

Analytical Methods

The Canons of Afrocentric Research

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The purpose of this essay is to describe an emergent and vibrant philosophy of Afrocentricity and its use as a basis for new orientations to the creation and interpretation of data.¹ The central thesis of this essay is that the traditional Eurocentric research canons of objectivity, reliability, and validity are inadequate and incorrect, especially for research involving human experiences. Consequently, this essay argues for new research orientations and provides new yardsticks (in the form of five Afrocentric research canons) by which research would be better judged.

New orientations to the acquisition and use of data are necessary because the pertinent literature is virtually silent on the views of African and other non-European communities, dealing almost exclusively with Eurocentric scholars whose interpretations are inevitably colored by European views of the phenomena being studied. These Afrocentric methodologies are intended to be used to investigate pertinent research questions legitimately and effectively (i.e., truthfully and inclusively), especially those that possess embedded assumptions about race and culture. These new Afrocentric orientations to data, or Afrocentric research methodologies, will push the inquiry into a higher realm where the methodology and the process of knowledge construction cease to take precedence over the well-being of the people being researched.²

A principal advantage of this new approach is that it compels the researcher to challenge the use of the traditional Eurocentric research canons of objectivity, reliability, and validity in the inquiry process. The researcher is expected to examine and to place in the foreground of the inquiry any and all subjectivities or societal baggage that would otherwise remain hidden and, hence, covertly influence the research activity. This essay is being presented from the perspective that these current and Eurocentric canons for evaluating research in the social sciences are inadequate and inevitably deceptive. Even if these methodologies were adequate for the physical sciences from which they were borrowed, they are inappropriate when human behavior enters into the equation. This inadequacy is evidenced in the fact that research labeled controversial, such as that concerning race and IQ, seems to be judged primarily on the reputation of the researcher (see, e.g., Eysenck, 1973, 1981–82, 1990; Herrnstein & Murray, 1992, 1994; Jensen, 1969; Kamin, 1974, 1976). By this, I mean that if the researcher is well known and considered an expert by his or her peers, the usual and much-touted standards of objectivity, reliability, and validity seem to become immaterial. This is not to say, however, that these traditional canons are ever fully adequate for judging research in the social sciences, even when they are applied rigorously and appropriately (see, among others, Asante, 1987; Cherryholmes, 1988).

I will present a set of five Afrocentric research canons based on Molefi Asante's Afrocentric principles of *Ma'at* and *Nommo* (Asante, 1987, 1990). These are *ukweli*, *kujitoo*, *utulivu*, *ujamaa*, and *uhaki*.³ Any inquiry that is not purely quantitative must satisfy these five canons to be truly legitimate. These five Afrocentric canons are the more appropriate and reasonable canons by which to judge research, especially that in which human behavior is a factor.

The Theory of Afrocentricity

The formal theory of Afrocentricity was first postulated by Molefi Kete Asante (1980, 1987, 1988, 1990) and is the conceptual framework for the new methodology being presented here. In its most fundamental expression, Afrocentrism is the scholar assuming the right and the responsibility to describe reality from his or her own perspective. With this basic premise, the concept has been employed by other scholars in many different ways: from developing new curricula for Black children (Oliver, 1988) to the formation of new research paradigms that challenge the rules governing Eurocentric research practices (Asante, 1987, 1990; Banks, 1992; Nobles, 1986). Asante's Afrocentric method is one such contribution to the new paradigm, and the methodology employed in this essay is an adaptation of his method.

Asante (1987, 1990) has identified *Ma'at* and *Nommo* as two principles that are intrinsic to African cultures wherever they may be found. *Ma'at* is "the quest for justice, truth, and harmony," and in the context of this essay, it refers to the research exercise itself, in harmony with the researcher, being used as a tool in the pursuit of truth and justice. The ultimate goal of *Ma'at* is that of helping to create a more fair and just society. *Nommo* means "the productive word," and here it describes the

creation of knowledge as a vehicle for improvement in human relations. These five canons of *ukweli*, *kujitoa*, *utulivu*, *ujamaa*, and *uhaki* are presented here as the canons against which research should be judged for the accuracy of the representativeness of the lived experiences of all people, including Black people.

In his four major works on Afrocentrism, Asante (1980, 1987, 1988, 1990) described a set of basic beliefs that researchers must hold to be considered Afrocentric, and these are acknowledged by Collins (1990), W. C. Banks (1992), and Milam (1992). The basic Afrocentric beliefs are that researchers must (a) hold themselves responsible for uncovering hidden, subtle, racist theories that may be embedded in current methodologies; (b) work to legitimize the centrality of their own ideals and values as a valid frame of reference for acquiring and examining data; and (c) maintain inquiry rooted in a strict interpretation of place (Asante, 1990). These three requirements, according to Asante (1990), make up the fundamental characteristics that define the Afrocentric researcher and also distinguish the Afrocentric methodology from the Eurocentric. Among these three characteristics, the insistence on a clear definition of place is the central distinguishing characteristic. That is, an Afrocentric inquiry must be executed from a clearly defined Afrocentric place and must include a clear description of this location.⁴

This definition of place is, in essence, an argument against the need for objectivity and for the inclusion of what can amount to an autobiographical approach and the rejection of the personal-theoretical dichotomy. In other words, knowledge construction must be based on, and knowledge claims must be evaluated in terms of, the canons of *ukweli*, *kujitoa*, *utulivu*, *ujamaa*, and *uhaki*. These five canons include, but go beyond, Asante's (1990) three recommendations and his appeals for fairness and openness in the research activity. They also include W. C. Banks's concept of communality.

By employing these five Afrocentric canons, the Afrocentric researcher harmonizes diverse values and experiences into a coherent and comprehensive definition of place. The need for these clearly articulated canons is critical because there is, currently, no universal agreement as to the precise nature of these diverse values (Asante, 1990; Collins, 1990; Milam, 1992). The use of the canons avoids the otherwise inevitable debate as to the exact nature of these shared values. There can, hence, be no argument about the validity of their inclusion (Asante, 1990). Further indication of the need for these canons is that a core belief of Afrocentrists is the inseparability of research and researcher and the inclusion of place; these are also important for the reason that it is only by maintaining an inquiry "rooted in a strict interpretation of place" (Asante, 1990, p. 5) that we can betray all naive racist theories and establish Afrocentricity as a legitimate response to the human condition. The concept of place, therefore, is "a fundamental rule of Afrocentric intellectual inquiry because its content is a self-conscious obliteration of the subject-object duality and the enthronement of African Wholism" (Asante, 1990, p. 5). The Afrocentric place is the perspective that allows the researcher to put his or her ideals and values at the center of the inquiry (Asante, 1990) and from which he or she can analyze and criticize the rules governing Eurocentric inquiry that prevent accurate explanations of African and other non-European experiences.

Questioning the Personal-Academic Dichotomy

The construction of theory and, therefore, of knowledge is now widely accepted as a subjective process, fraught with interference from the societal baggage that the researcher brings to the activity (see, among others, Asante, 1988; Cherryholmes, 1988; Harding, 1986; Lather, 1990). What is clear is that scholars seem to have implicit interest in their research outcomes. My contention is that all scholars have some stake or interest in the outcome of their work, and disclaimers to the contrary are misleading and deceptive; in the interest of truth and openness, the researcher must make that implicit interest explicit. For instance, as a Black Caribbean woman examining any heated or controversial debate such as that over race and IQ, I inevitably come to this activity with a complex configuration of baggage accrued from my life as a Black person, a Caribbean, and a woman. I, therefore, ought not to be believed if I claim disinterest in the results of my investigation because, as a Black academic, I do have a tremendous personal stake in the manner in which Black intelligence is theorized. Objectivity is an impossible standard to which to hold researchers; rather, researchers should be judged on the fairness and honesty of their work. Because, as I am arguing, objectivity is an impossible ideal, the researcher should present sufficient information about himself or herself to enable readers to assess how, and to what extent, the researcher's presence influenced the choice, conduct, and outcomes of the research.

The inclusion of the personal is, therefore, necessary for Afrocentric research. One's life experiences influence all aspects of the research process: the topics one chooses to research, the kind of research one chooses to do, how one interprets the data collected, and even the conclusions to which one comes. This is true for all, even for those who seek cover behind the shield of scientific objectivity. The Afrocentric research exercise counters the insistence on objectivity by arguing for a giving of oneself over to the act of research. By this giving, I mean that one has to open oneself up to critical self-examination and self-reflection both of introspection and retrospection. That is, one has to delve deeply into oneself to understand, and reveal to the reader, the motivations and the perspectives one brings to the research exercise. Making oneself an integral part of the research activity in this way means that any claim to objective research, or to the creation of pure theory, will ring hollow because such a stance ensures that the personal and the theoretical become inextricably linked. The emphasis necessarily shifts from objectivity to truth, fairness, and honesty, which are more reasonable canons on which to judge the creation of theory. It has to be admitted, however, that placing oneself clearly in the foreground of the process of constructing theory has terrifying implications, and the process itself can be extremely painful. The terrifying aspect arises from the realization that making oneself an integral part of the research framework exposes one's own person to the critical analytical process. By insisting that the personal and the theoretical are inseparable, the researcher is, in fact, compelling the reader to search for the layers of subtexts beyond what has actually been revealed, to come to a more complete understanding of the meaning of the data presented.

Retrospection and introspection are, therefore, important elements of the Afrocentric method. To arrive at fair and accurate conclusions about the outcomes

of the research activity, one must question oneself to ascertain if any personal obstacles exist, both before and after the research activity, to a fair interpretation of the data. In this process, researchers must also determine if, and how, their life experiences hinder or facilitate an honest interpretation of data; they must disclose their beliefs about the subject of the research activity, both at the beginning and the end of the activity; they must also explore whether these beliefs were altered in any way during the process of the inquiry; and finally, they must determine whether the conclusions arrived at are representative of only their own positions or whether they represent a consensus of opinions.

Examination of Links Between Inequality and Knowledge Construction

The skewed power relations that have resulted from the past 500 years of European and African contact have resulted in a one-dimensional perspective of the human story. Eurocentrists have continuously assumed the right to tell their own stories and everyone else's—and from a solely one-dimensional perspective. This has meant that the resulting Eurocentric stories are always incomplete and often distorted and consequently untrue (Asante, 1987; Banks, 1992; Milam, 1992; Oyebade, 1990). This confirms Asante's (1990) argument that Eurocentric research paradigms possess an intrinsic impediment due to the reluctance of Eurocentric thinkers, particularly of the positivist school or empiricist tradition, to see that human actions cannot be understood apart from the emotions, attitudes, and cultural definitions of a given context.

Afrocentrists and other scholars readily acknowledge that the relationship between race, inequality, and theory, as related to the production of knowledge, has always been a troubled one (see, among others, Gould, 1981; Ogbu, 1978). The production of knowledge for Afrocentrists is, therefore, intrinsically problematic because it is seen as a highly contextual activity. There is an inevitable interference by the scholar, with all his or her accompanying societal baggage, including race, with the subject matter. There is a widespread refusal by most non-Afrocentric scholars to acknowledge that race and inequality can and do influence the construction of knowledge. This refusal to acknowledge the influence of social structures on knowledge construction finds it unremarkable that the Black presence is invisible in theories relating race and intelligence, for example. It is important to appreciate at the outset of any inquiry that an important influence on the work must be an awareness of the exclusion of Africans and others from the scenes of theory. This absence is particularly worrisome in areas where they are intimately affected, such as the continuing debate over race and IQ.

When theorists on controversial subjects claim a total lack of interest in the results of their research and that their conclusions are a result of the scientific process scrupulously and objectively applied, it is not unreasonable to be suspicious of the claim. Even a cursory study of the prominent theorists in the field of race and intelligence, for example, reveals that their theories are closely related to their positions on social and political issues. For instance, hereditarians (who argue that Blacks are genetically deficient in intelligence) tend to be politically conservative

(Eysenck, 1990; Herrnstein & Murray, 1992; Jensen, 1969, Rushton, 1988a, 1988b), whereas prominent environmentalists (who argue that the deficiency is in the Black environment, not the genes) (Gould, 1981; Kamin, 1974) tend to be politically liberal. This political influence is clearly recognized in the literature but only by those of the opposing orientation. Each opposing group accuses the other of being politically motivated but never acknowledges the same about itself (see, among others, Brazziel, 1969; Cronbach, 1969; Eysenck, 1973; Jensen, 1969; Kamin, 1974).

Despite the fact that a large proportion of controversial race-based research involves comparisons of Black and White behavior and explanations for the perceived deviancies in Black behaviors, in very few instances are Black authorities cited (Graham, 1992; Thomas, 1982). There is the undeclared assumption that only White authorities and experiences are legitimate. Afrocentric research counters this by asserting the legitimacy of African and other non-European ideals, values, and experiences as a valid frame of reference for intellectual inquiry. Last, Eurocentric researchers, when investigating the admittedly controversial issue of IQ and race, for instance, usually declare themselves to be disinterested researchers who are simply engaged in a legitimate and objective scientific inquiry. Attempts to critique their works on methodological, experiential,⁵ or other grounds result in charges that their critics are creating controversy to restrict their right to legitimate research (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Jensen, 1969; Rushton, 1988a). However, when one looks at the affiliations of some of the more prominent proponents of either position, one sees that declarations of disinterest are patently false. By refusing to declare their stake in the outcomes of their research, their claims of objectivity, in my view, are clearly meant to obscure their true agendas.

Community Validation

An important tenet of Afrocentric research is that the inquiry cannot represent the position of a single individual but must be validated by the community that is the subject of the inquiry (Banks, 1992). Communalism is an important principle of African and many other non-European cultures (Asante, 1988; Collins, 1990; Nobles, 1986), and therefore, the views of the community must be included before a model can be submitted as Afrocentric. This process of validation can be done in a number of ways. For instance, for a study of the debate on the relationship between race and IQ, I chose to do this in four ways. First, I involved a group of self-identified Afrocentric research scholars who met once or twice per month to discuss relevant issues uncovered by the inquiry. The group provided feedback on whether the inquiry and my interpretation of the data embodied the principles of Afrocentrism as understood in the Afrocentric research community. That is, whether the research incorporated African ideals and values, whether it served to legitimize Afrocentricity as an authentic research paradigm, whether it consciously searched for hidden and subtle racial theories embedded in the race and IQ debate, and whether my findings and conclusions are representative of a consensus of global African opinion. This reference group is particularly important in deciding about consensus, and so its membership should, preferably, include persons from as many different communities as possible.

Second, I used the Internet and e-mail systems, both of which offer a convenient and efficient way to solicit the views and critiques of other scholars worldwide. I chose scholars whose work involves Afrocentric research methodologies or intelligence and its measurement for these consultations. To effect this, I joined three online discussion lists. I was able to send queries to the lists and retrieve the responses. It ought to be noted that one problem that I anticipated with this method did not in fact materialize. I expected it to be difficult to distinguish the responses of African scholars from others; this distinction was important because my study directly affected them. This was found not to be the case because African respondents tended to identify themselves and their race when discussing racially sensitive issues. On the whole, the non-African respondents were very critical of the idea of Afrocentric research and provided useful feedback by pointing to areas of the inquiry or the interpretation of data that needed attention.

The third method could be to initiate direct correspondence with well-established scholars, including those of Afrocentric orientation, to dialogue on the ideas and findings generated by the inquiry.

The Canons

Now let me turn to a description of the five Afrocentric canons.

Ukweli

Ukweli, the first of the Afrocentric research canons, is defined as the groundedness of research in the experiences of the community being researched. In fact, the experiences of community members are the ultimate authority in determining what is true and, therefore, are the final arbiter of the validity of research about their lives. The issue of what constitutes *ukweli*—that is, truth in intellectual inquiry or the verification of knowledge claims (Collins, 1990)—is as problematic for Afrocentric research as for all others. Truth, in Afrocentric research, has to be grounded in the experiences of the community. This is another reason why a clear description of the Afrocentric place is a necessary element of the inquiry: It provides a context in which to present the experiences of the community. W. C. Banks (1992) confirmed that communality is necessary for the verification of knowledge claims. He argues that

the mind of the intelligent scientist is not a well from which spring theory and method, whole and well formed. . . . Rather, it is from the actual and aspired interests of a community of people that a program of action emerges to serve and sustain their survival and welfare. (p. 270)

Kujitoa

Kujitoa is the second canon and requires that the researcher emphasize considerations of how knowledge is structured and used over the need for dispassion and

objectivity.⁶ In other words, Afrocentric research rejects the assumption of the need to avoid commitment to the objectives and outcomes of the research activity. The Eurocentric concept of objective, dispassionate, and value-free research is invalid operationally because what often passes for objectivity can be regarded as a sort of collective European subjectivity (Asante, 1990; Banks, 1992). The Afrocentric position is that an emphasis on objectivity and dispassion results in methodological considerations taking precedence over those of how knowledge is constructed. Asante (1987) and Collins (1990) suggested that this imbalance is a characteristic of hierarchical discourse structured on what Asante (1987) called the “rhetoric of dominance” (p. 25), which is anathema to Afrocentric inquiry. The issue of *kujitua* is intrinsic to Afrocentric research and cannot but improve the quality of the intellectual output. I believe that a straightforward declaration of *kujitua* puts the onus on the researcher to place his or her working assumptions in the foreground of the research activity and to validate these assumptions by engaging in continuous self-reflection and self-criticism. I agree with Cherryholmes (1988) and Asante (1990) that stories about objectivity (such as those produced by both hereditarians and environmentalists in the IQ debate) are flawed. Researchers who claim to be objective describe an approach that is elitist and control centralized, with criticism limited to experts rather than those whose experiences are being described (Cherryholmes, 1988). These ostensibly objective inquiries ignore the social context and the historical setting (Cherryholmes, 1988) that are crucial to an understanding of phenomena such as racial differences in IQ scores. Good and legitimate research entails the researcher’s “being aware and honest about how one’s own beliefs, values, and biases affect the research process” (Harding, 1986, p. 182).

As Lather (1990) asserted, it is politically value-laden research processes (of which Afrocentrism is a prime example) that are producing the more complete and less distorted social analyses.

Utulivu

The canon of *utulivu* (the third in the group) is intrinsic to the true Afrocentric researcher. In other words, the concept of justice is required for legitimate research. *Utulivu* requires that the researcher actively avoid creating, exaggerating, or sustaining divisions between or within communities but rather strive to create harmonious relationships between and within these groups. The justness of the research is measured in terms of the fairness of its procedure and the openness of its application. Asante (1987), hooks (1991), and Collins (1990), among others, have argued that what has often passed as research in the Eurocentric framework has protected social and literary theory from the scrutiny that would reveal how theory has often served the interests of the ruling classes. This “ensures that the old guard maintains control of the rhetorical territory” (Asante, 1987, p. 25) through maintaining control over definitions of what constitutes good research and who has the right to conduct research. These ingredients are used to establish a self-perpetuating initiation or *rite de passage* (Asante, 1987) into the Eurocentric research community, which results in the stifling of opposing discourse and, ultimately, injustice.

Ujamaa

The fourth canon of *ujamaa*—that is, the need for the recognition and maintenance of community—is a requirement of Afrocentric research. *Ujamaa* requires that the researcher reject the researcher-participant separation and not presume to be the “well from which spring theory and method, whole and well formed” but rather that theory and practice should be informed by the actual and aspired interests of the community. Eurocentric research, generally, tends to minimize, or to ignore altogether, the effects of the inquiry on the existence and maintenance of community. This concept of community mandates that Afrocentrists reject the researcher-participant separation because this rejection is a natural consequence of the African cultural environment, which encourages communalism rather than individual separation (Nobles, 1986). The ultimate authority, as defined by Afrocentrism, must be the experiences of the community members. In relation to controversial research involving race, Afrocentrists recognize that Eurocentric researchers formulate studies of Black people on the assumption that Black existence is in and of itself problematic (see, among others, Asante, 1987, 1990; Du Bois, 1965; Myers, 1992; Ogbu, 1978). This basic assumption has limited the explanations previously offered for the underperformance of Black children to deficit models, whether of genes, culture, or environment (Ogbu, 1978). The result has been that these theories are not corroborated in the experiences of Black people themselves, which, at least in this instance, should be the final arbiter of the validity of research about their lives.

Uhaki

Even though the Afrocentric researcher works to maintain or enhance community among people being researched, he or she is always cognizant of the interests of other groups. Therefore, closely integrated with the concept of community is that of harmony, or the canon of *uhaki*. *Uhaki* requires a research procedure that is fair to all participants, especially to those being researched, and one whose applications are mindful of the welfare of all the participants. The Afrocentrist must strive for the encouragement and maintenance of harmonious relationships between groups. This is an important test of the validity of Afrocentric research and is absent from traditional Eurocentric research activities.

Applying the Canons

The Methods of Analysis

To analyze the data obtained from an Afrocentric inquiry, the researcher must judge the data against the Afrocentric canons of *ukweli*, *kujitoa*, *utulivu*, *ujamaa*, and *uhaki*, already described. In addition, the researcher must depend on two other sources for useful data and for guidance in the interpretation of the data. The first source is his or her own experiences that are pertinent to the subject of the inquiry,

and the second is consultation with the wider community for guidance in the interpretation of data.

Locating the Afrocentric Place

The literature describes the Afrocentric place as the location, situated outside the Eurocentric framework, from which the Afrocentric scholar can effectively analyze and criticize the rules governing Eurocentric research practices (Asante, 1988; Collins, 1990; Milam, 1992; Oyebade, 1990). In this phase, the researcher becomes a focus of the inquiry, thereby creating the self-conscious obliteration of the researcher-participant duality and the enthronement of African holism, as one example, which Asante (1990), Banks (1992), and Collins (1990), among other Afrocentrists, maintain is intrinsic to the authentic Afrocentric inquiry.

Two methodological techniques recommended by Asante (1990), introspection and retrospection, must be used to locate the Afrocentric place from which the inquiry is conducted. *Introspection* is concerned principally with the implementation of the Afrocentric method, and *retrospection* is concerned with the interpretation of the data obtained from the inquiry. The process of introspection is aimed at ensuring that any obstacles to the implementation of the Afrocentric method that exist in the researcher's own mind are unearthed (Asante, 1990). The process of retrospection, similarly, is intended to help the researcher to ascertain if any personal obstacles exist to a fair interpretation of the data (Asante, 1990). This step is particularly important, as stated above, because a vast majority of scholars—even those of us who call ourselves Afrocentric—have been trained in an exclusively Eurocentric academic tradition. The techniques of introspection and retrospection are, therefore, two important phases of the Afrocentric research process (Asante, 1990) and provide actual data for the inquiry.

In the implementation of the procedure of introspection, the first question the researcher must ask himself or herself is, Who am I? In defining themselves, researchers define the perspectives they bring to the inquiry. A description of this perspective must include consideration of who the researcher is historically, socially, culturally, and politically. For instance, the fact that I am Caribbean, a woman, and African will make important contributions to the perspective I bring to any inquiry. This procedure of introspection also includes a close self-examination of the researcher's beliefs with regard to the subject under investigation. Researchers must question themselves as to who and what they are and the ways their own life experiences shape their handling of an inquiry. In addition, researchers must determine which of their experiences are peculiar to their own circumstances and which are shared by the wider community. Finally, researchers must determine what were their beliefs about the subject being inquired into prior to beginning the inquiry and how these beliefs may have affected the inquiry. This procedure will provide a description of the place from which the researcher does his or her work—that is, the Afrocentric place.

During the retrospective process, researchers must question themselves after the completion of the inquiry to ascertain if any personal obstacles exist to a fair

interpretation of the data. This step is essential to arriving at fair and accurate conclusions about the inquiry. Researchers must also determine if and how their life experiences hindered or facilitated a fair interpretation of the data. They must also determine what their beliefs were about the research subject at the end of the essay and whether these beliefs were altered in any way during the process of the inquiry.

Conclusion

In this Afrocentric methodology, all elements of the research process, from the framing of the research question to the data gathering techniques and the interpretive analysis, are closely integrated with the five Afrocentric canons outlined here. An unambiguous declaration of commitment must occur and when compared with the scientific distance required of Eurocentric research, it is the best approach to understanding any socially contextualized phenomenon. Every researcher approaches socially textured issues with all the historical and emotional baggage that has accrued from their personal and cultural histories. For example, researchers into phenomenon affecting African communities (both continental and diasporic) must be constantly aware of the centuries of hatred, contempt, discrimination, and plain denials of opportunity, including educational opportunity, that have been the lot of Black people. I know that although White behavior toward Black people has improved, especially over the past 30 years, centuries of beliefs and assumptions cannot be erased in a few decades. My own and other Black experiences (Du Bois, 1965, among others), in addition to the European literature (Hacker, 1992; Wellman, 1977), force the conclusion that many Whites still retain some residue of doubt or discomfort about African humanity, and this fact is very evident in much socially contextualized inquiries. The level of doubt appears to determine the nature of the theories proposed to explain phenomena such as the racial ranking in IQ scores. For those who truly doubt African humanity, Black-White differences in behavior are explained as Blacks' being genetically deficient compared with the "standard human"—that is, the average White person. Those who are well meaning but still uncomfortable about issues of race postulate reasons that can excuse the difference in behaviors. They too claim evidence of inferiority, but they point to Black environments and cultures as the culprits rather than genes. The question, however, ought not to be whether differences in behavior demonstrate racial hierarchy but, rather, what are the assumptions about race and human behaviors that direct Eurocentric researchers to focus on the possibility of this racial hierarchy in behaviors.

Notes

1. This term, *Afrocentricity*, describes a new orientation toward data in which the scholar assumes the right and the responsibility to describe his or her people's realities from their own perspective, employing their own values and ideals.

2. The most frequently cited example of this is the case of Cyril Burt of the United Kingdom, who is believed to have fabricated the data for his famous and much-cited twin studies (Hearnshaw, 1979).

3. *Ma'at* is "the quest for justice, truth, and harmony," and in the context of this study refers to the research exercise, in harmony with the researcher, as a tool in the pursuit of justice and truth with the ultimate goal of helping to create a more fair and just society. See Asante (1990) for a comprehensive explanation of *Ma'at*.

Nommo means "the productive word," and here it describes the creation of knowledge as a vehicle for improvement in human relations. See Asante (1987) for a comprehensive explanation of this concept.

Ukweli is loosely translated from the original Swahili as "truth." For the purposes of this essay, it refers to the groundedness of research in the experiences of the community, being researched. The experiences of community members become the ultimate authority in determining what is true and therefore become the final arbiter of the validity of research about their lives.

Kujitoa is loosely translated from the original Swahili as "commitment." It requires that the researcher emphasize considerations of how knowledge is structured and used over the need for dispassion and objectivity.

Utulivu is loosely translated from the original Swahili as "justice." It requires that the researcher actively avoid creating, exaggerating, or sustaining divisions between or within communities but rather strive to create harmonious relationships between and within these groups.

Ujamaa is loosely translated from the original Swahili as "community." It requires that the researcher reject the researcher/participant separation and not presume to be "the well from which spring theory and practice, whole and well-formed" (Banks, 1992, p. 270) but that theory and practice should be informed by the actual and aspired interests of the community.

Uhaki is loosely translated from the original Swahili as "harmony." It requires a research procedure that is fair to all participants, especially to those being researched, and one whose applications are mindful of the welfare of all the participants.

4. The Afrocentric place is the perspective that allows the researcher to put his or her ideals and values at the center of the inquiry and from which he or she can analyze and criticize the rules governing hegemonic inquiries that prevent accurate explanations of the lived experiences of those being researched.

5. *Experiential* here refers to the validation of research findings in the lived experiences of the community.

6. *Objectivity*, as used here, describes a position that holds that research findings are actual truths that exist independently of perception or of the researcher's own conceptions of the object of the research and that the conclusions arrived at are therefore undistorted by emotion or personal bias.

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