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Maat and the Rebirth of *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’: An Examination of Beatty’s Djehuty Project

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Abstract

In this paper we examine Obenfo Mario H. Beatty’s chapter, ‘Maat the Cultural and Intellectual Allegiance of a Concept’ in terms of its articulation of *Mꞛt* ‘Maat’. This examination sets out to delineate how a return to the principles inherent in *Mꞛt* ‘Maat’ can serve to bring about the *Whm Mswt* ‘Rebirth/Renaissance’ of *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ and *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ economically and politically. This research is significant in that it points us away from the semantically vacuous and etymologically opaque terms “Africa” and “Africans” to terminology, principles and practices that restore our original identity as *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’.

Keywords: Maat, Kmtyw (Ancient Egyptians), Consanguineous, Unalterable, Sankofa, Samanadze, Historiographers, Cosmology, Mbôngi

Introduction

The concept of *Mꞛt* ‘Maat’, which emerged with the creation of the world, is conspicuously present in most African cultures. In the Bantu, Dogon and Akan creation stories, among others, there is a consanguineous story of the Creator in relation with the feminine divinity: Mother Earth.¹ There is also the idea of complementary opposites:

¹ Typically, when the earth was seen as feminine, the Creator—associated with the sky—was seen as masculine. In classical *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’, the earth was seen as masculine *gb* ‘Geb’, while the sky *nwt* ‘Nut’ was seen as feminine. Both are manifestations of our worldview focusing upon complementary opposites where both masculine and feminine elements are necessary parts of the whole necessary to create life paralleled on the macro and micro levels. In other words, if one understands creation, one understands procreation and vice versa.

This worldview is not difficult to understand as it is abundantly clear to all that in the natural order of life and reality, a woman and a man are both complementary aspects of the Afrikan whole necessary to create life. This is attested, for example, in the Akan language, wherein *Awurade* (feminine) and *Nyankopon* (masculine) combine to form the totality of the creative force that is both the source of all life and which also permeates all life (Ofori-Ansa 1997). A similar conception is found among the Ga, who refer to the Creator as *Ataa* (father) *Naa* (mother) *Nyomɔ*. This idea is also attested in Fongbè whereby the Creator is known as *Mawu* (feminine) *Lisa* (masculine), again demonstrating the Afrikan worldview based on reality as it actually is whereby, we know (not believe) that both the feminine and the masculine are the complementary opposites both necessary to create life. (KAMBON and SONGSORE 2021b, 167-168)

Similarly, in ancient  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People (so-called "Ancient Egypt")',  *Mḥt* 'Maat' a feminine concept and divinity, was the foundation upon which all of creation was ordered and took shape (KARENGA 2004, 177; KAMALU 2008, 93). The concept of  *Mḥt* 'Maat' currently manifests herself in the culture and tradition of some modern-day  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People (so-called "Africans")' from throughout the continent and beyond.²  *Mḥt* 'Maat' is a comprehensive construct, which has cosmic, spiritual, political and philosophical principles (MARTIN 2008, 951, KARENGA 2004, 191). In ancient  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People',  *Mḥt* 'Maat' was the social order through which  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People (so-called "Ancient Egyptians")' strove for knowledge of the cosmic world. In her spiritual sense, she was represented as the Daughter of  *Rʿ* 'The Sun',³ and in her philosophical sense, she was the moral and ethical principle guiding all  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' (OBENGA 2004, 40).  *Mḥt* 'Maat' appears strongly as one of the values that is essential in bringing about the  *Whm*

² Here, we argue that rather than the etymologically opaque and semantically vacuous "Africa" that the landmass now commonly referred to by that name should more appropriately be referred to as  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People'. To distinguish the name of the ancient nation from the semantic content which transcends national boundaries (just the classical nation's name did), we will use the formulation contemporary/modern-day  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' refer to "Africa" to avoid confusion.

³ The material sun was known as  *Rʿ*, that is, the divinity associated with the sun. Many divinities were associated in some way with  *Rʿ*, such as  *Imw*, the Creator;  *Hpri* 'Khepri', a winged beetle or scarab rising in the east;  *Hr* 'Heru', the son of Ra;  *RʿHrʿhnty* 'Ra-Hor-akhty, the Heru of the two Horizons';  *Imn-Rʿ* 'Amen-Ra', the divinity  *Imn* 'Amen' of  *Wʿst* 'Thebes' solarized.

Mswt ‘Rebirth/Renaissance’ of  *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ and  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ economically and politically (CARRUTHERS 1995, DIOP, 1996).

The discussions that follow are a review of *Obenfo* (professor) Mario H. Beatty’s chapter, ‘Maat the Cultural and Intellectual Allegiance of a Concept’. In his presentation of the cultural concept of  *Mʿt* ‘Maat’, Beatty (2002), offers varied views of how living the concept of  *Mʿt* ‘Maat’ could help advance contemporary  *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ and  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ economically, culturally and politically. *Obenfo Beatty* (2002) further examines the concept by looking at its foundation, its linguistic and cultural interpretation as well as its cultural functions. The discussion herein does not focus on the linguistic aspect, but interrogates the cultural, political and spiritual constituents of  *Mʿt* ‘Maat’ as a means of examining and unravelling her relevance in the development agenda of Africa and Africans. We reviewed the paper by examining  *Mʿt* ‘Maat’ within the civilisation of the  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ throughout space and time up to the present day.

 *Mʿt* ‘Maat’ is an ancient practice of  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ that has cosmological, political and cultural implications.  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ of classical times prospered under the laws of  *Mʿt* ‘Maat’ (BEATTY 2002, 226-245; KARENGA 2004, 191; MARTIN 2008, 957-960). Most of these laws still manifest themselves in some modern-day societies of

In the beginning  *Ítmw* had appeared from primeval waters known as  *Nnw* ‘Nun’ by his own power of self-development. Note that “spirit” is thought of here as a self-development of “matter.”  *Ítmw* begat  *Šw* ‘Shu’, the wind, and  *Tfnt* ‘Tefnut’, moisture. Of these two were born  *gb* ‘Geb’ the divinity associated with the earth and  *Nwt* ‘Nut’ the divinity associated with the sky, whose children were the two brothers  *Ísir* ‘Osiris’ and  *Sth* ‘Seth’, and the sisters  *Íst* ‘Isis’ and  *Nbt Hwt* ‘Nephthys.’  *Ísir* ‘Osiris’ and  *Íst* ‘Isis’ would give birth to  *Hr* ‘Heru’, the dynastic divine falcon. The  *nswt bity* ‘Ruler of Upper and Lower Kmt’ assumed the title  *Sʿ Rʿ* “Son of Ra” (sa-Ra) from the 5th Dynasty (2498–2345 BCE) onward (Kambon & Songsore 2021a; Sesanti, 2016).  *Mʿt* ‘Maat’, the divinity of Truth or Righteousness, was a  *Sʿt Rʿ* ‘daughter of Ra’. The conception of Truth and Right occupied a prominent place in thought about  *Ítn* ‘Aten’, a solar divinity.

ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ of the landmass now erroneously known as “Africa” and beyond. The relevance of ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Mḥt* ‘Maat’ to ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ appears to be enduring. Obenfo Mario H. Beatty (2002) writes about the cultural allegiance to the concept of ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Mḥt* ‘Maat’, which this discussion engages. Though there is in-depth and varied literature about the concept, the forgoing discussions look at ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Mḥt* ‘Maat’ in classical ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’, the three levels of ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Mḥt* ‘Maat’, and their relevance to the people of modern-day ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ and contemporary ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ (BEATTY 2002, 236, OBENGA 2004, 40, KARENGA 2004, 191, AFOLAYAN 2006, 21 BEKELE & VERHAREN 2013, 4 MARTIN 2008, 957).

ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Mḥt* ‘Maat’ as a concept has been broadly discussed. She has also been subjected to different interpretations. According to E. A. Wallis Budge (1960), ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Mḥt* ‘Maat’ is, “The goddess of the unalterable laws of heaven” (185). Mario H. Beatty (2002) shares the view of April Leigh Kinkead (2016) who defines ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Mḥt* ‘Maat’ as, “Both a concept and a goddess” (66). Some scholars, themselves contemporary ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’, present that as part of the solution to the numerous problems of the continent of modern-day ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ is an understanding and incorporation of ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Mḥt* ‘Maat’ in their daily affairs (ASANTE 2011, 52; HOTE᠑ 2010, 18; HOTE᠑ 2008, 13; KARENGA 2004, 177; BEATTY 2002, 234). They posit, the significance of examining our past histories and cultures as a means of bringing about a renaissance for the continent now commonly called “Africa” culturally, politically and economically. Their arguments are strongly shared by Beatty (2002) who, while examining the significance of ᠠᠮᠤᠲᠤ *Mḥt* ‘Maat’ opines that, “Knowledge of African history and culture is essential in the process of reflecting upon the nature and purpose of our lives and how to conduct them in the best interests of African people” (p. 211). Beatty further emphasises, that “African” scholars and intellectuals wield in their hands the power of dismantling or:

Unmasking the pejorative subjectivity of much of Western discourse relative to African people and renouncing an unobtainable objectivity in historical interpretation...For African historiography, this has meant the recognition of a legitimate place for values in historical interpretation in tandem with scholarly and rigorous investigation. (2002, 212)

The concept of  *Mɔ̃t* 'Maat', most often translated by contemporary  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' as harmony, universal justice, truth, balance and reciprocity (BEKELE & VERHAREN, 2013, 4; MARTIN 2008, 957; BEATTY 2002, 236; AFOLAYAN 2006 21), emerges strongly in most discourses that seek to dismantle the yoke of subjugation of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'. Whereas  *Mɔ̃t* 'Maat' insists on the appreciation of spiritual, political, cosmic and philosophic means of life as was commonly seen in ancient  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' (e.k.a. ancient Egypt), Beatty's submission is not only for  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' to live  *Mɔ̃t* 'Maat' but further advocates Sankofa,⁴ which beckons modern-day  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' to go back to the past, re-examine and select that which is relevant because those things serve their most pressing concerns today. In his opening statement, Beatty (2002) indicates, our Ancestors speak to us and that, "Our task is to listen, learn, and study the wisdom of our ancestors and ponder it in our hearts in order to guide the restoration of our ancestral legacy and derive usable truths from it" (212). Beatty says this cognizant of the various cultures in the world, which probably have been imbibed by contemporary  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' but appear not to solve their pressing needs. It is only fair to suggest that foreign influence has bleached the mind of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People', rendering it incapable of either remembering the ways of our ancestors or rather, causing  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' to simply ignoring the usable truths that are spoken to us in various ways.

The truth and the Ancestors of Contemporary *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'

Who then are the Ancestors of contemporary  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' whom Beatty requires of us to learn, listen and study? What usable truth did they speak? Is there evidence that this truth for which the Ancestors spoke can be found in the cultural, political and spiritual practices of modern-day  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'? Do we go to the creation stories in search for the truth or how does the truth manifest itself today in the myriad of Black cultures since it has been noted, "The culture of Africa is varied and manifold, consisting of a mixture of countries with various tribes that each have their own unique characteristic" (BELL 1986, 3). However, it may be noted that "What lacks in Igbo is supplemented by Zulu, what is incomplete in Shona is substantiated by Dinka, what is forgotten by Bambara is returned by Fon, what is obscure in Owambo is clarified by Ayiti (Haiti)" Gumbe (2020 citing Kilombo ya Kanda n.d.). This perspective inevitably leads us to the views of notable historiographers who postulate that our Ancestors of ancient  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' are the ones who contemporary

⁴ Though the term is Akan, its symbolism is and usage is popularly that of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'.

 *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' must listen to in the interest of the  *Whm Mswt* 'Rebirth/Renaissance' of  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' and  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' (ALLEN 2008, 813, CARRUTHERS 1999, 12, DIOP 1989, 5-6). These scholars indicated that the existence of the  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' was prosperous because, they held sacred beliefs and admonished each other to live worthy lives (DOVE 2016, 15). The foundation of this worthy life was for them to speak and do  *M3't* 'Maat'. Aside from the knowledge that they could prosper while adhering to the laws of  *M3't* 'Maat', they also thought of the afterlife with the knowledge that, "No felicity was possible except for the deceased who could prove, at the Tribunal of Osiris that he had been charitable to the poor and had never sinned" (DIOP 1989, 1). Beatty shares in the submission of Troy D. Allen (2008) and Baba Cheikh Anta Diop (1989) as he engages the thoughts of the  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People': our classical Ancestors. He does this as a way of recognising their paths, directions and truths so as to suggest to  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People', the means of coming out of the various debacles that engulfed them. Similar to the Kasena whose proverb says; "Of every ailment one suffers in their community, there is a root elixir in their forest to curb it", scholars have noted, "For any reform to be permanent and enduring, it must be based on, and rooted in the principles of the aboriginal institutions (AYITTEY 2006)" (citing LANGLEY 1979, 98) while further stating that, "Experience has shown that we have always solved our problems without difficulty, when we have approached them from an authentically African point of view (AYITTEY 2006)" (citing ITALIAANDER 1961, 287). Obenfo Beatty appears to propose that the solutions to the challenges of contemporary  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' and  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' lie in the practice of  *M3't* 'Maat', which is an authentic concept of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'. Beatty (2002) avers, "Embedded in Maat are a number of critical assumptions about the nature of the cosmos, society, the person, and their inextricable interrelatedness which are in stark contrast and, indeed, alien to the narrative of Western Civilization" (p. 212), but which can help solve our problems. He indicated that the truth of our Ancestors is not that which can be found in Eurasian (so-called "European") civilisation.⁵ Beatty, however, is quick to caution:

In explaining Maat, this means going beyond the definition of it as truth, justice, righteousness, and universal order to provide some sense of what African people meant by these notions because they do not even remotely parallel the Western sense of these terms. (2002, 212)

⁵ Apart from direct quotations where the use of Western is used in place of Eurasia, we find it rather appropriate to use Eurasia since Europe is not a continent and Western may not be sufficiently clear and at times appears to suggest a cardinal point rather than Eurasia, which is the actual name of the entire landmass rather than just its westernmost peninsula.

Per this statement, Beatty is calling on contemporary  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ —the descendants of the classical  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ and the rightful heirs to its legacy—to interrogate the essence and the importance of order, balance and other components of  *M3t* ‘Maat’, through the lens of thought, culture, and traditional institutions, political and economic structures of  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ throughout space and time. What is challenging, though, is what currently may be understood as the real and true culture, tradition and politics of  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’. The discussions look at the foundations and origin of  *M3t* ‘Maat’ as a concept as well as arguments of how the understanding and practice can help alleviate the challenges of modern-day  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ and  *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’, now erroneously referred to as “Africans” and “Africa”.⁶ The  *Djehuty* ‘Djehuty’ Project, which examines the cultural and intellectual allegiance of  *M3t* ‘Maat’, agrees strongly that there is a need for the appreciation and incorporation of  *M3t* ‘Maat’ which will culminate in modern-day  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ bringing about the  *Whm Mswt* ‘Rebirth/Renaissance’ of  *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ and  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’.

M3t ‘Maat’ in Classical *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ and Contemporarily

Many concepts and theories that are often discussed may appear obsolete in the discourse of the so-called Afrikan development precisely because they either appear alien to some scholars or are estimated to have little effect on the  *Whm Mswt* ‘Rebirth/Renaissance’ of  *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ and  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ located therein globally. However, in light of the pervasive so-called development agenda—not directly addressing the need for a  *Whm Mswt* ‘Rebirth/Renaissance’—this begs the question of what exactly are we supposed to be developing into and in whose ultimate interests. Lacking this fundamental question leads people like George B. N. Ayittey (2006), to state:

⁶ For a more thorough discussion of this point, please see Kambon, O. “Of Repatriation, Rivers and Rivulets”. In [A Smart Ghana Repatriation Guide], 2021. Adinkra Group. <https://books.google.com.gh/books?id=laXbzQEACAAJ>

“Instead of addressing personal and leadership failures, black intellectuals and African government officials have overlaid the racism, slavery, Western colonialism, and imperialism card to the point of absurdity” (6). It will be entirely wrong to deodorize the historical facts and to assume that classical  *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ and her institutions existed in a utopian world prior to the coming of the  *ʿmw* ‘foreigners (from Eurasia)’. History, for which the study of  *Mʿt* ‘Maat’ is part, obviously cannot be regarded as a form of absurdity especially if it is the kind that proposes solutions to the many challenges of modern-day  *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’. Scholars have proposed that, “The retrieval of the Egyptian heritage in all disciplines is a first, necessary step on the way to the reconciliation of Africa’s civilisations with history (KARENGA 2004)” (prefaced by Cheikh Anta Diop, 1981, 12).⁷ Expounding on this idea further, Maam Seex Anta Jóob (Cheikh Anta Diop) avers that: “The history of Africa will remain suspended in air and cannot be written correctly until African historians connect it with the history of Egypt [...] The African historian who evades the problem of Egypt is neither modest or objective, nor unruffled, he is ignorant, cowardly, and neurotic.” (1989, xiv)

A prime example of the heritage of the  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ bequeathed to us from classical  *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ is  *Mʿt* ‘Maat’. History as explored by  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ scholars informs us of our notion of the world, its creation and of the elements of nature. History further safe-guards to some degree, our existence. In his submission, Ōbenfo Beatty examines the historical concept of  *Mʿt* ‘Maat’, her philosophical, spiritual and cosmic implications. Giving a historical overview of Maat as a practice of the  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’, Martin explicates:

Maat is a comprehensive construct that existed throughout ancient Egyptian civilization. In its cosmological sense, Maat is the principle of order that informs the creation of the universe. In its religious sense, Maat is a goddess or *neter* representing order or balance. Last, in its philosophical sense, Maat is a moral and ethical principle that all Egyptians were expected to embody in their daily actions toward family, community, nation, environment, and god. (2008, 951)

⁷ Cheikh, A. D. “Civilisation ou barbarie . [Présence Africaine], Paris, 274, 1981.

The femininity of the  *Ntrt* 'feminine divinity' can be seen in the creation stories of Akan, Dogon amongst others (DONKOR 1998, 28; GRIAULE 1970, 21). Beatty explains,  *Maat* 'Maat' grammatically is a feminine word but for the purpose of this discussion the gender of the word is not as important as her representation. Baba Beatty) states, the femininity is:

An indication of her divine role as a Goddess who was, among other epithets, 'Mistress of all the Gods,' 'Lady of the Sky,' and 'daughter of Ra.'. These epithets indicate her relevance in sustaining creation and her essential role in maintaining divine order and equilibrium in the cosmos. (2002, 217)

It was  *Maat* 'Maat' that held ancient  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' together. Current traditional so-called "African" institutions are able to maintain some level of law and order because they still hold on to some traditions and practices that share a close affinity to the traditional forms of adjudication and maintenance of order, and the appreciation of the Forty-Two declarations of  *Maat*, which while including similar elements, would vary from person to person in terms of order and overall composition. In his view, Kimbwandènde Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau does not begrudge Eurasia for woes suffered by  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' but rather excoriates modern  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' of her suffering because:

Many want to imitate East and West. This is to be what Africa is not. Its own leaders forget that 'Kânda ka ditûngwanga va lweka lwa fu kia nsi ko' (the society/community is not built beside its own social system). Many African leaders make very little effort to try to understand traditional African systems which, positively united, permitted the functioning of the tribal states which flourished all over Africa prior to pre-colonial time and which continue to maintain the powerful, united, active and (sic) uncorruptible political, administrative, social, and economic organization of our 'Makânda' the 'tribalic' communities of our villages. (1985, iv)

If, "The sense of *we*, the sense of interrelatedness, interdependence, and interconnectedness, is intrinsic to Maat" (BEATTY 2002, 214) why do contemporary  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' feel the absence of the values of interconnectedness, interdependence and interrelatedness in our cultural, political and economic situations? Obenfo Beatty (2002) again will answer that most  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' practice the  *Imw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)' prototypes of such values not because we woke up one day and simply decided

that we wanted to do so. Rather, this is the end result of an intentional and calculated processes designed to create alienated anti-Black people through miseducation, religion, media, and so forth and so on. In the words of noted psychologist Nana Amos Wilson “If you want to understand any problem . . . you need to focus on who profits from that problem, not who suffers from that problem” (WILSON 2018). Baba Fu-Kiau (1985), accuses: “Africans” of not developing their government systems from their ancestral practice however, this begs the question of what happened to cause us not to develop them. Once we ascertain the cause, we can then develop intelligent solutions to fight back. Baba Fu-Kiau in his introduction, diagnoses, if traditional so-called “African” political systems had given birth to new political administrative and economic patterns, this could have built the “African”, and “Africa”. He maintains, “An Africa removed from these local cultural substructures will be weak, poor, corruptible, divided and politically impossible to lead from afar as well as at home. It will be a perpetually rebelling Africa” (1985, v). This situation is what it is intentionally designed to be by  *mw* ‘foreigners (from Eurasia)’ who benefit from this state of affairs. This argument submitted by Fu-Kiau (1985), corroborates Beatty’s first submission which essentially admonishes contemporary  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ to listen to our Ancestors, heed to their truth and practice their culture. This echoes the exhortation that “African champions must break the chain that links African ideas to European ones and listen to the voice of the ancestors without European interpreters” (CARRUTHERS 1995, xviii).

There is enough evidence to make one concur with Baba Fu-Kiau who rightly observes that at the village level, traditional substructures especially those that are not yet infiltrated by concepts of the  *mw* ‘foreigners (from Eurasia)’ are better structured and more efficacious in developing their respective communities and the contemporary  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ located therein than the national level administrative structures. Baba Fu-Kiau (1985) attributes this well-structured indigenous system to the presence of order and agreement by consensus as exemplified in the Mbôngi⁸ system which was practiced among the Bantu (p. v). In his submission Beatty might have obliviously epitomised the relationship between mbôngi and  *Mb’t* ‘Maat’ when he explains:

As a universal order, Maat was intimately linked to, although not limited to, the creation of the world; the orderly movement of the sun, moon, celestial bodies, and the seasons; and the divine role of the king, leadership, society, family, and the relationships between people (2002, 216).

⁸ According to Fu-Kiau (1985) The Mbôngi is a term referring to the truly indigenous political institution of the Bantu-Kongo people whose structure tradition, politics, and entire social relations is based on the indigenous culture.

In other words, 𐤎𐤌𐤓𐤕 *Mb'it* 'Maat' is about a set of relationships—cosmological and interpersonal. These divine roles were not just about reverence to the creator but how every individual considered his or her role as sacred. In a community where the king, elders, family, and commoners play divine roles in service to each other, it will be a near impossibility for the communities not to progress. Ephirim-Donkor reveals, the replica of 𐤎𐤌𐤓𐤕 *Mb'it* 'Maat' in Akan cosmology. He indicated Nana Abrewa, the wife of Nana Nyame who brought forth the various Akan clans is:

Thought to be all-wise, omniscient, and just. Consequently, during adjudication the elders would often times reach an impasse. And when that happens, certain elders would be chosen and excused from the council to go and deliberate. But before they left, they would say to the remainder of the council: 'We are going to consult with the Old Woman.' Similarly, upon their return they would say to the waiting elders: 'We have consulted with the Old Woman, and this is her verdict...' (1998, 31).

In this regard, similar to how 𐤎𐤌𐤓𐤕 *Mb'it* 'Maat', daughter of 𐤓𐤌𐤓𐤕 *R'* 'Ra', is viewed, women or femaleness in general are accorded dignity in the context of 𐤎𐤌𐤓𐤕 *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'.

It is based on this that (THÉOPHILE OBENGA 2004, 191-192), concludes the concept of *Maat* is complex, multi-layered. He states, to understand it, we need to examine it on three levels:

1. On the universal level, the concept of *Maat* "expresses the harmony of the elements as clearly established, each in its right place." This is the concept of the ordered Whole, the cosmos.
2. On the political level, the concept of *Maat* works against injustice. It is in the name of *Maat* that the pharaoh subjugates rebels and dominates foreign lands.
3. On the individual level, "*Maat* embraces specific rules for living in concert with moral principles." Whoever lives according to these rules and principles achieves universal order in his or her own life, in practical terms, and lives in harmony with the ordered Whole.

This view of 𐤎𐤌𐤓𐤕 *Mb'it* 'Maat' on the individual level is best articulated in the personalised forty-two declarations of innocence referenced above.

Baba Obenga's (2004) typology will inform our discussion of $\text{M}^{\text{t}}\text{Maat}$ 'Maat' in the context of classical Kmt 'Land of Black People' that we argue is still relevant for modern-day Kmt 'Land of Black People' referring to all lands of Black people globally. Baba Beatty suggests that $\text{M}^{\text{t}}\text{Maat}$ 'Maat' should not be discussed outside of the issue of cultural unity of Kmt 'Land of Black People', colloquially known as "Africa" because it is capable of providing Kmt(yw) 'Black People', the needed cultural and intellectual power for:

Unraveling the unifying threads of African cultural unity through time and space and providing African people with a contemporary vision of truth, justice, and universal order that is, at once, an extension of our shared cultural universe and transcends our stultifying commitments and allegiance to arbitrary geographical boundaries erected by Europeans. (2002, 134)

The cultural allegiance to $\text{M}^{\text{t}}\text{Maat}$ 'Maat' should then be seen as how Kmt(yw) 'Black People' are connected to this practice and how the practice can link Kmt(yw) 'Black People' together by collapsing all forms of barriers that impede the unifying and liberating cause of Kmt(yw) 'Black People' on the mother continent and global Kmt 'Land of Black People' as a whole.

Universal Order and Cultural Allegiance to $\text{M}^{\text{t}}\text{Maat}$

The wanton destruction of the landmass contemporarily known as "Africa" but, we argue, more appropriately conceptualised as Kmt 'Land of Black People' by some anti-Black leaders calls for a lot of introspection and appreciation of the values of Kmt(yw) 'Black People', most of which are vital for economic, social and political development. Obenfowaa (female professor) Marimba Ani (1994) shares that the view of the universe held by Kmt(yw) 'Black People' is entirely different from that held by Imw 'foreigners (from Eurasia)'. Mama Marimba states, "The universe to which they relate is of sacred origin, is organic and is a true 'cosmos'. Human beings are part of the cosmos and, as such, relate intimately with other cosmic beings" (p. 29). For this reason, in a traditional context, Kmt(yw) 'Black People' do not violate mother earth with practices such as spilling blood and indecent behaviour. These must be abhorred because they believe such acts violate the earth, which is a feminine entity. Mother earth, also called Asaase (Akan) or Katiga (Kasem) has to be appeased by a traditional healer/diviner to restore the world to its purity. Obenfo Beatty (2002, 198) and Griaule Marcel (1998, 44) argue the world was

handed to Africans in perfection and purity— there was cosmic order and harmony. Beatty reveals: “When Nun⁹, the primeval waters that filled the universe, subsided, the primeval hill appeared where Atum-Ra comes forth and creates himself. Atum-Ra came forth from the primeval hill, the place of creation, after Maat was in place” (2002, 219). As such,  *Mꜣꜥt* ‘Maat’ represents the universal order of all creation that existed from the beginning. The maintenance of  *Mꜣꜥt* ‘Maat’ was one that guaranteed development for classical  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ and can engender the  *Wḥm Mswt* ‘Rebirth/Renaissance’ of  *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ so needed today. Baba and Mama Akoto and Akoto attesting to  *Mꜣꜥt* ‘Maat’ and her significance to the  *Wḥm Mswt* ‘Rebirth/Renaissance’ of  *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ state that:

Within the Afrikan paradigm, the primordial order and balance of the ancients is the ideal to be sustained and reestablished. It is the effort to reestablish that order that is the driving dynamic of development and expansion in the traditional Afrikan paradigm. That primordial condition of order and balance permitted the development of a nearly ideal social order, with a minimalisation of conflict and chaos. (1999, 209)

If our Ancestors speak to us and our only task is to listen to the truth they say, it is our duty then to explore what they knew and what truth they lived for. Appreciating what they lived and the truth that they stood for may only be attained by looking at history. As Baba Beatty shares:

History becomes the living past, not a detached and reified thing to interpret. The idea of pursuing an objective historical truth for its own sake with a detached indifference to a commitment to preserve and perpetuate culture and community is alien to the African world view (2002, 212)

The  *Mꜣꜥt* ‘Maat’  *Djehuty* ‘Djehuty’ project is a manifestation of just such a commitment. A close examination of scholarly works of  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ historians including Obenfo Beatty’s is not only limited to research satisfying the demands of the academic community but is seen as other possible ways of practically bringing about the  *Wḥm Mswt* ‘Rebirth/Renaissance’

⁹ Nun is the primordial element that existed prior to creation and Ra the source of life and rationality. These cosmological concepts originate with the  *Kmt(yw)* ‘Black People’ (Obenga, T., 2004, 40).

of  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' and her people. It is clear to some extent that at a time when historiographers and philosophers like Nananom Maulana Karenga, Cheikh Anta Diop, Kwame Gyekye, John Mbiti and Joseph Ki-Zerbo, set out to put together what could be an "African Philosophy" or history, there had earlier on been attempts by  *mw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)' intellectuals such as Hugh Trevor Roper to suggest that Africans only lived in a shadow and had no such history. (CONRAD 1996, 17-95, MAZRUI, 1969, p. 668). A consequence of this type of skewed and marginalised exposition was an increased awareness of the tangible components of "Africa's" culture, politics and economics by  *mw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)' rather than the intangible which informs the lives of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'. Therefore, whatever was perceived as a decayed "Africa" by others especially  *mw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)' scholars do not mean that traditional  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' was in such a state. Ayittey (2006), observes that the, "Ignorance and mythology continue to dominate impressions of the continent even to present times, albeit for different reasons" (11). This current assertion by the  *mw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)' appears to be influenced by the failure of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' to imbibe the cultural and spiritual underpinnings that governed  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' in the past or the failure on the part of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' to expound our cultures that seem to exist in obscurity but are very crucial to mitigating a lot of challenges. As has been observed:

Culture is important for human beings because it provides the necessary designs or models for living, indicating what is considered proper, or moral, or even sane. It provides a body of knowledge and tools by which people adapt to their environments, rules by which they relate to each other, and a veritable storehouse of knowledge, beliefs, and formulae through which humans attempt to understand the universe and their place within it. (SKINNER 1989, 206)

In the words of Mama Safisha Nzingha Adélékè, "The best way to fight an alien culture is to live your own." In his discussions Beatty (2002) shares the core principle of cultural concept of  *Mɔ'ɔ* 'Maat', which most importantly had a communal underpinning and whose practice was the core of the success of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'. At the core of  *Mɔ'ɔ* 'Maat' is the fundamental principle of cohesion and how the community of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'

fared or should have fared in a self-sufficient manner. Therefore, to  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People', an allegiance to  *Mb't* 'Maat' actually means a  *Whm* *Mswt* 'Rebirth/Renaissance' of universal balance by breaking the walls of social, economic, cultural and political barriers that hinder the growth of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'. This rebirth may manifest in how  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' revere life, appreciate nature, relate with the cosmic bodies and how we forge together in the pursuit of economic and political liberation (among many others) by and for  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'.

Mb't 'Maat' on the political level

Having looked at the cosmological order of  *Mb't* 'Maat', let us examine the political domain. In the political domain,  *Mb't* 'Maat' is justice and operates in opposition to injustice. Obenfo (professor) Obenga (2004) submits, the core of all the values of  *Mb't* 'Maat', "Is placed on a constant quest for truth and justice: *wr m3ct*, Great is Justice" (189). How do  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' resist forms of injustice? Entrenched in  *Mb't* 'Maat', is the spirit of communalism. All the forty-two declarations also reflect the conduct of the individual in the context of the community. For instance, 41 of one version states, *I have not had needs greater than my own property*, puts a check on incessant greed. This, coupled with the other laws support the claim that  *Mb't* 'Maat' in  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' was more often about the collective whole than the individual. So, emphasis is laid on how the individual conducts him or herself in accordance with the set norms and expectation of the larger group.  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' are therefore admonished to place the interest of the group first before their personal desires. This concept appears to be what has shaped our worldview about togetherness. Beatty avers:

African people fundamentally understand the world in terms of *we*, in terms of the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of the Creator, cosmos, society, and the person. This view determines what we see as truth, how we see truth, and how we act upon the world with this truth. This *we* is not to be misunderstood as a humanising mission, nor is it to be reduced to a balkanized mentality that frowns upon interaction with other human cultures. We must be politically astute enough to recognise that we must self-consciously protect and defend the sacredness of African history and culture in the face of enemies who are equally, if not more, committed to preserving the sacredness of something different that has absolutely nothing to do with humanising the world and who have no problem erasing African traditions in the process. Thus, *we* implies nothing less than the cultural unity of Africa, Pan-Africanism, and nationalism. (2002, 213)

The Kasena-Nankana of Navrongo have a similar practice when they recess to deliberate. When they reach an impasse, or when the chief or Tindaana reaches an impasse during a discussion, they end the discussion while stating, the mat is a soothsayer. Consulting the Old Woman and the mat, are actually the reexamination of the moral laws held by our Ancestors so as to enable them reach the desired conclusions that will befit all. Though these are still observed in traditional homes, the degree to which  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' extol or undermine these practices which are founded on  *M3't* 'Maat' is being influenced by  *3mw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)' politics and culture from democracy to sharia law. As elaborated above with the example of the impasse, the Akan people and the earth priest (Tindaana) at this stage are not in a hurry to commit flaws but must commune with the spirits of the land; listen to the voice of their Ancestors so to say in order to reach a worthy conclusion. They do this cognisant of the order and harmony that is to be restored and of their own desire of becoming Ancestors worthy of mentioning and emulating. It is presented that as early as 3400 B.C.E.,  *Hr N'r-mr* 'Heru Narmer', the first historic ruler of the first dynasty in  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People', "United Upper and Lower Kemet into one nation and located the capital in Men-nefer" with the primary aim of resisting foreign aggression and invasion from  *3mw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)' (NATAMBU 1998, p. 568). One will be right to conclude, this move was motivated by both economic and political interest, but more so in the interest of preserving  *M3't* 'Maat'.

In this vein, Nantambu shared that, in ancient Egypt for instance:

A Pharaoh was not a "political animal" or a "moral leader," but truly a real (maa) king, a divine leader, and a spiritual king, concerned with the divine principles governing the world. The kings of ancient Egypt upheld the laws of the universe and of human society, which Maat embodied, i.e. cosmic order, truth, justice, harmony, perfection, and spiritual strength. (1998, 568)

But the  *nswt bity* 'Ruler of Upper and Lower Kmt' was also staunchly against injustice of all forms. This unification is presented as one of the first known historical move by  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' towards nationalism, communalism and self-liberation. Obenfo Nantambu, speaking of the spirit of Pan-Afrikan Nationalism along the lines of Beatty's political discourse of Africa and Maat reveals:

Pan-African Nationalism seeks to achieve African nationhood and nationality; human perfectibility based on the seven cardinal principles/virtues of Ma'at¹⁰; self-reliance; self-determination; the creation of Pan-African nationalist solidarity and confraternity among all African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora; a cooperative, humanistic, and communal value system; spirituality; the traditional extended family modus vivendi; and polycentrism. As a corollary, it also seeks to relocate, redirect, reorient, and reposition African peoples to their original historical reference locus in ancient Kemet during the B.C. era. (1998, 168)

If  *M3't* 'Maat' is against injustice, a cursory look at the history of ancient  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' will reveal that unity, harmony and righteousness was largely the cause of the success of our Ancestors against all forms of injustice including the invasion of  *3mw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)' into ancient  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People'.

 *M3't* 'Maat' as a social order is fundamentally about how the individual upholds the sanctity of society through his or her conduct and deeds to one another in society. According to Baba Obenga, "The basis of social order, is a value that can neither be bought nor bargained away. The social order secretes benevolence and loving kindness, without stifling personal initiative and work: *ir sk3.k*" (OBENGA 2004, 189). It means that at every level of any person living  *M3't* 'Maat', their life should be full of dignity. The world would be a utopian one should this  *M3't* 'Maat' social order be observed and maintained. Baba Karenga (2004) shares, the  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' of  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' believed that the earth should be perfected like heaven. And that "Maat as natural law and order was developed into moral law and order [...] within the concept of the orderedness of being is the concept of balance in the world; a balance that is constantly challenged by the negative (isfet) and reaffirmed in the righteous acts (Maat) of humans" (193). Our failure as humans most times to restore order among ourselves is predicated on ignorance of who the real enemies are and how to avoid them at all cost. In some instances, it could be our very selves and at another, someone from afar. Okunini Kambon (2017) rightly examines that some Black intellectuals who should be expected to lead the crusade in restoring balance to the world especially the Black race—a race, which has been at war with  *3mw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)'—due to vectors of compromise have unfortunately been so ingratiating with those contemporary  *3mw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)' whose deeds are diametrically opposed to  *M3't* 'Maat' and who remain the greatest oppressors of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' (KAMBON and YEBOAH, 2018, 42-62).

¹⁰ Another spelling of  *M3't* 'Maat'

From the above, historical accounts enlighten us that  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' not only acted in the role of  *nswt bity* 'Ruler of Upper and Lower Kmt' but were also conquerors of kingdoms and empires. To quote Obenfo Obenga (2004, p. 191) "On the political level, the concept of *Maat* works against injustice. It is in the name of *Maat* that the pharaoh subjugates rebels and dominates foreign lands". Most of these important events and how they served the interest of ancient  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' are often not given due prominence in most intellectual discourses in and outside of modern-day  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People'. That which prevents the  *Whm Mswt* 'Rebirth/Renaissance' of modern-day  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' (so-called "Africa") politically and economically, for which reason the continent is fraught with challenges, and suffers forms of injustice is largely attributed to the lack of the true spirit of political unification, righteousness, and harmony among  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' globally. The continent has experienced an increase in foreign aggression, external political and economic influence most of which are mostly at the hands of  *Imw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)' and their progeny. Accusing fingers are pointed at the failure of contemporary  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' to harmonise our thoughts and ideas towards economic and political liberation. The second most debilitating canker is the absence of probity and accountability of so-called "African leaders" to their people. This is argued to be the reason for the unimagined challenges confronting the continent and all  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' to the present day (FU-KIAU 1985, 37; AKE 1985, 110-114; BRAUTIGAM 2009, 271; THOMPSON 2010, 19). Most policies operant in so-called "Africa" do not reflect  *M3t* 'Maat' but simply espouse the Eurasian rhetorical ethic on paper rather than in practice. A true 'we' spirit has both cultural, political and economic dimensions with the core aim of stripping  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' of the yoke of all forms of imperialism, neo-colonialism and balkanization (GUY 2013, 172.). The spirit of  *M3t* 'Maat' transcends the mere formation of political blocks—most of which are ineffective in addressing the malaise currently faced by  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'.

Even though Baba Beatty submits that there is some cultural and intellectual allegiance to some cultural interpretations of  *M3t* 'Maat' and other sacred concepts, he indicated that it is also important that scholars, who themselves are the contemporary  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' ensure that their allegiance is to the verifiable truth since all scholarly work will at some point in time be subjected to sharp scrutiny and moreover, are the ones who will be needed to engender the much-awaited  *Whm Mswt* 'Rebirth/Renaissance' of  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People'.

The individual, and the spiritual and moral dimension of M³t 'Maat'

We understand the components of  M³t 'Maat' not only as a concept but as a spiritual practice, which permeated the fabric of all  Kmt(yw) 'Black People'. Maulana Karenga (2004) explains, in the Palace of  Isir 'Osiris', there are the scales of  M³t 'Maat' (Truth, Justice) handled by  Inpw 'Anubis', the divine power who presides over the deceased.  Dhwty 'Djehuty' the, "Scribe of Heaven and Lord of Just Measure" (139) records the deeds of deceased as they proclaim their innocence in the forty-two declarations, an example of which can be found below:

1.	I have not done isfet ¹¹ .	22	I have not misled.
2.	I have not stolen.	23	I have not been hot-tempered.
3.	I have not been covetous.	24	I have not been deaf to words of Truth.
4.	I have not robbed.	25	I have not caused strife.
5.	I have not killed people.	26	I have not winked (at injustice).
6.	I have not reduced the requirements (of the temple).	27	I have not practiced illicit sex.
7.	I have not done fraudulent things.	28.	I have not been false.
8.	I have not stolen the property of God.	29	I have not quarrelled (with another).
9.	I have not told lies.	30	I have not been aggressive.
10.	I have not taken away food.	31	I have not been impatient.
11.	I have not been ill-tempered.	32	I have not misrepresented my nature...
12.	I have not transgressed.	33	I have not gossiped about matters.

¹¹  isft 'wrong, wrong doing, falsehood'

13.	I have not killed sacred cattle.	34	I have not done evil.
14.	I have not extorted.	35	I have not reviled the (king).
15.	I have not stolen bread rations.	36	I have not waded in water.
16.	I have not eavesdropped.	37	I have not been loud of voice.
17.	I have not been talkative.	38	I have not blasphemed God.
18.	I have not contended except concerning my own property.	39	I have not been immodest.
19.	I have not committed adultery.	40	I have not made distinctions (of others) from myself.
20.	I have not committed fornication.	41	I have not had needs greater than my own property.
21.	I have not caused fear.	42.	I have not reviled the divinity of my city.

(MAULANA KARENGA, 2004, 146-147)

It should be noted that the declarations of one person, while retaining similar common elements, would necessarily be different from the declarations of another person as these are not abstract ideals but 42 declarations that one can personally speak truthfully. By the same token the declarations of a  *nswt bity* 'Ruler of Upper and Lower Kmt' would be different from that of a farmer as the requirements for one to maintain  *M'at* 'Maat' and speak truthfully about doing so would be vastly different from that of the other. Nonetheless, the declarations would invariably amount to forty-two in number.

Just as pertained in classical  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' there is still ample evidence that among the Akans, Kasenas, Nankana and Yorubas, for one to become an Ancestor, it is important that one observes the laws of the land and live worthy lives for,

1. The attainment of eldership means that the elder must be in the state of perfection based on the collective infallibility of the elders. They are concerned with maintaining existential and metaphysical order, often in the face of hostility by the young. Upon his or her death, the elder becomes an ancestor of perpetual remembrance (DONKOR 1998, 125)

What then is the concept of attaining Ancestorship in alignment with the values and virtues of  *M3't* 'Maat' as against the forms of the  *3mw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)', which are currently practiced among some modern-day  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People'?

Comparing the declarations of  *M3't* 'Maat' by the  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' above against any modern constitution of any state in so-called "Africa" (which, if we had a  *W3hm Mswt* 'Rebirth/Renaissance' would once again be known as  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People'), we doubt if the details and strictness of the modern laws stand equal to those of the above which our Ancestors observed. Even if the current laws under which we languish were the same, "Africans" may not be compelled to observe them because the severity of the earthly punishment meted to those who violated them as pertained in classical  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' may not be the same now. This is probably because the cultural context in which we experience the sense of *we*, and the spiritual implication has been diluted and as such, the maintenance of  *M3't* 'Maat' harmony within the societies and, second, the hope to be admitted to eternity (Ancestorship) when one appears before  *Isir* 'Osiris' on the day of judgement appear to have lost their real essence. The broad spectrum of all that  *M3't* 'Maat' encompassed could be seen from the foregoing discussions.

As earlier on alluded to, in the headband of  *M3't* 'Maat', there is an ostrich¹² feather, a representation of the  *N3t* 'feminine divinity' who stands for truth, justice and righteousness. This symbol again, is a metaphor for the feather against which one's heart would be weighed in their personal final judgement day and against which their words and deeds (with regard to the degree to which they observed  *M3't* 'Maat') would be measured and recorded. Baba Beatty (2002) advises that the above attributes of this  *N3t* 'feminine divinity'—truth, justice and righteousness do not parallel their notions supposedly propagated by  *3mw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)' using the rhetorical ethic unless they are subjected to some cultural and linguistic interpretation within the milieu of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' (212). At the centre of this is how the individual conducts oneself in consonance to  *M3't* 'Maat'. Culturally, the way a Black man or woman may uphold truth, justice, or how they are applied may not be entirely the same within a Eurasian context even though a mere

¹² The ostrich is an important species of bird in  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People', not only because it is the first bird for which we have pictorial evidence, but also because of its symbolic importance. ...For the  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People', the ostrich, called  *N3w* 'ostrich', is symbolically presented exactly like the Old Kingdom Pyramid Text writing of the primeval water which was also called  *n3w*. Beatty (2002, p. 243).

mention of them seems to connote a basic and shared meaning within the two cultures. Again, Baba Beatty's (2002) statement may not mean he doubts the intellectual capacity of the persons seeking to distinguish those terms but that the cultural leanings of some scholars may influence how meanings are interpreted. Indeed, Baba Carruthers Jacob H. had observed:

African history and culture have been fighting the following two battles: (1) an international war against the European intellectuals and (2) a civil war against the colonized African spokespersons who are trained by Europeans to undermine African independence. (1999, 3)

Therefore, when Baba Beatty talks of these attributes of  *M3't* 'Maat', he appears to be asking modern-day  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' how we interpret and uphold justice, harmony and righteousness, and how these cultural interpretations have served our struggle. Baba Beatty offering an explanation on  *M3't* 'Maat', her spiritual and moral implications states:

Here, the feather as a symbol of truth is weighed against the heart of the deceased. If the heart were weighed against the feather as a physical specimen, the scales would never be balanced. Hence, the heart is metaphor for a person's will and desire to be in harmony with Maat which is reflected in behavior and conduct. The heart, being in harmony with Maat, reflects the moral and spiritual worthiness necessary to enter the abode of the blessed. It is important to note that a person's behavior and conduct, both in the context of society and the 'afterlife,' were not evaluated by a prescribed system of laws or 'Commandments,' but by how far it conformed with Maat. (2002, 221)

The heart being lighter than the feather was seen as an indication that they lived good lives on earth. Similarly, among the Akan people and other traditions of modern-day  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' now differentiated by thousands of fragmented designations, one is still recognised as an Ancestor if they actually lived good lives while on earth.  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' therefore assume and accord a departed soul Ancestralship because of how they lived in accordance with principles that in classical times would be associated and identified with  *M3't* 'Maat'. The individual, seeing how their culture venerates a person who has lived and died while practicing  *M3't* 'Maat', aspires to be remembered in the same light. Also, as Baba Beatty (2002) supports, "The heart, being in harmony with Maat, reflects the moral and spiritual worthiness necessary to enter the abode of the blessed" (p. 221). In classical  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People', the expectation was for all to live moral and physical purity. One was:

Not to soil the environment with any kind of impurity. It is therefore forbidden to commit adultery, to have sex on the bare ground (since the earth is divine), to trample on others' rights, to lie knowingly for the purpose of covering up truth or harming others, to be cruel to the weak, to embezzle property under one's stewardship, or to refuse food or drink to strangers, no matter what their identity or destination. (OBENGA 2004, 222)

Similarly, in most traditional cultures of contemporary  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People' (now colloquially referred to as "Africa"), hardly is one celebrated if their lived life is a mockery of the societal cultures and norms. A sharp contrast is what is seen in most so-called "African states" today where monuments are built in honour of nation wreckers; thieves, slanderers, murderers, and gluttonous dictators. This is probably because the fundamental institution and principle of maintaining  *Mɔ't* 'Maat' has been disregarded and ignored. However, just as mentioned earlier, some traditions of modern-day  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' throughout the continent and beyond still uphold some of the values of  *Mɔ't* 'Maat', in their quest to attaining Ancestorship. An example is that of the Akan people as shared by Donkor (1998), He reveals,

When the recently arrived spiritual personality gets to *Samanadze*, it is welcomed, given a stool to sit on, given water to drink, and asked to give account of his or her ethical life. The system of justice is based on aggregation. The ancestors listen carefully and render their decision based on whether or not the spiritual personality before them did more good than evil. If the good outweighs the evil, then it is admitted into ancestorhood. But if found to have done more evil than good, then it is found guilty as a *samanbon* (evil spiritual personality) and membership into ancestorhood is denied it. Thus denied, the evil spiritual personality will reincarnate to undo its evil deeds in the same way a childless couple may reincarnate for the sole purpose of having children. We must understand that the ultimate goal in the world is to lead the ideal life and become an ancestor. (1998, 140)

This description of conduct and judgment is not entirely different or as Obenfo Beatty would say, they do not parallel Judeo-Christian religious belief of conduct and judgment (2002, 212). However, the way and manner in which individuals from the different cultures and religions conduct themselves in order to attain this notion of Ancestorship is different—a reason Baba Beatty proposes an understanding of  *Mɔ't* 'Maat' within the culture and traditions which persist in contemporary  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People'. As exemplified in the laws of  *Mɔ't* 'Maat', a single act of 'wading the waters' was a crime and, having more than what one needed was equally a crime as captured in law 41.

The law on possessing appears not to discourage one from acquiring more property but admonishes individuals on the means to owning property. A reason law 18 states, 'I have not contended except concerning my own property'. For this reason, one could infer that in the daily lives of  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People', one thought and conducted themselves in certain ways partly because of the harm it could bring to their neighbour or the larger community. It is instructive to note also, that  *M3't* 'Maat' goes beyond just the attainment of Ancestorship and attaining eternity in the palace of  *Imntt* 'The West'. According to Uhuru Hotep the  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' of classical times, just like Akan people,

Believed that since Ra wants human beings to conduct their affairs in strict accordance with Maat, then practicing it at all times and under all conditions was certain to win His favor if not in this life, then more importantly, in the life to come. (2008, 13)

What is this favour of  Ra 'The Sun' that the practice of  *M3't* 'Maat' brings? Africans revere bravery, truth, and justice, which lead to harmony in the society. Any elder or youth who dies restoring them is eventually not accorded only the title of Ancestor but is regarded to have lived  *M3't* 'Maat'. Therefore, the real essence of  *M3't* 'Maat' is to be found in the benefits there are in the afterworld and, more importantly, the harmony that an entire community will experience. Hotep therefore shares, the ancient  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' were aware that:

Ra gifted human beings with free will. This means that we can choose to practice Maat and reap Ra's blessings or we can choose to practice Maat's opposite, 'isfet' and spread lies, discord and disharmony in our wake and thereby earn His wrath. (2008, 13)

Have modern-day  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' been reaping the benefits of  Ra 'The Sun'? Apart from having melanin, to say yes would mean there is peace, harmony, truth, righteousness and justice among so-called "African" nations or better still, that they are living in accordance with  *M3't* 'Maat'. If that assumption or conclusion is true, how have Africans been reaping  Ra 'The Sun's' benefits? The decaying of our traditional system and how rapidly erstwhile  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People', now known colloquially as "Africans" have been substituting them with foreign forms of structures, which pay no allegiance to  *M3't* 'Maat', remains the bane preventing our much-needed

Can contemporary  *Kmt*(*yw*) ‘Black People’ now running around calling themselves “Africans” say they live  *M3’t* ‘Maat’ in most of their national political and cultural practices? How are the virtues of human life upheld and how is punishment as cited above a component of restitution? If the response is no, seeking answers and solutions to these questions may lead us to the statement, “Restoring our lost sovereignty will also require that we restore our severed connections with our *Nsamanfo* (Ancestors)” (Hotep, 2010, 16). Our Ancestors of classical  *Kmt* ‘Land of Black People’ still speak. Our task is to listen to their truth for in it we will prosper.

Conclusion

The soul of a people is in their culture. Contemporary  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' whose Ancestors are the ancient  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' still speak to us. Some of their practices have served us faithfully—especially at a time when cultures of the non-Black  *Imw* 'foreigners (from Eurasia)' have failed us. The notion of ancient and contemporary  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' about truth, righteousness, harmony and justice is vastly different from the Eurasian notion of them in that the Eurasian notion is based on the rhetorical ethic (Ani, xxv). It has been established from the foregoing that in some cultural practices where  *Mɔ't* 'Maat' is observed and maintained there is relative order. Since  *Mɔ't* 'Maat' eschews evil, there is the clear indication that economic and political prosperity awaits  *Kmt(yw)* 'Black People' if we observe the divine principles of  *Mɔ't* 'Maat'. It is also important that we re-examine our indigenous cultures as a means of identifying aspects that are relevant and serve our most pressing needs in current times in the interest of bringing about the  *Whm Mswt* 'Rebirth/Renaissance' of  *Kmt* 'Land of Black People'.

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