

The Changing African Story From Traditional Queens to Slay Mothers

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Abstract

The story of how Africa has evolved over time is astonishing. African has been synonymous with unity, beauty, discipline and abundant natural resources. However, Africa tends to be growing from a centre of values to a somewhat valueless society. This is as a result of western culture influence on the traditional African woman. This paper on “the changing African story” surveyed the African woman from time before and how socio-cultural influences have changed her ways in recent times. The traditional African woman used to be a woman of values, morals, discipline and committed to the welfare of her household. However, there has been a kind of unfavourable upgrade in the African woman. She now represents carelessness, a somewhat harlot, care more about modern trend and is not ready “for better for worst” in her family. This is the centre of argument in this paper.

Keywords: Africa, African Queen, African Mother, Morals, Discipline, Western Cultures, Slay Mamas

Every nation have a mark... perhaps, a racial, cultural, land, behavioural, political and/or economic mark. Africa too has a mark, one that distinguishes it from other continents around it. This web pub takes a view of Africa from a purely traditional queen/mother which represents the female folks, born and bred in purely African traditional settings, with traditional morals against the western ideas of a woman.

In the African context, an African queen is represented as a beautiful woman of virtue, a mother that caters for both her children and husband. A keeper of the home; a highly spiritual minded figure who brings up the kids in the fear of her God/god. As an African mother, discipline is key in the family, courtesy is a must and civility is embedded in the ways of the family. The term African queen or mother easily brings to mind the beauty of the African continent, a self-conscious people with beautiful cultures and traditions that marks them out from the rest of the world.

Nevertheless, this story has changed dramatically. The original idea of the African Queen/mother is shifting ground from the status quo ante. The African queen, previously marked for her black beauty has bleached her skin to look like her white counterpart. She has been hugely attracted to the modern world and what it has to offer. She is not only on all social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc, but has become a master of it and hardly have time for her husband and children. Law and order in her family has become almost elusive. Her ways of discipline she has abandoned and the kids now are the centre of attraction to all kinds of crimes in the local community.

Seldom has she used the rod of discipline and the tongue of chastisement she has long abandoned. In the dying order of Africa's traditional beliefs, where polygamy was pompous, the future of the children according to Ibaba (2020) lies in the hands of the mothers. This means that in a polygamous home, the father is often unable to cater for the needs of the children, hence, each mother takes the welfare of her kids serious by assisting to provide for the welfare of her children.

Today, the traditional African woman that Ibaba (2020) saw has changed. The future of the children now lies in their own hands. The new African woman will prefer to change spouse for a better life than stick with her children and spouse when the "chips are down". This is the changing story about the Traditional African Queen.

Whenever the discuss of a pure African mother comes up, my mother is often the first person that comes up to my mind I see my mother as a "righteous woman, a model with fine example, a Christian woman worthy of emulation, a standard for measurement, a bearer of Christ' qualities and an embodiment of virtue, values and stood for anything good; A faithful wife and most loving mother who never spared the rod – a disciplinarian to the core and a firm believer in God to the later. Mama's story of her battle to bring us up brings tears to my eyes. It was incomprehensible then, but as I grew older, it becomes clearer to me. Mama gave us all basic education from where some of us took it upon ourselves to be educated. Many elder siblings even got to the universities level and graduated under mama's little funding capacity/assistance" (Oghenenyoreme, 2020).

Today, the African world has been largely affected by western cultures. This has been possible as a result of concerted efforts by colonial lords who made their cultures more attractive to the African people and even made it enforceable in some parts of Africa. Of course, Western cultures come with some forms of value and as such, the value it brings helps to erode the African culture.

Tuface Idibia, (also 2face Idibia, 2baba) once sang about the concept of an African queen.

Tuface likened the African queen to a "sun that lights up the Earth", whose "smile so bright" and whose "beauty changed the whole scenery" around her. This is the traditional practical belief of the average African of what the African queen represents. However, the twist of events of the traditional African queen has made the future of African look different from the status quo ante.

Today, what we have in Africa is now a crop of "slay mamas" who on daily basis has showed off more western inclination than imbibe in the core African traditional values. This has resulted in failed homes, failed marriages, failed child rearing, divided family settings, bad associations and bad influence negatively influencing the African girl-child amongst other notable negative effects. The African pride has indeed been long lost.

As I write, I begin to liken the knowledge I have of my mother to current ladies and their behavioural patterns. Their wants, operations and lifestyle in general totally differ from that of the world before. Man has indeed lost value and depreciated over time as a result of changing times.

Effects of Africa's Changing Cultures

One of the foremost negative effects of Africa's changing culture is the loss of identity. Amongst urban dwellers, it is very difficult to identify the roots of many who have for long, lived in the urban settlements. Some hardly go back to their roots and are seen as though they originated from such urban settlements. Even in the US, there are blacks that may not be able to trace their roots anymore as a result of over-leanings on their settlement there. Not only recently there seemed to be a high level prejudice that many Black Americans are trying to retrace their roots back to Africa. It is very pathetic. While the case with Black Americans is circumstantial, those back here in Africa is often as a result of unintentional efforts to imitate the white world.

Unbeknownst to Africans, while we endeavour to imitate the white world, our culture, including our products and services are being relegated to the backyard. Currently, some products will not get patronage if "Made in China" is not inscribed on them. This is perhaps why the Igbo boys produce a product in Aba and write "Made in China" on it. This is because the Nigerian buyers now prefer China and other foreign products to Nigerian products.

Over adoption of the whiteman cultural practices has also affected our general culture to a very great extent. We see this in our daily clothing. Today, people wear more of suits than native wears. In fact, in many banks, corporate wears are enforced from Mondays through Thursdays and native only on Fridays. The whiteman wears is now termed as corporate

while the African wear is native and not suitable for corporate functions. With this naming, we agree that the whiteman's wears is superior and better than ours. This is the gap that is needed to be filled.

Re-Understanding Our Cultures and Values

Africans need to be re-oriented that whatever society calls "good" is what is good and "bad" is what is bad. Take two families for instance. A wealthy family may allow their kids to take pieces of meat directly from pot and eat. In such setting, even if the mother sees the child picking pieces of meat from the pot, she may even encourage the child pick more, provided the child is satisfied. Take note here that the mother did not call her son a thief, so, society has not seen him as thief.

On the other hand, the story may be entirely different as family settings changes. In another family where the socio-economic status is low, the child who goes to the pot to pick meat may be reprimanded and even names a thief. Now, outsiders will also call the boy a thief irrespective of the object stolen. So, it is a naming problem. If you name your child a thief, others follow and call him a thief even if the boy is a good boy. But if you do not call him a thief, so it will go, others sees him as a good boy.

African leaders must come out to make policies that portray African culture as the best for African states and show the political will to implement such policies. African economies harbours more of Western products than locally made products. This makes it difficult for local manufacturers to grow. Even when border closure is enforced, lip services and corrupt border officials still makes the borders porous for foreign goods to filter in.

Africa must start naming their products as the best. Maybe more African names, more African wears in the workplace, more African products and so on. To attain this, African leaders must strive to exhibit good leadership and enforce loadable leadership in this direction.

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