

A HUMANISTIC  
APPROACH TO  
NIGERIA'S MOST  
CONTROVERSIAL  
ISSUES

BY  
NIGERIA'S  
FREE THINKERS

FOREWORD BY:  
ANGELOS  
SOFOCLEOUS

M.A PHILOSOPHY





**ENLIGHTENMENT**

**A PHILOSOPHICAL HUMANISTICS APPROACH TO NIGERIA'S MOST  
CONTROVRSIAL ISSUES**

**BY**

**RANDOM FREE-THINKERS IN NIGERIA**

**JULY, 2019.**

To all Nigerians, whose rights, (through our ignorance)  
Has been denied and trampled upon

**Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage.  
Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding  
Without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage  
When its cure lies not in lack of reason but lack of resolution  
And courage to use it without direction from another. Spere  
Aude! 'Have courage to use your own reason!' - That is the motto  
Of enlightenment.**

**Immanuel Kant**

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## FOREWORD

The great atheist activist Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a former Muslim, in her book *Infidel*, wrote: “It takes a long time to dissolve the bars of a mental cage.” In fact, for most of us, leaving our religion was a gradual process. At first, we discover that certain questions we ponder about remain unanswered in religion and any of our attempts to obtain a satisfactory answer to our questions stays in vain. Then, we discover that the reason religion is unable to give us answers lies in the very mechanism by which it operates: a mechanism which is based on irrational thinking and which is not evidence-based but is based solely on faith. Faith, however, is fallible and does not lead to truth. Religion, through faith, exploits the vulnerabilities of human nature, namely the wish to belong to a community, feeling uncomfortable with not knowing, and fear of death.

Convinced that religion does not offer a way to discover truth (in fact, it might take us further from it) we realized that we lived in a ‘mental cage’ and were on the hunt trying to find a discipline or a system which provides the world with a way to discover true facts about the world. We found this in science and philosophy. Two disciplines, which are fundamentally based on logic, rationality, critical thinking, and which value dialogue, criticism, and argumentation. They see that truth is not god-given, cannot be ‘revealed’, and, more importantly, cannot be imposed. Instead, truth is to be found through a battle - not a physical one, but through a mutual exchange of rational arguments, the strongest of which will prevail. Religion teaches you to not question. Science and philosophy, in contrast, not only teach you to question but provide you with the answers or with the means to discover the answers yourself.

The contents of this publication counter one of the greatest misconceptions about atheism: that it only deals with religion. While it is true that atheism, by definition, simply means ‘lack of belief in a god or gods’, it deals with a much wider array of topics than religion or the idea of God. Atheism, inspired by science and philosophy, promotes a way of thinking which is rational, logical, and based on understanding the other’s worldview so that mutual exchange of arguments and dialogue is possible. That is why it can also have views on homosexuality, death, evolution, and even mental health, issues which are covered in this publication.

I am delighted to see that this publication features articles by brave activists and thinkers who stand against the persecution of atheists, humanists, and secularists in Nigeria. Individuals who have realized the ‘mental cage’ in which they were brought up and wish to inform others about it too, often risking their lives. It is with great heroism that you fight for your rights in a country in which there is a great stigma for being an atheist or for advocating secularism, and in which certain regions impose a sharia-based penal code.

I encourage you to continue fighting for human rights, for everyone’s right to believe, and everyone’s right to not believe. For everyone’s right to freedom of speech, freedom of thought

and everyone's right to follow their own belief system, as long as this is based on kindness, compassion, and mutual understanding. And be sure: the tide will turn.

Angelos Sofocleous

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## Individualism vs. Tribalism

Individuality is the aim of political liberty. By leaving to the citizen as much freedom of action and of being, as comports with order and the rights of others, the institutions render him truly a freeman. He is left to pursue his means of happiness in his own manner.

-James Fenimore Cooper

### Abstract

*In a sense, this essay maximizes the idea that pervades one of the magnum opus of the historian and psychologist Gustave le bon, "Crowd: A study of the popular mind". Humans are social animals and it is not a surprise that we love associations and relationships, this realization, could have been what lead Aristotle to conclude that men who can stay alone are either gods or beast. Here, we would be shown the strength and uniqueness that comes with individuality and we will become exposed also to the perils of collectivism, most especially in its nastiest form of the worship of Authority, racism and tribalism, which are all of course, a great force in bringing a setback to the development of any nation.*

**Key terms:** Individualism, Collectivism, Tribalism.

A Distinct form of collectivism within African societies, which can be described as "tribalism", can be found across all African nations.

Tribalism is essentially anti-intellectual, appealing to a particular kind of passive mentality that is more comfortable in a stagnant society, ruled by tradition rather than in a vibrant, innovative, progressive and rational culture which Nigeria desperately needs.

Tribalism as collectivism in necessity to succeed requires cohesion, similar adjoining values. Prioritizing the people and values as greater than the individual and his uniqueness, they unite as a means to an endpoint. Rejecting the uniqueness of ideals that are common. A Us vs. them and an insignificance of the outside group is the nature of the group bias.

"A tribe is a social group united by some combination of race, ancestry, birthplace, religious/traditional upbringing or other unchosen characteristic. Tribalists passively accept and conform to group norms such as ways of living transmitted from generation to generation: mythology, costume, dishes, song and dance, language and religious practice. Tribes are to be distinguished from voluntary associations based on chosen values, such as a corporate workforce, an alumni association or a reading group in school."

First, it affirms the positive value of social cooperation and group action in pursuit of rational values. But of course, practically everything of value in a modern civilized society involves voluntary, cooperative activities, such as trade, civic involvement, cultural recognition, retained

value systems, community bonds and personal relationships. This is essential, and I am not suggesting an abolition of these variables.

According to Rand, tribalism's tendencies stems ultimately from the collapse of philosophy and the consequent rise of irrationalism and collectivism, long-standing trends which have left the modern individual feeling powerless and unable to do anything. "If men accept the notion that reason is not valid," she asked, "what is to guide them and how will they live?"

"Obviously, they will seek to join some group, any group which claims the ability to lead them and to provide some sort of knowledge acquired by some sort of unspecified means. If men accept the notion that the individual is helpless, intellectually and morally, that he has no mind and no rights, that he is nothing, but the group is all, and his only moral significance lies in selfless service to the group they will be pulled obediently to join a group. But which group?"

Tribalism has a "history of endless, bloody warfare", by its nature. "There is no surer way to infect mankind with hatred brute, blind, virulent hatred than by splitting it into ethnic groups or tribes. If a man believes that his own character is determined at birth in some unknown, ineffable way, and that the characters of all strangers are determined in the same way, then no communication, no understanding, no persuasion is possible among them, only mutual fear, suspicion, and hatred. Tribal or ethnic rule has existed, at some time, in every part of the world, and, in some country, in every period of mankind's history. The record of hatred is always the same."

Conflicts among "ethnic" groups have expanded to include cultural and political strife led by self-appointed "righteous" representatives of different tribes, religions, ethnic groups and more. This is leading to a decay of Nigeria, since people have refused to change their mindset towards the group passive mentality identity politics based on tribal and religious sentiments. This plays out especially during election periods, and the masses are taken advantage of, with their votes, by the tribalism card. The way forward is rejecting the tribal outlook while instead understanding and adopting rational values, positive ideals worth pursuing, ideals powerful enough to counteract tribalist trends. The individual of self-esteem and self-confidence is a marked man under tribal rule; the enforcement of traditional, tribal ways stifles his mind and limits his horizons.

Historically, capitalism is the "only system that drew men to unite on a large scale into great countries, and peacefully to cooperate across national boundaries," raising standards of living and making it "possible for men of various, formerly antagonistic nationalities to live together in peace." In a fully capitalist society, which we need to adopt, individuals choose whether to accept and utilize the achievements of other individuals, based on merit and not any considerations of tradition or tribal status or nepotism which is eating away Nigeria's true worth.

The sum of accepted achievements in all fields, be it scientific, technological, industrial, intellectual or artistic is a “free, civilized nation’s culture.”

When you build your own character by choosing rational values that further your own life, when you join with others to pursue and defend those values, when you break free from tradition by embracing other individuals’ achievements solely on their merits, then tribalism can have no hold on you. And if enough people choose to live that way, then the influence of tribes will eventually wither and die. Do not fall for the divide and conquer strategy, together we stand, divided we fall. The catalyst for genuine change to Nigeria lies not with the elites, but with the masses and the masses alone. Make use of your united strength as one, and individualism to fight for the truth and a better future. John F. Kennedy got it right, “Conformity is the jailer of freedom and the enemy of growth.”

Michael O.  
ENGLAND  
JUNE, 2019.

## **Homosexuality: Why You Shouldn't Care.**

### **Abstract**

*Sex is a great deal and we humans spend almost our entire lives trying to get laid. This write up, promises to enlighten us about an uncommon but natural sexual orientation which people have for vain and ignorant reasons condemned.*

**Key terms:** Homosexuals, sexuality, Genetics.

The common misconception with homosexuality most people in Nigeria believe, be it theists or atheists is the belief that homosexuality is an unnatural trait that has been 'learned' or 'adapted to' through mostly, environmental or peer factors. This belief is commonly instigated by our cultural, religious and perhaps, personal distaste towards homosexuality and these certain areas of instigation are usually influenced on the individuals, through indoctrination; a major societal vice in Nigeria.

In most societies and countries, same-sex relationships are perceived as sin and have subsequently been quelled through law enforcements, judicial impositions, and even the issuance of death penalty threats in order to completely eradicate the practice. Now, the major reason homosexuality is labeled as something unnatural is because of the common thought shared that homosexuals can't procreate. This thought usually thrives upon the individual-centered view of evolution, where the preservation of the individual is a goal, whereas, from a gene-centered view of evolution (the most predominant) the preservation of the genes is the goal; in this case, no procreation is natural, as it would still preserve the individual genes of the presupposed homosexuals. It manifests the case, that the population of archaic homosexuals out survived the population of 'exclusive' archaic heterosexual. Whereas, in a population of both, the extra resources man power and immense love from the homosexuals seemingly increased the chances of survivability of the heterosexuals raising their children.

Homosexuality is integral for survival as it is also seen in tens of thousands of different species. Yes, even in the animal kingdom. Small populations of every species are homosexuals such as dogs, rats, monkeys and even bed bugs.

Furthermore, it thrives on epigenetic which deal with how external factors alter the expression of organism's genes. Also, to assert that homosexuality is unnatural is to assert that from the dawn of man, heterosexuality has been a fixed and predetermined attribute. However such assertion is flawed considering the earliest record of same-sex marriage conducted 27 BCE in Rome under the reign of Augustus. Although homosexuality was taxed and forbidden then, it still tends to the opposition of a fixed sexuality dawned on man, since nature thrives on a natural selection which still thrives on randomness and flexibility.

Now, to the pivotal section of this piece, should we care about homosexuality? The answer to that is No. The fallacious belief that homosexuality is immoral is solely dependent on our cultural, environmental and religious views, incorporated through our society, environment (peers and family) and religious books present in our country. A good and major paradigm of such religious books would be the Bible and the Qur'an where homosexuality is seen as a blasphemous and heretical practice and a negation to the will of God (Allah).

Well, neglecting such religious views and doctrines, we can conclude that morality is relative and as such, the existence of a criteria upholding it. In the moral sphere, there are two query-form criteria existing which decide if an activity is either good or bad. The first criterion is the question: is the activity done consciously or by a conscious agent? While the second criterion is: does the activity affect the well-being of human beings?

Now, these criteria are interdependent on each other and as such, for an activity to be classified or arbitrated towards morality the two criteria must be met. Take for instance, I wave my hand, now, that's an activity done consciously, so it meets the first criterion but does the activity affect the well-being of human beings? Of course not (well, unless I'm signaling for a gun-raid). Another instance would be a scenario where someone sleepwalks into the kitchen and perhaps knocks down a glass of water, and then the next day someone slips off of the spilled water and dies from the lacerations and piercings of the shattered glass cup; now, such activity was unconscious that affected the well-being of a human. Henceforth, cannot be considered as moral or immoral since the two criteria were not met.

Relatively, homosexuality is not a conscious activity, since it's a natural attribute just like heterosexuality and labeling it an immoral act because it is supposedly unnatural would be an appeal to nature fallacy which states that natural things are morally good and unnatural things are immoral. From a relative viewpoint of such logical imposition, modern medicines should be scorned since they are unnatural and should be considered immoral -well, that seems genuinely unwise.

In other words, stop the hate movement and prejudice against Homosexuals, see them as you see heterosexuals, adhere to change (a constant) and live in peace.

Gideon E.  
Nigeria  
July, 2019.

## IN PRAISE OF SECULARISM

### Abstract

*This paper highlights and extols the shining characteristic qualities of secularism that have made it appealing to the contemporary minds and acceptable to contemporary society. The burden of this paper is to prove that secularism is not anti-clericalism neither is it anti-religion as some have mistakenly held. Rather it is basically an alternative ideology to a culture of religious fanaticism and dogmatism which stifles the human spirit and yearning for freedom and wholesome development. It argues that it is the failure of monotheistic religions (with their absolute claims) to foster peaceful co-existence of one another in the society that calls for adoption and entrenchment of secularism as a solution. Hence, human societies (like Nigeria) which are still in the fetters and clutches of religious absolutism and dogmatism can as well drink from the well of secularism and experience an oasis in the desert of religious suffocation.*

**Key terms:** religion, praise, secularism, dogmatism, fanaticism.

### Introduction

There is a dramatic situation in the Bible which illustrates the violent and stifling nature of religion. In the gospel according to St John (8: 49-59), Jesus had controversy with the Jews. The Jewish authorities accused Jesus of demon possession because of his numerous miracles. Jesus defended himself by appealing to his divinity made manifest through his work. He claimed that before Abraham was he is. This claim of divinity by Jesus got the Jewish authorities enraged. Overwhelmed by anger, they brought stones to "stone" him to death. This was neither the first nor the last time the Jewish authorities manifested this violence in the name of defending God. They did it to Stephen whom they claimed blasphemed against God by saying he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56 -58). What was wrong about such a claim? Are both Stephen and the Jews not saying something positive about God? One may be tempted to think that this violence is characteristic of only Judaism. That is not true. Ever since Christianity was declared the official religion of the Roman Empire by Constantine the Great in the Edict of Milan in 313 AD such violent killings have characterized Christianity in the process of defending Church dogmas. Christianity which had a humble beginning started burning people they called heretics to the stake, some they tortured until they recanted. For example, the infamous Witch Hunt which cut across modern Europe and colonial North America between 1450-1750 which claimed the lives of about 35,000 to 40,000 is a living testimony of how Christianity systematically tortured and killed helpless women it perceived as witches (Erich, 2010:195; Lois, 2010:5 ; Gaskill, 2000, 75). Even if they were witches, is anyone justified to condemn another to death in merciless judgment? Was that not a breach of one's freedom of religion and choice of occupation?

This ruthless violence in the name of God is not just a feature of both Judaism and Christianity, Islamic religion condemns innocent people to death by imprisonment, torture, hanging and beheading for committing an offense it calls blasphemy against Mohammed and Islam (sabb al-rasul, sabb al-sahabah even till today (Siraj, in Fitzpatrick & Walker pp 59-67; Smith, 2003:10). Such an acrimonious and horrendous practice characterizes the three major Abrahamic faiths that absolutely claim to be sure way to God. They leave people with no freedom to think and speak freely about God and their religious authorities. Not only do they exercise this influence within their theological jurisdiction they also exert it on the political sphere hence influencing government policies which affect all and sundry.

The last straw that broke the camel's back on the establishment of secularism as an alternative to Christianity (and all Abrahamic religions) was the case of George John Holyoake (1817–1906), who incidentally was a relative of Sir Keith Holyoake, our former prime minister and later Governor-General. At an early age he became attracted to the social ideals of the Scottish reformer Robert Owen. In 1841 he became the last person to pay the penalty for blasphemy in the distinction he British world. Holyoake's offense was simply this: at the conclusion of a public meeting where the need for social reform was being discussed, this young thinker of the idealistic orientation (barely 24 years) gathered the courage to raise the motion that God (the General Manager of World Affairs be placed on half pay for not looking after the poor as he had promised. On hearing this, the religious authorities of his day convicted him of blasphemy, Holyoake was sentenced to six months in prison in the Gloucester Goal after which he coined the term secularism to describe his own ideology (Lyoyd, 2003: 2) According to Holyoake, and secularism is a better replacement of the sorry sort of Christianity he experienced.

Having acquainted ourselves with the trajectory of religious imperialism, absolutism, dogmatism and fanaticism which brought about the rise of secularism in our society today, let's define the term secularism before we praise it's characteristics which make it a healthy ideology to be adopted globally. We consider this definition important in adherence to the admonition of Plato who once said that people disagree because they do not understand the terms they use at the first place. This position of Plato was reinforced by the German philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein who argued that" words do not have "fixed" meaning but rather depends on the context in which it is used (Wittgenstein, 1953). Hence, in this paper we shall define the term "secularism" within the contexts of politics and religion.

### **Meaning of Secularism in Political Context**

Secularism, as defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is the "indifference to, or rejection or exclusion of, religion and religious considerations." Brought to bear on politics, it narrowly means the separation of church from state and broadly means the separation of religion and all religious paraphernalia (symbols, relics, paintings etc) from government establishments. It doesn't call for a ban on religion but that religious matters should be an individual affair or group affair done within religious circles in such a way that it will not influence public policies and

government decisions. In other words, secularism is the principle of the separation of government institutions and persons mandated to represent the state from religious institution and religious dignitaries (the attainment of such is termed secularity). Defined briefly, secularism means that governments should remain neutral on the matter of religion and should not enforce nor prohibit the free exercise of religion, leaving religious choice to the liberty of the people. One form of secularism is asserting the right to be free from religious rule and teachings, or, in a state declared to be neutral on matters of belief, from the imposition by government of religion or religious practices upon its people. Another form of secularism is the view that public activities and decisions, especially political ones, should be uninfluenced by religious beliefs or practices (Nader in John,2009; Kosimi & Keysar, 2007).

### **Meaning of Secularism in Religious Context**

This is the kind of secularism that people really find difficult to grasp. It is secularism within religion. This type makes a subtle claim that one should be allowed to choose their own religion without force or external influence. In other words, one should practice spirituality as one's conscience dictates. Simply put, it calls for a religion without fanaticism, dogmatism and absolutism. That is, Obi is free to worship a mountain if his conscience convinces him that that mountain is God. Ali is free to believe in Mohammed and Jesus as servants of God without Christians charging Ali of blasphemy and burning him to the stake. While Iyanu is free hold that Oduduwa created the world and not the Muslim Allah without beheading Iyanu by Muslims. Secularism in this sense calls for" a freedom of religion from religion" George John Holyoake who himself designated his position as secularism in 1851 put it thus:

Secularism is not an argument against Christianity; it is one independent of it. It does not question the pretensions of Christianity; it advances others. Secularism does not say there is no light or guidance elsewhere, but maintains that there is light and guidance in secular truth, whose conditions and sanctions exist independently, and act forever. Secular knowledge is manifestly that kind of knowledge which is founded in this life, which relates to the conduct of this life, conduces to the welfare of this life, and is capable of being tested by the experience of this life (Holyoake, 1875: 100).

It is the above sense in which Holyoake defined secularism that this paper shall understand it.

### **Secularism as an alternative ideology to religion**

We have taken time to examine the meanings of secularism and what brought it about. Below are our reasons for proposing secularism as a better ideology.

Firstly, secularism recognizes the dignity and freedom of human beings to worship whichever God (god or gods or goddesses) an individual wants. Contrary to what people think, it is secularism and not religion that promotes true spirituality and gives humans that freedom to express such spiritual impulse. Religion is mere dogmatism and fanaticism. An adequate

knowledge of history justifies the first point above as both Church and State interfered intermittently in the spiritual life of the individual by choosing for the person which God to worship. This created the problem of the relationship between religion and civil government in the Roman Empire. For example, Christians were constantly persecuted for they refused to acknowledge the divinity of the Emperor (Barclay, 1995). With the conversion of Constantine to Christianity, it became established as the State religion of the Roman Empire. Christianity, which had proclaimed the right to belief, itself, became intolerant of other faiths. While on the one hand, this close alliance led to acceptance of Christianity which heretofore had been taboo. On the other, it led to conflicts between the Pope and the Emperors and the common masses suffered untold hardship. This continued until the Reformation period brought about by Martin Luther's 95 theses in 1517. Even after that, religion continues to suffocate people's freedom of worship of any God or gods an individual wants. However, with the acceptance of secularism as an ideology, no one will force the other to believe that God is one in three persons, that Mohammed is Allah's final prophet, that Abraham is the Father of Faith, etc. Rather one will be free to worship any being he feels is God (god).

Secondly, secularism promotes democracy and meritocracy in government. As we all know, any country dominated by religion like Nigeria will likely produce autocratic rulers. Nigeria is democratic and secular in theory but highly religious and dictatorial in practice. It is no news that politics and political aspirants have their positions decided in churches and mosques by pastors and imams who know little or nothing about politics. They tell their congregations whom to vote for and whom not to vote. When these politicians are sworn in they only implement those policies that were suggested to them by their emirs, pastors and political parties without representing the interests of the general public. We see that oftentimes those that are politically appointed to work in government ministries are being recommended by pastors, imams and emirs. These people may not have the capacity and qualifications to work are such portfolios. But because the pastor or emir or imam recommends them that settle the matter (this happens in NYSC where church executives are posted via such recommendations). And because they were not thoroughly screened they perform below expectations. This is what secularism shuns. Secularism enhances democracy and meritocracy by ensuring that everyone's voice is heard. All salient issues are decided by public debate and parliamentary debates in truly secular states. Hence, secularism is a better ideology for human society.

Thirdly, secularism brings about peaceful co-existence in human society. Who does not like peace? What system wants to experience instability? Which family prefers pandemonium to concord? This is what secularism promises and guarantees. Secularism shuns absolutes. It doesn't mean that it does not recognize objective truth if it sees it. However, it does not "force" anyone to accept it. With this stance of secularism, some people dismiss it as promoting anarchy in the society. They call it the ideology of "anything goes" These people are mistaken in thinking so. This is not what secularism is all about. Secularism advocates peaceful co-existence of all and sundry by claiming that no theory is absolutely better than the other such that it must be

foisted on others. By doing this, it settles the clashes that do occur between two extremists whose views are diametrically opposed to the other. For example, imagine a society where pope Francis says: "No one must use condom because it is against the will of God" and Donald Trump says "everyone must use condom because it helps in preventing sexually transmitted diseases" don't you think this must breach public peace as billions of Catholics will obey the pope and disobey Trump while millions of Americans will obey Trump and disobey the Pope? You may say this will never happen but it has happened before between the Pope and Charlemagne (King of Francis), during which the Pope crowned Charlemagne in 800 AD as King of the Frankish Empire but in order to assert his supremacy, Charlemagne himself crowned his son as his successor. Such clash of interests between two Supremes had happened in the past and it created serious pandemonium that affected the lives of many people. Therefore to forestall such bleak occurrence in the future and to promote peaceful co-existence of all and sundry in human society secularism is an option.

Finally, secularism is an ideology of progress and enlightenment. Just as the sun dispels darkness and gives warmth and energy to the body the same way secularism dispels the darkness of ignorance and ushers in the warmth of enlightenment. Because secularism doesn't prohibit any book as spiritually harmful and also because it encourages research in all fields and in all matters: scientific and religious, spiritual and physical, natural and supernatural almost without hindrance, then it becomes itself an intellectually stimulating ideology which lends it's support to enlightenment. And of course, we know that enlightenment is the road to human progress. Religion has this tendency to decultivate the Intellect- a culture which suppresses enlightenment. It emphasizes and enforces faith and revelation over and above reason (logic) and observation. But we don't know how many human problems that faith and revelation solve. For example, the Vatican has what it called Index Librorum Prohibitorum (List of Prohibited Books), books that the general public were forbidden to read because they contain what could damage faith and morals according to the church authorities. Notable among these authors were: Simone de Beauvoir , Nicolas Malebranche , Jean-Paul Sartre , Michel de Montaigne , Voltaire , Denis Diderot , Victor Hugo , Jean-Jacques Rousseau ,André Gide , Nikos Kazantzakis, Emanuel Swedenborg , Baruch Spinoza , Immanuel Kant ,David Hume , René Descartes , Francis Bacon, Thomas Browne, John Milton , John Locke , Nicolaus Copernicus, Galileo Galilei , Blaise Pascal, and Hugo Grotius , Magdalena Haymairus in 1569, who was listed for her children's book ( Sunday Epistles on the whole Year, put to the test ). Other women include Anne Askew, Olympia Fulvia Morata, Ursula of Munsterberg (1491–1534), Veronica Franco, and Paola Antonia Negri (1508–1555). To mention but one, Immanuel Kant's book *Critique of Pure Reason* was banned from public readership (Grendler,1988; Leonard, 2006 ; Stead, 1902 ) . The question is if some works of these great and brilliant Intellectuals were banned from public readership until when the ban was lifted, what exactly remained to nourish the Intellects of the public? How did these shinning authors whose works were prohibited feel? Hold your answers for yourself. The same prohibition is experienced in all the three major Abrahamic religions which claim to possess absolute knowledge of God exclusively. On the contrary, secularism

encourages and promotes research in all fields that will lead to overall, wholesome development of the human person thereby stimulating enlightenment and progress in human society.

### **Conclusion**

What we have posited thus far is this: that religion (if it is a true worship of God, gods) is not bad in itself. But it is bad when men and women have made it a hodgepodge of ideology devoid of meaning. It becomes nothing but a cranky, cantankerous curmudgeon who neither progresses nor allows progress in others. Honestly speaking, this is exactly what some religious leaders have done in the past that gave a clarion call to secularism to take over. We must also admit the numerous achievements of religion which are seen in the many emblems of Western Civilization. However, when we compare the numerous benefits of both religion and secularism in the world today we must uphold secularism for peace, progress, freedom and enlightenment to reign supreme in human society.

Orji Okpara Paul  
Nigeria  
June, 2019.

## **Between Religious Lecturers, Scientific Knowledge and Their Intellectual Dishonesty**

### **Abstract**

*Honesty is one of the most important qualities of a good teacher, most especially, when the subject involved is an exercise in knowing the nature of reality. There is absolutely no reason to put any barrier to any knowledge any student wants to know, there is absolutely no rational reasons, students are supposed to be lied to. Telling them the truth makes them appreciate things faster. This piece revealed in a classical polemical way, religious bigot, who are teachers with scientific pretensions. Teachers who respect their deeply held beliefs that are born out of emotions and ignorance more than scientific facts which are a product of rational enquiry, deduction and re-testable experiments.*

**Key Terms:** University, Dogmatism, Science, Mis-education.

I am a finalist student studying biochemistry in a university whose name I will not mention, and this is not of my freewill, but of the recent fascist and totalitarian atmosphere forced upon universities by the Authorities. Authorities, whose primary work is to ensure that the culture of ferocious pursuit of knowledge, liberalism, criticism and individuality that is known with the universities system is sustained.

It is in the universities, aside the silent efforts of the golden age of Arabic scholars who translated and preserved Greek and Hellenistic learning that the celebrated culture of western enlightenment began. The case for science, reason and humanism as demonstrated in Stephen pinker recent book is overtly as a result of the courageous ongoing investigation, perusal and discussion of all the aspects of human endeavours at that time in the universities. The universities then, has no respect for authority, and the only one instituted are mainly for maintaining cohesion, (with running of administrative courses that need specific talent and human capital resources), because it dawned on them that the worship of authority will lead almost invariably to infallibility and infallibility, will lead to the romance of dogmatism, and of course, as it will appear to any student of knowledge, dogmatism is not worthy of any serious academician or scholar Considering the credulous nature of man, our affinity to various biases, and our limited incapacity of knowing all facts. No man can be a highland of knowledge and I dare say the gods have been demonstrably projected not to have attained this status too.

The universities at the 80s and 90s had a very different atmosphere, there was no worship for authorities, and neither was these authorities taken to be infallible. Public opinion was also not spared; the universities produced attacks and polemical works at every form of superstitions, pseudoscience and stupidity most especially in the nastiest forms of bigotry and racism. But the atmosphere we have now is a different one; one of complacency, lack of enlightenment, absence of complete profound education and the total emasculation of their students. The old universities

puts some amount of power in the hands of the student, since they are the one greatly concern, students can influence to an extent the knowledge they want to be exposed to, so can they get rid of any professor whose service they are tired of, but the rise of the democratic age and the romanticize of centralize authority gave all the power to the tutors and authorities, they get to formulate all the rules and ultimately determine the type of education you get. The result is a system where students are treated without any individuality, respect and devoid of many rights.

I am tempted to rush to an example to demonstrated this Authoritarian regime, a young woman was suspended from school just because she called his VC a useless man, wrong and contemptible you might retort ! but this is only a proof that you have been long subjected to the slave master relationship we have been indoctrinated with, by our parents or Perhaps you are a victim of that repeatedly mislead axiom, "students don't have any individuality and they do not deserve any respect". The upbringing of many children in this totalitarian system of family and society is damaging to their mental health and their recognition of their precious individuality. A man is suppose to be the head of the family, by this, he is mandated to make all conscious decisions, including the ones he has no knowledge of, the wives and the children has nothing on him, even if they are well read, well learned about these issues that affects their family. The husband, as with the damaging egos that comes with almost all chauvinist men, do not feel the need to take a cue from the other part of the family, the family under his despotic rulings is definitely plunged into many untold disasters, how many such promising families have been ruined that way? It is high time we understand that Respects are not gotten by force nor by behaving like a self opiniative old cow, rather it is gotten by mutual understanding, love and the ability to accept criticism. That you can prevent people from calling you stupid will never stop them from thinking you stupid when you do stupid things, no matter your office and place in the society. Enough said!

Now to our bone of contention, it beats me really, to see people who have mastered and doctored a scientific discipline or has even done many researches to have been decorated with a professorship display such dismayed intellectual dishonesty about scientific knowledge and facts just because of their religious sensibilities. The class is not a place for dishonesty neither is it a place of doing great disservice to an established field of knowledge, it is a place of certainty, calculated conformity and a reestablishment of the understanding of those natural laws that makes up our universe.

Many definitions has been said and written about the word 'science' but I'd like to define it as a whole Exercise in finding the truth, most assuredly, by the means of research, using empirical methods, of which first hand observations, retested experiment and inductions are the main components. When problem are faced or there is a need to understand a situation, like the break out of a plague or why white people have white skin color, inner feelings are not used terrestrial forces are not suspected, so are the whimsical suggestions of old men influenced by

the superstitious culture of their age, preserved in the mind and brains of their sympathizers, not considered. What ought to be done and is often done, is to take samples, ask questions, perform credibility tests, and establish a conclusion that can be retested and reconfirmed by any one in any part of the world. This is what research is all about. It is by this powerful tool and methodology, that the great body of knowledge and scientific truth, which aids us in the understanding of our natural world, is being postulated and confirmed. Most of our knowledge in this world is still largely concrete ideas, and concrete ideas as I would like to contend belong to the realm of science. Russell has ingeniously written in his introduction to his history of western philosophy, "Whatever it is science cannot explain, mankind will never know."

The moment you take up the duty of becoming a student or teacher of any of the field of sciences, you automatically become a custodian of scientific knowledge; it will then be a sacrilege to hold any of its maxims, reality and world view at contempt. It will even be a greater sin to hold an unverified theory in the nastiest form of superstitions and religious dogma as a truism. Now, the greatest of all evil: to now teach and indoctrinate these dogmas as truth to young minds in the classroom, this is beyond comprehension. Science is a way of thinking more than it is an established field of knowledge said the late, American Cosmologist, Carl Sagan, it is not the memorization of facts as our school and their methods of teaching has led us to believe.

The situations we experience in classes nowadays are appalling, we now have teachers who are biologist, that understand and believe the theory of evolution is untrue in its entirety. There are now Geography and geology teachers who love to maintain that the age of the earth is 6,000 years when large evidences has stipulated it to be some billions years. The big bang theory seem to me to be the most rubbished, The formation of a cosmos where the earth is at the centre of the universe still appeal to their solipsistic nature, how could the universe not be about them? There is a clear line between scientific answers and answers that are mere suggestions, suggestions suggested, when mankind was at their worst and do not have proper equipment to access information and discern what is true from what is right. The scientific revolution came and the old answers were crumbled forever, forgotten, long gone, put to ruins, as relics and antiques of the past.

I have found myself walked out of many religious settings as soon as I have begun to suggest science as a way of looking at the universe, which of course is, but we have for the reason of complacency and total neglect of ethics that comes with selecting tutor, take people who are not mindful of the mainstream scientific method as the groomer and shapers of young minds. They are nothing but teachers of facts and these facts are not even up to date nor complete, they'd rather cherry pick those ones that suit their emotions and pseudoscientific tendencies. They parade these misinformed facts before the student, intimidate them and mar their young minds forever and like hypatia of Alexandria has written long ago "only through great process in the future can their mind be relieved of these miseducation". Discipline and fields have boundaries

and these boundaries must be respected everywhere, it is a sacrilege for a trained microbiologist to claim authority on mathematical models, except in the case of a polymath, and polymaths are not recognized by mere opinions and cheap contributions, they do not always have certification but their contributions intellectually to those field put them upfront and earn them the respect they deserved. If we must continue to gain fully, the professional gratification that comes from each occupation and disciplines, disciplines and occupation must not be overlapped, this includes teaching and teachers. In such a way that teachers who feel their religious books is a more accurate way to understand the universe should be restricted to their Sunday schools and madrasas, while those tutors who believe in the formidable power of science and the scientific revolution that propelled mankind to its glory should be retained in the school which is still by and large, a secular institution.

The business of man is not only in filling his bowels, but also in his expression and longing for love, the contemplation of beauty and in the scientific understanding of our universe. The last seems to me to be the most paramount and the most important, we must never let anything come in our way of achieving that, not some religious fanaticism, not our credulous tendencies, not even the strains of anti-intellectualism that we recently have around us, and has make the reward of stupid things very essential than common sense.

Olumide  
Nigeria  
June, 2109.

## ENLIGHTENMENT: HOW LUMINOUS IS THE LIGHT OF ENLIGHTENMENT IN NIGERIA?

### Abstract

*This short write-up encapsulates what true enlightenment is all about. It holds that enlightenment does not consist in "bookish" knowledge that doesn't translate to reality; in order words, wisdom is useless which does show itself in action. It argues rather that enlightenment is the sum total of the manifestation of knowledge, learning and wisdom in practical affairs of life. Seen in that spectacle, the light of enlightenment is still very dim in Nigeria since both the leaders and the led still display one form of ignorance or the other.*

### Introduction

Every civilization, every age, every tongue, every culture, has got a word for enlightenment. No age no matter how barbaric it is would claim not to be enlightened. Yes! The Germans call enlightenment Aufklärung; the Portuguese, Esclarecimento; the Italians, Illuminismo; the Russians, nrocbewehne. To justify whether or not each and every civilization's claim is correct, one would ask: what is the hallmark? To what shall we appeal? If Europe were to be summoned and asked what is your hallmark for enlightenment? She would answer: "I gave the world reason as the lamp through which to see its feet; I have counted the galaxies; I have painted the Mona Lisa; I have predicted the wealth of the nations; I introduced harmony, melody and symmetry into music: the violin, the oboes, the guitar, the trumpet, the brass, the keyboard – speak to that; I gave the world Oxford and Cambridge, Salamanca and University of Paris as the model of university system; I have replaced alchemy with chemistry, diversified bio-medical fields and build standard hospitals for world's health; above all, I have allowed man's freedom to operate spatiotemporally".

That Europe has attained genuine enlightenment cannot be over-emphasized. In the year 1686, a comet blazed across the skies over Western Europe. The English astronomer Edmund Halley (1656 – 1742) observed the celestial body, calculated its orbit, and predicted its appearances. Stripped of its former role as a potent catastrophe or a harbinger of natural calamity, Halley's Comet now became merely another natural phenomenon, the behaviour of which invented scientific investigation (*Landmark in Humanities*, p. 302). This new objective attitude toward nature and the accompanying confidence on the liberating role of reason were hallmarks of enlightenment.

Summon Nigeria as a nation and ask for her enlightenment, she would reply: "I have packed away from villages and now live in cities like Lagos, Abuja, Kano, London, New York, Paris and Dubai; I no longer take fufu, amala, tuwo in the morning but imported tea, coffee, eggs and cheese; I acquired my university degree in Harvard, Massachusetts, Cambridge and Oxford. I have given all my children first-class education abroad so that their brains are now oozing out the fragrance of England and America; I bought houses in Canada, Dubai, Spain, China; I have

siphoned and deposited all of my constituencies funds in Switzerland, Italy, England and America. I now attend Wizkid, Davido, Don-jazzy, P. square shows with three million naira and invite them for my daughter's nuptials with 14 million naira; above all, I have replaced superstition with true religion evidenced by the number of churches and mosques I have scattered all over my streets and bungalows".

It is crystal clear that Nigeria is very far from enlightenment: its light is dim, illuminating only shadows and fantasies. That is why we import guns to hunt our citizens, discriminate between sexes, straights, gays. A lot jobs based on ethnic affiliations, close ties and family relationship, summon citizens for national prayers and conventions the theme and who summoned and why, we do not know: no one agrees with one another, pointing accusing fingers at each other, and seeking imported help to solve parochial maladies.

While I do not mean to wound any person's feelings, I do intend to provoke rational feelings glowering with light which illuminates the "darkness of ignorance" and ushers in clear visions of purpose and progress in all nooks and crannies of the Nigerian atmosphere. That is true enlightenment! Quoting Antione Nicolas de Condorcet, Nigerians can only be said to be enlightened when:

*The sun will shine on free men (and women) who know no other but their reason; when tyrants and slaves, priests and the stupid and hypocritical instruments exists only in the works of history and on the stage; and when we think of them only to pity their victims... to maintain ourselves in a state of vigilance by thinking on their excesses; and to learn how to recognise and so destroy, by force of reason, the first seeds of tyranny and superstition, should they ever dare to reappear among us (Condorcet Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind, trans. J, Barraclough, 1955).*

To sum up, Enlightenment could be said to have dawned on Nigerians when angry citizens throw stones on our politicians and they don't throw back with swords but with voice of dialogue; when our lecturers and professors stop thinking (that) they are demi-gods beyond human frailties; when students stop thinking they came to school to make "quick money" but embrace the critical spirit of scholarship which pays on the long run; when scientists stop studying classical textbooks as science but embrace nature empirically; when our job industries stop placing undue emphasis on "paper certificates" but on the "certificate of practical experience and competence; when policy makers reward meritocracy and frown at mediocrity; when our musicians do not glorify only their excesses of libido. But lift the human spirit as well; and above all, when NOTHING but REASON convinces us. If not, we shall all pack our "Luggage of Ignorance" abroad and come back more unenlightened than we went". Long Live Nigeria!

Orji Okpara Paul  
Nigeria  
June, 2019.

## When Loves Becomes Hatred

Once were the gathering of the saints and breaking of leaven bread

The burning pyros- of fervent love

Bruises and pain we converge to endure

The scribbling of hot irons on our face to bear.

The tardy rides on thorns with spears of fear

A sunny smile we gave furbished with love and care.

Even through these ordeals our physique shows no despair

Once was our altruism strong as gears

With no whit of bigotry nor disdain to venture

We with a pure conscience held our faiths to rim

Gracing souls with blessings from above and beyond

Once was our love devoid of prejudices

Embracing our flaws and weaknesses nonetheless

Embracing varieties of colours of beliefs tribes and ethnicities

The true nobility of a christian

The love of the heathens

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Now we're deluded by our lust

Obsessed by our egotism

Hoodwinked by what we think we practice.

We have fallen not a little lower than beatific creatures but deeper! nigh to the land of the exiles!

We have lost track of what the elements of life are.

We come out as pacifist claiming to cause frith

Unwontedly, we're trucebreakers whose tongues are filled with troubles overload.

We scavenge on those who fail to adhere.

We feed on their ignorance impersonalizing those ascribed as " pagans " .

With flowers of fragrance of one-sided love "the love of the brethren."

sprouting forth with ardour at every springs.

Can we elude ourselves of these things?

Can we steer clear from this guilt ?

We're blameworthy

Nevertheless,

Not to dine in stagnancy with this sense of reprehension

But to come in with equity and redirect our pseudo mental conception.

Acknowledging that true theism embodies love and tolerance.

The inherent nature of life.

Ayobami

Nigeria

June, 2019.

## **SCIENCE AS A CONSTITUTION**

I would like us to define and properly grasp the meaning of science before we embark on any discourse regarding Science. Science is a branch of learning that deals with the measurable or systematic principles rather than intuition or natural ability. Any learning process in Science employs scientific methods where observation, hypothesizing, experimentation, inquiry and theorizing are all integral part of the methods before arriving at a conclusion. There are of course other sub methods but they are quite irrelevant for this discourse.

Scientific knowledge is all about discovering the natural world which is based on making falsifiable predictions (hypothesis) testing them empirically and developing theories that match known data from repeatable physical experimentation. All of these can be done logically which is noticeable in the field of Mathematics, Physics, and Biology or understanding the molecular nature of matter a field called Chemistry. There are other fields of Sciences but all are hinged on the aforementioned ones.

I would like to say that science and its engagements are not just products of a past time or a fun seeking nature but a serious discipline which is saddled with the responsibility of bringing solution or answers to discovered or possible problems, arrest the curiosity of man even though that cannot be totally obliterated but has offered some hope to those who might want to investigate their curiosity and also helped in dismantling some erroneous and superstitious beliefs which are borne out of the comfort seeking nature of the subjective or rather lazy minds. Just like any other discipline, Science works on principles and if any work must be attributed to science, these principles must be religiously maintained and followed. These principles are:

1. Reliability
2. Objectivity
3. Validity
4. Usability
5. Clarity
6. Questionability.

Let's start by understanding these principles by defining them and also in a way look at their superiority to any form of principle binding any other discipline; through a Catholic review and analysis of these principles we would come to underscore the need for Science as a constitution.

### **RELIABILITY**

This has to do with the quality of measurement or investigative process, if it's actually indicating the degree to which the measure is consistent, that is repeated measurements would give the same result. Any trait or natural phenomenon that is not measurable or systematic cannot be said to be scientific and in our bid to claim that something has become real we have to test, retest and test the hypothesis by several treatments before it becomes a fact. Reliability has to do with consistency.

## **OBJECTIVITY**

It's a state of being unbiased and not influenced by emotions or personal prejudices, such a state is attainable through the understanding of the why which answers have been provided by science overtime. Any form of subjectivity leads to pseudo science and 'make believe' which is irrational.

## **VALIDITY**

A quality of a measurement indicating the degree to which the measure reflects the underlying constructs, that is whether it measures what it purports to measure. The constructs are actually hypotheses(Intellectual guess based on observation) and can either be proven or disproved and every method or instrument used in the treatment are actually purposeful and not diverging from the focus of the construct. Legality and rights are the force that empowers validity.

## **USABILITY**

This is the degree to which an object, device, software application is easy to use with no specific training, Science products are usable by anyone and also it's methods applicable but as we advance there might be need for special training to manage some instruments properly, these training are not similar to those who bank on some sort of dark magic or myth but learnable and can be learnt by any ready mind. There are no special powers needed just the saneness and interest in learning.

## **CLARITY**

It has to do with the state or measure of being clear, noticeable either in appearance, thought or style, a state of transparency. There are no gibberish sayings or consorted lunatic display found in Science but lucid and clear actions which are explainable and not hideous. There are no needs of dark powers, dependence on the supernatural prowess of some gods or demons drawn by some of their prophets but a practical, logical and rational approach in understanding the world.

## **QUESTIONABILITY**

This implies that science is open to doubt, challenge and inquiry. Inquiry because that's why it's called science and it invites questions, there's no absolutism and final truth so flaws can be checkmated in order not to transcend in error. Science in its own way of respecting nature understands that the world is dynamic and governed by entropy. Change is the only constant thing. Newer ideas, genes are being evolved and that affects the response of organism to treatments, as some become adapted to some treatments and loses their response to it. Science being questionable keeps it on its toe as more research is being conducted to build up the knowledge base and bring answers to some possible future problems, also bridging the gap between our expected or imagined dreamland and our current reality. The state of being rational cannot be overemphasized because that's what makes the whole talk of science relevant, as deductions are products of reasons and not feeling, any of such would lead us into pseudoscience.

With the understanding of the following principles having Science as a constitution is not just the best thing that can happen to a nation but also a panacea to many societal ills. Our dwindling hope in our government would be revived as the lawmakers bonded by the constitution would relegate personal interest to the background and harness the fertile soil of logical thinking to bring about ideas that would help checkmate the executives. The Executives would exercise foresight in their planning as failing to do so wouldn't be scientific and can be queried, testable and reliable programs would be implemented and the dismantling of religious structures and institutions which have turned to a social vice and source of mental slavery to the populace would be effective. Talking about the falsehoods perpetrated by some so called religious bodies and how they cajole people to believe in human imaginations is not part of our discourse but having science as a constitution would help checkmate it. The Judiciary wouldn't be biased but follow through the Catholic principles of science to deliver a sound judgment void of prejudice. Corruption would be stressful and several offices which are an expected line of bureaucracy would follow through the same Catholic principles.

Our love for education would rekindle as we would come to understand that knowledge is in the continuum and the source of any advancement in knowledge which has a multiplier effect on the economy and industry. The Business sector would be enterprising as products serving no purpose, bringing no solution or bridging any gap would not be allowed to stay. Workers would increase their input as laziness would not be condoned.

Summarily, we still notice some principles of science play out in all our sectors but to a greater extent mixed with pseudoscience but making Science as a constitution brings focus and drives it's principles into the consciousness of every game player in very sector and helps organization.

D.O.F

Benin

July, 2019

# **NIGERIANS AND THEIR MENTAL HEALTH**

## **INTRODUCTION**

One very important aspect of every human being that defines us as people is one which has been neglected by many over the years, especially in Africa where it is taken very lightly or with little regard, the mental health of every human being when put on a scale with physical wellbeing leaves the scale balanced, that is the mental health of every person is just as important as his physical wellbeing, however, many of us tend to place one above the other thereby neglecting our mental health. This is very common in Nigeria today as many are more concerned with their nutrition and physical fitness whereas being healthy encompasses just more than being free from diseases, eating balanced meals and being physically fit. According to Merriam Webster's English Dictionary, to be healthy means to be free from disease or pain: enjoying health and vigor of body, mind, or spirit or showing physical, mental, or emotional well-being. The definition above helps us understand that for one to be classified as healthy, he must be fit in all areas including his mind which has been highly neglected in the world, Nigeria in particular and it has become detrimental in our society today as the effects have begun to show themselves. In this short chapter, I will examine the state of the minds of most Nigerians and those effects that have arose from neglecting our mental health.

### **The Mental Health of Nigerians**

As I earlier stated, we Nigerians have for long, ignored our mental health and it has become detrimental to our society as its fruits have begun to manifest in recent times and even taking on different forms such as depression, sociopathy and the most common of them being psychopathy which will be the main focus for this chapter due to its widespread influence in our society.

### **Depression**

Depression is a mood disorder which is marked by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, a significant decrease in appetite and time spent in sleeping, feelings of dejection and hopelessness, and sometimes suicidal tendencies. Depression as a disorder which can arise from psychological and social distress which can cause changes in brain function and as a result, the individual can experience general changes in behavior as well as significant changes in the daily life of the individual and can lead to eating abnormalities which can lead to obesity or anorexia in some cases as the lifestyle of the person has been altered by his emotional state. In Nigeria today, there are about 1.5 million reported cases of depression, in a country where one can be seen as too young to have mental disorders, it is no surprise that the figures are on the high side. It is extremely saddening to mention that many Nigerians even tend to overlook the obvious signs of depression in their peers and end up insulting the victim when the fruit of the long planted seed eventually manifests itself and the blame then shifts to his lifestyle, belief

system and choices whereas the root factor lies in his environment, peer influences and other varying factors which can also be a cause as the case may be, this has for long been overlooked by Africans and is a slow acting poison in our society and if not taken care of, the effects would eventually manifest.

## **Sociopathy**

Also known as Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD), this disorder is generally characterized by the disregard and violation of another right backed by a low moral conscience and indecent behaviour, people living with this disorder tend to exploit others for their personal benefits and are a nuisance to the society. With the description given above, it's no surprise that most of the characteristics of individuals living with ASPD are very common in most Nigerians today and is seen as normal at this point where most of us are now used to the repulsive behaviours of others and see no faults in such anomalous behaviours. There are over one hundred thousand reported cases of Antisocial Personality Disorder annually in Nigeria.

## **Psychopathy**

Although the psychopaths of everyday life are everywhere and have a devastating overall effect, both on individuals and on society as a whole, as a group they generally escape the notice of the extant scientific literature. If the literature mentions them at all, it is usually merely in passing. It says a few words about the lawyer for whom winning a case is more important than discovering the truth; the ad writer who uses fragments of information to put a good face on a bad product; the doctor who touts a costly medication over one that is less expensive but equally effective because he owns stock in the company that produces the drug; the politician who sells out for a mess of concrete, voting for a contractor's new construction project in exchange for a new driveway for her house; and the CEO of a major corporation who decides not to insure his employees, knowing that the taxpayers will have to pick up the bill for their medical care. But sooner rather than later, and all too predictably, the focus shifts from the mild psychopath to his or her more seriously disturbed cousin: the patient properly diagnosed as having an Antisocial Personality Disorder. Ordinary people and real life are left behind as we find ourselves plunged into the extraordinary and fantastic worlds of the likes of Bluebeard, Adolf Hitler, Saddam Hussein, David Berkowitz, and Jack the Ripper.

Martin Kantor Characterized by persistent antisocial behaviours, psychopathy, like every other mental disorder is difficult to spot as individuals with this condition are very likely to be nice persons on the outside as seen in the case of the infamous serial killer Ted Bundy who was described by many of his young female victims as handsome and charismatic, unknown to them that the traits exhibited masked a psychotic monster lacking human empathy, this is very common with most individuals living with the disorder.

## **The Signs of a Psychopath**

Psychopathy is a spectrum disorder and can be diagnosed using the 20-item Hare Psychopathy Checklist, which features traits such as lack of empathy, sexual promiscuity, pathological lying, parasitic lifestyle, and impulsivity. The bar for clinical psychopathy is a score of 30 or higher; serial killer Ted Bundy scored 39.

The checklist was developed in the 1970s by the Canadian researcher Robert Hare, professor emeritus of the University of British Columbia. While it was originally used to assess individuals in criminal cases or in high-security psychiatric units, the checklist items are now readily found online for anyone to peruse. A true assessment should be conducted by a mental health professional.

## **Psychopathy and Sociopathy (ASPD)**

The terms “psychopath” and “sociopath” are often used interchangeably, but in correct parlance a “sociopath” refers to a person with antisocial tendencies that are ascribed to social or environmental factors, whereas psychopathic traits are more innate, though a chaotic or violent upbringing may tip the scales for those already predisposed to behave psychopathically. Both constructs are most closely represented in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) as Antisocial Personality Disorder. The DSM uses neither "psychopathy" nor "sociopathy," though these terms are widely used in clinical and common parlance.

## **Conclusion**

The primal focus of this chapter is to examine the mental state of Nigerians, taking three common disorders into consideration as the basis for arriving at a conclusion, we as Nigerians take out mental health and that of others with little regard as though it isn't as relevant, however one can only be truly healthy when his mind isn't stable, many Nigerians today are silently suffering one mental disorder unconsciously while those who are aware of their defects hide in the shadows with no one to turn to as the society has shown no care towards that aspect, in response to this, awareness campaigns should be held to inform individuals on the importance of their mental health as it would go a long way in securing the future of generations to come.

Mr. Bright

Nigeria

July, 2019.

## A NEW NIGERIA

### Abstract

*The part of this book is about a new Nigeria. When we are talking about a new Nigeria, we are talking about a restructured Nigeria. A Nigeria where ethnocentrism, tribalism, nepotism and the likes gives way to equity, fairness, justice and the supremacy of the rule of law. In this part of the book, the writer has listed out some major problems facing Nigeria and possible solutions to such problems. Mind you, a restructured Nigeria starts from us. We all want a new Nigeria but there are many things that must be sacrificed in order to make us the great nation we ought to be. Many of the problems facing this great country of ours are majorly the fault of us, the common people. The values and belief system we hold in high esteem is greatly flawed. We praise corruption, inflate the ego of underperforming leaders, hold in high esteem obsolete religious books (the Bible and the Quran) instead of pushing for advances in science and technology, there are magnificent houses of worships at virtually every corner of every street in this country yet, majority of schools are in a dilapidated state, our leaders take billions of naira in security votes and other unnecessary packages yearly, and pensioners are dying of hunger. This country is almost in a state of disrepair and if care is not taken, we will “put a knife to what holds us together”. The security of this nation is nothing to write home about. Our military chiefs and top military officers have and keep swindling the money budgeted to fight insurgency in the north east. If we keep mentioning all the problems facing this nation, it would be a book on its own and for the sake of brevity; the writer has written a little on them, and proffer some possible solutions.*

**Key Terms:** Corruption, Law, Ethnocentrism, Country.

### MAJOR ISSUES FACING NIGERIA

It is no news that one of the major problems facing this great nation of ours is corruption and bad leadership. Corruption has been engraved in the DNA of an average Nigerian. Corruption started from the very beginning of this Nation when our colonial masters, the Brits, before lowering their union jack, inflated census figures and manipulated election results in favour of their “friends” the northerners. This I think was done to make neo-colonialism flourish in the then newly formed state Nigeria. The nation has been unstable from the time the “green-white-green” was hoisted. According to Merriam- Webster dictionary, corruption can be defined as “dishonest or illegal behaviour especially by powerful people”. In my words, corruption is simply the misuse of power, office or/and resources. It is no news that from inception of our dear nation, this has been the story. Majority of our leaders and law makers both past and present has been “allegedly” accused to be involved in one corrupt act from the other ranging from overinflating budgets for one contract/project to making/amending laws that will benefit their pockets to stashing personal vaults and sometimes empty soak away like in the case of a past military chief. Corruption was what prompted the first coup as several people in position and power were

involved in the “10% case” where contractors who were awarded contracts had to give those who awarded the contracts 10% of the money involved in executing the contract. In his speech after the first coup, Major Chukuwemeka Kaduna Nzeogwu stated that the enemies of Nigeria were “the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribe and demand 10 percent; those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers or VIPs at least, the tribalist, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before international circles, those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian political calendar back by their words and deeds.” Unfortunately, the coup plotters who had the best interest of this nation (in my opinion) were labelled criminals and rebels. Anyways, I am not here to talk about the heroes of January 15 1966, I just stated that to show that corruption has been with us from onset.

Another major issue facing this nation is tribalism and ethnocentrism. This, I believe is one of the things that threatens our unity as a nation. Tribalism means putting one’s tribe above everything else. This mind-set that people have is really affecting us as a nation. Since we have agreed to stay together as a nation, we have to put our loyalty to the nation as a whole before our tribal affiliation. If this can’t work, there should be a referendum and everyone should go their separate ways. Despite the fact that the British has used “super glue” to unite us, we have come far as a nation for us to separate. . Ethnocentrism simply means the mind-set that one has that his ethnic group is greater or more superior to others. This mind-set has been planted by our dear colonial leaders. Every ethnic group has been fighting for superiority especially the Hausas. This has made the Hausas think they are the leaders or “owners” of this nation and its resources. There was a time the nation called Nigeria was known to be one of the most peaceful places to live in. There was a time when Nigerians were one of the happiest people. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case. This is due to the high level of insecurity and the high cost of living in the nation. The rich are getting richer, the poor poorer, and the middle class is going extinct. The high level of insecurity in Nigeria is being treated with levity by our leaders, all the security chiefs and top military officers. As stated earlier, we inflate the ego of our leaders by saying that they are performing but in reality, they are underperforming. I recently saw a video that the military spent millions of naira in a surveillance project in the south-western part of Nigeria and they ended up buying drones that cost about \$150. We hear stories of top military officers that embezzle funds that are meant to use in effectively combating terrorism in the north eastern part of the country. We have also heard stories of the military supplying our “boys” with obsolete weapons to combat insurgent armed with more sophisticated weapons. We have heard stories of soldiers defying their superiors because they are under equipped and they were all court-martialled.

Majority of we Nigerians suffer from bigotry. To me this is one of the major causes of problems like religious intolerance. We often fight about whose God is greater, whose heaven is sweeter and whose hell is hotter. Like Mark Twain wrote in his work *THE DAMNED HUMAN RACE* “He is the only animal that loves his neighbour as himself, and cuts his throat if his

theology isn't straight". We Nigerians argue and fight about things that matter the least. About whose pastor is richer or whose church is bigger while our leaders are stealing our commonwealth. We are in churches and mosques daily, firing the devil and breaking all the ancestral curses while our political leaders keep stealing. Corruption has entered the church. Many of our pastors now fraternize with politicians instead of preaching against social injustice like Jesus and the other prophets of old.

We stigmatize and discriminate a lot in this country. The youths are not left behind. Bring up any intellectual topic and they will start saying that science is affecting someone. Majority of our youths are engaging in different delinquent activities and some parents even support them. I have heard of many cases where a young man engages in internet fraud and their parents take them to shrines to back them up spiritually. Gone are the days when the thirst for knowledge was held in high esteem in our institutions of learning. Now you are stigmatized and sometimes punished for knowing too much. Like I said earlier, we need to reform our value system and our way of thinking before the change will truly come.

### **SOLUTIONS TO SOME OF THE ISSUES LISTED ABOVE**

One of the solutions to the mess we find ourselves in is to make our leaders accountable. Before assuming any public office, assets must be declared. The presidency and its ministers should have press conferences maybe once in two weeks. Governors, commissioners and other public office holders should not be exempted. The senators and members of the House of Representatives should hold council meetings in their respective constituencies. The people should be included in governing the country. The people should know what is really going on with their money and the country in general. All past public servants involved in one form of corruption or the other should be tried and jailed for at least 30 years. All the stolen money should be returned back to the treasury. Leaders should be accountable. The salaries of public office holders should be slashed by 50 percent. Security votes and other avenues that public office holders have created to enrich themselves should be scrapped. Any public office holder caught in corrupt practices should be punished severely. Also, any public office holder that has served as a civil servant or has been in another public office should not receive pension and gratuity from the office they held or served before. Leaders must be followers first. It is written in one of the holy books we so much cherish.

In terrorism and insecurity, all top military and police officers and military contractors that were involved in corrupt practices should be jailed and all their properties should be confiscated. That is after their dismissal from service (in the case of military officers). Laws involving long jail term should be made for corrupt military officers. The officers and men in the theatre of operation should be equipped to international standards. The police and military men should follow the international rules of engagement and civilian brutality should be a punishable offence. Any police or military man caught receiving bribe should be punished as well as the

giver of the bribe. The surveillance and forensic department should be of international standards. Military men and police that are not in the officers' cadre should be well paid to boost their morale. The gap between commissioned and non-commissioned officers should be reduced. Promotion should not be based on tribe, religion or ethnic group but only on merit, courage and professionalism.

To reduce the standard of living and to combat unemployment, the following must be done. Firstly, there should be massive improvement in infrastructure. The roads and railways should be rehabilitated and new ones should be constructed. Our ports (air and sea) should be rehabilitated. There should be constant electricity and our refineries should be functioning. Information should be easily accessed. Data should be cheap. All the avenues that cause wastage like oil theft and vandalism should be stopped by implementing laws that would severely punish anyone caught in the act. They should be regular auditing of the budget and expenditure of the country. Social amenities should be provided in rural areas. Loans should be easily accessible especially loans that would improve agriculture and entrepreneurship.

Our value systems should change. Our educational system should be reformed. Money should be invested in research, science and technology and not in building church auditoriums that hold thousands of people. Our religious leaders should be accountable for all actions they take. The rule of "touch not my anointed" should not apply any longer. We should embrace changes in science and technology and stop fighting about whose heaven is sweeter and whose hell is hotter. We should hold scientific knowledge in higher esteem than religious knowledge. Genius and eccentricity should be rewarded and not looked down upon. Revolutionary ideas should not be trampled upon. We should embrace our differences and stop fighting one another since it is too late for us to separate. Nigeria should work for all and not for the privileged 0.013%. The Igbos would not cry for Biafra if Nigeria works for them.

In years to come, if all these and other solutions proffered by other intellectuals and radical thinkers are implemented, Nigeria would not move, "like a big man with the legs of a child" like Chimamanda Adichie wrote in her book purple hibiscus, instead, Nigeria will move with the speed of light and would take its place as a key player in the affairs of the world and would live up to its name THE GIANT OF AFRICA.

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