

# **Amos N. Wilson: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Africentric Psychological Warrior (1941-95); Some Personal Reflections and Professional Observations**

by

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I have known only a very few psychological visionaries in my lifetime; those who have tried to grasp the whole picture of Afrikan existence from a psychological point of view or perspective. Amos N. Wilson was one of those visionaries. He was a workaholic, keenly focused on the task at hand, and a deep Afrikan-Centered Critical Thinker (ACCT).

I first became aware of Amos Wilson when his book "The Developmental Psychology of the Black Child" was published in 1979. My first personal encounter with him did not occur until 6-7 years later around 1986 at the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Annual ASCAC Conference in Harlem, NYC. He gave a riveting speech about the realities of White Supremacy Domination (WSD) over Africans and how it affected the everyday lives of African children in America and throughout the continent of Africa. It was a powerful presentation and the most compelling one that I heard on that particular day. For me, that was the occasion when I encountered the real Amos Wilson, "Afrikan Warrior Extraordinaire." Although I wasn't able to meet him directly at that time since he was only in attendance for his presentation, I knew intuitively that our coming together was inevitable given that our ideological spirits resonated so naturally.

(There have been a few special moments in my life where I have either heard or read someone's work and it so resonated with me on so many levels that I knew intuitively that we would definitely meet and possibly join forces someday – because there have been only a very few such spirits that have been able to speak to my core as an Afrikan Warrior.) Amos and I met subsequently during the early 1980s while I was on the lecture circuit in NYC.

Although we knew each other personally for only a few years before he made his transition, it was a relatively intense and close relationship. We began a fairly close collaborative relationship at that point, speaking often over the phone and visiting with each other during my fairly frequent trips to NYC around that period. I visited his Center in the Bronx on a couple of occasions, had lunch and/or dinner with him at various establishments in Harlem and Manhattan, and we sometimes just hung out together in the streets of NYC. He and Marimba Ani showed me how to negotiate the NYC subway system and many of the ins and outs of both historic and contemporary Harlem and Manhattan. Amos in fact gave me my first tour of the infamous Greenwich Village during this period as well. We shared our varied stories about the trials and tribulations, joys and pains, etc., that we had experienced in our lives as we did our work on behalf of Black/Afrikan people. We marveled at the many similarities of our experiences. I of course invited him to Tallahassee to speak at FAMU and also to the ABPsi when I was the Convention Program Co-Chair for several years. We also shared a number of speaking venues around the country until his untimely passing.

I enjoyed and admired his passion, dedication and penetrating focus on the conceptual and mechanical nuts and bolts of Afrikan Liberation in the contemporary world of WSD, as well as his courage and uncompromising love for Afrikan people and his unbending commitment to Afrika's ultimate victory over its adversaries. No other brother had touched my spirit so deeply since I first met the indomitable Africentric Warriors Bobby Wright and Jacob Carruthers. Therefore, I not only lost a strong comrade and fellow Warrior in the Afrikan Liberation and Pan-Afrikan Nation Building Movement on January 14, 1995, but also a dear friend and brother as well.

My 2006 text entitled "Kambon's Reader in Liberation Psychology" (Nubian Nation Pubs.) was dedicated to Brother Amos Wilson. In that dedication, I noted that to me, Amos represented the Quintessential Afrikan Psychological Warrior for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; an ACCT of the highest order (on all levels of his being). My intent of course was to recognize his great intellectual and inspirational contributions to the movement, and the fine EXAMPLE of dedication and commitment to Afrika's liberation, vindication, affirmation and the reestablishment of an African Worldview Orientation for all Black peoples of the planet.

He was one of that small and highly select group of ACCT in psychology (like Wright, Welsing and a few others whose ideas and impact has reached far beyond the boundaries of traditional psychological analysis proper, speaking to a broad multidisciplinary Afrikan Liberation and Nation-Building audience/movement for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Afrikan survival and security.

Thus, like a select group of Afrikan psychological deep thinkers (i.e., Wright, 1974; Welsing, 1971; Khatib, Akbar, McGee & Nobles, 1975), Amos Wilson shows in his scholarly and practical work the full range of the application of what is called Afrikan/Black Psychology to the contemporary global Afrikan predicament in all areas of people functioning.

Amos Wilson (1998, 1999) therefore had the special gift for being able to translate Afrikan-Centered conceptual-theoretical paradigms, knowledge and principles into practical/everyday Afrikan reality; i.e., the practical elements of Black racial-cultural empowerment (self/group/cultural empowerment)/Practical “Black/Afrikan Power.” Thus, he continually extended the traditional boundaries of psychological analysis to respond to every aspect of Afrikan empowerment. He showed us how to use psychology to solve our real-everyday problems as a race. Like Bobby Wright in particular, and a very few other psychological thinkers/scholars, Amos used psychology as an essential tool or instrument of Afrikan empowerment, which is really what Afrikan-centered or Afrikan/Black Psychology is all about (Azibo, 1996; Kambon, 2012). He explicitly tied psychological concepts and principles to practical Black socio-political-economic realities. He challenged us to see our psychological condition in relation to our economic and political reality. He constantly reminded us in fact that “everything is political!” Everything we do is “political” and our ability to define and operationalize “power,” Black Power/Afrikan Power,” is the key force in our liberation. He also showed us how our internalization of a *WSD consciousness* leads us to economically and politically self-destruct. Afrikan people’s *WSD Consciousness* (“False Consciousness”) then is an instrument of Black oppression (Wilson, 1991). He brought into clear view all of the Eurocentric falsifications and distortions of Afrikan reality under *WSD* oppression. He further argued that our continuing failure to see ourselves as a “Nation” (a “Black/Afrikan Nation”) is a primary cause of our problems of White domination today in America and in Afrika (Wilson, 1991, 1998, 1999). We have no Afrikan Cultural Identity, no Pan-Afrikan Cultural Consciousness/Identity, and this is primarily what prevents us from creating our own independent economic, educational, political and social infrastructures that are so vitally needed for our survival and security as an Afrikan collective (Wilson, 1998, 1999).

In his seminal texts on “Afrikan-Centered Consciousness versus the New World Order” (1999) and “Blueprint for Black Power” (1998), along with his other significant works, he specifically articulates the concept of power and its major manifestations in European – Afrikan relations in America, throughout the Diaspora, throughout the Continent of Afrika and globally within a framework for a new Pan-Afrikan Nationalism for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He goes on further to explain the “psychology of power” in all of its rudimentary aspects and ramifications at the individual, group, and societal levels of organization. In effect, he stresses how our power derives from our psychology. In this regard, he discusses Consciousness, Values, Afrikan-Centered Consciousness and Afrikan Personality as primary conditions and instruments of power- “Afrikan-Centered Power” or “Pan-Afrikan Black Power!” He shows how Consciousness (“as power”) enables us to control our behavior and to alter our environment. It is in fact the means by which we deal with our environment.

It is socializable (teachable, etc.) and sovereign. He further shows how power is applied – “operationalized” in our everyday functioning in modern day societal life as Afrikans in America and globally. Amos viewed WSD as “power over Afrikans,” i.e., How Whites use White power against us, and how we must develop/siege our own Afrikan Power to overthrow White domination. Again, he sees the fundamental problem as Afrikan personality’s internalization of WSD reality. For him, as noted earlier, Afrikan people’s WSD Consciousness (False Consciousness) is an instrument of White power. He sees Afrikan’s economic, educational and political indebtedness to Europe/America and Asia as a major Afrikan global problem. He likens it to the “Sharecroppers Paradigm” used during the Jim Crow Era of White America’s strangle-hold on Black economic underdevelopment. Again, he sees the key to eliminating WSD as the development of Afrikan-Centered Consciousness-- a Pan-Afrikan Nationalism Identity and Consciousness throughout Black Afrika, America and the rest of the Diaspora. Wilson, similar to a courageous handful of other ACCTs) attempts to lay out a practical set of goals and objectives for solving the problem of WSD over Afrikans.

When viewing Amos Wilson’s life overall, it seems to me that what he was lacking was what all of those who have followed the path that he chose lacks, and that is *a strong organized and viable community of like-minded Africentric scholars/ACCTs to collaborate with and exchange ideas*. In other words, we in the Afrikan World community of ACCTs desperately need *Afrikan-Centered Think Tanks* (within as well as across all disciplines of knowledge) to strategically deliberate, plan and map out the needed and necessary behaviors/actions of the Afrikan world in its contemporary implementation of the Afrikan Liberation and Pan-Afrikan Nation-Building movements. His life and works call out to those of us who are still standing that this vital work needs to be and must be accomplished by our generation. Some of our Great Sages in our recent history like Chancellor Williams and John H. Clarke have called for it, and Jacob Carruthers, following their lead has tried to implement some important aspects of it in his lifetime (i.e., ASCAC), and several of today’s ACCTs like Chinweizu, Anderson Thompson, Marimba Ani, Ayi Kwei Armah and a faithful few others are continuing this righteous effort. They are engaged in the work of developing conceptual and organizational plans to translate this vision into reality by creating local, regional and global organizational structures to advance this objective within our lifetime.

The great promise of Amos Wilson’s life and works points to this great challenge for those of us whose responsibility it is to continue this movement to its fulfillment. Bro. Amos’ shining EXAMPLE will continue to inspire us, and his ideas will continue to instruct and guide us toward the fulfillment of this righteous and noble cause. The Ancestors be praised for his coming into being and for sharing his brief time among us as one of our shining Stars in the Afrikan Liberation and Pan-Afrikan Nation-Building Movement to create a New Afrikan World Order for the Black/Afrikan peoples of Planet Earth.

We in the Afrikan-Centered Psychology Movement in particular have taken up the charge of constructing the psychological paradigms that are foundational to reviving and expanding on Garvey's historic movement and work, and Amos Wilson's continuation of that charge. In the continuing cycle of the intergenerational relay called the Pan-Afrikan Nation-Building Movement, Amos Wilson has passed the ACCT Baton on to us (the present and next generation to come), and we boldly accept our duty and responsibility to press onward toward the ultimate victory.

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