The names of nearly all the gods came from Egypt. I know from the enquiries I have made, that they came from abroad and it is most likely that they came from Egypt. For the names of all the gods have been known in Egypt since the beginning of time.¹

The sea made it natural for Greeks to turn to neighbouring maritime peoples rather than to the hill-dwellers who live on the European mainland. Egypt and Asia Minor were more interesting than Macedonia and Illyria. From these already ancient cultures the early Greeks learned many things: the names of exotic gods and goddesses such as Hera and Athena, who became fully naturalized . . .²

¹ Herodotos 2: 50. See the discussion in Martin Bernal, Black Athena Vol. 1, 98–101.
² Griffin (1986, 4).
ABBREVIATIONS

PB
 Proto-Bantu

PWS
 Proto-Western Sudanic (Westermann)

PWN
 Proto-Western Nigritic (Mukarvosky)

PNC
 Informal. No systematic reconstruction available

PCS
 Proto-Central Sudanic (Bender)

PAA
 Proto-Afro-Asiatic (Ehret, Diakonoff)

PPAB
 Proto-Potou-Akanic-Bantu (Stewart)

Bantu
 Proto-Bantu (Meeussen, Meinhof)

BANTU
 Common Bantu (Guthrie)

“Bantu”
 Bantu & Semi-Bantu (Johnston)

A-A
 Afro-Asiatic (Diakonoff, Ehret, Greenberg)

ES
 Eastern-Sudanic (Greenberg)

CS
 Central-Sudanic (Greenberg)

CN
 Chari-Nile (Greenberg)

NS
 Nilo-Saharan (Greenberg)

[I have used Greenberg’s abbreviations (numbers & letters in brackets) to identify languages].

N-C
 Niger-Congo

Mande
 B Banbara, D Dioula, M Malinke (Delafosse, Westermann)

TogoR
 Togo Remnant (Heine)

Polyglotta
 Koelle’s Polyglotta Africana
Introduction

In this essay we will take a look into the proposed etymology of a word that has come down to us in the English language as “God.” It is this author’s contention that the mainstream definitions given to this term, and its proposed origins, are the result of folk etymology. We then propose possible alternative etymologies for the word God from African languages. Historically, linguists have tried to separate the Indo-European languages from African languages, and as a result, when a dilemma arrives in the process of trying to ascertain a meaning for an obscure word in Indo-European, instead of looking into African languages (from which Indo-European languages derived), they instead make-up fanciful etymologies to try and make it fit an Indo-European reality. The works of Greenberg (2005), Obenga (1993), Bernal (2005) and Campbell-Dunn (2004) have made it so that we no longer need to stop at Indo-European to find solutions for these linguistic conundrums.

Many believe that a word, let’s say, over a 6000 year span will lose its basic meaning and its shape will be unrecognizable. While this is probably true for most words, some lexical items have not fallen victim to such a fate. For instance, the Proto-Indo-European word for “nephew” *nepot-, survives in Rumanian as nepot, virtually unchanged. One term that has come down to us in English, with virtually the same ancient pronunciation, is the very term man (a person) for which we as sentient beings are defined:

MANO ‘man’


Nilo-Saharan: East Sudanic: Me’en me-zen- ‘person,’ Maban men@n@u, Tama ma, Ik am, Didinga mats ‘male,’ Meririt mo, Dinka mots, Maban: Mabang ma-su ‘person.’ [ES70, NSB]


Indo-European: Proto-Indo-European *manu(-s) ~ *monu(-s) ‘man’; Indic: Sanskrit m’ana ~ m’anus. ‘man, person’; Iranian: Avestan *manus ‘man’; Germanic: Gothic manna, Old High German man, English man (pl. men), woman (< wife + man); Slavic: Old Church Slavic mao‘z‘i (< *mon-g-joh-). Russian m’u’z ‘husband.’ [IE 700, N 292] Uralic: Proto-Uralic (Illich-Svitych) *m’a ‘n’ce ‘man, person’; Ugric: Vogul me’n’ci ~ ma’n’si (self-name), Ostyak ma’n’t, ~ mo’n’t ~ me’s ~ ma’s (self-name of one Ostyak clan), Hungarian magyar (self-name); Finnic: Finnish mies, Estonian mees. [U 114, N 292]

Dravidian: Kolami m–as ‘man,’ m–ac ‘husband,’ m–aca ‘wife,’ Naikri m–as ‘man,’ m–asal ‘woman,’ Naiki m–as ‘husband,’ m–asa ‘wife,’ Parji ma’nja ~ ma’n’na ‘man,’ Gondi manja ‘man, person,’ Konda m–asi ‘husband,’ Kurux m–et ~ m–et ‘adult man, husband,’ Tamil m–antar ‘people, men.’ [D 4791; Illich-Svitych’s comparison (N 292) is with D 4774: Tamil man ‘king, chief, husband,’ etc. The two are probably related.]

The root of the term man is actually *ni "soul, spirit, person." Ma- is an old Niger-Congo/Kongo-Saharan prefix (often used with mass nouns, liquids, pairs, etc.) which has been lexicalized in Indo-European languages. For instance, Latin Ma-n-es (Etruscan Mani) “ancestral spirits”, N-C ni "soul”, mani "people”, as in Ma-n-d-e (with intrusive d), Bamana, Djula, Sussu ni "soul", Gola o-n-gin, o-ngi: "soul”, Santrokofi ku-ni "soul" (singular prefix). In Indo-European: Oscan nii̇r “man”, Vedic Sanskrit nāri̇r- (often of gods); (PWS ni, (ne) “person”, PWS nu “person, man”) N-C nír “man”, Kele nír. Dagomba niře, Gba niri, Konkomba o-nír; Yoruba e-ní, Gbári u-nú, Ekoí ni “man”, ni being. We noted Niger-Congo ni means “soul.” Thus Latin a-ni-ma “soul” (whence animal) can be further analysed as a- (prefix) ni (“soul”) ma (suffix). The word has cognates not only in Latin animus “spirit, courage” but in Greek anemos “wind”, Sanskrit anilas “breath”, Irish anail “breath”. The Sanskrit and Irish forms share the l of animal. Basque has arima “soul” (with Akpafu n > r).

**MAN, WOMAN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sumerian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mu, (mulu, munus)</td>
<td><strong>SU</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mu, ni “person”</td>
<td><strong>SU</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWS nu, ni “person”</td>
<td><strong>SU</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWN NINTU (NITU) “person, man”</td>
<td><strong>SU</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Bantu” (Johnston 1922: 343) mu “man”</td>
<td><strong>SU</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Bantu” (Johnston 1922: 418) omsuntu “woman”</td>
<td><strong>SU</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mande M musu “woman”</td>
<td><strong>SU</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mande mògò, M moko “man”, mu “person”</td>
<td><strong>SU</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangbetu mu “friend”</td>
<td><strong>SU</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afro-Asiatic : Chad : Musgu muni “woman”</td>
<td><strong>SU</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we can see here, fundamental concepts of life have been and are present in Indo-European languages from Africa. This is the case that will be made throughout this discourse in terms of the word God in English. Before we get into the meat of this discussion, we must first examine the mainstream definitions of the word God and its proposed history.
Current Definitions of the word God

The origins of the name God, the Divine creative force which fashioned and holds up the universe, has been elusive to researchers for many years. Although there is some consensus on its meaning, most texts assert that they are unsure of the word’s etymology. This does not instill confidence in their proposals for its original meaning. Let us now examine these definitions which have been given for this term from several sources:

Webster’s 1913 Dictionary: http://www.hyberdictionary.com/dictionary/god


Catholic Encyclopedia: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608x.htm

(Anglo-Saxon God; German Gott; akin to Persian khoda; Hindu khooza). The root-meaning of the name (from Gothic root gheu; Sanskrit hub or emu, "to invoke or to sacrifice to") is either "the one invoked" or "the one sacrificed to." From different Indo-Germanic roots (div, "to shine" or "give light"; thees in thessathat "to implore") come the Indo-Iranian deva, Sanskrit dyaus (gen. divas), Latin deus, Greek theos, Irish and Gaelic dia, all of which are generic names; also Greek Zeus (gen. Dios, Latin Jupiter (jovpater), Old Teutonic Tu or Tiw (surviving in Tuesday), Latin Janus, Diana, and other proper names of pagan deities. The common name most widely used in Semitic occurs as 'el in Hebrew, 'ilu in Babylonian, 'ilah in Arabic, etc.; and though scholars are not agreed on the point, the root-meaning most probably is "the strong or mighty one."

Oxford English Dictionary:

"god (gdp). Also 3-4 godd. [Com. Teut.: OE. god (masc. in sing.; pl. godu, godo neut., godas masc.) corresponds to OFris., OS., Du. god masc., OHG. got, cot (MHG. got, mod.Ger. gott) masc., ON. god, gu∂ neut. and masc., pl. god, gu∂ neut. (later Icel. pl. gu∂ir masc.; Sw., Da. gud), Goth. gu∂ (masc. in sing.; pl. gu∂a, guda neut.). The Goth. and ON. words always follow the neuter declension, though when used in the Christian sense they are syntactically masc. The OTeut. type is therefore *gudom neut., the adoption of the masculine concord being presumably due to the Christian use of the word. The neuter sb., in its original heathen use, would answer rather to L. numen than to L. deus. Another approximate equivalent of deus in OTeut. was *ansu- (Goth. in latinized pl. form anses, ON. pss, OE. Ös- in personal names, ésa genit. pl.); but this seems to have been applied only to the higher deities of the native pantheon, never to foreign gods; and it never came into Christian use.

The ulterior etymology is disputed. Apart from the unlikely hypothesis of adoption from some foreign tongue, the OTeut. *gubom implies as its pre-Teut. type either *ghudo-m or *ghuto-m. The former does not appear to admit of explanation; but the latter would represent the neut. of the passive pple. of a root *gheu-. There are two Aryan roots of the required form (both *glheu, with palatal aspirate): one meaning ‘to invoke’ (Skr. hû, the other ‘to pour, to offer sacrifice’ (Skr. hu, Gr. γεαν, OE. yéotan YETE v.). Hence *glhutó-m has been variously interpreted as ‘what is invoked’ (cf. Skr. puru-hûta ‘much-invoked’, an epithet of Indra) and as ‘what is worshipped by sacrifice’ (cf. Skr. hutá, which occurs in the sense ‘sacrificed to’ as well as in that of ‘offered in sacrifice’). Either of these conjectures is fairly plausible, as they both yield a sense practically coincident with the most obvious definition deducible from the actual use of the word, ‘an object of worship’. Some scholars, accepting the derivation from the root *glheu- to pour, have supposed the etymological sense to be ‘molten image’ (= Gr. γηγοῦν), but the assumed development of meaning seems very unlikely.


ETYMOLOGY: Middle English, from Old English. See gheu(): in APPENDIX I

DEFINITION: To call, invoke. Oldest form *heu()-, becoming *gheu()- in centum languages. Suffixed zero-grade form *ghu-to-, “the invoked,” god. a. god, from Old English god, god; b. giddy, from Old English gydig, gidig, possessed, insane, from Germanic *gud-iga-, possessed by a god; c.
Many modern Christian theologians are shunning away from the word God for its alleged “pagan” origins. One such online publication has the following to say on this topic:

**Word origin: God** - Our word god goes back via Germanic to Indo-European, in which a corresponding ancestor form meant “invoked one.” The word’s only surviving non-Germanic relative is Sanskrit **hu**, invoke the gods, a form which appears in the Rig Veda, most ancient of Hindu scriptures: **puru-hutas**, “much invoked,” epithet of the rain-and-thunder god Indra. (From READER’S DIGEST, Family Word Finder, page 351) (Originally published by The Reader’s Digest Association, Inc., Pleasantville New York, Montreal; Copyright 1975)

Now if the sources noted above are accurate, then the word that we use for the Supreme Being, God, comes from a very pagan origin. Thus the word god is used generically by many different religions to refer to their deity or “invoked one.”

Some may laugh at the notion, the very idea that the word “God” has any origin or association with Hindu Sanskrit. To illustrate how this is possible, we again quote from ‘Family Word Finder’ on the historical development of our Modern English language:

Page 7, ‘Word Origins’ - “English belongs to the Indo-European family of languages, which consists of about 100 related tongues, all descended from prehistoric language of a pastoral, bronze working, horse breeding people, the Aryans, who inhabited the steppes of Central Asia about 4500 B.C. Scholars refer to their language at this stage as proto-Indo-European, or simply Indo-European.”

Other Biblical scholars derive the word God from Babylonian **gad** (pronounced **ga"d**) which was their “god” of *fortune*. One such discussion from Wade Cox is as follows:

Objections to the use of the word *God*, stem from the understanding that the Babylonian deity of fortune was **Baal-Gad** (pronounced **gawd**). It is then assumed that the term is pagan if the word *God* is used.

The term *God* in the ancient Anglo-Saxon comes from the word **Goode**, or **Goot** as in the Dutch and German. The word is actually a Hebrew word from which **gad** itself in the sense of SHD 1410 is derived. The word is SHD 1464 **Guwd** (pronounced **goode**). The tribes of Israel, when taken into captivity, took with them this name. It was used also by the Assyrians who captured them. It is a prime root meaning to *crowd upon* or *attack* and this means to *invade* or to *overcome*. It is this sense of overcoming, as God is the centre of power, that the term is used. **Guwd** or **Goode** is not the same as **gad** or **Baal-Gad** worshipped by the Babylonians. One is a perversion of the concepts of the other.

The word *God* is derived from the old Teutonic form **gudo** which means *that which is invoked (or worshipped) by sacrifice* (cf. Oxford English Universal Dictionary, art. God, p. 808). This was adapted among the Teutonic tribes in the variant forms.

The representation of the loyal heavenly Host as bulls representing God is ancient, even being found in pre-Hebrew culture. The Babylonian system in its mystery cults adopted the bull-slaying typology, which carried into Mithraism. The bull-slaying typology is a representation of the wars in the heavens (see David Ulansey *The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries*, Oxford, 1989 for the cosmology; Perseus is the bull-slayer for the Mysteries). This symbolism is carried on in the association with the mighty one and the centrality of goodness or **Gott** or **Goode**.

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3 [http://www.bibleanswerstand.org/God.htm](http://www.bibleanswerstand.org/God.htm)
The English word *God*, via the Teutonic *Gudo* and the earlier forms, is associated with the ancient Semitic and Hebrew as we see above. Thus, the bull was both symbol of reverence and the significant sacrifice. Hence, the name came to be associated with the bull. This pointed towards the sacrifice of Messiah as the Bull of Atonement. This understanding was long held among the Semites from Shem as high priest from the post-flood epoch. From recent finds, it seems this was further distorted in the system at Ur.\(^5\)

In the book of Isaiah, we get the folk etymology of the word *gad* in Babylonian. The Bible is good for folk-etymologies when it comes to foreign names and concepts (see Imhotep 2011a).

**Isaiah 65:11-12** But you who forsake the Lord, who forget and ignore My holy Mount Zion, who prepare a table for Gad the Babylonian god of fortune and who furnish mixed drinks for Meni the god of destiny. I will destine you says the Lord for the sword, and you shall all bow down to the slaughter, because when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not listen or obey. But you did what was evil in my eyes, and you chose that in, which I did not delight. -AMP

A deity can be a god of fortune without the “word” itself meaning fortune. We will explore this issue further in our discussion. All of the confusion over this term arises as a result of not consulting African languages. Each of these resources give us clues on how to properly interpret this term. It is only the historical bias of thinking that Africans, let alone African languages, had no influence on the development of ideas in Europe and its languages that prevent us from gaining more plausible meanings for obscure words in Indo-European. We hope to reverse this train of thought in this essay.

**Quandaries in Analysis**

Linguists assert that the word God derives from a Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root \(^*\)ǵʰeu̯- "to pour, libate" (Sanskrit *huta*, see *hot*), or from a root \(^*\)ǵʰau̯- \((*)ǵʰeu̯h₂-\) "to call, to invoke" (Sanskrit *hūta*). Sanskrit *hutā* = "having been sacrificed", from the verb root *hu* = "sacrifice." Although Wikipedia is not always considered a credible source, in this case it accurately conveys the sentiments in other source materials I have examined. It is believed our current pronunciation of God derives from proto-Germanic *gudan*, which many believe that it derives from a Proto-Indo-European neuter passive perfect participle \(^*\)ǵʰu̯-tó-m. As Wiki notes, “The Proto-Germanic meaning of *gudān* and its etymology is uncertain.” Everywhere we look for the meaning of this word, the ultimate etymology is “uncertain” and it is this uncertainty that guides the folk-etymology. The nature of the uncertainty is clear in the language of the following passage from Wiki:

Depending on which possibility is preferred, the pre-Christian meaning of the Germanic term may either have been (in the “pouring” case) "libation" or "that which is libated upon, idol" — or, as Watkins[1] opines in the light of Greek *χωρίς γαμμα* "poured earth" meaning "tumulus", "the Germanic form may have referred in the first instance to the spirit immanent in a burial mound" — or (in the “invoke” case) "invocation, prayer" (compare the meanings of Sanskrit *brahman* or "that which is invoked".

The reason why there is uncertainty here is because there is no evidence of how the ancient term was applied. This is why they state it “may” have applied to “pouring” libations. Even if we assume the word God means “to libate,” it would still lead us right back to Africa. The pouring of libations is a fundamental African practice associated with providing nourishment to the spirit doubles of community ancestors.

Another problem here is that linguists have no explanation as to how a verb “to invoke, call, libate, pour, sacrifice, etc.” somehow became a noun and applied to a Supreme Being. They speculate that “with a slight change in meaning, it (hu/hta) could mean that which is invoked,” but supply no linguistic grounds for the change (by inflection or agglutination). There are no clues as to whether proto-Germans (Teutonic) poured libations, sacrificed for a Supreme Being or for lesser beings or for both. What was the nature of these practices?

The problem is there is no evidence for such a speculation. There is no evidence in the Germanic languages, nor in Sanskrit, of this alleged root being used as a name or title for the Creator or group of “divine beings.” Pouring and sacrificing are distinct conceptualizations. It is safe to assume that the ancient users of this term knew the difference between pouring libations and that which the libations are being poured for. The real question is, “What were the ancients calling ‘God’ before *hu/*ga*/huta, etc., became the substitute for that term?” What was the general term used for what we call God or gods in PIE and Sanskrit and Germanic? The dominant form of God in Indo-European is some variation of Latin duæs (Greek theos). In Germanic they had the forms dia, tia or tiw. How did the verb “to invoke” come to overshadow the actual name for the Creator tiw in Germanic? We will come to discover that the words djeus/theos/tiw/dia/god/gott, etc., all derive from the same African root.

If you notice from all of the examples given above as to the origins of the word God, they only site two lines of entry in the Indo-European languages: Germanic and Sanskrit. If this term was used since Proto-Indo-European times, what caused its disuse in the other branches?

Reinterpretations

It is our contention here that the word for God derives from an ancient African root that means “sky” or “heavens” (lu, ru, du). There are several reasons why we are going along this path. The first is that what we call “God” in modern languages, in ancient times, was almost always associated with the heavens and rain. This is a universal association and not restricted to Africa. The concept of *ghua betrays this association in Indo-European languages. The Supreme deity among Indo-Europeans is associated with a sky-father. This is a concept inherited from their African ancestors who also viewed God as a remote (yet all encompassing) entity that supports life from a distance (from the sky). The sky is almost always assigned the gender of male, as the rain (a fructifying agent) is associated with sperm that “impregnates” mother earth that gives birth to life.

The most dominant word for God in Indo-European languages is not “God,” but a variation of Theos. It will be shown that Theos/Deus is in-fact a variation of the very word God without the g- prefix (although most linguists do not think they are related in any way).

The Sky-Father

We mentioned previously that the dominate conceptualization of God is that of a “Sky-Father.” This notion is ubiquitous around the world. What we want to do here is establish a framework for which we can interpret the name God in a global context. We will do this by examining a few examples from each corner of the world.

A book titled Indigenous Religions: A Companion (2000), edited by Graham Harvey, provides us with a wealth of information pertaining to God as a sky-father in many indigenous cultures around the world. In discussing the connection between mythos and animism among North American Apache

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6 There is an exception in Ancient Egypt. The sky is feminine and known as nwt. In North-America, there is a Sky Woman among the Abanaki in Vermont, and Manitou among the Great Lakes tribes.
creation stories, M.A. Jaimes Guerrero, in relation to the Jicarilla in northeastern New Mexico, informs us of their thoughts whose:

emergence myth, with creation from chaos and animistic characteristics, gives a prominent role to kachina-like personifications of the basic natural powers ... These beings, called Hactin, existed before creation, when there was only dark, wet, chaos - the world womb, as it were. Being lonely, Hactin created the essential elements of the universe and also created Earth Mother and Sky Father ... Once there was only the Great Spirit. He created the world in four days. He made Father Sun, Mother Earth, Old man Thunder, Boy Lightning, and the animals. Then on the fourth day he made the People, the Tinde. (Harvey, 2000: 40)

Harvey (2000: 162) also recognizes a “Sky-Father” (Ranginui) among the Maori in his essay “Art Works In Aotearoa.” In the essay “Gifts for the Sky People,” Mark Woodward notes among groups in Southeast Asia that:

With respect to the human realm, the sky is a superior exchange power and the source of spiritual potency. The Ao Naga of Assam refer to this potency as aren, the literal meaning of which is 'to increase' (Clark 1911). Aren is understood to be a nonmaterial substance possessed by the ancestors, sky people and wealthy and powerful humans. It is believed to be responsible for the fertility of crops, animals and humans. Mills reports that the primary purpose of sacrifice is to acquire aren and that it is conveyed to the fields in agricultural ceremonies (Mills 1922, 380-1).

This reminds us of the Babylonian god Baal-Gadl/Ga’d “fortune” as mentioned in the Biblical text of Isaiah. The idea is that one’s blessings and increases are a direct result of the rains which support a civilization. One is only able to raise a family, conduct business, grow crops, etc., in an area that has rain (water). For this reason water/rain/the sky is associated with “good fortune.”

In terms of a common praxis among Indo-European worshipers, Keith (1989: 37) informs us that, “There are a few cases where the parallelism existing among the words used by the different Indo-European peoples gives us the right to conclude the existence of common worship.” The reason for this statement is that one observes that the primary word for God in Indo-European languages is associated with the sky: In Indo-European worship of a sky god, *dyeus ph₂tēr (lit. "sky father"; > Ancient Greek Zeus (πατηρ) / Zeus (patēr); *dieu-ph₂tēr > Latin Jupiter).

Linguistic evidence links the root words for "day," "sky" and "god" in all classical Indo-European languages and the name for the God of the Sky descends from the Proto-Indo-European word *deiuo' or *deiwo' meaning "clear sky" or "day light or day sky" (Winn, 1995: 20-23). We see this association with the Roman God Jupiter who was worshiped as a god of rain, thunder and lightning whose center was the temple on the Capitol Hill. "Dyaus has the honour of being the only Indo-European god who is certainly to be recognized as having existed in the earliest period, and he has been claimed for that time as a real sovereign of the gods, much as Zeus among the Greeks" (Keith, 1989: 95).

In Africa “God” is often identified with the “sky, the heavens” (Johnston 1919-: 30, paragraph 3). Jan G. Platvoet (Harvey, 2000: 92) in his article “Spirit Possession among the Bono of West Africa,” reminds us that:

In Akan traditional religion Nyame is the (unseen) creator-god as well as the visible sky, and descends on earth as rain to become rivers and lakes. TANO, likewise, is both his 'eldest son', the greatest of the Akan atano gods, and obomuhene, 'king inside the rock', as well as that rock, the source of the River Tano, and the River Tano (Rattray 1923, 183-6, 191-2; Platvoet 1983,208-11).

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8 The word aren "increase" (from heaven) sounds much like the Yoruba word for "heaven" orun for which it is believed all blessings derive. There may be a connection here after further investigation.
God is the distant cause of fructification. Oduyoye in Saakana (1991: 80-81) notes that the concept of God as father in heaven fits more into the situation of matrilineal societies where the father does not reside with the child but is seen only now and then. The mother of the child is traceable; she is a body, thus the association with the earth which is visible and tangible. The father of the child is elusive but as influential as a spirit. These ideas produce a situation where “Father is a spirit far away; Mother is a body near at hand.” We don’t “see” spirits, but understand them to be working on our behalf from a distance. These ideas are thus associated with rain which comes from the distant sky, an “invisible” source who none-the-less supports creation (the earth-mother) by implanting his seed, the causal agent (of life).

Rain is a symbol of purity and fructification. This association of purity as symbolized by rain (water) is at the heart of one of the ancient Egyptian terms for the divine: ntr. Among the Azande of central Africa we have (see Imhotep, 2011: 35-38),

- Toro is “rain” (cleansing agent, fructifying agent)
- Ma-toro is “God”
- Cf. Hebrew ma-tar “rain” (cf. Hebrew thr “be pure”)
- Tal “dew” (uncontaminated water)

The ancient Egyptians, and other African nations, associated their gods with the purity and the life causing essence of water.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>ntr</td>
<td>“natron” (cleansing agent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ntr</td>
<td>“God” (unseen fructifying agent)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ntoro</td>
<td>“spirit of patrilineage”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twi</td>
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<td>“spirit of patrilineage”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yorubá</td>
<td>ntori</td>
<td>“because”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lugbara</td>
<td>adro</td>
<td>“guardian spirit”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adro</td>
<td>“God” (also the whirlwind found in rivers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mbuti</td>
<td>Ndele</td>
<td>“divine, begetter, Ancestor”</td>
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<td>ciLuba</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fulani</td>
<td>Ntori</td>
<td>“God”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masai</td>
<td>Naiteru</td>
<td>“God”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwasio</td>
<td>Nture</td>
<td>“sacred”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mombutu</td>
<td>Noro</td>
<td>“God”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewe</td>
<td>Tre</td>
<td>“clan spirit, fetish”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ijo</td>
<td>Toru</td>
<td>“river” (Egyptian i-trw “river”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>Tilo</td>
<td>“blue sky, God” (from which the rains fall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amarigna</td>
<td>Anätära</td>
<td>“pure”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolof</td>
<td>Twr</td>
<td>“liberation” (Egyptian twr “libation”)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Note that Budge (1008a) has a rendering of Ntr “temple of Isis” with the water canal glyph as a determinative.
11 This word ntr is reflected in Amarigna in the following terms: NiTir - adj refined, Tnte nTr - n. Element (chemical), NTr qbe - refined butter, Ntr werq - n. refined gold, tenTere v.i. was refined, Anelere v.t. refined; bounced, AnTari - n. refiner, werq anTari - n. goldsmith, AnTrenya – silversmith, ManTereya - refining flux, Anelere - v.i. acted flamboyantly, AsneTere v.t. had refined, AnTara - pure
In the vast majority of African spiritual systems, the sky is symbolic of the infinite vastness of the Creator and is used as a symbol of distance. Since the sky, its height, and rain are related concepts, the same word is used for all three, often with slight changes in vowels. We noted earlier that African terms followed Africans as they migrated out of Africa and are still recognizable in European languages. The following chart will demonstrate a few of these terms which should be recognizable given the nature of this discussion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connections proposed by Karst</th>
<th>Proto-Bantu</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mediterranean</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bantu</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guthrie, with Guthrie number</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lohíos (Apollo), Meiliíhos (Zeus), molo, magical herb in Homer</td>
<td>Bantu <em>mlozi, molokí, m-rogi, ‘magician, sorcerer</em>’</td>
<td>-<em>dôg</em>-, to bewitch, 644, [ &gt; -roθ in S.C. &amp; S. Bantu / <em>dôgi</em> 14, witchcraft, 646, [ &gt; S.C. &amp; S. Bantu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minos, Menuas <em>Urarteu king</em></td>
<td>Bantu *m-ngu, mu-ngu, mu-ingu, ‘God’</td>
<td>-<em>nêne</em> big, 3.3.; -<em>dôk</em>-, to rain, 650, [ &gt; S.C. &amp; S. Bantu <em>mulungu, God</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque, yinko ‘God’</td>
<td>Bantu-Zulu <em>Nkulu, God; Massai ngai, engai</em>’</td>
<td>-<em>yîNk</em>-, to give, 2085, ? ; -<em>kôdô</em> DP, old, 1197, / - <em>kôdô</em> 1/2/14, old person/old age, 1197, [ &gt; -kulu, in S.C. &amp; S. Bantu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The proto-Bantu forms *godo, *kodo and *gudu are inverses of the proto-Bantu form *-dOk. In early Niger-Kongo there is evidence of free-word-order (see Campbell-Dunn, 2009a, 2009b). As we can see, *godo becomes julus, jolos, jolos in Sardinian/Aegean. In the Phoenician/Punic languages, Bantu mu-
luku, mulungu becomes Moloh.

The Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Congo consonantal root for sky/heavens/God is -l-, -n-, and -d-, often with k- or g- prefixes which gives us the g-d (god) root. It is our contention that the Germanic word God derives from the African word Godo/Gudu where g- is a prefix and the root is du/do. It is this root from which we get Yorùbá Olu, Elu, El “God,” Oluwa “lord”; Hebrew Eloah “God,” Elo’iyym “Gods”; Canaanite El “God”; Babylonian Ilu “God”; Arabic il’ilah (Allah) “God.” In Bantu this term is rendered G-udu, G-ulú, K-ulú, (n)K-ale, K-ule, P-ala/H-ala, Z-ulú, Z-era, Bw-ena, Mw-ene. Specific examples of the name God in Africa can be seen in the name Guéno (the Eternal) among the Fulani (l>n); Gulu among the Chagga-Bantu of East Africa (d>l); Bambara san “rain, sky, buy, year,” san-kolo is “heaven”; Kulu among the Bakongo; and Unkulukulu (the oldest of the Amazulu) kuru “God point” in Bambara (center of cross).

In Ancient Egyptian this term became Hrw “sky, sun, God.” The root of Hrw is wr-ulú (Yorùbá Olu “great, lord, God”; enu “top, high”; Igbo enu “top of, up”). These terms evoke a sense of “eldership, distance, height, an apex, exaltation, the peak of something, etc.” For this reason, anything that is tall or reaches the heavens can be an #ulu (sun, moon, stars, mountains, etc.). A related Yorùbá word Olá means

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13 These sounds are known throughout world languages to mutate and interchange with each other. So in one language, for instance, the /l/ root (ulu) in another language will be a /d/, /t/ or an /n/. Often the k- or g- prefix will go through a process of palatalization and it will become an /s/ (Akan O-s-oró “sky, god”) or a /z/ (Amazulu Z-ulú “heavens, sky”; as in the famous Tshaka Zulu).
“elevated status, fame, honourable estate.” It can be seen in such names as Olásení “fame is not unachievable,” Oláđúnní “high status is sweet to have,” Olánrewájú “status is progressing forward,” Oláitán “honour never gets used up.” It is from this variation I believe that the word Allah (‘l) ultimately has its origin (which originally had a k- prefix that became a glottalized stop; Niger-Congo k-alá > Arabic ‘l)).

The sky is only used as a metaphor to denote the highest example of excellence; the summit of achievement (what a priest represents); the most honourable; the head honcho; the eldest (the oldest thing in existence); the grandest/biggest; the distance (in ability, consciousness and wisdom) between man and the Creator; the possessor of all things (as the sky encompasses all things in the universe) and general absence from.  

Campbell-Dunn (2009b) demonstrates this with the following terms which support our thesis above:

**DISTANT, REMOTE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sumerian ul “be distant, remote”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KU “big”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWS ku, kul “old”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWS kua “road”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWN KUA “go” (from *kula)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWN KWUL “be big”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bantu káddí “adult”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bantu (Meinhof) kulu “big”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bantu buk “go away”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mande ku “return”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangbetu eku “to return”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES Dilling okul, Kondugr ongul “road”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS Bulala kori, gõri “road”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khoisan/Nusan (S) !nu “foot”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Sumerian has lost initial k and final a]

*K = # or *B = #

*U = u

*L = 1

The underlying essence of this theme is “distance” which is symbolized by “height” and “age.” This can be seen in the Linear A script of Crete: da “old man” (with walking stick). Niger-Congo explains the association: *da “old,” I Tshi dadaw “old,” Agni lala “old,” Guang, Ga, Grebo da “old,” III Animere da “to grow, be grown,” II Bantu (Meeussen) dada “old,” PWN DADA “old.” Here the d/l root is signifying distance through age as the gap between “old” and “young” is understood intuitively to be between 40-60 years depending on culture. In the ancient Egyptian language Hrw derives from hr “distant.”

As we mentioned previously, the sky, rain, day and God share the same root in African and Indo-European languages. In regards to Africa, we will add further evidence of this trend of the r/l/d root for these associations:

**GOD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sumerian diğir “god”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LI, DI “head, spirit, hand”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GI “sky”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWS li (di) “head”, PWS ni “head”, “roofing straw”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

14 The vast majority of African traditions do not view the Creator as intervening directly into the lives of humans, thus why Africans call on his agents: abosom, ọriṣà, niombo, ntrw, angels, etc.

PWS ni “world”, PWS gi “world, sky”
PWS ti “black”
PWN DIM, TIM “darkness”
PWN DIM, (DIUM) “spirit”
PWN THITHUKA “night”
Bantu dim “masculine”
Bantu tiku “night”
Bantu dungu “god” (intelligent)
Bantu gudu “sky”
Mande si “night”
Mangbetu kini “night”
Mangbetu kudukudu “soul”
Mangbetu kudili “respect” (noun)
PCS *di, *dib “person, man”

[The word refers to “head”, “spirit”, “sky”, “rain”, “darkness”, “masculine” etc. Cf L. Juppiter Pluvius, the Sky Father who rains.]

[The –n- indicates “person”, the –r is demonstrative or plural, or “shine”].

*D = d  *I = i  *NG = ĝ  *I = i

HEAVEN

Sumerian u-na “heaven” (Wanger)
“time, night” (Delitzsch)

TU “fire” u-
NA “above” Sumerian an “heaven”

PWS tüà, (tò) “to roast” (of the sun)
PWS na “above”
Or PWS tu, tua “water” (rain from sky)?
PWN THU, THUA “water place”
Bantu tu,mb “to roast” (compare utu “the sun”)
“Bantu” tunu (273), tuwana (256), “sky”
Bantu to “river”
Mande Nala “God”? 
Mangbetu anana “climb tree” (to sky?)
Khoisan : Naron (C) /am, /gam “on”? 
Afro-Asiatic : Chad : Hausa (1) sama “above”, Logone (2) sama “rain”, Mandara (6) samaya “sky” (Greenberg)

*T = #  *U = u  *N = n  *A = a

RAIN

Sumerian šēg “rain”

DA, TA “sky” -ĝ

PWS la, (da) “day”, Mano de “day”, Gio de “day”
PWS ta “sky, rain, clouds”
PWS tu, tua “water”, Guang n-tšu “water”, Afema a-su...e “water”
PWN BUDA “rain, raincloud”
PWN TU “cloud”, THU, THUA “river, waterplace”
Bantu dé “sky, cloud”
Kele use “sky”, Ngombe buse “sky”
Mande sã “rain”
Mangbetu tu “pool in the forest”?
Mangbetu ro “sky”
Afro-Asiatic: Chad: Hausa (1) ša: “drink”, Ngala (2) še: “drink”, Logone (2) se “drink”

*T = ʂ  *A = e  *G = g

SKY  Sumerian an “sky, heaven”
NA “above” [ R ]

PWS la “day”, Ga d.ā “day”, d.ā “always”
PWS na “above”
PWN MU AL “to shine”
PWN GULU “sky”
Bantu mue “splendour”
North Guinea (Johnston) dana “sky” [a + a > ā]
Mande (Delafosse 1929) tele-ra “sun”, lā, dā “day”
Mangbetu anana “climb”
Mangbetu ro “sky”

[But see also PWS man, mal “flaming”, Bamana mana “flame, light” (of sky)]

Afro-Asiatic : Chad : Hausa (1) sama “above”, Logone (2) sama “rain”?

[Initial retroflex d. is lost in Sumerian.]

[Greek ana “up, on” is probably related].

*D/M = #  *A = a  *N = n  *A = a

WATER  Sumerian ra “deluge”

LA, DA, RA “water”

PWS la, (dā) “day” (sky, rain)
Eastern Sudanic: Afitti aranga “rain”, Tama ar “sky, rain”, Dinka uar “river”, Lotuko (na)are “water”, Bari kare “river”
Central Sudanic: Lendu ra, arra “sky”
Mande la, do “day”
Mangbetu zoro “rain”, ro “sky”
Nilo-Saharan: Fur ara “rain”.

[Linear A has RA₂ “water”].

**R = r  *A = a

PWS lu, ( du) “head”
PWS lé,(dé, dó) “one” (total), with dó as common reflex Sumerian dū “totality”

PCS *d.u “head” PCS *d.u “head”
ES Dongola, Kenuzi, Mahas, Gulfan ur “head”
CS Madi oru “up”, Moru kuru “up”, Lendu ru(na) “up”
PWS lu “head” (du, ra): Yoruba o-ri, o-li “head” (one head)
PWN TÚI “head”

**YOUNG BULL**

Sumerian amar “young bull”

GA “horn”
MA “head”, “animal”, “mass”, “meat”
LU, RU “head”

PWS lu, (ru, du) “head”
PWS lu (du) “tower”
Gur *dan “animal” [r = d]
Yoruba maluu “bull”

See previous example.

[Sumerian has a preprefix a- + prefix ma- + root ru, lu “head, cow” etc.]

* A = a
* M = m
* A = a
* L = r

**CITY** (Ur)

Sumerian uru “city”

DU “head”
LU “head”

PWS li, lu “head”, Grebo lu “head”, Dewoi du-ru “head”, Gbe du-ru “head”
PWN TÚI “head”
Bantu tue “head”
N’gome molu “head”
Mande dugu, M duhu, dā “village”
Mangbetu dru “head”
PWS *d.u “head”

ES Dongola, Kenuzi, Mahas, Gulfan ur “head”

CN kuru “head”

[“City” comes from “head”, ie “capital”]

* L = r
* U = u
* D = #
* U = u

**CLOUD**

Sumerian muru, “cloud”

BU “abundant”
LU “head”

PWS lu “head”, Gbe du-ru “head” (“top, summit”)
PWN LUND “clouds”
Bantu du,nde “clouds”
Mande (Delafosse) munda, muna, mūrā “cloud”
Mangbetu mundukuba “cloud”
PWS *bu “cloud”
[The root is \textit{lu, ru, du} “head”]

\begin{align*}
*L &= r \\
*U &= u \\
*M &= m \\
*U &= u ? \\
\end{align*}

**Tying it all together**

The evidence for an African origins thus far provides a better case for the word God than the PIE \*\text{g}^{\text{h}}\text{ue} “libations, pour” or \*\text{g}^{\text{d}}\text{au}- “to call, to invoke.” However, the libations etymology may be redeemable as will be shown towards the end of this essay. In the meantime we examine our African terms side-by-side with the Indo-European and find exact matches in terms of form and function.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indo-European</th>
<th>African</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teutonic Guido (Oxford dic.)</td>
<td>PB *gudu, *godo (PWN GULU “sky”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-Tuet. *ghudho- \text{m} or *ghutó- \text{m}.</td>
<td>lu/ru/du “head, sky, up”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P-Germanic *gud-iga-, (American Heritage dic.); PGmc. *guthan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OE. godu, godo neut., godas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*ghu-to “that which is invoked?”</td>
<td>PWS la, (dā) “day” (sky, rain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuetonic tia, tiv</td>
<td>lu/ru/du “head, sky, up”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish/Gaelic dia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We see here that the earliest forms of the word in the Germanic branch of IE conform to the renderings found in the reconstructions for Africa. We mentioned earlier that it is believed that there are no other attestations of God outside of Germanic and Sanskrit. This isn’t accurate. As the Catholic Encyclopedia mentioned earlier, in Persian we have \textit{khoda/khuda} (ک‌دَا); Hindu \textit{khooda} (a loan word) meaning “lord, master, king.” Knowing the African origin of this term we know why it means “lord” because of the \textit{lu, ru, du} root meaning “head” (Yoruba olu, Olori “lord”, Egyptian wr “lord”, Bantu kulu “ancestor, lord, elder, chief”). The form and usage of \textit{khoda} conforms to how it is used in Africa: Proto-Bantu \*\textit{kodo} “old.” Per Wiki:

The term derives from Middle Iranian xvata\text{y}, xwadag meaning “lord”, “ruler”, “master” (written as Parthian kw\text{y}, Middle Persian kw\text{d}y, Sogdian kw\text{d}y, etc.). It is the Middle Iranian reflex of Avestan x’a-dhata- “self-defined; autocrat”, an epithet of Ahura Mazda. The Pashto cognate is Khwdai (خ‌دَا). Prosaic usage is found for example in the Sassanid title katak-xvata\text{y} to denote the head of a clan or extended household, or in the title of the 6th century Khwaday Namag “Book of lords”, from which the tales of \textit{Kayanian kings} as found in the \textit{Shahnameh} (“Book of kings”) derive.

In Persian we have a \textit{k-d} root with subsequent suffixes. We noted earlier that the root of the term deals with “distance” which included “age” and any form of exaltation or elevation: “elder, king, lord, someone who owns, a possessor.” We see the same thing play out in the Persian language. The Babylonian word Gad (pronounced Ga’d) would also fall under this milieu. Baal-Ga’\text{d} was used in the sense of “Lord God.”

In actuality, all forms of the African words for God can be found in Indo-European languages, as well as in some Asian languages. Campbell-Dunn (2007: 129) has concluded that the Maori language derived from the earliest formation of Niger-Congo. It should be of no surprise to find the following:
GOD Maori Io is the Maori Supreme God. In Africa “God” is often identified with the “sky, the heavens” (Johnston 1919: 30, paragraph 3). PWS has gi “air, atmosphere, firmament”. We compare Maori Io with Lolo jiko “sky”, which, with consonant loss (as in io “flesh”) would give Io. Comparable examples: Bangi, Ngala, Poto likolo “sky”. The word is probably also related to the word for “he”, PWS gi “this”, PWS gu(a) [gɛwɑ] > wo, o, yo, “he”. In early languages people say “He, the sky rains” etc. Greek Zeus huei “Zeus rains”.


On page 26 concerning the AI- prefix in Maori, Campbell-Dunn notes the following:

OLD PREFIX AI-

The prefix ai- in Maori is found on aitua “accident, calamity”, aitu “sickness, demon”, which must be related; (it is also related to atua “god, supernatural etc”). Also found on aitanga “progeny”. Compare Rarotongan ai-, “a sign of the plural used with certain classes of nouns” (Savage): ai-tuaua “the elders”, ai-tuapuna “the ancestors”, ai-tuakana “the elder brothers”, ai-tuaine “the elder sisters”, ai-tungane “male members of woman’s family.” Again, we are seeing a pattern with an underlying sense of “distance” and in this case by “age.” The head is the upper most part of the body. It is the highest point of the physical body. This metaphor is used time and time again to denote distance in terms of age, societal rank and skill. The highest form of excellence in all things is always attributed to G-od: “the Most High.”

What Campbell-Dunn is suggesting is that the Polynesian name for God, Io “Supreme Being,” derived from a PWS root gua (see also PWS gi “air, atmosphere, firmament”). What’s interesting here is the African reconstruction, *ghwua, which closely matches the PIE *ghua. What happened is that there was a consonant loss of g- which left the vowels. I’m not too enthused about this correspondence. I think, that if there is a connection, a connection through rain, sky, day, or the heavens would be stronger.

These same African roots for sky and clouds (and even spirit) can be found in Indo-European as can be seen by examining the following:

“The Glottalic Theory of Proto-Indo-European: Consonantism and Its Implications for Nostratic Sound Correspondences” – Allan Bomhard

Basque *hodai > (BN, Z) hodei, (AN, B, G, R) odei, (B, G) odai, (B, R) odoi ‘cloud’ (also ‘thunder’ in B, G, AN, BN, R) ~ Dargwa (Akushi) da_ ‘wind’, Archi di ‘odour, scent’ < PEC *dwHV ‘wind’ (NCED _0_).

Basque *sohar > (c) zoḥjar ‘clear (sky, weather), to clear’, PEC *HuIV-n ‘to clear up (of weather)’ > Udi mɛːur ‘clear sky’, etc. (NCED 6_0_) ~ Burushaski *āŋ ‘to clear (of sky)’, *ān ~ PST *CSIj > Burmese ‘to stop (rain or sound), to clear (weather)’, etc. (ST IV: _0_) ~ PY *ʔɛɛ- (*ʔɛɛ-) ‘clear (of weather)’ (SSEJ _89)_
Theos, into theos). The translation of the theōrēō (Greek "θεός") is relevant to "holidays", "θέω" (Greek "θεός"), "run", and "θεωρέω" (theōrēō), "to look at, to see, to observe", Latin feriae "holidays", fanum "temple", and also Armenian di-k' "gods". Alternative suggestions (e.g. by De Saussure) connect *dhyses- "smoke, spirit", attested in Baltic and Germanic words for "spook," and ultimately cognate with Latin fumes "smoke." The earliest attested form of the word is the Mycenaean Greek te-a [8] (plural te-o-ī [9]), written in Linear B syllabic script.

The claim that Theos is not related to God is unfounded and an expected result of not looking into African languages. It should be noted that the –os ending is a suffix and not a part of the root. Thus, the root of Theos is The(u) (Latin deu). The form in Sanskrit dyaus may be a loan from Greek as the Greeks invaded India starting in 327 BCE. Again, as we see here, when the etymology is uncertain, they stop at Indo-European and claim victory. Theos and Deus derive from our very own lu, ru, du roots in Africa. The Roman god Jupiter is two words: ju (God < du) + piter (where we get English father). The ju- lead in the conjunction is a palatalized form of du present in Theos and Deus. The Greek God Zeus may also derive from a palatalized form of du. Did you notice the Armenian word for "gods" di-k? We mentioned earlier that the inverse of *gudu, *kodo is *dOk for which we get in Bantu mu-luku, mu-lungu "God" (Tshiluba lok-a “rain”; luka "vomit"). This same root is found in the Arabic language as one of their names for God: Al-Malik "king, lord, master." Again, we reiterate, that the underlying theme is “distance” and the root (lu, ru, du) denotes distance, vastness, height in all planes of existence. In Ancient Egyptian our root takes on the following familiar form:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hieroglyphs</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Hieroglyph" /></td>
<td>( wr = \text{great one, great man, god, chief, elder} ) Budge 170b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Hieroglyph" /></td>
<td>( wr = \text{master} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Hieroglyph" /></td>
<td>( wr = \text{great one} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Hieroglyph" /></td>
<td>( wr = \text{great one, great man, god, chief, elder} )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Uraeus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hieroglyphs</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Hieroglyph" /></td>
<td>( wr-t = \text{great one, title of Osiris} ) Faulkner pg. 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Hieroglyph" /></td>
<td>( wr-t = \text{great one (of uraeus, of goddess)} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Hieroglyph" /></td>
<td>( wrr-t = \text{crown} )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Egyptian word \( wr \) is built off an ancient ‘l root meaning “to have, to own, the owner of…” which is translated as “lord, master, God” (someone of “high” rank who has the power to command; has power over life and death; someone of great skill). This ‘l root in Yoruba is realized as an \( n \) when the initial vowel of the noun is \( h- \). When this happens the vowel prefix \( /o/ \) is used: \( Ifá \) (the Yoruba divination system) \( > \) \( Onifá \) (the diviner: \( olu+ifa : l>n \) ); \( Iyi \) (dignity) \( > \) \( onïyi \) (the man of dignity). In Bantu the word \( ini \) means “master, owner” (Bantu (Meinhof) \( yíni \) “owner”) and is at the heart of Kiswahili \( bwana \) “master” (Egyptian \( nb \) “lord, master” by way of metathesis). In Yoruba \( Olú \) is at the heart of \( Olùwa \) “lord, master,” \( Olúwo \) “head of the Osugbo, the council of chiefs, head priest of Orúnmilá,” \( Orúwo\)\(^{16} \) “head” (Ijebu dialect). \( Oluwo \) and \( Orúwo \) is Egyptian \( wr \) by way of metathesis. \( Wr \) is reflected in the Tigrigna language as \( wärä \) “famous.” In Kiswahili-Bantu we have \( waria \) “a skilled person, an expert, a capable person, a champion, a master at his work, a blacksmith, metal worker, smithing.” We should by now be getting a better grasp of how the word God came into being and its many applications.

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\( ^{16} \) Is cognate with Middle Egyptian \( hrw \) “upper part, top.” Also cognate with Bantu \( kulu \) “top, upper part, high, sky, heaven.”
This underlying sense of “distance” can be seen in the following African words that have the same shape of the word God.

Afro-Asiatic: Chad: Podokwo (3) guda, Cushitic: Galla (E) guda “many”

Over and over again we are seeing the same themes being expressed with the same cluster of consonants. These consonant clusters belong to an associative field of meaning where each concept is associated with a similar concept under an overall “theme.” For example, the sky is where rain comes from. Thus rain and sky are synonymous. Because the sky is at a far distance from the human being on the ground, the sky is associated with “height, tallness, length, remoteness.” Because we use the same word for the concepts of sky and top, we also use it to represent our heads as it is the upper most part of our body. Thus, the same word for head is the same word for “sky, upper, top.” After a period of time, there has to be some differentiation between these lexical items to distinguish their different contexts. Therefore, naturally, the vowels begin to change to discriminate one context from another.

Words belong to never-ending chain sequences, to phrases, sentences, contexts to the fabric of the entire language (Lord 1966: 241). Words have no meaning until they become joined together in a linguistic whole. As long as there is no clash of context, this range of associations can coexist (like in the case of homophones). Whenever homophones exist, the homophones will acquire different spellings wherever possible (i.e., person—parson; soul—sole; maze—maize; bell—belle). When homonyms threaten to arise, the two forms will diverge phonetically or morphologically (i.e., cloth—clothe; brothers—brethren; shade—shadow). A word will either adjust itself dynamically in a field or be rejected. Meanings build up composite meanings in a larger “field of tension.” This is exactly the case with our term that has come down to us as God. The reason why Indo-Europeanists only recognize one line of retention in Germanic (maybe two if you count Sanskrit) is because God is only one form of many that survived in Indo-European: they don’t know the other related forms. There are other variations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>the-os</td>
<td>“god”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>zeus</td>
<td>“a god who shoots thunderbolts”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>deu-s</td>
<td>“god”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td>di-k</td>
<td>“gods”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian</td>
<td>khooda/khudu</td>
<td>“lord”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teutonic</td>
<td>gudo</td>
<td>“god”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old English</td>
<td>gudo, godo</td>
<td>“god”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>gott</td>
<td>“god”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.Gmc</td>
<td>*guth-an/*gudán</td>
<td>“god”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque</td>
<td>yinko</td>
<td>“god”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eurasatic</td>
<td>*gwVrV</td>
<td>“god”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardinian</td>
<td>julus, jolos</td>
<td>“god”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we saw earlier, these forms and their variations are present for the words “day, rain, clouds and sky.” These are all consistent with their African counterparts for which they ultimately derived. It is based on this evidence (linguistic and anthropological) that I cannot accept the common meaning of God to mean “that which is invoked.” I would, however, like to propose a compromise to the proposal of God = libations which I think is on more solid grounds.

**God = Libations = Water**

We have already connected the word God (g-d root) and words for god with “the sky” and “rain” (Egyptian hd “stream,” hdw “a liquid.” A related and alternate term in Egyptian gr “stream”: r/l/d
alternation). It is because of this association that I find the connection between God and libations tenable. The concept of libations (*g’ue, hu) may have been a tertiary meaning that originally derived from rain.

Libations in African traditions act as a fructifying agent for ancestors on the other side: the underworld (ancestral realm). Just as the Creator “pours libations” (rain) onto the earth to sustain the living, human beings pour libations on the ground to sustain the doubles of the ancestors who are dead in this realm, but living in the spiritual community underground. The spirit double (ena) is not eternal and must be nourished with water and animal sacrifices in order to live (Mutwa 1964, Kajangu 2005, Imhotep 2011b). I will speak more about the true nature of ancestors and ancestor veneration in an upcoming publication titled The Ena, The Ancestors and the Papyrus of Ani: The Fundamental African Concept of Spirit. Space will not allow for an elaborate discourse on this topic here.

Suffice it to say that there is a stronger connection between the word God and libations through “the sky” and “rain” more so than “sacrifice” and “to invoke/to call.” The idea of “pouring” is not the sense being invoked by this term, but the actual liquid (water) being poured. This is how the “verb” became a “noun.” When we consult Africa in times like this, there is no need for fanciful etymologies. No matter where we turn, water is closely related to the term God and gods.

Water is a clear, pure, shapeless, odorless entity that sustains life and from which all life emerged. It is these adjectives that the ancient Africans had in mind when they associated these words with the r/l/d roots and its variations with what we know as God. The ancient Africans believed God to be an entity that has always been and will always be. No matter the challenge to water’s beingness, it will only change form (liquid, solid or gas) and maintain its essential character (H₂O). The ancient Africans believed the Creator to operate in this same manner: it is an infinite sea of matter perpetually evolving within itself, but still keeping its essential character (Yoruba iwa “character,” Oduduwa “the spirit of black character, oracular utterances created life”).

In practically all African traditions, the Creator is seen as existing in a boundless void of matter characteristic of liquid. This is seen in ancient Egypt as the Nwn and in the Bible as “waters of the void” in Genesis. It is this far remote, infinite, vast, boundless substance that gave birth to all life in the universe and that is what the ancients equated as what we know now as God. It is my argument that to understand God, we must understand water and I think that has been demonstrated in this work.

Summary

In summary, the word God deals with two primary conceptualizations: distance and water. The r/l/d root has a primary meaning of “sky, heavens, rain, top, upper, height, age.” These forms give way to secondary meanings of “ownership, lordship, chiefs, kings, elders, and ancestors” (those in relatively high social positions). God is a title of “rank” and is why the kings of Africa are “divine” kings. Kings are believed to be intermediaries between the ancestors and the community at large. They are also the incarnation of an earlier king (or founding father) for which he shares a royal bloodline. So the Christian notion that African kings are “gods” as in super-human beings is false and is based on an ignorance of African languages and customs.

A king is a “god” (mukulu) because he is the highest ranked person in the society. Africans have many “gods” because a god is an “ancestor or elder.” Every community has thousands of “gods” who lived “before” those currently living now. Because they lived before us in the community, and it is their discoveries that allow the community to thrive currently, they are “ranked higher” (given high accolades) than those in the community living now (in wisdom and in age). Since all living human beings trace their lineage all the way back to God, God is our primary “ancestor.” Elders in the community are also “gods” (kulu). Their “age” and wisdom provides them with a special status in African societies. They have a proven track record of service and have made major contributions to the expansion and sustaining of the community. For this they are given a high status and title. Without understanding why God is God, one will never get to the understanding the ancient Africans were conveying by the usage of this term.
Allah and El are only the high gods of Islam and Christianity respectively because the meanings literally mean “most high.” There is nothing spectacular about these names. The ongoing dispute between Christians and Muslims to whether Eloah or Allah is the “one” and only true god is childish and based on an ignorance of Africa, its customs and philosophy: they are the same god, same word from the same origins in Africa. All of the Biblical names for God are indigenous to West Africa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>Yoruba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘el</td>
<td>Divine being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“loah”</td>
<td>God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘el ‘sadday’</td>
<td>God Almighty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘el ‘e’y-o”n</td>
<td>God Most High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘ef’-yo”n</td>
<td>Topmost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh</td>
<td>God</td>
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</tbody>
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The cultures of the Abrahamic traditions used a “title,” a “description” and made it a *proper name*. Because they made it a proper name, the essence of its “meaning” was lost among practitioners and it has caused much confusion, even to this day.

There is much discussion in African-Centered urban circles about being a “god.” I do not think many people understand this concept as Africans understand it. I hope this work brings some clarity to this issue. The term God/god is not an inherited title: it is a title that one earns over the course of a life-time. You cannot get a degree, or be initiated into a school of thought and consider yourself a god. It is a title given to you by the people AFTER you’ve served the community over a number of years and contributed to its increase. There is also an argument among those of the Nation of Islam, Christians and Orthodox Muslims as to whether God is man or not. This argument as well is easily answered in Africa. The same name for man is the same name for God in African languages. This is where the confusion lies. But space will not allow us to explore further here (see Imhotep 2009, 2011a, 2011b).

It is *wisdom* that makes you a god. Wisdom is the correct application (through service) of knowledge successfully over time as a result of growing older. In other words, you have to put in work and you have to have a proven track record of success, expansion, growth and prosperity in your relationships, finances and family over the course of your life. Obviously some time has to elapse in order for these things to happen and is why no young person is called *kulu* “gods, old, wise.” This is why this title is applied to the Creator because it has a PROVEN track record of masterful skill, knowledge and wisdom as demonstrated in its creation: the universe. It is the oldest entity in existence. It is existence itself. Because it is the oldest being or concept, it is the wisest because wisdom comes with age. Therefore it is the highest ranking being in existence: the Most High “God.” One could never be wiser than God because one could not live longer than God: he/she has more “work” experience than you. Ultimately what makes God a God (MuKulu, Gueno, Gudu, Khudu, Nkole, Ngal, Olu, Oluwa, El, Oruwo, Wr, etc.) is that it has mastered the art of adding *life to life*. It is the only thing that knows how to create and sustain *life* in all spheres of existence. A physical representation on earth that can be used as a metaphor for this phenomenon is *water* and it is why water, in practically every corner of Africa and beyond, is associated with the Creator: in name and in function.

What makes an elder or a revered ancestor a Bakulu (“god”) is that they have demonstrated that they know how to add *life to life* in context of the living community. Only those people who know life to the
fullest, who have made life more beautiful on earth, who have discovered new more satisfying dimensions for being human, who has unveiled life’s mysteries and have discovered and shared strategies to tower over life’s one thousand and one challenges can be called a *MuKulu* (a god). Among the Bantu these towering figures are known as *nganga*. They are the community’s wise men and women and they are often healers/doctors. Not only do they know life to the highest capacity, they know what it takes to protect life. The root of the word *nganga* is the word *anga* “life.” This term is cognate with the ancient Egyptian word for life *’nh* “life” (Bantu, Akan *nkwa*, Coptic *onkh*, Duala *ong*, Niger-Congo *ka/ga* “life, citizen, man, living”).

**NGANGA**

\[ \text{ankh} = \text{life personified, the name of a god} \]
\[ \text{reinterpretation} = \text{a master, doer, a true knower, a specialist, teacher, priest, healer, a power figure} \]

In other words, a god is someone (or something) that knows the principles of life. To understand water is to understand (as much as possible) God: they are one and the same; they are unchanging elements that are conducive to life. The idea of God and knowing life to the highest capacity has inspired Africans to create, literally, institutions of life in which to study “God” (the universe): Egyptian *pr ’nh*, Kongo *Sansulu bia Zingu* “institutes of life.”

**Pala/Bala/Pila dia Zingu**

\[ \text{pr ankh} = \text{house of life (the name of a college of priests)} \]
\[ \text{reinterpretation} = \text{wisdom center for the development of masters (priests)} \]

The forces of nature also fit into this category of “gods” (*bakulu, ntrw, niombo, orishas*). How did the elements and forces of nature become gods? Remember that God is our primary ancestor. All forms and concepts emanate from it. All things evolve from within it because it is infinite. Nothing can exist outside of infinity. The sky becomes a metaphor for the Creator because, like the Creator, it is “boundless” and encompasses all things. So all things known and unknown in existence exists as an individuation of, and is consubstantial with the Creator. When the human being traces his existence back through time, he will undoubtedly trace his lineage through hundreds of millions of ancestors who eventually converge to the first two human beings to ever witness a sunrise. These two beings had to derive from somewhere. Modern science argues humans and apes share a common ancestor. The African traditions posit the elements, and in some instances, other animals. But more importantly, these two human beings had to be constituted physically of certain substances.

The ancient Africans had their own *Theory of Evolution* hundreds of thousands of years prior to Darwin. Africans understood at an early period in time that the human body’s physical constitution is an agmination (a clustering) of elements present in nature: gases, minerals, metals, water, vegetation, sunlight, etc. Since our evolutionary process involved evolving from the very elements found in nature, those elements too are our “ancestors.” These ancestors are “older” than the human-being, and just like a wise elder and the Creator, their presence adds life to life. They are directly responsible for our existence, just like our two parents and four grandparents, etc. If these elements (ancestors) did not come together to produce life, we wouldn’t be here, just like if my two parents wouldn’t have had their own “covalent bonds,” I (the author) would not be here to tell this story. So the African recognizes the forces of nature...
Asar Imhotep – Sun of the Soil
www.asarimhotep.com
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