

Young Black African and Irish

I am who I am where I am - New soap testaments etched between remnants of lost times of homo-sapiens and modern man

I am young, Black and Irish. Went to the Gaelscoil (Irish Speaking School) and speak Wolof with my family in the evening. I am 16, jeeze, don't I know it, and hitting on the girls. Some have red hair and some are tall like me. We use WhatsApp mostly and I have my few favourites. I still keep in contact with a colleen from the Inish Mór island. We do it in Gaelic. It feels different. She is the daughter of a trawler fisherman who owns a pub and a fish and chip shop in Galway and she has flaming red hair. On the island its quiet and the beaches are very beautiful. She wants me to work in the shop during the summer and I am considering the options. My sister wants to know what it is like on the island and is seeking permission from our parents to go next summer. She is at that stage where her curiosity is searching for much more. She thinks my experience is something she would like too and is eager to go. Her skills in camogie sports will come handy on the island and will allow her to mix easier.

I live in Limerick and play rugby for Garryowen Rugby Club. My height helps with my performance on the field. I am easily noticed and get a lot of attention. It feels good. My family are happy for me too. Frequently, with my brothers and sisters we converse in Gaelic just to keep a few secrets and our parents are ok with that. My father comes from a fishing community in northern Senegal, so does my mother and they married there at a bushfire wedding before departing to Ireland. It was a tribal event and celebrations continued for a few days. A dowry was agreed and cattle exchanged. This is the acceptable preferred recognized currency in their subsistence family way of life. My father was ambitious and wanted to study to be a solicitor and my mother wanted to teach French and Business. Both qualified and have set a good example for all of us. I have watched my father in the court house on a few occasions and it is like watching a pool game, where is the black ball on the table. He moves about in front of the judge. My mother teaches in a country 2nd level school and drives each day about 15 miles round trip daily. We are a conventional muslim family and no pork is allowed. My friends find this amusing.

Since reading the recent Continuum and West Africa and The Isles of Britain and Ireland everything has changed about my new identity and being Irish. It's amazing. I don't need to have red hair, blue eyes or freckles to feel Irish because now I know I have always belonged here. The stories in my fathers village and his fathers have continued in Ireland from a long long time ago before the time of recorded history in Ireland and now they are my stories as much as everyone else in Ireland. It is fascinating to observe how the whole spectrum of ancient African life in everyday life in Ireland today has manifested itself in Irish language, politics, sports, religion, native boats; place names for mountains, rivers and lakes, fiscal prudence, music and dance and mindsets, and how they resonate throughout everyday life. I intend to visit various places in Ireland each year and follow and observe the actual locations and ask myself why these names from my fathers village make these places so unique to me. There is a new sense of belonging for me now and connecting with a once broken algorithm that has now been repaired. My future in Ireland is found in the ancient past written by my forefathers all over the isles. Lets embrace it.

My sister will write something later.....

Hi ! I promised my brother and I like to keep it. So here I am. Well, OK....as he said I play camogie and attend the local Coláiste (girls only Gaelic speaking school). I would like to add that my parents sometimes feel homesick and sometimes we would all be taken to the seaside town of Ballybunion at the mouth of the Shannon Estuary flowing into the Atlantic Ocean. Their reasons are that this place reminds them of that area of the Senegal river and how the local landscapes are so familiar to them. They would watch all around them and converse in Wolof with lots of laughter. When the tide is fully out, especially on a sunny day, is their most treasured moment, as we all walk the vast sandy beaches just as they did when they were young in Senegal. Memories come flourishing back to them. Sometimes they cry. Me and my siblings become amused at this.

My dreams shadow my big brother and I learn from him. I know some of his friends but most of my friends are my own making. We meet in sports clubs and often attend concerts in local theatres. I like being at home with my mother and doing the house chores. I have no boyfriend and it is not important yet. When my parents were young they lived an island life on islands in the Senegal river and they often speak of this and I can understand why my brother took an interest in Inish Mór island near Galway. I am thinking the same too and looking forward to sampling lots of local fresh fish, caught, on the menu. My own Irish identity is important and I treasure that. It is part of me and my past and especially of my ancestors. Their legacy can be seen all around me where I live in Ireland. This sense of belonging is part of what I am and want to be.

This is cool.....my younger brother will write something soon....

Nagadeff !I never thought I would ever write this word. This is a first since my ancestors last used it in Ireland. It is a social greeting meaning ‘may you have many cattle’. I have no experience of cattle except when we pass a cattle mart in a small town and dad would say: ‘ I bought your mam with cattle’ and how relevant the word means today, insofar, as it continues to generate wealth for families still. I remember visiting the sea coasts and visiting Cashin near Ballybunion and my dad would tell me ancient stories of this place as though they happened yesterday. He would point to the cluster of small houses at the local harbor and tell me that was where his earliest ancestors first settled because there was so much fish in the river and it was so safe. He would show me the cormorants in the river and explain that they are descendants of the same ones that were there when his ancestors arrived. I asked were they our cousins too, and he said ‘of course not, don’t be funny’. Not far away at the entrance to the mouth of the Estuary in a place he calls ‘Baal’ that resonates with the present local name and also in the same place where he came from in Senegal and there he would seat me on his lap looking out to the vast waters. He would say ‘ do you see those boats out there with men inside?’, ‘I said, no. He said look again there are three boats and seven men and they are black skinned’. I began to believe him and my imagination got carried away. It seemed true. He said they are going to Limerick to the market to sell their catch. His stories continued for nearly an hour and his passion was so real. Anyway, I am older now and can understand the reasons why these stories are so important today.

I play rugby too since I was four years old and practice every Sunday morning at the club under the watchful eye of my big brother. I am better than him because I have scored more tries than he ever did when he was young. He stays quiet when I mention that. I am more sporty then he is and talk a lot more, sometimes too much for my own good. I have a bike

that he once owned and I ride it everywhere. My friends are mainly from the local school and rugby club. My dad takes me fishing locally and often I find it boring because we rarely catch anything. He has promised to take me to visit his small villages where he and my mam grew up and meet our cousins. He sometimes jokes that when he does buy a boat we will take it there as he says, wishfully, its very close by.

By the way I have a twin sister and she says she wants to say something too.....(later).

Hi ! I am a showgirl. I like all the girlie girlie stuff and just adore the stage. Its amazing looking at the audience and watching them clapping. Obviously, I am very easily seen in the cast and often get the Whitney Houston role impacting my soul's vocal chords. Of course, the boys want to be my bodyguard, hmm, and I like to say, the competition is stiff. It always feels good when I spot my family watching, and when I do, I beam my white teeth so they know I am the lead in the show.

Eating at the table at home I sit in the middle, between my older and younger sister, and my Dad calls me Can Toog (Wolof) after the biggest mountain in Ireland, meaning, 'stuck in the middle'. Yes, I am a middle child ...oh dear, and my twin isn't. Well, that depends what my pregnant mother has in a few months. In my case I find that I have to try harder to get attention at home. I think I am like my mom and sing like her. I am most often with my parents alone when they go for a drive and they talk a lot about how their ancient family relations from their village use to live near Limerick. One of their favorite places is being on 'les iles' or 'the isle' in the city center and telling stories. The boat club fascinates them as well as the swift speed of the high dancing water drops from the waterfalls, one hour before tide is out, and how his ancestors were thinking in those moments when they first laid eyes on this place. He loves to watch the cormorants and it reminds him: nothing has changed. He looks at the local boats and how their names resonate with his native village life and their boats, and is quick to point at 'the elbow' of the river where the Shannon turns sharply left into the hinterlands, and refers to this area to be the social match making point for the young and the center of fashionista and culinary taste 'a la cuisine'. Many stories he has told us of the waterfalls and the kid goats and the special importance of the mount on the isle that holds a religious significance or a 'buur roux' (Wolof), as he calls it and the local distilling of alcohol for the masses that lived there. More importantly, he explains how the first political structure on the isles of Britain and Ireland were conceived here. I could go on.

So! I see myself as a future royalty just like my father use to explain, how life in his village was and the importance of showing leadership among the community. By the way, I like tennis and am good at it and have joined the local club that is among the best in the country . My swing is good. English is my parents third after Wolof and French and they like that I practice my French at the local Alliance Francaise with my own age group on a Sunday. It's amazing. You can see from what I have written how much the past of my parents and ancestors really impacts on me today. I feel good about that.

Who is next to write ? Common Mom !

Alors alors ...it took me a long time to respond because of this other pregnancy on the way and you know how that feels, except that this time it doesn't feel the same as the last one. My medical consultant thinks I am crazy but I know cause I feel I am having twins again and very soon, and I am eating more to feed two. I am bigger than before as well. Actually, being

heavier in my village is considered a sign of wealth in my home community. It is anything but in Ireland. I cannot fit into my car to drive now and my lifestyle is so fast and chaotic.

In my home village my sisters love becoming pregnant and their lifestyles are conducive to having more babies. They have no cars and remain in their small huts and villages and many others are there to share all the normal work to be done and we all feed each other often eating from the same wooden bowl at the same time. My sisters think my life is easier. they would never understand even if I try to convince. I guess with benefits there are commitments and responsibilities. So much for my previous jungle existence and surviving with nature. Now I am living in a new world so removed from before. It is impossible to explain how to survive to my children. Maybe in time that will be possible.

I like to support the ideals of my husband and how he feels to reconnect this algorithm of the old and the new stories from an ancient time from Senegal to the modern day life as we have it today. A renewal of a sense of belonging for my children will complete their dreams and aspirations and their identity of being Irish and all these ancient stories that are an integral part of that makes that possible. Oops, I must go, and quickly....oh dear.

Sorry my mother had to leave so soon.

Quelle Surprise ! My mom has had twins, a boy and a girl. Now my twin brother is a middle child, just like me.

My dad will write in a moment.....

Al li loo, Pooj li loo, Al li loo, taa poc ag bulo, Al li loo, Pooj li loo, Aaaal li loooo, Taa poc ag bulo. Yes, a great celebration today and it feels so wonderful. In my village we celebrate using this same chorus . All in the village sitting around a bush fire and smiling about how the 'angry wife' wins her way with nature. Amazingly these above words from my village remain in song in Ireland today.

I am a Gaelic sport follower and attend the various local matches and often I find myself living in my village in Africa when I listen to words spoken there , ' Mekk poc ag bulo'. It is amazing how a mindset from an ancient time remains unchanged today and protected by an Irish Constitution and EU legislation. I have attended matches in West Limerick and North Kerry listening to 'Cad' being used for a ball that is enshrined in GAA terminology. This word is also found in a famous mountain range in Kerry (another story). There are also deeper personal moments attending these wonderful events that I discovered and find unique when I am in a crowd especially when there is a chorus of emotional chanting and I listen to ' Cammoon, cammoon' when a supporter is urging his team on. I have noticed how the current meaning can be lost in translation, but the spirit has not. This can also be seen in the words used for all political structures and appointments all the way to President of Ireland. In my village we also played sports using 'cad' and 'cammoon' and usually surrounded by our local boats called the 'Gaal'. For me, speaking and playing in Gaelic is what you do around our local boats, and because my village and others nearby are located along the Senegal Estuary we are known to be 'the boat people'.

In Ireland I have never left my home and I don't want my children to feel otherwise. All around me and everywhere I go resonates what I had in my village in Africa. My ancestors to Ireland were primitive homo sapiens using simple primal words from an ancient time that we

all now can recognize from this book 'Continuum'. This revelation can repair the broken algorithm lost in history and remove racism forever.

Meanwhile, back in Senegal in the fishing village along the estuary:

My uncle does not speak English and talks to us in Wolof today (using an interpreter) :

Nagadeff . (Meaning: 'may you have many cows')

My brother..... er...he is so far away ...you know.....and he says he will arrive home some day soon in his own boat from Ireland. Can you believe that? Is he dreaming ? What has happened to him? I wish he had stayed here with me in the village. Do you see that large stone over there, that is where both of us, as young boys, use to lay out our fish catch to dry in the sun. He tells me that he visits big shopping centers so big that you can get lost inside. I have never got lost in the big jungle and neither has he. How do you get lost in a shopping center that is so small compared to a jungle. Everyone in Ireland spend a lot of time in these strange places and are almost nowhere else. It seems it is a new place of worship except that people going there visit many gods to pay more money for something they already have at home. I don't understand this worship. In my village life is simple and everyone is around me and everyone feels together. We are one family and we all do everything together. Our ways have never changed and our traditions remain the same. Our tribe have a very stratified society that we devised from ancient times and we have a traditional structure that includes a hereditary nobility and a class of musicians and story tellers.

My brother tells me he had arrived home when he went to Ireland because he finds our tribal synergy, ephemeral vibrations and culture everywhere he goes and that our ancestors have etched their culture on all the local landscapes, Irish culture and Politics and by default today all of that is alive and written in Irish and EU law. I find this amazing especially when in those ancient years we could not write and our few primal words then were basic and vowel. I also am very proud of my ancestors that arrived in Ireland and how their ancient spirit continues there so far away from here and is now part of a new world that they call 'modern'. Their words adorn the landscapes of Ireland and the UK making it a museum of our ancestors in an ancient time.

My simple life does not require any plans and each day tells me what to do next. When I hunt I only count to three. One is to catch something for myself, two is to catch something for my family and three is to catch something for others in the village. After that there are no more numbers. Every family tries to own three cattle in a herd and any surplus is given to others. We do not need any banks or loans and everyone shares. We have goats too and my brother tells me that Irish goats have horns that rise up and over to remind him of an angry wife back home. So, he tells me they are called Pooc, the same as we call our angry wives. I find this funny so must my ancestors from my village when they first arrived in Ireland. I can feel what that must have meant to them then. It feels like you have received from them a letter they wrote to you from an ancient time and in all that period that letter has finally arrived home from where they left with a story to tell.

Today is too hot to go on the river. Each year is becoming hotter and the desert is becoming bigger and dangerous. It is harder to catch monkeys and birds too. Tonight, our village committee meets in the Da-jaloo hut for the purpose of a tribal meeting, a special place where also the attendance of the spiritual advisors See, Farata and Sukka Ruux attend too. In the

high chair will be the Ooaakatari, our chief and the Tesoxor, the assistant chief. I am the Tan Asamaan, a smaller eagle, and many committee members will attend too that we call TD or Tan Asamaan Dajaloo. This meeting is significant in that the spiritual, political and the warriors (firdu) will be present. Many items are on the agenda including how to get more food and water and protection from the heat. Also, some of our cattle and goats have been taken by another tribe and we need to stop that. Due to our location there are no cars or roads and we are situated in a remote place and on the largest island in the estuary that is called 'Ile de See'. Other tribal members are on nearby islands that arrive who want to engage and find solutions. Before the meeting we all gather around our Ooaakatari and with all the spiritual advisors we together recant the blessings of the Buur Roux to guide all the tribe safely.

Our tribal society does not want to become irrelevant and must be seen to make itself more relevant where it matters thus our observance of traditional rites are the key to our social harmony and political stability in our tribe. Our rites celebrate ancient stories that give us an identity and a real feeling of presence that make the abstract concrete and the fictional real.

I see my brother everywhere because when we were together we did all the same things . Today nothing has changed for me and I still do the same things. I hope he is happy as I am.

I will try to find some cousins who are not shy to talk to you. Give me some time. Due to Covid it has been very difficult to reach any cousins. We will try again another day. In the meantime my father wants to say something:

It makes me happy to read my brother's opinions, and his stories have reminded me of my earlier life with fond memories. The time - warp between my world to-day and in Ireland, and my previous life with my brother in the jungle feels truly amazing now. How much has changed for me in the meantime and the old world remaining locked under key in an ancient time capsule! Yet, still he is my brother and I have fond stories and memories we both cherished, and all of this experience being played out to-day and in continuum: connecting very different civilizations both ancient and modern, in harmony with each other making them feel the same once more. The ancient chants of a bushfire celebration in the jungle rhymes today with the celebrations of a gig in Dingle, Ireland any - day. This is now an unbroken story , a repaired algorithm that we can call it to be 'our story' once more.

I agree with my brother and his ideas of 'the supermarket of doubtful ideas', and his own simple single primal story of his subsistence lifestyle in the jungle and how uncomplicated it is.

My brother is indicating he won't compromise his primal freedom in the jungle with what he refers to as a 'fake power': standing in the aisle of a supermarket to sanctify life and his ability to choose. He prefers to hunt for what he wants to eat and share with others. He believes his decisions imbue his strength to exercise his freedom "to do" what he desires", with his own feelings. This is his un-compromising world that is often not too uncommon.

Unfortunately, he does fail to understand that he does not have the freedom "to choose what he desires". This is a conundrum that may not be solved and if it is, at what price?

I am happy that my brother and I have shared with all of you 'our story', that is my story and yours too, that embraces all known humankind time history, and to reconnect with our ancient ancestors that left West Africa to travel to 'The Isles of Britain and Ireland', and how

their tribal traditions continue to live and remain relevant to-day in Ireland and in the 'modern world' on The Isles.

In this moment, this milli-second has remained still for you to experience an original primal spirit in all of us, just doing nothing.

'Due to Covid issues it is continuing to prove very difficult to reach my cousins. My mother's sister will be available in a few days and has agreed to speak to us. Until then another pause':

I like to hear the success of my sister in Ireland and her wonderful family and I am so happy she has had twins recently. It has been a year since I last heard any news from her. She loves children, just like me. I am younger than her and when we were young she was my favorite sibling. She is right, life is simple in the village. The island I live on now is one where my late husband used to live before we got married. He was killed by a crocodile while rescuing my son who had got into difficulty on the river. Since then life has been very difficult. For me, life is about learning how to cope and to move on and deal with that suffering differently. When such sudden event occurs then the true reality or truth about yourself and the world stares you in the face with greater clarity than before. At that point nothing is more real in the world and that can make you feel more miserably.

In my small village everyone I lived with socially rehabilitated me into their community by involving me in many other ways that allowed me reincarnate the joys and sorrows playing out before me. I became busy and that allowed me to create and believe in new fictional stories that endures to assist me in getting out of suffering. I guess it is a distraction from reality. My new husband is my late husband's brother and he is good to me.

I am fortunate to have had six children between them both and some of them are adults now and two are married. Soon, I will be a grandmother. I originally got married when I was sixteen years old. In a few years time my adult children will feel like siblings to me.

On my island sand storms in the Sahara desert blow across the estuary and this causes a lot of heavy dust and a lot of cleaning to be done afterwards. Fortunately, this dust has allowed us as villagers to have enough good soil to cultivate vegetables and to have a varied diet. All my original family live elsewhere and I have not seen them for a few years. I miss my sister in Ireland and her life is truly extraordinary. I would love to visit her but I know that is not possible. My village chores are spent attending to the goats and milking them daily and some food preparations. I use to carry my children wrapped around me when they were young and thankfully those days are over. My skin is drier than before due to the scorching heat. I hope my sister will be happy to read what I have now said and that we meet again soon. I would like to dream that maybe one of my youngest children would some day travel to live in Ireland and with my sister. I know that would make me so happy. I don't want to cry saying goodbye and I hope to hear from her again soon.

I am , who I am, where I am, is a statement of fact for all black Africans on The Isles, This report reclaims their lost identity and culture and provides an ancient open air art gallery of landscapes complete with their village mindset as it use to be, their village culture, sports, and social structures, that have remained unchanged since their first arrivals, and forms the earliest evidence of life of humankind on The Isles, that is now their Annals of Who They Are.