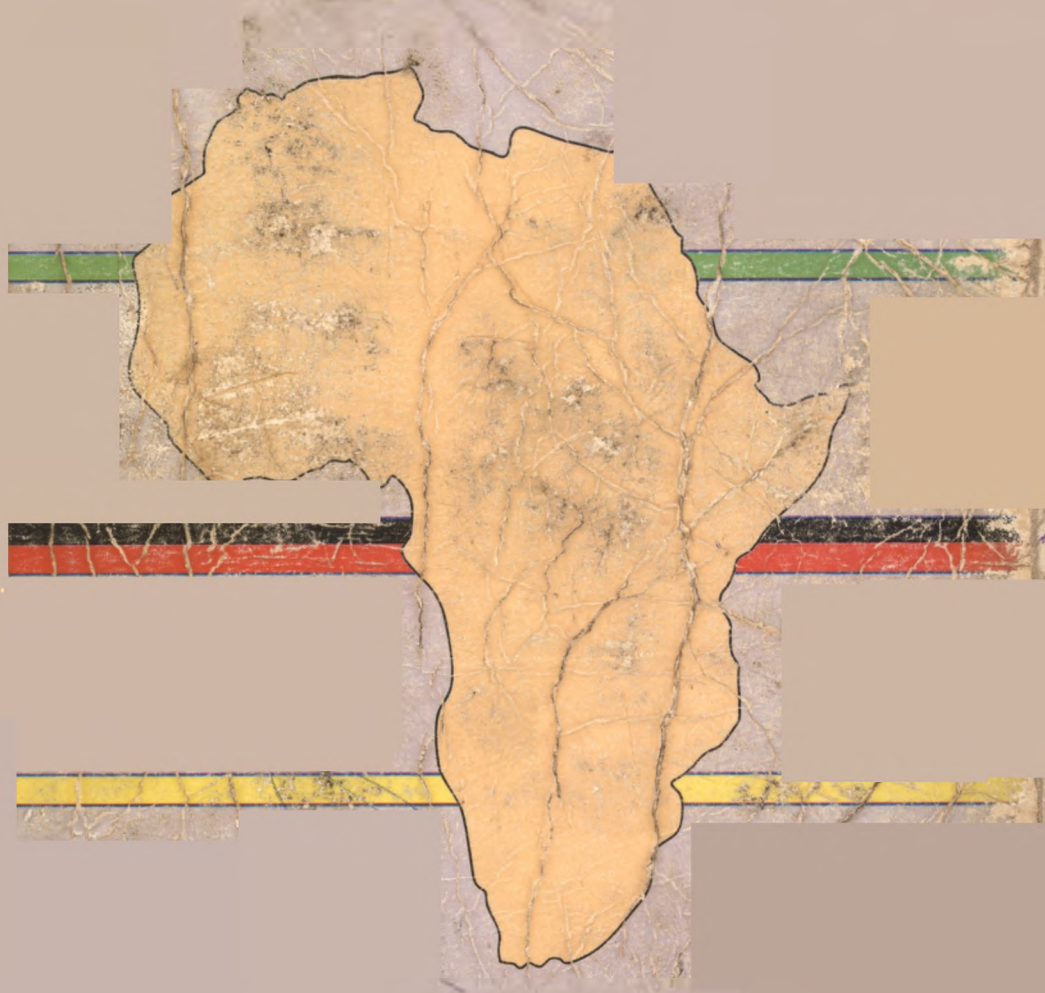


The Human Factor Approach to Development in Africa



Edited by
i G. Chivaura and Claude G. Mararike

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Vimbai G. Chivaura and Claude G. Mararike



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European Culture in Africa and Human Factor Underdevelopment

Vimbai Gukwe Chivaura

Introduction

Europe and Africa are two distinct societies. They are even antagonistic. They have different histories. They have given rise to different beliefs, cultures and institutions which impart diametrically opposite world-outlooks and missions to their peoples. Their sensibilities differ, so do their views concerning their relationship and encounter with each other in history.

To Europe, Africa is a source of 'raw materials' and Africans a source of cheap labour for white business enterprises. Part of Europe's fulfilment and business realizations in Africa, come out of maintaining this master-servant relationship between whites and blacks. Europe makes sure that this relationship goes on until it begins to look as if it were the natural order of things. In order to achieve this impression and conviction in Africans, it is therefore, necessary for Europe to destroy African history, culture, institutions and all traces of evidence which may indicate to Africans that they have not always been slaves of Europeans but masters of their own destiny. That way, the present set-up where the black man is servant of the white man can then continue without challenge, as if ordained.

The task before us then, as Africans, is to revisit our history and reconstruct it in order to rediscover the truth it contains about our immense ability to forge ahead as masters of our own lives. We cannot continue to go on like 'apes made by God to cut wood and draw water' for white people, as Gilroy, (1993:148), puts it.

History and culture: A reconstruction for liberation

Concerning history and the necessity for Africa to forge ahead on her own impetus, Malcolm X had this to say:

A race of people is like an individual man; until it uses its own talent, takes pride in its own history, expresses its own culture, affirms its own selfhood, it can never fulfill itself (1970:53).

Here, Malcolm puts emphasis on history and culture as factors that bind a people together as one, in action and destiny. History informs action and culture clarifies vision. It guides action towards a meaningful purpose. Again, Malcolm X explains how history informs action:

A man doesn't know how to act until he realizes what he's acting against. And you don't realize what you're acting against until you realize what they did to you (1970:55).

Malcolm X correctly suggests that, after we have understood why Europe destroyed African culture and institutions and replaced them by her own, we will then be in a position to know the appropriate action to take in order to free Africa's creative potential from continued repression and exploitation by Europe. According to Diop:

The time to draw [such] practical conclusions from years of studying African problems, [and] sum them up in formulae that are as clear as possible and easy to apply, has come (1978:2).

In that spirit, Malcolm insists on the importance of history and culture in Africa's freedom struggle and suggests further that:

We ... recapture our heritage and identity if we are ever to liberate ourselves from the bonds of white supremacy. We must launch a cultural revolution to unbrainwash an entire people (op.cit:54).

Malcolm takes great pains to explain how history and culture work. He explains as follows:

When you tell this black man ... who he is ... [and] what he had ... he'll look around and ask himself, 'Well, what happened to it, who took it away from us and how did they do it?' ... when you tell the black man ... what he once had, ... he only needs to look at himself now to realize something criminal was done to him to bring him down to the low condition that he's in today.

Once he realizes what was done, how it was done, where it was done, when it was done, and who did it, that knowledge in itself will usher in your action program (Ibid:54).

Malcolm continues:

Armed with the knowledge of our past, we can with confidence charter a course for our future. Culture is an indispensable weapon in the freedom struggle. We must take hold of it and forge the future with the past (Ibid:56).

Malcolm's suggestion that we revisit the past to know the present, brings to mind Achebe's reconstruction of the past in his novels to find out 'where we went wrong' and 'where the rain began to beat us' (1988:43).

Historical knowledge is precisely what Europeans destroy to make us lose our bearings and depend on theirs. There is the saying that those who ignore the lessons of history are bound to repeat it with all its mistakes. We are left with nothing to learn from when our history is destroyed. Europe then gives us her own history to depend on and chains us to her own future. We will be repeating history.

From the hard evidence of history, we must learn that European culture in Africa costs lives, human worth and minds. Then, we can and rely on the genius, originality and heritage of our own Human Factor (HF), to 'establish' our own 'centre' for 'cultural' reference (Malcolm, ibid: 55).

This cultural revolution, to borrow Malcolm's words:

will be the journey to our rediscovery of ourselves. History is a people's memory, and without a memory man is demoted to the level of the lower animals. When you have no knowledge of your history, you are just another animal ... you don't know who you are, you don't know what you are, you don't know where you are, and you don't know how you got here. But as soon as you wake up and find out ... you ... become somebody (Ibid, 55-56).

The feeling of inferiority that the white man has instilled in the black man and replaced with his own, will be removed by a balanced knowledge of oneself when the blackman knows from history what his contributions to science and civilization have been in the past, says Malcolm X (Ibid, 160). He would feel more like a human being. He would function more like a human being, in a society of human beings. It takes knowledge of history and one's past 'to eliminate' inferiority and regenerate confidence (Malcolm X: 160). Africa was 'the cradle of civilization from the evidence of history', Malcolm continues, and 'our culture and ... history ... are as old as man himself ... yet we know almost nothing about it' (Ibid, 154).

It is no accident that such a high state of culture existed in Africa and you and I know nothing about it. Why, the white man knew that as long as you and I thought we were somebody, he could never treat us like we were nobody. So he had to invent a system that would strip us of everything about us that we could use to prove we were somebody. And once he had stripped us of all human characteristics — stripped us of our language, stripped us of our history, stripped us of all cultural knowledge, and brought us down to the level of an animal — he then began to treat us like an animal, selling us from one plantation to another, selling us from one owner to another, breeding us like you breed cattle (Malcolm X: 54).

When you know history, you wake up,

[and] when you wake up and find out what this man here has done to you and me, you won't even wait for somebody to give the word (Malcolm X: 54).

By 'the man', Malcolm means Europe as a civilization and culture, an entity and historical identity, not individual persons. 'Not all of them are bad,' he says. 'There might be good ones. But we don't have time to look for them' (Malcolm: 54).

As Malcolm does, we too underscore this point to avoid distraction of focus from the crucial point we are making; that European culture in Africa is business and its toll on African life, brutal. Malcolm is not the only one making this point. Sembene Ousmane too, has sobering examples of European trade in human flesh:

As far as Africa is concerned, intellectual barriers have been erected ... by explorers, conquerors, [and] anthropologists...barriers which have lasted for centuries and the consequences of which we still see today. This misinformation justified and absolved the slave trade. That demographic drain ... estimated at 100 million deported ... One wonders how...this race did not disappear. This deduction of the vital forces, of the sound, young people, full of vitality, has

primary accumulation of capital for the benefit of the European... She has reaped from three centuries of slave trade the cultivation of corn, peanuts, manioc and cocoa. A poor compensation for one hundred million of her children gone forever (1979:2-3).

Europeans destroyed African culture and captured Africans to treat or sell as animals. They presented to the world, their plunder and destruction of African heritage as missions to civilize Africans and turn them into human beings. The British Commissioner in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* refers to the destruction of Igbo life, values and property as 'The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger' (1987:148). A British governor of Rhodesia in the 1950s defined the partnership between black and white as 'the horse and its rider' (Achebe, 1988: 23).

Such breaking in of savages, Europeans argued, was fraught with danger and risks to both the trainer and the animal. Extermination of Africans in the name of training them went on unpunished. In most cases in Rhodesia, for instance:

a white defendant accused of brutality did not need to appeal against his sentence. In March 1977 the press reported the case of a white farmer, Basil Rowlands, who kicked a 65-year-old labourer to death, and later pleaded that the man was not correctly planting maize pips along a furrow. V. J. Kock, the magistrate at Salisbury Regional Court, commented that 'although the consequences had been unfortunate he did not consider the assault a serious one' (More-King, 1989: 122).

Europeans were licenced in this way, to liquidate Africans who resisted being turned into business tools. Those who fought for freedom were called 'terrorists.' A Rhodesian farmer says, 'We were fighting for our country, for a beloved country. The terrorists? I don't really know WHAT they were fighting for' (More-King, 1989:77). Cecil John Rhodes, 'founder' of Rhodesia, urges Europeans to invade Africa and build an empire of European business, culture and civilization. In his article, 'Confession of Faith,' he writes:

Africa awaits us still, and it is our duty to seize every opportunity of acquiring more territory and we should keep this one idea steadily before our eyes that more territory simply means more of the Anglo-Saxon race, more of the best, the most human, most honorable race the world possesses (Davidson, 1984:9).

A former United States presidential candidate, Pat Buchanan, echoed Rhodes' words almost verbatim. He said:

our culture is superior. Our culture is superior because our religion is Christianity and that is the truth that makes men free (Kalamazoo Gazette: Sunday, September 12, 1993).

His appeal to Christianity must not fool us. Ian Smith quoted the scriptures too. Announcing UDI, the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, on 11 November 1965,

We have struck a blow for the preservation of justice, civilization, and Christianity and in the spirit of this belief we have this day assumed our sovereign independence. God bless you all (More-King, 1988:5).

A God-fearing man, Father Temples, supports European cultural invasion of Africa on the pretext that:

we cannot pretend that the Bantu are capable of presenting us with a philosophical treatise with an adequate vocabulary. It is we who must develop it ... [and] tell them ... their innermost conception of being (Songolo, 1981:159).

The very best minds of Europe — Christians, anthropologists, historians, statesmen, philosophers and men of letters, engaged their talents in the business of demolishing black culture and the African HF. David Hume, among the philosophers, wrote:

The Negro is naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual, eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturers among them, no arts, no science (Ngugi, 1981:14).

Hegel saw Africa as 'the unhistorical, undeveloped spirit still involved in conditions of mere nature, and the African [as] the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state' (Ibid:14). The brutal and virtually unsurpassable crashing blow on Africa, her people, civilization and culture, comes from Conrad, among men of letters. He views Africa as 'a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril' (Achebe, 1988:12). 'We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth,' he writes in *Heart of Darkness*:

an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet. We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and excessive toil (Achebe, 1988:5).

Anthony Trollope, the English novelist, knocks out the African HF with these words:

The African is idle, unambitious as to worldly position, sensual and content with little.... He despises himself thoroughly and would probably starve for a month if he would appear as a white man for a day (Ngugi, 1981:14).

European Marxists use different business tactics of removing the African HF and culture and putting theirs in place. Who would have suspected that to Maxim Gorky, the renowned Soviet humanist and father of socialist realism in art, Africans had no brains but base appetites and sexual perversions like those of the morally bankrupt European bourgeois? He writes:

In the field of science, the bourgeois is interested in the cheapest and most convenient ways and methods of exploiting the physical energies of the working class; science exists for the bourgeois only to the extent that it is capable of contributing to his enrichment, regulating the functions of his stomach and

intestines, and stimulating his sexual vigour. The bourgeois is incapable of understanding ... the fundamental mission of science to promote intellectual development, to aid the repair of the human physique which capitalist oppression has undermined, to convert inert matter into energy, to study the mechanism of the structure and growth of the human organism. In all this the modern bourgeois is as little interested as the savage of Central Africa (Alexandrov, 1987:37).

Like Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*, Gorky calls the very humanity of the black people...in question' and:

parades in the most vulgar fashion, prejudices and insults from which a section of mankind has suffered untold agonies and atrocities in the past and continues to do so in many ways and many places today (Achebe, 1988:15).

His call for freedom has no Africans in mind. As Ngugi says:

When [Europeans] talked of man they meant the European man, just as when Americans fought for independence on the basis of the inalienable rights of man, they obviously meant the Anglo-Saxon White Protestant, not the black man (1981:25).

Gorky's view of Africans as savages without values, matches that of Rhodesians who said:

These men are armed thugs, criminals bent on taking Africa back to another age, when it was known as the Dark Continent. To dignify them with the names like 'freedom fighters' and 'guerillas' is to afford them a status they do not and will never deserve (More-King, 1989:77).

Gorky clearly cherishes quite some unwholesome thoughts about Africa and shows the same incapability as other European schools of thought, to accept cultures other than their own as human. He has not, in Achebe's words:

rid [his] mind of old prejudices ... to look at Africa not through a haze of distortions and cheap mystifications but quite simply as a continent of people ... often highly gifted ... and ... strikingly successful in their enterprise with life and society (1988:18).

Another socialist, Mikhail Kurgantsev, laughs at the African past and what he calls:

the various assertions about the existence of 'the black man's soul' incognisable to the European, of the exceptional African Negro civilization, of the African's fundamental animosity towards scientific and technological progress and inability to wage class struggle, of the future of the continent being in preserving and consolidating the primitive and archaic forms of the traditional way of life ... (1983:43).

'Today,' he says, 'the reality of the continent poses new and difficult acute social problems, which cannot be solved by asserting and justifying the old way of life' [Ibid].

The future of Africa, according to him, lies in Leninist, African culture. 'The following well-known proposition of Lenin,' he suggests, 'is fully applicable to the African culture of today' and, he quotes:

The **elements** of democratic and socialist culture are present, if only in rudimentary form in **every** national culture, since in **every** nation there are toiling and exploited masses, whose conditions of life inevitably give rise to the ideology of democracy and socialism (Ibid:43).

Other Marxists, Lyudmila Aganina and Evgeni Chelyshev, listen to the rhythm and heartbeat of Africa with a Leninist stethoscope, rather than African first-hand experience. 'In the early stages,' they say, 'an important goal of [African] ... national liberation ... was the revival of the entire nation ... as a spiritual and social entity' (1983:25).

Beginning with the latter half of the 1960s, however, the social factor is shifted into the foreground ... An intricate interweaving of the struggle for ... national interests with the ... solution of social problems, the tenacity of ... traditional institutions, social diffusion which continues to exist despite the increased process of class differentiation ... conditions the complexity of the social development of many ... countries and ... creates ... various bourgeois ... doctrines (1983:25).

Culture, the spiritual and social entity which cements the entire nation together, and gives it human character and identity, is the factor Lyudmilla, Chelyshev and other Europeans are at pains to remove. Soyinka dramatizes this European cultural dehumanization of Africa in *Death and the King's Horseman* and the undying resolve of Africans to re-affirm it. He writes:

PRAISE-SINGER: ... the white slavers went; the white slavers came and went, they took away the heart of our race, they bore away the mind and muscle of our race. The city fell and was rebuilt, the city fell and our people trudged through mountain and forest to found a new home — but Elesin Oba do you hear me?

ELESIN: I hear your voice Olohun-iyó.

PRAISE-SINGER: Our world was never wrenched from its true course.

ELESIN: The gods have said No.

PRAISE-SINGER: There is only one home to the life of a river-mussel; there is only one home to the life of a tortoise; there is only one shell to the soul of man: there is only one world to the spirit of our race. If that world leaves its course and smashes on boulders of the great void, whose world will give us shelter?

ELESIN: It did not in the time of my forebears, it shall not in mine (1975:10-11).

When Africans turn away from their own culture and put 'the destiny of their countries in European hands' (Fanon in Ngugi, 1981: 3), Europeans rejoice and 'fall all over [them] in ecstatic and salivating admiration' (Achebe: 77). They know, then, that Africans will always be their slaves looking up to them for directions. Aganina and Chelyshev have the following praises in store for such Africans:

the peoples of developing countries begin to realise the impossibility of overcoming the economic and social difficulties on the path of capitalist development [and] ... declared their solidarity with the ideas of Marxism-Leninism ... The last decade has ... seen a growth of the political maturity of workers and the youth and increased influence of the ideas of scientific socialism on the public mind (1983:25-26).

'Europe's powers of persuasion,' as Achebe notes, 'can be far in excess of the merit and value of her case' (1988:77). With continued, relentless onslaughts on the African HF, she has, indeed, succeeded in creating 'complexes' of inferiority, 'denigration' and 'self-abasement' (Achebe: 44) in many African leaders and thinkers until they have turned their backs on their own people, culture and history, and surrendered themselves to Europe for directions in political, social, cultural and moral matters, including even perversions.

✂ Through brainwashed Africans, European culture in Africa has become big business. The majority of newspapers, science fiction, magazines, comics, school textbooks and other sources of information one can think of, come from the West. The following observation on the media situation in Asia and Latin America is true of Africa, too:

Eight out of ten stories that a Latin American reads when he opens his paper every morning have nothing to do with the problems of his continent. Six out of ten reports have been supplied by AP, UPI, Reuters or Agence France-Presse. In the evening, Latin Americans watch television which presents news items in the same proportion and also from foreign sources. The situation is similar in the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa (Grachev, 1984:5).

✂ Many films that Zimbabweans watch on television and movie theatres, and many programmes and songs broadcast on radio stations, promote the culture, values and concerns of Europeans with little or no relevance to African affairs.

✂ The story is the same with books in education. Literature from and about the West comprise the majority of texts and courses taught in Kindergatten, Primary, Secondary, High Schools and Universities. Some departments of literature even insist on using names which continue to identify them with Europe as their centre of reference and source of values. The University of Zimbabwe English Department is an example. The word 'English' seems so firmly grafted onto its soul that no approach, to date, has succeeded in persuading the Department to exorcise it from its bosom. Sembene Ousmane is, indeed, right in saying that 'the new leaders of Africa today are all-ears to Europe' and:

speak to their people in European languages. Neither their radio, ... television, ... press nor cinema uses the national languages, which are not used at any level in the schools either. The media which should constitute night schools to replace the traditional evening gatherings ... to create an awareness, are simply ... relay stations for the former Mother country ... African capitals are chief provinces of New York, Paris, Rome, London, Madrid and Lisbon.

There is the mad rush of the African heads of State to be received in Moscow, Peking, Paris, Washington, London, Bonn, ... extending their cups, vying with each other for prestige, ... claiming ... non-alignment and hypnotising slogans ... based on no economic or cultural reality in their respective countries (1979:9-10).

^ African leaders and intellectuals have lost their minds to Europe by losing their own culture. They have become possessed by it. As Carter G. Woodson says:

When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his proper place and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary (Smitherman, 1986:201).

Ngugi gives the example of Africans who turn to Christianity and sing:

'Wash me Redeemer and I shall be whiter than snow.' If God was slow to respond, there were always hot combs and lipsticks, snowfire and ambi to help the spiritual journey to whiteness and black death (1981:15).

Obi's enthusiasm as school headmaster and self-appointed ambassador for European culture in Africa embarrasses even his European master in Achebe's *Dead Men's Path*:

Three days later the village priest of Ani called on the headmaster. He was an old man and walked with a slight stoop....

'I have heard,' he said after the usual exchange of cordialities, 'that our ancestral footpath has recently been closed...'

'Yes,' replied Mr Obi. 'We cannot allow people to make a highway of our school.'

'Look here, my son,' said the priest bringing down his walking-stick, 'this path was here before you were born and before your father was born. The whole life of the village depends on it. Our dead relatives depart by it and our ancestors visit us by it. But most important, it is the path of children coming to be born...'

Mr Obi listened with a satisfied smile on his face.

'The whole purpose of our school,' he said finally, 'is to eradicate just such beliefs as that. Dead men do not require footpaths. The whole idea is just fantastic. Our duty is to teach your children to laugh at such ideas.'

'What you say may be true,' replied the priest, 'but we follow the practices of our fathers. If you reopen the path we shall have nothing to quarrel about. What I always say is: let the hawk perch and let the eagle perch.' He rose to go.

'I am sorry,' said the young headmaster. 'But the school compound cannot be

a thoroughfare. It is against our regulations. We can even get our boys to help in building it. I don't suppose the ancestors will find the little detour too burdensome (1977:73-74).

The white Superior has to restrain Obi before he wrecks further havoc on the plan to inculcate European culture and self-shame in African school children. 'He ... wrote a nasty report on ... the misguided zeal of the new headmaster' (Ibid:74). African literature has several examples of men and women who have become captives of the West and refuse to identify with African culture and society. Ocol in *Song of Lawino*:

pour[s] scorn
 On Black People,
 [And] behave[s] like a hen
 That eats its own eggs
 A hen that should be imprisoned
 under a basket...
 He says Black People are
 primitive
 And their ways are utterly
 harmful,
 Their dances are mortal sins
 They are ignorant, poor and diseased! Ocol says he is a modern man,
 A progressive man,
 He says he has read extensively
 and widely
 And he can no longer live with
 a thing like me
 Who cannot distinguish between
 good and bad (Okot, 1984:35-36).

Yet another character in Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, scoffs at African ways and opts to marry like a European. His friend asks:

'Are you going to marry the English way or ... ask your people to approach her people according to custom?'
 'I don't know yet. It depends on what my father says.'
 'Did you tell him about it during your visit?'
 'No, because I hadn't decided then.'
 'He will not agree to it,' said Joseph...
 'I can handle them,' said Obi, 'especially my mother.'
 'Look at me, Obi....What you are going to do concerns not only yourself but your whole family and future generations. If one finger brings oil it soils others....'
 'Anyway, it is too late to change now.'
 'It is not.... What is an engagement ring? Our fathers did not marry with rings. It is not too late to change. Remember you are the one and only Umuofia son to be educated overseas. We do not want to be like the unfortunate child who

grows his first tooth and grows a decayed one. What sort of encouragement will your action give to the poor men and women who collected the money?' ...

'It was only a loan,... I shall pay it all back ... (1960:67-68).

All these characters are now worthless after trading their souls for European culture and benefits. They have become mere corpses, the living-dead. Lawino sings this dirge for them:

Listen, my clansmen,
I cry over my husband
Whose head is lost.
Ocol has lost his head
In the forest of books.
And the reading
Has killed my man,
In the ways of his people
He has become a stump.
Bile burns my inside!
I feel like vomiting!
For all our young men
Were finished in the forest,
Their manhood was finished
In the class-rooms,
Their testicles
Were smashed
With large books! (Okot, 1984:116-117).

N'Deye Touti in Ousmane's *God's Bits of Wood*, also loses her culture and sells her soul to Europe. She never reads African authors, only European. As a result, she knows more about Europe than Africa (1962:58). Her school teaches European ideals, values and culture. The culture she watches in films removes her from her people. For instance, her people are polygamous. But 'love' and marriage in European books and films go 'with parties and costume balls, weekends in the country and trips in automobiles, yatching trips and vacations abroad,' with 'elegant anniversary presents.' 'Real life [is] there; not here' where she sees 'beggars and cripples' everywhere. When she comes back to her own culture after watching 'visions of mountain chalets deep in snow,' beaches with Europeans busking 'in the sun,' and 'cities flashing with many-coloured lights,' she is 'seized with...nausea,...rage and shame' (Ibid: 57).

The European culture she watches in films and learns about in books at school, tells her nothing about improving her people's lives of poverty, starvation, low wages, unemployment and strikes for wage-increases. Mame Sofi asks her what she thinks about the strike:

'You go to school — you must have some ideas about the strike?'
'You know that I don't, Aunt. It's too complicated for me.'
'Well, what do they teach you in school then?'
'Everything — everything about life.'

'And the strike is not part of life? Closing the shops and turning off the water — that is not part of life?' (Ibid: 47)

The European values N'Deye learns are useless to HF development in Africa. They cripple her capacity to participate in her people's welfare. When Europeans shower her and you with praises, prizes and books with their stories, history, geography and theories of development, they are not being kind or generous. They are destroying your soul and burying you alive after turning you into their clown for entertainment.

Woodson is right to say you do not have to tell a man to stand here or go to the back door when you have destroyed his soul (Smitherman, 1986: 201), or performed plastic surgery on him as they have done to some rock-stars until they could not recognize their own faces in the mirror.

N'Deye rushes out from a theatre showing a film on Pygmies. She cries aloud, 'No, No! These are not the real Africans ... She' and heads straight into a theatre showing the Parthenon ruins. There, she feels at home and shouts at noisy Africans in French to shut up or go out (Sembene, Ibid: 58).

Culture as identity, HF and liberation

Culture, as Obote observes in Okot's *Artist the Ruler*, is 'the soul of a nation' found in the temple of its literature and arts:

with regard to the achievements of, for instance, a statesman and those of a man of letters, it is the works of the latter which are remembered and preserved for generations. A study of history shows most clearly that between the statesmen and men of letters, it is the latter, once more, who have always won the unquestioning recognition for generations. ... As is often said, there is no exact measure of the greatness of a statesman. But a man of arts — be he a poet, dramatist, composer, painter or sculptor — is judged in the main by definite and specific achievements: achievements over ignorance and prejudice, and in the fields of joy and enlightenment which he brought to the consciousness of generations ... (1986:vi).

Sembene Ousmane refers to culture as 'the sum total of man's needs, both material and spiritual....the hyphen between the layette and the shroud'. He says:

Yesterday's culture which some considered a manifestation of primitives, symbol of ineptitude, stirred up thousands ... of men and women. This ancient culture is leaven. It is the ember which blazes in the heart and lungs. And ... those who shaped it, created it, carved it, sculpted, sang, wove, and thought it for themselves in their own time, in their own situations, snatched this generation as well as those to come from prostration (1979:8).

Once Africans affirm their culture, they get out of European control and become their own masters as they did during the liberation struggles:

The people gathered up the debris, the waste, the relics of the expression of the departed generations, the vanquished, the disappeared ... to nourish and sustain those who refused subjugation ... Myths and symbols were exhumed and dusted

off. African languages thrived once again. Precepts, proverbs, axioms appeared even richer than before. To consolidate all of this, the sayings and doings of the ancestors [became] ... stroke[s] of genius (Ousmane, 1979:7-8).

The authors of historical novels in Zimbabwe searched their history for fearless, patriotic, culturally animated 'spiritual giants,' who shook their world fighting European culture and its business of luring and destroying lives in Africa (Mutsvauro, 1983:5).

Mapondera in Mutsvauro's *Mapondera, Soldier of Zimbabwe*, Lobengula, in Samkange's *On Trial for My Country*, and the heroes in *Year of the Uprising*, are such examples. Together with songs from African history and culture, they inspired freedom fighters in the Second Chimurenga and won the liberation war.

Heroes from African history and culture contrast sharply with the dwarfish, confused, morally sapped fictional absurdities like Lucifer in *Waiting for the Rain*, Sam in *The Non-Believer's Journey*, Tambudzai in *Nervous Conditions*, Marita in *Bones*, Mazvita in *Without a Name*, and the Narrator in *The Black Insider*. These are forged from the creative imaginations of European novels depicting lives spiritually exhausted by their insatiable, morally barren cultures, whose unquenchable hunger Armah aptly likens to an arid desert which, he says, only 'takes' and 'knows no giving'. He warns:

To the giving water of your flowing it is not in the nature of the desert to return anything but destruction [and] your future ... extinction ... People headed after the setting sun, in that direction even the possibility of regeneration is dead. There the devotees of death take life, consume it, exhaust every living thing. Then they move on, forever seeking newer boundaries. Wherever there are living remnants undestroyed, there lies more work for them. Whatever would direct itself after the setting sun, an ashen death lies in wait for it (1973:xi).

The titles of the imaginative works in which the Zimbabwean fictional characters appear, also sound vapid, with mangled visions celebrating defeat and acquiescence to European enslavement and cultural hypnotism.

Indeed, European culture as business lures and, then takes. It uses force or destroys completely where it fails. Its 'reign' in Africa 'has been long' and 'will be longer' (Armah: xv) if we continue following its direction and losing sight of its predatory business mission and history in Africa.

Conclusion

The purpose of providing historical evidence and showing the process of Europe's destruction of Africa's HF and social institutions, and putting her own in their place, is to help us understand that Europe did all this to turn Africa into her own business playground and expend the energy, sweat, blood and tears of the African people in nourishing the life and health of Europeans, 'nursing' European 'children, watching the sickbeds of [their] mothers and fathers ...' and sacrificing African lives in defence of Europe and Europeans, instead of Africa and her own children (Washington, 1965:148).

To liberate Africa's resources, HF and labour, from continued exploitation by Europe, we must, as Armah suggests, 'leave the destroyers' culture, social institutions and business agendas alone. We must embark on building and revitalizing our own, guided by Africa's own immense talent and the historical example of our forebears' creativity. We are responsible for building our children's future in the same way our forebears gave birth to us and ushered forth the present with their own blood on the battlefield. 'The linking of those gone, ourselves here and those coming,' is 'our vocation' and 'continuation' (Armah 1973:xiv, xvii). It is our destiny and inalienable humanity. The weapon with which to affirm it and the freedom to regenerate, carve and defend it, is culture, the total heritage, unbreakable bond and irreducible HF.

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