

Zulu Traditional Healing, Afrikan Worldview and the Practice of Ubuntu: Deep Thought for Afrikan/Black Psychology

by

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the Zulu people of South Afrika (Azania) and its perspective can be generalized to aspects of an Afrikan worldview with respect to Afrikan/Black Psychology. More specifically, this paper examines the role the Zulu traditional concept of spiritual wholeness (psychology) has played in maintaining a sense of beingness for the Zulu people throughout the Apartheid era and how this notion can become a part of Afrikan Centered Psychology. A move towards an Ubuntu Psychology is also explicated. Zulu nomenclature for the classification of psycho-spiritual (mental) disorders is presented with a special attenuation towards mental health diagnosis and treatment within the Afrikan context on the continent of Afrika as well as throughout the Afrikan Diaspora. Much of the Zulu wisdom was gathered as the author traveled throughout South Afrika on a Fulbright Fellowship seeking to elucidate the power of Afrikan Traditional Healing and the Zulu worldview in Post-Apartheid South Afrika.

Introduction

It is recognized that the traditional systems of Afrika's indigenous peoples have played a pivotal role in their maintenance. Afrikan/Black Psychology as an intellectual enterprise and relevant area of study has been instrumental in elevating the dimensions of the Afrikan worldview as an intellectual enterprise as well as a tool of Afrikan survival. Zulu, as well as much of the Bantu-Kongo conceptualizations of human beings, are most instructive when considering working with Afrikan people worldwide. While this paper focuses on the Zulu people of South Afrika, its perspective can be generalized to aspects of an Afrikan worldview with respect to Afrikan/Black Psychology. The Zulus' understanding of their *Umhlaba* (world/soil), their *umhakathi* (community) while simultaneously being in touch with their *isintu* (culture) and *ingqikithi* (essence) is worthy for Afrikan centered healers to recognize.

Although South Afrika is comprised of San (Bushmen), Nguni people (Xhosa, Zulu, Swati, Ndebele), Sotho (Tswana, Sesotho and Sepedi), Tsonga people, Venda people, Coloureds, Indians, Afrikaaners and English, we will focus on the Zulus of the Kwa-Zulu Natal Province. The Zulus have garnered immense popularity primarily through the military genius of the warrior Shaka Zulu. His effort to unify the Zulus and stave off the British has been and remains the subject of much discussion in South Afrika and throughout the world. When one examines the cosmology and axiology of the Zulus one can gain some insight into the true divine essence of Shaka's strength. Due to its popularity and its profundity, this presentation highlights the Zulu concept of health and healing. Special attention will be directed towards understanding how this Afrikan system of healing is very much a part of what is called Afrikan/Black Psychology.

Zulu Cosmology and Axiology

Cosmology alludes to how a people organize the universe. This organization consists of the family values, beliefs, ethos, and traditions. Axiology refers to values of a given people. Observing the values of a people informs one about what is important to a given people. The true values can be determined through examination of nomenclature, ritual, and traditions. The word *Zulu* means God's people or people of heaven. Implicit in the name is the true belief of the people, that is, God is central and that they (the Zulu) are divine. This alludes to the profound spiritual element that informs the Zulu notion of what has been called mental health. For the sake of our discussion we will call this mental health idea Afrikan/Black Psychology. We will define Afrikan/Black Psychology as that area of psychology that is grounded in an Afrikan psycho-spiritual notion of being. Moreover, it holds that all sets are joined, that spirit permeates all living things, and that there is an element of the Divine within all things. According to the Afrikan Psychology Institute of the Association of Black Psychologists, Afrikan Psychology is ultimately concerned with understanding the systems of human Beingness, the features of human functioning, and the restoration of normal/natural order to human development.

Traditional Healing in South Afrika

Systems of healing have existed since time immemorial. Typically the systems of human interaction that people develop evolve within the cultural context of the people. The healing systems would not only be named by the people but also speak to the specific needs of those people. Indigenous healing acknowledges the presence of both internal and external variables that may infringe upon the optimal growth and development of a living organism. In South Afrika this propensity for health, harmony, and balance is evident in the practices of the traditional healing systems and they have particular implications for Afrikan/Black Psychology.

Zulu Healing

Healing among the Zulu center around *uMvelinqangi* (God), the *amadlozi* (ancestors), nature and a person's connection to these spiritual forces in a deep and profound manner. This person is called a traditional healer within the Western concept of specialists. The traditional healer has always been a person of great respect in the community, a medium with the *amadlozi* (ancestors) and *uMvelinqangi* (the first Creator) (Ngubane, 1977). Traditional healers connect with the presence of *uMvelinqangi* (the First Creator) that exist within the universe and radiate the expression of that which operates in opposition to *uMvelinqangi*. The healer either presents substance in the form of medicine or provides a healing environment (divination) for *uMvelinqangi* to be fully expressed within the sick person and community. Persons who visit the traditional healer are required to engage in specific communally beneficial ways following in one's effort to restore order and balance within self and the community. Because *uMvelinqangi* exists within everything, the healer must simply connect with the universal force to manifest the full power of *uMvelinqangi*. This process will empower the ill person (or empower the powerful collective presence within the person) while concomitantly overpowering the destructive forces outside of the person. Throughout history traditional healers have played a plethora of roles within Zulu society, such as:

- (1) Diviner/priest, accepted medium with *amadlozi/abaphansi* (ancestral shades) and the *uMvelinqangi* (First Creator), religious head of society, prominent at all major *umsenbezi* (rituals);
- (2) Protector and provider of customs, sociocultural cohesion and transformation, legal arbiter at public divinations, ecologist and rainmaker; and
- (3) Specialists in preventive, primitive and therapeutic medicine including the use of traditional pharmacology (Edwards, 1987).

According to Buckland and Binger (1992), Zulu practitioners of divination, sorcery, and healing fall into the following categories:

1. *Sanusis* - A sorcerer, who can be male or female but is generally male; the title is sometimes applied to a healer.
2. *Znyange Zokwelapha* - A healer.
3. *Znyanga Zemithi* - A specialist in tribal medicine.
4. *Znyanga Zezulu* - A weather worker.
5. *Sangoma* - A counselor or diviner; usually female sometimes male.

Edwards (1987) suggests that there are three broad overlapping categories of traditional healers in South Afrika i.e. *inyanga* (traditional doctor/herbalist) *isangoma* (diviner/counselor), and *umthandazi* (faith healer). For this discussion, we will use these three categories of healers. The *inyanga* is usually a male who has gone through a period of training with an accomplished *inyanga* for at least one year. *Inyangas* typically use *amakhambi* (herbal medicines) for immunization, tonic and preventative measures, body cleanser, laxatives, etc.

When *amamkhubalo* (herbal medicines) are used for *umsenbezi* (ritual), color classification of the medicine and time of day and season of administration become significant. The colors of the medicines are *imithi emnyama* (black medicine), *imithi ebomvu* (red medicine) and *imithi emhlophe* (white medicine). *Amakhubalo* (herbal medicine) is organized according to color are:

1. *Ubulawu* – A liquid medicine used across all colors.
2. *Insizi* – Powdered herbs, roots or animal medicine that is always used as a black medicine to pull out an illness.
3. *Intelezi* – A liquid medicine used as a white medicine to render free from imperfections often after sickness is taken out with a red or black medicine.

Here we see that the Zulu operate in harmony with nature and the universe, and that various aspects of color contain the power for healing. To further illustrate this harmonious relationship with nature, there are certain herbs that are extracted only in the morning, day, evening or night. It is believed that the full healing power is manifested at specific universe time periods and one must approach that herb at the proper time that *uMvelinqangi* has bestowed upon it with its full power.

The next traditional healer is called *isangoma*. This healer is usually a woman who shares knowledge of medicine with the *inyanga* (herb doctor). A person is chosen by the spiritual realm to be a *sangoma* after an *ukuthwasa* (life transforming experience). It is during the *ukuthwasa* (transforming experience such as a seizure or near death experience) that the person communicates with entities of the spiritual realm that inform her/him what s/he needs to do. Following the experience, the person goes to study under an accomplished *isangoma* who diagnoses illnesses through communicating with the *amadlozi* (ancestral shades). Buckland and Binger state:

The sangoma divines using a set of objects that have special meaning or energy. After an apprentice spends time with an established sangoma, s/he begins to develop her/his own style...collects a bag of oracle bones...from animals or other materials...in twos, representing male and female (1992, p. 77).

The roles for an *inyanga* and a *isangoma* remain distinct and complimentary. The *sangoma* is consulted to determine the etiology of a problem. After the cause of an illness has been determined, then the *sangoma* refers the person to medical treatment from another practitioner.

Both the *inyanga* and *isangoma* are part of a public *imisebenzi* (ritual) and the *Nomkhubulwane* ceremony for girls. *Nomkhubulwane* is the first princess and the daughter of *uNunkulunkulu* (the Great Grandfather). The *Nomkhubulwane* ceremony is a rite of passage ceremony that functions as a reintroduction in the Zulu community to assist with addressing the AIDS crisis that is occurring in South Afrika. The traditional healers not only inform the girls of their purpose in life, they also help the girl know how to maintain good health. In this case the traditional healers are curative and preventative. Since there is a high premium placed on being a virgin, the healers *imisebenzi* (ritual) serves to influence and reduce the rate of STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) while providing insight into food selection, preparation, and consumption.

The third traditional healer has evolved recently with the influx of people moving from the rural to urban areas. The *umthandazi* (faith healer) has become an intricate part of the combination of traditional Afrikan religion and Christianity. They are found primarily within the Zionist and Apostolic churches of the cities. The *umthandazi* has the ability to prophesize, heal and divine using prayer, holy water, baths, enemas and steaming baths.

Illnesses Addressed by Traditional Healers

Classification and categorization of disorders appear to be common among humans. Within Western Mental Health practice the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV-TR (DSM-IV-TR) lists mental diagnosis and the behaviors that are associated with such. This system of classification suggests that human behaviors indicate the presence of a state of being. For the Zulus it is no different. Illnesses are organized on the basis of their causality. One category of disease is *umkuhlane* (illnesses of a natural cause). Included under this category are *isithuthwane* (epilepsy), *isifuba somoya* (asthma) and *ufuzo* (familial/genetic disorders) such as *isidalwa* (mental retardation) and *uhlanya* (schizophrenia).

Another category of diseases is extremely intriguing. They are *ukufa kwabantu* (metaphysical disorders that exist among Afrikan/Black people). This category suggests that there are some disorders that are common among people with shared cultural/spiritual background and experiences. When a traditional South Afrikan healer was asked if Afrikaners (Whites) could have *ukufa kwabantu* the healer stated the “You have to be human to have these disorders.” The definition of humanity indicates when one is out of order with such. The following is a list of *ukufa kwabantu* that are divided into animistic, magical and mystic theories. Animistic theories ascribe the disorder to the behavior of some personalized supernatural agent such as *amadlozi* (ancestral shades) or *uMvenlingqangi* (Creator). In the event that a series of misfortune or illness besets a person the explanation has a communal basis. Failure to perform certain rituals, acting in disharmony with one’s spouse or failure to indulge in sexual abstinence during periods of mourning results in illness. The explanation for the illness is communal either involving an individual, a couple in a community or a family (in the case of ritual) within a community.

Magical Theories are caused by the malicious act of a malicious human being who employs magical means to injure his victim. Including:

- *Ufufunyane* – spirit possession attributed to *ubuthakati* (sorcery to destroy).
- *Idliso* – poisoning attributed to *ubuthakati* (sorcery to destroy).
- *Umeqo* – disorder attributed to stepping over the harmful creation of a sorcerer. Symptoms include very painful joints or edema of the ankles.
- *Uvalo* – anxiety attributed to sorcery aimed at lowering the defenses.

Mystical theories explain disorders in terms of an automatic consequence or some act or experience of the afflicted person. For example,

- *Umnyama* – experiencing illness or adversity because of contact with places or people immediately associated with major life and death events (e.g. birth, death, sexual intercourse, menstruation).
- *Umkhondo omubi* – a dangerous track or ecological health hazard such as lightning.

These theories are central to the Zulu cosmology, ontology and axiology in that they address health and wellness as well as correct human interaction. The Zulu *ingqikithi* (context) for understanding the *ubunhlobohlobo* (diversity in all its relatedness) in an effort to insure *ukulungisa* (balance and harmony) is extremely noteworthy throughout the Zulu diagnostic system. The presence of one of these illnesses suggests that ancestral shades have withdrawn their protection from the person for failure to act in a manner harmonious with the community. This person's failure to act in an appropriate manner renders the entire community vulnerable to their illness because the community has to witness the residuals of the illness or misfortune. Zulu healing occurs within the communal context and it is the responsibility of the community to facilitate the healing of the family, couple or individual because the illness as well as the wellness impacts the entire community. The Zulu dictate that this happen. The communal aspect of self and healing is critical to the understanding of Afrikan/Black Psychology in that psychology in its classical sense misses the mark at some level with Afrikan/Black reality. *Ubuntu* is the essence of the work of Zulu traditional healers.

Western Psychology

Psychology, in its classical sense, is the understanding of the normative behaviors of those who have been classified as European. The history of modern Psychology locates its origin in Leipzig, Germany in 1879. What were the ideological/philosophical underpinnings about human behavior in Germany at that time? If Psychology is to be understood as the normative behavior and thought processes of Europeans, then the question that begs to be answered is does this normative behavior expectation have universal application? The assertion has been, within the European context, that what Europeans do is the norm for all people. They are universal and thus the prototype of all people. It is paradoxical because this same group went around the world classifying the distinction of various organisms from itself. They even classified humans into different categories and then gave them differing behavior characteristics (Negroid, Caucasoid etc.). As they set out to advance that their thought is universal, they also purport that others are inferior to them. One adopting the views of a Western-based Psychology, while not being of Western descent, would advance their own inferiority.

Such self-denigrating proposition would be highly destructive to the essence of one's being. Such paradoxical thinking by Westerners may indicate that their behavior sets may not have been a part of the milieu of behaviors for the vast majority of people. For how can one establish a psychology that advances their inferior nature? It is illogical. What then are the implications for contemporary psychology?

Presently, we can see the misappropriation of European Psychology as evinced by the large number of non-Europeans being classified and having a host of aberrant behaviors. Outside of the mental health arena one can see the ever-present misinterpretation of Black behavior such as Blacks sitting together in the cafeteria, laughing loudly, and loving music. Afrikan/Black Psychology can and must explicate phenomena from an Afrikan perspective.

Afrikan/Black Psychology

If Afrikan/Black Psychology is going to be an effective and viable resource within the Afrikan/Black community then it is imperative that we have a discipline that is consistent with our way of being in the world. It has been suggested by Afrikan Centered Psychologists such as Drs. Wade Nobles, Naim Akbar, Cheryl Tawede Grills, Daryl Taasogle Rowe and many others that we advance such a psychology that would be most instructive in addressing the psycho-spiritual challenges faced by Afrikan people world wide. There have been numerous criticisms mounted against this Afrikan Centered approach to psychology for a multiplicity of reasons. The major criticism is that the Afrikan Centered approach to psychology is theoretical and has no real empirical grounding. Although the lived experiences and practices of Afrikan people may be considered to be antidotal data, it is imperative that one remain cognizant of the fact that such a modality for understanding human conduct has been implemented for centuries. This alone gives this understanding of human conduct credence since one aspect of the empirical method is the degree to which a study (practice) can be replicated. Missing from our discourse about Afrikan Centered ways of being is a culturally centered analysis of our mode of being in the world. Such an analysis must emanate from the cultural core of Afrikan minded thinker/practitioners rather than culturally misoriented ones. The latter are grounded in Western Psychology and often fail to account for the power of an Afrikan Centered perspective of human conduct.

Western Psychology or understanding of human behavior is predicated on human as material substance. Man is merely an expression of appetites, urges and desires. The ultimate expressions of a human are in doing. An Afrikan understanding of human behavior is predicated on being rather than doing. This being is associated with character. Afrikan epistemology places the highest premium of human existence on how one can/must 'be' rather than what material acquisition one has.

Within the Afrikan context, humanity is focused on one's being in the world. A person is determined good (sane) or not good (insane) on the basis of one's behaviors. If one's behaviors is deemed to be communally beneficial then that person has good character or what the Yoruba of West Afrika call *iwa pele*. This idea is a manifestation of *Ubuntu*. For the Afrikan no discussion about the color of one's skin was relevant to the idea of character, or this would only explain the esoteric aspect of being. The exoteric is that which is of great significance to the Afrikan minded thinker. How does one be in the world? What do they do that adds beauty to life? How do they enhance the existence of the community? These are the questions of relevancy that are posed towards a person with respect to the Afrikan Worldview. Their being in the world is seen as an expression of the God-force that is within them.

Borrowing from the European Psychology coffers, there is a benefit of a heuristic or mental short-cut when interacting people. Heuristics are probably common among most people however they cannot be the sole determinant of the totality of what a person is about. Afrikan/Black people use heuristics in a race conscious society in large part due to interaction with Europeans. Borrowing again from the Western Psychology coffers, this can be attributable to aversive interactions with Europeans. The horrific treatment that African people encountered as a result of interacting with Europeans created the heuristic of what or what Europeans are. The driving force here is not the material substance but the character. Europeans have shown themselves to be distrustful with respect to Afrikan people. Years of mistreatment of Afrikan people by Europeans necessitates Afrikans be cautious around Europeans. Some Afrikans are able to accept some Europeans into their communities because of the Afrikan's character and concept of humanity. This reveals the value of being however it may also be responsible for some of the continuing challenges that Afrikans face. The heuristic within the Afrikan worldview is about assessing the quality of your inner essence through your behavioral expressions and spirit vibrations. How you resonate in the world determines your worth to the community.

Zulu Worldview and Afrikan Behavioral Concept (NTU)

The Bantu (Ba-Ntu) have a concept of *ntu* that means universal life-force. This concept of *ntu* is present in all things that allude to universal life-force or spirit. The Zulu have a term *Ubuntu* that speaks to the idea of universal being. *Ubu* refers to being while *ntu* allude to universal life-force. This universal life-force is found in all things, including muntu (human beingness), hantu (spirit in time and place), kintu (spirit in things) and kuntu (spirit in modality/expressiveness). If one's behavior is deemed to benefit the community then one is deemed to be human for human activity naturally operates in a manner that perpetuates life and does not destroys it. The highest premium of existence is placed on being within the Afrikan context. This points the way to Ubuntu Psychology.

Ubuntu in the Diaspora

It must be understood that the notion of the interconnectedness of all things has remained an integral part of Afrikan life throughout the Afrikan Diaspora. Humanity within the Afrikan context is determined by how well we honor the law that all things are connected. The greatest value of the human being is contained within the collective aspect of our existence. A common Southern United States greeting is “how your mama ‘nem?” This statement most often follows the inquisition into how the person that is being spoken to is doing. The real goal of the interaction is to find how the person is operating within their community and how the community is operated around the person. Communal stability or instability and ultimately the spiritual state of a person as well as their community can be determined from this succinct yet penetrating exchange. It must be understood that the contraction ‘nem’ often refers to “and the rest of them.” These others are those that are in contact with the mother. It is about community. If the report is “they alright” then all is well because “they are doing well.” However, if the report is that the mother or anyone within the mother’s immediate community is out of sorts, then communal spiritual intervention is required to address a spiritual disruption. If the report is “my brother been actin’ funny” then the community is ready to jump into action. Oftentimes the community knows that the brother is “actin’ funny cause he on that stuff” (using elicit substances). The community knows because the spirit of the community has given the report that “the boy is out there again.” Someone who knows the “boy” has filed a report that they have seen him in places that do not represent his community of origin well. The person who asks the question about the mother and the rest of them will often say something like “tell her I will keep her in prayers” followed by “I am going to cook her some greens and bring them by the house.” This is a potentially powerful communal intervention.

The communal intervention in this exchange is astounding. The greens are the herbal medicine and the prayer is a meditative moment that acknowledges a higher power. The food is physical intervention with an element of spirit involved. God-force is within the greens and the preparer. The preparer makes the food to soothe the troubled soul of the mother and as they prepare the food they will say a prayer or incantation throughout the preparation period. To violate this spiritual law is not to be human and will be evident in the taste of the food. Food lacking the spiritual essence of the person is generally less satisfying to the taste buds and to the spirit. The food is also an opportunity to talk further about what is going on in the community. If the food preparer is invited in upon the delivery of the food then a discussion about the situation will usually ensue. This entire process is important to the person and the community because the person acting out of sort is part of and a reflection of the community. The interaction serves to remind everyone that they are not alone in any situation. This is ubuntu, the collective nature of being.

Self, within the Afrikan notion of being, is communal as well as a possession of a person. Initially, one has no choice about their community and ultimately about themselves. They are born into a situation. However, Afrikan thought challenges the ideas of no choice in community. Among the Yoruba, it is suggested that the individual spirit (yet-to-be born in human form) makes an agreement with the Creator (Oludumare) to be born within a community for a purpose. This divine purpose is called Ori. The essential element of this discussion is that again the community was the most salient aspect to the being and the becoming of what appears to be one person.

Ubuntu and the Healing Practice

Many assert that the devastation in Afrika is due to deforestation. The greatest destruction is the deforestation of the soul caused by colonization, which has led to an erosion of the spirit as evinced by the fading away of communal values. As people rush to preserve the forest so that the earth of Afrika can continue to sustain the lives of Afrikan people, they must also make a concerted effort to preserve the values of Afrikan people. The cultural values are those elements of the human experience that serve to hold a people together. Without the values of the culture the culture is reduced to nothingness. During colonization, the colonizers also brought their values with them. These Western values most often ran counter to those of Afrikan people. In fact, Western values are predicated on the diminishing of non-Western values, ethos and beliefs. Their culture is one of xenophobia while at the same time being xeno-dependent. One of the significant values that Western thought challenges is that of communalism or acknowledged interdependence. They would rather propagate a myth of self-reliance and independence while surviving in a parasitic nature, draining the life out of their host. They advance a myth and promote a delusion of grandeur to the world that does not serve them or others very well. On the other hand, it has been the Afrikan practice of communalism that has most sustained Afrikan people on the continent of Afrika and throughout the Afrikan Diaspora.

Ubuntu Psychology is governed by a humanity that acknowledges the spiritual essence of self and others. This spiritual essence is the prime mover within the universe. The highest value of a person is not in their material acquisition but in their expression of character. A person can have much wealth, but if the expression of their spiritual essence is not pleasing then others will seek to stay clear of that person. Western thought will allow one to interact with that foul person because they have material wealth. They see the material only. They will placate the person and even be dehumanized by that person because their humanity takes a back seat to their potential material gain. Those who adhere to the notion of *ubuntu* see self and others as spirit and thus will not place spirit in a place that seeks to destroy spirit. On the flip side of this is this process of treating people with diminished spirit as if they were fully expressive in the moment as spirit.

Ubuntu Psychology is predicated on a beingness that recognizes the interrelated aspects of all things within the universe. There is a full recognition that all things within the universe are connected. There is a knowing that one's sowing (gathering) of a harvest is predicated on their reaping (planting). There is recognition that any behavior that one exhibits has consequences that can be constructive or destructive. A more fully evolved spirit seeks to express itself in a manner that will bring more optimal life to themselves and others. In this interrelated state, a high premium is placed on relationships. Group work is more important than individual activities. This law that all sets are connected is profound. In Western science it is known that if infants are just fed (given material) and not held, touched or cuddled that they will experience a failure to thrive that is revealed when an infant may lose weight and eventually die. There is a need for human contact. One person's being is always connected to another person's being.

In *Ubuntu Psychology* the self is seen as being an expression of the Divine and is thus divine. All humans come from one divine Source and are at the same time an expression of that divine Source. This means that all possess some elements of the Divine and that the greatest obligation is to be divine in daily interactions. This is an energy that is transmitted from generation to generation. There is an awareness that when others are not operating from a place of divinity, their energy is projected in an unsettling manner. These people are referred to as being spiritually depleted, spiritless, the devil or some anti-force that is blocking optimal spiritual growth and development. They are to be avoided if not destroyed because their essence is inconsistent with divine essence. There are many ways to destroy a spiritless being as evinced in the statement "kill them with kindness." When one comes from the divine Source then they can operate like the divine and destroy life or non-life and bring forth new life. They know that they are not the Source but are merely an expression of that Source, therefore they do not have the quantity of the divine power but they do have the same quality of power.

Relative to this notion that self is divine is the idea that *Ubuntu Psychology* adheres to the notion of universal consciousness or Soul. It is predicated on the belief that to be human is to be Spirit and that this Spirit is always in connection with a Divine source within the universe. One then is able to connect with multiple dimensions of the universe because the universe is all and is multi-dimensional. This is evinced when a person is able to think about another person and then almost mysteriously receive a visit or some form of communication from that person. It is an example of how the person puts the vibration in the universe or the universe puts the vibration in the person and the full contact is made. The universe does not completely discriminate good or bad but it does yield to various commands made of it by parts of itself. *Ubuntu Psychology* recognizes that we are a part of the Divine source and that we have at our command the power of the universe if we understand our connectivity.

Our Obligation as Ubuntu Psychologists

(1) Return people to their Source through Rituals (*umsebenzi*). As people seek to navigate their daily environment they can either be enhanced or they can have feelings of being diminished. It is through the process of navigating the world that one can have a feeling of being ever so connected to their Source or feel estranged from it. This Source is their all in all and is perpetually a part of their lives. One must be connected to their Source in order to be able to navigate the world. The source can manifest itself in the form of family, friends, community, hometown or any physical outlet that allows one to experience a dimension of their value and worth as a human being. It is then imperative for those who practice *Ubuntu Psychology* to facilitate people with being in connection with what gives them life. People make this connection through prayer, meditation, concentration, and incantations. The connections are made through rituals. The process allows one to connect with that which is greater than them and is responsible for the energy that flows throughout their bodies. This alludes to one's power.

(2) Remind people of their power in rituals. People must be reminded to have a sense of power even in what appears to be a powerless situation. As Ubuntu practitioners, it is incumbent upon us to let people know that they have power in their lives at all times. Most pointedly they are the conduits of the power that they seek. There are many addiction programs that attempt to inform the people that they are addicted to a particular substance because they were powerless over their addiction. The falsification in this statement is that the alleged addict had to use her/his personal power to make contact with the substance which suggests that all power was always in the hands of the person and not the substance. The person may have chosen to surrender their power to the substance in exchange for what they believed the substance provided them, however, the power remained in the hands of the person who chose to have the relationship with the substance. Reminding people of their power is often difficult when one has determined that they had no power in the decisions to become an addict. However the power to change is ever-present. There are times when one is over powered by an aggressive force such as children in abusive relationships with adults. Even in those situations, assuming the child survives, the child can grow up to make certain powerful choices about how the rest of their lives will proceed. People who have been captured by enemies in the time of war have had to make serious decisions to never surrender their power of mind. Although their enemies captured them, they found a way to retain connection with their power in order to go on. This has been the case with enslaved Afrikans who were stolen from their homeland and dispersed to other parts of the world and mistreated from sun-up to sun-down. These enslaved Afrikans were able to conceptualize ways of revolution, escape, and creative expression through avenues such as quilts and songs. This could only be done to the extent that they stayed in contact with their internal power in externally powerless situation. Their strength of mind served to end the institution of Afrikan enslavement and usher in a new error of Afrikan existence around the world.

(3) Assist them with directing their power in the optimal manner through ritual. Being aware of having power is not enough. One must know how to use their power in the most responsible manner. Nothing in and of itself is good or bad; how it is used makes it so. One must be shown how to use their personal power to bring about change in their lives and the world.

(4) Assist people with connecting with their power within the universe out of ritual. *Ubuntu Psychologists* assist others with getting and remaining in contact with their internal power to impact change upon humanity. This is the real therapeutic process that enables one to function as a divine being rather than a distortion of another's consciousness. Being niggas fits into this latter category of operating as a distortion of another's idea. Others conceptualized the nigger and this conceptualization became a part of the consciousness of those that this energy was directed towards. This distorted consciousness disconnects one from the true Source of power because it forces a connection with the one that created the idea of the nigger. There must be remembrance of the power of ritual and recognition of the Source of that power.

The overall function of an *Ubuntu Psychologist* becomes to: (1) recognize Spirit in all aspects of life, (2) appreciate people's spiritual journey, (3) facilitate movement towards becoming one with the Creator, (4) help increase people's strength from their experiences, (5) keep people aligned with their purpose and (6) acknowledge that people have purpose. This becomes foundational for the therapeutic practices that *Ubuntu Psychologists* seek to engage. The process of therapy or *Ubuntu* ritual remains connected to the Afrikan understanding of self as a communal being. Healing rituals in practice functions in a manner that is consistent with the Afrikan concept of self. This requires the *Ubuntu Psychologist* to engage in various rituals or *umsebenzis* in order to be fully available during the therapeutic process.

Conclusion

The Afrikan worldview in general and Zulu worldview in particular understands that the spirit is a central aspect of community. Afrikan/Black Psychology with the practice of *Ubuntu* Psychology must advance Afrikan thought as they become instrumental in the correct orientation of people of Afrikan descent specifically and the world in general. Zulu thought can be instrumental in the proper mental, spiritual and intellectual healing of Afrikan people. The Zulu suggest that there are certain illnesses that occur only to Zulus (Afrikans). This can best be understood from examining the *ukufa kwabantu* (disorder of Afrikans) within the Zulu *ingqikithi* (context). The view that the Zulu have about *ukulungisa* (balance and harmony) indicates that every action that one engages in must benefit the community. The interrelatedness of this view of self and the community is central to the Afrikan perspective of the universe. Senghor (1998) states: *reality is force and the world a process of interplay between forces, that humanity is part of this universal field of force, that at bottom all force is alive, spiritual rather than material, that the individuals' life fulfillment are only to be found in community with others...* (italics mine, p. 27).

The powerful aspect of *ukufa kwabantu* (disorders of Afrikans) is that the Zulu define the disorder and prescribe the treatment within the *ingqikithi* (context) of Zulus. It is suggested that the illness is a result of some force that causes imbalance within the community and that the community needs the person to get well in order for the community to be well. This is definitely not a sterile exercise in simply applying some label to set behaviors with no real understanding of its relationship to the community. Many diagnostic systems used within the Western context (i.e., DSM IV) provide a name and a series of characteristics for a given behavioral disorder, but fail to indicate the connection between the community and the behavior or provide the reason the behavior is of concern to the community.

Furthermore, the responsibility to heal from the situation is placed on the person and not the community out of which the person evolved. One recent example of the detached aspect of Western psychological system is the manner in which European American male youths were killing their schoolmates. Even though the phenomena was not isolated to one sect of youth or relegated to one area of the United States, the etiology of the troubling behavior centered on the youths. Very little discussion was given to the community (i.e., locally, nationally and internationally) that the youth were raised in but rather that these youth had been troubled for some time and that their behavior evolved out of them being troubled. According to the Zulu, a healing system that denies the communal context out of which the aberrant behavior evolves is inept in providing total healing for the community. The Zulu worldview suggests that behaviors evolve within a communal context and that the correctives for behaviors have their place within the community. The world has a lot to learn from the Afrikan Worldview and the Zulu healing system. *Ubuntu Psychology*, as an aspect of Afrikan/Black Psychology, has much to offer the world in healing the essence of being; the psyche (*sakhu*).

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