



Asante, Molefi Kete. *African Pyramids of Knowledge: Kemetic, Afrocentricity and Africology*. Brooklyn, NY: Universal Write Publications LLC, 2015, pp.286, ISBN: 978-0-9825327-0-6. Reviewed by Aaron X. Smith (Assistant Professor of Instruction, Temple University; asmith10@temple.edu).

In a powerful rallying cry for a reconnection to ancient African consciousness, Molefi Kete Asante sought to “overthrow parochialism, provincialism, and narrow Wotanic visions of the world by demonstrating the usefulness of an Afrocentric approach...” His book, *African Pyramids of Knowledge* presents a most powerful academic synthesis of Asante’s numerous theoretical deconstructions of Eurocentric theoretical domination. This work can be easily enjoyed by Afrocentric thinkers and scholars from various other academic disciplines and non-institutional perspectives. Asante has constructed a revealing work that continues in the enlightening vein of classic works such as, *The Miseducation of the Negro* (Woodson 1933), *The Afrocentric Idea* (Asante 1998) and *The Afrocentric Paradigm*, (Mazama 2002). This paradigm shifting work has the potential to reorient the reader away from limiting traditional perspectives on African knowledge towards “an African truth that has been staring us in the face for thousands of years”.

Asante draws upon an increasing dissatisfaction with intellectual and cultural Eurocentric hegemony, while promoting the benefits of having “a plural vision in a nation.” Interacting with various phenomena according to a worldview which adversely impacts the development and promotion of unifying and empowering Afrocentric thought is described as counter-productive by Asante. The elevation of the Eurocentric worldview, historiography and socio-political particularism to the level of a Universal standard speaks to the heart of the problem this text works to remedy. Through the promotion of an Afrocentric idea which has evolved into an Afrocentric Paradigm, Asante unequivocally asserts that a massive liberation movement can be initiated through readers being located within the realities of an unparalleled, ancestral cultural and conscious chronology. This work continues a long-standing approach to information advanced by Molefi Kete Asante which asserts that Afrocentric agency is a necessary component in the regaining of sanity for African people throughout the Diaspora. Asante attacks the problem from four primary vantage points, intellectual, mobilizing, confronting and asserting. The book is divided into four sections (1) The Intellectual Landscape, (2) A Mobilization of Ideas, (3) Confronting the Historical Situation and (4) Asserting the New Cultural Reality.

Through a multifaceted approach to the issues of cultural dislocation and revisionist history Asante methodically deconstructs the problematics within the existing academic and cultural cannon while erecting a new set of standards and understandings based upon the resurrection of African historical and intellectual foundations.

The first section (*The Intellectual Landscape*) addresses the need for African people throughout the Diaspora to utilize what's available the way that our ancient ancestors implemented innovative forms of creativity in order to survive, flourish and advance civilization. Asante describes a revolution to decolonize information that is being led by a number of Afrocentric scholars. These lines of Afrocentric inquiry include scholars such as; "Kimani Nehusi, Ana Monteriro Ferreira, Reiland Rabaka, Christel Temple, Michael Tillotson, Nilgun Anadolu-Okur, and Lusaka Nkala..." This section establishes a sound foundation regarding Afrocentric theory and thought in a way that powerfully sets the stage for engaging the information found within the ensuing sections of the text. The second section (*A Mobilization of Ideas*), discusses the importance of establishing "an African-centered basis for establishing the chronology of Africa." The African identity of the earliest Egyptians and the role African names, nature and language play in discovering Egypt's influence on other Civilizations (most notably Greece). Asante also elucidates the power of Ma'at (truth, balance, harmony) through detailing Kemetic concepts such as Tep=Begging, Pet=Extension, Heb=Festival, Sen=Circle and Meh=Crown. Asante wonderfully weaves together African historical, theoretical, methodological and mythical elements to in his successful attempt to reveal that "the secret to all African cultures is through the door of Kemet."

In Section three (*Confronting the Historical Situation*), Asante describes the impacts of dju (the core of human life and existence) and Ifa (the spirit of divination among the Yoruba). Asante discusses the importance of appreciating alternative (African) ways of knowing that deviate from the traditional Eurocentric, hegemonic, historical cannon. Asante is extremely critical of the notion of objectivity, while celebrating the agency of cultural location that undergirds his own Afrocentric ideas. This third section also examines pioneers of Afrocentric thought such as Martin Delany and Edward Wilmont Blyden. Marin Robinson Delaney (1812-1885) was a man filled with pride about his blackness and connection to the rich legacy of Africa. Delaney believed that whites relied upon historical deceit as a means of Subjugating African people. His very existence ("as a scientist, ethnologist, explorer and medical doctor" (page 164) was a glaring counter argument to the falsified notions of African biological and intellectual inferiority. Edward Wilmont Blyden, (1832-1912) asserted the power of African agency through a view of Africans as the first, foundational people responsible for the roots of all of human civilization.

Blyden published, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, where he encouraged African people to create their own world, free from European distortions. Asante stresses the importance of self-love and cultural awareness like Delaney while utilizing history and publishing as his preferred weapons in the war for a victorious African consciousness.

Asante makes an important methodological distinction between the topical (African American Studies) and what is disciplinary (Africology). There are distinctions between African American Studies and Africology. Asante explains how what began as Black Studies emerged from the racially polarized political climate of the 1960's. Various names for this pursuit of the Black perspective including; Africana Studies, Afro American Studies and African American Studies have sprouted up on various college campuses. "Their pursuit and ours even now, were for a discipline that would begin its study with African people as subjects rather than objects (Asante, 1999). Africology seeks to move beyond simply an aggregation of courses that center on Black people. Asante defines Africology (a term first introduced by University of Wisconsin Professor Winston Van Horne) as "the Afrocentric study of African phenomena." Africology as a discipline is grounded in the ancient Kemetic concept of Ma'at (truth, harmony, reciprocity, balance and justice). The historical, perceptual methods and theories which undergird Africology separate the discipline from all other African inspired Departmental monikers.

The final section of the text (*Asserting the New Cultural Reality*) explains the linguistic diversity of African languages, the Eurocentric limitations of Marxism and European strategies of distorting African realities. Asante explains his theory of *Sciencing* and looks at popular confronters of the Eurocentric viewpoint (ex. Ellison and Fanon). *African Pyramids of Knowledge* provides an extensive, powerful critique of "Western particularism as universal." Some may argue that the text over emphasizes examples of greatness from the past and antiquity, while not focusing enough on contemporary Afrocentric luminaries (of whom Molefi Kete Asante is one of the most well-known). This text ends with a discussion about the future of Africology and effectively endeavors to answer the question, "how do we recover, repair, and restore the land, the people, and society?" This book is equipped with a rich end-notes section and a broad based approach to the multifaceted benefits of the Afrocentric approach to history and other related information. Through a systematic, chronological, linguistic and cultural approach to Africology as a discipline, Asante puts forward one of the most convincing arguments for the necessity of implementing Afrocentric agency in the quest to liberate the minds of African people while freeing truth from the cultural clutches of Eurocentric dominance. Asante utilizes accurate historiographies to displace the negative effects of Eurocentric revisionist anti-African history.

Through linguistic and cultural analysis, Asante connects the past to the present in a way that can be implemented for the purpose of future liberation of African people. *African Pyramids of Knowledge, Kemet, Afrocentricity and Africology* by Molefi Kete Asante, asserts the primacy of Classical African knowledge in a clear, descriptive way that can inform, culturally locate and inspire the curious reader.