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Mastering a Continent

A documentary by Basil Davidson is one of the various series that directs a keen and critical look into the different African communities. It is more like a second installment of the basil Davidson's series, that is known as, "Africa Series", taking into account that it is a negation of misunderstood facts and figures associated with African heritage adhering to the core basics of the misconception of Europe. Having a look at the modern cities of Africa, it is evident to trace the stance of European misconception that can be viewed in terms of products such as high-rises, cars and western dress. After an in-depth analysis, it can be inferred that Europeans are misguided about African ideology because Africa has its own rich history of progression. It is significant to note that Science has inferred, African civilization began in Africa, it is not derived. However, early Africans have to face a number of difficulties in terms of mastering their continent. There are a number of great achievements in the history of mankind that adheres to African climate and analysis of ecology of ferocious extremes. There were a number of lethal diseases, man-eating beasts and the work related to farming, posing as a serious challenge for civilization. it is significant to note that these so called primitive people were having many superior skills in nature, taking into account their art of hunting and bridge building. It is lamented that the African people tried to adhere to life standards by maintaining the stance of farming, taking into account that initially, Africans bred cattle under tropical conditions. Although cattle were a symbol of Western status and power because cattle were a source of earning money, asserting it was misunderstood. The Pekot tried to integrate livestock in all aspects of living. The sole source of food was the meat and milk from cattle. The waste material or cow dung was used as an insulator in the construction of walls and roofs, provided it was their own thinking. The lifestyle of Pekot was similar to that of a casual life because men owed cattle and they used to give specific cattle to their wives so that they can be fed and protected. Boys were assigned the “external or manual tasks”, while females had to adhere to households. It would not be wrong to say that the social and political life of Pekot was an adequate amalgamation of political and economic systems, where there was no space for changes and improvement.

It is significant to note that Suka of Nigeria is a stance of technological advancement, taking into account that it was heed to mixed farming in tropical agriculture by the use of iron. It is one of the significant examples of "European misconception.” Iron tools were used by people in framing of guinea corn. The incorporation of tools changed the approach towards agriculture because farmers were able to produce more and new goods that were healthy in nature. It was also an approach to support craftsmanship where men were excellent at crafting. Women, on the other hand, were able to make new types of pottery that included pots and baskets. In a nutshell, this new society was a complex society that paved the way for a new political structure. It is more added that Kings were made to have more religious power as they could ask the Gods for agriculture and fertility. It was the European misconception that African communities were bound to primitive ways because there was an innovation in terms of traveling and transport, the structure of business was organized by using stone roadways, bring ease in traveling. The society was also called a ‘collection of professionals” because education paved the way for achieving and arraigning knowledge contributing to doctors and healers. It would not be wrong to say that the use of techniques such as iron smiting, and iron smelting was a decisive technological advance. The metallurgical and artistic achievements made the Sukas elucidate about how technology is connected to the spiritual ideas and the worldly aspect as well.

The third stance that the author incorporated to understand misconceptions of Europe was that agricultural society made a massive contribution to agriculture as well, such as irrigation. It would not be inadequate to say that adhering to African’s ideology women were assigned the laborious task in farm. Women used to farm onions and it also facilitated them to store some for themselves as well, taking into account that the rest of products were sent to neighboring villages in order to fulfill their necessity of life as well. The use of irrigation methodology for achievement of food paves the way for questioning method of irrigation. It is significant to note that women carried water to irrigate the land, keep it wet and irrigated. It would be effective to call it a “human aqueduct” because women were the source of taking water. The adherence to technology is accompanied by the analysis of human beliefs because the people of Dagon of Mali had a staunch belief system. The structure of religious framework was much similar to that of Christianity. The belief system reflects that God withdrew Jesus to heaven when he was offended by what he saw. They also believed that fox has the potential to tell future, taking into account that it is much similar to the set of Christian serpents. Adhering to the belief that this world is a trial, and humans are doomed to survive and sustain despair and death, the people of Dogon also celebrated death. Masquerade was the connotation meant for the celebration of death. It was a dance that was a celebration of both necessity and history taking into consideration that is assumed as a joyful promise for the future. Another reflection of this idea highlights the hardships of people would become easier and they will view life as a gift of God.

It would not be wrong to say that the aim of the documentary was to enlighten the stance of Africa in terms of historical impact, taking into account how Europe has misunderstood diversity and school of thought that shaped the history of Africa. It was a shift from old and primitive stance to a better and more diverse life where lifestyle meant mode of sustaining. All actions observed a great shift, taking into account that it was all because of African ideologies. Although there was a primitive touch that was enacted still, it can be observed that Basil has profoundly incorporated the idea of European misconceptions. A close observation of three different communities carves out an existence that eases understanding of African history provided by the inclusion of a holistic approach. It can be inferred that this documentary is a two-way approach that could justify inclusion and exclusion at the same platform. Inclusion refers to the enactment of African ideologies and association to some holistic ideas that were part and parcel of “spirituality”, while exclusion reflects purity of African culture by excluding European misconceptions. It can be asserted that African progression is actually misunderstood by Europe that not only changed external approach of understanding towards Africa but somewhere the internal outlook also got shifted, highlighting Africa was considered as a primitive and dark arena that is accustomed to backward thoughts and falsified hopes.