

## **RUDOLF STEINER'S PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM AS A PANACEA TO THE NIGERIAN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SETTINGS: AN ANALYTIC APPROACH**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The question of human freedom is a perennial one that has occupied the philosophical enterprise. Many questions have been asked: can humans think freely? Can they act freely? Are there circumstances that limit human beings? Can one control his/her thoughts and actions? Many philosophers have engaged these questions from varieties of perspectives through different approaches and methods. This work, "An Appraisal of Rudolf Steiner's Concept of Freedom," provides the pivot for our philosophical inquiry. It seeks to interpret the epistemological and ethical significances of freedom. Freedom is not only theoretical but it is also practical. To thoroughly tackle the question of freedom, it is also important to incorporate the views of some other philosophers in this area of specialization. This work finds that human beings can achieve freedom through pure Individualized thinking by transcending the compulsive impulses of nature and culture. It makes use of hermeneutical and analytical methods, to interpret and analyse critically the philosophical positions of Steiner, its significance, potentials and shortcomings.*

**KEYWORDS:** Freedom, knowledge, thinking, social, political

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Here a succinct review of existing literature on Steiner's concept of freedom will be made. Many philosophers and authors have aired their opinions; critique and appraisal of Steiner's idea of freedom. Through a wonderful exposition and elucidation of Steiner's philosophy of freedom, they helped campaign for a better attitude through thinking which for Steiner should be meditative and be done independently. Each author writes presumably based on the encounter he has with the works of Steiner and their society. A few number of them, though, do not agree with his idea of intuitive thinking. Some tried to mediate his idea with those of other philosophers, while others rejected his view. His idea of freedom which gears towards intuitive thinking is not something that is limited to one epoch; it cut across and is even more relevant in the present era.

Seth Miller in his work, *Thinking Towards Freedom: Rudolf Steiner's Epistemology and its Consequences for Human Freedom*, begins with verifying that an understanding of Steiner's basic epistemology leads us towards a truly radical treatment of an issue lying within the drama of every

individual human life today: freedom" (Miller; 2020, p.26). He sets out to propound the epistemology of Steiner and to deconstruct the scientific or materialistic foundation of epistemology by questioning cognition beyond cognition. He went further to suggest that the issue of freedom has always been in intermingling circle with epistemology. Hence the question: In what way am I free? In trying to expound Steiner's idea of freedom, he avers that " freedom is a freedom from necessity for the source of our free actions should not be found in any external law (Miller; 2020, p.29). For him, what makes an action free is when we can trace it to the sources which are directly and immediately present to our consciousness. If not, it may be a natural outcome of causes that are unknown to us (Miller; 2020, p.29). We cannot find the source of freedom in the physical realm which is subject to the natural law of which its conditions result in limiting the possible outcomes. If so, the only option left is the interior world. This inner or interior world is the world that is very present to our consciousness. This consciousness is not found in the dream-life of the will nor in the sleepy-life of feelings, but in the wakefulness of our thinking (MMiller; 2020, p.32). We can validly evaluate the veracity of our thought in this state of consciousness. The capacity to think is characteristically special among human capacities. When this capacity to think turns upon itself, it possibly discloses something unique within itself. This is what Seth Miller in Steiner's voice calls 'living thinking'. "It is in the experience of living thinking that humans can find freedom"(Miller; 2020, p.34).

Bo Dahlin in his work, *On the Path Towards Thinking: Learning from Martian Heidegger and Rudolf Steiner*, agrees with Steiner, and Heidegger that people do not know what it really means to think. He went further to criticise the present day materialistic explanations of thinking as caused by the brain; for it stands in clear opposition to the meditative and day-waking conscious conception of thinking propagated by Steiner (Dahlin; 2009, p. 537). He recognised that Heidegger and Steiner's thought on thinking are similar in some respect especially in this view (Dahlin; 2009, p.537). For Heidegger, man is a thinking being, a questioning questioned questioner and for Steiner, he is a being that lives by the grace of thinking, he cannot but think if he must live according to his nature. Steiner re-echoes the thought of Heidegger that man needs education in thinking when he says that human beings seldom think (Dahlin; 2009, p.542). Steiner sees genuine thinking as something that is " alive...an intense spiritual activity...with dynamic possibilities... clear and precise" (Dahlin; 2009, p.537). For him, as with Heidegger, being is a whole, there is no need for multiplicity of being. Steiner claims the possibility of attaining the levels of intensified awareness, whereby "the thinking activity itself becomes a fully conscious and living experience" (Dahlin; 2009, p.546). Steiner calls this state of consciousness an exceptional state', described as an "experience of thinking observing itself coming into being" (Dahlin; 2009, p.546.).

Heidegger may not have explicitly argued against the material reductionist causes of thinking and consciousness, but Steiner is adamant and plain against materialist ontology while at the same time acknowledging the results and possible usefulness of neurophysiologic research (Dahlin; 2009, p.246). On the basis of these arguments, Dahlin reasons with Steiner that we cannot enter the active thinking process in full consciousness within our ordinary frame of mind because of the difference between the faculties of thought and will (Dahlin, 2009, p.246). However, he [Dahlin] maintains

that through ordinary consciousness one may realize that this subconscious activity must be independent of the brain, otherwise ‘ ‘ the laws of logic and of physiology must be the same(Dahlin; 2009, p.9). When one maintains consciousness, a direct insight into the reality of thinking is possible, and the reality of the world which is beyond the ordinary sense is realized (Dahlin; 2009, p.457).

Iddo Oberski in his *Rudolf Steiner’ s Philosophy of Freedom as a Basis for Spiritual Education?*,” attests that Steiner carefully relate his ideas to those of other philosophers, such as Eduard von Hartmann, Berkeley, Kant, Schopenhauer, Spencer and Spinoza, and attempts to show some of the fallacies in their reasoning insofar as it relates to the question of freedom (Oberski; 2011, p.9). Iddo Oberski’s interest in Steiner is on his examination of thinking and idea of freedom. He claims that Steiner’s philosophy of freedom is essentially phenomenological and tries to justify it by juxtaposing it with that of Heidegger. This similarities in the two contemporary philosophers is found in the fact that they encourage a kind of thinking that goes beyond metaphysics and humanism,...beyond representational thinking and will power (Oberski, 2011, p.9). Both believed in the artistic nature of teaching but, unlike Heidegger, Steiner goes further to challenge the assumption that there are dimensions that are impenetrable to our existence. Those perceived limits for him (Steiner), are in reality merely the outcome of our (intellectual, abstract, materialistic, dualistic) thinking (Oberski, 2011, p.10).

Iddo avers that Steiner uses phenomenology as an attempt to understand the phenomena from within, rather than without, and he goes beyond phenomenology by claiming an objective introspection that itself becomes possible only through an understanding of thinking itself. So, he opines that “thinking lies both before and above the very distinction between subjectivity and objectivity” (Oberski; 2011, p. 10). It is when one makes a choice with a known motive, devoid of unknown cause, that he is free. This freedom is achieved through intuitive thinking. The philosophy of freedom of Steiner as Iddo understands, “ leads logically to spirituality through intuitive thinking” (Oberski; 2011, p.15).

Terje Sparby in *Rudolf Steiner’s Idea of Freedom: As Seen in the Panorama of Hegel’ s Dialectic*, acknowledged that, One of the main tensions in Steiner’s work is the one between his early philosophical and later anthroposophical accounts of freedom” (Sparby; 2016, p.173). While the former is focused on individual freedom, the latter is focused on the whole of humans existence. Here, he notes that, Steiner’s Philosophy of Freedom focuses on the individual process of rational action, while his anthroposophy brings in topics such as the origin of freedom in the genesis of the human being and the idea of re-connecting to the whole from which the human being has separated” (Sparby; 2016 p.174). Therefore, in Steiner’s work, we have three main aspects of freedom, viz, the origin of freedom, the past (the origin of freedom), enacting freedom in the present, and the future of freedom (re-connecting to the origin) (Sparby; 2016, p.174). He went further to link these three aspects with the universals, the particular and the individual moments in Hegel. Ordinarily, Steiner accepts the fact of human freedom but he seeks to know how this freedom can impact in man’s relation with his environment. He is convinced that the development

of higher cognition is, however, fully interwoven with the development of freedom" (Sparby; 2016, p.189).

Dwelling on Steiner, Toa Bak avers that, *The Philosophy of Freedom*, which is one of the foundational works of Steiner sought to propose an epistemic standpoint for the possibility for man to have free thought, and consequently to initiate a new action. It is this position that led Steiner to think that Kant misunderstands our relationship to the world in the "question of the world being unknowable." Therefore, Steiner presents a paradigm shift, steering attentiveness to the dynamism of the world, though maintaining the gains of modernism. Thus, the emphasis does not end in the evolution and nature of consciousness and how to develop actively new sages but also how to inculcate them, how to educate it (Bak; 2018, p.7). Also, Tao acknowledges that in Steiner, there is no separation of the experience of the self, of the thinking, and of the material word which Reid prompted as he does not exclude inner experience. Finally, Tao submits that human beings are beings that grow, develop, transform, and evolve (Bak; 2018, p.8). In other words, no human being is just defined or static.

Notwithstanding, Martyn Rawson in the article, *Using a Constructionist Reading of Steiner's Epistemology in Waldorf pedagogy*, took a step which may not augur well with the purists' ideas of disciples of Steiner. Thus, he writes:

"...we are not spectators of a reality that is complete in itself and therefore knowledge cannot be objectivist. Nor is it the result of constructivism- it is not produced by the mind alone. Knowledge has a historical or evolutionary dimension and human beings participate in the world and contribute to world processes" (Rawon; 2018, p.37).

By this, he maintains with Steiner, that human being is not merely a spectator but a protagonist who participates actively as cosmic events unfolds (Rawon; 2018, p.37). This simply reiterates that reality is not something that is "out there" permanently stable and static which the mind grasps, as in objectivist view; nor something that is merely a subjective product of the mind, as in subjectivist view. Rather, His notion of reality is, thus;

...(seen) as a vast self-organising process in which a continuous stream of indeterminate single qualities come together into concrete shapes through the force of generalized principles and then dissolve again, a continuous process of becoming and change (Rawon; 2018, p.37).

Therefore, in producing knowledge, man exemplifies the flux of life. Human being is part of the evolving process and the locus of consciousness. For, the core act of knowing according to Steiner, involves our thinking intuitively matching the concepts and precepts. Therefore, he opines that "the kind of thinking Steiner is talking about is applied, focused, directed consciousness that is both reflective and yet an active process in the moment of the act of knowing" (Rawon; 2018, p.38). Thus, Rawson, sees Steiner's epistemology as "both ethical and emancipatory. It is about

individuals basing their actions on the most comprehensive understanding of the relationships available to them within a given context” (Rawon; 2018, p.40).

Nielsen summarises Steiner’s imaginative teaching with regards to Childs development, thus:

Steiner saw the concept of imaginative teaching’ to be central for the child’s holistic development and self-actualisation. Through imaginative teaching and learning, Steiner believed the door to the child’s inner, genuine self and potential was opened, enriching not only his or her personal life, but steering him or her towards meaning and purpose in the world. Imaginative teaching was to Steiner the means to bridge the gap between the child’s material and other world, imbuing wholeness and completeness of experience (Nielsen; 2020, p.2).

From the above, one can see from Nielsen’s lens that imagination holds a special place in the Steiner’ s philosophy. This is because imagination leads to holistic learning in children and help them to grasp the synthesis of life. Thus, Steiner followed in the footsteps of his predecessors like Goethe, Froebel, Jacques Rousseau, Jean Paul Richter and Johann Pestalozzi to formulate a thesis which “embodied an elaborate theory, or potent voice for the holistic proposition in education” (Nielsen; 2020, p.3)

Having seen and noted the ideas of some philosophers on Steiner, it is pertinent to note some striking points. Steiner’ s idea of freedom is one that is epistemological with certain ethical perspectives. Little wonder, his input on the psychological inquiry into human knowledge and also his effort to understand the processes of “perception” and cognition. It is also important to observe that he established the normal and traditional monistic and dualistic views of epistemological enquiry into a somewhat quasi-monistic idea that incorporates the dualistic characteristics of cognitive processes. Scholars reviewed above made effort in recognising the importance of thinking and its role in achieving freedom. They failed to properly relate it to the individual or the person participating in the act. Thereby, alienating the individual who is the protagonist in the activity of thinking. This research hopes to fill that gap by showing that human being and thinking have a very important relationship which interweaves with all the existential experiences of man. Thinking is not an activity done in vacuum. It is an essential characteristic of man; what distinguishes one from fellow beings, and lower animals.

### **Has knowledge any foundation?**

The problem of knowledge is not novel in the history of thought. Right from the time of the Ionian philosophers through the Sophists, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the sceptics, the Scholastics, modern and early modern, many theses and counter-theses have surfaced on the theme, knowledge. Some did try to prescribe criteria for knowledge, some its foundation, somewhat it consists of, while some completely denied its existence. It was not until the modern period that Immanuel Kant formulated what many see today as the foundation for a modern epistemological inquiry (Steiner; 1981, p.2).

With regards to the foundation of knowledge, Steiner criticised the western philosophical tradition for having an unhealthy fate in Kant (Steiner; 1981, p.11). For Steiner, Kant is guilty of philosophical assumptions and presuppositions in his basic epistemological question; *How are Synthetic Judgement a priori possible?* (Steiner; 1981, p.2). He accused Kant of presupposition for saying that “a system of absolute, certain knowledge can be erected only on a foundation of judgements that are synthetical and acquired independently” (Steiner; 1981, p.2). To avoid this perceived presupposition made by Kant, Steiner suggests that every epistemological investigation must begin by rejecting existing knowledge for knowledge is something brought into existence by man and through his activity (Steiner; 1981, p.11). For if a theory of knowledge is really to explain the whole sphere of knowledge, it must start from something yet untouched, something that is not yet knowledge, “something prior to cognition” (Steiner, 1981, p.11).

Steiner’s idea of foundation of knowledge is not foreign to philosophy and his criticism of Kant is well within its right. Kant’s synthetic *a priori* thesis tilted towards the dogmatism of the western epistemological tradition which contemporary philosophers like Heidegger and Nietzsche frowned at. Martin Heidegger in his *Being and Time*, toed the same lane of dismantling every assumption and presupposition by deconstructing the ancient ontology. To achieve this, Heidegger proposed *Dasein*, “the entity with which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its being” (Heidegger; 2001, p.27). Frederick Nietzsche is also not left out. He sought to liberate philosophy from the dogmatic ontology of the western philosophical tradition through his radical mode of questioning and critique of the highest values themed, intellectual integrity (Ojimba; 2004, p.54). Likewise, Steiner, like Heidegger and Nietzsche, aver the need to have a foundation for philosophical inquiry whether Intellectual integrity, *Dasein* or our-directly-given-world-picture (Steiner; 1981, p.11).

### **Dualism and Monism: Two-sides of a Coin**

The perennial debate between monistic and dualistic proponents did not go untouched by Rudolf Steiner. Monism is any view which claims that where there appear to be many things or kind of things there is really only one or only one kind (Proudfoot & Lacey, 2010, p.264). In contrast, dualism is the “view which claim to see in the universe as a whole or in some area of concern just two fundamental entities or kinds of entity or properties” (Proudfoot & Lacey, 2010, p.109). Major philosophers like Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz are in the middle of the controversy. Descartes avers that “there are thinking things and extended things” (Stumpf & Fieser; 2003, p.222). For him the world is made of physical and spiritual substances that are independent of each other but interact, though, he fails to convince us on the interaction (Stumpf & Fieser, 2003, p.223). Spinoza takes another view which is pantheistic in nature. He sees God or Nature as the only single substance that is one and infinite though with many attributes (Stumpf & Fieser; 2003, p.237). The attributes are thought and extension which Descartes sees as independent substances but for Spinoza, different ways of expressing the activity of a single substance (Stumpf & Fieser; 2003, p.237).

Steiner sees the conflict between monism and dualism as a conceptual misunderstanding that they are both two sides of a coin. In explaining the discrepancies, Steiner suggests that "the universe appears to us as two opposites: I and the world" (Steiner; 1995, p.19). He goes further to say that the relation between 'I' and the 'World' meets us on the stage of history in the contrast between Monism and Dualism, thus creating a bridge between the I and the World (Steiner; 1995, p.20). Steiner reminds us that this opposition confronts us first in our own consciousness; "it is we who separate ourselves from nature and place ourselves as "I" in opposition to the "World." (Steiner; 1995, p.25). He, therefore, agrees with Goethe, and partially with Spinoza that though things appear apparently distinct, that they are same and part of nature. For "all humans are within her and she in them" (Steiner; 1995, p.25).

### **Thinking as the Ultimate Factor**

Steiner in developing his idea of freedom ascribed and assigned great role to thinking. Rittelmeyer notes that Steiner's works can be taken as a heuristic method that trains the thinking rather than as a proven body of knowledge (Rawson; 2011 p.12). As Ogletree Stated, his thinking on thinking is not in tune with the idea of his age (Ogletree; 1974, p.344). He was bold to delve into the area of philosophy which though all philosophers consider important yet they shy away from it. If various scientific disciplines rightly teach us to be critical in order to arrive at valid conclusions because they flow with thinking that is natural endowment of humans; then thinking forms and becomes the basis from which conclusions should be drawn from the world (Miller; 2020, p.5). To think that great philosophers like Descartes, Heidegger, and Nietzsche began their foundational philosophies with ideas related to this by building for themselves solid foundation through critical questioning is a huge plus to Steiner for giving thinking its rightful place in the life of man. He is therefore, right to say that the study of human freedom is a study of human way of knowing, for knowledge is key to human freedom and individual responsibility. This is because the process of cognition which he calls thinking shares an essential quality with the essence of individuality (Steiner; 1995, p.xiii)..

It is very logical then that his philosophy of freedom revolves round three elements of freedom, thinking and individuality, of which thinking is the main actor and the creative force. Since, thinking forms the basis of every conclusion, without thinking no logic can be formed and no cognition will take place. Though, some philosophers directly or indirectly tend not to bother about this area "because to deal with its consequences fully would mean explaining the basis for thinking in the first place and its relation to knowledge, which is epistemology" (Miller; 2020, p.5).

### **Sources of Moral Actions**

As ancient as philosophy is, so is the question on the sources of moral actions. The first formal questioning on the sources of human action came from the sophists who, while questioning the conventional morality of the ancient Greek empire, remind the people that they are the measure-of-all-things and masters of the law (Stumpf & Fieser; 2003, p.3). They suggested like Steiner agreed, that nature, human natural drives and culture affect and contribute to human actions. Steiner calls them "inner and outer authority" (Steiner; 1995, p.146). Heidegger and Nietzsche

recognised the two factors in their philosophical sojourn which made them to build a critical foundation which would be independent of inclinations of nature and conventional norms. The sophists, Heidegger and Nietzsche are not alone as many of the existentialists share this view which ignited in them the zeal to fight for emancipation of humans to freedom, responsible and authentic living (Stumpf & Fieser; 2003, p.445).

Therefore, as it concerns the sources for human action, Steiner made a great observation like his fathers in history of thought. What then must happen for human beings to achieve freedom, to act freely? Let us now see freedom as emanating from pure individualized thinking.

### **Steiner's Freedom as Emanating from Pure Individualized Thinking**

In response to the question: how do we overcome the driving force of our own nature and the conventional law to act independently and freely; Steiner posited pure thinking also called practical reason or conceptual intuition as the highest motive and also the solution (Steiner; 1995, p.148). He avers that "to the extent that the intuitive content turns into action, it is the ethical content of the individual and allowing it to live out fully is the highest driving force of morality" (Steiner; 1995, p.150).

Linking freedom and responsibility to what one knows is not foreign to philosophy. As at the time of Socrates and Plato, there was a slogan which says, "man know thyself", which the Socratic tradition sees as the knowledge of good is to do good (Stumpf & Fieser; 2003, p.43). This implies that moral action is a product of the cognitive processes within. Socrates does not, however, completely agree with Steiner's conclusion that ethical individualism is the best way to go. Unlike Socrates, Steiner sees the free moral action as that which considers the individual in his unique situation, not for the good of the society but for the good of the individual which the society benefits from (Steiner; 1995, p.164). The existentialists have same point of departure with Steiner for they emphasized the need for subjective thinking which is equivalent to Steiner's pure individualized thinking (Stumpf & Fieser; 2003, p.445). They believe that it is through this subjective thinking that one gets to lead an authentic life and free life. In all, there is unison in self-knowledge and self-discovery for it is here that man owns himself through intuitive thinking.

### **Steiner's Freedom Versus Situation Ethics of Joseph Fletcher**

There is possibility for scholars to mistakenly substitute Rudolf Steiner's ethical individualism with Joseph Fletcher's situational ethics considering that both take note of the unique circumstances of an event before action and both propagate love as their maxims. Let us look briefly at the tenets of Situation Ethics.

Situation ethics was proposed by Joseph Fletcher, an American bishop and ethicist who interpreted his ethics in his book with the same title in 1996 (Chandran; 1998, p.95). In situation ethics, situation plays a very important role in moral decision making and the concrete realities are the main concern rather than absolute universalized norms (Stephen; 2004, p.4). Fletcher in the book, made an extreme relation to absolutism by opining that no law and commandment is valid to all

people and ethical decisions is to be determined by situation (Chandran; 1998, p.95). This ethical theory of Fletcher is located between the extremes of legalism and antinomianism but it is not a lawless relativism; for it has one law for everything which is love (Geisler; 2010, p.35). It can also be classified through six affirmations and propositions: First, "only one thing is intrinsically good, namely, love: nothings else at all." Second, the ruling norm of Christian decision is love, nothing else. Third, "love and justice are the same for justice is love distributed; nothing else." Fourth, "love wills the neighbours good whether we like it or not." Fifth, "only the end justifies the means, nothing else." Sixth, "love's decisions are made situationally, not prescriptively" (Chandran; 1998, p.95). This ethical view also sees the end as what justifies the means, thereby, encapsulating a view that is not merely radical and relativistic but that encourages pragmatism, positivism and emotivism.

From the above, we can now identify whether the Steiner's idea of freedom is same as Fletcher's Situation ethics. This research observes that both philosophies have different points of departure, whereas Steiner started with finding an indubitable foundation for knowledge and how best man can harness thinking for a good living, Fletcher began with a relativistic and pragmatic approach by rejecting the already existing ethical theories of legalism and antinomianism based on presupposition and assumption that none of them exudes love and, that they restrain humans from engaging in act of love (Fletcher; 1997, p.2b). Steiner's ethical individualism is not merely a total rejection of our natural drive; neither does it aim to throw the conventional morality into the waste bin, but rather it helps to fulfil and validate while recognising the creative power thinking bestows on humans by helping them bridge the subjective-objective gap between the individual and the outer world. Deductively, we can say that Steiner is conscious of the means as well as the end unlike Fletcher. This explains why he spent more than half of his major work, *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path*, talking and elucidating on human knowledge and on thinking; for only one who is conscious can think effectively because "consciousness is the vehicle of thinking" (Steiner; 1995, p.43).

Therefore, it is a philosophical accident to view Steiner's idea of freedom as a form of situational ethics or as an idea that is in contrast to conventional morality. Rather, it is a clarion call on humanity to go beyond the tenets of conventional laws, doing good not as a duty or as something that is beneficial to us, but because goodness and love should be spread and should be limitless. When mankind comes to this stage of existence, freedom will be achieved.

### **Realising our Potentials as Unique Individuals: A Case Study of Freedom in Nigerian Social and Political Settings**

It is no secret that Nigerian society is in shambles. From poor health sector to the pitiable educational sector, from bad roads to the prevalence of insurgency. The plight of a normal human being in Nigeria is ugly even to the occupants of hell; it is not enough to trek barefooted to the school, neither is it enough to graduate amidst many hurdles in various higher institutions. Hunting for job to maintain ones' existence is harder than sneaking into Europe through the harsh weather of Sahara. In all these, "Nigeria remains one of the most important and fascinating countries in

Africa, with abundant human and material resources, if these could be harnessed effectively" (Philips; 2005, p.134). Achebe agrees with John Philips that "there is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else (Achebe; 1983, p.1). He goes ahead to assert that "the Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders [and citizens] to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership and followership" (Achebe; 1983, p.1).

Borrowing from the idea of Steiner, it is very reasonable to state that the connecting dot beneath the problems of leadership and followership in Nigeria is lack of freedom. Many in Nigeria are yet to develop and cultivate the habit of intuitive thinking. They are still subjecting to their slavish nature and the conventional moral norms. They are not in control of their actions and they are victims of reflex actions, addictions, natural inclinations, conventions, and more recently, social media agnotology. Achebe also painted a vivid portrait of Nigerian society and how unfree people are with what happened during the tenure of Murtala Muhammed. He noted how public servants suddenly became disciplined and conscious of their duties, because the dictator was an astute disciplinarian (Achebe; 1983, p.1). This points to and validates the fact that freedom is not a utilitarian or a deontologist theory but rather a sign of love. Every action one takes should not be out of duty or obligation, or for the gain, but for the goodness of the act so as to spread love and promote happy living (Steiner; 1995, p.155). When we follow Steiner's philosophy of freedom in Nigeria, we shall achieve the three needs of a moral life and our actions will be determined by them. We shall seek for the greatest possible welfare of all humanity, purely for the sake of that welfare. We shall seek the progress of civilization or the moral evolution of humanity to ever greater perfection. And we shall see to the realisation of individual moral goals that have been grasped purely intuitively (Steiner; 1995, p.146). When we achieve these, Nigeria will defeat radicalism and fanaticism in our religions, corruption and incompetency will be dethroned in our social and political life, and pure individualized thinking which spreads love will help us to live authentic, creative, transformative and free lives.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

### **Summary of the Finding**

With Steiner's idea of philosophy in view, we have observed that it is possible for human beings to be free and that freedom has no limit. This freedom can be said to be divided into two parts; epistemological and ethical freedom. Steiner found it necessary for any inquiry on freedom to begin with epistemology because he observed that every act of man whether conscious or unconscious begins with cognition. This motivated him to launch a philosophical investigation into the most important process that occurs in every human being, which is often neglected. This process is thinking or the process of cognition. It is upon this investigation that Steiner's philosophy of freedom stands.

Observing that people are what they know, and that we are born into a world with plethora of assumptions and presuppositions, Steiner set out to search for the starting point of epistemology which is devoid of all assumptions. His criteria are that any starting point of epistemology must not have encountered the process of cognition and must not be knowledge. This led him to the directly-given-world. This is the first thing we encounter before the process of cognition begins. It is the process of cognition that processes the directly-given-world and feeds us with the result as percept. This process of cognition is thinking which has consciousness as its vehicle.

We observed that human beings and the world are one, and part of nature. But through thinking, there is distinction between 'I', the thinker, and the world. This creates a dichotomy which translates and transmits to us as subject and object. It is also here that the perennial twin of monism and dualism originated. Yet, the disparity can be conquered through thinking when we become conscious that everything is one with nature and nature is one with everything. Such that things we see are extensions of nature. When we view the world like this, there will be no need for "I-world" distinction.

We also found the difference between the percept, concept and mental picture as used by Steiner. Percept is that which is external and which we perceive especially with our senses. Our feelings are also classified as percept. It is the imprint of the world or the external object on the senses before the process of cognition. Once, thinking acts on the percept they are turned into mental-picture and stored or communicated to others as concept. Concept and mental-picture are related but mental-picture is more real than concept. For one to have a mental-picture, there must be direct contact with the object in question. Concept can be transmitted and one does not need direct experience to grasp the concept of something. It is through the help of mental-image that one gets in touch with reality and understands them. It involves being conscious and aware of the object in question. Mental-picture is the personalised experience of the human being in question. It is here that our natural drive, conventional norms and intuition comes to fore.

We noticed that Steiner uses the idea of percept, concept and mental-picture to draw our attention to what motivates our actions which are our natural drive or inclinations, the conventional morality, and the intuition. When motivated and controlled by our natural inclinations we are victims of addiction, reflexes and drives. When we act out of the compulsion of ethical principles and conventional norms, we are also unfree. Between them is an individual insight that arises neither from abstract principles nor from bodily impulses, being unpredictable and wholly individual, springing up deeds that can be said to be truly free. These deeds are also deeds of love which is of the highest good and reflects true morality. This is where ethical individualism is manifested.

We have noted that to be free we must lift ourselves out of our group-existence, out of the prejudices we receive, and all we inherit, from our family, nation, ethnic group, and religion which limits our imaginative and creative capacity to meet the world freely and directly. Our potential is, therefore, fully realised as free beings but we must work for it.

### **Recommendations**

The philosophy of freedom as propagated by Steiner has a great lesson which is the need for active and meditative thinking. The habit of intuitive thinking is seemingly not a pleasing experience to many emerging scholars. Rather they prefer what Steiner calls 'remembering thinking' which is more or less, garbage in garbage out. This trend does not support freedom as the individual involved does not think for themselves rather the influential people in the virtual world, their religious leaders and group leaders do the thinking for them.

This research recommends that human beings should endeavour to make use of the rational ability that distinguishes us from lower animals. This will help in eliminating presumptions and assumptions that becloud our world. It is through conscious living that we can mediate and reconcile between ourselves with the world, churning out biases and misconceptions that are antagonistic to truth. This will help to reduce the gossips, fake news, and rumours in our social atmosphere; hence, to live is a conscious act actualized through thinking.

It also recommends that the African society, especially Nigeria, should begin to particularize the concepts they borrow from other cultures and traditions. This will engender contextualisation and creation of adequate mental-picture for a perfect African society. Instead of copying and applying the borrowed values from the western world hook, line and sinker. Africans should be able to evaluate them and situate them to their environment so that they can improve on themselves without losing their uniqueness, identity and freedom as humans.

### **Conclusions**

Steiner's philosophy of freedom is a timely clarion call to purposeful and conscious living. It is a panacea to the biases and idols that limit our intellectual growth, creative instinct and imaginative spirit. His analysis of thinking shows us the unlimited cognitive power of the intellect and awakens us to full realisation of our beings. We have grasped that the subject-object distinction and the 'I-World' disparity is only a conceptual demarcation during the process of cognition. Our inclinations like feelings, natural drives, reflexes and addictions can be mediated with the conventional moral norms and be transcended through intuition. Intuitive thinking as a special kind of thinking helps to free us from compulsive impulses so as to be free to make good decisions not out of duty, nor for ulterior motive, but for love. Through intuitive thinking we conquer the idols and biases of our environment and reignite our creative force, imaginative energy and freedom.

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