

**MOLEFI KETE ASANTE ACCEPTANCE SPEECH FOR THE HONORARY D.LITT AND D.PHIL FROM
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA, TSHWANE
December 4, 2020**

**Honorable Chancellor Thabo Mbeki, Principal and Vice Chancellor Mandla Makhanya,
University Council, Registrar, Executive Deans and faculty of this great university,**

A few months ago, I stood at Inzalo Y'Langa, the place of the rising sun, in Mpumalanga where men and women built the earliest stone monuments and I contemplated the astronomical and spiritual knowledge of our Ancestors whose blood and dust fertilize our narratives of history, and I thought of how small we humans are in the vastness of the universe.

Today you have honored me with a recognition greater than any that I have ever received. It is at UNISA under the administration of the Principal that an African idea gained its widest acceptance by scholars, researchers and teachers when Vice Chancellor Makhanya invited me to speak to the UNISA faculties last year during a period of intense discussion on Afrocentricity and decoloniality.

It is true that I have a few other honorary degrees, but none so consequential as this one. I am a Wanadu in the court of the Amiru of Gao, Hassimi Maiga, in Mali, an enstooled king, as Nana Okru Asante Peasah, Kyidomhene of Tafo in Akyem in Ghana, and I have been honored by academics in Mexico, Russia, Brazil, Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana, USA, France, Portugal, China and Japan, but no other university or institution has fully sensed the significance of my work in Afrocentricity as UNISA. I am a particular fan of this university.

My aim has been to introduce a new paradigm where all questions are submitted first to an African interrogation. What did our ancestors say about this or that? What conclusions did they make? How can I interpret their understandings from their behaviors? In everything I am seeking the centrality of African understandings because there is nothing more correct for us than our own historical experiences. Such inquiry does not close down communication; it opens a door closed too long by ignorance and invisibility.

Life has taught me that the arc of understanding starts with curiosity and curves toward knowledge and ends in wisdom. That is why I have often taught and wrote of the achievements of our ancestors whose words, deeds, and ideas were serially distorted, stolen, and often fictionalized by grave robbers and misguided adventurers. African hunters and farmers were the first scientists, discoverers, and students of nature. These African women and men studied the stars and planets, the forests and meadows, and knew the characteristics and traits of animals. They shared knowledge with each other and understood the cosmos, the quality of the soil, the impact of the moon on humans and agriculture. We are not people without history; we are the core of human history. *Homo sapiens* first stood up on the African continent and first uttered the name of God from the earth on this continent.

Honorable Chancellor, Principal, and University Council, I humbly accept your recognition of my work as a collective project for the ultimate freeing of our minds from all forms of oppression, patriarchal racism, gender discrimination, abusive hegemony, and intellectual captivity. I will forever be a partisan of your mission.

Molefi Kete Asante