

*Afrocentric Teacher-Research: Rethinking Appropriateness and Inclusion* (Peter Lang Publishing: New York, 2013. 163 pp., ISBN: 798-1-4331-1754-1) by Staci Perryman-Clark, reviewed by Emeka Smart Oruh (emekso@hotmail.com) of Plymouth University, United Kingdom.

Staci Perryman-Clark is an assistant professor of English-Rhetoric, a writing teacher, a writing programme administrator and director of First-Year writing at Western Michigan University. Perryman-Clark is also the editor of *Reading and Writing in the Age of Cultural diversity* (2011). Perryman-Clark's writing and academic endeavors have been recently published in *Composition Forum*, *Composition Studies*, *WPA: Writing Programme Administration* (WPA) and a host other academic and writing outlets. With a PhD in English Rhetoric, Perryman-Clark is poised to bring novelty and critical insights into the business of rhetoric and composition, as well as black cum Afro-centric worldview (p.8). This is essentially what she has done in the book under review here titled *Afrocentric Teacher-Research: Rethinking Appropriateness and Inclusion*.

*Afrocentric Teacher-Research* opens a vista of Afrocentricity including an attempt to rupture the very dynamic of pushing Afrocentric Ebonics-based curricula to the margin. It equally dramatizes a scholarly and intellectual efforts imbued with Afrocentric worldview for the furtherance as well as expansion of African-American writing curriculum. The types of curricula espoused by Perryman-Clark bring to bear the concept of rethinking the appropriateness and inclusion in relation to cultural differences. This approach to rethinking curriculum design and intellectual configuration in the light of multicultural thought process is a brave response to a call for the rights of minority groups (students) – African-American – to be included in the calculus of bridging wide racial lines. Put simply and tersely, the book echoes a reformulation of racial disparities to gravitate towards inclusion. This is central to such envisioned students, who are being shaped by the dialectics of this book, to utilise their own cultural artifacts and language rather than to be detached from them as a consequences of monolithic, Western ideology. This move is also at the heart of a language policy of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, whereby writing instructors are encouraged to implement pedagogies that touch various linguistic and cultural diversity of our time.

Perryman-Clark's clarion call embraces multicultural dialectics and a form of "Rainbow Coalition," which is considered pertinent at the moment given the pressures to legitimise mono-axial discourses. As she adumbrates, blackness, racial differences and gender disparity should be the colour of the envisioned school curricula; they should rather be integrated into the mainstream educational and pedagogical approaches. To this end, the author contends that

[...] there is no reason why all students can't benefit from Afrocentric pedagogical approaches that promotes exposure to African American communicative practices (p.21)... I argue that exploring African-American cultural practices enhances the literacy development of not only African-American students but all students (p.22).

It can be gleaned from the excerpt above that the book is essentially moored to rescuing the Africanist ideal by also being aware of the need to embrace diversity and inclusion, hence, the book's subtitle: "Rethinking Appropriateness and Inclusion".

This book is presented in six chapters; the sub-headings speak volumes of each chapter's message. All of the chapters coalesce to give an imprimatur of inclusion and appropriateness (fairness) in curriculum development that will endorse inclusion and multicultural colouration. The first chapter, titled "Theoretical foundation for Afrocentricity and Ebonics," is a theoretical depiction of (past) understanding of Afrocentric pedagogy through the lenses of corporate discipline such as education, sociolinguistic, and rhetoric and compositions. This chapter highlights Perryman-Clark's theory of Afrocentric pedagogy in which the link between Afrocentric pedagogy and the African or African-American worldview is brought to bear. The second chapter, labeled "African American Worldviews: Practical Applications in the First-Year Writing Classroom," is a shift from the conception of Afrocentricity and Ebonics (introduced in the first chapter) to its application *vis-a-vis* pedagogy. This chapter also offers methods through which all students can critically relate to linguistic diversity as well as Ebonics. Chapter three, titled "Afrocentric Pedagogy: Implications for Using Teachers-Research to Transform Classroom and Disciplinary Practices," brings to mind the author's review of mainstream classroom teaching models of African-American students, which precipitate the writing of the book under review. In chapter four, titled "African American Students and *they* Writing: A Rhetoric of Appropriateness," the author presents rhetorical analysis of expository and writing assignment as it relates to African-American worldview. Also, in chapter five, "Afrocentricity for All Students: Toward a Pedagogy of Inclusion", Perryman-Clark focuses deeply on positions taken by students with regards to the practical goals towards implementing the Ebonics agenda. Chapter six "Rethinking Inclusion and Appropriateness in Writing programmatic and Institutional Degree: A View from Oakland" is the last chapter in which the author highlights the implications of rhetoric and composition that need to be pursued to strengthen the campaign for "Students' Right to Their Own language" (SRTOL).

All in all, Perryman-Clark concludes that it is vital that the programmatic and institutional policies be reinvented, including linguistic diversity policies, to help make the contention for campaign for students' right wear the toga of reality (p. 119). Perryman-Clark uses this platform to relate her stance on the Oakland California School District that failed to encourage stakeholders and the community as a whole on the benefits and value of "Ebonics" pedagogy. Therefore, in one aspect, the book is about the connection between cultural epistemologies and knowledge, as well as communicative practices and disciplinary implications of Ebonics and Afrocentricity. The Ebonics philosophy is alert on the complexity and difficulties that might bedevil the march to make this envisioned pedagogical cum linguistic movement a reality; nevertheless it broadly recognizes how it can overhaul and improve stakeholders' (students, composition teachers and WPA) understanding of rhetoric, writing and literacy across academic disciplines.

Perryman-Clark's bold step is a response to Zuidema's (2005) "Myth Education: Rational and Strategies for Teaching against Linguistic Prejudice", whereby teachers and students are urged to reject negative attitude towards Ebonics by re-evaluating what frames legitimacy and stigmatisation of language rights and linguistic study (p. 119). She harps on the need for students to follow history, issues and challenges facing democratic approaches to education as well as research and teaching, hence, Perry-Clark's clarion call is for the materialisation of an Ebonics curriculum (Afrocentricity), which finds detonation in linguistic diversity, bidialectalism, code-switching, ESL, multilingualism, linguistic pluralism, language attitudes, language rights, exploration of languages, culture and society, among others.

There is no refuting the fact that *Afrocentric Teacher-Research: Rethinking Appropriateness and Inclusion* is a bold and audacious move to endorse the very contours of the African-American worldview. However, it is speckled with a rather idealized view of change. Specifically, change in terms of curricular reformulation, abridging cultural differences and mainstreaming African-American/minority rights in education or writing pedagogy. Also, like the ostrich, Perry-Clark seems to bury her head in the sand of intellectual, cultural, linguistic and pedagogical trammels to achieving the message she intends to pass across in the book. In order to circumvent these trammels, the author should have anchored her thought-process and philosophy in a more pragmatic and plausible approaches that will make her espousal more realistic, especially as mainstreaming new-fangled philosophy is usually in the shadow of traditional ones.