

# Amos Wilson: Toward a Liberation Psychology

by

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## Abstract

The purpose of this examination is to show how particular social theories advanced by Amos Wilson serve to encourage a viable model from which Africana psychology can build and develop a heuristic research agenda that yields practical results for improving the quality of life experienced by people of African descent. Focus will center on Wilson's explorative excursion into the realm of education, Black-on-Black violence, psychohistory, and liberation psychology.

**Keywords:** Amos Wilson, Liberation Psychology, African-centered psychology, Psychology of oppression

Amos Wilson was a scholar/activist who headed to the call of “Bolekaja”, which means to come on down and fight (Ani, 1994). Wilson was born and spent his formative years in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Eventually, he earned degrees from Morehouse College and Fordham University. As an academic, Wilson taught at the City University of New York from 1981 to 1986 and at the College of New Rochelle from 1987 to 1995. Wilson died in 1995. Given his unwavering interest in psychology, Wilson engaged in intellectual warfare that sought not only to interpret, critique and understand, but ultimately to promote that African realities be embraced and sustained.

Although his particular discipline was psychology, his work went over and beyond the “traditional” scope of the discipline. The purpose of this examination is to show how particular social theories advanced by Amos Wilson serve to encourage a viable model from which Africana psychology can build and develop a heuristic research agenda that yields practical results for improving the quality of life experienced by people of African descent. Focus will center on Wilson’s explorative excursion into the realm of education, Black-on-Black violence, psychohistory, and liberation psychology.

The working definition of Africana psychology that governs this assessment centers on an examination of a people rooted in collective experience that continually gives rise to collective memory. Certainly, there are those who say that Africans kidnapped from Africa and relocated and displaced in the North American context have neither a sense of collective experience nor collective memory. It has been argued that all sense of Africa has been wiped clean from the slate relative to displacement, and whatever has been established in this absence as some semblance of social structure for African descendants in North America has surfaced in trends shaped and measured by cultural standards not determined by people of African descent. To disavow this premise of slate washing and to examine what accounts for Wilson’s promotion of radical Black thought rooted in Africana psychology, this examination draws from his call to redefine what is classified as a negative experience in order to engage assessment of this experience as a base from which to structure Africana psychology.

Wilson’s work thrusts Black psychologists in a positive direction that synthesizes previous theoretical work done in Africana liberation psychology and attempts to take these foundational pieces to forge a practical agenda for liberation psychology. This is not to imply that Wilson’s research agenda is the only agenda, but that his work suggests a research agenda grounded on the concrete experiences of people of African descent that seeks to combine theory, research and practice. While it can be argued that all knowledge based on social construction is political, certain formulations are more overtly political than others. To offset the politics of the social construction of knowledge, Wilson placed his pulse on liberation as the ultimate goal of Africana psychology. The evolution of ideas and agendas expressed in Wilson’s work provide a type of Africana social theory that the pioneering Black psychologist Bobby Wright speaks to when he argues “Black Social Theory will not only tell us where we are going, but will also explain what to expect when we achieve our goal” (Wright, 1984, p.22). In similar fashion, Wilson expresses in *Blueprint for Black Power: A Moral, Political, and Economical Imperative for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (1998) the role Africana psychology must play in a social theory that leads to social action and change when he states that, “At the center of African-centered psychology...is a psychology of power. It does not simply describe the nature of African people, or the orientations of African people based on traditional African culture. It is a psychology that is prescriptive as well as descriptive. It is a psychology of liberation” (Wilson, p.140).

## Education

Among psychologists in general, and Black psychologists in particular, education has been and continues to be a topic intensely debated and discussed. Much of the research launched by white psychologists has been put forth to justify the idea that people of African descent are genetically and intellectually inferior. The Eugenics movement and the mulatto hypothesis are popular theories that have given credence to the notion of African genetic and intellectual inferiority. Eugenicists sought to genetically control the feeble-minded and the socially undesirable (Guthrie, 1998). Germane to white supremacy logic, people of African descent unequivocally qualified for both positions. The basic claim of the mulatto hypothesis associated with the Eugenics movement is that “racially mixed Blacks with a greater proportion of Caucasian blood (genes) are superior to Blacks with a moderate amount of White blood, and these (the latter) Blacks are superior to those with a lesser amount” (Kambon, 1998, p.182). Guthrie informs us that European psychologists like Alice Strong, B.A. Phillips, C. O. Ferguson, W.H. Pyle and Stanley B. Hall, the founding father of the American Psychological Association, engaged theoretical and empirical research to scientifically “prove”, support and justify African intellectual inferiority (Guthrie, 1998). According to Guthrie, during the first half of the twentieth century the process of deconstructing myths about the inferiority of people of African descent and debunking the “suspicious statistical shenanigans” of early white psychologists to rationalize African inferiority dominated the research agendas of early Black psychologists. Black psychologist Horace Mann Bond, Herman G. Canady, Howard H. Long, Albert S. Beckman and Martin D. Jenkins were among the early deconstructionists in African psychology who sought to “falsify the claims advanced about Black people in the standard journals of the discipline” (Harrell, 1999, p.42). In the spirit of the first wave of Black psychologists in the United States, Amos Wilson would continue this deconstructionist tradition.

Central to the education of the people of African descent, Wilson established himself as one of the more progressive and polemical voices of his time by addressing several “controversial” and thought provoking questions. Wilson raised questions such as: (1) Are Black and White children the same? (2) Is the Black child merely a White child who “happens to be Black? (3) Are there any significant differences in the mental and physical growth and development of Black and White children? (4) What effect does race awareness have on the mental and personality development of Black children (5) Are such leisure activities as the playing of certain games, watching television, going to the movies and listening to the radio, hazardous to the mental health of Black children? (6) Is the use of Black English a sign of mental inferiority? (7) Why do Black children generally score lower than White children on I.Q. tests? (8) Do Black parents socialize their children to be inferior to white children? and (9) Why have integrated schools and businesses failed so many children? (Wilson, 1978).

Wilson questioned and redefined the concept of intelligence in a manner that made it more diverse and complex than a score on an I.Q. test. As if he were anticipating the emergence of psychological pseudoscience and its' contemporary manifestation of eugenics in the form of the Bell Curve (Murray & Herrnstein, 1993) that sought to provide empirical data that re-enforced the notion that African-American children were intellectually inferior, Wilson notes that "intelligence is grounded in experience...Experiences, past, present and anticipatory, are the precursory materials out of which intelligence is dynamically constructed" (1991, p.21). While earlier Black psychologists like Horace Mann Bond and Herman G. Canady dealt with the role of rapport and standardization in intelligence testing (Guthrie, 1998), Wilson was among the first to approach the intelligence of Black and White children from a cultural differences perspective. Wilson argues that neither cultural deficiency nor deprivation accounts lower IQ scores among Black children but different cultural orientations/worldviews than those on which standardized tests are based. The worldview reflected in questions on intelligence tests traditionally has not been representative of the cultural reality experienced by children of African descent in the United States, and thus has reflected the cultural hegemony of European American standards being superimposed on children of African descent (Wilson, 1978). Questions posed by Wilson regarding African American identity and personality characteristics would be engaged later by Robert Williams (1983), William Cross (1979) and Baldwin & Bell (1985). They sought to operationally define the constructs of identity and personality by creating measures such as the Black Personality Questionnaire (BPQ), the Racial Identity Assessment Scale (RAIS) and the African Self-Consciousness Scale (ASCS) that could empirically validate theoretical conceptualizations about African American cultural orientations.

While many Black psychologists have attempted to develop education as a practice of freedom (Friere, 1998) and to provide answers to the educational dilemmas raised by Wilson, additional questions also surface. There is a need to investigate these questions through research that dares to look beneath the surface of the problems that face people of African descent and dig into the deep structure of Africana reality to search for concrete answers to concrete problems. According to Wilson (1998), "Too many of us see education as essentially a preparation for jobs...moving up in social status and as a means of securing a better lifestyle...However, I do not see them as the primary functions of education. I think it is vital that we understand that the major function of education is to help secure the survival of a people" (p.1)

## **Psychohistory**

Wilson's focus on history is presented in *The Falsification of Afrikan Consciousness: Eurocentric Psychiatry and the Politics of White Supremacy* (1993). Here he establishes discourse on the role and function of historiography when he asserts, "The study of history can not be a mere celebration of those who struggled on our behalf. We must be instructed by history and should transform history into concrete reality...If not, Black History month becomes an exercise in the inflation of egos; it *becomes* an exercise that cuts us further from reality" (Wilson, 1991, p.13).

Given this stance, Wilson echoes sentiment expressed by historian Carter G. Woodson who at the turn of the century launched an effort to place cultural and intellectual history into the annals of world history by founding the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and *The Journal of Negro History*.

In *Falsification of Afrikan Consciousness* (1993), Wilson responds to critics who take the position that history is nothing but irrelevant facts that have no relationship to contemporary situations. He posits, “Apparently, the rewriting, the distortion and the stealing of our history must serve vital economic, political and social functions for the European, or else he would not bother and try so hard to keep our history away from us, and to distort it in our minds (Wilson, p.15). Wilson clearly understood that there was an intimate connection between history and psychology. Within this interconnection, history forms the foundation for critical thought since “History can become a basis for self-criticism, a basis for the understanding of the motives and the psychology of others” (Wilson, 1993, p.18). Wilson is arguing that the study of history is more than just the study of dry, stale facts from the past but the study of a cultural personality. Therefore he suggests, “We should look at history more accurately, as Psycho-history, i.e., the psychological result of having undergone certain historical experiences” (Wilson, 1993, p.20). Wilson’s view on psychohistory was a radical departure from the views advanced by others positing an examination of the maintenance of social control in Western society. In *White Racism: A Psychohistory* (1972), Kovel describes psychohistory as the changing meaning of symbols. He examines how symbols have been utilized in Western culture, particularly in the United States, to sustain forms of dominative and aversive racism. However, in his position on psychohistory, Wilson looks at symbols not for the sake of symbols, examining instead the psychology of culture as a symbolic precipitant. Wilson advances the premise that “The psychology of a culture is to a great extent a symbolic precipitant of the kinds of experiences forced upon a group of people by their history...if we do not know our history then we do not know our personality. And if the only history we know is other people’s history then our personality has been created by that history (Wilson, 1993, p.23). For Wilson, if history and psychology interact to shape and form consciousness, the issue becomes how is it that history is used as a tool of political propaganda without being recognized as such.

Wilson suggested that central to African consciousness, the answer to this critical question is found in the study of the concept of mythology. Wilson states “We have to recognize the function of mythology since mythology seeks to mold character and to motivate, as well as to de-motivate (Wilson, 1993, p.131). He further argues, “Eurocentric history most popularly functions as mythology” (Wilson, 1993, p.28). Wilson attaches importance to the functionality of mythology and its impact on the Black psyche. He contends “Whether a mythology is perceived as true or false is sociologically unimportant” (Wilson, 1993, p.29). The empirical validity of the mythology as an actual fact that can be verified is secondary to how the mythology is internalized and actualized in our lived experiences.

Wilson extends and expands this analysis when he suggests “The European doesn’t care whether or not we remember the facts and the details as long as we remember the *impression*, as long as our personalities have been impressed and transformed in a fashion compatible with European interests” (Wilson, 1993, p.27). Given Wilson’s approach to psychohistory, mythology is a psychological construct that assists people in understanding history, creating meaning and making sense out of their contemporary reality. According to Wilson, “A mythology organizes the world, organized behavior; it organizes interpersonal and intergroup relations. Whatever mythology we believe is one that organizes our approach to other people, our perceptions of ourselves and of other people. It provides answers. The answers may not be right, they may be wrong; but it still provides an answer. And that’s psychologically satisfying” (Wilson, 1993, p.31).

## **Black-On-Black Violence**

*Black on Black Violence: The Psychodynamics of Black Self-Annihilation in Service of White Domination* (1990) begins with Wilson listing the litany of grim statistics. Yet Wilson knew these “statistics do not tell the half of it...statistics can only faintly reflect the psychosocial and socioeconomic turmoil prevalent in far too many inner-cities today” (Wilson, 1990, xii). In his book *Why Blacks Kill Blacks* (1972), Alvin Poussaint posits that part of the explanation to Black-on-Black violence can be found in how America teaches that crime and violence are the only means to obtain manhood and success and respects violence to the extent that needs of the oppressed will be addressed only after acts of violence have been carried out (Poussaint, 1972; Karenga, 1991). Although Poussaint acknowledges the social factors involved in producing Black-on-Black violence, unlike Amos Wilson, he does not explicitly state that violence is a direct result of a social system designed to support white supremacy domination and control.

In *Black on Black Violence* Wilson asserts that Black-on-Black crime and violence are sociopolitical necessities that serve to maintain and perpetuate Black self-annihilation in service of white domination (Wilson, 1990). Similar to assertions advanced by Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Wilson understands that the cultural imposition that produces self-alienation in African people is “not an individual question...it is a sociodiagnostic question” (Fanon, 1952, p.10). The individual is not the sole unit of analysis when examining social and psychological phenomena. In addition to the individual, Wilson argues that the research must examine the social system in which the behaviors occur:

The idea of personality as relatively isolated and unreflective of its social interactive history and environment, as merely motivated by purely internal motives, is an illusion. Moreover, such a concept is a dangerous myth and a psychological conspiracy perpetuated by the ruling groups in society to escape their responsibility for producing and perpetuating negative social forces which produce anti-social individuals and groups (Wilson, 1990, p.13).

Wilson's radical thought calls to mind Black psychologist Bobby Wright, who argued that Blacks kill Blacks because they have never been taught to kill whites (Wright, 1980). Interestingly, Wilson equates the African American internalization of Euro-American values transmitted by the dominant social structure with spirit possession. He states, "We are killing each other in order to maintain this system. We have let ourselves become possessed by a *spirit* (italics mine) such that when we become aggressive, we aggress against the self instead of at those who are the source of our aggressive orientation" (Wilson, 1991, p.13). Wilson refers to this spirit possession among African American males as reactionary masculinity which occurs when African American males over identify and seek to imitate their Euro-American counterparts. According to Wilson, the mass Black-on-Black violence that plagues African American communities is a learned, conditioned behavior that has become deeply embedded in the psyches and/or souls of many African American males. Wilson places emphasis on the social, political and economic realities that generate these oppressive conditions. Further he informs about interlocking institutional structures that maintain these conditions, notably government agencies, schools, churches, and media, among others. Wilson also argues in *Black-on-Black Violence* that as African Americans rightfully blame and point the finger at the social structure, the primary responsibility to end violence against the self falls on African people (Wilson, 1990).

## **Liberation Psychology**

The idea of liberation psychology can be traced back to those Latin American theologians who sought to apply the condition of oppressed people who were suffering under the yoke of colonialism and imperialism. Latin American psychologists soon adapted and appropriated this theoretical orientation and interpreted it from a political psychology point of view. Freire suggests that social activists seek to develop "conscientizacao" or "critical consciousness" among oppressed people which refers to "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1998, p.17). Just as previous theories have traveled throughout intellectual spheres, Latin American liberation theology would take an intellectual voyage and influence what has come to be known as Black liberation theology in the works of Cleage (1969), Cone (1970), Roberts (1971) and Jones (1998). According to Cone, "Black theology is a theology of liberation which arises from an identification with the oppressed blacks of America, seeking to interpret the gospel of Christ in the light of the black condition. It believes the liberation of black people is God's liberation" (p.23). While the articulation of this transient liberation theory can be attributed to Latin American theologians and psychologists (Martin-Baro, 1992; Friere, 1998), it is important to note that the discourse on the connection between spirit, religion, and radical politics that counter, correct and confront cultural/political hegemony is deeply rooted in the Africana tradition of making spirituality/religion relevant to lived experiences, inclusive of the oppressed.

African descended thinkers such as Boukman, Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, Gabriel Prosser and Henry McNeil Turner (Palmer, 1998), all combined the secular with the sacred to create a social and political philosophy/psychology that acknowledges the importance of constructing social theories centered on social change as the ultimate goal.

Contemporary Africana psychologists have begun to formalize their discourse on liberation psychology. Kobi Kambon (aka Joseph Baldwin) was one of the first Africana psychologists to articulate a formalized Africana liberation psychology. Like other radical psychologists, (Martin-Barro, 1992; Wright, 1972; White, 1972), Kambon understood that before a liberation psychology can be constructed, the formal discipline of psychology must be deconstructed and liberated from its own disciplinary constraints. Baldwin contends, “most of us Black psychologists, I believe, have failed to fully understand the fundamental political meaning of our discipline, and our role as Black psychologists within the discipline of psychology...we are an oppressed people who are engaged in struggle for our liberation” (Baldwin, 1985, p.16). Baldwin further asserts, “we (Black psychologists) have functioned in the service of the continued oppression and/or enslavement of Black people rather than in the service of our liberation from Western oppression and positive Black mental health” (Baldwin, 1985, p.16). Baldwin’s position is that liberation psychology must address the role of psychologists in the following areas: (1) theory building activities, (2) research activities, (3) clinical applied activities and (4) professional development activities (Baldwin, 1985).

The work of Daudi Azibo (1992) also engages Africana psychological discourse on liberation psychology. Azibo explains that the two ways of psychologically liberating people of African descent involve inducing reactive rebirth, which entails transforming the African out of oppression-induced psychological states, and achieving proactive natural development by actual participation in African survival thrust, as indicated by authentic African culture. He posits that in order to understand what Africana liberation psychology encompasses, it is important to consider four critical points: (1) Africana liberation psychologists must be aware of the assumed universality of Eurocentric psychology; (2) the inadequacy of exclusively using the principles that derive from the theory, research and practice of Eurocentric psychology; (3) the problematic issue of combining Eurocentric-thought based psychology along with a superimposed African cultural perspective; and (4) the fundamental premise that liberation psychology for people of African descent is and can only be African psychology (Azibo, 1992). Azibo augments the work of Kambon and raises some crucial issues concerning the essence of Africana liberation psychology. Azibo argues that liberation psychology must be grounded in African worldviews and that it must come from radical psychologists that combine the critical approaches of deconstruction, reconstruction and construction to develop research strategies, theoretical formulations and practical solutions that seek to change the social structure. However, Africana psychology and liberation psychology in their contemporary form are not the same project. Certainly, these should be the same in that any psychology pertaining to people of African descent at this critical juncture in history must put forth some type of agenda for liberation.



For Africana psychologists this process should be “a search for a positive ideology, an ideology of liberation-an ideology that asks and answers the question: How will our people stay on this earth?” (Clarke, 2004, p.201). When one places all rhetorical semantics aside, the real issue becomes clear. What does liberation psychology encompass, not just in a theoretical sense, but what does it look like in terms of measurable, observable behavior? Ultimately, the goal of liberation psychology is to change society:

not just to research the social world but to change it in the direction of democracy and social justice...[it] is concerned with alleviating or eliminating various social oppressions and with creating societies that are more than just and egalitarian societies. Liberation from what is linked to liberation for what...[it] not only seeks sound scientific knowledge but also takes sides with, and takes the outlook of, the oppressed and envisions an end to that oppression (Feagin & Vera, 2001, p.1).

Such an analysis serves as a guide to direct African Americans from resistance to liberation. This process would explain not only from what conditions African Americans are being liberated, but also details what a liberated consciousness and society would look like (Marable, 1982). The aim in this approach to psychology would be to address the practical and functional benefits humans derive from being involved in this liberating process. The development of a liberation psychology is “necessary if the field were to fulfill its promise of serving human needs, of providing tools with which people could transform their lives and re-humanize the world” (Mishier, 1996, p.xii). In the final analysis “a psychology of liberation requires a prior liberation of psychology, and that liberation can only come from a praxis committed to the sufferings and hopes of the peoples...” (Martin-Baro, 1996, p.32).

In his magnum opus, *Blueprint for Black Power: A moral, political and economic imperative for the twenty-first century* (1998), Wilson provides a detailed analysis and a plan about what an Africana liberation psychology would encompass. Aspects of applicability, practicality and functionality emerge as key factors in his analysis. Earlier articulation of Africana psychology (Azibo, 1992) focused primarily on African personality theories as the foundation for liberating people of African descent. Wilson expands this discourse to include the essential variable of power to his analysis of the African psyche. By incorporating power into the equation, Wilson constructs a political psychology with practical implications that focus on functionality. He asserts, “the white man oppresses African people because he possesses the power to do so. The Black Man (African people) are oppressed because he has not developed the power to prevent his oppression...no matter how we choose to explain white oppression or global supremacy, whether cosmologically or mundanely, the ultimate reason the white man does what he does is because he possesses the power to do so” (Wilson, 1998, p.2)

Works by Diop (1974), Welsing (1991), Kovel (1970), Bradley (1981) and King (1990) are important approximations that enhance our understanding of why Europeans do the things they do, but this body of work does not address the fundamental issue of power. After all is said and done about the origins of white supremacy, the simple yet complex actuality is that white people in power do the things they do because they can. Thus to liberate self and to improve the overall quality of life experienced, people of African descent must study and research power. Wilson's analysis takes into account the mental processes that influence how social, economic and physical factors manifest in the lived experiences of people of African descent. He informs, "the most powerful obstacle against the liberation of African peoples from white domination and exploitation is not the ability of whites to use superior military or police firepower or their ability to use it against African urgency, but [it] is their ability to engage in unrelenting psychological-political violence against the collective [African] psyche" (Wilson, 1998, p.11).

Congruent with Kambon's concept of African self-consciousness, Wilson acknowledges the importance of African consciousness to the liberation of African people. He argues that consciousness is connected to social control when he states, "consciousness is a psycho-physiological control mechanism. It is an instrument of behavioral (social) control ...consequently, its concern, character, abilities, and intentions are the objections of social concern and social engineering...to control behavior or at least, to limit its possibilities" (Wilson, 1998, p.89). Always the functionalist, Wilson argues that now that African scholars have identified the African personality disorders that result from what Kambon (1998) refers to as cultural misorientation (the over identification with and acceptance European culture), it is time to focus theory, research and praxis towards the socioeconomic functions of the maladaptive African personality. According to Wilson (1993), a major departure of Black psychology from Eurocentric psychology or White Psychology, is the fact that Black Psychology is openly and consciously political and recognizes that the very basis for so-called problems in the Black community is the fact that very basis for so-called problems in the Black community is the political structure" (p.65). Wilson understood that politics, economics, history and psychology are interlocking systems that contribute to how people experience life as cultural beings and is the fundamental premise that derives the conceptual and paradigmatic boundaries of African psychology as a field of study. Thus a progressive African psychology must provide critical analysis of how the collective maladaptive African personality sustains and supports European power and control over people of African descent. He hypothesized that for most forms of cultural misorientation operative among people of African descent, a social/economic counterpart has served to maintain and perpetuate African subordination and powerlessness (Wilson, 1998).

The relationship between the interlocking systems of politics, economics, history and psychology is an intimate connection since between "ideology legitimates power systems, and hierarchal structures and social relations and justifications for the exercise of power" (Wilson, 1998, p.221). Hence consciousness and personality are not mere theoretical abstractions, but statements of the functional elements of consciousness.

Following this line of thinking, Wilson (1998) asserts, “The receptivity of the African community to White American ideological propaganda is chiefly the result of its concrete living condition by the White American nation” (p.224). In this vein, he posed two questions in an attempt at clarifying the manner in which African consciousness is disempowered and/or empowered. How is Afrikan consciousness empowered by white power? Wilson answers that African consciousness is disempowered by white power through its creation of its other directed personality. The other-directed personality is defined as “...an African container devoid of an African content and therefore suffering a chronic sense of emptiness, an insatiable craving for satisfaction. The vacuum created in this personality comes from it being emptied of its Afrikan core by its European enslavers...It is designed to consume all things produced by others like itself, consume itself” (Wilson, 1998, p.124).

Contrarily, African consciousness is empowered by Black Power through the creation of a “self-defined, self-directed personality that is both ‘inner directed’ and ‘traditional directed’ as well as responsive to immediate and future reality” (Wilson, 1999, p.135). Wilson cautions that he is not advocating a blind return to a romanticized Africa of the past. He offers a contemporary and critical understanding of what it means to be African in the 21<sup>st</sup> century when he states, “African culture is constantly changing and evolving because the context in which African people live changes and evolves. What makes it Afrikan culture is that it operates in the best interest of Afrikan people, is designed to advance African people (Wilson, 1999, p.79) Consequently, Wilson contributes to an understanding that Africana psychologists must continue to develop “a collective consciousness informed by the historical struggles for motivation by the shared sense of obligation to preserve the collective being” (Robinson, 2000, p.171). In true liberation fashion Wilson admonishes, “We have to differentiate between a religion, an ideology and an esoteric ceremony that works for and serves us. We need to jettison a belief that requires our service and yet does not advance our interests, and thus does not change our political/social situation” (Wilson, 1999, p.72). Ultimately, Wilson encourages African Americans to deconstruct the European social structure and reconstruct a new Africana consciousness and identity “that included an indomitable will to power!...When Africans in the Americas and the world over choose to critically examine the ‘received’ ideas and biased perceptions of ‘reality’ imposed on them by Europeans and choose to know reality for what it is...they will have attained the keys to their own liberation” (Wilson, 1998, pp. 25-26).

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