

# opinions

## Generalizing for sake of convenience

People tend to have a habit of generalizing things for the sake of convenience. It's usually easy to generalize than to make the effort to get to know things in their real sense of existence. I'm guilty of such a thing. I remember once calling an oriental person a Chinese, because I assumed (naturally like many others) for the sake of convenience that he was one. Obviously, for my ignorance, I insulted a Japanese person for calling him Chinese. Rightfully, he let me realize my blindness by stating: "Just because I physically resemble Chinese does not give you the justification to call me Chinese." Naturally, not all people with small eyes (no insult intended) are Chinese. One could be Japanese, Korean, or Indonesian. The physical features are not the right way to identify people.

Culture, history and language are what determines one's identity.

This brings me to the point I like to get across. The phrase "African" is used so loosely in North America that every black person who was born anywhere in Africa is generalized as one. I wonder why? What in the devil's name is going on? One answer is that all Africans are one with the same cultural, and historical identity. If this is the case then have black Africans succeeded in giving birth to one culture all these centuries? Or is it simply a clever pirate transmitting "the wrong interpretation mixed up with vain imagination"?

Well, this is your wake up call people.

The continent of Africa is home for more than fifty different nation-states. Each of these nation-states

has its own culture, history and language, in which few of them share the same language; let alone the same culture or tradition. Some Black-Americans even think that Swahili is the continental language of Af-

### What in the devil's name is going on?

rica. Don't tell that to a west African, he or she will be amused at the level of your ignorance. What most of those (generalizers) don't understand or refuse to understand is that each African has an identity that he or she

holds very dear. For example, my identity comes from eleven centuries of common history, language and tradition which is uniquely Somalian. My ideas, beliefs and opinions are that of Somali first, then African second. If I was asked to talk about and African culture, which one do you suppose I will be presenting? You guessed it, Somalia!

In other words, if you missed my point, I logically can not do justice in trying to claim that I understand what it is like to be a Nigerian or a Malawian. Therefore, when one generalizes those who are born on the African continent as African, then one is depriving them of their identity. I'm sure that Canadians will be a little bit upset if I kept calling them Americans; Though, I can't see any obvious differences.

Geographical identification is not exclusively important to us (Africans); though, we suffer the most from this kind of identity 'piratism'. Imagine why people of an Italian, Greek, German, or Irish descent don't settle for this kind of generalizations or 'piratism'? The kind of the matter is that they are not called Europeans, but are called Italian-Canadians and so on. Well, as the song goes: things that make you go @\$\$\*&-oops! On this note, I conclude my lesson of cultural identity with the words of Mr. Garvey:

"People without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture are like a tree without roots." -Marcus Garvey

Asalamu Ala'kum,

Shriwac Sheikh-Mohamed

## HIV unmasked

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### AIDS: A MULTIFACTORIAL DISEASE

The eighth annual AIDS conference in Amsterdam finally questioned the HIV link to AIDS. Luc Montagnier of the Pasteur Institute surprised audiences in Amsterdam by saying "there are too many shortcomings in the theory that HIV causes all signs of AIDS". This has led others to consider the disease as multifactorial.

Michael Callen, author of *Surviving AIDS*, has been alive for eleven years with full blown AIDS. He has fought every illness brought to him but not AIDS itself. Callen frequently points to the prejudices of the medical community. Callen notes the recognition of the influence of stress, poor eating habits, and too little sleep have in leading to fatal heart attacks. Yet, HIV victims will die of AIDS and no questions are asked.

Callen and others who emphasize AIDS as a multifactorial disease point to high risk groups as proof HIV is not the only cause of AIDS. The AIDS explosion began in California

among predominately homosexual men. The majority of the men were regularly having unprotected sex, were inflicted with numerous sexually transmitted diseases and were being inoculated for them regularly. It has been argued this combination led to a general decline of the immune system.

Other high risk groups, such as hemophiliacs, take the blood from

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thousands of donors in one transfusion. Intervention drug users are susceptible to infections and usually have unhealthy lifestyles. Any combination can effect the immune system which can trigger a HIV or AIDS. In comparison, the majority of monogamous heterosexual men in Africa are still living HIV positive after a decade.

### AZIDOTHYIMIDINE

Many groups concerned with AIDS are angered at the medical

community's attempts at curbing the sickness. Azidothymidine (AZT), a failed cancer drug of the 1960s, is still the most prescribed drug for HIV positive people, however AZT's effectiveness is being increasingly questioned. The drug's manufacturer, Burroughs & Wellcome, a British Multinational, has earned over \$350 million a year because of HIV/AIDS.

AZT was approved by the FDA in just 18 months, a record for the organization which usually takes up to several years to approve a drug. AZT works by killing approximately 499 healthy cells to kill 1 HIV infected cell in addition to retarding bone marrow. Dr. Duesberg, a leading virologist at Berkeley, is one of the many experts who have drawn the analogy of poisoning a city's water system to kill one terrorist. If AIDS is multifactorial then AZT is not only a poor solution but a contributor to the illness.

Canada will see the cases of AIDS increase nine-fold this decade, one of the highest rates of spread in the developed world. The Strecker theory urges the population to realize how little is understood about epidemiology and how this causes areas of research to be ignored for financial reasons.

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