



AFRICA-FRIDAY REFLECTIONS

"AFROCENTRIC THOUGHT"



DRAWING A PARALLEL BETWEEN AFRIKAN LEADERS IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CLIMATES, AND THE DANGERS OF GENERALIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY LEADERS IN EACH CLIMATE.

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“The Black skin is not a badge of shame, but rather a glorious symbol of national greatness.” – Marcus Garvey.

In the midst of everything that has been happening in South Afrika's political climate in the past few days, specifically former president Jacob Zuma, I could not help but look at the developments surrounding his troubles with the law using a different scope – one that is not solely political, but rather social too.

The problem with having one person represent an entire nation is that if that person fumbles that duty, it is assumed that their failure is not just their own, but the nation's in its entirety. Heads of state are in fact embodiments of whatever state they've been tasked with heading. So when that person fails at representing the state well, the state and its people are also regarded as failures. This is one of the many problems with politics.

Regional and continental politics also speak to this. The Afrikan continent is one that has become synonymous with leaders that use authoritarian rule, despite the fact that not all of its leaders use this style. This is why we have people in and outside of our continent labelling all our leaders as greedy and power-hungry individuals.

This is because leaders such as Angola's José Eduardo dos Santos; Eswatini's monarch family, the Mswatis; and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe have done such an exceptional job at demonizing Afrikan leadership, that people tend to forget or disregard the contributions of great leaders such as Burkina Faso's Thomas Sankara; Mozambique's Eduardo Mondlane and Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda. As a result of bad leadership, Afrikan politics and the leaders in it are generally considered failed establishments.

If one leader incites a bloody military coup; and the other one rules with an iron fist, starving and killing thousands in the process; while another steals state funds and resources in a kleptomaniacal fashion, it is instantly assumed that all Afrikan leaders carry out their administrations in the same way.

This does not just happen at a political level, but a social one too. There is a culture that has been germinating for a long time now in Afrikan societies – a culture of immorality, transgressive and un-Afrikan behaviour. Specific instances of such include the growing use of sex as a mercenary tool (prostitution); using the ability to purchase foreign clothing and car brands as a benchmark for success; and also the normalization of belittling and destroying one another as Afrikans.

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The first instance refers to encouraging young women to use their bodies as currency in an effort to have material wealth. The second instance is usually perpetuated by celebrities, and then adopted by the rest of society: purchasing brands such as Birkin; Louis Vuitton and Versace as a determinant of success. The irony being that the materials used in manufacturing these brands are of Afrikan origin. In essence, we're being pressured to buy products that would not even exist if it were not for the abundance of resources in our very continent – the Afrikan continent. The third instance is arguably the most destructive. I'll explain how:

In the past year or so, we have seen media become more actively involved in the portrayal of the Black community in a negative light. It has gone as far as even creating TV channels that show this. DSTv has a channel called Moja Love, which broadcasts very obscene and destructive content, and makes it readily available for the masses to consume. Some, if not all of the shows on the channel paint Black people as nothing more but violent and uncivilized people, with a knack for destroying each other and actually taking pleasure in it. Of course, it would be unwise, uninformed and misleading of me to say that this is not a reality in our community.

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Truth is, there are Black men and women who find joy and satisfaction in the pain of other Black men and women. However, what is wrong, is to portray the entire Black community as such. Channels such as Moja Love are a huge problem in Afrikan societies because they not only show our young Afrikan girls and women as promiscuous and willing to do anything for material wealth, but they also show content that paints our celebrities as advocates for doing

whatever it takes to be successful (using material and westernised standards of success).

Finally, the last of this immoral, transgressive and un-Afrikan trifecta is how the channel encourages destructive behaviour between Black people in an effort to increase ratings, essentially making money off of the deep-seated personal and societal issues that we have in our community.



Our media is basically a proponent for Afrikan menticide, and we willingly allow ourselves and our children to partake in it. Channels such as Moja Love and other destructive, anti-Afrikan media content get high ratings and publicity, while more constructive and pro-Afrikan media content such as that of Arise Black Child; Black Space; Ebukhosini Solutions; Mutapa and so many others are gagged from mainstream media. What's even more disturbing is that these media spaces are owned by Black people, as is the case with Moja Love. How is it that a conscious Black body that lives and breathes the same air as the rest of us; and has eyes and ears that see and hear the anarchy in our community, can willingly decide to be a part of the problem, and not the solution? Unless they're not Black Conscious.

The plain and simple truth is that having a body that looks Black, with Black features and a Black accent, does not necessarily mean that the person is Black Conscious. Black Consciousness requires you to not only look the part, but to also act the part. It's about taking pride in your identity as a Black person, and making sure to never betray that Blackness for any worldly idea or philosophy. Black Consciousness is spirit, infinite and eternal.

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Perhaps we need to understand that the portrayal of not only our political, but social climate too, is done in a negative light for the sole purpose of invalidating our greatness. If they showed the good that we do; and our potential, it would completely destroy the sky-scraping tower of lies that they have built about us. What we need to do is speak up about the beauty that lies in the work that so many of our leaders have done and continue to do for our continent.

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Not just heads of state, but even liberation figures such as Baba Anton Lembede; Baba Chris Hani; Mama Zanyiwe Madikizela; Mama Dulcie September and so many others in the Afrikan diaspora. Our societies also need pro-Black men and women such as Baba Simphiwe Sesanti; Sis' Ntsiki Mazwai; Mama Mmatshilo Motsei; Mama Tebogo Buntu and many others.

We need to know our history so that we're able to not only understand our current realities, but also provide solutions for the future.

"There is no time to waste. We must either unite now, or perish." – Julius Nyerere.

Lesedi.



Rebaone Tsatsinyane.