

## SOME QUESTIONS OF VALUES IN NATION BUILDING: AN EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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The large sums of money that are being spent every year on education by practically all countries of the world, including those of Africa, is a testimony to the great importance attached to education by the peoples and governments of the world. However, while there is no dispute on the importance of education, there is a great deal of disagreement on the values that education should promote. This is an old disagreement. Ever since the time of Socrates, and perhaps even before him, great thinkers have spent considerable time trying to explain what education is and what it should accomplish. Some two thousand years ago Aristotle put this unsettled question quite succinctly in the following words:

“From the present model of education we cannot determine... whether to instruct a child in what will be useful to him in life, or what tends to virtue or what is excellent; for all these things have their separate defenders”.<sup>1</sup>

The debate regarding the values that ought to be promoted is a crucial issue in the modern world. In a book on *Philosophy of Education*; Philip H. Phenix says:

The problem of the status of values is crucial in education. If values have no more standing than individual taste, then directing the development of persons becomes a matter of arbitrary imposition by some persons on others. If values are rooted in society, then personal development must be subjected to group decisions. If there is a rational natural law of values, reason becomes sovereign over individuals and groups in the process

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1. Quoted by Brauner C.J. and Burns H.W. *Problems in Education and Philosophy*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. 1965. p.55.

of guiding growth. If values have their sanction in God, there are resources and judgments for education which lie beyond individuals, groups, and perhaps even beyond human rationality.<sup>2</sup>

In Africa today the same dispute rages on. What are the excellencies and virtues that African education ought to promote? African scholars, as well as scholar-politicians, are deeply engrossed in these issues because the problem touches on the important question of values on which to build the new African nations. The ideas of a society must somehow be articulated if education is to promote them.

These concerns are responsible for the emergence of important ideologies like Negritude, Humanism, Pan-Africanism or Socialism in Africa. Each of these ideologies stresses, among other things "... the restoration of dignity to the African person, the promotion of worthy African customs and traditions, and the belief that Africa has something to give to the world, particularly in the realm of human relations."<sup>3</sup> Except perhaps Tanzania, which has succeeded in charting the path it will follow in its development and has identified the values it will build its new society on, almost all African countries are still debating the same issue. "The major task facing the nation," once said Vice-President Kapwepwe of Zambia, "is to establish our identity and a system of doing things the Zambians way."<sup>4</sup> Indeed the same major task faces practically all countries of Africa today.

### Imitating others:

Colonial rule in Africa is almost over. But vestiges of colonialism still persist. The colonialist that ruled Africa for many hundreds of years regarded the African, to use Herskovitz' words, "... a straggler in the march of mankind towards civilization, whose progress was to be shaped by those who brought him the benefit of the higher order".<sup>5</sup>

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2. Phoenix P.H. *Philosophy of Education*. Holt, Rienhart and Winston, Inc., 1958. New York: p. 551.
  3. Seremekun F. "Zambia's Cultural Revolution," in *East Africa Journal*, Vol. VII, No. 5. May 1970. p. 27.
  4. *ibid*; p. 28.
  5. Herskovitz, M. J., *The Human Factor in Changing Africa*, New York Kropf, 1962. p. 225.

In this march for progress the best model to follow was, of course, the Western model of government as well as its social and economy structure. The West was regarded as the home of democracy and the storehouse of the best human achievements. In parenthesis it is ironical to note, however, that what the African experienced in the hands of the colonialists was the opposite of democracy administered by individuals who represented the worst aspects of Western culture. African martyrs and political leaders who were steeped in the best tradition of Western liberalism and democracy fought for the introduction of these better values that were disregarded by the colonial masters themselves.

The idea that Western countries provided the model for African developments was not challenged by most Africans themselves. After independence the newly emerging countries of Africa naturally looked to Western education as the key to advancement and betterment. Prior to independence, some form of Western education had trickled to these countries mainly by missionaries and to a lesser extent by the colonial powers themselves. After independence the trickle transformed itself into a flood, and Western education was indiscriminately imported to these countries. The conviction of African leaders, who are themselves products of Western education, of the indispensability of Western education as the only avenue to modernization, coupled with the growing desire for education of any kind by the fast awakening African masses, led to a transplanation on African soils not only of Western educational systems but also of other aspects of Western culture. More recently ideologies like Marxism and Maoism have found their way to Africa. This tendency to follow in the footsteps of other countries has won for the African nations the epithet, "Follower Nations."

It is now being increasingly realized that the attempt to shape one society in the model of other societies was not only a futile exercise but a dangerous one as well. Sociologists and Social Anthropologists point to many societies that either attempted, or were forced, to abandon their way of life in favour of alien values and as a result started to disintegrate. This disintegration is shown in the cultural alienation of the people in these societies. Pitt-Rivers suggests, for example, that mass imposition of foreign cultural values on a people leads to a loss of interest in life among those affected by it. When people are robbed of their accustomed way of life, their cherished values and customs, they tend

to lose interest in living. "By destruction of the interest in life natives became maladjusted, a circumstance which throughout organic life leads to eventual extinction."<sup>6</sup> These maladjustments are today subjects of important sociological studies. Turnbull's book *The Lonely African*<sup>7</sup> is an excellent account of the problem of cultural alienation in Africa today.

In spite of such evidence there are still certain Europeans as well as Africans who maintain that Western institutions represent the best model for African societies to follow. Even some learned Africans subscribe to this view. By and large, however, the dangers of imitating others and blindly accepting foreign values is recognized. If the nineteen fifties is regarded as the decade for the liberation of Africa, the sixties might well be considered as the decade for the search for African identity. In research institutions and universities in the continent and all over the world, scholars are heavily engaged in the study of all departments of African culture. These studies point to the rich cultural heritage in Africa that can provide the foundation upon which to build a sane African society and a healthy African personality.

#### **Cultural Relativism and Chauvinism:**

While this trend is a healthy sign the road ahead is naturally rough. The question is by what criteria are we to judge what values in our African culture we should preserve or modify or eliminate? Different views are expressed on this vital question. A person with a relativistic turn of mind may argue that what is good in one society may not be so good in another society. If for example one society has a tyrannical form of government and if this arrangement works and is accepted by the people this according to him is what is good for the society. There may be countries in Africa whose governments are similar to that of the Republic of South Africa, the only difference being that the exploiters in one place are minority natives and in the other minority whites. But in every other respect they may be the same. To take another example, the ideal person in one society may be a courageous, fearless, hardy and a completely loyal citizen to

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6. Quoted by Germa A. *Education and the Conflict of Values* (unpublished doctoral dissertation), Southern Illinois University. 1964. p. 232.

7. Turnbull, c., *The Lonely African*, New York: Simon and Schuster 1962.

the state while in another it may be one with an independent and inquisitive mind. Values are social invention and relative to social organizations. The thorough-going relativist would accept any political institutions or form of social organizations if they are acceptable by the peoples concerned. The task of education is to promote whatever values a society considers worthwhile, and not to question or destroy them. Hence, while he rightly condemns the importation of value systems from one society to another, he fails to provide the standards by which to judge values.

An individual with an experimentalist sympathies may also regard values as relative and mutable; relative because they originate and develop in specific human society and mutable because they change as the conditions of man changes. However, even though values are created by man they are the result of his intelligence and judgement. Man's interests transform themselves to values after experience has confirmed to him that they lead to personal happiness and fulfilment as well as to social betterment. It is, therefore, necessary to critically and intelligently examine that those values that are regarded as worthwhile do in fact lead to personal and interpersonal happiness and fulfilment. Values that contribute to this end are eventually retained and those that do not are dropped. The task of education is to cultivate the intellect and sharpen the judgement of the individual so that he can participate in the creation of worthwhile values. The difficulty with this view is in determining what really constitutes happiness and fulfilment. This is not a matter that can be objectively tested as the experimentalist claims. On the other hand the view that the main function of education is not simply to prepare individuals to accept their cultural values but also to criticize it seems to be plausible. This point will be considered more fully later.

Certain African leaders and of course many older members of African societies, are attracted by the Rousseauian idealization of the life of the "noble savage". They believe that the simple and innocent values of tradition are preferable to the sophisticated yet corrupting values of modernity. The enthusiasm for restoring "African authenticity," to use President Mobutu's words, has sometimes led some leaders to take a chauvinistic stand towards traditional culture. In some instances this has given rise to unnecessary conflict. The rather drastic steps taken to restore traditional names in place of Christian names in Zaire has been a cause of great

dissatisfaction among the Christian members of the society and created unnecessary clashes between Church and State. The condemnation by certain authorities in Zambia of modern fashions of dress, pop-music, cosmetics and the like has been a cause for disgruntlement among the young and again created unnecessary misunderstanding between the young and the conservative old. Such disagreements and clashes came to the fore in a conference on culture that took place at the University of Zambia some four years ago. At the suggestion that "the wearing of mini-skirts, dresses, wigs and robes, tight trousers and jeans should be discouraged,"<sup>8</sup> a young woman member of the conference rightly warned «against the implementation of a proposal which 'will tear us apart'.»<sup>9</sup>

In order to avoid such difficulties it may be necessary to differentiate between the peripheral and the central aspects of culture. No doubt dresses, music, foods, manners of eating, ways of rearing children, and so on, identify one group of people from others. But these aspects in the culture do not have to remain in their pure form always. Traditional African dresses like the 'toga' or 'shema' may be slightly clumsy for everyday purpose in a modern society. Likewise national foods like 'fufu' or 'milmil' may lack in nutritious ingredients necessary for healthy growth. Certain African child-rearing practices may, in fact, not be compatible with the scientific ways of bringing up children. All these it may be necessary to change or modify in light of new conditions and circumstances as well as new scientific discoveries. As Professor Reid says:

"The *particular* content of ideas of what it is good to do and seek must change along with other change - the change in social structure ... new understanding of human potentialities, scientific and technological advance. ... *The sifting of the genuine from the spurious goes on endlessly.*"<sup>10</sup>

The process of industrialization and urbanization introduce changes in the traditional way of life as indeed they have in Africa. The extended family, for example, hardly exists in the urban centers of the Continent as it exists in its pure form

8. Seremekun F, op. cit., p. 30.

9. Ibid, p. 30.

10. Reid, L.A., *Philosophy and Education*, Heinemann, London, 1962. p. 48.

in the rural communities. The intimate personal relationships that characterize rural communities of Africa is replaced by the more impersonal and formal relationships of the urban centers. African ideologists like Kaunda and Nyerere argue that there are aspects in traditional African culture, particularly in the area of human relationships that can and must be retained in the process of change towards urbanization and industrialization. These traditional values must be retained not merely for the sake of retaining them for chauvinistic reasons but because of the positive contribution they can make to the quality of human life in the modern world. By retaining these values Africa will not only be saved from repeating the mistakes that other industrialized countries have made but would also make a positive contribution to the welfare of mankind. These contributions would be Africa's legacy to the modern world and also a source of pride to the African.

The prevalence of inferiority complexes in Africa is not so much due to the adoption of Western dresses or music as it is the false belief that "The African...had everything to learn and nothing to teach, either to their children or to the rest of the world."<sup>11</sup> This belief is partly the result of the systematic brainwashing of the African in the hands of the European. The other equally important reason (though gradually diminishing) is the neglect by African educational institutions of their fundamental responsibility of initiating the child into his own culture so that he can grow up to be proud of it. It must be remembered, however, that initiating into the culture is not done with the view of indoctrinating the African child and rejecting modern novelties. Rather it is to make him realize that in all fields of human thought and culture his ancestors have also made significant contributions even though these contributions are now superseded by new ones. This change of attitude towards one's own cultural heritage is more fundamental than all the condemnation of mini-skirts and pop-music, which in any case are more African than American. It is only after these attitudinal changes have taken place that the African can regain his pride in himself. This would inevitably give rise to the revival of traditional culture. Many young Africans are more comfortable and draw greater internal satisfaction in their own traditional

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11. Herskovitz. M. J. op. cit., p. 225.

milieu, but feel ashamed to participate in it openly because they have falsely come to regard it inferior. As a result the traditional culture is set apart from that of the imported culture. But once these attitudinal changes take place the young African way well be in a position to absorb unashamedly in his daily life, aspects of his own culture that contribute to his personal satisfaction and fulfilment while at the same time accepting those aspects in the foreign culture that contribute to the same goal. The result would be a healthier synthesis of traditional and modern values.

### **The Role of Government:**

In reality, governments in many African countries decide on the values that the schools should transmit to the young. This is simply because schools are regarded as tools for furthering the interests of governments in power. Ali A. Mazrui, in an article on *The EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF NATIONAL GOALS AND POLITICAL VALUES IN AFRICA* says:

“The role of schools in dealing with such a scale of values might vary according to the dominant orientation of the government in power. The Kenya Government might be inclined to foster and encourage the ethic of self-improvement, since the Government is committed to the goal of creating an indigenous entrepreneurial culture and private enterprise. Tanzania, on the other hand, might be inclined to preserve the traditional scale of priorities - which put communal work before self-improvement.”<sup>12</sup>

The dangers of government dictation of the value systems to be transmitted by education are quite obvious. The government may have its own brand of ideology which it is determined to guard at all costs. Oppositions to this official ideology are punishable by law and teachers in schools and universities are required to transmit officially acceptable values. The scholar is in no position to question these values and teach others that might contradict the official position. Before the war many university professors in Nazi-Germany lost their jobs because they defied the government regulation. During

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12. Mazrui A. A., “The Educational Implications of National Goals and Political Values in Africa.” In *Education in Eastern Africa*, Vol. 2. No. 1. 1971. p. 45.



the MaCarthian period many American professors and teachers suspected of communist sympathies were also expelled from their jobs.

There are good reasons to be apprehensive when schools become agents for promoting government sponsored ideologies, however worthwhile these ideologies may be. This would soon defeat the realization of the fundamental objectives of education which is the cultivation of an open and a critical mind and undermine those very qualities necessary for making independent value judgement such as creativity, inquisitiveness and objectivity. It is true that the cultivation of an open and critical mind is no easy task; it requires highly competent teachers as well as a rich educational environment. It is expensive. From the point of view of conservative leaders who prefer obedience to criticism from their citizens it is also dangerous. As a substitute, an education that is cheap and has immediate utilitarian value is sought in some countries. Economists rightly point to the large number of unemployed educated Africans loitering in the streets of Accra, Addis Ababa or Lagos. They suggest that educational expansion must be adjusted to the job market available in the country and that the education given in the school must be one that is applicable to productive purposes. This suggests that educational development must be determined by the economic realities and the number of school-going children must correspond to the number of available jobs. The greater the economic capacity to absorb the educated manpower the greater the expansion of educational facilities should be. If the economic capacity shrinks so also should the educational facility. Economists have suggested on many occasions that there are more school-going children in some African countries than these countries need, and steps should be taken to reduce the number. One or two major points may be cited in opposition to this view.

First, it is generally accepted, even by the poor countries that education is not merely a means to get employment but is a fundamental human right. It is outside the scope of this paper to discuss what the rights of man are, who determines these rights and on what justification. The preamble of the American Declaration of Human Rights, which, in a way, is a cristalized statement of the aspirations of all men, maintains that every man has the right, among other things, to liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Education is a prerequisite for the realization of these rights. Ignorant men are like Plato's

prisoners in a cave. The soul liberates itself only when it manages to escape from the cave and begins to see the bright world without and comes face to face with the sun which symbolizes knowledge. The means of this liberation and happiness is education. Furthermore, in Plato's oligarchic society those who rule are those who had the benefit of an extensive education. Modern democracy is a government by the people. For this reason education can be regarded as the most fundamental of all the human rights. As Professor John Wild says:

"...of all the basic rights of man the right to education is the most precious and the most in need of adequate realization. On it will depend not only the attainment of its own peculiar values but that of all the rest as well. As his rational insight is to a wise man, so is a sound ideology sustained by effective education to a healthy society. As nothing worse can happen to a man than the corruption of his mind, so nothing more awful can happen to a community than the breakdown of its informal and formal education."<sup>13</sup>

In a debate between Jefferson and Madison in the early years of the formation of the American Republic, Madison is said to have been wary of the prevalence of ignorance at the time, to which Jefferson replied that the solution is not to perpetuate ignorance but to go ahead with educating the masses. African leaders are at present engaged in the difficult task of nation-building just as Jefferson and his colleagues were some two hundred years ago. On what values are these new nations to be built? This involves making important decisions. To romanticize the traditional past and advocate a return to it is dangerous. It is equally dangerous, indeed genocide, to accept an imported ideology. In an important article entitled *Freedom and Unity*, Jülius Neyerere writes...

"...the change which is taking places in Africa now is fundamental that the society itself is being transformed. The traditional order is dying; the question which has yet to be answered is what will be built on our past and, in consequence, what kind of society will eventually replace the traditional one. Choices which involve clashes

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13. Wild, J. "Education and Human Society: A Realistic View" in *Modern Philosophies and Education*, The National Society for the Study of Education, 5835 Kimbark Avenue, Chicago 37. Illinois, 1955, p. 41.

of principle must therefore be answered in the light of the kind of society we want to create, for our priorities now will affect the attitudes and institutions of the future."<sup>14</sup>

These important decisions can only be made by an enlightened citizenry. The narrow specialist or the skilled manual worker, whose only contribution to the national life is the economic prosperity of the nation, are as incompetent as the illiterate members of the nation. African education would be defeating the task of nation-building if it failed to produce citizens who are not intellectually and morally equipped to make decisions and choices of their own. No doubt the education given in the schools must be useful to the individuals; it should enable them to employ the skills and knowledge they have gained to earn a living and support a family. The country should also reap the benefits from its investments. However, receiving the skilled services of those whom it has educated is only one way in which a country is rewarded for the expensive educational facilities it provides.

Secondly, overemphasis on utility education has its grave dangers in other aspects. A subject taught purely for its utilitarian value suffers both in content and in the manner it is taught. When teaching a subject purely for its utilitarian value, the teacher is compelled to select those elements in the content that have applicability to a certain job. He does not have the time, nor does he see the need, to probe into the principles and theories that underly the practical aspect of the subject. In his method of teaching the emphasis would be more on drill and memorization and less on exploration and personal investigation. The latter method is too time-consuming, while the former is effective in producing, as quickly and as economically as possible, individuals who can do a given job efficiently. Thus an artificial wall is created between theory and practice, between science and technology. Science is an exercise in investigation and creation. The student who is denied the opportunity of studying some science misses the whole point of education, which is after all, the cultivation of a scientific temperament among people.

Thirdly, a purely utility education fails to give due importance to experience that contributes to culture and refinement. Music, art, drama or even philosophy may bring

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14. Nyerere J., *Nyerere on Socialism*, Oxford University Press, Dar-es-Salaam, 1969. p. 8.

little economic reward to the one pursuing them but are still of cultural importance. This does not seem to be appreciated by those who regard development as purely economic advancement calculated by the gross-national-product and the per capita income of a people in a country. The artistic, musical, aesthetic and ethical culture of a people count for very little and education is regarded purely as a matter of bread and butter. It is sad to note that schools and universities have succumbed to these influences and have largely abandoned their primary task of producing "cultured" individuals. This is witnessed by the bareness of the cultural life in most African schools and universities. Formal instruction in music and drama and art are scarce just as extra-curricular activities of a cultural nature are rare.

Finally, to press the point that African governments do not have the money for non-utilitarian, "luxury," education is to miss one of the important functions of education, namely the development of imagination and creativity in individuals. Such persons are in a position to create jobs for themselves and contribute to the economic and cultural life of the nation even when ready-made jobs are not available for them. There is a strong case to believe that the function of educational institutions is to produce educated individuals in the sense described above and only secondarily for specific jobs. It must be remembered also that due to the fast changes that take place in every sphere of work no skill or knowledge would have lasting utility unless one is equipped to creatively apply his skill and knowledge and engages in continuous self education. Furthermore, governments cannot be expected to play the role of providers of education as well as jobs. Other agencies should cooperate in this task. But the main burden of creating jobs lies on the educated themselves. They can do this, however, if they have been encouraged to develop creative intelligence while at school. If this is successfully done the role of government would change from that of provider of jobs to that of assistant to the educated in the creation of jobs.

As a corollary to the above point it is necessary to accept the fact that in most instances the slow educational development in most African countries is due to a stagnant economic condition. This, in turn, is the result of the social and political conditions existing in the country. It is also a fact that educational decisions are in the last analysis political decisions. If fast educational development appears to be a

threat to the vested interests of the few land lords and politicians who hold power and control the economy, the pace of educational development is deliberately made to go slow. Educational development is controlled by the financial resources made available to it. The economist does not attempt to probe into these vital issues and suggest means of political and social reforms as preconditions for economic reform. Rather than pointing to the growing unemployment of the educated as an indication for the urgency of improving the social and political foundation of the nation, economists regard these as indications for controlling educational expansion. It seems that the problem of social instability which is threatening many African countries cannot be solved by controlling educational expansion but by instituting fundamental social and political reforms. In planning the educational development of the future it may be well to deviate from the usual practice of establishing first the amount of money that will be available for education in the next ten or twenty years and then project educational development for these years within the framework of the given budget. The reverse approach will be to project educational expansion irrespective of financial considerations first and then look for the financial support to realize this projection.

### Developing the Capacity to Think:

It will be noted from the preceding discussion that the question regarding the values to promote through education and other means in society and those to discourage or modify is not easy to settle. No philosopher has so far succeeded in providing a satisfactory criteria by which to judge values. The religious justifications for value-judgments are under strong criticism as are the secular justifications. It is now generally acknowledged by modern philosophers that the task of value-judgment is very involved and one which is far from being solved. In the concluding paragraph on the chapter on "*the justification of Values*," O'Conner points out that "...the problem of how to justify our value judgments is still an unsolved problem in philosophy. To realize this will save us from dogmatism and at the same time encourage us to go on looking for the answers."<sup>15</sup>

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15. O'Connor, D. J., *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. 1957. p. 71.

Even though the justification of value judgment is a difficult problem the task of nation-building in Africa today involves making value decisions. This is a matter that cannot be left to an individual or groups of individuals. On the contrary it requires the participation of all members of the society. However, children whose capacity for reasoning is not yet sufficiently developed have to be told what rules to follow. Similarly, illiterate people need always the guidance of enlightened men. It is only individuals who have had the benefit of an educational experience that develop their capacities to reason and judge, that can intelligently participate in the exercise of value-judgement. This is the challenge to African education.

In an article entitled *The Educated Man*,<sup>16</sup> Eric Lucas mentions five areas of inquiry that are pursued in educational institutions. He refers to them as "the great highways of human thought and culture". They include the logical and mathematical; the scientific; the artistic; the socio-historical; and the theological and philosophical. An educated person must travel in each of these highways sufficiently far to understand and appreciate the contribution of each of them to the enrichment of human life. Those who enjoy the journey in one particular highway may proceed to the furthest point possible and become specialists in the area. However, they must have had the necessary background knowledge of all the areas of thought and culture so as not to appear strangers to the other four.

All these five areas of inquiry, though they employ different methods of investigation, attempt to gain new and deeper understanding of the universe and more effective control of nature. Mathematics and formal logic use the deductive or axiomatic method whereas the empirical sciences use the experimental method. Borderline sciences like sociology or psychology rely more on observational methods. Whatever the method used, the aim is to get at the truth and in the process of getting at the truth, the scholar has to follow meticulously certain rules of procedure. Careful collection of data, well-thought-out formulation of hypothesis and testing these hypothesis, thorough experimentation, additional careful observation and measurement are some of the procedures that are followed by a scientist. A mathematician has to follow

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16. Lucas, E., "The Education Man?" in *What is a Man?* Oxford University Press. 1972.

the standard procedures of deductive reasoning. This goes to show that the discovery of truth cannot take place in a haphazard, undisciplined and careless manner. On the contrary, it calls for a great deal of intellectual discipline, thoroughness and exactitude. These are qualities of mind that are indispensable to anyone devoted to the pursuit of truth.

Similarly, such intellectual dispositions as honesty, objectivity, broadmindedness and perseverance are also required of a genuine scholar. One who is dedicated to the pursuit of truth can only follow where his reason and facts lead him. Russell defined the reasonable person (and the scholar cannot afford to be anything else but reasonable) "as one who always proportioned the degree of intensity with which he held his various beliefs to the amount of evidence available for each belief."<sup>17</sup> Unlike the medieval scholastic philosopher, the real scholar cannot start an investigation from an accepted belief and try to adjust his facts and reasoning in support of this belief. This is intellectual dishonesty, not acceptable to a scholar. The educated person should be open to different views and opinions, and weighs each of these objectively and dispassionately. He must be prepared to abandon cherished beliefs in the face of new discoveries. This is a mark of moral courage. These intellectual qualities and others like them also form the basis of conduct. From this point of view they are also moral qualities. It is not, therefore, always correct to dissociate the intellectual formation of the individual from his moral formation. In a way, any subject taught at school forms the intellectual as well as the moral disposition of a student. A teacher is responsible for the development of both.

### **The Content of Education:**

It is obvious that the intellectual qualities enumerated in this paper cannot be cultivated in a vacuum. In order to be able to think, children should be provided with materials to think about. So as to cultivate the capacity for value judgement, students must be confronted with issues to discuss and frame opinions on. The question is, what is this content going to be? What are the issues to be discussed and debated? In the past, and to a large extent in the present, the materials that the African student learnt at school and universities have been drawn from imported books. This

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17. O'Connor D. J. *op. cit.* p. 27.

was chiefly influenced by Western culture. Other parts of the world were touched on insofar as they had some contribution to make in understanding Western civilization. History books mentioned Africa in relation to slave trade, the adventures of missionaries and colonization. Similarly the issues debated in the classroom were far removed from those that have immediate relevance to the African. It is not, therefore, surprising that the African student not only knows more about Europe or America and their cultures, and little or nothing of his own, but that he also regards these other cultures as superior to his own and worthy of imitation. Fortunately, there is an increasing awareness in Africa of the dangers of these educational practices. In spite of strong resistance in many places, African schools have gradually introduced courses on various aspects of African culture. It is necessary, however, to guard against the dangers of over-enthusiasm in introducing inadequately prepared courses in African schools, and particularly in the universities. Sir Eric Ashby was right in his remark that "To teach African studies at undergraduate level is a much harder task than to teach European or Middle Eastern or Russian studies. The subject is not codified. The documents are incomplete. The text books are not yet written."<sup>18</sup>

The development of the intellectual qualities mentioned earlier depends on how the purpose of the subjects taught is understood (instrumentally or intrinsically), and on how it is taught. If a subject is regarded purely as a means to do a certain job for an economic end, its scope and content would be very much limited. There would be little attempt to delve deep into it or to show the relationship that this form of enquiry has to other forms of enquiry. On the contrary, only those aspects in the content that would have an immediate application are taught. In teaching, the emphasis is more on drill and memorization and less in exploration and inquiry. As a result the student fails to acquire the intellectual as well as the moral qualities of discipline, broad-mindedness, truthfulness, etc. As has already been mentioned, the overemphasis on the utilitarian or extrinsic value of education in many African schools and universities denies the young African scholar the opportunity to develop these qualities. The proof of the pudding is in the eating; the

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18. Ashby, E., *East African Universities and Western Tradition*, Oxford University Press, London. 1969. p. 162.



success of an educational system is best judged by observing those that went through it. To what extent do young educated Africans manifest commitment to truth, independence and discipline of mind, and objectivity and broadmindedness in their judgement? How much concern is there among them about the vital issues of nation-building, expressed through debates, writings and lectures? To what extent are they free from prejudice, unscientific attitudes towards life, and confused thinking and narrow-mindedness? How successful has education in Africa been in cultivating the intellectual qualities necessary to make everyone concerned think, choose and decide for himself what type of society he wants to create for himself and his children? If the records are not very complimentary with regard to this, it is necessary to reflect on what has gone wrong in African education, and hasten to rectify the situation. Failure to do this is tantamount to abandoning the responsibility of deciding the direction of social, economic and political change in Africa. For as President Nyerere well put it, "...the choice for Africa is between changing or being changed ...changing our lives under our own direction, or being changed by the impact of forces outside our control."<sup>19</sup>

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19. Nyerere, K. J., *op. cit.* p. 29.