



Humans and the de-creation of God in the contemporary society



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The contemporary era witnesses a profound shift in humanity's relationship with the concept of God, characterised by the de-creation of traditional religious frameworks. This paper provides an overview of this phenomenon, tracing its background in the context of socio-cultural, philosophical, and scientific developments. The aim of this study is to comprehensively explore the de-creation of God in contemporary society, with three main objectives: analysing the contributing factors, examining its implications on religious institutions and spiritual practices, and investigating alternative expressions of spirituality. Employing a multidisciplinary approach, the literary method involves a synthesis of scholarly literature from sociology, philosophy, theology, and the natural sciences. Findings reveal the complex interplay of secularisation, scientific rationalism, cultural pluralism, and ethical critique in shaping the contemporary landscape of religious belief and spirituality. Despite the challenges posed to traditional religious institutions, the emergence of new spiritual movements and ethical frameworks signifies a potential for creative reimagining and exploration of human spirituality. In conclusion, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamic interplay between culture, belief, and meaning-making in contemporary society, shedding light on the transformative processes reshaping humanity's conception of God.

Contribution: This study provides a deeper understanding of the changing dynamics of modern spirituality and religious belief, bringing valuable insights into the process of de-creation of God in the contemporary society. It prompts theological reflection on the impact of secularisation, scientific rationalism, and cultural pluralism, while exploring alternative spiritual expressions.

Keywords: de-creation of God; concept of God; theology; contemporary society; secularism; spirituality.

Introduction

The de-creation of God in contemporary society is shaped by a range of socio-cultural, philosophical, and scientific elements. Socio-cultural issues encompass the movement towards secularism and the gradual decline of conventional values as a result of globalisation and postmodernism (Ugochukwu 2023; Zekrist 2023). The emergence of the digital society has brought about a reconfiguration of power dynamics, since digital religion poses a challenge to traditional religious beliefs (Ugochukwu 2023:70–75). From a scientific perspective, Christianity undergoes a process of self-secularisation, supported by neuroscientific studies that advocate for the dismantling of dogmatic language in order to better resonate with contemporary generations (Dockendorff 2020:9–10). These elements jointly contribute to the reassessment of religious beliefs and the waning impact of traditional religious conceptions in modern culture, rather than the evolution of God.

Barcari (2023:20) argues that in modern society, the concept of God undergoes metamorphoses rather than evolution, focussing on this aspect rather than discussing evolution. The impact of globalisation and secularisation has resulted in the rise of novel religious movements and spiritual discussions. These modifications present a challenge to existing cultural beliefs and provide individuals with a more comprehensive understanding of their role in society through platforms such as advertising (Sokołowska 2019). Cipriani (2011:149) argues that although conventional religious values may be experiencing a crisis, there is a noticeable trend towards personalised spirituality and a renewed presence of religion in both public and private domains. According to Portier (2012:193), this change does not indicate an evolution of God, but rather a change in how religious beliefs and practices are understood and expressed in our current multicultural and

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multi-religious society. Portier (2012:193–205) contended that the development of religion in present-day France should not be seen as a stalemate where modernity progresses while religion declines. He argued that the reduction of the narrow-minded worldview has not resulted in the disappearance of faith as projected by Auguste Comte whose theory of human development, encompassing three stages – theological, metaphysical, and scientific – has been challenged by contemporary religious resurgence. Contrary to Comte's prediction of religion's decline, the world has witnessed a sustained religious presence (Ekeke 2011:198). Comte envisioned a progression from attributing knowledge to supernatural beings to embracing scientific reasoning. However, this vision has not materialised as anticipated. Comte's hope for a society devoid of religious influence appears unrealistic given the enduring significance of religious concepts like hope, faith, and trust in contemporary discourse (Bourdeau 2011:2). This discrepancy underscores the complexities of societal evolution and the enduring presence of religious thought, contrary to Comte's predictions (Ekeke 2011:198). It has instead opened up opportunities for a renewed growth of religion, often manifesting as an expanding 'spirituality' in both personal lives and public discourse.

Arguing on the nature of God in contrast to Ogbonnaya's (2022) perspective on the dual nature of God as both Spirit and matter, Ekeke and Nwosu (2023:74) contend that individuals perceive God, the omnipotent and eternal Supreme Being, in various ways. His connection with humanity evokes reverence and leads to diverse religious doctrines that portray him in distinct manners which may also include evolution. While certain individuals may not regard God as a distinct entity, others designate God by unique human appellations. Furthermore, Ekeke and Nwosu (2023:79) argue that the existence of God cannot be scientifically defined, and the contention persists that the God we are referring to is not one of multiple god species found in different parts of the world. In Africa, there is a belief held by some that God created everything, even the primordial and so such a Being (Supreme Being) cannot evolve.

The aim of this study is to thoroughly investigate the de-creation of God in modern society. This will be achieved through three main objectives: analysing the concept of and the reasons that contribute to the de-creation of God in the society, studying the effects it has on religious organisations and spiritual activities, and exploring alternative forms of spirituality.

To achieve this purpose, the paper employed the literary research methodology. The literary method encompasses a comprehensive approach that integrates scholarly literature from various fields such as sociology, philosophy, religion, theology, and the natural sciences.

The concept of God

The question of, is there God or does God exist has been answered in the affirmative long ago as God was already there

before all things. However, the evolving concept of the Supreme Being, whether this God ascends to a higher or descends to a lower status, is part of the new challenges faced by religious believers, including the question of the very meaningfulness of belief itself. If not well addressed, the religious believers may extremely represent some ways of supporting atheism, agnosticism, scientific rationalism or even non-theistic spiritualism as may be anchored on contemporary modernisation and scientism. Achieving the focussed aim here, therefore, begins from the knowledge of what or which kind of God is the research studying before getting into diverse concepts of the same God from where one gets to the point of whether such creator-God remains unchangeable or can yield to evolution. What kind of God then?

Originating from anthropological and religious studies, the concept of the High God represents a supreme deity prevalent among non-literate cultures in regions like North and South America, Africa, Northern Asia, and Australia. Described as transcendent and associated with the sky, the High God lacks graphic representations and is often linked to natural phenomena like thunder or celestial bodies (Linsley 2022). Across various cultures, the High God is perceived as the creator of heaven and earth, with interpretations varying from masculine to sexless. While some scholars argue for its ancient origins predating pantheons, others suggest Christian influence in its development. Christian missionaries, with their monotheistic perspective, may have influenced interpretations, prompting further scholarly investigation (Unaegbu & Ezeigbo 2013).

Above all, God is the Being or Spirit that is worshipped as the creator of the universe especially in Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and even African Traditional Religion (ATR), among others. Many simply view the ultimate reality as One Above, the Sacred, the Supernatural, and the Self-Existent, the Absolute or God. This god is conceived as not only higher but the highest God as others now are messengers to the Most High. He is the ruler of the universe and source of all moral authority. He is so believed to have attracted attributes defining him in many languages and instances as though readily to give answer to the, 'what kind of God question'. The omnipresent and everlasting Supreme Being is perceived in many manners. According to Ekeke and Nwosu (2023):

To a significant degree, the underlying belief about God is not only that there exists anything, such as a concept, ideal, force, or intentional inclination, that can be referred to as God; but in addition, there exists a self-sustaining, self-aware, individual entity, who is the source of all things and surpasses the entire creation, while also being present inside every aspect of it. (p. 78)

God is universally recognised as the supreme or ultimate reality in all religions, surpassing the entirety of his creation. The term 'God' refers to a supreme entity who is revered as the creator and ruler of the universe, with absolute power, wisdom, and goodness. That notwithstanding, the immanent and transcendent nature of the Almighty God has, for some time, been misunderstood for which were accusations of being a Deus Remotus or Deus Otiosus, a withdrawn God especially

when the western anthropologists and missionaries discredited African concept of the Most High amid lesser deities in-charge of ministries as messengers or subordinates and with other sorts of spirits who help the forward-move of the divine ministry. Furthermore, ATR illustrates this concept and well explains a class of monotheism describable as, 'diffused monotheism' in which the Supreme Being is worshipped directly but more elaborately through his divinities. Iwuagwu (1998:76) calls it, 'a mediatorial religiosity in which the Deity according to social convention, is approached through a hierarchy of intermediaries'. This may be a part of the reasons in the bid of ameliorating the timing of executing the rigid justice which distinguishes ATR apart from extreme reverence for God.

The concept of God is a unique one as God unlike infinite objects is a necessary Being. It is highly likely that the belief in God or gods continues to be central to most, if not all, world religions. However, there exist diverse perspectives or interpretations of God, which are inevitably shaped by human thought and understanding, including dualism (only two gods opposed to each other), polytheism (a plurality of personal gods), and henotheism (believing in multiple gods while focussing on one deity). Monotheism asserts the existence of a single God. Pantheism views God as a personal entity, whereas panentheism sees God as transcending the universe. Deism, akin to theism, acknowledges one God but denies divine intervention. Absolute monism, akin to pantheism or panentheism, perceives God as an absolute unity manifested in a seemingly diverse universe. The views should not elude agnosticism which purports that the truth about God is not known and then atheism, denying God's existence, up to naturalism, which is simply atheism expressed positively. The atheist, for instance, does not think that God created, rather that the natural order of things is just self-existent. The concepts are used here to connect the evolution which is consistent declension of the 'being' of this discussion, God.

Therefore, such self-existing concept links the thought which holds that God evolves as a more appropriate philosophy. Following Charles Darwin's publication of 'On the Origin of Species' in 1859, creationism garnered renewed interest among conservative religious groups. Despite scientific acceptance of evolution within two decades, some Churches eventually adopted it. Even scientific creationists acknowledge a creator but question the literal interpretation of Genesis. Both creationist camps reject biological evolution, asserting that changes within species or negative mutations do not lead to the emergence of higher or more complex species. However, Teilhard de Chardin's (1969) central concept which posits that evolution is a purposeful and guided progression towards greater complexity and consciousness could be seen as an interconnectedness between evolution and creationism. This progression, according to Teilhard de Chardin (1969), culminates in the 'Omega Point', a state of ultimate unity with the divine. This worldview combines scientific and religious viewpoints, suggesting that creation and evolution are not contradictory but rather interconnected within a deliberate divine design. Can God undergo changes that

result in the evolution into a species that is either lower or simpler, or into a species that is higher or more complex? Is this idea compatible with the theory of biological evolution, which is disputed by all creationists? Keeping creation idea juxtaposed with evolution, reemphasises the need for craving to know whether or not God evolves as closer to human creativity. The attempt to uncover truth may intersect with cultural individualism and pluralism, the decrease in religious affiliation, the secularisation of public institutions, the increase in atheism and secular humanism, scientific rationalism, and advancements in science, leading to the emergence of non-theistic spirituality or similar concepts. These developments aim to explore the potential evolution of God. Nevertheless, in a pluralistic society, it can be challenging to provide equal treatment for all individuals and ideas. However, it is crucial to make an earnest attempt to safeguard the right of every person to promote their own religion or philosophy by honourable methods. This challenge has led to research into whether God evolves, especially in an era when humanists and various atheists often view faith in God, particularly through the lens of creation, as a potential obstacle to fully realising human potential.

Understanding the de-creation of God in contemporary society

The de-creation of God in contemporary society refers to the process through which traditional conceptions of divinity, religious authority, and spirituality are challenged, reinterpreted, or rejected within modern cultural contexts. It involves shifts in societal attitudes towards organised religion, advancements in scientific understanding, cultural pluralism, and the emergence of alternative spiritual expressions.

De-creation in this research is reemphasised as human's attitude of re-creating the concept of God. Already put forward, anthropomorphism or imagined attributes of God are created by humans and are humans' way of creating God as found in the effort to reflect somewhat a philosophy of religion or a critical reflection of religious beliefs up to the God of all religions. From the reviewed concepts of God, this work has established the hand of humans in creation directly or indirectly of God-figures which agrees with Durkheim's (1912) view. The contemporary society is the society of now and one of urbanisation, globalisation, and even of robotics, all brought about by modernism and scientism. In other words, it is full of either creationism or better put, de-creationism. No doubts, modernism and scientism have come with own merits as well as demerits so to say. Firstly, one of such demerits is nearly the over-enquiring attitude of humans about all things and beings, including God, which leads to odd-excesses. Secondly, de-creation of God also stems from 'thought of pre-existence' procured from evolution. Evolution, a cornerstone of modern biology, suggests that living beings derive from preexisting types with differences arising from successive generations. Evolutionists now focus not on proving evolution's existence, but on its implications for knowledge acquisition, regardless of content (Encyclopaedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite 2010).

The relationship between humanity and the concept of God has been a central theme throughout history, deeply influencing cultures, societies, and individuals. In contemporary society, the dynamics of this relationship have undergone significant shifts, leading to the emergence of a complex phenomenon often referred to as the 'de-creation of God'. This term encapsulates the various ways in which traditional notions of divinity, spirituality, and religious authority are being challenged, reinterpreted, or even rejected altogether.

The de-creation of God is characterised by a complex interaction of socio-cultural, philosophical, and scientific factors. An important determinant is the increasing prevalence of secularism and the diminishing influence of established religious institutions in numerous regions across the globe. With the growing secularisation of societies, the power and significance of conventional religious institutions and ideas decrease, making room for a wider range of spiritual and belief systems. This phenomenon is notably evident in Western countries; however, it can also be observed in diverse cultural contexts.

In contemporary society, the de-creation of God has become a subject of profound interest across various disciplines. This part of the paper explores the socio-cultural, philosophical, and scientific factors contributing to this phenomenon. The discussion integrates perspectives from sociology, philosophy, and science to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay shaping contemporary perceptions of divinity.

Socio-cultural factors

Societal shifts in values, beliefs, and practices play a significant role in the de-creation of God. According to Berger (1967), modernisation and secularisation processes lead to the privatisation of religion, relegating it to the realm of individual choice rather than a societal norm. As societies become increasingly diverse and pluralistic, traditional religious frameworks are challenged by alternative worldviews and ideologies (Bruce 2002). Moreover, globalisation facilitates cultural exchange and exposure to diverse religious traditions, leading to a relativisation of religious truth claims (Giddens 1990). This agrees with Bauman (2000) in his work 'Liquid Modernity'. He argues that the present era of modernity is characterised by fluidity, perpetual transformation, and the disintegration of conventional frameworks. This 'liquidity' results in more personal autonomy but also generates instability, unpredictability, and a pervasive feeling of vulnerability. In this era of fluid modernity, individuals are compelled to constantly adjust and reinterpret their identities in a swiftly evolving social environment, where consumption and network-oriented connections hold considerable influence.

As religion seems to cover everywhere, scientism reacts as well with some philosophies resulting to this ubiquitous attitude. Again, from another angle, is the idea of different world religions counter conversion strategy of penitents.

This may have prompted Ogbu Kalu's local vision of 'the battle of the gods'. He recalled the rapid expansion of Christianity and her overtake of ATR infected Nigeria at least the Igbo (Eastern Nigeria). Such observation aligns with that of Sigmund Freud in describing God and religion as creation of human imagination. Also, Durkheim's argument that what people call the voice of god is nothing but voice of humans. Notwithstanding that, a German scholar, Daniken dismissed spirituality or spiritism absolutely when he opined that gods do not exist in his reason that what humans call gods are nothing but fellow humans made of flesh and blood (cited in Osuafor 2000:1).

The rise of secularism and the decline of religious institutions further contribute to the de-creation of God (Taylor 2007). Secularisation theorists argue that as societies become more secular, religious beliefs lose their explanatory power, and individuals turn to secular sources for meaning and guidance (Wilson 1966). Additionally, the emergence of new forms of spirituality, detached from organised religion, reflects a shifting landscape of belief systems (Heelas 2000). It can therefore imply that it is not that God evolves but that societies and cultures change as a result of these socio-cultural factors.

Philosophical factors

Philosophical critiques of traditional theological concepts have also fuelled the de-creation of God in contemporary discourse. The dilemma of evil, for example, poses fundamental inquiries regarding the presence of a kind and all-powerful deity in the presence of pain and unfairness. (Mackie 1955). Existentialist thinkers such as Nietzsche (1882) proclaimed the 'death of God', asserting that the decline of religious belief entails a crisis of meaning and value in human existence. Furthermore, one can picture the observation and pronouncement of 'the death of God' by Friedrich Nietzsche. It is arguable here that these arguments firstly protect the belief in God instead of otherwise as intended by the propounders of de-creation of God. For instance, if there were no god, Friedrich Nietzsche would not have declared one dead in his 'Death of God' speculation. This individual, a German classical scholar, philosopher, and cultural critic, is widely regarded as one of the most significant thinkers of modern times because of his efforts to expose the underlying impulses behind religion, morality, and philosophy. He carefully considered the implications of secularism's triumph during the Enlightenment, reflected in his observation that 'God is dead', perhaps intending to diminish the popularity of religion, whether traditional or Western. However, this only highlighted loopholes and misunderstandings in his views for many people. It is observable though that those expressions humanly made either consciously or unconsciously when it comes from the so-called enlightened minds may deceive at least the unenlightened into either disbelief or de-creation of the all-knowing and most excellent self-existing God.

Furthermore, advancements in philosophical naturalism and atheism challenge supernatural explanations of the universe

(Dennett 2006). Atheist philosophers like Dawkins (2006) argue that scientific progress undermines religious faith by providing naturalistic explanations for phenomena traditionally attributed to divine intervention. Moreover, critiques of religious epistemology question the rational basis for belief in God, advocating for a secular, evidence-based approach to knowledge (Hume 1779).

Scientific factors

Scientific discoveries and advancements have reshaped humanity's understanding of the cosmos, contributing to the de-creation of God. The theory of evolution, proposed by Darwin (1859), challenged religious creation narratives by offering a naturalistic account of the diversity of life on Earth (Dawkins 1986). Cosmological theories, such as the Big Bang Theory, provide scientific explanations for the origin and development of the universe without recourse to divine causation (Guth 1997).

Moreover, neuroscience and psychology offer insights into the human mind, suggesting that religious experiences and beliefs can be understood as products of cognitive processes and social conditioning (Boyer 2001; Dennett 2006). Neurotheological studies explore the neural correlates of religious experiences, challenging the notion of a transcendent, external deity (Newberg & Newberg 2012).

It is clear from the foregoing that the de-creation of God in contemporary society is a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by socio-cultural, philosophical, and scientific factors. Societal changes, philosophical critiques, and scientific discoveries have collectively contributed to a re-evaluation of traditional religious beliefs and narratives causing some religious bodies to think of tweaking the doctrine of God, not that God evolves, because the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient God cannot change as it is written 'Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens' (Ps 119:89). 'The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever' (Is 40:8). 'I the Lord do not change' (Mt 3:6). 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away' (Mt 24:35). Speaking from apologetic perspective, understanding these dynamics is essential for navigating the complexities of modern spirituality and fostering dialogue across diverse worldviews.

Implications of the de-creation of God on religious institutions, belief systems, and spiritual practices

The de-creation of God in contemporary society has profound implications for religious institutions, belief systems, and spiritual practices. This part of the work delves into the multifaceted impacts of this phenomenon, drawing from research across sociology, theology, and anthropology to provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolving landscape of religion in the modern world.

Impact on religious institutions

Religious institutions, once central to societal cohesion and identity, face significant challenges in the wake of declining belief in God. As fewer individuals identify with traditional religious affiliations, churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues grapple with dwindling membership and financial support (Chaves 2020). The loss of congregants undermines the social and financial infrastructure upon which religious organisations rely, prompting shifts in operational strategies and outreach efforts (Iannaccone 1998).

Moreover, the de-creation of God necessitates theological adaptation within religious institutions. Progressive religious leaders engage in theological revisionism, reinterpreting sacred texts and doctrines to accommodate contemporary sensibilities (Cone 1970). Conversely, conservative factions within religious communities may double down on orthodox beliefs in response to perceived threats to traditional values (Smith 1998). These theological tensions contribute to intra-religious debates over doctrine, morality, and social ethics (Martin 1969).

Impact on belief systems

Belief system here involves God, important values and a good acceptable culture, all are herein examined under this sub-head.

The de-creation of God reshapes individual and collective belief systems, fostering a diversification of spiritual worldviews. Many individuals, disillusioned with organised religion, turn to secular humanism, atheism, or agnosticism as alternative frameworks for understanding existence (Zuckerman 2009). Others embrace eclectic spiritual practices, drawing inspiration from diverse religious traditions, New Age philosophies, and Eastern spirituality (Heelas & Woodhead 2005).

Furthermore, the decline of belief in a transcendent deity challenges traditional conceptions of morality and purpose. Without divine authority as a moral anchor, individuals and societies grapple with questions of ethical relativism and existential meaning (Bloom 2017). Secular ethics, grounded in humanistic principles of empathy, reason, and social justice, emerge as viable alternatives to religious moral frameworks rooted in the Bible for Christians (Singer 2011).

It is true that there are recognised religions of humankind referred to as surrogate or pseudo-religions, which claim not to believe in God or gods. But apart from such open religions' claims, it may be shocking that even the pseudo-religions have at least an indirect connection with the Supreme Being that may be punctured in de-creation of God (Wotogbe-Weneka 2012:4). In essence, any puncture on the god-system would have a devastating effect on religion and religiosity as far as the fact remains that those atheistic claimant religions still perceive the ultimate reality from different perspectives. No wonder the expression of the word, 'divine' comprises

not only God but all manner of spirits which may include magic and mysticism. African Traditional Religion serves some examples here as the Most High has multiple divinities that are intermediaries between him (Supreme Being) and humans. Another example is humanism, as an ideology, that believes that any human problem must be solved by humans without recourse to any supernatural involvement called God, gods or any other spirit:

Hence it has been stated that in any case of human revolt against religion, the revolt is invariably not against religion as religion, but against a scheme of religions or something in religion that contradicts its basic spiritual moral claims. (Wotogbe-Weneka 2012:6)

The great and important value that has been religiously placed on people would be affected adversely. This implication of de-creating God would affect many religious people who are even ready to die for their belief system. It has been observed that to some religionists, religion remains more valuable than their life. Thus, accounting for the reason why followers of a certain religion often fight to defend it, attracting derogatory qualifications of even being considered by others as unreasonable, fierce and fanatical, and especially in situation where their religion is threatened by force or disregard.

Religion for sure is an outstanding way of life of humanity, who can hardly live without culture. The culture of religion hinges on God, whose mutilation would devastate the entire religious traditional culture of humankind globally. This agrees with the central assumption of Dupuy (2013) which asserts that the holy is important to human society and continues despite modernity's rationalising tendencies. The sacred balances logic, regulating violence, social order, and existential threats. Dupuy (2013) suggests that the sacred re-emerges in new ways, not that modernity can eliminate it.

Impact on spiritual practices

The de-creation of God catalyses innovation and adaptation within spiritual practices, fostering a reimagining of rituals, ceremonies, and communal gatherings. Secular rituals, such as mindfulness meditation and nature worship provide avenues for spiritual expression outside of traditional religious contexts (Taylor 2011). Moreover, digital technologies facilitate virtual communities and online forums for spiritual exploration and communal engagement (Campbell 2012).

Nwosu (2018) has argued that there is the wide acceptance of a spiritual world and pantheons to the point that when neglected would boomerang on the material or human world disastrously. The concept strongly holds that humanity bears significant responsibility for disregarding religious and supernatural commands. Consequently, the physical world perceives the consequences of these negligent and misguided choices as bad or problematic (Nwosu 2018:270). This observation highlights the impact of neglecting and the de-creation of the concept of God on the entire spiritual system of the universe. There is no dispute that the spiritual realm has authority over the physical body, and it has the

power to grant forgiveness, grace, and punishment to human wrongdoers at its own discretion. It is also even believed that in the spiritual strata, the Most High reserves right of overseeing the lesser divinities up to times of sin or offence (Nwosu 2018:271).

The preceding thought being accepted as true would vehemently prove that the de-creation of God, who invariably is believed to be creator and ultimate moral order controller would cause derangement in the entire universal spiritual strata and a greater percentage of the world religions. This will also affect religious believers and belief system itself.

Additionally, the de-creation of God prompts introspection and re-evaluation among adherents of organised religions. Religious seekers may engage in spiritual syncretism, blending elements of different faith traditions to create personalised belief systems (Hervieu-Léger 2000). Others undergo religious deconstruction, critically examining inherited beliefs and practices to discern authentic spiritual truths (Bell 2011).

It can be deduced from the foregoing that the de-creation of God has far-reaching implications for religious institutions, belief systems, and spiritual practices. As societal attitudes towards divinity evolve, religious organisations must adapt to changing demographics and theological paradigms. Individuals navigate a diverse landscape of belief options, seeking meaning and community amid shifting cultural currents. Understanding these implications is crucial for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to engage with the complex interplay between religion, culture, and society.

Impact on morality

The de-creation of God, regardless of how meticulously approached, could have detrimental effects on morality. Nwosu (2016) suggests that within a moral culture, there may arise hostility between proponents of science and religion. However, reconsidering this view implies viewing proponents of science as representatives of modernity, while those of religion symbolise morality. Yet, their seeming disconnects stem from human misunderstanding and misdeeds. In the absence of proper values alignment amid contemporary haphazard changes, modernity may thrive without morality. This modern lifestyle impacts all human endeavours, with moral decision-making influenced by societal pressures. This underscores the significance of morality in discussions of God's de-creation in the society.

Morality, defined as adherence to principles of right human conduct, is crucial for ensuring the habitability of Earth and averting societal catastrophes. The Caribbean narrative exemplifies this phenomenon; before European colonisation, the indigenous Caribbean population, in their resistance against enslavement, was ultimately exterminated via battles. Examining this narrative underscores the pressing need for morality in order to achieve harmonious cohabitation and human well-being (Akpogu 2019:15).

A long-standing debate among philosophers revolves around the dependency of morality on religion. While some argue that religion motivates moral behaviour, others assert that morality is independent, discernible through reason or conscience. Yet, conscience, the source of ideal morals, is believed to originate from God.

Human interdependence necessitates social systems like socialism, wherein communal ownership prevails. Acknowledging humans as society's most vital asset underscores the importance of human relationships for societal advancement and continuity. Criticised for its inhumane treatment, slavery serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of strained human relations.

This research posits that the consequences of de-creating God may surpass the horrors of historical slavery. Since religion, spirituality, and morality are all interconnected with the divine, the entire fabric of human relationships would face negative repercussions.

Examples of de-creation of God in contemporary society

The occurrence of the de-creation of God in modern society is evident through a range of observable patterns and cultural transformations throughout diverse domains of human existence. This section of the essay explores notable instances of the de-creation of God in contemporary culture, utilising sociological, cultural, and scientific insights to clarify the intricacies of this phenomena:

- **Declining religious affiliation:** One of the most conspicuous examples of the de-creation of God is the declining religious affiliation among populations worldwide. Numerous surveys and studies indicate a steady decrease in religious identification and participation, particularly in Western societies (Pew Research Center 2019). This trend is evident across different age groups, with younger generations exhibiting lower rates of religious adherence compared to their elders (Twenge et al. 2015). The rise of the 'nones', individuals who identify as atheist, agnostic, or religiously unaffiliated, reflects a growing disconnection from traditional religious institutions and beliefs (Hout & Fischer 2002).
- **Secularisation of public institutions:** Another example of the de-creation of God is the secularisation of public institutions and spaces. In many secular democracies, there is a clear separation between religion and state, with public policies and governance decisions based on secular principles rather than religious doctrines (Bruce 2011). Public education, for instance, increasingly emphasises secular curricula devoid of religious indoctrination, reflecting a commitment to pluralism and neutrality in matters of faith (Foltin 2006). Similarly, the legal recognition of same-sex marriage and the decriminalisation of blasphemy and apostasy underscore the diminishing influence of religious authorities in shaping public morality and legislation.

- **Rise of atheism and secular humanism:** A significant manifestation of the de-creation of God is the increasing prominence of atheism and secular humanism as alternative worldviews. Atheist and humanist organisations advocate for a naturalistic understanding of the universe, rejecting supernatural explanations for phenomena and emphasising scientific inquiry and rational discourse (American Humanist Association 2024). Prominent atheist authors and activists, such as Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris, have popularised secular perspectives on morality, meaning, and ethics, challenging the hegemony of religious discourse in public discourse (Dawkins 2006; Harris 2010).
- **Emergence of non-theistic spirituality:** While traditional forms of religious belief may be waning, there is a simultaneous emergence of non-theistic spiritualities that offer alternative frameworks for meaning-making and transcendence. Practices such as mindfulness meditation, yoga, and nature worship provide avenues for spiritual exploration and connection without reliance on traditional religious dogma (Heelas & Woodhead 2005). Moreover, secular rituals and ceremonies, such as secular weddings and celebrations of life, reflect a desire for communal bonding and existential reflection outside of religious contexts (Cimino & Smith 2007).
- **Scientific rationalism and naturalistic explanations:** Advancements in science and technology have contributed to the de-creation of God by offering naturalistic explanations for phenomena previously attributed to divine intervention. The theory of evolution by natural selection, proposed by Charles Darwin, provides a comprehensive account of the diversity of life on Earth without recourse to supernatural causation (Darwin 1859). Similarly, cosmological theories like the Big Bang Theory offer scientific explanations for the origin and development of the universe, challenging creation myths found in religious traditions (Guth 1997).

The above-stated examples illustrate the complicated nature of the de-creation of God in contemporary society. From declining religious affiliation to the rise of atheism and secular humanism, from the secularisation of public institutions to the emergence of non-theistic spiritualities, the de-creation of God manifests through diverse cultural, social, and intellectual phenomena. The aforementioned examples show that the dynamism of human societies has given rise to some forms of doctrinal changes by religious institutions and not that the Almighty God evolves. A comprehensive grasp of these illustrations is important in order to fully comprehend the intricate dynamics that exist between religion, culture, and societal transformation in contemporary society.

Alternative expressions of spirituality, ethics, and meaning-making in response to the de-creation of God

In response to the de-creation of God in contemporary society, alternative expressions of spirituality, ethics, and meaning-making have emerged, reflecting a diverse array of

human responses to existential questions such as the existence of humans, the existence of God and others. In this section of the work, the authors explore the evolving landscape of non-theistic and post-theistic belief systems, drawing insights from sociology, psychology, and philosophy to illuminate the many-sided nature of contemporary spiritual and ethical frameworks.

Emergence of non-theistic spiritualities

One prominent response to the de-creation of God is the rise of non-theistic spiritualities that eschew traditional notions of divine transcendence. Kurtz (2000) in his secular humanism, for instance, emphasises human agency and rational inquiry as the foundation for ethical decision-making and existential meaning. Humanist philosophers like John Dewey advocate for the cultivation of human flourishing and social justice without recourse to supernatural beliefs or religious dogma (Dewey 2013).

Moreover, secular forms of mindfulness and meditation offer avenues for spiritual growth and introspection divorced from religious doctrine (Kabat-Zinn 1994). Baer (2003) argues that mindfulness-based practices, rooted in Buddhist traditions, promote present-moment awareness and acceptance as means of reducing suffering and enhancing well-being (Baer 2003). These secular adaptations of contemplative practices appeal to individuals seeking spiritual fulfilment outside of institutionalised religion, thereby making the belief in God to wane. It should be clear that this is causing the attempt to repackage the doctrines of God in other to fit into the societal mould. It is not that there is any iota of fact that God evolves.

Post-theistic ethical frameworks

In the absence of belief in a transcendent deity, post-theistic ethical frameworks provide alternative foundations for moral reasoning and action. Ethical naturalism, rooted in philosophical naturalism, posits that moral values and principles emerge from human relationships and the natural world Harris (2010). From this perspective, morality is grounded in empirical observations of human flourishing and well-being rather than divine commandments.

Additionally, relational ethics underscores the interdependence of all entities and the significance of compassion and empathy in the process of making ethical choices (Noddings 2003). Relational ethicists like Gilligan (1982) argue that ethical responsibilities arise from our inherent relationships with others and the environment, fostering a sense of interconnectedness and mutual care. This relational approach to ethics challenges hierarchical and rule-based moral frameworks prevalent in traditional religious systems.

Meaning-making beyond theism

The de-creation of God has prompted individuals to explore alternative sources of meaning and purpose beyond religious paradigms. Existentialist philosophies, exemplified by the

works of thinkers like Sartre (1946) and Camus (1942), emphasise the human capacity to create meaning in the face of existential absurdity. Existentialists contend that individuals must confront the inherent meaninglessness of the universe and embrace personal freedom and responsibility in shaping their lives.

Moreover, narrative approaches to meaning-making highlight the role of storytelling and myth-making in constructing personal and collective identities (Frankl 1946). Narrative psychologists argue that individuals derive meaning from their life stories, weaving together past experiences, present circumstances, and future aspirations into cohesive narratives (McAdams 1993). This narrative orientation offers a flexible framework for understanding and navigating the complexities of human existence.

It could be very obvious that the de-creation of God has catalysed a rich tapestry of alternative expressions of spirituality, ethics, and meaning-making. Non-theistic spiritualities, post-theistic ethical frameworks, and narrative approaches to meaning offer diverse pathways for individuals and communities to navigate questions of ultimate concern in a secular age. Understanding these alternative perspectives is essential for fostering dialogue and cooperation across diverse worldviews and promoting human flourishing in an increasingly pluralistic society.

The way forward and conclusion

Peterson (2019:125–140) examined the swift assault and dismantling of postmodernism's foundational biblical ideas about sexual ethics and the order of the species as established by God in the first few chapters of Genesis, and argues that the traditional church plays a crucial role in countering postmodernism's deconstruction of God by upholding moral values, sexual ethics, and family centrality in contemporary society.

Furthermore, Meylahn (2009) argues that the traditional church can address the de-creation of God in society by embracing responsibility towards the other, as emphasised in sacred texts, fostering a global citizenship ethic. He considers that the sacred scriptures of the Judaic-Christian tradition play a crucial role in shaping a Christian identity that is accountable to others showing agapeic love.

Ultimately, the occurrence of the de-creation of God in the contemporary society demonstrates an intricate interaction of socio-cultural, philosophical, and scientific influences that are transforming humanity's connection with the divine. By conducting an examination of diverse contributing elements and illustrative instances, it becomes apparent that conventional conceptions of divinity, religious authority, and spirituality are currently facing scrutiny, reinterpretation, or outright rejection in contemporary society.

Although the de-creation of God presents difficulties for conventional religious institutions and belief systems, it also presents possibilities for imaginative reinterpretation and

investigation of spirituality. Various manifestations of spirituality, ethical frameworks, and existential philosophies arise as a result of the evolving religious milieu, hence promoting diversity and inclusiveness and not the evolution of God. The Almighty God of the Christianity does not change.

It is crucial to actively participate in open conversation and thoughtful analysis of the changing dynamics of religion and spirituality in modern society. This entails cultivating a sense of mutual respect and comprehension among individuals who possess varying beliefs and perspectives. Furthermore, there is a requirement for ongoing academic investigation into the intricacies of the de-creation of God, examining its consequences for human welfare, societal unity, and moral growth.

In order to progress, it is imperative to acknowledge and accept the wide range of human spiritual encounters, while concurrently advocating for the values of compassion, empathy, and ethical accountability in our interpersonal and societal engagements. Through fostering a culture that promotes open communication, investigation, and mutual regard, we may effectively negotiate the intricacies of the de-creation of God and work towards a society that is more inclusive and peaceful.

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Authors' contributions

The corresponding author, E.C.E., is responsible for conceptualisation of the idea, proofreading and editing, data arrangements, visualisation, methodology and data analysis and formatting aspects of this article. The second author E.E.N. contributed in the investigation, gathering of data, data curation and contributed in the literature review for this research.

Ethical considerations

This research article does not involve human subjects and therefore did not require ethical approval; however, a waiver was granted by the Ethical Research Committee, Faculty of Arts, University of Calabar, Calabar.

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The data for this article are not available for access by a third party except on permission.

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