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Faith, Fact and Fiction

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Abstract

According to the Bible, which is a source of comfort and God’s word for hundreds of millions of people, “faith” is considered one of the greatest human virtues. In Hebrews 11:1, we are told that “faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.” In Hebrews 11:3, we learn that “by faith we can understand that the universe was ordered by the word of God so that what is visible came into being through the invisible.”¹ In addition, according to Jesus Christ Himself in Matthew 17:20, faith gives us the power to move mountains.² Indeed, these are rather uplifting and compelling descriptions of faith. But how is faith seen by today’s believers? How much of faith is grounded in truth, and how much of it is grounded in fiction? Is there any reason to have faith in something we cannot directly see in the visible world?

Keywords: Faith; African Identity; Fact; History and Religion; Fiction; Philosophy and Faith

1. Introduction

We must recognize the fact that the definition of faith is not exclusive to Christianity. Faith can encompass a variety of ideas—it is more of a theme than a specific topic. For example, modern language may dictate that an individual can “have faith” in their friend’s ability to keep a secret. I will endeavor to exclude such conventional uses of “faith.” Instead, “faith” in this

context requires a conviction in something outside of an individual’s existence and immediate physical world, an assignation of belief in some higher power. This definition is partly based on self-transcendence, a personality trait widely accepted and studied in psychology.³ Defined by psychiatrist Robert Cloninger, this trait represents an interest in and an acknowledgment of an elevated aspect of humanity that goes be-

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1. *New American Bible*, St. Joseph Medium Size Edition (Totowa: Catholic Book Publishing Corporation, 2011).

2. *Ibid.*

3. Robert Cloninger, *Feeling Good: The Science of Well-being* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 43.

4. Dean H. Hamer, *The God Gene*. (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2005), 35.

yond one's individual experience.⁴ Although it is somewhat of a vague term, it can help bridge any potential gap between spirituality and organized religion, and also helps quantify a previously inexplicable attribute that makes an individual see his existence as part of something bigger. Scientists have often used it to describe "what is often referred to in the West as faith."⁵

Self-transcendence is flawed in the regard that it accounts for acknowledgment of any elevated aspect of humanity, which could simply be art or music. Could a belief in art or music as a higher power also be faith? History suggests that the answer is yes—one needs only look at the ancient Greeks, whose gods represented societal values from drinking to fertility. For the purposes of this investigation—in the interest of narrowing the scope—"faith" will be defined as a belief in something higher than humans and beyond the observed world. This is in line with the trait of self-transcendence, as it values an individual's recognition of the metaphysical world as an indication of faith, but also disregards conviction in material goods as a part of faith. If an individual values music as an art, for example, he is not necessarily a man of faith. Yet if that individual worships music, such that even if he saw and heard no music, he believed in the art of music as a higher power beyond the physical world, he will be considered a man of faith.

The lens through which to study the development, appeal, and effect of faith on mankind cannot be of solely one discipline. Faith sits at the intersection of anthropology, psychology, biology, and philosophy, and these fields all offer valuable tools for understanding it. It would be a grave injustice to limit an investigation of faith to history or biology. In order to get the fullest picture of faith possible, multiple disciplines are investigated in this chapter. Each discipline comes with its own terminology, but this has been standardized—and terms have been defined—for the sake of limiting the focus instead on the theories that each espouses about various aspects of faith. The intended scope will be global, but special

attention is paid to Western cultures and faiths.

Let us first proceed to address how faith and fact can relate. Can one be both religious (a person of faith) and scientific (a person who relies on facts)? Many philosophers, theologians, and scientists have grappled with this question. Immanuel Kant was one philosopher who cared deeply about this issue, and he was convinced that faith and knowledge were equally valuable but not conjoining. He once famously said: "I had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith." Here, Kant was admitting his spirituality and that his spirituality must be considered separately from his knowledge of the material world. However, one should not be confused: he is not saying that one must deny scientific evidence in order to uphold religious faith. Rather, he was saying that science has its limitations because there are some truths in the world that cannot be explained by material evidence. On the other hand, Kant might as well be telling us that depending on the lens through which we process our epistemological stance, faith and knowledge, science or truth may not be mutually exclusive after all. Some truths can be explained by something much less internal: morality.⁶

Interestingly, as Dr. Tony Jack at Case Western Reserve University noted, this belief in truth emerging from morality seems to be replicated in the Declaration of Independence by the United States' founding fathers: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." From a moral standpoint, this certainly seems logical and reasonable, but material evidence seems to contradict this. Material evidence shows that human beings are not equal. Human beings are not all equal in intelligence, for example. Human beings are not all equal in financial wellbeing. Human beings are not all equal in our opportunities and advantages. Yet, as Jack noted, it seems that something in our gut—our morals—tells us that material evidence cannot be the only information we use to process what is true and what is not.⁷

Immanuel Kant's statement seemed to pre-

5. Ruth Schuster, "Neanderthals Turned to Faith When Confronting Death, New Evidence Suggests," *Haaretz*, December 15, 2016.

6. TEDx Talks, "A Scientific Defense of Spiritual Religious Faith | Tony Jack | TEDxCLE," YouTube video, 19:33, July 10, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BihT0XrPVP8>.

7. *Ibid.*

dict psychologists' and neuroscientists' later discovery that people do not all have one form of reasoning and do not find truth by only one means. In fact, our rationalization of a problem often exists in a sort of "dual processing" system, whereby we make decisions based on either quick assumptions or deep, rational thinking. However, scientists have also found that, within our deep, rational thinking, we have yet another division. We can either think in terms of what Jack described as "cold, detached, logical, analytic reason" or a "warmer, fuzzier type of social and emotional reason." As such, there is a "tension between scientific truth and social, narrative truth." Neuroscientists have also shown that these two types of thinking compete for attention from the thinker, but the thinker naturally tends to move between the two—like a seesaw, according to Jack. Both forms of thinking are highly evolved in the human species, as is indicated by the parts of the brain associated with each form of thinking.⁸

Interestingly, however, Jack said, while the modern world often favors the more logical form of thinking in order to produce "practical" skills, it is actually the social narrative form of thinking that is associated with a larger portion of the brain. This means, Jack argued, that universities should not emphasize STEM over the humanities. Universities should instead promote a balance between the two, just as thinkers should find a balance between "cold" thinking and "warm" thinking. These two forms do not have to contradict; together, they form a well-rounded human being.⁹ With too much emphasis on cold thinking in recent years, in fact, studies have shown a decreased amount of empathic concern and perspective taking among college students.¹⁰ Furthermore, psychologists have found that relying too much on cold thinking decreases one's mental and physical health because we as human beings thrive on social connections. When this occurs, college students deny

themselves of the full faculties of their thinking and the full potential of their life. (Konrath et al 2011) Perhaps, then, what is "faith" (found with warm thinking) and what is "fact" (found with cold thinking) should not be staunchly held apart. They can work cohesively together to form a perfect whole.

Let us examine Kant's statement further as to how faith and science both relate to one another and are completely opposed to one another. Firstly, it is fundamental to understand how science is limited in its examination of faith (as Kant suggested). Most religions believe in a deity that lives outside of time, space, and the material universe as we know it. This means, then, that science can neither prove nor disprove God—whatever God is—because science can only deal with matters of the physical universe within space and time. Therefore, when atheistic scientists try to disprove God through scientific reasoning and methods, according to Dr. Alan Lightman, they are "totally missing the point."¹¹ So if science cannot explain God or the spiritual, what can?

According to Lightman, we can engage in spirituality through either sacred texts (divine revelation) or a transcendent experience that is deeply personal in nature—and therefore cannot be measured completely in concrete, objective terms. For transcendent experiences in particular, "the authority of that experience rests on the experience itself. There is no one who can refute a personal transcendent experience that you've had."¹² Many people have found themselves transfixed by some sort of transcendent experience they have had, and they feel that they have subsequently understood some deeper truth that never could have been explained through "facts" or "reason." Consequently, some theologians and philosophers have said that the ultimate truths in the world can only be understood internally (within the mind) rather than through science. It follows, then, that whatever "reality"

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid. See also Sara H. Konrath, Edward H. O'Brien, and Courtney Hsing, "Changes in Dispositional Empathy in American College Students over Time: A Meta-Analysis," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 15, no. 2 (2011): 180–198.

11. ICE at Dartmouth, "Fact and Faith," YouTube video, 1:08:50, December 8, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nH1qNusLl0w>.

12. Ibid.

is must be whatever we perceive personally. It is not, contrary to scientific belief, outside of ourselves and objective in nature. “Reality” is just the opposite: inside of ourselves and subjective in nature.¹³ We can engage with more insight on the matter by turning to two great minds of the last century: Albert Einstein (a materialist and scientist) and Rabindranath Tagore (Indian musician, poet, and philosopher). What follows are parts of what is considered to be one of the greatest intellectual discussions on truth and reality, which took place in Einstein’s house outside of Berlin on July 14, 1930:

EINSTEIN: Do you believe in the Divine as isolated from the world?

TAGORE: Not isolated. The infinite personality of Man comprehends the Universe. There cannot be anything that cannot be subsumed by the human personality, and this proves that the Truth of the Universe is human Truth. I have taken a scientific fact to explain this — Matter is composed of protons and electrons, with gaps between them; but matter may seem to be solid. Similarly, humanity is composed of individuals, yet they have their interconnection of human relationship, which gives living unity to man’s world. The entire universe is linked up with us in a similar manner, it is a human universe. I have pursued this thought through art, literature and the religious consciousness of man.

EINSTEIN: There are two different conceptions about the nature of the universe: (1) The world as a unity dependent on humanity. (2) The world as a reality independent of the human factor.

TAGORE: When our universe is in harmony with Man, the eternal, we know it as Truth, we feel it as beauty.

EINSTEIN: This is the purely human conception of the universe.

TAGORE: There can be no other conception. This world is a human world — the scientific view of it is also that of the scientific man. There is some standard of reason and enjoyment which gives it Truth, the standard of the Eternal Man whose experiences are through our experiences.

...

EINSTEIN: Truth, then, or Beauty is not independent of Man?

TAGORE: No.

...

EINSTEIN: I agree with regard to this conception of Beauty, but not with regard to Truth.

TAGORE: Why not? Truth is realized through man.

...

EINSTEIN: I cannot prove scientifically that Truth must be conceived as a Truth that is valid independent of humanity; but I believe it firmly. I believe, for instance, that the Pythagorean theorem in geometry states something that is approximately true, independent of the existence of man. Anyway, if there is a reality independent of man, there is also a Truth relative to this reality; and in the same way the negation of the first engenders a negation of the existence of the latter.

TAGORE: Truth, which is one with the Universal Being, must essentially be human, otherwise whatever we individuals realize as true can never be called truth—at least the Truth which is described as scientific and which only can be reached through the process of logic, in other words, by an organ

13. Ibid.

of thoughts which is human. According to Indian Philosophy there is Brahman, the absolute Truth, which cannot be conceived by the isolation of the individual mind or described by words but can only be realized by completely merging the individual in its infinity. But such a Truth cannot belong to Science. The nature of Truth which we are discussing is an appearance – that is to say, what appears to be true to the human mind and therefore is human and may be called *maya* or illusion.¹⁴

Often, those who have faith are criticized by scientists for believing in something that cannot be “proven” scientifically, since science is usually considered to be the art of absoluteness or complete objectivity. With this logic, anything that cannot be explained by science is, in a sense, “unreal” or not worth understanding. However, as Lightman points out, science is not immaculate. It is like faith in that it sometimes must be based on assumptions. For instance, while it appears that our universe is governed by laws and not by total randomness, the theories that scientists have founded to explain such laws are merely provisional. The theory of gravity has changed three times: from Galileo’s theory to Newton’s theory to Einstein’s theory. All of these theories sufficiently explained the laws of nature as could be understood at the time of these individual scientists, but the latest theory by Einstein will inevitably change when more information comes about. In other words, our understanding of good science and “facts” must necessarily change once we are given new and better information. There is no absoluteness or complete objectivity. In the words of Lightman, we are only working with “approximations” of “ultimate laws” at any point in time with scientific research and experimentation. Religious truths, on the other hand, are not approximations because they are divinely given and cannot change

(assuming that something divine is transcendent and outside of physical time and limitations).¹⁵

Science, while it relies on physical evidence for everything, actually does have two major understandings that cannot be based on physical evidence. They are instead based on scientists’ own assumptions on what is true. Perhaps, one could even say that they are based on scientists’ own gut reactions or even their faith. The first understanding is that the physical universe has laws that are true in every case. This is why scientific theories (like the theory of gravity) are made: to explain what law is present with every phenomenon (like the phenomenon of gravity). When a scientist finds that a phenomenon does not match up with a given theory, the theory must be revised. However, the understanding that there is a theory “out there” in the universe that can explain the laws of nature and every applicable phenomenon never sways. Scientists assume that this theory “out there” will be found, and it just has yet to be found. This also means that scientists will never be content with the notion that a strange phenomenon that does not align with present theories can be labelled as a “miracle.” They assume that it can be and must be explained by a better theory that is soon to be discovered. The second understanding, similar to the first, is that someday there will no longer be a theory that is an approximation of the laws of the universe; someday there will be a theory that really can explain everything, and there will be no outlier phenomena that contradict this theory. The theory will be, in essence, perfect. The first assumption cannot be proven because there is no way to demonstrate how order must necessarily apply to everything. The second assumption cannot be proven because there is no way to prove that in some time in the future there will be a phenomenon that contradicts this ultimate theory (assuming that there is one).¹⁶

In the end, science can also only go so far when explaining cognitive phenomena. For instance, scientists can examine what chemically happens in the brain when one is having a transcendent experience. However, within those

14. Maria Popova, “When Einstein Met Tagore: A Remarkable Meeting of Minds on the Edge of Science and Spirituality,” *Brain Pickings*, n.d., <https://www.brainpickings.org/2012/04/27/when-einstein-met-tagore/>.

15. ICE at Dartmouth, “Fact and Faith.”

16. *Ibid.*

chemicals, there will never be an image or replication of that transcendent experience. This is why, ultimately, transcendent experience is personal to the individual thinker. All a scientist can really say, then, is that the transcendent experience that the thinker sees and feels is the sensation or the interpretation of chemical activity in the brain. This sensation or interpretation can then be called “consciousness.” To make matters more complicated, this consciousness does not behave in predictable ways, even if the same chemicals are still present. Rather, consciousness has “emergent” qualities that are incredibly random and intricate—like a snowflake. A snowflake is always made out of ice (or water molecules that are composed of hydrogen and oxygen), but every snowflake is unique.¹⁷

Arguably, then, we must give some credence to the intricate nature of transcendent experiences. Even if they cannot be fully explained or predicted by scientific measures, it would be unwise to say that they do not exist. This would be far too materialist (or reductionist) of a view. Perhaps, instead, with a little faith and an open mind, we can acknowledge that science is one method of understanding the world and the human experience, but it is not the only way. Sometimes one of the best ways of knowing the human experience is through our own introspection. Let us now look outside of transcendent experiences. What happens when we do have enough physical evidence of sorts that explain certain phenomenon, but what we believe intrinsically to be true—by faith—contradicts that evidence? What if we find that our faith cannot be congruent with the facts? There is much scientific research that shows how, even with evidence before us, we as human beings tend to staunchly keep to our beliefs and to be intransigent. There are many reasons for this, which shall be examined here.

The illusory truth effect describes a phenomenon whereby, the more times we hear

something, the more likely we are to believe it is true. According to Lynn Hasher, a psychologist from the University of Toronto, who was part of the team that first described this effect in the 1970s: “Repetition makes things seem more plausible. And the effect is likely more powerful when people are tired or distracted by other information.”¹⁸ A psychologist from Vanderbilt University, Lisa Fazio, expressed a similar sentiment: “When you see [a] fact for the second time it’s much easier to process – you understand it more fluently. Our brain interprets that fluency as a signal for something being true”¹⁹ – even when it is not. The illusory truth effect is seen prevalently in the “fake news” that we read and are exposed to on a daily basis. For example, just because President Trump has repeatedly said that crime rates in the United States have worsened over time, 57% of his voters agreed with him, according to a 2016 Pew Research poll. However, the reality is that FBI data has demonstrated time and time again that crime rates have fallen about 20% since 2008, thereby debunking Trump’s claims.²⁰ Surely, though, the power of the illusory truth effect is not lost on Trump, and he knows that truth is irrelevant as long as what he says is said with confidence, over and over again. Indeed, politicians know this effect all too well.²¹ Even Adolf Hitler in his *Mein Kampf* wrote: “Slogans should be persistently repeated until the very last individual has come to grasp the idea.”²²

Availability heuristics also may lead us to uphold beliefs that are evidentially false. This is a “mental shortcut” of sorts that causes us to believe that an event or circumstance is more common than it is, simply because this event or circumstance may be more common in our own lives. For instance, according to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, fishermen are ten times more likely than policemen to die while working. However, many people may assume that policemen are more likely to die while working

17. *Ibid.*

18. Lynn Hasher, as quoted in Emily Dreyfuss, “Want to Make a Lie Seem True? Say It Again. And Again. And Again,” *WIRED*, February 11, 2017, <https://www.wired.com/2017/02/dont-believe-lies-just-people-repeat/>.

19. Lisa Fazio, as quoted in Emily Dreyfuss, “Want to Make a Lie Seem True?”

20. John Gramlich, “Voters’ Perceptions of Crime Continue to Conflict with Reality,” Pew Research Center, November 16, 2016, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/16/voters-perceptions-of-crime-continue-to-conflict-with-reality/>.

21. Dreyfuss, “Want to Make a Lie Seem True?”

22. Adolf Hitler, quoted in Dreyfuss, “Want to Make a Lie Seem True?”

than fishermen because they may be more exposed to policemen in their city than they are to fishermen. Similarly, even though the media makes stories of terrorism and crime more available to us to consume, acts of terrorism and crime are not as common as they appear to be.²³ Availability heuristics can, in part, explain prejudice and stereotyping.²⁴ (Bodenhausen 1990, pp. 319-322; McCauley et al 1980, pp. 195-208) For example, if an individual is exposed to a particular image regularly enough, such as black people being poor, they will subconsciously begin to equate that stereotype to all other black people.

Another illogical pitfall that we have all experienced at some point or another is using emotional reasoning to justify our beliefs. Emotional reasoning, first articulated by psychiatrist Aaron T. Beck, is the state whereby we are convinced that something that feels right simply is right. Beck's depressed patients, for example, would reason that because they were depressed, there must be something objectively wrong in their lives. However, the facts attested to the opposite. With clinical depression, there does not necessarily have to be anything "wrong" in a depressed person's life, but the depressed person's brain is sick and convinces them otherwise. Emotional reasoning can also act outside of our own mental health—particularly in taboo subjects like religion, sexuality, and politics. If a person feels afraid, angry, or uneasy about a topic in any of these subjects, they may illogically conclude that the topic is objectively wrong, loathsome, or dangerous.²⁵ For instance, if someone feels deeply anxious down to their core value about the thought of homosexual relationships and sex, they will conclude that homosexuality is inherently sinful and wrong. Many African Christians and Muslims see homosexuality as wrong in the eyes of God because it is wrong in their own eyes. The emotions of individuals become de-

flected onto God.

People may use a technique called "confirmation bias" to validate their worldview. By definition, "confirmation bias" is the inclination to search for information or "evidence" that reinforces what one already believes is true. It also results in the automatic rejection of information or evidence that disproves what one already believes is true. This inclination occurs when, in the United States, conservatives rely on Fox News for their sources, and liberals rely on MSNBC for their sources. Meanwhile, conservatives may demonize all information on MSNBC, and liberals may demonize all information on Fox News.²⁶ At its very essence, confirmation bias is "the direct influence of desire on beliefs"²⁷ and is thus quite similar to emotional reasoning because one uses what one wants to be true to guide what one finds to be true. Through one's desires, one seeks out information that confirms one's prejudices. Ultimately then, succumbing to confirmation bias is succumbing to a way of thinking that is inherently not objective and very much faulty.²⁸

Even with all of these logical fallacies kept in mind, it is important to emphasize that emotions do not have to be entirely eliminated from the equation when one evaluates what is true and what is not. R. Kelly Garrett, an associate professor of communications at Ohio State University, admits that using no emotion when making a decision may lead one to make a worse decision.²⁹ In fact, in Garrett's view, it is not necessarily one's emotions that might fail one in reasoning clearly. He argues that one may be able to use emotions to help one arrive at a conclusion, but the key difference is this: if one is willing to also look at *objective evidence* and use it to check one's gut instinct, they are able to see the facts and reality as they truly are. If, on the other hand, one is unwilling to look at objective evidence and use

23. David B. Feldman, "Why Do People Believe Things that Aren't True?" *Psychology Today*, May 12, 2017.

24. See, for example, Galen V. Bodenhausen, "Stereotypes as Judgmental Heuristics: Evidence of Circadian Variations in Discrimination," *Psychological Science* 1, no. 5 (1990): 319-322 and Clark McCauley, Christopher L. Stitt, and Mary Segal, "Stereotyping: From Prejudice to Prediction," *Psychological Bulletin* 87, no. 1 (1980): 195-208.

25. Feldman, "Why Do People Believe Things that Aren't True?"

26. *Ibid.*

27. Shahram Heshmat, "What is Confirmation Bias?" *Psychology Today*, April 23, 2015.

28. *Ibid.*

29. R. Kelly Garrett, "Why Millions of Americans Believe Things that Aren't True," *Quartz*, November 9, 2017. See, for example, Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).

it to check one's gut instinct, one is stuck living out illogically in a world of fiction and without a true balance of emotion and reason.³⁰

2. MYSTERIES AND UNKNOWN BEGINNING OF FAITH

When did humans turn to faith? Many historians estimate that faith only emerged in civilizations about 11,000 years ago when social structures were being recognized and asserted.³¹ But new archaeological evidence indicates that the most primitive men may have been spiritual. A recent dig discovered an intentional burning and burial of a Neanderthal child from 40,000 years ago in a cave near Madrid, Spain.³² Historians had previously considered the Neanderthals to be a barbaric community with little recognition of death, much less the capability to conduct a deliberate ritual following it. Findings of deliberate burials like this one raise lingering questions about the beginning of spirituality in humankind. Ritualistic behavior usually indicates some level of cognition about the uniformity of the outside world.³³ Do ceremonial burnings indicate that there was at least a very basic expression of faith in early human history?

Another archaeological discovery also implies that faith may have had its roots in early civilizations. In 2008, a structure of large stone rings and carved pillars was discovered in south-eastern Turkey.³⁴ Called Gobekli Tepe, this massive monolith was carbon-dated back to 9,000 B.C., predating the Stone Age. Importantly, it appears to have no foreseeable function; the archaeologist who discovered the structure asserts that it marks the world's first holy site. If this monolith really was a temple, faith was in-

tegrated into the social fabric of mankind far before when historians had predicted. Some anthropological evidence hypothesizes about the why as to the origins of faith. One theory suggests that faith received its real start as a defense mechanism in response to rapidly industrializing societies and the formation of the city-state.³⁵ Under this theory, with the emergence of busy, crowded cities from previously small, intimate communities, people gained a certain level of anonymity with each other. That anonymity, when afforded to criminals, scared many human beings.³⁶ If they didn't know their neighbors anymore, who would ensure that neighbor was behaving properly? Supposedly, this is what created the need for a punishing god that sees all. As the city-state bloomed, so did organized religion, because it assisted with accountability and deterrence.³⁷

The intersection between faith and political stability lends itself to another theory of the origins of faith—one that will be referred to here as “the transcendental social theory.” Transcendental social structure, in psychology, refers to the sort of social structure in which roles and systems are essentialized, giving people power by virtue of their positions, regardless of who the actual person is.³⁸ Using this psychology term, one anthropological theory considers faith to have sprung up from an imbalance in the transcendental social of a society. It begins with a society marked by a hierarchy between a royal state and a lower class. The royal state often comes to represent the higher power, reorganizing religion “into a centralized, organized, organic-seeming system.”³⁹ The completeness of this kingdom “requires the creation of the incompleteness and

30. Garrett, “Why Millions of Americans Believe Things that Aren't True.”

31. Andrew Curry, “Gobekli Tepe: The World's First Temple?,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, November 2008.

32. Brett Mercier, Stephanie R. Kramer, Azim F. Sheriff, “Belief in God: Why People Believe, and Why They Don't,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 27, no.4 (2018).

33. Albert Garcia-Romeu, “Self-transcendence as a measurable transpersonal conduct,” *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 42, no. 1 (2010).

34. Maurice Bloch, “Why religion is nothing special but is central,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 363 no.1499 (2008).

35. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 14.

36. Mercier, “Belief in God.”

37. David Ludden, “Who Do People Believe in God?” *Psychology Today*, August 21, 2018.

38. J. Borg, “The serotonin system and spiritual experiences,” *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 160, no.11(2003):1965-9.

39. Julie Zauzmer, “A scientist's new theory: Religion was key to humans' social evolution,” *The Washington Post*, February 27, 2017.

40. Zauzmer, “A scientist's new theory.”

disorganization of the subjects' transcendental social."⁴⁰ So if the royal state was overthrown, the subjects, who relied on the state to make their transcendental social complete, turn to a more non-political transcendental representation, which ultimately takes the form of faith in a metaphysical higher power.⁴¹ Historian J. Z. Smith points to early Judaism as an example of this explanation for faith—supposedly, the ardent Jewish monotheism originated in a desire for a “unified, centralized city-state” like that of the Mesopotamians.⁴² Without rulers, the center of their now-complete transcendental social became purely religious.

Let me engage in further speculations based on how early humans could have interpreted their mysterious environment. Humans' beginning on this planet was prone to have around it a cloud of mysteries because of the "newness" or "strangeness" of the environment that they now became important dwellers in, and on whose shoulders lie the responsibility to advance or perish in it, in accordance with their ability to manage the complex things habituating the earth with them. Since none of the early humans came here with a manual to guide their conduct, there was, therefore, the need to stamp their presence with ideologies which most definitely were a by-product of their comparative experience individually and, in the long run, collectively. Naturally, a human is an observant animal. He or she tends to study the environment carefully and then makes projections, or assumptions, about things that he/she relates with every day, and documents all that have happened around him/her. In the beginning, this was done through oral data and preservation, before the age of converting oral data to written documents.

While doing various observations, the deluge of mysterious happenings would have necessitated his acceptance that he was not the only living being roaming the face of the earth, and as well conceded to the reality that he was not in control of the physical and the metaphysical world, in which he became a stake holder. Living with the fear of survival that unlocked his intelligence to search for and preserve food, strug-

gling to conquer territories that were hounded by wild animals that pushed him to invent machines that would fight this war for him, falling sick occasionally and as a result seeing members of his clan lose their lives with no knowledge of where they 'go' to, all prepared the ground for him to believe in something. With this development, and as a corollary of his long-time observation, he came up with a mind made up that certain forces must actually be responsible for these activities and the best way to deal with this was to fill the void with the concept of faith.

As a result, an intricate relationship had existed for long between faith and fact, and it is such a connection that gave way to the creation of fiction as a way to present and propagate both. It is safe to conclude that humans' attempts to unravel and understand the mysterious happenings around them made them susceptible to believing in something, particularly when the object of belief or faith matched their sentiments. Thus, faith thrives in any society that places emphasis on the need to appeal to the unseen forces which are believed to be in control of the physical world. The symbiotic relationship between faith and fact serves as an age-long lubricant to the wheels of progress of every society; through them, philosophies have been woven and science and technology birthed. This makes it indispensable and especially important so much so that a society's growth can partly be measured by the faith they profess.

At the intersection of faith and fact, fiction springs up to become a reckoning force that helps in materializing whatever abstractions they have perfected in their own respective domain. Therefore, no society, its level of development or civilization notwithstanding, can rid itself of faith as a crucial part of its growth chart because it is part of the foundation upon which every other thing is structured. Faith has proven itself potent in the grand scheme of human social engineering strategies. Its capabilities to become a passageway through which what the society considers as facts are conveyed gives it a remarkable status. In essence, it metamorphoses easily into a fact channel, from which it serves as the

41. Niraj Chokshi, "Fear of a vengeful God may explain humanity's global expansion," *The Washington Post*, February 12, 2016.

42. Curry, "Gobekli Tepe."

mechanics for building fiction. That cyclical pattern provides an excellent opportunity for a people to show the world its own unique ways.

3. FAITH AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

Why faith? Evolutionary science looks for ultimate and proximate causes of behavior—ultimate causes are the push factors behind evolution, while proximate causes will shape how the evolutionary behavior is carried out. Some evolutionary scientists stress that the ultimate cause of faith was the human value of agency. Unlike many other living things in the prehistoric times, humans found that they possessed a remarkable degree of agency and an understanding of the causes and effects of their behavior. This hypersensitivity to agency was followed by a significant degree of *animistic thinking*, through which agency is assigned to non-living creatures. It is at this point that a human can forfeit power to something outside the physical world.

The management of the city-state and the benefits it affords to its citizens may also influence the spirituality of the citizens; the United States, for example, defies the traditional negative correlation between societal advancement and spirituality. Although it is one of the most advanced countries in the world, Americans are still largely a spiritual people—a trend that is directly unlike that of all other advanced countries. This may be related to the insufficiency of social security safety nets in the US—the lack of free healthcare, for one—which could propagate “laissez-faire attitudes [that] make people’s futures less certain and the belief in a benevolent God more attractive.” This perspective suggests that faith comes from a psychological necessity in response to a negative situation; if an American is chronically ill and cannot rely on the healthcare system or the government to continuously provide an appropriate level of care, perhaps a God is the next avenue of hope. So, is faith just a coping mechanism?⁴³

There has been some scientific evidence for

a biological basis of self-transcendence (and consequently faith) through both genetics and neuroscience. Firstly, some scientists have found a statistically significant correlation between genetics and spirituality, implying that some people may be predisposed towards the trait of self-transcendence. The other side of the coin looks at the neurological roots of spirituality. Multiple studies have indicated that when studying the relationship between multiple personality traits and the release of pleasure-inducing neurotransmitters and neurochemicals (like serotonin, dopamine, and endorphins) in an individual’s brain, only self-transcendence as a trait is correlated strongly with an increase in serotonin. In addition, prayer of any kind significantly increases those same neurotransmitters (it is worth noting here that this may partially be due to the pleasure-producing effects of singing and repetitive actions, which constitute many forms of prayer).⁴⁴ Yet when tracing the history of faith, the biological basis is only marginally helpful; atheists can use it to claim that faith is only an illusion created by humans to experience pleasure, while religious people can assert that our brains were purposefully hard-wired to believe in a higher power and benefit from that belief. There is little evidence to support the idea that, thousands of years ago, humans deliberately conjured up a higher power in order to experience the pleasure of prayer. There is still dispute among anthropologists, historians, and psychologists about whether faith was an intuitive, evolutionary, or purposeful development in human history.

Faith has several impacts on social progress. Faith in a higher power can promote social bonds. Recent evidence suggests that when humans believe in a moral and punitive god, they are more likely to be impartial and kind to strangers that share their faith. This comes from a study in which participants played a game that at one point gave them a choice to cheat to help themselves earn more money. In the post-game

43. We should also point to the religious origins of the founders of the United States to explain the present religiosity. These religious origins became embedded in the social, cultural and political life of the American people—it is in their constitution, in their language, in their morality, in their quotidian interactions. Even as many have moved away from religion recently, the country retains its cultural fragments.

44. Julie Zauzmer, “A scientist’s new theory: Religion was key to humans’ social evolution,” *The Washington Post*, February 27, 2017.

survey, those who did not cheat consistently reported their god as more moralistic, punitive, and knowledgeable. The researchers behind this study argue that the results offer compelling implications for the role that faith can play in “[fostering] the development of larger-scale cooperative institutions, trade, markets, and alliances.” Faith is also posited by some psychologists to have served as an important hormonal stimulant in human social evolution. This explains humans’ expanded capacity for social bonding as compared to other primates and relative to human brain size. These psychologists point to the aforementioned pleasure-producing neurological effects of faith, and also of many of its parts: singing, repetitive actions, and, notably, synchronized behavior, with a religious community as evidence that faith can benefit both the individual and his society.

Most anthropologists have held that the transition from hunter-gathering to farming communities paved the way for the idea of spirituality to take hold.⁴⁵ Agriculture was considered a necessary predecessor to faith. However, the discovery of the Gobekli Tepe casts doubt on this traditional theory of social progression. The hypothesized date of construction and the area of the site indicate that the builders were hunter-gatherers. It was only within the ten centuries after building the Gobekli Tepe that the people of this society transitioned to a farming community, learning to corral the variety of livestock in the area and deliberately harvest the abundant grain. The exciting implication of the construction of the Gobekli Tepe prior to the prominence of agriculture as a means for living is that the “coordinated effort of building the monoliths” and the rituals that accompanied the structures “literally laid the groundwork for the development of complex societies.” While the causality between faith and social development can only be hypothesized, cases like the social bonding study and the Gobekli Tepe site suggest that faith has the potential to shape a society’s progress.

4. FAITH AND THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN

Human beings possess faith, relating it to their feelings about the spiritual world and nature.

Man himself is a pastiche of innumerable complexity, and faith is his consolable mental frame that keeps his sanity. Made up of complex particles himself, man’s existence on earth is riddled with interminable issues to unravel. Thus, man in his search to clothe life into a garment of meaning, finds solace in adopting faith as a reliable method. Spurred by the curiosity of his own biology, he embarks on a journey to find a meaning to the unknown. His head houses billions of neurons that work tirelessly to provide him a roadmap, his other parts of the body are a wonder to marvel at, when their orderly nature is taken into account. Thus, the early man, like every other person with little or no knowledge about the chemistry of his environment, saw onto faith as a rescue formula.

In the same spirit, the environment that man finds himself in does not make things seem any less mysterious. How on earth would there be availability of things that bring color to the world in their not-restrictive supply; water, air, leaves, games, hills, and a host of others? Admittedly, anyone would fall into a similar level of amazement if found in such awe-inspiring circumstances. Rain drops are a body of surprises on their own, timeless winds and mixed weather all form a class of cognitive illusion that radiates continually in his mind. Thus, man becomes a marketplace of thoughts, making him vulnerable and susceptible to the forces of nature where he finds himself. This, with little doubt, constitutes the very beginning of his need to cultivate a habit, a habit which will later be termed faith in the grand scheme of things.

To discard faith in any way as a receipt of man’s evolutionary childishness using any mathematical exactitude such as that found in the domain of science is not only condescending, but also doing severe injustice to the early humans. Even in science, an appreciable level of faith is expected in every segment of scientific advancement which will, in turn, serve as the oil to the wheel of their development. By way of illustration, the observation by many of the first person to fly a plane must have triggered the feeling of faith in them. Also, it requires faith on the part of many people to believe that men actually

45. Curry, “Gobekli Tepe.”

walked on the moon in 1969. Therefore, it is almost irrefutable that faith in man's life is usually 'natural', even though its naturalness is a product of the intimidating evidence he has around.

Perhaps, no place has the definition of faith better captured than in C. S. Lewis's conclusion that faith "is holding on to things your reason has once accepted, in spite of your changing moods."⁴⁶ It becomes necessary to add that man's innermost reactions to the things he cannot fathom—nature—are the basic background that fuels his embrace of faith. From Lewis's conclusion, it goes without saying that faith is not modelled on mere fabrications, it is built on the conviction of the things we come across and which our cognitive domain (reason) has accepted. Even in doubtful circumstances and challenging situations that are capable of changing man's mood, such as the sudden death of a close friend, failure in a transactional dealing, or a decline in social relationships among others, it requires faith to hold on to life with a positive vibe. Thus, people who resort to taking their lives, for instance, when in depression or despair, are usually considered as people who give up on faith. In other words, faith is an essential part of human existence.

Interestingly, the *New World Encyclopaedia* takes the definition of the concept to a higher ground when it states that faith refers to "confidence, trust, and hope in God, a person, community, tradition, or locus of inspiration."⁴⁷ People who come from different places share similar but non-identical objects of faith. However, the fact that we have dissimilarities in these objects of faith, it is common among all that they have a conviction about a cosmic body who exists somewhere and whom they all believe is in charge of the affairs of the world. Tracing the etymology of the concept in question, it readily shares meaning with some other words such as trust—this is usually because people who profess a particular faith find it difficult to strain from the laid down

ideologies around it. Thus, they remain loyal to their faith. When people hold on to a belief system and develop a positive mindset to it, it is a sign of the faith that they have in it.⁴⁸

From these definitions, one would notice that faith is not only essential in human life, it is also very important in handling situations that are beyond man's understanding. Stripped of their bare essentials, humans will become excessively vulnerable and live a life dominated by fear without faith. Faith gives succour to humans. In some civilizations today, there is still a strong belief that humans are on this space (planet) to carry out certain assignments that are sent by the cosmic body(ies), whom they have come to agree is/are in charge of the developments around the world. Hence, they hold it dearly that they are equivalent to pawns whose movements are determined by the chess players, and they have built their philosophies in accordance with this line of thought. Thus, they bring about the phenomenon of destiny which gives the satisfaction that no one can embark on the things that are not predetermined for them.

5. FAITH AND AFRICAN IDENTITY

Bearing in mind that faith is an abstract possession of humans⁴⁹, it goes without saying that the African people in times past, and to a large extent in today's world, use faith as a form of identity. Identities are usually conceived as the possession of certain biological characteristics, some other attributes that clearly show one as belonging to a particular group.⁵⁰ Here, identity shows that belongingness is usually handed down by the society one finds oneself. Henri Tajfel, a psychologist, offers an enlightening definition of identity when he defines it as "a part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership."⁵¹ This def-

46. Clive S. Lewis, "Definition of faith," Accessed on the March 11th, 2019 from <https://www.johndcook.com/blog/2010/04/30/definition-of-faith>.

47. *New World Encyclopedia* Accessed on March 11th, 2019 from <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Faith>. See also Paul Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith*. New York: Harper Bros., 1957.

48. *Ibid.*, 3.

49. *Ibid.*

50. Daphna Oyserman, *Race and Social Problems*, 67-76.

51. Henri Tajfel, "Social identity and intergroup behavior," *Scientific American*, 1974, 65-69.

inition remains contextually important because of the understanding that people identify themselves with a group usually because of the cultural and emotional ties they share with them, thus making it a nurturing, rather than a natural, idea. Right from a tender age, the society takes it upon itself to spoon-feed the children about the ways and customs of the environment, and they are grown with the values and ethos of such an environment. In pristine African society, the naming system, for instance, is an aspect of the people's lifestyle which is dictated by their religious commitment. African belief systems are a veritable way of identifying them culturally. Their traditional religions involve many belief systems with variegated styles of worship across the continent.⁵² Predominantly, all these belief systems and denominations are derived through orality, rather than the scriptural pattern of the European world, and they have in common a belief in the cosmic bodies.⁵³

Faith, to the African people, is a necessary passport to social identity. Each group of people has its unique spiritual system that they passed down from one generation to the other. It has generally helped them in ensuring the peaceful running of social affairs and become a notable part of their existence. One compelling attribute of the faith systems is that they are usually culturally tied and geographically defined. For the purpose of this work, we shall draw an example from each of the four regions of the continent.

5.1 *The Lotuko People of South Sudan (Central Africa)*

The Lotuko people hailed from the Eastern Equatorial state of South Sudan. Their geography is unique because of the proximity to mountains.⁵⁴ This people, like many other people of the world, have a religion that centers primarily on the admiration of mother nature and would not be easily persuaded to convert to any other

form of religious orientation.⁵⁵ It is instructive to state that the Lotuko see their style of worship as both a means of identity and an act of spiritual commitment. This explains the reason why a conversion into another religion is usually believed to be a form of cultural assimilation. Even though it appears that their own epistemic accounts highlighting the basics about life differ in content from that of their immediate geographical neighbours, this has not been used as an avenue to wage religious wars against them. By being a member of the Lotuko community, one identifies with them and makes all the necessary adjustments required of them as members. It is when this is done that one is then considered a member and given appropriate regards. Outright disbelief in the popular deity sometimes may attract condemnation and social stigma.

5.2 *The Bantu of Central and East Africa*

Through intermingling with people from other geographical settings, the Bantu are now a scattered people across the continent. From the beginning of their early history, they had a strong belief in a supreme being, associating God with the sun and other forces of nature. Their idea of God is that He dwells in the sky.

The Bantu have an interesting myth explaining why there exists a distance between the sky and the earth. To them, the entity called God shares similar characteristics with humans, such as their emotions and their predilection to things among others. Like human beings, God can be angered.⁵⁶ The unique thing about Bantu myth that tends to explain the reason behind the far distance between God and men is that it has a formidable foundation in their belief that God has pleasing attributes and it is the untamed insubordination of humans that provoked his annoyance to stretch the heaven backward so as to keep the hands of humans far away from it. With such a tale behind the logic of heaven-earth dif-

52. See Mark Juergensmeyer, *The Oxford Handbook Of Global Religions*, 2006 Accessed on https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_African_religions.

53. See "An African Story BBC Archived" accessed on the 14th of March, 2019 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/index,ection6.shtml>

54. See "Lotuko of South Sudan," accessed on the 14th of March 2019 at https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lotuko_mythology.

55. Ann Patricia Lynch, "African Mythology A to Z," Infobase Publishing, 22-24. Assessed https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bantu_mythology.

56. Ibid.

ferences, the society reveals its utter intolerance for any form of insubordination, particularly to the cosmic body which they believe is in charge of the things around their lives. This is a motif common to many African societies. In Yoruba folktales as well as in the more serious Ifa literary corpus, such myth is pervasive.

5.3 *San religion of Southern Africa*

The San adopt *Cagn* as their Supreme Being, who in a sense is their own Alpha and Omega, without whom there would not have been the creation of the world as we have it. To the people who hold this belief system, there is a common understanding that *Cagn* resolved to stay in the sky because of the perceived opposition that may come from humans or other forces of nature.⁵⁷

Generally, in South Africa, this belief system provides an avenue for the people in the region to trace their historical beginnings to the faith of the San. Their ancestors who carved the belief for them do not live in today's world; yet, it has succeeded many generations unceasingly. Through the oral medium of legacy preservation, the people get to know about themselves more and the faith of their ancestors. When they achieve this, they hold the faith sacredly and feel duty-bound to identify with it in accordance with the ways of their forebears. Like every religion known to the world, San is unique to its host environment and as such serve the goal of uniting the people beyond the physical relationship. Many of the people from the region, especially during the pre-colonial time, identified with it and gave it a priority in their life.

5.4 *Odidani of the Igbo people, West Africa*

The Igbo people of Nigerian extraction are predominantly known as the chief custodians of Odidani. The religion has a different pattern of organization from many African religions. Unlike others, it fits the description of monotheism more than the majority of religious beliefs known for the African people, as it is a belief in one God.⁵⁸ A sharp line of difference is that there are different deities through which they

believe they can reach their God, Chukwu.⁵⁹

Till today, the people of the Eastern part of Nigeria who are the followers of Odidani faith still show considerable loyalty to their roots despite the influx of Christianity and its foreboding influence on them. One would almost think that their modern patronage of the Christian faith means they have changed their identity, but a run through their naming patterns still reflect the age-long commitment they have with Chi, their God character. In their social habit, it is obvious that their metamorphosis follows the line of adaptation where the people profess one thing and still live the life of the other. This accounts for the reason why there is absolute substitution of entities in the two religions; Odidani and Christianity. In many cases, Chineke is usually used as a substitute for Jehovah while other aspects of their cultural practices also reflect that a people's identity is intricately linked with the faith of their forebears.

Despite the fact that the above religions are randomly selected across the continent, and do represent far less than the actual number of the traditional religions found therein, a closer look at these regions with their religious specificity will reveal that each of them is taken by its adherents as a means of identification. This is indubitable, perhaps, because the precolonial African religious system was not used to the proselytization that is common to both European and Arabic worlds of spiritual merchandise. With the advent of both Christianity and Islam on the continent, it is arguable that the majority of Africans today are either swearing their religious loyalty to one of them, or are hypnotized by them entirely. This will not be entirely wrong. Regardless of this, however, the people still hold to their traditional religions, although in a covert way.

Therefore, it is difficult to see an Odidani worshiper proclaiming support or sworn loyalty to the Orisa belief system of the Yoruba. Neither can one easily find a San believer of Southern Africa claiming the Bantu religion of the East African people. To them, these religions are in a state of spiritual complementarity and mutual

57. Andrew Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, 171-173.

58. Afulezy Uju, "On Odinani, the Igbo Religion, Kwenu," 2010: 22-26.

59. Ibid.

uniqueness whose beauty lies in each person loving and embracing his/her own cosmographic legacy. Needless to say, therefore, that faith in Africa comes off as a means of cultural identity, more than in the sense that we have it in the contemporary society where the world is divided along the lines of Islam and Christianity. Even though we get a popular feeling that Africans follow Christianity and Islam keenly today, many of them resort to their traditional religions when in a state of despair. This means that their loyalty sometimes is dictated by social expediency or peer pressure.

6. FAITH AND AFRICAN CULTURAL ECONOMY

In the pattern of human evolutionary progress,⁶⁰ faith comes first, and it is from it that a people's culture and economy are woven. As argued elsewhere in this chapter, the early man, resulting from his need to appeal to the unseen forces, carved out religion, and the rest is history. Deviating theoretically from the position of Karl Marx about his stance that the economy is the base on which the superstructure of society is built, thereby implying that the economy comes first in the grand scheme of things,⁶¹ Marxism is considered inconsistent with the order by which the early people perceived the environment, first as a mystery that needed to be untangled, and later as a place where they struggled for survival, where the search for food was the dominant activity of the day.

To a considerable extent, a people's faith determines their cultural direction, and as such, shapes their social anatomy. Although it can be argued that certain individuals who control the base of these religious structures and who at the same time are at the peak of the social pyramid give injunctions that are meant to satisfy their sentiment. Perhaps this results in the way patriarchy has become a formidable social system to date. Since this is not the scope of this research,

adequate energy is thus required to unravel the fact that a people's faith is usually responsible for their social interrelationship. Marriage systems, naming culture, educational focus, funeral habits, inheritance, and a host of others, are all the known ways by which a people show the world their perspectives on nature, and these are determined by the religio-cultural frame of every known human society.

Following the philosophical mappings of scholars like Karl Marx, one will realize that a people's faith can affect their cultural engagement because faith itself is seen as a tenet or trope with which the economy of a people is structured. Inherent in the habit of social stratification across high and low, have and have-not, ruler and the ruled, the social roles apportioned around gender all are maintained strongly by the faith institution which helps the people at the helm of social affairs obtain and maintain power. Once it has been practiced for a long time, faith becomes a norm backed and protected by mutual understanding and/or support. This usually explains why certain activities done by the people of old are still practised now, even against the will of certain people; for instance, the idea of a bride price payment in some parts of Africa. Since such an arrangement favors patriarchy, it becomes almost difficult to stop its practice.

Many aspects of life today are basically dictated by faith, and in turn their cultural economy. In Catholicism for instance, there has not been a record of the religious community producing a female Pope.⁶² This reveals their belief in a *male* God, an arrangement that shuts the females out of power entitlement. Similar to this idea is that a female cannot become an Imam in Islamic arrangements. This, with a good measure of logic, underlines the assumptions (faith) that females, by nature, are not meant to occupy leadership roles. With this unassuming ideological message laced with such ordering, the majority of things favour males above their female counterparts. In

60. I am familiar with the view that the evolutionary perspective to human origins is in contrast to the belief in a literal Genesis creation story by some churches. The latter belief would change some of the arguments in this essay, or at least lead to an alternative perspective.

61. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: International Publishers, 1967 [1867], 23-25.

62. I am aware of this disputed record, but a record nonetheless. See: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pope-Joan>. Also, a catholic source which is expectedly defensive: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08407a.htm>, and a recent attempt to "prove" the story: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/medieval-coins-suggest-legendary-female-pope-may-have-existed-after-all-180970297/>.

another examples, we have seen how the faith of a people shape their collective attitude and behaviour when dealing with certain situations in life.

For instance, the Yoruba people of Nigeria believe in reincarnation, an idea rooted in their interpretation of life as a triadic movement of the unborn, the born, and the dead. This faith has necessitated and informed a funeral practice among them where the dead are venerated and the new born celebrated in order that the unborn who will complete the chain of existence do not stray from such organicity. Also, interesting to note regarding the people's intricate link between their faith and culture is their naming patterns. Very often, Africans give names to their wards to show their appreciation to the cosmic body and their unwavering loyalty to the same. This accounts for the reason why names such as *Osunfunmi* (Osun bequeaths this to me) and *Babatunde*, (Reincarnation of a father) are found among the Yoruba people; *Chiamaka* (It's God we know) and *Chimamanda* (My God will not fail) are found among the Igbo people of Nigeria.

7. FAITH AND FACT: THE QUESTION OF AUTHENTICITY

More often than not, we should ponder at this point and ask a vital question: "is faith fact?" To answer this question, one needs to understand how foreboding the influence of faith is on the African people. Although the influx of Christianity and Islam on the continent makes the people appear like they are still intoxicated by the hypnosis of the religion of their erstwhile colonizers, the actual reality is that the precolonial Africans were people with strong connections to spiritual commitments, which accounts for the huge success that Christianity and Islam record among the people. They were not a people without a spiritual belief system; instead, they were strong adherents of different faiths. Therefore, it was not a problem for those faiths brought through trade to grow in leaps and bounds.

Political, religious and social leaders in the world today understand that people are mostly at-

tuned with one faith or another, and they spare no time to exploit them for personal benefits. Africa, being perhaps the most religious continent today, faces equal temptation by people who are naturally expected to guide them aright in the discharge of their social and spiritual duties. All sorts of motivational writings inspired by faith spring up from religious establishments in contemporary African societies. People, the targets of this spiritually induced motivation, tend to act out the content consumed, and have mostly been victims of their own belief.

In March 2019, a terrorist attack, apparently orchestrated by certain persons who maintain a very sharp contradictory stance with Islamic philosophy and a loathing for immigrants, left 49 people dead, scores wounded, and a nation trying to come to grips with the worst mass killing in New Zealand history. The gunman had live-streamed the slaughter, from a helmet-cam on Facebook.⁶³

A cloud of controversy surrounds this outrageous violence as it, upon deeper investigation, reveals the level of extremism that people would go to in order to enact their hatred for, and contempt to, other people's faith and philosophy. Reactions across the globe are made along the religious line and this is absolutely telling about the nature of faith, fact, and fiction. These generated reactions give room to the rethinking of faith, as something authentic to rely upon. In all of these, faith plays important roles even when the fact of the incidence remains either deliberately concealed from the public or are painted according to the interests involved.

This places faith at an unsavoury disadvantage because it is difficult for two people of contrasting ideologies to agree on the same topic, upon which they thereby go on to generate their philosophies/fictions/facts in the long run. Therefore, faith cannot always be a very good source of fact, when considered from a relatively objective point of view. Many people embark on certain assignments with strong convictions in their faith, even when sometimes what they do lack a logical background.

All these, however, do not discount the posi-

63. See "Mosque attack that left 49 dead was the worst mass killing in New Zealand's history," <https://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-new-zealand-mosque-terrorist-attack-20190315-story.html>.

tive impacts of faith on humans generally. Our growing advancements in technological milestones make it seem like an old-fashioned idea by the early people who, as some scholars conjecture, run to faith as a way of accepting what they do not understand about the environment they found themselves. Faith, with a dint of sincerity, is an evolutionary level that the early men reached before resolving to challenge their instincts on ways by which they can colonize their environment; in the long run, this gave birth to scientific inquiry. With their gradual records of success in using their brains, certain things which were believed to be inherently mysterious began to gain different reactions, eventually liberating them from their hitherto limited knowledge of life around them.

Even in the scientific domain, faith is absolutely needed. Scientists, determined to reconfigure the general perspective about their methods and state of research, tend to show the world that their approach to development dwarfs other known methods, and by extension is basically founded on logic. However, upon a closer view, most of the scientific conclusions that are commonly accepted are done through faith that people have in them, as they all cannot be subjected to individual testing to verify the authenticity of their claims. For instance, the idea that NASA could give the figures of stars or planets in the universe with such mathematical exactitude calls for deeper assessments. Yet, these things are believed by the scientific community because of the faith they have in the system and science.

8. PART B:

9. FICTION

Fiction, despite the many contributions of scholars in their efforts to define it, stands as the output of man's imagination or a doctored account of an individual, usually a writer (story teller in some cases) that is imbued with the responsibility of shaping the mental powerhouse of the audience, that is, the people consuming the work, or just to entertain them. Although there are chances that a fictional work is founded on real historical

accounts, it cannot be pass marked as history, even where there exists a thin line of difference between history (fact) and fiction (story). While history represents the actual stories with such exactitude of names, places, events and characters, fiction performs a creative operation on the history, particularly when the content of the fiction has a historical references, fine-tune it and make interesting modifications on it to produce the fictional material.

Fiction is not necessarily about events that have really happened but rather are invented.⁶⁴ In this sense, we strike a better understanding of fiction as a work that is birthed from the pure imaginative power of the writer. This presupposes the fact that a work of art that has been created is saddled with a certain assignment to correct in the society as it cannot be created in a vacuum. Literary prose narratives in which the fiction is to a prominent degree based on biographical, historical, or contemporary facts are often referred to by compound names such as "fictional biography," the historical novel, autofiction, and the nonfiction novel.⁶⁵ This goes on to further cement our understanding that there are various types of fictions we have in the literary world. However, the common denominator is the idea that a fiction is an imagined work of art.

Any work of art that has survived publication stands to be held with a level of reverence by its audience. However, it is this same audience that, in the long run, face the risk of absorbing fictional works as fact, partly due to the dearth of actual historical material, or sometimes because of the popularity that the work has gained over the years. Thus, this speaks of the overlapping tendency between fact and fiction. It is somewhat comforting to realize that Jonathan Culler shares a very interesting insight into fiction. He notes that the "literary work is a linguistic event which projects a fictional world that includes speaker, actors, events, and an implied audience (an audience that takes shape through the work's decisions about what must be explained and what the audience is presumed to know)."⁶⁶ Fictional works, therefore, are based on an imagination

64. M. H. A. Abraham, "A Glossary of Literary Terms," Massachusetts, USA: Ear/ McPeck, 1999, 94.

65. *Ibid.*, 94-95.

66. Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford, 1997, 30-31.

of an author, or a writer, who uses his ingenuity to create events that will appear real, when in actual fact it is fictitious.

A very disturbing development about the foregoing is that, through its long stay and wide circulation, fiction is bound to be taken as fact, even when the former is a mere concoction of the author's efforts or a brainchild of his imagination. Fact, however, is something that is known to have happened or to exist, especially something for which proof exists, or about which there is information.⁶⁷ With this, before something can be described as a fact, there must have been evidence of its actual happenings. It is, therefore, appropriate to assert that fact differs from faith and fiction because it does not always have any basis in human imagination or belief in some unseen forces. Thus, it shares a complementary bond with history, or anything that remains valid when examined. For example, Trump, the current President of the United States, won the last held election against his opponent, Hilary Clinton. This, obviously, is a statement of fact but to those who contested it, the outcome is a manipulated process.

In what will be revisited later on, however, facts as well can be rid of originality as long as there are vested interests that want to shape them to favour personal benefits or satisfy their prevailing exigencies. There is a common understanding that whosoever controls what the masses consume, either ideas or even food, holds the power to condition their direction of thought, and by extension what they accept as their reality. The contemporary world has witnessed many doctored facts, as media platforms are used favourably to situate what are accepted as facts; thus, many things we carry around are merely saturated reality. On the extreme end therefore, one may argue that facts are only facts because of the time of their happening, and their selection by historians or a narrator. Given the long-time difference between a factual historical legacy and the revisionists doing magic to it, fact will be seen as intermingling with fiction.

10. THE ROLES OF FICTION IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY AND POLITICS

It is noteworthy to state that fiction, being a product of human faith, has functioned admirably in shaping society over time. True to the contemporary reality of the modern-day environment, humans have come to see faith as an exclusive property they possess, even if it is to have faith in science, in accordance to technological advancement, as long as it makes them feel in tune with their understanding of nature. Therefore, fiction performs notable roles in human society, some of which are provided below:

- i. To engineer strategies for political, social and personal interests.
- ii. To show the audience the philosophical sentiment of the writers.
- iii. To persuade the multitude into following or performing certain obligations.
- iv. To provide people with entertainment services.
- v. To steer up public panic for sinister purposes (fake news).
- vi. To encourage traffic for economic projects (advertisements).
- vii. To instruct people about imminent dangers in certain areas.
- viii. To mediate between the government and the people.
- ix. To educate the general public about important issues of life.
- x. To make meaning and sense of the world in a different way.
- xi. To condition the character development of the people.
- xii. To widen the mind to think differently.
- xiii. To ease people from physical and emotional boredom.
- xiv. To enhance our ability to connect with each other.
- xv. To make us a little bit more aware and informed.

67. Cambridge Dictionary, 2019. Accessed on March 12 at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fact>.

10.1 Myths

In classical Greek, "mythos" signified any story or plot, whether true or invented. In its central modern significance however, "a myth is one story in a mythology—a system of hereditary stories of ancient origin which are believed to be true by a particular cultural group, and which served to explain (in terms of the intentions and actions of deities and other supernatural beings) why the world is as it is and things happen as they do, to provide a rationale for social customs and observances, and to establish the sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives."⁶⁸ With this, therefore, a myth's specific function is to help explain the phenomenon that ordinarily appears incredibly astonishing. Subject to the reality that humans have a limited understanding nature, they thus are susceptible to believe in anything that appears rational to their cognitive domain.

We can equally label myth as the communally made-up stories explaining the phenomenon of deities, a society's account about how the world is and why humans are here. Myths consist of the totality of narratives built to console humans on the limitation of their knowledge and understanding of the world, to explain the beginning, the gradual arrangements of things of the world, and that of the things which are predominantly unseen. In essence, a myth provides an explanation for those things of nature that defies logical explanations for their existence. Admittedly, a myth usually covers the story of superhuman characters or heroes, and sometimes gods, to tell us about the purported logic of creation and its systematic arrangements. Through telling and retelling, man believes in these stories and uses them as a guide in his social transactions with other members of society. Thus, man is homomythic.

In pre-colonial African societies, myth occupied the center of their fictional materials, which in turn served as a scaffolding to their philosophical pillar. There are myths about creation, about early humans, and about belief systems such as Ifa or Orisa worship, among many other myths in Africa present before the contact with the European world. Philip Neimark talks about the

Yoruba myth of creation in his book, *The Way of Orisa*. He writes:

Oludumare, the single God, assembled all his wealth in one place and sent his messenger out to summon the 401 Irunmoles (supernatural beings from Heaven, 256 of whom became the sacred odus, or texts, of Ifa). He sent for them so that they could carry his treasures to Earth.

They were asked to sacrifice a large lump of pounded yam, a potful of soup, many kola nuts, sheep, pigeon, fowls, and 3,200 cowries and to use the sacrifices to entertain visitors. Oludumare's messenger reached all 401 Irunmoles and delivered the message, but none of them entertained the messenger with the ordered sacrifices. When the messenger reached Orunmila, he was welcomed heartily and entertained with food. Because of this kindness, the messenger disclosed to Orunmila that he should not be very anxious about carrying the treasures because the most important one was underneath Oludumare's seat.

When the Irunmoles assembled, they were told of Oludumare's message, and all of them were struggling for what they believed to be the most valuable contents. Some carried money, some food, some other things valuable to them. Oludumare's messenger, talking through his trumpet, told Orunmila to "sit quietly because the most important thing is in the snail's shell." Thus Orunmila sat patiently watching the other Irunmoles take away all the wealth, property, and various essences they were to carry to Earth.

After they left, Orunmila got up and went straight to where Oludumare sat, took the snail's shell from

68. Ibid., 170.

under his seat, and departed for Earth. Orunmila met the other Irunmole at the terminus of the road leading from Heaven to Earth and asked them what was wrong. They responded that the earth was covered with water, and there was no place for them to land. Then Orunmila dipped his hand into the snail's shell and took out a net, which he cast upon the water. He dipped his hand inside the shell a second time and brought out earth, which he cast upon the net. A third time he reached into the shell and brought forth a five-fingered cock and threw him on the net to spread the earth on the net and the water. The cock began to spread said earth, water was moving backward, and the ground was spreading. When it seemed the work was going too slowly, Orunmila himself descended and commanded the small land to be expanded thus: "Be expanded quickly. Be expanded quickly. Be expanded quickly!" He stopped, and the world expanded. There was great joy in Heaven. The place where Orunmila stood, as the first person on Earth, and decreed the world be expanded, is to this day called *Ife-wara* in *Ile Ife*...⁶⁹

Apparent from this myth of creation is that it centres on supernatural beings. From *Oloдумаре*, the Supreme Deity, to the 401 *Irunmole* all serving as messengers to *It* (*It*, because *Oloдумаре* is not marked for gender in the Yoruba pantheon), down to the celestial account of the beginning of man, or life, cannot be accepted as fact because no one has a convincing explanation or evidence about that in today's world. This, rather than discredit the story, shows us the place of myth among humans in explaining things that are beyond their understanding. As stated above that myth provides an account or

a storyline for the things they hold dear, albeit unseen. Before we go on to link the philosophical import of myth, such as the Yoruba myth of creation as mentioned above, it is also of importance in equal measure that we briefly discuss legends, and eventually fables.

Unlike myths, legends talk more about human exploits which are so extraordinary that one would believe they are superhuman. In all places where humans dwell, there usually are people whose existence is actually beyond the ordinary. The people undertake tasks that seem herculean, yet will surmount them in the long run. We have heard about the *Odyssey* from Greece, and stories that have documented the accomplishments of Achilles among others. Also, in Africa, there are legends about great people who have made an indelible imprint in the past. It is more of a circumstantial reality that nature imbues every race of people with certain personalities that have incredible characters to achieve impossibilities. These extraordinary individuals generally, having lived a life worthy of emulation and capable of inspiration, are kept in people's hearts for a long period. A legend has been characterized as a tale created in the past, and then transferred from one generation to another. Some do have a historical basis: "A legend is a story that is believed to be historical in nature, but without substantiation. Examples are: King Arthur, Robin Hood."⁷⁰ Since stories such as this have been kept in people's collective memory of the people, and there are existing historical antiquities that will validate their authenticity, legend is therefore created around the figures in those stories. Legends can be viewed also as those historical legacies that usually attract a form of tale which would in the process contribute to the moral capital of the people in society. In other words, legends are stories that become more important with time. The story is passed down from one generation to the other from earlier times, and will continue to adapt with the prevailing circumstances as the people progress with time. From one generation to the other, a legend is usually handed down through oral rendition, particularly in Africa. Through

69. Philip Neimark, *The Way of Orisa*. San Francisco: Harper, 1993, 57-58.

70. "Introduction to Literature: Myths and Legends." Accessed on March 12, 2019, from <https://passnownow.com/literature-myths-legends/>.

the telling and retelling, the personalities become agents of emulation and models of character development to the people who crave to live like them or have a similitude of the good life they spent.

Among the Yoruba, there is a popular legend around a man named Akiti the hunter, who was said to possess the attributes of a superhuman. Relying so much on his masculine fervency, he boasted around that no man, or an animal for that matter, could overpower him in a duel. In some of his expeditions, he had overcome a giant, a lion, a leopard and some other fearful animals. As a result of his invincible nature, he declared himself "the King of the forest". After an undefeated period with many animals, he challenged an elephant into a fight. After much effort of using his potent charms against the opponent, the elephant, by changing from one animal to another in an effort to conquer the opponent, he became drained and almost gave up. Lastly, he changed into a fly and was able to penetrate the animal through its ears and defeated it finally, after which he was declared "the King of the forest".⁷¹

From a closer look, one would think that myths and legends are identical because of the similarities they share. However, there are observable differences that delineate the two. Explicit differences exist between a legend and a myth; while legends are oftentimes made up of stories used to explain the amazing characteristics of individuals who once existed on the face of the earth, myths are stories that answer questions about the workings of natural phenomena.

Legends become a social necessity because they are created to carry out a sociological function. No matter how neatly woven they appear, they are not always totally true.⁷² One of the fictional creations of the precolonial African era that was used as a vehicle of philosophy is the fable. Before now, one could, based on conjecture, assert that these things are deliberately employed to shape the people's ideology. Although there is an almost interminable list of the fictional materials of the pre-colonial African societies that are

different and unique from the ones highlighted here, the ones selected are not definitely exhaustive by any means and they merely represent the focus of this study. What was essentially outstanding about all these materials is that they did not exist in a vacuum. Africans, like every other group of people, do not create fictional materials just for the sake of creation. Every work of art, as exemplified here, is saddled with a unique assignment, of which serving as a philosophical construct is one. As our last resort, we shall consider fable.

A fable is a story that has animals as its characters and the basic purpose it has is to teach morals. In a fable, invented characters may have a non-living thing quality, and in some other cases, it may have characters that are larger than life. "The distinguishing feature of a fable is the anthropomorphism or personification involved that leads to a moral lesson being taught. At times, this moral lesson is summed up at the end of the fable in a short maxim."⁷³ It is a fact should be made of the fact that African people have strong moral capital and would pass down these morals through the appropriate mediums.

There exists a popular fable among the Yoruba people about a tortoise and a dog during a famine. In a fictional land of Kurunmi, everyone was riddled with the aggravating effects of hunger, sad faces and emaciated body sizes. But there was a dog that lived healthy to the amazement of everyone, especially the tortoise. In his usual wise manner, the tortoise decided to pay the dog a visit with the aim of knowing his secret. Behold, the tortoise approached the dog to make inquiries about his rosy lifestyle, even amidst general insufficiencies in the populace. Rather than oblige the tortoise and reveal his secrets, the dog, aware of the tortoise's diabolical intentions, declined initially. The dog could not resist long and eventually gave in to his request. Finally, the tortoise got access to the dog's secret and made a mess of himself when he bit off more than he could chew. He was caught at the spot where they stole from a farmer's farm and beaten beyond words.⁷⁴

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. N/A "Literary Devices, Terms, and Elements." Accessed on March 12, 2019 from <http://www.literarydevices.com/fable/>

74. N/A "The Tortoise, the Dog and the Farmer" http://www.allfolktales.com/wafrica/tortoise_dog_farmer.php.

Apparently, the above fable, like others of its type, is usually employed to teach morals in society. When such a story is handed down to the younger members of the society, they tend to shun what the fable frowns at; in the case above, greed. Thus, as we have seen, the precolonial African environment made use of these things like myth, legend, and fables, among others, as philosophical constructs to guide the communal affairs of the society.

Therefore, a child who gets exposed to the myth of the creation of the Yoruba people, as exemplified above, will understand the beauty of obedience, patience, and the importance of social engagement. Orunmila, amidst the 401 Irunmole, did not act in negation to the instructions given to him, and he waited patiently to execute his plans when others were in disarray. This, in a way, helps the child to embrace and imbibe a virtue that will serve as his compass when he grows up within his environment. In the same spirit, the legend of Akiti, "the king of the forest," is laden with a philosophy that helps the child to dream big and acquire a superhero character, such as what Superman does today for the kids in the West and Africa. This equally is deducible in the fable of the tortoise and the dog, which frowns at greed and the excesses of humans. It reminds us of our greedy nature that despite the fact that we sometimes get things that are beyond our reach, we are usually consumed by greed till we make a mess of ourselves.

10.2 Postcolonial Africa

One thing changed the focus of African fiction, and by extension, its direction for good: the contact it had with the European world. Like a fish doped out of the river, many African scholars, rather than build on the strong background of their forebears and continue to occupy the forefront of building the moral frame of their society, have forever been occupied with the need to prove their existential values to the West and the world, who have concluded rather abruptly that Africans are people devoid of plans or focus. African fictions, which hitherto have been struc-

ured in ways that touched every aspect of their culture, have been given a different duty to do, this time, to save their identity in the presence of people who are committed to muddle their names. It is not strange, therefore, to see the fictional market of postcolonial Africa to be littered with materials that touch on identity-saving.

Today, many African fictions, in form and content, are tailored along the lines of the West, and therefore there has been a paradigm shift from what it used to be. All the genres of literature are employed by writers to air their story to the world. There is no avoiding the temptation to adopt the new order that includes structured fictional creations; short stories, novels, newspapers, and social media platforms. This prevailing development demands a new generation of fictional composers who can employ the available medium to tell the stories of Africa and its people to the world at large. Because writers who emerged during this period usually have acquired a certain level of western education, it becomes relatively easy to flow well in postcolonial Africa's fictional markets. This is necessary for them to understand how to use appropriately the new medium of communication and carry their people along with bearable influence.

10.3 Short Story

A short story is another version of fictional material, but it is a concise work of art that shares the same tropes of analysis with other types of literary materials, such as the novel and novella, among others. A unique attribute of a short story is that it does not provide a room for needless discussions; it is brief and with a special focus. The short story is also unique because it creatively helps the writer to spice up his work with only the necessary narratorial techniques.⁷⁵

As a way of getting additional information about what a short story really is, the definition of William Boyd is very insightful. He explains that "short story seems to answer something very deep in our nature as if, for the duration of its telling, something special has been created, some essence of our experience extrapolated, some

75. *Ibid.*, 286.

76. William Boyd, "A short history of the short story", *Prospect Magazine*, April 2006. Accessed on March 12, 2019 at <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/william-boyd-short-history-of-the-short-story>.

temporary sense has been made of our common, turbulent journey towards the grave and oblivion."⁷⁶ Here, he highlights the brevity of the short story and its value-laden nature.

Leading among the popular writers of short stories in postcolonial Africa is Chinua Achebe. With his excellent ability to spice up his stories with didactic lessons, this writer is a force to reckon with in the African short story collections. Even though the structure of the type of literary work does not give room for excessive details or redundant information, Achebe is a man whose style and dexterity are impressively awe-inspiring. In one of his short stories, he narrates the story of a man, Nwibe, whose angry nature makes him forfeit the highest title in the land, *ozo*, that he would have achieved in his community.⁷⁷ Nwibe is a promising man with economic success, who also has the potential to attain an enviable position in society, *Ogbu*; a man who has already joined the rank and file of the community. This man has just notified the elders of the town of an imminent opportunity he seeks to join the clan of the bigwigs in the nearest future. One would think that a man who has his attention fixed on something important to his own life and who even stands the chance of being seen on the highest level of the social ladder, would possess a great amount of restraint. Surprisingly, Nwibe's anger mismanagement is a clog in his wheel of progress, even when he does not realize this early enough. Ironically, a man who lacks enough wisdom to settle internal strife in his own family eyes a social position that undertakes the responsibility of organizing the whole society.

On a fateful day after a verbal duel between his two wives, Udenkwo and Mgboye, and Nwibe's timely intervention, he sets out to take his usual trip to the market. It is an early morning expedition and not many people are up or around and as such, he decides to take a forest path to the marketplace. When Nwibe dives into a stream to bath himself before proceeding on his journey, a madman watched him for quite a while. This particular madman confused Nwibe's identity with that of another, and also

with some rogues who had previously disturbed him. The madman became eager to revenge, to take a pound of flesh from the innocent Nwibe who knew nothing. The madman decides to put a show on this day, knowing that it is a market day.⁷⁸ After continuous ruminations, this madman takes Nwibe's pieces of cloth from where he hides them, puts them on and then dashes away. After the villain picked Nwibe's clothes and dashed into the forest, Nwibe makes a frantic effort to reclaim this by deciding to run after him. This they both do so with zeal and vigor, even though the madman has a better chance of running faster than Nwibe, probably because of his alertness or physicality.

When Nwibe emerged into the full glare of the highway he could not see his cloth clearly anymore and his chest was at the point of exploding from the fire and torment within. But he kept running. Unaware of the teeming crowd who remained bewildered as to why someone in their right state of mind would make so much effort to rescue their stolen possessions from a man who is known to be mentally unstable, Nwibe continues to make incoherent noises about the man running before him, the madman. As he makes more efforts, the man becomes lost in the crowd and is difficult to identify, first as a madman, and second as someone who is dragging anything with another man. Lastly, Nwibe lost all the respect and honour he has garnered over the years because he is unable to tame his anger at the most important stage of his life. This short story, amidst other things, shows anger as a bad virtue a human can possess.

In fact, it is writers like Achebe who make use of the short story medium as a compelling one to not only influence the moral capital of the African society but also show the world the beautiful essence of fictions in man's life. Through this imaginative story, one sees a whole lot about the people's patterns of living, in marriage, chieftaincy and social relationships. In Africa, polygamy is popular and this is depicted in the story with reference to Nwibe's wives and household. How these wives relate and the social hierarchy attained by their time of marriage is

77. Chinua Achebe, *Girls at War And Other Stories*, 34.

78. *Ibid*

equally reflected in the way the man intervened when there is a rancour between them. Nwibe, instead of talking angrily to Udenkwo, the second wife, for her brazen disregard, addressed Mgboye, the first wife that she should learn how to act in situations like that to avoid the aggressive tongue of the second wife who is believed to be loose. After all she's older.

10.4 Newspaper medium

Another very influential fictional medium in Africa's postcolonial environment is the newspaper. It became exponentially popular during Africa's colonial contact with the West and was used in exchange for the old method of information dissemination. The success of it, however, is founded on the fact that the African people place an important premium on information sharing. To them, information is life. By this time, the educated Africans embraced it and therefore employed it to reach a larger audience, however with a good dose of its contents drawn from their traditional ideas. Thus, there began columns in newspapers that featured fictional inputs from interested columnists. In gaining political power from their colonial masters, enlightened Africans used this medium as a formidable tool to achieve their dreams.

As expected, fictional writings find their way into the medium with a different assignment from what the old media platforms, such as fables and myths, circulated. This time, the primary focus of the people was not to expend their energies on mere frivolities; they were more concerned with saving their honourable names that have been dragged into the mud by their condescending counterparts. Thus, across the African continent, scholars, in their attempt to face-save their African values and identity, made exhaustive use of every available medium and outlet. Hence, the Onitsha market literature, which predominantly circulated in the form of newspaper articles and pamphlets, gained attention by their respective audiences and eventually, their patronage. Therefore, the first generation of African writers in the postcolonial environment used the medium of newspapers to further

the fictional creations.

The first generation of African writers made an indelible mark on literary productions. Most of these writers operated as anonymous individuals to keep educating the teeming masses and save their own identity from being the target of the calumny and high handedness of the leadership of the continent misusing power in the postcolonial environment. Drawing from the oral heritage of the people of Africa, their literature used a rich style to get across their message to their people, who easily identify with them because of the familiar techniques.⁷⁹ Gradually, this evolved into various forms in every outlet. From this grand standing development, a number of writers made their voices heard and promoted their fictional works. There is little wonder then that the political bigwigs in the contemporary African societies now use the medium for personal reasons.

10.5 Social media platforms

A powerful force in the communication business in the 21st century is social media. Its force is so foreboding that it appears to dwarf every other form of communication medium before it. It is so interesting to note that some parts of the world today publish fictions on social media platforms where their people go to access their production bit by bit. This medium is a child birthed to consummate the project of globalization that has encouragingly become a force to reckon with in today's world. From Facebook, Whats-App to Twitter and many more, today's world seems like one with the potential to malfunction without this media. The growing interest to make use of them cuts across every generation, even though the passport to it is the internet, which consumes a fortune from its users. Thus, like never before, social media platforms liberate many individuals and embolden them to come up with their fictional materials online.

Many of these platforms qualify to be used to air countless fictional items. More interesting is the idea that all the preceding media of communication cede their contending might to the social media platforms of today, as they do

⁷⁹ Cavan McCarthy, "Printing in Onitsha: Some Personal Observations on the Production of Nigerian Market Literature," *African Research and Documentation*, 35, 22, 1984.

not possess the strength for a healthy competition. However, the fact that Africans are not the innovators of this idea contributes significantly to their inability to doctor social media in ways that will advance their own moral philosophy. As a result of this uncensored use of the media platforms, especially by younger members of society, there appears to be an interminable list of emerging moral difficulties they stand to battle with for a long time to salvage the people who already strayed from their forebears' ways. Since every societal outlook is the product of the people's philosophical capital, Africans in contemporary society are thus like a fowl in a heavy hurricane that has no say in the direction it goes into.

Resulting from this, therefore, the social media platforms have been used to achieve different aims and purposes, and as long as they satisfy the whims and the caprices of their users, they continue to qualify as an important tool for fictional directives. As important as they appear however, they are a potent tool for social degeneration and social disintegration. Oftentimes, people manipulate this media for personal objectives which usually harvest a bad result for humankind. For example, anyone in the comfort of his house with access to the internet can concoct news material and push this to the social media. In the span of seconds, the world would have access to it and begin to act on the information they consume on the internet. The spiralling influence of the social media industry has given information communication an entirely new definition, seen in the popular attention it gets.

Writers, publishers, political stalwarts, social influencers and many others, banking on the assumption that the majority of people consume things on the media, use them without limit. This has had a domino effect on the general social system of the people. Fictional materials are easily accessed and published on the media because it gives the publisher or, sometimes authors, unfettered access to the internet, and by extension imbue them with a level of confidence to exhibit their intellectual properties, with the danger of it being stolen or lost when there are technical issues. Therefore, fiction has the shape it takes during the precolonial era and has under-

gone a surprising metamorphosis during and after the contact with European colonization. An enduring culture, however, is that it has been a useful vehicle of philosophy for the African people, both in the past and present.

11. INTERSECTIONS

12. Fiction and Fact as a Vehicle of Philosophy

12.1 *Precolonial Africa*

Across every boundary, human philosophies have largely been a product of carefully woven fictions and facts. This reality is cemented by the need to engrave abstract ideas into the collective consciousness of the people who as a result, are ruled, organized, and grown to suit the purpose(s) of the communal vision set by the philosophers. Basically, facts and fictions are used in different capacities to engineer social order and change, in accordance with the values and ethics of individual society. It is educative to note that religions, too, are the brainchild of human philosophy, developed and maintained through fictional or factual narratives that serve as guides to the people's day-to-day activities. In Africa, for instance, historical facts, with a fair dose of fictional input, have been the moderator of people's affairs both before and after their contact with Western powers.

In every spectrum of human existence, Africa has an established philosophy guiding them for a long period. In social affairs such as marriage institutions, justice system, family coordination, transition from childhood to adulthood; spiritual commitment such as African belief systems, soul purification, appeasement of the unseen forces among others; scientific affairs such as building technology, farm mechanization, food processing and preservation, etc., all these are entirely woven into their philosophical database through fictional materials and sometimes, factual historical legacies. For instance, as shall be fully discussed in what follows, when a story about superhuman characters is handed to the younger members of the society, it has the underlined assignment to make them challenge themselves to become great.

Therefore, through fiction and fact, the African people stand tall in the aspect of using

these two phenomena to build up their society. Hence, the people employ myths, legends, fables, and fairy tales, among other things, as tools to shape their own ideological constructs and, by extension, their philosophy. Even when it looks difficult to trace the mythical beginnings behind the philosophies professed by the society today, it is difficult to contend the fact that they lack foundation in this known environmental strategy used timelessly to shape the society. No matter the level of scientific advancement or technological milestones reached in this contemporary world of globalization, human foundations began with mythical conceptions of a people about themselves and their environment. It is the level that everyone gets to before evolving intellectually in line with the dictate of emerging realities in order to function maximally in a continually changing society.

13. FAITH AND FICTION: A NEXUS

Usually, a people's faith is intricately linked to the fictional creations they make. It is hard to see Yoruba-based movies, derived from their historical background or imaginative intelligence, that will depict the lives and styles of the Ninjas which exclusively belong to some Asian communities. In the same vein, when one comes across a fictional work documenting the exploits of *Eyo* masquerades, one immediately understands that such work is coming from people of Yoruba origin, especially Lagosians. In this spirit, the faith that is popular among a people shapes their mental and emotional attitudes and thus provides them the avenue to showcase what they really are to the world around them. If fictions are made from the creative ability of the people, the people are in turn made by practices and happenings of their environment from which they get their materials for fiction. People think in line with the environment they find themselves.

Having established that a people's faith is usually linked to their fictional behavioural patterns, it becomes relatively expedient to demonstrate how these two maintain a point of convergence. Before going on to prove this point, we must

remember the contiguous nature of the people's faith, morality and eventually their tales. To understand this striking connection between a people's folktales and their belief systems, we shall adopt Vladimir Propp's "morphology" of the fairy tales.

Propp concludes in his writings that a fictional material follows certain arrangements, first of which is the struggle that confronts a hero after the loss of the people who are important to him: the parents, or sometimes the caregivers. When the hero dashes into a society looking for ways to survive by every means, there comes a period when he is warned from taking some steps he has in mind to pursue; a warning he will disregard because of his focus on what he is bound to achieve.⁸⁰ To have a better grasp of this puzzle of Propp's constituents of folktales, fictional writings will be broken down into their basic structural strand as explained by him.

For example, in *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, part of the enduring culture (faith) of the people of Umuofia is that confidence, hard work, and courage are essential ingredients to man's success, a popular understanding shared by the general populace. Thus, Okonkwo's father, Unoka, who could be considered "dead" because of his financial and moral bankruptcy, can be linked to Propp's explanation about the Hero's family absenting himself from home, which leaves Okonkwo, the major character, with no other option than to go into 'war'—here, his urge to fight poverty in all ways possible. The second phase, which includes an interdiction being addressed to the Hero normally taking a form of a warning to him about an imminent danger, occurs to Okonkwo when he goes to borrow tubers of yam from Nwakibie, a wealthy man in his village. One would recall that it is Okonkwo's eventual success from his agricultural engagement that claim him a respectable position in his village which later became his major undoing. In actual fact, if he had not been successful like his father, he would perhaps not have had the confidence to kill the white man and he would not have died disrespectfully.⁸¹

From the above, one would see the influence

80. Vladimir Propp, *The Morphology of the Folktale*, Austin, Tx: The University of Texas at Austin Press, (1966) [1928], 65-67.

81. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, London: Heinemann, 1958, 16-32.

of the people's faith on their general philosophy and social relationships. Thus, a people's faith constitutes the very foundation upon which their fictional creations are built. Perhaps, one of the ways to understand the link between faith and fiction is to understand the underlying philosophy that gives rise to the production of work such as *Robinson Crusoe* as a fictional narrative. At the face of it, one would think that the book merely tells the story of a man whose urge for adventure is unquenchable. However, upon closer scrutiny, one would notice the imperialistic tendency of the West to conquer and bring under their control everything that lives on the earth, attributes that are exhibited by *Crusoe* himself.⁸²

One cannot but notice the compelling connection between this fictional weaving and the European Christian faith. Here, *Crusoe* can be compared with the character of Jesus Christ in the Christian faith, who comes from "heaven" to "die" for the "sin" of the people of the earth. Like *Crusoe*, Jesus came to teach people and direct them away from their "evil ways" because of his conviction that any spiritual philosophy that runs counter to the one he brings is not suitable for humanity. Thus, Jesus felt the need to teach people his own divine path and beliefs, just as the way *Crusoe* does to Man Friday. Pleading for change, Jesus persuaded those he encountered to abandon their wrong beliefs and practices. This, in a way, will show to the non-believers that there was a nexus between faith and non-faith.

14. HISTORY, FACT AND FICTION

Ordinarily, history would qualify as a form of fact. There are so many things that can qualify a statement or practice as true. In the case of history, there are surviving evidence that can stand the test of time and the scrutiny of research. Not many scholars have captured the definition of history as Ludwig von Mises in *Theory and History* when he says "history tries to describe past events as they really happened. It aims at faithful representation. Its concept of truth is correspondent with what was once reality."⁸³ Let us excuse the mistake that history writing

captures what "really happened" as no one can know. This talks about the undeniable evidence that history dwells on which makes it distinct from fiction, in its focus. History provides these pieces of evidence, although the interpretation of evidence is not without bias or full integrity to truth.

Fiction, unlike History, is free to depict events that never occurred. Writers create, as they have the latitude to carve out creatively, imaginary stories. He is free to depart from reality. The tests of truth that apply to the work of the historian do not apply to the creative writer. Yet his freedom is limited. What we usually have in a fictional work is the sense that the audience gets because of its make-real status. This justifies the proliferation of science fiction, in the contemporary literary markets, which are usually a brainchild of the author's imagination.

A striking point of convergence between fiction and history is that they both deal with human minds and the happenings in the society. Very often, they are predominantly centred on the life of an individual or a society in relation to the milestones reached and challenges surmounted. Thus, one could hear about the history of Oranmiyan among the Yoruba people and have no problem believing in the claims alluded to him by history, particularly when there is a "staff" of his that can be seen in Ile-Ife, the cradle of their race. One important area where a line is drawn between a historian and a fiction writer is in the magnitude of imagination. Like the historian, a fiction writer will consider the historical facts at his disposal and then use his creativity to invent a story. Through this, he clothes the history with fascinating inputs so as to obtain and sustain the attention of the audience.

15. FACT AND FICTION: TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CONTRADICTIONS

From the above, it is implied that both fact (e.g., the historical) and faith (the spiritual) are the raw materials of fiction. With an objective view, however, there are numerous underlying con-

82. Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*. United Kingdom: William Taylor, 1719, 23-108. Accessed on https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robinson_Crusoe.

83. Ludwig von Mises, *Theory and History* Yale: Yale University Press, 1957, 274.

traditions between fact and fiction, particularly in the 21st century. Since the discrepancy between fact and fiction has been the exclusive imaginative intelligence of the writers, thus, it goes without saying that the objects of fact are laden with innumerable inconsistencies. While it is difficult to find a historical fiction that is entirely free from the imagination of the author, the enduring problem nonetheless is how to identify where such work strays from actual reality. When identifying the various types of fictional medium of the postcolonial environment, mention is made of the newspaper medium and the social media platforms of today.

For political as well as personal reasons, these media outlets are hijacked by people in the modern world to scheme out plans to achieve sinister objectives. Very often, we come across news flashes of the same event with different reportage on the various available media. To understand the height at which this disingenuous thing has been widely circulated today, there have been many occasions when newspaper agencies deliberately misrepresent the news items for cheap political purposes, and would, in the long run, make an apology. What is clear from this is that they have at their disposal the necessary tools to confirm or refute the genuineness of the news, but their ulterior motive is a factor that gets more attention than the circulation of the actual stories/events. This leads us to the concept of historical revisionism.

This concept defines the act of revisiting history in order to inject doses of personal information into them, or in some cases find out possible inconsistencies in conclusions made in the past. It usually means a radical approach to the traditional views of history, which includes doctoring of strange evidence, creating unreal scenarios, and providing fictional materials in support of their positions. The revision of the historical happenings, however, can be as a result of lapses made by previous researchers and which borders on some important things that cannot be ignored.⁸⁴

This development, one can argue, is possible because of the unprecedented advancements in science and technology and also the birth of the

internet lifestyle of the late 20th century that have been used today in exponential capacity. Before the advent of such technological advancements, at a time when things were basically documented in white and black, there was then a relative difficulty in refining a historical happening. Things were kept keenly beyond the access of those who could have gone about masterminding outrageous input on things that have happened. This, sadly, cannot be said of the current age. Everything that has the impact of the internet today is blatantly susceptible to personal doctoring. With this in mind, there is no escaping from likely contradictions in what is generally perceived as facts by the innocent public. Today, it is not impossible that two people living as neighbours will hold different accounts of popular events and each will consider his own part as the whole truth.

With this development, coming across historical legacies that have been reconfigured as a high probability. A number of narratives dubbed as history that have been stamped into people's memory get to be re-edited when 'new' evidence surfaces by contracted historiographers, or in some cases scientists. Hence, it becomes increasingly difficult to separate facts (history) from fiction. Not forgetting that faith, either in a supreme being, spirits, or a cause (such as an ideology) drives humans to invent stories, through the power of imagination, and thus make a historical event the source of such invention.

When such stories are consumed by an unsuspecting audience, that is, members of society, they are bound to be accepted as fact. In this pattern, a fact, encouraged by faith and translated into fiction changes and redirects the thought processes of people, and consequently the social directions.

16. CLOSING REFLECTIONS

From the foregoing, attempts have been made to define the concepts under discourse, although not in any way exhaustively. Efforts have been made to reveal the interdependence of faith, fiction and some beliefs that drive progress and development. Scientists try hard to change the narrative that their world of development is initiated

84. Richard J. Evans, *Lying About Hitler: History, Holocaust, and the David Irving Trial*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.

by curiosity and courage, and thrives exclusively on logic and rationality. However, if taken from the perspective of doubts in knowledge, and the belief in data and their interpretations, there are elements that faith constitutes part of the basis of many scientific and technological advancements. Most of the inventions seen today have been projected (by faith) in the past, most especially in fictional creations. Examples that abound in today's fantasy world of Artificial Intelligence (AI) or the Internet of Things (IoT) must have featured in the fictional plays in decades past.

When we allude to faith as a necessary end that helped the early humans to keep their sanity in order to live well and responsibly in a society riddled with innumerable puzzles, we are, as a result, making a case for the justification of it. There are two ways to look at it. If you return to the biblical definition of faith in Hebrews which I cited at the start, faith is not something you have at the end of a process, or when you have lost every other thing. The Christian's faith is not a last resort. Rather, faith is the start of a journey, the absolute belief that what you are about to embark upon will not fail. Faith is stepping out into the unknown, yet being sure of the outcome from the start. Faith is what you have even before you have a dream. As the biblical writer puts it, faith is evidence of things not yet even seen. But there is also faith expressed as desperate hope—what a man holds onto when he has succeeded or failed in different spheres of life. For instance, a dying man whose ailments have defied every given medical assistance would not be condemned for holding onto faith as a last resort. He would only be able to gather his wit together when he hopes that his condition can be upturned by some stroke of luck. Thus, regardless of how numbing the effects of holding onto faith alone (religious faith especially) has affected millions of African lives, one cannot overemphasize the importance of it among us generally.

It is in that spirit that fiction is birthed in human society. Faith, in other words, includes hope, and this hope materializes in people's imaginations which in turn fuels their creativity to invent stories (fictions) in ways that will suit their societal bias or personal convictions about life.

With one thing leading to another, we see fiction as a brainchild of faith. Stories explaining to us the nature of things in life are usually products of human imagination; we have seen that in the form of myth, among other things. It is this cyclical ordering that eventually brings us to the nature of fact. Apart from the areas where untainted historical happenings can be taken as fact, most of the things we call facts are basically coloured by human bias, therefore making fact itself a relative entity. What is fact (truth) to one individual could be opposite to another.

Although fact has an obviously different background from faith and fiction as highlighted above, it however can spring from either of them in reality. A chunk of what society considers as fact today have their basis in fiction, or faith. Apart from these two sources notwithstanding, history can be a very good background of fact. Historical legacies that have archaeological evidence with relative objectivity can be adjudged as fact. This is the very reason why the argument that facts are something that can be proven beyond reasonable doubt remains untenable anywhere. For something to be collectively accepted as fact, it must have satisfied the requirements of evidence that is expected of it. Even at that, the level of the technological milestones that humans have achieved today gives room for the outrageous engineering of reality. Facts in the internet age are easily doctored, courtesy of science.

We have seen how the African people use fiction and fact as ideological constructs to shape the moral outlook of their people. Through fictional creations of myths, legends, fables and others in the precolonial African societies, the people were able to carve for themselves a worthwhile philosophy. We see how myth, a system of hereditary stories which were in the past believed and held sacred by a particular cultural group, helped in explaining the unexplainable, and as such put their fear at rest. Creating myth was necessary to fill the void of human curiosity in particular and their despair in general. Since every group of people found it necessary to create a story that will explain the beginning of the world, there is thus the necessity for mythical establishments. From this, people show their value and cultural

peculiarities through it, and reveal their belief systems in the cosmic body.

One of such myth of the African people is that of the Yoruba creation myth. The Yoruba people of West Africa, like every other group of people, created a myth to explain their own understanding of the wonderful beginnings of the world at large. Having explained how the 401 Irunmole enhanced the origin of lives to the formless planet, they systematically infused their philosophy of the interdependency of man to the story. It would have been practically uneasy for Orunmila alone to ensure that all the things needed to be fixed about the planet are done exclusively by him. Apart from the obvious misgivings that will crop up as a result, the beauty of the plurality of ideas would have been lost in the process. Also added to the myth is the importance of obedience, diligence, and hard work. If Orunmila was disobedient, he would not have made the required sacrifice that got him access to the valuable information he later acted upon when others were going astray. Through obedience, the Yoruba believe that countless things can be achieved with little effort. Thus, this myth fulfils a purpose in the epistemological heritage of the people.

In contemporary and postcolonial Africa, authors now employ the use of the appropriate medium to air their views. The media of communication of the past are changing, becoming supplanted by the current ones such as short stories. Using this medium, we have seen how the creative Achebe used his short story to paint the picture of a power-craving Nwibe who desired to join the group of elders with the highest social respect. Even though he is both financially qualified and intelligently capable, his lack of some virtue or his flagrant inability to control his anger makes him unfit for the very position he looks forward to. With this form of attitude, Achebe draws the importance of patience and tolerance as beneficial human virtues, the absence of which can cost a man the most important thing in his life, as seen in the case of Nwibe.

Part of what makes the fictional anatomy of the postcolonial time outstanding is the invention of the internet life, which gives an unprecedented rise to the manufacturing of the social

media industry. By this time, communication becomes more important as its means are redefined. Like the pre-colonial African time when uncensored freedom is given to anyone who decides to produce fictional materials for either personal benefits or social progress, the postcolonial Africa also apports unlimited latitude to the citizenry of the 21st century to fabricate anything and put it online for mass consumption. Thus, there remains no end to the backlog of fictions one can come across daily through different media such as social media platforms, printed books, newspapers, and many more. All these are meant to condition the thought process of the people in order to satisfy a preconceived target.

In the long run, we see how faith itself is qualified as a measure of identity of the (African) people. Despite the sweeping influence of both Christianity and Islam on the African space today, a number of the people do not abandon their beginnings, that is, traditional religions, even though they may appear as loyal adherents of these two popular religions. This explains the reason why people of different geographical backgrounds hold different beliefs and yet cohabit peacefully among themselves. In the Yoruba society, for instance, where there are various Orisa, the people do not engage in competition over the gods and goddesses for superiority or lay claim to being the best because they do not see these entities as different; instead, they are regarded as complimentary. Thus, rather than serve as religious constructs meant to run differently, African belief systems serve more as a means of identification than any other thing.

Resulting from this, therefore, we realize that faith, to a large extent, contributes to shaping the cultural economy of the people. It is a people's faith that shapes a great part of their lives. From marriages to naming customs, from funeral arrangements to social relationships, a lot can be revealed from the type of faith that individuals and group of people profess. There are some cultures of the world that cremate their deceased, while we have others who bury them under the earth. There are some cultures where females marry men and fulfil some social rites, while there are others where the opposite is the case. This signals that a people's culture is a by-

product of their belief systems and faith. Faith, in a sense, can also shape the direction a fiction can take.

A compelling nexus exists between faith and fiction. While it is understandable that fiction is a product of imagination, it is not beyond logic to assert that such imagination has its background in what we believe. If a people believe that heaven and hell exist, they will go on to create stories that talk about imaginary heaven and hell. And when their target audience gets to consume these works, it begins to shape their thinking and philosophies. Like Propp alluded to, the lives of heroes usually follow a certain order in fictional narratives, which sometimes have resemblances to real life issues. It is arguable that Daniel Defoe's belief in a saviour that is popular with the religious line of his Christian faith shapes the western philosophy of conquer-them-all seen in imperialism, which was usually masked by the claim to know more about the environment.

In establishing a nexus between faith and fiction, it is realized that fiction performs amazing roles in human society. One of the noticeable things about African fiction is that it serves a utilitarian purpose. Unlike in the Western spheres where fictional materials can be produced for entertainment sake, African fictions perform a truckload of assignments among the people, part of which have been stated above. African fictions function both as an ideology shaping minds and also as a means to reduce stress. When a play make the audience forget their woes on issues that threaten their happiness, it equally provides them with the necessary energy with which to understand their society, challenge the existing status quo, and fine-tune their own areas of moral and intellectual weaknesses.

Thus, we move to understand the possible connectivity that binds together history, fiction and facts. It cannot be over flogged that history, in its crude form, could be accepted as fact since there are credible evidentiary sources on which it is based. Therefore, it is valid to have an understanding in what can be established to have happened or existed. Even though there have been chances of fabricated history being sold to the public by historical revisionists usually done

for personal reasons and benefits, this does not undermine the reality that humans have generally experienced some things collectively which have occupied their memory for good. For example, no matter how revisionists paint the idea about civilization, we now understand that it has its cradle in Egypt, despite an age-long contrary narrative circulated to undermine Africa. However difficult it may appear, there is always room for fact-finding.

Adequate efforts have been deployed to unmask the reality that fictional works tend to dwell on the author's imagination; history does not. The moment established historical facts are deliberately distorted by an author, they cannot be taken as a serious interpretation any longer. In this spirit, we would note that a historical document may not in itself attract the reading attention of the audience, but the moment it is spiced up by the imaginative power of the author, with captivating inputs, it gets and sustain the audience's attention.

Rather than absolve history, therefore, of the judgment that it has unlimited innocence in the way it shapes the psyche of the society, the fact that it is usually an important material from which fictional narratives are drawn makes it equally complicit in the contradictions surrounding it in the contemporary world. History has been so defenceless lately that many people dip into it to fetch rhetoric that supports their bias. With the advent of the internet and a foreboding record of technological advancement of the 21st century, people with power deploy all the might at their disposal to recreate history and turn it into facts ready for consumption by the unassuming audience. This is exactly where the historical revisionism referenced elsewhere in this piece comes to being. Most of the things up for consumption on the media platforms today are fabricated deliberately to condition the direction of our thoughts.

A dangling question mark, therefore, hangs loosely on the nature of faith and fact, and it makes a case for their authenticity. Humans, by nature, usually create stories that will suit their bias and therefore make bold efforts in search of scientific or logical explanations with which they would convince themselves of being on the

right line. For instance, when the Abrahamic faiths lay claim to the idea of God using rain to cover the face of the earth as a reaction to the moral deficiency of Noah's time, they, in the long run, make a case for the justification of re-ordering society, and as well insisted that it was not a mere fallacy. This claim, built on faith, is in an attempt to make sense of a belief system. Obviously, people of different epistemological and ontological accounts of the world would either disagree with such happenings outright, or do not hold it with any seriousness.

To critics, there is not much room for doubt that faith cannot, on its own, be a very reliable source of fact, as it is usually clouded by human sentiments and their varying opinions about the things of nature generally. If we concede that there is a place we can call heaven (paradise) for instance, in line with the claim of some religious beliefs, the versions of it that exist would lead to various discussions on faith, fact and fiction. This is actually because there are conflicting accounts of the same place by the people who allude to it. Thus, such a belief cannot be regarded as a "fact" on its own because it fails to satisfy the basic tenets of what historians call "fact". The effects of people's dependency on faith as their source of fact create the likelihood

that they would always argue when what they committed to believe as facts are things that are considered by others to be fantasy.

Efforts have been made to reveal that humans need faith to progress in every angle, and that faith is not limited to religious communities. Faith is an effective means to make sense of realities. The understanding of that reality is connected with faith, and it is upon it that human beings build the progress they record from the time immemorial to the current age of technology. While it is part of the contemporary attitude of the scientific community to discard faith as the product of man's evolutionary childishness, such conclusions are, upon closer inspection, a product of their desire to be essentially different and superior in logic to other forms of perspectives on life. In actual sense, faith is equally needed in scientific affairs, and it is the positive nexus between both that enables faith to feed fact and in the long run instigates fiction. In other words, while it takes faith to believe fact (as in the case of science), fact makes faith tangible. It is for this reason that the Bible says: "Show me your faith and I will show you my work." The complementary of both is an indubitable fact.