

# PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES



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## **French Studies And The Making Of The Total Man**

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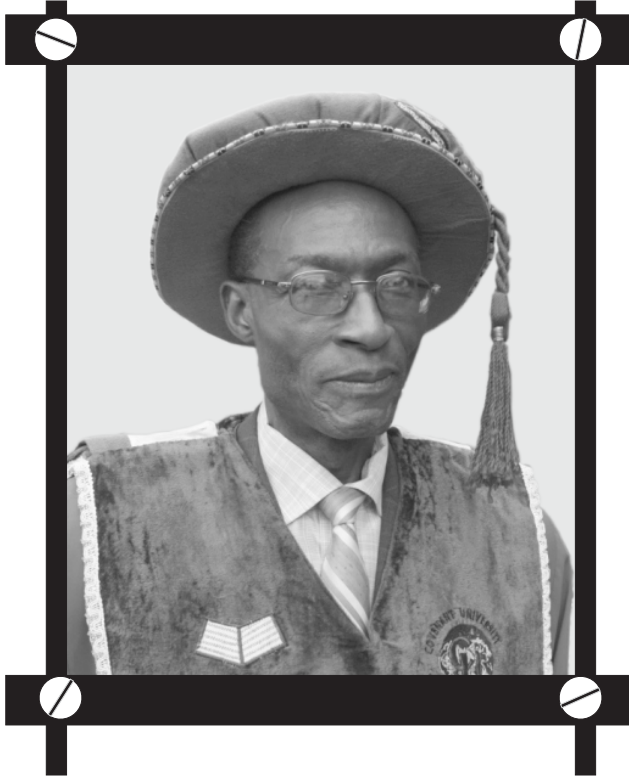
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 On the Choice of the Present Topic

I delivered my 'inaugural' lecture at my request at the University of Lagos on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1985, five years after my appointment as Professor of French Language and Linguistics because I was tired of waiting for the long list of deserving but not-yet- ready senior professors to be exhausted. The topic of that lecture was *The French Language and the Task of the French Linguist in the West African Environment*. In another public lecture at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, in 2003, I examined the general topic *Language: The Master Key to the Expression of Knowledge*. In the intervening years (1986-2002), I had had the opportunity at various professional gatherings of exploring different aspects of my major research interests which were and remain the following: **General Tendencies or Universals in Language Acquisition and Use with Particular Reference to the French Language; Language, Society and Culture and Christianity and Culture in (West) Africa**. I must observe here that (West) Africa has always been the focus of my concerns.

The topic of the present lecture as announced is: *French Studies and the Making of the Total Man*. It is related to previous topics in the general sense that it also bears on the French language which like any other natural or human language is the most important means of expressing knowledge, the human condition or the existential realities of its 'speakers' or users. The present topic is however much broader and more directly 'context-sensitive', to borrow the expression from Noam Chomsky, the well-known American linguist and proponent of Generative Transformational Grammar. It is

broader and more directly 'context-sensitive' because it integrates the concept of 'The Total Man' which is "the core concept of academic programmes of Covenant University" We know that our students take courses on the Total Man Concept (TMC) from the first year to the end of their programme of either four or five years. The TMC programme is considered to be unique to Covenant University. Another important and related concept which is only implied in my topic is that of 'Human Development'. It is interesting to note not only the fact that courses relating to both concepts are domiciled in the College of Human Development but also that there is a Department of Human Resource Development in the College of Human Development. The choice of names for the College and Department clearly suggests the University's preoccupation with the development of the human being, of the individual and the centrality of the College of Human Development in the University as a whole. Let us observe particularly the uniqueness of the College in bringing together disciplines which traditionally belong to different Faculties: Psychology, Sociology and Mass Communication are considered as *social sciences* and are usually assigned to a Faculty of Social Sciences English, French and other languages, History, and Philosophy normally belong to a Faculty of Arts. What role, it may be asked then, can the Department of French, the youngest of the teaching units in the College of Human Development, play in the development of the individual, the human being? I shall try to answer the question in this lecture.

French has existed as a discipline in this University only since 2004. The Department of French will graduate its first set of students at the end of this academic session (2007 / 2008). This probably explains why the

Department has quite often been described as the 'Department of French Language'. The designation is presumably based on the analogy of 'Department of English (Language) and Literary Studies', the name of the Department where French was initially 'based'. The name seems to me to be an indication of a common misconception and also a subtle suggestion of the role that people regard as the most important and therefore assign to a Department of French: **that of teaching the French language seen simply as a means of communication.** This obviously restricted view would make the Department of French no more than a mere language service Unit! The choice of the present topic has therefore been made largely out of a desire to 'contextualize' the discipline of French (Studies), define its scope for the 'outsider' and show its relevance to the Nigerian / African and global context.

The French language indeed forms an integral part of French Studies as will become apparent in my presentation. However, a Department of French, properly speaking, is a Department of French Studies and is generally concerned with **all that bears on the French people, their history, culture and civilization.** In a significant sense or properly conceived a programme of French studies is multidisciplinary; that is it cuts across many disciplines and can therefore be said to be concerned with the development of the individual, the human being.

## **1.2 Babel: The Emergence of the French Language and the Others**

In Genesis chapter 11 verses 1 to 9 Moses records the

story of the tower of Babel. The tower of Babel has come to be considered as an early symbol of man's pride, a rebellion against God. However, it also portrays some of the many God-given abilities of man, namely man's organizing ability, man-centered organizational unity, ingenuity or skill and wisdom. What is important in the present context is the fact that the tower of Babel can be seen as the initial cause of racial and linguistic pluralism, diversity or multilingualism and all that linguistic and racial diversity has subsequently come to imply in human societies: misunderstanding between people speaking different languages (although misunderstanding can also arise among people speaking the same language), incomprehension, racial discrimination, social inequality or injustice, etc. on the one hand and the search for understanding and co-operation, racial, economic and socio-political integration through the use of a common language on the other. Differently expressed, language is known to have served and to serve as a 'unifying bond' between different peoples as well as a source of conflict between individuals and between nations.

Linguists estimate that there are between four thousand and eight thousand different languages presently spoken by more than five billion people in the world. These figures are imprecise because it is quite often impossible or difficult to determine whether related or contiguous communities speak different languages or merely dialects of the same language. In other words, the difficulty in classifying languages is tied up with the language-dialect dichotomy or distinction or the criterion of **mutual intelligibility**. There is also the fact that there is not enough information about a large number of languages including many in Africa for example.



Linguists and those interested in the matter know that the distribution of these languages is uneven. Some countries like Nigeria, Cameroun and India have far more than 150 languages; others like Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire have between 20 and 60 languages while still others like France and England have far fewer than 20 languages discounting languages 'transplanted' by immigrant communities. Quite often such languages correspond to "ethnic groups" How such distribution of languages came about is uncertain. But linguists have tried since the 18<sup>th</sup> century to establish genetic relationships among languages through what is known as the comparative (historical) method based on structural similarities- typology- and genealogical relationship. Thus for example languages spoken now in Europe and in other continents of the world are assigned a common origin and described as **Indo-European**. Other languages are described as **Non-Indo-European**.

The French language belongs to the Romance group of the Indo-European family along with Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Catalan, Occitan (also known as Provençal), Rhaeto / Ibero-Romance, Rumanian and Sardinian. These languages are known to have originated from Vulgar Latin. (The list of languages and the names of some of them differ with different writers). However, the languages are today structurally different obviously due to the different internal and external factors of development (cf. J.H.Greenberg 1957:35-74).

What happened in the intervening years from the time of Moses' record of Babel (1445-1405 B.C.) to the very first written French text known as *The Strasburg Oaths* (842

A.D) has been largely a matter of 'reconstruction' by Romance linguists and historians of the French language. In more than eleven centuries the language has undergone drastic changes in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary (cf. R. Posner 1966 and A. Ewert 1966 for example).

### 1.3 'Debabelization': French Colonization, Language Imposition and Choice

The French language is today spoken by several millions of people all over the world as a result of colonization, the migration of the French from their original homeland and the prestige of French culture and language. It is generally believed that next to English French is the most widely used language in the world. It is today much more universal than it was in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Rivarol talked of the universality of the language affirming that it had attained maturity in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when Europe, conscious of the need for unity through language, chose French over German, Spanish and Italian and despite the fact that many literary masterpieces had been produced especially in Italian long before that happened in French. It is known that as early as the Middle Ages William the Conqueror (1028-1087) had exported French to England, that Marco Polo (1254-1324), though an Italian (from Venice) used French to relate his adventures in the Middle East (he is said to have lived in China) in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. French in fact began to replace Latin as the international language of philosophy, medicine, banking and commerce in the sixteenth century and subsequently became the language *par excellence* of the sciences (cf. M. Blancpain & A. Reboullet 1976: 94-95).

The expansion of the French language outside of France

(Europe generally) took place between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries beginning with Canada in 1604 and ending in 1923 with the ex-Belgian colony of Rwanda which attained independence in 1962. With regard to Africa more specifically, the introduction of the French language is usually traced to the French presence in Senegal in 1624 (although some documents suggest 1638). As a matter of fact, Senegal is considered as the first *colony* of the French in Africa. Madagascar (1643) and Reunion (1663, formerly known as île de Bourbon) were the only other African countries that the French acquired in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Martinique and Guadeloupe (1635), St-Pierre-et-Miquelon (1610), Guiana (1637) and Haiti (1697) all in the West Indies and Louisiana (1699) in the USA became French possessions also in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. All other African as well as non-African countries were acquired individually by the French, five in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, twenty-five in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and eight in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The French colonial effort may be said to have properly begun in Africa then only in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, more precisely after 1890, although France had been in North Africa sixty or so years earlier, around 1830 and about two centuries earlier in West Africa (Senegal as already mentioned).

It must be observed here that at the outbreak of the First World War, France already had six other colonies in West Africa, namely Dahomey (now the Republic of Benin), Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. The Federation of French Equatorial Africa was formed in 1910 but occupation was completed only after the First World War and yet France's initial contacts with that vast region date from 1839, just about a decade after the conquest of Algiers.(see Le Robert,

*Dictionnaire universel des noms propres*; R.W. July 1970; R. I. Rotberg 1965; C. Legum (ed.)1965).

It is important to observe that the 1884 Berlin Conference which 'settled the partition of Africa'- the balkanization of the Blackman's continent- ironically carried out without African representation, not only formalized the 'colonial' and 'imperialist' division of Africa into the two major blocs of anglophone and francophone countries but also created the artificial boundaries and borderlands that have long characterized Africa and which sometimes have been at the root of bloody conflicts (See A. I. Asiwaju 1984).

For the proper appreciation of the importance and utility of the French language today the following facts may be highlighted: \* French is either one of the official or working languages of international organizations like the UNO, UNESCO, NATO, OAU, AU, ECA, ECOWAS, IOC (International Olympic Committee) and IOF (International Organization of Francophony) among others.

- \* French is the diplomatic language of the Vatican along with Latin.
- \* In Africa, French is used in many more countries than English is. In fact, more than twenty countries may be described as 'francophone' even though a large part of the population of each country does not speak the language. In Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia on the other hand, a large proportion of each population can speak and write French, even though it is no longer official language, a role that has for some decades now been played by Arabic.

- \* At the CCTA / CSA meeting of Specialists held in Yaoundé, Cameroun in November 1961 on the teaching of a Second European Language it was recommended that both French and English be taught in Africa with a view to facilitating inter-African and international communication.
- \* The total number of speakers of French across the five continents of the world is variously estimated at between 200 millions and 300 millions including France's own population of about 55 millions

Now, since the French language was introduced into Africa largely in the wake of colonization, one would have expected the colonies to do away with or abandon that language, 'a vestige of colonialism' or at least relegate it to the background years after the attainment of independence in the 1960s. However, no nation, people or government can divest a language of its functions or status, without serious consequences however light the demographic weight of that language. It is true that independence came with a heightened consciousness of the need to promote national or African languages and cultural identity, but it also emphasized the need for co-operation among African countries if they were to consolidate their political gains. And yet co-operation seemed impossible in the highly multilingual context of francophone Africa without a common language. French, though a 'colonial' language was seen as a 'a gift of Providence' and a far better choice than any African language.

Since the 1789 Revolution, France had based her

colonial policy on the idea of assimilation. The policy of assimilation held that the African could assimilate French culture, identified with the French language, and would be treated as socially equal to the Frenchman if he accepted it. Assimilation manifested itself in one area everywhere and at every level: education was given exclusively in French. In other words, no provision for the use of indigenous languages in education was made. Culturally, however, assimilation was possible only for a few Africans since very little financial provision for education led to the production of extremely small African elites. Politically, assimilation meant the centralization of French rule from Paris, the use of French as the language of administration and the prohibition of African languages in national life. With the changing political climate after the First World War, the policy of assimilation however had to give way to the new policy of association. In the face of growing African reaction against European influence, the time had come for France to carefully determine the nature or form of her colonial institutions. She needed to accommodate the reality of the diversity of her African possessions and avoid conflict. The policy of association was therefore “a policy of accommodation”, a wise political strategy. Indeed, the French language and the strong tradition of French culture have provided the only common means of maintaining former French Africa as a cultural reality. French has been a strong psychological factor in the creation of regional or continental organizations like OCAM (Organization Commune Africaine et Mauricienne), OIF (IOF in English see above) (Organization Internationale de la Francophonie), etc.

It is interesting to observe that most educated French-

speaking Africans including many of the political leaders of the pre-independence era consistently considered the French language as *providential*. I present three of the views which can be regarded as fairly representative. Léopold Sédar Senghor (1965:91), an Advocate of *Négritude* (Blackness), who became Senegal's first President in 1960, voluntarily retired in 1980, was later elected Member of the prestigious French Academy, had remarked, five years after the independence of his country, as follows:

*Because we are cultural half-castes, although we feel as Africans,*

*we express ourselves as Frenchmen because French is a language with a universal vocation, because our message is addressed to the Frenchmen of France as well as to other men, because French is a language of graciousness and civility(...). The French language is a mighty organ capable of all tones and of all effects, from the softest mildness to the fulgurations of the storm. It is one by one or all together, flute and oboe, trumpet and cannon. Again, French has given us its gift of abstract words, so*

*Rare in our mother tongues by which tears turn into precious stones.*

Extrapolating from Senghor's views, we may safely say that the French language does not only symbolize the Francophone Blackman's acculturation but also provides every Blackman who can use French access to world civilization.

The utility, nay indispensability of the French language in the resolution of Africa's political and economic problems is restated in the following remarks by Oumar Ba (1980:15) (The translation from French is mine):

*For the immediate resolution of our problems, the French language is to every clear-thinking African obviously **providential** (emphasis supplied), if we must, at all cost, be a part of this relentless world of complex and urgent political and economic realities.*

In a speech which he delivered at Ottawa, Canada, nearly forty years ago, Habib Bourguiba who was also President of Tunisia from 1957 to 1987 had made the following extended statement about the French language (The English translation is mine):

*French is not a mother tongue for us Tunisians. It is our everyday language. The Colonial factor brought us into contact with it: we have adopted it as an instrument of contact with the outside world, of contestation and affirmation. Throughout our struggle for independence we used it to make our voices heard in the community of nations. Since independence we have found in bilingualism an effective means of preserving our national identity, by taking part in research and progress through the direct assimilation of the techniques of the modern world. Tunisia does not deny any aspect of her past the expression of which is the Arabic language. But she knows that it is through the mastery of a language like French that she can easily make herself heard outside and fully participate in the culture and life of the modern world. Having made this choice of bilingualism which is not only linguistic but also cultural, we have realized that the use of one and the same language generates a common mentality in those who speak it. It is from this corporate feeling that what has been called francophony can arise. It is because it brings into privileged contact those countries where French is*



*official language, and those where it is working language or language of everyday use, it is because those countries - or provinces- recognize they have common aspirations, perspectives and needs, that I see francophony as an instrument of rapprochement or as capable of becoming one.*

Rather than being replaced, abandoned or relegated to the background in francophone Africa, the French language has consolidated its position on the African continent through the extension of its sphere of influence to anglophone countries. If French in French-speaking Africa can be considered as a historically imposed language, the result of French colonization, the adoption of the language by anglophone countries must be explained only in terms of the educational or cultural, historical, geographical, political and economic circumstances or imperatives of those countries and of Africa as a whole. Thus for example Nigeria and Ghana which are surrounded by francophone countries cannot be effectively involved in the economic development of the West African sub-region without the use of French. It is pertinent to observe here that eleven of the sixteen member states of ECOWAS are francophone. In so far as the anglophone countries like their francophone counterparts also want to be a part of the world order, represented by international organizations like those mentioned earlier, in this age of globalization, the use of French as of English appears indispensable. The general 'existential realities' of Africans would thus seem to amply justify the acquisition and use of French and English seen as international, interethnic or common languages and thus as 'agents of debabelization'. The continued formal teaching and

learning of French are therefore necessary in anglophone countries as in francophone countries.

In his Inaugural lecture, entitled *Artificial Boundaries*, Anthony I. Asiwaju (1984:34), Professor of History, had the following to say about the need to teach French in Nigeria:

*Our foreign language teaching should stimulate more serious interest than we can now show in literatures other than in English. In Nigerian border regions in particular, the facilities in our secondary schools must be improved to allow for a compulsory course in French, the official language of the adjacent foreign jurisdictions.*

Although first introduced as an optional 'foreign language' into only a few secondary schools in West Africa, French considered today as a 'second language' is manifestly a very popular subject. Not only has it become a compulsory school subject in many countries, it is also being learnt voluntarily by people from diverse socio-cultural or ethnolinguistic backgrounds and of different ages who want to partake of 'world culture', engage in international business or global politics. In the area of higher education in Nigeria for example, the National Universities Commission (NUC) now requires that the French language be taught in all universities. Here at Covenant University, this NUC requirement is being met in course GST122: Communication in French.

The teaching of the French language may be considered to have attained the age of maturity, of wisdom! after some fifty years of the existence of the language in the school curriculum in anglophone West Africa. The first graduates of French in Ghana and Nigeria, the two

countries which can be said to have spearheaded the teaching of French as a foreign language in the region, were produced between 1955 and 1965. The maturity of French language teaching may be further inferred from the fact that there are today more than thirty full professors of French in both countries with specializations in the different areas of French Studies.

Programmes of French Studies are offered in practically all African universities with a College or Faculty of Humanities or (Liberal) Arts, although the content of such programmes understandably, varies from one department to another. The name of the Department where the programme is offered may also be different: it is either a Department of Modern European Languages or of European Languages, of Modern Languages or of Foreign Languages, of European Studies or simply a Department of French. My preoccupation in this lecture is with what constitutes the core content of a French studies programme.

Nigeria has today more than ninety (90) universities: federal, state and private. For reasons of simplicity of presentation and convenience, I shall examine later on a few documents which I believe will help to either justify or modify existing programmes of French or set up new ones where they do not exist in Nigeria. But for now, let us turn our attention to the nature and scope of French Studies.

#### **1.4 French Studies: Nature and Scope**

In a Catalogue of British Theses entitled *French Studies* covering the period from 1971 to March 1987 The British Theses Service (BRITS) represented by

Information Publications International (IPI), Surrey, UK lists (not in alphabetical order) the following thirteen disciplines: Economics and Business Studies (classified together); Education; Archaeology; History; Linguistics; Literature; Architecture; Art and Music; Philosophy; Politics; Religion; Anthropology; Sociology.

University Microfilms International (UMI) also represented by Information Publications International on the other hand presents the following twenty-six disciplines under *French Studies* in its Catalogue of Doctoral Dissertations submitted to North American Universities for the period of 1980-1984: Anthropology; Architecture; Biography; Business Administration; Cinema; Economics; Education; Fine Arts; Health Sciences; History (General, Ancient, Mediaeval, Modern, Church, African, Asia, European); History of Science; Language; Law; Literature (General, Classical, Comparative, Mediaeval, Modern, American, Canadian, English, Germanic, Latin American, Romance); Mass Communications; Music; Philosophy; Political Science (General, International Law and Relations); Psychology; Religion; Sociology; Theatre; Theology; Transportation; Urban and Regional Planning; Women's Studies.

It may seem surprising to many people that French Studies cover disciplines which are traditionally considered as quite distinct and as having 'nothing to do with' French. In what way then, one may ask, are Architecture, Law, Psychology, Religion, Political Science / Politics, Education and Sociology for example related to French Studies? Would one say that the classifications are incorrect, or debatable?

A close examination of the two catalogues, setting aside the obvious differences in presentation such as the grouping or separation of disciplines, the number of disciplines covered and also the fact that the BRITS sometimes presents Master's theses along with doctoral theses whereas UMI presents only doctoral dissertations, helps to show in what ways the various disciplines can be said to be related to French:

- \* Studies in Architecture bear on types of buildings or parts of a building (churches, crypt, etc.) in France and on French Architects even though the medium of expression may be English.
- \* Studies in Law bear on essentially legal matters like 'Non Possessory Security Interests in Goods' in France and other countries from comparative perspectives; ' Matrimonial Actions' in 17<sup>th</sup> century France. The two languages, English and French, are used depending on the university awarding the degree. The medium is naturally French in France and English elsewhere. Studies in Psychology (with branches described as General, Clinical, Physiological, Experimental or Social) are on Frenchmen who are deemed to have contributed to the field or discipline by their works as philosophers, psychologists and novelists like René Descartes ( 17<sup>th</sup> century), Simone de Beauvoir (20<sup>th</sup> century) , Michel de Montaigne (16<sup>th</sup> century), Marcel Proust (20<sup>th</sup> century) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (20<sup>th</sup> century) compared with Sigmund Freud (a 20<sup>th</sup> century Austrian Psychiatrist) or on the Perception of French vowels compared with English vowels.

- \* Studies in Religion (with Philosophy, History or General as branches) are on Frenchmen: 'churchmen', moral philosophers or political scientists like St. Bernard de Clairvaux (12<sup>th</sup> century), Abbé de Choisy (1644-1724), Jacques Maritain (20<sup>th</sup> century), etc. in comparative perspective in their treatment of subjects like 'human desire', 'Democratic Pluralism and Human Rights'; on 'the Problem of Evil' as preached in 18<sup>th</sup> Century France; Voltaire and Protestantism, 'Catholic Royalism' in the 19<sup>th</sup> century department of Gard, among others.
- \* Studies in Political Science or Politics are on a host of subjects like French relations with other countries; the notion of 'Art Social' in France from Saint-Simon (1760-1825) to the Second Republic; the Politicization of the French Peasantry since 1945, Economic and Financial Decision-Making in the Fifth French Republic, Factionalism in the French Parti Socialiste (1971-1981), French Foreign Policy with Reference to European Elections, The Administration of Francois Bigot as Intendant of New France, Politics in Marseilles since World War 2 with Special Reference to the Political Role of Gaston Defferre, Steel and the State in France (1945-1981): The Politics of Industrial Change. Studies in Education (covering such branches as Art, Curriculum and Instruction, Teacher Training, Secondary, Higher, History, Language and Literature, Music, Philosophy, Sciences, Psychology) bear on subjects like French as a Second Language Teacher Certification, A Comparison of the Educational Theories of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Education and the Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, the Design

and Implementation of a Microcomputer-based State Contest in French Culture and Civilization, The 12<sup>th</sup> November 1968 Law on the Reform of French Universities, The Teaching of French in the United States in the Early 1970's, The Peasantry in the French Revolution, Jean-Baptiste Delasalle's *The Conduct of Schools* (in 18<sup>th</sup> Century France), Pierre Bourdieu's Work on the French Educational System, The Worldview of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin Seen as a Model of Humanistic Science with Implications for Biological Education, The Theory and Practice of Vichy Education Policy(1940-1944), Jansenist Education in France in the Petites Ecoles of Port Royal, etc. ; and finally Studies in Sociology (with divisions like Ethnic and Racial Relations, Industrial and Labour Relations, Demography, Theory and Methods) bear on diverse subjects like Social History and Sports in Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century France, The Analysis of a Demographic System of France (1740 1909), Camus: Character, and Culture in the Study of the Concept of Nihilism , A Thematic Content Analysis of the French Romantic Movement, the Evolution of French Medical Syndicates, Science, Social Theory, and Everyday Life in the Works of Auguste Comte, Processes of Uneven Development in France and Saint-Domingue in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Slave Trade, Black Immigration, Social Structure and Economic Development in France during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

It seems evident from the foregoing presentation that Frenchmen and Frenchwomen or the French generally, their history and institutions have been and remain major preoccupations of scholars (as exemplified in the

seven disciplines summarily reviewed). One can therefore, logically, describe French Studies as follows; **A discipline covering all that has been written in French by Frenchmen and Frenchwomen as well as the appraisals thereof in French and or English, all being considered as contributions to human knowledge or scholarship. Such contributions may be specific to France or related to any other French-speaking country, a French possession, or may be considered as of 'universal' relevance in so far as they have implications for the world in general. Contributions may be immanent or comparative on individuals, institutions and ideas.**

That French is the medium through which Frenchmen and Frenchwomen have made their contributions to diverse disciplines/branches of human knowledge or scholarship- seems obvious. However evaluations or appraisals of such contributions may be in French only where scholars undertaking such appraisals or evaluations are French monolinguals. Where scholars are proficient in both French and English, appraisals may be in one or the other of the two languages. There may be instances however where interested scholars have access to French contributions only through translations undertaken by other scholars. The role of French- English (other language) translations in academic research cannot be overlooked or underestimated.

The preceding definition of French Studies is broad and would require the student to spend more than the usual period of four or three years in order to become an



'expert' a leader in his field. This is why each university works out its own programme of French Studies according to its 'context of situation' and 'philosophy' without however falling below the minimum standards set by the "National Higher Education Board" or some other "Relevant Regulating Body".

The minimum standards usually require courses in the following areas, obviously with differing emphasis, namely French Language, French Literature, African Literature in French, French / Francophone Culture and Civilization.

#### **1.4.1 Illustrative Examples of Programmes of French Studies**

An examination of examples of Programmes and Regulations Relating to the Award of the B.A. Honours in French Studies from Ghana, far away Australia and Nigeria and also what is generally offered in France by Departments of French Studies to foreign students on the Year Abroad Programme reveals the following facts (The details of some of the chosen programmes are presented in the APPENDICES). It has not been possible to present every one of the programmes according to the same format because of the serious differences in the presentations.

##### **A. Examples from Ghana**

In one Ghanaian university operating the widely accepted Unit Course System language courses account for 41 credit units for the four levels (100-400) for both first and second semesters with the following breakdown:

1. Language: Oral and Written Expression - 27 units ( 12 credit units per semester); Translation-8 units; Linguistics - 6 units.

2. French and African Literature - 18 units (under 50 % of Language courses).
3. French Culture and Civilization one course of 3 units only.
4. In another Ghanaian university in special relationship with a British university(1948-1965) the French programme had the following form:
  - i. Language courses accounted for just a little less than half of the entire programme with the following components: History of the Language and an Unseen Translation from Old French into English; Translation from English into French; Translation from French into English; An Essay in French on a subject relating to French Thought; An Oral Examination to test the candidate's scholarship as well as his command of the spoken language.

The importance of the written language was expressed in the following condition: **No candidate who fails in Prose Composition may be held to have satisfied the Examiners.**

ii. Literature: Courses in literature accounted for one-third of the entire programme with an extremely wide choice of Authors from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

iii. French and Francophone African Culture and Civilization had only one course devoted to it with the following description:

A specified period of Modern French History with special reference to French Institutions.

The History of French Relationships with Africa.

B. An Example from Australia

\* The Handbook of the Department of French of the Australian university consulted presents the programme of French Studies as having the following main features

(It is not possible to determine the credit units as the system employed this programme is not of the traditional or orthodox type):

All 100 Level courses are described as “Introductory” while 200 Level and 300 Level courses are described as “Advanced”. 400 Level courses are “Honours Subjects”. In all there are 36 courses with the following distribution: 100 Level- 10 courses; 200 Level- 12 courses; 300 Level- 7 courses ; 400 Level- 6 courses.

Language: 14 courses;

Literature : 8 clearly Literature courses;

Culture and Civilization: 5 courses

Others( special subjects, Semiotics, Thesis and Research Method, etc.): 9 courses.

**The Year Abroad Programme tagged “Language N” is generally undertaken by students in New Caledonia.**

I must observe in passing that this programme does not include any course on Francophone or African Literature.

C. Examples from Nigeria

\* For the Nigerian context, the following programmes are presented partly as illustrative and corroborative examples and partly as contrastive examples in an attempt to show the relevance of French programmes generally to the nation.

In the French programme of a Department of Modern Languages of a Federal university the following weighting is given to the components:

Language: 5 courses out of 7 per semester for 100 Level;

4 courses out of 7 per semester for 200 Level;

4 courses out of 7 per semester for 400 Level.

Literature: (French)

- 1 course out of 7 per semester for 100 Level;
- 2 courses out of 7 per semester for 200 Level;
- 2 courses out of 7 per semester for 400 Level.

Literature (African)

- 1 course out of 7 per semester for 200 Level;
  - 1 course out of 7 per semester for 400 Level.
- Civilization (French and Francophone)
- 1 course per semester for 100 Level;
  - 1 course per semester for 200 Level

It would have been observed that no mention was made of the courses taught at the 300 level in the French programme of the Federal University just reviewed. As is well known, practically all French students are required to spend their third year at the Nigerian French Language Village at Badagry (NFLV). Although the status of that institution has recently become a subject of debate, I know that that institution's mandate to receive and teach Nigerian students of French has not been revoked. An examination of its programme is therefore germane to my presentation more so as I also intend to examine the French Language and Civilization programmes offered to foreign students on the Year Abroad Programme in France by a Department of French Studies.

2. At the Nigerian French Language Village no fewer than five of the courses taught to 300 level students from all over the Federation are in the area of Language, namely:

French Language Structures

Translation (Theory and Practice)

Techniques of Oral and Written Communication

French Phonetics and Laboratory Exercises

The breakdown of courses in the other areas is the

following:

Literature (French): 1 course

-- (African): 1 course French Culture and Civilization: 1 course (From 1789, the French Revolution to the present day).

There are also compulsory? socio- educative” activities like, debates and Symposia, lectures/ talks and excursions, all of which are designed to improve the language skills of students.

I would like to observe here that the content of the Programme of the French Village which is an “Immersion Programme” compares favourably with what is offered in France. This may be due to the sustained collaboration of the French Government that the Village has hitherto enjoyed and the experience of the teaching staff.

D. Examples from France Let us now look at three types of courses offered in France by the Department of French Studies to foreign students. It must be observed here that the Certificates or Diplomas awarded for such courses are “National”, that is, they have the approval of the French Ministry of Education.

A. Practical Certificate of French Language (First Stage)

1. Composition and Summaries of Texts Read (3 hours per week).

2. Grammar and Orthography.(6 hours per week)

3. Seminars of Corrective Phonetics and Practical Exercises (3hours per week)

4. Aspects of French Civilization: History (1 hour per week).Geography (1 hour per week)History of Art

(1 hour per week) (e.g. Roman Art, Gothic Style, Versailles Castle, Painting in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries).

5. Introduction to Textual Study (2 hours per week). 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries Authors.

B. Diploma for French Studies (Second Stage).

1. Explication of Literary Texts and Summaries (3 hours per week).

2. Stylistics (2 hours per week), Grammar (3 hours per week), Translation (1 hour per week) (6 hours per week in all).

3. Seminar of Corrective Phonetics and Practical Exercises (3 hours per week).

4. Lectures and Guided Work in French Civilization  
The French Mentality (1<sup>st</sup> semester)  
French Institutions (2<sup>nd</sup> semester)

a) Political Institutions

b) Administrative Institutions

c) Economic Institutions

C. Higher Diploma for French Studies (Third Stage).

1. Text Contractions (1 hour), Grammar (2 hours), Translation (1½ hours) in all, (4 hours per week).

2. French Phonetics and Practical Exercises (3 hours per week)

3. Lectures and Guided work in French Civilization (2 hours per week).

This course treats subjects like:

- The Government of France: Institutions, Political Parties

-The Meaning of Presidential majority.

-The French and Politics: Interest groups, etc.

-Political and Social Militancy.

- The Weight of History.
  - France in 1945.
  - The Fourth Republic.
  - The Fifth Republic.
  - Centralization: Origin, Evolution and Limits.
4. French Literature (4 hours per week)
- Study of Authors (2 hours per week)
  - Literary History(2 hours per week).
- Detailed Studies of Hugo (19<sup>th</sup> century): Les  
Chatiments
- Verlaine (19<sup>th</sup> century): Selected Poems
- Stendhal; La Chartreuse de Parme
- Literary History: - The Origins of French Literature  
from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>  
century.
- Notions of Literary History (to be illustrated  
principally with literary prose texts).

Once again it is clear from the three course lists that French language is given greater prominence than any other component in each programme: 12 hours per week out of 13 are devoted to language activities in the French Language Certificate programme; 9 hours out of 14 in the Diploma programme while 7 hours out of 13 are devoted to language in the Higher Diploma programme. While there is progressive increase of hours for the study of French Literature, from 2 hours to 3 hours and 4 or 4 1/2 hours, the time devoted to the study of French Civilization does not go beyond 2 hours. One may therefore talk of the marginality of this component compared with others

The emphasis placed on or the importance attached to language courses in all the programmes is explained by

the fact that a sound knowledge of the language is required for the proper study and understanding of literary texts, written texts being considered as “images” of speech, thus secondary means of communication. Indeed, language teaching methodology gives priority to the acquisition of the ability to speak over the skills of reading and writing.

## 2. THE CONCEPT OF THE TOTAL MAN

I crave your indulgence, Chancellor Sir and Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, to rehearse what is well-known in the Covenant University context.

The expression “Total Man” has some 13 million references or entries according to web information. The first entry has the following brief descriptions:

*Spiritual, mental and physical development.*

*Gain life skills and skills for personal growth*

*Including time management, financial management, etc*

The third web entry is titled “Total Man Concept of Covenant University” and is a two- paragraph presentation. The concept is understandably presented in greater detail, I think, in the Covenant University *Students’ Handbook* (2007-2009, pages 33-36).

TMC is described as follows: “a unique and holistic concept of human development that is novel in Africa. The fundamental and foundational philosophy is premised on accessing the **total** make-up of **man** from the spirit, soul and body dimensions”

Accordingly, the concept is discussed under three headings as follows. I shall retain only the main strands



in order not to be tedious to you.

### *The Spiritual Man*

What is required of the student of Covenant University is the cultivation or development of a lifestyle patterned after the “Perfect Personality” of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is in consonance with the fact that the University is “Christian”.

Born in sin no man can develop spiritually satisfactorily without the work of the Holy Spirit. But for the Holy Spirit to work on and in anyone the person must be born again. Each student is therefore encouraged in appropriate ways to lead a disciplined life, a life worthy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### *The Intellectual Man*

Here the formation of the Intellectual Man is ensured through a complex of specially designed courses in eight areas: Biographical studies, Entrepreneurship, Family Life, Human Development Process, Leadership Development, Mental Development, Success Concepts and Work Ethics.

Courses in these areas are additional to the normal General Studies Courses and compulsory discipline specific courses.

An examination of the Covenant University curriculum clearly shows that a high level of creativity and mental excellence is required of each student.

### *The Physical Man*

Students are encouraged to develop their bodies by taking part in sporting activities.

## 2.1 The Concepts of Total Man and Human Development: How Related?

The three-dimensional concept of development (of the student) mentioned earlier differs in my view from that of human development only in detail or emphasis.

This is so because the development of every individual takes place in a **physical environment** and a **moral climate** that are necessarily variable. The individual is born into a milieu, a society, a locality where he lives and grows up and is influenced for good or ill (and where he also later influences others).

The development of the individual is therefore conditioned not only by biological factors but also by psychological, sociological and environmental factors among others. The difference between the Total Man Concept and the Human Development Concept therefore lies in the “degree of completeness”, of “perfection” or “integration into a whole” of the components of the human being, a “total” man. But how does the individual develop a wholesome, “total” being?

Covenant University has set itself the task of making “expert thinkers, leader-managers and hyper-resourceful technocrats in all fields of human endeavour” (page 33 of *Students' Handbook*) of its graduates, of raising “a new generation of leaders who will restore the dignity of our great Nation and the dignity of the black race” (culled from *Chancellor's Address 5<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Ceremony, Friday January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007*). The task reformulated is tantamount to the following:

- 1) are able or competent;
- 2) will lead;
- 3) will restore dignity to their race;

4) are God-fearing.

The only means of raising such people is through the relevant type of **education**.

The type of education offered at Covenant University emphasizes **skill** and **character**. What do these words really mean? I shall discuss them generally under the following headings:

- \* Man as a Moral (Spiritual) Being.
- \* Man as a Social Being.

### 2.1.1 Man as a Moral (Spiritual) Being

According to the Bible, God made man in His image and after His likeness (Genesis 1:26). Man was however without the knowledge of good and evil until he ate the forbidden fruit (Gen 3:5, 22). Adam's disobedience of God's commandment implied the assertion of his independence of God. Through the fall, human beings may be said to have come to the stage of setting their own standards of behaviour, of deciding what is good or evil without being concerned initially with the sanctions of the Law of the Maker.

We know that the violation of God's commandments attracted the sentence of death (spiritual separation and physical death). And since death became the lot of man, man has been "a problem to himself". He has constantly wondered about the purpose of his life, being beset with pain and sorrow, disease, sickness, fears, worries and suffering, the vicissitudes of life: joys and sorrows, wealth and poverty, etc. In search of ways to prolong his life and not succeeding, he becomes restless. Man is a "contingent" being, because he is not responsible for his existence and does not know the purpose of his existence, especially in his "pristine" state.

The moral (“spiritual”) man however knows that “the whole duty of man” is to “fear God and keep His commandments”(Ecclesiastes 12:13), because “ God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether **it be good** or whether **it be evil**” (Ecclesiastes 12:14)

The fundamental question of morality is therefore one of how to determine “ the good” in or of an act performed by man as a human being, that is when he acts with **reason** and **freewill**, that is voluntarily.

As was observed earlier, every human being or individual lives in society and necessarily interacts with others. There must therefore be moral criteria within the society that allow people to determine the **quality** of human acts or behaviour. Are such criteria identical for all societies? Are the moral criteria of society the same as God's standards? If not, what does the moral (spiritual) man do in society?

Moral philosophers generally recognize a **Primary Moral Criterion** and **Secondary Moral Criteria** in their examination of **Human Acts and the Good for Man**. For the sake of brevity and the essential purpose of the present lecture I wish to say that the Secondary Moral Criteria are dependent on the Primary Moral Criterion and are invoked where the Primary Criterion cannot be conveniently applied.

The Primary Moral Criterion is true, reliable, unalterable, and universal. In other words, the primary moral criterion is fixed and applicable to all men, therefore to human life, irrespective of race. The primary moral criterion has to do with the fundamental problems of conduct, and hence

with human nature.

Granted that there are fundamental human needs for which nature has provided a particular activity, any use of such an activity which runs counter to, or injures its natural purpose, must be considered evil. We know that the first law of nature is that of self-preservation. Accordingly, all the powers of reason, sense and development tend towards that end. Any act that is in opposition to this law, destroys or endangers self, and or another or one's community, is therefore unnatural or evil. Thus lying for example is evil because it is using speech to confound or mislead another or others rather than for communicating one's thoughts which is the primary purpose of speech. Similarly, killing self (that is committing suicide) or another and stealing are adjudged to be evil, or against human nature.

The sum total of these reflections is that life is under law. There is a law that governs **right conduct**. Our habitual thoughts determine our character and conduct. And it is the law that determines **moral goodness**.

It is important to observe here that for the moral (spiritual) man an act is evil or bad and reprehensible, if it is in conflict with any of the Ten Commandments, the Law of God, the Eternal Law which gave rise to the Natural Law. Progressively degenerate after the fall, man is regenerated by the work of the Holy Spirit, first on realization of his degeneracy and of the fact that he is not "sufficient of himself" and that his "sufficiency is of God" (2 Corinthians 3:5). The moral man is empowered or given the grace to lead a disciplined life, kept in communion with his Lord through prayer as he works out his salvation

with fear and trembling ( Philippians 2:12) unto the perfect day.

Covenant University is raising moral (spiritual) people not only through regular activities that appeal to the “spirit” and encourage the formation of a “good character” but also through the prohibition of acts or types of behaviour like stealing, giving false information, dishonesty, insubordination, etc considered as evils or vices (see *Students' Handbook* pages 71-72).

### 2.1.2 **Man as a Social Being**

It is a truism that society is inconceivable without individuals: it is individuals that constitute society. However, the individual apart from society or community is an abstraction, an “aberration”. He can develop only in so far as he becomes a social being. Becoming a social being means entering into relationships with other members of society. Individuals do not form relationships except where they have common interests and goals or are bound or forced by circumstances, destiny or history. Such relationships are of different types. By reason of the difference of the surrounding culture, of heredity, level of education among other factors, individuals have different possibilities or opportunities of development or self-realization within the various social groups of which they are members.

The individual, as a child, is born into a community, grows up learning not only the language, an instrument of socialization, but also the customs and traditions, worldview, etc. of that community. Indeed every community sets its standards of behaviour and imposes sanctions considered appropriate in cases of violation. In

a significant sense, every community carries within it factors or forces of integration and disintegration. For the harmonious existence of members of the community there must be a harmonization of individual and social interests. Such harmonization is possible only where the necessary conditions exist: individuals must respect one another and seek to satisfy their needs without causing injury to the satisfaction of the needs of others.

Jacques Maritain (cited by John Lewis 1961:55) observes as follows:

*Man is very far from being a pure person; the human person is a poor, material individual, an animal born more poverty-stricken than all other animals. The human person is at the lowest level of personality, stripped and succourless; a person destitute and full of needs. Because of these deep lacks and in accordance with all the complements of being which spring from society and without which the person would remain, as it were, in a state latent life, it happens that when a person enters into a society of his fellows, he becomes a part of a whole larger and better than its parts-and the entire person is engaged in and exists with a view to the common good of the society.*

Covenant University encourages and effectively ensures “a harmonious social life” by its prohibition of what may be described as “anti-social acts” “offences against persons”, “fighting” and “stalking” (cf. *Students’ Handbook*, page 74).

It is expected that students who will have acquired within a “closed society” like a university “good social habits” such as loving neighbours as oneself or helping others, the needy for example as lies within one’s power, and

contributing to “the greater good” would easily adjust to changes in an “open society”, whose conventions are often unacceptable, without unduly compromising individual standards of morality “reached through spirituality”. Herein lies the quality of character, the essence of living in society, of a social being.

### **3. THE ROLE OF FRENCH STUDIES IN THE MAKING OF THE TOTAL MAN**

The Total Man Concept as is well known and was briefly presented earlier, has three dimensions: spiritual, intellectual and physical.

I shall discuss in this part of the lecture how French Studies can help in the making of the total man. For the discussion, I would like to divide French Studies into the following two branches:

- 1- French Language Studies, and
- 2- French Literary and Cultural Studies.

#### **3.1 French Language Studies**

This branch of French Studies alone is so vast that one would require one hour to present it satisfactorily. Notice that it constitutes a field of specialization also known as “French Language and Linguistics”. What I intend to do here is to provide a sketch, such that the relevance of this branch to the making of the **total man** will be easily apparent.

French Language Studies cover what linguists call the synchronic and diachronic descriptions of the language from (Vulgar) Latin- its origins- to the present-day dialects including the structure, acquisition and use of the language using any of the available theories of language. Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Vocabulary



and Semantics are the usual levels of description. French language studies also include English-French and French-English translations. Independently of the level of emphasis accorded this aspect and of the student's general linguistic abilities, however, more work would need to be done by both the student and teacher in order to reach a level where the student can be said to be a "competent translator". Whatever the case, this aspect of French Language Studies is clearly utilitarian and admits of specialization like other aspects.

While I can say from experience (based on my researches over the years particularly as illustrated in E.N. Kwofie 2004a and 2004b) that all aspects of French Language Studies are interesting and worthy of "academic attention", the most utilitarian, pragmatic and interesting aspect which should preoccupy us here is the "learning and teaching of an international variety of the French language" (see. E.N. Kwofie 1985, 2004a).

The acquisition of such a variety not only ensures the ease of international communication but also provides some access to specialized literature or specialties in French as exemplified earlier (See 1.4). The French language thus helps to extend the mental / intellectual horizons of any one who is proficient in it. In other words, the role of the French language in the making of the total man lies in the intellectual dimension: the language is **an additional key to knowledge**.

Apart from extending the student's intellectual horizons, the French language enhances his/her "marketability", that is improves his/her chances in the job market.

### **3.2 French Literary and Cultural Studies**

I have decided to present my reflections on French Literature, Francophone African Literature and their

attendant cultures/civilization under a single heading not only for convenience but also for academic/methodological reasons.

Every literature, considered as a collection of genres (the main types of which are: poetry, drama and novel (prose)), is produced in an environment or context by the creative imagination of writers for an audience or reading public. Literature therefore necessarily reflects individual as well as collective sensibilities, preoccupations and cultures. It has in fact been regarded sometimes as a “mirror of society” (see E.N.Kwofie, Forthcoming)

France has since the Middle Ages occupied a pre-eminent position in the intellectual life of Europe and provided models in various fields for the countries of Europe and elsewhere. In the area of Literature thousands of works had been produced by 1990. Pierre-Henri Simon (1959:5) for example observes that France had produced more than 600 notable writers in fifty years between 1990 and 1950.

For the present purpose I shall restrict myself to the identification of some of the themes treated by French writers from the standpoint of how they are related to the Total Man Concept.

An examination of works of literary history and criticism as well as of thematic studies reveals a wide variety of creative temperaments and themes in the French literary landscape. I have counted no fewer than 186 different themes in French Literature (Francophone African

Literature not included) thanks to Michel Bouty (1972:279-339).

Among the themes treated are the following:

The Absurd (or Nihilism), Nature, Ageing (or Old Age), Violence, Revolution, Virtue, Corruption, Worldliness, The Universe, Suicide, The Supernatural, Society, Social Classes, Socialism, Communism, Suffering, Satanism, Dignity of Labour, Money, Self-Pride, Anxiety, Sacrifice (or Patriotism), Reality, Providence, Destiny(Fate), Individual Liberty (Anarchy), Pleasure (Sin), Evil, Wisdom, Scepticism, Civilization (Humanism, Progress), Education (Education; general, mind and body), Religion (Christianity, Tolerance, 16<sup>th</sup> Century Wars of Religion), Criticism of the sciences.

It is clear that these themes have to do with human experience, the human condition or predicament, or the realities of human existence and that they are therefore closely related to the spirit, soul and body dimensions of man

A study of French literature is generally then a study of the human condition, albeit aspects of it depending on the choice of texts and the attendant pedagogical orientations, and by implication or extension an invitation to a reflection on the realities of human life. French literature can consequently be said to contribute to the heightening of the consciousness of the (competent) reader (in our case the student) of many of the problems of human existence, such as the purpose of existence or life, the need to believe or not in God, which is a fundamental question of faith, and on which Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), a 16<sup>th</sup> century French Christian

philosopher and scientist for example offered thoughts to help people to take a stand ( that is whether or not to believe in God and submit to Him). His thoughts known as “Le Pari” (The Wager) are summarized as follows (see *Pensées et Opuscles* 1934, 5<sup>th</sup> Article pages 59-62, 1966 I have made minor editorial changes)

*Let us now speak according to our natural understanding (...) If there is a God, He is infinitely incomprehensible, since He has no parts or limits; He has no link with us.*

*Perhaps God exists, perhaps He does not exist.*

*If you believe in Him, and when you die you discover that He exists you will be happy that you believed in Him, because He will reward you.*

*You will have everything to gain and nothing to lose, since you lose nothing by believing Him. If you believe in Him and when you die it turns out that He does not exist, you have nothing to lose. You gain nothing and you lose nothing. But if you refuse to believe in Him and when you die you discover that He exists then you are in trouble. You would be sorry for yourself for not believing in Him. You lose everything and gain nothing by not believing in Him.*

*It is therefore wise to be on the safer side by believing in Him and submitting to Him since, at worst, you would have nothing to gain and nothing to lose if He actually exists. A wise person would choose the better option that will put him on a safer side and that is the option of believing in God and submitting to Him. Besides, this option gives meaning to human life and removes absurdity from it.*

Indeed, Being and Nothingness (Nihilism, Absurdity, etc) has been a major theme from Christian and Atheist perspectives in French literature for centuries. E.W.

Knight (1959) for example considers the works of the following four 20<sup>th</sup> century writers: Gide, Malraux, Sartre and Saint-Exupéry as “The French Example” of “Literature Considered As Philosophy”.

As for the earliest references to the (need for) physical education of the individual they may be found in the 16<sup>th</sup> century “Theories of Education” of François Rabelais (1494-1553) and Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1593-1592).

The views of Rabelais (contained in chapter vii of *Pantagruel* and chapters xxi-xxiv of *Gargantua*) and of Montaigne (expressed in *Essais* 1, 26 *De l'Institution des Enfants*) combine in one form a criticism of pedagogy and a new programme.

The teaching methods at the time aimed at the child's memory, at making “une tête bien pleine”(a well filled head). Rabelais recommends through a programme comprising Ancient Languages, the Mathematical Sciences, Astronomy, Natural Science, Medicine and Law. Physical exercises, sport, interest in and practice in human toil are part of the Rabelaisian programme. Knowledge sits well only with a virtuous soul (“science sans conscience n'est que ruine de l'âme”), so Rabelais crowns his system with religion. His pupil should love and serve God, eschew the vices of this world and practise charity.

Montaigne on the other hand advocates a sympathetic understanding for the child (“ostez-moi la violence et la force”- Take away violence and force), “une tête bien faite” (a well-made head), travel abroad, ensuring that the pupil has a well developed body by making him take

physical exercises, handling arms, riding and dancing.

Rabelais' 'encyclopaedism' is however sacrificed to Montaigne's idea of developing the pupil's judgement. God is also completely left out in Montaigne's programme.

In concluding our reflections on the importance of developing the body dimension of the human being, I would like to observe that Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) also recommends in *Emile ou De l'éducation* (1762)(well known to Educationists) physical education from age five years to twelve years.

For Francophone African Literature which dates essentially from after the First World War, the recurring or dominant themes may be classified broadly as follows: Protest and Revolt Against the Colonial Political, Social and Cultural System or Order with such variants as Socio-Political Consciousness, Personality Cult, The Anti-Hero, Political Disillusionment, Negritude and African Worldview, and The Affirmation of African Culture. In a general sense, it can be asserted that like French literary works Francophone African creative writing is based on existential realities but realities that are typically African (cf. B. Mouralis 1980:53-78; S.A. Ojo & Oke (Eds.) 2000). No race suffered from the slave trade, colonization and colonialism as much as the black race, so it is understandable, nay natural that Negro-African literature should be preoccupied with themes relating to those experiences.

Writing more than sixty years ago R. Caillois (1942: 34-35) had lucidly remarked that the diverse themes

treated by creative writers, especially novelists, could be reduced to the one and only subject of **the Human Condition** or **Man's Estate**.

Reflecting on the Western Novel in relation to the Third World Novel, Paul Morelle (1983:33) expressed the view that the novelists of the developing world bring to the novel those things that the Western novel seems to increasingly lack:

*These Third World novelists, whether they are Tunisians, Algerians, Moroccans, Black Africans, Persians or Latin Americans, bring to the novel by their themes, the customs described, the psychologies highlighted, a kind of violence, a hardness, a dramatic intensity which are increasingly lacking in the Western novel (...).*

*For the novel we have somehow forgotten since the time of Zola, Maupassant, Barbusse, Celine, Steinbeck and Caldwell is that as well: the basic passions, thwarted destinies, stories of hunger, of misery, of struggles and of death.*

There is no doubt that French literature and Francophone African literature are both concerned with human experience in its diverse forms. But as literary creation critically depends on the writer's personality and socio-political circumstances, every literature is necessarily protean.

French / Francophone literary studies therefore expose the student or reader to different aspects of human experience or existence which generally provides the subject-matter of diverse disciplines as earlier reviewed.

They are clearly useful in developing the individual's personality: the extension of his / her intellectual horizons and mental skills, the heightening of "moral" consciousness-sensitization to human frailty (cf. Pascal's *Pensées*) and the broadening of outlook on life through exposure to other cultures.

Many Negro-Africans have become notable creative artists (poets, novelists and dramatists) and literary critics and subsequently "exponents" of the collective consciousness of their societies thanks to their exposure to the French literary tradition.

#### **4. THE RELEVANCE OF FRENCH STUDIES TO THE NIGERIAN / AFRICAN/GLOBAL CONTEXT: BY WAY OF CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

With the attainment of political independence in the 1960's by the majority of African countries the attention of African governments came to focus more on national socio-economic development, international politics and global relevance. The desire for a voice in world politics through rapid economic development was a major factor in the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 in Addis Ababa. The desire and search for continental unity stemmed from the general realization that African countries could not individually successfully achieve economic development and wield any appreciable influence on the international scene. Balkanized Africa needed to unite and such unity lay in the "appropriation" of the two dominant colonial languages, English by francophone countries and French by anglophone countries.

The learning and teaching of the French language are thus necessary in anglophone countries just as the



learning and teaching of English are in francophone countries.

As was earlier observed, the French language is a means of international communication. Consequently the variety of the language that must be chosen for acquisition by students and therefore teaching is the one that would maximally ensure “international communicability” or (maximum) intercomprehension.

Research has shown that there exist at least twenty regional varieties or “dialects” of French. Several linguistic differences have been observed in the French used in Africa (cf. E. N. Kwofie 2004a).

The question therefore arises as to which African variety of French must be chosen as the “standard” for Africa, if that were possible and desirable, first in order to ensure “communicative efficiency” in Africa and second within the global context. This assumes that the African variety would not be so divergent as to prevent communication between Africans and non-Africans.

As French is a “vector” of an important culture and civilization, the teaching of the language as an academic subject must be extended to that of the attendant culture and civilization that largely informs the literature of the French people.

Indeed the teaching of French in Nigeria (as elsewhere) has over the last forty years also involved the teaching of French literature; African literature in French and French and francophone cultures although the focus has been on the language.

In its attempt to reposition the French language in the Nigerian Educational system, the University French Teachers' Association of Nigeria had proposed the following sub-themes for its November 2007 Conference held at the University of Benin.

- \* Learning and teaching French for special purposes.
- \* The role of translation in African literature.
- \* Translation and interpretation studies in Nigerian Universities.
- \* French and nation building in Africa.
- \* French language and multilingualism in Nigeria.
- \* French language and African cultures.
- \* Literature and Language.
- \* Literature and ideologies.
- \* Literature and politics.
- \* Oral literatures in French from the last millennium.
- \* French studies and medicine.
- \* French studies and international relations.

These sub-themes implicitly suggest not only relations between French and other disciplines but also the roles that the language plays, has been playing and can play in present-day Nigeria and Africa.

It may be noted for example that “learning and teaching French for special purposes” implies the need to cater for students (and others) pursuing programmes other than French (studies). Such a measure takes into account the demands of globalization.

This would seem to be the purpose of teaching French to students specializing in disciplines like Computer Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Estate

Management, Banking and Finance among others.

The relevance of French studies to the Nigerian and generally African context will be further enhanced through “Combined Honours” programmes involving French studies and courses like Mass Communication, Banking and Finance, (already mentioned) International Relations or Political science, etc, appropriately structured or designed.

Combined Honours courses will lead to what may be called “high-level professionalization of French” and will definitely help to produce the extremely resourceful technocrats, thinkers and leader-managers in various disciplines that Covenant University aims at.

There is no doubt that well-thought out French Studies programmes in Nigerian Universities will make hundreds of Nigerians not only “functionally” literate in French to fill the international communicative needs of the country but also and what is more important enable Nigeria to play her leadership roles more efficiently in Africa and exert visible influence on the world scene through such organizations as the UNO, UNESCO, AU, ILO and WHO.

In order, however, to ensure communicative competence, provision must be made for learners to be exposed to the French language in its natural environment, that is a setting where French is regularly utilized. The French Language Year Abroad programme was initially designed for that purpose. It was easy to implement between the 1960's and the late 1970's through the co-operation of the French Government.

However, the Nigeria's economic situation was becoming rather difficult as from 1980 and an early alternative had to be found. The Nigeria French Language Village was the “local solution” of the Federal Government based on the recommendations made by the Four-Man Sub-Committee of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (of which I was privileged to be a Member) and by subsequent Committees.

Advances in Information Technology (IT) certainly facilitate access to new teaching methods and authentic pedagogical and self- instructional materials, but IT does not obviate the need for an Immersion Programme. In so far as there is at present no viable alternative to the NFLV (Badagry), there seems to be no justification to either “scrap” the Institution or merge it with another. A merger, as reported in some newspapers, would be tantamount to the abolition of the Village and that after some fifteen or so years of existence and certainly useful services rendered. The abolition of the Village would mean that each Department of French must teach its 300 Level courses itself, the Immersion being considered unimportant; or else make independent arrangements for its students to go abroad, thus returning the programme to the period of “financial anxiety for parents” with all its implications for specialization in French..

Nigeria's and Africa's contribution to world civilization- the Universal- in the area of French Studies lies in the collaboration of Anglophone bilingual literary scholars with their Francophone counterparts in the identification of cultural parallels or identities in Oral African

Literatures and their subsequent correlation with equivalent features from non-African settings with a view to determining universals or universal tendencies among human beings regardless of race. The assumption here is that Africans may not have “invented the gunpowder, the aeroplane, the compass of the navigator, etc,” but Africa still has something that can help to define man as a being created in God's image and that it is the responsibility of Africa's French-English bilingual experts to identify the features of “that possession” as Africa's contribution to World Civilization. As I have said elsewhere (E.N.Kwofie 2005:9) there is no aspect of human experience including the spiritual that cannot be verbally represented so long as it is intellectually discernible. French and English are for us Africans unique symbol systems that allow the representation of the “furniture of earth and heaven”

Chancellor Sir, and Distinguished Invited Guests, permit me in conclusion to extend an invitation in French to those of my listeners who have no knowledge of French:  
**Dans un monde où le progrès dépend largement d'une langue internationale, l'acquisition du français, langue diplomatique et de culture largement diffusée s'avère indispensable particulièrement en Afrique. Je vous invite donc à apprendre le français.**

(In a world where progress largely depends on an international language, the acquisition of French, a language of diplomacy and culture in wide use is certainly indispensable particularly in Africa. I therefore invite you to learn French).

I thank you all for your kind attention. Merci beaucoup pour votre attention  
May God bless you all. Que Dieu vous bénisse !

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I thank the Almighty God for his manifold blessings: of life, health and strength and the opportunity to continue to serve Him in this University, His vineyard (1 Corinthians 7:24), and to share some of my thoughts with you today. I give Him all the glory for He has indeed done all things well. He has been faithful all these many years.

I wish to acknowledge next the Chancellor of Covenant University, Bishop (Dr) David Oyedepo whom I have continued to admire for his God-inspired leadership of this University, his encyclopaedic knowledge and consistently profound expositions of the Word of God. Chancellor Sir, I have since coming on board the Covenant ship described you as an “African Moses”, may the Good Lord Whom you serve continually with dedication keep you and your family and give you the strength to fulfil your assigned mission of raising leaders who will take Nigeria and Africa to the promised land and also “affect” the world .

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Aize Obayan and the Registrar, Mr Yemi Nathaniel have provided good leadership, been sources of encouragement. I appreciate you Madam and Sir.

I acknowledge also all the other Principal Officers of the University, Deans of Colleges, Faculty and Staff as well as all of our Students “our children” without whom

Covenant University would not be the envy of other Institutions.

I wish to specially acknowledge all our distinguished academic colleagues and friends who have travelled various distances to come to honour us today with their presence.

Finally, I wish to express my love to my dear wife of thirty-six years, Grace who has gracefully borne the burden of raising our four beautiful and God-fearing children, all by the grace of God graduates in various disciplines which they themselves voluntarily chose with little guidance but learning French as a requirement!

May the Good Lord provide all your needs for your show of love and friendship. Amen.

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**APPENDICES EXEMPLIFYING SOME OF THE  
NUMEROUS PROGRAMMES OF FRENCH STUDIES  
APPENDIX 1**

**REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE FINAL  
EXAMINATION FOR B.A. HONOURS IN FRENCH  
STUDIES UNDER THE SCHEME OF SPECIAL  
RELATIONSHIP**

1 i. History of the French Language to the present day including vulgar Latin, Historical Phonetics, Morphology, Syntax, Vocabulary and Semantics Candidates should have some knowledge of the whole field and of the main principles of General Linguistics, but will not be required to show a specialized knowledge of all

banches of the subject. Those who choose questions on Historical Phonetics are recommended to make use of a recognized system of Phonetic symbols. Candidates will have an opportunity of showing a linguistic knowledge of the set texts of the Medieval and Renaissance periods. Three questions must be answered from this side Of the paper.

- li. Unseen translation from Old French into English.
2. Medieval and Renaissance Literature with set texts before 1600.
3. Modern Literature from 1600 with special attention to the following:
  - i. A specified aspect or period of the History of the French Novel.
  - ii. A specified aspect or period of the History of the French Drama.
  - iii. A specified aspect or period of the History of the French lyric poetry.

**CANDIDATES WILL BE REQUIRED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM ALL THREE SECTIONS.**

4. A special subject in either language or literature chosen from a list to be described from time to time.

**AT LEAST ONE PASSAGE FOR COMMENTARY WILL BE INCLUDED IN EACH PAPER.  
CANDIDATES MUST STATE WHEN REGISTERING WHICH SUBJECT THEY SELECT.**

5. Translation from English to French.
6. Translation from French to English.
7. An essay in French on a subject relating to French thought.
8. Three Modern prescribed texts to comprise:-
  - i. One prose work.
  - ii. One play.
  - iii. The whole or part of the poetic works of one author may be specified.
9. i. A specified period of Modern French History, with special reference to French Institutions.
  - ii. The History of French Relationships with Africa.

CANDIDATES MAY ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM ONE SECTION ONLY, OR FROM BOTH.

An oral examination to test the candidate's scholarship as well as his command of the spoken language.

IN.B. NO CANDIDATE WHO FAILS IN PROSE COMPOSITION MAY BE HELD TO HAVE SATISFIED THE EXAMINERS.

### **Subsidiary subjects**

Candidates must also satisfy the examiners in a subsidiary subject, unless exempted

And must select their subsidiary subject one of the following:

ENGLISH, LATIN, GREEK, ECONOMICS, ETHICS, HISTORY, LOGIC, HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY.

### **DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH STUDIES READING LIST**

#### **17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

Corneille : Le cid, Horace, Cinna, Polyeucte, Nicomede, Le Monteur; (6 weeks).

Racine : Andromaque, Britannicus, Berenice, Bajazet,

Mithridate, Iphigenie, Phedre, Athalie; Les Plaidemo. (8 weeks)

Moliere : Les Precieuses Ridicules, Les Femmes Savantes, L'Ecole des Maris, L'Ecole des Femmes, Tartuffe, Le Misanthrope, L'Avare Le Malade Imaginaire, Le bourgeois Gentilhomme; (9 weeks).

La Fontaine : Septieme Livre; 17<sup>th</sup> siecle.

La Buiyere : Les caracties on morems de ce siecle.

Madame de

La Fayette : La Princesse de Cleves;

Pascal : Pensees;

### **18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY**

Le Sage : Turcaret, Crispin rival de son maitre; Gil Blas; (3 weeks).

Prevost : Histoire du Chevalier Des Grieux et de Maon Lescaut; (1 week).

Voltaire : Contes, (esp. Zadig and Candide); (1 week).

Marivaux : La vie de Marianne; Le Paysan Parvenu; (2 weeks).

Rousseau : La Nouvelle Heloise; (1 week).

Rousseau : Discours sur l'inegalite; Contrat Social; (2 weeks)

Diderot : La Religieuse; (1week).

Laclos : Les Liaisons Dangereuses; (1 week)

Beaumarchais : Le Barbier de Seville; Le Mariage de Figaro; (2 weeks)

### **19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY**

Chateaubriand : Atala, Rene; (2 weeks).

Constant : Adolphe. (1 week).

Stendhal : Le Rouge et Le Noir; La Chartreuse de Parme; (1783-1842) (2 weeks).

Balzac : Eugenie Grandet, Le Pere Goriot, Le Colonel Chabert, etc. (3 weeks).

Flaubert : Madame Bovary, Salamambo, Trois Contes; (3 weeks).

Maupassant : Any collection **Contes**, e.g. **Quinze Contes** (ed. Green); (1 week).

Zola : Germinal, L'Assommoir; (2 weeks).

Lamartine : Meditations, Harmonies Poetiques et Religieuses; (1790-1869) (2 weeks).

Musset : Poesies nouvelles (Garnier), e.g. the Nuits poems, etc. (1810-1885) (1 week)

Vigny : Servitude et Grandeur Militaires; Les Destinees; (1797-1863) (3 weeks).

Hugo : Les Chatiments, Les Contemplations, La Legende des Siecles; (1802-1885) (3 weeks).

## **20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY**

Mauriac : La Pharisienne, Le Noeud de Viperes, Therese Desqueyroux; (3 weeks).

Bernanos : Journal d'un Cure de Campagne; (1 week).

Roger Martin du Gard : Les Thisbault (e.g. vol.1); (1 week).

Jules Romains : Les Hommes de Bonne Volonte, (e.g. **Verdun**); (1 week).

Gide : La Porte Etroite; La Symphonie Pastorale; (2 weeks).

Camus : La Peste, L'Etranger, L'Exil, et Le Royaume; (4 weeks).

Saint-Exupery : Vol de Nuit, Terre des Hommes, etc; (2 weeks).

Motherlant : Les Bestiaires, Le Maitre de Santiago; (2 weeks)

Anouilh : Antigone; (2 week).

Sartre : Theatre 9e.g. Huis Clos, Les Mouches, Les Mains Sales); Le Mur, Les Chemins de la Liberte; (5 weeks).

Malraux : Novels (e.g. Les Conquerants, L'Espoir, La Condition Humaine); (3 weeks).

Camara Laye: L'Enfant Noir, Le Regard du Roi. (2 weeks).

## **APPENDIX 2**

What follows is another programme of French Studies from Ghana. The Programme is quite recent (2002/2003) and is being operated within a Unit

Course System. The components are as follows:

### \* French Language

Under this heading the following aspects of language are taught: Oral and Written Expression (3 units), Translation: Theme and Version (2 units for 200 Level /3 units for 300 and 400 Levels), Introduction to Linguistics is part of Language IV along with Oral and Written Expression (3 units for 200 Level), Linguistics II and Linguistics IV (3 units each for 300 Level and 400 Level respectively). The Oral and Written Expression courses are labelled LANGUAGE I-VIII and stretch from 100 Level to 400 Level. There is a special course SECRETARIAL EXPRESSION II (Secretarial French and Oral Expression- 3 units for 300 Level). These language courses account for 41 credit units for the four levels for both first and second semesters

A further breakdown reveals the following weighting: Oral and Written Expression: 24 units, 12 units per semester; Translation: 8 units; Linguistics: 6 units

### \* **French and African Literature**

The core courses here are as follows: Introduction to Literature (1 unit only for 100 Level), 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries Literature (3 units; interestingly taught in the same year for 300 Level during the first semester and for 400 Level during the second semester), African



Literature (3 units for 400 Level, Aspects of French Literary History (3 units for 300 Level), Special Authors (3 units for 400 Level). These courses account for 18 units. It is interesting to observe here that French and African Literature (3 units) is an elective course at 200 Level, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries French Literature (3 units) and African Literature & Civilization (3units), are electives at the 300 Level while French Thought (3 units) and Aspects of French Literary History (3 units) are also both electives at 400 Level.

### **\* French Culture and Civilization**

Only one 3- units course of this component is offered and at 400 Level: French Civilization II (Politics & Society). There is however no preceding course and the only other mention of Civilization is in the 300 Level elective course titled African Literature and Civilization. But here it is clearly “African” and not “French” Civilization.

Based on the preceding analysis, I believe it can be said that the acquisition of French as a medium of expression is considered to be far more important than knowledge of French Literature and Civilization. Even the usual expectation that African Literature would occupy a pride of place in all African universities, probably for the sake of greater relevance, is clearly not met here. But then it must be remembered that the quality of implementation of an academic programme depends critically on the content of the programme and the available manpower. It must be remarked here as well that the adequacy of the content of any of the components can only be determined through the examination of the course description and prescribed reading lists which I have not undertaken for the present

exercise.

### **APPENDIX 3**

The list of courses presented hereafter has been gleaned from the Handbook of an Australian University. The Handbook is certainly not as current as one would like, but the content suffices for the present purpose.

*Introductory Subjects: These are 100 Level or First Year Courses*

French Studies 1- 17<sup>th</sup> Century French Theatre, Introductory French-Preparatory French (Basic grounding in spoken and written French), French Language A(Aural comprehension; general linguistic principles; general language learning, discriminating between sounds, some grammatical study) French Literature and Civilization, French Language B, French Literature (Prescribed texts of Voltaire, Flaubert, Gide, Camus), French Civilization (Background to French Culture from the Renaissance); French Studies 11 (The French People Today).

*Advanced Subjects: These are 200 Level and 300 Level Courses*

French Language C (Intensive Course conducted principally in French designed to give students the necessary confidence and basic skills to allow ready communication with native speakers of French), French language D, History of the French Language ( to 1600), General Semiotics, History of Modern French Syntax and Vocabulary(1550-1950), The French Novel from Flaubert to Gide ( Prescribed Texts of Flaubert, Zola, Proust and Gide), Medieval French Literature B (1100-1500), Contemporary Trends in the French Novel, French Society from the Days of Louis XIV to the First World War, The Muse and Her Sisters, French Culture in social

Context (to 1871), The 18<sup>th</sup> Century Philosophical Debate in Literature, French Language E ( Aimed at developing the four skills: aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing), French Literature of the Renaissance, Advanced Semiotics, Texts and the Social Sciences (Introduction to contemporary psychological and sociological theories as applied to literature), Special Subject (Compulsory for Honours students ), French Language F(intensive practice in spoken French, study of intonation, stress and rhythm, relationship between spoken French and written French), French N ( A special civilization course based on life in New Caledonia)

***Fourth Year Honours Subjects***

Applied Linguistics 1, Stylistics, Advanced Oral French, Special Subject (Approved Topics in literature, methodology, language or linguistics), Thesis + Research Method.

Although the language is important, a third of the programme is devoted to it, the literary preoccupations seem to dominate. The history of the French, their language and culture are given adequate attention.