

## A Visit to the Museum at MORONGO

by Felix Mnthali

everywhere

it is everywhere the same this landscape of the dispossessed  
ancestral glories and the very soul of a people  
tucked in obscure nooks of nondescript museums:  
shards of pottery, unruly strings of dismantled baskets  
bows and arrows; assegais and battering rams;  
gun-powder, machetes, and sling-shots against cynical posses  
and the jungle rules of "gun-boat diplomacy": we even found  
snapshots of a brave cornered by a coalition of looters  
and the tamed and dispirited looted  
all these are now violent memories of discontinuity  
tamed and sublimated and swept under the carpet by time

"They say we came from Asia across the Baring Straits  
but our creation myths tell us that we have always been here  
and that here is where we were made"

I walk out of that museum with a feeling of "deja-vu":  
just which people on this rapacious "man-eat-man" earth  
have not been told the soul of their glory  
belongs to someone else  
and that the monuments of their sweat and the apex of their minds  
were only borrowed clothes left behind by invaders  
and by birds of passage?

We now know that Egypt of the Pharaohs  
and of the great pyramids was the land of black people;  
that the great "palaces of stone" in Zimbabwe  
were not built by Asians or anyone else but Africans;  
that our Africa has never been a dark continent except to looters  
and to loiterers masquerading as saviours;  
that our ancestors never invited anyone  
to wean them from their ways;  
that God never asked our ancestors to turn  
into pale and ridiculous copies of anyone else!

We now know . . . but does it really matter what we now know,  
if we cannot act on what we know?