

THE ANCIENT KEMETIC WORLDVIEW
AND SELF-LIBERATION:
MDW NTR AND SEEING WITH SIA

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ABSTRACT

As the direct descendants of the first human beings, African people are the supreme witnesses of Creation itself, and senior authorities regarding the earthly Creations. African people bear supreme witness to humanity, and the most effective methods of being human: the biology and chemistry of life, the physiological and metaphysical aspects of earthly existence, and the science of the cosmic Creations—observing all that is above and what exists there, beyond the sky. By definition humanity *is* African: the first human beings were African and the first defining innovations of humanity were birthed in Africa. Since history is necessarily a study of the origins of humanity, and the first humans were African, history then must initiate at the emergence of humankind, which took place in Africa.

The records left and maintained by the oldest humans on earth—written, memorized, or otherwise—provide amazing clues as to the initial Creation and subsequent development of humankind. As each successive generation works to strengthen the collective memory of their own people’s past before conquer, the struggle to remember memories and to keep traditions intact becomes even more evident. As with every epic turn of events, the conquered are forced to decide if they will remain as such or not.

This paper explores the ways in which the African worldview provides a critical and otherwise impossible analysis of human history, by exploring the oldest contributions of the first human beings—who were African. I argue that the ancient Kemetic worldview—*Mdw Ntr*—provides a prototypical blueprint for every African’s self-liberation, creating a context through which contemporary freedom struggles can ultimately be assessed and achieved. In particular, this paper examines how the ancient Kemetic worldview has, since its inception, presented a working method of thinking and doing—seeing with *Sia*—which not only inspired successive African generations, but also the freedom struggles of contemporary African communities. *Mdw Ntr* is both a theory and a methodology: it encompasses a way of seeing reality, while also providing exact methods for how to go about this process. I propose that the notion of *Sia*—or “exceptional clarity”—is an actionable blueprint exemplified in the *Shabaka Text* and *The Great Hymn to Aten*. Both texts provide a methodology for achieving *Sia*; both texts speak to the fundamental processes of *Mdw Ntr*; and both texts exhibit a working model for self-liberation through the ancient Kemetic worldview. In order for human beings to manifest power—to be empowered—they must ultimately think with “exceptional clarity” and speak their intentions into existence. To be effective, one cannot

speaking without thinking, or do without first thinking and speaking. According to the ancient Kemites, thinking is the first step in speaking and also doing. Thinking initiates all actions: the more exceptional the clarity, the better. Hence, self-liberation emerges and subsequently, the collective liberation of African people.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Life is at once past, present, and future. All human beings are essentially a cumulative representation of past generations, while also existing in the present, and inspiring the future. Investigating existence is perhaps one of the most important endeavors of humankind, and subsequent discoveries—which encompass a wide range of subject matters—add on to the growing body of accumulated knowledge. A central aspect of the African worldview is interpreting, defining and navigating existence. Since time immemorial, African people have demonstrated a need to *know* and investigate. Obenga (2004) explains this phenomenon as follows:

Who am I? On the surface this query seems elementary and, indeed, not worth asking, but once this question has been asked and an answer attempted in the context of African culture, the explanation becomes increasingly complex, multifaceted, and philosophical. Explaining how African people know and the language that is used to convey this explanation is in many respects more significant than describing what we know, for when we “let the ancestors speak” for themselves we implicitly convey an awareness of African culture at a deeper level. By highlighting the idea of explanation as an important and somewhat neglected issue in the context of African historiography, we attempt to enter and reconstruct the living past of African history on its own terms (p. 31).

Obenga (2004) notes that *Who am I?* is one of, if not the most important questions that African people can ever ask themselves. According to Obenga, it is essential that African people ask the simplest questions, which are at once extraordinarily complex and which also require Africans to “let the Ancestors speak.” This paper explores the ways in which the African worldview provides a critical and otherwise impossible analysis of human history, by exploring the oldest contributions of the first human beings—who were African. This paper argues that the ancient Kemetic worldview—*Mdw Ntr*—provides a

prototypical blueprint for every African's self-liberation, creating a context through which contemporary freedom struggles can ultimately be assessed and achieved. In particular, this paper seeks to examine how the ancient Kemetic worldview has, since its inception, presented a working method of thinking and doing—seeing with *Sia*—which not only inspired successive African generations, but also the freedom struggles of contemporary African communities. This actionable blueprint—of self-liberation as an aspect of the ancient Kemetic worldview—is exemplified in the *Shabaka Text* and *The Great Hymn to Aten*; two texts which exhibit a working methodology for African people's collective liberation.

The ancient Kemetic worldview is conveyed through *Mdw Ntr* or Divine Speech—implying both words and actions—and provides a clear blueprint for navigating human existence, which present-future generations can easily follow. If, as Obenga suggests, the ancient African ancestors are allowed to speak for themselves, African people will find the answers they need to ensure their liberation. What then, is liberation? What are African people seeking to liberate themselves *from*, and what do African people envision as *freedom*? Over the last 600 years, Africans have collectively, and throughout the Diaspora, defined freedom in the face of enslavement, colonialism, and oppression.

During and after enslavement, the concept of freedom—an implicit aspect of the African worldview—became something much more explicit, requiring constant explanation in the face of the European worldview. Africans were face-to-face with something other than themselves—in theory and in methodology. History proclaims that over and over again, enslaved and oppressed Africans were faced with the responsibility of *humanizing* Europeans—rearing them, explaining to them, pleading with them, and hoping for a philosophical breakthrough.

Throughout this defining process, Africans elaborated the notion of “freedom,” and subsequently “liberation” or “freedom” from “oppression.” African people began to articulate their desires to be free in very clear terms. Using the language of their oppressors, Africans began to translate their pre-colonial ideologies—and the African worldview—in ways that left no aspect of their confrontation with white supremacy to chance. Du Bois (1920) examines freedom thusly:

I believe in Liberty for all men: the space to stretch their arms and their souls, the right to breathe and the right to vote, the freedom to choose their friends, enjoy the sunshine, and ride on the railroads, uncursed by color; thinking, dreaming, working as they will in a kingdom of beauty and love (p. 2).

Du Bois’ concept of liberty encompasses a wide range of human experiences: from thinking and dreaming, to equal access and opportunity, to a kingdom of beauty and love. Essentially, Du Bois’ notion of liberty evokes an implicit definition of existence: freedom becomes the ability to “be” without the calculated interference of white supremacy. To live “uncursed by color” in a society necessarily defined by the oppression of Africans i.e. “people of color,” is to *exist* without obstruction. Thus, freedom for the African is *being*.

Al Amin (1969) defines African existence, via the experiences of “Black america,” in the face of oppression and white supremacist tyranny:

Black america has always offered Blacks human freedoms—a humanism uncommon to white and negro America...Black america has existed ever since the first slave despised the injustice that was done to him and did not seek to accommodate himself to that injustice. Thus, there have always been people who could articulate these injustices and could discuss what the response to these injustices should be. It is self-evident that people always rebel against oppression and there has been one continuous rebellion in Black america since the first slave got here (p. 11).

Al Amin presents the idea that the collective notion of Blackness, particularly within the American context, is inextricably linked to the notion of justice: thus, fighting *injustice*

becomes the perpetual role of Africans in America. Al Amin implies that the innate qualities of Blackness are humane—and exist outside of what whites and even “negros” (or people of African descent who prefer the European worldview) seem to truly understand. For Al Amin, implicit in the notion of African existence is the knowingness of African humanity and subsequently, the resistance to injustice and rebellion against oppression. Fundamentally, the African must battle the European worldview simply to freely *exist* when coexisting i.e. sharing the same immediate space with Europeans.

Newton explains liberation thusly (2004):

The sacredness of man and of the human spirit requires that human dignity and integrity ought to be always respected by every other man. We will settle for nothing less, for at this point in history anything less is but a living death. *We will be free*, and we are here to ordain a new constitution, which will ensure our freedom by enshrining the dignity of the human spirit (p. 75).

Among other things, Newton (2004) asserts the “sacredness” of humanity and the human spirit, the integrity of which must always be respected by every other human. According to Newton, the members of the Black Panther Party—an organization emerging in the 1960s as a direct response to the continued violation of African human rights in America—would settle for nothing short of human rights, for anything less would be “a living death.” For Newton (2004), the work of the BPP was to ensure the freedom of African people “by enshrining the dignity of the human spirit” (p. 75). Thus, Newton situates dignity, integrity and spirit at the helm of human existence and the core of the African liberation struggle.

In what ways have African people—on the continent and throughout the Diaspora—been forced to define themselves as human beings, but also to solidify notions of humanness in a global context? Africans are scientifically proven to be the original

people of earth and yet, Africans are constantly under the weight of having to prove their humanity. As Diop (1989) explains the irony is that for millennia, Africans were the only people in existence, leaving historical markers in the form of texts, artifacts and evidence (i.e. memorized histories explaining origins and migrations as well as linguistic connections to past origins). Therefore, the genesis of humanity is necessarily African and to examine the worldview of African people is necessarily to examine the prototypical worldview of humanity. According to Rodney (2001) however, Africans are placed in the awkward position of having to justify and prove their existence. He goes on to reiterate this absurdity:

Humanity is not a thing one proves One asserts it perhaps, or accepts it. One doesn't really set out to prove it. But, unfortunately, the historical circumstances in which black people have evolved in recent centuries have implanted in the minds of black brothers and sisters a certain historical conception and, in order to destroy that historical conception, one has to engage in this type of game saying, "This is what the white man said but no, it isn't really so, we have a past," and that sort of thing (p. 66).

Rodney's synopsis is at once jarring and soothing: it unmask the uphill battle of African people to restore the notion of humanity unto itself while at the same time revealing the utter insanity of such a task.

According to Fu Kiau (1991) humanity is power, "a phenomenon of perpetual veneration from conception to death—a perpetual reality that cannot be denied" (p. 8). Fu Kiau (1991) identifies a distinctly African worldview, which is contrary to that of the "Westerner:"

The African sees his world as a unified world where every action is understood in terms of collective effort; everything is shared collectively in the process of life and change. The individual, the living sun (one in the collection of the community's suns) is understood as sick, when he/she runs out of the wheel of the community suns. His world is basically a humanistic world. He believes that things exist that human knowledge cannot explain. The Westerner, on the

contrary, sees his world as divided and competitive. People are seen as separated entities whose actions are their own. The Westerner believes that people fail to succeed because they are unfit. His world is basically a mechanical world where nothing can be explained apart from his tools (pp 46-47).

Fu Kiau examines the Bantu-Kongo concept of humanity, which views each individual as the “living sun” who must be in the wheel of other community suns in order to be healthy and vibrant. Each living sun must coexist with other living suns, and each person’s individual actions are viewed as a part of a larger, collective action. Thus, every human being within the community is inextricably linked. On the contrary, Westerners view humanity as a competition, and inherently as the saying goes: “every man is for himself.” Each individual’s actions reflect their own wherewithal (or not) and determine their own success (or not). Westerners believe that every person has the ability to manipulate the world as they see fit, all things are within the human grasp and no thing is beyond the human sphere of influence, so to speak.

With this in mind, people of African descent have been forced to define their humanity in the face of the European worldview, which is both fundamentally different from the African worldview and defined, in the modern sense, by the subjugation of African people. Thus, the new and improved European worldview is defined by the enslavement and oppression of African people in particular. As Africans seek “liberation” or “freedom,” they are confronted with a battle of worldviews or what Carruthers (1999) terms *Intellectual Warfare*. However, what the African worldview provides, and the ancient Kemetic worldview in particular, is a method through which Africans can define themselves, their humanity, the coordinates of their existence and even their struggle for freedom under the tyranny of white supremacy. In other words, resistance to the European worldview is one thing, but existence in and of itself is a much more intrinsic

and fruitful endeavor. Self-liberation, as an important step towards collective liberation, opens the door for African people to see themselves within the context of their innate humanity: something that can never be truly understood as a reaction to white supremacy and oppression. It is through the African worldview that African people have defined and maintained their existence, long before the transatlantic slave trade. It is also through the African worldview that African people will remain.

CHAPTER 2

IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS AFRICA

According to archaeological evidence, humanity began in East Africa. In fact, East Africa provides “the earliest evidence of a creative pulse” which initiated an “evolutionary trajectory never before witnessed in the history of life” (Encyclopedia of Archaeology, 2001). These first people would set the stage for every aspect of what we now know life to be. More than simply being passive witnesses to an “evolutionary” process though, these early human beings participated in a revolutionary process of deliberate development and change, of which we are the ultimate inheritors. Modern scientists estimate that humanity began between two and four million years ago in the Olduvai Gorge valley of what is now Tanzania, and the East Turkana region of what is now Kenya (Encyclopedia of World History, 2001). What happened in between the estimated four million and two million years is surely an entire investigation in and of itself. In fact, modern science leaves much to be desired in relation to how the study of humanity is approached—especially because of the ways in which “modern humans” are strategically delinked from early “hominid” groups. However, for the purposes of this paper, it is important to note that 1) human beings emerged in Africa 2) scientists of all cultural and ideological backgrounds agree on this point and 3) evidence proclaims that human beings have been present on the planet earth for at least two million years. More importantly, as the rationale for the enslavement of African people evolved, European scientists and historians collaborated to delink African people from the rest of humanity. Africans were presented as non-human beings, deserving of enslavement and colonialism.

Western science is built upon the notion of the Big Bang Theory and subsequently,

the idea that human beings evolved from primate-like hominids. However, for all of the techniques, extensive resources, and brainpower involved in these discoveries, there are still more questions than answers about the “origin of humanity” and what is essentially an investigation into the Creator and the Creations i.e. all of the things created by some force that is both greater than and outside of humanity’s sphere of influence¹. Since, for the most part, Western science admittedly avoids the exploration of the metaphysical possibilities associated with humanity’s origins, Westerners continue to encounter a brick wall: through which existing theories can never really penetrate. The bones and tools found in the layers of the oldest civilizations on earth—unearthed in Africa—date back millions of years and prove that humanity is as old as we can theoretically imagine. Thus, even the concept of the beginning necessitates a realization of an infinite, African past.

Contemporary scientific discourse would ultimately have to engage the reflections of the earliest human communities if ever it expects to have significant clarity regarding the matter. Needless to say, it is clear that investigating the origin of humanity is a fascinating endeavor which ultimately requires the ability to step outside of the limitations of the Western concept of “physical” reality, and imagine the Creation as expressed among the oldest human groups in the world, which emerged in Africa. Hence, it behooves modern scientists to take the earthly seniority of Africans into account when examining the origins of humanity. The records left and maintained by the oldest humans on earth—written, memorized, or otherwise—provide amazing clues as to the initial

¹ Humanity’s sphere of influence includes agricultural developments, animal husbandry, irrigation methods, and other ways of utilizing existing resources. Human beings have even accumulated a good amount of knowledge regarding the perpetual rebirth of humankind. Even still, these actions cannot compare to what it means to create animals, mountains, rivers, oceans, planets, stars, etc.

Creation and subsequent development of humankind.

Another problematic element of modern, Western, science is the notion of “prehistory.” At the point in which we are talking about human beings, would not said humans be the initiators of what we call “history”? What is the significance of “prehistory” and at what logical point do we enter “history”? Are these demarcations less arbitrary than they appear? If not, what are the founding principles upon which such concepts can actually be deemed absolute? These questions require more evaluation of the “sciences”—particularly archaeology, anthropology, and geology—however, the focus of this paper is not to examine these disciplines in their entirety. More importantly, the above mentioned questions are only a handful of the many which must be asked in order to achieve the most clarity possible about humanity and ultimately, about history.

Carruthers (1999) presents an extraordinary analysis of the limitations of western thought: examining the fundamental ways in which Western ideology and subsequently, the theoretical and physical developments manifested by way of the European Worldview, are posited within a very narrow scope and sequence. Myers (2011) echoes Carruthers’ analysis, examining the “emergence of disciplined thought in the West” as well as “the theoretical philosophy behind the structuring of bodies of knowledge in the West” (p. 17). According to Myers (2011), an understanding of the “context and/or setting for the formulation of ideas in the West (the academy), and the structuring/demarcation of content areas” is key to gaining an understanding of the academic disciplines. Thus, one cannot escape the limitations and inherent challenges presented in the context of fields like archeology, anthropology, and even geology however; the physical artifacts which have been found, tested, and approved speak to the

undisputed proof of Africa as the cradle of civilization. How that information is interpreted and synthesized is a whole other issue and requires much more centering in accurate concepts of world history for it to be effective.

In examining the significance of “pre-historic” Africa—and the mindset, which would later influence the more “modern” developments in ancient Africa itself, and the contemporary world—Clarke (1967) references L.S.B. Leakey who wrote the following:

In every country that one visits and where one is drawn into conversation about Africa, the question is regularly asked, by people who should know better: “But what has Africa contributed to world progress?” The critics of Africa forget that men of science today are, with few exceptions, satisfied that Africa was the birthplace of man himself, and that for many hundreds of centuries there-after, Africa was in the forefront of all world progress (p. 6).

L.S.B. Leakey and his wife Mary were credited with discovering some of the oldest human remains in Africa in the 1950s, at the Olduvai Gorge crater in Tanzania. Leakey’s awareness of the African origins of humanity would also lead him to recognize the inextricable link between “pre-historic” African humanity and the “hundreds of centuries there-after” when Africans existed at the helm of world progress.

Once again, even where terminology and characterization become problematic, Western science is faced with a dilemma: not only did humanity initiate in Africa, but also these first, early humans of Africa are credited with earth’s earliest and most essential innovations. There is virtually no way to escape the fact that Africa is, for all intents and purposes, the site of earth’s first revolutionary developments: the creation of human beings and the first creations made by these human beings. The oldest technological instruments, tools wielded and fashioned by humans at least 1.5 million years ago, attest to not only the presence of human beings in Africa, but also prove that these human beings were thoughtful, creative, and at least interested in sustaining

themselves from one day to the next. Therefore, the oldest humans—who emerged in Africa—were proactive in their existence: fashioning the tools necessary to ensure their survival on planet earth.²

Clarke (1967) notes that there are many vital aspects of humanity’s development in Africa, which ultimately create the framework for contemporary technological advancements. According to Clarke (1967), Africans revolutionized humanity with the development of the canoe, the creation of water-tight clay pots, the building of thatched huts, and other inventions, which influence so many aspects of today’s society (p. 5). With this in mind, Clarke explains that even the most unassuming innovations in African history are in fact deserving of examination, in an effort to analyze and define subsequent historical episodes. Clarke reiterates the richness infused in what is conveniently avoided in so-called modern science: the intellectual development of humanity on the African continent and the technological advancements, which would perpetually revolutionize communities around the world. Clarke notes that there are many vital aspects of humanity’s development in Africa, which ultimately create the framework for contemporary technological advancements. Such thinking was a part of Clarke’s vision for “A New Approach to African History,” which would more accurately historicize Africa, while also providing a method for understanding significant human advancements in the larger African context.

² To be clear, the innovations of the first humans reflect what Carruthers (1999) calls the “Divine Conversation” between human beings and the metaphysical forces, which exist outside of humanity (p. 40). The oldest existing records of humankind’s development speak to a clear understanding with regard to the source(s) of their knowledge.

Following Clarke's methodology, to examine the beginning of African existence:

- 1) is logical;
- 2) helps us to understand what behaviors and elements initiated and sustain humanity
- 3) helps us to determine what behaviors and elements did *not* sustain humanity
- 4) provides an accurate reference for, and tangible solutions to, both age-old and very-new problems.

Despite the specifics and technicalities of what is called "science," humanity's story is as epic as any novel could ever be, for real life is much stranger and more interesting than fiction.

Imagine, for a moment, the complex lives of the first human beings. Placing ourselves in the position of our earliest ancestors, and thinking about what their existence must have been like, is probably one of the only ways we will ever come to grips with the sheer magnitude of their development and creativity. The seminal research of Cheikh Anta Diop—a physicist, mathematician and historian—is one of, if not the first accurate explorations into the complexity of these first people. Diop's training as a physicist, and his ability to couple his technical training with a logical understanding of the humanity within these pioneering first people, clearly influenced his ability to provide a sensible theory with regard to humankind's origins. The work of Cheikh Anta Diop is prototypical science: it represents an examination of the physical aspects of human history, while taking into account what remains of the oldest records left by human beings—such as written and/or memorized accounts, artifacts, and other tangible, scientific evidence. Diop (1986) establishes the connection between modern humankind and the earliest humans thusly:

The general acceptance, as a sequel to the work of Professor Leakey, is the hypothesis of mankind's monogenetic and African origin makes it possible to pose the question of the peopling of Egypt and even of the world in completely new terms. More than 150,000 years ago, beings morphologically identical with the man of today were living in the region of the great lakes at the sources of the Nile and nowhere else...It means that the whole human race had its origin, just as the ancients guessed, at the foot of the Mountains of the Moon (p. 35).

Diop's analysis is at once a critique of the "scientific hair-splitting" by anthropologists—even with so much physiological evidence available—and an intellectual breakthrough of significant proportions. Diop (1986) explicitly explains that while the conclusions of questionable anthropological studies "stop short of the full truth" even still, they "speak unanimously of the existence of a negro race from the most distant ages of prehistory down to the dynastic period" (p. 36). According to Diop, this information—which contested the arbitrary classifications of anthropologists who attempted to annex early human groups from modern humanity—called for world history to be rewritten from a more scientific approach "taking into account the Negro-African component which was for a long time preponderant" (p. 54). [Where is this discussion of

According to Van Sertima (1986), Diop's dissertation on ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) civilization explored Kemet's anteriority on the continent of Africa, as well as its explicit connection to successive African civilizations, which would ultimately be dispersed throughout other regions of the continent (p. 8). Regarding Diop's post-dissertation work as physicist in an accomplished nuclear research center in France, Van Sertima (1986) explains further:

His scientific background is very important in our assessment of his contribution to historical knowledge. He was able to use it to great effect to refine and develop his earlier Egyptian thesis. For example, Diop developed a chemical process for testing the level of melanin in the skin of the Egyptian mummies he studied in the Museum of Man in order to establish their Black African ancestry. His close examination of primary sources and his knowledge

of metallurgy enabled him also to establish that the iron artifacts found in the Ancient Egyptian Empire were not intrusions from a higher stratum nor accidental byproduct of another process, as [professors] Leclant and Mauny had claimed, but very strong evidence of the invention of iron-smelting by the Egyptians long before the Hittites and Assyrians (p. 9).

With this said, Diop's mastery of several roads of knowledge, speaks to nuances in research that Western science would ultimately be forced to reckon with. More than this, however, Van Sertima reiterates the most significant aspect of Diop's work which challenged the notion of his contemporaries: who claimed that *homo sapiens sapiens* or modern humans, evolved elsewhere, outside of Africa. Diop's analysis of early human metallurgy helped to solidify the restoration of ancient Kemet as the indigenously African. In examining the complete body of Diop's research, Van Sertima (1986) proclaims the following:

What it established is that while earlier African types might have migrated and disappeared, the human at its most advanced stage, at the peak of its present phase of evolution, came out of Africa to people other continents and merely underwent mutations or adaptations in other ecological zones (p. 14).

With this in mind, Diop's work established the continuity of African existence: from the beginning of time until the present. It also provided a concrete theory about humanity in relation to African people. As Western scientists and historians worked to delink African people from humanity, Chiekh Anta Diop sought to investigate the matter and to challenge Western notions of African humanity. Proving that the first humans were African, and that the people of ancient Kemet were African (as well as phenotypically Black) was an incredible step in the what Carruthers (1999) calls *intellectual warfare's* "battle for Kemet." Establishing Kemet as an African civilization, and as the child of "pre-historic" Africa, established the genealogical continuity of antiquity. More than this though, defining the relationship between ancient Kemet and subsequent African

civilizations was essential to locating African people as anterior to all other human groups. Even still, with more than enough scientific proof, there was still the question of history and how the story of African people's place in humanity's epic would ultimately be told.

CHAPTER 3

WORLD HISTORIOGRAPHY

As the direct descendants of the first human beings, African people are the supreme witnesses of Creation itself, and they have the longest known relationship with the earthly Creations. Over time, African people have demonstrated awareness of and engagement with the other created elements of planet earth including but not limited to plants, animals, bodies of water, and aspects of land (such as mountains). African people bear supreme witness to humanity, and the most effective methods of being human: the biology and chemistry of life, the physiological and metaphysical aspects of earthly existence, and the science of the cosmic Creations—observing all that is above and what exists there, beyond the sky. Thus, any investigation into the realm of history encompasses the physical, intellectual and spiritual sciences. Avoiding this fact truncates the extent to which inquiry into the beginnings of humankind can ultimately be effective. By definition humanity *is* African: the first human beings were African and the first defining innovations of humanity were birthed in Africa. Since history is necessarily a study of the origins of humanity, and the first humans were African, history then must initiate at the emergence of humankind, which took place in Africa.

To reiterate Clarke's (1967) position, history must begin with the beginning: the study of Africans in Africa and elsewhere. An examination of the world's history is necessarily in chronological order and to the degree that new discoveries emerge, this order changes. Thus, an examination of humanity's earthly experiences in chronological order must be grounded in a deliberate examination of Africa, where humanity began. There is fundamentally no way for world history to exist in chronological order without a

very deliberate and serious exploration of Africa, first and foremost. With this in mind, we have a full circle or cycle of history that begins and ends with Africa: always. Humanity and the examination of humanity is necessarily an African conversation, and Africans are best equipped to facilitate this kind of inquiry by virtue of earthly seniority, at minimum. This chapter explores the notion that Western historiography is fundamentally flawed due to its attachment to white supremacy. Not only is the white supremacist nature of Western historiography problematic for African people (and other colonized people of color), it is also white supremacy which enables Western historiography to permeate world history without proving its own validity.

Thompson (1997) defines history as an “organized knowledge of any and all past time/space events based on the point of view of a body of authorities whose individual members or membership arrange those accumulated events within the context of some kind of systematic whole based on their beliefs about the future” (p. 16). Similarly, Carr (1998) explains that the term *history* relates to “human perspectives on the ‘past,’ the collected phenomena and events or some subset thereof of ‘reality.’” (p. 19). Carruthers (1997) explains that the term history itself, from the Greek *Istoria* (history), expresses a methodology that is at variance with the African method of transmitting a collective, national memory (p. 49). According to Carruthers (1997), “*Istoria* is a mode of inquiry that challenges the traditional ancestral transmission. Such confrontation suggests that the tradition itself is flawed” (p. 49). Thompson (1997) goes on to explain that historiography is the study of history itself; it examines how and why history was written and in what ways historians interpret history, creating generalizations from these interpretations (p. 16). Carruthers (1997) expresses the anteriority of African historiography as follows:

Ironically it was the African concept of history that inspired the ancient Greeks. Herodotus, for example, who is nowadays proclaimed by Europeans as the ‘father of history.’ said that the Egyptians were “the most careful of men to preserve the memory of the past,” He added, “none...have so many chronicles” (p. 49).

Likewise, Obenga (1997) explains: “The imposition of Western values on African culture is not only a historical phenomenon, it is also a contemporary condition that continues to haunt African historiography” (p. 35). In other words, history—being the record of human events—is subjected to the historiography of the historian. Historians, examining events from their cultural background and worldview, bring their own assumptions to the exploration of a historical event and/or the telling of a historical story. Thus, historiography emerges as the “central ideological weaponry of Europe’s global system of white supremacy” and is the “hidden part of the European world view that stands under everything written by white social scientists in their quest to justify the European drive for world domination and mastery over man, society, nature, and God” (Thompson, 1997, p. 29).

According to Carruthers (1997), John Locke’s *Second Treatise in Government* initiated a “sociology of history” which presented humanity as progressing from hunting/gathering to agricultural to a more advanced industrial society (p. 52). Similarly, in *Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu theorized a “political sociology” the stages of human development, from savage to barbarian to civilized (p. 52). Based on Montesquieu’s ideology, Europeans were the only ones to have reached the highest stage of development, making them the natural leaders of humankind. Thus, Europeans were worthy of a constitutional government (Republican or Monarchal) while the other noncivilized peoples of the earth were best suited for despotism (Carruthers, 1997, p. 52). Ultimately, Hegel would lead the “secularized theology of history” to new heights with his *The*

Philosophy of History, which sought to separate Africa from history and to identify Africans as uncivilized (p. 52). Hegel's theory promoted the idea that history began in the East, moved West and matured in the 18th Century among the Germanic peoples (Carruthers, 1997, p. 52).

Carruthers (1997) explains further:

Thus, while Germanic armies were invading and conquering the peoples of the world, intellectuals of German ancestry were constructing an ideological universe dominated by Germanic concepts of Western Superiority. Francis Bacon and John Locke posited theories of the intellectual, economic, and technological superiority of Europeans over people of the Western Hemisphere and the African continent. They and their followers began to define themselves as the intellectual descendants of the ancient Greeks, who more and more were idealized as the originators of ancient civilizations. While Bacon, Newton, and even Montesquieu continued to recognize the influence of Kemet and its outstanding cultural achievements, this side of history began to fade in significance. More and more these ideas appeared as a sign of triumph of European peoples over their non-European competitors. In the eighteenth century Montesquieu, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and others inserted a thesis of "Negro inferiority," which was the basis of the philosophical invention of white supremacy. This extension of the chosen people theme justified a past of three hundred years of enslavement and genocide against African peoples. It also prophesied a future of continued super-exploitation in the name of extending civilization (p. 53).

Carruthers (1997) notes that Napoleon's invasion of Kemet provided the opportunity for European intellectuals to initiate their last step in "the vindication of Europe against the legacy of African cultural anteriority and hegemony" (p. 53). However, Hegel's formula called for 1) the removal of Egypt from Africa and 2) Africa's separation from history in general since it had no real, true history (Carruthers, 1997, p. 53). Carruthers (1997) explains further:

Hegel's hypotheses in this regard were so compatible with the philosophy of white supremacy that both Kemet and Africa disappeared from history. Kemet was relegated to archaeology (of which Egyptology is a major branch); the rest of Africa exiled to a new discipline, anthropology (p. 53).

With this in mind, it is clear that revisionist history is much more intrinsic to Western historiography than is readily admitted. Not only have African people been faced with the suppression of hard facts, but there has also been a strategic effort to reassign important African contributions to mythical human origins outside of Africa. Carruthers (1997) notes that European history is based on the following characteristics: a nomadic historiographical motif, an Armageddon thesis, and the imperative to fabricate history (p. 51). He explains that the “nomadic historiographical motif is a worldview of *fundamental alienation*” and reflects a nomadic culture, constant raids, and habitual conquest, which would ultimately create an unstable environment for the ancestors of modern Europe (Carruthers, 1997, p. 50). The Armageddon thesis reflects the notion of a chosen people—Jews, Christians, Iranians, and Germans—who reveal themselves to be “divinely ordained” to lead their respective communities, and even the world, through whatever end-of-the-world ideology they believe in at the time. Carruthers notes that it is “so intertwined in the mythology and historiography of Eurasian thought that its directives seem self-evident...since Armageddon history is based on successive conquests, periods of decline and defeat are explained as ‘Dark Ages’” (p. 51). Similarly, the inclination towards revision is also a major factor of Western historiography. Carruthers (1997) explains that the Renaissance and Reformation brought about a “new spirit of history” (p. 52). During the transition between Antiquity and the era of Islam, Augustine presented history as the time between the Fall from Grace in Eden and the subsequent reincorporation of the redeemed or saved portions of humanity (p. 51). Carruthers (1997) refers to this as “theological historiography” which explained time—the passing of time and history—as “a series of ascending stages leading to the divine millennium” (p. 51).

All serious historians—particularly African historians—must come to terms with how *a* story can become *the* story. Those committed to uncovering the truth must ask how the present matrix of human existence is affected by the power dynamics associated with the more recent shifts orchestrated by colonialism and imperialism i.e. white supremacy. More importantly, how do the present historical records reflect the assumptions implicit in the tale of “exploration” and “conquer”? With globalized societies intertwined in ways that conveniently allow for much more interaction, and with imperialism as the backdrop for the majority of these global interactions, the influence that comes with power cannot be avoided or denied. The parasitic nature of the contemporary world—a seed planted long ago in the days of colonialism—drains the intellect, resources, and even cultural traditions from the descendants of the conquered. All the while, the conquerors tell the tale as if they always possessed their pirate’s booty. With the added pressures of unfair disadvantages and injustices at every turn, the conquered are many times weighed down with the burden of survival. Among them rise those who discover —through mere curiosity or fundamental determination—that while they are living and surviving and being, they are still conquered people. More than this, they learn about their lives before conquer: for they haven’t always been captives. As each successive generation works to strengthen the collective memory of their own people’s past before conquer, the struggle to remember memories and to keep traditions intact becomes even more evident. As with every epic turn of events, the conquered are forced to decide if they will remain as such or not.

Despite the varying aspects of the present situation in which they find themselves, the conquered simply have to make a choice: to be free to live in ways that affirm their

existence or not. However, to do this the conquered must know more about their alternatives. To what degree has being conquered been an advantage, if any? Are their conquerors benevolent, just, inspiring? Better yet, does the original world of the conquered people—the world before they were conquered—exemplify benevolence, justice, or inspiration? If the conquered people continue to ask their conquerors' advice regarding their previous world, they must be prepared for answers that reflect the motives of their conquerors: to remain in power. With the abundance of earth's resources—suitable land, drinkable water, and available sustenance—it is ultimately a wonder that any group of people would insist on subjugating another group of people. Leadership appears to be a natural development among human beings, leaders emerge and there are followers who seek their leadership. However, to force unwarranted and tyrannical leadership upon a group of people is something else altogether. Why would such a thing be necessary? The current state of earth's people speaks to an overwhelming and most times unwarranted influence of Europeans upon the societies that they have subjugated or conquered. From the Amazon to the Congo to New Zealand, Indigenous communities continue to fight for the right to exist: to be, without the unsolicited involvement of the people who claim to have conquered them, and who also claim possession over their land.

The truth is much stranger than fiction, for it does not always have a linear progression, nor is it always as beautiful as what can be developed through fictional accounts. By definition, history must be truthful; it must reflect reality and speak to what is and what has been. Arturo Schomburg, a noted historian, bibliophile, and thinker, once instructed John Henrik Clarke on the method of approaching African history. He told Clarke that African history is nothing but the missing pages of world history (ben-

Jochannan and Clarke, 1991, 136). As mentioned, humanity and the examination of humanity is necessarily an African conversation. World history cannot present itself as truthful without beginning with African people and deliberately investigating the human innovations that ultimately sprang forth from Africa. The fact that Western historians attempt to gloss over the last 5,000 years, while paying even less attention to what connects the people of 5,000 years ago to the people before them, is a testament to the much-needed reconstruction and restoration of history. It would be illogical for historians who are interested in a truthful examination of humanity to blindly follow the path of Western historiography. Even though there are many reputable, Western historical resources, it is unthinkable that people who have been conquered by Europeans, could even think about ignoring very obvious pitfalls within Western historiography. If African people are serious about liberation, they must be intent on divorcing themselves from the abusive relationship they have with white supremacy. The European worldview claims to love humanity, all the while abusing the physical bodies, minds, and spirits of African people. The European worldview professes its love for planet earth, all the while ignoring every other culture's right to protect planet earth, and to maintain their indigenous connection to their own "third world." As with any abusive relationship, African people must be willing to see their relationship with the European worldview for exactly what it is: abusive. As African people come to terms with Western historiography, they must be diligent and unafraid to challenge the status quo. Prior to the development of Africana Studies as a formal discipline, Africans have created theoretical spaces outside of the European worldview. With the birth of Africana Studies in the university, African historians were provided with a space where they could illuminate the African worldview

and continue to develop an authentically African historiography.

CHAPTER 4

ACADEMIA AND AFRICANA STUDIES

Historiography and subsequently, history, are two of the most important aspects of human inquiry. Knowing is contextual and every discipline must be historicized: there is no way to achieve an understanding of a body of knowledge without at least examining its origin. Thankfully, one does not necessarily need to spend excessive time within the confines of a university to experience the curiosity that ultimately leads to the acquisition of knowledge. The desire to know, the curiosity required to find out, and the investigative techniques associated with finding out, are elements of learning which find themselves in the most rudimentary experiences of those who have the time and physical opportunities to do so. In other words, the desire to know is probably one of humanity's most innate qualities. It exists, it is; and while there is pontification regarding the method of knowing, the ways of developing as knowledge is accumulated, and the degree to which people change as they become more knowledgeable, the fact that people desire to know is still evident.

What, then, is knowledge? How do we know, and what do we call ourselves knowing? In order to know what we know (as individuals and also collectively), and how we've come to know these things, it is essential that we begin to examine what we have inherited and also what we've initiated. Does what we know come from what we have learned or what we have observed, investigated and discovered? According to Carruthers (1995), the ancient Kemites initiated a profound concept of knowledge, orchestrated through the theory and methodology that is *Mdw Ntr* (Medew Netcher) or "Divine

Speech” (p. 39). Identified as the “deep thought of Kemet,” *Mdw Ntr* is both the process of thinking and doing and is, in every sense, the process of knowing.

Implicit in the examination of what it is that we know, and the processes we use to discover, is an exploration of the ways that the human beings before us have come to find out what *they* knew. More than this though, it is imperative that we chart the course of humanity’s progression and the knowledge bases that have been accumulated over time. These accumulated knowledge bases reflect every subject matter imaginable and essentially, they speak to the ways that humanity has developed over time. What we would now call “science” or “literature” or even “mathematics” is, in fact, a reflection of the accumulated knowledge bases, which the human beings before us saw fit to retain, maintain, and leave for the inevitable future. Each discovery and every innovative step find their way into humanity’s timeless epic. There is virtually no place in the inhabitable world where we can go and not find evidence of humanity’s innovation or at minimum, at least replications of human innovation brought from elsewhere. Therefore, some of the factors associated with *humanbeingness* include varying degrees of examination, exploration, the acquisition and accumulation of knowledge, and subsequently the development of theories and modes of existence.

Learning as much as possible about what we know is an important step in the process of understanding. To thoroughly explore as much as possible about the accumulated knowledge we have access to, we must begin as far back in time as we are able. We must also determine what it is we are looking for. Is everything that we know about humanity’s existence worthy of being called “knowledge”? As we examine

humanity from time immemorial, will there be aspects of this information that become more valuable than others? As Carr explains (1998):

Regardless of race, individual memory begins in the biogenetic code of physical being: a person receives genetic traits—both physical and mental—from their specific ancestral lineage. Groups of human beings assume the responsibility of individual and group survival by creating social structures which were initially based upon expanded blood lineages and the limits of individual memory are augmented and ultimately superseded by extra-physical tools which facilitate the accurate transmission of the desired narrative of human activity from generation to generation (p. 19).

Carr's examination of memory is critical to understanding what we might refer to as "knowledge"; what human beings choose to remember is oftentimes a reflection of what is valued enough to be remembered by the respective societies within which the various groups of humans find themselves. Implicit in the notion of memory is, in fact, knowledge itself: human beings cannot remember what they do not know. As knowledge accumulates, successive generations of various human groups have the advantage (or not) of inheriting the "memories" of their ancestors: what their ancestors knew (or didn't know). Theoretically, the accumulated memories available in 2013 C.E. would be a composite sketch of all preceding memories, and all preceding knowledge, to whatever degree they are accessible. To the extent that memories are remembered, and the mechanisms exist within a given cultural group to foster perpetual remembering, memories can exist into the forever-future³.

³ On the contrary, if a given cultural group does not value the notion of memory, or if a cultural group has somehow inherited a truncated memory, it is likely that they will not have access to the earliest memories of humanity. Herein lies perhaps the most profound element of the European worldview: it is limited due to its inability to attach itself directly to humanity, and more importantly to humanity's developments. In other words: Europeans cannot place themselves in the beginning or at the site of the beginning.

Likewise, what various groups of humans think about, develop, and ultimately master, also reflects the culture of these societies within which human beings find themselves. As Carr (1998) explains, the various groups within which human beings have come to be organized are challenged with forging a “meaningful and serviceable past” (p. 18). Consequently, each group responds to this challenge based on the “material considerations of space and time, geography, and social circumstance” which ultimately produce “a spectrum of thought and valuation (axiology) about the origins (cosmogony), nature (ontology), perception (aesthetic) and function/order (cosmology) of reality” (p. 18). Thus, memory manifests as the result of what human beings experience as well as what they think about the time they spend on earth relative to the spaces in which they find themselves. Since knowledge is cumulative, accumulated knowledge combines the memories of groups of people, retained and also maintained in ways that allow successive groups of people access to these remembered happenings. According to Carr (1998) the founding principle of history is in fact, memory:

While instinct might allow human beings to survive physically, memory is the ability through which the uniquely human capacity to reason and develop is built upon among groups and transmitted from generation to generation. Animals survive from season to season: human beings develop from generation to generation, each group developing a greater understanding than one before it, precisely to the degree that the preceding group provides the collective memory upon which the contemporary group builds its unique contribution (p. 19).

With this in mind, it is clear that memory is what essentially defines history. History is what people chose to remember, or not. History reflects the depth of what people find important enough to remember, and even more so what they deem valid enough to perpetuate to future generations. However, validity is still inherently subjective: depending on what one deems to be true. Herein lies one of, if not the most fundamental

challenges of history: how can humanity determine the truth of the past, present, and future? How do we, as human beings, determine what is, and what is not; what has been, and what never was; what will be and what could never be. These very basic and extraordinarily complex questions are the fuel behind inquiry. Over time, cultures not only accumulate knowledge, they also accumulate methods of approaching knowledge and subsequently develop theories about what they know. Today, in the present, we are the inheritors of thousands (and perhaps millions) of years of information: questions, presumed answers, methods and theories. We are gifted with the privilege of being able to survey everything that came before us, and it behooves us as thinking people to do so to whatever degree we are able. Negating the origins of the accumulated knowledge we have inherited, dismissing the processes or methods that we habitually utilize, ignoring the inherent beliefs and theories of the knowledge we have come to possess, we miss out on the clarity that could ultimately be achieved.

By no means is the acquisition and accumulation of knowledge an arbitrary endeavor. Every aspect of knowledge is contextual and while this does not necessarily degrade the integrity or truthfulness of what has been discovered, it does make it clear that everything humanity knows is posited within the context of the human beings who investigate, observe, transmit and qualify this information. One of the most important aspects of Western historiography is in fact, the assumed universality of accumulated Western knowledge. Although much of what is called Western knowledge is, in fact, unoriginal thought inspired by the investigations of and direct instruction from other cultures, Western historiography has solidified its position as the omnipresent backdrop of the new world's order, to the extreme disadvantage of those cultures, which have been

enslaved, subjugated and habitually oppressed by those who invest in and perpetuate Western historiography. Thus, as Carruthers (1999) reminds us, Western historiography is certainly one of the most important tools of white supremacy and exists as the supreme weapon of *Intellectual Warfare*.

When thinking about the modern university, it becomes clear that institutions of higher learning in America are the manifestations of the “genealogical normative constraints of the West, a set of institutional and intellectual coordinates contrived and replicated over the course of the last two millennia, with particular emphasis on the era of late modernity” (Carr, 2006, p. 438). These “genealogical normative constraints” manifest themselves in the established and accepted “disciplines” within the academy, where inquiry and scholarship are subsidiary to replication and reinscription. Hence, upon further examination, the imagined ideal of the university—where research and inquiry *should* take place—reveals itself to be a much more complex space built on the foundations of western ideology and the western worldview. The presence of canons of literature, historical methodologies, and academic exemplars (students and teachers) continuously lead back to fundamental ideas born out of the “genealogical normative constraints of the West” (Carr, 2006, p. 438).

Carruthers (1999) provides an extensive analysis with regard to how European methodologies, grounded in the dominance of the rest of the world, fundamentally influence academia. Carruthers uncovers a few points in particular that are useful in a discussion about the “university” and “academic disciplines. He examines the relationship between African intellectuals and the European or Aryan worldview. With regard to the term “Aryan,” Carruthers (1999) explains the following:

We will abandon the misleading and inaccurate division between Europe and Asia, West and East, Occidental and Oriental. Linguistic, cultural, and biological data suggest that the Northwestern Europeans who have dominated the world for the last five hundred years are of the same stock as the Irano-Indians and Greeks of antiquity. In antiquity, these people identified themselves as Aryans, which means the Lords or master people...it is quite appropriate that we recognize the Aryan people and culture as properly including the people who inhabit the Eurasian continent. The differences between the Western and Eastern Aryans have been the constant theme of modern dialogue; the unity has often been ignored” (p. 34).

Establishing the unity of thought among Eurasians, which would qualify western thought as a collective and distinct worldview, Carruthers defines worldview as “the way a people conceive the fundamental questions of existence and organization of the universe” (p. 21).

With regard to the Western or Aryan worldview, Carruthers (1999) proclaims:

- 1) The irony of European thought is that so much of it was borrowed from ancient African people
- 2) European thinkers succeeded in grafting African ideas on a diametrically opposed worldview
- 3) Added to the irony of borrowing from the diametrically opposed African way, the European thinker, while generally suppressing insight concerning the African connection and debasing black culture, exuded a veiled admiration for ancient African civilization. (pp. 49-50)

In other words, Europeans have borrowed much of their intellectual inspiration from ancient Africa. And yet, the European worldview has presented itself in ways that are diametrically opposed to the African worldview. The connection to Africa is at once suppressed and admired, secretly.

With this in mind, Carruthers (1999) identifies the fundamental struggle between the traditions of the modern university and the goals of Africans with regard to Africana Studies and an African-centered curriculum. He writes the following:

Advocates of an African-centered curriculum and similar approaches to multiculturalism have been engaged in intellectual and academic warfare with the defenders of Western civilization who rightly see the proposals as threats to the supremacy of 'Western' ways of thinking about and explaining what has happened and is happening in this world. (p. 87).

Carruthers identifies two camps among the defenders of Western civilization: "hard-liners" and "soft-liners." Carruthers notes that hard-liners "see Western culture as the only relevant culture," and proclaim that "the best way to help people of non-Western heritage is to give them extra support in acquiring the skills and orientation which will make them culturally literate in this tradition" (p. 88). Thus, Africans will benefit from equal access to the established traditions of the western worldview via academic disciplines within the modern university and the goal, according to hard-liners, is to "march towards the full achievement of the ideals of Western civilization" (Carruthers, 1999, p. 88). In recent times, defenders of Western civilization have transitioned their ideas and aligned themselves with the "soft-liner" camp. Soft-liners believe that the "attack" on the cultural aspect of the curriculum and the advocacy of alternatives (such as Africana Studies) is really a promotion of "reverse ethnocentrism" (Carruthers, 1999, p. 89). Of course, this is highly problematic because the basis of modern curricula is the European Worldview only (from kindergarten to post-graduate studies). Oftentimes this fact is so deeply ingrained and thoroughly integrated throughout the disciplines, that the European Worldview is masked as the standard: the natural way of things.

Africana Studies is, in fact, a bold unveiling of the hidden (and sometimes not so hidden) agenda of the university: the perpetuation of Western civilization. Africana Studies acknowledges the fact that Western civilization is inextricably tied to domination, especially within the "institutional and intellectual coordinates contrived and replicated

over the course of the last two millennia” (Carr, 2006, 438). Hence, what appears to be an English department is in fact a replication of the institutional and intellectual coordinates of Western civilization. And, as Carruthers (1999) explains, these “coordinates” have been about the absorption of particular aspects of African foundations of knowledge into the European Worldview while at the same time denying their very existence, *and* while the conquer of Africa’s land, people, and resources continues to be one of the most intentional outcomes.

Having established that the modern university itself is a location in which Western civilization is reinscribed, where colonialism and imperialism are marketed as a necessary means to the end of “civilizing” the rest of the world from darkness, we come to the question of what a discipline is and how it functions within the modern university. According to Little, Leonard and Crosby (2006) an academic discipline is a field of study with a precise and orderly framework through which humankind, and the environment, can be examined. Essentially, the objective of an academic discipline is to organize knowledge; the components of a discipline include a rationale, body of literature, curriculum, theoretical framework (where hypotheses can be constructed) and methodologies (by which hypotheses can be tested) (Little, Leonard and Crosby; 2006, p. 813). Interestingly enough, it is clear that many so-called disciplines within the university lack some of the above elements. For example, it is difficult to locate a rationale for the English discipline, although a body of literature and curriculum exists.

In an examination of the fundamental ideals of art (as a discipline within the academy) and art classification (within and outside of the academy), Taylor (1998)

unmasks the Western aesthetic disguised as objective intellectual work. Taylor (1998) attributes the constraints of the West to entelechy and defines it as follows:

Entelechy, then, is a process of idealization through which the dominant class manifestation is framed as the generative and normative instance of all other manifestations...The entelechial moment comprises two actions, the act of violence and the act of forgetting. The violence is symbolic, the seizure of advantages of definition that deprived other people of the capacity to speak of themselves with equal resonance and conviction. But the violence of this operation must be concealed by the power of forgetfulness, at first willfully and later as a feature of "tradition." Illegitimate power always remembers what it wants to remember and forgets what it wants to forget...The values of the denominational class become sedimented in the activity, perhaps as "standards," and once sedimented, redefine the activity of the unchosen as unqualified or inferior. Western art becomes art, socially approved writing becomes literature, and so forth (pp. 58-59).

Taylor's explanation speaks to the foundations of western ideology and the means through which the western worldview has become an integrated component of the modern academic world. The irony of the "mask of art" (insert literature, science, mathematics in place of art) is that in fact, the western intellectual genealogy of all "disciplines" is boldly displayed, with pride even. Thus, foundational "disciplines" within the academy are fundamentally western in framework, methodology and normative assumption. As the western world seized advantage over information and resources, it also began to have selective amnesia, "forgetting" the origin of its inspiration and proclaiming the "unchosen" as "inferior" or even nonexistent⁴.

In assessing the role and function of Africana or African American Studies in the university, several terms must be defined in order to determine the place of Africana

⁴ The work of Myers (2011 & 2013) explicates this notion much further and uncovers the foundations of the University, academic disciplines, and how white supremacy is fluid throughout.

Studies in academia. Africana Studies⁵ originated as a discipline in the late 1960s, after university students of African descent began to protest the lack of African-centered education available on college campuses. Africana Studies has created a space where history, historiography, and cultural studies can theoretically be approached outside of the European worldview. Understanding Africana Studies, as a liberated space within the university, helps to understand the discipline as an extension of the African worldview. To begin, it is essential to examine the concept of the “university” and the purpose of such an institution. Oftentimes, the “university” is viewed as an eternal, omniscient, and omnipresent entity: beyond investigation. However, it is not. If the fundamental values of a Mathematics department are posited within a methodology that presupposes math as an inherently Western endeavor, it is very unlikely that such a department could work in conjunction with Africana Studies. However, in recognizing that Africana Studies is the examination of how African people once viewed and continue to see the world, mathematics would certainly need to exist within such a discipline. In a truly sound academic space, the exploration of mathematics would exist as a link between ancient and contemporary aspects of math as experienced and explored by all of humanity, and beginning with the first human beings in Africa. To take this idea a step further, imagine a mathematics class within Africana Studies. This course or series of courses would examine not only the Africana methodology with regard to numbers and the use of numbers but also it would investigate the practice of mathematics from the beginning of time to the present. The conceptual framework of mathematics in Ancient Kemet is certainly enough for a series of courses in and of itself. A course within an Africana

⁵ Africana Studies has also been referred to as Black Studies, Afro-American Studies and African American Studies.

Studies department could examine math in architecture, exploring the various types of math and number processes used to build pyramids and other megaliths throughout the Diaspora, for example. Or even another course on math and geography, examining the processes used to develop a sense of the world and how mathematics was incorporated in the travel and migrations of human beings: beginning in Africa. Interestingly enough, even these terms are limiting: when Africans surveyed land and traveled the world, they did not call it geography. In fact, the Western approach to disciplinary knowledge is inherently flawed because it isolates aspects of knowledge, which are essentially fluid in nature. There is no real way to study astronomy without understanding mathematics and physics. Similarly, to understand agriculture, one must have a sense of astronomy and mathematics as well. Thus, it would be useful for Africana Studies to remain committed to the Africana worldview throughout its endeavors: to approach all “subjects” and more importantly subject matter from an authentically African perspective. This will probably result in modes of inquiry that would, by today’s standards, be deemed interdisciplinary. Nonetheless, in the long run such a radical approach would be much more effective and logical. Hence, Africana Studies is the best place for true human history to be investigated thoroughly: not only because it is posited within the Africana worldview, but also because it is fundamentally committed to a balanced and authentic view of world history. Such an endeavor is no small task, but it can and must be done. Thankfully, much of the work has been approached already in one way or another. The job of the contemporary Africana scholar is to then extend and build upon these existing bodies of work.

It is important that as Africana Studies continues to assert its power within the university, it must also recognize the reality of the university structure within which it seeks to find space. The game is that there is no game, so to speak. In the same way, the irony of the discipline conversation is that in fact, many fields of study are disguised as disciplines and yet have not had to prove themselves in the same way that Africana Studies has had to do. Some disciplines, especially those that exist within the foundational curricula of the university in Europe and later in America, are accepted wholeheartedly without any critical review. Still, Africana Studies proceeds in spite of the inequalities at the onset, in spite of the fact that other disciplines exist within a secure structure that is essentially beyond critical reproach. As Carruthers (1999) suggests, there must be an end to the “white monopoly” of the “sacred field of critical European thought”: inconsistencies, biases and ideologies—in-disguise must in fact be revealed for what they really are and how they really influence the university as well as the so-called disciplines within the university (p. 34).

Needless to say, Africana Studies is in fact a discipline, per the definition. It is a space in which information about African people and the origins of civilization and humanity (in Africa) can be examined and critiqued. Africana Studies has theories and methodologies, both ancient and modern, which inform and guide the discipline. And, as with any other discipline, many of these theories and methodologies continue to be critiqued within the discipline itself; inspiring critical analysis with regard to what Africana Studies has been, can and should be. Carr (2006) calls this the *Unbroken Genealogy Approach*: in order to create an accurate genealogical link between “contemporary disciplinary Africana Studies” and “earlier cycles of the African

intellectual tradition” normative language must be established to develop links between “the earliest human attempts to negotiate the challenges of physical and human geography” all the way through the “emergence of sedentary communal arrangements and subsequent meaning-making systems” (p. 443). In much the same way, Myers (2011) conceptualizes the discipline as the “contemporary arc of an extensive tradition of *Africans studying*.” Myers (2011) goes on to explain the following:

The intellectual foundations of Africana Studies represent the latest improvisation of a long-view tradition of Africana intellectual thought. As much, Africana Studies is the progeny of generations of thinkers of African heritage who, as a consequence of European modernity, are now spread throughout the world.

According to Myers (2011), Africana Studies scholars—born out of an intellectual enterprise designed to extend these Africana intellectual traditions—must articulate the “constitutive forces” of the discipline. Both Carr (2006) and Myers (2011) assert the idea that Africana Studies is an extension of a long genealogy posited within the distinct Africana worldview and that, the fundamental role of Africana Studies is to articulate the links between the chronological episodes and movements of Africana humanity dating back to the very beginning of time. Essentially, Africana Studies has the task of completing a project that is not really being approached in any other discipline: to examine human history accurately and piece together our collective time on earth in a scientific manner. Ironically, history proves that Africans have consistently been about the business of mapping out human history in a methodical way; linking worldviews and ideologies with what we would now call astronomy, mathematics, geography literature, and medicine, to define the reality of humanity on the planet earth. Thus, Africana Studies necessarily redefines world history, filling in missing pages, critiquing stolen legacies (which may often be “diametrically opposed” to the African way), exposing

imperialist ideologies disguised as objective schools of thought, and ultimately reemerging as the foundational mode of accessing knowledge.

In regard to nomenclature, “Africana Studies” seems to be the most appropriate fit. As Clarke (2006) explains “Africa, or Africana, relates you to land, history and culture” (p. 292). Africana encompasses the totality of African humanity, and provides space for a continued critical analysis of the social, spiritual, political, ideological and methodological texts and practices, which ultimately inform the experience of African people since time immemorial. Furthermore, the term “African” has been used consistently by Africans throughout the Diaspora both during and after slavery. Pan-African congresses, Back to Africa movements, African churches and organizations were prevalent among African people in the United States. Thus, it seems that one of the commonalities, even in nomenclature, is in fact the word “African” itself. Africana emerges as the most fitting and most useful term for the purposes of engaging our collective past, present and future.

Africana Studies is in many ways the precursor for memory: it helps to situate people of African descent within their most authentic context, and works towards the long-term goals of liberation, restoration and the rebuilding of African nations on the continent of Africa. Essentially, one of the challenges faced by Africana Studies is described in the very first page of the Prologue of Ayi Kwei Armah’s *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973):

You hearers, seers, imaginers, thinkers, rememberers, you prophets called to communicate the truths of the living way to a people fascinated unto death, you called to link memory with forelistening, to join the uncountable seasons of our flowing to unknown tomorrows even more numerous, communicators doomed to pass on truths of our origins to a people rushing deathward, grown contemptuous in our ignorance of our source, prejudiced against our own survival, how shall

your utterance be heard?

Here, Armah begs the question: How do we connect the “uncountable seasons of our flowing to unknown tomorrows even more numerous” all while passing on “truths of our origins” to “a people rushing deathward...prejudiced against our own survival”? With distinction and eloquence, Armah forces us to face the uniqueness of our circumstances: Africana Studies is not just about teaching history, or facilitating political awareness, or establishing economic power. It is about sifting truths from untruths, about understanding how human beings work and recognizing what must be done to reestablish a better humanity.

For we know that in reality, “African” liberation is in fact human liberation. As Armah explains, “This land is ours, not through murder, not through theft, not by way of violence or any other trickery. This has always been our land. Here we began.” Although the text is a work of fiction in theory, it is difficult to disprove this statement: all facets of contemporary knowledge attest to the notion that Africa is the origin of humanity and human civilization, that Africans have directly influenced most notable civilizations outside of Africa, and also that African people (as defined by the possession of melanin, conceptual worldview, and common heritage) are indigenous to the continent of Africa.

With these things said, the validation for Africana Studies is much deeper than anything associated with the academy. Ideally, Africana Studies offers an opportunity for scholarship, where strategic and long-term planning for liberation can take place. The ultimate goal being much more than ensuring the survival of Africans in the west, but also to reestablish earthly harmony and balance as manifested in the African worldview. With Africa in many ways being the core and center of the earth, it is important that

Africa be the central focus of such conversation. According to Clarke (1984), Africana Studies scholars must in fact envision themselves as a part of an “International Priesthood” in which members take what is essentially a “holy order of commitment” and the endeavor of scholarship, study, nation-building and liberation become a serious, life-long practice.

Africana Studies is non-negotiable. It is distinct from other disciplines because it incorporates the study of various subjects and ideas without conflict. Theoretically, Africana Studies could have its own “science” component, “literature” component as well as other opportunities to study different subjects from the Africana point of view. In other words, Africana Studies is a space where all aspects of humanity could be examined. When we think about our origins, we know that our Ancestors studied all facets of the earth and of the cosmos: all aspects of all things. However, they were grounded in a worldview and understanding which reflected themselves. This worldview also happened to be a vanguard approach to the sciences, to spirituality, to literature, etc. In contemporary society, we are essentially being asked to do the opposite: we are asked to study all things but through the lens of Europe. Such a thing in and of itself would not be so bad—to look at the world through the eyes of another—however it has proven to be detrimental to the entire world and created mass destruction on a grand scale. History proves this fact and there is no denying it. Africana Studies goes far beyond the idea of simply studying African people. It really speaks to a shift in awareness and a return to the source of life, reconnecting to the essence of humanity. It is *that* important, *that* invaluable, and *that* necessary. It is a portal through which we can begin to envision liberation and restore the kingdoms of our Ancestors.

CHAPTER 5

AFRICANA STUDIES AND THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEW

By definition, the African worldview is a compilation of African ways of thinking, being and doing which began with the first people of humanity: Africans. According to Carruthers (1999) the African worldview “is distinct and universal among African people who have been uncorrupted by foreign influence” (22). Carruthers (1999) goes on to examine Chiekh Anta Diop’s idea of the “cultural, historical and linguistic unity of Africa” based on several major premises:

1. Africa is united culturally in all aspects of human activity and such unity has persisted through time
2. The black worldview was established first by the Kushites and transferred to Kemet, where it was developed to a remarkable profundity and later disseminated throughout Africa
3. Biologically and culturally, transnationally and dischronically, the African peoples were one (225).

Therefore, the African worldview is a reflection of cultural continuity and similarities among the indigenous people of Africa. The irony of contemporary discourse is that words like “American,” “Western,” and “European” are used without question, and individuals only need to submit to the usage of these terms in order to gain access to the power structures to which these terms lend themselves. However, Africans are consistently charged with the task of defining themselves and despite the extraordinary obstacles presented over the last 600 years, Africans have succeeded in doing so. Thus, the term “African worldview” is used with intention, it is grounded in solid evidence from both ancient and contemporary history. And it is this complex worldview that is

perhaps one of the most important aspects of each African's self-liberation. This is not to say that each African's self-liberation is outside of the collective context however, each African's journey towards self-liberation contributes to the sum total of African people's collective liberation.

Similarly, Carruthers (1995) explains that the African worldview is "the only viable foundation for African liberation" (p. 21). According to Carruthers (1995):

Wherever records still exist the wisdom of the African people proclaims the necessity of the restoration of the African worldview as the necessary condition for liberation. An assessment of history demonstrates that when the principle has been followed, liberation struggles have gone forward. In contrast retrogression has taken place when the principle has been abandoned (21-22).

In other words, the African worldview influences the way that African people ultimately envision the world. As mentioned, African liberation rests on the shoulders of the African Worldview: the African worldview is the main ingredient in the recipe for liberation.

Carruthers (1999) explains the difference between ideology and worldview as follows: "Since ideology is largely associated with the rationalization of class interests, it does not encompass the idea of a worldview which includes the way a people conceive the fundamental questions of existence and organization of the universe" (21). With this in mind, and to use Carruthers' framework, a worldview is original, and the worldview of any culture is necessarily a composition of ideas and understandings with regard to the foundational questions of humanity: existence and the organization of the universe. Diop (1989) explicates the irony of attempting to prove that an African worldview even exists:

Anthropologists have invented the ingenious, convenient, fictional notion of the 'true Negro,' which allows them to consider, if need be, all the real Negroes on earth as fake Negroes, more or less approaching a kind of Platonic archetype, without ever attaining it...yet if one stuck strictly to scientific data and archaeological facts, the prototype of the white race would be sought in vain throughout the earliest years of present-day humanity. The Negro has been there

from the beginning: for millennia he was the only one in existence. Nevertheless, on the threshold of the historical epoch, the ‘scholar’ turns his back on him, raises questions about his genesis, and even speculates ‘objectively’ about his tardy appearance... (274).

The wonderful thing about Africana Studies is that while it is a fairly new “discipline” as recognized within the academy, large bodies of work exist and the blueprint for scholarship has been laid out. An Africana Studies curriculum must involve an examination of Africa and the African worldview. For newer scholars, much of this work has already been done. Scholars like Diop, Obenga, Jackson, and Carruthers, have provided exceptional intellectual maps in Africana scholarship, which can be followed exactly as they are laid out. A new scholar must attach himself or herself to the Africana Studies genealogy to be effective. If, as Myers (2011) proclaims, Africana Studies is the extension of “Africans studying,” then it is essential to know what Africans were studying prior to the development of an Africana Studies department and to mimic and extend these studies. Or, as edified in the *Instructions of Merykare*, “imitate your fathers and your ancestors/ their speeches endure in writings/ open and read them and copy the knowledge” (Carruthers, 1999, p. 116). This imitation is powerful and important; it must be done in order to adequately extend the tradition. However, the road will be much simpler because the ancestors spent lifetimes sifting through information and accumulating knowledge.

Africana Studies has the task of completing a project initiated in the heart of its greatest and most recent adversaries: the trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, and imperialism. Extending the work of scholars like Martin R. Delany, Arturo Schomburg, Cheikh Anta Diop, John Henrik Clarke, Jacob Carruthers et al, Africana Studies must continue to examine human history from its earliest origins, piecing together the

manifestations associated with our collective time on earth. For many, the appearance of a large gap in time is off-putting: *how can ancient history possibly have any tangible affect on today's events?* Africana Studies has the ability to function as much more than a historic reflection: Africana Studies exists as a practical and effective solution to the contemporary struggles facing African people in the pursuit of liberation. Africana Studies examines what Clarke (1967) calls the “triumphs and failures” of existence, providing a frame of accurate reference and tangible solutions to age-old and very new problems. Following Clarke’s methodology, an examination of the beginning of African existence is not only logical, it also provides a means of understanding what elements sustain humanity and what behaviors and elements do not.

While Africana Studies’ position within the Western academy is relatively new, the antecedents of Africana Studies speak to a strategic endeavor combining efforts to recover lost information while also creating improved conditions for African people all over the world. Africana Studies, in the contemporary sense, has always carried the torch of African liberation as its chief endeavor. While Africana Studies should certainly continue to measure the ways that it is effectively achieving this goal, the idea of activism as strictly “action-based” and Africana Studies as strictly “academic-based” is unfounded. Thus, Africana Studies emerges as a functional tool for liberation in that the genealogical foreparents of Africana Studies have historically demonstrated an explicit decision to do so.

Africana Studies encompasses the totality of African humanity, providing a space for a continuous and critical analysis of the social spiritual, political, ideological and methodological texts and practices of African people. Thus, the African worldview

emerges as a natural occurrence, birthed from the commonalities found throughout the continent. Recognizing these natural similarities and analyzing their implications opens up a space for critical discussions about what works and what does not work for humanity. Obenga (2004) examines the African worldview through various examples of linkages between seemingly different African cultural or ethnic groups. According to Obenga (2004) there is a “profound historical kinship” which links all regions of Africa from the earliest period of documented civilization—pharonic Egypt or Kemet—until today (p. 50). For example, in the ancient Egyptian pharonic philosophy or the Ancient Kemetic Worldview, the beginning of all beginnings was *Nwn*—the primal waters that existed before creation (Obenga, 2004, p. 45). Obenga goes on to examine the links between the Ancient Kemetic worldview and the worldview of subsequent African cultures like the Bambara and Akan. According to Obenga (2004), the Bambara worldview examines the creation of earth and humanity through the primal waters of preexistence. The Bambara worldview surmises the beginning as a time when waters, coming from a central body of water in the sky, bubbled across earth (Obenga, 2004, p. 47). Similarly, in the Akan worldview *Tano* or *Ta kora* is the great river god, who is also a creator (p. 47). In Dahomey (Benin), the Niger River is called *Kora*, which means “immense one” (p. 47). As Obenga (2004) explains:

Over and again in African tradition, similar references to easterly sources, and to water as the venue of primal creation, keep recurring. The ultimate form assumed by the many watery venues is the greatest of all waters, the river deity of the primal waters. The myth is a vessel for a constant idea, that of water as a force imparting vitality to the earth. In a process traceable throughout black Africa all the way back to pharonic antiquity, we find such references to the Great Waters, the primordial, creative energy, idealized to the point of divinity. Water, a medium inexhaustible in its fascination, is linked to the fertility of farmland, inseparable from the fecundity of beings and things (p. 48).

Examining every facet of African existence, and the fundamental ways that African worldviews are connected, allows the universality of the African worldview to reveal itself on its own terms. Thus, the universality of African people emerges as a concrete reality that speaks to thousands of years of concurrent knowledge production.

Carruthers (1999) explains that the *Universal African Worldview* is “distinct and universal among African people who have been uncorrupted by foreign influence” a fact which goes back to the explorations of Martin Delany and Edward Wilmot Blyden during their respective field studies on the continent, prior to the Berlin Conference partitioning in 1884-1885 (p. 22). Essentially, the African worldview is the way that Africans view the world or what Carruthers calls “African Deep Thought.” Carruthers (1995) examines African Deep Thought as follows:

In comparing the Deep Thought of Kemet with that of Basic Africa, the patterns are too complimentary, the resemblances too striking, the parallels too extensive, the connections too intimate to be other than indicators of a profound unity. The question is one of anteriority. The age-old wisdom is that the pattern of Nile Valley civilization first emerged in Basic Africa and then traveled down to the area later occupied by Kemet, developed to a remarkable level and then returned to and influenced further developments throughout the continent (p. 87)

Carruthers provides several cultural and linguistic examples to support the notion of an African worldview. For example, the Dinka are a group of Africans who live in the White Nile Valley and are typically associated with what is known as the South Sudan. Among the Dinka, the Creator is conceptualized as a “Creator-parent” (Carruthers, 1995, p. 68). The word *cak* conveys the ideas of creation, production, and naming. *Cak* also means to give, educate and create. The Dinka word *Wet Nhialic* means Divinity or Divine Speech, “the truth or what really absolutely *is*” (Carruthers, 1995, p. 67). Among the Gikuyu of East Africa, *Ngai* (the Creator) is self-created. *Ngai* communicates through

the manifestations of the sun, moon, stars and rain (Carruthers, 1995, p. 78). According to the Gikuyu, humans must master the art of sacred speech. “Miraculous elders” or *Athuri* are trained through ritual and discipline to receive direct messages from God (Carruthers, 1995, p. 78). *Athuri* are viewed as the highest spiritual authority and work as interpreters, translating divine messages for the larger community. Similarly, the Soto-Tswana word for the Creator—*Modimo*—also means “the beginning” and refers to the primordial world itself (Carruthers, 1999, p. 77). According to Soto-Tswana Deep Thought, *Modimo* gave each *Motho-Umontu* (human being) a *seriti* or “spirit”: a portion of and the same quality as, the Divinity itself (Carruthers, p. 77). The *seriti* of each person lives forever and is the basis of communication with the elders once a person transcends the physical world. The Soto-Tswana believe that there is a distinction between the visible and invisible worlds.

With this in mind, the African worldview becomes more than an assumption of superficial linkages based on phenotype or location. It becomes much more intrinsic and evolves as a deeper, more permanent cultural characteristic of various groups living on or descended from the continent of Africa. Fu Kiau (1991) provides insight regarding the Bantu-Kongo worldview. According to Fu Kiau (1991) the Bantu-Kongo perceive humanity as power, “a phenomenon of perpetual veneration from conception to death—a perpetual reality that cannot be denied” (p. 8). According to Fu Kiau (1991), the Bantu-Kongo define the Creator as *Kalunga* (the-one-who-is-complete-by-self, the all-in-all), a term that is also synonymous with *Nzambi* (p. 114). Fu Kiau explains that prior to the influx of Judeo-Christian ideas, *Nzambi* referred to the “complete power energy that gave birth to *moyo*, ‘life,’ and to *luyalungunu*, “universe” (1999, p. 114).

The Deep Thought of the Bantu-Kongo, Dinka, Akan, and Soto-Tswana are just a few examples of the many components of the African worldview. It is no coincidence that these examples of the African worldview are specifically grounded in African spirituality. The African worldview is itself grounded in the interconnectedness between all aspects of life. Therefore, an authentic examination of the African worldview—based on the collective Deep Thought of Africa—is necessarily grounded in an understanding of the world where math, science, spirituality, and literature intersect without a contradiction in terms or conditions. The Deep Thought of Africa, or the African worldview, proves the consistency in thought among Africans time and time again. However, uncovering the African worldview is in itself a magnanimous process involving research, examination, and synthesis. More importantly, a working knowledge of African languages is essential along with a committed generation of scholars willing to participate in the endeavor of translating and conceptualizing African ideas in ways that can be conveyed outside of the language group: the Chiekh Anta Diops, Theophile Obengas, Ayi Kwei Armahs, Ngugi wa Thiong’os and Bunseki Fu Kiaus of Africana Studies. According to Ani (1991):

Those of us who have been committed to Pan Afrikan liberation and self-determination have been studying, researching, learning and teaching about the genius of Ancient Afrikan civilizations for many, many years. We have been making claims that have been largely built on a combination of faith, intuition, and common sense. After all, we are the oldest people. We must therefore be the wisest having been the first to begin the cultural process. We have depended on the sacred texts of Kemet and cautiously used the distorted anthropological descriptions of Europeans as we have attempted to piece together a civilizational portrait which could be used as a template of Afrikan cultural reconstruction...Our approach is continually challenged by those who claim that there *is* no ‘Afrikan worldview,’ that each Afrikan society is fundamentally different, and that the concrete substance of Afrikan culture has been destroyed and is now lost within such abstractions as ‘worldview.’ According to this

ideological position, the Afrikan connection is nonexistent, nothing but a figment of the Afrikan nationalist imagination” (p. xi-xii).

Ani (1991) examines the very real challenge that Africana Studies faces: operationalizing the definition of the African worldview. According to Ani (1991), “We have been reaching back into our Ancestral traditions to express Afrikan-centered concepts in Afrikan terms” in ways that allow African scholars to “think again with Afrikan minds” (p. xvi). Africana Studies does not assume that Africans born in the continent will automatically be able to think with “Afrikan minds” nor can it assume that Afrikans born outside of the continent cannot think with their Afrikan minds. Instead, the proof manifests itself through alignment. Accessing the indigenous Deep Thought of Africa would also require radical changes, in the way that African people think about every aspect of life. Realigning with the African worldview i.e. principles and ways of thinking about life manifest an African experience that is at least a trusted departure from the current experiences of Africans around the world who are victimized by the western European power structure. What do African people have to lose by examining the ways of life and living, which were used by their African ancestors prior to colonialism?

Carr’s (2006) *Unbroken Genealogy Approach* is extremely important in historicizing Africana Studies before it was acknowledged as a discipline, and recognizing these links the discussion of community involvement will become much clearer. When we think of someone like John Henrik Clarke, a community-trained scholar, who would later train others within the community (such as Malcolm X), it becomes much clearer that the interaction between scholarship and the community has always been fluid. In fact, when reviewing the intellectual genealogy of many community leaders (who existed outside of the academy) we find that there was an extraordinary link

to scholarship (from Marcus Garvey and Hubert Harrison to David Walker and Elijah Muhammad). All of these things speak to the interconnection between scholarship, activism and community leadership. If anything, the contemporary delinking of community activism with scholarship is probably the worst mistake that African people can make. The anti-intellectualism of today's society (within and outside of the university) has created a disdain for true scholarship and a refusal to embrace the *Unbroken Genealogy Approach*. This is highly problematic and is surely the culprit for the lesser effective movements in recent times, as well as the complete abandonment of true activism to some extent. With these things said, it becomes apparent that if Africana Studies focuses on educating and developing scholarship, and African people remain the focus, community involvement will necessarily be a major component of the curriculum. However, such involvement necessitates a high level of assessment and inquiry: no community endeavor should be ensued without first examining how such a thing has been done before. If scholarship and mastery is the focus, then community endeavors will necessarily be much more effective and reflect the organization of previous movements.

Africana Studies is charged with the task of being the vehicle through which the African worldview is examined, manifested and ultimately utilized for the purposes of African liberation. If it isn't doing those things, it isn't Africana Studies. Africana Studies encompasses the totality of African humanity, providing a space for a continuous and critical analysis of the social spiritual, political, ideological and methodological texts and practices of African people. Thus, the African worldview emerges as a natural occurrence, birthed from the commonalities found throughout the continent. Recognizing these

natural similarities and analyzing their implications opens up a space for critical discussions about what does and does not sustain humanity.

Carr (2011) explains that Africana Studies “must leverage the social, political and cultural capital that commanded its birth into the level of intellectual engagement necessary to widen the tributaries flowing from the African experience to human knowledge and advancement.” This political and cultural capital is what makes up the African worldview, and is what inspires and directs African liberation movements. The “intellectual engagement” needed to open up the flow from the African experience towards human advancement is also a significant aspect of African liberation. Carr (2012) draws on the examples of two contemporary African scholars—Ayi Kwei Armah and Ngugi wa Thiong’o—to further extend Carruthers’ challenge. According to Carr (2012), Armah is one of the few Africans in the world trained to transcribe Mdw Ntr (Egyptian hieroglyphs) and wa Thiong’o has emerged as a leading advocate for restoring African languages as the primary method of communication across the continent. Carr (2012) asserts that the archives of African people—written or otherwise maintained—must be “placed in a constellation with one another” and then placed within a larger context as well (363). In other words, the body of archival information relating to the global African experience must be allowed to speak for itself as authentically as possible, and to ultimately converse with itself through translation between African languages.

CHAPTER 6

THE AFRICAN WORLDVIEW (X) ANCIENT KEMET (=) *MDW NTR*

I. *MDW NTR*: A Theory and Methodology

According to Carruthers (1995), the African worldview is distinct and, when it is “modified to account for modern conditions,” the African worldview is “the only viable foundation for African liberation” (p. 21). Carruthers (1995) explains further:

Wherever records still exist the wisdom of the African people proclaims the necessity of the restoration of the African worldview as the necessary condition for liberation. And assessment of history demonstrates that when the principle has been followed, liberation struggles have gone forward. In contrast retrogression has taken place when the principle has been abandoned (21-22).

In the novel *The Healers*, Armah (2000) chronicles the journey of Densu as he develops his intelligence, spirit and leadership. At a point in the text when Densu is confused about his future, his teacher Damfo challenges him as follows:

“If you bring together all your scattered energies,’ he said, ‘then you can see your own strength. After that you can judge whether you really are weak or strong. But have you done so yet? Have you brought all the parts of yourself together?” (p. 86).

Damfo’s advice can be extended to African people as a whole: African people must bring together their scattered parts in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the African experience since time began. This bringing together of the pieces—collectively known as the African worldview—allows African people to see themselves clearly and analyze their collective future. African people must define their existence, and review the methods of African existence that have evolved over time and since time began, selecting those methods which best fit the ideals African people define for themselves. The ideals that African people define for themselves must be life-affirming or else they would not be “ideal” nor would they perpetuate “existence.” When Africans decide which ideals are

life-affirming, Africans will be able review their current existence and decide which aspects support these collective ideals.

Carruthers provides what might be the most important definition of the African Worldview through his examination of *Mdw Ntr*. According to Carruthers (1995), *Mdw Ntr*—Divine Speech—is the ancient Kemetic worldview and the word itself encompasses oral and written human speech, science, math, metaphysics and Divine Speech (p. 40). According to the Kemites, the road to all things begins and ends with *Mdw Ntr*. Every aspect of life must ultimately manifest itself as a “Divine Conversation” between humans and the Creator, through the investigations and conclusions about the earth and the cosmos (Carruthers, 1999, p. 40). In the ancient Kemetic worldview, *Mdw Ntr* was both a theory and methodology; it provided a way to think about existence—from creation onward—while also providing criteria through which everyday life can be assessed and approached. This chapter will explore *Mdw Ntr* as a methodology and examine specific aspects of the ancient Kemetic worldview.

Carruthers (1999) challenges Africans to reorganize the world according to the African worldview, in the hopes of establishing harmony between mankind and the universe, and in securing true liberation for people of African descent (261). According to Carruthers (1999), “Western historiography is based upon the records of Eurasian warfare and conquest” (p. 263). Carruthers stresses the need for Africans to commit to restoring the “true principle of human activity” by writing an accurate history of not only the world, but also the African presence in the western hemisphere. He advocates the Africanizing of curricula in “preparation for Africanizing the world” and identifies the functionality of teaching classical African languages like *Mdw Ntr*, along with teaching

the ancient African concepts of math, science, agriculture and medicine, all of which are readily available in the existing literature from ancient Kemet (Carruthers, 1999, p. 264).

In much the same way, Carruthers (1984) maintains that the African worldview is “essential to a proper explanation of world history” (p. 14). According to Carruthers (1984) “the formulation of an African worldview is the essential beginning point for all research which is based upon the interests of African people “ (p. 15). With this in mind, the African worldview emerges as more than simply African history or an examination of the African social sciences; instead, the African worldview redefines *world* history, and exists as a universal methodology designed by and for Africans. In other words, Africana Studies grounds humanity in the science of *being*, emerging as a tool of African liberation and a weapon against oppression. African liberation becomes more tangible as Africans identify their ancestral lineage and genealogical inheritances, beginning to utilize the African science of existence—or worldview—that inspired some of humanity’s greatest achievements.

The compartmentalization of *Mdw Ntr* as “hieroglyphics,” and the focus on *Mdw Ntr* as a system of writing alone can be problematic. The danger of Egyptology, posited within the western European worldview, is that it seeks to divide the ancient Kemetic worldview into categories—like religion or philosophy or science—which reflect contemporary European ways of thinking. Unfortunately this kind of translating avoids the cultural framework, which gave birth to Kemet and its descendants. As Obenga (1997) explains, *Mdw Ntr* was both a language and a script, and the most ancient written language on the continent of Africa circa 3300 B.C. E. (pp. 36-37). According to Obenga (1997):

The ancient Egyptians created a holistic script that, indeed, represents the only semiological system in the world to be so full and complete. In their attempt to express the notion of order in the universe and to make manifest the fundamental evidence of this order, the ancient Egyptians searched for and explained a comprehensive and complete view of the universe. In fact, the script itself is a philosophical codification of the universe, making it visible in writing. The sheer scope of the different types of phenomenon in the universe (celestial beings, humans, animals, plants, minerals, aquatic beings, terrestrial beings, luminous beings, etc.) reveals a total of over eight hundred symbols. All of the phenomena are distinct, yet part and parcel of the unity, systematization, and organization of all knowledge regulated by a rational order where both spirit and matter in unity makeup what we call reality (37).

Similarly, Carruthers (1995) examines the connection between *Mdw Ntr* as written text and *Mdw Ntr* as “Divine Speech,” all of which is fundamentally grounded in the idea of Deep African Thought or the African Worldview. Carruthers (1999) explains the link between Deep African Thought—written and oral—and written scripts—like *Mdw Ntr*—thusly:

But let us add this one caveat: while Cheikh Anta Diop made a valuable contribution in pointing out that Kemetic culture helps us to validate and interpret the thought of ‘Black Africa’ (Diop 1991, 309) Amadou Hampate Ba has brought new insight into the question of anteriority, especially at the epistemological level. *It is the living oral tradition that helps to understand properly the written tradition of Kemet” (p. 87).*

In extending this notion further, and using what we know about the cyclical pattern of African existence, the African worldview emerges as a both/and phenomenon. Speech is both written *and* oral, and yet no matter the *form* speech must still manifest itself as something *informed*. While the narrative of human history proclaims that written speech emerges after spoken speech, the fact remains that Deep Thought and Divine Speech are consistent throughout. This proves that the term *Mdw Ntr* could theoretically be applied to all African worldviews, provided they are indigenous to African people, and reflect deep thinking as a manifestation of conversations with the divine energies of the world.

In Ayi Kwei Armah's novel *KMT: In The House of Life* (2002) the scribes of Ancient Kemet become alive through historically informed creativity. On writing in particular, the scribe Irity Sen explains:

No matter how much you talk, you use only a small number of sounds. You repeat them. You vary them. They come out as different words. To write words, we make images that stand in place of each sound. Learning those images takes little time. It's like this: There is no secret. To write a word, you first have to listen to it. Carefully. A word is sound after sound put together. By itself, each sound is only noise. From coming together, sounds gain meaning. To write, separate the sounds, then group them in the order of their hearing. The reader takes the sounds, not singly but group by group and they become words again" (p. 262).

Through Irity Sen's reflection, Armah examines how writing was used in Ancient Kemet. Not only did writing originate in Africa, but it also emerges as a fascinating method, which would ultimately revolutionize humanity. Armah goes on to explain through the reflection of another scribe that writing was a form of technology, which allowed the Kemites to convey messages precisely without variance. Thus, a reader could be a long distance from the writer (who is also the speaker) and still be able to access the message in its purest form. This technology, which is one of the fundamental technologies of today's world, is one of the most lasting and liberating aspects of the African Worldview. Thus, writing becomes a powerful tool used to manifest all that *Mdw Ntr* encompasses. As a form of *Mdw Ntr* or Divine Speech, writing becomes an important aspect of African liberation. Reading the messages left from Africans throughout time is an important step in accessing the African worldview. With this in mind, written *Mdw Ntr* is probably the greatest masterpiece of Ancient Kemet. It is also a direct descendant of *Mdw Ntr* as Divine Speech. Where writing exists in Africa, it manifests itself as an extraordinary resource and where it does not exist in "book form" the "writing" must be located and

examined wherever it may be: in memorized histories, on the walls, on the bodies, and in the sounds of a culture.

Obenga (2004) explains that ancient Kemet's best work was in fact produced at its beginning. According to Obenga (20004):

The construction of the pyramids, the invention of the 365-day calendar, the development of normative values and ethical codes in wisdom literature and instructional books, the clear progress made toward abstract thinking aimed at the understanding of the Whole—such are the extraordinary feats to be credited to the first dynasties of pharonic Egypt. Right from the beginning, with a remarkable immediacy, this civilization achieved fundamental breakthroughs, generated monumental inventions, produced intellectual works of great moral value, explored questions of key philosophical importance. By what “miraculous” means were the ancient Egyptians able, right from the beginnings of their national history, to produce such marvels, of such greatness, and in such abundance? The question will remain perennially open (p. 83)

Obenga—an established linguist, scientist and premiere authority on Kemetic civilization—reveals that there is still so much to be learned about ancient Kemet. Undoubtedly, the “miraculous” means of ancient Kemet are in fact in its pre-dynastic history, which continues to be uncovered through inquiry and investigation. Even still, the ancient Kemetic Worldview provides key links to not only the origin of humankind but also the origin of thinking and the initiation of accumulated knowledge bases. With this in mind, *Mdw Ntr* exists as a key link between the present and the infinite past. If the dawn of ancient Kemet produced its most impeccable contributions, then whatever was before *that* must have informed and inspired the developers of ancient Kemetic civilization.

Since *Mdw Ntr* is both a theory and a methodology—existing as both a way and language of life—examining the texts of ancient Kemet helps to provide a context for the ancient Kemetic Worldview. As mentioned, the ancient Kemetic Worldview provides a

blueprint for humanity, as it is the oldest translatable record of humanity's way of life. More importantly, for contemporary Africans, *Mdw Ntr* provides a direct link to the ancestors, going back to the beginning of remembered time. To the advantage of continental Africans, memorized histories discussing migrations, lineage, and origins solidify the inextricable connection between the first Africans and contemporary Africans: the first humans and contemporary humans. Thus, an exploration of *Mdw Ntr* is necessary to understand humanity itself, Africans as the direct descendants of the first humans, and Africans as they bear contemporary witness to humanity: defining and defending it in the face of opposing European worldview.

Carruthers (1999) explains that the root word of *Mdw Ntr*, “*mdw*,” means staff or cane and is “equivalent to the idea of authority or authoritative utterance” and is associated with the “potent word” (p. 39). *Mdw Ntr* or “Divine Speech,” was a result of the Divine Conversations between the Creator and humankind. *Mdw Nfr* or “Good Speech” was within the realm of humanity and dealt mostly with governance and ethics. The ancient Kemites believed that upon consistent practice of *Mdw Nfr*, human beings were able to approach the apex of existence: *Mdw Ntr* or “Divine Speech.” On the contrary, *Mdw Djew* or “evil speech,” and *TfTf* or “idle chatter” were thought to guide humanity in the opposite direction of *Mdw Ntr*. Implicit in understanding *Mdw Ntr* is the comprehension of everything that *Mdw Ntr* is not: *Mdw Djew* or *TfTf*.

According to Carruthers (1999) the Shabaka Text (ca. 700 B.C.E.) summarizes the Kemetic foundation of the explanation of wisdom (p. 40). Shabaka, his brother Pianky, and his father Kashta liberated Kemet from foreign domination from their base in Kush—farther up the Nile (p. 40). The Shabaka Text (also referred to as the “Memphite

Theology”) was a creative replication of an older Kemetic text (p. 40). In other words, Shabaka commissioned the renewal of *Mdw Ntr* through the restoration of an important document, which he deemed worth remembering. At a time when foreigners were influencing Kemetic culture and threatening the sustainability of ancient Kemetic civilization, Shabaka decided to “remember” the important elements of accumulated, Kemetic knowledge bases. Carruthers (1999) credits the refreshing influence of Shabaka—a Kushite from inner Africa—as an important aspect of the Shabaka Text’s Africanity. Thus, the Shabaka Text represents ancient Kemet at the crossroads: in much the same way that Africana Studies (as defined above) represents the African Worldview at a more contemporary crossroad. The Shabaka Text also reflects the African response to crisis: remembering the ways of the Ancestors. When in doubt, Africans must *Sankofa* as the Akan of West Africa would say or: “go back and get it.”

Carruthers (1999) transliterates an excerpt of the Shabaka Text—“the epistemological statement in the text which encompasses the metaphysical or theological basis”—as follows:

The power of the mind and tongue are in the limbs
The seeing of the eyes, the hearing of the ears,
The sniffing of the nose, are elevated to the mind,
Which causes every perception to come forth.
Then the tongue repeats the thoughts of the mind;
So, all of the creative forces are born,
Atum and the Primeval Powers.
All divine speech happened in the thoughts of the mind
and the commands of the tongue...
So all works and arts were made, the making of the two hands,
the walking of the two feet, the movement of all limbs;
in accordance with his command.
The speech of the thinking mind comes forth from the tongue
and makes the specialization of everything...
So Ptah was satisfied after making all things,
that is all divine speech (or all speech is divine). (p. 43).

Carruthers examines the inherent wisdoms of the Shabaka Text: 1) “experience defined as sensory perception is an initiator of the process of knowing” 2) speech is “the operational base of knowledge i.e. it is through speech that we know” and 3) “the ‘word’ truly creates for human consciousness” (pp. 43-44). The Shabaka Text provides an important glimpse into the “mind” of the mind, so to speak: it explains the process of knowing. According to Carruthers (1999) the Shabaka Text reiterates the ancient Kemetic understanding of Creation: the gods—Atum and the Primeval Powers—were born as a result of Ptah’s thinking and Ptah’s word. The ancient Kemites believed that Ptah gave the word and it was so. Essentially, human beings were expected to model their own creativity after the Creator’s example: thinking (which is in itself “speech”) and doing, as the logical progression of thought-speech (p. 44).

II. Seeing with *SIA*

As is typical, the ancient Kemites took the notion of creation—within the realm of humans—a step further. *Mdw Ntr* was essentially a manifestation of Divinely-inspired thought: through words “spoken” out loud, on papyri, or in actions. However, achieving *Mdw Ntr* was a process in and of itself: merely “thinking” and “doing” were not enough. Carruthers (1999) notes that the divine concepts of *Sia*, *Hu*, and *Heka* provided the methodology for *Mdw Ntr*:

Sia is the concept of exceptional intellectual clarity; *Hu* represents articulate command and *Heka* symbolizes extraordinary power. So indeed the mind thinks, the tongue orders and the body obeys—in that order. That is, when the mind sees with exceptional clarity, then the tongue speaks with authority and the limbs perform with extraordinary effectiveness and thus all good things come about; all great projects succeed. The command is obeyed when it is rightly conceived and articulately uttered because it is Maat (Truth)! (p. 45).

In order for human beings to manifest power—to be empowered—they must ultimately think with “exceptional clarity” and speak their intentions into existence. To be effective, one cannot speak without thinking, or do without first thinking and speaking. According to the ancient Kemites, thinking is the first step in speaking and also doing. Thinking initiates all actions. The more exceptional the clarity, the better.

This particular excerpt of the Shabaka Text reveals the complexity and simplicity of the ancient Kemetic Worldview. These three steps—*Sia*, *Hu*, and *Heka*—provide a simple method through which all things can ultimately be achieved. However, actualizing this method effectively is no easy task. Thinking with exceptional clarity, or *Sia*, requires an understanding of *Maat*⁶ and also the willingness to participate in Divine Conversation with spiritual entities outside the realm of humanity: ancestors, deities, and the Creator. Essentially, *Sia* is a process in and of itself: one must be taught to seek clarity, and one must learn how to gain as much clarity as possible, whenever possible.

Obenga (2004) confirms the ancient Kemetic inclination towards exceptional clarity through a transliteration of the “The Great Hymn to Aten”:

You appear, beautiful, on the horizon of the sky
Living sun disk, you who brought life into being
When you rise on the eastern horizon
You fill all lands with your beauty.
Beautiful you are, and great.
Your sparkle, high above the land entire.
Your rays embrace the lands to the ends of all your creation.
Being the sun, you have reached all the way to their boundaries,

⁶ *Maat* is the ancient Kemetic concept of Divinity Supreme. According to Obenga (2004): “In the philosophy of pharonic Egypt, *Maat* is a concept of central importance. It implies order, universal balance, cosmic regulation, justice, truth, truth-in-justice, rectitude and moral uprightness. The concept of balanced order is the permanent basis of pharonic civilization. Balanced order brings peace (*htp*), condemns crime (*dj 3yt*) and evil (*bin, djwt*)” (p. 189).

bonding them for your beloved son.
Far though you are, your rays are here on earth.
You are on people's faces, yet your motion is invisible.
When you retire to the western horizon,
earth grows dark as if in death.
People sleep indoors, their heads covered,
their eyes invisible to each to each.
If all their goods were stolen from upon their heads
they would not know it...
But at dawn, as soon as you rise on the horizon,
and shine as the sun disk in the day,
you dispel the darkness, shooting your rays.
Then the Two Lands celebrate.
Awakened, humans rise to their feet
because you have roused them...
What a multitude of things you have made,
even when they are invisible!
O Unique God, you who have no one above you,
you create the universe according to your heart,
being alone (pp. 99-102).

This excerpt alone provides an extraordinary amount of insight into the ancient Kemetic Worldview, the many aspects of which are ever-present even until today. In an effort to let the ancient Kemites speak for themselves, and within the context of their anterior motives, it is essential to examine “The Great Hymn to Aten” within its own context.

Composed by Amenophis IV-Akhenaten—pharaoh, poet, and philosopher—the Hymn exists as a testament to the Sun (referred to as both *Ra* and *Heru* throughout the text) (p. 107). Amenophis-Akhenaten describes several aspects of nature relative to the Sun, which speak to the accumulated knowledge of 18th Dynasty Kemet (ca. 1372 B.C.E.), as well as to his own *Sia* or exceptional clarity. Amenophis-Akhenaten reveals the following observations:

1. The Sun is “living” and subsequently initiates life. It begets and sustains life: all living things are dependent upon the Sun (p. 110).

2. The Sun's rays (*wbn*) which shine on the faces of humankind, are both visible and invisible. While the invisible rays (such as ultraviolet rays) perpetuate themselves towards earth, they are unseen by humankind (p. 110).
3. Even though the Sun is far away, its rays can be felt on earth (p. 111).
4. The Sun rises in the east and sets in the west. As the sun sets, darkness returns and humanity retires indoors. In many ways, this darkness causes the earth to be quiet as if in death. The darkness is in extreme contrast to the light, and leaves room for confusion (because human beings are unable to see as they do during the day).
5. Humanity rises with the Sun: the Sun awakens human beings. This awakening (both physical and spiritual) causes great joy to all earthlings. The Sun inspires.
6. The One, Unique God-Creator created the world according to its own heart "being alone").

The profundity of such *Sia* or exceptional clarity is inherent in a few very basic facts. Nearly 4,000 years ago, a man named Amenophis-Akhenaten chose to remember—through written *Mdw Ntr*—the accumulated knowledge of his culture. How did he know what he knew? To what degree did this knowledge improve upon his own existence, and the existence of those around him? Why would anyone need to *know* anything at all, for that matter? Can one exist without *knowing* and if so, how?

The proof of Amenophis-Akhenaten's insight is in its everlastingness. His insightful musings—written over 4,000 years ago—reflect the ever-present inquiry of humankind. In other words, Amenophis-Akhenaten's questions are also contemporary humanity's questions: they have not changed. However, the degree to which Amenophis-Akhenaten's conclusions are seriously interpreted in contemporary discourse is a whole other matter. Amenophis-Akhenaten's inquiry and emergent clarity—his ability to "see" with *SIA*—speaks to his anteriority as a descendant of the earliest humans, who were

African. How does contemporary humanity—driven with the European Worldview—extend this conversation? Why does the sophisticated, modern, Westerner ask 4,000-year-old questions? Moreover, when will the European Worldview admit its plethora of limitations? According to Beatty (1998), the observation of celestial phenomena is “a profoundly cultural activity which inevitably influences the way people create their image of celestial phenomena” (p. 3). In other words, the observations of ancient Kemites like Amenophis-Akhenaten reflect what Beatty (1998) refers to as “empirical observation in tandem with intellectual perception” (p. 3). Thus, observing the Sun is one thing; but perceiving the field and function of the Sun with clarity is a whole other thing. Understanding, then, emerges as a possible conclusion. To know and *understand* what is, and what exists, is a profound step in the direction of accumulating knowledge for the sake of posterity.

Humanity is way behind where it could be, due to the European Worldview’s attempt to guide the direction of humankind. Perhaps because of pride or prejudice, the European Worldview refuses to acknowledge the anteriority of ancient African civilizations. By doing this, the European worldview also refuses to acknowledge the logical developments of human thought, or to identify what questions have already been answered. As the proverbial African saying goes—“cutting off your nose to spite your face”—is never a good thing. Ironically, the 18th Century looters of ancient Kemet who came from Europe, were known for destroying or removing the noses of Kemetite artifacts: mostly as a means of desecrating the African features of said remains. Both literally and figuratively, the European worldview perpetuates the notion of annexation and dismemberment: cut off the nose, no matter what happens to the face. The “face” of

humanity is African: from inception to the present. Removing Kemet from the conversation of humanbeingness is in many ways, the metaphorical removal of the “nose” from the “face.”

This is all to say that *Sia* cannot be underestimated or taken lightly. While it is not within the scope of this paper to fully explicate the ancient Kemetic worldview—accumulated over several thousands of years—it is important to reiterate the anteriority of questions asked and conclusions determined. According to Obenga (1997), the language of a people begets insight:

To be conscious of reality connotes not only that one knows, but that he knows he knows. Language is inextricably linked to thought: it expresses a people’s philosophy. By definition, a people’s first explanation of themselves proceeds from how they name and conceptualize their language...By using the term *Mdw Ntr* to explain their language and consequently themselves, the Ancient Egyptians saw their language as a mirror that at once reflected the divine reality underlying the universe and projected the divine reality inside human beings upon the outside world (pp. 36- 37).

With this in mind, *Mdw Ntr* emerges as a supremely insightful development: a revolutionary step, which ultimately catapulted humanity forward in ways that have yet to be fully digested. *Mdw Ntr* is a highly rational endeavor, combining the written representation of intangible concepts in ways that ultimately resolve all visible and invisible matter. As mentioned, the technology involved with writing is in and of itself a revolutionary development. However, what writing does for the human mind is something even more extraordinary: it captures the essence of life. Obenga (1997) explicates this notion further:

On face, the script itself is a philosophical codification of the universe, making it visible in writing. The sheer scope of the different types of phenomenon in the universe (celestial beings, humans, animals, plants, minerals, aquatic beings, terrestrial beings, luminous beings, etc.) reveals a total of over eight hundred symbols. All of the phenomena are distinct, yet part and parcel of the unity,

systemization, and organization of all knowledge regulated by a rational order where both spirit and matter in unity make up what we call reality (p. 37).

According to Obenga (1997), *Mdw Ntr* expresses eternity: “a powerful tool that the ancient Egyptians used to store knowledge, instruct future generations, preserve culture, and conduct intergenerational dialogues that transcended time” (p. 39). In fact, serious training was required to deal with *Mdw Ntr* and “the scribe learned to speak and how to act and even what to want by internalizing the wisdom literature known as the *sb3yt* (teaching) through study and by observing, interacting with, imitating, and learning from those with more developed skills for ‘no one is born wise’” (Obenga, 1997, p. 39). Scribes were trained in the place of learning or school, ‘*t n sb3*, and the curriculum consisted of the wise teachings of the Ancestors as well as astronomy, mathematics, and geometry (p. 39).

Thus, *Mdw Ntr* as a methodology—and a blueprint from all successive developments within the collective African worldview—proves itself to be a language, way of life, curriculum, and criteria. Knowing, doing, thinking, writing, reading, and ultimately *being* are inextricably linked in the ancient Kemetic worldview. In the process of developing *Sia* or seeing with exceptional clarity, the Africans of ancient Kemet were presented with an extraordinary and well-defined methodological approach—leaving little to chance and instead, providing an exceptional and deliberate criterion through which anyone could be initiated. Everything and everyone in its specified order.

With this in mind, Obenga (1997) proclaims:

The present and forthcoming generation of African scholars must be faithful to the integrity of the past and also respond to the questions and issues of one’s own generation. Just as Maat does not proceed by convincing its opponents and making the see the light, so too must we, as African scholars, strive to speak Maat

and do Maat even in the face of opposition. To the extent that we do our job seriously, we will again access the spiritual and intellectual resolve to imagine an African future as stable as the pyramids and as enduring as the sb3yt (teachings).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: *MDW NTR* AND SELF-LIBERATION

The liberation of African people cannot exist outside of an examination of history. Historically, Africans have consistently provided some of if not the most revolutionary critiques of the European worldview. The confrontation between the African Worldview and the European worldview has certainly been the backdrop of the last 600 years at least. African ideas about governance, spirituality, education and human development have continued to challenge and oppose the European Worldview. Laws have been amended and changed, contradictions have been confronted, and the lived European experience has once again been afforded the opportunity to evolve for the better. However, these subtle changes have not proven to be enough to rid the European worldview of its damaging practices. Despite the civilizing missions of various generations of African people, the experiences of Africans victimized by European control have not elevated in ways that speak to the compatibility of the cultures. An examination of the African worldview, a deliberate investigation into the recent and distant past, cannot be any more laborious than the uphill battle of working to save America from itself. The patience and sacrifice involved in acquiring the tools that can ensure the African future seem to be more fruitful than the energies spent attempting to civilize Europeans. The accumulated knowledge of thousands of years of Deep African Thought was a direct and distinct threat to the structure of American enslavement. History proves that in every space where Africans found themselves under the oppression of Europeans, Europeans were committed to divorcing African people from their African worldview. Even in continental Africa, Europeans sought to dislocate African people from their worldview. Therefore, it is

imperative that African people work towards reclaiming their indigenous understanding of the world. Not only as a method of resistance, but also because the African worldview predates the European worldview and is proven to be more life-affirming and comparable to all Indigenous communities.

According to Obenga, scholars dedicated to African history must be willing and able to investigate the intricacies of what Carruthers would call “Deep African Thought.” Obenga (1997) explains that Africans must investigate who they are as a means of defining the collective African present-future. According to Obenga (1997) Western prejudice—manifested through scholarship—coerces African scholars to “commit treason” against African traditions (p. 32). Thus, Obenga (1997) challenges African scholars to conduct authentic examinations of Africa, “engaging the living African past on its own terms”:

...When we employ the notion of African philosophy, we begin to move toward explaining Africa on its own terms not those of the West. With African philosophy, we are able to reveal and build historical continuity, historical consciousness, and cultural unity (36).

The interaction between scholarship and community has always been quite fluid among Africans, despite the extenuating circumstances of enslavement and colonialism. The contemporary de-linking of community activism, liberation movements and scholarship is not only inconsistent with the African worldview, but it is also highly problematic and indicative of subversion. African Deep Thought continues to reflect a commitment to knowledge acquisition above all, and for the sake of posterity. For African people, posterity and the future emerge as an aspect of life which is constantly under siege, due to white supremacy and the contemporary vestiges of colonialism. With this in mind, it is imperative that African people utilize whatever methods available to secure their

collective longevity. Using the African worldview—through teaching and learning in Africana Studies—African people will be better equipped to manifest and recreate spaces of liberation and freedom.

African world liberation so happens to have had among its soldiers some of the most prolific scholars in the world, who just so happen to be African. Undoubtedly, their African origin informs the caliber of their excellence and at the same time it also places them in the larger context of the world's greatest minds of record. Then again, the world's record does not exist outside of African people, making African people the essential variable for a valid human equation. Rodney (2001) explains further: "African history must be seen as very intimately linked to the contemporary struggle of black people. One must not set up any false distinctions between reflection and action" (p. 67). With this in mind, Rodney clarifies what has become an incessant debate between "activists" and "scholars." According to Rodney, history is not just theory: it is one of the most important aspects of any revolutionary movement and is, in and of itself, a method of mobilization.

As a perpetual and present-future endeavor, the liberation of African people is a long-term project, which requires preparation for and advanced thinking about the livelihood of those who have yet to come. The decisions made by African people now will undoubtedly determine how the future Africans will experience life and how much of this life will be determined by mindset of the European oppressors. Carruthers (1995) identifies Hosea Easton, Henry Highland Garnet, David Walker, Martin Delany, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Henry McNeal Turner and Marcus Garvey as some of the important voices advocating the existence of what we now call the African worldview. Carruthers

(1999) explains that David Walker—mentored by Richard Allen—believed that the study of ancient Kemet was a necessary component of African liberation (240). Carruthers (1995) also notes that Martin R. Delany was one of the most consistent advocates of the African worldview, writing about the global African struggle and emerging as a prominent leader in the struggle against enslavement and western European imperialism. According to Delany (1852), Africans living in the United States were a nation within a nation, “as the Poles in Russia, the Hungarians in Austria, the Welsh, Irish, and Scotch in the British dominions” (209). Essentially, Delany (1852) advocated for the sovereignty of Africans living in the U.S. He believed that enslaved Africans had been “despoiled” of their purity and “corrupted”, inheriting the “vices” of their oppressors (p. 209). Delany’s genuine curiosity, committed research, and adoration for African people the world over contributed to his multi-faceted approach to pre-disciplinary Africana Studies and African liberation. Like Amenophis-Akhenaten, Delany saw with *Sia*. A trained physician, linguist, historian, activist/organizer, Pan-Africanist, publisher/journalist, Delany embodied the distinctive character of humanism indicative of his African ancestry. Similarly, Edward Wilmot Blyden also saw with *Sia*, displaying an unwavering commitment to repatriation, African liberation throughout the Diaspora, and the rebuilding of sustainable continental African institutions. In reflecting on his visit to ancient Kemet, Blyden (1873) wrote: “How shall I describe the emotions with which the first sight of this ancient country inspired me? How shall I select and reproduce in an order intelligible to others the thoughts which, in rapid succession, passed through my mind?” (p. 145).

According to Clarke (1967), the 19th Century was “The Century of Resistance” and there were two distinct freedom movements among Africans living in the U.S. (p. 7). During the earlier part of the 19th Century, 1) Africans united in a series of revolts against their enslavement, and 2) free Africans manifested a “concerted effort to free their enslaved brothers and sisters” (Clarke, 1967, p.7). Clarke refers to the layers of liberatory efforts from the late 18th Century—with Prince Hall and John B. Russwurm—to the 18th Century work of militant abolitionists like Henry Highland Garnet. According to Clarke Frederick Douglass also contributed significantly to African liberation (1967):

“Frederick was the noblest of all American black men of the 19th Century and one of the noblest of all Americans. This great abolitionist’s Civil Rights views are as valid today as they were a century ago” (p.8).

Clarke (1967) also identifies the significance of Sojourner Truth—a leader in the womanist movement and the first African woman to become an anti-slavery lecturer—as well as Araminta Harriet Tubman who he describes as “a pioneer rebel and anti-slavery activist” (p. 8). Essentially, the 20th Century was made possible by the 19th (Clarke, 1967, p. 8).

In many ways, Egypt or Kemet existed as a prototypical African worldview for scholars of the 19th Century and would later influence the direction of the scholarship of the 20th Century: long before the official development of Africana Studies as a discipline. In the early 1900’s Hubert Henry Harrison—a bibliophile and journalist—wrote the following:

But there is Egypt. And in the presence of her mighty pyramids and temples that have outstared the suns of 60 centuries we may reject the cold contempt, the prejudiced conjectures of a race whose religion is a lie, whose democracy is a sham, and whose accomplishments have all been made in the latest half-hour registered upon the face of the great clock of time.

Harrison encourages people of African descent to reject the “cold contempt” of the European Worldview and to embrace the teachings of their African foreparents, which “outstared the suns of 60 centuries.” Many African scholars explored the tragic flaws associated with the European worldview, and challenged African people to steer clear of the ideologies which supported white supremacy. According to Easton (1837):

Slavery, in its effects, is like a complicated disease, typifying evil in all its variety—in its operations, omnipotent to destroy—in effect, fatal as death and hell. Language is lame in its most successful attempt, to describe its enormity; and with all the excitement which this country has undergone, in consequence of the discussion of the subject, yet the story is not half told, neither can it be. We, who are subject to its fatal effects, cannot fully realize the disease under which we labor. Think of a colored community, whose genius and temperament of minds all differ in proportion as they are lineally or personally made to feel the damning influence of slavery, and, as though it had the gift of creating tormenting pangs of pleasure, it comes up, in the character of an accuser, and charges our half-destroyed, discordant minds, with hatred one towards the other, as though a body composed of parts, and systematized by the laws of nature, were capable of continuing its regular configurative movements after it has been decomposed. When I think of nature’s laws, that with scrupulous exactness they are to be obeyed by all things over which they are intended to bear rule, in order that she may be able to declare, in all her variety, that the hand made her is divine, and when in this case, I see and feel how she has been robbed of her means to perform her delightful task—her laws trampled under feet with all their divine authority, despoiling her works even in her most sacred temples—I wonder that I am a man; for though of the third generation from slave parents, yet in body and mind nature has never been permitted to half finish her work. Let all judge who is in the fault, God, or slavery, or its sustainers.

Easton (1837) examines the American institution of slavery, which ultimately damaged the “genius and temperament” of African minds and worked to stifle the natural development of African people. Easton implies that not only was the institution of enslavement extremely destructive, it also separated Africans from what would have been a more natural and indigenous development. Easton (1837) goes on to explain further:

Emancipation embraces the idea that the emancipated must be placed back where slavery found them, and restore to them all that slavery has taken away from them. Merely to cease beating the colored people, and leave them in their gore, and call it emancipation, is nonsense. Nothing short of an entire reversal of the slave system in theory and practice—in general and in particular—will ever accomplish

the work of redeeming the colored people of this country from their present condition (p. 52).

A reversal of the slave system in theory and practice, would require an examination of the worldview from which the theory and practice emerged. Thus, a distinct component of African liberation is in fact the rejection of the European worldview, which created the theory, and practice of the oppressive systems of enslavement and colonialism.

Historically, African people have consistently—and even in the face of extraordinary opposition—committed themselves to holding on to as much of the African worldview as possible. In some locations the expertise of a particular aspect of life may manifest itself in ways that are more readily available than in other spaces. Nonetheless, the imaginary lines partitioning Africa into “nation-states” with impenetrable divisions, are not only recent history, but they are also less meaningful in the long run and should never be given the space to interfere with the collective cultural communion among Africans. Wherever African people find themselves, and especially in the face of colonialism and enslavement, there has been an attempt to hold on to the African Worldview as tightly as possible by those who remember the land before contemporary times. For Africana Studies to be an effective mechanism through which African liberation is realized, African people must be even more committed to Pan-Africanism as a means of cultural renewal. These Pan-African sensibilities connected the minds of Arturo Schomburg of Puerto Rico with John Henrik Clarke of Georgia; allowed Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana to seek guidance from George Padmore of Trinidad; allowed Brasil’s Abdias do Nascimento to gain inspiration from the teachings of W.E.B. Dubois; and inspired Marcus Garvey of Jamaica to travel to the U.S. in search of Booker T.

Washington, born in Virginia. Thus, the African worldview—which is inherently Pan-African—is a living, breathing reality more than anything else.

As Chinweizu (1982) explains, an examination of what the European worldview has “contributed” to the “Third World” is in order. According to Chinweizu (1982) the European Worldview does not only affect the experience of African people, it also affects the ecology of the planet: “The biosphere is showing symptoms of a destabilization which is traceable to social aims, attitudes and activities which the West pioneered and of which it remains the exemplar” (226). Thus, Chinweizu challenges African people to assess the European worldview, and to determine if it informs a way of life, which will ultimately support humanity and the world’s ecology at-large. In other words, the task of African people becomes multifaceted and the liberation of Africans, the earth, and the living creations of earth from the domination of the European worldview, is paramount.

Essentially, African people must ask themselves:

1. Are European systems of thought, governance and religion life-affirming? Do they promote harmony between earth, humanity and the cosmos?
2. Can humanity maintain itself based on the direction in which human beings are moving with the descendants of western Europe in control?
3. What has the European worldview done for the collective wellbeing of humanity?
4. Is there evidence to support the notion that western European ways of being are in fact fruitful and will carry Europeans or any cultural group for that matter, into the new millennium whole?
5. What has the European worldview done to affirm humanity or to ensure the intellectual progress, physical wellness, and spiritual maturation of African people?
6. How do European standards of knowledge contradict and weaken African understandings with regard to education and the acquisition of knowledge?
7. Are European standards of human existence even high to sustain humanity?

Winnie Mandela (1984) examines the role that history played in illuminating the injustices perpetuated against Africans in apartheid South Africa. She credits her father, a history teacher, with providing her with the information she needed in her journey towards self-liberation—which would ultimately influence her life's work as an activist and political organizer. As Mandela (1984) explains:

When my father taught me history, I began to understand. I remember, distinctly, for instance, how he taught us about the nine Xhosa wars. Of course we had textbooks, naturally written by white men, and they had *their* interpretation, why there were nine 'Kaffir' wars. Then he would put the textbook aside and say: 'Now, this is what the book says, but the truth is: these white people invaded our country and stole the land from our grandfathers...My father taught us other songs which dealt with events in the history of our people...I still know the words today. The white makes a mistake, thinking the tribal black is docile and subservient" (pp 48-89).

Here, Mandela examines the ingenuity of her father—who at once demonstrated his own sense of freedom by informing his children of their historical inheritance and also inspired the self-liberation of his daughter, which would inform her work as a leader in the South African liberation struggle. Each part of freedom contributes to the whole of it, and as each African gains enlightenment, African people advance collectively.

Ironically, Africana Studies is accused of being "impractical," of being unable to find solutions for the "common" problems of "everyday" people. And yet, the "Champions of African Deep Thought"—who have committed their lives to what Clarke calls the "international priesthood" of deliberate and extensive scholarship, and the restoration of Africa—are in fact, deeply concerned with manifesting the highest quality of "everyday life" for African people worldwide every day. As African people move towards the accomplishment of securing the highest quality of "everyday life," liberation emerges as a clear destination, growing an exceptional harvest from the collective efforts

of this extended planting season. In "Study and Race" a lecture presented to the Young Men's Literary Association of Sierra Leone, Edward Wilmot Blyden explains (1893):

1. Mere knowledge of itself is not power—but the ability to know how to use that knowledge—and this ability belongs only to the mind that is disciplined, *trained*, *formed*

2. But for every one of you—for every one of us—there is a special work to be done—a work of tremendous necessity and tremendous importance—a work for the Race to which we belong. It is a great Race—great in its vitality, in its powers of endurance and its prospect of perpetuity...Your place has been assigned you in the Universe as Africans, and there is no room for you as anything else.

Blyden proclaims that Africans were selected by God to be African and to deny this is essentially blasphemous. For the African to turn his or her back against Africa, to privilege the European worldview over the African Worldview, is to go against the laws of nature.

Africans in this 21st Century are the inheritors of over 5,000 years of information which is, for the most part, readily available. While the translation of these texts is still a tedious process, so many ancient Kemetic translations and transliterations exist to inspire in-depth analysis moving forward. *Mdw Ntr* provides what is probably the most succinct, multifaceted aspect of the African Worldview. It is an original curriculum of sorts, it provides the tools that every African needs to see herself or himself clearly: not as a subject of conquer or white supremacy, but as a fully present, inquiring human being. *Mdw Ntr* reminds African people of their beginnings, and even presents a frame of reference that is not overtly riddled with oppression, enslavement, white supremacy, and capitalism. And yet, *Mdw Ntr* is not a utopia either, it reflects the real, lived epic of humanity's existence: with the perpetual ebb and flow of what Clarke (1967) referred to

as the triumphs and failures of humankind. Thus, *Mdw Ntr* is liberating in and of itself. It is liberation, it inspires liberation, and the acquisition of the ancient Kemetic Worldview is essentially a tangible freedom for African people.

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