

Possibilities of Afrikology

It is an immense honour to be able to respond to Professor Lansana Keita's review of *Dani Nabudere's Afrikology: A Quest for African Holism* in *Africa Review of Books*, Volume 15, Number 1 2019. Professor Keita's article is obviously more than a mere review, as it discusses in great detail the intellectual antecedents of part of what we now consider to be Western philosophy. It also notes the significance of Kemetian and pre-Kemetian philosophical traditions which are often not discussed in philosophy departments and courses in most parts of Africa.

V. Y. Mudimbe, the accomplished Congolese philosopher, is also concerned with the protohistorical orientations of philosophy as are Cheikh Anta Diop, Dani Nabudere and Keita. However, the difference between Mudimbe and the latter group of philosophers is that the former does very little in accentuating the presence of the African voice. In other words, Africa is presented through a Eurocentric lens and therefore is invariably silently ensconced within a Eurocentric voice that also tends to speak for the continent. Put differently, Africa remains caught in a ventriloquist's snare.

The radicalism of Diop and Asante stems from locating the vibrancy and agency of the African voice and also the identification of an alternative path in African philosophy. Unfortunately, this path remains largely unrecognised within the analytic bastions of African philosophy that have been dominant on the continent. Diop, Asante

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and Nabudere clearly all advocate a different orientation in African philosophy in which a rich and dense historicity is favoured and explored to accomplish more conceptually interesting outcomes. Arguably, Professor Keita is quite intrigued by what those outcomes might be.

At this juncture, I am not about to summarise my entire book on Dani Nabudere. Instead, what I shall do is to re-state Nabudere's main positions, as Professor Keita has already undertaken the task of interrogating not only the central arguments of the book but also the implications thereof. By this, I mean apart from examining the dimensions of Nabudere's, Diop's and Asante's projects, he has started to imagine the possibilities for a philosophy of protohistory in contemporary times. This kind of approach seems to be unusually appealing. While wholly supporting this project in this brief article, I will return shortly to Nabudere's initial impetus which is the bedrock of this spectrum of deliberations.

African discourses on Egyptology are becoming more firmly established and often seek to counter the common Eurocentric bias that Africa had no history or culture worth discussing. African scholars

of Egyptology, in addition to some North Atlantic intellectuals, claim that Africa is in fact the Cradle of Humanity and hence the foremost vehicle of civilisation. Increasingly, research is deepening in this respect. But the works of Dani Nabudere, the eminent Ugandan scholar who passed on in 2011 take the project further. Rather than stop with the task of proving the primacy of the Egyptian past and its numerous cultural and scientific achievements, Nabudere attempts to connect that illustrious past with the African present. This, remarkably, is what makes his project worthy of careful attention. And this is essentially what his philosophy of Afrikology entails: tracing the historical, cultural, scientific and social links between the Cradle of Humankind and the contemporary world, with a view to healing the disruptive severances occasioned by violence, false thinking, war, loss and dispossession in order to accomplish an epistemological and psychic sense of wholeness for Africa's collective self. Of course, this proposition has considerable importance as a philosophy of universalism and not just as an African project. Afrikology intends to transcend the dichotomies inherited from Western epistemology (and culture as a whole) that maintain a divide between mind and body, or heart and mind, and revert instead to an earlier conceptual tradition perfected in ancient Egypt that conceives of knowledge generation as a holistic enterprise where the fundamental binary of the Western universe does not readily apply.

Nabudere's work not only foregrounds the significance of Egypt as a cultural fountainhead. Other parts of ancient Africa, such as Ethiopia, contributed to the eventual flowering of Egypt as a beacon of civilisation. The common ancient practices of worshipping kings as gods, establishing and maintaining pantheons of gods, and elaborate ceremonies for the dead are all practices that first began in Ethiopia and which were carried on by the ancient Egyptians. Also, sign language was in existence in the hinterlands of Africa such as among the Pygmies and the Khoi-San of Southern Africa, and parallels or even predates the representations of totemism, fetishism and the Egyptian hieroglyphic script.

Nabudere points out the groundbreaking impact of Egyptian hieroglyphics as being the essential backstory for European and Asian myths, legends and fairytales. Aryan philologists did not have the appropriate knowledge to unearth the connections between the Egyptian hieroglyphic script and the European appropriation of them. This failing created a blind spot in the Western conception and generation of knowledge. As such, it resulted in the tendency for the Western mindset to individualise the perception of natural phenomena. Nabudere re-reads Carl Gustav Jung's work on the formation of archetypes and supports the view that they were first conceived in the hinterlands of Africa before they found their way into ancient Egypt and then, eventually, to other parts of the world. In several instances, Nabudere makes this sort of claim: that many cultural and symbolic representations found in Egypt were in fact created in the hinterlands of Africa. Jung had a reading of the ancient Egyptian world that was contrary to those

typical of Western Egyptologists. He was of the view that in order to understand the Western notion of the *collective unconscious*, Western scholars had to look towards ancient Egypt and other parts of Africa. The founding elements of the Western psychoanalytic text, such as ceremonies of rebirth, the pantheon of gods, divine animals, ancient myths and symbols, the sanctification of the tomb, the wonders of the pyramids, elaborate burial rites and the entire spectrum of the Egyptian collective unconscious are all dimensions of Egyptian accomplishment that Jung deeply respected. Indeed, Egyptian civilisation which lasted for two thousand years provides the basis for understanding just how complex human societies can be.

In ancient Egypt, there occurred a quest never before experienced by humanity to establish a new approach to knowledge creation and generation. Pharaoh Shabaka of the twenty-fifth dynasty (770–657 BC) carried out what has been termed a 're-memorisation' of the past by appropriating and codifying ancient Memphite traditions; a project that eventually resulted in *Memphite Theology*. In a related vein, Memphis was adopted as the capital of Egypt – as the site of a thoroughgoing cultural renaissance. The restoration of Memphis as the capital of ancient Egypt carried far-reaching connotations. It sought to establish Egypt as the Cradle of Civilisation, apart from having profound architectural, intellectual as well as religious implications.

Nabudere also explains how the fundamental differences between Western and African epistemologies occurred. In ancient Egypt, the creation of the universe is attributed to Ptah who was self-created. In addition, Ptah is responsible for the creation of other gods. However, in

the cosmology of ancient Greece from which the West draws much of its inspiration for its epistemological foundations, the cosmos was created out of the pendulum between nothing and nothingness. Herein lies the telling difference between ancient Egypt and ancient Greece. Greek philosophers, such as Plato, through the Theory of Forms instituted an abstract kind of thought system that did not quite exist in the more holistic ancient Egyptian approach to knowledge generation. Under the influence of Plato, a dichotomisation of perception in relation to natural phenomena occurred, that is, a separation between things and forms or between the written sign and the thing itself. This epistemic separation led to much of the sort of dialectical thought to be found in Western philosophy.

In ancient Egypt, after the creation of the universe by Ptah occurred, Thoth (or Tehuti) the Egyptian god of the tongue created the hieroglyphic script and, in so doing, developed an intimate relationship between the tongue and the heart. In other words, thought springs from the human heart and the tongue articulates what the heart thinks. Here, no binarisation of natural phenomena occurs as in Western dialectical thought. Instead, a wholeness in thought and enunciation is maintained, and it is on this basis that Nabudere advances his philosophy of Afrikology which is not merely a re-memorisation of the ancient Egyptian past, but also a programme for a sustainable basis for knowledge generation in the contemporary world.

Much of the above can be found in Nabudere's earlier work – *Afrikology, Philosophy and Wholeness: An Epistemology* (2011). In what follows, I will give a much closer and detailed reading of the

text in order to: 1) give some idea as to the viability of Afrikology as an epistemological approach; 2) situate Nabudere's work within a tradition of similar African epistemologies; and 3) generally provide an outline by which to interrogate the strengths and weaknesses of Nabudere's propositions.

Nabudere cites Charles Taylor in alluding to the current malaise within epistemology. This in turn has placed contemporary society under tremendous strain as evidenced in disturbing forms of alienation, violence and fragmentation. The dissolution of epistemology can be traced back to the misrepresentation and misunderstanding of ancient Egyptian civilisation by scholars of ancient Greece. Nabudere urges a return to the initial locus of the misunderstanding, and this proposition forms a key component of his notion of Afrikology. Apart from its role as an epistemological construct, Afrikology is also meant to provide a therapeutic function in healing chronic societal dysfunction and fragmentation. Hence, rather than perceiving knowledge through a materialist lens, it needs instead to be viewed as serving an unambiguous cultural and spiritual role. As mentioned earlier, Nabudere constantly stresses the point that most of the cultural traits or archetypes commonly associated with ancient Egypt – such as the cult of gods, the offering of sacrifices and the place of divinity in everyday life – can in fact be traced to ancient Ethiopia.

Carl Jung explains that in order to understand his definition of what he calls 'the collective unconscious', which he claims is manifest within the entire spectrum of humanity, we only need to turn to the archetypes of ancient Egypt such as 'the divine kingship, the festival of renewal, the gods, the divine animals, the symbolism of

the tomb, the evolution of burial customs, the Temple, the ancient Egyptian psyche and experiences of the species, the pyramids and the texts in the Temples'.¹ However, some Eurocentric Egyptologists have sought to undermine the position of ancient Egypt as the Cradle of Humankind and instead attempted to push Asia into greater prominence. External factors – the intervention of foreign forces – also sought to undermine ancient Egypt as prime locus of archetypes until Pharaoh Shabaka of the Cushite (Nubian and Ethiopian) dynasties instigated what is regarded as the first African renaissance. The renaissance was aimed at cultural and intellectual retrieval, as contained in the *Memphite Manifesto* which became available in 716 BC. Memphis became the capital of ancient Egypt. This period is equated with the birth of consciousness, the beginning of the notion of political organisation and the re-memorisation of the past.

In this elaborate project of cultural retrieval, it was re-discovered and re-affirmed that:

Ptah, the primordial deity, is self-created and is also a creator of the other gods. He is ... the ruler over the unified Kingdom and King of Lower and Upper Egypt and its renewed unification in the hands of Horus. Thus, for the Egyptians, unlike the Greeks, the Cosmos was not suspended between nothing and nothingness, nor did it emerge from nothingness. It was a self-created universe from the oneness that was continuous.²

It is from this elemental context that the question of knowledge, its generation and dissemination ought to be understood. The *episteme* of ancient Egypt made no distinction between the mind and the body. Instead, knowledge and language were perceived as corporeal

phenomena. The heart formulates a concept or unit of knowledge which it then releases to tongue for proclamation.

Thoth is the ancient Egyptian god of the tongue as well as the hieroglyphic script. The question of knowledge generation involved both conceptual and phonetic dimensions. Written signs represented precisely what they were supposed to. However, in ancient Greece, things and what they represented (forms) were quite distinct; hence the introduction of abstract dialectical thought in the Greek *episteme*. It is also believed that Thoth was in fact a human being with mystical properties. Thoth was subsequently appropriated by both the Greeks and Romans and named after their own gods. In Greece, he was called Hermes, son of Zeus, the foremost messenger of the gods and the god of oratory.

The Romans referred to Thoth as Hermes Trismegistus, which means 'Hermes the thrice great', 'the great one', 'the greatest', and 'the Master of Masters', 'the author of astrology, magic and alchemy'.³ Thoth is ascribed the invention of writing, medicine, chemistry, law, rhetoric, applied mathematics, astronomy, astrology and metaphysics. In addition, he is credited to have written 1,100 books and published 20,000 works in various fields of intellection. However, this prodigious intellectual production is devoid of individualism and is instead a product of the collective knowledge amassed by ancient Africans. Hermeneutics, which is the practice of interpreting a variety of texts, is also associated with Thoth. Being a messenger that operates in the divide between men and gods, Thoth was deemed a skillful interpreter of messages. The art of interpretation is also central to the practices of chicanery which attempt:

to go beyond the traditional culture and the limits of divination itself by using hermeneutics to interpret these practices and ideas connected with them. Hermeneutic intervention here includes not only the interpretation of recorded historical consciousness, but also the interpretive process to enter the realm of 'symbolic interpretation' and 'double-thinking' which ... is a mode of 'shifting yet discriminating definitions and fluid associations that underlie the Chicane practice.⁴

Individualism in intellectual fields such as alchemical studies began with the Greeks, which provides a contrast to African forms of orality where individualised authorship continues to be somewhat foreign. As Nabudere reminds us, a Kiganda proverb of modern Uganda states: *amagezi ssi goomu*, which means knowledge (wisdom) is not the property of a single individual.⁵ Scholars such as Samir Amin have claimed that Plato misunderstood the knowledge systems of ancient Egypt and in so doing developed processes of thought based solely on reason. Aristotle, on his part, developed a classificatory grid based on the Platonic model. It has been propounded that Plato's *Republic* is an Athenian reformulation of the Egyptian caste system. This reformulation had profound consequences on the history of epistemology. As such, it was noted:

Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle are correctly blamed for having created a false hierarchisation of principles arising out of their search for 'perfect' knowledge due to their inadequate experiences in Egypt. Plato, in particular, is blamed for having created a hierarchisation and distinction between ideas, or *forms* and *things*, and between *outside* and *inside* of things – and hence between *virtue* and

knowledge. From now on in the Greek understanding, the *thing* and its *form* (the idea) were no longer organically linked.⁶

This in turn led to the binarisation of epistemic phenomena and hence the dichotomy between appearance and reality, the conditioned and the unconditioned, the absolute and the relative, the subject and the object, and so on. This epistemic development is often traced back to Plato who misread *Memphite Theology* in providing a large part of the foundations of Greek philosophy, thus advancing the essential impetus for Western thought as a whole. According to Nabudere, this dual mode of reflection – in which the thing is separate from the ideal – is known as the dialectic.

The Greek misrepresentation of ancient Egyptian systems of thought was not itself a wholesale rejection of those systems. Indeed, as Cheikh Anta Diop has argued, Greek philosophy is drawn primarily from Egyptian cosmologies. For instance, the Greek philosophical concept known as *logos* (whose employment is attributed to Heraclitus and Plato) actually originates from the ancient Nubian word *Ra*. Just like Diop, Nabudere argues that the fragmentation of knowledge forms can only be reversed if the momentum and dominance of Platonian-Cartesian epistemology cease. A number of times, Nabudere mentions the work of the Copenhagen school of quantum mechanics and physics, with its admission of multiple conceptions of reality as a way out of the impasse inherent in the Western epistemological model. As such, a transdisciplinary conception of reality, encompassing the gains of quantum mechanics, is also recommended as an alternative to Cartesian epistemic culture.

Nabudere also argues that the practice of divination and shamanism espouses a transdisciplinarity capable of not only improving but also transforming contemporary epistemology. Shamanism is present in many cultures but, in contemporary times, it is commonly associated with religion or quasi-religious rites even though shamanic practices had in the past been associated with immunology and psychobiology. We are urged to appreciate that

the shaman operates by using techniques of ecstasy and the power to leave his body at will during a trancelike state. In cultures where shamanism occurs, sickness is usually thought of as a soul loss and it is thus the shaman's task to enter the spirit world, capture the soul and reintegrate it in the body. A person becomes a shaman either by inheritance or by self-election. Thus, in shamanism or divination, there are no boundaries between the spirit, the mind or the body.⁷

Shamanism is based merely on religious faith but carries within it an elaborate epistemological system that has deep and ancient foundations in human existence itself. The passage below captures what being a shaman entails:

At the heart of shamanic practice is the active pursuit of knowledge. This take many forms: through calendarial study, divination and prophecy, Shamans seek knowledge of the future; and through recitations of myths, epics, charms, spells, songs and the genealogies of previous Shamans, they pass along knowledge of the past and of the spirit world. And since Shamans everywhere seek to know more than they have experienced in their everyday waking lives, they may extend their wisdom through dream journeys that provide a thousand years of human living into a single day.⁸

Shamans as such do not conform with the accepted linearity of time and instead strive to meld with universal consciousness.⁹ They possess the powers to control random events, heal the ill, cure stress and anxiety and bring about healthy community relations. These general therapeutic functions lead to wholesome deliberations within the community and reduce instances of despondency, psychic tumult and alienation.

Widespread social fragmentation is believed to have been caused by the fundamental divide that exists between the mind and the body in Western culture, and the reluctance or inability to conceive of the spirit world as being embedded within the condition of the human.¹⁰ Disciplines such as postcolonial theory emphasise the presence of multiple knowledge forms and traditions as opposed to mainstream Western scholarship which tends to view such repressed forms as being relativist and essentialist.

Just as is to be found in practices of chicane, the shaman is believed to possess a double personality like a trickster. In addition, a duality of consciousness straddles both the material and the immaterial worlds. The resilience of the trickster tradition was evident in the slave plantations of the New World where captive slaves were able to find solace in sorcery, magic, mystical invocations and the enchantment of the spirit world in the face of the daily brutalities of slave existence. Through the agency of memory, the inversions of mimicry and the invocations of the spirit world, slaves in American plantations were not only able to establish and maintain some degree of psychic equilibrium, but perhaps more importantly were able to create modern African-American culture as we know it. Furthermore,

this resistance against Western hegemony formed the basis for the emergence and development of the ideology of Pan-Africanism.

There are reasons to believe that shamanism is making its way into mainstream culture through sometimes remarkable means. Harry Smith, an American archivist, artist and experimental filmmaker, was commissioned by the record label Folkways to produce an anthology of American folk music which would otherwise have been lost in the frenzy of World War II. Smith delivered 84 songs along a system of ordering based on ancient Egyptian cosmology. Ballads were classified as green/water, social music came under the heading red/fire, and songs with the rubric blue/air. The cover art carried a 17th-century engraving of the celestial monochord which represented Pythagorean music theory. The anthology was released in 1952. Smith's archivist mind also organised his anthology, using ideas drawn from hermetic philosophy and especially the work of Robert Fludd, an Elizabethan philosopher and author of *History of the Macrocosm and Microcosm* (1617). Shortly afterwards, a cult grew around Smith's anthology that went on to influence the folk boom in the United States in the 1960s that produced figures such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Jerry Garcia and John Fahey in the process. In this way, Smith's work found its way into influential artistic circles and most especially the counterculture in the United States, beginning from the 1950s. Eventually, Smith ended his days as a shaman-in-residence at the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado.

Ancient rock art reveals much about shamanism. Formerly, Western interpretations of ancient African rock art state that the forms evident in the practice were in fact stylised human beings. However,

recent research ascribes the forms found in rock art to hallucinatory experiences of shamans as opposed to being literal representations of the material world. Apart from being representations of hallucinatory and spiritual states, rock art contains 'the shamanic roots of modern religion'.¹¹ Shamans of advanced age were unable to endure the rigours of all-night-long sessions in trance-accomplished states of heightened consciousness with the aid of psilocybin, or magic mushrooms, as it is more commonly known. The trance-like states were akin to spiritual journeys in which shamans consulted with deities and the departed on account of their communities. They then returned to the material world with renewed psychic energies with which they healed the infirm, restored communal harmony and brought random elements under control.

One of Nabudere's central arguments is that African cosmologies and epistemologies can be harnessed within the context of postmodernity for a new cultural synthesis as a panacea for the current existential malaise that afflicts the contemporary world. He further states that if recourse to the cultural accomplishments of ancient Greece has been possible, the same should be true about ancient inner Africa. In his view, postmodern rationality has failed and in order to address this failure, an existential symbiosis between humankind and nature would have to be re-discovered as had happened in pre-Athenian times. Under the Greek epistemological model, abstract rationality became the basis for the construction of knowledge, and experience was subsequently undervalued. Kant's critique of pure reason is a continuation of the ancient Greek model and found acolytes in Johann

G. Fichte, Friedrich Schelling, Friedrich Schleiermacher and G. W. F. Hegel. But this model is now being challenged by advances in quantum mechanics and physics which are highlighting the interconnectedness between humankind and nature. Nabudere argues that there are fallacies in Western traditions of rationality stemming from Plato's misunderstanding of ancient Egyptian cosmologies:

It follows that the Greeks' attempt to philosophise without an adequate understanding of Egyptian sources was bound to be misleading to their successors. Since their lack of understanding of the source of knowledge in its origin was fatal in their own context, it was also bound to pass on the weaknesses to their European successors. This is made clearer when referring to Diop's reflection on the Greeks' emulation of the African philosophy. Indeed, as Diop has demonstrated, the Greek scholars had embraced ancient Egyptian wisdom, but later abstracted aspects of that knowledge to develop their own system of 'reasoning' as ... in the case of Plato.¹²

The Greek dialectical method draws much from the cosmological forms of inner Africa in which creation is believed to be founded on a dual mode. Ra, the Egyptian deity, is believed to have created two divine pairs: *Shu* and *Tefnu*, *Geb* and *Nut* and in this combination we find the four elements (air, water, earth and fire) that are central in the corpus of the pre-Socratic philosophers: Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides and Anaxagoras.¹³ The original African model that provided the basis for this framework occurs in pairs: *Osiris* and *Isis*, *Seth* and *Nephthys*.

Having criticised the epistemological tradition developed by Platonian-Cartesian-Kantian thought for causing much of the fragmentation

and alienation in the contemporary world, Nabudere urges a return to an ethos of Nubian interconnectedness and complementarities. He is aware that this project of cultural retrieval would be an arduous task: 'a return to the ancient Egyptian or "inner Africa" system of ancient times is not possible in its pure form'.¹⁴ The Platonian-Cartesian-Kantian model on which much of Western thought is based, in Nabudere's view, is deeply flawed; and in order to overcome its shortcomings and also to discern the antecedents of the crisis of contemporary reason, we are urged to return to the being of language. In this particular instance, the languages of Africa are offered as a beacon that possesses the wholeness and interconnectedness inherent in pre-Socratic existential relations and epistemic frameworks. Scholars of inner Africa believe that the heart is the locus of reason; but when Platonian epistemology separated things from their forms, a dialectical method of reasoning emerged and created a profound division between humankind and nature, thereby leading to chronic fragmentation, the sterility of dialectical thinking, meaningless hierarchisation and epistemic absolutism.

Not all of Nabudere's proposals about the return to an ethos of wholeness and interconnectedness are convincing. He mentions the employment of African languages as a possible way of attaining that goal but has very little to say about the logistic requirements involved in such a project: 'It follows...that it is through languages, and traditions based on those languages, that humanity can dialogue with one another and come to a consensus about a new future. Hence, the recognition and development of African languages, through which the overwhelming masses of the African people are able to

communicate, are the preconditions for bringing about a true human understanding and discourse with other cultures and civilisations.'¹⁵ Obviously, this proposal involves numerous daunting practical concerns that Nabudere is silent about. Also, we need more evidence on the ravages of 'the paradigm of oppositionality'¹⁶ on which most of the contemporary traditions of rationality are based.

But there is a progressive element about Nabudere's work. Once again, he reaffirms that invaluable contributions of scholars such as Cheikh Anta Diop¹⁷ and Théophile Obenga whose problematisations and interrogations of origins of African thought systems have demonstrated that there is much depth to be discovered in those traditions. When this approach is juxtaposed with the work of African philosophers such as Peter O. Bodunrin, a superficiality and artificiality become evident in the latter's thought. African philosophers of the analytic school adopted wholesale the Cartesian model of analysis, thereby contributing to the excesses of dialectical thought. On his part, Nabudere believes the hermeneutic approach can lead to 'the recovery of knowledge' as well as constitute an antidote to the paradigm of oppositionality in which most of the canons of rationality are mired. Also by adopting a hermeneutic approach, the centrality of Thoth as an interpreter of mystical messages is again brought to fore just as the value of shamanic and trickster traditions are reasserted. The repressed histories of those traditions are likely to enrich the common fount of our humanity. Indeed, the consequences of Nabudere's propositions are bound to be far-reaching. He advocates a re-ordering of the Western epistemological model; in fact, what his argument amounts to is indeed a

destruction of the entire model. Of course, this is easier said than done. Perhaps it would be more feasible to construct a parallel universe based on his holistic epistemological approach. The baggage of Western intellectual culture is much too entrenched and entangled in the history of humanity as a whole that it is certain that its destruction may constitute a destruction of most of the archive of human intellectual culture itself. Nabudere unearths some quite interesting aspects of ancient African systems of thought. But his advocacy of a return to those forms as an existential priority poses numerous logistical challenges.¹⁸ As mentioned earlier, the point would be to build a parallel universe away from the debunked Cartesian structure and then wait and see how it thrives.

What has become apparent in the work of Nabudere, Diop, Asante and Keita is that a thoroughgoing reconsideration of the study and practice of philosophy in Africa is required. Such a wide-ranging re-examination would entail the incorporation of pre-Athenian African holism in the apprehension of multiple forms of phenomena which would involve a radical transformation of our institutions, agricultural practices, socio-economic systems and epistemological traditions; in short, the entirety of both our material cultures and our diverse forms of consciousness together with the non-subjective languages and infrastructure that mediate them. In sceptical and antagonistic circles, this would be perceived as an assault on Western epistemology and the very concept or project of modernity itself in favour of Nubian or Kemetic mysteries, and by extension, a lost or submerged form of ancient African holism. Such a radical stance is inherent

in the thought of Nabudere and all the major Afrocentric thinkers mentioned in this article.

Nabudere is not the most lucid of thinkers in terms of realising the aims and objectives of Afrikology. However, he is clear in stating that the overriding conceptual framework of contemporary epistemology is both misshapen and misguided, and so a total transformation is required for Afrikology to work. But how do we accomplish this almost insurmountable task if African institutions of higher learning, economic systems and even contemporary spiritualities are controlled and dominated by Eurocentric sensibilities? This and closely related others are serious questions that need a wide range of incisive and productive responses, responses that also need to be deep, broad, radical and subtle, immediate and long-term in relation to their effects and objectives.

Nonetheless, the Afrikological vision of philosophy in a decidedly Afrocentric world is exciting and filled with lambent futuristic allure. This allure can often seem pure and uncomplicated when situated in a field of possibility. But the African socio-political landscape is something else entirely, speckled as it is with violent transitions, political upheavals and unending cycles of economic turmoil, dispossession and, paradoxically, potentials for unimaginable hope and renewal. In such an unstable landscape, the pure futuristic allure of Afrikology might seem simplistic except when bolstered by the coarse terror and atavism of a particular kind of nativism which ultimately might appear to undermine the very credentials and potentialities of Afrikology.

Another obvious challenge to the possibilities of Afrikology

is the wide social disconnect with protohistorical pursuits and orientations that is evident everywhere. There seems to be a basic lack of interest even when the development of a Nubian consciousness would seem to be empowering; in other words, those Nubian fumes would appear to be impossibly distant and perhaps even unattainable. Nonetheless, thinkers such as Nabudere are convinced that this very distance can also become the *raison d'être* for our existence.

Notes

1. Dani W Nabudere, *Afrikology, Philosophy and Wholeness: An Epistemology*, Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2011, p.10
2. Ibid. p.18
3. Ibid. p.22
4. Ibid. pp. 47-48
5. Ibid. p.24
6. Ibid. p.27
7. Ibid. p.40
8. B. Tedlock cited by Dani W. Nabudere, 2011 p.43
9. For more on shamanic practices visit <http://shamanism.wordpress> and <http://shamansdrum.org>
10. Dani W, Nabudere, 2011, p.45
11. Ibid. p.60
12. Ibid. p.76
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid. p.71
15. Ibid. p.90
16. Ibid. p.103
17. See for instance, Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization*. Mercer Cook trans. Connecticut: Lawrence Hill and Company. 1974.
18. Kwasi Wiredu *Philosophy and an African Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980; Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996; Sanya Osha, 'Kwasi Wiredu: Philosophy in the African Way' (September-October) 2005; Sanya Osha, *Kwasi Wiredu and Beyond: The Text, Writing and Thought in Africa*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 2005.