EMERGENCE OF A CONTINENT FROM "RACIAL" DISMEMBERMENT ANTHROPOLOGY'S RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

For a long time extending up to the present, many Europeans, Americans, Asians, and quite a few Africans (presumably under the influence of Western paradigms, Eurocentrism, racism, or other provincialisms) have projected a picture of Africa as dichotomised in some neat racial, religious, cultural, or geographical way, but such is not the case and has never been the case. Often, Northern Africa is projected as that part of Africa which is not Black and/or not Sub-Saharan, but this is in many ways a crude oversimplification. In reality, there is no sharp geographical or biological division between Northern Africa and various neighbouring regions -- whether inside or outside the continent of Africa.

The fact that so many scholarly books have been published on peoples and cultures of Northern Africa explicitly within the context of the Middle East, the Near East, the Arab World, the Mediterranean Basin and the Islamic World and so few studies on the region have been published within the context of Africa per se is not an accident. It is largely the result of the dismemberment of Africa at the Sahara by scholarly establishments with extra-African agendas. In addition to a long-standing suffusion of scientific racialism which has contributed, numerous scholars have attempted to justify this dismemberment based on biology while others have attempted to justify this it through using some version or the other of the culture area construct. Although my major focus is on the odd dismemberment of Africa, some attention will also be given to new visions in African anthropology.

More specifically, I have four objectives as follows: (1) to remind you that Africa's dismemberment at the Sahara has occurred largely through the misuse of biological anthropology, (2) to demonstrate to you that it has also occurred through odd uses of the culture area construct,

(3) to share with you a couple of examples of how this dismemberment continues to affect African studies, and (4) to briefly reference a few of the challenges to be faced in African studies as we move into the 21st century.

MISUSE OF BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN AFRICA

The myth that there is a more natural association between the genes of Europeans and Asians with civilization that obtains for the genes of "True Africans" is a myth that is still very much with us and anthropologists must at least share the blame (Goodman,1997:5). In the first decade of this century, G. Elliot Smith (1909:25) stated that "the smallest infusion of Negro-blood immediately manifests itself in a dulling of initiative and a 'drag' on the further development of the arts of civilization." He also stated that the anthropologist interpreting biological and cultural prehistory was as justified in relying as much on his selective observations as a specialist as on actual measurements taken directly from the fossil material on which the interpretation was to be based (Smith and Jones, 1910). Such excesses in scientific racism have done much to misdirect attempts to understand relationships between different people of Africa at the same time that they distort our understanding of African contributions to the peopling of neighbouring continents.

Ruth Benedict (1968:66) once observed that "The early evolutionists believed that man's physical evolution had preceded in a straight line from his pre-human progenitors up to the White race." However, such evolutionists are still among us. For example, Rightmire (1975:43-49) by intimating that the "Negro" (his term, not mine) has special origin and that that origin is so recent that it is shrouded in mysteries of the last few thousand years drives a wedge between most modern-day Africans and all African fossils dating back more than about 10,000 years. William Howells (1967:320-321) combined ideas which were chauvinistic with others about territorial imperatives to attempt to convince us that African fossils tell more about non-Africans than about Africans: "To put it simply," he stated, "if skulls mean anything, it is the Whites who have been solidly entrenched in East Africa since the later Pleistocene, and anyone else is an interloper. . . ." He went on to inform us, "the whole picture of the Negro populations of Africa may be deceptively new." Birdsell (1963:184) stated that "there is virtually no

fossil evidence pertinent to the antiquity of the Negroid peoples of Africa." Coon (1962:658) stated that only after the so-called Congoid line had stood still for half a million years, "Negroes and Pygmies appeared as if out of nowhere." And in their book called Africa and the Africans, Bohannan and Curtin (1971:191) are on record as follows: "To say that Africa is 'home' of mankind does not mean, however, that Africans as we know them today were the first human beings - indeed, it seems likely that today's Africans are all recent immigrants." Unfortunately, there still exist some scholars for whom the so-called "Real African" is more or less equivalent to Seligman's so-called "True Negro" (Jean Hiernaux, 1975:54) and this racial thinking has contributed to Africa's odd dismemberment (Keita and Kittles, 1997:xx; see also, Goodwin, 1980).

According to Keita and Kittles in their American Anthropologist article entitled "The Persistence of Racial Thinking and the Myth of Racial Divergence" (1997:536), it is curious that, although the race concept has ostensibly been largely rejected by most anthropologists, the received racial models and terms are still often used, sometimes apologetically and sometimes unknowingly. "[A]t other times names of continents are used, with the populations or physiognomies deemed representative, or the "true" originals, by various investigators, merely conforming to Coon's (1962,1965) or C. G. Seligman's (1930) ideas of original races. This is especially true in the case of Africa." The non-racial worldview which seems to dominate today in anthropology somehow gets shunted aside when it comes to Africa in a way that Keita and Kittles say they find puzzling. They point out, moreover, that "it is far more accurate to speak of a range of biohistorical African variants than different races of Africans. Northern Africans are more accurately conceptualized as primarily the products of differentiation than of hybridization." (Keita and Kittles, 1997:536). "The racial approach clearly does not contribute to an understanding of biohistorical processes, especially in Africa, which cannot be defined by one trait or cluster of traits, on any level: serogenetic, mtDNA, Y chromosome, nuclear DNA, odontometric, odontomorphological, craniometric, craniomorph-ological, hair form, or skin color" (Keita and Kittles, 1997:541).

Odd Use of the Culture Area Construct in Africa

I wish now to briefly review the culture area construct, especially as it has affected our thinking about Africa. But to be sure, the question

of how best to conceptualize culture areas in Africa or elsewhere does pose many difficult and esoteric problems even for scientists with the most careful of methodologies and the best of intentions. And in an age when sovereign states have emerged as the highest official expression of the political will of people who live within their borders, sociocultural clustering is not easily dealt with.

Among the many questions which have always arisen in relationship to the delineation of culture areas are the nature of social units, the process of diffusion, the relation of particular cultures to culture in general, environmentalism as a cultural determinant, how best to extract structure from a continuum of change, and how much importance (if any) should be given to such biological reductionism as so-called "race." Still, it occurs all too often that area constructs in Africa and elsewhere, while posited a priori as merely convenient or working assumptions, are eventually mistaken for social facts and allowed to assume an autonomy of their own. There is clearly no one scheme of culture areas which will serve equally well in all disciplines nor be equally relevant to all problems even within a single discipline.

Scholars specializing in international relations as Joseph Nye, I. W. Zartman, and Karl Deutsh have theorized about area phenomena such as regionalism and subordinate state systems, economists such as Barbara Ward, Arnold Rivkin, and August Losch have sometimes concentrated on blocs, systems, and the economics of location. Geographers such as Allen Philbrick and Edward Soja have often shown a preoccupation with the distribution of innovations, functional organization, and communication spheres on an area basis. Similarly, anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict, Alfred Kroeber, A. I. Hallowell, and George Devereux, have studied psycho-social components of national character and regional patterns as area phenomena.

Every area framework necessarily implies certain assumptions both about the nature of the substantive units which underline the whole, and also about the type of relationship obtaining among them. It would appear that the frameworks about which we should be most suspect are those which we take most for granted. For example, the discontinuity which we often accept as natural because Northern Africa and the rest of Africa may be seen to grow out of the distortions which are a part of our

taxonomies. As J. Desmond Clark has made clear in his role of archeologist, such commitments are not inconsequential.

Although Egyptian dynastic rule lasted for two thousand five hundred years and the Meroitic Kingdom on the Upper Nile continued Egyptian civilization for another thousand years more, it is hard to gauge its influence on the rest of Africa since the scholarly emphasis has always been focused upon Egypt's relations with neighbouring civilizations of the Middle East . . . It's effects upon the populations of the Ethiopian highlands or on those of the savannas of the Sudan belt remain unknown since practically no research has been done in this direction. [Clark 1970 :194]

Bryce Wood (1968:408) has noted that ever "since the beginning of the air age, traditional definitions of areas have shown a remarkable capacity for survival." Although the delineation of areas has clearly been problematic across lines separating individual academic disciplines, anthropological experience seems particularly relevant to a broad range of social scientists for at least two reasons. Firstly, parading under the banner of the "science of humankind," anthropology tends to incorporate diffuse material across a number of disciplines and a viewpoint that is quite catholic. Secondly, there has been a concerted anthropological effort throughout this century focused on arriving at an operational definition of a culture area as a specialized construct.

Prior to 1889, the idea of correlating frequency and magnitude in the area distribution of statistical entitles had not really surfaced, but then Tylor - a devotee of both the comparative method and cultural evolutionism - changed that. In his seminal "On a method of Investigating the Developing of Institutions, Applied to laws of Marriage and Descent" (1889), Tylor may be credited with having generated a major idea at the basis of the anthropologist's culture-area construct. With contributions by Otis T. Mason in 1895 when he wrote an article. delineating "culture-areas' among Amerindians north of Mexico, by William H. Holmes in a 1903 publication, G. Holmes in 1914, and by Clark Wissler in a publication of 1917 (see Wissler, 1957 and Ehrich and Henderson, 1968), the culture-area construct evolved very much in tune with the Zeitgeist shaping ethnological theory in America in the early part of the twentieth century.

By this time, the influence of the Franz Boas and his many disciples on American ethnology was becoming very pervasive. The Boasians tended to be historical particularists who consciously favored explanation based diffusionism at the expense of cultural evolutionism and they were quite favorable to the adoption of the culture-area construct for they tended to see it as an expression of their "doctrine of limited possibilities" (Harris 1968:384, 624-627). In 1917, when Wissler (1957) used the culture-area construct as a central principle around which to organize a monumental work on Amerindian ethnography, he was operating very much in step with the scholarly establishment in American ethnology.

Beginning in the 1920's, there were three notable applications of the culture-area construct to peoples inhabiting non-Amerindian settings by American anthropologists and in all cases, they had to do with Africa. The first of these entitled "A Preliminary Consideration of the Culture Areas," was authored by Melville J. Herskovits and was published in American Anthropologist in 1924. Four years later, Ralph Linton (1928) published a study on culture areas of Madagascar. By 1930, Herskovits presented his scheme of African culture-areas in completed form, a scheme which was subsequently incorporated into several of his later publications (e.g., 1948, 1955, 1962). The real importance of these early inputs into the development of area studies within ethnological theory emerges when we consider that it was not until 1939 that Alfred I. Kroeber's famous Cultural and Natural Areas was published. However, except for E. G. Burrows' work on Oceania of 1940 and Kroeber's magnum opus of 1944 on historic configurations in selected Old World civilizations, there was no notable attempt by Americans to again apply the new concept to Africa or elsewhere outside of North America until 1946.

In the post-World War II era, the United States Government showed an unprecedented interest in funding cross-cultural research and there was a general proliferation of new or refined culture-area schemes (e.g., Linton and Wingert's work on Oceania, Bacon's work on Asia in 1946, Stewart's work on South America between 1946 and 1959, Coon and Patai's work on the Middle East in 1951 and 1952, and Ehrich's work on the Middle East and Aegean in 1956). In 1959, George Peter Murdock, who had spent a total of less than one month on African soil,

produced from the ethnographic record his amazingly comprehensive distillation entitled Africa: It's People and Their Culture History which was implicitly organized around a scheme of culture-areas.

In the United States, diffusionist thinking about regional domains culminated in the elaboration of the concept of culture areas, relatively small geographical units based on the continuous distribution of cultural elements. In Europe, the same trend gave rise to the notion of Kulturkreise, or Culture-Circles, large complexes of traits which had lost their former geographical unity and were now dispersed throughout the world. [Harris 1968:373]

One indication that students of the culture-area construct and Kulturkreise share much scholarly heritage in common is Herskovits' praise (1962:21) of F. Ratzel, the German geographer, for his differentiation of African cultures on the basis of ecological and economic organization criteria beginning as early as the 1880's. Similarly, Tylor went on record as recommending the English version of a work by Ratzel (1896) as a solid foundation in anthropological study. This acclaim of Ratzel by such outstanding pioneers of American anthropology is remarkable not because Ratzel was a major inspiration of the Kulturkreislehre, but rather that he was opposed to that liberal expression of environmentalism known as psychic unity, and because his work relating to migration theory and diffusional processes was of such uncertain merit. In fact, his culture concept relied so heavily upon a notion of biological feed-back that it contributed to many years of debilitating consequences for the German-Austrian culture-historical school of ethnology.

Largely following in the footsteps of Ratzel was Leo Frobenius, except that Frobenius pushed certain aspects of Ratzels' theories to further extremes. While Frobenius is often credited with having been the first German ethnologist to attempt to chronologically order the sequences of African cultures, an achievement for which he seems to have received little notice in Germany or elsewhere, was his formulation of an organismic or functionalist cultural model which was at least quasi-independent of race (Baumann and Westermann 1962:14).

Using postulates set forth by Ratzel and Frobenius along with some original ones of his own, in 1904, B. Ankermann became the first member of the German-Austrian culture-historical school to present a comprehensive formalization of culture circles in Africa. Moreover, Ankerman sought to order then in time by relying heavily on the culture circles which Graebner had established for Oceania about the same time. Ankerman's scheme was subsequently used by the Viennese or Austrian school - notably by Father Schmidt and Koppers - to formulate a theory of culture circles embracing the whole world (Baumann and Westermann 1962:14).

Father Schmidt was also directly influenced by Graebner who had been the first to apply the ideas of the Kulturkreislehre on a world-wide basis. The most influential and enduring culture-area scheme advanced by the culture-historical theoreticians did not appear until 1940, Volkerkunde von Afrika, a separate part of which were authored by H. Baumann and D. Westerman. This was same work which appeared in French in 1948 and 1967 under the title, Les Peuples et Les Civilisations de l'Afrique. As in the wake of World War II, more and more anthropologists grew intolerant of the diffusional excuses of Kulturkreislehre, the writing seemed "on the wall." And though it received its coup de grâce in 1956 when leading exponents of the German-Austrian culture-historical school renounced it at a world conference, many of its perspectives have continued to color African studies in unacceptable ways.

To be sure, anthropologists of other European traditions also made contributions to culture-area theory, in general, and to such theory as applied to Africa, in particular. The culture-area schemes which have been most influential in the English-speaking world even to the present day are the three advanced by (1) Baumann, (2) Murdock, and (3) Herskovits.

It should not be overlooked that for better or for worse, there was much cross-fertilization between the culture-area construct as it evolved largely in America and Kulturkreise or cultural circles as they were conceptualized largely in Germany, Austria and other parts of central Europe. It is noteworthy, moreover, that as applied to Africa, both conceptualizations developed with essentially no input by scholars of

African descent. It is also noteworthy that to this very day, there is a conservative Eurocentric establishment within anthropology which inhibits alternative ways of thinking about areas of Africa in ways that recognize its biological and cultural cohesion and continental integrity from the shores of the Mediterranean to the tip of the Cape.

Concerning the culture-area scheme set forth by Baumann, it seems to have been not so much critically read and evaluated by scholars as merely acknowledged and held in awe. The second, while apparently quite familiar to Africanists, seems to have been little followed as a model. The third, by far the most popular, seems to have been seldom if ever evaluated as an exercise in method. It would seem that in the preface of Peoples of Africa (1965 :viii-ix), the attitude of well-known African-American anthropologist, James Gibbs, rather epitomizes the situation.

In lieu of making an issue of pigeon-holes out of which Baumann, Murdock, and Herskovits were influencing Africanists to operate, Gibbs merely stated his belief that the Herskovits scheme was best for "the student new to African studies," and he strongly implied that the schemes by Murdock and by Baumann, being "more elaborate," were best for the specialist or for the student not new to African studies. This writer is not certain that Gibbs' attitude did not simply continue the passing of the ball in a way which masked certain problems of major theoretical importance (e.g., the impact of biological reductionism on culture area delineations and wide-spread assumptions that only minimal acculturation had taken place across the Sahara, and that where it had, all the importance influences had come from the northern sector to the southern sector rather than vice versa).

This writer is totally unconvinced that the major differences between the three schemes in question can correctly be reduced to mere degrees of elaboration, however, time permits me to venture only superficially into these waters today. Beginning with Baumann, he made no provision for the presentation of ethnographic data outside of a theoretical context which did not account for (1) their status in an evolutionary series, (2) the people and places associated with their origin, and (3) their migratory and diffusional routes. Consequently, because raw data and theory are always so inextricably intwined in Baumann's

scheme, it is virtually impossible to use his model without accepting the theoretical "baggage" of the Culture Circles movement, also known as Kulturkreislehre. Although Baumann was conscious of the need to specify his criteria (Baumann and Westermann 1962:89-92), only at a superficial level did he use them consistently (*i.e., geographical habitat*, economic organization, place of origin, race [sic], and culture) to distinguish his culture areas.

In any case, mere selection of variables is essentially mechanical; what is of much greater importance are the types of assumptions made about how they function in relation to each other At this level, Baumann's schema of culture circles in Africa is very problematic. Like many of the other culture-historians, Baumann was never able to grasp the nature of discordance between phenotypic distributions associated with the way people looked and sociocultural distributions associated with the way people behaved. For example, through biological reduction applied to the concept of culture with respect to the Bushmen and the Hottentots, Baumann concluded that the cultural, racial, and linguistic boundaries separating them were coterminous, that is, a part of the same set of social facts. Consider the following.

Plus nous pénétrons dans la civilisation et dans le caractère racial des Pygmées, plus se fortifie en nous la conviction que les Pygmés et les Bochimas ont evolué en partant de racines séparées. [Baumann and Westermann 1962:21]

Nous savons aujourd'hui qu'un mélange de races répond à un mélange de civilisations, et, comme l'affirment des linguistes renommés tel que Meinhof par example, à un mélange de langues. [Baumann and Westermann 1962:22]

That Baumann was not always consistent in relying on biological reductionism is illustrated by the fact that he criticized Eickstedt for allowing language differences to affect his classification of African races (Baumann and Westermann 1962:24). Still, the evidence showing that Baumann believed there existed a neat fit between "race," on the one hand, and cultural particulars, on the other, is overwhelming. For example, in lamenting the fact that Black Africans had been only superficially studied by physical anthropologists, he expressed

confidence that in time, the racial classifications which would be established would correspond in their broad lines with the ethnic classifications which he had established through ethnological inquiry.

Overall, it would hardly be an overstatement to note that Baumann considered race and geography, in that respective order, to be the most important determinants of culture. Moreover, he posited a fit between a people and its physical habitat which was idealized enough to suggest a type of geographical predestination and explanatory approaches other than biological and geographical determinism (e.g., history and cultural materialism) were converted into passive factors. As Baumann had also been influenced, in part, by the scheme of culture-areas which had been developed for Nigeria by the American, W. D. Hambly, so was the work of the Kulturkreislehre to have an even greater effect on the work of a number of prominent American Africanists of European descent.

Herskovits(1962) indicated an intimate familiarization with Ratzel, Frobenius, Baumann, and Westermann, while Murdock(1959) openly acknowledged that he was perhaps more dependent on Baumann and Westermann than on any other single source. The Austro-German culture-historians had made voluminous contributions to African ethnography at a time when African Studies had not yet been conceived by the academic establishment in America. Not only did the Kulturkreislehre directly attract an occasional American partisan (e.g., Clyde Kluckhohn and, to lesser extent, Robert Lowie and Joseph Greenberg), but it was only at great risk that any early Africanist - whether pro or con - could afford to be ignorant of what its exponents were saying.

Though both Murdock and Herskovits where influenced by the Culture Circles movement, neither followed it slavishly. While recognizing a debt, they even ignored, minimized the importance of, or totally rejected whole blocs of cultural-historical theory. For example, Murdock and Herskovits attempted to substitute a range of ecological considerations in place of a rather simplistic geographical determinism; and in principle at least, neither would have any part of the biological reductionism of its culture concept.

In Africa: Its Peoples and Their Culture History, Murdock (1959: ix, 7, 12, 21, 40, 42) stated that his first major aim was the reconstruction of the history of the African continent over the last seven thousand years. In his attempt to accomplish this purpose, Murdock explicitly utilized seven analytical tools: (1) written records, (2) archeological evidence, (3) linguistic relationships, (4) botanical evidence or distribution of cultigens, (5) social structural analysis or the temporal resolution inconsistencies in social organization, (6) the distribution of ethnographic forms, and (7) interestingly enough, racial criteria. Murdock set forth his second aim as "to order existing ethnographic knowledge by summarizing the cultural data surveyed for each of the distinctive areas or provinces into which the peoples of the continent are divided." A careful consideration of the second aim leaves little doubt that Murdock was positing "the distinctive areas" almost as though, like a river, artifact or ritual scene, they had existence in objective reality.

Unlike Baumann, who divided Africa into an unwieldy number of races and twenty-six culture circles, and unlike Herkovits, who divided it into two races and ten culture areas, Murdock divided Africa into five races and ten distinctive areas, each of which he considered to contain from three to eight major distinctive provinces. Clearly, there was a confusion of levels of analysis there. It is a type of confusion where ethnic, geographical, and historical variables were used in fluid ad hoc combinations to delineate so-called distinctive areas. It is noteworthy that the criteria used in this regard were more restrictive than those explicitly set forth for historical reconstruction. Moreover, in a single scheme of distinctive areas where the aim was to reconstruct history within an area framework and where simultaneously the area framework, by definition, incorporated historical criteria, validation became problematic.

The problem was part of the culture-historical legacy which so influenced Murdock. However, cognizant that the cultural- historians had repudiated Kulturkreislehre in 1956, and due also to some honest theoretical differences, Murdock(1959:41) felt moved to state: "The culture history of the present volume has nothing in common with the approach of this group." This statement, however, cannot be accepted on face value. To be sure, Murdock's qualified commitment to the historical particularist "age-area principle" did not permit him to accept

blindly the historical connection between specific cultural resemblances occurring in different regions, and he exercised considerably more caution in postulating migration or diffusion from general similarities in complex social phenomena (Murdock 1959: 40-42 Cf.19 where a complex is discussed).

It is true that under the reforming influence of Joseph Greenberg, Murdock avoided some major errors in the domain of historical linguistic interpretations, but it may be suggested that, although progressive, this should not be considered a move away from the cultural-historians. To a considerable degree, Greenberg had at least one leg in bed with the cultural-historians. In fact, Greenberg (1971:102-104) has argued that apart from not being diffusionist, Kulturkreislehre found diffusion to be "it's chief methodological source of disturbance." Moreover, in Graebner and Schmidt's claims to have pinpointed original cultural circles, Greenberg (1971:104) saw "the most consistent and fully elaborated migrational theory . . ."In any case, the point to be made here is that Murdock's categorical statement of disassociation with the cultural-historical school can not be taken at face value.

The similarities between Murdock and Baumann and Westermann (1962; orig. 1940) permeate so deeply that on occasion, Murdock's geo-ethnic temporal constructs glossed as "distinctive areas and provinces " seem often to be duplications of Westermann's culture circles. It is undoubtedly due to his great intellectual debt to Westermann that in the Preface of Africa, Murdock observed:

With rare exceptions, general works are incomplete in geographical scope, naive in theoretical perspective, and inaccurate in factual detail; historical reconstructions reflect racial biases [emphasis mine], outmoded concepts of the mechanics of diffusion, and undisciplined imagination; classifications of cultures and of languages are often impressionistic and technically defective; and regional summaries and analyses are fewer and less satisfactory than for most comparable ethnographic areas. From these strictures the author must hasten to except three generalizing anthropologists whose work has proved so extraordinarily helpful that he must single them out for a special accolade: Hermann Baumann, who.. . has made an invaluable scholarly contribution in sifting and organizing the descriptive data on the peoples

of Negro Africa; Daryll Ford. . . ; and Joseph H. Greenberg, who has brought order out of chaos in African linguistic classification. [Murdock 1959 vii-viii]

Herskovits while drawing from time to time on the work of the cultural-historians showed almost no inclination to go along with any of the major theoretical commitments of the Culture Circle movement. For example, consider the following:

Scientific procedure demands that description test current generalizations, or establish new ones, as a basis for eventual understanding. It is essential, moreover, in any attempt to see African ways of life along broad lines, that the analysis focus on culture, without regard to either of the two semi-independent variables, physical type and language. [Herskovits1962:55]

Among the numerous geographers and anthropologists who had a direct influence on Herskovits were Lord Malcolm Hailey (1957) and Alan P. Merriam (1959), but it can not be overlooked that these were late influences, people who had themselves already profited immensely from Herskovits' own pioneering work in the field of culture-areas. Only the Germans had preceded Herskovits in the task of attempting to scientifically delineate culture-areas in Africa. It is possible therefore that in the course of time, Herskovits unwittingly became a prisoner of his own early conceptualization. What is certain is that instead of periodic re-evaluation of it, he tended to publish it over and over again with ever greater confidence.

Though Herskovits was aware of massive Volkerwanderungen in vast stretches of Africa dating back to prehistoric times as well as interactions between neighboring peoples from the Cape to Cairo and from Daker to Addis Ababa continuing throughout his professional career, he apparently felt quite comfortable championing the cause of Africa south of the Sahara as a separate entity. For example, in The Human Factor in Changing Africa (1962), a late work in which his scheme of African culture-areas was published, Herskovits delineated ten areas on his map of the continent, but only discussed the six south of the Sahara in his text. This publication was separated from Herskovits' "A Preliminary Consideration of the Culture Areas of Africa" (1924) by

almost forty years, yet apart from the fact that the early scheme delineated nine areas and the late one ten, there were few objective changes.

Herskovits' attitude about his undertaking changed considerably, however. As a part of the earlier work, he expressed his hope that it would be followed by more detailed investigations would establish "more definitely the correctness with which the present boundary lines have been drawn." However, by 1962, he had reached the point of interlacing his prose as follows: To one who, like myself . . . as a scientific observer. . .", "Because my scientific orientation . . .," and "In consonance with scientific procedure, my approach holds that . .(Herskovits 1962: vii, viii, ix).

Although the lines of Herskovits' culture-area scheme tended to remain quite firm over time, he tended to shape new social facts to fit his generalizations which were already in place. For example, he (Herskovits,1962: 41-50) came to learn that cultural interaction into and across the desert was not so recent after all, and that his assumptions of "conflict" between the "Mohammadan North" and "Negro south" was a gross oversimplification - perhaps in considerable measure part of his cultural baggage which he had unwittingly grafted onto the subject of his inquiry. It remains true, however, that Herskovits never really progressed beyond ignoring relationships between his northern culture-areas and the rest of Africa, for (with the exception of Egypt) he labeled them as "marginal" in 1924, and by 1962, he had merely substituted the word "residual."

Herskovits' (1924: 61-62) early assertions about the influence of Egypt on distant parts of Africa as well as his inclusion of large parts of the Guinea Coast in his "Western Sudan " culture-area were a direct result of the very strong influence of Frobenius on his initial formulation. As that influence waned over the years, Herskovits (1962:45-46) came to doubt that Egypt's influence on distant parts of Africa had been anything other than extremely superficial and restricted. Also, it seems almost never to have occurred to him that areas south of Egypt may have had a major impact on Egyptian culture. In fact, as Herskovits' New World Negro (1966) makes apparent, he was more impressed by cultural similarities between Africans and African-Americans than between Africans of the northern littoral and those elsewhere on the continent. In

any case, this oversight and oscillation were consistent with Herskovits' on-going attempt to understand Africa in cultural terms which would transcend "color" and the "sand curtain."

Whatever the shortcomings of their application of the culture area construct to Africa and the complications that they raised for studying Northern Africa in relationship to the rest of the continent, we cannot overstate our indebtedness to their important pioneering in African ethnology. At the same time, our scientific enterprise requires that we attempt to distinguish aspects which were rigorous from those which were problematic.

SOME CHALLENGES OF MOVEMENT INTO THE FUTURE

The contribution of anthropology to African studies is perhaps greater than that of any other disciplines; however, this contribution has also been compromised by serious mistakes. Unfortunately, many of the old racialist ways of conceptualizing Africa provided a place of privilege for Mediterranean Africa as the cradle of Western culture while denigrating the rest of the continent (see Elizabeth Rankin and Nessa Leibhammer 1996:187). Also, although many books have been written whose titles contain such terms as "The Middle East," "The Near East," "Islamic World," "Islamic Africa," "Barbary," and "Maghreb," very few scholarly books have been published from a broad social science perspective with "North Africa" or "Northern Africa" as part of their titles.

In other words, despite the fact that Northern Africa has never in any demographic, geographical, historical, social, or cultural sense ever been divorced from the rest of the continent and despite existence of the Organization of African Unity which has existed for almost forty years with members from all parts of the continent, the scholarly literature which exists reflects an almost total lack of publications which focus on Northern Africa within a continental context. It is almost as though there were a publishing conspiracy to divorce Northern Africa from the rest of the continent of Africa.

According to the 1998 edition of Books in Print, for example, there are currently in print only seven books in the English language (apart from three cook books and/or bibliographies) which have either "North

Africa" or "Northern Africa" in their titles. Of these seven books, two also carry "Middle East" or "Central Africa" in the titles, meaning that they are not specific to the region. A third book is explicitly about the era of Queen Victoria while a fourth is a history that focuses exclusively on the years 1816-1820. This leaves only three books currently in print which focus specifically on Northern Africa as a region within the perspective of any of the social scientific disciplines. I make reference to the following.

(1) Government and Politics in Northern Africa by William I. Zartman (Greenwood, 1978) 205p.

(2) Northern Africa: Islam and Modernization by Michael Brett, ed (International Specialties Book) 156p.

(3) Peoples of Northern Africa by Diagram Group Staff (Facts on File), which is a children's work.

One reason for this virtual nonexistence of books specifically under the rubric of Northern Africa and about Northern Africa as a region of Africa is that in the Western World, one has tended to view Africa more from a racial perspective than from a continental perspective and in the Arab World, one has tended to view Northern Africa more from the perspective of Pan-Arab nationalism or Islam than from a continental perspective. The unwritten rules which have allowed research on Northern Africa to go forward only within such narrow and biased restrictions are not justifiable, are not reasonable, and are outdated. Moreover, they greatly handicap professors in numerous disciplines who wish to teach survey courses about Africa in its entirety without at the same time having to teach about a rather large number of Asian societies which are ordinarily included as part of the Middle East.

In the past, such professors focusing on Africa as a continent or on various regions of Africa from an African perspective have had to limit themselves to adapting textbooks teaching about Sub-Saharan Africa and supplementing as best they could or they have had to have students buy textbooks which are largely about a continent other than Africa. Many professors have found both these approaches unsatisfactory not only for reasons that have to do with the economics of cost and time, but also because they make it virtually impossible to study certain types of African problems which transcend the boundaries of the so-called "sand screen" and "color line." For example, problems relating to religion, ecology, political organization, development, linguistics, human biological

variation, and sometimes kinship, frequently transcend the superficiality of a "sand curtain" at the Sahara.

Another difficulty resulting from the legacy of dismemberment of Africa is that some scholars in reaction to the old scientific racism have developed new and equally racialized thinking about Africa. For example, despite the brilliant contributions to African studies by the famous Senegalese scholar Cheikh Anta Diop, his claim first made in 1954 that the ancient Egyptians were exclusively black, though typological and confusing, has become a fighting weapon in the hands of such African-American scholars as Yosef Ben-Yochanon and Molefe K. Asante (Odhiambo 1997).

A simple truth about Africa which so many anthropologists have found it nearly impossible to be unequivocal about is that culture and biology are as separate in Africa as elsewhere and there is no scientific basis for portraying Africa as a unique exception. Many anthropological textbooks have still not begun to reflect this non-racialist way of thinking about Africa, but this notwithstanding, the continent is beginning to emerge from the scholarly domination of anthropologists who have long portrayed it as dismembered and some encouraging new developments in African anthropology may be seen coming into view which defy racial categorization.

According to Sally Falk Moore (1996), anthropology must repeatedly transform itself "and efforts must be made to ensure the professional conversation about new visions for the discipline be carried on with colleagues in the international arena, that the discourse not be narrowly American, that the dialogue include African academics." As more domestic anthropologists get involved, we witness a process where the pendulum swings more away from third-person ethnography and more toward first-person ethnography. In some regards, African scholarship is flourishing, with African scholars and intellectuals in the words of Maria G. Cattell, "critiquing and reevaluating their own past and the role of anthropology as their history. They are also redefining 'Africa' and their national and local identities" Cattell,1995:11). However, this does not mean that the outside world will somehow cease to impact African anthroplogy for as V. Y. Mudimbe (1994:xv) has pointed out in The Idea of Africa, "Both Western and African interpreters use

'categories and conceptual systems that depend on a Western epistemological order.'"

In this regard, it is informative to consider the treatment of so-called "population characteristics" in a book such as The Human Geography of Tropical Africa (1982) by Reuben Udo of University of Ibandan which incorporates the worst of racial thinking about Africans, including all the usual stereotypes about some isolated areas where Africans are supposedly racially "pure," and even references to supposed differences between what he calls "true or Sudanese negroes" in the West as opposed to "Bantu negroes" in the East. Another problem in African studies is the existence of so many books which claim in their titles to be about Africa in general but which actually deal rather exclusively with sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Gordon and Gordon 1992). In a sense, this is buying into the old view that the "real" Africa stops at the Sahara. In any case, as Elliot Fratkin has pointed out, there still needs to be long-term collaboration by First World scholars with African universities. Also, the book Internet for Africanists and Others Interested in Africa (1996) makes that the point the African continent is relatively undeveloped in terms of information technology and electronic communication and even telephones often do not work; hence, the post-modern technological age has barely arrived in the heart of Africa. Also, the number of libraries and institutions which specialize in African studies and have on-line catalogues are not all that many, according to Gary Baines (1998) of the History Department at Rhodes University.

The funding sources on which anthropologists depend are increasingly emphasizing research that is practical and development-oriented as well as research which is global rather than area studies, but according to Richard Antoun (Michalak, 1997), "if this leads away from in-depth studies and the study of process, it's misguided; if it encourages attention to how global processes work out in local arenas, it's useful." He has also pointed out that "Our studies are always arbitrary and we draw boundaries of study based on the problem we're studying, so whether you want to pick the Middle East as a frame depends on the problem that you're looking at (Michalak 1997).

African boundaries are also bridges that Africans regularly cross and this needs to receive more anthropological attention. The whole

question of boundaries in Africa has been the subject of scholarly research for a long time, and will undoubtedly continue to be in the future (Nugent and Asiwaju 1996; Goodwin 1964). In addition to boundaries on the ground, there are boundaries of the mind which affect the way we practice anthropology. Maria G. Cattell (1995) has written about "the globalization and increasing complexity of the adaptability and creativity of Africans in grappling with us and with their own problems. With respect to African anthropology, this globalization, or what Mohammed Bamyeh refers to as "transnationalism," the challenges are many but some of the movement on the horizon is impressive.

For one thing, not only are Africanist anthropologists in more dense conversation with each other than ever before, it also happens that African anthropologists are developing networks which take greater account of each other. This development has been facilitated by the collapse of apartheid in South Africa and ending of Cold War rivalry in Africa (Mbaku,1998), but it will also be facilitated in the future through the information revolution, through better communication between in situ anthropologists and African anthropologists in the Diaspora, and through the continuous exploration by Africanists of both meaning and development from an anthropological perspective

Associated with Sudan, for example, is a long tradition of anthropology, and the Sudan Studies Association founded in 1981 by anthropologists Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban and Richard Lobban among others, offers a rich network for scholars, teachers and students. Anthropology in Egypt has a long history, in part because of its link to Egyptology, and some who say that Herodotus is the father of anthropology (Hopkins 1998). The South African Association of Cultural Anthropologists is not only once again in communication with the Association for Anthropology in Southern Africa (De Jongh,1997; Michalak, 1996; Odhiambo, 1997; Cattell, 1996). In September, 1996, the Joint Conference of the Pan African Anthropological Association and the Association for Anthropology in Southern Africa drew participants from twenty-seven African countries with more than 100 papers being presented.

In his recent work entitled Africans: The History of a Continent, John Iliffe (1995) devoted meaningful treatment to all geographical

regions of Africa, including North Africa, at least during the pre-modern era. A further indication that Africa is emerging from her dismemberment is reflected in four major continent-wide projects which have recently showcased African culture in an excellent way. The first was the exhibition Africa: The Art of a Continent at the Royal Academy of Arts in London from October 4, 1995 to January 21, 1996. Published for the occasion was a massive 614-page illustrated volume of the same name filled almost to the point of overflowing anthropologists, historians, and others. This largest African exhibition ever assembled in one place moved next to the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin (see Rankin and Leibhammer, 1996). For its final showing, the exhibition occupied virtually every gallery of New York's Guggenheim Museum, from June 7 through September 29, 1996 and in this connection, a new volume was produced, also called Africa: The Art of a Continent but with much new material contained in its 191 folio-sized pages. In the same spirit of Africa, meaning the continent of Africa, the Garland Encyclopedia of World Music in 1998 produced a mammoth 851-page volume called Africa on the music of the continent accompanied by a C-D ROM with twenty-one audio examples extending from Algeria in the north to Zimbabwe in the south.

It is ironic that after arguing in The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography, that continental and regional studes sometimes involve environmental determinism and the politics of space, Lewis and Wigen (1997) ultimately argue in favour of their own system of regional classification which is highly reliant on religion and race. As we move into the 21st century, a major challenge of anthropology is to rid itself of the kind of scientific racism that has so dismembered the continent of Africa. If we fail in this, perhaps our future will already have been written in the pages of Peter Rigby's recent work (1996) entitled African Images: Racism and the End of Anthropology. However, I believe the future lies in our speaking truthfully and in a meaningful way. Andrew Spiegel (1997:18) has recently set a challenge for a new ethnographic approach in South Africa which I think gives us all something important to think about - namely "to continue to seek access to people's tacit cultural knowledge by watching and listening to their everyday activities and utterances rather than by looking at the unusual, the conflictual and the exotic."

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