



Philosophy and Human Affairs: Rethinking the Public Perception of the Philosophical Profession

ADEKUNLE A. IBRAHIM
University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

EMMANUEL C. UMEH
Seat of Wisdom Major Seminary, Umuahia, Abia State, Nigeria

Abstract. This paper examines the place of philosophy in human affairs through a rethink of the public perception of the discipline. In the public mind, philosophy is an abstract, abstruse and fuzzy discipline that offers little or nothing but unnecessary hair-splitting discourse detached from the practical concerns of human life. This unfortunate conception of philosophy is predicated on the theoretical characterization of its subject matter and its conceptual misrepresentation by philosophers and teachers of philosophy. This has led to the prevalent lukewarm attitude towards philosophy as a discipline that lacks practical relevance to human affairs. Against this backdrop, the paper articulates philosophy as a discipline with two fundamental outlooks: formative and utilitarian. The former sees philosophy as a discipline that builds in the individual the capacity for self-transformation and actualization while the later articulates the philosophical skills-set as the ultimate transferable skills required by employers of labour. On the basis of this, the paper demonstrates the inevitability of philosophy in the overall development of the human person as well as its place in human affairs. In addition, it outlines the skills-set of philosophical training and illustrates how it fits into corporate thinking as well as why various human endeavours are in dire need of philosophy graduates. In addition, it recommends the steps to be taken to correct the misconception about the value of philosophy in relation to the practical concerns of life. Finally, the paper calls for a rethink in the public perception of the philosophical discipline in order to maximize the abundant benefits of philosophical skill-sets for the greater good of humanity.

Keywords: Philosophy, Human Affairs, Skills Set, Self-Transformation, Self-Actualization.

1. Introduction

In all honesty, there seem to be no other discipline that is more misunderstood, misconstrued and misrepresented as philosophy. In fact, the public opinion about philosophy is characterized by despair and disinterestedness due to a litany of obfuscating commentaries. In a bid to give a vivid picture of the obscurity of the value of philosophy in the mind of the public, it is important to note that there is hardly any philosophy student or philosophy teacher who has not been faced, at one time or the other, with the question “Why study philosophy?” or “what is the practical value of philosophy?” In all honesty, most interlocutors hardly get clear, simple and convincing answers to these questions. This explains the misconception of philosophy as an abstract, abstruse and fuzzy discipline that offers little or nothing to the career minded.

A critical reflection on this engagement reveals that most of the interlocutors in response to answers supplied points to other disciplines to illustrate the nature of the answers they are looking for. For instance, it is usually argued that the economist earns a living dealing with economic issues affecting people’s daily life. The study of computer science certainly leads to endless practical applications; not to mention career possibilities. Biological research can produce new cures for the diseases that plagues us, engineers learn how to build better bridges and produce marvelous inventions. Psychologists help us deal with test anxiety and other maladies. The banker, lawyer, botanist, agriculturist, journalist, actor, musicians or artist, each earns a living utilizing knowledge and skills in their respective subject areas. Hence, the question “what does a philosopher do?” in most cases are orchestrated by cynical and

discouraging comments on choosing philosophy as a course of study in the university. These comments include: "Philosophy will destroy one's faith in God", "All philosophers do is criticize and tear down", "They make simple things complicated", "Philosophers are sadists and atheists", "You will only get stirred up as philosophy questions everything, and then leaves you without any answers", "The study of philosophy will make you jobless".

The above scenario shows that other disciplines enjoy a clear public knowledge of what they are all about while the value status of philosophy is in obscurity. This, in effect, leads to the unfortunate public perception of philosophy as a discipline that lacks a clear-cut relevance to public affairs. Consequently, humanity is denied the awareness of the abundant benefits philosophy has to offer in terms of its elevation of mankind to the pedestal of enlightenment, open-mindedness, broadening of sensibilities and sensitivity to human ideals such as; trust, tolerance, cooperation, compassion, and so on. (Oladipo, 24)

In view of the foregoing, this paper seeks to unravel the reasons behind the prevalent lukewarm attitude towards philosophy as a discipline that lacks relevance to human affairs. It explores the inevitability of philosophy in the overall development of the human person by conceptualizing it as a discipline with two fundamental outlooks: formative and utilitarian. To achieve this objective, the paper outlines the skills-set of philosophical training and shows how it fits into various human endeavours. On the basis of this, it recommends steps to be taken to correct the misconception of philosophy in relation to practical affairs of life through the elevation of mankind to critically conscious being.

2. Philosophy and Its Skills-Set

The question "what is philosophy?" is itself a philosophical question as definitions and expositions of philosophy have differed radically, even among philosophers. This is because philosophy is a term that is not open to any universal acceptable definition as it can be defined from different perspectives depending on the intellectual and ideological background that informs the definition. This accounts for the multifarious definitions of philosophy as witnessed among philosophers. However, this is not to say that there are no standard definitions of philosophy. The point being stressed here is that there is no one definition but there are definitions of philosophy. In essence, it is practically unphilosophical to give a

definition that provides a one and for all meaning of what philosophy is as there are no final answers to philosophical questions. This is why we can talk about definitions but not definition of philosophy. Thus, "any attempt to define philosophy is difficult but to claim indefinability is an erroneous and unproductive approach (Udoidem 3).

In view of the above, we may proceed to consider some definitions of philosophy. One definition that appears to enjoy more patronage is that derived from its etymological roots. It states that the word philosophy is a derivative of the fusion of two Greek words *philein* and *sophia* meaning "love of" and "wisdom" respectively. Philosophy therefore, is the love of wisdom. This means that philosophers are passionate seekers of wisdom while wisdom is the goal of philosophy. Wisdom here entails a deep understanding of the basic principles and laws of existence and how this is utilized in guiding our daily living. It is a total perspective of the conditionalities of meaningful existence. For this reason, Soccio sees wisdom as "general knowledge of what does and does not produce human happiness" (12). Accordingly, wisdom requires knowing the difference between right and wrong, combined with the desire and ability to act in basic accord with that knowledge. In this sense, wisdom is simply the guide to life while philosophy is the search for the guide to life. This explains why the spirit of philosophy is the endless pursuit of wisdom that entails a persistent act of questioning everything. To merely accept anything without questioning is to be somebody else puppet, a second-hand person, a person of another person. Wisdom, therefore, as the goal of philosophy, demands that we do not engage in the uncritical acceptance of beliefs handed down by parents, teachers, politicians, and religious leaders. It is therefore the goal of philosophy to empower us to control of our beliefs, make up our own mind about life, knowledge, religion and morality ourselves.

Thus, the art of questioning everything involves the activity of critical and reflective thinking which are the hallmarks of the philosophic spirit. The expertise of the philosopher lies in the conscious and sustained application of critical and reflective thinking to various aspects of human experience. (Oladipo, 19) In essence, the philosophic spirit, according to Dilthey as quoted by Rickman "leaves no valuations and aspirations unexamined and no piece of knowledge isolated; it seeks the grounds for the validity of whatever is valid." (129) This description of philosophy as the pursuit of wisdom resonates in the various perspectives through which it is definable.

These perspectives are in line with the meanings of philosophy as outlined by Harold Titus et al (9) as follows:

- Philosophy is a set of attitudes or beliefs toward life and the universe that are often held uncritically. This is the informal sense of philosophy that entails an informal personal attitude towards life.
- Philosophy is a process of reflecting upon and criticizing our most deeply held beliefs and attitudes. This is the formal sense of philosophy that entails a searching and critical attitude that is open-minded and tolerant- willing to look at all sides of an issue without prejudice.
- Philosophy is an attempt to gain a view of the whole. In this sense, philosophy is a worldview, a master perspective, a clear unified vision of reality; the "big picture" a synoptic outlook.
- Philosophy is the logical analysis of language and the clarification of the meaning of words and concepts. This definition is derived from one of the functions of philosophy. It involves the analysis and clarification of terms and the use of language in order to lay bare the sense in which they are employed to avoid ambiguity.
- Philosophy is a group of perennial problems which interest mankind and for which philosopher have always sought answers. This involves an inquiry into the deepest problems of human existence. Questions that border on the nature of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, freewill and determinism, mind and body, good and evil are examples of perennial problems that have engaged the attention of philosophers for ages.

From the above stated definitions, four cardinal importance of philosophy to human life are derivable. These are:

- Philosophy provides us with new conceptual lenses for looking at the world. It frees our minds from our taken-for-granted assumptions and enables us to think freely and creatively.
- Philosophy provides us with a synoptic platform which enlarges the area of our awareness. It enables us to be more alive, more discerning more critical and more intelligent.

- Philosophy in its most positive use is a critique: an enterprise of demystification. In this sense, it exposes and uncovers all forms of baseness of thought.
- Philosophy is self-examination. In essence, it entails a dialogue with the inner-self which leads to life that is responsible and fully awake. As such, philosophy provides the framework for self-appraisal as the unexamined life is not worth living.

A careful look at the above stated definitions and importance of philosophy reveal that philosophy instills in its learner(s) skills set with which they analyze, examine, interpret and unify information about their environment in order to create meaning and determine their place in the world. This skills-set which form the basis for the philosophers' versatility include but not limited to what Ibrahim (11-13) outlines in his paper *Philosophy and Career Opportunities* as follows:

(a) Critical Thinking

The word critical comes from the Greek word *kritikos* which means "to question, to make sense of, to be able to analyze". Thinking is the way we make sense of the world. In this sense, a critical thinker is someone who has developed a knowledgeable understanding of our complex world, a thoughtful perspective on important ideas and timely issues, the capacity for penetrating insight and intelligent judgement, and sophisticated thinking and language abilities. Critical thinking is not simply one way of thinking; it is a synoptic approach in dealing with the diverse parts of the world in order to make enlightened decisions. In this sense, students who have learnt their philosophical lessons well are not as likely as those who have not to become trapped by dogmatism. Such students have learned the value of an open mind and seeking solutions to problems that meet standards of coherence and reasonableness.

(b) Creative Thinking

This involves using our thinking process to develop ideas that are unique, useful, and worthy of further elaboration. A critical thinker is a creative thinker as he utilizes his penetrative insight to force into the open uncommon ideas that hitherto had not been noticed. In this way, philosophers are creative thinkers and engineers of ideas as they are pace-setters in idea generation.

(c) Logical Thinking

This involves a well thought out process of reasoning that emphasizes the construction of logically valid and compelling arguments to support or reject a viewpoint and detect illogical ways of thinking, that is, fallacious reasoning. The philosopher, through this skill, develops the ability to spot logical difficulties in an argument and to avoid such in the construction of an argument.

(d) Unification and Effective Communication of Ideas.

A philosophical training involves the development of the ability to synthesize, relate, connect and integrate ideas in an understandable, balanced and well-thought-out manner to avoid ambiguous and controversial presentation of ideas. This further entails the ability to understand and use language in an effective way to communicate and express ideas clearly and coherently. As such philosophy helps one to think, read and write, and possibly speak more critically, carefully and cogently.

(e) Analytic and Hermeneutic Skills

The word "analytic" comes from the Greek word "*analytikos*" which means "to resolve into its elements". Analysis is a function of philosophy which consists of translating sentences needing clarification into other sentences which contain neither the key words of the original sentences, nor synonyms for them. The word "hermeneutics" comes from the Greek *hermeneutikos* which means "interpretation". So, the analytic and hermeneutic skills involve the ability to break up, link up and interpret specific issues in order to force into the open hidden pre-suppositions and taken-for-granted assumptions or beliefs. They enable us to draw out or extrapolate the implications of an idea in relation to different aspects of life. This involves forming, clarifying, breaking into constitutive elements, sorting and applying concepts in order to understand the world in a clear, sophisticated and organized manner.

(f) Normative and Prescriptive Skills

Philosophers by virtue of their training are expected to provide guidance with respect to issues they have subjected to reflection, meditation, contemplation, critical analysis and hermeneutical evaluation. In this sense, a philosopher is a counsellor who provides a

critical guidance on basic issues of life ranging from morals, values, meaning and purpose.

3. What is Human Affairs?

The expression "human affairs" is made up of two principal words. Human, on the one hand refers to mortal anthropoid beings while affairs on the other hand means engagements, activities, relationships, or interactions. In this sense, human affairs refer to human or mortal interactions or relationships. It refers to the engagements or activities of humans in the pursuit of their survival. So, when we talk about human affairs, we are simply referring to interactions as a fact of human existence. Human existence here refers to man faced with daily enormous challenging encounters with his environment, health, spiritual well-being, relationship with others, economic survival, socio-political needs, educational, moral, cultural and other needs. In view of the fact that humanity is faced with diverse existential challenges, human affairs invariably becomes multi-faceted as it simply reflects the activities of man on a daily basis. As such, there are domestic affairs, family affairs, business affair, environmental affairs, financial affairs, economic affairs, political affairs, religious affairs, legal affairs, public affairs, international affairs, educational affairs and so on.

3.1 Philosophy and Human Affairs

In the public domain, philosophy is an abstract, abstruse and fuzzy discipline that offers nothing but unnecessary hair-splitting discourse detached from practical affairs of human life. Hence, philosophy to the public is not a layman's concern because it is couched to reflect the sophistication of the Ivory tower laced with jargons that are meaningful to the initiates. This exclusive theoretical conceptualization of philosophy led to the popular but unfortunate description of it as a purely speculative discipline with no tincture of connection to practical life. Hence, whenever, the word 'philosophy' is mentioned, it conjures up the image of something abstruse and fuzzy devoid of any practical relevance to human affairs. This explains why philosophy undergraduates and graduates go through lot of excruciating experiences in the attempt to explain the market value of a philosophy degree. For this reason, they are cynically and frequently asked, "What is the practical value of philosophy?" In other words, "what will you do with philosophy and where will you work"? Majority of these students find it difficult if not impossible to articulate the practical relevance of a philosophy

degree to their interlocutors. As such, they become perplexed due to lack of awareness of the appropriate responses to such public scrutiny. This in most cases is not a fault of theirs as the academic presentation of philosophy is usually done in its theoretical form detached from its practical precondition. For instance, in his work *Philosophy and Employment Prospect...* Ibrahim narrates his ordeal with his father's critique of his choice to study philosophy as follows:

In 1998, I had a fair share of my own excruciating experience when I rejoiced home to inform my parents that I have been admitted into the University to study philosophy. I was so frustrated when my father rebuffed my choice of philosophy as he cynically retorted "philo-kini?" in Yoruba, meaning "philo what?" this simply shows my father's disapproval of the choice of philosophy as a course of study due to his inability to phantom the employability value of philosophy. (25-26)

In the same vein and in a different dimension during his national youth service, he was also confronted with the same public misconception about philosophy as he narrates further that:

When I was posted to my place of primary assignment (a secondary school) as a core member, the principal, on seeing philosophy as my course of study, rhetorically asked, why did they send you here? Are they not aware that we do not offer philosophy as a subject? Consequently, he quickly signed the rejection form with which I was reposted to the state university to teach philosophy as a Graduate Assistant. (26)

In a similar scenario, Ozumba recounts his own experience when in the 1970s he got admission to study philosophy. In his words:

On reaching home after the first semester my father confronted me with the question: what is this philosophy you say you are studying? Before I could fake an answer, another question came in quick succession "After your study of philosophy what will you do?" I was completely shattered; I look around there was no known philosopher close by to deliver me from the discouraging questions. (Philosophical Handbook... 1)

Perhaps, it was a blessing in disguise for young Ozumba that there was no known philosopher around as the response of such a philosopher might even put him into more trouble with his father. This is because most philosophers would argue in the Heideggerian perspective that the right question to ask is not "what

can we do with philosophy?" rather it is "what can philosophy do with us?" This certainly is the right answer but obviously not a pragmatic one as it fails to address what is usually considered as the practical or market value of a degree. The fear of unemployment, fulfillment of responsibilities, peer pressure, family expectations, economic situation as well as the abstract nature of philosophy seemingly propels the public to seek for the practical employability value of a philosophy degree. Thus, philosophy undergraduate(s) continue to face wagging tongues on their choice to study philosophy to the extent that their engagement in it is with mixed feelings. That is, deep down in their sub consciousness is a silent but forceful resonation of the questions (in the Nigerian Pidgin English) as follows: "Wetin I go do after graduation?," "Na who wan employ me?"

The foregoing shows that the market value or the practical value of a philosophy degree is still outside the purview of the public mind. This makes it difficult for the ordinary mind to understand why a serious-minded admission seeker should opt for the choice of philosophy as a course of study. In order to provide a clear, pragmatic and comprehensive response to this worry, there is need to briefly consider how philosophers have always responded to this question so as to determine why such responses have always been seen as grossly inadequate and practically unconvincing. This is to justify the perspective through which this paper answers the question.

The question "why study philosophy?" has always been raised with the mindset to ascertain the practical value of philosophy to human affairs. Unfortunately, most philosophers' responses have always been from the Heideggerian perspective which argues that the value of philosophy must be sought only in the good of the mind not in the consideration of its practical value to human life. Lawhead echoes this response when he writes that:

The most important benefits in studying philosophy is the changes it can make in your growth as a person. Hence, the question about the practical value of philosophy should not be frame as, "what can I do with philosophy?" the question would be, "What can philosophy do with me?" (9).

In the same vein, Bertrand Russell in his book, *the Problems of Philosophy* argues that many are quick to dismiss philosophical inquiry on the ground that it cannot yield any practical, demonstrable true conclusions. He maintains that judgement of this kind come too quickly and underscores a misunderstanding

of the goals of philosophical study. According to him, “many men under the influence of science or of practical affairs are inclined to doubt whether philosophy is anything better than innocent but useless trifling, hair-splitting discipline” (89). In a bid to correct this misconception, he points out that the value of philosophy ought not to be sought in the utility of basic needs rather through its effects upon the lives of those who study it. He therefore captures the value of philosophy in terms of its effects on the life of an individual. On the one hand, when philosophy is absent in the life a man, Russell says, he becomes a prisoner of prejudice. In his words:

...the man who has not 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... (91).

On the other hand, Russell points out that the presence of philosophy in the life of a man makes him a universal citizen free from dogmatism and narrow-mindedness. For this reason, he argues further that:

The mind which has become accustomed to the freedom and impartiality of philosophic contemplation will preserve something of the same freedom and impartiality in the world of action and emotion... contemplation enlarges not only the objects of our thoughts but also the objects of our actions and our affections: it makes us citizens of the universe, not only of one walled city at war with all the rest. In this citizenship of the universe consists man's true freedom, and his liberation from the thralldom of narrow hopes and fears (93).

The point Russell seems to be making in the above is that the presence of philosophy in our lives brings to the fore our imaginative prowess, while at the same time making it less likely that we will cling dogmatically to unexamined assumptions and beliefs. This ultimately builds in us a sense of impartiality and global perspective on issues. On the question of the practical value of philosophy, Russell has this to say: Utility does not belong to philosophy. If the study of philosophy has any value at all...it must be only indirectly, through its effects upon the lives of those who study it. It is in those effects therefore if anywhere, that the value of philosophy must be primarily sought...it is exclusively among the goods of the mind that the value of philosophy is to be found; and only those who are not indifferent to these goods can be persuaded that the study of philosophy is not a waste of time (89.90).

A careful look at the foregoing reveals that Lawhead and Russell completely rule out any utilitarian value derivable from the study of philosophy as they argue that the question of utility or practical usefulness does not arise at all in relation to the philosophical profession. In fairness to Lawhead and Russell and other similar voices, it is indeed the case that the primary concern of philosophy is the realization and transformation of the self. This is the case in as much as there is no one that is born fully formed at birth. It is through self-experience in the world that we become who we are. In this process of becoming who we are, philosophy helps us (as learners in the world) to unify and create meaning from our experience through critical reflection which ultimately transforms us. It does this by providing us with the conceptual, analytic and interpretative tools to deal with the myriads of realities we face in our daily life.

However, as a synoptic discipline which concerns itself with all aspects of human life; it amounts to self-contradiction (on the part of Lawhead and Russell) to exclude the question of utility from the concern of philosophy. This is because philosophical problems and concerns are in one way or the other in touch with everyday life. The denial of this claim is usually predicated on the fact that philosophy has become professionalized. This in many ways has detached philosophers and philosophy from the concerns of everyday life. This explains why philosophy is usually seen as abstract, abstruse and not relevant to practical life. On the contrary, philosophical ideas and problems are inspired, generated and sustained by the ever-evolving contradictions of human life. These contradictions in human existence provide the raw materials for philosophical discourse. In this sense, if philosophy turns away from the practical concerns of human affairs, it is tantamount to detaching from its source of life. Like a popular Yoruba adage says: *odò tó gbàgbé orisun è, ó se tán tí ó gbe* meaning "a river that forgets its source, will certainly run dry", In effect, detaching philosophical subject matters from practical concerns of everyday life is simply philosophy's readiness for extinction.

Consequently, if the questions of self-realization and utility are aspects of human life, and the concern of philosophy covers all aspects of human life, then, it follows that philosophy is both formative and utilitarian in outlook. On the one hand, through its formative outlook, philosophy helps the individual in becoming a self-actualized person by instilling in him/her the ability to form one's opinions and beliefs, develop profound self-awareness, cultivate the culture

of flexibility in the face of new insights, build the skill of creativity in bringing out unique and new perspectives on issues, and exhibit clearer, well-thought out value systems in morality, the arts, politics and so on. On the other hand, philosophy through its utilitarian outlook, builds in an individual the ultimate transferable skills-set that employers seek in their prospective employees. According to Alison Doyle, there are top five (5) important employability skills that are of value to employers. These are: Communication Skills, Teamwork, Critical Thinking, Ethics, and Information Technology. (www.thebalancecareers.com) In this way, philosophy through its various courses such as: Arguments and Critical Thinking, Analytic Philosophy, Logic and the Foundation of Mathematics, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy and Human Existence, Ethics, as well as series of philosophical seminars and round table discussions prepare the individual(s) that study it with the ultimate skills-set necessary in the pursuit of earning a living and self-transformative qualities that enhance interpersonal relationships and effective citizenship participation. By so doing, philosophy becomes practically relevant to all aspects of human engagements as philosophical graduates equipped with the core transferable skills-set become valuable additions to organizational set-ups. Thus, philosophy satisfies two basic purposes of learning: learning for the sake of employment and learning for self-development. This means that the study of philosophy satisfies the two basic human needs: maintenance needs (lower needs) and actualizing needs (higher needs). Maintenance needs on the one hand are the physical and psychological needs that people must satisfy to maintain themselves as human being such as: food, shelter, clothing, security, social interaction and so on. Actualizing needs on the other hand refers to self-actualization which involves "self-fulfillment, creativity, self-expression and realization of potential, that is, being everything, we can be". (Velasquez 33).

In view of the foregoing, to evaluate the worth of philosophy as a discipline exclusively either in terms of the goods of the mind (formative outlook) or job preparation value (utilitarian outlook) is to take a narrow view of human needs and how philosophy helps in the satisfaction of these needs. A balance evaluation of the value of philosophy in the life of man entails taking into accounts both the formative and utilitarian outlooks. This involves the articulation of the role of philosophy in the process of transforming the individual(s) both at the spiritual and material levels into a fully functioning person. This is because "for the human life to be meaningful, the two

categories of his being (spirit and body) must be catered for" (Ibrahim 5). Thus, besides providing an overall balance in the outlook of human life, philosophy has a strong utilitarian function as it offers a variety of career prospective skills in practically all fields of human endeavor. As such, a training in philosophy through its skills-set (earlier outlined) enables one to fit seamlessly into the following work areas or profession: Computer Programing, Legal Profession, Corporate Administration (public and private), Marketing and Advertising Agencies, Logistics and Transportation Industry, Journalism and Media Outfits, Banking and Financial Institutions, Examination Bodies, Regulatory Bodies, Diplomatic Missions, Publishing Houses, Politics and Governance, Client and Career Counseling, Military and Paramilitary Forces, Organizational Consultancy and Facilitation, Hospitality and Tourism Agencies, Conflict Resolution and Management Bodies, Movie Industry, Music and Entertainment Industry, Event Management Agencies, Research and Educational Institutes and many more.

It is however important to note here that now more than ever humanity needs the philosophical skills-set to navigate the treacherous political, social and economic downturn all over the world. In a world directed towards the enforcement of democratic governance, it will be counter productive if the citizens of countries are dogmatic, gullible and uncritical beings as the democratic processes underscore the importance of the philosophical skills-set to navigate the dialectic nature of democracy. Furthermore, the current digitalization of human interactions (that inspite of its positive impacts such as the rapid information sharing and easy information sharing, ease of economic and social engagements) create some serious challenges for human existence. These challenges include, but not limited to: multiple personas and the fragmented self, illusion of being in control of the self, pursuit of public validation and narcissistic tendencies, evolving digital self against the real self, cyber bullying, manipulated digital presentations, misinformation and propaganda as well as the suspension of concrete social relationships. Philosophy through its conscious and sustained application of critical, reflective and methodic thinking builds in its learners the capacity for informed and responsible consumption of social media contents in order to maintain a healthy sense of self-awareness and self-authenticity.

4. Conclusion

This paper sets out to rethink the public perception of the philosophical profession within the purview of its place in human affairs. This objective was pursued with the analysis of what philosophy is as well as its importance to human life. It sees philosophy as a critical and reflective art of questioning aimed towards a wholistic understanding of human existential predicaments. This paper argues that philosophy through the application of its skills set such as: critical thinking, creative thinking, logical thinking, effective communication skill, analytic and hermeneutic skills empower man to navigate the complexities and challenges of human existence. In addition, the paper clarifies the notion of human affairs and its various dimensions so as to establish the place of philosophy in human affairs. It achieved this by exploring how the philosophical skills set fits into and helps in the operation of a wide range of human profession. Furthermore, the paper traced the public misconception of philosophy to the failure of philosophers to conceptualize and present philosophy in a way amenable to public consumption in terms of its practical relevance to human life. It therefore submits that philosophy should be seen as having two basic outlooks: formative and utilitarian. This it argued provides a comprehensive and pragmatic framework within which to establish the place of philosophy in human existence. Finally, it outlines some recommendations to correct the public misconception of philosophy as a discipline devoid of practical relevance to human life. This includes; practical conceptualization and presentation of philosophy, demystification of philosophical terms and linguistic structures, interdisciplinary research, education as all round development of the human person, practical demonstration of philosophical ideas in general study courses, and a balanced educational policy between science and humanity focused disciplines.

5. Recommendations

In view of the insights provided by the foregoing discussion, it is clear that the negative public perception of the philosophical profession is due to issues such as the theoretical conceptualization and misrepresentations of philosophy, mystification and professionalization of philosophy, detachment of philosophical research from the practical concerns of life, myopic understanding of the purpose of education, an exclusive description of man as a

practical being. To correct this public misconception of philosophy the paper recommends that:

- Philosophical conceptualization and presentation should be made to be more amenable to practical illustrations and exemplifications in the classroom.
- Philosophical discourse needs to be demystified by using more simplified terms and linguistic structures that are easily consumable by the public.
- Philosophers need to engage more than ever in interdisciplinary researches to bridge the gap between philosophy and other disciplines.
- Education should be seen as a process of an all-round development of the human person both in the formative and utilitarian purposes.
- The contents and presentation of philosophical focused general study courses in the tertiary institutions should reflect more practical issues of human existence.
- The over emphasis on science and technological based disciplines in educational policies needs to be balanced with more humanity-based contents as there is always a man in the worker as well as a worker in the man.

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