3-8-2014

The Sociocultural Functionality of Afrikan Syncretism: The Case of Spirituality

Nikitah O. Imani
University of Nebraska at Omaha, nimani@unomaha.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/blackstudfacproc

Part of the African American Studies Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/blackstudfacproc/13
THE SOCIOCULTURAL FUNCTIONALITY OF AFRIKAN SYNCRETISM: THE CASE OF SPIRITUALITY

Dr. Nikitah Okembe-RA Imani Professor and Chair, Department of Black Studies University of Nebraska-Omaha
THE NECESSITY TO CRITIQUE THE EUROCENTRIC SOCIAL SCIENCE NARRATIVE

General Ontological Framework

“Subjects” and “Objects”
The Hierarchy of “Control”
Dichotomization
Antagonistic Opposition

Platonic Epistemology and the “Law of the Excluded middle”

The mutual exclusivity of Platonic epistemology impedes holism.

The mutual exclusivity of Platonic epistemology impedes hybridity.

The Tendency to Ethnocentric Analytical Imperialism

The syncretic nature of Africana phenomena causes it to be marked as “deviant” by Eurocentric comparative analysis

The “both” and “and” discourse characteristic within Africana is problematic because it is rendered in Eurocentric as the absence of “authenticity” and “originality.”
THE ANCIENT SOCIAL FUNCTIONALITY OF SYNCRETISM

• 1. The linking of historical cultural strands among the whole of the people in a nation and/or empire

• 2. The linking of kinship relationships among the whole of the people in a nation and/or empire

• 3. To tie together implicitly connected concepts of the divinity in a manner that is consistent with the “both” and “and” epistemological and ontological assumptions of Africana theosophical thought.

• 4. To maintain political and aristocratic legitimacy
Amon (Amun, Amen) and Re (Ra)
THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL FUNCTIONALITY OF SYNCRETISM

1. The linking of contemporary cultural strands among the whole of the people in the nation but apart from the state structure.

2. The linking of kinship (fictive and non-fictive) relationships among the whole of the people in the nation but apart from the state structure.

3. To tie together implicitly connected concepts of the divinity in a manner that is consistent with the “both” and “and” epistemological and ontological assumptions of Africana theosophical thought.

4. To critique political and social legitimacy in the colonial and neocolonial nation-state.