

# An Essay on God as the Bicameral Mind: Implications for Africological Research

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## Abstract

This article proposes that Molefi Asante's articulation that God is the Bicameral Mind, as written in *Afrocentricity: Theory of Social Change*, is the basis of an Afrocentric philosophical approach that is more universe-centered than location or subject/agent theories, which many Asantean Africologists use to create discourse within our discipline. Given that the major rationale for an Afrocentric philosophy is the Bicameral Mind, we begin this essay by reviewing the relationship between the African Cultural System (ACS) and God as the appositional functioning of the right and left side of the brain. The article commences with a proposal of one Afrocentric philosophical approach, among many, which finds that Asante's premise about God being the Bicameral Mind is a significant point of departure for Africological discourse development that encourages knowledge of self and therefore freedom.

The discipline of Africology must give us a prism through which we can correctly interpret the world around us. It must give us the capacity not simply to ask different questions, but the right questions, and to test the truth of the answers we receive on the basis of realities emanating uniquely from the African experience.

--- William E. Nelson<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

With the first writing of *Afrocentricity: Theory of Social Change* in 1980, Molefi Asante proposes an Afrocentric philosophy through which Afrologists can produce liberating and transforming scholarship within the discipline of Afrology.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the current intellectual ideas generating from most Temple trained Asantean scholars is repetitive at best and stagnant at worst. It is true that the discipline Asante divinely reveals and scribes as Afrology in his 1980 text became further institutionalized in the academe with the creation of the first department of Africology at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee in 1994 under the direction of Winston Van Horne. It is also true that the Department of African American Studies at Temple University became the first to offer a Ph.D. degree with Afrocentricity as the proposed philosophical perspective in 1988. In spite of these defining disciplinary advancements, however, it is clear that there is only a minimal corpus of Africological writings that has set the precedent for liberatory Asantean Africological paradigmatic scholarship besides the writings of Ama Mazama, Danjuma Modupe and of course, Asante.

Temple has produced over 100+ doctoral dissertations since the inception of the Ph.D. program, many which rely on an Asantean Afrocentric philosophical perspective as lens. Most Africologists, it seems, at least from perusal of these dissertations, rely on location theory or subject/agent theory as theoretical Afrocentric points of departure. Using either of these theories requires Africologists to seek understanding about Africana phenomena in the midst of our postmodern moment and then decide if the phenomenon is Afrocentric or otherwise. According to the defining Afrocentric paradigmatic sources, examination of phenomena in this way is imperative on our path towards liberation of our consciousness, our initial stage in our quest for our knowledge of self and quest for freedom in the oppressive West.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, if our Africological mission is to scribe transgenerational African approaches for thinking and research that assists us in developing ways of understanding about and proposing necessary solutions for our freedom while residing in the oppressive West, we are really indeed at an Anpuic crossroads at this moment.<sup>4</sup> For, Asantean Africological students who are currently in scribal training at Temple University are stuck in a quagmire when using either location or subject/agent theories because these theories do not necessarily encourage self knowledge that can truly bring about freedom of consciousness and therefore freedom for the greater homeland and diasporan African communities. What really has differentiated our attempts at discourse development from, say, scholars emerging from University of California at Berkeley's Department of African American Studies and Northwestern's African American Studies Department besides our notion that we need to reclaim our subject/agent position regardless of location? Are not most writings on Africana phenomena in our postmodern world about finding, reclaiming, dispersing, moving, collapsing and/or negating subjective/agent positions because of location in time and space?

My intention for writing this essay is to continue with a much-needed conversation among Asantean Africologists. Concerned with what really defines our work as Africologists, and where we have gone a stray, it is my hope that I will not anger nor disrespect the first generation of Asantean Africologists, but inquire about ways to rectify the seemingly retardation of our discourse among younger Africologists. To do so, it is necessary to address God as the Bicameral Mind, the major rationale for an Afrocentric philosophy as written in *Afrocentricity: Theory of Social Change*. Revisiting God as the Bicameral Mind is important for us because we may need to ask if somewhere in the midst of “being” Afrocentric, we as Africologists misheard or misread something in the process? Though I do not claim to provide the pinnacle interpretation of Asante’s ideas, this essay is just another attempt to clarify key foundational concepts that we as Africologists have rarely engaged.

Our thesis, then, is that by examining God as the Bicameral Mind, we find that Africologists may be compromising their full Afrocentric potential by just relying on location and subject/agent theories, and that close examination of the function of the Bicameral Mind may hint towards a more cosmically organic and meaningful relationship between ourselves as Africologists and the discourse we produce. If we return to Asante’s seminal text to review this foundational thinking behind his Afrocentric philosophy, maybe our new generation of Africologists can be the next scribal vanguard to produce discourse that moves us closer towards understanding what comprises knowledge of self and freedom, instead of repeating the same old explicative about what/who is or what/who “ain’t” Afrocentric in this postmodern moment. We begin by reviewing Asante’s earliest arguments leading up to his discussion of God and the Bicameral Mind.

## **Revisiting God as the Bicameral Mind**

Defining the African Cultural System (ACS) is the first premise in Asante’s argument about God as the Bicameral Mind. The matrix characterizes the esoteric relationship between homeland and diasporan Africans and comprises the essence of what we can call the African “self”. For, according to Asante, both homeland and diasporan Africans, “respond to the same rhythms of the universe, the same cosmological sensibilities, the same general historical reality....”<sup>5</sup> Interpreting the universe-centered significance of this matrix as it relates to homeland and diasporan Africans, requires that we review Asante’s passage about the importance of our relationship with Yoruba cosmological entities. He writes that, “[I]ndeed, Shango, Ogun, Oshun and Obatala have meaning for us even if it is only at the essential level of symbol.”<sup>6</sup> Referring to the Ifa Orisha, the Yoruba identification for the forces comprising the Yoruba existence and informing Yoruba human thought and behavior, Asante defines the ACS and the African self. The Orisha are “symbols” in the sense that each Orisha is a personification of what Asante refers to as the, “same rhythms of the universe, the same cosmological sensibilities, the same general historical reality....”<sup>7</sup>

Shango, Ogun, Oshun and Obatala and other Orisha are personifications of the rhythms or ways of moving through and manifesting as nature and human experiences. As the Ifa Orisha of love and fertility, for example, Oshun, for the Yoruba, is a personified symbol of the African universal creative force within the universe and humans. That is, not only is the process of bringing life into the world the force of Oshun, but all human creativity that expands the universe is the force of Oshun. Likewise, the totality of the Orisha personifies the cosmology, the Yoruba origin and structure of the universe. Therefore, if the cosmological universe comprises the ACS, and the ACS informs homeland and diasporan thought and behaviors, then what really informs our thoughts and behaviors is what comprises the cosmological universe. In this example, for Asante, it is the Ifa Orisha. We can conclude then that homeland and diasporan Africans create and experience reality based upon the cosmological entities, and all “decedents” of Africa are in fact African, regardless of geographical location, because of their relationship to these cosmological entities, even if we are unaware of this cosmological relationship.

Cosmologically comprised ACS creates organic independent realities for African Americans. Though African Americans, for, Asante, are African, we are also African Americans who have a historical experience that is necessarily independent from other homeland and diasporan Africans.<sup>8</sup> Not at all negating the African Cultural System, Asante writes that the ACS is, “modified according to the specific histories and nations. In this way, we know that Yoruba, Asante, Wolof, Ewe, Nuba, and African–Americans possess values and beliefs derived from their own particular histories yet conforming to the African Cultural System. All cultural systems are responsive to the environment.”<sup>9</sup> What defines African Americans as such, is therefore the ways in which the forces comprising the universe, in our example above, the Orisha, for example, generate situations, thoughts, behavior and values, that warrant our having to respond to an oppressive American environment.<sup>10</sup>

Having to respond to the American environment does have debilitating effects on African Americans. In America, the African self or the ACS has to respond to an oppressive American environment.<sup>11</sup> Defined by, “the social and legal sanctions for four hundred years in America,”<sup>12</sup> to be African American is the product of the forces of the universe, that is, the African self, continuously negotiating these oppositional oppressive experiences. This is “our predicament”.<sup>13</sup> As a result of negotiating oppression since 1619, African Americans, therefore, have the tendency to think and behave seemingly in contradistinction to the African self or the ACS. Though the later informs our thoughts, behaviors and values often unbenounced to us, our values and beliefs can often reflect the “individualistic, antihumanistic, and autocratic posture,” of the European self that is “juxtaposed” with the African self.<sup>14</sup>

Religion has been one of the main oppressive cultural experiential institutions to which the ACS has had to respond while in the American environment. For Asante, “all religions rise out of the deification of someone’s nationalism.”<sup>15</sup> To explore Asante’s premise, we must first clarify the meaning of religion and nationalism. Referring to the etymology of religion, *religare*, the Latin verb, means “to bind.”<sup>16</sup> Religion, then, is a medium through which human beings reconnect with the source of themselves. Nationalism for Asante is sustaining and advancing a particular culture’s historical and contemporary, “behaviors, cultural habits, clothing, and lifestyle.”<sup>17</sup> Alongside the later, nationalism concerns the “values and beliefs derived from their own particular histories yet conforming to the African Cultural System.”<sup>18</sup> Asante’s point that religion, therefore, “[arises] out [of] the deification of someone’s nationalism,” suggests that religion is in fact a belief and practice through which humans can sustain and advance thoughts and behaviors deriving from the Cultural System’s historical and contemporary negotiation of environment.<sup>19</sup> In general, religion, then, is *any* organized system of thought, from Buddhism to Marxism that expresses and sustains historical and contemporary cultural essentials.<sup>20</sup> European and/or American imposition of their interpretation of Christian religion on African American thought and behavior is not Asante’s main concern within his conversation. African American adoption of Islam and other non-African religions, theories and philosophies to challenge Christian and American ideals, however, for Asante is imperative. For, these impositions have greatly impaired African Americans’ ability to sustain and advance thought and behavior “derived from our own historical [and contemporary] experiences while maintaining fidelity in its best form to the African Cultural System.”<sup>21</sup> African American participation in any religion that is not expressive of the ACS denounces the African self, while sustaining and advancing “non-African customs and behaviors, some of which are in direct conflict with our traditional values.”<sup>22</sup>

Participation in Islam has been the most salient example of this process. Asante finds value in the Nation of Islam’s transformative potential. As members of the Nation, African Americans have developed collective spiritual, economic, and educational infrastructure, values, and behaviors that directly challenge Christian values and behaviors. Asante, however, concludes that our participation in the Nation of Islam or Orthodox Islam encourages us to not only practice “non-African customs and behaviors” and appropriate a non-African Cultural System, but listen to a God that exists outside of ourselves.<sup>23</sup> As this point is his major rationale for an Afrocentric philosophical perspective in the discipline of Afrology/Africology, we shall read it at length. Asante writes:

Consider the factors which have contributed to the over-powering submissiveness of African and other non-Arabs to the culture and religion of the Arabs. First, the language of God is said to be Arabic. Secondly, the pilgrimage must be made to Mecca. Thirdly, to pray effectively, one must turn his or her head toward Mecca... Now let us consider why this is anathema to Afrocentrism and like Christianity makes us submit to a strange God. Did God or the Bicameral Mind speak to Muhammad in Arabic?

Since Muhammad was an Arab, I would expect his God to have spoken to him in his own language as my God speaks to me in Ebonics and Kiswahili. There is nothing more sacred about one language than another; one language may have special significance to one people more than to others. Understand how Islam made Arabic the language of millions of non-Arabs, thus spreading the culture in a most powerful manner.... This meant that those non-Arabs who wanted to become Islamic had to go many steps further than the native born Arabs who already know the language of God. Look at the trip being run on his head! Unaware that God or the Bicameral Mind could speak to him, and probably did, in his own language; the brother ran off to learn a foreign tongue.<sup>24</sup>

Two major problems arise in Asante's estimation. On the one hand, African American and other non-Arab participation in Islam is problematic because all non-Arabs who practice Islam are exchanging their culture for Arab culture in very obvious ways. Verbal language is one form of a culture's epistemology, or way of knowing, writes Asante.<sup>25</sup> As language transmits culture, then, African Americans and other non-Arabs who pray and read the Koran in Arabic are participating in Arabic culture.<sup>26</sup> Through this process, African Americans are prioritizing Arab values and beliefs, as well as the particular Arabic historical experiences that create Arabic values and beliefs, all of which are non-African.

What is most problematic for Asante is the process in which God reveals values and beliefs to Muhammad in Arabic, the language in which Muhammad thinks and speaks. Asante's basic premise is that when Muhammad listens to Allah speak to him in Arabic, Muhammad listens to values and beliefs, which he had generated in his own mind in response to his concern about the social character of his people. Muhammad just listened to God, the Bicameral Mind or his brain that organizes historical cultural specific experiences as examples of guidance to make decisions during times of stress in any environment.<sup>27</sup> This point is substantiated by historical documentation, which suggests that circa 610 CE, Muhammad fasts and meditates in isolation upon becoming frustrated with the consumptive behaviors of Arabs residing in Mecca.<sup>28</sup> Having to respond to the changing Arabian priorities, Muhammad remembers and listens in Arabic, to Arab ideas, values and beliefs that Arabs' historically and transgenerationally used to sustain and advance their culture in the midst of a changing, oppositional, problematic environment or situation.<sup>29</sup> Allah, therefore, is really Muhammad.

Exploration of the original usage of the Bicameral Mind clarifies this point. According to Julian Jaynes, when the earliest African people experienced stress within their environment, the right side of the brain began to consciously organize examples of guidance that had generationally posed as solutions to cultural specific problems; having to make any decision that had not been made before was stress inducing for a person.<sup>30</sup> The left side of the brain ensured that one is conscious of these culturally specific ideas, values and behaviors, through the medium of language.<sup>31</sup>

The Bicameral Mind, in this estimation, is the memory of the ways in which cultural ancestors, generationally, maintained cultural sustaining behaviors and values. Over time, however, the continued process of having to make new decisions eventually eroded our ability to be conscious of not only the working of the Bicameral Mind, but the culturally specific ideas, values, and behaviors.<sup>32</sup>

Given Asante's premise about the tenacity of a Cultural System's influence on the creation of cultural specific values and behavior, creating time, space, and experiences, all that Muhammad listens to are his thoughts that are most expressive of the Arab Cultural System; the totality of Muhammad's values and behaviors had been preserved in Arab culture and history and had come out of the cultural experiences of a people who spoke Arabic. The Bicameral Mind or Allah, in Asante's estimation, is the accumulation of the best of historical Arab ideas, values, and behaviors, the root of which is the Arab Cultural System. Anyone who is non-Arab, then, and adheres to the dictates of Islam, is adhering to a cultural legacy of "God" that is truly outside of her natural mind, the ACS.

This lesson about the process of God, Muhammad and epistemology is instructive for us. It is clear for Asante that our continued engagement with the American environment has forced many of us to often think and behave in accordance with non-African values and beliefs. Whether we think and behave in accordance with Christianity, Islam, Marxism or Modernism, our allegiance is not to our "composite African Cultural System" because, again, each of these "religions" is the deification of a non-African cultural historical experience, the accumulation of the specific cultural traditions, as it responds to an environment, from which the writer of the religion emerges. Turning inwards, each writer, artists, theorists, teacher, etc., engages with God, or her mind and listens, thinks, writes and articulates her ideas that are the most expressive of the accumulation of her cultural experiences in order for her to make decisions in response to a situation that threatens cultural survival. In the case of African Americans' engagement with America, most religions, clearly upholding a specific cultural tradition, become the standard by which African Americans should think and behave in their oppressive American environment.<sup>33</sup> Yet a purposeful experience, it is our having to experience, that is, think and behave in accordance with other expressions of God(s) in an oppositional environment, which has best prepared African Americans to begin to come to terms with the deepest part of ourselves, the African Cultural System.

According to Asante's premise, it would seem that as African Americans, we must listen to our minds, the appositional functioning of the brain, which generates cultural specific experiences for us in our own language, in the midst of an oppressive environment. About this process Asante writes,

If your God cannot speak to you in your language, then he is not your God. Your God is the God who speaks to you in your language. What is your language? It is the language with which you first got your consciousness.... If you want to hear your God in the language of your ancestors, then learn an African language...<sup>34</sup>

Clarifying the meaning of Asante's idea above requires that we flesh out one major question. What God is speaking to us in Ebonics, Kiswahili or any other language that has emerged out of the African Cultural System? According to Asante's premise concerning the ACS, it is the, "rhythms of the universe, the... cosmological sensibilities, and the... general historical realities," that informs our thoughts and behaviors through time and space, even when we are "juxtaposed" with the American environment.<sup>35</sup> If we take this premise as possibly true, as the accumulative decedents of many African cultural groupings, we need to listen to what our God or Bicameral Mind informs us about historical cultural specific experiences for examples of guidance in our American "predicament".<sup>36</sup> Each one of us can listen in Ebonics, or through any other African language, to our African ideas, values and beliefs that adhere to the ACS. Upon listening to God or our Bicameral Mind, we can overcome our predicament by thinking and behaving in accordance with the best of our African Cultural System. Through the use of our individual minds, we can begin the process of coming into consciousness of our African selves.<sup>37</sup> To be conscious in this way, is "an internalization of African values," whereby all of our thoughts, behaviors and values reflect this transgenerational way of being an African in the world.<sup>38</sup> Such is the foundation of an Asantean Afrocentric philosophy as scribed in 1980.

### **Africology, the Recreative Intellectual and the Problem of God: The Concept of God within Us**

Afrology/Africology is then the discipline through which we can come to know ourselves as expressions of the African Cultural System. In his section, "Afrology Black Studies", Asante defines the process of creating academic discourse within the academe. He writes:

[t]he outlines of an Afrocentric base for scholarship are rooted in the social, political and economic values of our people. Not until we are able to look within our own value systems for intellectual and spiritual guidance will we be capable of redressing our own world view and thereby modify our behavior. Afrology, as a field of study, promises to be the instrument we need and by definition it possesses an Afrocentric base.<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, Afrocentric scholarship is concerned with looking “within our own value systems for intellectual and spiritual guidance” for ways of modifying behaviors expressive of our American environment.<sup>40</sup> But what is the process for looking within our own value system? Is it not listening to God the Bicameral Mind as well?

On the one hand, those interested in creating Afrocentric discourse are those who are about the business of studying “every thought, action, behavior, and value and if it cannot be found in our culture or in our history, it is dispensed with quickly.”<sup>41</sup> Here is where Afrocentric scholars have come to prioritize location theory and subject/agent theory as the two major approaches to Afrocentric discourse development.<sup>42</sup> Afrocentrists who rely on location theory examine whether the author writing about the Africana experience does so in accordance with the social, political and economic manifestations of the African Cultural System within any environment. The objective of this process is to provide critique as pedagogy and corrective.<sup>43</sup> Those who write through the lens of subject/agent theory either analyze or (re)write the specificities of any historical and contemporary Africana phenomena in search of the ideas, values and beliefs that Africana peoples have historically and transgenerationally used to sustain and advance in the midst of encountering an oppositional environment.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, Africologists relying on either location theory or subject/agent theory do disseminate discourse in academic journals and lectures or through community programming. Encouraging the Africological community of scholars and the greater interested African American community at large to learn about the African self and the ACS, Africologists are the foremost keepers of the transgenerational values and beliefs, that are gleaned through their location and subject/agent theory examinations.<sup>45</sup> Therefore those who read Afrocentrists’ discourse partake in an important process in overcoming their oppressive environment and raising their consciousness because they are moving closer to understanding the social, political and economic values of our people that are most inline with the ACS. While both Africological disciplinary processes of discourse making have advantages, I query if, however, Africologists using location and subject/agent theory are listening to God in the way Asante intimates?

God the Bicameral Mind problematises, according to our above review, the way most Africologists currently perform Afrocentric scholarship in our discipline. Africologists who rely on either location theory or subject/agent theory use language, as epistemology to come to terms with what is the best of the African Cultural System as it responds to the environment. This process is definitely inline with the Asantean idea that “language is epistemic.”<sup>46</sup> Through the cyclical process of reading, observing, listening, thinking, and then writing in our language about the best ideas, values and beliefs exemplifying significant ways of responding to our environment, Africologists are creating discourse through the use of our African American language. Yet, accessing and generating knowledge through our use of language in relationship to both location and subject/agent theories is only the “re-creative” intellectual process.<sup>47</sup>

“Re-creative” Africologists reproduce and reuse the values and beliefs of the creative intellectual, the “most valuable type of creativity...that which communicates with the whole earth by remaining open to associations, ideas, spaces, and possibilities,” scribes within the pages of *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change*.<sup>48</sup> Because of this hierarchy of listening and knowing, many so-called re-creative Africologists may be unaware that we *too* can listen to “the whole earth.”<sup>49</sup> For the whole earth, if we stay true to our interpretation of Asante’s work, is nothing more than the ACS. Though Africologists *do* listen to God when they use African American language to read, examine and write the historical experiences of homeland and diasporan Africans through the application of location and subject/agent theory, we do not listen to God in the same way that Muhammad listened to the most ancient of the Arab Cultural System, his Arab Self. For, Muhammad was the creative intellectual, the last prophet who heard God in his language. Most Africologists do not listen to God in this way, especially in regards to generating discourse; we as Africologists consistently remain mired in the application of subject and location theory, both of which the “creative” intellectual created. But Africologists who read and thoroughly process our Koran, that is, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change*, can also listen to God in the same way Muhammad has. We are *all* creative intellectuals who are capable of hearing God, our African Selves.

Using the Bicameral Mind is one way Africologists can begin to know ourselves as an expression of the ACS. We all have creative intellectual potential because we are the expressions of creation, the ACS. Given our discussion above concerning God as the Bicameral Mind, that which generates and communicates the best of cultural ideas, values, and beliefs, Africologists, can directly come to knowledge about the ways of thinking, behaving and therefore creating discourse that is inline with the ACS. As we have already explained the relationship between ACS and the universe, our charge is now an imperative for our work. Outlined in the example of the Orisha, if the ACS is the foundation of our being African American, we are nothing but an expression of what any Orisha symbolizes. That is, African American thought and behavior, creating time and space and informing ideas, values and beliefs are the expression of the forces or energies comprising the universe. God or the Bicameral Mind, then, is the gateway through which each African American can begin to know ourselves as the African universe by listening to the forces that inform our every thoughts, behaviors, values and beliefs; and we can hear them in our African American language because the ancestors have made them available to us in oral and written texts. Like Muhammad we can also know them by communicating with the God within ourselves. Correct thought, behavior, values and beliefs that we develop in accordance with the best of the ACS is inevitable for each person who uses their own God or their Bicameral Mind to know herself. I think this may be a timely “creative,” not “re-creative” intellectual endeavor.

## Concluding that We Find God: Implications for Africological Discourse Development

We can de-limit Asante’s conclusion that most of us are re-creative intellectuals. Our charge within this conclusion is to challenge Africologists to transcend the confines of location and subject/agent theories. If the Bicameral Mind is the gateway to the universe which influences African American human thoughts, behaviors, values and beliefs, we can begin to really have a “deep commitment to Africa” when we listen to the God that is speaking to us in our own language in our mind. In other words, what force comprising the universe influences our thoughts, behaviors, values and beliefs, as we negotiate our individual engagement with the American environment? We can find the best of the guidelines for responding to an environment in the living symbols reflecting “the... rhythms of the universe, the... cosmological sensibilities, and the...historical realities”, that is the African self.<sup>50</sup> Some explanations within traditional conceptualizations of the African Cultural Systems are as follows:

African Cultural System (ACS)		
Cosmology	African Self	Some Symbolic Expressions
Kemetic	Ntru/Ba	Asar, Aset, Het Heru, Tehuti, Ptah, Sekhmet, Amen, Aunpu
Ifa	Orisha	Obatala, Yemoya, Oshun, Ogun, Shango, Legba, Ochoosi
Fon	Vodou	Gu, Age, Sakpta, Da, Loko

Our traditional African educational sources therefore provide our model for how the Africologists can listen to God and know themselves. As extensive explanation about the curricula and pedagogy abounds in the writings of ancestors George M. James and Nana Baffour Amankwatia II (Asa Hilliard III) and our Elders Muata Ashby, Linda James Myers, Naim Akbar and many others, only a brief recap is necessary here to make our point. They suggest that we can find our oldest source example in the education of the Kemetic *ses*, a divinely inspired scribe, whose education is about knowing the self as one of the Ntru or Ba comprising the universe, so that the *ses* could later scribe Mdw Ntr.<sup>51</sup> Scribing the words of the divine, the *ses* is a medium for the divine and/or nature to remind others about the best of Kemetic values, beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors. To know the self as an Ntru or Ba, then, meant that the *ses* listened to the cosmological narratives, meditated on the Ntru or Ba, and participated in guided rituals dedicated to communing/communicating with the Ntru. Through these overlapping processes, the *ses* could identify and become conscious of the force within her.<sup>52</sup>

By listening, meditating, and ritualizing, the *ses*, no longer thought and behaved according to her *Ka* or the thoughts, behaviors, values and beliefs that she developed while in her environment, in this case, the material realm. She had come into knowledge of herself as one who thinks, behaves, values and believes in accordance with the best of her tradition, “oneness with the universal forces and the One God.”<sup>53</sup>

Africologists can experience a similar ongoing cyclical procedure towards becoming a *ses*. Though Asante’s work does suggest that the universe is source matrix, the Africologist in America does not have to know herself intimately as an expression of the universe prior to engaging in either location or subject/agent theory. Therefore, we can begin to know ourselves as such, by studying our personality traits, exploring our desires, dislikes, passions, and concerns. Here we can agree with Asante when he writes that, “we must study every thought value and behavior.”<sup>54</sup> Secondly, we read voraciously about the structure and origin of the universe written in cosmological narratives to learn the characteristics of the symbolic expressions, or the rhythms and movements comprising the universe. In this way, we can understand ourselves at the deepest core of ourselves, at least one force comprising the universe. Studying our thoughts, behaviors, values and behaviors in tandem with studying the forces comprising the universe will reveal two ways the universe impacts our thoughts, behaviors, values and beliefs. On the one hand, we are nothing more than the symbolic expressions. On the other, because we constantly have to negotiate the American oppressive material environment, many of our pronounced thoughts, behaviors, values and beliefs are the appositional aspects of the symbolic expressions, some of which we may wish to transcend. And finally, we as Africologists may wish to participate in the ritual practices of the respective cosmology as a method of communing with our Ba, Vodou, or Orisha for example, becoming more familiar with our nature. For some, it may be meditation, for others it may be divination. Still for others it may be calling on the universe to create a peaceful reality through our Ashe’. Nevertheless, each experience may be important because how can we scribe the best of our tradition if we have not begun the process of knowing the best of ourselves and hearing God for ourselves?

Winston Van Horne is correct when he predicts that, “great social and cultural responsibility thus fall on those who impress design and form upon the subject matter of africology through the intellectual contents [and discourse] of the discipline.”<sup>55</sup> One of our major charges as Africologists is to first listen to God, the Bicameral Mind and come to know ourselves as the universe as a method for producing socially and culturally responsible discourse in our discipline. Equipped with the best of our African Cultural System because we know ourselves as the universe, we are better able to analyze the patterned forces that create African American historical, social and political experiences occurring through time, space, thoughts, behaviors, ideas, values and beliefs. Most importantly, we can best know how to respond to an oppressive American environment because we are consciously working on transcending our oppressive values and ideas like the Kemetic *ses*; we are thinking and behaving with our Bicameral Mind.

As Africologists, we can now know the purpose of having to respond to the American environment because every cosmological narrative explains this “predicament” that Asante refers; it is an experience that is ever recurring. A culturally and socially responsible “creative” intellectual Africological approach, then, could possibly engage the following as the scribal process. Africologists can assume that:

- Cosmological forces in the form of symbolic expressions inform *every* thought and behavior, even those that emerge in response to an oppressive environment. Therefore any interactions among Africana people and between Africana people and other human beings, animals and nature, are the interactions between the cosmological forces comprising the universe. In what ways can we explain *any* of our phenomena, whether historical or contemporary, using cosmology and the symbolic expressions?
- Oppression is also the expression of cosmological forces. In what ways can cosmology help us to explain the reason for oppressions and create solutions to oppressions? In other words, can cosmology point to ways of encouraging harmony and balance in our personal lives and in the world?
- Cosmological forces in the form of symbolic expression manifest as human operated concepts, theories, social constructions and personal and social experiences. How can we use cosmology to explain the purpose of concepts such as race, community, social groups, friends, culture, gender, sexuality, and class, for example?<sup>56</sup> What are alternative designations that better explain their cosmological significance in our contemporary context and that transform thoughts, behaviors, values and beliefs that American concepts and terms enliven?

This is just one sample preliminary approach among the many that we can create as Africologists if we rely on our own God as the Bicameral Mind, not unlike our Kemetic *sešh* ancestors.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> William Nelson, "Africology: Building and Academic Discipline" In *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 68.

<sup>2</sup> In Asante's 1998 *Afrocentric Idea*, he acknowledges that he coined the term Afrology, but he also acknowledges that Winston Van Horne's use of the term Africology is an appropriate name for the discipline of what others refer to as African American Studies or Black Studies.

<sup>3</sup> Molefi Kete Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1990), 7.

<sup>4</sup> Here I am referring to the ancient Kemetic Neteru Anpu, the force in/as existence that prepares humans to experience the projection of thoughts and behaviors that has led us into a moment of (re)examination, struggle and confusion. The result, however, is our (re)emergence with clarity, incite and (nu) awareness about the expansiveness of our human potential as divine.

<sup>5</sup> Molefi Kete Asante, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* (Buffalo: Amulefi, 1980), 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>16</sup> religion. Dictionary.com. Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1). Random House, Inc. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/religion> (accessed: January 09, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>27</sup> Julian Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (Boston: Houghton, 1977), 101-112.

<sup>28</sup> Subhash C. Inamdar, *Muhammad and the Rise of Islam: The Creation of Group Identity* (Madison: Psychosocial, 2001), 108.

<sup>29</sup> Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness*, 101-112.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Asante., 7.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 9

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- <sup>42</sup> Danjuma Modupe, "The Afrocentric Philosophical Perspective" In *The Afrocentric Paradigm*, ed. Ama Mazama. (Trenton: African World Press, 2003), 65-66 has suggested other theoretical constructs through which Africologists can examine phenomena.....
- <sup>43</sup> Molefi Kete Asante, "Locating a Text: Implications of Afrocentric Theory" In *Language and Literature in the African American Imagination*, ed. Carol Aisha Blackshire-Belay. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1992), 13.
- <sup>44</sup> Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity*, 5.
- <sup>45</sup> Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 31.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 50
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>51</sup> Maulana Karenga, "Towards A Sociology of Maatian Ethics: Literature and Context," In *Reconstructing Kemetiic Culture*, ed. Maulana Karenga, (Los Angeles: Sankore, 1990), 71.
- <sup>52</sup> Muata Ashby, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Coming Forth by Day* (Miami: Cruzian, 2000), 47.
- <sup>53</sup> Daudi Azibo, "African-centered Thesis on Mental Health and Nosology of Black/African Personality Disorder," *Journal of Black Psychology* 15 no. 2 (1989): 179-180.
- <sup>54</sup> Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 9.
- <sup>55</sup> Winston Van Horne, "Africology: A Discipline of the Twenty-First Century." In *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 415.
- <sup>56</sup> Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 9.