

Pursuit of unity must be intentional, oppressors will not give us our healing

The double-genocide theory is a tribalist's wildest fantasy. The theory sidesteps the socio-political stakes of the erasure of the community unaligned with Mitterrandian French power and replaces it with tales of crazed African inter-tribe hatred fuelling senseless semi-spontaneous killings. Nothing is more sensational to the western world than dehumanization amongst those whose humanity they long negated. Westerners project their tribalism by claiming that Rwandans see no humanity in each other; in order to cast their ancestors' cruelty as perspicacity, and the good inspiration to treat Rwandans and Africans as if our humanity is indeed debatable. But the racism here, which is nothing more than tribalism bolstered upon imperialist authority, should be unconditioned from the African psyche. Unlike what French President Francois Mitterrand once claimed, which was later echoed by western academics, journalists, and politicians, Rwanda has never been a country where "Hutus [killed] Tutsis and Tutsis [killed] Hutus". This is a transparent projection. Rwanda was never as inherently fixated on tribe as the west remains. The success of this identity crisis exportation to Africa is intimidating. However, it isn't absolute enough to erase the truths that Rwandans know.

From [extreme polarization between communities of different sociopolitical beliefs](#) to the [increased radicalization of right-wing parties](#), the [steady rise of fascism across Europe and America](#), and the shocking wealth disparity in "the land of the free," the west's history of hate and dehumanization of otherness is not a thing of the past. But rather than address the sinister damage of western tribalism— chronic individualism, apathy, and bigotry – the west has chosen to

weaponize it, to secure geostrategic interests abroad. These interests, being to the detriment of Rwandans and Africans in general, are persistently rejected by Pan-African leaders, to the dismay of neo-colonialists.

This explains the hostility towards Rwanda's reconciliation in general and the authorities overseeing it, in particular. The sustaining of this tribalism exportation requires conflating the rejection of racist meddling into African issues with authoritarianism. To sanitise itself from the stain of this fixation on tribe, the west has chosen to equate the defence of Rwanda's unity to political violence.

A Threat To Mother Culture

There are unquestionably substantial risks to adopting western tribalism. Its basis, as was the case with the eugenic fixations on ethnographical and phenotypic differences between populations that were commonplace in early 20th century Europe, remains economic and social division+ geared towards exploitation and control. It conveniently provides the divider the authority to choose the isolated party to lend some of its power to, depending on their willingness to comply with the dictates of white supremacy and imperialism. "The spirit of...tribe should be cultivated and nowhere can this be done with a better chance of success than in British East Africa and Uganda", remarked a British War Office Official in 1917, as quoted in Leroy Vail's "The Creation Of Tribalism In Southern Africa". The official goes on to state that this tribe cultivation can be achieved by "allowing only one denomination to work in each demographic area and by not allowing the same denomination to work in two adjacent areas."

A full century later, the constant regurgitation of the double-genocide theory by the likes of Judi Rever and Professor Philip Reyntjens, perpetuates this myth of primal mutual hatred between Rwandans. They insist that Rwandans continue to define themselves by their otherness, rather than

what binds them as an indivisible community with mutual solidarity and camaraderie. The social and juristic core of Rwandan cohabitation has always been a “villagification” (“Umudugudu”) of sectors to unite their populations under the common goal of achieving every member’s well-being and safety. Ubudehe, a deeply empathetic practice of mutual support across ethnic groups through collective action, has characterized Rwandan culture for over a century – despite the hostility of western tribal projection. Consequently, the suggestion that such a country could only be defined (and divided) by its tribal differences is an intentional deception.

Undermining mutual solidarity

To make the African believe that we, primitive and hateful, cannot overcome our differences is to kill two birds with one stone. First, this manipulation weakens the movement of unity among Africans. The west is particularly uncomfortable with African unity because it threatens to neutralize the colonial power Europe, in particular, gained over African nations by dividing them on its terms, fracturing communities with borders created by white men whose desires naturally opposed those of Africans whom they sought to exploit. Westerners have always known that if “to divide is to conquer,” then “to stand united is to push back”.

Bird number two is the normalization and spread of an abnormal and toxic world order that is antithetical to the essence of humanity: a lack of empathy for those that need and often deserve the most compassion. Consider the chaotic, consciously indecisive Covid-19 response of several western countries in general, and their neglect of the most vulnerable in particular. Europe and America, despite the resources at their disposal, have contextualized their apathy for the elderly, immuno-deficient and frontline workers, as calm pragmatism. The global south witnessed in disbelief as the reluctance of the privileged, and/or ignorant, to wear masks, was tolerated by western authorities and the media, and conspiracy theories

that negated the threat of Covid 19 were broadcasted and even legitimized by commentariat on major media houses for the sake of “balanced discourse that is essential for democracy.”

[“Hold-up”](#), a 3-hour French documentary peddling conspiracies about Coronavirus, has been shared on social media by various French celebrities and “fringe” politicians for months, for instance. An ode to the French “freedom of expression”, this documentary, which features testimony from ex-French Health Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy and links the coronavirus to 5G technology, remained platformed by top French streaming sites for months, as once more French democratic institutions chose “blindness” to the potential repercussions of harmful actions that would predictably cost innocent lives. The documentary has since been viewed over 2.5 million times, by individuals who then took to social media to undermine the importance of individual responsibility in protecting their community from a health catastrophe, and engorge scepticism towards the Covid 19 vaccine.

The death toll in France, which features [one of the best healthcare systems in the world](#), has now surpassed 100,000; a devastating number for which the protection of harmful lies and individual freedoms under the guise of democracy holds a heavy share of responsibility.

In such “democracies”, the ideas and beliefs of the most privileged members of the dominant tribe are considered more deserving of protection than the lives of the defenseless. If this is democracy, Africans cannot afford its tolerance for inhumanity.

No Foreign Saviours for Africans

Unfortunately, Africans have underestimated the damage of the western tribalism projected onto Africans. This is due to our misconception of righteousness and benevolence as intrinsic features of the “morally superior” white nations. This

mentality persists even against a mountain of historical evidence that shows that the notion of white superiority only nurtures the “white saviour” complex, itself a cancer that must be removed from the African consciousness. The necessary surgery here is a methodological and painstaking extraction of racist perspectives that have been rendered credible by two centuries of unrelenting colonial propaganda.

The first malignant idea is that dignity, like fairness, is not a value inherent to Africans, but something dreamy and foreign, which the west, in its superintendent role, grants if it chooses to be so generous, or withholds when it seeks to punish or condemn any determined pursuit of decency for the African that has not gained the saviour’s blessing.

Visionary leadership that rejects and tries to reverse this condition amongst Africans is demonized while complacent and mediocre leaders who swear by the inspiration of the more “competent” western inspiration and empathy-free governing systems are imposed upon Africans.

The other damning thought is that “saving” should come from those that have caused so much abuse towards Africans. Our past – and, to a certain degree, our present – oppressors cannot and will not gift us our healing; for one thing, they have shown that our goodness resides from identifying with their priorities and the evil within us opposes their desires. Our own aspirations are nowhere to be found.

Africans have observed the uncritical acceptance of the notion of the white man as the only possible saviour of the oppressed, which has nurtured a seed of indifference in the hearts of Africans where their fellow Africans are concerned. The narrative that has westerners alone monopolizing morality has demobilized Africans from intervening when mass injustice occurs on the African continent and has made Africans comfortable with the idea that they need not be bothered with the welfare of their brothers and sisters.

With African indifference, intervention has served several external interests, some of which have been to prolong the conflict. According to Nathaniel K. Powell, not only have France's military interventions on the African continent often "[cost \[Africans\] good governance and long-term stability,](#)" but they have also been used to support some African countries' oppressors, so long as the latter's and France's interests aligned.

In Rwanda, western tribalism was perfected in pursuit of the interests Powell speaks of. Jean-Marie Vianney Gatabazi, Rwanda's Minister of Local Government, [recalled](#) how French soldiers on the frontline in Byumba during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi proudly stated that "they were there to fight alongside Hutus against Tutsi aggression."

The only realities the west chooses not to be blind to are our superficial differences, which are in fact features of a beautiful plurality. Rwandans must be as intentional in pursuing unity as the west has been intentional in attacking it by slandering our reconciliation efforts. The persistent quest for harmony and defence of our culture and truths is the only way to honor the colossal efforts that led us to the stability the west seems strangely opposed to.