible. It is such openness, readiness to learn, the recognition of our limitations as individuals, as groups and as cultures and the free flow of information and dialogue that create the environment for peaceful co-existence which limits conflicts. So philosophy embodies attitudes and dispositions which help overcome differences and promote co-existence. Making it possible to freely co-exist in spite of differences, and see the differences as opportunities to appreciate and learn.

Philosophy’s vocation for the truth and for the good encourages the pursuit of the truth and objectivity devoid of prejudices, sentiments, and personal interests. This is why philosophy “ regards fanaticism, bigotry and dogmatism not only as offence against manners but (also) as a betrayal of the truth”.¹⁶ These extremist attitudes are sure fertile grounds for the growth of conflicts while the philosophical quest for the truth through dialogue is a panacea for peace and conflict resolution, for it disposes one to admit mistakes and errors when we must; a necessary step to peace –making.

In this vein, imbibing the philosophical spirit is imbibing a peaceful disposition. No wonder those with philosophical training can work in Peace and Conflict Resolution boards and agencies; in arbitration jobs and Welfare and counseling agencies and commissions . They can serve as Peace Corps etc.

1.10. Philosophy and transferable skills

Philosophy makes for versatility and helps to develop transferable skills. Transferable skills are aptitudes and capacities which can be used in multiple sectors and makes it possible to do many tasks. People trained in philosophy can operate in many fields e.g: teaching at all levels, publishing, research work, investigative journalism, public administration, political advisers, legislative arbitration, Managers, Resource persons, tourism, speech-writing, counselors etc.¹⁷

1.11. Philosophy and meaningful existence

Philosophy has a value because of the greatness and nobility of the object it contemplates. Thus we do philosophy and should appreciate it because it asks fundamental questions which makes life meaningfully rich and qualitatively challenging. The person who does not ask questions, entertain doubts and reflect on life has not lived but merely existing, living a life comparable to any lower animal, in fact the height of idiocy. If you want a meaningful rich life it must be examined. Philosophy makes us to be aware of the complexities of life and enables us to avoid the simplistic explanations so often encountered in our discussions and debates. By asking fundamental questions as philosophy does, the world opens up and we begin to see the infinite possibility that there are more than one dimension of life.

Beyond the questions of what we do, our profession, our scientific and technological and cultural achievements, there lies at the center of our lives the basic question: who am I, from where do I come from and where am I going? (questions of human destiny) why evil? Why suffering? What is happiness? What is death? Is there life after death? Is life worth living? All these point to the problem of existence. These are nagging questions which lie deep in the human person; questions that make him anxious even at times tend to overwhelm him. Only a rational and reasonable response to these questions can assuage the human heart, give stability to individual existence, and offer man the reason to hope, to aspire and to endure.

People are thus seeking for a final explanation a supreme value which refers to nothing beyond itself and which puts an end to all questioning. Life in fact should never be grounded upon doubts, uncertainty or deceit. Such an existence will be threatened constantly by fear and anxiety. Thus Pope John Paul II will say “ whether we admit it or not there comes to everyone the moment when personal experiences must be anchored to a truth recognized as final, a truth which confers a certitude no longer open to doubts”.¹⁸ The pope would further say “ the thirst for truth is so rooted in the human heart that to be obliged to ignore it, it would cast our existence into jeopardy”.¹⁹

This is the quest for a meaningful existence. The problem of meaning is so fundamental to our life and gives direction to it. It cannot be solved by entering into a technological or scientific laboratory. The quality of life-issues, the motive for living and the quest for life are questions which tend towards the metaphysical and only a discipline of philosophy which has a metaphysical range can provide adequate response to these questions. Thus these universal and enduring questions of man need a response which can only naturally be provided by philosophy. Philosophy has done this for man for ages both as a man’s natural disposition and as a scientific pursuit, and will continue to perfect her responses for ages and generations to come, hence the humanization and transcendental role of philosophy.

2. CONCLUSION

We can conclude this chapter by saying that from the above reasons adduced, it has become evident that philosophy will continue to be a veritable instrument for the holistic development of man in his struggles as a being in the world. There is no aspect of man’s existence; intellectual, social, cultural, political, spiritual, scientific and technological that has not been positively enhanced through the philosophical enterprise and legacy. It is true that the special sciences have helped man to understand the material universe and have ensured tremendous material progress. However, the most important questions of life do not even exist at this material plain because beyond these material exigencies, man must face the questions that are foundational in man’s life that is the questions of value, the Good, human destiny, meaning of life and human happiness.

These purely belong to the proper competence of philosophical reflections and analysis. Thus philosophy has indeed proved to be a great benefactor of man and touches the human being in areas which no other science is capable of doing namely providing the reason for living and the courage and hope to face the future with equanimity of spirit. These words of Socrates in defense of the practice of philosophy shall remain instructive to all generations on the nobility of philosophy. He wrote "... I shall never stop practicing philosophy... are you not ashamed that you give your attention to acquiring as much money as possible and similarly with reputation and honor and give no attention or thought to truth and understanding and the perfection of your souls."²⁰ Expressing the sentiment Bertrand Russell says "that the mere practical man is one who recognizes only material needs, who realizes that man must have food for the body but oblivious of the necessity of providing food for his mind if all men were well of if poverty and disease has been reduced to their lowest possible point there would still remain much to be done to produce a valuable society and even in the existing world the goods of the mind are at least as important as the goods of the body. It is exclusively among the goods of the mind that the value of philosophy is to be found".²¹

Of course the good of the mind has salutary consequences on man's physical well being hence the Latin adage *Mens sana in corpore sano* (a healthy mind in a healthy body)

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