

INDEPENDENCE AS FLAIR AND BLIGHT

A guest editorial

by

Hilary “BrownBard” Inyang

Independence is configured existence without excessive attachment to stakes, figures and sticky circumstances. It is of various species: political, physical, economic/financial, intellectual (mental), religious and emotional. Factorial combinations of various varieties of independence may signal the attainment of maturity of a person or entity. From a ground state of restraints and constraints, independence is rarely won without confrontations as in severance of master-servant strings, wars of independence, exits of prodigal children, renunciations by past believers and damaging divorces. Independence is a rather eclectic quantity with fancies, hopes, scars, debts, foreclosures, crashes, endowments, credits and nostalgia.

Political independence exhibits many facets and intrigues with fine prospects and flops. Freedom is in the bidder’s slogans but may not be reasonably attained. Still, there are sacrifices of assets ranging from the tangible to lives lost for good. There are fights for independence with side-arms, mortars, bows and arrows, swords, rifles, bombs and cannons. If they win, they subsequently celebrate anniversaries in parks, squares and streets: so many cute uniforms in parades with proclamations of national aspirations and achievement, some of which may not be genuine! Colonizers have left physically but has political independence translated to economic independence? That question with reference to the “independent” nations export/import ratio, productivity index and national consciousness, should be answered by the pedigreed folks being dropped off by limousines at independence celebrations.

Then, there’s independence of thought and ideas which is the brand that hegemony detests. At most, the king allows his advisers to dabble in it within tight bounds. It is much worse for thinkers from vassal states. The king’s gestapo, aided at times by Kapos, may be ready to break the bones of independent thinkers for their indulgence in unsanctioned thoughts. Socrates and others of less renown still proclaim their intellectual independence in hallowed graves. Repressors of independent thought have historically ignored its utility as the spinner of civilization and cultural diversity.

Colonialism has been the fair target of fights for independence with much expense of lives. Many national flags have red segments to signify bloody independence fights. Physical or political independence may not guarantee intellectual and economic independence as exemplified by “banana republics” that still depend on their colonial masters for direction, or adult children whose personal sustainability plans factor in large financial grants by their aged parents. Independence is rarely a stroll on the streets of Idyll. There have been post-independence coups, and many minions who fought hard for freedom, a profound cousin of independence, have sought shelter back in their patron’s fold after winning independence.

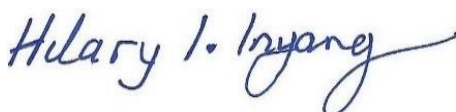
Emotional independence is a fluctuating quantity. Just review the “break-up” dynamics of some love-birds: alternating attachments and detachments with words of love and hatred in the mix! Matters of the heart construct emotional independence and other terminations of deals. The courts may step in to specify and enforce some aspects of this brand of independence, especially, on finances and contacts between the feuding parties. Children may seek emotional independence from their parents and vice-versa at times. Some do that noisily while still tethered to the other party’s finances. Financial independence is a very tough target

that roams bidders through smooth or will investments, temptations, tribulations and at times, reasonable delight.

Closely connected to intellectual independence is spiritual independence, the posture of direct engagement with Divinity without excessive interference by mortals such as prophets of all ilk and uncertain holiness and sincerity. Just too many folks have been deceived by fake messiahs! They are rarely in the wilderness these days but more often, in gilded chambers fit for kings. Fair to think that direct dealings with the divine will reduce shenanigans in this world with reasonable benefits to humankind!

Born poets and others created by circumstance have been there since Antiquity, to exhort subjugated races, castes and communities to independence with their pens and voices. Among them have been towncriers calling for serfs to volunteer and overthrow hegemonious barons; and Socrates affirming independence of his thoughts before biased and haughty juries. Paul Laurence Dunbar, the revered African-American poet of the late 19th Century, penned in his poem - **Sympathy**, “*I know why the caged bird beats his wing till its blood is red on the cruel bars, for he must fly back to his perch and cling*”. Every living thing bids for freedom but must deal with the matter of independence. Some poets like Williams Ernest Henley, proclaim their independence as in his poem - **Invictus** in which he states “*I am the master of my fate*” as an unlinked counter to Jane Hirshfield’s observation in her poem - **What Binds Us**, that “*there are names for what binds us: strong forces. Weak forces*”.

Then, in his poem - **The Spirit of Independence**, Kurt Hearth confirms the interest of many mortals to catch and constrain others to their orbits: “*upon me, many have attempted to impose their wills. Successful only at inviting failure*”. That is because the subjugated often fights back and accepts the risks of doing so as Claude McKay acknowledges in his poem - **If We Must Die** by ending with the lines- “*like men we’ll face the murderous cowardly pack, pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!*”. Didn’t Maya Angelou affirm her independence, heritage and pride by stating in her poem - **Still I Rise**, “*cause I walk like I’ve got oil wells pumping in my living room*”. Independence is a gem to own.



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SERVING AT THE PLEASURE OF MORTALS

by

Hilary “BrownBard” Inyang

Yes, that variety of freedom
called independence, is cute.
Flowers without attachment
to any pompous stalk or stem,
own credit for their splendor.
No stem there to make claims!

The mortal’s pleasure fluctuates,
even with treats unchanged.
Call it boredom if you may,
but it is much more like mischief.
Hegemony is in the mix
of a mortal’s urge to exploit.

Every servant dangles on a rope
that the honcho holds with glee.
A swing there and a swing here
while his/her pleasure is availed.
Which species of a mortal’s mood
is constant with normal routines?

There are slides and flips
in every mortal’s displays:
recession, stagnation and gains
with countenances to match.
Cycles of tip-toes and runs
drag the dependent along.

There are cords to be cut
for real freedom to avail.
Do you get the touted brand
when sharecropping is still intact
or seek to swivel around
without leashes as restraints?

Sojourner, admire but detach
from any ruthless, fuming top.
Configure and own your means!
Hammers and nails must be acquired
to construct one’s own abode,
one without stringing to dons.

IN DEFENCE OF INDEPENDENCE

by

Hilary “BrownBard” Inyang

Everyone of natural birth,
was dropped on this earth
with just an umbilical cord
that was later severed.
Even as a twin or triplet,
each baby bears individual trauma.

The birth of a genuine nation
as traumatic as it may be,
holds promise for later flair.
That entity must however, be
devoid of untoward foibles
and independent of vile interests.

Power mongers and even,
some jurisdiction elements,
lay out lame excuse that
“Independence will retard them”.
How convenient when claimants
in the upper realm, hold freedom!

To dispense the same freedom
that they hold to the rest,
scares them to their bone marrows.
They envisage and fear
congestion of freedom’s plots
that would reduce their holdings.

Like parents of any species,
arguing about independence
of their ward, there is surely
self-interest of a kind,
behind the expressed rationale.
Just track this world’s resources!

In defence of independence,
we hereby, loudly re-affirm
that every human being was born
equal and must live as such:
neither harm nor demean
to neighbors of any persuasion.

SENSIBILITIES OF THE SENTINELESE

by

Hilary “BrownBard” Inyang

Their acumen, we can't deny.
We adduce their silky approach
to every entreaty to succumb.
Prepared for calm or affray,
but nonchalant on their beach.
We approach to our demise.

An island barricaded to fight
intrusion by blighting fronts,
all in defence of serenity.
Nature must truly love them:
the Sentinelese on their island
that even the waves, defend.

Civilization: of which brand?
Is it the one that tames
with intent to later enslave
or the very elusive brand
that would equitably share
freedom across land and sea?

Real doubt of friendliness
in the approaching invader's pitch
and handwave are strong
in the Sentinelese mind.
All approaches are to dominate,
not to embrace and befriend.

The vicious rain of arrows
on anyone who dares to approach
nature's last fenced camp:
that is the steady response
of the sensible Sentinelese
They retrieve gifts and retreat.

Spartan in their nakedness,
except for their dark skin,
they savor nature's gifts
of the blooming forest, the sandy beach
and the freedom to run wild.
Approach them at your own risk.