



Features: THE MIND/'S CONSTRUCTION IN THE FACE

Feb 12, 2019

ABUJA, NIGERIA -

In Act 1, Scene 4 of William Shakespeare Macbeth, King Duncan while enquiring about the execution of the incumbent Thane of Cowdor told Lennox, Malcolm, Donalbain and the attendants that "there's no art to find the mind's construction in the face." Duncan embraced and praised Macbeth knowing not that he was actually embracing the person who would kill him. He did not know that Macbeth had an inordinate ambition for his royal crown. The face of Macbeth radiated love towards Duncan whereas his mind was full of venom for the innocent king. This reminds me of the Etsako expression: "He smiles as if he loves me whereas his mind is full of hate for me". The over ambition for power was planted in the mind of Macbeth when one of the three witches told him that he would be king. Before his encounter with the three witches, Macbeth was content with his position hence he told the witches not to dress him with borrowed robes. His wife, Lady Macbeth who desired desperately to be the first Lady manipulated his mind to finally decide to kill his own king who loved him so much. This shows that in politics, there are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies but common interest. Power is a game of the survival for the fittest.

The struggle for power is the essence of Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli's book, the Prince Machiavelli described immoral behaviour, such as dishonesty and the killing of innocents, as being normal and effective in politics (Giovanni Giorgini, "Five Hundred Years of Italian Scholarship on Machiavelli's Prince," *Review of Politics* (2013) 75#4

pp. 625–40). The book is widely used by tyrants and dictators who want to remain in power by all means. Tyrants enjoy sycophancy hence they keep deceitful people who manipulate their minds to believe that they are in control. Unhealthy relationships corrupt good manners. The book of psalms warns against bad counsel. The truly happy person doesn't follow wicked advice, doesn't stand on the way of sinners, and doesn't sit with those who do not want the progress of others. "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked" (Psalm 1:1). Because "in his riches man lacks wisdom" (Psalm 49(48):1-13), he does anything including taking human life to get wealth through power. The welfare of innocent people is always at risk in the hands of those who cover their hatred for others with pseudo smiles as if all is well. This is why some people believe that the devil you know is better than the angel you do not know. Sometimes we innocently tell those who are hiding our treasure to help us look for it. Prophet Jeremiah must have felt betrayed when he said, "cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the Lord" (Jeremiah 17:5).

When Julius Caesar was persuaded not to go to the Capital because he would be assassinated, he told his wife Calpurnia that Brutus would be there. He trusted in the protection of Brutus. When he was being stabbed, he ran towards Brutus. When Brutus stabbed him, Caesar cried: "You too Brutus" and he gave up the struggle and died. While the other conspirators act out of envy and rivalry, only Brutus truly believes that Caesar's death will benefit Rome. Julius Caesar was a great Roman general and senator. While his good friend Brutus worries that Caesar may aspire to dictatorship over the Roman republic, Caesar seems to show no such inclination, declining the crown several times. Caesar was unable to separate his public life from his private life hence he ignores ill omens and threats against his life. He remained constant like the Northern Star (<https://www.sparknotes.com/shakespeare/juliuscaesar/characters>).

Those who understand the essence and goal of life do not believe that success depends on deceit. Only truth reveals the reality in the mind hence those who live on lies live in a dream world and remain captives of conscience in a world of hallucination. This they realize too late at the dusk of life given that no one lives on earth forever. Only the "truth will set you free" (John 8:32). The world could be a paradise if every human being operates within the context of truth. What a world of peace and love human beings would enjoy if our yes is yes and our no is no. But this is not often the case unfortunately. Jeremy C. Bradley, in "Demand Media" states that the actions of political parties, lobbyists and other government players such as legislators and state governors is most effectively studied by looking at the "inputs" and "outputs" of the political system. Judging from the outputs of politicians, the theory discovers that the truth inside the political manifesto is not perceptible to a person who is not a "political insider". Most political rulers operate on "cover-up" and show the governed only the shadows. The true nature of political systems can be known only by opening or exposing the political reality through the enlightenment of the public. This is why political debates are necessary before any election even though there is no art to find the minds construction on the face. But this could elicit some trust and love in the governed.

Martin Luther King once said, "Hate is too great a burden to bear". What do we do with the hate communications in our world today? How can we avoid conflict and survive in an environment where most people care only for their pockets to the detriment of the poor? How do we survive the desperation of many who want to rule by making empty promises as if we have lost all sense of history? Frankly, what is the way out of this mess of deceit where truth in governance is becoming an expensive mirage? There must be a way forward. Maybe, that is why so many people are forming non-governmental organizations (NGO) in the place of already existing governmental and religious structures to promote peace through dialogue. But to what extent can we trust the intentions of these non-governmental organizations? What then happens to the organizations that are put in place by Christian and Muslim institutions with the support of government? When Christians and Muslims form a council with the intention of promoting peaceful co-existence, the expected result in the nation must be a serious indicator that there is hope. If

the delegates and leaders of organizations that promote peaceful co-existence are committed to the aims and objectives of the organizations, then the world will turn a positive look on the nation.

Those who should be the voice of the voiceless must not operate like a medical expert who runs a private hospital to the detriment of the government hospital where he is a consultant? It would be a serious tragedy if a person who calls himself a prophet begin to “create God in his own image” by forming private organizations and ministries only to make more money by deceiving the people. The core value of religion is truth hence religious leaders and all adherents must take this mission above every material gains. Whatever is in the dark would be brought to light even though the real intentions of human operations are not written in the face. Nigeria is like a mirror through which the external world access the whole of Africa. The outside world is saying a lot of negative things about Nigeria. We cannot allow this to continue hence the Christians and Muslims must come together to present to the world a Nigeria that is different from their negative minds. This can happen if only we can practise the virtues of honesty, sincerity, frankness and transparency as enshrined in the Holy Bible and the Holy Qur’an. Religion could serve as a mirror that should reflect the true reality of a nation. If Christians and Muslims work together in truth and sincerity to promote peace, the name of God would be glorified on earth. May we all become the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:14). May God use us to address the distress in a world where no one is sure of tomorrow because of the daily threat to human life.

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