EDITORIAL: THEIR AMERICANS: WHY DO WE LOVE ‘EM SO?!

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America! We Love You! But why? Africans came before Columbus to fraternize with Native Americans (Sertima, 1976). But since 1492 we have been terrorized along with the natives. Transportation, Auction, Plantation, Revolution, Emancipation, Liberation, and still we love you, America! Did you put voodoo on us or are your adorable Hollywood monsters so irresistible?

I went to a conference on ‘Their America’ with a determination to address the second half of the organizers’ charge, the half that was not about why America is hated but without spelling it out in terms of love for America; that half of the coin of hatred appears to be the side of love too shy to be named but no less passionate than the side of hate. Their America is also ours to dream, to love, to seek, to save!

Why do we love this God’s own country of theirs? Is it because our African ancestors before us slaved for this country, as Bob Marley queried? We built the cabin and we planted the corn. Yet
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they look at us with a scorn while they eat up all our corn. Bob Marley went on to chant that we have to chase the crazy baldheads out of town because they return hatred for our love, telling us about the God above; but mostly we respond with unrequited love and yet the dominant message of Bob and all Rasta is the message of love. Love and Peace. The philosophy of One Love. In fact, Peter Tosh initially refused to play at a peace concert organized by ghetto youths and warring gangs. He reasoned that he would only play if they changed the name to One Love Concert during which Bob Marley made the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to shake hands on stage. On his turn, Peter Tosh spent about 45 minutes of his time on stage to lecture against the ‘shitstem’ that could not develop the country because it could not develop the people. Then he launched into his rebel chant, you can’t blame the youths when you teach them that robbers, killers and rapists were very great men (Campbell, 1993). Why do people of African descent appear so loving given what they have been through? Is it because one of our ancestors was the first to fall defending the principle that all people are created equal and endowed by their creator with equal reason to choose their own form of government and to pursue greater happiness for all, especially when our people were mostly under the misery of chattel slavery? No wonder some fought for the divine rights of a king while many fought for the revolution even without any promise of freedom either way.

Even while brother Crispus Attuck fell in the attack of Boston, an estimated 100 million African ancestors were being destroyed in the middle passage alone, according to the great W.E.B. Du Bois (1970) and the Trans Atlantic Slavery Gallery, Liverpool Maritime Museum, U.K. They were said to be insured ‘goods’ for which the
merchants could claim damages only when the ‘goods’ were damaged at sea (Agozino, 2004). So our people were used as flotsam and jetsam, cast overboard when the food and drink rations ran low, when rampant diseases ran amok, when it took the fancy of lecherous captains and crew and especially when our people fought back but were overpowered. This year, 2007, we mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the evil trade and yet the issue of reparations is scarcely raised.

Do we love America so because only about 5% of stolen Africans were landed on its soil, according to Cornel West, to be reproduced cheaply like animal husbandry? Or do we simply love America so because our flesh and blood struggled to survive the terrorism of the capture, the holocaust of the middle passage, the hell of the plantations, the meanness in the big house, the bloody backlash of emancipation, the degrading and deadly convict lease chain gangs, the lynch mobs, Jim Crowism, and thousands of body bags from Uncle Sam’s foreign wars and domestic battles? Even when some mock that tens of thousands of the natives were killed but only a thousand, ‘a lousy thousand’ of theirs were lost in Iraq at the time of the conference in 2004, Africans caution that among their dead are ours too, that we would prefer to see an end to the killing, the return of the troops home and the allowing of others to make their own choices, trusting that they would choose a government of their own people, by their people and for their people without seeing this as foreign imposition to be resisted, just like you are supposed to do even when you do not always succeed in that goal yourselves.
Ahamefuna (may my name never be lost) was a Nigerian Cab Driver who was shot dead in South Carolina after sponsoring himself through a business management degree. Ordinary American citizens raised $2,000.00 towards returning his corpse to Nigeria for proper burial. The family eventually donated the same amount to some charitable organizations in the city, including the police, probably because two people were still in prison for the murder, but explicitly because it is improper to accept a gift and decline to return the favor when a reciprocal opportunity arises. Is this an act of love, favor-currying meekness, or the simple imitation by a conquered people of their conquerors, according to Ibn Khaldoun. Except that it is sometimes the conquerors who mimic the conquered in many respects as Khaldoun’s own history, of the cyclical conquest of city dwellers by the desert nomads who become subsequently urbanized (hip and cool) in turn and become ripe for conquest by another rugged tribe from the deserts, would suggest.

When America was attacked there was an outpouring of sympathy from all over the world but one of the few places where an anti-terrorism rally was held was in Enugu State of Nigeria where the marchers drew parallels with domestic acts of terrorism with a long history of serial massacres and with many more victims all together than America suffered on 9/11. Almost all such incidents took place in the Muslim dominated north of the country and the targets were almost always the Easterners who lived in the North and who were seen to be predominantly Christian. Yet it is clear to most observers that such violent incidents were far from being simply as a result of religious differences, for most religions preach love, but differences socially constructed through the deliberate politicization of religion and culture by some. No one
would call for American invasion of the country as a solution to such a political problem, Mahmood Mamdani (2004) warned in the case of Sudan. Was it love that the eastern Nigerians demonstrated by refusing to seek revenge against others in their region after many massacres elsewhere (except for the retaliatory killings in the East following the 2005 episode of the massacres in the North) or is it the Easterners that should be grateful that they were not completely destroyed after they were defeated in a genocidal civil war, as Ali Mazrui (2003) marvels without saying what exactly the Easterners were to be ‘forgiven’ when they were the ones who bore the brunt of the genocidal war and pre and post war cycles of massacres? Was their demonstration for American victims a genuine act of love or what do they have to gain from demonstrating against terrorism except attracting attention from potential terrorists who would see them as American allies and find them vulnerable without the protection that America boasts of?

Media determinism of the Marshall McLuhan variety would suggest that the love of America by Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* is a manufactured consent (Fanon, 1963). Some Marxists might even call it a symptom of false consciousness. Others will blame it on the amazing power of Hollywood and other multinational corporations, the internet and 24 hour news, music, weather, history, and also movie channels, countless newspapers and magazines, radio stations with ownership concentrated extraordinarily in the hands of white male Americans, including at least one who had to give up his native citizenship to become an American in order to build a media empire unhindered. These media can be expected to drum up support for America around the
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world no matter what America’s position happens to be. The fact that such support is not universal and never complete is proof that Chomsky is right in pointing out that human beings are not as malleable as behavioral conditioning theorists would want us to believe. If neither carrots nor sticks could effectively win over determined opponents like the millions that marched to oppose the war, the ones that posed as human shields to prevent the air war, the powerful voices that spoke out against war, the individuals who refused to fight and the many who felt obliged to fight in different ways on either sides of the divide, the corporations that lost and not only those that benefited from the war; perhaps the African tradition of love should be explored better for more lasting results. Many others have suffered fates worse than those of America without attracting as much global outpouring of sympathetic tears as in the case of America perhaps because America is more beloved than any other and not simply because America flexes its media muscles mightily. People love America even when America is too busy enjoying its obese affluenza in the midst of poorfluenza. CLR James (1952) challenged his detention on Ellis Island and deportation order from America in the era of McCarthism by arguing that he had produced the best work on American popular culture, thereby demonstrating his love for America more than some Americans themselves.

People love America even when America is behaving like a bully in the school playground. People love bullies secretly and share in the laughs at the expense of the victimized, especially when they are not at the receiving end but many detest them even if only a few would stand up to bullies. Some Americans would claim that Sadam was the real bully and that America finally stood up to him. First they came for the gay people, then they came for the disabled,
then the communists, then the Jews and the Gypsies. But let us not forget the millions of conscript workers who died defending the Nazis or the African and other colonized troops that died kicking fascist butts only for the surviving heroes to be returned to colonial despotism after the war. Some in Britain wag a sore finger at America nostalgically to complain that if it were not for America’s support for decolonization, Britain would still have its empire today, and the sun would still never set on the British Empire (to which Gandhi responded with the wit that the sun would not set because God does not trust the British in the dark). The Queen of England carries on anyway as if the sun never sets by awarding Orders, Knighthoods and Membership of the British Empire annually. All available evidence points to the direction that Britain should be grateful to America if it is true that it took America’s support to free the colonized, though many who know the history of decolonization are bound to say, yeah, right, whatever, as Americans say. It is true that America pointed out in 1776, an example that other colonized people benefited from and taught Britain a lesson that an empire is not worth the troubles in bloodshed, repression and resistance costs. It appears that America is in a hurry to forget that valuable lesson.

America - the real Disneyland which is concealed by the real Disneyland just as the prison is there to conceal that the entire society is carceral, according to Jean Baudrillard. Malcolm X made a similar point when he addressed the people who laughed during his Message to the Grassroots speech when he mentioned that he was once in prison. Brother Malcolm told them to stop laughing because they themselves were still in prison. Baba Fela Kuti made
the same point in his *Beast of No Nation* song where he told fans who were asking him to sing about prison life that what they regard as the outside world was really, a ‘craze world’. America is the real Disneyland because you do not have to go to Disneyland in order to have fun in America, the whole country is an elaborate amusement park complete with comical leading characters, almost too stereotypically cartoonish to be human. Like Disneyland, it is not cheap to visit America, you will not be allowed entry unless you pay the prescribed fees and possess the right documents. You are almost certain to be searched and or strip searched at random as they say and you remain under surveillance as you queue up forever to get on the fast rides and enjoy your American dream of fast living complete with fast foods. The question is, who would hate such a wonderland and who would want to blow it up? You bet, none of the 19 hijackers was an African. This made the Boondocks cartoonist, Aaron McGruder, to exclaim wittily, ‘We are number three!’ For the first time, people of African descent became the third most hated group in America. But still hated in spite of our love for America. We find the entire society carceral as Baudrillard, Fela and Malcolm X clearly indicated but we still love America with all its flaws.

Do Africans love America so because Africans are exceptionally loving people? It is not only Americans that are beloved by Africans. We love humanity without discrimination and if only we could extend to one another, the immense love that we show to others, perhaps our lot would be better in the world. It is easy for rats to kill other rats, it is just the cats that they have problems with, said the Fugees. If you hate yourself while the whole world loves you, then you are doomed but if you love yourself while the whole world is against you, you do stand a better chance. Despite
the immense crimes committed against people of African descent throughout history, African people have fought back in self-defense and even when they are victorious at long last, they have tended to respond with amazing love and kindness most of the time. Some might dismiss such love and kindness as the cringing refuge of the weak and the crippled; some would query if we can truly call it love if it continues to be repudiated, trampled upon, spat at or ignored. Is it a simple crush gone too far or a simple ingratiating butt kissing by the impoverished who hope for some crumbs from the tables of the affluent, the self-snobbbery of the clown?

Madiba Mandela (1994) answered from a position of strength and immense wisdom which he confirmed when he was asked by Clinton whether, as president over his former jailers, he did not feel the compulsion to hate them or to seek revenge? Bill Clinton (2004) noted this lesson in his autobiography, My Life. He confessed that when he asked Mandela if he did not feel a little hatred for his former tormentors, Mandela replied that if he allowed them to deny him his capacity to love, they would have taken from him his basic humanity and that he would not let them do that and that neither should you, he told Clinton and Clinton said that his jaws dropped. The example of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa under the presidency of Mandela is an alternative model to the world and even though the results are less than perfect like all court results anyway, they appear a lot more effective than anything that could be achieved through war and blood-letting. This does not mean that Africans are pacifists for they have equally demonstrated extraordinary
bravery in military battles against imperialism but more against each other and enjoyed sweet and costly victories along with bitter defeats. But still we love with a big heart and abundantly so.

The philosophy of non-violence has African roots, according to Mahatma Gandhi (1993). He clearly reported in his autobiography that he was clueless about politics when he went to live in South Africa as a young attorney who had studied in England. From his relatively privileged position, he saw imperialism as a good thing. Thus when there was a Zulu uprising, he readily volunteered to join the British Army to put it down. He was deployed as a Sergeant Major and asked to run a nursing unit made up of volunteer Indians. He soon realized that he was not allowed to treat any British officers, none of them was injured anyway. He and the other Indian nurses were treating only the wounded Zulus, some of whom were called friendlies, those Zulus who supported the imperialists. Gandhi started chatting with the wounded and asked them how they could sit there and take it without fighting back like men. They told him that they were fighting back all right, that they were fighting peacefully and non-violently by refusing to pay taxes to an unrepresentative government and by going on strike rather than work for exploitative employers. After living in South Africa for 14 years, Gandhi took this philosophy of civil disobedience back to India and put it into practice to help win the independence of India, a million past mutinies not withstanding (Naipaul, 1992).

The Zulus were practicing the ancient African philosophy of peace and love that allowed even the enslaved to rise to be king in the case of Joseph in ancient Egypt and King Jaja in Opobo, Nigeria, towards the end of the Trans Atlantic Slavery. In the case of ancient Egypt, they must be one of the rare people in history to
regain their kingdom from former slaves and eventually set them free and allow them to exodus even with their own slaves as the Bible states. When Tussaint l'Overture fought and defeated the French, the British and the Spanish in turns for the love of freedom, he did not seek to become a monarch even when offered by his followers (James, 1989). Rather, his love for the French battle cries of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity made him to trust Napoleon who was living with a black woman and thus he ended up dying in prison torture in Paris where he had been tricked on the pretext of a peace dialogue, the same trick that led to the kidnapping and deportation of King Jaja to a prison colony in the West Indies. And yet people of African descent continue to love Europe and North America.

Some enslaved Africans carried this love of the enemy to such a ridiculous extent, according to Malcolm X, that the house Negro would ask the sick master, ‘Massa, we sick?’ Whereas the field Negro would be praying that the master dies and goes to hell. However, this special stereotype should be read with caution given that many house Negroes have distinguished themselves in battles of resistance. Toussaint, Frederick Douglas, Sojourner Truth, to name but a few, were house Negroes who developed revolutionary consciousness in spite of their location in the proximity of the propagandist, oppressive, exploitative master, or because of it. The dominant mode of resistance remained the rituals of belief in an afterlife where the innocent would be justified and the guilty punished and where many Africans still believe that they could negotiate with their creator before reincarnating to right the wrongs of a previous life. In Calabar, Nigeria, a park is being built by the
Cross River State government, the Amazing Grace Park, to honor the scene where enslaved Africans saved the captain of a slave ship soon after the ship left the coast and sank. The captain was said to have composed the spiritual, ‘Amazing Grace’ that was sang during the funeral of President Ronald Reagan, reminding us that although he (the hymn writer) was a wretch, enslaved Africans risked their necks to save his little punk ass from drowning, and we are not told how many Africans drowned with the ship still shackled. He claimed that he was blind but now he could see and I wonder if he saw the love of those who saved him or he simply saw their kindness as an opportunity to colonize them rather than enslave them at a greater risk?

Throughout the struggles of resistance by people of African descent, they have achieved more through peaceful resistance than through warfare and the way of peace has won us more allies than any war could boast of. The Civil Rights Movement could be the pinnacle of this long tradition of non-violence, achieving more than almost all the previous battles combined simply because it was built on the cumulative effects of the previous battles. The Anti-Aparthied Movement was informed by that monumental peaceful struggle and the violent arm of the struggle emerged when it was clear that the violent regime only listened to violence. And even then, the door of dialogue was never firmly shut against the oppressors. Mandela (1994) confirmed this after 27 years in prison when what Foucault would mistakenly call the governmentality (mistaken because not everything designed as government successfully functions as such) of Apartheid was rendered ungovernable by a combination of mass movements, international boycotts, armed opposition and finally the humiliating military defeat of its conscript army of invasion in Angola with the support
of Afro Cuban forces that made many more young white draftees to dodge the draft and thereby weaken the apartheid army. The apartheid regime was suspected of out-sourcing mass violence to the third force for the orchestration of black on black violence and some whites organized to fight for a white homeland in Africa but Africans reacted mostly with humility and love for all, despite immense provocations.

What if America had heeded the advice of Steve Bantu Biko who warned that America was barking up the wrong tree, what if America had decided to back Africans in that struggle as only America could have done, perhaps Africa would have something substantial to show for the love Africa has consistently shown. Instead, the official American policy was that of ‘constructive engagement’ with apartheid, support for the destabilization of frontline states, the assassination of Patrice Lumumba and the cushioning of dictators or the overthrow of popular regimes apparently to pave way for American Multinationals to control the exploitation of African resources. If Africa continues to love America despite America’s record in Africa, then it must be unconditional love, to the extent that we have bled and died in all your wars not because you made us but because we genuinely believed in human freedom and love, making us sometimes to refuse to fight your battles as Mohammad Ali, The Greatest, did with style. But mostly, Africans have loved America enough to fight and die for America even when America tried to stop them by assigning them cooking and cleaning duties until the Tuskegee Airmen scored the unprecedented clean record only to return to base in America to be denied access to the officers’ mess that was
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open to German prisoners of war. And yet Africans forgive and love America with passion (Sandler, 1992).

Some would suggest that such legendary rush to forgive and to repay wickedness with love on the part of Africans should not be misrepresented as the essential nature of Africans or else some other bullies could get new ideas of how to abominate with the false confidence that Africans would respond with impunity and forgiveness. If Africans are that loving by nature, how come they readily abominate one another from Biafra, through Rwanda to Darfur and why do the victimized cry out for reparative justice instead of simply offering forgiveness and love? Is that not because peace and love without reparative justice ring hollow, especially with peace treaties signed with peace pipes before the people rest in peace in mass graves as Peter Tosh would wail; that truth and reconciliation without reparations would not necessarily equal justice, without love?

The love that Africa has for the rest of the world appears to be unconditional love. If anyone has any reason to hate America, it is Africans but we appear to love America more than many of those who have every reason to love America. Israel loves America for good reasons and America acknowledges this by declaring that Israel is a special friend. Europe has every reason to love America and America reciprocates by calling Europe a motherland and a close ally. Even Japan has good reasons to love America and America reciprocates by setting up special trading partnerships with Japan. Africans who suffered so much to build America remain loathed and discriminated against and yet Africans continue to show superhuman love ability. What is wrong with you, America, can’t you see that Africans love you? Why would you
spend so much fortune to overcome your perceived enemies
without spending nearly enough to reward the love that we have
shown to you? But that is not the question for this paper. The
question is why do we continue to love America and not why
America does not love us back? Africa is a lot like a battered
spouse who continues to love the batterer because of the children
of Africa who are scattered around the world or because the
battered spouse hopes that the batterer would someday get therapy
and change. Africans believe that America will change for what is
there to lose but our love? The land of the brave and the beautiful,
complete with reservations and plantation prisons, ghetto traps and
immigration jails, this land is also the home of blues, jazz, soul,
funk, rock ‘n roll, and rap. Who would hate such a wonderland?

Just because you love someone is no guarantee that you will like
everything he/she does. That is why we have the love and troubles
tradition in blues that Patricia Hill Collins and Angela Davis write
about and about which Eve performed the song, Love is Blind.
When Billie Holiday sings about the Strange Fruit of the lynch
mob’s hate and when she sings about her man who does not love
her, she never returns hatred for the unrequited love, we still feel
the love even when we feel the blues. When we speak up against
the policies of America or when we burn the flag as freedom of
expression, do not suspect that we are against you. When Nelson
Mandela criticized the decision to invade Iraq, he made it clear that
it had nothing to do with the fact that key elements of the younger
Bush administration had opposed a motion asking for his release
from prison. Mandela cannot be accused of hating America for he
is always paying tribute to those Americans who supported the
struggle against apartheid just as their ancestors supported the struggle for emancipation and the struggle for civil rights. As he put it by differentiating between the country and the people: ‘If there is a country that has committed unspeakable atrocities in the world, it is the United States of America’ – Madiba Mandela. And yet South Africans love America so much that hip-hop is the biggest thing among the youth even if they do not carry ‘I love America’ bumper stickers and even if they own no cars to talk of bumper stickers. Desmond Tutu echoed this view in Villanova University in Pennsylvania when he spoke to a crowded basketball court and expressed his thanks to the ordinary people of America who supported the struggle against apartheid. When asked if he had any advice for America, he replied that America should export the love of the ordinary citizens and not war.

America should not take our love for granted forever because you never know what you have in love until you lose it. Mandela had suggested that if the then Secretary General of United Nations, Kofi Annan, was a blond and blue-eyed man from Europe or North America, the U.S. and its allies would not have ignored his pleas that more time be given to the weapons inspectors to find out what everyone now knows, that there were no weapons of mass destruction and that Sadam Hussein was not trying to buy uranium from Africa for the purpose of developing a nuclear weapon and so there was no imminent threat to justify a pre-emptive war. When Kofi Annang announced that the war was illegal, he was echoing something that many had voiced or suspected, that the war was phoney, that it was not a real war or that simply, the Iraq war did not take place because it was neither a just war nor just a war, simply an old-fashioned imperialist invasion that the people were not surprisingly resisting as best they could (Agozino, 2004b).
Eminem was probably referring to this emptiness of promises of more blood for oil by using the medium of animations, an art form of music video that Tupac Shakur perfected, to film his call in *Mosh* for the troops to be brought home to fight their own battles on their own soil, with the terror of the burning cross and the letter K formed on the national flag and with only media clips and footage as the ‘real’ shots in the music video conveyed with his borrowing of African American art forms, marrying radical African poetry (RAP) with the prophetic oratorical tradition of black Baptist preachers. Jean Baudrillard correctly predicted this overthrow of reality by virtual reality when he argued that the Gulf War did not take place, an argument that Agozino (1994b) extended to the Iraq war.

Three African heads of state, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal had written a letter to advise against the invasion of Iraq. The letter was faxed to Washington after the three leaders had agreed on the text following extensive faxing to and fro among them. But two days after the letter was faxed, it emerged that President Wade had suddenly drafted a different letter of support for the American invasion and faxed it to Washington. It was reported that White House officials called the other two heads of state to advice them to formally withdraw their first letter because only the second letter was officially being accepted. The African response to the war was largely that of opposition but three African countries – Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea signed on as part of the coalition of the willing, pledging to grant overflight and basing rights to the American forces and to contribute troops if needed. They did not
eventually contribute any troops because they were not asked and one of them, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, later claimed that he supported Bush blindly out of fear that if it was true that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, they could find their way into Sudan with a government which was close to Sadam and which was supporting the Lords Army rebels that were fighting in Northern Uganda and who could lay their hands on such weapons to the disadvantage of Uganda. Eritrea and Ethiopia were seen to be jostling for the support of America in their own intermittent internecine warfare over millimeters of colonial boundaries. There might be selfish reasons why some Africans profess their love for America but given that they have not received any crumbs sizeable enough to justify such deep love for America, it will be hard to put it all down to scrounging.

W.E.B. Du Bois predicted correctly that Africa will often be in the heart of the wars of the future as Africa was central to the wars fought by Europe and North America in the past. In the case of Iraq, the fact that Africa was used as a major justification for the war is not fully acknowledged in media coverage. Apart from the attacks on the American Embassy for which President Clinton bombed a chemical factory in Sudan, the Bush administration did name a few countries in Africa as possible targets of the global war against terrorism for allegedly harboring terrorists. If the yellow-cake ‘whopper’ as Michael Moore would put it, was not served to a gullible gulping audience, it may have been difficult to sell the imminent danger scare. This falsehood was exposed during the trip of President George War Bush to five African countries – Senegal, Nigeria, Uganda, Botswana, and South Africa (SNUBS Africa) and yet no apology has been offered to Africa by those who peddled this rumor, not even the person of African descent who
was made to repeat such falsehood at the United Nations. The same black brother and a black woman representing the U.K. at the United Nations Conference Against Racism, Durban, South Africa, were the only ones alleged to have walked out on the conference just because the crime of slavery and the demand for reparations were tabled for discussion by people of African descent along with the issue of the colonization of Palestinians by Israel. By some strange coincidence, the invasion of Iraq was declared on the International Day Against Racism and Bush declared ‘Mission Accomplished’ on the International Labor Day.

But let us face the charge squarely: Is the claim to love unconditionally not the last refuge of the weakling? No, considering that this is the way that parents love their children or at least the way parents are supposed to love even when they do not always maintain this saintly expectation. Parents continue to visit their children even on death row, some parents at least, knowing also that they are innocent or simply protesting that the death penalty should not be an option in a racist world nor even in a perfect world. What has Africa got in return for its love? Aid, investment, dictatorship and a miserly few billions for the fight against AIDS worldwide compared to the hundreds of billions sunk into a dubious war of choice, billions for aiding big pharmaceutical companies that make drug cocktails that no one but Uncle Sam could buy when millions of AIDS patients in Africa die more from hunger, as Mbeki correctly argued. No, the African love is not for sale for Africa loves even with little to show for it, Africa is no whore. That is what people call unconditional love.
Africa - the Papa and Mama of all of humanity, according to archeological evidence. Africa has more right than any other place on earth to claim the status of parent for all of humanity. Thus white supremacists are wrong when they joke that African Americans only look African but are Anglo Saxon Protestants at heart. The reverse is truer: Anglo Saxon Protestants might look European but they are truly African for humanity emerged from Africa, once upon a time. Perhaps, this is why Africa loves America and indeed all of humanity, because everyone is a child of Africa even when they deny it vehemently (blame it on subconscious Freudian fantasies), plus the children of Africa who recognize their African ancestry are scattered around the globe. So we are sorry to disappoint you, America the beautiful, America the bitch, we love you still even when you get with everyone but us (the way Wayne’s World defined the difference between a bitch who would sleep with everyone except you and a whore who would sleep with anyone who pays). Linton Kwesi Johnson has a piece of dub poetry called, Inglan is a Bitch but he did not add that if England is a bitch, then Amerika is Da Bitch. When Hip-Hop artists say that they love them bitches and Eve sings about her bitches, do they know how applicable that term is to nation states and do they know that nations rape each other as in the rape of Africana by Europa – a lesbian rape (Agozino, 2003)?

The lessons that America could learn from Africa are immense beyond the open jaws of Bill Clinton at the feet of Mandela. One important lesson is embedded in the theory of African Fractals based on the fact that fractal designs are more common in indigenous African architecture, town planning, religious belief systems, kinship patterns, hair-dos, textile designs, arts and games than is found in Euro American cultures where designs are
predominantly Cartesian and Euclidean while Africans prefer non-linear geometry, according to Ron Eglash (1999). This is the theory and philosophy that persuades Africans to recognize the interconnectedness of all peoples with the natural environment. This peace-loving nature of Africans has been frequently mistaken for weakness at the cost of unnecessary suffering and wastage of resources. The theory simply states that we are fractions or parts of a whole, we replicate each other and so injustice to some would be felt by all until we learn to heed the loving warning of the great Bob Marley: ‘Until the philosophy that holds one race superior and another, inferior, until there are no longer, first class and second class citizens of any nation, until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all without regards to race’ there will be war. This legacy is part of the African roots of non-violence philosophy. We think that such a philosophy has benefited America in the past when people of African descent held up a mirror to America.

America could benefit once again by learning the humility of history. As Paul Robeson warned in a previous time of trouble, ‘The Germans waffled today, our ruler is above all rulers, the Romans waffled today, our kingdom is above all kingdoms’, but one historical law that has been proven since the times of Ibn Khaldoun is that no empire is forever. Empires rise and empires fall and Africa has seen its share of great kingdoms, one of which lasted longer than any kingdom ever known to humanity. The secret of the ancient Egyptian kingdom is simply that it was built peacefully instead of through invasions and conquests. In fact, when there was a rebellion in Damascus led by a vassal lord, the Pharoh was advised to declare war but he chose to invite the
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rebellious vassal to the palace, feasted him and sent him home as the independent ruler of his own principality (Kamara, 1995). That is also the lesson from all major religions, that they are spread through peaceful means more than through force. The same is true about the gospel of democracy, it can be best spread if it is not perceived as an imposition by an occupying colonial power more interested in exploiting natural resources than in protecting a people from a dictator that the imperialists helped to create in the first place and in the guise of fighting a terrorist that they helped to train previously, ‘protecting’ people that they continue to massacre by themselves with great help from the ‘resistance’. Rather than invade Saudi Arabia to impose democracy just because 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi citizens, America should be commended for seeking dialogue and peaceful collaboration with the Saudis. Except that the dominant approach of war against all who are not for ‘you’ leads to blind eyes when so-called allies use the ideology of permanent pre-emptive war to hunt down their own dissidents, peaceful and fundamentalist, to kill or torture as part of the Global Order Against Terrorism (or GOAT with biblical allusions in Revelations as the head butting fighter against monsters; but the goat is also considered a stupid animal, according to Nigerian university students who would mock those in power when they demonstrate, chanting for example, George Bush is a goat o, a goat o, Tony Blair is a goat o, ewu, ewu - the Igbo word for goat, a synonym for fool).

America should use its influence to support and encourage the people of the world that it calls its friends even though some of them appear less democratic and less multicultural than the Iraq that was invaded, to adopt a government of their own people, by all their people and for all their people for that is what Africa would
do for its friends if Africa had the immense power and resources that America has. We love America because it struck the first blow or should we say that we took the first blow in the struggle for decolonization and national revolution against colonialism in America. But rather than continue in the noble tradition of liberation, America has frequently been trying to impress Europe by seeking to catch up and surpass her grotesque barbarity. As Fanon warned, America has more than succeeded in its goal of catching up with Europe but the result is a monster that is less adorable than the monsters of Hollywood precisely because the American monster is so real.

It is true that some who have tried democracy, such as Lebanon and many African countries, have had their hands burnt in the process just as America once did. But it is a crazy argument to say that you will not take your sick mother to the hospital just because your father died in the hospital. It was not democracy that nearly destroyed America, Nigeria, Lebanon, Sierra Leone, Iraq, Liberia, Ethiopia, Serbia, Sudan, Bosnia, Algeria, Apartheid SA, Palestine, India, Guatemala, Columbia, Nicaragua, Kosovo, Ivory Coast, Northern Ireland, Chechnya, and what have you. It was intolerance, especially the intolerance of politicized religion. It was the relative lack of democracy that was the problem but even if the problem was a democratic one, the solution, strangely enough, is always more democracy and not less. Democracy is only a pain in the backside until you think about the alternatives. So, the attack against America should not have been used as an excuse to limit democracy at home while claiming to be advancing it abroad through the barrel of the gun, to hold thousands in indefinite
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detention without charge or trial, to shun friends and allies who refuse to swallow their whoppers with the wrappers intact. Africans think that America can do better than that.

Our love for America has not concealed from us the meanness of America to people of African descent in America, especially in the prison industrial complex. I seriously doubt if any people in the present world would suffer what people of African descent have suffered and continue to suffer in America and still find time to love America. It is not too late to show some love back, damn it, as they say in America. Free the captives in your crowded jails and prisons unless they are among the tiny minority who are not there simply for picking their noses and even among those violent minority, learn to discover the love of justice through the acts of love and not through the acts of revenge. Some criminologists have borrowed from Third World traditions to develop criminology as peacemaking but Africans want to take it further by talking about ‘Criminology as lovemaking: An Africa Centred Theory of justice’ (Agozino, 2005). People can and do change and we hope that even you, America, can and will change before your time in dominance will come to a predictable end. Immanuel Wallerstein has already announced the end of American dominance.

Watch out America, China is rising, India is growling, Europe is rousing and Africa will not remain divided and therefore weak forever. Africa will unite for a People’s Republic with dual citizenship for the African Diaspora, a unity that will be impossible to enslave or colonize ever again and without threatening anyone. We just wish that our Jewish and Palestinian brothers and sisters will see the light of love and seek a single state solution to the senseless carnage. A single multicultural nation where the
fundamental rights of all would be respected and where the government would be democratically elected would allow Jews and Palestinians alike the right to return and to choose where to live as is done in most countries on earth today where globalization makes nonsense of shameful walls of separation and babies dressed in suicide bomber costumes. With the support of America, such dreams are possible, not only for the Middle East but across Africa where the people are yearning for unity while America and Europe are misled into seeking and furthering divisions in alliance with local dictators and foreign exploiters. Come on America, you know we love you. But please do not start asking us to define love for you. Just apply your legendary philosophy of pragmatism. But if you really wish to know, go beyond your Peace Corps and start a Love Corps, go beyond your War Colleges and set up a college for the study of true love. Is that not what you are truly craving? You landed a man on the moon in record time, do not tell us that you can’t find love or that you don’t give a damn.

The articles in this issue of our journal attest to the love that Africans have towards America. Dr. Anita Kalunta-Crumpton demonstrates this by showing concern about the over-representation of black people in US and UK criminal justice statistics and she suggested that the use of qualitative research could help to unravel ‘indirect discrimination’ and thereby help to reduce the wasteful over-incarceration of black people.

Don John Omale’s account of the history of justice with emphasis on the restorative traditions in Africa makes explicit reference to the fact that the principles of restorative justice are being borrowed
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by Europe and North America to help them to solve the correctional crisis facing them. Amar and Weaver contributes an essay on how a better understanding of the perception of justice by Muslim prison inmates could help America to prevent terrorism, indicating the authors’ love for America.

The examination of the views of American students and Nigerian students concerning the death penalty was used by Lambert, Elechi and Ventura to express their love for America and perhaps help to nudge the country to join the advanced countries of the world in abolishing this barbaric punishment once and for all. Similarly, the review of Okafo’s book on traditional African justice system by Onwudiuwe adds to this love of America by pointing out positive lessons that the country could learn from Africa.

Bibliography


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I was invited to the conference at a short notice because the first African who was invited could not renew his visa in time in London where he lived. Another African was invited in his place from East Africa but that one missed his flight. I was given less than a week to prepare this paper as a substitute speaker.