

Intellectual Warfare, Theory and Practice: Gates, Thornton, white World Terror Domination and the War on Afrocentricity¹

by

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Abstract

This article provides an analysis of attempts to conceal white culpability in the enslavement of Afrikan people, in service of white world terror domination as perpetrated by Henry Louis “Skip” Gates, Jr. and John Thornton. Thus, the white terrorist/anti-Afrikan/anti-Black integrationist imperative is examined in Gates’ *“Wonders of the African World”* (1999) and Thornton’s *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (1998), and in earlier historical appropriations and subversions implemented by white terrorists of various types, with or without the assistance of their anti-Afrikan/anti-Black collaborators.

Keywords: Afrocentricity, intellectual warfare, white supremacy, war, hotep.

Introduction

Following a massive 2014 hack of Sony Pictures emails, Henry Louis “Skip” Gates, Jr. (currently the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University) became embroiled in a scandal when it was discovered that he helped Ben Affleck, a white man, cover up his forefathers’ involvement in the enslavement of Afrikan people (Gillman, 2015; Meer, 2015; Scodari, 2016; Shan, 2015; Smith, 2015). While such a revelation may have come as a surprise for those not familiar with the history of the questionable integrity of Gates, for those who have followed his unquestionably anti-Afrikan/anti-Black scholarship at least since the premiere of *“Wonders of the African World”* (1999), it was par for the course.

Prior to the revelation of this particular instance of concealment of white culpability in the enslavement of Afrikan people, Gates penned an article in a similar vein in the *New York Times* in which he illogically and inarticulately placed the blame for the enslavement of Afrikan people on people in Afrika while absolving the white perpetrators who masterminded the whole process, and were its primary beneficiaries (Chinweizu, 2011; Gates, 2010). The rampant mis-education of Gates permeates his works, however, he has not gone unchallenged (Chinweizu, 2011; A. A. Muhammad, 2010). In short, it appears that the leopard cannot change his spots after all; back in 2009, Gates was arrested in his own home in an incident in which this “post-race scholar” cried racism (Jan, 2009; Reed, 2009).

While some may have hoped that this incident would have been a wake-up call for Gates, judging from his continued anti-Afrikan/anti-Black trajectory since that time, apparently, the incident was easily forgotten as Gates pressed the snooze button and went right back into an anti-Afrikan/anti-Black post-racial slumber. Indeed, rather than reforming and changing his ways, Gates has doubled down on his agenda of promoting a Frankenstein style anti-Afrikan/anti-Black and ahistorical construction of “Afrocentricity.” In his promotion of this agenda, Gates appropriates the term “Afrocentricity” as a tool in his ahistorical anti-Afrikan/anti-Black toolbox.

Interestingly, Gates has not worked alone in this unholy crusade, he has a partner in crime: namely a white man by the name of John K. Thornton (currently a professor in the history department at Boston University who specializes in the history of Africa, the African Diaspora and the Atlantic world) who, in his text *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250-1820* perpetrates just such an agenda to absolve whites from responsibility for the enslavement of Afrikan people while placing the blame squarely on the shoulders of Afrikan people in the name of (central intelligence?) agency (J. K. Thornton, 2012). However, as I have argued elsewhere, this too is not a new phenomenon for Thornton (Kambon, 2005; J. Thornton, 1998). For example, Thornton’s *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (1998) and Gates’ “*Wonders of the African World*” (1999) served as a one-two punch or a combined slap in the face of Afrikan (Black) people; thus, a double-pronged attack of intellectual warfare with the ultimate aim of protecting whites, by throwing Black people under the proverbial bus.

Interrogation of Blame-Shifting and Historical Precedent: Juxtaposing Afrocentricity

In this work, I interrogate the questionable agenda and scholarship of this tag-team duo and their works using a framework in which their appropriation of the term “Afrocentric” for their demonstrably anti-Afrikan/anti-Black machinations can be understood in its appropriate historical context as part of an ongoing war against Afrikan people waged by whites (represented by Thornton) and their anti-Afrikan/anti-Black collaborators (represented by Gates).

Further, in this article, I would like to trace the precedents for Gates and Thornton's anti-Afrikan/anti-Black "Afrocentricity" to two key works that foreshadowed the recent Sony Pictures Revelation: Gates' "*Wonders of the African World*" (1999) and Thornton's *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (1998). In each of these works, Gates and Thornton, respectively, attempt to shift the blame for the enslavement of Afrikan people from the pale (white) Eurasians (primarily of European and Arab origin) who organized it, and thus, were and still are its primary beneficiaries, not the Afrikan/Black people who were its primary targets, locked in "interminable wars, forced labour and terrorism" (Chinweizu, 2011). This blaming of the victim is then deemed "Afrocentric" due to its putting Afrika at the center of responsibility for the actions originated by and primarily beneficial to Eurasians. In this exercise, I will show that there is a precedent for oppressors adopting and harnessing instruments originally created by and for oppressed people as articulated by Thornton himself. I will then draw an extended parallel between this historical precedent and the current anti-Afrikan/anti-Black agenda continually and consistently being pursued by Gates and Thornton in the name of an agency-bestowing (ethnically) cleansed "Afrocentricity."

And interestingly, the term Afrocentricity has been used in a proxy war as a straw man to simply knock down in the interest of essentializing a whole host of traditions of Afrikan (Black)² thought that are, to varying degrees, non-integrationist that seem to pose a threat to the white terrorist/anti-Afrikan/anti-Black tradition. In this program of intensive subjectivity, laced with ulterior motives, the agenda is not only to vilify any and all who may be broadly associated with what may be termed a "diabolic" Afrocentricity, but it is also marked by a usurping and appropriation of the term for the sake of its currency and familiarity to ultimately serve white terrorist/anti-Afrikan ends. Hence, in relationship to the improper use of Afrocentricity, I implicate what I refer to as white world terror domination. White world terror domination should be understood within the same context as the phenomenon commonly referred to as white supremacy. But implicit in my phrasing is the notion that whites are not actually supreme, but instead work to dominate others, by the use of terrorism.

This exercise works to document the white terrorist/anti-Afrikan/anti-Black integrationist imperative, hence, the imperatives that those who practice white world terror domination (white terrorists) and their collaborators (anti-Africans/anti-Blacks) have in common. Foremost among these imperatives, for example, is protection of white terrorists from justice, retribution, etc. The general thrust is that if white terrorists are not to blame, then there can be nothing done to them or against them, as evinced in "*Wonders of the African World*" (Gates, 1999) and Thornton's *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (1998), conveniently posited as two sides of the same anti-Afrikan coin.

The degree to which Christian clergy sought to explain the revelations of another religion by seeing them as diabolic or divine determined the degree to which they would tolerate aspects of that religion. If a religion were [sic] discovered to be founded on diabolic revelations, then the Church had no choice but to adopt what I have called an ‘exclusive’ approach to it. All its wisdom must be denied, a course that was clearly reflected in the destruction of Mexican codices. But if some of the revelations of a religion were discovered to be of divine origin, then much of its content would be accepted in an ‘inclusive’ approach, if it could be cleansed of the diabolic elements. (Thornton, 1998, pp. 256-257)

The above quote will serve as a framework for understanding the orientation of both Henry Louis Gates Jr. and John Thornton in relation to Afrocentricity. This orientation is manifested in Gates’ *“Wonders of the African World”* (Gates, 1999) and Thornton’s *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (Thornton, 1998) as case studies. As I have argued elsewhere, the historical roles played by Gates and Thornton with respect to real Afrocentricity are analogous to that of the Christian clergy described in the quote above with respect to the “diabolic revelations” of indigenous religions (Kambon, 2005; J. Thornton, 1998, p. 257). Thus, similar to strategies adopted by the Christian clergy in its religious-cultural and ideological warfare against indigenous religions, only non-threatening elements of Afrocentricity – such as the methodological imperative of simply making Afrika central – are adopted. Even this imperative is only adhered to when consistent with the “discontinuous revelation” of what may be referred to as the religion (i.e., a specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of people) of “white supremacy” (Nasheed, 2016).³ The orientation of Gates and Thornton towards real Afrocentricity constitutes what may be termed intellectual warfare (Carruthers, 1999).

Afrocentricity: Diabolized in a Scapegoat Proxy War

According to Molefi Kete Asante (professor and chair, Department of Africology and African American Studies, Temple University), who is largely responsible for popularizing the term Afrocentricity,⁴ “Afrocentricity is a perspective” (Asante, 1993, p. 2), and for him, “Afrocentricity is the belief in the centrality of Africans in post-modern history” (Asante, 1988, p. 6). Hence, Afrocentricity is vibrant in that “It is not static, typological or structural; it is dynamic, processual, and flexible; the only rigidity being the centrality of Africa as symbol and spirit” (Asante, 1980). Thus, for Asante, “Afrocentricity, therefore is only superficially related to color, it is more accurately a philosophical outlook determined by history” (Asante, 1988, p. 27). This aspect of Afrocentricity defines it largely as a methodological and functional perspective, a point that was quickly seized upon by the white terrorists/anti-Africans/anti-Blacks (I will demonstrate this activity below).

As further delineated by Asante, “Afrocentricity is *pro-African* and consistent in its belief that technology belongs to the world; Afrocentricity is African genius and African values created, reconstructed and derived from our history and experiences *in our best interests*” (Asante, 1988, p. VIII) [Emphasis mine].

In the book *Afrocentricity*, Asante asserts “When tactics become the objective, we fall victims to self-deception. Many of our thinkers have warned us of the danger of this view. There can be but one true objective for us in the contemporary era; to reconstruct our lives on an Afrocentric base” (Asante, 1988, p. 85). Ironically, Afrocentricity, as the name itself implies, can be principally defined in terms of its tactics – the methodological imperative of simply placing Afrika at the center. This is a tactic that is only scarcely modified by the vague and easily discarded caveats of “pro-African” and “in our best interests” (Asante, 1988, p. VIII). Gates and Thornton each summarily dispensed with these caveats while at the same time adopting the only rigidity, that is, the methodology of simply putting Afrika at the center. This is analogous to what Thornton refers to as the “inclusive approach” (1998, p. 257). Thus, cleansed of “diabolic elements” designed to serve the “best interests” of its Afrikan (Black) creators, a now castrated, an “Afrocentric” stunt-double is systematically employed in the service of the new religious imperative of white world terror domination (Asante, 1988, p. VIII; Thornton, 1998, p. 257). The concept and practice of white world terror domination by means of deceit, in this context, may be defined as a historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and Afrikan (Black) people by white people and nations in Eurasia that are buffered/supported by carefully selected Afrikan (Black) people, who are the system’s secondary beneficiaries, for the purpose of establishing, maintaining, expanding, refining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege, a.k.a. the interlocking static/dynamic system of white world terror domination (Fuller, 1964). One who practices white world terror domination is thus a white terrorist/dominator. It should be noted that white world terror domination should not, however, be equated with a simple class argument. Indeed, white terrorist tendencies cut across all class lines. According to the late Dr. Khalid Abdul Muhammad,

If it’s a class problem, wherever the Black/white dynamic exists, then the white is the upper class and the Black is the lower class. And your lower class is much lower than white folks’ lower class. And your upper class ain’t nowhere near the top of the white upper class. If you are a communist, the white communist is on top, the Black communist is on the bottom. If you are socialist, the white socialist is on top, the Black socialist is on the bottom. If you are Christian, the white Christian is on top the Black Christian is on the bottom. If you a Jew or Hebrew, the white Jew on top, the Black Jew is on the bottom. If you a Muslim the white Muslim is on top the Black Muslim is on the bottom. Whatever the social, political, economic, academic, religious, spiritual, system or order is. Wherever the Black/white dynamic exists you’ll find the white on top and the Black on the bottom (K. Muhammad, 1997)

Despite this dynamic – or rather because of it – the Black person on the bottom of the Black/white dynamic, albeit a victim of white world terror domination, may defend and maintain white terrorist systems of perpetuated wealth, power and privilege in the interests of obtaining the few crumbs, remnants, leftovers and hand-me-downs that powerful white terrorists see fit to drop from the table of the feast pilfered from the Afrikan farm. In the perpetuation of white world terror domination, white terrorists engage in what may be referred to as intellectual warfare: a systematic discrediting, disrupting, misdirecting, and/or neutralization of rival ideologies that may pose a threat to the existing order of the establishment (i.e., Afrocentricity, Black Nationalism, Afrikan Centeredness, Pan-Afrikanism, etc.). As such, the war on Afrocentricity serves as a proxy war in which Afrocentricity serves as a straw man scapegoat that, once rejected, serves as a blanket rejection of many other, oftentimes more threateningly pro-Afrikan (pro-Black) expressions of thought, word and action.

In the foreword of *Afrocentricity* written by Kariamuw Welsh, in making the case for Afrocentricity, she asks rhetorically, “The question most often encountered is why? Why the need for an Afrocentric philosophy? Why should Africa be at the center? And my question is why not?” (Asante, 1988, p. VII). Apparently, this question was also quickly seized upon and incorporated by the New Clergy of white world terror domination. Why not put Afrika at the center? Especially when doing so perpetuates the religion of white world terror domination by transferring culpability for the genocide of millions of people of Afrikan heritage from the shoulders of whites to those of Afrikan people (Gaeta, 2009).

This system/religion of white world terror domination should not be mistaken for racism. Racism is at the periphery of the white terrorist worldview, and is but one of many capes utilized by the matador system of white world terror domination (and the individuals who perpetuate it) in essentially the same way that religion, the hard sciences, the social sciences, and more recently, Afrocentricity have been used. And in an extended analogy, Wright (1984) articulates that:

In a bullfight, after being brutalized while making innumerable charges at the movement of a cape, there comes a time when the bull finally turns and faces his adversary with the only movement being his heaving bloody sides. It is believed that for the first time he really sees the matador. This final confrontation is known as “the moment of truth.” For the bull, this moment comes too late. The experience of Black people all over the world presents an analogous situation. For hundreds of years, they have been charging at the banners that are held by European (white) matadors... Therefore, it is indeed Blacks’ moment of truth and it is time for them to look at the Matador. (Wright, 1984, p. 1-2)

Afrocentricity is indeed a “dynamic” and “flexible” tactic that can be adapted to serve the interests of anyone who is willing to literally or figuratively put Afrika at the center of his or her discourse (Asante, 1980). This is the loophole and the flaw by which the concept, from its very first extended articulation, has been plagued.

According to Gates’ own assessment, “Surely all scholars of Africa and its Diaspora are, by definition, ‘Afrocentric,’ if the term signals the recognition that Africa is centrally in the world, as much as the world is in Africa. But this is a source of the problem: all Afrocentrists, alas, do not look alike” (Gates, 1991, p. 47). After appropriating the term, Gates is then successful in effectively “othering” the “diabolically inspired” Afrocentrists in his statement, “I am certainly not in the same camp as Molefi Asante and all those guys” (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 95). Thus, we find the term (or more so a few of its ideological premises) appropriated and thoroughly co-opted while the original theorists and practitioners are vilified and demonized. This is the work of the clergy of white world terror domination in relation to the potentially threatening “diabolic revelation” of Afrocentricity – threatening in the sense that it goes against the white-supremacists’ overt and covert goals of self-preservation (Welsing, 1991).

But what evidence is there of any attempt by Gates or Thornton to vilify or demonize Afrocentricity as part of their intellectual warfare? Their own words are enough to show that they are aware of and are actively participating in intellectual warfare against the version of Afrocentricity that does not serve their white terrorist interests. In Thornton’s case, examine the following excerpt:

Many community activists are well meaning people like those in Gates’ barbershop, and their own knowledge is shaped by the struggle of the sixties and nationalism. But they can see where the pressure needs to be applied, and it is in the schools above all. That is why it is they, who have created a lot of quality materials (from an education standpoint) to use in schools.

But a lot of these materials are harmed by nature of their information, which often comes from the more extreme end of the Afro-centric movement. *The activist Afrocentrics are not likely to win more than limited victories in these battles.* Their agenda is not popular in most of America, and their accuracy is suspect in many circles. Thus, even when they present ideas that most of mainstream scholars would accept, they are rejected as being wrong in content or divisive in tone. Those of us who would prefer to see a more “mainstream” agenda need to present it ourselves.

Perhaps we should be thinking about how to do this and give Gates’ his due for producing this year’s wake up call for African history. (J. Thornton, 2001) [Emphasis mine]

If we simply examine the language of Thornton, his use of terminology is consistent with that of intellectual warfare. He argues that “The activist Afrocentrics are not likely to *win* more than limited *victories in these battles*” (J. Thornton, 2001) [Emphasis mine]. Further, strategically unnamed “Afrocentric” scholarship is discredited in regards to accuracy, content and tone. There is again, however, an inclusive approach adopted for the “divinely inspired” “quality materials” if they can be cleansed of their “diabolic elements” of “extreme” Afrocentricity or substituted for the “divine discontinuous revelation” of the “mainstream [white terrorist] agenda” (J. Thornton, 1998, pp. 249, 254-257; 2001) Such is the nature of the intellectual warfare of white terrorists against the vilified and discredited other: “diabolic” Afrocentricity.

Gates makes a similar statement of war against Afrocentric demagogues and pseudo scholars “...in the *raging battle* of who will speak for black America” [Emphasis mine] (Gates, 1992, p. 128). This labeling as “demagogues and pseudo scholars,” is part and parcel of the warfare against the “diabolic revelations” and “prophets” of Afrocentricity. This labeling is the classic white terrorist (and their anti-Afrikan/anti-Black collaborators’) modus operandi in which the “pseudo” and “demagogue” of today are analogous to the “diabolic origin” and “witchcraft” of yesterday (J. Thornton, 1998, p. 266). This is yet again consistent with our extended metaphor linking modern white world terror domination with the Christian Church of yesterday wherein, “All forms of popular revelations (augury, astrology, divination, etc.) [were attributed] to the Devil...All such revelations could then be labeled as witchcraft and their practitioners burned (as indeed thousands were)” (J. Thornton, 1998, p. 250).

According to the late (1930-2004) Carruthers (founder and former director of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations; founding member and director of the Kemetic Institute in Chicago, and a professor of Inner City Studies at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago), in his warfare campaign on behalf of white world terror domination, “Gates aggressively submits to the republic’s mandate that U.S. born Africans must be a part of American society and a part acceptable to European American authority” (Carruthers, 1999, p. 208). Such an assessment, if correct, is consistent with our working definition of white terrorism, although Gates is merely a collaborator, an agent working on behalf of white world terror domination.

Thornton further outlines specific war strategies of this intellectual warfare, “As scholars, we or someone we can work with, need to get the scholarship out to the public, specifically through the school system” (J. Thornton, 2001). “Scholars,” in this context, may be read as “white terrorists.” But with whom can they work? Thornton’s own analysis of the past is useful in understanding today:

“[T]he Church still accepted most of the revelations that came under its control or that were not threatening (such as apparitions of saints and the Virgin)” (J. Thornton, 1998, p. 250)

Enter Henry Louis Gates and his pseudo “Afrocentric” “*Wonders of the African World*” and John Thornton’s own contribution to the “battle,” with his agency bestowing *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (Gates, 1999; J. Thornton, 1998, 2001). And, indeed, the “church” of white world terror domination accepts both of these “apparitions” as part and parcel of revelations that come under its control (J. Thornton, 1998, p. 250).

“*Wonders of the African World*” represents a weapon of mass destruction in the full-scale intellectual warfare of white world terror domination against “diabolic” Afrocentrism. Our question now becomes, how has this war on the “diabolic” version of Afrocentricity influenced, nay, infused the work of Gates and Thornton, particularly “*Wonders of the African World*” and *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*? This question becomes pertinent as the “diabolic” Afrocentricity is viewed as a threat to the church of white world terror domination vis-à-vis the church’s approved version in a manner similar to what necessitated “ol’ switcheroo” used in Mexico, as described by Thornton:

This was exactly the attitude of the Spanish clergy in confronting Mexican religion, for example. When they heard Aztec stories of Quetzalcoatl, a good king (deified by the sixteenth century) who had been driven from Mexico by trickery and would return in glory, they decided that Quetzalcoatl must have been the Apostle Thomas bringing word of Christianity, and those who drove him out must have been inspired by the Devil. Thus, they sought to persuade the Aztecs that they were restoring Quetzalcoatl by bringing Christianity, while at the same time vigorously attacking most current Aztec practices as being diabolically inspired by Quetzalcoatl’s enemies (J. Thornton, 1998, p. 256).

Similarly, “*Wonders of the African World*” by Gates and sponsored by PBS and the BBC is a part of a continued war of white world terror domination on the “diabolic version” of Afrocentricity using a whitewashed version of so-called Afrocentricity as a weapon. In this new version, Afrika is indeed placed at the center as required by Asante’s aforementioned articulation of the perspective. To understand the reasoning behind placing Afrika and Afrikan people at the center (in this particular context), it is insightful to note Kwame Ture’s statement that, “You can make no analysis in the life of an oppressed people and leave out the oppressor. Anytime you make any analysis in any aspect of life of an oppressed people and leave out the oppressor, you will blame the oppressed people for their conditions” (Ture, ND). This is the crux of the white terrorist-friendly Afrocentricity. Afrika is at the center only when putting Afrika at the center absolves the oppressor (i.e. Eurasians/Ameripeans) from guilt for the abject conditions of Afrikan people that they created.

But why would Gates fight against other Afrikan people on the behalf of white world terror domination? Once again, Thornton’s analysis of the past is useful in understanding the present:

Slaves augmented the military might of the Iberians whenever there was danger from Native Americans. For, example, on early Hispaniola, royal instructions demanded that Spanish settlers arm their most trusted slaves (normally those with a family), called “secure blacks” (*negros seguros*), in case of a revolt by the Tainos, and later still to protect various colonies against foreign incursions. (J. Thornton, 1998, p. 141) [Italics in original]

The role that Gates now plays is analogous to that of the “secure blacks” of the Iberian armies in the fight to defend the “republic of Western letters” from the foreign incursions of “bad” Afrocentrists (Gates, 1993, p. 36). Gwendolyn Mikell (Professor of Anthropology and Foreign Service, Georgetown University) correctly identifies this tendency in Gates’ “*Wonders of the African World*.” According to Mikell,

Gates has crafted his own attack on Afrocentric views of the greatness of Africa. It seems to me that the Gates’ video attempts to paint a picture of an imaginary divide between African Americans and African views of the Continent and its role in history [...] Gates pretended that the West was not hegemonic in its relationships with Africa during the pre-colonial and colonial periods that transverse the slave trade. He pretended that the only pressures creating Trans-Atlantic slavery came from African greed, from forces within the Continent. (Mikell, 2000, p. 33)

Is Mikell’s assertion plausible? Gates’ own writing validates her statement. He asserts that (the diabolically inspired version of) Afrocentrism produces “shoddy” scholarship wherein Afrocentrists “rediscover a lost cultural identity—or invent one that never quite existed” based upon the “shaky grounds of self-esteem” (Gates, 1991, p. 47). “*Wonders of the African World*,” therefore plausibly represents Gates’ attempt to disavow this “invented” cultural identity. Despite the implications of the title of his video, “*Wonders of the African World*,” Martin Kilson (Harvard University Professor Emeritus: Frank G. Thomson Professor of Government) aptly notes Gates’ long-standing tradition; his schizophrenic tendency towards aggrandizement/masochism in relation to African people in terms of Gates’,

[...] almost neurotic need to couch discourse on African-American socio-cultural and political patterns in what I call “Black put-down terms,” a mode of intellectual discourse on Black realities that Gates’ intellectual confrere Kwame Anthony Appiah is also addicted to, I should add. Second, much of Henry Gates’ discourse on African-American socio-cultural and political patterns exhibits a thoroughly chameleon trait — an almost manic need to produce a discourse on Black realities that migrates between a “Black put-down” or “Black-averse” mode, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a seemingly redeeming “Black-friendly” mode, though in ultimate essence the redeeming posture is phony [...] As Ali Mazrui (1933-2014) rightly put it: “Gates seemed incapable of glorifying Africa without demonizing it in the second breath.” (Kilson, 2000, p. 24)

Gates' own declaration of war against the "shoddy" scholarship of "bad" Afrocentrists' "invented racial fantasies" and identities supports the idea that "*Wonders of the African World*" is part of his own attack on mythical "Afrocentric" views about the greatness of Afrika, thus, the presentation is a state of the art weapon in the intellectual warfare of the white terrorist "republic of Western letters" against such "diabolically inspired" Afrocentrism (H.L. Gates & Wolf, 2012, p. 164).

Why, however does Gates leave the European out in his analysis of the enslavement of Afrikan people? On this issue, Asante argues that:

If one listens closely to Henry Louis Gates, the entire project of slavery would not have occurred if it had not been for African involvement. Blaming the victim for the predicament of enslavement is neither historically correct nor morally valid [...] How was this project sold to the white producers? Were they told that the video would show how Africans were responsible for our own predicament? The themes covered in the series rest on some disturbing sub-texts such as the undermining of a pan-African sentiment, the reinforcement of negative stereotypes, the separation of ancient Egypt from the rest of Africa, the attack on the Swahili language, and the undermining of the movement for African reparations (Asante, 2000, p. 9).

If the analogy of the "secure black" fighting a "diabolized" Afrocentricity on the behalf of white world terror domination is correct – and it is – then it is very likely that this is how the project was sold to white producers. Mazrui questions,

Why is Skip Gates presenting us with a simplistic picture of continental Africans (villains) selling their brothers and sisters (Diaspora African victims) – and provoking what he regards as the curse on Africa for selling its children? In reality only a small minority of the inhabitants of Africa could have sold and exported fellow Africans. So why is Africa as a whole presented in such stark evil ways? Why does Henry Louis Gates Jr. virtually let the white man off the hook on the Atlantic slave trade apart from a throw-away sentence? What is going on? What is the agenda? (Ali A Mazrui, 2000a, p. 17)

This agenda can be understood as an integral aspect of intellectual warfare in the service, not of racism, but of white world terror domination. As a matter of fact, the guise of fighting "racism in all its pernicious forms" (especially "diabolized" Afrocentricity) has been one of the means by which Gates has secured a position among the clergy of white world terror domination (perhaps as an overly eager and willing altar boy) (Gates, 1993, p. 149). This is affirmed by Martin Kilson's statement that:

Henry Gates is, above all, trying to play-back his way to a special public self-portraiture – one he considers politically serviceable [...] First of all, there should be no doubt among progressive African-American intellectuals that Henry Gates – as the leading African – American academic entrepreneur intellectual in the country these days has an intellectual persona and modus operandi vis-a-vis Black-world realities that is riddled through with *establishmentarian* and sometimes *anti-Black purposes* [Emphasis mine]. (Kilson, 2000, p. 25)

Kilson's "establishmentarian" and "anti-Black" are synonymous with my claims of his support for the religion of white world terror domination against its enemies, the so-called "diabolic" Afrocentrists. In addition to absolving whites of their role in the enslavement of Afrikan people and in attacking the "diabolically inspired" revelation of Afrocentricity, Gates indeed does paint a serviceable and appropriately sycophantic self-portrait for white terrorist approval. This self-portrait is useful in obtaining the white terrorist vote of confidence as the most likely candidate "...in the raging battle of who will speak for black America" (Gates, 1992, p. 128). George Nelson Preston (professor Emeritus at City College, CUNY, co-founding director and chief curator: Museum of Art and Origins, NY; aka Nana Kwaku Anakwa, the Aboafohene of Akuapem-Mamfe and Akuapem Kyidom Aboafohene, Ghana) also takes note of Gates' political machinations for his own personal benefit (which is not very dissimilar to the picture that he paints of the rulers of old Asante and Dahomey). Tracing this development chronologically, Preston declares,

Gates did praiseworthy work in literature, became highly visible and whites now use this high-profile visibility as the criteria to make him expert in everything Black. It is an open admissions ticket of a sort as the most knowledgeable Black about every and Anything Black. [...] It would appear that Gates [...] has been crowned as the new *Negro in Residence* designated to represent us in all matters Black be they literature, sociology, anthropology, art history, archeology, art criticism, history. [Emphasis mine] (Preston, 2000)

Apparently, the selection of Gates as the "Negro in Residence" is convincing as conveyed by Biodun Jeyifo who totally buys the idea of "the figure of Gates as an African-American 'Everyman' confronting Africans" (Jeyifo, 2000, p. 40). Mazrui, much more adeptly recognizes that "We must not drift into the fallacy of regarding Skip Gates' point of view as 'the African-American perspective'" (Ali A Mazrui, 2000a, p. 16). As for Pan-Afrikanists and Afrocentrists, Mazrui is quite correct in asserting, "Almost none of them regard Gates' voice as their voice" (Ali A Mazrui, 2000a, p. 16). Indeed, Gates fits the profile of one of the "secure blacks" that have been handpicked to fight for the perpetuation of the system of white world terror domination against the "diabolically" threatening revelations of Afrocentricity and is generally identified by the "Black Community" at large as a modern-day "King Buzzard" of sorts (Henry Louis Gates & McKay, 1997, p. 116; J. Thornton, 1998, p. 141).

It is also clear to Kilson that, “Henry Gates knows well that the *American establishment*, in its several formations, gets the message of his intellectual maneuvers” (Kilson, 2000) [Emphasis mine]. But then Gates has long been aligned with this tradition of white terrorist thought.

It is highly dubious that Gates’ “Black friendly” posturing of “tough love,” “agonizing” about the genocide committed against Afrikan people (that, incidentally, Afrikans are solely responsible for in his white-supremacist-sanctioned view), or eschewing of “the penchant of white racists to demean, deny, or denigrate the civilizations that black people have produced on the African continent” is sincere (Gates, 2000, p. 11). In lieu of Gates’ seemingly relentless assault on people in Afrika, Preston wonders, “Does he rail at his [white] wife because her ancestors sold, bought and enslaved his ancestors” (Preston, 2000)? This is highly improbable because the religion of white world terror domination would not be served by such behavior. Gates’ evaluative criteria and ulterior selectivity in deciding when (and when not) to express his faux righteous indignation seems to be based upon the question, “How will my actions contribute to the intellectual war being waged by the religion of white world terror domination against the ‘diabolic revelation’ of Afrocentricity.” In fact, if Gates truly had an issue with the rulers of “The Slave Kingdoms,” it is probably, in all actuality, an issue of self-hatred, in the sense that he sees his reflection in his depiction of these rulers. As noted by Windley, “At one point, he descended to a level of vulgarity saying he was annoyed by ‘Black Africans kissing the behinds of whites,’ a curious objection considering his personal circumstances” (Windley, 2000) Indeed, his role vis-à-vis the directives of perpetuating white world terror domination’s war on Afrocentrists is scarcely differentiable from the role of his “slave kingdom autocrats” in perpetuating genocide against Afrikan people. In both cases, the constituencies in question sell their own people out in exchange for the benefits that white world terror domination has to offer.

But what truly is the effect of “*Wonders of the African World*” and Gates’ aggressive submission to the directives of white world terror domination to demonize “bad” Afrocentricity? Mazrui, voices his concerns, thus:

Some of us fear that in your efforts to repair relations between white America and Black America, you may be sewing [sic] the seeds of discord between African Americans and the peoples of the African continent. By trying to shift the main burden of guilt for slavery from whites to Blacks, you may conceivably help race-relations in the United States. But does the price you are exacting amount to raising levels of animosity among the next generation of African-Americans towards Africa? (Mazrui, 2000b, p. 48)

This is exactly the tithes required by Gates' religious affiliation (white world terror domination), not so much to repair race-relations as to secure a spot amongst white world terror domination's most elite clergy. Such a price has been well assessed by one, "who understand[s] the costs, and the pleasures of achievement" (Gates, 1993, p. 149). To achieve such a position, it is imperative that the next generation of Afrikan people in America accept the doctrine of a demonized Afrocentricity. This imperative largely echoes yesteryear's FBI Counter-Intelligence Program stance towards Black Nationalism:

The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is *to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize* the activities of black nationalist hate-type organizations [...] in every instance careful attention must be given to the proposal to *insure the targeted group is disrupted, ridiculed, or discredited* through [...] publicity and not merely publicized... [emphasis mine]

A final goal should be to prevent the long-range GROWTH of militant black organizations, especially among youth. Specific tactics to prevent these groups from converting young people must be developed [...] Efforts of the various groups to consolidate their forces or to recruit new or youthful adherents must be frustrated. (Activities., 2004)

It is interesting to note that these "hate-type" organizations, as delineated by the grand pontiff of white world terror domination, Herbert J. Hoover, included Martin Luther King, Jr.'s integrationist and accommodationist SCLC. Apparently, Afrocentrism is similarly enough of a threat to the religion of white world terror domination to warrant comparable attempts to demonize, discredit, misdirect, and prevent its existence (at least in its real form) and long-range growth. In the place of "diabolically inspired" Afrocentrism will be the "divinely inspired discontinuous revelation" of "Those [...] who would prefer to see a more 'mainstream' agenda." (J. Thornton, 1998, pp. 249, 254-257; 2001)

Thus, Thornton's call to arms for a "mainstream agenda" to be pumped into the schools is represented in his *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*. In the book, he ingeniously (albeit deviously) and systematically uses the ideological premises of Afrocentricity (placing Afrika at the center) in attacking the perpetually unnamed "pseudo-historical" and "ahistorical" doctrines and documents of "diabolically inspired" Afrocentrism. Similar to Gates, Thornton, "cleanses" Afrocentricity of its "diabolical element" that requires that it be used for the "best interests" of Afrikan people and proceeds to put Afrika and Afrikan people at the center of responsibility for the genocide committed against Afrikan people by whites and any Gates-like collaborators there may have been.

Hence, Mazrui's comments to Gates also apply to Thornton:

Without the participation of Africans there would have been no slave trade! How naïve about power can we get? Without the involvement of Africans, there would have been no colonialism either. Without the involvement of Africans, there would have been no apartheid. Without the involvement of African Americans, there would have been no segregationist order in the Old South. (Ali A. Mazrui, 2000, p. 5)

Centrality of Afrika and Afrikan people in this context, mitigates the “white man's burden” of responsibility (Kipling, 1997). Thornton proves that, true to Asante's claim, Afrocentricity is “dynamic, processual, and flexible; the only rigidity being the centrality of Africa as symbol and spirit” (Asante, 1980). Using the “inclusive approach,” Thornton adheres to this aspect of Afrocentricity vigorously, because by applying it to the genocide of Afrikan people, this methodology serves the interests of the religion of white world terror domination (1998, p. 257). These interests are expressed in Thornton's exonerating Europeans of culpability in the genocide of Afrikan people as evinced in the following formulaic utterances that permeate the book:

Although the state might be a silent beneficiary...trade remained competitive, probably favoring no particular national or regional actors—and certainly not Europeans at the expense of Africans. (J. Thornton, 1998, p. 71)

In summary, we can say that although European arms may have assisted African rulers in war in some cases, they were not decisive...Therefore, *Europeans did not bring about some sort of military revolution that forced participation* in the Atlantic trade as a price for survival [Emphasis mine]. (J. Thornton, 1998, p. 116)

In conclusion, then, we must accept that African participation in the slave trade was voluntary and under the control of African decision makers. This was not just at the surface level of daily exchange but at deeper levels. Europeans possessed no means, either economic or military to compel African leaders to sell slaves. (J. Thornton, 1998, p. 125)

Such is the means that Thornton adopts to philanthropically give Afrikan people “agency.” This gift of agency is like an IMF/World Bank loan. The debt burden that comes along with accepting it is simply not worth it.

Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800, which one would not hazard to call “pseudo-history” or “ahistorical,” is essentially one long extended conjecture. Thornton’s own philosophy in which the line between fiction and historiography is blurred is instructive in understanding his writing:

Do these things really matter? One hopes ideally that a piece of historical fiction like this one takes the minimum liberties with history, and tries as much as possible to get those elements of the story that are verifiable by historical research as right as possible. Fiction should only be used when the sources simply fail, and then probably only in such a way that one can say this or that event could have happened, even if we cannot say for sure that it did happen. (J. Thornton, 2001)

The multitude of statements and conclusions, punctuated by “must have been the case,” “obviously,” and “it is clear, then, that,” every few lines become almost comical to the point that a student of stylistics would take note of this almost lyrical parallelism that concludes most every sentence, paragraph and/or chapter. Similar to Gates’ altruistic motives of applying his philosophy of “tough love” to Afrika and people in Afrika, Thornton strives to paternalistically give “agency” to apparently formerly “agency-less” Afrikan people. Yet, at other times, he is much more miserly in his granting of agency:

Religious conversion, as it is conventionally understood, was therefore not simply a process of Europeans forcing Africans to accept an alien religion, *nor did the practicing of traditional African forms of continuous revelation in the New World represent some sort of heroic religiocultural resistance* (J. Thornton, 1998, p. 271). [Italics mine]

For Thornton, Afrikan people can have agency, but only to the extent that such agency does not make for “heroic religio-cultural resistance.” Only when it makes for blaming Afrikans for European actions is agency granted. Also, Europeans cannot have done anything that might make someone think that they were in any way, shape or form “bad” (i.e. forcing Afrikan people to do anything). Such is the selectivity of the “inclusive approach” of white world terror domination as applied to Afrocentricity. This is the benevolent parity granted by the white terrorist-friendly anti-Afrikan “Afrocentricity” of Gates and Thornton. In another example, Thornton states that:

In the overall analysis of resistance, one can conclude that a great deal of American resistance simply arose from the exploitative nature of social and economic relations. It ought not to be seen as being any different from the reactions of any exploited group anywhere in the world. Moreover, such an analysis can be extended to the motives for revolt. (J. Thornton, 1998, p. 303)

And again, Afrikan people are denied the baraka-like blessing of agency to be bestowed or withheld by Thornton when such agency could be used to further the cause of the “diabolic” Afrocentrists. Agency in fomenting rebellion and “heroic religiocultural resistance” are just such topics that “demonically possessed” bad Afrocentrists would just *love* to pick up and run with. Thornton, like Gates, is equally complicit in what Mazrui calls, “cultural condescension with paternalistic possessiveness and ulterior selectivity” (Ali A Mazrui, 2000a, p. 15). This “ulterior selectivity” in particular is adeptly employed in service of the ideology and religion of white world terror domination. Far from an unreformed racist, Thornton’s writing is often consistent with that of a highly-refined white terrorist.

How is this consistency expressed? Thornton’s own analysis is once again instructive in understanding the implicit and explicit intellectual war of the modern church of white world terror domination on “diabolic” Afrocentricity, here analogous to the church’s reaction to “continuous revelation”:

Nevertheless, the modern Church was cognizant of the danger that continuous revelation held for their authority, and even though they recognized it, they also sought to contain it. They did this first by insisting on the primacy of the discontinuous revelation (to the point of denying the validity of a revelation if it contradicted the Bible directly) while placing its interpretation in their own hands and second by ascribing revelations with which they did not agree to the Devil. (J. Thornton, 1998, p. 249)

Afrocentricity in the hands of Thornton becomes an exercise in putting Afrika at the center with ulterior selectivity. Thus, its benign interpretation is incorporated into the religion of white world terror domination when elements designed by “vulgar cultural nationalists” (all of whose pseudo ahistorical continuous revelations are likely attributable to the devil) to work in the best interests of Afrikan people are eradicated (Gates, 1993, p. xvi). This analogy to religion is useful in the sense that, as defined by Asante, “All religions rise out of the deification of some one’s nationalism” (1988, p. 2). This concept is extended to Afrocentricity and Njia as proposed by Asante. The religion of white world terror domination is no different as it is the general deification of white nationalism and, at times, anti-Afrikan/anti-Black support of it. In serving the interests of the system of white world terror domination, Thornton and Gates perpetuate this nationalism while ascribing revelations they did not agree with ostensibly to “the Devil” or, at the very least, to “diabolically-inspired” Afrocentrists. More powerfully, however, they use Afrocentricity’s core ideology of putting Afrika at the center, in the service of white world terror domination.

Although Asante claims that “*Wonders of the African World*” is a “Eurocentric Enterprise,” it is instructive to note how his own warning, “when our tactics become the objective, we fall victims to self-deception,” manifests itself as a truism (Asante, 1988, p. 85). Asante calls “*Wonders of the African World*” a “Eurocentric enterprise” when, in all actuality, Gates and Thornton have accepted Afrocentricity’s only rigidity: “the centrality of Africa” (Asante, 1980).

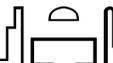
This acceptance of Afrocentricity as a perspective and a philosophical outlook that is only superficially related to color is consistent with the “inclusive approach” of our extended metaphor with Christianity in its dealings with indigenous religions. When selectively applied and incorporated, Afrocentricity as a methodology/tactic may readily be reinterpreted to vilify its originator(s) and utilized to undercut its own conclusions. For Asante not to recognize his own child, albeit exposed to effects of figurative bleaching-cream and a straightening comb, indeed proves the fallacy of allowing a tactic or method to become the objective or a means of self-identification and definition.

Through “*Wonders of the African World*” and *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*, Gates and Thornton – as a dynamic duo of white world terror domination – effectively (to the extent that it is imperceptible to the public) use a castrated form of Afrocentricity to perpetuate and defend white world terror domination a.k.a. white supremacy (a system of power and privilege) in its war to neutralize, demonize, discredit and ridicule the potential threat of “Diabolical Afrocentricity.”

Since the time of “*Wonders of the African World*” Asante, for his part, has published copiously on his conception of Afrocentricity (Asante, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2014; Asante & Miike, 2013). Gates’ anti-Afrikan/anti-Black Afrocentricity, however, seems to continue to be tied to the enslavement of Afrikan/Black people and absolving whites from blame for it (Gates, 2013; Gates & McQueen, 2014; Gates, 2010). This has also been a continued thrust of Thornton (Heywood & Thornton, 2009; 2010).

Another major development is the new version of discrediting diabolical “Afrocentricity” with the vilification of the term $\frac{\text{a}}{\text{a}} \text{HtP}$ *hotep* translating to ‘be at peace, peaceful, become calm’ as a pejorative term for anyone who is not overtly anti-African/anti-Black (Dickson, 2006, p. 186). Numerous articles have been penned by the new vanguard of Henry Louis Gates’ replacements, who operate in an internecine realm of anti-Afrikanness/anti-Blackness (Clutch, 2016; Harriot, 2017; Young, 2016). For this new vanguard, rather than vilifying $\frac{\text{a}}{\text{a}} \text{HtP}$ *isft* ‘wrong, wrongdoing, falsehood, chaos’ any and all who are not anti-Afrikan/anti-Black are the collective target. Just as in the case of “Diabolical” Afrocentricity, this collective target is then attacked under the label of $\frac{\text{a}}{\text{a}} \text{HtP}$ *hotep*, which is, apparently, the new version of “Diabolical” Afrocentricity (Dickson, 2006, p. 120). We find that this seemingly new imperative of anti-Afrikanness/anti-Blackness is not unprecedented by any means, as it forms part of a long-standing tradition of anti-Black comprador collaboration and self-annihilation in service to white world terror domination (Wilson, 1990). The upshot of this internecine conflict is the same as that of internecine conflict during enslavement – namely pale (white) Eurasians go largely unscathed while Afrikans/Blacks suffer the brunt of the damage.

As there is a two-pronged attack on Afrikan/Black people from pale (white) Eurasians and their anti-Afrikan/anti-Black collaborators, Afrikan/Black champions and intellectual warriors must remain vigilant by not falling for the gambit of straw man/woman “diabolical” Afrocentricity or the new version of  *hotep*-bashing. Rather, what is necessary is the continued tradition of standing against  *isft* ‘wrong, wrong-doing, falsehood,’ and for the restoration of the (feminine) Afrikan (Black) principle of  *mAat* *Maat* ‘truth, right-doing, righteousness, justice, rightness, orderly management’ (Dickson 2006). As in the Prophecies of Neferti, when this is done,

					
<i>iw</i>	<i>mAat</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>iit</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>st.s</i>
be	Order	FUT	come	to	seat.3SG.POSS

‘Then Order will return to its seat,’

			
<i>isft</i>	<i>dr.ti</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>rwti</i>
chaos	expel	to	outside

‘While Chaos is driven away.’¹ (Lichtheim, 1973, pp. 143-144)

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Notes

¹ In memory of the intellectual warrior, the late Dr. Jacob H. Carruthers, 𞤎𞤍𞤗𞤢. An earlier unpublished version based on a grad school term paper upon which this current article was developed was posted for feedback at <http://www.assatashakur.org/forum/pan-afrikanism-afrocentricity/11116-intellectual-warfare-gates-thornton-white-supremacy-war-afrocentricity.html> Substantial changes in form and content have been made since then (Kambon, 2005).

² Note that, while not ideal, Afrika (n.)/Afrikan (adj.) is preferred to “Africa” as the word is consistently spelled in various Afrikan languages with a /k/ (cf. Yorùbá Áfríkà; Akan Afrika; Kiswahili Afrika; isiZulu iAfrika; Kikongo Afelika; Hausa Afirka; Kirundi Bufirika; Gĩkũyũ Abĩrika; Igbo Afrịka; Luganda Afirika; Lingála Afríka; Malagasy Afrika; Sesotho sa Leboa Afrika; Oromoo Afrikaa; Fulfulde Afirik; Setswana Aferika; Tsivenda Afurika; Tsisonga Afrika; Siswati Í-Afrika; Soomaaliga Afrika; Kinyarwanda Afurika, etc.) noting that Afrikan languages by-and-large do not use a /c/ for a hard /k/ sound.

³ Some scholars, such as Dr. Kamau Kambon, prefer to use the term white world terror domination over “white supremacy” due to the fact that pale (white) Eurasians are not supreme, however pale Eurasians engage in the activity of domination by means of terrorism. Thus, white world terror domination is preferred in this exercise.

⁴ “Du Bois used the term in his ‘Provisional Draft: Not for General Distribution: Proposed Plans for an Encyclopedia Africana.’ The document is filed with Du Bois’s letter to Daniel Walden, dated September 21, 1961.” (Moses, 1998, p. 243).