



Thoughts of a Black Child

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1. Absolute Chaos

I hate black people.

Truth be said. If you are young, black, ambitious and not connected; you will have a tough time establishing yourself in South Afrika. Unless you are the corporate type who will make their mark in somebody else's business.

Let's be frank for a moment and stop being politically correct. The professional business world in South Afrika is filled with connected comrades who trade only on the basis of patronage and nothing else. Some of the deals that are made in these circles have nothing to do with business relevance but simply to ensure that members of this group benefit.

What group? There is an inner circle of comrades and ex-exiles who control the deal making stream in this country. Right from government contracts to private deals, they are well positioned and very influential. And your membership to the club is worth your success.

Some of us are either absolutely stupid or out of touch with reality. I used to think that my success in the world will depend solely on my ability to execute jobs and my professional conduct. Ability has nothing to do with how well you will do in business. It is how well connected you are that is more important. If you do not have the requisite credentials, you better be a member of certain political fraternity. Ignore these at your own peril.

Many of our black professionals dream of an ideal world. They operate on the basis that their reputation will precede them. Unfortunately South Afrika is riddled with the ills of apartheid and the mantra of comradeship. You must either be white to succeed or belong to the right structures of the black population. Ironically, it is white people who benefit the most from our policies of transformation. Black people in influential positions trust white people more for business than they do black professionals. As a black professional, you will always be treated with skepticism on whether you can deliver on anything. Black people view other black people with suspicion in business. Others see other people as threats to their own personal progress, hence the hostile treatment of black people.

Being black, professional and ambitious is the worst experience you will ever experience in a lifetime.

Members of all races have tried a hand in business and fallen down. These bad business experiences are classified as learning experiences for them before finding something they can become successful in. And many of them a testament to patience. In South Afrika, the large default rate of black business is classified as an incapability of blacks to run businesses. While there are many black people who have succeeded in business, we are told of the stories of the ones who do not succeed. The business environment is hostile to black people in this country. Financial institutions will not finance businesses started by black people as a general rule, no matter how sound they may be.

While these experiences may be sad for black people, they are a good reminder to the black race that they need to establish themselves on their own without expectations from other races. Black professionals are still largely dependent on white business for their survival. The majority of black owned businesses in the professional services space are dependent of white business for survival. It is time black people make inroads into all sectors to ensure their continued existence as independent people. Our skills as black professionals are largely irrelevant in our black communities, hence our need to work in corporate South Afrika. Until this trend is corrected, black people will forever remain less influential in the economy.

Do professional or business black people support each other? Or do black people support other black professionals or business people?

Perhaps I must start answering this question with the declaration that I think apartheid and colonialism were most successful in South Afrika. Bantu education has entrenched in the mind of a black child a deep seated hatred against being black. Many black people wish they were white.

Black people generally do not support each other. Black consumers shun black products and associate them with inferior quality. Black professionals will generally avoid using the services of other black professionals. Black business would rather procure from white business than support another black business. So black people will in general avoid having to support each other economically. They feel much at home providing moral and social support to their own, but not in business.

So where does this leave the black child? The black child will continue to suffer in perpetuity until the black professional learns to deal with the inferiority complex they have. This means that a black child will have to work even harder just to reach the same level as kids of other races.

The issues raised above are some of the issues I have had to deal with as a black professional and entrepreneur. Like it or not, South Afrika is still very much a racist country. Racist attitudes of the past continue today. But added to that is the racist attitude of black on black racism.

Can black people be racist? Racism is associated with power and influence. The more influential a person becomes, the more power they have. It is unlikely that black people can become racist towards other races due to the power imbalance. Other races are well off economically and are therefore the ones who are generally racist against black people. But there is a class struggle within the black race that is defined by earnings, education and influence. The racist attitude of class struggles are the main cause of disharmony among the black people.

2. Aids and Poverty

Historically, Afrika has always had illnesses that are known to be incurable, henceforth termed terminal in English. These illnesses are not life threatening in the sense that people suffering from them lead normal lives. These are therefore manageable ailments, many of which are well known and generally acceptable to society. Very few of these illnesses have some stigma attached to them, and these are extremely rare illnesses.

Historically, the general state of health in African communities was good as people relied heavily on tradition medicine and therefore people had a basic knowledge of medicine and herbs for general ailments. People were therefore generally not dependent on traditional practitioners for their general state of health.

Across the Afrikan content, all nations placed importance on food and proper diets as the foundation of good health. The type of food consumed in Afrika is generally high in fiber and proteins. Every food stuff has a significant nutritional content that is strictly observed. As supplements to basic food stuffs, fruits and vegetation play a secondary role in providing a balanced diet.

The advent of colonialisation in Afrika brought with it a total collapse of the Afrikan way of living as people no longer had land and had to rely solely on labour for survival. All of a sudden, people were faced with severe shortage of food and plantations as many of the food supplements were freely available in the veld. Colonialisation also brought with it processed food and later fast foods, the majority of which are health hazards. These food stuffs, processed and fast food, have very low nutritional value and contain high levels of cholesterol and fat.

Over a period of time, Afrikans found themselves faced with a great challenge as the historically known illnesses could no longer be control or cured due to the breakdown in societal structures brought about by white rule. Simple illnesses that people could cure were no longer curable as people had no access to vegetation. Urbanisation also meant that people no longer had access to traditional medicine as traditional practitioners are mostly prevalent in rural areas. Added to this problem was the effects coming from the use of processed and fast foods.

Over three centuries, the societal structures collapsed and Afrikan people were forced to make changes to cope with the new life styles introduced by white people. Being landless, without access to vegetation and the slavery like conditions put our people at a distinct disadvantage for fighting and dealing with health issues. And this was the beginning of the sad state of health on the Afrikan continent.

Aids, acquired immuno deficiency syndrome, is a health state in which the human body has lost its natural ability to defend itself against illnesses. There are many causes to why a body can loose its ability to fight illnesses, including HIV and poverty. Much has been written about the relationship between HIV and AIDS, however, very little is said about the relationship between poverty and AIDS. Poor people, talking from a health perspective, are unable to maintain a proper diet. This is true especially because many poor people struggle just to have something to eat, let alone choose which is suitable for consumption.

In medical science, HIV is the virus that consistently attacks the body until it reaches a stage where no healthy red blood cells remain to fight illnesses; and this stage then is called AIDS. In the Afrikan cultural context, using the Basotho perspective, "lefu la poone" is the stage at which the human body has been severely compromised as a result of hunger. At this stage, the person is vulnerable to just about any illness and the body is unable to respond appropriately in fighting illnesses. However, this is the stage at which a person stands a great chance of recovery with proper feeding and diet. This is the stage prior to full blown AIDS resulting from a poor diet. Many of our

people in Afrika die as a result of AIDS emanating from hunger caused by poverty than any other illness.

Poverty as a cause of AIDS is the sad truth that the medical society chooses to ignore in favour of HIV as a cause of AIDS. Both causes of AIDS are deadly and warrant enough care and attention, however, poverty is more prevalent and more acute due its social impact on society. A poor person can never develop to full capacity, no matter what their potential is. A hungry person is dysfunctional due to the basic need for food. The majority of people on the Afrikan continent are poor, and the potential for social disruption is real.

A poor person can never be expected to compete at the same level with other sectors of society, it is just not possible. Since the majority of people are poor, the resultant expectation is therefore that the majority of people on the Afrikan continent can never function to capacity due to their poverty status. If this remains the case, it is therefore accurate to assume that Afrika can never develop and advance to its full potential for as long as people remain poor in Afrika. For as long as Afrika remains poor, there can never be peace on the continent as some of the conflicts are a direct consequence of poverty.

Many an Afrikan child grow up bitter as they can never understand how it happens that they are so poor while their neighbor is so abundantly wealthy. The problem in Afrika is elevated by the fact that the levels of poverty in comparison to wealth are directly on the opposite. There are people who are as rich as those who are absolutely poor, and therefore hungry. The problem of petty crime is sometimes a direct result of this poverty. Many of the violent conflicts on the continent can be directly linked to poverty as the military factions always fight about the control of mineral resources, so that one group can benefit from their exploitation.

Afrika is unfortunately faced with a double whammy of a problem, AIDS resulting from both HIV and poverty. To make matters worse, both forms of illnesses are interdependent. An AIDS sufferer from HIV must not be poor for any hope of a successful treatment. Poverty eradication is therefore even more important as a national priority than anti retroviral drugs, as these drugs are directly dependent on the health state of the individual to be effective. Discounting the health and side effects of anti retroviral drugs, for now, they become even more dangerous to people who take them without proper feeding. The ideals of rolling out anti retroviral drugs are undermined by the fact that many of those who take them are poor. So this also means that there can never be a realistic and accurate outcome from these programmes whilst people remain poor.

3. Black Identity

Through history, it has always been interesting to observe the role Afrikans have played in differentiating themselves from the rest of the world. This viewed from the perspective of governance, religion, economics and science.

While it may be interesting to study these, my intention is not to cover them here. I simply refer to them as references to make a point. My interest is the observation of the economic participation of the Afrikan people in South Afrika.

When I grew up, I got accustomed to black business in the form of general dealerships, taverns, beauty salons and the informal business. And the level of wealth creation was placed in that respective order. Informal business was used as a means to place food on the table and send children to school. It was also a means of progressing to other higher forms of business. Beauty salons were a somewhat specialised form of business, which thrived on the back of Afrikan women's obsession with beauty and particularly the race to mimic the Afrikan Americans in look. Selling alcohol was highly regulated, but this form of business thrived the most of all black forms of business. But it was a highly cyclical business in that it was almost certain that every liquor outlet will one day falter and close down.

General dealerships were the hallmark of business acumen. People went into business without any form of training or support. And the majority of these businesses stood the test of time until shortly after the 1994 elections. The majority of black millionaires we have today have their roots in running these kind of businesses.

Of course we had the somewhat not so visible business of renting out properties. This is mostly known as back-room dwelling. A few people practiced this form of business at a professional level where these properties were properly managed and well taken care of. And for those who did, big rewards were reaped.

Very few professional type businesses existed in those days. They were so rare that the existence of Black Like Me by nstate Herman Mashaba was the pride of all black people. Black Like Me became the hallmark of strength and the epitomy of success. The likes of Sizwe Ntsaluba and the Kunene Brothers.

Until the dawn of democracy in South Afrika. The new government brought with it the mobilisation of white business into black areas. National and multi-national companies entered the black areas and the playing field was no longer level for the small black businesses. They had no scale with which white businesses operated. Overnight, all black businesses in our areas went bankrupt. Just like that.

The only forms of black business remaining are taverns, which are no longer profitable as young people buy alcohol in white areas. Some beauty salons continue to do well, but the majority are just

breaking even and therefore not sustainable. Informal trading remains the widest form of black business due to high unemployment levels. But informal trading of today is vastly different to that of the past. Informal trading used to be profitable.

The majority of black people are trying hard to break into the professional services business. Having worked for many years and highly educated, they had hoped to make a mark in that sphere. Unfortunately this space is dominated by multinationals too. Only a few black businesses are growing to sustainable levels. Many are forced back into employment after years of trying unsuccessfully to make a success of their businesses.

It seems the only form of business that may be termed black that has done somewhat well today is empowerment companies. But I cannot regard empowerment companies as black as the measure of the blackness of the business is its origins. Most of these empowered companies are white companies who have sold a shareholding to prominent black people. As a result, these businesses have absolutely nothing to do with the black economy. The one distinguishing factor about black business is that they operate mainly in black areas and therefore directly benefit the economies of the black society. As things stand today, I am not aware of any empowerment company that directly benefits the black society. This unfortunately includes the investment arms of labour federations whose returns are meaningful only to the office bearers who earn large packages.

The unfortunate matter of equity. The present government is unfortunately focused on equity in companies than assisting black entrepreneurs starting their own businesses. Equity is the fallacy of economic prosperity in the eyes of the intellectuals. A 20% stake in a national company by a few prominent black people will never translate into economic participation of the majority. Neither will the benefits of that stake accrue meaningfully to the people. Equity equals individual wealth. This is why all black areas remain hugely underdeveloped because all economic activity happens outside of our areas. White business operating from black areas is only reaping the rewards of patronage while they do absolutely nothing to invest in these areas.

So what is left to be regarded as legitimate black business? All things considered, I am inclined to proclaim there is no black business niche market today. The majority of black people are mostly replicating white business in black areas without much attention to the needs of black society. Even traditional black niche markets such as art, craft and creative work are today fronted by white business, with black people the suppliers to white business. But these artifacts are generally only available from white owned stores who charge extremely high prices for the end product.

The arts. Black people are thriving in the entertainment industry as artists of different forms. Mostly working as music composers, singers, dancers and stage actors. This is probably the only form of industry dominated by black people. The problem though is that even though they own entertainment; distribution, marketing and production is still largely owned by white business. The bulk of the revenues made in entertainment goes to distribution companies, and this where the industry is largely white owned. Black people end up with generally up to 20% of royalties, while the rest of the profits go to white companies. Theatres too are owned by white companies.

What about publishing? Many black people are excellent writers of fiction and non fiction work. As with the rest of other industries, they do not own the whole value chain. There are very few black

publishing companies in South Afrika. It is even worse that book shops are white owned. Only a select few black owned book stores remain in business. The majority of book stores are chain stores owned by public companies.

Public transport. Perhaps the only true black owned and controlled business in South Afrika is the taxi industry. Since it's introduction in the early 1900s, the taxi industry has always been in the hands of black entrepreneurs. To this day, it remains truly the pride of black business by ownership and contribution to the black economy. Set aside a few governance issues, this is one of the industries that has produced black millionaires. My only wish was for the government to assist in formalising the business. The taxi recapitalisation programme is an unfortunate programme by the government that has been badly planned and horribly implemented. This is a programme that renders some taxi owners out of business. You cannot scrap all taxis, irrespective of their book value, and only give a R50,000 subsidy per taxi scrapped. The cost of the old taxi was about R150,000 while the new taxis costs around R273,000. This leaves the taxi owners with a liability of R223,000 after the implementation of this programme. Who is supposed to cover the difference? What about the insurance costs? And people expect the taxi industry to just accept the R50,000 and move on. This is illegal and immoral in my opinion.

4. Black Souls in Modern South Afrika

Politics of Afrika and the diaspora during the times of colonialism, slavery and oppression have contributed so much to the development of black intellect. During these times, black souls were united by a basic principle of correcting the wrongs against the majority and owners of the land.

Many programmes were devised as a result that focused on education and the development of those who participated in the general struggle for the liberation of its people. True leaders were made and natural leadership was strengthened. It is during these times that black people generally were conscious of the state of affairs and identified with the course in different ways.

Many a people sacrificed a lot in the interest of attaining emancipation for the people of the land. No personal gain or reward was ever a factor in these times. And as a result, black people generally were well informed about body politics, far beyond the general understanding of the wrongs of the prevailing governance systems at the time. Many identified and associated themselves with many ideologies such as socialism, nationalism and so called free market system.

It is during these trying times that many Afrikan states rekindled relations and looked in the diaspora for assistance. As a result, the politics of Afrika are not that different from those of Afrikans in the diaspora. The diaspora had a significant impact on local politics such that a lot of thinking came from the diaspora. Many black souls were fulfilled during these times as many had real purpose in life.

It is the periods following the independence of Afrikan states that hold the most problematic era for Afrika at large. All of a sudden, struggle heroes became statesmen and were confronted with the harsh realities left behind by colonisation. Dysfunctional economies as all relied on the colonisers for survival, almost non existent education for the people of the land and the illusion that with government comes power.

It is during these periods of acclaimed freedom where black people suffers and experience the reality of centuries of colonisation. Many of our struggle heroes became redundant overnight. The reality that not all participants in the struggle shall benefit from fruits of liberation. With no education nor traceable experience in anything else, these stalwarts became among the poorest of our land. Shortly after liberation, many a people sat with great hope and expectation of a better life. A life far from poverty and starvation. A life far from humiliation and ridicule.

A decade into freedom, many Afrikan states began to be embroiled in party in-fightings, factionalism and tribalism. A sad fact brought about by the realisation that a better life is directly linked to ones position in government. For masses of the people, it was a sad reality and a bitter struggle ensued as a result. People demanded change, politicians demanded positions. In this wrangle the countries were left destitute and many destroyed to brinks. Decades following freedom, the majority of Afrikan states are poorer than they were during colonisation. State power abuse is rampant and those of the land who dare challenge this practice are chastised and publicly ridiculed.

It is during this phase of great anxiety and disillusionment among our people that many a black soul find themselves wanting. People seem to have lost faith in domestic politics and politicians. People wonder if casting a vote is worth the effort considering the performance of many a political parties around. More and more black people feel alienated by mainstream politics.

It is precisely during this period that black people have began asking the question whether former liberation movements remain relevant in present day politics. Many of these liberation movements either have outdated views on society or continue to pursue revolutionary ideas despite the fact that they are in power. As a result, many people feel trapped as these liberation movements no longer

fulfill their aspirations for a better life, debate and most importantly political ideas.

Many wish, selfishly, that someone would form a new political formation to accommodate the majority views and aspirations. As terms of office come and go, many resent the idea of voting for these parties and strongly feel the urge to protest by staying away from voting. However, they are consciously aware of the political risk associated with watching others make a decision on their behalf. It is in this spirit that many of them continue to vote for liberation movements as opposed to staying away from voting or doing the unthinkable by supporting former liberal parties who are merely white parties serving the interests of white people.

The progressive and conscious proponents of development are dying a slow death, death of the soul. The deteriorating state of economies of the continent and seemingly disbandment of morals by politicians has led to this mass movement of souls yearning for a home. A home where ideas and thoughts can be expressed openly without fear of intimidation.

5. Black Management Forum – A Passage For The Chosen Few

Many cultural, religious and social groups meet regularly through their societies, which were formed solely to advance certain principles for the common good of their membership. These societies are so prolific in South Afrika that even those formed purely on the basis of race are very popular and generally successful.

It is in this context of race that many people have begun to ask whether race based organisations are still relevant in the present climate. Those opposed to these organisations have argued that such organisations are not contributing to national reconciliation and therefore are holding the country back from moving beyond race classifications. Those in favour of the continued existence of such organisations argue that these organisations play an integral part for the development of certain race groups within the country, especially given South Afrika's racial past. They argue that these organisations are focused on the advancement of these groups and therefore play a significant role in social and economic upliftment.

The Black Management Forum is one such organisation whose goals are the advancement and development of black talent for managerial and leadership roles. This they say is achieved through regular mentorships, development programmes and even international developmental programmes. The BMF has had many prominent black leaders go through its ranks before settling in at some significant positions in government and the private sector.

This is especially true as all the people who have held leadership positions at the BMF are leaders in whatever careers they have since decided to pursue. It is for this specific reason that one must applaud the BMF for its work.

I do not know the official membership of the BMF, but suffice to say it is enough to justify the continued existence of the organisation. The BMF even has a student body that recruits members from universities and run some programmes at these institutions of higher learning. Based on this, one must conclude that the BMF has enough following to justify its existence.

Financially, one must also assume it is a stable organisation. Looking at the list of companies that are members of the BMF, it is reasonable to make this assumption. It also has an investment arm in the form of BMF Investment. Although the BMF Investment company is a matter of great concern as the company remains a secret to the general membership of the BMF. Its affairs are not known and many are wondering what is the status of this investment company that was meant to be an empowerment vehicle for the BMF constituents. The first and last time I heard about the BMF Investment company was in 2002 when there was a private share offer for members to invest in some agricultural company.

Having said all that, it is really worrying that the general membership of the organisation does not seem to believe the BMF is delivering value. This viewed from the paying individual members of the BMF as many discontinue membership after a few years after realising that no tangible value is directly accrued to them. Having been a member in good standing of the BMF for about four years running, I decided to terminate my membership as I was questioning the value I perceive from the organisation. They run interesting forums once in while, but beyond these there is absolutely nothing of value I receive as a member.

In my assessment, I believe the BMF has more friends of the BMF in individual members than paid up members. I have never been to any developmental gathering of the BMF in the four years between 2002 and 2005 that I was a paying member. It is also very sad that their annual general

meetings are too costly for any individual member to attend. It seems to me the BMF is more focused on corporate members than it is to individual members, who are the basis for its existence in the first place.

Based on my personal experience, and the discussions I have held with fellow BMF individual members, it seems to me that the BMF is only benefiting those who hold office and very little is done about the broad membership it has from black individuals. Perhaps I was wrong with my expectations that they play a role in advancing their members in managerial and leadership aspects. I have not even seen the BMF engage me as a member on any matter I have heard the BMF make public proclamations such as employment equity and BEE. All these policy positions I read about in the media and I always wondered when they were discussed that I was not aware of. Perhaps they get discussed in the AGM which many of us can't attend due to high costs.

I would be greatly interested though to hear from any individual member of the BMF who has found value in the organisation. I want to believe that this may perhaps make me aware of where the value lies than what my perceptions may have been about the BMF. I unfortunately find myself wanting to make the assertion that the BMF is yet another gravy train for the select few as my understanding is that the majority of its membership do not benefit from their membership.

It is also interesting to challenge the BMF's position with regard to BEE. It would be very interesting to know who the BMF's service providers are and what percentage of them comply with the BEE ideals. I am making this claim based on my past efforts to make proposals for business with the BMF, none of which were ever acknowledged nor answered. From my understanding, many of the BMF's individual members hold professional jobs while at the same time running small businesses. It would have been interesting and very empowering for the BMF to have procured their services in whatever form is relevant to the BMF.

It is also interesting to note that none of the awards given at the annual dinner-galla go to individual members but to people who are already successful in their chosen fields. While it is important to recognise achievement, it is more relevant to start by recognising and developing your own members. Many black people have since lost hope and interest in the affairs of the BMF as a result of this lack of perceived value.

As a membership organisation, I find it interesting that the BMF does not publish its individual members, only corporate members are proudly announced on its website. I believe this publication of the total number of individual members would force the BMF to work towards maintaining, if not increasing, its members. As a disappointed proud past member, I find that the BMF still has a lot of relevance in the situation facing black professionals, only if their aspirations could be taken to heart and not have to compete with those of the corporate membership.

Today as I make these claims and assert my opinion of the BMF, I hope that the respected BMF leadership will address these issues and not dismiss me as just another opinion. I look forward to the day I feel that my membership fee is worth something in the BMF and many other such organisations.

6. Boloji

Moloi ha a mele ditshiba, mme pelo ke moloi.

By definition, the above saying suggests everyone practices black magic! Why black magic and not witchcraft? I have difficulty understanding what witchcraft mean. And the word witchcraft sounds so dirty and cheap. Because non Afrikans do not understand what *boloi* is it must be labeled witchcraft?

How I so wish someone close to me, like my mother or granny, practiced this age old skill! If they did, then they were very good at covering their tracks so that I never knew about it! I truly would have loved a knowledge transfer of this trade. Firstly because of its historical significance. And because of its secretive nature, there are many things we do not know about this practice. And I truly believe someone needs to develop this knowledge beyond selfish interests and expand it into main stream use for the benefit of mankind. Sounds far fetched?

Boloji, in any Afrikan context, means something that cannot be explained or those things that are beyond logic or understanding. And logically so. So let's start with the obvious.

Ho fofa ka lefielo is miraculous. *Thokolosi* is a mysterious creature. *Letolo* is mystical too. What else can *baloi* do that we are not necessarily privy to? If effort is put into understanding this practice, for what other purpose can we use boloi? Can't society, specifically black society, benefit from our abilities that have since been practiced in shame and to harm others?

If you are black, think back to your home town or when you were growing up. What things happened that just could not be explained? Think about it. If someone reportedly has the ability to interfere negatively with your intelligence, what would the opposite effect be? Think of what we have come to know today as modern science. What contribution can we make to our future if all our skills are put to good use? Kids who come from families where boloi is practiced must be grateful and must do their best to become good at it. It is only through a good understanding of the practice where good uses can come.

Historical significance? Historically, Basotho used *thokolosi* for cattle herding in the mountains. Cattle were put *motebong* under the care of *dithokolosi*. Almost every wealthy family owned one for this purpose. Think about South Afrika's power crisis. People are able *ho fehla letolo/lehadima!* Can you imagine the economic benefits that would accrue to black society as a result? Everyone is going green these days. *Ho fofa ka lefielo* requires no source of energy whatsoever! Add the low cost of operation and all of a sudden people can travel anywhere they want. Why would people want to own vehicles if this can be realised?

So why not witchcraft? Witchcraft is the practice of black magic for negative purposes. This is what white people have come to label evil spirits. I take great interest in black magic and not witchcraft. As a black person, you should be able to distinguish between the two.

Afrikans are communists by nature, if I must define a governance system. As communists, families handed down this tradition from generation to generation without the need to formalise it. But today, as kids are sent away to school, and with influence from other nations; it is crucial that people start making plans of how legacy and heritage can be protected for the benefit for all. Traditionally, this would be the role assumed by kings and traditional doctors; to ensure that this practice is protected and continues for future generations. But now with kings and doctors almost non-existent, it is imperative that black society must define for itself how these practices will be preserved.

Is it not time that black people established companies that would ensure continued existence of such

practices? Consider the following possible business ventures: traditional doctor, herbalist, *incibi*, *mosuwe*, *ditema*, *mekgoro*, *ho betla*. Why can't we protect these areas through proper formal structures while creating wealth at the same time? How many of our people have these skills but are redundant? Why can't I drive my Porsche and consult a traditional doctor in posh offices in Sandton? Ultimately, the survival of every society rests with acceptance of who they are and developing those for societal good. This article is all about possibilities. It is time the black race considered things beyond customary views which are highly cluttered with apartheid and slavery influence.

Are these views hypocrisy, pipe dreams or reality?

It is time you considered things for what they are and then for what they could be. Just be proud of your heritage, whatever that heritage might be. You have unique and valuable skills that not everyone possesses. Even if you may not become wealthy doing it, you may make a big difference in peoples lives. And making a difference will certainly bring bigger things in your life.

7. Corporate View

Oxford English dictionary says corporate means "shared by members of a group." And what a group this is!

Since I started working about twelve years ago, I have been fascinated by the corporate environment. Back then, it represented a challenge. Something that must be conquered. And it was this challenge that informed my pre-occupation with learning and accumulating knowledge that one can use to achieve the highest level possible. I saw myself becoming an executive in a major corporation.

The corporate environment represented success in the eyes of many black kids. Working and growing within the hierarchy was the best thing ever a child could dream of. Companies represented a better life to us.

This must be seen in the context that when we grew up, public service jobs were the only options really available to us. Outside that, the only job we could do was become a clerk in the private sector. Of course I am the last generation in the era before the death of apartheid. Apartheid died the year after I completed matric. So I was stuck with the remnants of apartheid while I had to live in the new South Africa where there were supposedly equal opportunities.

Corporate life sucks. It is the single thing I dislike most about working. Spending nine hours daily at a desk is the worst form of punishment a human can be subjected to. You are subjected to a hierarchy to which you must conform. Hierarchy which is not really receptive to how humans generally relate. There are dress codes to which we must subscribe. So called ethics that are really anti social and which forces people to be cruel against each other in the name of competency.

And then there is competitiveness! You see, this is why working is so wrong. People are supposed to be working against each other in order to beat one another. My take is that people are supposed to support each other in order to excel as a team. Competitiveness breeds individualism. Individualism is against the spirit of being neighborly. Ubuntu.

But then again, I am an exception to the rule. I seem to hold rather unique and screwed up views about many things. Otherwise people wouldn't be so competitive and ambitious about the corporate world.

If these views were true, many people wouldn't be working now, would they? The flip side also being that the majority of people who work must enjoy what they do, right?

But I do know that I have not been happy working. And I have also seen a lot of miserable people at work.

8. Damned Unions

As a black person, I must say outright that I know the value of trade unions in our country. Many industries are still stuck in the past, and without trade unions black people would have absolutely no chance to progress nor be treated justly. This assertion from me validates the fact that trade unions are necessary, but to what extend is the question.

Trade unions in South Afrika have failed badly to transform and cater for the needs of the new age. They see themselves as champions of the poor, who are generally unskilled workers. Trade unions are becoming increasingly irrelevant with the new age knowledge workers. Skilled workers are marginalised by trade unions and their needs are largely not served by them.

Having been a union member myself in my first job, and a shop steward, I feel betrayed and let down. When I started working, I was making an average salary of a black South Afrikan. This put me in line with what the union stands for with regards to worker issues. But the moment I progressed to a supervisory level the union started becoming increasingly irrelevant in my job. As a knowledge worker whose promotions are governed by performance contracts, trade unions could no longer represent me as an employee. Their interest lies with workers falling within the bargaining units.

It is grossly unfair that I must be held to a performance contract for my remuneration, while the rest of the workers get increases simply based on agreement with unions. Union workers usually get more salary increases than the rest of us, despite our individual performances.

Having progressed to supervisory and management levels, I find it hard to accept the same unions we supported are hard bent on refusing us rewards based on our performances. Since now I qualify for profit shares, why should I be held hostage by unions that vehemently refuse for their members to be held to the same standard of performance as I am held? As a skilled worker, my job demands so much from me that these unions don't care. I must be educated to do my job. My job requires that I have a car, which I must buy out of my pocket. I must have a computer at home. I must have an internet connection. I must own a mobile phone where I can be reachable 24 hours a day. I must keep my skills current at all times. All these things I must pay for out of my pocket to keep my job. Why then should unions complain when once in a while I get compensated in the form of a profit share?

Of course I still understand the challenges facing the workers in corporate South Africa. But does this mean black people must remain unskilled workers? How many unions today represent the interests of workers in the skilled sectors? How many unions today have programmes geared at developing their members to become better employees? At last count of the companies I have worked for, training budgets remain unused in most of these companies. I am yet to come across a union that encourages its members to grow themselves.

There is a danger looming in corporate SA. The growing number of workers are knowledge workers, mostly professional workers who earn between R200k and R500k a year. This layer of workers are largely un-unionised and continue to be alienated by unions. They aren't poor workers by definition and yet aren't rich either. This is the crop of South Afrika's young workers. They increasingly do not belong on either side of the equation. Yet they suffer mostly on labour policies and taxation.

Being an IT professional myself, I would have expected unions such as the CWU to be highly biased towards skilled and professional workers, simply based on the industry in which they operate. Unfortunately, they represent at most of the skills ladder, the artisans.

Many of us who have experienced racism and discrimination first hand have even opted to become independent consultants. As a consultant I have no right nor expectation of an employed worker. But at the very least I am not held to the stressful demands of an employee and I can come and go as per my professional interests. My contract as a consultant vary between three and twelve months with any given company. The downside of course is that I must provide all the required infrastructure out of my pocket, for which I am not compensated, not even by SARS. Many of us use consulting as a stepping stone into entrepreneurship. Once enough contacts and reputation has been build, then one can afford to go it alone as an entrepreneur.

The consulting business is supposed to be one of the most unionised areas in this country. So many of us are being taken for a ride, but it seems no union takes an interest in the affairs of knowledge workers. We are among the highest taxed individuals in the country, despite the fact that we not the highest paid workers. The average tax rate in this segment is between 25% and 30% for PAYE. No one seem to care that this is one of the reasons why people are inclined to make as much money as they can to compensate for taxation. Add to that the fact that we do not qualify for leave days, any kind of leave. We do not even qualify to claim back our costs of being a consultant such as computers.

Is this the battle of the classes? From my experiences with unions, my take is that unions have deliberately chosen this route to divide the workers. Workers who suddenly brake into this mould of a classless worker are made to look like they earn too much. Are given labels such as fat cats and middle class. All the while putting a blink eye to the realities of these workers. I also feel that unions are doing this to keep control over what their mandate is. Since the majority of unions represent unskilled and semi-skilled workers, unions generally determine for themselves what their mandate is. This will never persist with skilled workers. Unions would be forced to represent the workers interest or they would loose significant numbers of members.

The question for me then becomes: should workers interests be held hostage by the interests of unions?

Based on my personal experiences of working life, I maintain that a worker must do what is best for them. If a union can better serve your interests, then join one; otherwise you are better off fighting for your rights alone. Your ability to negotiate and your skills will serve you in the long run, despite the hassles you are likely to experience early on in your career.

9. Faking It

When you just don't belong.

Does being in business or working for business mean one must behave strangely? By strange I mean untoward and against our principles as Afrikan people. Arrogant, disrespectful and inconsiderate.

As an Afrikan child, I can never call my elders by their first names. This is tantamount to treachery. I am expected to be compassionate and understand to others. I am especially expected to show empathy towards family problems others might be having. I am also generally expected to treat everyone with respect, irrespective of their position or job title.

I have never being able to call elder people by their first names, no matter what race they come from. This is a foreign concept to me and one which I am sure my parents would not take kindly to I were to find myself practicing. There are also certain things I find difficult to discuss with an elder, despite my position in the company. Debates and arguments are the worst. There is a thin line between raising your voice and being passionate about a particular discussion topic. You cannot raise your voice to an elder.

Discipline. This is one of the most touching areas of being a senior person at work responsible for elder people. While discipline can still be carried out to elder people, it is the compassion associate with this that sometimes makes one wish things could be different. Especially if the discipline is somewhat linked to future well being of the elder concerned. My heart bleeds every time I sit having to be part of a team to decide the future of an elder person. I wish companies would comprise their disciplinary teams with this in mind so that elder people are generally taken care of by other elderly people.

Observing the protocol of corporate hierarchy mean that people are segregated based on their roles in the company. This to me breads divisions. In some companies there are certain floors where ordinary staff members are not allowed entry as these floors are occupied by senior and executive staff members. I have a problem of being treated differently based on my job title in a company. I cannot treat people differently simply because some happen to be in upper echelons of management. My respect and honour is based on how an individual conducts themselves, and not their job title.

There are times when I just don't know how to conduct myself. When my upbringing clashes with the corporate culture.

Language factor. I am proudly an umXhosa who also fluently speaks Sesotho. These are my primary languages and I only use English on a need to basis. I express myself best in my language plus I prefer speaking my languages to English. I do not see myself as an agent promoting the use and advancement of the English language. I therefore use isiXhosa and Sesotho freely where ever I might be. This includes conducting meetings in these languages if the audience happens to be of these languages. Why should I speak English to a Mosotho? **To me speaking English in a room full of Afrikan people is fake and makes me uncomfortable.** This is one of the areas I am not prepared to compromise. I am proud of my languages and I will use them whenever I can.

And then there is the matter of policy. Being the Afrikan that I am, I have always understood that policy/law/rules are subject to discretion. As a manager/supervisor/team leader, is it not my prerogative to decide on matters affecting my team/staff? If a member of my staff has family matters to attend to, is it not for me to decide if they can go if their jobs are done? Is it not for me to decide to give an employee a day off is a child is sick? I have always argued that why should people

be compelled to take leave for things that they did not plan for such as a family member being sick? Of course this done within reason.

Let's consider culture, tradition and religion. I am an Afrikan at the core who strongly adheres to culture and tradition. There are times when certain traditions must be performed, which require protocol to be observed. Let's say I must perform a thanks giving ritual. I must be home at least two days before the ritual and during the period since it was announced, I cannot be late to coming home. This means that I am not allowed to stay late after dark until after the ritual. To do any of these, I must take annual leave and I will hard pressed to make people understand what exactly it is I am talking about; including black managers. When observing the custom of "ho ila", there are certain things I cannot engage in at work and this becomes a point of contention with some companies. Since I am Afrikan by religion, I am forced to observe other people's religious symbols through public holidays while for mine I must take annual leave.

Sick leave. I generally do not consult medical practitioners. I am most at home consulting an inyanga for whatever health condition I may have. There is a lot of companies who will take issue with a sick note from an inyanga. Medical aid procedures are way too cumbersome to claim your costs from an inyanga. As a matter of principle, it is up to the company to sort it out if they happen to have issues with the use of *izinyanga*. This is a position for which I will never apologise nor reconsider. Some people are at peace taking flu vaccines while I am comfortable taking my herbs. Like it or don't like it, that is the real state of affairs.

Many of us are expected to change to suit our jobs. Many people are miserable at work as a result. People are trying way too hard to fit into the corporate environment. The corporate environment is too hostile for many people.

10. Former Liberation Heroes in Present Day South Afrika

One looks back prior to 1994 with fond memories. Memories of how united black people were under the rally of fighting white rule. So much was sacrificed yet so much was gained.

A successful peaceful settlement to the new dispensation was attained under tough but commendable leadership of our true black stalwarts. The negotiations even surprised the white rulers of South Afrika then, on how well articulated these comrades were. Many of us rejoiced every time we were told about the progress of the negotiations.

Up to 2002, many of our people looked up to these heroes with respect and a sense of pride. For they were in the forefront of the struggle and many paid a heavy price of imprisonment. This gave them the honour to be elected leaders of our struggle and our democratic movement.

What happened between 2002 and 2008 seem the preserve of these former heroes, as many of us the people seem clueless. Many of them resigned from active politics to form the first wave of black economic empowerment deals. Most of them became very successful by measure of wealth, even though this wealth is yet to trickle down to our people. They became the new symbol of black success and what young blacks aspire to.

But what happened in the wake of the preparations for the 52nd conference of the African National Congress in Polokwane was shocking to say the least. Out of the blue, seemingly, many of these our stalwarts came tongues blazing attacking people on what seemed a very personalised campaign at either discrediting people or revenge. Many did not care anymore about public perceptions and maintaining a particular conduct in the public eye.

What happened to this our heroes?

Let me recount: Tokyo Sexwale, Matthews Phosa, Cyril Ramaphosa, Mac Maharaj, Jay Naidoo, Jeff Radebe, Penuel Maduna. These are some of the most respected stalwarts of our struggle, but at one point or another they came out blazing and daring anyone who cared to listen. Even our own Jacob Zuma has joined the chorus!

I know many got angry over being investigated for this or other reason/allegation. I know some had their political careers cut short with the likes Tokyo Sexwale, Mathews Phosa, Mac Maharaj and Cyril Ramaphosa. But what has changed so much that when these leaders make a remarkable come back to politics are so angry and going all out to smash anyone who dare challenge or stand in their way?

With the exception of Penuel Maduna and Jeff Radebe, I loved and enjoyed listening to these heroes at all times. They used to deliver such compelling and convincing arguments in debates. I remember the period 1992 to 1997 when they used to be regulars on our local channels. They truly made many of us proud.

Bontate Sexwale and Phosa, specifically you, what has happened that changed those inspiring leaders we once knew in you? What could have possibly gone wrong between comrades that the friendliness and bitterness in you seem lost? Could this give credence to the allegations that there is a struggle between the first and second waves of BEE? Remember the outcries that the first BEE transactions never trickled down to our people but only to you politicians.

But strangely enough, it is you people who benefited from BEE who are claiming BEE has failed the poor! All of you in the new ANC NEC/NWC claim policies must change to be pro poor, yet the

state of BEE remains in your hands. You claim the previous ANC NEC was elitist, and elitist they were, yet I see the same class in you. Not that class is a bad thing, but your comrades are popularising the notion that being a black elitist is synonymous to being anti poor and henceforth undesirable. The notion that black people cannot and are not supposed to be wealthy.

To be fair, this anger cannot be put on the ANC alone. All former liberation movements seem to be suffering the same deficiency. Point in case is PAC and Azapo. Could it possibly be that our leaders too have PhDs? One would have thought that this syndrome only exist in corporate South Afrika and not politics.

This is just the voice of a lone ordinary South Afrikan wondering what could have gone wrong with our former heroes.

11. Free Spirit

Having made peace with the fact that I am not a career person, nor am I a corporate type, I can freely jostle for the journey towards my self discovery in writing.

I have been writing for a few months now, with most of my work focused on poetry. I would like to think that I write Sesotho poetry, for it is through poetry that I am able express myself. It is through poetry that I can capture the past, reflect on today and imagine the future.

Strangely enough, I also find myself constantly writing English poetry! This I attribute more to circumstances than a conscious decision.

Most of my opinion pieces are written in English, probably because I am disappointed at how black people respond to the word written in indigenous languages. I have come to appreciate that even though the majority of the people who visit my sites are black, many of them are seriously challenged in their mother tongue languages. Although I do not want to speculate on the reasons for this, this compels me to focus my writings in English.

I have recently started using Facebook, and all my articles are written in English.

My thoughts and views are largely on history, heritage and politics. I believe history strongly influences our present lives and possibly our future.

It is in this spirit that I can finally say **I Am Free**.

12. Giving Way

It is said that the human body and spirit is build to absorb shock and endurance. We never really know what we are capable of as a people until faced with danger, tragedy or problems. This logic suggests that people perform at their best when faced with unusual situations because then they act out of instinct and use intuition.

Intuition and instinct are what gives us godlike status. Well, if you happen to be a spiritual person, you will understand that there are forces in the universe beyond logic. Our visible union with these forces is through memory, dreams and intuition. Whether you believe in them as an individual is irrelevant. Fact is that they exist.

The fair factor about life is that no one chooses what life should bring for them. Nor can we choose when these events are to happen to us. But central to all of life's undertakings is knowledge, understanding and experience. You will never be the same person after going through these events. Whether we choose to actually learn anything from our past is debatable. This is why the human brain can remember and hold memories for so long. So that we may remember what must be remembered, and that which has been learnt is forgotten and erased from memory.

Perhaps the most important thing about life to me is dreams. I have come to accept that dreams communicate messages to the dreamer. Much the same way nightmares do. The only way to stop nightmares is to understand what they are about and they will go away. Dreams unfortunately do not tend to repeat themselves too often. So as and when you dream you must endeavor to remember your dreams and what meaning they hold for you. Of course some people say dreams are superstitious, but people will believe whatever they want to believe. Always reflect on your dreams and you will be a free person.

Having gone through the ups and downs brought about by life, I have missed some of the most significant messages brought about by dreams. And that is the biggest mistake of my life. We sometimes lead busy lives with not much time to ourselves. Wherever we may be in life, every person needs the time to reflect and introspect. It is only by looking at ourselves that we get the true meaning of what our lives are supposed to mean. And the beauty of life is that your life means to you what life has brought for you. There is no need to be validated in what you are. And that is purity in its truest form.

Why exactly would I talk about life from a philosophical perspective in a biography?

At the height of my economic prosperity I forgot about the simple things in life like dreams. Sometimes I did things contrary to my instincts and feelings. When I began dismissing certain things in life as a nuisance simply because I had shut my understanding towards them. And the truth be said, no one can ever run away from the truth about him/herself. The majority of us black people tend to forget who we are the moment we make a success of our lives. And not being able to differentiate between yourself and your wealth is dangerous. So I stopped looking at myself as a person and only saw the prosperous person.

I guess things happen for a reason, whatever that reason may be. I have learnt that it is a waste of time trying to find reasons behind why certain things happened in your life. Life happened and you must just move on, hopefully with an understanding of your circumstances. The more prosperous I became, the more empty, lonely and miserable I became. The more wealth I generated, the more meaningless it became in my life. As if something big was missing in my life, and finding that something proved elusive. My discontent with my life continued even though business/work was going great.

I finally felt like I was choking and since I still couldn't figure out what the missing link was, I thought it best to lose everything and start life afresh. Okay, maybe saying I couldn't figure things out is too big of a statement. To some degree I knew what was wrong with my life, but the gap that existed between my real life and what I thought to be what needed to be done was too wide to try to fix things. It was just easier going bankrupt and start from scratch than trying to figure things out. The best thing about starting afresh is that there are no expectations to be met. You can be whoever you want to be without any baggage.

Simple things in life, if not kept in check and guarded, have the potential to spin out of control. And this is exactly why every person must reflect often. And without this understanding of my true self, I lost touch with my life and realities.

I am a quiet and peaceful individual, and I value my peace tremendously. Not knowing what is wrong in my life proved the most strenuous and stressful of times. Even though my leaving everything I had worked for may seem irresponsible, it probably is, I placed more value on my peace of mind than anything else. Material things can always be worked for and attained, it is only a matter of time.

So this was just a story about the many things, thoughts, feelings, dreams, visions and realisations that put me where I am today. Although I am flat broke, I am extremely happy with my life. I am content of who I am.

I no longer view success in economic terms, but rather as that which makes you happy and fulfilled. And a happy fulfilling life I believe to be the key a long life.

13. I Hate Christianity

South Afrika is touted as a christian country, with the rest of religious beliefs in the mere minority. Perhaps this is true considering that apartheid South Afrika institutionalised christiaity. If faith is determined by how many people supposedly associate themselves with it through church and denominations, then this is most probably true. If the size of faith is determined by the proclamations for a particular belief, then this is likely the truth.

The arrival of first settlers in Afrika around 1400 saw the erosion and trampling on Afrika's heritage. Everything the white man did not understand became pagan, heathen and evil. As far as they were concerned, an Afrikan had nothing positive to offer, so rather destroy everything the white man does not know and understand. It took a period of about 5 centuries to systematically destroy Afrika and her people. And it took the same period to force white culture and beliefs to the uneducated Afrikan.

To many Afrikan states, the acceptance of christianity was a life and death situation, requiring no logic as those who refused to embrace the new religion were shot and killed. And so the story of missionaries began in Afrika. The purpose of early missionaries in Afrika was land dispossession and the spreading of the christian religion. And this mission was often violent and many became victims in its wake. After the dispossession of the people, both land and cattle, the only meaningful way to a possible livelihood was to embrace the new faith and continue with life.

The climax of the invasion of missionaries took place during the 16th century, when virtually the entire continent was swamped with missionaries and the establishment of white governments that began with the worst form of killing people in recorded history. Every Afrikan nation has recorded the advent of white settlers and missionaries through the period 1600 to early 1980s. That is a long time for any person to resist acceptance of any foreign belief under severe attack and survive the carnage.

During this period, Afrikan religion, culture, languages, norms and value were destroyed and people had to live life according to the dictates of white masters. As if the killings and brutalities were not enough, christianity was institutionalised. To receive "services" from the white master, people had to belong to some christian denomination. For children to be accepted in school, their parents had to belong to some christian denomination. To get work, a person had to belong to a denomination. Work permits, residential permits; all required belonging to a christian church.

Every aspect of an Afrikan's life was regulated and directly linked to his acceptance of the christian faith. Early schools were church only schools. Through the use of the bible, people were made or rather forced to abandon everything they believed in favour of christianity.

As a young boy, I had to be baptised in a christian church to be registered and to be eligible for whatever Afrikan people were legible for from government. To be baptised, I had to be given an English name without regard for my culture and traditions. Our names were supposedly too difficult for the white masters to understand, so we just had to have English names for their amusement. People were also taught that our Afrikan names were dirty and therefore undesirable. Reason why so many Afrikan people use English names and are ashamed of their indigenous names.

Today in South Afrika, Sundays are reserved for the christian faith on television. Sabc 1, Sabc 2, Sabc 3 and eTv; all broadcast christian services for the most part of the day. Satellite television has five 24 hour christian channels. So if you happen not to be part of the crowd, there is nothing to watch on Sundays. Every day, the christian faith is given time on both tv and radio for services, without any regard to indigenous people of the land.

So believe me when I say that the Afrikan in me truly despise this inhuman and commercial religion. The one that preaches that one should become a subservient in the face of injustices. One that preaches to people that faith will see them through while they suffer in silence. One that teaches black people that their salvation shall be at death. So the misery of my people continues while they eargely look forward to a good life after death. My Afrikanness embraces life and the good things life has to offer. I therefore yearn for equality and being treated like a human being I am. All of which I am not ashamed of, for god gave me life to live and a rich heritage. If this is undesirable to some, tough luck. I am who I am, a creature of creation.

I therefore stand proud of my Afrikanness and all it encompasses. This, by definition, includes my faith in god and my ancestors. My belief in the natural world. My trust in the spirituality. My love and respect for my surroundings. My coexistence with other of natures creations.

I am truly Afrikan and proud. If god gave me all these and are deemed backward and heathen by others, so be it. In my god I shall believe. All these were given to me as a proud heritage, and I thank my god for that. My experiences as an Afrikan have taught me that people don't know better. When people shall destroy one another, all in the name of religion. When god's creations shall be destroyed, only because some believe it to be strange. The burning desire to destroy all that is different and that which they don't understand.

My Afrikanness has taught me that co-existence is a necessity for all god's creations. And that striving for dominance in this world can only lead to destruction. I also know that I need other creatures as much as they need me. The environment, the people and the animals; all bear testimony to my greatness and tolerance. For god had his reasons why all mankind are different and believe in him differently.

So believe me when I say I detest all what this faith and its people represent. For they seem incapable of understanding who I am. My indifference make them shudder, so much that they should change me to be like them. Believe in the same things, eat the same food, speak the same language as them, dress the same and even look like they do.

How can they ever understand me if they never tried to understand me? How can they understand me if they never listened? How can they be better people if they fail to behave like people? How can they be tolerant when all they know is destruction? Destruction of me self, destruction of my environment, destruction of the planet; all in the quest to prove their humanity.

The Afrikan in me has never felt nor saw the need to prove my humanity, neither have I had the edge to prove my dominance over others. My forbearers taught me the need for harmony and peace between god's creations, and this I shall remember to death. That no creature shall be above the other. That no human shall be better than the other, for we Afrikans know that one hand washes the other. For my fellow human is a brother and I shall do all possible to help. That I shall do all I can to protect and preserve the environment and animals around me. That I need them and my life depends on the continued existence of everybody else, animals included.

14. Identity Crisis

It is said that colonial rule has been the most effective form of oppression known to man, even worse than slavery. For, it focused on devaluing and demeaning the status of an Afrikan man throughout its existence. Colonial rule lasted officially for about three and a half centuries. It systematically targeted the way an Afrikan views and feels about himself, and everything Afrikan was therefore relegated to being pagan, heathen and backward.

The forced religion of christianity trampled on peoples humanity and frightened people with burning in hell for those who refused to embrace the new faith. The education system ensured that children were taught subjects that reduced their humanity to that of animals and everything was done to ensure that all that is good is associated with being white. All the good things existed only in the white areas and black areas became the worst dumps people have ever seen.

Apartheid laws ensured that all services were located in towns and cities far away from townships and that people would always have to travel long distances just to access these services. Black areas were relegated to dumps with no conceivable means of making a living and only white, indian and coloured people were allowed to set up businesses serving these areas. Often these shops were worse than the township dumps themselves on service and hygiene. The only form of legal business allowed to a few black people was selling alcohol. Alcohol therefore became the prevalent substance in townships and people began abusing it, much to the satisfaction of white colonisers.

The only viable form of making a living in townships was through illegal selling of sorghum beer. Many of black children were raised by mothers who depended solely on this business as our fathers went to the cities to work, and many of whom we never saw again. Those fathers who still went home to their families became drunkards and abused our mothers. This as they saw themselves above everyone else and in desperation of relieving their frustrations of being treated like animals by their white rulers. Family structures as known to Afrikans were broken and many women found themselves single parents over night.

Since our Afrikan way of life depended on agriculture, farming and live stock, all land was confiscated to white people and our people had to live in rented dwellings where ever the white man saw fit. People began being shoved from one place to another as the white rulers decided people were located too close to their lavish life styles. Shacks therefore became a reality in the life of an Afrikan.

Our fathers and mothers were given white names by their employers as they reckoned our names were too difficult for them to pronounce. So our fathers became the Johns, Abrams, Davids, Isaacs and the likes of this world. Our mothers became the Marrys, Florences, Emilys, Elsie's of this world. Our mothers were told their hair is disgusting and henceforth they shall cover their hair all the time when at the madams house. Similarly our fathers were told to shave their beared as it looked untoward. They were taught to accept instructions without questions and to adopt white values. They suffered daily abuse at the hands of whites, young and old, and were called boy and girl respectively.

They were taught by their white masters how evil a black person is and that the black person must be dealt with at all cost. Over time our parents became hostile to their own kind who did not follow the white mans ways of doing things. Children were strongly encouraged to follow in the white mans steps and mimic whatever the white man deemed fit and acceptable. Apartheid South Africa labeled a black man a kaffir. Everybody had to learn the ways of the white man, and anyone who dared otherwise was dealt with by either death or prison. The first wave of colonialisation, brain wash, happened with our parents living and working for whites. To them everything black became so bad that it had to be done away with. Our language were undesirable, our names were ungodly,

our culture and traditions became heathen and being black became evil.

They became the messengers of the white man on how desirable it was for the black person to change and embrace life as known by the white person. Young children stopped having Afrikan names. Tradition and rituals were no longer performed. Parties and 21st birthdays became the order of the day in black townships. This was the beginning of chaos and the dwindling of values in townships as people fully embraced that which was taught by the white master.

Since the white master maintained black life was cheap and had no value, people could be killed without remorse and second thought. Those who remained black and continued practicing their age old traditions were named heathens and all sort of bad names and labels. There became two nations of black people, those who supported white views and therefore lived their lives according to white teachings and those who remained black. Those who embraced new white taught lifestyles benefited from better treatment from white masters and became foremen's of the white man.

Over a period of about three generations, there were big divisions between black people in the townships. Those who regarded themselves better than the rest of the black people due to their embracing white teachings. This group was easily identified by white names, were faithful church goers and shunned black peoples lifestyles.

In present day Afrika, South Afrika specifically, the view that black people are sub human continues. Colonial education has not changed and the black child continues to be taught things that devalue and make him feel inadequate. No black history is taught and white history is embraced. Black tradition and culture remains shunned in favour of white culture. Black people use white names which many cannot even pronounce. People continually aspire to be like white people and will go to lengths to ensure they look and act like white people. Names, language, hair styles, and even go as far as using toxic skin lightners in the quest not only to sound but to look white.

It is no wonder then that when the new movement was born in the form of Afrikan Renaissance, scores of black people went out to support and embrace the new thinking. This they saw as a chance for them to reclaim their lost heritage and to forge an identity within the present social order. People put so much effort and resources to ensure that this wave sees the light and becomes a reality. Urban black people, especially educated ones, saw this as a chance for them learn the ways of their elders and from which a new form of identity and pride can emerge. And so everyone had great expectations about this noble idea.

The biggest challenge faced by the creators of the Afrikan Renaissance movement was that theirs was seen, rightly so, as an elitist movement of the educated that excluded the ordinary people. Secondly, the elitist have spent so much time in exile and in jail as political prisoners that they have forgotten many of the basic tenets of black life. It is in this context that the majority of the people rejected this movement as they rightly argued that they remain the guardians of Afrikan heritage. Who are you to come with academic ideas on the ways of the black person when I am an black person? They asked.

As a result, this noble idea remains an academic exercise for the elite that just can't be implemented nor followed by anyone. And so the elitist invented their own version of Afrikan lifestyle that is distinguished by expensive "traditional" attire that is worn on special occasions. To them, Afrikan heritage is a symbol and not a lifestyle, nor is it a set of norms and belief systems as understood by the ordinary people. The elite also want to define which aspects of black life must be retained and which must be done away with. How can you change that which you have no understanding of? The people asked.

The South Afrikan society is divided into three as a result. There are those black people who despise anything Afrikan and therefore want no association with black heritage. There are the elite group,

former exiles, who are intent on redefining what a black life should be like. And then there is the ordinary people who remain what a black person has always been since time immemorial.

Unfortunately for the elite, as noble as the Afrikan Renaissance idea is, it remains a textbook exercise that will never see the light of the day. For these exiles have a way of thinking for the people and knowing exactly what it is that the people really need without ever bothering about and consulting the people. Many of them make the assertion that the people are ungrateful while they see them as being arrogant and out of touch with reality.

So as we speak, the society is faced with a group of people who wish anything black could disappear in thin air and never have to face the humiliation that they have since abandoned the ways of their forefathers. And then there are the elite who are so desperately trying to compensate for the lack of understanding of the ways of the people. They are trying so hard to belong that they will go to lengths to even legislate things that the people take for granted. Instead of learning and practicing what is rightfully theirs, they go out to debate and canvass popular opinion in their sphere.

15. Not Black Enough

Many years ago, as a result of white rule and colonialisation, black people rallied under a common banner of race; being black. In South Afrika, the Black Consciousness Movement led by Bantu Biko labeled anyone who was classified non European Black. Being Black in South Afrika therefore means a group of people belonging to the Afrikan, Coloured and Indian races.

As Biko put it, people must be addressed in terms of who they are and not who they are not. As a result, all these races were collectively termed Black people to signify a particular race versus another. In the American diaspora, black folks became known as Afrikan Americans, this also in line with solidarity for their Afrikan heritage.

During these hard times of hatred and genocide, people lived and advanced a common course which was the liberation of the black man. And in Afrika specifically, this liberation was hard won starting with Ghana in 1960 and ending with South Afrika in 1994. Perhaps many Afrikan states performed better when coming to the recognition of its people as a race. Many rejoiced and sighed at the sight of being treated like human beings we are. Finally, the fruits of freedom were beginning to show.

It is October 2008, about 14 years since South Afrika became a democratic state in which all people have a right to exercise their political will. It is exactly 14 years since South Afrika has never seen white rule again. Precisely 14 years since Black people ascended to power and have remained so, most likely so for the next generation or two.

However, the human relations in South Afrika are somewhat surprising, if not downright silly. During the first tenure of Black government, all rallied and supported the idea that political stalwards must at least benefit from this freedom we enjoy today. Therefore, people were appointed to positions purely based on struggle credentials and nothing else, with the view that time shall come when all shall be treated equal for the development of our lovely country. Peace, hope and a bright future awaiting all South Afrikans; especially Black South Afrikans.

Today being black in South Afrika seems like a curse! The majority of our people live in poverty. Black education has deteriorated such that Black graduates are redundant in this economy. Health care is, well let's not talk about that. Unemployment is reported to be around 40%, depending on who you ask. In some places, obviously black places, unemployment sits at around 70%. For the first time in the history of Afrika, a black person has a prepaid water meter which dispenses no water if there is no money to buy water. Black families by tradition are large families. This is due to their social significance. Yet black people today receive low quality houses that consist of only two rooms! A kitchen and a bedroom.

Even the few resources that existed in former apartheid home lands have since been relocated to white suburbs for the benefit of this few at the expense of the majority. Case in point: Qwaqwa was a home land that depended mostly on agriculture, water and industry. It owned a large infrastructure which has since being distributed between Bloemfontein and Bethlehem. Qwaqwa prided itself for its quality education, albeit a bantu one. It had three teachers colleges, a university campus and two technical colleges. Today none of these exist except the university campus. It had a modest police force and health institutions. Education, policing and nursing were the main employment agencies in the economy. Today it sits with about a 70% unemployment statistic.

The black government has done a lot to create policies that foster the development of our people, however all these are shunned by a white business community. Key industries and sectors remain the preserve of whites. Harassment and discrimination in the workplace remain the exclusive experience of a black person. 14 years into freedom and democracy.

Perhaps all these are nothing and seem miniscule compared to the fact that today being black means how well known your name is or has been in the politics of struggle. If you happen to come from a family whose name is not among the known in political activism, your well being and progress is immediately stifled. Employment and business opportunities mean that if your last name is not associated with stalwarts or you do not have any relations with those well known, your future and that of your siblings seem rather bleak. Experience, knowledge and potential don't seem to matter anymore, the only sure way to make mends is how much of a socialite you are with those in the political sphere.

But surprisingly, white people continue to benefit from the system; some even better than during apartheid. The pain that many black people are capable, and many have worked hard to be educated and acquire experience. All of which seem a fruitless exercise as people see no rewards. The shame associated with having to work for someone less capable than you are only because his last name carries more weight than your experience will ever do. Many South Afrikans of all races considers South Afrika not part of Afrika, and this you can believe by the lifestyles and laws followed in the country.

Black people must conform to white culture and norms, while Afrikan culture is systematically destroyed. Black identity has lost meaning as black people must aspire to look and act like white people do. Including the use of language. Black culture is shameful to the educated and enlightened, while the same people purports and advances white culture. Being proudly Afrikan in South Afrika seems a political suicide and a definite corporate stalemate. People's careers have ended by merely expressing their pride at being Black.

All these begs the question: are our Afrikan politicians so ashamed of who they are that they will destroy the only heritage they have?

What has happened to the principles that guided our liberation struggle which stressed the importance of identity? Remember Black Consciousness, Afrikan Nationalism, Pan Afrikanism and lately even Afrikan Renaissance. Remember struggle campaigns like the Black is Beautiful? Buy Black, Black and Proud; all these were attempts at ensuring the black identity is entrenched and foster an element of pride among people of these races.

As we approach the fourth term of a black government, one wonders how long before being Black will be a pride. I wonder how long I will continue to suffer just because I happen to be **Black and Proud**.

It reminds me of the words of Bantubonke Steven Biko when he said: "...The first step is to make the black man come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth. This is what we mean by an inward-looking process. This is the definition of Black Consciousness."

"...Now this is part of the roots of self-negation which our kids get even as they grow up. The homes are different, the streets are different, the lighting is different, so you tend to begin to feel that there is something incomplete in your humanity, and that completeness comes with whiteness. This is carried through to adulthood when the black man has got to live and work."

Safa saphela isizwe esimnyama. Anitsheleni inkokheli zethu zisilamulele kuloludaba.

16. PAC Post Political Unbanning

The adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1959 saw a break away formation gather to form the Pan Afrikanist Congress of Azania. The PAC formation was led by its first president Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe. This group felt that the African National Congress was betraying the people as the Freedom Charter placed less emphasis on the distribution of land to its original owners. South Afrika belongs to all who live in it, so pronounced the Freedom Charter.

In reality, the PAC manifesto differed not from that of the ANC except on the land question. In fact, the PAC manifesto had nothing more on programmes other than the land question. PAC felt strongly that the land question must be addressed and the land must be redistributed to its rightful owners. As a result, the PAC devised programmes of action to mobilise people to advance its goals. Even though now it seems the PAC has never had an idea of how practical their policies were.

In general, the PAC did a good job of attracting membership and support for the party throughout the period during which all political parties representing the interests of black people were banned and unlawful.

The PAC began experiencing problems and tough challenges during the late 1980's when its membership and support seemingly dwindled. The worst came in 1990 when all political parties were unbanned. The PAC, then under the leadership of Mlamli Clarens Makwetu, took a hard-line stance that it was not to participate in the South Afrikan negotiations for the government of national unity; known as the Codesa negotiations.

They chose to stay out of the negotiations and unfortunately did not have programmes in place to canvas for the support of the people. Neither did they bother getting a mandate from their constituencies in taking this stance. Many of its supporters were disappointed for this position. The negotiators at Codesa did not bother either to convince the PAC to participate, instead the Inkatha Freedom Party was begged to participate. This left the dwindling PAC out in the cold together with the Azanian Peoples Organisation, who also refused to participate in the negotiations.

In 1992 when the government of national unity was established, the PAC was not part of it. When elections were announced for April 1994, the PAC initially decided not to participate in the elections, they later changed their minds and participated. Their participation in the elections led to a very humiliating 5% vote, considering their history and that they fared worse than even white minority parties.

What has led this once respectable party to its brinks? First the problem was their policies. The PAC had no concrete programmes other than the land question. Even the land issue had no clear programme of action on how they intended to redistribute land. Secondly, the PAC lost touch with its local structures in the 1980s. To this day, I doubt if the PAC knew its membership following their unbanning in 1990. Many of the people on its books were members who had not renewed their membership in years.

The chronic problem the PAC has since been faced with following 1990 has always been leadership, or lack thereof. They lost many of their cadres to the ANC and Azapo. The few left in the party seemed not able to move the party forward beyond its antiquated policies. They lost the remainder of their good leaders during the first democratic government and have never survived that.

In 1992, its supporters blamed the leadership for not participating in the negotiations and for not consulting them on this decision. When they gained the 5% vote in 1994, the PAC was left with only three well known activists with ground support: Benni Alexandra(Khoisan X), Patricia De

Lille and Pandelani Nefolovodwe. They lost Pandelani Nefolovodwe and Benni Alexandra before the end of the first tenure. And then Patricia De Lille left to form a new political party, the Independent Democrats, which fares better than the PAC in elections.

The biggest setback the PAC has ever had is the fight for positions in the party since 1990. Following their conference since unbanning in early 1990s, the PAC began with its in-fights after Clarens Makwetu was voted president; with Letlapa Mphahlele faction strongly dissatisfied. The 1997 conference saw Makwetu replaced with Stanley Mokgoba as its president, and a legal battle ensued. Mokgoba was replaced by Dr Motsoko Pheko as president in 2002. In 2007 Pheko was replaced with Letlapa Mphahlele as its president, amid a splinter led by Thami ka Plaati. At the same time, Pheko was embroiled in legal battles with the executive committee as they demanded he vacate the PAC seat in parliament.

During all these fights, no one cared or bothered about the PAC support throughout. The PAC has never bothered going back to the structures and engaging its members regarding its programmes or at least being mandated. They moved from 5% in 1994 to 2% in 1999 to less than 1% in 2004. To this day, the PAC is still focused on positions than what it stands for and communicating that to its structures. Their outdated policies, if any exist beside land, remained what they were when it was formed in 1960.

In the PAC one sees a trend of struggle heroes turned dictators even though the struggle was never about positions. The PAC today is so insignificant that many are asking whether its continued existence is justified. Despite the fact that the PAC has nurtured and trained so many of us in politics, all of us have since found political homes elsewhere as the PAC continues to self-destruct.

As South Africa desperately needs an alternative party, many had hoped the PAC would outgrow its childish in-fights and focus on rebuilding the party to a home many could be proud of. Today many look at the PAC as it has been, a party that was once great but has since lost its relevance.

The PAC once was a formidable party under the leadership of Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe, followed by Zephania Mothopeng.

Today, I hold the following leaders, and those who served in their executive, responsible and liable for the dire state of the party:

- Mlamli Clarens Makwetu
- Stanley Mokgoba
- Dr Motsoko Pheko
- Letlapa Mphahlele

In these leaders we have seen what power and greed means. In them we have seen what a lack of leadership can do to a party.

As history is recalled, we shall remember with pride the formation of the PAC, but shall shudder with shame at its demise. The people have been betrayed by those in whom faith was placed. Maqabane, you truly disgraced our land and your predecessors.

17. Racial Divide

Rainbow Nation? While a rainbow nation is a noble idea dreamt by our respected Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, it remains just that, a dream.

These respected elders have played a major role in trying to reconcile the past injustices for a better South Afrika for all. While many people buy into this idea of reconciliation, it has failed to take root in the hearts of many. The problem is that black people are expected to reconcile with whites, while the white people are largely left to their own accord regarding South Afrika's past. Black people are told to forgive and forget, hence the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The question that must be asked by many people is why must black people be expected to make amends while white people were the ones mostly guilty of apartheid? Why am I, as a black child, expected to extend a reconciliatory hand while white people generally don't care about reconciliation? Shouldn't white people of this country make the first attempt at reconciling with the black people?

South Afrika, two worlds in one country. One world is white and rich, while the other is black and poor. Although much work has been done in improving the lives of black people since the dawn of democracy, a lot more remains to be done. The problem with race relations is that black are generally more willing to reach out to other races.

The white society remain widely unreformed. Take the working environment for instance. White people still see themselves as superior to blacks. Black people are expected to fit into a white culture at work while their white counterparts make no effort in learning/accommodating the black culture, even if the majority of worker are black. Generally white people expect black people to speak English while at work. Even if black people are conversing among themselves, whites expect them to speak English so they can understand what is being said. Whose fault exactly is it that white people can't understand a single black language?

People are still grouped by race than interest. In any form of gathering, you will observe that the groupings will generally be racially based. Blacks find it easy to mingle with other black people. Whites with other whites, and so on. Perhaps the issue of prejudice also play a role here. Many people still label others names when those associate with people of other races.

The question of the Coloured people. Who are Coloured people? Unfortunately the Coloured people have isolated themselves from society as an exclusive race. Years of freedom fighting have sought to declassify people under the single generic term Black. But sadly many Coloured people see themselves more superior than Black people, hence their refusal to be called Black. There are Coloured people who desperately aspire to be White, at all costs. This state has led to tension in some areas where Black people blatantly refuse to accept Coloured people into their fold. And the racist remarks and treatment of Black people by the Coloured people is not helping either. Many in the Coloured community have cried that Coloured people are ignored in the new South Afrika. This said out of ignorance that the term Black is an all encompassing for the Black races of South Afrika.

Who are the Indians in South Afrika? The Indian people are the worst practitioners of Black on Black racism in South Afrika. For some unknown reason, Indian people see themselves as being better than the African race. They aspire to be White at the expense of the African people. Due to the historical better treatment of Indians by the apartheid regime, they have remained better off than most Black races in the country. Indian employers are among the worst of people you can work for as a Black person. This is somewhat puzzling as many of the Indian people played a crucial role in the struggle for democracy. To this day in South Afrika, Indians will favour Indians, Whites and Coloured over Africans; exactly in that order.

It is through these unfortunate events that you will find Durban the worst city for African people. African people live in the worst of areas in Durban city due to this entrenched racism. The city centre is home to White and Indian South Afrikans. Cape Town is the worst city where I have seen racism, fifteen years into democracy. Cape Town is where discrimination has been systematically entrenched, yet I rarely hear people complain about it. Cape Town city is reserved for White people. Blacks, Africans and Coloured, are relegated to the outskirts of town where life continues under some of the worst humanitarian conditions I seen in my country. Cape Town is a sharp contrast of riches and poverty. It is a shame that people who were born and raised in Cape Town has never set foot to the Table Mountain nor to Robben Island.

18. Sad State of Journalism

Many years ago, barriers of entry were high for anyone aspiring to become a journalist. These requirements were the same for a news reader, a sports anchor, a field reporter and even for the editor. In fact, people were expected to be able to do all of them. People were required to possess a good command for writing, reading and the ability for form an independent opinion on matters. This enabled the media to maintain a relatively quasi independent status over the matter being reported.

For the most part, the independence could be argued to have been maintained, choosing to forget the propaganda and support for apartheid South Afrika. Even with this apartheid hanging over us, a number of media houses were able to develop the best talent available in the country. People who could report, analyse and often arrive at different conclusions about the same story. That was the forming of South Afrika's sound and progressive journalism.

Worse was the black journalist as the same requirements applied, but more was required from a black journalist than any other race. The black journalist had to be extremely good in english and afrikaans, a non negotiable requirement, whether or not the journalist was going to report in either language. This meant that on top of excelling in which ever language the black journalist was to report, they had to master two more languages. Black reporters were required to take a news item, translate it into english, afrikaans and one Afrikan language before they would be allowed to become journalists.

This stringent requirement, as unfair as it was, ensured that the calibre of black journalists produced back then were the best, better than any other race in the country. And many of them have since gone to manage and edit newsrooms, leaving a crop of young journalists to mentor and develop. However, it seems the requirements into a newsroom these days is simply a journalism degree and a command for english. This is not necessarily a bad thing, except these black journalists are supposed to report in an Afrikan language for the Afrikan audience, and this is where the problem lies. Many are good at what they do, and are accomplished in the academia, but the fact that they do not have a good understanding of the language for which they are supposed to present news bulletins make them bad reporters.

The measure of how good or bad a news reporter is, is primarily based on their grasp for the language in which they present the news. I have watched with dismay as young black journos proudly present isiXhosa news in english. And it seems no one requires them to make an effort to understand the language, as long as everyone is good in english that is good enough, it seems. The consequence of this practice is the erosion and non development of Afrikan languages, not to mention that the majority of South Afrikans speak these languages at home; and this happens to be the only time when news are watched and listened to the most. I listen to isiXhosa news because I am a umXhosa. Secondly because I choose to and the only news affecting my people are likely to be read by my people. The english bulletin focuses on news relevant to white people, and rightly so. But making isiXhosa news english is wrong in every sense.

The arrogance of the media has let this pass as this does not affect the owners of media houses, who are white. English news bulletins are well researched and prepared, and anyone who dares present them must command good english before being allowed to present. But the same standard is not kept for other language groups in the country. Of late, even the news bulletin originates in english and then is translated, verbatim, into the different Afrikan languages. The result of this is news that are not relevant to the people listening or watching them and even the loss of proper grammar as the focus is more on translation and not on meaning. Seeing that Afrikan people in South Afrika do not have much choice, especially on television, there isn't really an option to simply switch to another station. So people end up watching multiple news bulletins in different languages to be able to

gather enough relevant news.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation is funded by the government, a black government, and is itself led by black people; yet the news aired to the black masses is simply disgusting. I will choose to ignore the obvious bias of the broadcaster on other programmes such as current affairs and drama. The prevailing notion is that black people do not want to listen to their languages but English, what a load of rubbish! The fact that many of our leaders are educated and have since suffered an identity crisis does not mean many of us are in the same dilemma. We are proudly black and African.

It is mind boggling to learn that the editor of a news bulletin for an African audience, say isiXhosa, is a white person. How on earth can a white person be in charge of isiXhosa news when he can't even speak a word of isiXhosa? And by the same logic we do not see a black person who can't speak English, if there is a black person in South Africa who does not speak English, being an editor of English news? Only English and Afrikaans seem to matter to the SABC, despite the fact that the majority (over 80%) speak indigenous languages. Perhaps the SABC should take note of why predominantly African people refuse to pay for TV licenses and white people do.

As horrendous as this is, it is nothing compared to my next point. While black people are required to go through this rigorous process in becoming journalists, many of these requirements do not apply to white journalists. An English journalist is simply required to show a command for English and nothing else, the same applies for Afrikaans. I do not have an issue with this per se, but it becomes a major pain when I have to listen or watch a white journalist present on isiXhosa news in English or Afrikaans. The same will never apply to English or Afrikaans news bulletins. An African journalist can never present in any language other than English or Afrikaans.

And this makes me even sad when white journalists cannot pronounce names of their black colleagues, let alone of Africans at large! How can you work with a person for many years and still not be able to pronounce their name? Only arrogance can lead this. I have watched, journalist after another, making mockery of names of black colleagues without even the slightest sign of indignation. Yet a black journalist must be able to pronounce white names, or they will not become journalists. I must say on the outset that I mostly blame the black journalists themselves as they should have done something about this, but the fact that it continues makes me believe they are cohorts.

I have never seen a nation where its own citizens do not care to know and pronounce names of its leadership, South African white people are the first. White journalists cannot pronounce names of many cabinet ministers despite these ministers having been ministers for fourteen years now. Every time this happens, I see the word treason imprinted in my mind. I have watched with horror the following names being butchered by white journo's: Nconde Balfour, Kgalema Motlanthe, Pumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka; to name a few. Mangosuthu Buthelezi is pronounced properly because he will not take nonsense from anyone, and any white journo who wants access to the honorable minister would better be able to pronounce his name properly.

This morning, 16 November 2008, I was listening to a morning bulletin on SA Fm by Elvis Preslin and the journo reports that "the CEO of SA Airways Khaya Nqakula" this and that! This is a complete bad and incorrect bulletin because the CEO is not Nqakula but Nqula. I cannot imagine what would befall a black journalist making such a public blunder. And the white journo will not even correct this obvious lie nor apologise, he simply continued reading his bulletin.

Yes, I understand that there are a few black journalists who cannot, correction, choose not to; pronounce black names. But to me this is more a complexion issue for black journalists than their ability. And this would not have occurred if the media upheld the same standard for everyone as those of black journalists in English stations. Many times I laugh so much listening to a Mosotho

journalist trying to properly pronounce the name of a Mxhosa. They struggle because some alphabets do not exist in Sesotho to represent these difficult names, but they make an effort and will not go past a statement until at least a name has been pronounced relatively okay. Why can't white journalists in South Afrika do the same? What gives white journalists the arrogance to simply dismiss having to pronounce our names properly as total disnecessity?

I must admit that our public officials should have taken a stance on this matter regarding their names, but that is for them to answer to. As a South Afrikan who watches news in six different languages, it bothers me enough and actually bugs me a lot. For me there are many things on which our white counterparts just seem not interested in making an effort. And with a name being such an important factor in human relations, many of the white people I have spoken to see proper pronunciation of black names as silly and plainly not necessary. "Chana, it's just a name.", they say. Yet it is not just a name for them, why should it just be a name for me? As an Afrikan, my name has meaning, and that is extremely important to me. Why should I allow my name to be dismembered by people who clearly do not take me seriously? Yes, there are white people who make an effort to get our names right, but I am afraid it is the norm in the media industry for white people not to.

For South Afrika, where illiteracy rates are reportedly in the region of 30%, it is crucial to get things right. The majority of our people listen to radio than any other media, and these unfortunate experiences keep cropping. When I was a young boy, one of two things happened when an insert was to be made in a foreign language. They would either totally not play the insert but simply provide a translated version. Or they would play the insert and then offer a translation directly following the clip. This thing now that they will do a word for word translation while the clip is playing is totally new to me and totally disgusting as you can't hear either. Or they simply just play the clip and offer no translation. Sometimes when they do offer a translation following the clip, it is the word for word kind of translation that loses meaning.

In as much as the media is white owned, I feel the interests of all role players must be observed and respected. Give us proper news or rather just don't bother giving us news that are highly improper. Contrary to popular belief in South Afrika, Afrikan folks are proud of their languages and many want them developed. While this may fly in the face of liberals, both black and white, the majority of languages spoken in South Afrika are neither english nor afrikaans. In fact isiZulu is the most spoken language, followed by isiXhosa. Sesotho is third (by population count but second by popularity) followed by Setswana. The rest of the languages follow, and english is the least spoken language in this country, with afrikaans the second.

I have heard some people, including our political leadership, proclaiming that it is way too costly to observe and advance all languages as proclaimed in the constitution. This is most unfortunate as they fail to understand that the development of these languages is not optional, nor is it meant to satisfy some groups for political correctness. The growth and development of the South Afrikan economy is fully dependent on all its citizens being able to participate fully in its development. And this can only happen when everyone is free to exercise whatever language they know best in carrying out their chosen profession. These leaders also forget that a language such as afrikaans did not exist before the arrival of settlers in South Afrika, but was developed over a few centuries to what it is today. No one ever sat back and said it was too costly to develop the language. The Afrikaner leadership understood what needed to be done and fully supported this need.

And the plain truth is that no one is doing anyone any favour by the use of Afrikan languages. For it is upon the Afrikans themselves to fully take charge and take forward the mandate of developing and advancing their languages. Many have realised, and more so the young generation, that their future existence and excellence is dependent on the understanding of their languages. White media will either have to voluntarily give credence to these languages or they will suffer the loss of potential revenue when the current crop of Afrikan youth become decision makers in the near

future. They must understand that the buying power lies with the masses and the present generation of political and business leaders will soon retire and pass on. It is the upcoming form of leadership that will bring about change and the white media better be prepared and ready for such change.

19. She Matter

The black middle class and womanhood.

The historical significance of women in black society seem to be loosing meaning, if it has not already happened. Historically, women are at the centre of society. Mothering, teaching, leading, cooking and beauty. A black family is a family because of a woman.

It is a known fact that no man can be successful and have stature in society without a woman by his side. A man can never be respected if he remains single beyond a certain age. Family brings pride and recognition to a man. The central theme of family to a black man is respect, success and pride.

Family is the centre of values in Afrikan society. The value system is taught and refined at home for every child. It is this role that places such a high importance on cultural knowledge for women. For it is women who will eventually pass this knowledge to children when they finally establish their own families in the future. *Mosadi ke tshiya ya lelapa*. Contrary to popular belief, a woman has a higher stature in Afrikan society than a man does.

It is quite disturbing to note black women and their view of family nowadays. While it is understandable for some of them to feel the way they do about family, it does not really justify the behaviour. Black women today equate financial independence with the need not to have men in their lives. What is even worse is the fact that they all want children but not the fathers of the children. So men are sort of baby making machines for them.

This points to broken family values for our black women.

Since black sisters don't want men in their lives, we now have a pandemic of single mothers across the country. Single motherhood is the in-thing for them.

What will be the final consequence of this trend to black society? The very first visible signs are the erosion of family values. Kids from single mothers grow up not to know the role of men in the family. Fathers become a novel concept to them, one they grow up never to experience. This, I believe, deprives young people from the knowledge of what role men are supposed to play in society.

Of course the blame can't entirely be placed on black women alone. Black men of today also don't see family as a valid concept. Afrikan brothers now view family from a financial perspective, where their life partners must conform to stereotypes such as being educated, financially stable and well connected. To them family is just another business transaction.

Some men are intimidated by successful women. So the moment their partners become successful they abandon them for women in their "class". But many times these men cannot be blamed for leaving their successful partners. Afrikan women unfortunately equate success with money, influence and power. This power they extend to family where they become arrogant and disrespectful to their partners. Unfortunately men are not well receptive to being controlled, historically. When a woman continually insists on becoming dominant in a relationship, men tend to pack and leave.

Does money, class and education have to play a role in social relations? It seems people have forgotten that personal relations are based on mutual respect and understanding. For as long as women associate their financial success with control, we have a long way to go.

20. Spreading the Word

This is the period beginning in October of 2008, shortly following my decision to shut down [2dots Media](#). This was mostly a period of self reflection, introspection and discovery.

What humbles me about this period, which I will always remember, is the fact that I was able to reassess my life; specifically my priorities. Having really decided, subconsciously, that software development and IT in general were nearing their end of life as a career; it was most important to decide on what my next career will be. And having gone through a process of identifying all possible careers, it was a tough and hard realisation to me.

I learned about myself that I am most comfortable doing the arts, of all things! Things I used to look at as possible occupations to follow my role as a technical person, were clearly out of place with the person that I am. Spending my time being a manager or project leader became meaningless. Even the investment world did not appeal to me anymore. I now view investments purely from a private investment perspective and have no ambitions whatsoever to work in any such technical capacity. This made me understand that technical or scientific choices were really out of question as these added no value in my life as a person.

The true value of science and technology can never be individualised. These are industrial type solutions to mass production and major contributors to air pollution. This coming from a software developer who has written software for a living for twelve years to date!!!

Knowledge vs skills vs wealth vs nation building.

I have come to agree and accept that wealth is a myth and holds no value to the quality of life an individual lives. A person's quality of life is determined by their choices and habits, money plays a very subtle role. Knowledge and skills are the key to a growing nation. The more skills you can develop in your people, the more likely your country will succeed. It is this view that fuels my argument that most of us should spend our time building the country than consciously trying to build wealth. Wealth is a by-product of knowledge and success. This is one of the reasons why we have such poor service delivery and corruption in government. Public servants are too busy creating wealth to bother providing a service to the people. Many of us have left the public service for the private sector as either employees or entrepreneurs. The moment the majority of citizens of a country focus on themselves more than they do on the issues affecting their country, the harder it becomes for the country to progress at a maximum.

So what's this about spreading the word? My interest in the arts is on writing. Putting thoughts and feelings down is my passion. And let me add that creative work comes naturally to African people. It is our nature to communicate our inner thoughts through expression. Our forms of popular expression are music, poetry and dance. I unfortunately lack on the dance side. Music touches my soul. Poetry is my self expression.

It is therefore my aspiration, goal and intention to become a writer of some form.

My current platforms of expression are; www.futhwa.org.za, www.nalane.org.za, www.qwaqwa.org.za and Facebook.

Since I must still live and pay bills, I continue to work as a software developer.

21. Thabo Mbeki: Totally Twisted

Afrika has been blessed with a string of great leaders. From Kwame Nkrumah in the days of the struggle to present day leaders, all of whom carry respect and honour of their people.

In present day South Afrika, we are blessed with one Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki, the son of stalwart Govan Mbeki. Thabo Mbeki spend most of his life in exile as an ANC cadre. To many, he remained unknown until perhaps during the Codesa negotiations. He became publicly known when he became the deputy president of the country in 1994.

And so a bizarre story unfolds.

"Perhaps on an occasion such as this, we should start from the beginning, so let me begin. I am an Afrikan."

Thabo Mbeki started leading the country in 1997 under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. The running of the country was left to him in a move President Mandela described as trust. In 1998 Thabo Mbeki was elected president of the ANC and president of the country in 1999. This saw white liberals up in arms claiming there was no one suitable to rule the country after Nelson Mandela, a black leader they meant. They claimed the country would falter and many of them, white folks, would leave the country. Indeed many of them did leave, but many came back when they realised the country was better than okay, and many also realised that exile is not as rosy as they thought.

It became clear pretty soon that Thabo Mbeki was not to tolerate irresponsible behavior from his comrades and poor governance, for the most part. But importantly, all became aware that he was very opinionated on all matters, a matter he was never ashamed of nor apologised for. And this is what sets him apart from most leaders. Firstly, he told white people to leave if they feel the country was doomed after Nelson Mandela. Then he began stating that Afrika requires solutions from Afrika by Afrikans. And this he lived up to, much to the dislike of liberals and critics alike.

Afrika began seeing a new light under his leadership. The G8, the UN and the world at large began taking note of this brave Afrikan who minced no words when making a point. For now, suffice to say we saw the best growth South Afrika has ever realised in its history. Afrikan reforms and peaceful negotiations became the order of the day. What of his creation, the Afrikan Renaissance concept. The overhauling of the Organisation of Afrikan Unity into the Afrikan Union. The setting of the Afrikan Parliament.

During his second tenure in office, some formations began showing their dissatisfaction with the way the country was led. They argued the policies were not in the interest of the poor, though these were and remain ANC policies. While there is some truth in this statement. the misfortune is that he alone was blamed for the policies of the ANC. The failures of government began being labelled Thabo Mbeki failures. This entertained the white liberals as here was an Afrikan who had relegated them to redundancy and embraced Afrikan leadership and Afrikan values at large.

In particular, the following seem to have been drivers in the decision of the ANC to "recall" him from office in late September 2008.

- **Having an opinion**

His best quality, being able to express his views modestly and being able to defend them, seems to have been a point of contention to white liberals who found in the likes of Zwelinzima Vavi, Siphon Seepe and Blade Nzimande allies. All of a sudden, they rallied and

worked hard to challenge him on various matters, all of which he was able to respond to articulately through his weekly column and direct responses in the media. This ability to defend his views made enemies of those mentioned above.

- **HIV/AIDS**

To the shock of the world, Thabo Mbeki announced his views on the causes of AIDS. He stated that although HIV did cause AIDS, he did not believe it was the only cause of AIDS. He urged scientists to look at other causes of AIDS so that those can be dealt with as well. Unfortunately, the world and media garnered and called him a denialist for this view! To this day, no one has cared to look at this reasonable request. What about hunger and famine that destroy many in Afrika? Shouldn't we be fighting poverty at the same time to eliminate these other causes and to assist those poor infected with HIV to have a better chance of recovery? What the media still report to this day is "Mbeki denies HIV causes AIDS." Now you must wonder why this apparent propaganda. I personally still believe to this day that poverty and hunger is the single most deadly force in Afrika. And this advent poverty has led to the scourge of AIDS in Afrika. Yes, HIV prevails, but poverty is more prevalent than anything else.

- **Firing Deputy President Jacob Zuma**

Deputy president Jacob Zuma was fired in June 2005 following his implication in a fraud case. The reasons given were to allow him time to focus on his case. This did not sit well with Cosatu and SACP, and ever since the ANC has never been the same.

- **Writing a weekly column in ANC Today**

President Mbeki wrote a tasteful piece in the ANC Today on a weekly basis. Many people looked towards Friday to receive this newsletter and he used it also to respond to white liberals and counter revolutionaries. Many despised him for this. An unapologetic Afrikan who is not interested in the views of white liberals about Afrika and Afrikans. He also used this piece to criticise Cosatu and SACP, a sore point for them.

- **Assisting Afrikan states with peaceful settlements**

Firstly, the first world countries despised the fact that they were not allowed to participate in finding solutions for Afrika's problems, many of which are of their doing in the first place. Surprisingly, even some South Afrikans did not care about finding solutions in Afrika. They called him an Afrikan president. A rather strange view considering the impact of regional instability in South Afrika. As usual, Cosatu and SACP were the mouth pieces of this cluster.

- **Rendering Cosatu/SACP redundant**

This I think to be the most plausible reason for his recall. Since his presidency of both ANC and government, Cosatu and SACP lost all leverage in advancing their individual mandates. They wanted more control and influence in both structures but were rendered redundant instead. This led to their campaigning for his removal at any cost, hence dissidents united in Polokwane to ensure his ousting. Strange since the SACP is a political party afraid to contest elections on its own. It has always opted to ride on ANC's ticket.

The most shameful thing for the ANC was they did not even have the guts to have an official position regarding his recall. Many conflicting statements were made by the secretary general, treasurer and chairman. The least they could have done was to agree on a statement and stick to it. Jacob Zuma called him a dead snake! In this victory of Jacob Zuma, Zwelinzima Vavi, Blade

Nzimande and *ngwana* Julius Malema; it seems people went out of their way to prove they were in power. They started recalling people, disbanding the Scorpions and practically trampling on anyone who happens to voice a different opinion. Funny as they claimed under Thabo Mbeki debates were stifled!

It was truly distasteful to watch how comrades turned savage over such a short period of time. Decency and respect were lost in the race to outst anyone who dared the new ANC leadership. While it is their right to appoint and recall, it is disgusting how our elders are sworn at and ridiculed in public, even by young people. Truly disgusting as Afrikans that we are.

Most surprisingly, the ANC, Cosatu and SACP now claim Thabo Mbeki pursuit his own policies and not those of the movement. Sad for them as we know how decision are made in the ANC, yet today everything bad in South Afrika is attributed to one individual.

What went wrong? Firstly, Cosatu and SACP have been granted more power over the ANC than justified. But importantly, the ANC now seems to lack leadership. The leadership we knew in the likes of Jacob Zuma, Mathews Phosa, Angie Motshekga and Baleka Mbethe seem to have been lost somewhere between 1994 and 2008. The public spats all of the NEC members make is short of childish. Any criticism to them seem to invite a string of insults and attacks from all sides.

In my opinion, Thabo Mbeki did so much for the ANC and this country that this witch hunt seem totally uncalled for. There could have been better ways for the ANC and its allies to handle this fall off. Msholozzi, even though I personally do not see you as fit for presidency, I respected you for your leadership and especially your accessibility to people. I remember meeting you when you were the deputy president of the country, and I never stopped talking about how truly Afrikan you were. Unfortunately the way you have acted since the rape trial leaves a lot to be desired.

I truly trust that history will be fair and give credit where due as it seems the movement Thabo Mbeki spend his entire life serving has since become his worst nightmare.

And as for the ordinary people of South Afrika, we shall remember your greatness, leadership and guidance with fond memories.

22. The Historian

I love stories. Maybe this is mostly because I am a quiet person and don't talk much.

As Afrikans, we grew up in the tradition of story telling every evening before bed time. All children would sit around the open fire while an elder would relate stories of the past. These stories were about courage, cowardice, wisdom and tradition. This is what is called folklore, stories about our past told in story form and carried forward orally from generation to generation.

No Afrikan child born before 1990 was deprived of this valuable tradition. Modern people may not realise it but this tradition ensured every child had the knowledge of who they are as a people. Every child grew up fully knowing their history through this story telling. And because this history was narrated so expertly, almost every child could in turn relate these stories themselves with utmost accuracy.

Other than story telling, these night times were family time where all members of the family gather together for company. Supper had to be attended by all no matter what other pressing matters are there. This family bonding was critical and everyone understood this fact. This is why no one was allowed, young or old, to still be outside the family compound past sunset. And it was every parents' responsibility to narrate stories to the children where no grand parent was around. Grand parents were generally the practitioners of story telling.

As with everything else in Afrika, there are strong rules governing the story telling function. Like that folklore tales can only be related at night. Like that every story must carry with it an educational message for the young. Like that every child must understand that which is being relayed through the story. And that these stories must be remembered.

Traditionally, history has an orderly seniority of roles. Wise Ones, Poets, Musicians, Story-tellers and Historians.

Wise Ones

The highest role is the wise one, the medicine people. No ordinary person can become a medicine person. To become a healer, one must have the calling which only a select few receives. Let me at the outset make understand that a medicine person is not a witch doctor. There are different specialisations of medicine people, and none of them is a witch. A renegade medicine person can of course become a witch, in which case all healing powers disappears.

Poets and Praise Singers

African poetry has meaning and messages are carried through poetry. Just about anyone in society is a poet as Afrikans take pride in reciting poetry as a way of expressing feelings. Poetry is an ordinary skill done by just about anyone. Praise singers are poets of high standing with official recognition. Their status allows them the privilege of patronage to societal gatherings.

Musicians

Musicians are naturally entertainers, even though music is used from time to time as a vehicle relaying historical messages.

Story-tellers

Story-telling is a specialised skill developed over many many seasons. For others, it is a gift people

are born with. Except for the gifted people, story-telling is reserved for the elderly people in society.

Historians

Historians are people whose sole job is to memorise events in society. A historian can assume one of the following specialisations: family, clan, tribal or national. A family historian is concerned with the lineage of the particular family. A clan historian is focused on the lineage and events of a clan. A tribal historian is tasked with memorising all events and lineage of a particular tribe. A national historian is a memory bank for the major events and royal lineage of a particular nation.

The above short descriptions are merely intended to give a glimpse of what role history and historians hold in society. It is by no means a full account of any of these areas, save that for another day.

I am a poet like many Afrikan people are. I am passionate about my heritage and I remember the stories I was told since I was a young boy. I take a keen interest in my history and that of the Afrikan continent.

Writing, fiction and non fiction, is not regarded as a specialty in Afrikan society. The written word has hidden meaning that requires the reader to decide what the writer meant. To Afrikans the message must always be clear and understandable. It is in this regard that oral communication is the only recognised form of expression. It is also a social form that forces people to relate to others. That is why the roles described above are so critical in our lives. They ensure that nothing is lost and all events are preserved for future generations. Oral communication is favoured over the written one also because of its significance in teaching children language. Children learn best by communicating and not by learning to write! Oral communication is a natural process that requires no logical interpretation once words can be understood.

I possess traits of a poet and that of a clan historian.

[Nalane](#) was inspired by this need to preserve our way of living as Afrikan people. It is a vehicle intended to document our way of doing things. Of course [Nalane](#) uses the written word, but I can only hope that its reach will be significant.

23. The Plight of Thabo Mbeki

This weeks events regarding the alleged decision by the NPA to withdraw charges against JZ have brought to me once again the sad state of affairs in the ANC. No sarcasms this time to you all supporters of JZ who seem to conveniently dismiss issues whenever JZ is mentioned.

I have always maintained *ukuthi* the NPA must go as it witch hunted black leaders and embarrassed them in public for no particular reason. If you check the ratio of NPA so called high profile cases, I rest my case!

However, this thing that ANC cadres are intent on embarrassing and humiliating Thabo Mbeki is most unfortunate. In their representation to the NPA, the ANC (and not Zuma ironically!) claims it can prove that TM was involved in the arms deal. TM has been removed from the ANC leadership, striped of the presidency of SA, what more do you guys in the ANC want from him? How much more damage do you want to inflict on this one individual?

How come you guys are so forgiving to whites who continue to mock us yet you can't forgive whatever it is that TM did? Why does the ANC of today hate Thabo Mbeki so much?

Many of us darkies took a decision never to play any meaningful role in SA politics, but when you see a son of the soil being harassed in the country of his birth by fellow comrades you can't help but wonder if your staying on the side lines helps matters. Many of us secretly wanted the Scorpions to go but the way in which the ANC of today treats black people who have since been identified as "counter revolutionaries", whatever the criteria is, is quite appalling. When exactly will we move past JZ, Vavi, Blade, Malema (not sure if i is true for him), Sexwale, Phosa, Molefe, Maharaj and the Shaik's asserting themselves over what they perceive as enemies?

Call me a sell-out if you will. Oops! The going definition is that of a counter revolutionary! If voicing my dissatisfaction with the ANC and its untoward ways is counter revolutionary, then I guess I am proudly counter revolutionary. And the more ordinary people like me become counter revolutionary, soon the ANC may find itself sitting with a revolution at its hands; a real one, not the imaginary kind.

Is the ANC aware of the damage it is doing, not just to the ANC itself, but to Mzansi as a whole? I never thought our political fraternity would stoop so low like leaders from the rest of continent usually do. If TM was so targeted by the DAs and the white community, it would be a different story. Saying this fully aware of our sad past. But this is the same ANC for which he spend the rest of his life serving. How ironic for a man who has been so selfless like most of the leaders we know in the ANC. Much unlike the ANC leaders of today we seem not to know.

As I sit here and write, this further affirms deep down in my feelings that I will never ever vote for the ANC in my life time. I am tempted to say whatever forces there are that are working so hard to destabilise the ANC, as the ANC always cries foul, I wish them a very good luck and wish them well and that they succeed in their counter revolutionary ways.

This coming from a son of the soil who is so deeply uprooted in his history and the struggle for his people.

I am deeply touched by the plight of Thabo Mbeki. Whether I like him or not, what the ANC is doing is unacceptable.

Pelo ya ka e dutla madi.

24. Traditional Healing and Christianity

Traditional healing is an African tradition that is as old as our heritage. It is the only form of divination and link with the spirits. Traditionally, we have only one specialisation of traditional healers: a traditional healer!

But through time there has come some distinction in the profession, namely:

1. Sangoma
2. Ixhwele (traditional healer)

You will find many specialisations of Amaxhwele depending on what an individual eventually becomes good at. For now, let me not indulge in these specialisations as they will take away the focus from the burning questions I have.

What fascinates me, or should I say worry me, is the fact that the majority of traditional healers practicing these days use Christianity as the basis for their healing. Prior to conducting any form of consultation, they pray to God, the son and the holy spirit.

My understanding of traditional healing is that it has absolutely nothing to do with Christianity. Traditional healers are supposed to serve a specific purpose in life, part of which is the link with the ancestors. Essentially they serve two purposes: healing and divination. Healing is the cure of ailments using their knowledge and skills. Divination is religious in that it provides that link between the living and the spirits. This where they play the role of advisers in this link with the spiritual world. This link is religious by its very nature in that it is part of the indigenous belief system, today referred to as African Traditional Religion.

I am at pains trying to understand how can a traditional healer be good at what they do if they base their healing on Christianity. How do you reconcile Christianity as a religion with traditional healing as a profession? Does this mean without Christianity there would be no traditional healing? Didn't traditional healers exist before the advent of Christianity?

To my knowledge, traditional healing is supposed to be neutral on matters of faith as far as the healing process is concerned. How then, is it possible that they pray to Christ for assistance in their healing? What of people who consult traditional healers but do not believe in Christ? Does this phenomena make traditional healing a Christian heredity? If so, what happened to the real traditional healing that has always existed in Africa and other parts of the world?

What of the phenomenon of priests? These are people from so called "African" churches who use prayer and "holy" water to heal. Are these traditional healers? As far as I know, priests undergo no initiation process to certify them in their priesthood. How then do you tell a qualified priest from fakes?

The function of traditional healers.

1. Sangoma

Sangomas are trained in divination, the art of reading and understanding the "bones". Their sole job is to devine and nothing else. As a result, no Sangoma can claim healing powers as this is not part of their trade. For healing, they are supposed to refer clients to Amaxhwele.

I also wish to argue that the concept of Sangomas is foreign to all except the AmaZulu in Southern Africa. How do you explain the fact that only the Zulu name, Sangoma, exist for them and none in the rest of the other languages? How do explain the Zulu utterances that all Sangomas use even if

they are not Zulu themselves? How do you explain the chant “*siyavuma*” they are so popular for, irrespective of their clan names?

I am putting forth the argument that the concept of Sangomas is an adopted concept from AmaZulu by the rest of the black race in Southern Africa.

Any Sangoma who claims healing abilities is lying.

2. Ixhwele/Matwetwe

This is the original category of traditional healers who exist in all black races for both the purposes of healing and divination. I am not sure why the AmaZulu have separated the function of healing from divination, but the rest of ethnic groups do not have this separation of powers.

This is why there is a vast difference in the process followed to train and initiate Sangomas and traditional healers(Amaxhwele).

I am intrigued to ask the question: have we lost the originality of traditional healing? Because most of the practicing “traditional healers” today are in fact Sangomas who use Christianity as the basis of their faith.

What is the responsibility of government in redefining what traditional healing is? The role that apartheid and colonialisation played cannot be overlooked, but the question still remains, do we still have traditional healing as a profession?

25. Traditional Leadership

Definition: traditional leadership refers to the structure of governance in the context of Afrikan traditional lifestyles.

1. Overview

Leadership in an Afrikan context is not a formal occupation nor a science learned for professional purposes. In this context, leadership must be viewed to be the responsibility that comes with each maturity level in society.

The Afrikan society has predefined and highly structured roles for all members of society that must be observed at all times. These roles are not to be questioned as doing so is regarded disrespectful.

Each stage of life defines roles based on seniority. At a simplistic level, these stages can be summarised as infancy, childhood, adolescent, adulthood and elderly. Within each life stage there are leadership roles assumed in pursuit of fulfilling whatever the purpose of that stage may be. All these activities must be viewed in the light that they serve as precursors to real leadership in adulthood.

The point that must be stressed is that Afrikan society places more value on experiences learned than anything else. All aspects of Afrikan life are governed closely by a value system that is intertwined between Setho(Isintu) and Botho(Ubuntu). Setho is the indigenous religious beliefs of Afrikan people while Botho is the value system as embodied by culture, customs and norms.

2. Leadership Structure

The Wise Ones

The highest role is the wise one, the medicine people. No ordinary person can become a medicine person. To become a healer, one must have the calling which only a select few receives. Let me at the outset make understand that a medicine person is not a witch doctor. There are different specialisations of medicine people, and none of them is a witch. A renegade medicine person can of course become a witch, in which case all healing powers disappears.

The medicine people play a crucial role in guiding both the leadership and ordinary people in decision making processes. Before any major decisions that affect society can be taken, the wise ones will always be consulted for advice.

The King

The King is highest power of authority whose mandate is the development and welfare of the nation. They are also responsible for the protection of the heritage of their communities. Kingship is a hereditary custom where a strict lineage is observed for anyone to ascend into becoming a king. It is in this regard that historians, medicine people, the elders and the tribesmen pay attention to lineage. Only male children qualify for kingship.

The Chief(s)

The Chief(s) is the highest authority within a tribe, community or clan. They have similar responsibilities to the King, except that theirs only applies to their constituencies. The chieftaincy does not necessarily have any hereditary lineage to be observed. Even women are allowed to become chiefs.

The Tribesmen

The tribesmen are the general council for the king and chiefs. There is no king or chief who can take decision or administer justice without the general council. All matters concerning the community are decided at the lekgotla(tribal court). The general council is made up of men only

and all men serving on the council must be married with families. In certain tribes and clans, only circumcised men can become tribesmen.

General councils are usually made up mostly of elders in society, though elders are welcome to sit at *lekgotla* even if they are not members of the council.

The Clan

The clan's role in the leadership hierarchy is the maintenance and observation of tradition, custom and norms specific to the clan. It is also to enforce a clean lineage.

Family

The family is the base structure on which society is formed. All rules and laws are practiced under the auspices of a family structure.

The family is structured as follows:

Family Head

Every family is led by the head of the family, a role traditionally fulfilled by men. It is not unusual though to find many women heading up families in the traditional context. In the absence of the man, the woman assumes all responsibilities that would otherwise be carried out by a man.

Mother

The mother is the social provider within the family. She is also the direct support structure to the family head, without whose authority, decisions cannot be carried out. The mother has the added responsibility of passing on knowledge and skills such as culture and tradition to the children.

Children

The Elders

All senior citizens are considered leaders by default based on their experience and age. They usually play an advisory role in society.

Amabutho (The Armies)

Every nation, tribe and clan has armies whose purpose is the protection and defense of boundaries. Only males are allowed to participate in the armies and there are different ranks of armies based on age and specialisation.

Amabutho are one of the areas where leadership is enforced and skills transferred among the regiments.

3. Governance

Term of office

All leadership roles generally are held for life. Only in few instances where a leader is overthrown would the leadership structure change. Decision making process The traditional management style is consultative and collective decision making.

No major decision can ever be made without first having consulted and listened to the views of the people through *pitso*. For every other decision, the leader must consult and deliberate with the general council.

Adjudication laws

4. Economics economic policy property rights ownership inheritance trade

4. Applicability past present

26. View from Above

Have you realised how we pray, wish and hope for things that when we finally achieve them, you are so disappointed? They no longer hold value or meaning like we used to think.

Of all things that economics is not, perhaps this is the only true value that economics has to society: needs. A career, profession or trade has layers of specialisation and by implication seniority. People generally aspire to grow to the top of whatever it is they do for a living. This is the shortcomings of a career.

That your earning capacity is directly linked to a job title and sometimes to how many people report to you. You reach a stage where no matter how good you are, you will have reached the ceiling. Your only options being to stay where you are, move higher up or change careers.

Changing careers is usually not an option for many people due to the time it takes to develop your skills in any given career. So moving higher up seem plausible. The operational roles higher up seem okay, until you are now faced with the reality that you must now ascend to management.

Operational people perform the job and deliver on whatever it is they are responsible for. Management on the hand seem to be a bunch of people whose job is to make the job of operational people difficult. All management does, at least in my experience, is talk and talk some more while doing nothing that adds tangible value to companies. They love meetings and they love reports. Meetings seem to keep managers busy while reports are a way of making people work even more. Most of the reports that are drawn for management are never read.

In my experience as a manager in different companies, management is the worst job you can do if you are an operationally inclined person. Performance and delivery seem to be measured differently to how it is measured in operations.

This is the coldest place in the corporate culture as your job title determines who in the company you can associate with. Non management staff see you as a manager while the rest of managers higher up see you as someone way below. I have also learnt that this is the level where you find the most non performing people. It also seem to be the level where it is most difficult to fire someone. Managers with poor performances would rather be redeployed to other departments than be relieved of their duties.

Management was the most frustrating area of work I have had to do in my life. Three months goes by without any tangible deliverable you can point to. You spend so much time in meetings that produce nothing but commitments for other meetings to follow. Decisions that are continually deferred for future meetings. It comes to a point where you wonder if your job is actually worth it. You feel redundant as there is absolutely no noticeable progress in the work that you are responsible for.

Perhaps I am not management type, but what else can you do when you reach that ceiling? When you can no longer continue in your capacity because the next level of growth is management.

27. What Makes You South Afrikan

South Afrika is a wonderful country faced with many problems, most of which are a direct result of our apartheid past. Despite all these, it is a country with many positive and promising future. Many of its citizens understand the need to build the country and remain hopeful that all will be fine in time. There seems to be more of what brings people together than that which divides them.

In recent memory, there has been incidents that have driven this country to shame to due to conduct of some of its people. The so called xenophobic attacks that quickly spread throughout the country still remain a question to many as this was an unprecedented event in the history of our country. Since time immemorial, our people are known to be migrants and many are married in cross cultural relationships, giving their children a claim to a diverse heritage. We all live together peacefully with anyone interested in settling in our local communities.

In many Afrikan communities, it is common to find nationalities of Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and even Malawi. These people have since settled and made homes and are part of the community. This is especially true for Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and Zimbabwe as these countries became the victims of apartheid South Afrika and thereby having their land segregated like many areas in South Afrika. As a result, many people found themselves cut off due to the borders that were put up by the apartheid rulers. In many instances, this also resulted in some families being drawn apart as they now fell within different national borders. But despite all these, our people continued to live together, irrespective of nationality.

This is further evidenced by the fact that many people have long since forgotten their original heritage in favour of culture and life styles found in their newly found homes. AmaZulu who find themselves in Basotho areas have since become Basotho, with their names the only remaining link to AmaZulu. AmaSwati who have since become AmaZulu and the like. This migratory patterns have always ensured that people have an understanding of other cultures and it was also used as a way of establishing ties with other nationalities.

It is then interesting today to ask the question what makes you South Afrikan? Is it your legal nationality status, social status or race? This question is even more relevant to Afrikan South Afrikan as it does not affect white people. Many black people have raised this question many times all with different opinions on what is the possible cause. Or even on what needs to happen to change peoples views on others regarding nationality.

What interests me though is the criteria used by the South Afrikan Police Service in determine who is South Afrikan or not. I have heard many stories of people relating their nightmares at the hands of police on suspicion of being an illegal resident. While most of these stories are true, I have always maintained a little sense of disbelief as I believed there surely must be reasonable people in the police force who treat people with respect and indifference. I always maintained that it was highly unlikely for a police to come to you and demand identification out of the blue unless the circumstances were different. Maybe walking at night or being drunk would invariably attract such scrutiny, but never unsolicited. I was dead wrong.

I have been stopped twice in the new South Afrika by police demanding that I prove my innocence to them. The first time they demanded that I prove that I am South Afrikan. I do not look anything like a non South Afrikan, if there is such a thing, and looking at me you can never doubt my origins. But by some twisted logic I was required to produce my identification document. I do not carry my identification with me when not driving because it is required to do so. The only form of identification I have with me at any given moment is my drivers license, which I am also reluctant to produce as I do not understand why I should prove I am a resident. These officers are very rude to begin with, not wanting to hear anything from you. I was travelling in a taxi that was about 50

meters from my flat.

Without my identification I had to prove my residence by reciting landmark places of whatever place you choose to tell them is your home. Since my flat was in Kengsinton in Johannesburg, they reckoned it was not good enough an identification. I had to have a non suburban place where I could have come from. The second time I was walking, about 100 meters from my parents house in rural Qwaqwa of all places! I was walking to a public library with my laptop on my back in a backpack when this police kombi pulls by and the driver says can he look in my backpack. I ask him what for and before I finish he says to see if I have not been smoking something. I am obviously offended since I do not even smoke to start with. So I tell him I am offended and ask if I look like a smoker for him to want to check my bag for whatever kind of smoke it is.

At this point about three officers get off the kombi and approach me demanding to inspect my backpack. This is daylight and people are watching all this while. Very irrate I give them my bag to search and they leave without a word.

I now ask myself the question that what exactly does it take for a police officer to want to search a citizen? I am not a criminal nor do I believe to potray a criminal look that invites police or anyone else to me for humiliation. As a law abiding citizen of this country, what rights do I have in situations like these? I have heard of people who uphold their rights and simply refuse to be humiliated but always end up in jail.

I have never been treaded badly when driving my car around, anywhere in South Afrika. This makes me to think that this bad treatment is always intended for people who are assumed to be poor or uneducated or uninformed people. These police officers do not care about your humanity nor do they care to listen to any reason. What has been suprising for me is the fact that the officers who addressed me in both instances did not look South Afrikan themselves. This bothers me a lot as many of our black people used to hate the police as a result of our apartheid past. Many have since tried to view the South Afrikan police in a positive light since the dawn of the new despenation.



Thoughts of a Black Child is a collection of essays by Fezekile Futhwa.

It covers topics of interest from politics, education, economics to social affairs.

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His work is available from <http://www.futhwa.org.za/> as well on <http://www.nalae.org.za/>.



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