

The Humanities Education and the Challenges of Development in Africa: Rethinking the Idea of Arête

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Abstract

The humanities have, from the inception of education, played significant roles in the process of civilization and development. They remained the foundation of the development of humans and their society. They fed and nurtured the society. When the society felt it had found its footing, it started relegating them to the background and humanity started drifting out of its bounds towards the transhuman frontiers. This implies that there cannot be any meaningful development without a human face. What determines the human face remains the essence of the humanities. The humanities have guided developments in societies. Their contributions are part of what has kept humans and their society today. These are immeasurable contributions. In the face of such relegations and abandonment, rethinking and reintroducing the concept of arête as the foundation of the training of future leaders and drivers of development in Africa remains an imperative. The life of arête ensures the necessary discipline to drive development for the common good. Most African leaders abhor and lack the life of arête which is a *conditio sine qua non* for development. This has become our albatross vis-à-vis African development. The humanities remain the wheels of arête. This is one of the routes back to sanity in African leadership and development.

Keywords: Africa, humanities, arête, development, education

Introduction

Thou shall not sit with statisticians nor commit a social science. - W.H. Auden

The humanities and indeed the liberal arts were of high esteem in both the ivory towers and in the society at large for centuries. Gradually there came a paradigm shift away from this to other areas which seem to have relegated the humanities to the background trying to stifle it. The humanities look at both humans and their culture (education) as requiring to be modelled towards perfection. The purpose of the humanities can be summed up in the famous statement of Socrates that 'an unexamined life is not worth living'.

The quest for development of both human and material resources needs discipline and prudence. These are the major if not the sole purpose of the humanities. They equip us to critically assess

these. The humanities make the society conducive for development to thrive. In essence whenever there is a shift from the education that makes humans examine their lives for the good of the society the obtainable development becomes counterproductive. The French philosopher, Rousseau (1997) saw this and harped on it in his prizewinning essay of the Dijon Academy. He argued that civilization which came about through the sciences and its developments brought corruption (immorality) into the society. This was because the humanities and the attendant values were relegated to the background.

The challenges facing the globe today are largely due to lack of appreciation of values and other norms that promote peace, sustainability and respect for life. These lacks have been the focus of the humanities right from the origin of the education of humans. They strive to ensure that

these values become part of humanity in all perspectives. The humanities ensure an all-round development of the human race in the things that are noble for the good of the human race. The education in the humanities ensures a human race that respects life, protects and respects the environment, fights for the common good, sees work as an arduous good, goes for the virtuous and takes delight in the intellectual. Such is the current understanding of the life of arête. Arête remained the fundamental focus of the humanities and indeed the history of western education. It has been a requirement and a precondition for the development of societies. Majority of societies that lack this basic background hardly fare well in development matters. Development needs discipline and this is only possible through disciplined individuals. This is a necessary condition.

In this work, it is a call to a re-evaluation of our values vis-à-vis development. It is argued that development remains wanting without the humanities and remains a sine qua non in all the perspectives of development.

The Concepts of the Humanities and Development

The Humanities: The concept 'humanities' remains a fluid one. It could be traced historically from the western tradition of education following the paradigm shift from the pre-Socratic philosophers who focused on nature. This shift was initiated by Socrates who, according to Cicero pulled philosophy down from the skies to concentrate on human affairs. From this point, the focus of knowledge concentrated on humans. Thus subjects and courses that have their focus on humans and how they organize their affairs are regarded as the humanities.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica (2020), the humanities are those areas of knowledge that focus on human beings and their culture with special focus and approach from the analytical and critical methods. It notably pointed out that the

idea of the humanities is traceable to the Greek *paidea*, the classical Greek period in the history of philosophy and education. This was the period the concept of arête was seen as the major criterion for active participation in the life of the polis.

The humanities deal with all areas of knowledge that concern humans and their cultures and the world around them. They involve critical reflections and analyses on these areas.

Human beings determine the nature of their development. They are equally the standard for determining development. Their attitude is an indicator of the pace of development for any particular society. The humanities take up the challenges in this regard. They remain strategic to successful development.

Development: The hermeneutics of development involves a lot. It is one of the concepts surrounded with different perspectives. Some like Adam Smith and Ricardo see it from the economic (growth) perspective while others like Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011) see it from the human (social) welfare perspective. This later group believes that development should be associated with the abilities to do and pursue aspirations and potentialities.

All the above views however point to an increase or improvements on a certain status quo. It can be seen as all efforts in the quest for the progress of humanity from all angles which are geared towards the improvement of the natural condition. In all, the human being remains at the centre and is the standard for assessing developments.

Hickey and Mohan (2004) identified a 'critical modernist' approach to development. Here development is seen as a discourse that shapes and frames values and politics. This talks about rethinking development whereby modern concepts of development have to integrate old values and also accommodate local ideals and realities. This underscores the essence and

importance of the humanities in the quest for development. Every meaningful development discourse must have a fundamental knowledge of the society and its peoples. This is a service and knowledge rendered and provided by the humanities.

Development must improve the opportunities for humans to flourish, using the Aristotelian concept. In essence, flourishing may not necessarily be from the material aspects alone. There are other values and variables that ensure development and human flourishing. This was the reason Sen (1999) saw development from the perspective of amount of freedom and choices available to citizens of any society. In view of this, it becomes tenable that technological developments are not the summits of development as far as humans are concerned. One can posit here that development must have a human face. Development must create a positive change in societies. This is where the role of the humanities comes to the fore. Humanities create the opportunity through education for people to identify and realise their potentials. For development to thrive the atmosphere must be conducive. There are certain values that need to be established before people can think of realising their potentials. There must be human flourishing where the human mind is at peace for the human being to realise the many capabilities, freedoms and choices necessary before one can think of development of any society. People's rights and freedoms must be respected. The distribution of these, by way of their acknowledgement marks the understanding of development as measured by the human development index. Development is not a matter of statistics of financial indexes.

The Concept of *Arête* as the Fulcrum of Education in the Humanities

The Athenian society was a highly intellectual one compared with other Greek city-states like Sparta and Thebes. They strived to live the life of *arête*, which is the life of excellence in both private and public life. *Arête* was a life of virtue required of every Athenian adult. This in most cases qualifies

one to be elected into public offices. One major reason for the success of the Athenians in the intellectual and social developments was due to a life of self-discipline inculcated into the citizens. The entire philosophic mission of one of the greatest teachers in history, Socrates, was to teach how to live the life of *arête*. The bottomline of his teaching is summarised in his famous statements in Plato's Dialogues that 'an unexamined life is not worth living' - (Plato, 2014, 38a5-6) and 'virtue is knowledge' - *virtute est scientia* - (Plato, 2013, 87e-89a). He went about teaching these principles and way of life to fight many of the social ills besieging the Athenian society. With Socrates and his teachings in virtue (*arête*) the normative disciplines of philosophy such as ethics and political philosophy sprang up. Ethics in particular has remained strategic in all development efforts. Thus the role of the humanities can't be ruled out in development matters.

The emphasis on the education of *arête* was equally continued by Aristotle, a student of Plato. For Aristotle (2014) the essence of education is the attainment of virtues. For him, good education is geared towards the acquisition of intellectual and moral virtues. This idea of virtue permeated his two major works: the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*. The pre-Socratics set the pace and foundation of education in *arête* in major parts of the west. Equally reiterating the importance and role of the humanities and its origin from the Athenian setting, Oakeshott pointed out that ancient Athenian education:

was passed on...from the schools of the Roman Empire to the...medieval Christendom. Moved by a vivid consciousness of an intellectual and moral inheritance of great splendor and worth, this was the notion of education which informed the schools of the renaissance Europe and which survived into...continental Europe. (p.83).

This tradition of education in *arête* and its transmission into many eras was carried on by

Aquinas and the Schoolmen (the scholastics) and down to the enlightenment period when and where Rousseau (1997) condemned the drifting away from the humanities and pointed out how this is bringing about corruption in the society. He sort of condemned development without the humanities. It was at this era of the enlightenment that the humanities started being relegated to the background in developments. It was equally a cause for worry for many. This made Capaldi (2009) to be very concerned on how the humanities in general lost their place after being strategic to development. He was equally surprised that such could happen despite the strategic role they have played in the development of both humans and society. He recalled that:

Going back to their origins...in the Middle Ages, the humanities were custodians of the Ivory Tower and as such their essential task was the articulation, preservation, critique and transmission of the fundamental values of civilization. Higher education was understood as the initiation into that inheritance and as an adventure in self understanding. (Capaldi, 2009, p.114)

In the African setting, traditional education was equally focused on morals (*arête*). Africans held people of good character in high esteem. This was even before the introduction of formal and western type of education. People were promoted and respected based on moral standards. There was a significant shift in this perspective with the advent of western education which emphasized possession of wealth/quantity of knowledge.

This call for the life of *arête* for the citizens has positive impacts in the development of the Athenian society. Every Athenian citizen (especially the *eupatridae*) had the opportunity to live the life of *arête* and thus those who fail in this regard are held to ridicule and contempt by the society. Others were equally challenged to emulate this noble lifestyle in order to participate actively in the general life of the society. This helps to instil

the life of virtue into the citizens. This was the propaedeutic background to the successful development of the Athenian society.

The mythos here is that training in the humanities goes a long way in grooming, orienting and developing people who have the common good of all in mind. The humanities make the ground fertile for development to take place and thrive.

In the Athenian setting, only those who practice the life of *arête* were elected into public offices. The society had several systems in place for ensuring this. This challenges the citizens to live a virtuous life and life worthy of emulation. One of the sure ways towards this is through intellectual development which training and orientation in the humanities afforded them. It gave them opportunities to be good citizens.

Arête emphasizes the life of excellence through acquiring and living the life of virtue. When Socrates pointed out that 'virtue is knowledge' he meant that the possession of virtue implies critical thinking to decipher the good and the bad, the common good and selfish interests. To identify and practice these virtues is the task of education of which the onus falls on the humanities. This task has already been summarized by Capaldi and Oakeshott earlier in this section. Education in the humanities ensures a critical individual who will appreciate and apply critical thinking in matters of life, environment, sustainability and all that would ensure that development has a human face. This position and those of Capaldi and Oakeshott is lent credence by the Forum on Humanities in Africa (2014) who stressed the importance of the humanities. They posited that human values are the core of the humanities education, that they are crucial and critical to all fields of human endeavours and development.

Discourse on Africa's Development

Many nations in Africa have the human and material resources necessary for their development. To harness these has remained a

herculean task. The willpower to do such has been lacking. There have been several efforts to ensure speedy development of Africa. However these have not yielded the much expected results. Such efforts include setting up of institutions and programmes like the African Union (AU), African Development Bank (AfDB), the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and other regional development organs like ECOWAS, Southern Africa Development Committee (SADC), etc. These organizations have been reeling out policies for African development which still don't yield the expected results that would scale up Africa in the global list of development.

Many still believe that colonialism was the major reason African nations are underdeveloped. Rodney (2018) strongly believed that the west and their colonialism underdeveloped Africa. He might have been right then. But the argument no longer holds water in this century and millennium. It has been decades that we became free from our colonial masters. The current refrain of neocolonialism or imperialism as Africa's development albatross is equally arguable and contentious and not to be swallowed hook, line and sinker.

Almost all the nations of Africa lead and govern themselves. They now hold the reins of their development. How do they manage the resources they are endowed with? Do they use such for the common good? What is their understanding of the public or common good? African leaders and the citizens lack the appreciation of the ethics of governance and leadership. They do not see governance and leadership as a call to service. This is a major challenge for education in Africa. When will our educational institutions produce leaders who appreciate the ethics of governance and leadership? It remains to be disputed that our leaders lack many of the virtues necessary for the development of Africa. This is a serious challenge for the humanities.

One of the category mistakes in the African settings is that our leaders and politicians begin training and orientation in governance and leadership ethics only when elected or find themselves in public offices. These are however mere protocols. They were not groomed from the fundamental levels in the educational systems. This is a serious missing link in the development of Africa. One of the probable reasons this is the case is the current isolation of the humanities in our educational taxonomy.

The dividends of democracy don't reach the people who are supposed to enjoy them. They merely end up in the private pockets of our leaders. This is part of the logic behind the position that without discipline development remains a mirage. Many of the monies embezzled from the public treasuries are stashed away in foreign nations and banks. The Abacha loot in Nigeria remains a typical case in point. These are used to develop such host nations at our own detriment. We are the ones underdeveloping ourselves.

What do we make of a nation where the leaders have made the younger generation to be interested in the 'quick money syndrome'? The younger generation no longer believes in the principle of hardwork as a virtuous and an honourable means to success. Our leaders do not live a life of discipline that is 'worth living'. There is need to appreciate industry in all human endeavours. Many of the subjects and courses in our educational institutions lack ethical curricula. The introduction of such curricular would go a long way to help checkmate unbridled attitudes and quests for immoral and illegal means of wealth acquisition.

Development in Africa should not adopt western standards hook, line and sinker without relevant modifications to suit African existential situation. This is one of the factors affecting indigenous means of facilitating developments in Africa. We abandon our own values and pursue western ones holistically and create unnecessary missing links. This was what Nneji (2011) criticized in his work

on 'unvaluating the African'. It can be said that Africans 'inferiorise' themselves. This is where the logic of neocolonialism/imperialism meets a blind alley. We inadvertently make ourselves preys and victims of imperialism.

We often look at the west as standard in a way that we are suffering a self-imposed inferiority complex. This is the logic behind the position that we, in most cases, do not trust our own ideas. This is equally implied in the position of Marah (1998) that African people's attitude of seeing the white man as being superior because of its leadership in technological advancements must be challenged. One might however say that the white man is superior because he appears more disciplined and understands what is meant by the common good when it comes to leadership and development. The development of the west which is cherished and imitated by Africans started with education in the humanities. This laid a great foundation for the development they are enjoying today. Africa and Africans need to rethink this.

The West we often imitate and refer to started all their developments from somewhere. The prepared the ground with education in the humanities. Naturally, certain stages of development cannot be jumped over. We need to prepare the ground for African development to thrive. According to the African Development Bank Group (2014) 'concentrating on copying the west without asking where and how they arrived where they are does not portray long-term thinking' and does not augur well for development in Africa. Majority of researches conducted by Africans are for the solutions of non-African problems. In the international academic settings, African researches tailored to African problems are considered as not having international focus. This forces us to abandon the solutions to our own problems and focus on helping the west solve their own problems. This is what we erroneously call imperialism whereas it is 'inferiorisation' of ourselves - the African.

Many African leaders help foreign powers to perpetrate imperialism. Why must African academic institutions use western standards for assessments? They should serve as guides only. Thus this is equally a challenge for the humanities. There is need to make Africans look inwards as many of our founding fathers did. (We had great thinkers like Julius Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah). Their philosophies can be reviewed, updated and upgraded to focus on African contemporary problems. Fortunately, some scholars have started making inroads into such areas with special reference to capitalism. There is now an on-going campaign for an African brand of capitalism known as 'africapitalism'. Amaeshi and Idemudia (2015) talked about rethinking the business-society relationship from a development perspective in Africa especially and stressing how it differs from similar western constructs.

Corruption in Africa encourages imperialism which I see as a self-inflicted injury. Many leaders of African nations enter into many economic alliances with foreign nations just for their own selfish interests and not even for the sake of the common good. Some of these leaders will go for foreign companies who deliver inferior and substandard jobs ignoring local ones who can do such better. Most are attracted by the incentives they would gain in foreign currencies. In line with this position, Adi (2019) saw the evolving romance by African nations with China as 'chopsticks imperialism. Only introspection can heal such. The solutions to our problems lie within and must come from the within. This is one of the strands of challenges for the humanities in the quest for African development.

There are many policies of African development which are hanging on the balance due to the fact that most of our leaders lack the necessary skills and orientations that are the essence of humanities. The ethics of good governance for the common good remains lacking. This is the major problem in the successful implementation of many development policies in Africa. Let us look at one

of the policies of the African Union (AU). The African Union (2015) enacted the 'African Peace and Security Architecture' policy which was geared towards establishing and maintaining peace and security in the African region. It was designed to ensure peace and stability in the region as accompaniment to development. One of the major objectives of the policy, according to the African Union indicates the:

determination to achieve the goal of a conflict free Africa, to make peace a reality for all people and rid the continent of civil wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts, and to prevent genocide. The African leaders also pledged not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans and undertook to end all wars on the continent by 2020. (African Union, 2015, p.10)

This policy is crucial for African development to thrive. Its implementation started in 2002 as articulated in the 2002 protocol relating to the establishment of the African Union's peace and Security Council. This policy appears non-existent in the African settings. Many of the leaders are not interested in being an African and they don't understand what being an African implies. This would have motivated them to work towards the realisation of this policy. The starting point of the realisation of the fruits of this policy is in the national leaderships of each nation of Africa. When a leader lacks the ethics of leadership, such a leader may not understand the value of this peace and security policy. For most leaders, such a policy may be mistaken as being a hindrance to their selfish motives in their own country. Some fund and promote conflicts in other nations because of selfish interests. Any leader who understands the position of Africa and how Africa is seen by the west and other imperial powers should appreciate the essence of this policy. This policy calls for the appreciation of social and cultural integration as a necessary ingredient in peace and security efforts. Realizing the importance of justice as a component

of peace and security, the African Union (2019) came up with the 'transitional justice policy'. This appears to complement the peace and security policy seen above. The principles guiding this policy revolve around values grounded in *arête*. According to the policy, the principles underpinning it are: leadership, nationalism, inclusiveness, equity and non-discrimination, African shared values, cooperation, coherence, etc. These are variables proper to humanities education. It is believed by many that peace without justice is a mirage. For peace and security to reign, those wronged by either acts of omission or commission must be shown justice. Many African leaders promote and perpetuate injustice. They defy the values being promoted by this policy. Our lack of good governance ethics makes many ethnic nations married together by wrong acts of commission of the colonial masters feel marginalized and discriminated against. This is the starting point of conflicts, a serious challenge to peace and security and consequently development. This has been a challenge to African development. That Africa is prone to conflict is a result of such issues and this is a major albatross on Africa's development.

Many of the problems confronting Africa need appreciation of the roles and importance of the humanities in both leadership and development. There are certain issues that Africa needs to set right before any meaningful development. To unveil and proffer solutions to these issues are outside the realm of the sciences. There are several avenues to achieve such and Africa has the human and material resources for such. The humanities have a plethora of avenues and means to achieve that. One must not however deny the fact that they have been making serious efforts towards this angle but the problem is the fact that we lack leaders in Africa who appreciate African values and would want to look for solutions to African development problems from within. This is the reason why they need the backing of the governments and their policies.

For any development policy to yield results, professionals from the humanities background remain strategic. Many policies in Africa have remained highfalutin because the fundamental contributions of the humanities were lacking. Many policies in Africa have remained paper works because of several missing links which the humanities are supposed to fill.

The humanities equip us for critical reflections and analyses of our activities. They give us insights into human problems for a better appreciation of their nature and to proffer of solutions. This helps us to ensure that we are on the right track in the quest for development.

Problems of Development in Africa vis-à-vis the Humanities

Many are the problems besieging Africa from the development perspective. One thing is clear; they are surmountable. It needs dedication and re-evaluation of values. Majorly, the problem of African nations has been the problem of values and discipline. We have the human and material resources necessary for development and to reduce, if not exit, poverty. Unfortunately our present leaders, compared with many of the founding fathers of African nations, lack necessary leadership values for such. They equally lack the vision and willpower. Our founding fathers were deeply rooted and grounded in the humanities and their attendant values. These for sure accounted for level of development success they achieved with available human and material resources. Their vision then for their nations and Africa in general were attestations to their humanities background and remain unparalleled till date.

According to Lepapa (2017) the major problems hindering development in Africa include corruption, poor governance, insecurity, etc. These are all problems associated with lack of proper values, a serious indictment, especially, on the African education sector. This is a pointer to the consequences of the relegation of the humanities to the background in the Nigerian and other African educational systems and programmes.

This position is reflected in the study conducted by Goucha (2007). There is special interests and preferences of science and technology courses over the humanities in most African nations. The Forum on Humanities in Africa (2014) also noted that researches in higher education and researches in Africa indicate that the humanities are in a precarious situation. They also noted that policy makers are unrelentlessly trying to stifle them. It appears Africa has keyed in into the move to annihilate the humanities through the on-going digital revolution. The digital revolution has shifted attention away from the humanities in various ways. Employment opportunities no longer tip in favour of the humanities. Foreign and federal government scholarships hardly favour the humanities. With this the humanities look abandoned and are being treated as if they have no contributions to offer for the development of the society. This appears misplaced. According to Underwood (2019) the digital revolution is trying to undermine the humanities. He was however optimistic that the attempt at annihilation will not succeed.

Our leaders need to extricate themselves from obsession with western standards and values. We must not always adopt and adept to western solutions for our myriads of African problems. This makes us prey to imperialism. Many of the nations in the west fashioned out what would work for them. Why can't we Africans fashion out our own?

The west has a subtle way of coercing us to dance to their whims and caprices. They do such in most fronts through many of the international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Such organizations have been accused of prescribing policies which are unfriendly to African development. They bend us to their rules through such policies. For example McGrath (2019) found out that black writers systematically compare themselves with white writers.

Arête, Humanities and Africa's Development

Certain values remain fundamental to development. Every nation must be founded on certain basic values which will guide and spur them to development. The Athenians did it through the introduction of the concept of arête as a springboard for development by training the individual ahead of leadership. This was equally obtainable in most western societies. Humanities stress important values for the good of both individuals and societies as *conditio sine qua non* for development to thrive. These values necessary for good leadership have to be inculcated into the citizens for the nation or society to realize its goals. In most cases these form and inform the nation's national policies. Most if not all the policies are pursued and achieved through education which is an aspect or appendage of the humanities.

The humanities make us understand the nature of humans from both the cultural, religious and social backgrounds. This helps the leaders of the society to know how to channel and utilise human and material resources for development. Studies and findings from these areas help to understand how societies have evolved, how they have fared and how to project into the future by improving where there were shortfalls. Policies and decision making not informed by the findings in these area are merely highfalutin. This is one of the problems of borrowing western-oriented policies and programs for African development. The training of human resources in these areas will contribute greatly to African development. Even advancements in science and technology need to be driven and grounded in the findings of the humanities. This was how the Japanese began. Africa and Africans can easily replicate the Japanese ideology of development. When development is home grown, it is definitely humanities-grown. Culture, education and religion played significant role in the Japanese development feat just as philosophy (and the concept of arête did same for ancient Greeks). Africans must reflect globally and practicalise or actualize locally. This was how the struggle for independence started and was realised.

The Forum on the Humanities in Africa of the Humanities Program (2014) stressed the importance of the humanities in critical appreciation of the prudent and ethical management of natural and national resources and civic dialogues in the public spheres which remain crucial for development in Africa and the globe.

The British Council emphasized the role of the humanities in development. This, according to Jones (2014) is because it believed that not all development problems could be solved with technical expertise. He pointed out the strategic importance of critical thinking in development issues which the humanities afforded individuals. Our leaders, scientists and those in the field of development need critical thinking. Nussbaum (2010) equally emphasized the importance of the humanities in development. She pointed out that overemphasis on the quest for economic growth at the detriment of the humanities make students to lack critical thinking skills and many other values. For Small (2013) humanities contribute knowledge economy which then contributes to the economy proper.

The foremost philosopher, Whitehead (1967) maintained that education remains the only bootstraps by which the civilization of any nation is achieved. The humanities help societies to cultivate the human mind. This is the reason why education, from the analytic perspective, is seen as 'cultivation'. It tills the mind and makes it fertile for other areas of knowledge to germinate, grow and be nurtured. This is why the developments in other areas of knowledge and human endeavours are seen as the products of a fertile imagination. The humanities hold the ace in this.

Researches indicate that the humanities will remain strategic in future developments and will survive the scourge of technology. Many have argued that the humanities provide what is called by Moro (2018) the essential skills needed for every day survival. For her, these essential skills remain foundational for all developments. These

are needed in all sectors of human development. Africans and their leaders need to refocus on the strategic role of the humanities in aiding in finding solutions to the myriads of problems that stunt development in the region.

Majority of our founding fathers were oriented in the humanities, had real development visions for Africa and practiced the life of arête. They did well in both private and public management of their lives. They governed their societies bearing in mind the common good. Today our present leaders lack the fundamental training in the humanities which is one of the prerogatives for appreciating values in leadership. The humanities hold a lot of promises in finding solutions to the myriads of African problems which constitute clogs on its development.

Conclusion

The humanities have remained the intellectual starting point of all the developments of humans. It cultivates the mind and indeed the individual and disposes him/her for the necessary and required development. Other areas of human endeavours need the appreciation of the values inherent in the humanities for the products to have human face. Their lack leaves serious lacunae which may affect societies adversely.

The variables of corruption, lack of good governance, lack of shared African values are the major challenges that Africa needs to overcome before any meaningful development can take place. To appreciate the nature and solutions to these problems, there has to be a recourse to the skills and knowledge provided by the humanities. Through humanities are better positioned to dissect these clogs in the wheels of African development. They equally ensure the sustainability of achieved development strides anywhere. The orientation for such is an orientation in the virtues that have the common good in mind. This is the basis of the quest to reconsider rethinking the concept of arête from the African perspective. African education has been ab-

initio an arête-based education in good morals and African shared values, it was equally an education in the humanities. The humanities will help us have a new vision of Africa, a new understanding of Africa from a new pedestal. Many of our fundamental problems which inhibit African development were created by the colonialists. Only the humanities are in a position to give us the lens to first of all identify them and proffer solutions. Only then would development in Africa thrive.

The humanities remain the fundamental routes back to sanity in the development of Africa. They should remain foundational to African development. The humanities can be seen as the handmaiden of development and at the same time the gadfly of development.

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