

## INSERT

## TEXT 1

**Why Do They Forget Where They Came From?**

by Eric Miyeni

I was sitting with a friend of mine who likes to razz me about things, just to get me to argue, when he started this conversation:  
 My friend: "You know, Eric, what I don't like about guys like Patrice (Motsepe) and Cyril (Ramaphosa) is that these guys have forgotten where they came from."

Me: "What's so great about where we came from?"

My friend: "What?"

Me: "What's so great about where we came from that we should imprint it in our brains and never forget it?"

My friend: "Come on, Eric, you know what I mean."

Me: "But I don't!"

The truth is that I have heard this argument before and I'm a little sick of it. History is so loooooong. But I know that those who are proponents of this argument are not thinking beyond three hundred and fifty years. If they were, they would be saying guys like Patrice (Motsepe) remind them of where we came from.

You see, beyond three hundred and fifty years, all the way past a thousand years ago, we were the toast of the universe. We were colonisers, not the colonised. Beyond three hundred and fifty years ago, we gave the world its very first institute of higher learning. We gave the world science. We gave it philosophy. We were kings and queens. We ruled. Today archaeologists can scientifically trace cross-ocean trade back to us ... African man, African woman. We are the original people. Geneticists will tell you that. Paleo-anthropologists will tell you that.

Archaeologists will tell you that. We populated the rest of the world and changed to fit the environment. Nations of the world outside of Africa are, in a sense, our children.

But I know that the "Why do they forget where they come from" brigade is not thinking beyond three hundred and fifty years ago. Three hundred and fifty years ago, Jan van Riebeeck landed in what is called Cape Town today and began what you can safely describe as the massacre and degradation of the original people. Just like other Europeans were doing to the other original people on other parts of Africa, the mother continent.

This rape went from being overtly brutal to being so subtle that even those doing it today believe they are not doing it.

The old lion, you see, had grown old and its young had come back to circle it, challenge it and found it wanting. So they took over, brutally. Africa, the mother continent was old, you see, and tired. And maybe she hadn't taught her children manners. Maybe she had only taught them brutality. And boy, did they learn the brute force lesson well!

In South Africa, they exerted their revenge for three hundred and fifty years or more. In that time we were turned into slave labour, denied even the basic right to family, we were flogged and insulted, forced to die working for our captors who grew rich from what was ours. What's fantastic to remember about that except that it should never happen again? I am okay with the most successful among us forgetting "where we come from" if where we come from means no further than three hundred and fifty years ago.

However, if by "... forget where they come from", my friend means a refusal to contribute to the uplifting of those like them who are still down and it sounds to you like a rational and well-founded argument, I say to you, well, isn't their success a good enough contribution to our collective psyche, that thing at the back of your brain that sometimes says we can be kings and queens again? If Patrice (Motsepe) could run around with a suitcase full of nothing but ideas and have to beg a hospital to bear with him because one of his cheques bounced, and still rise to billionaire status, isn't that good enough as a contribution to our overall total upliftment? Did we fight to be carried or fight for the door to open so we can walk or run ourselves to our chosen destinations?

I celebrate every black achievement because it points the way to where we once were – at the top of the hill, as kings and queens of the universe. Except this time around, we must teach our children better lessons, like we did here in South Africa when we said that reconciliation, not retribution, not revenge, is a better way forward, no matter how mean your enemy was to you. Peace.

[Adapted from a piece in Miyeni's book, *O' Mandingo! The Only Black at a Dinner Party*, 2003]

**TEXT 2****A Visit to the Barbershop**

You have to understand that I have very happy hair. No matter how serene and composed the rest of me is, no matter how grave and formal the situation, my hair is always having a party. In any group photograph you can spot me at once because I am the person at the back whose hair seems to be listening to a disco album called *Dance Craze '97*.

Every so often, with a sense of foreboding, I take this hair of mine uptown to the barbershop and allow one of the men there to amuse himself with it for a bit. I don't know why, but going to the barber brings out the wimp in me. There is something about being enshrouded in a cape and having my glasses taken away, then being set about the head with sharp cutting tools that leaves me feeling helpless and insecure.

I mean there you are, armless and squinting, and some guy you don't know is doing serious, almost certainly regrettable, things to the top of your head. I must have had 250 haircuts in my life by now, and if there is one thing I have learned it is that a barber will give you the haircut he wants to give you and there is nothing you can do about it.

So the whole experience is filled with trauma for me. This is particularly so as I always get the barber I was hoping not to get – usually the new guy they call 'Thumbs'. I especially dread the moment when he sits you in the chair and the two of you stare together at the hopeless catastrophe that is the top of your head, and he says, in a worryingly eager way, "So what would you like me to do with this?"

And so I sit for a small, tortured eternity, staring at my lap, under strict instructions not to move, listening to the terrifying cutting machinery trundling across my scalp. Out of the corner of my eyes I can see large quantities of shorn hair tumbling onto my shoulders.

"Not too much off," I bleat from time to time, but he is engaged in a lively conversation with the barber and customer at the next chair, and only occasionally turns his attention to me and my head, generally to mutter, "Oh, dang," or "Whoopsie".

Eventually, unable to speak, I hand him a large sum of money and stumble from the shop. I walk home with my collar up and my head sunk into my shoulders. At the house my wife takes one look at me. "Did you say something to upset them?" she asks in sincere wonder, and goes off to fetch the big hat.

[Adapted from Bill Bryson's book, *Notes From a Big Country*, 1999]

**TEXT 3      PlayStation Campaign**



[From <<http://www.engadget.com/2006/07/12/sony-pulls-ppsp-white-is-coming-ads-in-netherlands/>>/ and <[www.kotaku.com/.../07/black-ppsp-europe-thumb.png](http://www.kotaku.com/.../07/black-ppsp-europe-thumb.png)>]

**TEXT 4**

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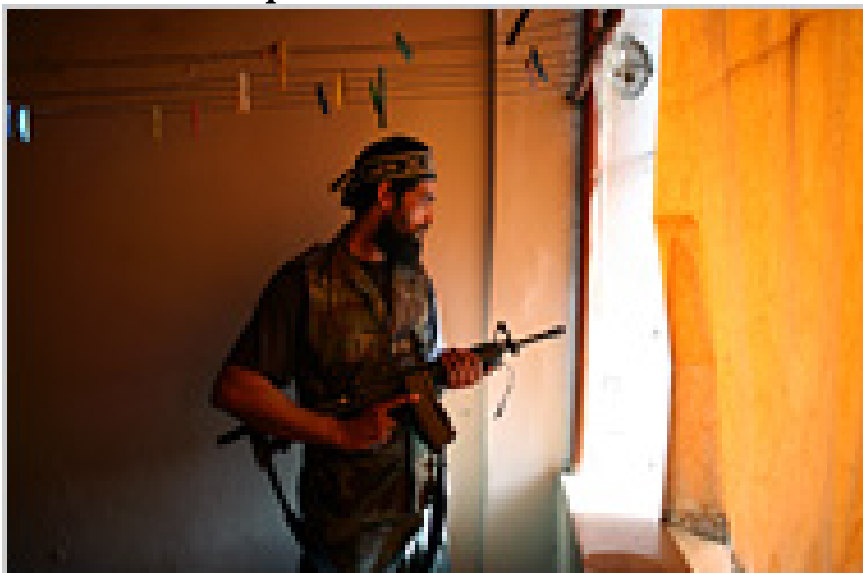
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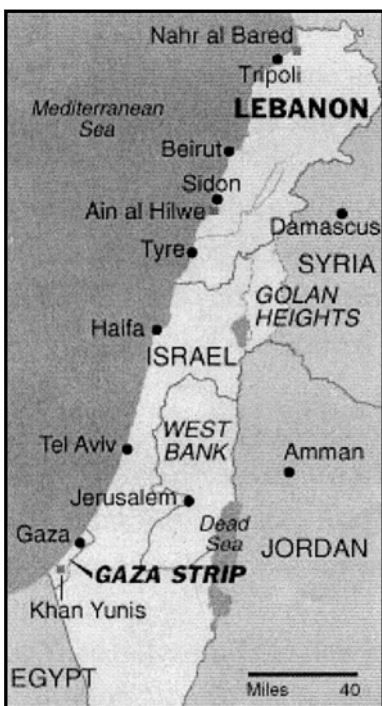
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**Jihadist Groups Fill a Palestinian Power Vacuum**



An Islamic militant posed this week in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, Ain al Hilwe. Jihadist influence is growing there and in Gaza.

By **STEVEN ERLANGER** and **HASSAN M. FATTAH**  
 Published: May 31, 2007



The New York Times

JERUSALEM, May 30 — It was 2 a.m. when masked gunmen raided Al Wafa Net in the Khan Yunis camp in Gaza where 17 young men were surfing the Internet.

“The gunmen tied their hands, then forced them to stand at the stairs while they broke all the screens, and then the server and the television and the photocopier,” said the owner, Hamad, of the attack a few months ago. “Then they burned all 36 computers.”

In recent months in Gaza, there have been similar attacks on music and video shops and pharmacies accused of selling Viagra, as well as on American and [United Nations](#) schools.

A standoff between the Lebanese Army and Islamists at a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon has focused attention on a jihadist element taking root there as well as a radicalisation in the Palestinian areas themselves.

With the fragmentation of authority in Gaza, and its isolation, said a Gazan analyst, Taysir Mhaisin, “there is an increase of fundamentalism and the birth of groups believing in violence and practising violence as a model created by bin Ladenism.”

Mouin Rabbani, a Jordan-based analyst of Palestinian politics for the International Crisis Group, said, “There is a security vacuum that creates space for all kinds of new grouplets and forces.”

[Source: <[www.nytimes.com/2007/05/31/world/middleeast/31\\_palestinians.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/31/world/middleeast/31_palestinians.html)>]

**TEXT 5****administrivia;**

n., Regulations or requirements which are beyond challenge or revision because they predate the employment of the officials that uphold them.

(*comb.: administrate + trivia*)

**adminutia;**

n., Elements of administrivia which routinely generate protests answered by, "*I don't make the rules, I just enforce them.*"

(*comb.: administrate + minutia*)

**clafir;**

n., A public information officer especially gifted in the art of 'spin'.

(*Turk. clafir: literally, a royal clothier; a valet or personal assistant to an emir*)

**clafiricate;**

v., To successfully sell setbacks as progress.

(*Turk. clafir: literally, a clothier; a valet or personal assistant to an emir*)

**depure;**

v., To add elements or language to a project which lend the appearance of long standing, and thereby credibility.

(*Chem.: to add a contaminant known to enhance the desired reaction*)

**disdose;**

n., Acceptance or resignation to one's lot in life or career stagnancy; a benign mental numbness. Also disdosition.

(*R. Cathol.: St. Disdo, an accidentally martyred fourth-century half-wit, the patron saint of the ignorant*)

**inverbiate;**

v., To create a previously nonexistent verb from a noun.

(*L. in verbum dictum simplex: by simply saying so.*)

**lingnastics;**

n. Double-talk. The art of saying all things to all listeners while saying nothing of consequence to anyone; flatulent bureaucratise.

**spolid;**

Adj., Corrupt to the core.

(*Ital. spolido: a cheese gone horribly wrong in the aging process*)

[From: <<http://home.earthlink.net/~skilton/dictionary.html>>]