African World History Project

The Preliminary Challenge

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Association
for the Study of
Classical African Civilizations

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The Preliminary Challenge

Edited by Jacob H. Carruthers
and Leon C. Harris

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Contents

Statement of the International President vii
Foreword x
Preface xviii
Acknowledgments xix
Introduction 1

Part I
The Challenge:
Restoring the African Way
Chapter 1 Developing An African Historiography 9
By Anderson Thompson
Chapter 2 Who Am I? 31
By Théophile Obenga

Part II
The African Historical Imagination:
Developing a Conceptual Framework
Chapter 3 An African Historiography for the 21st Century 47
By Jacob H. Carruthers
Chapter 4 Critical Issues in Nile Valley Studies: Unification, Periodization, and Characterization 73
By Vulindlela I. Wobogo
Chapter 5 The Calendar Project 103
By Rekhety Wimby Jones

Part III
Patterns of African-Centered History:
Applying the Visiion
Chapter 6 Waset, The Eye of Ra and the Abode of Maat: The Pinnacle of Black Leadership in the Ancient World 127
By Asa Hilliard III
Chapter 7 Civilization or Barbarism: The Legacy of Cheikh Anta Diop 159
By Leonard Jeffries, Jr.

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Part IV
African-Centered Perspectives:
Continuing the Tradition—The Next Generation

Chapter 8 From Tef Tef to Medew Nefer: The Importance of Utilizing African Terminologies and Concepts in the Rescue, Restoration, Reconstruction, and Reconnection of African Ancestral Memory 179
By Adisa A. Ajamu

Chapter 9 Maat: The Cultural and Intellectual Allegiance of a Concept
By Mario H. Beatty 211

Chapter 10 Womanism and Black Feminism: Issues in the Manipulation of African Historiography 245
By Valethia Watkins

Chapter 11 The African-Centered Philosophy of History: An Exploratory Essay on the Genealogy of Foundationalist Historical Thought and African Nationalist Identity Construction
By Greg Kimathi Carr 285

Afterword 321

Appendixes

1. Transcript: Inaugural Meeting of the African World History Project 327
By Greg Kimathi Carr and Valethia Watkins

2. Memorandum 355
By Jacob H. Carruthers

Bibliography 363

Contributors 388

Index 392

Statement From the International President

Our initial gathering in 1984 at Los Angeles Southwest Community College brought together a committed group of Africans to rescue and reconstruct our African history and humanity. From this auspicious occasion, the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations, one of the most innovative and prestigious organizations of the twentieth century, was born. The work of restoration began at this First Ancient Egyptian Studies Conference as the presenters and participants approached the subject of Kemet (Ancient Egypt) with a precocious and ingenious interdisciplinary style.

Not content to rely on the established interpretations of European historians, the conference served as the authentication and continuation of the life works of Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan, Dr. Chancellor Williams, Dr. John Henrik Clarke, and Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop. Even the prevailing intellectual tyranny could not silence the truth that was disseminated during the three days that celebrated our ancestral connection.

The defensive charge by nineteenth century poet Hillary Teague, "Retake Your Fame," has become the great offensive campaign in the revolutionary dimensions of our work. In fact, the mission of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC) focuses on the need for black scholars and activists throughout the world to develop an African-centered methodology based upon a critical understanding of ancient Nile Valley Civilization and its contributions to humankind.

Like the Sankofa bird, ASCAC looks back to move forward. We are indeed proud to rededicate ourselves to the foundation laid during our first decade and beyond. We look back to move forward by linking our glorious African past to challenges of the African present. We look back and celebrate our monumental expeditions to the homeland. On our first occasion, ASCAC took over a thousand African Americans to Kemet to study, research, and reclaim our birthright, and on the second occasion, hundreds of Africans from

America met with Africans from throughout the Diaspora in Ghana to examine, explore, and proclaim the historical unity of African people.

When looking back at ASCAC's commitment to the education and reeducation of our people, we see that the number of study groups has significantly increased on the national and international levels. As an extension of this, ASCAC continues as an advocate for ongoing national dialogue on the necessity of reviving educational curricula such that a balanced view of African history and culture is reflected. The number of scholars, activists, and practitioners researching Classical African Civilizations has multiplied. Research continues on the exploration of African spirituality and ancient rituals and ceremonies. Furthermore, ASCAC has begun to define the purpose and function of African creative productions by examining the role and responsibilities of the artists in classical and contemporary African civilizations.

Most importantly, we are very proud to have begun a collaborative effort with several strong youth organizations that focuses on new strategies and directions. ASCAC is ensuring our immortality by reaching out and nurturing our young scholars and activists who are spreading their wings as they join us in our battle to win the hearts and minds of our people.

In this context, the importance of the *African World History Project: The Preliminary Challenge* speaks for itself. *The Preliminary Challenge* is designed to inspire thought-provoking dialogue, cross-generational discourse, and informed action. It separates truth from falsehood and will begin to heal us from the crippling effects of our historical amnesia as well as lay out the necessary framework for our liberation.

The African World History Project represents our commitment to the education and reeducation of our people. It will be disseminated in every African home, hamlet, school, college, university, church, mosque, and temple that would allow the truth of African history to be told. It will serve as a basis for textbooks, children's books, videos, radio and television programs as well as other teaching tools. The African World History Project will impact the ongoing reclamation of the history of ancient African civilizations and direct what future generations will learn.

The African World History Project is offered with compassion without compromise and represents the collective intelligence and genius of our people. Our hope is that the lessons learned and wisdom earned in this "reproduction of knowledge" will serve as a continuation of the legacy of David Walker, Hosea Easton, Edward Blyden, Henry McNeal Turner, Martin R. Delany, Henry Highland Garnet, William Leo Hansberry, Hubert H. Harrison, George G. M. James, Carter G. Woodson, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, W.E.B. Du Bois, Maria Stewart, Willis N. Huggins, J.A. Rogers, Drusilla Dunjee Houston, Chancellor

Williams, John G. Jackson, Cheikh Anta Diop, Théophile Obenga, Yosef ben-Jochannan, and John Henrik Clarke.

For all of these reasons, this is indeed a marvelous occasion. It celebrates our ancient past, our active present, and our proactive plans for the future. More confident than ever, we are rededicating ourselves to the study and examination of African life with a recommitment to African ascension.

If I had one thousand tongues, I would not be able to say "thank you" enough to the many people who have made this publication possible and who will contribute to future volumes. We are eternally grateful to our esteemed elders Dr. John Henrik Clarke and Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan for their wisdom, guidance, patience, and understanding.

We are indebted to Dr. Jacob Carruthers, the intellectual visionary of the African World History Project and Editor of *The Preliminary Challenge,* and to the dauntless and daring authors of its content. Our deep gratitude goes to Dr. Anderson Thompson, Research Commission Chairperson, for calling forth the need for a new historiography over two decades ago. We are grateful to the Midwestern Region of ASCAC and the African community of Detroit, Michigan for hosting the meeting that launched this historic project. My never ending thanks goes to Brother Leon Harris for his enormous labor of love to bring these words to print. Finally, I extend my undying love and appreciation to the Council of Elders, international board, regional presidents, members, and friends of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations for their generosity and support in making this vision a reality.

—NZINGA RATIBISHA HERU

International President
March 1997

Foreword

African people are the most written about and the least known of all the world's people. The European's fear of competition and comparison is the main reason for their reluctance to accept Africa as a part of an authentic commentary on world history. African scholars have a monumental task of reconstruction to perform. They must restore what slavery and colonialism took away, the basic humanity of African people. To do this job properly, the African scholar must be academically trained and bold enough to put Africa at the center of history and move all world history from that center. Those who do not believe that mankind and organized society started in Africa should be asked to present any evidence they have on the origin of man and human society that started elsewhere.

At the time African societies emerged, there was no Europe. I know this is hard on the imagination, but Europe had not yet joined civilization. Societies that are eventually called organized and civilized come into being by answering the challenges of time, place, and circumstances in history and by the successful management of energy. The international fight over the place of Africa in world history revolves around the role of Egypt in particular and Africa in general. When Europe was born, Africa, particularly Egypt, had had a ten-thousand-year walk in the sun politically and culturally and was now tired from its long journey. The challenge of the Nile Valley created Egypt. The challenge of Egypt and the Mediterranean islands eventually created Rome and Greece. The challenge of Rome and Greece eventually created Europe. Nations are shaped by the way they meet the challenges of history and circumstances.

In this initial volume on African World History by African historians themselves, the authors are meeting the challenges of history, time, and circumstances that, for the most part, have been shaped by Europe. In order to create an excuse and a rationale for the slave trade and the colonial system that followed it, Europeans had to forget—or pretend to forget—all they had previously known about Africa, the history of Africa, and African people and

their culture. In one of his last public speeches on this subject, the Caribbean writer, historian, and political activist, the late Richard B. Moore observed:

> The significance of African history is shown, though not overtly, in the very effort to deny anything worthy of the name of history to Africa and the African peoples. The widespread, and well nigh successful endeavor, maintained through some five centuries, to erase African history from the general record is a fact which of itself should be quite conclusive to thinking and open minds. For it is logical and apparent that no such undertaking would ever have been carried on, and at such length, in order to obscure and bury what is actually of little or no significance.
>
> The prime significance of African history becomes still more manifest when it is realized that this deliberate denial of African history arose out of the European expansion and invasion of Africa which began in the middle of the fifteenth century. The compulsion was thereby felt to attempt to justify such colonialist conquest, domination, enslavement and plunder. Hence, this brash denial of history and culture to Africa, and indeed even of human qualities and capacity for 'civilization' to the indigenous peoples of Africa.[1]

Mr. Moore is saying, in essence, that African history must be looked at anew and seen in its relationship to world history. First, the distortions must be admitted. The hard fact is that most of what we now call world history is only the history of the first and second rise of Europe. The Europeans are not yet willing to acknowledge that the world did not wait in darkness for them to bring the light. The history of Africa was already old when Europe was born. Europeans are not yet willing to acknowledge their spiritual and intellectual debt to Africa. The following quote from the book *Who is This King of Glory* by Alvin Boyd Kuhn is an exceptional admission by a European.

> The pick that struck the Rosetta Stone in the loamy soil of the Nile delta in 1799 also struck a mighty blow at historical Christianity. For it released the voice of a long-voiceless past to refute nearly every one of Christianity's historical claims with a withering negative. The cryptic literature of old Egypt, sealed in silence when Christianity took its rise, but haunting it like a taunting specter after the third century, now stalks forth like a living ghost out of the tomb to point its long finger of accusation at a faith that has too long thriven on falsity. For that literature now rises out of oblivion

1. Richard B. Moore, "Commencement Address" (private papers of Richard B. Moore in the possession of John Henrik Clarke, n.d.).

> to proclaim the true source of every doctrine of Christianity as Egyptian, the product and heritage of a remote past. The translation of the *Egyptian Book of the Dead,* the *Pyramid Texts,* and the *Book of Thoth* lays on the table the irrefutable data which show that, far from being the first gleam of true light in a world previously benighted in heathenism, Christianity was but a poor and crippled orphan, appearing—after the third century—without evidence of its true parentage and sadly belying in its outward form the semblance of its real ancestral lineage. The books of old Egypt now unroll the sagas of wisdom which announce the inexorable truth that not a single doctrine, rite, tenet or usage in Christianity was a new contribution to world religion, but that every article and practice of that faith was a disfigured copy of ancient Egyptian systematism. The entire body of Christian doctrinism is now seen to be nothing but revamped and terribly mutilated Egyptianism.[2]

The French writer Count Volney's book, *The Ruins of Empires,* speaks of the world's indebtedness to Africa. He says:

> Those piles of ruins which you see in that narrow valley watered by the Nile, are the remains of opulent cities, the pride of the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia . . . . There a people, now forgotten, discovered while others were yet barbarians, the elements of the arts and sciences. A race of men now rejected from society for their sable skin and frizzled hair, founded on the study of the laws of nature, those civil and religious systems which still govern the universe.[3]

European historians in particular and Western originated historians in general have made a cult out of claiming Egypt as the creation of some people other than African. They have proclaimed their point, but they have not proven their point. They have not answered the vital question: "Why would any people build a civilization as enduring as Egypt away from home before they build a similar civilization at home?" Civilization nearly always requires a rehearsal stage. If you examine the massive evidence on the southern African origins of Egypt, you will find that Egypt's rehearsal stage was the Sudan, Ethiopia, and the nations further to the south. In this regard, I suggest that you read "Egypt, Ethiopia's Oldest Daughter," the second chapter in Chancellor Williams's book, *The Destruction of Black Civilization.* A second suggestion is that you read John Jackson's pamphlet *Ethiopia and the Origin of Civilization.* Also read

2. Alvin Boyd Kuhn, *Who is This King of Glory* (Elizabeth, N.J.: Academy Press, 1944), ix.
3. Count Volney, *The Ruins of Empires* (New York: Peter Eckler, 1980), 15–17.

"Egypt and the Evolution of Civilization," the third chapter of *Introduction to African Civilizations* by John Jackson.

We are talking about a high point in the culture of the world; we are talking about two periods when Africa laid the foundations for the future cultures of the world. I call these periods the Golden Ages. Different teachers have different ways of approaching this. I find a simplistic way of approaching it by using the term *Golden Age.* Now, what do we mean by Golden Age? This is a period when the people of the Nile Valley had peace with themselves, progress, and honorable arrangements with the people in the other two valleys, the Tigris and the Euphrates. It is a period when there was no appreciable pressure on them to fight wars and to defend themselves against foreign foes.

Typically, when you study the history of nations and people, what you are really studying are pressure points and pressure periods. It is difficult to fight a war to defend your very existence and create art, beauty, poetry, medicine, and love at the same time. Once the pressure comes on you from the outside foe, necessitating that you to fight for your very existence, some of those things have to go. Men will have to go to war, so that disrupts the family. Resources will have to be used for defense, so that disrupts the economy. Teachers will have to do something other than teach, so that disrupts education and the culture. In using *Golden Ages,* I'm talking about periods without significant pressure in the Ancient Nile Valley. Although pressure did come during these periods, it was not enough to prevent them from making progress.

The Third through the Sixth Dynasties laid the foundation, not only for the culture of the Nile Valley, but it laid the foundation for cultures to come. This foundation would be the basis of a culture that spread throughout the Mediterranean world and subsequently through most of the world of that day. The foundation of the Third Dynasty began about 2800 B.C.E. It was laid by the great African intellect, multi-genius, physician, pyramid-builder, philosopher, and teacher, Imhotep. Even though he was a commoner, he outshone the king of that day, Djoser. This civilization and culture would take another leap forward, laying before the world some of the basic laws and requirements that to some extent still govern the world.

The literature that would go into *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* had been scattered; it was then being pulled together into a single work. *(The Egyptian Book of the Dead* is the Western name for the work; the Africans entitled it *The Book of Coming Forth by Day and Night.)* It is now intact and the philosophical foundation has been laid. The papyri, or papers (different books), supporting *The Book of Coming Forth by Day and Night,* the foundations for

so much of the world's literature, are also coming together now. At this point we do not have to talk about Europe—there is no Europe.

It is difficult to conceive a period when there was no Europe as such. That geographic area didn't even have a name. There wasn't a single nation-state anywhere in the area today known as Europe. Nobody was called English; nobody was designated Russian; and no one was identified as German. Europe had no appreciable borders. Its inhabitants were roaming tribes mostly at war with each other. Europe had not created its first nation-state, its first shoe, or its first book.

I am talking about a period that is not even supposed to exist, because in the European world view (paradigm), nothing exists before Europe. This is a period before Europe came into existence and before the contact of African religion to the wider world. This is before the concept of the goddess Het Heru (Hathor) that spread to India and subsequently became the basis of the sacred cow worship that is still being used in India today. I am talking about a great building period, whose foundation had been laid by Imhotep with his famous Step Pyramid at Saqqara, which was the beginning that developed into the foundation of architecture. Within a few miles of the Step Pyramid is Her-em-Akhet (the Sphinx), the first example of massive building in stone at a height above a single story.

This period behind us, what would follow? The period of Pyramid building followed. Most of the pyramids were built during the period between the Third and Sixth Dynasties. This period of building also paralleled a period of flourishing religion. African religions are probably based on ancestral worship and phallic worship. You do not discuss phallic worship among Western people because they will turn it into something vulgar or worse. However, to worship the part of your body that can unite with the body part of someone else and produce life seems rather practical if you are looking for something to worship. You are worshiping something that gives and sustains life. It was during this period that a lot of symbols got straightened out and put in order.

When the early Europeans first met Africans at the crossroads of history, it was a respectful meeting and the Africans were not slaves. The African nations were old before Europe was born. In this period of history, what was to be later known as *Africa* was an unknown place to the people who would someday be called *European.* Only the people of some of the Mediterranean islands and a few places that would become Greek and Roman states knew of parts of North Africa, and even to them it was a land of mystery. After the rise and decline of Greek Civilization and the Roman destruction of the City of Carthage, Rome made the conquered territories into a province which they called *Africa*, a word derived from *afri*, the name of a group of people about

whom little is known. At first the word applied only to the Roman colonies in North Africa. There was a time, though, when the Greeks called all dark-skinned people *Ethiopians,* and so Africa was called Ethiopia, that is, "The Land of the Burnt-Face People."

If Africa in general is a man-made mystery, Egypt in particular is a bigger one. There has long been an attempt on the part of some European *scholars* to deny that Egypt was a part of Africa. To do this, they had to ignore the great masterpieces on Egyptian history—one being *Ancient Egypt, Light of the World*—written by European writers as well as a whole school of European thought that placed Egypt in proper focus in relationship to the rest of Africa.

The distorters of African history also had to ignore the fact that the people of the ancient land, which would later be called Egypt, never called their country by that name. It was called "Ta-Merry" or "Kampt" and sometimes "Kemet" or "Sais." The ancient Hebrews called it "Mizrain." Later the Moslem Arabs used the same term but later discarded it. Both the Greeks and the Romans referred to the country as the "Pearl Of The Nile." The Greeks gave it the simple name *Aigyptos*. Thus, the word we know as *Egypt* is of Greek origin.

Until recent times most Western scholars have been reluctant to call attention to the fact that the Nile River is more than 4,000 miles long. It starts in the south, in the heart of Africa, and flows to the north. It was the world's first cultural highway. Thus, Egypt was a composite of many African cultures. In his article, "The Lost Pharaohs of Nubia,"[4] Professor Bruce Williams infers that the nations in the South could be older than Egypt. This information is not new. When rebel European scholars were saying this one hundred years ago and proving it, they were ignored.

Unfortunately, so much of the history of Africa has been written by conquerors, foreigners, missionaries, and adventurers. The Egyptians themselves left the best record of their history. It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century after a few European scholars learned to decipher the writing of the ancient Egyptians that this was understood.

The Greek traveler, Herodotus, was in Africa about 450 B.C.E. His eyewitness account is still a revelation. He witnessed African Civilization in decline and partly in ruins after many invasions. However, he could still see the indications of its past greatness. In this period in history, the Nile Valley Civilization of Africa had already brought forth two Golden Ages of achievement and had left its mark for all the world to see.

Slavery and colonialism strained, but did not completely break the cultural umbilical cord between the Africans in Africa and those who, by forced

4. Bruce Williams, "The Lost Pharaohs of Nubia," in *Egypt Revisited, Journal of African Civilizations,* ed. Ivan Van Sertima 10 (Summer 1989): 90–104.

migration, have lived in what is called the Western World. A small group of African American and Caribbean writers, teachers, and preachers collectively developed the basis of what would be an African-consciousness movement over one hundred years ago. Their concern was with Africa in general, Egypt and Ethiopia, and what we now call the Nile Valley.

In approaching this subject, I have given preference to writers of African descent who are generally neglected. I maintain that the African is the final authority on Africa. In this regard, I have reconsidered the writings of W.E.B. Du Bois, George Washington Williams, Drusilla Dunjee Houston, Carter G. Woodson, Willis N. Huggins, and his most outstanding student and protégé John G. Jackson. I have also reread the manuscripts of some of the unpublished books of Charles C. Seifert, particularly the manuscript of his last completed book, *Who Are The Ethiopians?* Among Caribbean scholars like Seifert, J.A. Rogers (from Jamaica) is the best known and the most prolific. Over fifty years of his life were devoted to documenting the role of African personalities in world history. His two-volume work, *World's Great Men of Color,* is a pioneer work in the field.

Among the works of present-day scholars writing about African history, culture, and politics, Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan's books are the most challenging. I have drawn heavily on his research in the preparation of this article. He belongs to the main cultural branch of the African world, having been born in Ethiopia, growing to early manhood in the Caribbean islands, and having lived in the African American community of the United States for over twenty years. His major books on African history are: *Black Man of the Nile,* 1979; *Africa: Mother of Western Civilization,* 1976; and *The African Origins of Major Western Religions,* 1970.

Our own great historian, W.E.B. Du Bois tells us:

> Always Africa is giving us something new. . . . On its black bosom arose one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of self-protecting civilizations, and grew so mightily that it still furnishes superlatives to thinking and speaking men. Out of its darker and more remote forest fastnesses, came, if we may credit many recent scientists, the first welding of iron, and we know that agriculture and trade flourished there when Europe was a wilderness.[5]

Dr. Du Bois tells us further that "Nearly every human empire that has arisen in the world, material and spiritual, has found some of its greatest crises on this continent of Africa . . . . 'It was through Africa that Christianity be-

5. John Henrik Clarke et al., eds. *W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Titan* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 274.

came the religion of the world.'. . . It was again through Africa that Islam came to play its great role of conqueror and civilizer."[6]

Egypt and the nations of the Nile Valley figuratively were the beating heart of Africa and the incubator for its greatness for more than a thousand years. Egypt gave birth to what later would became known as "Western Civilization," long before the greatness of Greece and Rome.

This is a part of the African story, and in the distance it is a part of the African American story. It is difficult for depressed African Americans to know that they are a part of the larger story of the history of the world. The history of the modern world was made, in the main, by what was taken from African people. Europeans emerged from what they call their "Middle-Ages" people-poor, land-poor, and resource-poor. And to a great extent, they were culture-poor. They raided and raped the cultures of the world, mostly African, and filled their homes and museums with treasures, and then they called their victims primitive. The Europeans did not understand the cultures of non-Western people then; they do not understand them now.

History, I have often said, is a clock that people use to tell their political time of day. It is also a compass that people use to find themselves on the map of human geography. History tells a people where they have been and what they have been. It also tells a people where they are and what they are. Most importantly, history tells a people where they still must go and what they still must be.

There is no way to go directly to the history of African Americans without taking a broader view of African World History. In *"Tom-Tom,"* the writer John W. Vandercook makes this meaningful statement:

> A race is like a man. Until it uses its own talents, takes pride in its own history, and loves its own memories it can never fulfill itself completely.[7]

In this project, *The Preliminary Challenge* of the African World History Project of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations, the writers have broken new ground and pointed to a new direction. I have always maintained that the final answer to African history must come from African people themselves. In the twenty-first century, there will be over one billion African people in the world. We are tomorrow's people. But, of course, we were yesterday's people, too. With an understanding of our new importance, we can change the world, if first we change ourselves.

—JOHN HENRIK CLARKE

Council of Elders May 1997

6. Ibid.

7. John W. Vandercook, *"Tom-Tom"* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1926), xv.

Preface

A reflection by an African woman of the Diaspora epitomizes the foundation of our project:

> At first the reading of an afternoon in the average public library would hardly reveal a line to the credit of the Ethiopian. Sometimes a ten volume set of modern books might yield only a few paragraphs; but the vow and the richness of the finds, gleaming like diamonds, led the eager searcher on. The trail was followed into the dry dusty books of the ancients, where the path widened and truth was revealed that will answer some of the baffling problems of civilization today. Here were missing links of the chain of culture vainly sought for elsewhere.[1]

The development of the history of African peoples had been a struggle for at least a century and a quarter when Drusilla Houston published *The Wonderful World of the Ancient Cushite Empire* in 1926. The idea that *African history* was nothing but "the missing pages of world history" (in the words of Arthur Schomberg[2]) was widely shared among African writers in the Diaspora. The suppression of the roles of African peoples in the European project of universal history is a part of the context for the African World History Project.

The reeducation of the current generation requires a comprehensive restoration of memory about the peoples of Africa including those who were expatriated. Our task, therefore, is simply continuing a project that is now centuries old. By building on and expanding the works of our ancestors, we hope to provide the literary corpus for the education of African peoples throughout the world.

1. Drusilla Dunjee Houston, *The Wonderful World of the Ancient Cushite Empire* (1926; reprint, Baltimore: Black Classics, 1985), 2.

2. John Henrik Clarke, *My Life in Search of Africa* (Ithaca: Cornel University, 1994), 13–14.

Acknowledgments

The African World History Project (AWHP) is a convergence of the historical efforts by African people to break the white monopoly on black thought en route to cultural, economic, and political self-determination. It is shaped both by the all-out historical effort of European thinkers and writers to distort the record and the naiveté of African assimilationists conditioned to mimick their European mentors. The latter aspect of this configuration is characterized by E. Franklin Frazier as "the failure of the Negro intellectual." Forged from this two-front fight is the AWHP—an expression of the ongoing, historical endeavor by African people to vindicate, validate, and vitalize the efforts by our ancestors and elders to recover and restore African history, culture, and dignity. To them we are forever indebted.

A project of this magnitude could not be undertaken without the cooperation and assistance of many people. We thank Ivan Van Sertima, editor of the *Journal of African Civilizations,* for permission to reprint "Civilization or Barbarism: The Legacy of Cheikh Anta Diop" by Leonard Jeffries, Jr., published in Volume 8, Number 1, *Great African Thinkers,* and "Waset, The Eye of Ra and the Abode of Maat: The Pinnacle of Black Leadership in the Ancient World" by Asa Hilliard III, published in Volume 10, Summer 1989, *Egypt Revisited.* We likewise thank Rekhety Amen Jones for permission to include Part I of *The Calendar Project,* which she coauthored with Frederick A. Reese in 1987. Each of these groundbreaking works is a significant contribution to the restoration mission of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC).

Although the AWHP had been a topic of discussion within ASCAC for more than a decade, it was at the ASCAC National Conference hosted by the Midwestern Region in Detroit, Michigan in 1995 that the project received the push necessary for its initiation, which we hereby acknowledge.

We thank the Kemetic Institute for its overall support of the project, with special thanks to Muriel Balla, Rosetta Cash, Yvonne Jones, Belinda Roberts, and Bobbie P. Womack for their diligence and untold hours of typing and proofreading; Roosevelt Roberts for his insertion of the appropriate Medew

Netcher; and Julius Brooks for contributing the art work for the paperback edition of *The Preliminary Challenge.*

None of the work required of this preliminary challenge could have gone forward successfully without the enthusiastic support and participation of ASCAC's International President, Sister Nzinga Ratibisha Heru, who was involved in all aspects of the project from planning to fruition. In "The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor" (translated by Roosevelt Roberts as "The Tale of the Excellent Follower"), the shipwrecked sailor offers to pay his benefactor food and treasure in exchange for safe return to Kemet. Amused, he responded: "In health, in health, fellow, to your home, that you may see your children! Make me a good name in your town; that is what I ask of you." Sister Nzinga has indeed made a good name in our town by which she will long be remembered in the African-centered movement for her love of and undying dedication to African people and our struggle for self-determination.

—LEON C. HARRIS

September 1997

Introduction

The *Preliminary Challenge* of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations's (ASCAC) African World History Project (AWHP) is designed to provoke African-centered scholars to develop a basic tool for the liberation of the African mind. Most African historians trained in foreign universities have been shackled with non-African theoretical frameworks, historiographies, and methodologies. While we should avail ourselves of any methods that benefit our project, we should first seek African ways of thinking and searching before embracing foreign epistemes, which we may not need and which may in fact defeat the objectives of the project.

The project that we are promoting started more than two centuries ago when Africans began to read and discuss the doctrines of the European philosophers of the eighteenth century. European thinkers such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Hume, and Kant began to fabricate the doctrine of white supremacy and *Negro* inferiority, which led to the most brutal campaign of cultural genocide known to humanity. Their philosophical discourses added fuel to the vulgar attitudes and reactions resulting from the encounters of Africans with Europeans in the context of the European slave industry.

The reaction of the African leaders in the Diaspora to these atrocities was remarkable under the circumstances. With little or no formal training (actually a blessing in disguise), these thinkers began to glean gems from the literature of the oppressor. They perused the Bible of western Asia and the works of Greek historians. They found information about the Nile Valley Civilizations of Kush (ancient Ethiopia) and Kemet (ancient Egypt), and upon those pillars they began to construct an African-centered historiography. While the effort goes back at least to the last decade of the eighteenth century, the project was perhaps best articulated by David Walker in 1829 when he taught: "The Egyptians were Africans . . . such as we are . . . some of them yellow and others dark . . . about the same as you see the coloured people of the United States at the present day."[1] Subsequently, he instructed all Africans to "take a retrospective view of the arts and sciences—the wise legislators—the Pyra-

1. David Walker, *Walker's Appeal* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), 48.

mids and other magnificent buildings—the turning of the channel of the river Nile, by the sons of Africa . . . among whom learning originated and was carried thence into Greece."[2] David Walker, thus, emphasized the necessity of grounding the assessment of the condition of African people in Nile Valley Civilization. This instruction had been anticipated by Richard Allen and Absolom Jones when they evoked the biblical passage about a Prince coming forth from Egypt and Ethiopia stretching forth her arms.[3] A few years later Prince Hall had emphasized his belief that the Jewish prophet Moses had received his first wise teaching from his Ethiopian father-in-law.[4]

Walker's instruction was followed by African nationalists leaders throughout the nineteenth century. Martin R. Delany, Henry Garnet, Edward Blyden, and Henry Turner all emphasized the Nile Valley connection. The theme was raised to a higher level of relevance by Cheikh Anta Diop and George G. M. James in their 1954 publications.[5]

Thus the African revolution which would liberate the African body and mind was firmly linked to a classical African past. The history of our present undertaking can be traced directly from that historical context.

The ASCAC project was proposed in 1985 at its second annual conference. The proposal was an expansion and refinement of the "Memorandum on the Africa World History Project"[6] that had first been presented at the annual conference of the Association of African Historians held at the Center for Inner City Studies in 1982. After more than ten years of discussion, the project was formally launched at an ASCAC mini-conference. ASCAC President Nzinga Heru provided the leadership that brought the conference to fruition. The meeting, hosted by the Midwestern Region of ASCAC under the presidency of Abdul Aquil, was held in Detroit, Michigan in 1995.

The essays in this volume, with three exceptions, were authored by ASCAC members who attended the conference. The exceptions are previously published articles by two ASCAC founding directors and an excerpt from a book published previously by a founding member of ASCAC.

Although there was considerable consensus about the general nature of the project, some significant differences occurred. Discussion of these differences was quite fruitful although some of the differences remain and are re-

2. Ibid.

3. Herbert Aptheker, ed., *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States* (New York: Citadel Press, 1951), 37.

4. Thomas A. Frazier, ed., *Afro American History: Primary Sources* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1970), 49.

5. Cheikh Anta Diop, *Nations negres et cultures* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1979) and George G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy* (1954; reprint, San Francisco: Julian Richardson Associates, 1988).

6. See Appendix 2.

flected in the following essays. This volume sets a precedent of letting the African conversation unfold as we attempt to forge a consensus on methodology for our intellectual endeavor. The contributions were developed at different times and in various contexts, but they reflect discussions among the senior authors that have been going on for more than twenty years. The younger contributors were inspired in part by these discussions and have now been enrolled in the conversation.

Editor's Notes on the Contributions

The two essays in the first section, "The Challenge," represent the call to arms. Anderson Thompson's paper is a revision of an article published in *Black Books Bulletin* in 1975. As explained in Chapter 3, Thompson's article provoked us and started the chain of events that led to this volume. The essay very effectively presents the alternative open to African scholars who obsequiously and fawningly imitate the historiography of the oppressor, admonishing them to find the brave but not new path to intellectual independence and freedom. The use of *Sambo historiography* as a metaphor for submission jolted us into abandoning the aberration approach of criticizing European intellectual disciplines. We could no longer accept Du Bois's conclusion: "Subtract from Burgess his belief that only white people can rule, and he is in essential agreement with me."[7] (John Burgess who is often called the founder of the discipline of American Political Science was an open advocate of white supremacy.) In other words, the European episteme was unacceptable not just at the periphery, where the doctrine of white supremacy dictated biased evaluation of African peoples and cultures, but at the core which was inseparably wedded to *fundamental alienation.* Thus, this contribution was inspired by Anderson Thompson's challenge.

Théophile Obenga's essay is a more subtle challenge. His penetrating probe into the core of the modern European project calls upon Africans who promote the European episteme to confront themselves. They face the question of intellectual allegiance. To whom is their loyalty due—to their European trainers or their African traditions? Obenga, following his mentor, Cheikh Anta Diop, provides the correct answer by leading the wayward African scholars to the waters of the Nile. Hopefully this volume will inspire some of them to drink.

The second section, "The African Historical Imagination," refers to the intellectual process of conceptualization necessary for the development of an African-centered perspective free from the shackles of Western paradigms.

7. W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (New York: Meredian Books, 1964), 726.

The three essays in the section are provocative in a different sense from those of the first section. Although they point to a Kemetic foundation for the theoretical and methodological framework for the AWHP, they are essentially at odds and represent an area of substantial difference among African-centered thinkers. The first essay in this section outlines an African-centered world history that imagines intergenerational conversations within several African nations that are synthesized into a Pan-African episteme as a response to the European intellectual historicide conspiracy against Africa. Letting Africa speak for itself about these matters drives this effort to free African thought from European paradigms.

Vulindlela Wobogo's essay rejects the conventions of the European Egyptologists on issues of periodization and chronology. He also offers some conceptual terminology for the African historical discourse. He reviews and utilizes works of other contemporary African-centered scholars in reaching his conclusions.

Wobogo's probe into the arena of periodization concludes with a modification of the Golden Age approach which was promoted by John G. Jackson,[8] John Henrik Clarke, and Asa Hilliard (Chapter 6 of this volume) among others. This conceptualization is in turn an expanded version of the periodization scheme of Egyptologists.

The essay by Rekhety Wimby Jones represents a different approach to establishing the unification date. First, she explains the development of the Kemetic calendar, and then she gives the history of our proposal about the date of Kemetic unification. She also explains the tentative nature of the proposal and suggests that further research is required before a long-range position can be established.

The differences in the approaches of these three papers reflect the ongoing debate among the scholars involved in our project.

The third section, "Patterns of African-Centered History," presents two applications of African-centered historiography to the development of an African history. Asa Hilliard's article articulates a revision of the Golden Age scheme of periodization and examines the history of Kemet from the beginning of the second unification under the Waset families to the Ramesside Age. The review of Cheikh Anta Diop's last major work, *Civilization or Barbarism,* by Leonard Jeffries provides a provocative conceptual framework for cross-cultural historical comparisons in Part II of that summary work. Diop's contribution to the project of restoring African history is the model par excellence.

8. John G. Jackson, *Introduction to African Civilizations* (New York: University Books, 1970), 97–109.

Therefore, Dr. Jeffries's review is a preface for a much expanded treatment of the Master in future volumes of the African World History Project.

The four contributions in the fourth section, "African-Centered Perspectives," are responses by the ascending generation to the invitation issued by the senior members of our project. We, the seniors, have followed the instruction of Ptahhotep and made an "Elder's Staff," that is, a Good Speech, to raise up the next generation. The responses of these juniors are themselves inspiring.

Adisa Ajamu's essay challenges us to consider abandoning the terminology of the opposition and even the language of our oppressors as necessary components of our intellectual revolution. Mario Beatty critiques the efforts of some of the pioneers of the present "Afrocentric" project as they relate the classical concept of Maat, or Truth, in the highest sense. Valethia Watkins challenges African-centered thinkers to spurn the seductive plays of feminism in our pursuit of intellectual freedom. Greg Kimathi Carr completes the section by sharing part of a research proposal which will explore the modern African-centered epistemological project from its inauguration to the present with special emphasis on the past Black Studies phase.

The appendixes contain a transcript of the conversation that planned this volume. Also included is the memorandum that contains the first proposal presented to ASCAC for launching the project.

The African World History Project is projected as a multivolume restatement of the national memories of African peoples. The discourses to be published can only be representative of the totality, which will require time, energy, and resources far beyond our present capacity. The first projected volume will explore the various dimensions of historiography and methodology and present an overview of the methods we will use in the volumes that follow.

The research commission of ASCAC will issue a call to work early in 1998. An AWHP conference will be convened for the purpose of planning the project with emphasis on the first volume. All African researchers are invited to participate and submit for consideration ideas and papers that address the relevant issues.

The Preliminary Challenge is a Serekh announcing the beginning of this project. It is also an invitation inviting African scholars, students, and multitudes to:

> Come back to Kemet; come back to the Black city and join
> in the restoration project.

—JEDI SHEMSU JEHEWTY
(JACOB H. CARRUTHERS)

6237 (June)

Part I
The Challenge

Chapter 1

Developing an African Historiography

By Anderson Thompson

Preface

Presently, the African World Community faces its greatest challenge. It has been predicted that Africans as a race of people going into the next millennium may not exit the twenty-first century physically! I have referred to this elsewhere as the "challenge of the 21st century."[1] The core of this challenge is *the battle for the hearts and minds of the Worldwide African Community,* that is, the battle to establish the *primacy of Africa* in the minds and actions of African people worldwide. Inextricably tied to this battle is the quest to adopt the *African Principle* as the guiding mode of behavior as we proceed in the war to save Africa and its people worldwide.

The African World Community is now recovering from a combined period of four thousand years of intermittent foreign invasion, pillage and plunder, as well as military domination and occupation from its same ancient enemies, Asia and Europe. The result has been the economic, political, social, and cultural subjugation of Africa to Asia and Europe and the forced distribution of African people throughout the world such that today African people have become commodities, consumers, and artifacts, devoid of a historical memory and the knowledge of who they are.

The African Principle

When a people lose the knowledge of who they are, that is, their culture, they lose the very foundation upon which their individual existence and their society is based. To combat this loss, each African person must be equipped with a "Grand Vision of the Future," a vision extending beyond personal interests

1. Anderson Thompson, "The Challenge of the 21st Century," *The African Principle Essay Series* 1, no. 1 (1994): 1–6.

such that this vision becomes the embodiment of the *vital interest* and *moral centerhood* of the entire African World Community. I refer to this vision as *The African Principle.*

The African Principle places the moral, economic, political, and spiritual centerhood of African people on the African continent, the land of our ancestors. It is the ideological, spiritual, and moral direction of African people; it is the underlying source that makes us an African people. It is that which makes us who we are and what we are. It is the voice of our ancestors, and it is the essence of our existence.

Moreover, the African Principle is the underlying source of the African Value System, the gift from our Creator passed on to us through our ancestors. It represents those standards, rules, laws, and customs that should guide our behavior and serve as the foundation and motivation for all of our actions. It is the quality underlying the source of our existence. Some, if not most of our African leaders, have *compromised the African Principle* in order to achieve *personal success and security* at the expense of the African masses. In essence, the African Principle requires that African organizations and leaders of these organizations act in *the greatest interests of the greatest number of African people.* As such, the African Principle is the standard against which we must measure the actions of our leaders and the organizations that claim to represent the interests of the masses of African people.

The Essential Challenge: Development of an African Historiography

If this battle in the war to save African people is to be won, the essential challenge for African scholars is the abandonment of Western History (whose object it is to keep us intellectually, politically, economically, and socially dependent) as we develop an African historiography, that is, the writing, interpreting, and teaching of history from an African-centered point of view. In the absence of this viewpoint, we are unable to see the world about us as it really is or to prepare our youth and the masses of African people for the struggles we will be forced to face in the twenty-first century.

This history must be written, interpreted, and taught from clearly worked out ideological principles based on concrete goals and objectives. It must acquaint each of us with the historical experiences of African people and their non-African enemies and their allies. Attendant to this process of forging an African-centered history is the intergenerational transfer of this African past

so as to provide a bridge to our youth and from them to their descendants. In doing so, we will be able to provide our youth with the knowledge of their past and a clear-cut view of what we are fighting for and who our enemies are.[2]

The object of this paper is to outline and give emphasis to some of the questions facing the black historian, theoretician, scholar, and writer in an effort to refine the debate over the proper role of history in the black struggle as we push for an African historiography in the Americas.

Africans in the United States of America have a special role and responsibility in this struggle for control of what ultimately is African destiny because we have the wealthiest, best (Western) "educated" and most technically skilled Africans in the world. Consequently, with these resources, we have the greatest potential for bringing about the necessary change of viewpoint essential to the liberation and development of the African World. We should begin this departure from the Western conceptualization of African history and culture with our own national situation—one that we know best.

This paper is not intended to be a general theory of history about specific Africans in the so-called New World. Unfortunately, many blacks (and many more whites) have devoted themselves to this task. Furthermore, it is not intended to be an in-depth probe of a particular aspect of African history, whether related to Africa or the Diaspora. It will, however, make a case for the following four assertions:

1. Black historians, theoreticians, and so on must join hands to develop an African interpretation of history that will assist us in the formation of an international theory capable of winning the support of the masses of black people in America and the rest of the black world. Such a theory must have a philosophy and an organizational program that explains the goals of Africans in America, our aspirations, desires, and hopes in relationship with other Africans throughout the world.

2. This international theory must be one that serves as an effective instrument for serious study of black mass organizations in the United States, Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. It should include the character and leadership of such organizations as well as the leaders themselves. This fundamental critique should determine the usefulness of these organizations based on the extent to which they operate in the long term interests of Africa rather than

2. Chancellor Williams, *The Destruction of Black Civilization* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1974), 171–186.

shortsighted strategies and tactics that benefit the few rather than the many.

3. We must initiate a complete study of the Asian and European impact on the total African world to include the European use of the *Negro Question* and how Europeans have used history as an ideological weapon of warfare against Africans.

4. We must have closure to the two hundred year old debate over the question of a separate homeland for *thirty million black captives who reside in the United States.*

Introduction

Where have we missed the mark? Why are some of the best and most talented black minds so unproductive? Why are there so many black intellectual spectators and so few participants in the struggle for African Liberation?

During the Cold War Era, in the wake of World War II, for more than thirty years, flag-wielding, drum-thumping, bugle-blowing representative groups marched down State Street, a well-known thoroughfare in downtown Chicago, in celebration of Captive Nations Week. With banners waving, a steady stream of Greeks, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Poles, Hungarians, Chinese, and so on strutted and pranced past the mayor's reviewing stand hoisting colorful placards aloft announcing Captive Nations Week. These neatly painted signs and banners signaled to the world in dramatic form that their fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters who were still in captivity behind the Iron Curtain of the Soviet Union and the Bamboo Curtain in China had not been forgotten by their people here in the United States. The colorful standards identified each nation in captivity and the governments that held their kin captive. These marchers signaled a warning challenge to Soviet and Chinese oppressors that there was a strong resistance movement present in America ready to aid in the liberation of their respective nations.

Typically, hundreds of black shoppers, office clerks, and moviegoers—the true captive nation and the only genuine captives in America—stood watching! The wealthiest, most talented, and most technically trained sons and daughters ever snatched out of Africa stood at attention, lifted their hats, saluted, and cheered the determined Greek nationalists, the angry Czech patriots, the proud Hungarian freedom fighters, and the outspoken Chinese nationalists. Paradoxically, the black watchers—twentieth century mental

slaves—who munched popcorn, laughed, jived, and cracked jokes, while enjoying the pomp and pageantry of the Euro-Asians, should have been at the head of these parades instead of just watching! Why have black people in America stagnated into *a "captive nation" of watchers and observers, oblivious to the character, nature, and deeds of their own traitorous leaders,* who, at best, see the goal of "first-class citizenship" as the only solution for more than thirty million black captives?

Essential to any answer to this question is the issue of black intellectual leadership. Harold Cruse, in the January 1971 issue of *Black World*, commented that few black critics had responded to his analysis of "black social thought" in his book *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* which had been published in 1967 at the peak of the Black Power Movement.[3] Cruse sounded the challenge for black intellectuals to awaken from their forty year European slumber of lost identity and purpose and to begin fighting for the interests of the black masses.[4]

In 1974 this challenge was repeated by John Henrik Clarke, who, with a tired and strained look, told a jam-packed audience at the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History Conference that "on no level do we blacks bring high critical appraisal to the works of blacks as we do the works of whites."[5]

Perhaps, because of ignorance, fear, laziness, or all three, many black thinkers (and image makers) are "Negro Watchers" or white worshipers like the black parade watchers who witnessed the all-white Captive Nations Week celebrations without viewing themselves as a captive nation also. Maybe our much needed army of black critics has retreated into the false sense of security of being just "Black Watchers," while all around us, in every arena of the black world, the arrogant Aryan foes, sporting the cult of Anglo-Saxon superiority, and their traitorous Negro servants (both left- and right-wing Negroes) are scoring lethal victories on the minds, bodies, and spirits of the sons and daughters of Africa. These heavy losses have been strategically and tactically launched against our people by the tightly organized, well disciplined, and wealthy international right and left flank (wing) forces of the white race locally, nationally, and internationally in perhaps what Chancellor Williams called "the last battle for Black Civilization."

3. Harold Cruse, "Black and White Outlines of the Next Stage," *Black World* (January 1971): 19.

4. Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1967), 202, 260.

5. Speech delivered by John Henrik Clarke at 2d Annual Conference of Association of African Historians and published in *Afrocentric World Review* 1, no. 2 (Spring 1974): 10–31.

Integration Seeking Intellectuals: Talented Tenth Mercenaries

Sister Shawna Maglangbayan in her controversial book *Garvey, Lumumba, Malcolm: Black Nationalist-Separatist* raised the same concerns. She wrote: "Where are the Black theoreticians who link theory to practice, whose theory is Black oriented and drawn exclusively from the Black historical experience!" Sister Shawna's conclusion was that "they are practically nonexistent"[6] because "by and large, the Black intellectual who has existed for centuries in the Black world, is an assimilationist."[7] In other words, most of our black intellectuals are imitators and lovers of *The European Principle* and its values, symbols, and beliefs. Thus in a very real sense, they are *entertainers* for a white audience, acting out roles that emote applause as they portray Western culture and values, while wearing "white face." Thus white domination of the black world continues unimpeded to a crescendo of applause and laughter from the white world in general as well as white benefactors, who dole out rewards to their black imitators in the form of jobs, grants, prestigious awards, media access, and so on.

Sister Shawna continued:

> [Because] he is essentially a copyist . . . devoid of all sense of initiative, lacking the quality of independent thought . . . [he] actually takes pride when white men like Sartre, Daniel Guerin, or a George Breitman, prefaces the works of Lumumba or Malcolm X.[8]

She also concluded:

> For these reasons the Black layman, the ordinary Black man and woman, must begin taking matters into their own hands. If we wait on the integration-seeking intellectuals to become researchers and engage in the far-ranging historical, political and economic appraisals which stand at the base of our ideology, we are doomed.[9]

Sister Shawna then made this significant, closely related observation:

> Garvey marked the opening of the twentieth century with one of the greatest revolutionary movements that the Black world has known. He pointed the way to the Black man's liberation. Yet, we

6. Shawna Maglangbayan, *Garvey, Lumumba, Malcolm: Black Nationalist Separatists* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1972), 109.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 110.
9. Ibid., 111.

> let him go down not in history, but outside of it, as if his life had been peripheral to our very existence.[10]

With the cry of the African Principle, "Africa for the Africans, those at home and abroad," Marcus Garvey raised the international question of the right of self-determination for all African peoples and the right to an international life for the black masses everywhere as well as in America as early as 1919.[11] The establishment of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) with divisions all over the black world was one of the first mass-based black governmental forms organized in harmony with the African Principle.

We must take a critical look at the UNIA as well as other black organizations in order to learn from their mistakes and benefit from their successes before it is too late! In *The Destruction of Black Civilization,* Chancellor Williams, as alluded to above, sounded the call for Africans in America to unite or witness the destruction of the black race in America. The haunting notion that thirty million blacks in America are challenged by racial extinction is no longer the idle fantasy of a few "fanatical black militants."

Formula for Consensus

There are tons of rich, unprocessed oral and written black socio-economic history and thought that need critical interpretation in light of our situation in America. In order to provide for this ongoing necessity, it is imperative that we initiate a comprehensive program developed out of a process of group consensus that provides for correction through endless debate and hard criticism. Outcomes of the process should be routinely tested in the "arena" of black communities and made practical by organized political activity. Until such occurs, we will continue to suffer from the lack of a single accepted, conceptual, historical framework for explaining and clarifying black goals in America or for dealing and/or coping with our recurring internal and external situations.

Historiography

Historiography as we know it is the mother science *of European ideological warfare on the rest of the world for world conquest, and history, as we know it, is the fact-loaded, systematically contrived ideological weaponry of Western Civilization for achieving this aim.*

10. Ibid., 117.

11. Marcus Garvey, *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey,* vol. II (New York: Athkeneum, 1969), 136.

Scholars in the field of Western History attempt to distinguish history from its intellectual ancestral myths, religions, and philosophies by conjuring up a "mother science" and philosophy of history called historiography. Thus, to understand "history" is to understand historiography, its hidden partner.

The word *history* is a household word for the Westernized scholar. It is used every day in the most serious written works, lectures, discussions, and debates with little or no critical examination of what the term means. In general, let us define history, for the moment, as *organized knowledge of any and all past time/space events based on the point of view of a body of authorities whose individual members or membership arrange those accumulated events within the context of some kind of systematic whole based on their beliefs about the future.* Out of this context, then, history is supposed to answer questions about human action in the past, present, and future.

Historiography (according to recent use of the term) means the study of historical study or the study of history itself. It asks what, who, and why questions. Thus, the historiographer is mainly concerned with what historians write about and why, or whom historians write about and why. At the core of the historiographer's interests is: 1) the examination of the very root assumptions of why history is written and for whom and 2) the attempt to determine how historians interpret reality and the generalizations they formulate from those interpretations. An ironic aspect of the historiographer's work, hidden to the lay person, is the examination of what the writers of history had in mind for the future. In sum, historiography refers to a grand and systematic history of history itself, ensconced within a particular view of the future.

Consequently, the development of a historiography is the most all-encompassing and most binding decision a people can make in measuring their place in world events in reference to the past, present, and future. History, its complement, is the ideological tool a people may use for the assessment of their past, the evaluation of their present conditions, and the charting of a course for their collective destiny. Although history appears to focus primarily on the past, its essential concern is the future. *All history is written with an eye toward the future!*

Captive History

As a practical matter historiography has been, for the most part, a study of the way Europeans think, research, write, and theorize about the way history should be presented. Through military conquest and cultural imperialism, the European world has imposed this view on the rest of the world. Thus, the characteristic qualities of historiography and history are actually the commonly held,

underlying assumptions associated with European world domination. In short, the non-European world is being held in ideological captivity.

Thus, whenever we use the word *history,* we are automatically speaking of Western Civilization. History and Western Civilization are synonymous. It is as if nothing else ever happened to mankind until the arrival of Western man. Practically every view of all events, persons, and so on stems from the window of the experiences of the Western white man. Thus it is as if history began with the coming of the white man. It is most unfortunate for the African world that the very idea of history is still imprisoned within the context and framework of Western thinking and the Western point of view. Consequently, the African world is being held in both physical and historical captivity.

Since history, per se, is a series of well established European definitions, interpretations, and points of view, and because the field of historiography, for the most part, is European in nature, any effort to critique "history" or step outside the parameters of Western Historiography must stand up against and challenge the dominant, self-serving tradition of European History.

With the capture of history, Europeans were also able to dictate the dating and periodization of history, another aspect of the challenge facing black historians and writers.

European Periodization: Conquest of Space and Time

White supremacy began thousands of years ago with the invasions of the Indus and Nile Valleys by nomadic Aryans. Along with conquering and controlling the land (space), Europeans have also taken control of time. For example, the strategy of Western History is to focus all eyes on the important dates pertaining to the late arrival to civilization of Aryans who attempted to make sense of the ancient African Civilizations they had desecrated. Their conquests, subjugations, exploits, and finally their imitations of the Ancient African Way are what is commonly known as Ancient History. Every period of history has this same fundamental characteristic, that is, the categorization of time in relationship to the exploits and development of Europe.

Regarding time, Western Historiography is a set of facts systematically contrived to rationalize and explain European world dominion in the context of a fabricated sequence. It celebrates four thousand years of violent, murderous, Barbaryan, migratory, tribal conquests of Africa. This all-pervasive history boasts of how the black-haired, black-eyed; red-haired, green-eyed; blond-haired, blue-eyed Aryans battered their way into every corner of Africa, ravishing and destroying land, resources, and people. Their present-day museums and art centers from Berlin to Baghdad are arrogant exhibits of this four thousand years of world Barbaryan plunder and theft.

Ram Chandra Jain in *The Most Ancient Aryan Society* attributed this behavior of Europeans to a cultural characteristic inherited from their Aryan ancestors. Jain, a student of Aryology, claimed that Aryanism is not a race, but a distinct culture and civilization and that the guiding principle of their economy was usurpation and exploitation.[12] "This Aryan way migrated to Europe with the Euroaryans," according to Jain, "to Asia with Hittaryans and Iranaryans and to Bharata with Brahmaryans."[13] Jain further claimed that "the people who took this Aryan way to different lands were the chief ancestors of most Europeans, most white Americans, and European colonists of today as well as of the Iranian and Brahmaryans."[14] In depicting the pervasiveness of Aryan culture, he stated that "the Aryan way still rules or is very powerful in almost all the countries of the world of today."[15]

It is ancient Aryan or Western History that attempts to mask this behavior by mythologizing, theologizing, and rationalizing its "manifest destiny" of world dominion by using its own contrived fields of history (and social science in general) to explain the successes of white men and to maintain white domination. The effectiveness of Aryan Historiography is linked fundamentally to its ability to successfully explain to the Aryan World, the African World Community, and the world in general *why it is right that white men, a relatively small minority of the world's population, should rule the world.* Aryan History, the bedfellow of Aryan Historiography, depicts in heroic dimensions how this white minority defeated, conquered, and controlled the rest of the world in a manner that leaves the African victim (the parade watcher) cheering his own defeat, while hoisting aloft his European (and Asian) heroes and cultural models. Not only does the "history" of Europe explain how this was done, it endeavors to convince the African world that the white race was chosen by God as the most appropriate race to rule. This is, of course, a tremendous, ongoing intellectual, cultural, and physical challenge to the white scholar and the white world in general. And in the midst of this sham, the white intellectual actively searches for a final solution to the long overdue Negro Question—a matter of key importance to the African World Community (see pp. 20–25).

Thus, a more thorough definition of Western Historiography emerges: Western Historiography, *the daddy of European ideological warfare, is the study of the way Europeans think, research, write, and theorize according to European interests about the way history should be interpreted, researched,*

12. Ram Chandra Jain, *The Most Ancient Aryan Society* (Rjasthan, India: Institute of Bharatalogical Research, 1964), 76.

13. Ibid., 78.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

written, and taught by white men in light of their obedience to the European Principle, or Law of European World Supremacy and Dominance.

There, then, lies the challenge to the black intellectual. black scholars, intellectuals, and writers must reject this fraudulent European tradition and adopt a point of view consistent with the African Principle. In this connection, George G. M. James in his revealing book *Stolen Legacy* admonishes Blacks to "discontinue the practice of quoting Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in their speeches as intellectual models"[16] because so-called Greek philosophy is stolen Egyptian philosophy. He asserted that "the term Greek philosophy, to begin with, is a misnomer, for there is no such philosophy in existence."[17] He concluded that "the true authors of Greek philosophy were not the Greeks; but the people of North Africa, commonly called the Egyptians."[18]

James went into detail in order to expose and explain the "theft" by outlining how "Alexander the Great, who by an act of aggression invaded Egypt in 333 B.C., and ransacked and looted the Royal Library at Alexandria and together with his companions carried off a booty of scientific, philosophic and religious books."[19]

It was through this process, according to James, that "the Greeks stole the Legacy of the African Continent and called it their own."[20] The result of this aspect of the ongoing four thousand year onslaught "has been the creation of an erroneous world opinion; that the African continent has made no contribution to civilization, because her people are backward and low in intelligence and culture."[21] To the contrary, according to James, the ancient black-skinned Egyptians developed a very complex and comprehensive religious system. He wrote: "It regarded the human body as a prison house of the soul which could be liberated from its bodily impediments, through the disciplines of the Arts and Sciences, and advanced from the level of a mortal to that of a God."[22]

Enlarging upon the idea of Kemetic preeminence, Professor James continued:

> Egypt was the holy land of the ancient world; and the Mysteries were one, ancient and holy Catholic religion, whose power was supreme. The lofty culture system of Black people filled Rome with envy, and consequently she legalized Christianity which she

16. George G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy* (New York: George G. M. James, 1954), 160.
17. Ibid., 1.
18. Ibid., 7.
19. Ibid., 153.
20. Ibid., 154.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 1.

> had persecuted for five long centuries, and set it up as a state religion and as a rival of Mysteries, its own mother.[23]

According to James, this is why the mysteries have been dispersed. This may explain why other ancient religions of black people are dispersed, that is, perhaps they are the offspring of the African mysteries which have been clearly understood by Europeans, and consequently have provoked their prejudice and condemnation.[24]

The Negro Question

What should the white nations do about the troublesome presence of the blacks and the rising African unity of over one billion blacks who occupy valuable land and resources necessary for European world mastery?

There is a duality in the story of the Western white man and his culture which paradoxically is thrown into sharp relief wherever the black man appears (or is dropped) on the scene. When the black man appears in the affairs of white men, they label this intrusion the *Negro Question.*

All over the European world, the Negro Question has been rearranged or reformulated to fit the specific circumstances of the time and of the place. However, the Negro Question in substance never changes. In South Africa, Kenya, Canada, South America—wherever the black man exists with the white man—the question asked is: "What should the white nations do about the troublesome presence of the blacks and the rising African unity of over one billion blacks who occupy valuable land and resources necessary for European world mastery?"

The Negro Question in the United States asks: "What is it that white Europeans in America must do with black Africans in the United States that gives the greatest benefit to the white race?" This immediately paves the way for continuous dialogue between the twentieth century black slave and his white master. The black leaders who follow the American Principle of Anglo-Saxon supremacy and African inferiority are living examples of the white man's answer to the Negro Question. Their lifestyles stand as living proof that they are no longer African but American.

Sambo Historiography: Is Dat You, Sambo?

Helen Bannerman's *The Story of Little Black Sambo,* written in 1898, was one of the many mechanisms of psychological warfare adopted by white America

23. Ibid., 154.
24. Ibid., 154–155.

to deal with the Negro Question. *Little Black Sambo,* as it was affectionately known, was read by black and white school children across the country well into the mid-twentieth century. *Sambo* changed the black man into an object of laughter and ridicule, stripped him of his masculinity, and debased his fundamental humanity. Relegating the black man to a pitiful caricature would reduce the threat of any organized resistance and guarantee a high degree of social control over the black population. With the invention of the *Sambo Paradigm,* the one word *Sambo* would stand for the whole African race. This was the decisive weapon of victory that could be transmitted to succeeding generations.

Just as the stage and screen image of blacks wore a Sambo "face," much of Black History writing then (and now) responded to the white invented Negro Question enterprise by projecting the Sambo image—White History in black face! This answered the challenge to disguise "black inferiority" by attempting to "unite" (subsume) Black History with White History, an effort designed to inspire the black victim and absolve the white audience from feelings of guilt. I refer to this aspect of *Sambo Historiography* as *entertainment history.*

Entertainment History

Sambo historiography, or White History in black face, was a major apparatus of the Negro Question. It produced a kind of entertainment history written primarily for a rich, unseen, white audience to a victimized, visible, black leadership and the black masses in order to prove the Negro's fitness for admission into Western Civilization. This white paradigm for black redress was an integral part of the white response to the presence of black people in white society, and in a significant manner black elites readily participated.

Unfortunately, this imitation process, this Sambo-like approach to thought and action, is carried on by a small army of carbon copy whites, that is, Negro supporters, followers, and worshipers of the American idealized version of the Negro Question as depicted in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The American settler colony legitimizes itself by forcing these black Sambo thinkers to supply their white oppressors and the enemies of their white oppressors with the missing answers to America's peculiar Negro Question.

After well over a century of practicing the Sambo approach (the black historian who is an imitation of white historians), many of our most heralded black historians and image makers have renounced every trace of anything that is African in them and have become the supporters of the American Creed as concretized in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Con-

brothers, the colored Americans, Americans of a darker hue, which answers the white man's Negro Question by erasing everything that is African in the black masses. Cruse warned us in the last paragraph of the final chapter of his 565 page assault on the ideological poverty of the Negro intellectuals: "The farther the Negro gets from his historical antecedents in time, the more tenuous become his conceptual ties, the emptier his social conceptions, the more superficial his visions."[25]

Negro Historiography

In the absence of an African viewpoint vis-à-vis white supremacy, Black History has been a compilation of the old, white contrived formula of written dialogue, with an unseen white authority debating the question of Negro inferiority with the black historian and questioning the fitness of the black man to be included in Western Civilization.

At present, most of what is labeled as African History is ironically merely one branch of the European (Aryan) historiographical preoccupation with the Negro Question. This question arose out of the many European colonial possessions and European slave-catching, slave-making enterprises. In the same manner, so-called Black American History is merely a tiny twig on the American branch of European Historiography.[26] This is essentially so because Afro-American or Black History has been expressed as a small branch of American History rooted in European ideology. As a complement to this, to our detriment, many university trained blacks write from the assimilationist/integrationist point of view. Thus, we have a compilation of Negro and white views on blacks and very little on the concrete, historical struggle of the black masses in America.[27]

Many black writers of history in America reflect serious conflicts, contradictions, and confusions when confronted with the task of conceptualizing Black History. At first glance, when one looks for a diversity of viewpoints on key historical issues and crucial questions, one detects a great theoretical weakness or total absence of such. In addition, as Cruse put it, "the Negro movement is at an impasse precisely because it lacks a real functional corps of intellectuals able to confront and deal perceptively with American realities on a level that social conditions demand."[28] This is not only true of the black historian in America who accepts European methodology, it is also apparent when examining the historical works of many of those who have espoused

25. Cruse, *Crisis of Negro Intellectual,* 565.
26. James, *Stolen Legacy,* 154.
27. Maglanbayan, *Garvey, Lumumba, Malcolm,* 117.
28. Cruse, *Crisis of Negro Intellectual,* 472.

some form of African, Pan-African, or black nationalist conviction. This, of course, is problematic.

In the absence of an African conceptualization of history, most black writers have grown accustomed to the European way of seeing the world. As a result they have failed to recognize that much of their brilliant research into the black experience serves as a tool for analyzing a specific European problem relative to the Negro Question. Thus, rather than serving as a historical analysis of the experiences, concerns, and struggle of the black masses useful for African liberation, their research provides Europeans with solutions for the peculiar problems presented by the presence of the Negro at a given moment. In other words, this black produced, European-centered research provides the Western world with alternatives as to what Europeans should do given the presence of the Negro—solutions which otherwise would be difficult or virtually impossible to acquire.

Thus, in the absence of an African viewpoint vis-à-vis white supremacy, Black History has been a compilation of the old, white contrived formula of written dialogue, with an unseen white authority debating the question of Negro inferiority with the black historian and questioning the Negro's fitness for admission into Western Civilization. Such excuses and sympathies have led to the creation and perpetuation of the black experience in America as a series of "white and black together" slave narratives and chronicles palmed off as Black History.

The European Principle vs The African Principle

Which master will our black intellectual leaders serve in the future: the European Principle which serves European World Conquest Interests or the African Principle which serves African National Liberation and Worldwide African Unity?

Throughout the African continent, the integrationist/assimilationist, trained native elites and their counterparts in the African Diaspora are the ardent supporters of the European Principle as espoused by the French, Dutch, Portuguese, British, Russians, and Americans. These African leaders are caretakers and model purveyors of the European Principle or Law, which represents the greatest good for the greatest number of Europeans wherever Europeans exist. These Negro elites betray the interests of the black masses for the short range benefits that they themselves receive from the intellectual intercourse with their European oppressors. They receive limited, short-lived pleasure rewards, while the white oppressors reap the long-range control over the black masses, black land, and black resources.

Throughout the black world you find these handpicked native elites poisoning the minds of their particular African masses. Yet, tragically, everywhere, with the support and encouragement of their European masters, these black Sambos are exalted by the black masses as leaders and heroes of the people.

The real heroes of the African masses, that is, those who struggled to identify the enemy and to forge unity and solidarity among our people, were never popular in the colonial, native histories (Sambo or Negro History). They were generally ignored, ridiculed, or systematically censored.

The blacks who supported the Africanization or re-Africanization of blacks in American were called insane or crazy black militants by the native elites. However, it was these "crazy militants" who kept the bold, black captives ever ready to protect and defend themselves against their oppressors against great odds, both internal and external, and ironically, they created management jobs for the Uncle Tom opposition. These maligned blacks are our true heroes. They are the ones who followed the African Principle of the "greatest good for the greatest number of Africans wherever they may be." They are the ones who worked tirelessly and courageously to rescue black minds and bodies from all forms of oppression. As a result of their efforts to maintain and develop the black masses, they remain outside of the mainstream of Black History as we know it today. This must change!

Where are our heroes who have struggled for liberation and self-determination? Where are the critical works dealing with those blacks who envisioned a politically, economically, and culturally sovereign United States of Africa? Where is the list, the roll call, of the hundreds of supporters, defenders, and protectors of the *African Stream* (see pp. 25–26) and the list of those who were followers of the guiding principle of African Law?

The problem is Sambo Historiography! It is the context out of which African History and thought is generally written. To do otherwise is to invite academic, literary, economic, and social ostracism. Thus our challenge is to confront Sambo and his master so as to provide our people with our true history and authentic heroes. A short exemplary list of nineteenth century heroes includes Martin R. Delany, H. Ford Douglas, Henry H. Garnett, James T. Holly, Mary Ann Shadd, Thomas S. Sidney, Maria Stewart, David Walker, Lewis Woodson, and Robert Alexander Young. As suggested throughout this discussion, there is much to do and an abundance of material yet to be critiqued in our quest to formulate an African Historiography.

Black Ideological Streams of Thought in America

There are at least two independent but interrelated ideological streams of African life and history where blacks in America are concerned, and each of these historical streams, with its numerous serpentine rivulets, eddy about each other and then separate into two discrete and distinct main streams: the African Stream *and the* American Stream.

The relationship of the Negro Question to the American settler colony has been a peculiar white problem since the takeover of the United States in the early sixteenth century. As far back as the penetration of North America by Columbus and his forebears and the subsequent violent and bloody importation of enslaved Africans to the Americas to replace the exterminated Indian labor, white leaders and theoreticians have viewed the Negro Question (the presence of the black man in the Western Hemisphere) as a problem of major importance unceasingly. During the period of physical slavery, white slave masters feared that emancipation of the "Negro" from slavery would inevitably lead to miscegenation and racial pollution. Later, another class of whites feared the competition from manumitted Negroes for land, jobs, education, and housing.

The question of what is to be done with the blacks and the question of what should be the future relationship of the black majority and black elites to the white race is the European challenge of the twenty-first century as it continues its quest for world control.

The main currents of the Negro struggle for entrance into the *American Stream* center around the popular right-wing Negro, integrationist/assimilationist stream that demands the immediate removal of all impediments that prevent full participation for all "colored Americans" in the mainstream of American life. The only homeland that they know, love, and worship is America, and first-class citizenship is the ultimate goal and the basis for the final attainment of the American Dream. The techniques for seizing a piece of the Western imperialist pie is the strategy of protest, electoral politics, prayer, marches, and begging whites to give black people their freedom so that they can become first-class American citizens (exploiters) like their white brothers and sisters.

The right-wing Negro capitalist stream merges with the currents of the left-wing black reformer stream. The latter stream ranges from the Marxist-Leninist, "stay-at-home in America as African Americans and fight to destroy capitalism" strain to the "help build a Euro-Asian socialist world that will destroy international monopoly capitalism" strain. The Black Marxist American tributary envisions a new world, an international black and white utopia by way of removal of capitalism and its replacement with proletarian interna-

tionalism governed by the black and white working class and the Negro and white intellectual elitist vanguard.

The *African Stream* of history in the white settler colony, which also has many currents, is made up of the many unrecorded, voluntary, and involuntary migrations and dispersions of the black masses on and away from the continent of North America. It is also the history of the black struggle to settle the land question in the United States and the efforts of black spokespersons to deal with each other over which direction the masses should follow in order to disengage themselves from white society. It is the story of countless instances of black efforts to return to Africa. Its present struggle still demands a homeland in North America or elsewhere for the black majority or the beginning of a return to Africa and the establishment of a homeland in Africa for blacks in the United States.

The Call: An African International Theory

This may be the last call for African intellectuals to come home. The total African world is once again under siege while being duped into being a race of "parade watchers," standing on the "sidelines" of world affairs, watching as wave after wave of Asiatics and Europeans march into the twenty-first century on the backs of African peoples, while exploiting, for their purposes, African land, African wealth, and African culture.

We must collectively study the beginning of the twentieth century which pinpointed the high watermark of European attempts at world mastery through violence, bloodshed, and warfare. The old colonial powers of Britain, France, and the United States found themselves competing against the newly arising empire nations of Germany, Italy, and Japan for Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. The aftermath of World War I unleashed the latent tendencies for Pan-European reorganization, that is, Pan-Slavism, Pan-Germanism, Zionism, Pan-Sovietism and Pan-Irishism. The Bolshevik Revolutions of 1917 and the colonial slaughter and subjugation that took place in West and Central Africa highlighted the struggle between the Western and Eastern European powers for world control. European nationalism and imperialism was at an all time high, and *the struggle between white nations over which group was chosen by God to rule the world reached its climax.*

Since World War II and the subsequent Fifth Pan-African Conference (1945) launched by Ras T. R. Makonnen and George Padmore's Pan-African Federation, the African Worldwide Community of more than one billion scattered Africans has been in the midst of a one hundred year old International

African Liberation Struggle marked by continuous wars of national liberation, rebellions, political management, coups d' etat and ideological struggle.

It is most important that we understand at this time that the end of War World II signaled the unshackling of a four hundred year old Barbaryan stranglehold on millions of Africans all over the world. It also marked the closing out of four thousand years of savage Euro-Asian destruction and the dismantlement, pillage, and rape of the African continent, its people, and its resources.

Even more important we must be prepared in an organized way to understand the full meaning of the current French, British, Portuguese, Dutch, and Spanish defeats in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. We must understand also how the tremendous European loss of African colonies, the halting of free and open access to vital raw materials, the European loss of millions of square miles of land and millions of African people have contributed to the present crisis of western European decline and the coming of age of Africa as an economic and political world power.

However, the warning message of Chancellor Williams in *The Destruction of Black Civilization* must be heeded:

> Nothing is clearer than the tragic fact Africa, like the rest of the Black world, has only the illusion of being free and independent. . . . It is still as economically enshackled as it ever was—in some respects more so . . . . The response to that challenge will be the test for the genius of the race. The outcome and, indeed, the whole future of the race depends upon the extent to which we have become intellectually emancipated and *decaucasianized* enough to pioneer in original thinking.[29]

Any attempt to develop the call for an African reinterpretation of history, an African world view, or an international African philosophy will be attacked by the European and Asian intellectual armies from the left and the right. Both northern and southern Europe and central and eastern Asia, whether they are communist or capitalist, socialist or Zionist, Christian or Moslem, need Africa to keep their quest for world dominion on track. They must have Africa! The Euro-Asians will stop at nothing to continue their propaganda warfare to transform Africans, that is, to "caucasianize" Africans, in order to trade, operate, and profit among Africans with facility.

However, as the twentieth century time clock indicates, the winding down of European hegemony with the slow deliberate shift in the balance of world power from northern Europe to African powers and Arab-Asian pow-

29. Williams, *Destruction of Black Civilization*, 44.

ers, it is obvious that the European imperialists are no longer what they used to be. They, with all their exclusive nuclear clubs and ultramodernization, are headed for big trouble as the Arab-led petro clubs and African copper and bauxite clubs volley them from one crisis to another.

Here is where an African analysis, growing out of the continent and framework of Africa and her one billion scattered children, becomes especially important. The study of the newly emerging African blocs, the struggles for national liberation, the struggle to neutralize neocolonialism, and the struggle of blacks inside white settler colonies cry out for an interpretation of their own and on their own terms! No one person or organization can do this alone. It must be organized and done by blacks themselves who are configured in multi-disciplinary cadres. Finally, it offers us and our posterity the experiences necessary to further develop African interests, a necessary prerequisite for a future world union of all Africans.

Let us not fool ourselves. The world is led by ideas, and in this connection truth is a heavy weapon in the struggle for African freedom. But it is meaningless if there is no African framework—no context out of which we clarify these ideas, establish our own goals, and select the best methods for organizing our people in order to successfully accomplish our goals.

The creation of an African Historiography challenges contemporary African thinkers to understand that ideas are weapons of warfare and that blacks have historically been instruments of our own destruction in this struggle. We must also understand that many of our best ideological warriors are servants of the enemy and many have been immobilized for they do not know (or are unwilling to acknowledge) that there is a *race war* going on.

Paradoxically, the black man has been a victim of this race war for well over four thousand years, and only recently, in the last thousand years, coincident with the advent of Islam, have we Africans been duped into believing that no such race war exists.

Due to our long history of black intellectual defection into the enemy's camp and our lack of military might to protect ourselves, we have had little or no ideological machinery for interpreting our own history and the histories of our enemies. We must be prepared this time to interpret our own history and make our own analysis of race, color, class, ethnicity, and religion based on our own concrete situations. To be viable we must write our own history, the histories of others, and explain the past with a fixed eye on the future and pass those hopes and expectations on to the next generation of Africans.

This may be the last call for African intellectuals to come home. The total African world is once again under siege while being duped into being a race of "parade watchers," standing on the "sidelines" of world affairs, watch-

ing as wave after wave of Asiatics and Europeans march into the twenty-first century on the backs of African peoples, while exploiting, for their purposes, African land, African wealth, and African culture.

Summary

The way our history is presented to us explains to us and the rest of the world the way we as a people are introduced to ourselves in the presence of the total world community. European Historiography is that well guarded domain of European Social Science that controls and oversees the whole business of producing and processing the field of history.

Historiography is that vital branch of Western dominated social science that studies history writing, the history of history, history writers and historical researchers, as well as their philosophies, theories, and methods of history. Historiography as a field of study concerns itself for the most part with an in-depth, behind the scenes examination of the very root assumptions of why history is written, how history is written, and for whom history is written.

However, historiography, as such, in its present as well as its past form, is the central ideological weaponry of Europe's global system of white supremacy. It is that hidden part of the European world view that stands under everything written by white social scientists in their quest to justify the European drive for world domination and mastery over man, society, nature, and God. Historiography is the core science or mother science of Western Civilization that carries out the rationalization for the myth of white supremacy and the false notion of the manifest destiny of the white race to rule over all others.

By controlling the entire business of producing, processing, and writing the history of the world with Europe at the center, the white world holds the black world in intellectual bondage.

By examining the world of European Historiography, it becomes apparent that the African world exists in *ideological captivity* by an international ring of white scholars working in concert, being well financed, in constant communication with each other, and in complete control of the fields of social science and history.

What is to be done? The time has come for African writers, researchers, and scholars to take up arms against the white man's propaganda war called social science. We must sever once and for all the umbilical cord that tightly binds the whole of the black world to European social thought.

We must face the challenge that we are and have been for some time at war with a global system of white supremacy that must be destroyed. The African in America is at war with the same enemy as the African in Haiti,

Nigeria, and Brazil—a war that includes and affects every black man, woman, and child on this earth.

We are in a race to win the race.

Chapter 2

Who am I? Interpretation in African Historiography

By Théophile Obenga

The yeoman's task for the present and forthcoming generations of African scholars is to penetrate the depths of African history and culture in an attempt to not only understand and describe but to analyze how African people explain themselves. The explanations that human beings provide of themselves are inextricably linked to the concept of culture. Culture consists of all ideas about why to do things, how to do things, the language required to convey those ideas, and the tools and techniques involved in doing them. Although a major task in and of itself, it is not enough to describe African culture and stop there. Although the ideas of description and explanation flow rather naturally into one another, they are distinct, yet overlapping processes in historical explanation.

Who am I? On the surface, this query seems elementary and, indeed, not worth asking, but once this question has been raised and an answer attempted in the context of African culture, the explanation becomes increasingly complex, multifaceted, and philosophical. Explaining how African people know and the language that is used to convey this explanation is in many respects more significant than describing what we know, for when we "let the ancestors speak" for themselves we implicitly convey an awareness of African culture at a deeper level. By highlighting the idea of explanation as an important and somewhat neglected issue in the context of African historiography, we attempt to enter and reconstruct the living past of African history on its own terms.

Our revered and venerated historian/activist John H. Clarke has consistently relayed to us that "history is the clock that people use to tell their time of day." For me, this "clock" is a metaphor for what I see as two fundamental

issues in African historiography: historical continuity and historical consciousness. How we explain this clock will not only impact how we interpret and organize African history, it will play a crucial role in how we participate in the world community. As the clock is made up of the sum of its parts, so too must an emerging African historiography function as a clock, guiding our quest to reveal the deep philosophical and cultural affinities among African people through time and space.

The crisis of interpretation in African historiography, due in large part to Western prejudice, renders it all the more essential that African scholars follow Edward Wilmot Blyden's simple injunction: "The African must advance by methods of his own."[1] For purposes herein, my intention is to provide insight into some of the concepts that the Ancient Egyptians used to explain themselves and how they connect with other African cultures. Cheikh Anta Diop has keenly pointed out the importance of this issue for constructing methods of our own:

> By renewing ties with Egypt we soon discover an historical perspective of five thousand years that makes possible the diachronic study, on our own land, of all the scientific disciplines that we are trying to integrate into modern African thought.[2]

Beyond the Limitations of Western Historiography

In our quest to "let the ancestors speak" for themselves about themselves, we must be consistently vigilant in recognizing and grappling with the side effects of Western prejudice and the way in which it has affected the treatment of African history. The tendency of Western scholarship to wrap itself in judicial robes and pass judgment on African history and culture from on high is both a historical and contemporary phenomenon. Indeed, as will be explained below, Western prejudice coerces African scholars to commit treason against our traditions. An analysis of the views of two of the most prominent intellectuals in the Western philosophical tradition, David Hume (1711–1777) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) offers solid support for the assertion that the relationship between scholarship and Western prejudice is both overt and subtle, complex and ever present.

Hume, undoubtedly a major philosophical influence on the development of Western thought since the mid-eighteenth century, is representative of the imposition of Western values in historical interpretation. In an essay

1. Hollis R. Lynch, ed., *Black Spokesman: Selected Published Writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1971), 236.

2. Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology,* trans. Yaa-Lengi Meema Ngemi (Brooklyn: Lawrence Hill Books, 1991), 4.

entitled "Of National Characters," his arrogance is shown by his ability to compress the whole scope of African history into a single footnote:

> I am apt to suspect the negroes, and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient GERMANS, the present TARTARS, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are NEGROE slaves dispersed all over EUROPE, of which none ever discovered any symptom of ingenuity; tho' low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In JAMAICA indeed they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning; but 'tis likely he is admired for very slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly.[3]

There are three critical points that need to be highlighted in this footnote: first, the idea of innate mental differences between Africans and Europeans; second, the idea that Africans do not have the capacity for rational speculation which explains why there are "no ingenious manufactures among them"; and third, the idea that African inferiority is perpetual and irredeemable. According to Hume, even when exposed to advanced education and philosophical speculation, the African can only "parrot" the West. In this essay, Hume also separated out Egypt from his analysis, implying that it was to be seen as a "white" civilization even though he perceives critical elements of ancient Egyptian Civilization, specifically in the realm of religion, as incomprehensible and "absurd."[4] As Richard H. Popkin has suggested, these sentiments are not the abstruse meanderings of a prejudiced individual. In his words, these views are "intimately related to his thought, and to one of the problems

3. David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary,* vol. I, ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1912), 252.

4. David Hume, *The Natural History of Religion,* ed. H. E. Root (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956), 56–57. In this passage, David Hume sets up a hypothetical discourse between a Sorbonnist and a priest of Sais. In the footnote to this passage, Hume concretely comments on this hypothetical exchange by questioning how past thinkers could be so oblivious to the differences between Egyptian and Jewish religion when the former is inferior to the latter and indeed, "absurd." The hypothetical exchange is as follows: "How can you worship

of eighteenth-century thought—the justification of European superiority over the rest of mankind."[5]

In a similar vein, Georg Hegel built on and in many ways extended Hume's major premises relative to Africa. With "Mind" or "Spirit" being seen as the ultimate reality, Hegel attempted to frame a rational and coherent system of general ideas in which every element of human experience was interrelated and thus could be interpreted in the context of what he labeled the "Absolute." History and philosophy are synthesized in such a way that the individual's place in the world is understandable and meaningful. History, being seen as the development of freedom, then becomes a rational effort to render explicit the idea of Spirit, a process that is otherwise unconsciously performed.

In one of his more noted works entitled *The Philosophy of History,* Hegel suggested that history is more than a cumbersome search for the ultimate meaning by which humans live. For him, history is a consciously directed activity that involves the critical element of reason. In an attempt to answer the query of how knowledge of the world relates to the world itself, Hegel highlighted the terrain of World History to explain by reason the unfolding of the World Spirit. Since "sub-Saharan" Africa was, for Hegel, "the land of childhood" that lies "beyond the day of self conscious history,"[6] it must be marginalized from the civilizations contributing to world history because it has no movement or development to exhibit, a natural consequence of a static barbarism. Possessing no idea of God, no sense of morality, no respect for himself, no knowledge of the immortality of the soul, no consciousness of universality, no consciousness of his freedom, no state (i.e., rational political order), no personal self-control, no development or culture, the logical and reasonable conclusion is that Africans show a "perfect contempt for humanity"[7] and therefore, must occupy a position "on the threshold of the World's

leeks and onions?, we shall suppose a Sorbonnist to say to a priest of Sais. If we worship them, replies the latter, at least, we do not, at the same time, eat them. But what strange objects or adoration are cats and monkeys? says the learned doctor. They are at least as good as the relics or rotten bones of martyrs, answers his no less learned antagonist. Are you not mad, insists the Catholic, to cut one another's throat about the preference of a cabbage or a cucumber? Yes, says the pagan, I allow it, if you will confess, that those are still madder who fight about the preference among volumes of sophistry, ten thousand of which are not equal in value to one cabbage or cucumber."

5. Richard H. Popkin, "The Philosophical Basis of Eighteenth-Century Racism" in *Racism in the Eighteenth Century,* ed. Harold E. Pagliaro (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973), 246.

6. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History,* with an Introduction by C. J. Friedrich (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), 91.

7. Ibid., 95.

History."[8] He concluded by claiming that Egypt "does not belong to the African spirit,"[9] thereby making explicit the separation between ancient Egypt and black Africa that Hume implied.[10]

Hume and Hegel are not primarily important because they committed *historicide* relative to African history, but they stand out as being representative and reflective of Western prejudice and moral arrogance, allegedly standing at the summit of history, peering down on "primitive" and "savage" Africans, using their particular culture as both judge and jury of African people. The imposition of Western values on African culture is not only a historical phenomenon, it is also a contemporary condition that continues to haunt African historiography. Continuing on this point, I find it necessary to challenge certain anthropological categories such as African systems of thought, African beliefs, African ethnophilosophies, African philosophical thought, ethnography, ethnology, ethnophilosophy, ethnolinguistics, ethnoreligion, black psychology, and the like. These categories destroy the notions of historical continuity, historical consciousness, and cultural unity by relegating Africans to the realm of the primitive "Other," implying nonrational, nonphilosophical, and nonscientific entities possessing no civilization.[11]

These anthropological and historiographical conflicts have swept many of our best minds in the wrong direction, entangling them in a servile type of conversation within Western thought that is not in the best interest of African people, nor is it particularly helpful in engaging African traditions. Despite his brilliant scholarship and mind, I must disagree with Valentine Y. Mudimbe's assertion of the "invention of Africa" and his turn toward using gnosis as a

8. Ibid., 99.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 212, 218, 219. Although Hegel overtly makes this claim, he, ironically, cannot avoid discussing the African spirit when interpreting what he sees as contradictory and confusing aspects of ancient Egyptian religion. His views on ancient Egyptian religion are very similar to Hume's in this respect: Hegel claims that "among the Egyptians worship of beasts was carried to excess under the forms of a most stupid and non-human superstition. The worship of brutes was among them a matter of particular and detailed arrangement; each district had a deity of its own—a cat, an ibis, a crocodile, etc." He attributes this "barbarous sensuality" to "African hardness, Zoolatry and sensual enjoyment." For him, ancient Egypt was caught in limbo between spirit and matter. Spirit "never rises to the Universal and Higher" and yet it does not "withdraw into itself." This dynamic of spirit not fully withdrawing into itself is how he justifies the separation between ancient Egypt and black Africa.

11. Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, Inc., 1994), 307. Ani illuminates the characteristics of the "Other" juxtaposed against the rational European. In these types of polar anthropological conceptions, Europeans are seen as "critical, scientific, logical, civilized, advanced, modern, lawful, orderly, responsible, universal, energetic, active, enterprising, and creative." The Other is seen as "noncritical, superstitious, magical, illogical, uncivilized, backward, unlawful, childlike, parochial, lazy, passive, apathetic, and imitative."

way to avoid confronting the notion of African philosophy. The notion of African philosophy is not an "invention," nor is it a contrived negation of the West or a naive polemical search for a romantic past.[12]

The echoing historical innuendo that there is no African philosophy lies at the heart of this paper, for when scholars talk about ethnophilosophy and African philosophical thought, they can only describe Africa by attempting to make it look like the West. But when we employ the notion of African philosophy, we begin to move toward explaining Africa on its own terms—not those of the West. With African philosophy, we are able to reveal and build historical continuity, historical consciousness, and cultural unity.

The above discussion should not be seen as merely a litany of problems; it represents a great opportunity for African scholars to weigh in on critical areas and make creative contributions. One of these critical areas is the historical and cultural nexus between ancient Egypt and black Africa. By engaging the living African past on its own terms, the following discussion will be a contribution to revealing a common linguistic universe, a common spiritual reality, and a common system of values shared between ancient Egypt and black Africa.

Mdw Nṯr: Sacred Language and Script

To be conscious of reality connotes not only that one knows, but that he knows he knows. Language is inextricably linked to thought; it expresses a people's philosophy. By definition, a people's first explanation of themselves proceeds from how they name and conceptualize their language. How a people name and explain their language suggests the level at which they deal with reality. Why did the Ancient Egyptians consciously name their language *Mdw Nṯr* (the words of God; Divine Speech)? How do we explain their philosophy behind the use of *Mdw Nṯr* as opposed to *Mdw Nṯrw* (word of Gods)?[13]

For the Ancient Egyptians, *Mdw Nṯr* was both a language and a script. A language is a systematic structure of arbitrary vocal symbols by which members of a social group communicate. Methods, processes, and rules of binding words together into a larger unified whole are strict. For example, the phrase "the scribe knows the book" makes perfect sense in English, but in *Mdw Nṯr* the same phrase would be communicated by different linguistic rules. Hence,

12. I am specifically responding to Mudimbe's assertion that the corpus of my works, which seeks to reconstruct African history on its own terms and to use this knowledge to address contemporary issues, can be seen, in his words, as "highly ideological and one could assert that their contributions are no more than "programmatic statements" or "polemics." See V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 40.

13. The ending *w* denotes plurality in the ancient Egyptian language.

for the Ancient Egyptians, "knows scribe the book" would be the equivalent of "the scribe knows the book" in English.

A script is a visual representation of all the sounds of a given language. It consists of a system of written signs or symbols that represent a system of sounds of a given language, but, as F. de Saussure has claimed, "languages and writing systems are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first."[14] Hence, we communicate our ideas to other people through the use of signs (script) or sounds (language). Signs are received by the eye and sounds by the ear. The Ancient Egyptians also used this writing system to convey phonetic symbols that relate to the meaning of the words produced, that is, phonetic symbols (to be pronounced) were used for the representation of the language and the communication of ideas.

Mdw Nṯr is the most ancient written African language on the Continent (c. 3300 B.C.E.). By using the term *Mdw Nṯr* to explain their language and consequently themselves, the Ancient Egyptians saw their language as a mirror that at once reflected the divine reality underlying the universe and projected the divine reality inside human beings upon the outside world. As language reveals the human mind, I believe that the ancient Egyptian use of *Mdw Nṯr* as opposed to *Mdw Nṯrw,* which would denote a plurality of Gods, can be explained in part by Jacob Carruthers's observation that ". . . the Great Unknown Creator created a multitude of significant qualities for the various aspects of creation; and that these qualities are all united in one eternal order . . . ."[15] There was no separation and alienation between humans, the Creator, and nature.

As a result of this absence of alienation, the ancient Egyptians created a holistic script that, indeed, represents the only semiological system in the world to be so full and complete. In their attempt to express the notion of order in the universe and to make manifest the fundamental evidence of this order, the ancient Egyptians searched for and explained a comprehensive and complete view of the universe. In fact, the script itself is a philosophical codification of the universe, making it visible in writing. The sheer scope of the different types of phenomenon in the universe (celestial beings, humans, animals, plants, minerals, aquatic beings, terrestrial beings, luminous beings, etc.) reveals a total of over eight hundred symbols. All of the phenomena are distinct, yet part and parcel of the unity, systematization, and organization of all knowledge regulated by a rational order where both spirit and matter in unity make up what we call reality.

14. F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics,* trans. Wade Baskin (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1959), 23.

15. Jacob H. Carruthers, *Essays in Ancient Egyptian Studies* (Los Angeles: The University of Sankore Press, 1992), 54.

Both Hegel and Hume and a number of Egyptologists fail to grasp this fundamental view of life that naturally flows through the bloodlines of African history and culture. Their failure to do this is directly related to their intellectual reflex to conceptualize ancient Egypt as an eccentric aberration in the otherwise smooth flowing narrative of Near Eastern/Mediterranean History. It is the African spirit that reasons as it looks upon the world, and contrary to Hegel's position, ancient Egypt is genetically and culturally part of this "African spirit."

In *Mdw Ntr,* there exists a strong relationship between the form and content of the language and the philosophy of the ancient Egyptians. With this in mind, it is no mystery to explain why this writing is seen everywhere—on monuments, temples, coffins, stelae, pyramids, and so on. It is no mystery to explain why the Ancient Egyptians upon being deceased were accompanied by a bandage of texts found in the "Pyramid Texts," the "Coffin Texts," and the *Book of Coming Forth By Day.* These divine texts were inextricably linked to the divine order and, in turn, the divine order was linked with the divine word.

The king played a central role in upholding this divine order. The king was not a "god incarnate" or even a "divine king" in the literal sense. These terms primarily intend to suggest that the king was a dogmatic, individual monarch who mirrored the individual and unpredictable behavior of rulers in the Near East whose actions were motivated by politics and the will to more effectively control people as opposed to attempting to establish and maintain harmony, order, and balance. Of course, this misses the true meaning of this phenomenon. The kingship was, above all, a cosmic phenomenon. The king was representative of both the divine order and the collective will of the people, and this whole assemblage operated collectively in a coherent and cooperative fashion. As a manifest symbol, the king belonged both to the cosmic order and to everyone. He had an essential role in maintaining and upholding justice, order, harmony, and balance in the universe. The king was oft-times referred to as *s3 Rᶜ* (the son of Ra) because of his role as the insurer of cosmic and social order. This title is very important because it suggests that the king was genetically related to Ra. In the script, Ra the Creator is visibly manifested as the sun whose rays symbolize cosmic intelligence and divine communication. The sun's light is the expression of spiritual, intellectual, vital, and creative power and energy. Hence, Ra is the reality which is why *s3 Rᶜ* is seen as divine among the people. Moreover, this is why it was always wished that the king have strength, power (*w3s*), stability (*ḏd*), life (*ᶜnḫ*), and health (*snb*) like Ra eternally (*mi Rᶜ ḏt*). And as the king is *s3 Rᶜ* (son of Ra), Maat, the Goddess of truth, justice, and cosmic order, is consistently referred to as

s3t Rᶜ (the daughter of Ra). Their roles are described genetically in terms of family precisely because it was the king's obligation to bring people light and to ensure truth, harmony, balance, and order in society. The people did not distrust the king and feel an estranged sense of alienation that seems to be a consequence of Western political structures dating back to Greece. The people had a deep sense of respect and confidence in a king who was seen as a divine ruler, not a politician. This is why the people felt a deep sense of kinship with the king. Thus they held festivals to renew his stability, health, life, and power, and they collectively built monuments for Ra that continued to reflect their deep aspiration to build for eternity.

The language and script of *Mdw Nṯr* is an expression of this sense of eternity, and they took the preservation and perpetuation of this language as serious as they took the notion of the king as a cosmic phenomenon. Because *Mdw Nṯr* was a powerful tool that the ancient Egyptians used to store knowledge, instruct future generations, preserve culture, and conduct intergenerational dialogues that transcended time, it required serious training to deal with it. Thus the role and training of the scribe (*ś*s) was essential to the development of the country. The scribe learned to speak and how to act and even what to want by internalizing the wisdom literature known as the *sb3yt* ("teaching") through study and by observing, interacting with, imitating, and learning from those with more developed skills for "no one is born wise."[16]

The word for writing (*ś*s) was the same word used to denote painting and drawing.[17] From this, it seems as though the scribe's quest to learn *Mdw Nṯr* was rigorous and demanding and inextricably tied to philosophy, science, and art. In writing the script, the scribe tried to unite the true with the beautiful. The use of balance and space in writing the script was also crucial. The scribe had to pay great attention to the proportions and disposition of the symbols as well as to their aesthetic aspect. Symbols were arranged symmetrically and inserted in a well-balanced space within a square grid.

Many were trained at the *ꜥt n sb3* (place of teaching or school), and along with the study of astronomy, mathematics, and geometry, the wisdom of the ancestors was a prominent aspect of the curriculum. To a significant extent, they learned to read and write by copying the wisdom of the ancestors.

16. See "The Instruction of Ptahhotep" in Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature,* vol. I, *The Old and the Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 63.

17. The equipment of the scribe (*ś*s) consists of a rectangular case or palette (*gsty*) for cakes of pigment seeds, a pot of water (*p3s*) for wetting the pigment or ink, and the reeds (*ꜥr*). The ink was made of vegetables consisting of colored earths mixed with gum and water like carbon black and ocre (*imyt,* "pigment", "ink"). Inscriptions (*wd*) were cut in stone, wood, and other materials with marvelous accuracy. For more detailed information on scribal training, see Ronald J. Williams, "Scribal Training in Ancient Egypt," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92 (1972): 214–221.

Hence, the intellectual traditions of the society served not only pedagogical purposes, but didactic purposes as well, grounding the educational system in philosophy. From this discussion, it is clear that the scribe did not separate his skill or profession from his spirituality and intellectual traditions. This was not merely a profession or a job that one went to and came back home. The scribe was conscious of the fact that *Mdw Ntr* was a divine language and script. Consequently, the scribe was not only interested in showing excellence and efficiency in his skill, but he was always interested in preserving and perpetuating the culture and history. Thus, he had divine obligations that transcended, yet encompassed the scribal trade. His primary allegiance was to his culture and history; being a scribe was secondary. This self-evident allegiance defined both his mission and the importance of his position.

Ancient Egypt and Black Africa
Explaining Cultural Unity Through Basic Concepts

Outside of a number of African scholars, there are only a handful of scholars in Egyptology who imply, much less than boldly assert, a cultural connection between ancient Egypt and black Africa.[18] Egyptologists, in the main, have been content to analyze ancient Egypt in the cultural sphere of the Mediterranean/Near East. As I have consistently asserted elsewhere, the Near East, especially Greece, owes a great debt to the wise in ancient Egypt, yet this fact does not imply that they should be seen as part of the same cultural universe. Placing ancient Egypt in the context of an arbitrary construct such as the Near East settles by ascription a point that ought to be settled by the evaluation of the evidence.

On the basis of the relationship between the ancient Egyptian language and modern African languages, it is possible for scholars to reconstruct the common origin of all of these African languages. Because it is implausible and indeed impossible to reconstruct a common ancestor that bridges the Semitic language family (i.e., Akkadian, Hebrew, Arabic, etc.) and *Mdw Ntr,* nobody has yet done so. "Afro-Asiatic," or "Hamito-Semitic," has been posited to be such a linguistic ancestor, and I have devoted a great deal of energy and scholarship to shattering this intellectual swindle which was created to solve a cultural problem, that is, the separation of ancient Egypt from the rest

18. Among these Egyptologists is Serge Sauneron who asserts that "But for Egypt, the sea marks the limit of a world—of an African world; thus the dreams of Ogotommeli, or the 'Bantu philosophy,' carry precious elements which help us to understand better certain aspects of Egyptian religious thought—but we must expect to find little of Platonic thought in this world." See Serge Sauneron, *The Priests of Ancient Egypt,* trans. Ann Morrissett (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1960), 7.

of black Africa. For our purposes, the comparative method must be applied to the reconstruction of the common parent of the ancient Egyptian language and modern African languages. It is of great advantage that ancient Egypt and modern African languages have undergone a long separate development, so that common features and correspondence between languages must not be regarded as loans but, more precisely, as features and correspondences of distinct dialects from the same linguistic parent stock. On this front, the task is extremely laborious for the present and forthcoming generation of scholars, but the harvest could be very rich and fruitful.[19]

A new era will be opened in "African Studies" or "African American Studies" when *Mdw Nṯr* is considered as the basis itself of such studies. We must follow Cheikh Anta Diop's consistent clarion call for ancient Egypt and Nile Valley Civilization to function as an "operational scientific concept,"[20] that is, the social sciences, humanities, and the "hard sciences" must consider and use this heritage as a classical point of departure for discussing the whole of African cultural development.

Revealing word similarity and meaning is one of the means by which linguists attempt to develop a taxonomy of languages into families. African languages themselves will be called upon to testify on behalf of this deep cultural unity. Answering the question "Who am I?" must address "What is the nature of the human being?" In addition, "Who am I?" locates African people in a similar cultural universe of realities and values. The following chart illustrates some of the basic concepts of ancient Egyptian anthropology dealing with the afterlife and shows the linguistic and cultural connection with various African ethnic groups.

Egyptian/Coptic	**Modern African Languages**
1. *rn* "name" Coptic ran, ren, rin, lan, len	Nuer (Sudan) ron "call" Shiluk (Sudan) rin "name" Gelke (Cameroon, Adamawa) rin Mbe (Nigeria) len Kimbundu (Angola) rina Luganda (Uganda) e-rinnya, also linnya

19. See Cairo Symposium in 1974; Cheikh Anta Diop, *Parente genetique de l'Egyptien pharonique et des languages negro-africanes* (Dakar: NEA, 1977); Théophile Obenga, *Origine commune de l'egyptien ancien, du copte et des langues negro-africanes modernes* (Paris: L. Ḥarmattan, 1993).

20. Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism*, 1.

2. *k3*, ka "spirit," "power," "essence," "personality"	Bagirmian (Chadic) kow "life" Mbochi (Bantu, Congo) o-kaa "clanic essence of an individual," "personality" Sotho (Bantu, South Africa) ka "can, may" Ronga (Bantu, South Africa) ka "to be," "essence"
3. *b3*, ba "soul," "spirit" Coptic bai	Mangbteu (Zaire, N.E.) bae "ghost" (semantic evolution) Songhai (Niger) bi "double," "soul" Amashi (Bantu, Zaire) ba "to be" Mbochi (Bantu, Congo) ba "to be full" (idea of fullness), "spirit" Ki-Kongo (Congo) ba "to be, exist"
4. *ib* "heart," "will," "desire," "mind," "wish"	Sango (Central African Republic) be "heart" Songhay (Niger) ba "to desire, wish" Igbo (Nigeria) obi "heart" Janji (Nigeria) ro-ba "heart"
5. *3ḫ*, akh "spirit"; pl. *3ḫw*, akhu "power" of God	Mbochi (Congo) ku, leku "death," that is, the process through which the deceased become "divine spirits" in the realm of the dead o-ku-e, okue "spirit" (idea of light) This is why missionaries translated okue by "demon," "evil." Ewo (Togo) ku "death" (same idea)

The way human beings face death is directly related to how they face life. African people, far from being preoccupied with death, embraced life. In fact, African people do not make the arbitrary separation between life and death because in "death" there is life. In ancient Egypt, when one was buried he or she was *nb ʿnḫ* (the Lord of life). Egyptologists continue to wrongly translate this as "sarcophagus" which is a term with a Greek etymology possessing two stems: sarkos, a noun meaning "flesh" and phagein, a verb meaning "to eat." So for the Greeks, this same process involves the ground eating one's flesh. This does not even come close to approximating the meaning of *nb ʿnḫ*. For the Greeks, this was a fundamentally material process; for Africans, it was and is fundamentally spiritual. African people do not see death as an interruption of life. Hence, the designation of "afterlife" is somewhat of a misnomer. When a culture views death as eating one's flesh, it conversely shows that they view life as finite and primarily material and thereby view

death as unnatural. Thus you see the pressure placed on the human beings in the West to do everything he/she can on this physical plane of existence in finite time and space because you only have "one life to live."

We see throughout Africa the creative and powerful force of the word. This is why the utterance of the name is so important. To name is to beget, that is, to call up a genealogy and an evolution. For the ancestors who have made their transition, their rest, in part, depends on the remembrance and responsibility of the living to keep alive the name and memory of those who have gone before them. When a person died in ancient Egypt, the body was saved and preserved (i.e., mummification) and stelae and writings were created to perpetuate the name in order to make it *sꜣnḫ* (living). The creative word encompasses not only writing, but speech, ritual, myths, beliefs, philosophy, and practices. The written word was not the finite measuring stick of truth as it becomes in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. This is why the missionaries used the inflexible boundaries that the written word defines and creates in order to "convert" Africans. African people did not devalue the importance of the written word, but the point is that neither did they place it in a superior position over other means of transmitting knowledge from one generation to another.

Who am I? With concepts like the *ꜣḫ*, the *bꜣ*, and the *kꜣ*, you automatically get a conception of the human being as divine. Human beings are not conceived in these terms today. The definition of "Who am I?" in the modern world is closer to David Hume when he asserts that the self is "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement."[21] This is why Maat and other similar notions in African culture are so important because they give primordial order to all values. Humans are not seen as merely "a bundle or collection of different perceptions." If the human being is viewed as being internally disordered and in a perpetual state of flux and conflict, what type of values do you create to order society and to interact with other human beings and the universe?

Concepts like the *ꜣḫ*, *ib*, and *kꜣ* speak to the African sense of immortality and consistent desire to be integrated into the cosmic whole and to be in harmony with the divine order. Their values in relation to the afterlife are directly related to their vision for the world of the living. They speak to both individual and collective immortality. The alienation, selfishness, uncertainty, and disorder that modern man experiences speaks to the fundamental failure to view human nature and human possibility in a Maatian sense of divine

21. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding and Selections from A Treatise of Human Nature* (La Salle: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1946), 247.

order that encompasses the cosmos, the society, and the individual. This separation and alienation yields values that thrive on estrangement. In a recent article in *Time* magazine, Lance Morrow seems to capture the predicament of modern man: ". . . the Earth constricts. We imagine ourselves to be prisoners in solitary confinement, tapping crude coded messages on the dungeon wall and hoping for an answering tap—without which we stare at the queasy possibility that we are truly, absolutely alone."[22] The only way that humans can introduce the philosophical possibility of being alone in the universe is if the human being is not assumed to be divine. With this assumption, it becomes almost natural to conclude that you are "prisoners in solitary confinement," delinked and hopelessly separated from the Creator, nature, and the universe. Who am I? The way that African people have answered this question through their concepts suggests profound wisdom for not only African people, but for humanity.

The present and forthcoming generation of African scholars must be faithful to the integrity of the past and also respond to the questions and issues of one's own generation. Just as Maat does not proceed by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, so too must we, as African scholars, strive to speak Maat and do Maat even in the face of opposition. To the extent that we do our job seriously, we will again access the spiritual and intellectual resolve to imagine an African future as stable as the pyramids and as enduring as the *sbȝyt* (teachings).

22. Lance Morrow, "Is there Life in Outer Space?," *Time*, 5 February 1996, 51.

Part II
The African Historical Imagination

Chapter 3

An African Historiography for the 21st Century

By Jacob H. Carruthers

John Henrik Clarke queried, "Are African people ready for the twenty-first century?" "Part of the answer," he continued, "is the statement, African people must define themselves. They must decide who they are and understand their place in the world."[1] Thus Dr. Clarke challenged African scholars to reconstruct African history. Such reconstruction is necessary according to Dr. Clarke because "history is the clock that people use to find their political time of day. It is also a compass that they use to locate themselves on the map of Human geography."[2] Dr. Clarke's challenge is particularly significant as we stand at the midpoint of the last decade of the twentieth century (according to the European calendar).

What principles, theories, and methods should we follow in pursuit of the compelling project that Dr. Clarke commanded? In the following discussion I am going to consider some of the issues that pertain to the development of an African historiography for the twenty-first century.

The critique and framework that follow are extensions of a challenge issued in 1978 at the inauguration commitment of the Kemetic Institute.[3] The proposal was amended in 1982 and presented at the February 1982 annual conference of the Association of African Historians as "A Memorandum on the Africa World History Project." The project was inspired by a brilliant essay written by Anderson Thompson, "Developing an Afrikan Historiography."[4]

1. John Henrik Clarke, *Africans at the Crossroads* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 1991), 401.

2. Ibid.

3. Jacob H. Carruthers, *Essays in Ancient Egyptian Studies* (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1984), passim.

4. Anderson Thompson, "Developing an Afrikan Historiography," *Black Books Bulletin*

The intellectual genealogy of our quest includes our mentors John Henrik Clarke, Yosef ben-Jochannan, Chancellor Williams, John G. Jackson, and our nineteenth century ancestors such as David Walker and Martin R. Delany. An extended version of the proposal was introduced to the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC) in 1984 and became the major project for the ASCAC Research Commission.[5]

In the meantime, Chinweizu, a Nigerian scholar, published his brilliant collection of essays, which included "Decolonizing African History," a very provocative paper, and other essays on historiography. The fact that Chinweizu's ideas are so compatible with those expressed in the original Kemetic Institute proposal supports the extent to which Pan-African thought flows from a heritage that extends throughout the African universe. The same world view inspired the Kenyan author Ngugi to write *Decolonizing the Mind.* The rising tide of the Pan-African Intellectual Revolution, which demanded the UNESCO project, *The General History of Africa,* is now mandating the next step, an African World History.

The African Concept of History

Perhaps the first recorded definition of African history is found in the "instruction" of Ptahhotep who petitioned the Pharaoh to permit him to pass on "the speeches of the (ancient) Listeners and the deeds of those who were in front of the most ancient ones who listened to the Divinities."[6] In other words, for the ancient Nile Valley Africans, the memory of the past handed down from generation to generation through Medew Netcher (Divine Speech) was the fiber of society which was conceptualized as an intergenerational association among God, the original ancestor; the fore-parents; those living on top of the earth; and the generations yet unborn.

Joseph Ki-Zerbo, a historian from Burkina Faso, echoed Ptahhotep when he wrote, "History is the memory of nations."[7] In this regard, he compared nations to individuals: "Unless one chooses to live in a state of unconsciousness and alienation, one cannot live without memory, or a memory that belongs to someone else."[8] Professor Ki-Zerbo very simply articulated the African

3 (Spring 1975): 4–13.

5. Jacob H. Carruthers, "The Research Commission Report: A Recommended Ten-Year Research Agenda," *Reconstructing Kemetic Culture* (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press), 205–215.

6. Translated from Zybnek Zaba, *Le Maximes de Ptahhotep* (Prague: Editions de L'academie Tchecoslovaque des Sciences, 1956).

7. Joseph Ki-Zerbo, "General Introduction," *General History of Africa,* vol. I, *Methodology and African Prehistory* (California: UNESCO), 3.

8. Ibid.

conception of what we may call history. In so doing he summarized our plight vis-à-vis European historiography. We have been forced to live without our national memories and accept in their stead the memories of the nations that oppressed us. To our credit, however, some communities escaped the complete erasure of their national memory and still continue the "living tradition." There is also a stream of liberated transmission in the Diaspora that reconnected with African national memories and constructed the bridge over which we travel.

The African living heritage was transcribed not only in the traditions of intergenerational oratory like those of the West African *djelis,* but it was in part written here and there—Kemet, Ethiopia, and elsewhere. These traditions are the deep wells that will replenish us as we trek back to our cultural homeland. This is one aspect of the temporal and spatial unity of Africa proclaimed by Cheikh Anta Diop.

Ironically it was the African concept of history that inspired the ancient Greeks. Herodotus, for example, who is nowadays proclaimed by Europeans as the "father of history," said that the Egyptians were "the most careful of men to preserve the memory of the past." He added, "none . . . have so many chronicles."[9] We should note, however, that the Greek word *Istoria* (history) conveys a methodology quite at variance with the African notion of transmission of the national memory. *Istoria* is a mode of inquiry that challenges the traditional ancestral transmission. Such confrontation suggests that the tradition itself is flawed. One upshot of such an enterprise is the constant drive toward radical revision of the national memory.

Plato's attempt at reconstruction of the history of Athens is a clear demonstration of the Kemetic (ancient Egyptian) influence on the Greek intellectuals.[10] An Egyptian priest relates to Solon, a Greek sage, the story of a Hellenic golden age that was lost to the Greeks because of their inability to preserve and transmit their own heritage. But like a true son of Hellas, Plato rejects the transmissions of his own Greek ancestors.

The high regard for Kemetic historiography continued under the Ptolemies, who commissioned the Kemetic scholar Manetho to write a history of his country. Manetho's history was a major influence on the historical reconstruction of the Jewish historian Josephus who lived in the first century (according to the European calender).

Although the Greek and Jewish borrowings from Kemetic historiography were substantially modified to suit the scholarly agendas of sages like

9. Herodotus, *The History,* trans. David Green (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 163.

10. See "Timaeus" and "Critias" in Plato, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato,* Bollingen Series LXXI, ed. Edith Hamilton and Hunnington Cairns (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963).

Plato and Josephus, their fabricated histories were still more or less *national memories.* Universal history was hardly conceivable. Although the tradition of historical fabrication was begun by these non-African intellectuals and although such fabrication is a necessary method for universal history, the launching of the project of universal history had to await the modern age with the thinking of such philosophers as Hegel. Thus, the African concept of history, though modified here and there, prevailed throughout most of history, that is, until fairly recent times.

Before discussing the history of traditional African historiography, let us take a closer look at the problem of European historiography that now confronts us.

A Profile of European Historiography

The foundations of European historiography include not only the previously mentioned Kemetic influence but also a predominant western Asian input both direct and indirect. The character of this Asian influence can be seen in the Kemetic description of the western Asian that Pharaoh Khety made over four thousand years ago:

> Now the vile Aamu is wretched in the place where he is, it
> is deficient in
> Water scarce in wood; many are its paths which are treacherous because
> of mountains.
> He is not in one place
> When traveling his legs go in circles
> He fights since the time of Horus.[11]

The nomadic culture permeated western Asia and spilled across the Aegean into southern Europe. The mobile communities continuously streamed southward and westward across the Tarsus and Zagros mountains and northward and eastward from the Arabian desert. The raids and conquests resulted in the uprooting of the populations as they either fled for their lives or were forcefully marched from their homelands to other places. The world view of *fundamental alienation* reflected this turbulent condition.

The chaotic human condition produced a nomadic historiography which was best explained by the Islamic scholar Ibn Khaldun. For him history was the continuous surge of fierce but pure hearted barbarians conquering peace-

11. My translation from M. W. Golemscheff, *Les Papyrus Hieratiques* (St. Petersburg: De L'Enmitage Imperial), 13.

ful but corrupt and lazy sedentary communities and thus infusing the more cultivated areas with a fresh vigor that led to flashes of the Great Society only to lapse into complacency and sloth until new barbarians appear at the city gates.

Khaldun's pattern can be seen in the historical writing of the Greeks and Romans: Herodotus was interested in the Greek victory over the Persians; Thucydides focused on the Spartan conquest of Athens; Polybius pursued the Roman defeat of Carthage. The history of the Western curriculum follows and extends this pattern: history begins with the Greeks; the Romans who defeated them take over next; then the Germanic peoples become the focus with the Anglo-Saxons finally prevailing over other advanced modern national groups. This view has finally produced the notion that history has or is about to end because its Germanic telos has been achieved.

Intertwined with this nomadic historiographical motif is the Armageddon thesis which plays such a prominent role in Judeo-Christian and Persian theology. The idea of a chosen people (Jews, Christians, Iranians, and later Germans), with a divinely ordained triumphant destiny, is so intertwined in the mythology and historiography of Eurasian thought that its directives seem self-evident. The notion that a section of humanity is scheduled for an ultimate reconciliation with God in the millennium is a formula for the justification for conquest of the rest of humanity, which is damned. Since Armageddon history is based on successive conquests, periods of decline and defeat are explained as "Dark Ages." The sense is that history stops or the chosen people drop out of history while another nonchosen people take over. This is especially the case with the history of Western Civilization that, according to European historians, started with the Greeks, Romans, and early Christians, which was then plunged into darkness for seven hundred years when Islam prevailed.

The third aspect of this Eurasian historiography is the imperative to fabricate history. Plato's historical fabrication in the "Timaeus" and "Critias," although inspired by Kemetic history, was in fact a revision of the Greek mythological tradition of borrowing myths and legends from Tricontinental Cultures (see p. 55). These mythologists, like the Jewish scribes, incorporated stories such as the great flood tale from Mesopotamia. Indeed the emendation of foreign texts was a widespread practice among Eurasian intellectuals of antiquity.

Nomadic historiography then with its correlated theme of Armageddon and its practice of invented accounts, produced a formidable challenge to the national memory of Kemet and other African traditions. The polyglot borrowing infused these histories with an incipient flavor of universal history which would compete against the local memories, especially after Eurasian conquests

of African peoples. These patterns expanded toward the end of antiquity through the Middle Ages. Thus Kemetic history was subsumed in turn by Greek, Roman, Judeo-Christian, and Islamic histories.

Modern Western Revision

After European Christianity liberated itself from Muslim domination, the Renaissance and Reformation ushered in a new spirit of history. Although the Protestant movement at first simply secularized Augustine's city of God by establishing earthly theocracies, the intellectuals began to secularize Augustine's philosophy of history. At the cusp between Antiquity and the era of Islam, Augustine established history as the interval between the Fall from Grace in Eden to the ultimate reincorporation of the saved portion of humanity. This theological historiography explained time as a series of ascending stages leading to the divine millennium. The incorporation of this linear concept of a historical theology in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries produced a universal history that included all of the elements of ancient and medieval Eurasian historiography.

A major ingredient of this modern revision was the sociology of history that emerged between the middle of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. John Locke in his *Second Treatise on Government* implied such a sociology when he posited a progression from a hunting and gathering society, through a sustenance agricultural society, to an advanced industrial society. At the end of the period, Montesquieu in his *Spirit of the Laws* was more explicit when he theorized the stages of social development, that is, from savage to barbarian and finally to civilization. Needless to say, only Europeans have achieved the highest stage. Montesquieu's political sociology also established appropriate forms of governance for Europeans and others. Constitutional government, either Republican or Monarchal, was appropriate for Europeans. Despotism was suited for the noncivilized character of everybody else. This latter form of governance later was called "Oriental Despotism," then hydraulic governance, and even later the Asian Mode of Production (AMP).

In the nineteenth century this secularized theology of history was brought to a dazzling height by the German philosopher Hegel. In his *The Philosophy of History,* Hegel produced a concept of history that excluded "Africa proper" because Africa represented humanity in its original wild and uncultivated phase. For him history proper began in the East and progressed to the West where, among nineteenth century German peoples, it reached its maturity and wise old age. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Anglo-Saxons revised Hegel's theory to place themselves at the head of other Germanic peoples.

Thus, while Germanic armies were invading and conquering the peoples of the world, intellectuals of German ancestry were constructing an ideological universe dominated by Germanic concepts of Western Superiority. Francis Bacon and John Locke posited theories of the intellectual, economic, and technological superiority of Europeans over people of the Western Hemisphere and the African continent. They and their followers began to define themselves as the intellectual descendants of the ancient Greeks, who more and more were idealized as the originators of ancient civilizations. While Bacon, Newton, and even Montesquieu continued to recognize the influence of Kemet and its outstanding cultural achievements, this side of history began to fade in significance. More and more these ideas appeared as a sign of triumph of European peoples over their non-European competitors. In the eighteenth century Montesquieu, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and others inserted a thesis of "Negro inferiority," which was the basis of the philosophical invention of white supremacy. This extension of the chosen people theme justified a past of three hundred years of enslavement and genocide against African peoples. It also prophesied a future of continued super-exploitation in the name of extending civilization.

When Napoleon invaded Kemet and confronted the memorial of African history, the European intellectuals began the final step in the vindication of Europe against the legacy of African cultural anteriority and hegemony. The European Egyptologists incarcerated Kemetic antiquities and began the arduous task of putting Kemet and the rest of Africa in their proper places in the context of the new world order.

Indeed it was Hegel who articulated the formula. In *The Philosophy of History,* Hegel proposed that Egypt be removed from "Africa proper" and that Africans be removed from Kemet. More importantly, he proclaimed that Africa was no part of history proper and in fact had no history. Hegel's hypotheses in this regard were so compatible with the philosophy of white supremacy that both Kemet and Africa disappeared from history. Kemet was relegated to archaeology (of which Egyptology is a major branch); the rest of Africa was exiled to a new discipline, anthropology.

When Africa was restored to history after World War II (because of developments beyond the scope of this memorandum), the continent was divided into two major areas, that is, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. The latter was further divided into several areas, that is, West, East, Central, and so on. This convention which dominates European African Studies programs is a very sophisticated revision or correction of Hegel's thesis. The political sociology of the West divided the world into the Developed West and the Develop-

ing Rest (to paraphrase Chinweizu) to round out the historiography of "Postmodern" Europedom.

This very brief and admittedly inadequate review of Eurasian historiography is a reminder of the difficulty involved in the decolonization of African historiography. Attractive ideas such as Nkrumah's "Triple heritage" theory, which Ali Mazrui capitalized on, are modified versions of Eurasian historiography vis-à-vis Africa. Even the political theory of African socialism (with its three stages of African communalism, foreign colonization, and progress) echoes the historiography of Hegel and Marx. Let us now review some moments of African historiography.

Kemetic Historiography

Although Kemet was removed from history proper, the Egyptologists could not completely ignore the history of Kemet. Manetho's history and the documents upon which it was based suggested a framework that was conducive to European historiography. Apparent gaps in the kings lists, vicissitudes in volume and quality of published texts and iconography, regional instability, and certain periodization indicators allowed the guardians of the incarcerated civilization's memorial to superimpose schema of meaning which reduce the history of Kemet to an example of the universal pattern of European historiography. Thus the Sma Tawi (Union of the Two Lands, which established the historical kingdom) is explained as a result of one or more wars of conquest. The evidence mobilized to support such a conclusion is purely circumstantial and in my opinion very inconclusive. Even though the older theory of final Armageddon between a northern kingdom and southern kingdom has been abandoned, the present-day explanations implicitly substitute a series of more modest conquests resulting in a gradual increment of subjugated city-states.[12] For the Europeans such growth cannot occur without *competition* and *conflict.*

The Egyptologists have further divided the chronology into periods of stability and prosperity on the one hand and instability and decline on the other. Thus Kemetic history is grouped into nine chronological eras: Predynastic, Early Dynastic; Old Kingdom; First Intermediate; Middle Kingdom; Second Intermediate; New Kingdom; Third Intermediate; and Late. European intellectual consensus on this scheme of periodization exudes an aura of self-evident truth. As formidable as this onslaught of European methodology is, African scholars following the lead of champions like Martin R. Delany and Cheikh Diop must challenge this historiography with full force.

12. For an example, see Barry J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (London: Routledge, 1991), 31–35.

Before turning to an African approach at developing a historiography for Kemet, let us deal with a matter of geographical context. European scholars have devised the term Mediterranean World to encompass the civilizations of antiquity. The implication is that a relatively small area of the Mediterranean Sea that borders southern Europe, western Asia, and northern Africa somehow characterizes the ancient world. Such a convention suggests an exaggerated importance to the Greeks and Phoenicians and places Kemet and Mesopotamia at the periphery. The idea quickly diminishes when one considers the facts that historical antiquity stretches from approximately sixty-two hundred years ago to sixteen hundred years ago and that the Greeks and Phoenicians came on the stage only during the latter third of the era. In fact this antiquity emerged in the heart of Africa and western Asia hundreds of miles from the Mediterranean Sea and gradually moved in the direction of the Mediterranean. Thus, the proper foci are the three continents.

Based on that reality I am suggesting that we call the geographical and historical context of the era Tricontinental Antiquity. This formulation is a significant step toward the decolonization of African History.

The Union of the Southland and the Northland

(sm3 t3 šmᶜw t3 mḥw)

A Ramesside chronicle gives a total of 955 years from Meni to the end of a period of apparently noncontested succession (Turin Canon). This span seems to coincide with Manetho's first eight dynasties. The Neferirkare (See Palermo Stone) Chronicle, which summarizes more than half this period, records the regular celebration of various spiritual and social events. Among these is the *sm3 t3 šmᶜw t3 mḥw*, the union of the Southland and Northland, which is recorded at least four times on the extant fragment of the chronicle. *sm3 t3 šmᶜw t3 mḥw* was the early version of the concept *sm3 t3wi*, the union of the Two Lands, which was adopted as the sacred name of at least two Pharaohs, one in the so-called Eleventh Dynasty and the other in the Twenty-fifth. *sm3 t3wi*, the formal name of the Nation, is the term selected by the Kemites themselves to express the spirit of the times. It is for that reason that I suggest we consider using this concept to designate the period which extended from Meni's unification until the victory of Mentuhotep II. In making this suggestion I am attempting to let Kemet speak for itself on the matter.

During the Sma Tawi (a phonetic version of *sm3 t3wi*), the idea of two lands was a metaphor for a complex of dualities. In addition to the South and North, or Upper and Lower, idealized components of the country, there was also a union of the black city and the red hills, that is, the fertile land adjacent to the Nile River and the desert hills on both sides of the Nile. Finally there

was a union of the east and west in terms of the two shores of the river Hapy (Nile). This referred not only to the geographical reality but also to the theological division between the land of "those living on top of the earth," whose abodes were idealized as located on the east, where the sun was born each day, and those living under God in their homes for eternity in the west, where the sun set. This theological orientation gave rise to one of the civilization's most important and enduring enterprises, the mortuary industry. The establishment of hundreds of businesses, manufacturing companies, and priesthoods; the employment of thousands of artists and craft persons including painters, jewelers, carpenters, masons, chemists, agriculturalists, engineers, architects, and scribes; the mobilization of expeditionary forces and excavators; and many other endeavors were all necessary to provide for the initiation into eternity of pharaohs, noble persons, officeholders, and the masses of persons in all walks of life. The mortuary economy was a substantial basis of the wealth of the country.

The era as here defined included the development of the systems of theology, governance, education, and inter-urban and international commerce, which exercised a decisive impact on Tricontinental Antiquity as well as the rest of Africa. During this period, Kemet seems to be the only civilization to develop a system of countrywide central government. Thus Sma Tawi (the Union of the Two Lands) was truly the defining ethos of the Nile Valley national culture.

The first millennium encompassed some setbacks. A possible regional or civil conflict is suggested by data from the Second Dynasty. A crisis of succession followed by a major civil war occurred toward the end of the era. The restoration under the leadership of Mentuhotep II was epitomized by the final name that the victorious monarch selected for his most sacred Horus title: "Sma Tawi," The Union of the Two Lands. The reconstruction of a history based upon this framework offers an interesting alternative to the Europeanized history of Kemet.

Weheme Mesu: The Repetition of Birth

A new era seems to begin four thousand years ago when Amen M Hat pronounced *Wḥm Msw* (Weheme Mesu) as his Horus name. While no official chronicles are available for this period, the spirit of renaissance seems to characterize the five hundred years between Amen M Hat and the expulsion of the Aamu under Kamose, Ahmose, and Amenhotep I. The renaissance began with the publication of a text that emphasized Good Speech[13] as the route to resto-

13. The text is entitled "The Prophesies of Neferti." See M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature,* vol. I, *The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 139–145. In the story, the king orders his advisors to bring him a wise person who can

ration after the divisions and conflicts at the end of the preceding era. Literary productions characterized the period. Old texts were revised and new genres were established for the creation of new literary directions. Thus the spirit of this rebirth was not merely the rote repetition of the past, rather it was the establishment of a new edifice on the firm foundations of ancient traditions. But the waters of the deep well of time-tested ancestral wisdom did not dictate details, rather this flow inspired bold innovations.

No chronicles from the era are available but an interesting historiography underlies the literary productions. Anachronistic conventions in historical texts attributed authorship to heroes of the past such as Seneferu, the father of Khufu. Historical tributes were selective. One hero of the period was Mentuhotep who reunited the country at the end of the previous period. Historical evaluations were positive and negative, which indicates a critical historiography. The outstanding examples of negative evaluation of selected past persons and events are found in the story called the "Eloquent Peasant" and the tales attributed to the sons of Khufu as well as the "lamentations."

During the rebirth, a manufacturing industry, medicine, architecture, engineering, and what we would call fine arts developed in accordance with the literary canon. Governance, especially in relationship to the civil service bureaucracy, was fine-tuned resulting in a recentralization and professionalization of government administration. Theology developed more subtle and complex themes. The revision of the mortuary texts (called "Pyramid Texts" of the earlier period and "Coffin Texts" in the period under consideration) in the Book of *M3ᶜ ḫrw* (Maa Kheru) provided profound depth to cosmological and eschatalogical explanations. Maa Kheru texts 75–80 and 355 are outstanding examples of this aspect of the Weheme Mesu.

The spirit exuded during the first half of the period gave rise to unprecedented economic and cultural prosperity. The temple city at Waset (Karnak) was developed; factories were established in Asia; northern Kush was annexed; indirect evidence supports the conclusion that Crete and Hellas were sites of Kemetic colonization.

The latter half of the period was plagued with problems. There seems to have been a long crisis of succession resulting in a divided country. The most devastating calamity was the takeover of the Delta by Palestine rulers and the declaration of war against Kemet by Kush. The country was reunited by the successors of Pharaoh Sekenenre who started the war of liberation. The declaration of war issued in the name of his son and immediate successor Kamose was a clear call for restoration of the renaissance.[14] Thus the Weheme Mesu

enlighten him with Good Speech and Excellent Discourse.

14. Labib Habacha, *The Second Stela of Kamose* (Gluckstadt: Verloe J. J. Augustin, 1972).

ended with a reunification after times of trouble just as is true of the first era, the Sma Tawi.

The Victorious Bull

When Djehewtymose I pronounced his sacred name as "Victorious Bull, beloved of Maat," he set the theme of Kemet for the following half millennium. During the era, each pharaoh (with the exception of Hatshepsut) kept Victorious Bull as a part of his Horus name, as though it were a title itself. The aura of military superiority tempered with justice (Maat) was the legacy of Kemet during this age. The kings claimed legitimate authority over all "which the sun encircles." They commanded other nations to submit to the rules of international relations imposed by Kemet. At the same time the monarchs took responsibility for cultivating the national culture to unprecedented heights.

Beginning with the first Djehewtymose, the army oriented kings (Djehewtymose I was a general of common origins who married into royalty) connected themselves with the long line of pharaohs that extended back to Meni. The crest of this trend is symbolized in the first Ramesside dynasty by two royal chronicles. The first is the Royal Table of Seti I. This chronicle was carved into the walls of a temple in Abydos. It depicts Seti and his son Rameses II (as a child) pouring libations to two thousand years of predecessors. Only monarchs who were considered legitimate are included in the table. This was perhaps a model for public history.

The other document is the Comprehensive Royal Chronicle of the Ramesside Era (called the Turin Canon). This list, written in hieratic, apparently included the names of all pharaohs, even those considered illegitimate. Also included are the names of divinities and perhaps demigods who ruled prior to the Meni unification. History is inclusive: "all that time encircles." This comprehensive concern with the past is correlative to the concern for the peace of the entire world. It is also during this period that Amun (the Hidden One) assumes the position of Lord of all Lands, thus the idea of a universal deity.

The power and wealth of Kemet during this period is attested by the physical memorial at sites like Waset (Luxor/Karnak) and the Valley of the Kings and Nobles. Literary production was prolific though not as creative as the previous period. Truly this is the era "When Egypt Ruled the East."[15] The data for this are relatively abundant and afford a great challenge to an Africa historiography.

15. See George Steindorff and Keith C. Steele, *When Egypt Ruled the East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), passim.

Significant to understanding the period is the rise of a military elite and a powerful priesthood. Both began to compete for control of the ancient center of governance, the Royalty-Nobility. The apparently serious divisions during the time of Hatshepsut and Akhnaten in the first segment of the period and the internal troubles after Merenptah involved this tripartite competition for supreme power. In addition to the internal problems, foreigners began an invasion of northern Africa and western Asia. These "sea people" began a long and continuous campaign to take over the Delta. Therefore a time of external troubles began during the latter part of the period.

After a quarter century of infighting and outfighting, the era came to an end with the partial restoration under the second Ramesside dynasty. The "Victorious Bull," especially Ramses III, began an attempt to crush the never ending stream of foreign invaders as well as reestablish the code of international relations imposed during the Djehewtymose dynasty three hundred years earlier. A brief interval of prosperity and nation building seemed to follow as an echo of the earlier great Weheme Mesu.

The Servant of God

The next era is marked by the proclamation of a second Weheme Mesu (the concept had been used also by Seti I as a part of his expanding title). This time the source of the proclamation appears to be the Head Priest Heri Hor who usurped the royal title after a period of behind the throne rule. This event established a claim to rule by the High Priests of Amun who more or less dominated Waset for the next three years. Attempts to control the rest of the country became increasingly ineffective as foreigners began to take over governmental power in the Delta region and compete with the theocracy for control of the nation. The result was fragmentation of governing authority and, in general, disunion of the Two Lands.

The historiography of the era is articulated at the end of the period when the Kushites, that is, Pianky and his successors again restored unity after three centuries of regression. Both Pianky and Shabaka left monuments which tied the Kushite liberators to the Sep Tepy. Their restoration was based upon the reestablishment of temples (the "opening") and the copying and restoration of the ancient theological foundations. This is the thrust of Pianky's victory stela, which is a historical document in its own right as well as the text of the Shabaka Stone.

Indeed the end of the era brought the historical people full circle. Kemet's "Last Walk in the Sun," as John Henrik Clarke put it, was a unification which *copied* the Meni revolution almost three thousand years earlier. After that revival, Kemet began a struggling and rebellious decline as foreigner following

foreigner issued onslaught after onslaught against Kemet the original "Light of the World." It is in the context of a fallen Kemet that the historiography of Manetho was developed. The conquerors needed a history of their subject nation. They also needed a blueprint for writing history and felt Kemet held the key. As Kemet began to fade, Kush, the ancient parent of Kemet, started a new millennium of Nile Valley civilization. Unfortunately the historiography of this last phase of Nile Valley civilization is opaque because their written language has not been decoded.

Conclusion

This brief review of some possible moments of Kemetic historiography is intended as a contribution among African scholars as we attempt to reconstruct the ancient world from our perspective. In my opinion the national memory of Kemet was no simple thing. It extended nearly three thousand years, a length possible because of the continuity of a scholarly tradition augmented by the written language. Thus we find an expanding historiography, changing from era to era but always building upon the tradition of the past. This intergenerational discourse was based upon enduring principles and recurring themes.

This reading of Kemetic historiography reflects three traditions which were evoked throughout all eras. The first is the concept of Maat as social order. During periods of prosperity and national well-being, Maat is deemed to be upon her throne. When internal conflict disrupts the national order, Maat is said to have been expelled from her throne. The restoration of peace and tranquility is symbolized by the return of Maat to her exalted seat.

Another traditional theme which symbolizes this interpretation of Kemetic historiography is the Osirian drama. Here Osiris, the king par excellence, meets an untimely end. A time of confusion sets in involving the succession to the throne. The absence of a legitimate monarch is the ultimate sign of disorder. Thus the resurrection of Osiris and the triumph of his son Horus, who prevails over his adversary Seth and is crowned king, restored the order.

The third tradition, based upon the two divine dramas, is conceptualization of the interregnum. Disorder and national peril accompany the death of the pharaoh and are expelled at the coronation of the new pharaoh.

The four historical themes we have found in the chronicles and historical texts exhibit the cycle of order, decline, and restoration. This reading indicates that the restoration itself is a part of and evokes the period of order which preceded it. The new era follows the restoration. Thus, in the case of the Weheme Mesu, Amen M Hat's renaissance was announced three generations after the restoration under the leadership of Mentuhotep. Each era be-

gins with a *birth* or *rebirth* which ushers in a prolonged period of prosperity. Eventually, however, a period of decline occurs which plunges the nation into civil war. The conflict is ended with a triumphant restoration that sets the stage for another Weheme Mesu.

Our task then is to uncover these principles, themes, and methods as much as is within our power. Our endeavor must be tempered with patience as we let Kemet speak for itself.

The Living Tradition

The historiography of Kemet like all African Deep Thought flowed from and into what Amadou Hampâté Bâ has called the "Living Tradition." The heritage of all African peoples was based upon the intergenerational transmission of the "Mighty Word" to use Théophile Obenga's term. This Divine Conversation that began with the creative words of God to the first ancestors was continued with the elders in each generation, passing on the creation and the sequential development dramas, which contained the enduring wisdom of the nation.

The *djelis* (griots) constituted only one group of speakers. The masters of each office and craft were also transmitters of their respective disciplines. In addition the elders of each family or other units of the society were the teachers of the traditions.

Here we find the national memory in its purest form. The transmitters are experts in acquisition and transmission of memory. The art is taught as the most sacred calling. The cultivation of speech as the vehicle for this industry bred an expertise in the verbal arts that is still found among African peoples in the Diaspora as well as continental African societies. The *preaching* styles among Africans in the Western Hemisphere attest to the retention of African oratorical traditions. Good Speech is one of the assets upon which success depends in many of the more autonomous aspects of African life. The barbershop, the church, and the sports arena are all theaters for effective speech among Africans.

This historiography of the oral tradition conditions most historical accounts by Africans, not only those that existed prior to foreign intrusions but also those that developed in response to and more or less under the influence of foreign invasions and conquests. An example of this retention can be seen in D.T. Niane's publication of the epic of *Sundiata*. The principles of the African oral tradition are introduced by the djeli at the outset, even though the hero ideologically and genealogically is connected with a non-African religion and people. In the historiographies discussed below one can see traces of this African methodology even among Arabized and Europeanized African thinkers.

African Historiography and the First and Second Comings

After a gap of a few centuries, due to the silent documents of Kush, a different historiography began to emerge in Africa. From the Ethiopian Chronicles to the scholarly treatises of Western educated scholars and leaders like Jomo Kenyatta, a post-antiquity intellectual profile developed. These traditions were heavily influenced by the comings of Christianity and Islam into Africa. The impact of these new religions, which originated in western Asia, could hardly be ignored because almost from the outset their adherents spilled into northern and eastern Africa and later into western Africa.

The penetration of Christianity and Islam into Africa can be divided into two phases, the first comings and the second comings. The first comings, which began almost two thousand years ago and continued for about fifteen hundred years, were gradual, although often accompanied by violence, especially in the case of Islam. In the early years, Christianity took root in Kemet and North Africa and Ethiopia and later in Kush. Six hundred years after the first coming of Christianity, Islam made its entry, sweeping across North Africa with the Jihad. In East and West Africa, Islam settled peacefully with the exception of the raid on ancient Ghana in the eleventh century. Thus these two foreign cultures were subjected to extensive Africanization as they converted some African leaders and families. The most devastating result of the first comings, however, was the institutionalization of the Arab slave industry via Islam in which some African leaders, especially those who converted to Islam, participated.

The second comings was a different matter. Beginning about five hundred years ago, European Christians began penetrating the coast of Africa starting in the northwest and ending in the northeast as the continent was circumnavigated. The second wave of Christians was to impose a *Maafa*[16] much more devastating than the earlier wave of Christianity, much of which had been wiped out by the first coming of Islam. The second wave of Christianity was more devastating than Islam's first coming. These Europeans borrowed the Arab slave industry model and plunged it to new depths in terms of human oppression and agony.

The second coming of Islam began three centuries later. Although led from within by Africans, the movement was also more drastic than its first coming. Thus for almost two centuries much of Africa was bombarded by religious tyranny from foreign Christians and their allies on the one hand and

16. *Maafa* is a term used by Marimba Ani in *Yurugu* to denote the European slave industry which resulted in the death and devastation of millions of African people and their communities.

native Moslems and their allies on the other. The forces of the second comings are still competing for the control of Africa.

Just before the second coming of Islam, but three hundred years after the second coming of Christianity, the philosophical white supremacy onslaught erupted. This atrocity was designed not only to erase Africa from history but to destroy the ability of the African mind to overcome the mutilation and deformation. Then after four centuries of the chattel slave industry, the European powers divided the African continent and its people among themselves as colonies of super exploitation and humiliation. This is the context for consideration of the historiography of Africa in the wake of the comings.

Historiography During the First Comings

The Ethiopian Chronicles may be evaluated in more than one way. It is clear that the historians who compiled the Kebra Nagast, for example, had a compelling interest in connecting the nation with the Judeo-Christian movement that was becoming dominant during the transition from antiquity to a new age. This trend can be seen also in the Coptic Christianity of Kemet and Kush. Thus, while the Western Asian movement was considerably Africanized as it settled into African enclaves, it also had a pronounced tendency to de-Africanize the national memory and to insult and humiliate traditional African culture. For example, the African converts seemed to fabricate a genetic connection to the ascending ideology on the world scene. Leo Hansberry's careful review of the Chronicles, though commendable, leaves many questions for us to explore.

In the cases of the Kilwa and Kano Chronicles and the Timbuktu Tariks, the African historians again attempted to genetically connect themselves more or less explicitly with the Western Asians who originated the theological ideology of Islam. The Islamic assault against traditional African culture was even more vicious than the early Christian intrusion. The resulting aura is similar to the attempt by Josephus to connect the Jews to world history through a Kemetic connection as had Plato attempted earlier with the Greeks. This tendency became a part of certain African oral traditions like, for example, the Kouyate version of the saga of *Sundiata.*

These African historiographical reactions to the first comings of Christianity and Islam must be revisited in our restoration of an appropriate methodology for our project. One of the echoes of this approach to African historiography is the *Triple Heritage* thesis put forth by Kwame Nkrumah and later by Ali Mazrui (the African heritage comes off as the lesser of the trio).

To a significant extent the African historiography of the first comings is still reflected in some present-day African movements. The Rastafarian movement which originated in Jamaica connects African people to the Ethiopian Christian Monarch Haile Selassie who in turn traced his ancestry to the Western Asian, King Solomon, of the Old Testament. The various groups of black Hebrews and black Jews incorporate a similar historiography. The Nation of Islam, probably the largest movement in this category, connects the history of the African people to the Arabs who founded Islam. The powerful grip that Judeo-Christian-Islamic history holds on African minds trying to escape the prophecy of white supremacy is indeed ironic. Africans too often believe that the enemies of their enemies are their friends.

Historiography During the Second Comings

The African reaction to the second comings can be found in the writings of African thinkers from about 250 years ago to the present. One of the early signs of the approach was the adoption of Ethiopia as a proto-Pan-African metaphor. Some of the writers who employed the symbol are Equiano, Richard Allen, and Prince Hall in the eighteenth century; Vastey, David Walker, and Delany in the last century; and Casley Hayford and Drusilla Dunjee Houston in the early years of the present century. Most of the thinkers also included ancient Egypt as a part of the African historical heritage. Indeed Kemet was considered by them to be the African "Mother of Civilization" to use Yosef ben-Jochannan's term.

Another pillar of the new way of thinking is the celebration of the Haitian Revolution as a symbol of modern African self-determination. Among the writers who placed emphasis on the event are Prince Hall, David Walker, Martin R. Delany, Edward Wilmot Blyden, and even Frederick Douglass. In fact the revolution itself seemed to inspire a search for the ancient African foundations. The Haitian Revolution was thus adopted as a part of the Pan-African heritage just as were the Nile Valley civilizations of Kush and Kemet. (*The Irritated Genie,* a history of the Haitian Revolution, was written as an attempt to view history from the perspective of an African historiography.)

The African thinkers who perused these themes fall into two camps. One group we may refer to as *vindicationists,* utilizing the example of St. Clair Drake and others. This school used the ancient and modern examples of African greatness as proof that Africans were human and had made significant contributions to world civilization. They asserted that Africans were and always had been equal to all other peoples in social, economic, political, and cultural development. Based upon this positive assessment of history from an African perspective, the advocates strove to convince their European detrac-

tors that Africans were worthy of inclusion into Western Civilization on an equal basis. The objective of this historiographical thrust seems to be assimilation into the order which presently oppresses African people. Such assimilations can come about only when the power holders in the oppressing order decide to remove the impediments. Thus this approach is predicated on a bipartisan (black-white) consensus. Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois are representative of this school.

Because of its objective the vindicationist school is open to negotiation. It invites compromise and is willing to give a little in the intellectual contest. One of the traits of this group is its flexibility on the question of the race of the Kemites. Its advocates often state that the ancient Egyptians were racially mixed but that blacks had a significant role in the multiracial and multicultural society. Some of them also admit that colonialism brought some benefits to Africa. They also proclaim that a viable African future requires that the African nations modernize along the line of the Western model. Many of them are quick to condemn as irresponsible those Africans who refuse to compromise on these points. This position encompasses those thinkers in the United States that Harold Cruse would classify as integrationists.

The other school of modern African thinkers would fall into Cruse's nationalist category. My own feeling is that *nationalism* really cuts across the two divisions. There are nationalists who, like Toussaint L'Overture and most present-day African governmental officials, aspire to develop Europeanized African states that are tied to their European fathers. This is the nationalism that defended colonialism as a stage of progress and now accepts neocolonialism as the only alternative. Therefore, rather than *nationalist,* I will refer to the second group as *foundationalists* for lack of a less awkward term.

In one sense the foundationalists are also vindicationists. Much of their argument includes the restoration of the African image. One major difference between the two schools is that the vindicationists orient their argument toward the Europeans whereas the foundationalists speak primarily to people of African descent. A second difference is that the foundationalists emphasize that Kush and Kemet are to the rest of Africa what Greece and Rome are to the rest of Europe. Therefore this school refuses to concede any significant non-African input into the civilizations of Kush and Kemet. A third difference is the extent to which foundationalists emphasize the diametrical, cultural opposition between the pure Eurasian and African cultures. Another difference is the noncompromising position of the foundationalists, that is, they are unilateralists refusing to negotiate on the matter of what they consider to be irrefutable truth.

A final difference between the two schools is the objective. The foundationalists intend to restore African Civilization. They consider the advent of the slave industry and subsequent colonization as painful disruptions that must be repelled by building on the foundations of African traditions. This does not mean a simple return to the past but rather a profound Weheme Mesu, a true Repetition of the Birth, another African renaissance. Martin R. Delany and Cheikh Anta Diop are representatives of this school.

I have excluded from this section any analysis of those African scholars who ignore African historiography altogether and who merely continue to use the *nomadic history* taught them by their European and Arab masters. Such exclusion includes the African and black Marxists.

Conclusion

Because of the transnational impact of the first and second comings, African historiography began to expand from national memory in the traditional sense toward Pan-African memory—racial memory if you please. Christianity and Islam were transnational movements which differed significantly from other forms of imperialism. Thus the historiography of the earlier part of the era crossed the traditional national horizon and sought origins in an eastern cradle on foreign soil such as Jerusalem and Mecca.

The latter phase posed a much more drastic problem. In the case of Islam, African culture was totally degraded and humiliated. The European Christians for their part invented the modern concept of race with a supreme white race and a genetically inferior black race. All of the essential terms were transnational: Islam, Christianity, white race, black race. In all cases the net result was the attempt to expel the unconverted African from the human race. The only hope for the African was to give up all that was African and become either a black Arab or a black European. Perhaps the most significant feature of the condition of Africans in this regard was the demotion or loss of traditional African languages. In any case, throughout Africa the language of education, commerce, and government is now a non-African language: Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, and German. African languages are accused of primitiveness incapable of expressing the ideas of higher civilization. This loss of African speech drastically disconnects Africans from African traditions and especially African history.

The task confronting our project involves a careful tracing of this development in an attempt to separate African traditions from the traditions of Africa's invaders and conquerors. Such effort requires that we first confront the foreigner who is in each of us.

Conclusion
The Historiographical Weheme Mesu

The foregoing skeleton of a possible framework for Kemetic and African historiography is intended as a provocation to explore the methodological foundations of an African World History. In this regard Kemet vis-à-vis the rest of Africa is often compared with Hellas vis-à-vis the rest of Europe, but much more is at stake. The protracted foreign occupation of Kemet, the incarceration of its memorial, and the campaign to remove Africa, including Kemet, from history altogether places the champions of Africa in a unique situation. The project was not merely a matter of ignorance about Africa or simply ignoring Africa, it was a conscious effort to erase the memory of Africa from the very history which was made possible by African historical leadership. That attempt was characterized not only by omissions but by fabricated insertions also. The libelous statements of Voltaire, Montesquieu, Hume, Kant, and Hegel were not merely lapses but consciously crafted lies which have had devastating intergenerational effects.

The European hypothesis of white supremacy was made to function as though it were the truth. Therefore the education of several generations of Europeans, Asians, people of the Western Hemisphere, and Africans was permeated with this notion. Thus not only non-Africans but many Africans were trained to accept African inferiority as a fact of life. African education is still under the control of European ideology—even African and black educational institutions!

This brings us to 1954 (according to European time). In that year, three important works were published: *African Glory* by J. C. deGraft-Johnson; *Stolen Legacy* by George G. M. James; and *Nations negres et culture* by Chiekh Anta Diop. Each of these post-World War II works followed a course essential to the foundationalist project. Professor deGraft-Johnson in his revision of the national memory of the Akan people prefaced his work with a comprehensive survey of general African history from antiquity to modernity. Building on traditions pioneered by Edward Blyden and Casley Hayford, he outlined some of the significant moments that any modern history of Africa or any history from an African perspective must take.

Professor George G. M. James focused on the priority of Africa in the domain of deep thought. He claimed that Africans, that is, the Kemites were the authors of philosophy, which was stolen by the Europeans in the sense that they failed to admit the sources of their great ideas—an omission which is identified today as plagiarism. James challenged Africans to stop citing Socrates and so on as models of wisdom and instead cite the ancient Nile Valley intel-

lectuals. While some of James's claims are questionable, his general thrust has been incorporated into the strategy of the foundationalists.

Dr. Chiekh Anta Diop's *Nations negres et culture* was the beginning of several major works which called for "the elevation of a Black Egypt to the level of an operational scientific concept" and "making this idea a conscious historical fact for Africans and the world."[17] For Diop the possibility of African history in particular and African Human Sciences in general depended on that foundation. The "Two Cradle Theory" of his earlier works is a formulation that must be examined in the development of Africa's historiography. The sociology of history which he pursued in *Precolonial Afrique Noir* and his examination of the "African Mode of Production" in his last major work are methodological paths that are significant points of departure for our project.

Since 1954, one of the most challenging contributions to African historiography is Chancellor Williams's *Destruction of Black Civilization.* Dr. Williams's thesis focuses on white supremacy as a destructive force and its tragic consequences for African peoples throughout history. For him white supremacy is the cause not only on the external onslaught of Africa by Asians, especially Arabs, and by various groups of Europeans, but also the cause of devastating internal conflict which pits Africans mixed with foreign blood and/or brainwashed with foreign ideas against Africans who defend the race and its traditions. Certainly Professor Williams's ideas deserve serious consideration.[18]

Many other works should be examined in our initial literature survey. Generation of such a list is beyond the scope of this note. African psychologists and psychiatrists have set forth several bold ideas. The contributors to the ongoing African-centered education movement are at the center of the project and are beginning to articulate their thoughts.

On the basis of the long history of African historiography we should indeed evoke the Weheme Mesu. The Repetition of the Birth is certainly an appropriate response to Dr. Clarke's query with which we began. We need to launch a search for an African speech as did Pharaoh Amen M Hat because the African tongue has been silent for a long time. The recovery of our ancient speech will open the Deep Well of African Treasures that will revive us as we find our way through the desert of European historiography. Let us strive to become the new African that Diop summoned—that new African who "will have felt another man born within him, moved by an historical conscience, a true creator, a Promethean bearer of a new civilization."[19]

17. Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology,* trans. by Yaa-Lengi Meema Ngemi (New York: Lawrence Hill & Company), 1–2.

18. See Greg Kimathi Carr, ed., *Chancellor Williams' The Destruction of Black Civilization: A Study Guide* (Los Angeles: ASCAC Foundation, 1992).

19. Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism,* 6.

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Chapter 4

Critical Issues In Nile Valley Studies

Unification, Periodization, and Characterization

By Vulindlela I. Wobogo

A central task for African researchers involved in the restoration of African history and culture is the establishment of a scientific reference date for an African-centered calendar. Kemetologist Jacob Carruthers, in his seminal work, *Essays in Ancient Egyptian Studies,* addressed this directly when he laid out six projects fundamental to the restoration of African history. The fifth project was a call by Carruthers for "the development of a Kemetic calendar based upon a great event from our heritage, for example, the unification of Tawi (the United Two Lands)."[1] The dating of the unification would thus become central to the establishment of the calendar. Carruthers also addressed the need to use proper terminology when referring to our homeland, which, by extension, would apply to our history and culture also. This means that it is also important to establish a common system of characterization for societies in general and African societies in particular.

Companion to these tasks is the establishment of a scientific periodization for Nile Valley history and the adoption of the African word *Maati* (literally "two truths") as an expression for African dialectics.

This essay will address five issues: characterization of the Mena unification; dating of the unification; designation of the periods of Nile Valley history; characterization of social structures; and the use of the term Maati. (Four of these issues were presented at the national conference of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations held in Detroit, Michigan in the spring of 1995. The fifth issue, characterization of social structures, was not presented because of time limitations.)

1. Jacob Carruthers, *Essays in Ancient Egyptian Studies* (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1984), 40.

To simplify the discussion all dates are Before the Common Era (B.C.E.) unless otherwise designated.

Reclamation of Time and Space

Time and space are foundational to all phenomena, social or natural. In a very real sense, a people's self-concept is based on their conception of time and space. This is true even on the individual level as suggested by the common practice of stating that one needs one's space. This concept of space not only has a temporal-geographical meaning, it also has a spiritual-philosophical meaning. It relates to an inner space of consciousness of self on both the individual level and group level. In fact, the common definition of intimacy (emotional, not physical) is related to allowing another person into one's space. One of the greatest crimes of the West, in particular the United States, could well be the almost complete disappearance of intimacy as noted by Cesaire, who queried, "Do you not see the prodigious mechanization, the mechanization of man; the gigantic rape of everything intimate . . .?"[2]

The inner space of Richard King seems almost totally invaded in modern times, with its processes and systems. In a very real sense, a person and a people need their space. For Africans, space was taken away via foreign conquest and forced removal of Africans from our homeland. The center of civilization was moved to the Mediterranean, or the "Near East," and thus we were removed from our center in a cultural-philosophical sense. As noted by Anderson Thompson, Carruthers's concept of *Tricontinental Antiquity* (see page 55) reclaims our spatial reference frame. Thompson also posed the question of time and how we use and define it in our quest for liberation. The first part of this essay addresses this question of time and its meaningfulness to the pursuit of liberation.

It is thought by many that civilization began when humanity became aware of time. Time is a sequence of events: the year is the earth circling the sun, the day is the earth turning on its axis, and so on. Indeed, time seems to stand still when nothing happens, just as it would seem to freeze if the earth stopped spinning. History, then, can be perceived as time, that is, a sequence of events, interpreted in a particular manner. Tradition is that which has endured over a long period of time, and because it persists, it is timeless. For a given people, time is most manifest in their conception of history. No one questions the essential worth of historical continuity, which is continuity in time. The idea is supported by the words of Chancellor Williams, who wrote in reference to a parable about the Sumerians, "They lost their history and so

2. Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 60.

they died."[3] Professor Williams once stated to me that "history is your charter of equality with all other peoples."[4] So the reclamation of our history is a recapturing of our time and space, and this is most evident in how we define what is important in our history, or, as Carruthers says, "in our tradition."

This essay addresses the question of time and history directly by suggesting an approach to the establishment of a fundamental reference date upon which an African-centered calendar can be based as well as an approach to the characterization and periodization of the different phases of our history. It addresses historiography, our approach to time and space, our view of what is important, and our interpretation of the significance of events, because time is affected both by the event and by how we view it.

Characterization of the Mena Unification

The unification of Kash/*Kmt* (Kash/Kemet) by *Mn* (Mena), also known as *Nrmr* (Narmer), has previously been dated by European Egyptologists as occurring circa 3100. The dynasty started by *Mn* was designated the First Dynasty, which implies there were no prior dynasties or unifications despite evidence to the contrary found in the king lists preceding *Mn* and elsewhere (Scorpion et al.). Recent interpretation of the discoveries in Ta-Setian grave sites (Qustul and Siali) indicates that both of the preceding ideas require revision. It seems that there may have been unifications prior to *Mn* and there were certainly dynasties prior the unification in question. This unification is critical because it has been suggested as the reference date for the African calendar (Carruthers et al.), though many favor a date based on the *Spdt*-Ra (Sirius-Ra) conjunction announcing the beginning of the *hnty* year of 4241 (see Fig. 2). This latter date has been used for some time by the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC). Dates are thus designated relative to the founding of Kemet (FK) which is set at the conjunction in question. According to Diop, scholars were already using 4241. It seems clear that a major change in approach is needed to rectify the situation.

In keeping with the spirit of the African Renaissance, it is suggested that African scholars unilaterally utilize the approach suggested by Carruthers, with a slight modification, which Carruthers is in agreement with. According to Carruthers, "the union of the two lands under Menes would be . . . a beginning date and all time since then would be designated A.M. (after Menes)."[5]

3. Chancellor Williams, *The Destruction of Black Civilization* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1974), 15.

4. Chancellor Williams interviewed by the author at the First State of the Race Conference, Los Angeles, Calif., 1978.

5. Carruthers, *Essays*, 32.

In keeping with the above, the unification would be designated "the Mena Unification" to distinguish it from prior unifications, perhaps further up the Nile. Carruthers's suggested phrases to denote dates will modify to *ḫntw Mn sm3* (KMS), that is, Before the Mena Unification, and *šmsw Mn sm3* (sms), that is, following the Mena Unification. To denote dates, *Before Mena* and *After Mena* will modify to *Before the Mena Unification* (KMS) and *After the Mena Unification* (SMS).[6] The Third Dynasty would then be designated as Dynasty 3 SMS, the Fourth Dynasty as Dynasty 4 SMS, and so on.

The next question is whether or not to utilize the Mena unification as the reference date for our calendar or the 4241 Spdt-Ra conjunction (*Prt Spdt*-Ra). Carruthers stated that more investigation is needed for a final decision since a more significant date might be uncovered in Kash prior to the Mena unification. But if the 4241 *Prt Spdt*-Ra is chosen unilaterally, further research on this issue would not be needed.

It is also important to determine when the sidereal calendar was first used. At present many assume the first use was in 4241, but as Diop noted, this usage must have been preceded by a long period of observation and calculation:

> It has been determined, in fact, by means of astronomical calculations of mathematical precision, that in 4241 B.C. a calendar was in use in Egypt. That is to say that the Egyptians had acquired enough theoretical and practical scientific knowledge to invent a calendar whose periodicity was 1,461 years. This is the interval of time separating two heliacal risings of Sothis or Sirius: every 1,461 years Sirius and the Sun rise simultaneously in the latitude of Memphis. It is probable that this figure was fixed by calculation rather than by experiment, that is to say by observation. It is difficult to imagine, in fact, that forty-eight generations would bequeath their observations of the heavens so that at the end of the stated period, at a precise dawning, the forty-eight generations could prepare itself to witness the heliacal rising of Sothis. This would also assume the existence of written astronomical archives, of precise chronology at a period considered as prehistoric.[7]

It is clear that at present we cannot determine the first use; we can only determine the first appearance in recorded history, and there is no documentation that indicates this is the first use. However, it is reasonable to postulate that the first official use was after the *Mn* unification. Changes in standards, especially weights and measures, almost always occur after significant politi-

6. Ibid., 33.

7. Cheikh Anta Diop, *The Cultural Unity of Negro Africa, The Domains of Patriarchy and of Matriarchy in Classical Antiquity* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1962), 58.

cal milestones. The French Revolution is a case in point. Thus it would be fitting for the ancient Africans to adopt this calendar after unification, especially since it was near another astronomical milestone, the transition between the age of the twins and that of the Bull.

Dating the *Mn* Unification

The time has come to dispense with the presently utilized unification date of 3100. The reasons have been long discussed by many researchers, both African and non-African. The dates given by European researchers for the *Mn* unification have been listed in table form by ben-Jochannan. As the table shows, almost all of the researchers gave dates prior to the fourth millennium.[8] It is generally recognized that the choice of the 3100 date is arbitrary and was likely motivated by racism. In fact, the date is a compromise chosen to ensure that the beginning date of an African civilization (Kash/*Kmt*) did not precede that for a civilization considered to be of European origin (Sumer et al.). The adoption of a date for the beginning of a civilization based on reasons other than solid evidence is not new. Even when the disputed dates differed by only a few hundred years, the most recent date was chosen by European Egyptologists to ensure that a black civilization did not precede or give rise to a white civilization. Such was the case with the alleged white civilization of Mesopotamia.

Regarding the unification date of Upper *Kmt* and Lower *Kmt* and thus the beginning of the nation of Kemet, Diop indicated that,

> the official date, adopted until now for no special reason, wavers between 3100 and 3000. In actual fact, the choice of 3100 results from no necessity but that of synchronizing Egyptian and Mesopotamian chronology .... The motivating idea is to succeed in explaining Egypt by Mesopotamia, that is, by Western Asia, the original habitat of Indo-Europeans. The foregoing demonstrates that, if we remain within the realm of authentic facts, we are forced to view Mesopotamia as a belatedly born daughter of Egypt. The relationships of protohistory do not necessarily imply the synchronization of history in two countries.[9]

In one sense it would not make any difference if the two civilizations rose at the same time. Sumer and subsequent Tigris-Euphrates Valley civiliza-

8. See Yosef ben-Jochannan et al., *Understanding the African Philosophical Concept Behind the "Diagram of the Law of Opposites"* (New York: Alkebu-lan Books Associates), 3.

9. Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization, Myth or Reality* (New York: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1974), 105–106.

tions were genetic and cultural descendants of Kash as was *Kmt,* and they were no less African than those in the Nile Valley. Even the name for the first Sumerian capital, Kish, after the legendary flood, loudly recalls Kash. Other information also suggests a Nile Valley origin for Sumer. In particular, the religion, historical documentation, and social structure indicate clearly that Sumer was a Nile Valley product. Many researchers have affirmed this, but another important piece of information adds to this body of knowledge. As noted by Rashidi, the name of the ruler of Kish (a female) was Ku Baba.[10] The word *Ku* might be related to the khu of the nine components of the African conception of a being, which designates that part of the soul that is eternal and rises to dwell among the stars following a proper Wsirian burial. The word *baba* means "elder" or "father" in several African languages (Yoruba, Swahili et al.). Thus the name Ku Baba could mean "elder spirit," which would be in keeping with the name of the first ruler of a civilization. But these facts were not generally recognized at that time, hence the alteration referred to above. Notwithstanding this information, it is still improper to use a unification date of 3100 because there is no scientific basis for it.

There are several reasons for fixing the *Mn* unification at or very close to 4378, the time when the age of the two truths, or twins (Gemini), transitions to the age of the Bull (Taurus). One or more of the first three reasons have been discussed by a number of researchers, and these arguments were recently summarized in part by Finch[11] as follows: 1) the date given by Manetho for the beginning of the *great year* in the sign of the Lion (Leo); 2) the correlation of the aforementioned passage with assumption of the title of the Bull by *Mn* and subsequent kings; and 3) the tablet of *Djr,* third king of Dynasty 1 SMS, which notes in the First Dynasty SMS the 4142 *Prt Spdt*-Ra conjunction and the subsequent overflow of the Nile. To these can be added specific information from a proper interpretation of the Dendera Zodiac, the incense burner discovered in Ta-Seti and *Nrmr*'s Palette. A final reason is the reality that a change in an astrological age would foreshadow and give rise to important events such as the *Mn* unification and would act as an incentive to effect the unification at or near that date. It would also likely involve new standards of time and measure, such as occurred after the French Revolution and the independence of the United States from the British.

10. See Runoko Rashidi, *Introduction to the Study of Classical African Civilization* (London: Karnak House, 1992).

11. For an excellent discussion of the date for the First Dynasty, see Charles Finch III, "Chronology, the Calendar, and the Kamite Great Year," chap. iv in *Echoes of the Old Darkland, Themes From the African Eden* (Decatur, Ga.: Khenti Inc., 1992).

The Great Year and the Hnty Year

Our discussion requires an understanding of two cycles. The first is the great year, which is the time for the precession of the equinoxes to complete a full cycle and pass in succession through all of the ages (Gemini, Leo, Aries, etc.). This cycle is based on the wobble of the earth (see Fig. 1). Due to this wobble the position of the constellation, which characterizes the age in which earthly society presently resides, is shifted from its normal position on the horizon by $^1/_{72}$ of a degree per year. Since there are twelve constellations in the zodiac, each age lasts for 2,160 years, so the entire cycle takes 25,920 years, which is presently designated as a great year.[12] The great year is not simply an esoteric creation of astrologers; it is a verifiable physical event. To the general population it is known as the astrological age that allegedly influences the personality. The argument advanced in this essay does not imply agreement with popular astrologers on the significance of the ages to a person born under one of the signs of the zodiac.

The Africans of the Nile Valley had a very accurate knowledge of the great year. Manetho, a Kemetic priest, was questioned in 241 concerning the great year and stated that the first age of Leo began 36,525 years before that time.[13] This gives a date of 36,766 for the beginning of the first age of Leo, presumably when the ancients started counting the precession.[14] The presently accepted date for this age is 36,778, a mere two years older than Manetho's date, which is an astounding accuracy of two parts in 36,778 or 0.0054%. Manetho was aware that they were in the second cycle after this date since the age of Leo had already occurred twice. So the knowledge of the cycle cannot be doubted.[15] It rivals that of modern physicists.

The second cycle is the *hnty* year, announced by the rising of *Spdt* in conjunction with Ra, the sun (hence our designation of *Spdt*-Ra conjunction), in the morning horizon as explained by Diop. Carruthers, in 1984, expressed that the founding of *Kmt* occurred prior to the 4241 *Prt Spdt*-Ra:

> Based on the probable time of the Menes unification and coronation as the 'Uniter of the Two Lands,' which probably coincided with a *hnty* year, (1460 regular years), the present year, which will end in the middle of July, is 6219 year smsw S.M. (following Menes)

12. For a complete discussion of African understanding of the precession of the equinoxes, see Peter Tompkins, *Secrets of the Great Pyramid* (London: Harper & Row, 1971), 159–175.

13. See W. G. Waddell, trans., *Manetho* (1940; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 227–233.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

> .... [W]e can say that the founding of Kemet ... occurred no later than what is now called 4240 B.C.E.[16]

This idea will be developed further in this essay. It should be mentioned that ASCAC currently uses the 4241 *Prt Spdt*-Ra (the heliacal rising of Sirius and the sun) as the founding of *Kmt.* The year based on *Spdt* (365.2563 days) is different from the year based on even rotations of the earth, which we will designate the *rotational year.* At present we count the rotational year as the year, but a day is added every four years to reconcile the two. This method was allegedly utilized by Khufu and copied by Europe. However, we are also aware that the ancients instead waited 1,460 years and added one year ($365\frac{1}{4} \times 4 = 1{,}460$ plus $1 = 1{,}461$ years), which would be the time it takes for the $\frac{1}{4}$ day anomaly to be reconciled and for the two years to be in phase (see Fig. 2). The *Prt Spdt*-Ra thus announced the beginning of a *hnty* year and also the overflow of the Nile twenty days later, except during the times when this overflow was out of phase. If one uses the exact value for the sidereal year (365.2563 days), the dates for the conjunctions would change since the time for reconciliation would be slightly shorter and it would not occur at the beginning of a rotational year but near the middle. However, some suggest that the ancients used the average of the sidereal year and the solar year based on the equinoxes or solstices (365.2422 years), which is almost exactly $365\frac{1}{4}$ days. A discussion of this is beyond the scope of this essay, so a *hnty* year of $365\frac{1}{4}$ days will be used to simplify this discussion.

These two cycles, the *hnty* year and the great year, are central to the decision to fix the *Mn* unification at 4378. The ancients were profoundly cosmic in outlook. To them the astrological ages held a significance that far exceeds anything in modern times. The precession of the equinoxes was nature's timepiece, the hand of fate itself, and the passage of one age into another would have had a profound meaning for it would bring with it the death of one era and the beginning of another, each with its dynasties and philosophies. Such a transition undoubtedly inspired men to do great things. What could be greater than the unification and reclamation of an ancient homeland? This argument is reinforced by the tablet of *Djr,* the material evidence supplied by the Dendera Zodiac, the Ta-Setian incense burner, and *Nrmr*'s palette.

The Tablet of *Djr*

To return to our support material, the *Spdt*-Ra conjunction of 4241 was noted on a tablet by *Djr,* third king of Dynasty 1 SMS. This tablet (see Fig. 3) notes

16. Carruthers, *Essays*, 33.

the conjunction of *Spdt* (the dog star) and Ra (the sun) and the corresponding overflow of the Nile to announce spring or inundation. In effect *Spdt* and Ra rise unilaterally in the morning when these two years coincide. This event therefore must have occurred during the First Dynasty SMS. The relevant dates for the *Prt Spdt*-Ra are 2780 and 4241. The former is too late even for the 3100 proposed unification, so it must refer to an earlier one (4241, 5702, etc.). Thus the latest date for unification is 4241. Some posit that 4241 was the first time the *Spdt*-based calendar was used. However, it may have been used earlier and certainly was discovered earlier, as noted in the above quote.

African scholars at the dialogue meetings (Carruthers et al.) have raised some doubts about the interpretation of the symbols on the *Djr* Tablet. It appears that the symbols in the upper right corner indicate *Spdt* and perhaps Ra, though the dot in the Ra circle seems to be missing along with the usual alphabetical symbols *R* and *e* or *a* (Re or Ra). Finch, who included a drawing in his discussion, not a copy of the tablet, indicated the interpretation is "Sirius, Opener of the Inundation."[17] As Carruthers noted, this may require further investigation. We, however, are certain that the calendar was in use in 4241. The question is, does the *Djr* Tablet refer to that calendar. In reality, it could not refer to any after that, so the only question is the literal interpretation, that is, does it indicate the *Prt Spdt*-Ra. The author is of the opinion that it does. The questions raised, however, will not be addressed in this essay, but in the first volume of the World History Project, after the dialogists and other scholars have researched and discussed the issues involved.

If this interpretation is correct, the *Djr* Tablet clearly indicates that a *Spdt*-Ra conjunction occurred in the First Dynasty, which in turn means the unification occurred before 4241. The question is how long before this conjunction did the unification take place. We can get an estimate of the time between conjunction and the beginning of the First Dynasty SMS by totaling the lengths of the reigns of the first three kings of the unification dynasty, *Mn*, Aha, and *Djr*. Though Finch identifies *Djr* as the second king of Dynasty 1 SMS, Rashidi identifies him as the third king. The reign of *Mn* was 62 years, that of Aha was 17 years, and *Djr* ruled for 42 years, which total 121 years. An extrapolation of 121 years from 4241 yields a date of 4362 for unification. If *Djr* is the second king, then one would add 104 years to get a date of 4345 for the unification, which is 33 years after the Gemini-Bull transition. These calculations are not precise since the literature is not consistent on the lengths of these rulerships, and we do not know what year in the rule of *Djr* that the tablet was made. But it gives a reasonable estimate, especially since the extrapolated date is very close to the transition from the age of the twins to the

17. Finch, *Echoes*, 119.

age of the Bull. The 4241 *Prt Spdt*-Ra is the first cornerstone in our argument. The next one is the Dendera Zodiac.

The Dendera Zodiac

The preceding is strongly reinforced by a proper interpretation of the Dendera Double Zodiac (see figs. 4a and 4b). The Dendera Zodiac is less ambiguous in that there is no confusion over interpretation of the symbols involved. This zodiac was discovered on the ceiling of the temple of Hathor at Dendera and was subsequently removed by researchers and sold to various persons. The double zodiac contains two intersecting circles, each with signs of the zodiac arranged on them in a circular fashion in order of appearance in the great year. The intersection of these circles marks conjunctions of successive ages. There are two special markings on the perimeter of the zodiacs located opposite each other which seem to commemorate some significant event. If a line is drawn connecting these symbols, as in figure 4b, it passes in between the sign of the twins on one circle and the Bull on the other, which seems to point to the date of passage of one age to the other. Along that line is a statue of a person very similar to the representation of *Mn* on the palette of *Nrmr*, who is wearing the crown of Ta-Seti, commonly referred to as the crown of Upper *Kmt* or Ta-*šmᶜw*, which will be discussed below.[18] According to Tompkins, this indicated a unification in the third or fourth millennium before Christ:

> A special hieroglyph on the ring of the zodiac indicates an equinoctial line running through the end of Gemini and the beginning of Taurus—the date of the founding of the empire of Menes and the beginning of the cult of the Bull and the adoption of the new calendar, sometime in the third or fourth millennium B.C.[19]

This quote implies a unification after the fifth millennium because the line apparently is interpreted very broadly by Tompkins. But a closer look reveals that this line fixes the unification in the fifth millennium B.C.E. right at transition. Had it been meant to indicate a unification after this, the line would be shifted towards the Bull. The implications of the line are clear: the transition from the age of the twins to that of the Bull coincides with the unification of the two lands by the king represented. This is a reasonable interpretation of

18. The incense burner discovered in Ta-Seti shows the king of that land wearing the white crown, which means the Ta-Setians were wearing it before it became the crown of the southern portion of the united two lands. This in turn means that this crown should properly be called the crown of Ta-Seti, not the crown of Ta-*šmᶜw*, or Upper *Kmt*.

19. Tompkins, *Great Pyramid,* 174.

the symbols on the zodiac. The date of transition was 4378, so a unification at or near this date is clearly implied and reinforced by the information in the preceding paragraph.

The Ta-Setian Incense Burner and the Palette of *Nrmr*

The incense burner discovered in Ta-Seti and the palette of *Nrmr* were previously considered to be related to the existence of dynasties prior to *Mn* and to the *Mn* unification respectively. A closer look at these important artifacts reveals information related to the date for unification. Information discovered in the grave sites at Siali and Qustul in Ta-Seti confirms that the crown of Ta-*šmᶜw* (Upper *Kmt*) is in reality the crown of Ta-Seti and that dynasties existed in Ta-Seti prior to Mn as noted above. However, the information that concerns us is the title assumed by the Ta-Setian kings. On the incense burner (see Fig. 5), the only title of the king is *ḥr*, imaged as a falcon perched on a serekh. Other artifacts confirm that the sole title of the king is the falcon-*ḥr* during this period. These artifacts date from the period approximately 150–300 years prior to the *Mn* unification. Scenes of conflict close to the unification show another bird (a vulture perhaps) as a representation of the victorious king. It is clear that the title of the Bull was not in use, presumably because the age of the Bull had not yet arrived, but it was on the horizon or, more properly, just below it. According to researchers the scenes represented in Ta-Seti give evidence of a seven generation struggle over unification that intensifies as unification is approached.[20] During this time the title of the Bull was not assumed by the king. The intensification of the struggle for unification would fit well with the idea that the twins-bull transition was the target date for unification. One can almost sense the urgency that would grip the contestants for the honor of leading the struggle for unification that would take African Civilization into the new age.

The palette of *Nrmr*, which commemorates the unification, correlates well with this idea (see Fig. 6). The front side of the palette shows the king wearing the white crown of Ta-Seti, presumably during the conquest of the southern part of the two lands or during the first part of the campaign to subdue Ta-*Mḥw* (the Delta), which is indicated by the sign with the flowers, the human head, and the rectangle (which means "land" in *Mdw Nṯr*); thus the meaning "people of the papyrus land."[21] Since the king's only title is the fal

20. See Bruce Williams, "The Lost Pharaohs of Nubia," *Egypt Revisited, Journal of African Civilization,* ed. Ivan Van Sertima (1995): 102–103.

21. There is an anomaly in this scene. Diop stated that the crown on the reverse side meant that he had conquered Ta-*šmᶜw*, which means that this crown should indicate the king has or is conquering Ta-Seti. However, the symbol with the head seems to represent the papyrus land, which is usually interpreted as the Delta. The papyrus plant grows all along the Nile

con (*Hrw*), imaged as a bird above the captive, it could mean that this scene represents events prior to completion of the unification or very close to it, evidenced in the intertwining necks of the animals restrained by two figures. According to Diop the restraint by ropes of the intertwined animals symbolizes the union of two entities that would be fighting if unification had not been effected.[22] On the reverse side, the king is shown wearing the crown of Ta-*Mhw,* or Lower *Kmt,* which means he has conquered Lower *Kmt,* but in the bottom scene the Bull (the king) is shown subduing his foe. Thus the king has taken the title of the Bull, or adopted it as an icon, in the age of the Bull. This in turn indicates that the final victory symbolized the completion of the unification and the adoption of the title of the Bull by the king at unification (if the Bull represents a battle in progress) or just after unification (if the Bull represents a process that has been completed). The preceding indicates that unification was consummated close to or right at the twins-bull transition in 4378. One could interpret the palette to mean one side, that is, one battle, was completed before transition and the other side or battle was completed after unification.

Significance of the Twins-Bull Transition: The End of the Age of *Shw-Tfnt*

The preceding arguments collectively form a solid case for a 4378 unification, but perhaps the most convincing argument is the significance of the transition in question. As noted above, science is now aware that this cycle is caused by the wobble of the earth which causes the position of the pole to move slowly in a circle like a top when it is spun with a motion that is not a true twist. No information is available at this time that indicates the ancient African scientists were aware of this, but apparently they were aware of the effects. They knew that the precession was $^1/_{72}$ of a degree per year, and the ancient African scientists claimed that they had recorded two cycles, which is a period of observation fifty-two thousand years long.

It cannot be overstressed that the twins-bull transition was in all likelihood a tremendous incentive for unification. It may well be that the existence of two lands was tolerated prior to *Mn* because it would fit the age of the two

and especially in Ta-Seti, so the front side could indicate conquest of everything except the fortified cities represented on the reverse side. But on the reverse side there is no indication of papyrus plants. Ta-*Mhw* is represented by the red crown. It is clear that this palette needs reinterpretation, but the front could refer to the blacks inhabiting the Delta since we know that the whites did not dominate this area. The reverse side would then refer to the whites in the Sinai peninsula.

22. See Diop, *African Origin of Civilization,* 82.

truths, or duality, imaged as *Shw-Tfnt* in the Dendera Zodiac. Thus social structure would be consistent with social philosophy and two lands would fit the age of Maati (two truths). One should keep in mind that Maati is one of the two basic cornerstones of classical African philosophy, and Maati permeates every aspect of African Civilization, structurally and philosophically. It is therefore likely that two separate lands would be considered consistent with a dualistic age. But the age of the Bull would bring an end to this division. It is very likely that the presence of two separate lands would be inconsistent with the new age and so the age of the twins would give way to the age of the Bull. Unification would require a strong force, a bull so to speak, one that would have the powerful personality to effect the unification. As the time of the twins-bull transition approached, all of the young leadership material would envision themselves as the Bull, the new leader for the new age. This probably affected the general population in the same manner, especially since ancient populations had a much stronger historical consciousness than those of today. Unification by the Bull would be on the minds and in the hearts of all, just as the heroes of the Haitian Revolution were waiting for the leader who would make the leap from slavery to independence. Such a powerful spiritual force would also move people to resolve their differences, bury old grudges, and form alliances on personal and political levels. So *Mn* emerged as the most powerful personality, the Bull so to speak, and it was he who would unite the two lands at the twins-bull transition.

Problems

The proposal is to fix the date for unification right at 4378. Refinement of this date can take place over time as new information is uncovered. Fixing the date for unification at 4378, however, opens up a number of problems with chronology, in particular, problems related to the dates of subsequent dynasties. Would all dynasties be revised or would the First Dynasty SMS be expanded? How would these decisions be made? These were the questions that forced Egyptologists to revise the long chronologies, since these chronologies indicated excessively long periods of occupation by invaders (Hyksos et al.). The consolidation of kingships resulted in the shorter chronologies. We are also aware that the adoption of the short chronology was politically motivated; therefore, a reexamination is in order. Clearly, these questions cannot be answered by simple logic; it will take painstaking research and extensive discussion. This discussion can only occur among persons armed with the necessary skills (*Mdw Ntr*, linguistics, astronomy, geology, history, etc.). The effort will require the team approach called for by Williams and Diop. In particular the cooperation of continental Africans armed with a knowledge of African lan-

guages will be essential as will the efforts of astronomers. In fact, steps to begin this discussion have already been taken by Carruthers. This in itself will be a meaningful contribution to the African Renaissance.

Periodization of Nile Valley History

We return once again to the concept of time. Time for most is specific and refers to a date, an hour, or even a minute. We must be on time and have the correct time. But time is in reality related to events, even in relativity theory. In fact, as noted above, events define time. So when we look at history we are really looking at events, not just dates. A calendar defines a reference point, and periods of a given people's history indicate which events are important to them. In the previous discussion we perused the problems in changing the date for the unification of Ta-Wi. When one thinks in terms of dates the problem seems immense, but if we think in terms of significant events, strict time is of a lesser importance. Thus, what is important should first be properly labeled as an event or period. The exact dates will then follow. For this reason, it is important that we characterize the periods of Nile Valley history in such a manner that is beneficial. This characterization will influence how we view our own history, not just when it happened.

Prior to the onset of the African Renaissance, the periods of Nile Valley history were characterized as in the first and second columns of Table 1.

Molefi Asante formulated the periodization in the third column, possibly to remove certain contradictions.[23] His characterization was a great improvement in that the term *Intermediate Period* suggested a suspension of African Civilization and a conquest by foreign elements when in reality the foreign occupation was only in the eastern Delta. It occurred primarily because of internal problems in *Kmt,* hence the term *instability.* The author formerly utilized the phrase *periods of chaos,* but upon exposure to the Asante terminology, I decided that *instability* was preferred since the term *chaos* was a bit strong. In addition, the term *Golden Age* has more esthetic appeal than the term of the Egyptologists. Others are of a similar opinion. Legrand Clegg II referred to the second Kashite Renaissance as the Golden Age in an early publication and later used it to refer to the Old Kingdom in his video on *Kmt.*[24] It is not known to the author whether Asante was influenced by Clegg or vice versa. It is suggested that *Golden Age* be retained as an alternative scheme, but that the term *renaissance,* which means a rebirth of sorts, be utilized because

23. See Molefi Kete Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (Trenton, N. J.: Africa World Press Inc., 1990), 68–72.

24. *When Black Men Ruled the World, Part I Egypt During the Golden Age,* prod. Legrand Clegg II, The Clegg Series, 1990, videocassette.

Table 1
Periods of Nile Valley History

Dynasty	**Egyptology**	**Asante**	**Suggested**
Pre-*Mn*	Pre-dynastic	Pre-dynastic	Formative Period I
I–II	Archaic	Foundation of Empire	Formative Period II
III–VI	Old Kingdom	First Golden Age	Formative Period II
VII–X	First Intermediate	First Period of Instability	First Period of Instability
XI–XII	Middle Kingdom	Second Golden Age	First Kashite Renaissance
XIII–XVI	Second Intermediate	Second Period of Instability	Second Period of Instability
XVII–XX	New Kingdom	Third Golden Age	Second Kashite Renaissance
XXI–XXIV	Third Intermediate	Third Period of Instability	Third Period of Instability
XXV	Nubian Dynasty	Fourth Golden Age	Third Kashite Renaissance
XXVI–XXX	Foreign Occupations	Period of Decline	Period of Decline

it is more descriptive of what actually occurred. In each instance the Nile Valley inhabitants (Hapyians perhaps) returned to tradition and at the same time created new techniques, philosophy, language, and the like. Jacob Carruthers suggested use of the term *Whm Msw*, literally "repeating the birth" in an ASCAC conference one year prior to the author's presentation. After being informed of this by Kemetologist Roosevelt Roberts, the author modified the presentation to include a recommendation to utilize Carruthers's terminology. Following this idea the first Kashite Renaissance would be *Whm Msw Kash Tpy,* literally "repeat, birth, Kash, first" in transliterated *Mdw Nṯr,* or "the first Kashite repeating the birth," or "the first Kashite Renaissance." Carruthers has suggested using the phonetic spelling Weheme for *Whm.*

For the other rebirths, corresponding terms would be utilized. It would probably be best to eventually have all the periods expressed in *Mdw Nṯr.* When using the terms repeatedly in writings and tables, it might be useful to utilize an acronym such as WMK-1 and so on, as is sometimes utilized in theoretical physics. This would only be useful for serious researchers.

There is some logic to extending this idea of rebirths to developments that occurred in other parts of Africa subsequent to the decline of Kashite civilization. This could include developments in Khart Hadast, Kash (e.g. Alwa and Malkuria), Monomotapa, Mossi-Ghana-Mali-Songhai, Kongo, and so on. The present Weheme *Msw* would be the last in the sequence, which was interrupted by the *Maafa.*[25] However, a decision would have to be made concerning the number of rebirths. For example, if the developments subsequent to the fall of *Kmt* were termed the fourth *Weheme Msw,* the present one would be the fifth. It is also important to decide where to place Khart Hadast. It seems reasonable to include this in the third Weheme *Msw* (Dynasty 25–26 SMS), which would change the designation of the decline. The decline would then include the fall of Khart Hadast. An example of the complete periodization is given in Table 2.

Characterization of Social Structure

Prior to the onset of the present Weheme *Msw,* societies were generally characterized using a system of prefixes and suffixes related to the manner in which kinship and inheritance were determined. The prefixes *matri-* (mother/female) and *patri-* (father/male) were used to designate gender. The suffix *-lineal* referred to kinship/inheritance and the suffix *-archal* referred to the political hierarchy within society or to a general preeminence. Matrilineal would then

25. The Swahili word *maafa,* coined by Marimba Ani in reference to the slave trade, means "a disaster." This definition was later extended to "a disaster beyond human comprehension that is continuing."

Table 2
Mdw Ntr Designations for Periods of Nile Valley History

Dynasties	**Suggested *Mdw Ntr* Designation***
Pre-*Mn*	*Msw Kash Tpy* (First Kashite Birth)
I–II	*Msw Kash Sn-nw* (Second Kashite Birth)
III–VI	*Msw Kash Ḥmt-nw* (Third Kashite Birth)
VII–X	*nn-Ḏdt Tpy* (First Period of Instability)
XI–XII	*Whm Msw Kash Tpy* (First Kashite Renaissance) WMK-1
XIII–XVI	*nn-Ddt Sn-nw* (Second Period of Instability)
XVII–XX	*Whm Msw* Kash Sn-nw (Second Kashite Renaissance) WMK-2
XXI–XXIV	*nn-Ḏdt Hmt-nw* (Third Period of Instability)
XXV–XXVI	*Whm Msw Kash Ḥmt-nw* (Third Kashite Renaissance) WMK-3
XXVII–XXX	Period of Decline

*Formative label by Diop; instability periods by Asante; renaissance periods by Carruthers/Wobogo: *Mdw Ntr* approach by Carruthers (rebirths), *Mdw Ntr* for births by Wobogo as extension of Carruthers's approach.

mean kinship traced through the mother, wherein a man's inheritors are his nephews and nieces. Politically, a patriarchal regime would mean one in which a ruler was a male and the political hierarchy in general was dominated by males. In some cases, a general preeminence is meant by use of the *-archal* suffix. The use of the preceding terms should theoretically be limited to descent or rule, but if preeminence is meant then nearly every aspect of society would favor one sex. The use of the suffix *-archal* can in some instances be misleading because a female deity can be highly regarded or may even be considered the progenitor of humanity, such as in the Zulu cosmology where Ma is the first human,[26] but the male is the chief even though he is controlled by a council of elders.[27] As an aside, it seems reasonable to suggest that Ma is related to Maat, the goddess of truth, justice, and balance in classical African cosmology. We are aware that the Zulu claim the Sahara as their ancient homeland, and no one knows if the *t* in Maat was actually pronounced in *Mdw Ntr.*

The need for a new or modified terminology was first addressed by Carruthers who utilized the suffix *-focal* (literally "focus on") to replace the term *-archal.* Thus *matrifocal* would replace *matrilineal* as a general characterization of society, especially in the case of African societies that Diop characterized as having "even a certain preeminence of the female." Under this scheme the term *matrilineal* would refer strictly to kinship and inheritance. One could also use *-focal* for each aspect of society under study to replace both the *-lineal* and *-archal* suffixes. The suffix *-focal* could not be used if things were perfectly balanced (which they seldom are). Similarly, a system wherein lineage was recognized in one manner or another from both parents is called "bi-" or "dual-lineal" in anthropological circles since the *matri-* and *patri-* prefixes would not be descriptive. Others have suggested use of alternate terms.[28] It should be kept in mind that a balance can be achieved in an equalitarian or an egalitarian manner and the *-archal* suffix does not address this possibility. *Kmt* was balanced or Maatian in that kinship and inheritance of the throne was matrilineal but a male ruled as king. Royal inbreeding simply merged the two kinship systems, which was required by an urbanized monarchy as explained by Diop.[29]

26. See Vusamazulu Credo Mutwa, *Indaba My Children* 3d standard ed. (Johannesburg, South Africa: Blue Crane Books, 1965), 3–5.

27. See Williams, *Destruction of Black Civilization.* In this work Williams stresses that the excesses of T'Shaka Zulu should have been checked by the council of elders, especially since he expected it, but they were not because the council was awed by T'Shaka's power.

28. Oba T'Shaka has suggested the term *twin-lineal* for *bi-lineal* descent (after the use of the term *twin* in Dogon cosmology) and also for a general characterization of a society that empowers both genders equally in terms of governance.

29. Diop explained that whatever the system initially (matriarchal or patriarchal), if a so-

Diop and others often utilized matrilineal and matriarchal interchangeably, which suggests that they were using the most general interpretation of the terms. In effect what was in reality a specific term (descent/kinship) eventually was utilized as a general characterization, and it is understood to be so by those in the upper echelons of scholarly society. This is the most common case in science generally speaking. At first a term is used as a general characterization based on the information first at hand. But as time passes and studies become more illuminating, it often turns out that other features are equally fundamental or sometimes more so, such as dowry, for example. There are two alternatives. The term can be redefined to include all of the features. In this case it becomes a general characterization for society. Alternatively, a new or modified term can be used and the former general term becomes specific. The first alternative is usually chosen and is only abandoned when the term becomes too ambiguous to retain in light of new information or a new interpretation of old information (or both of course). In other cases the former general term is retained for specific use (kinship, for example) and another more descriptive term is chosen as a general characterization. The latter alternative is suggested here for several reasons.

Many societies display a mixed system even in kinship and inheritance as well as social etiquette. Ownership may favor one sex and inheritance can favor another. Among the Ovambo of Namibia, women own the home but inheritance is through the male line. Nevertheless political decisions are arrived at through a highly democratic process, which we should perhaps call a Maatian process. So inheritance is patrilineal but ownership is not strictly so. One could object by taking the position that only the use of the house is implied, but according to Williams and Diop that also applies to land since it is considered sacred and beyond human ownership in the Western sense. In still other societies there is little or nothing to own (even leadership), so inheritance is moot, but dowry still exists. This is based on the reality that historically speaking dowry preceded private ownership even in the limited sense of this term in traditional African societies. In the northern or Arctic cradle a patrilineal system is usually non-Maatian (not balanced) and based on private ownership in the full sense of the word, as demonstrated by Diop. In ancient Greece women owned virtually nothing, not even their lives, nor did they have any rights in the democratic sense.

ciety evolved to a monarchy the social structure would become bilateral due to the attenuation of the strength-risk factor. See Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism*, trans. Yaa-Lengi Meema Ngemi (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Lawrence Hill Books, 1991). This would explain what happened in *Kmt* through royal incest. According to Chancellor Williams the same thing happened in the Ba Kuba monarchy where one of the kings changed the system so that a man's sons inherited certain positions at court.

Maatian and Non-Maatian

Considering the above, it seems reasonable to utilize the terms *Maatian* and *non-Maatian* as general characterizations of society from the *Mdw Ntr* word *Maat*, which means truth, balance, justice, propriety, and so on. Under this system the -lineal, -focal, or even -archal terms would be retained for specific features of society. Thus in *Kmt*, political rule is patriarchal or patrifocal whereas filiation is matrilineal. Even in traditional Africa, monarchies are the same, though the religion is matrifocal in certain aspects. Upon close examination the system Diop referred to as the matrilineal clan in *Civilization or Barbarism* is Maatian in the full sense of the term. The matrilineal feature makes up for the lack of strength and the lesser tendency to take risks by the female. Diop showed that this tendency to strive toward a balance is characteristic of most traditional African societies. Contrastingly, the Indo-European system is non-Maatian because even descent is through the male. African systems that have patrilineal elements exhibit a tendency to be balanced, even in such an inherently unbalanced system as polygyny.[30] The use of *Maatian* and *non-Maatian* would allow for a more precise characterization of societies in a general and specific sense, and it is not complex. Maatian societies or cultures would be those in which a general tendency to achieve a balance between all areas of society is evident and the opposite would be the case in non-Maatian societies. The use of *non* is even consistent with *Mdw Ntr* in that the negation of a term is achieved by placing a double *n* (nn) in front of the word. (Could this be the origin of *non* in the English language?) This system is also consistent with the present *Whm Msw Kash* in that it is an African term and is generally recognized as the foundation concept of African-centered philosophy. Théophile Obenga has repeatedly stressed that this concept is the foundation of African philosophy and civilization, and Jacob Carruthers has expressed similar remarks. According to Obenga, Diop held a similar opinion. In fact the ideas Obenga presented to the African community as essential steps for our liberation were transmitted from Diop. It is therefore fitting to utilize Maat as a scientific concept.

30. In the Gikuyu system of polygyny a childless couple solves the problem by allowing the female to mate with another male of the same age-group. If she conceives, the man can allow her to continue to have children by another male, but they will be his children. If the female does not conceive and the couple chooses to stay together the male takes another wife but she is chosen by the first wife, often without the male's knowledge. It is even possible for the wives to avail themselves of male company in certain circumstances. No system is perfectly balanced (if it were it would be static and changeless), but it is clear that this system is motivated by a thrust towards fairness and balance, the type of which is totally inconsistent with Western jealousy. For an in-depth discussion of this issue, see Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 167–178.

Maati as Dialectics

It is generally recognized that classical and traditional African thinkers concluded that the cause of evolution or change in general, sometimes referred to as the motive force of history, is the interaction of Maati in the broadest, most comprehensive sense of the term. This interaction is referred to as dialectics in Western circles, although its formulation is decidedly less balanced than the African concept from which it was derived (by Greek students in *Kmt*). Even a casual glance at the Nile Valley, Dogon, and Zulu cosmologies bears this out in a profound manner. In the Dogon cosmology, the interjection of sexuality or Maati sets evolution in motion.[31] In the Nile Valley cosmology, the interaction of four Maati or *Nfrwy* (pairs of dieties) in the waters (itself a Maati) leads to the evolution of the universe.[32] In the Zulu cosmology, the interaction of time and space leads to the creation of energy (heat) and energylessness (cold) that results in an explosion of the "tiny spark of living fire" created by the union of time and space which is entirely analogous to the big bang of the primordial egg of matter that was the universe at the beginning of time.[33]

Maati is equally evident in the structure of matter, reproduction, and the forces of nature. The atom is composed of a positively charged interior (protons) that has a very high density and vibratory motion and a negatively charged exterior (electrons) that has a relatively low density and translational motion. Each entity is the *anokwalei* (relative truth or opposite in Western terms) of its counterpart. In reproduction the Maati is RNA-DNA, the first of which is the code and the second which is the transporter of the code. The forces of nature as presently understood can be divided into two types: those based on charge (electro-weak; strong nuclear) and those based on mass (gravitation). The former is very powerful but short range, and gravitation is very weak but long range. The powerful force holds matter together at the atomic level; the weak force holds the universe together at the cosmic level. These observations in nature could be made ad infinitum. It is clear that the fundamental structures and processes of nature are Maatian in every case.

Space does not permit a deeper discussion of the cosmologies or of the Maatian character of nature, but the point made here is that Maati should be

31. See M. Griaule and G. 'Dieterlen, *The Pale Fox* (Chino Valley, Ariz.: Continuum Foundation, 1986), 81–86.

32. See George James, *Stolen Legacy* (1954; reprint, San Francisco: Julian Richardson Associates, 1988), 139–140. Also see "African Philosophy of the Pharaonic Period (2780–330 B.C.)," excerpts from a work in translation, in *Egypt Revisited, Journal of African Civilization,* 2d ed., ed. Ivan Van Sertima (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990); Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism,* 310–313; Carruthers, *Essays,* 58–66.

33. See Mutwa, *Indaba My Children,* 3–4.

used as our motive force of history, our theory of evolution, and the cause of change in general. This would be consistent with the basic theme of the present *Whm Msw* Kash, which is to view the world from an African-centered perspective. This should be reflected in terminology, names, concepts, and so on, as many have noted. We are now moving from simply renaming ourselves to redefining concepts and naming them accordingly. It is only necessary to use that which was bequeathed to us, understanding that the term Maati has a modern interpretation. In general Maati and proper derivatives, or words from other African languages, should replace terms such as opposites, duality, and so on.

Anokwalei Enyo

Maati, or two truths, should be taken to mean "two entities defined in terms of or relative to each other," that have no meaning as singular entities outside of that relative definition. In 1974 the author formulated a modern interpretation of Maati and utilized the term *Anokwalei Enyo*, which means two truths in Ga, a Ghanaian language. At that time a lack of knowledge of *Mdw Ntr* caused the author to be hesitant regarding the use of Maati for fear it might be a misspelling or perhaps not even an African word. (Many who have taken names they thought were African can attest to this fear.) However, Anokwalei Enyo is a specific formulation of Maati and the name should be viewed only in that light.[34] Other formulations could use other African languages, thus incorporating them into our daily thinking and theoretical constructs.

An updated version of the theory of Anokwalei Enyo published in 1977 is presently undergoing expansion into a book which will be published in the near future. The laws are all derived directly from African cosmology and social structure and represent only a new formulation and a few insights. This theory should be utilized along with others to analyze the flow of history from a Maatian viewpoint. In fact the expansion of Anokwalei Enyo referred to above will include a modest attempt to do just that.

Study of Science

To conclude this essay, the author suggests (and sincerely hopes) that African-centered thinkers consider including more natural science, mathematics, and technology in their studies whether or not a degree or certificate is a goal. This is especially true of computer technology given that we are in the computer age. Western science is not what it should be, but it is essential that we study

34. See V. Wobogo, "Anokwalei Enyo, A Modern Formulation and Application of a Fundamental African Science Principle," *Black Books Bulletin* 1 no. 3 (Fall 1977): 18–23.

it to determine what it ought to be, at least for us. We cannot reconstruct the world in an African image, as Carruthers suggests we do, if we are only conversant in spirituality and the social sciences. We cannot be content to live on land we do not improve, as Obenga has stressed. Some of our finest minds started out as scientists/mathematicians or studied it extensively (James, Diop, ben-Jochannan, Obenga, and Williams are a few). Though one can overstress the importance of mathematical thinking, it makes no sense at all for anyone to be nonconversant or even limited in science and technology. Maat means balance and balance requires both the spiritual and the material rather than just one. This does not mean all components will be exactly equal, but it does mean that each part will have a meaningful presence. Since we are now aware that Africans created science and technology, we should not be frightened by these disciplines, even if we agree that they could and should be taught from a different, more humanistic, more Maatian perspective than is presently the case. It is ironic that in the land of technology our young people are far too often alienated from science, including some of our brightest minds. The creative genius of those who created rap is no different than that of chemist/ mathematician Fletcher Henderson, father of big band jazz and the idol of Basie and Ellington. Other musicians were similar to Henderson. Miles Davis's best subject in high school was mathematics, and McCoy Tyner and Herbie Hancock were both engineering majors before they got their break and went on to become jazz giants. It has been the author's observation that most African scientists have a definite tendency to seek the complement of science, that is, spiritual development. Howard University physicist James Lindesay, one of the brightest minds to come out of Stanford University, was deeply involved in the study of extrasensory phenomena. James Harris, Nobel prize winning chemist, plays the trumpet. Physicist Zolili Ndlela was fully involved in the revolution of the sixties and is self taught in seven computer languages as well as in calligraphy. Ron McNair, laser physicist and graduate of MIT, who perished in the Challenger accident, was also a jazz saxophonist (reportedly a very good one), a great athlete, and a martial artist in the true spirit of the Maatian man produced by the ancient African priesthood. Ben Chavis holds a degree in chemistry (B.S.) as does comedian Sinbad (M.S.). African spirituality alone will not free us, but if it is useful it will allow for the utilization of science and technology for our benefit without reproducing the atrocities of Western Civilization. The latest *Whm Msw* Kash has begun; let us continue its development in the spirit of Maat.

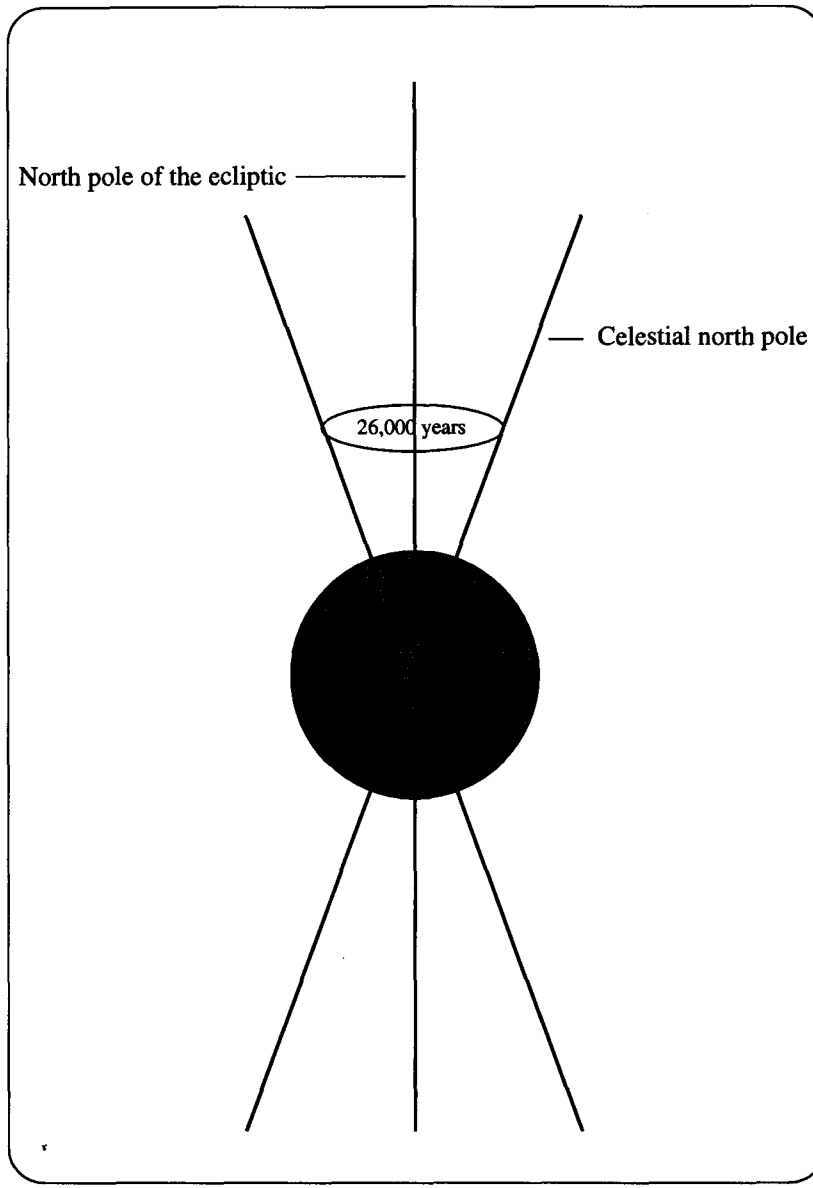


FIG. 1 THE PRECESSION OF THE EQUINOXES

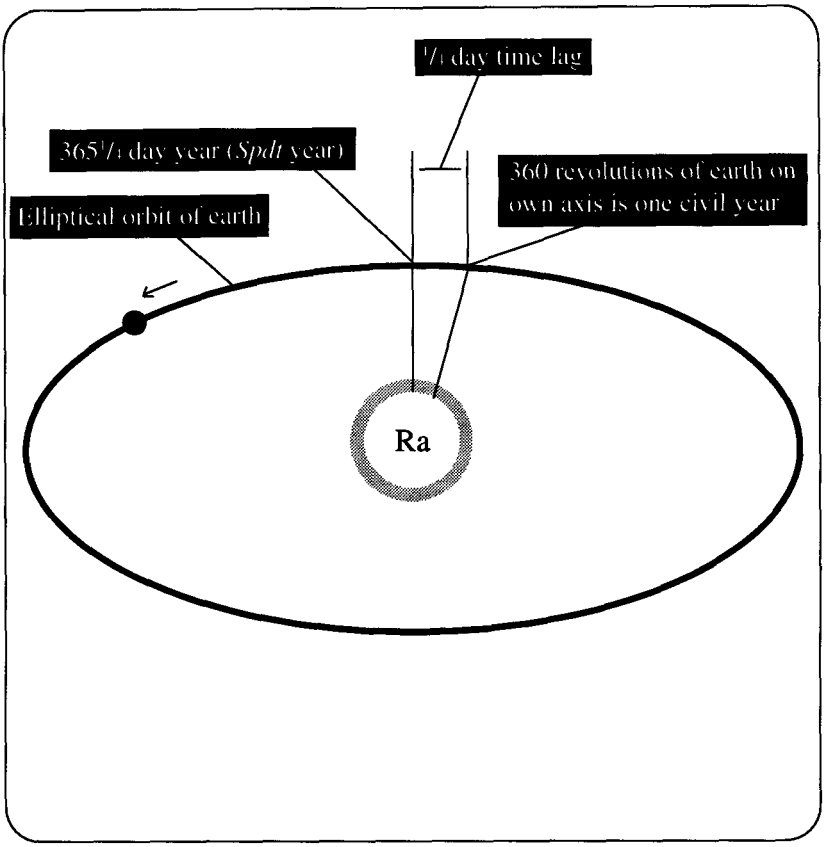


FIG. 2. COMPARISON OF ROTATIONAL (CIVIL) AND *SPDT* (SIDEREAL) YEARS
A *Spdt*-Ra conjunction occurs every 365 x 4 = 1460 rotational years. At this time one year is added to account for the one year time lag. The Kemetu referred to this phenomena as *prt Spdt,* literally "the going up of *Spdt,*" which reflects the dramatic appearance of *Spdt* with Ra at sunrise, on the horizon, after being invisible (rising after sunrise, i.e., during the day) for a considerable time period. When the civil and astronomical years were in phase, the light of *Spdt* was characterized as mingling with the light of Ra.* In *Mdw Ntr* a more complete description could be "*prt Spdt hna* Ra," literally "the going up of *Spdt* together with Ra," or "*Spdt Hna* Ra" or even "*Prt Spdt*-Ra." Discussion among researchers would determine the most useful expression for this event.

*Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar,* Third Edition, Revised (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1978), 204–205.

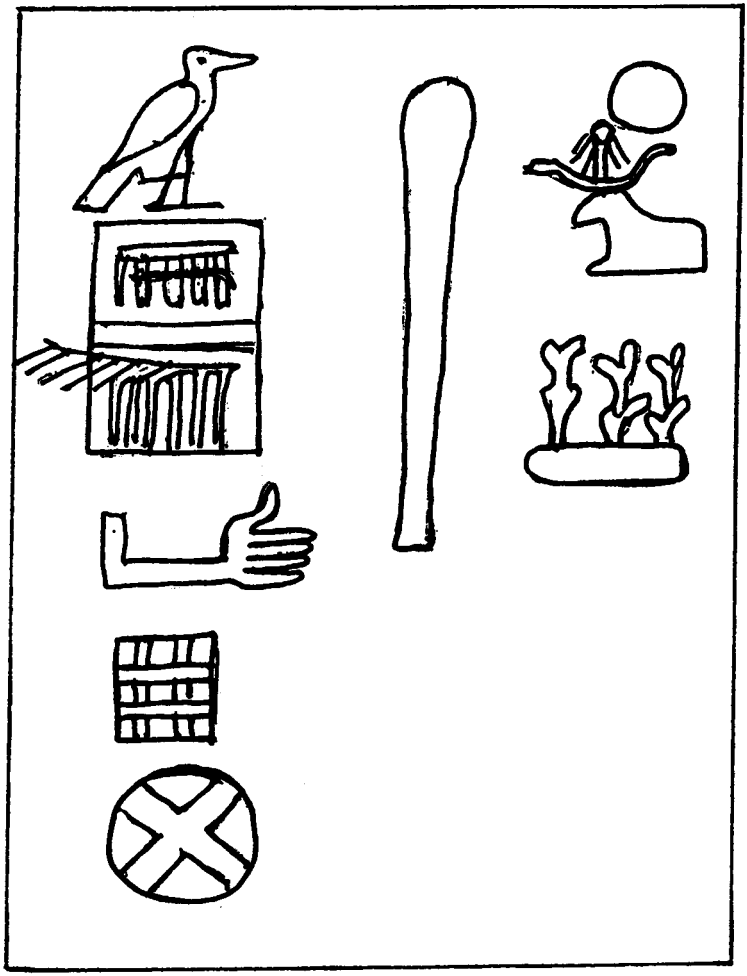


FIG. 3. THE IVORY TABLET OF KING DJER
THIRD KING OF KEMETIC DYNASTY 1 SMS

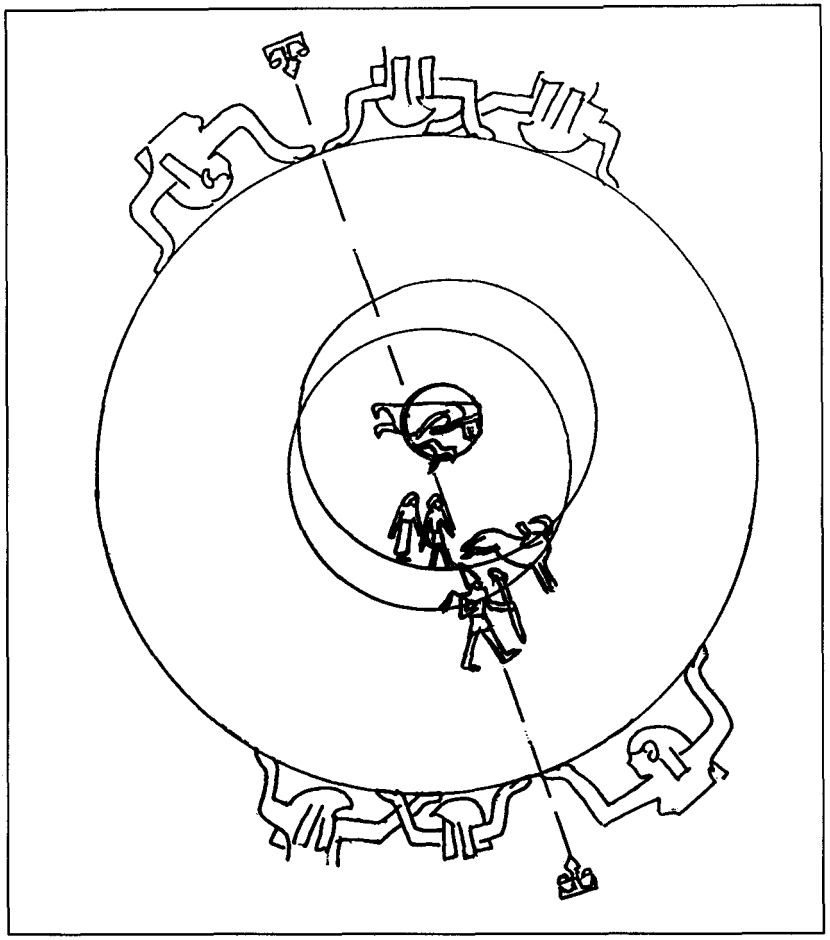


FIG. 4. ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF THE DENDERA DOUBLE ZODIAC
The top inner circle contains the signs of the twins and the bull. Other zodiacal signs (omitted here for clarity) circle around the celestial north pole, located in the constellation of the jackal (small animal in center) which in turn rotates around Drago (the hippotamus), the center of the ecliptic. The intersection of the circles indicates the transition from one age to the other. The special signs define a line through the figure (the king or Mena) which also passes between the twins and the bull, indicating unification during the passage from the former to the latter age in 4378 B.C.E. Twenty-four arms represent the 24 hours of the day (12 are drawn here). In the complete zodiac 36 figures on the perimeter represent the decans or 10-day weeks in the 360-day year.

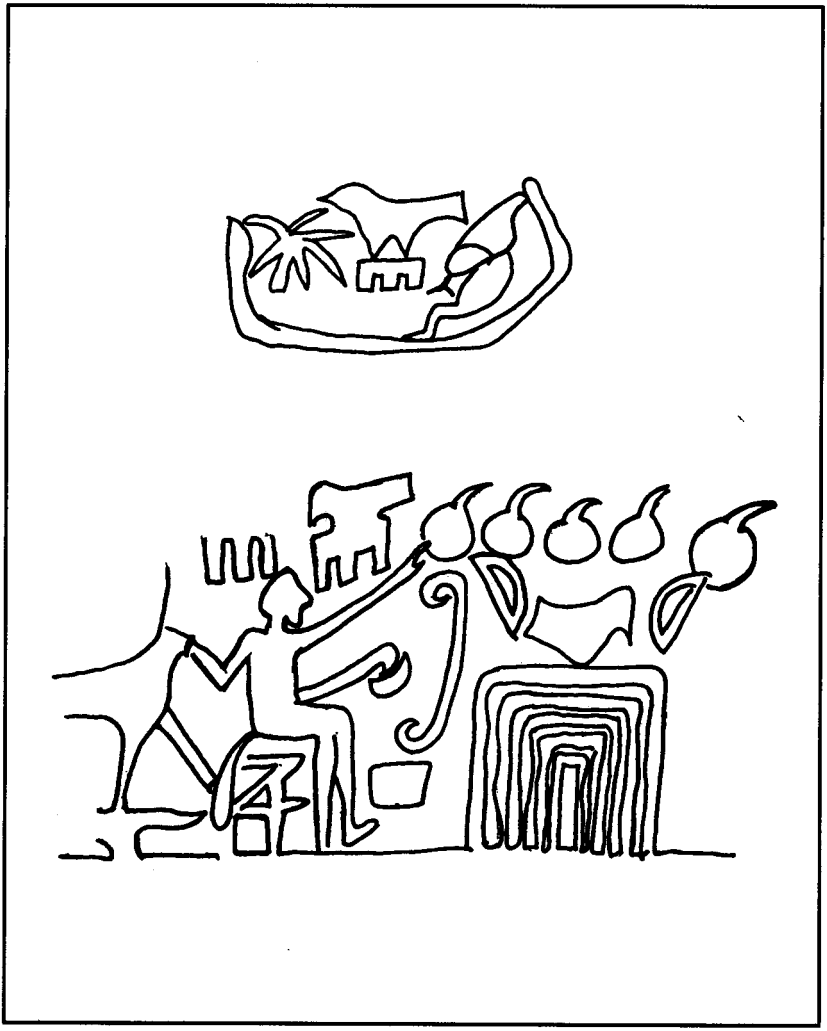


FIG. 5. PRE-UNIFICATION INCENSE BURNER DISCOVERED IN A TA-SETI GRAVE SITE
In both figures, the king only has the title of the falcon (*Hrw*), which indicates that the age of the bull had not arrived.

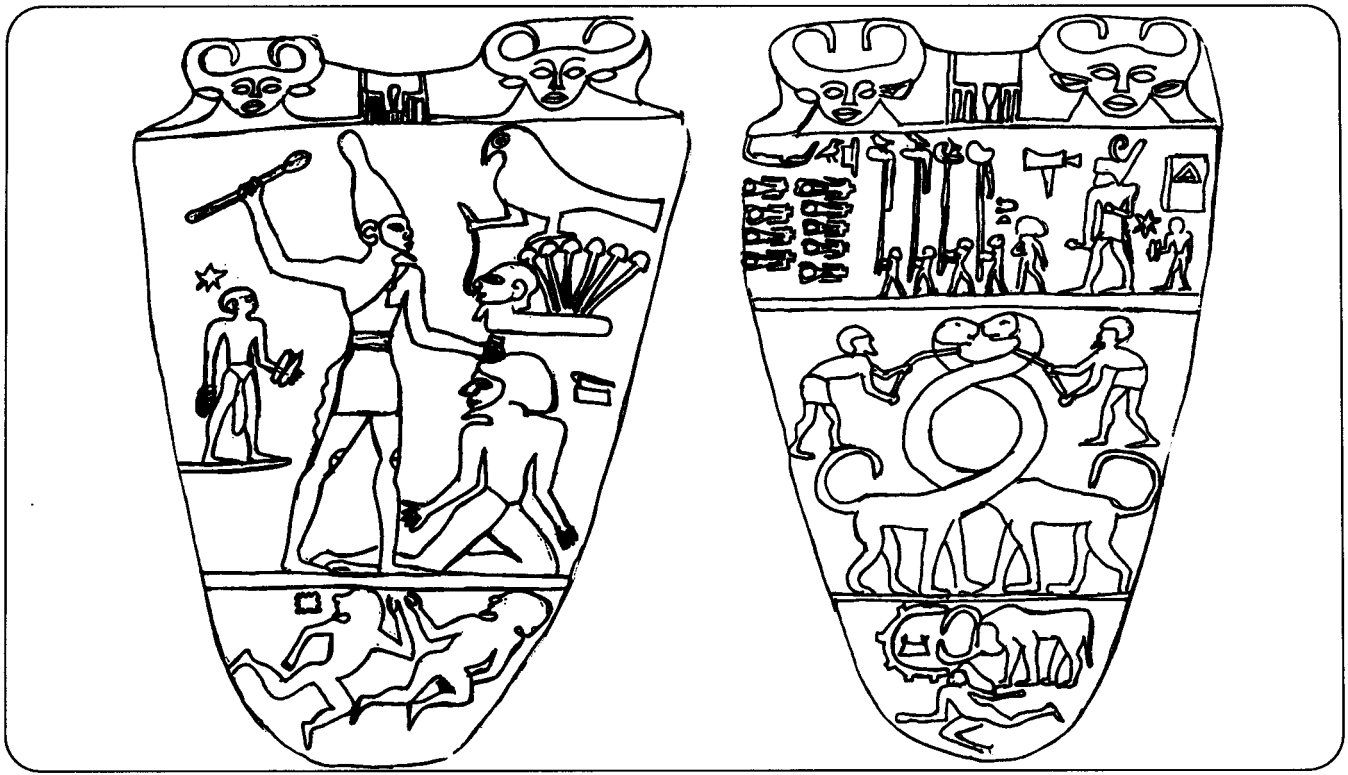


FIG. 6. THE PALLETTE OF *NRMR* (*MNA*) WHO UNIFIED *KMT*

On the first side, the king is shown as *Hrw,* imaged as a falcon holding a rope. The image of the bull can be seen on the second side at the bottom. In both cases, the animals or bird clearly represents a title of the king, hence it is clear that *Nrmr* has taken an additional title of the bull in the age of the bull.

Chapter 5

The Calendar Project

By Rekhety Wimby Jones

Dedicated to African scholars throughout the world whose enlightenment, courage, vision, and commitment did not fail to stimulate and encourage this work. May we all go forward seeking the highest truth and the nobility of the humane African world view.

Preface

From its inception, the Kemetic Institute has been concerned with and committed to the development of an African world view. It was there that the need for a spatial and temporal reorientation of African people was realized. This idea was mentioned by Dr. Jacob Carruthers in a series of lectures delivered at the Institute in 1979 and later in his book, *Essays in Ancient Egyptian Studies* (pp. 27–32, 38). In this connection, the Kemetic Institute developed the idea of producing a world map having a southern orientation according to the African view of the world and a calendar according to the Kemetic (ancient Egyptian) concept of time.

In 1983 I took the calendar project upon myself and began to organize the work with several local artists. We immediately sought the resources and technicians needed to do the work, which required detailed, highly skilled, creative labor. The resources, however, were not available to us at that time. For three years, it remained a concern of the Institute.

It was perhaps natural that finally in Harlem, New York, the center of African culture and the home of the cultural renaissance, that the proper forces

This work was published originally as *The Calendar Project* (Harlem, N.Y.: The Hunt Printing Company, 1987). It consists of two parts: "The Original African Calendar History" authored by Rkhty Wimby Amen [Jones] and "The Science and Mathematics of Calendars" authored by Frederick A. Reese. The second part is the technical aspect of this discussion. It is not included in this volume of the African World History Project. Part I is published here with the permission of its author.

came together and began to work on the calendar project, namely myself Wimby Amen, an Egyptologist; Frederick A. Reese, a mathematician and physicist; and Kwame Nkruma, an artist.

We approached the work by first studying much of the important literature on the Kemetic calendar and calendars in general (see bibliography). As we got more involved in the research, it became apparent that there was a need to make a sound mathematical analysis of the Kemetic calendar as well as the other calendars which derived directly from it, namely the Julian and Gregorian calendars used today in the West. The latter calendars serve as the bases for calculations used by Egyptologists to establish Kemetic chronology. The history and analysis of both Kemetic and Western systems are presented herein.

This endeavor opened up many new avenues of study for us such as astronomy, physics, and cosmology as well as new insights into the social and spiritual meaning of our ancient calendar. Most exciting, however, was the discovery of a new equation by our mathematician Frederick Reese. This equation will allow us to "correct" the old Kemetic calendar and establish the most accurate calendar that has ever been calculated and perhaps that can be produced. Further, the Reese Calendar Theory provides the first definitive, systematic methodology for calendar construction, replacing the "guess as you go" method. Thus, the genius of African people who created the very first calendar that the world has known continues to expand the works of our ancestors to make this earth a better place for people.

This project is not, however, the definitive statement of the Kemetic calendar or our understanding of man's relationship to what we know as time. In order to fully understand the Kemetic calendar, more study is needed in the fields of astronomy, physics, metaphysics, cosmology, and mathematics. The Kemetic material on calendars is vast and has not been fully studied or studied from an African-centered understanding. What we attempt here is an outline of a new approach to the study of calendars in general and the Kemetic calendar specifically. This is most important because its actual working has not been understood. We now realize that this is an ongoing project that will require the joint effort of scholars in several disciplines related to calendar construction.

Introduction

It is imperative that African people have and use their own calendar. For centuries the world as we know it has been dominated by Western thought. We have only to look around us for evidence of the magnitude and pervasiveness of Western culture and its effect upon our lives. The current calendar, like maps in current use, is part of the evidence that demonstrates the impact of

Western culture. This calendar, which shapes our comings and goings and denotes what should be important to us, is more than just an instrument for keeping time; it is also a political tool used for control of First World people. Moreover, it is not the most accurate timekeeping system. There are those who know of its shortcomings. The United Nations has attempted for quite some time to institute a calendar reform movement, but to no avail. We must then ask the question: Is this calendar a planned and calculated attempt to dominate time, movement, and thought?

The Western world has persisted in using a calendar that places emphasis on its culture. Christian holidays and lifestyles are disproportionately represented. Indo-European gods, the seven-day week, and the Sabbath all attest to this Western dominance. Furthermore, the Western world has persisted in using an inaccurate map that places Europe in the center. The United States even goes so far as to continue using the English measuring system rather than the metric system now employed by the rest of the world. Thus, European culture is the center upon which all else revolves.

As a result, time has been reinterpreted, altered, and in some cases lost. For people of non-European descent the effects have been devastating, because they do not benefit from the Western calendar in any way. It does not relate to their cultures; it is not relevant to their lives. It is merely an attempt by the West to dominate their thought. Time should not be used for personal gain and power. Herein lies the need for a new calendar. African people need a calendar that gives homage to African culture, that frees us from the unrealistic constraints upon our movements, politics, and thoughts, and that enables us to totally throw off the yoke of European cultural influence. This Kemetic calendar should create an environment in which African people can develop and reach their highest potential and even advance humanity one step further.

Calendars have always served certain basic functions. They have counted days and accounted for the passing of time. Universally, calendars have revealed the needs of a particular society by focusing on such things as feast days and religious celebrations. In addition, calendars have performed some administrative functions. While it is true that calendars throughout time have been similar in many aspects, it is important to note that all societies have not related to time in the same manner. The purpose and the function of calendars in Europe differed fundamentally from that of the Kemetic calendar.

In European societies, time is marked by the clock for immediate time and by calendars for extended periods of time. A striking feature of time in Western societies is that it closely monitors and regulates the social affairs of men and is inflexible in its interpretation. The rigidity of Western time causes people to be singularly focused in a unilinear, unidimensional time and space.

The logical extension of this view finds Europeans unaware of the infinite cosmic time and space around them. The manifestation of time in the West can be seen as a force that controls the actions of men. Thus Western man is imprisoned by the exactness of time.

The African concept of time and marking of time differ drastically from their European counterparts. In the African world view, time and space are conceived as being multilinear and multidimensional. There is no fixed or rigid interpretation of here and now. Time is a simultaneous accounting of past, present, and future. The multiplicity of time thus frees African people from unrealistic and even unnatural time constraints. Men's lives are not regulated by a fixed time scheme from the cosmic whole. African people exist in time but are not bound by time. Time, in this sense, becomes infinite and frees the individual from societal controls.

The Kemetic calendar was not only a system for measuring days, seasons, and years, it included other astronomical cycles. This calendar was intimately connected to the greater cosmic clock. The top portion of the Kemetic calendar was an astronomical chart of constellation and other stars. The bottom was dedicated to a calendar of days, seasons, and so on. This arrangement gives reverence to the cosmic clock and prioritizes the African concept of time.

Kemites related to time in humanistic terms. They were less interested in the numerical counting of days and years and more interested in human relationships. Time was dated as a measure of the king's reign. There was no enumeration of days in abstract terms (numbers). All dates had meaning to Kemetic life and the natural environment.

The Coming Forth Of The Days Of The Year

Kemites were the first group of people, as far as we know, to have based the concept of the year on solar phenomena. They divided this year (or *renpet* as it is called in the ancient language) into 365 days that were further divided into 3 seasons, each season having 4 months, each month having 30 days consisting of 3 ten-day weeks. The year was completed by the addition of 5 extra days at the end of 12 equal months.

From the earliest times, it seems that the Kemites considered all their months to have 30 days each. No attempt seems to have been made to follow the length of the moon's period. (The moon's synodical period is approximately 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes.)

This first calendar was what may be called a *moving calendar.* This is due to the fact that the astronomical or solar year contains not only 365 days but a little less than 365 ¼ days. (The solar year is the mean duration of one

THE KEMETIC CALENDAR

First Season – Shemu

Month	Abed	Inundation	Coptic Name	Corresponding Gregorian Date
	Meso-Ra	Birth of Ra	Mesore	August
	Jehewty	*Ntr* of Wisdom/Knowledge	Techit	September
	Menkhet	The Third Month	Paophi	October
	Het Heru	The House of Heru	Hathor	October – November

Second Season – Peret

		Growing		
	Ka-Her-Ka	The Ka Over the Ka	Khoiak	November – December
	Shefbedet	The Sixth Month	Tobi	December – January
	Rekh Wer	The Great Burning	Meshir	January – February
	Rekh Nedjes	The Small Burning	Phamenoth	February – March

Third Season – Akhet

		Harvest		
	Renutet	*Ntr* of the Harvest	Pharmouti	March – April
	Khonsu	Khonsu	Pachons	April – May
	Paini	The Festival of the Valley	Payni	May – June
	Ipet	The One of Ipet	Epipi	June – July

complete revolution made by the earth around the sun: 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 45.44 seconds or 365.2421926 days.) Therefore, every year the dates of the calendar advanced 1/4 day ahead of the astronomical event that marked the beginning of the year. Eventually that event would occur on every day and in every month and during all seasons of the calendar. It took approximately 1,460 years for that event to occur again on the same calendar day that it began (4 x 365—the actual time is, however, a little longer).

Peret Sopdet

The event that marked the beginning of the year for the Kemites was the solar sidereal phenomena referred to by many modern astronomers as the heliacal rising of Sirius. (Heliacal rising means rising with the sun. Sirius is a star in the constellation of Canis Majorius.) Sirius was called Sopdet by the Kemites. This event, which occurs once every solar year, was called Peret Sopdet, **glyphs xxxxx** "Coming forth of Sopdet" in the ancient language. On the first occasion that the calendar was used, the Peret Sopdet occurred about the same time that the river Hapy (Nile River) began to rise to its highest point and also on a day closely approximate to the Summer Solstice (the Summer Solstice is the longest day in the year). Why, then, one might ask, did the Kemites choose the Peret Sopdet to begin the year rather than one of the other two equally important phenomena?

Of the three events, the Summer Solstice is the only *constant* from our position in space and time, whereas the other two occur at different times depending upon one's exact location on earth. The inundation of Hapy was not absolutely regular. This was first realized in the south of Kemet at Abu and Aswan and then at later dates in the northern regions. The heliacal rising of Sopdet does not take place at the same time everywhere. For example, it is visible on August 2 in Cairo, Egypt, while in Chicago, Illinois of the United States, it is visible on August 15. It is not even visible on the same day for the whole of Egypt because of the differences in latitude between north and south. For example, between Luxor and Cairo the difference can be as much as four days. It appears, then, that a starting date of either event would have caused different regions (nomes) to have a different New Year's Day. In ancient times the exact date chosen to mark the event was probably determined by the government for a specific latitude.

Renpet (Year)

The word for *year* in the ancient language is "renpet," depicted by a picture of a sprout growing out of the earth. Thus the year referred to agricultural phenomena.

From all the information on calendars of ancient Kemet available to us, it appears that the renpet was based upon the heliacal rising of Sopdet. In modern astronomy, a year based on the rising or setting of stars (actually the rotation of the earth with respect to the stars) is called a Sidereal Year. Due to the great accuracy obtainable by modern technology, we now know that the actual length of the Sidereal Year is 365.2563615 days. Yet it is doubtful that Kemetic astronomers knew the exact processional movement.

Kemites recognized that the year was longer than 365 days and corrected the calendar accordingly. A text or decree, which was found at the site of Tanis or Canopus in Kemet, enacted around 238 B.C.E., called for the periodic adjustment of the calendar to account for the extra amount of time embodied in the year. The following is written in the Decree of Canopus:

> Due to the change in the Peret Sopdet every four years and also of the other festivals which are celebrated in Shemu, at this time, which will come to be celebrated in Peret in the future, just as it happened in the times of the ancestors. Now when this occurs, since the year consists of 360 days plus the 5 days which is customary to add to them at the end, now 1 day shall be added every four years, (called) the Festival of the good doing *Nṯrs*, beginning from this day-it will be added to the five additional days (*hryu*) before the New Year. This will be done so that all men will know that we were a little short in the arrangement of the time of the year. Now the laws of the science of the skys were corrected.

Thus they added one day every four years. The fourth year would then contain 366 days to make up the time lost in the cycle. This is today called a leap year. They considered the year to be $365\frac{1}{4}$ days or 365.25000 days, which itself is only an approximation. In taking a period of $365\frac{1}{4}$ days as the length of the year, the length is overestimated by a little less than 11 minutes and 14 seconds, or more exactly by 0.0078 days. Thus every 128 years an error of one day accumulates, and over longer periods of time the error increases. Therefore the correction made at Canopus was only the first level of calendar correction from the data at hand.

Despite the fact that the Kemites knew the year to be more than 365 days, they continued to use the 365-day calendar and indeed preferred it. There is no evidence that they ever implemented the leap year that they invented. Their reasoning in maintaining the 365-day year is directly related to the pur-

pose of the calendar, which as mentioned earlier was to record several cosmic cycles.

The first of these cycles surveyed were the heliacal risings and their periodic return counted from a point on the equator, and that was considered as the constant. They divided the equatorial zone into 36 decans. A decan is a period of roughly ten days marked by the passage of constellations at the equatorial zone. They made the year to correspond to the 360 divisions of decans (36 x 10). Thus the first division of the year was $^{1}/_{360}$.

Realizing that roughly 5 days were needed to complete the year, they made the necessary correction by the addition of a second division or unit of 5 days. These additional days were called *ḥryw* renpet,  , "the days over the Year." This gave them an approximate total, having a true astronomical base of 365 days.

This calendar year was independent of terrestrial events. However, during the historical period of the Peret Sopdet, the Solstice and Inundation roughly coincided. We can say that there is a mean frequency of 365 days between successive inundations of Hapy. The present displacement of the Peret Sopdet from the Inundation and Summer Solstice is caused by the cycle of the procession of the earth's axis which amounts to 1 in 70 years (causing the stars to appear later each season). It takes 26,000 years for this cycle (Great Year) to complete itself and for the events to coincide again. This cycle may also have been incorporated into the calendar.

Another cycle was the longer Sopdet Year. This cycle consumes the quarter days actually present in each year. This cycle equals: 365 (days) x 4 (years) + 1 (day) = 1,461 days; and 365.25 days = 1 small year x 4 (years) = 1 long year (1,461 days). The Peret Sopdet slipped away from the months taking approximately 1,460 years for the two to coincide again. [For a more technical discussion on this topic, which is not included in this excerpt from *The Calendar Project,* see Rkhty Wimby Amen and Frederick A. Reese, *The Calendar Project* (New York: The Hunt Printing Company, 1987), Appendix, Part II].

In the spirit of simplification, the Kemites adopted the deca system: 3 seasons, 12 months, months of 3 decans, plus 5 days over. In this manner, they could maintain unchangeability and still keep a close approximation to the real sidereal year (whose exact value they may or may not have known). It was far simpler to have months of equal numbers than the artificial variation of days as the present Gregorian calendar in the West has, which produces changeability in endless confusion.

In order to determine the date for the Peret Sopdet on our calendar, we have chosen the site of the Giza Pyramids to mark the event, namely lat. 30° N. That site is known to have had great spiritual, geographical, and mathematical

significance for the Kemites. In 1987, the date that the heliacal rising of Sopdet at lat. 30° N will be visible with the naked eye will be August 2 (on the Gregorian calendar) in the morning twilight. [Reference is to the year that the article was originally published.]

The Kemetic calendar can be compared to a situation where several different clocks based on different phenomena are running simultaneously and the times they keep are averaged in order to incorporate them into one system. The lapse of days could be counted, and consideration could be given heliacal risings, solstices, equinoxes, Inundation, the long year, and the great year. Any astronomical event could be located with some precision (to the day), as could any calendar event in the course of the years, centuries, or into the future. If it had been used uninterruptedly since its creation, we could presently situate with absolute precision the position of any past event, cosmic event, or event signaled in a calendar that had occurred.

Now in this age of high science and technology, when we are able to determine with certain accuracy and precision the time of the movement of celestial bodies, it is fitting that we set our clocks and calendars to keep accurate time. This new Kemetic calendar records one cycle, the sidereal year, and it is based (directly) on the ancient calendar concept. The advantage is that we can now synchronize the calendar with natural phenomena, which will make the calendar practical for civil purposes. The nature of the society in which we live requires that information be available to everyone, that is, knowledge of the time of seasons, natural phenomena, and important events. The Reese Equation and the Reese Intercalation Law, which will allow for the proper insertion of leap years, will be incorporated into this calendar and thus give us the most accurate timekeeping method possible. Furthermore, the Reese Equation introduces a new constant.

The implementation of the new calendar will necessitate sacrifice of the long year (1,460 year cycle). It must have had important significance to our ancestors, which we cannot at this time ascertain with utter certainty. This cycle may have also contained a constant. It would be appropriate for our astronomers to keep a moving calendar, along with the new civil calendar which will be used by everyone.

Kemites lived their lives in the rhythm of these cycles:

Tr (Season)

Originally the seasons were tied to agricultural phenomena. The seasons are as follows:

First Season

Shemu ☵☉ depicted by a picture of a river and water—repre-

senting inundation
Second Season
Peret depicted by the word "to come forth"—growing
Third Season
Akhet  depicted by a field of growing plants—representing the idea of harvest

The agricultural system of Kemet depended on the waters of Hapy. The waters came from two sources: 1) the White (Nile) River which is a continuous flow and 2) the Blue (Nile) River, originating in the highlands of Ethiopia, which is a seasonal flow. The river was at its low point in June. Around July 19 (Julian), the water began to rise due to the monsoon rains in Ethiopia. From August through September the water reached a peak—the volume increasing as the water rose. The water from Ethiopia carried silt. This silt accumulated, making the land rich and fertile. At the end of September the water lowered and continued to do so into October. By early November, Hapy was back within its banks. (Due to the new Aswan Dam, the river no longer inundates.)

Once the months moved out of their seasons, it was no longer practical to call the seasons by their original names, so they came to be referred to as First, Second, and Third season. This situation was corrected at Canopus when a more accurate calendar was employed. At Canopus it happened that the Peret Sopdet was fixed in the season of Shemu, 2d month (Paini), Day 1 (corresponding to July 8, Julian). Thus, at that time, Shemu was the First Season. By the time the Copts adopted the calendar to the Julian system, the seasons were out of order. The Peret Sopdet occurred in the season of Akhet. Thus the Copts fixed the beginning of the year therein, as it is today in their calendar.

It is appropriate for Africans today to put the seasons back into their proper place, that is, corresponding to their agricultural significance. It would seem that the more natural order would be 1) Inundation, 2) Growing, and 3) Harvest. And, indeed, since the Peret Sopdet began the year and announced the inundation, so to speak, it follows that Shemu, "water" or "inundation," was originally the first of the seasons. This we can do today for two reasons: the first is the historical and logical place of Shemu as the first season; the second is the discovery by a young African scientist, of our time, of a new calendar measurement which will make it possible for the calendar and natural phenomena to always coincide.

Abed (Month)

The word in the Kemetic language for *month* is "abed." It is written with a picture of a moon or crescent. From the earliest times it seems that the months

were referred to by the number in their seasons. The following formula was used: name of the season plus the month number, that is, month I; month II; and so on. Thus the first month of the season of Akhet was written  , "Abed I of Akhet."

In the earliest calendars some of the month names were different than they were in the Late Period. As time went on, certain month names gave way to newer and more popular ones. Below are comparative lists of early and late month names.

Early	Late
Meso-Ra	Mesore
Jehewty	Techit
Menkhet	Paophi
Het-Heru	Athyr
Ka-her-ka	Choiak
Shefbedet	Tybi
Rekh Wr	Meshir
Rekh Nds	Phaemenoth
Renutet	Pharmouti
Khonsu	Pachons
Khenti Khet	Payni
Ipet	Epipi

In a calendar dating from 140 B.C.E., we see the following situation:

Menkhet had become Paophi
Shefbedet had become Tybi
Rekh Wr had become Meshir
Rekh Nḏs had become Pa-n-Imn-*ḥtp*
Renutet had become Pharmouti

It should be noted that several names have remained the same from time immemorial.

These later names have been retained by the Coptic Church (in their Coptic form) from ancient times. Concerning the use of the names in current times, we may wish to continue using the same today because they do instruct us concerning ancient celebrations and philosophical concepts. Therefore, the names of the months of our calendar are the same ones used by the Coptic Church, only they are given the older Kemetic pronunciation.

In the current Coptic calendar used by the Coptic Christian Church, the New Year's Day occurs in the month of Jehewty (in Coptic, *Thoth*) in the season of Shemu. At the time the Copts adopted the calendar they took the arrangement of the calendar without modifying anything. The calendar they adopted is the one that was used during the time of Augustus Caesar (30 B.C.E.–68 C.E.).

During the Ptolemaic occupation, Augustus, respecting tradition, instituted the first of Thoth in the season of Shemu as the first month and day. In the work of the Egyptologists Drioton and Vandier entitled "Egypte," we are informed that during the Persian period Thoth was the first month of the year. (The Persian period was from 525 to 332 B.C.E.)

Yet there are several examples of texts from the Twelfth to the Nineteenth Dynasties in which Meso-Ra was reckoned the first month of the Year. Faulkner in his *Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* gives the numerical order of the month and has Meso-Ra as the first month. Sir Alan Gardiner argues strongly that Meso-Ra is the first month of the year as indicated below:

> It is commemorated the moment when the sun-god *(Ntr)*, in his first act of rising, opened the succession of months and years, as the originator of which is so often eulogised. But the first rising of Re was also the instant of his 'birth' (MesoRe), the occasion of the earliest going forth . . . .We see how appropriately the first day of the year was accounted the birthday of Re.

Heru (Day)

The Kemites divided heru into 24 hours: 12 hours of light and 12 hours of darkness (night). Heru for them began at dawn and was reckoned from sunrise to sunset. In the ancient calendar each abed (month) had 30 heru, an additional 5 heru were added at the end of 12 equal abed. (There is no evidence that the days were numbered consecutively as is done on the Coptic calendar.) The abed was simply divided into 3 sets of 10 heru, namely 1–10; 11–20; and 21–30. Perhaps we can speak of a ten-day week.

Even though the ancient calendar was organized in this manner, we feel that it would be expedient for Africans, at this time, to employ the seven-day week established by the Christian Church in 321 C.E. for the purpose of easy conversion of our calendar to the Gregorian calendar now in use in the Western world. Once our own calendar is firmly established, we can abandon the seven-day week altogether, if desired.

In our calendar the heru were represented by the sun sign (which is one way of writing heru in the ancient language). The lines underneath indicate the number of the heru from 1–7. Thus, Heru 1 corresponds to Saturday. If one wishes to call the days of the week, they are Heru plus the number of the day:

Sunday	=	Heru-wa	Wednesday	=	Heru-fedu
Monday	=	Heru-senu	Thursday	=	Heru-diu
Tuesday	=	Heru-shomt	Friday	=	Heru-sisu
			Saturday	=	Heru-sefek

Names do exist for every day of the month; however, this nomenclature is not included in this book. It is important to designate the days of the week as presented here because every time we speak the names of the days according to the Gregorian calendar we evoke Indo-European-Saxon gods:

Sunday	=	Sun's day
Monday	=	Moon's day
Tuesday	=	Tiw's day
Wednesday	=	Woden's day
Thursday	=	Thor's day
Friday	=	Frigg's day
Saturday	=	Saturn's day

This evocation has the effect of strengthening European cultural influence in our lives. We must use our own names because language is central to the liberation of an African world view.

A Brief History of Western Calendars

The history of Western calendars is complex and at times very confusing because they have gone through many changes and continue to do so. The Mediterranean civilizations (including Greece, Canaan, and Rome) originally reckoned time according to the moon's synodical period. (The lunar year consists of 354 days.) The ancient Hebrews tried to combine the lunar and solar year. This was done by introducing an intercalary month of varying months every two or three years. The Greek calendar was also lunar. The Greeks, however, were never successful in calendar construction. It is to the Romans that the West owes its calendar concept.

The ancient Romans originally conceived of a year consisting of five lunar months, and later they developed a ten-month year. In 713 B.C., a Roman

scientist named Numa Pompilius attempted the well-nigh impossible task of harmonizing the solar and lunar year to the then current 10-month year. This could only be accomplished by periodic intercalations. (Intercalation means the insertion of an additional day, days, or month into the ordinary or normal year.) The result of this is an intercalated space of time. It is here where the confusion begins.

Numa introduced two new months, Januarius and Februarius, into the old lunar calendar. March had been the first month, followed by April, May, June, Quintilius, Sextilius, Septembris, Octobris, Novembris, and the tenth month was Decemberis. Each month had either 29 or 31 days due to the Roman superstition that even numbers were unlucky. The event that marked the beginning of the Roman year was the Spring Equinox, March 25. The Spring Equinox continued to be the New Year's Day throughout the Western world up until 1753.

The pontiffs and priests in Rome were entrusted to make the necessary periodic adjustments of the calendar. However, they constantly abused this power for their own political ends. For example, they would extend or shorten months or add extra months for political motives of various kinds such as shortening or lengthening the term of a magistrate according to their pleasure or causing the gain or loss of revenue according to the length of the year fixed by them. In short, they modified intercalations according to their will.

The Julian Calendar

The modern Western calendar dates from the time of Julius Caesar. Julius wanted to stop the abuse of the calendar. Thus, he commissioned a famous astronomer from Kemet named Sosigenes to produce a calendar for Rome based upon the principle of the Kemetic calendar, which he believed was the most perfect ever constructed. Julius simply stole the Kemetic calendar wholesale, without any modification or improvement whatsoever.

This calendar, known as the Julian Calendar, is in general use in the Western world today. It has a year consisting of $365\frac{1}{4}$ days (365 days, 6 hours) divided into 12 months, each month having 30 or 31 days with the exception of February which has 28 days. Every fourth year, the leap year, an extra day is added. In the leap year, February has 29 days. Thus the world owes its calendar to Kemet and to Africa.

Ten years after the establishment of the Julian Calendar, Julius was assassinated and the reign of Augustus began. Augustus broke with the leap year rule and actually eliminated certain leap years. He also changed the name of the month *Sextilis* to *August,* after himself. To the month August he added an extra day, which is why August has 31 days.

The next disruption in the calendar occurred under Constantine in the year 321 A.D. The Christians introduced a 7-day week. The idea of the seven-day week is an aspect of the religious system of the Jews, commemorating the seven days associated with the creation of the heavens and earth by God: six days of creation and the seventh day was the Sabbath (a day of rest). This week is only relevant to Christians and not to the other people of the world. Most unfortunately, however, it is not commensurate with the year or the month. The weekdays, therefore, change their positions in the months and years in an endless confusion. Julian dates are counted consecutively, making the system independent of the length of months of the year.

The Gregorian Calendar

In 1582 Pope Gregory XIII made another significant change to the calendar. The astronomers of this time discovered a problem, namely, that the Julian year of 365 days and 6 hours was slightly longer than the actual solar-sidereal year. Therefore, over the years the Spring Equinox had become retarded in the calendar. So, Pope Gregory XIII employed the astronomer Aloysius Lilius and the scientist Christopher Clavius to correct the calendar. They deleted 10 days and applied a new leap year rule of only using century years divisible by 400, and the Spring Equinox was put back to March 21.

The calendar is called the Gregorian Calendar, and it is the same calendar in use today. The Gregorian year averages 365.2425 days. It was not until 1582 A.D. that some of the Western countries began to adopt this Gregorian calendar. Great Britain and what became the United States did not adopt it until 1752, and that was after a great struggle brought about by protest and riots by the general populace against the calendar.

The Western calendars never seem to have been actual timekeeping tools, but rather a political mechanism for keeping the peoples of the planet under their control. It is time to abandon the Western calendar altogether and to conceptualize time in a manner consistent with African reality. (The West will itself abandon the Gregorian calendar, when it is politically expedient to do so.)

The Era and Chronology

According to *Webster's Dictionary,* an era is "a period of time reckoned from some particular date or epoch" or "a chronological order or system of notation, computed from a given date as basis." That date marks an event of great significance in the history of a given people. The custom of designating an Era has always been popular among European people.

For the Hebrews, the Era was considered to date from the year of Creation, or 3761 B.C. by the Western calendar. The year 1987 A.D. corresponds to the Jewish year 5747–48 A.M. The Coptic calendar begins with the Era of Diocletian, or the Era of the Martyrs, which commenced on August 29 of the year 284 B.C. This era is so called in memory of the cruel persecutions exercised on the Christians by Emperor Diocletian. An event called the Hegira, the flight of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 B.C., begins the Islamic Era. This era is used throughout the Muslim world.

The idea of a Christian Era for the chronological reckoning of years was conceived by a Roman abbot named Dionysius Exiguus in 532 A.D. Dionysius proposed that the calendar begin with the birth of Christ. He designated the first year of this era of Christ as A.D. 1—A.D. being the abbreviation for anno Domini, "in the year of the Lord." He called the immediately preceding year B.C. 1—B.C. somehow being negative time, since it is counted backward from the starting point. There was no year zero in this system.

The purpose of Dionysius's work was to prepare a table for determining the date of Easter. His system was prepared as a continuation of a previous table based on the Era of Diocletian. He adopted 248 Diocletian Era to A.D. 532. How he determined this correspondence is not known.

It is not until 748 A.D. that one finds the earliest known documentary use of the Christian Era. In 879 Charles III of Germany was the first ruler to add "In the Year of Our Lord" to the date of his reign. The earliest known use in a document of *anno Domini* occurred in 1219. Essentially, it was during the 13th century A.D. that this system of chronological dating came into use by the Christian world.

The Kemites had no dating by eras in the modern sense of the word. The year was the longest unit of time used for chronological reckoning. For them, time was more a composition of events that had occurred, that were taking place, or that were yet to occur. The day, month, and year were reckoned according to significant events therein. Following are three examples of the Kemetic method of reckoning the year found on the Palermo Stone, an ancient king's list:

Year 3 – Birth of the two children of the King of Lower Kemet
Year 4 – Design of the House (called): "Mighty-of-the-*Ntrs*"
Year 9 – First occurrence of Feast of Jet

Later, the year came to be connected to a reigning king. The first year of any given king's reign was called Year 1, counted consecutively for each year

of the reign. A king's successor would begin his reign anew with Year 1. The following is an example from two successive reigns:

> Year 9 under the servant of the Nisut Bity Djoser-ka-Ra
> Year 2 second month of Akhet, day 15 under the servant of Heru, Nisut Bity Jehewty Mosis (Thothmosis I)

One could say that each king's reign was kind of an era.

The Kemites had no desire for continuous counting for chronological purposes. This is, in fact, a European concept. Indeed, for the Kemites, there was no past, present, or future, but rather a simultaneous past, present, future time. Time is relative to one's awareness. Perhaps this is why sometimes kings would proclaim as their own the deeds of their predecessors. They understood the significance of the event(s) in its (their) timelessness and spacelessness—in other words, outside time and space.

Perhaps the only thing that can be compared with the European concept of Era is what I will call a *Sothic Era.* For, according to Censorinus, the Greeks counted the years in the Sothic Era. Censorinus wrote in his time: "we are in the hundredth year of the solar year, the year of God."

In keeping with the Western calendar and Era tradition, as a first step in taking control of our own time, African scholars first attempted a change in the Western era as a transitional step en route to determining our own Era. It was suggested by the scholars at the Kemetic Institute that an appropriate event with which to begin our calendar could be the union of the two lands under Menes.

The date was based on the probable time of the Menes unification and coronation as pharaoh of the "Union of the Two Lands, Tawi," which probably coincided with a Sothic Year (1,460 regular years). According to the Egyptologists, a Sothic Year occurred around 140–41 C.E. Therefore, it must have also occurred circa 1320, 2780, 3388, 4238, 5705, 7471 B.C.E., and so on.

It is known from the Fifth Dynasty "Pyramid Text" that the calendar of 365 days was then already in existence. The Egyptologists have reasoned that the calendar was probably introduced around 2781 B.C.E., and that the First Dynasty began a little earlier—a mean time would be circa 3100 B.C.E.

Another statement which can be considered in any discussion of Kemetic chronology is the statement made by Plato in his *Timaeus* (c. 332 B.C.E.) concerning the antiquity of Kemetic civilization. Therein, it is written in the words of the Kemetic Priests: "And the duration of our civilization as set down in our sacred writings is 8000 years old."

If, however, we go back to dates admitted by the European scholars, we can say that the founding of Kemet as Tawi (i.e., as an astronomical and terrestrial event) occurred no later than what is now called 4220 B.C.E. Adding 1987, we get our date 6207 S.M. (S.M. means Shemsu Menes, "Following Menes"). That means that in 1987 year 1 of our new Kemetic era would have been 6,207 years ago (in 1997 it would be 6,217 year ago).

It is certain that we, African people, need our own calendar, and establishing an Era is a positive step in that direction. We, at the Kemetic Institute, earlier proposed the tentative use of the earliest approximate date derived by the Egyptologists, namely, 4220 B.C.E. (to be used tentatively until the time comes when we can research further time and dating for ourselves) as an orientation date for African people worldwide. This date was adopted as our orientation date by the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC) when it was founded in 1984. Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop favorably commented on its use in *Civilization Ou Barbarie* and the *Journal of African Civilizations.* However, in order to do this work, we need a truly scientific approach to time measurement. To arrive at the era 6207 S.M., we employed the Western calendar system of measuring time, now used throughout the world. We had not, at that time, studied or analyzed the origin of that system in order to determine its basis and correctness. In light of Brother Reese's work, our dating will have to be revised. However, we feel it would be appropriate that ASCAC continue to use the tentative date, especially on correspondences and conference announcements, until revision can be made. Now, we have more insight into the system upon which these previous analyses were made, and we need to adjust our reckoning accordingly.

Let us be clear. The date chosen by the German and American chronologists, on which the entire chronology rests, namely 139–40 C.E., is questionable, to say the least. According to Professor James Breasted, in *Ancient Records,* vol. 1, p. 30, "we know from the use of the Egyptian year by classical astronomers and mathematicians that the calendar coincided with the Sothic year, and that new Sothic cycle began, some time in the period 140–41 to 143–44 A.D."

Breasted was referring to information given by Edward Meyer in his work on chronology. Meyer derived the date 140 C.E. from studying the work of the Latin scholar Censorinus. At the time Censorinus wrote, 238 C.E., dating by the Christian Era had not yet been invented. That idea was not conceived until three centuries later in 532 C.E. Censorinus, in his classic work, which happens to be the only work by a European from antiquity that contains any copious collection of dates, wrote:

> The eras of the Egyptians always begin on the first day of the month of Thoth, a day which, this present year, corresponds to the 7th calends of July, whilst a hundred years ago, under the Second Consulate of the Emperor Antoninus Pius and of Brutius Praesena, this same day corresponds to the 12th of the calends of August, the ordinary epoch of the rising of the Canicular star in Egypt. Thus we see that we are in the hundredth year of this Annus Magnus, which I have stated above, is called the solar year and the Year of God.

Who, then, inserted the year 140 C.E. into this translation? This is a most serious point to be studied.

The concern of European chronology has always been to synchronize Kemetic dates with those of Near Eastern and biblical dates. Given the fact that creation occurred circa 3761 B.C.E. and Abraham lived circa 2000–1825 B.C.E., according to biblical chronology, chronologists at first focused on a relatively short time frame of reference and attempted to fit all history therein. Oddly enough, thanks to new understanding and techniques in archaeology, the history of Kemet has becomes older. Our purpose is, however, not comparative, but simply to understand our past.

We do not here attempt to establish an era for our calendar or a chronology for Kemet. That will be the task of a larger body of African scholars. What we do suggest is that other types of Eras (Sothic era, short significant periods) and other types of chronology (relative chronology-continuous-comparative reckoning of events, etc.) be considered.

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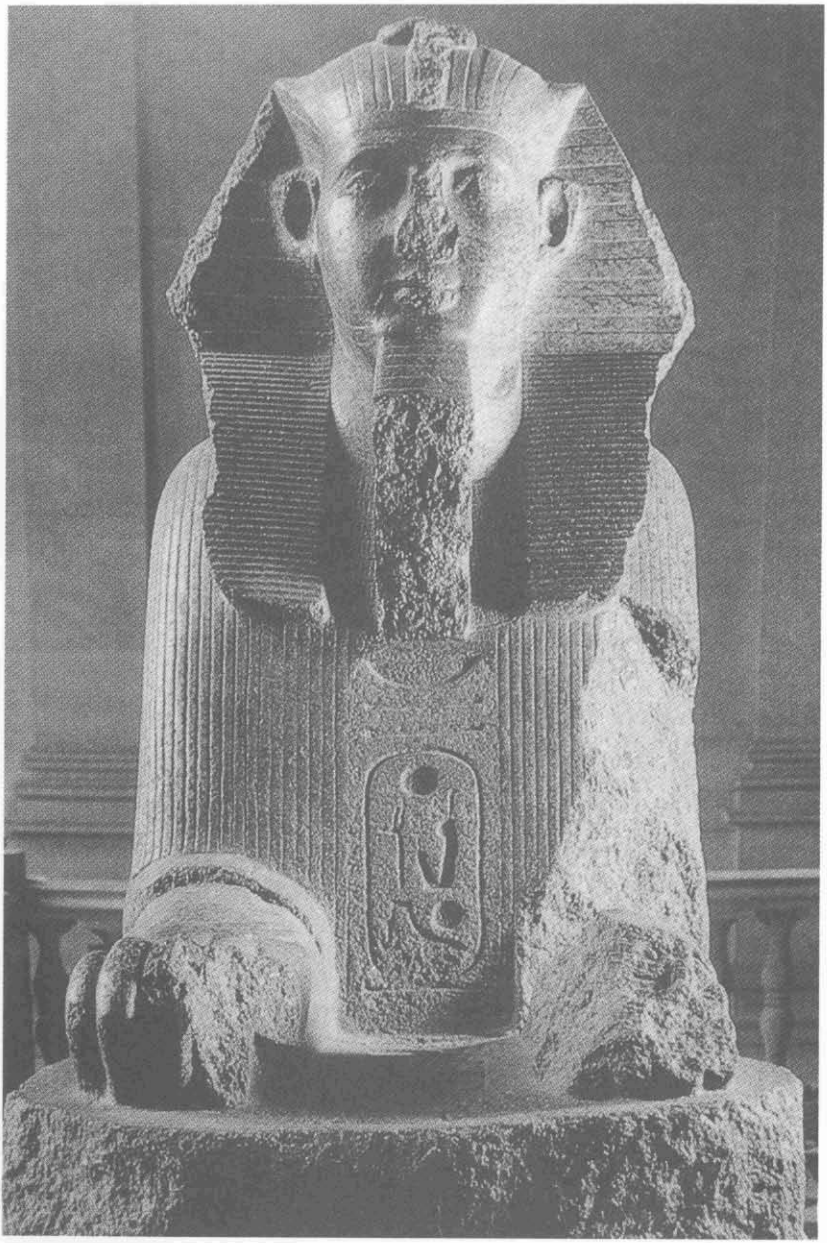
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Part III
Patterns of African-Centered History



King Amenemhet IV
Photo by Wayne Chandler

Chapter 6

Waset

The Eye of Ra and the Abode of Maat

The Pinnacle of Black Leadership in the Ancient World

By Asa G. Hilliard III

Thebes [Waset] is holier than any city. Water and land began to exist there . . . . (All cities) are founded after her true name; they are called 'cities' after (her) name, and they are placed under the watch of Thebes [Waset], the Eye of Ra.

The Wicked broke loose from Thebes [Waset]. She is the mistress of cities, mightier than any city. She gives the country to one single Master by her victory, she who wields the bow and holds the spear. Near her there is no fighting, for her might is too great. Every city takes pride in her name; she is their mistress, being more powerful than they.

This is (the order) which issued from the mouth of Ra. The enemy of Ra is reduced to ashes, and all belongs to Thebes [Waset]—Upper and Lower Egypt [Kemet], heaven and earth, the Lower World with its shores, its waters, and its mountains, and all that is brought by the Ocean and the Nile. All that existed for Geb grows for her, and all belongs to her in peace, wherever the Sun goes round. Every land pays tribute to her as a vassal, for she is the Eye of Ra, which none resists .

.....

Happy is he who comes to die at Thebes [Waset], the abode of Justice [Maat], the place of Silence . . . . Evil-doers come not here into the places of Justice [Maat] . . . . Happiness to him who comes to die here! He will be a divine soul!

Nineteenth Dynasty Papyrus—Moret, 1972

Reprinted with minor changes from *Egypt Revisited, Journal of African Civilization*, ed. Ivan Van Sertima and Larry Williams (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1989): 211–238 by permission of the author and publisher.

The origin of Kemetic (ancient Egyptian) civilization is lost in antiquity. Civilization appears full blown at the beginning of Kemet as a nation and before the First Dynasty, circa 3100 B.C.E. Writing, a solar calendar (virtually the same one in use today), sophisticated astronomy, the world's parent religion, and so on were all in place.

The developmental period for this civilization must have taken thousands of years. Mer-en-Jehewty (Manetho), a Kemetic scholar who lived during the Greek period, said that Kemet was over thirty thousand years old. Kemet lasted as a political entity for nearly three thousand years, and its culture was unbroken for much longer than that. Not only did this culture begin many thousands of years before the establishment of Kemet, the culture remained intact throughout the entire life of the nation and for hundreds of years after the end of its sovereignty. This record is unmatched in human history!

The center of power, leadership, and spirituality was in the deep south of the nation during most of Kemet's existence. In the beginning, although the capital of the southern king, Mena, was located strategically at the apex of the Nile Delta (near present-day Cairo) in Menefer (Memphis), the southern Holy City of *Abḏw* (Abydos) remained sacred all the way through the Middle and the New Kingdoms. The head or the heart of Wsir (Osiris) was said to be buried there in a monumental tomb made with gigantic limestone blocks. The ruins of this magnificent tomb are still there, and they date to the Old Kingdom. The New Kingdom temple of Seti I and Rameses II of the Middle Kingdom are adjacent to it. During the early dynasties, all kings had a tomb at *Abḏw*, even if they had one in the north at the Saqqara cemetery.

During the Middle Kingdom, circa 2100 B.C.E., the center of government and the center of power came to reside in what was to become the greatest city in the richest and most powerful nation of the ancient world, Waset.[1] In Medew Netcher (hieroglyphs), Waset literally means the place or seat of power. It was so great that Homer would sing its praises in *The Iliad* as the "hundred gated" city as late as 850 B.C.E. During the time of King Amenhotep III and Queen Tiy, Waset had a population of one million out of the nation of four million people.[2] Waset (Luxor), located nearly four hundred miles directly south of Cairo, today hosts the remains of the finest temples of the ancient world: Ipet Reset (Luxor Temple) and Ipet Sut (Karnak Temple). Both of these magnificent temples, which served as religious and educational institutions, were built almost entirely in the Grand Golden Age (The New Kingdom).

1. Leonard Cottrell, *Lady of the Two Lands: Five Queens of Ancient Egypt* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1967).

2. P. H. Newby, *Warrior Pharaohs: The Rise and Fall of the Egyptian Empire* (London: Faber and Faber, 1980), 40, 103.

Waset was also referred to in ancient times as Niwt (The City). The Hebrews later called it No or No Amon. Chancellor Williams called it Nowe or Wose. The Greeks who renamed everything in Kemet giving them Greek names, including the kings and queens, renamed the city "Thebia," presumably after another of its Kemetic names, "Tapet." From Thebai we get the name "Thebes."[3] After the Greco-Roman period, the great Asian immigration occurred. The Arabs gave the city the name L'Quqsor, meaning "The Palaces," probably because they believed the temples to be palaces. This name was Europeanized to "Luxor," the name that it has today.

No one knew how old Waset was. One Nineteenth Dynasty poet said that Waset had existed since the beginning of time.[4] However old Waset was, it did not become prominent in the written records and as the political center of Kemet until the Middle Kingdom.

In this essay, we will look more closely at the remarkable role that Waset played in the leadership of Kemet and the known world. At the same time, we will look more closely at selected great kings, queens, and high priests who ruled during the Waset years. This is important from an African perspective since we have in the images of these royal and noble persons the best evidence to support the argument that it was indigenous black Africans who always led their people, the people of Kemet, during Kemet's finest millennium.

On Chronology

To understand Kemetic history and the place of Waset in it, it is important to keep two things clearly in mind. First, the political control of dynastic Kemet was in the hands of Kemetic people for nearly all of Kemetic history from 3100 B.C.E. to the Persian conquest in 525 B.C.E. Regarding this history, Egyptologists have accepted a division that has three *kingdoms* and three *periods* (the time in between the kingdoms). Kemetic scholars (African-centered) prefer to call the kingdoms Golden Ages. The First Golden Age, the *Old Kingdom* (the Pyramid Age), was from the Third to the Sixth Dynasty (2700–2160 B.C.E.). It was followed by a period of disorder that is called the *First Intermediate Period.* The Second Golden Age was the *Middle Kingdom,* the age of classical literature. This period included the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties (2040–1784 B.C.E.). It was followed by the *Second Intermediate Period,* a period of disorder within which occurred a short (150 year) foreign inva-

3. John Anthony West, *The Travelers Key to Ancient Egypt* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 236.

4. Elizabeth Riefstahl, *Thebes in the Time of Amunhotep III* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma, 1964), 6.

sion of Asian nomads. They left no significant contributions to Kemetic culture.[5]

The Third Golden Age, which included the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties (1554–1070 B.C.E.), is called the *New Kingdom* (The Grand Golden Age). It was followed by a Late Period of declining conditions. Traditional Egyptology has designated the Twenty-fifth Dynasty (760–657 B.C.E.) as a period. However, it should be designated as the Last Golden Age, the *Late Kingdom* (a Resurrection Kingdom), since that is how it saw itself. That is how it behaved, drawing its cultural inspiration from its ancestors, acting to purify the deteriorated forms of Kemetic culture. The rulers of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty went back to the Middle Kingdom for its cultural models. The Shabaka Text (Memphite Theology) is a literary example of the return to the earlier cultural traditions by Twenty-fifth Dynasty leaders. Therefore, the last three Golden Ages, including the greatest of the Golden Ages, were ruled from Waset either physically, as in the case of the Second and Third Golden Ages, or culturally, as in the case of the Fourth Golden Age.

The second thing to remember is that Kemetic culture preceded, remained intact throughout, and succeeded all the intermediate and late "periods" of dynastic political rule. In other words, even under the rule of conquerors, the Kemetic way of life, its culture, remained unbroken and profoundly influential internationally for more than three thousand years. It was not to be overcome until the massive immigration into the Hapi (Nile) Valley of an Asiatic, Arabic-speaking population with the new religion of Islam, circa seventh century C.E.

Kemet's purest and loftiest indigenous cultural forms were under the Golden Ages or Kingdoms. It was during these ages of kingdoms, not the periods, that the greatest growth and acceleration of cultural development happened.

The Primary Kings, Queens, and High Priests of Waset

Now we can see the indigenous Kemites and their roles more clearly. I have chosen to write in detail about the Golden Ages and to show photographs of *only the most significant kings, queens, and high priests who ruled from Waset.* This approach allows for an emphasis on the empirical evidence for the racial makeup of Kemet. For we can see clearly with our own eyes that *"racial" identity, as far as it can be determined from the art and mummies, is least ambiguous when it comes to the most important royal figures!* However,

5. George Steindorff and Keith C. Seele, *When Egypt Ruled the East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 25.

in reviewing this type of evidence, we must guard against being duped by restoration projects which leave figures anglicized.

While we show pictures of rulers and nobles, we must not forget that the population of the Hapi Valley was predominantly "black" during the whole of the dynastic period as attested to by eyewitnesses and by studies of skeletal remains (Diop 1987) and by paintings and carvings.

Any visitor to Egypt today can see that in the bustling city of Cairo, a city of nearly thirteen million, the population is very mixed racially. Within many families, there is that range in hue from coal black to pallid white. As one moves up the Nile, there is an unmistakable browning of the population, especially noticeable at Luxor. By the time one reaches Edfu, Kom Ombo, and Aswan, six hundred miles south of Cairo, the population is almost wholly "Nubian," and mainly dark-skinned. And this is after nearly fifteen hundred years of heavy mixing!

The Middle Kingdom 2040 to 1784 B.C.E.

Each major city or nome in Kemet had its own name for the Creator. In each case, the Creator was associated with a maternal deity who was like a Virgin Mother, who with the Creator has a Son. With the rise of Waset at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, the whole nation adopted the name of Waset's God, "Amun," "Amon," or "Amen." Strictly speaking, it is not actually a name of the Creator but a description of the Creator's location. Amen means "The Hidden Creator whose real name is unknown." Later the Greeks would identify Amen with Zeus, referring to him as Zeus-Amon, and they would call the city of Waset the city of Zeus.

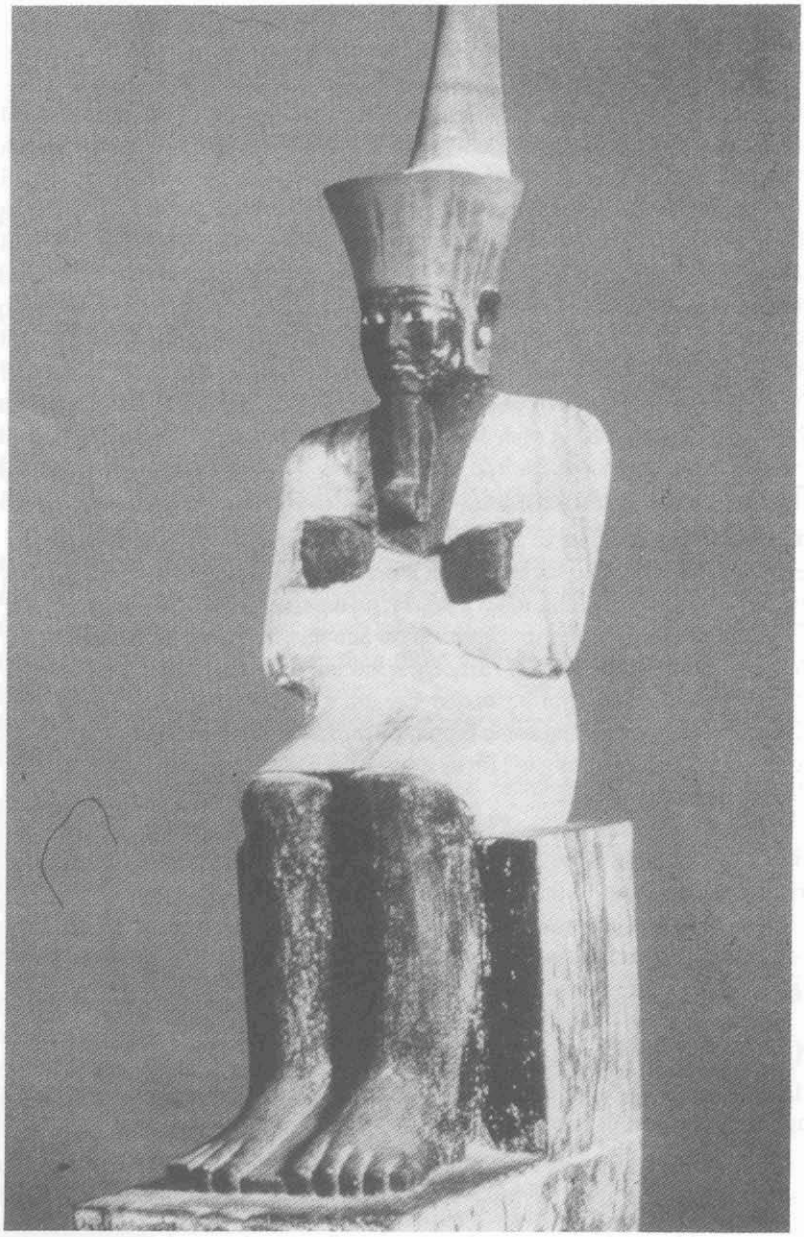
Amen of Waset was wed to Mut, the Holy Mother. They have a Son who was called Khonsu. This was the Waset (and the national) Holy Family or Triad. From the start of the Middle Kingdom, the Amen Priesthood centered at Waset held power through the Greco-Roman Period. In some cases, they even held sufficient power to discipline the king. Even during periods of foreign invasions, these southern priests kept much of their power.

Mentuhotep II (2010–1998 B.C.E.)

Of the Eleventh Dynasty kings, Mentuhotep II is regarded as the greatest king and founder of the dynasty.[6]

> These first kings of the Eleventh Dynasty, Mentuhotep I and Intefs I, II, and III, had small claim to that grandiose title [King of Upper and Lower Kemet], though they gradually gained control of the

6. Jill Kamil, *Luxor: A Guide to Ancient Thebes*, 2d ed. (London: Longman, 1977), 12.



Mentuhotep II

> Nile Valley to the southern borders of Egypt and began to push the Herakleopolitan kings northward. It was not until about 2040 B.C. that a king called Neb-hepetre Montuhotep II finally routed the Herakleopolitans and reunited the two lands.[7]

The mummy of Mentuhotep II is not shown here. However, his statue reveals that he was almost "coal black" in complexion.

Queen Hatshepsut's dazzling Eighteenth Dynasty mortuary temple is a copy of a smaller temple beside it that was built for Mentuhotep II in the Eleventh Dynasty.[8] The old name for this Temple was Djeseru, meaning "The Holy." Hatshepsut called it Djeser-djeseru, meaning "The Holy of Holies." The two temples together were called Djesereti, meaning simply "The Two Holies." Today the site is called by the Arabic name, Dier El-Bahri.

It must be recalled at this time that Kemet had been the real naval power of the world for at least five hundred years. For example, Snefru, first king of the Fourth Dynasty, sent forty large ships in a fleet to Lebanon.[9] His son Khufu, builder of the Great Pyramid, was also the builder of *a 140 foot long ship* that is almost completely intact today. It is on display next to the Great Pyramid! Expeditions to Punt (Somaliland) had been conducted from Kemet at least as early as the Fifth Dynasty by King Assa Djedkara. There were many of these expeditions.[10] We may conclude, therefore, that the influence of the Eleventh Dynasty extended far beyond the borders of Kemet during the Reign of Mentuhotep II.

Let us now move to the Twelfth Dynasty (2592–2568 B.C.E.), which is still in the Middle Kingdom. A Middle Kingdom text, "The Prophecy of Neferti," emphasized the southern origin of King Amenemhet. King Snefru of the Fourth Dynasty (2592–2568 B.C.E.) is said to have requested of the Priest Neferti of Bastet that he prophesy concerning the future of Kemet. One can understand this great king, the builder of the first true pyramid, the founder of the Dynasty, and the father of King Khufu, as he wonders if the greatness of the kingdom would last for ages. Living in the first Golden Age, the Pyramid Age, he was clearly the king without peer anywhere in the world.

An Eighteenth Dynasty manuscript, P. Leningrad 1116B, is the earliest surviving record of Neferti's response to Snefru. In this pseudo-prophectic text, Neferti foreshadows the disintegration of the power of the central gov-

7. Riefstahl, *Thebes,* 16.

8. Simpkins Splendor of Egypt, *The Temple of Hatshepsut* (Cairo, n.d.)

9. Steindorff, *Egypt Ruled East,* 50.

10. Newby, *Warrior Pharaohs,* 49, 54; John Rose, "The Sons of Re," *Cartouches of the Kings of Egypt* (Cheshire, Great Britain: JR-T Deanprint Ltd, 1985).

ernment in the Old Kingdom, to be followed by what came to be known as the First Intermediate Period.

> Rise against what is before you!
> Lo, the great no longer rule the land,
> What was made has been unmade,
> Re should begin to recreate!
> The land is quite perished, no remnant is left,
> Not the black of a nail is spared from its fate.
> (Yet) while the land suffers, none care for it
> None speak, none shed tears: 'How fares this Land!'
> The sundisk, covered, shines not for people to see,
> One cannot live when clouds conceal,
> All are numb from the lack of it.[11]

Neferti continues the gloomy prophesy with specific reference to the identity of the alien destroyers and even the conditions which permitted the alien destroyers to enter Kemet.

> A *strange bird will breed in the Delta marsh,*
> Having made its nest beside the people,
> The people having let it approach by default.
> Then perish those delightful things,
> The fishpond's full of fish-eaters,
> Teeming with fish and fowl,
> All happiness has vanished,
> The land is bowed down in distress,
> Owing to those feeders,
> Asiatics who roam the land.
> Foes have arisen in the East,
> *Asiatics have come down to Egypt.*[12]
> .....

Then Neferti prophesies a dramatic turnabout. At the very moment of deepest despair a redeemer will arise. He predicts that the deliverer will be none other than Amenemhet, a Nubian King.

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11. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature,* vol. I, *The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 141. (emphasis added)
12. Ibid. (emphasis added)

Then a king will come from the South,
Ameny, the justified, by name,
Son of a woman of Ta-Seti, child of Upper Egypt
He will take the white crown,
He will take the red crown;
He will join the Two Might Ones . . . .
Rejoice, O people of his time.
The son of man will make his name for all eternity!
The evil-minded, the treason plotters,
They suppress their speech in fear of him;
Asiatics will fall to his sword,
Libyans will fall to his flame,
Rebels to his wrath, traitors to his might,
As the serpent on his brow subdues the rebels for him.
One will build the Walls-of-the-Ruler,
To bar Asiatics from entering Egypt:
They shall beg water as supplicants,
So as to let their cattle drink.
Then order will return to its seat,
While chaos is driven away.
Rejoice he who may behold, he who may attend the king!
And he who is wise will libate for me,
When he sees fulfilled what I have spoken![13]

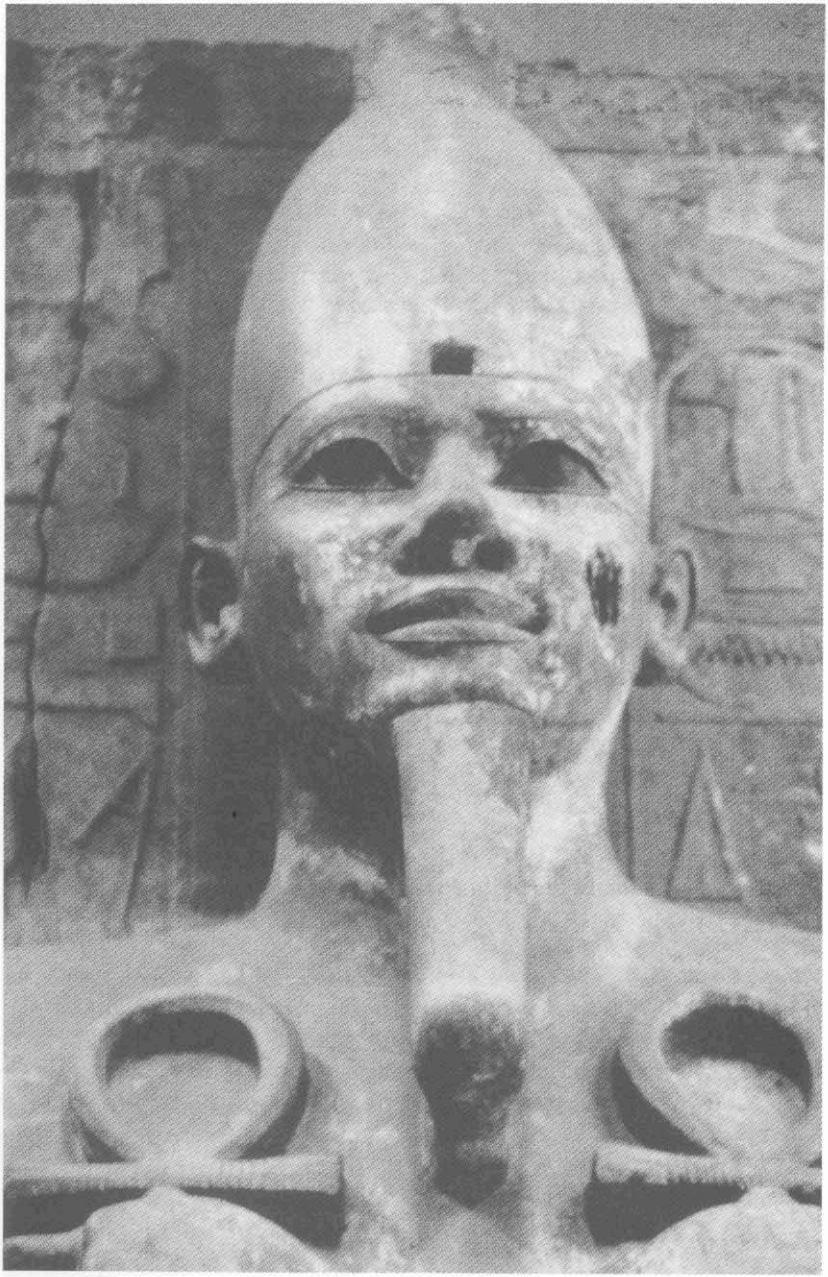
Of course this psuedo-prophecy was fulfilled, Amenemhet (1991–1962 B.C.E.) being the founder of the Twelfth Dynasty. He was followed by two great kings in this dynasty. In year 20 of his reign, Amenemhet established the practice of co-regency, sharing power with his son Senwosret for approximately ten years.

Senwosret I (1971–1927 B.C.E.)

One of the greatest kings of the Twelfth Dynasty was Kheperkara Senwosret I. He is identified by Bernal as the African king who is mentioned in the ancient Greek legends, King Kecrops. Kecrops is important in that he was said by the Greeks to be the founder of the Greek city-state, Athens. Senwosret's predecessor, Amenemhet I, founder of the Twelfth Dynasty, was leader during a significant rise in Kemet's international power and influence.

This sphere of power and influence included the Red Sea as far south as Punt and what today we call the Mediterranean,that is, Libya, Palestine, Syria, Crete, the Aegean Islands, and even the mainland of Greece itself![14] Senwosret inherited this great legacy.

13. Ibid., 143–144. (emphasis added)
14. Kamil, 1976.

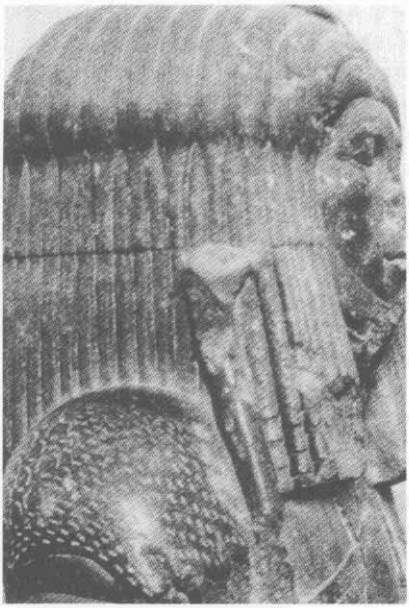


Senwosret I

A beautiful "White Chapel" was built for this king at Waset on the site of the Ipet Sut Temple (Karnak). It still survives and can be seen, reconstructed from buried fragments, in a slightly new location inside the great Ipet Sut Temple in Waset (Luxor). This White Chapel was actually the earliest surviving building of the greatest university in the ancient world.



Amenemhet III
front view



Amenemhet III
side view

Amenemhet III (1843–1797 B.C.E.)

Another of the most important kings of the Twelfth Dynasty was Amenemhet III. Bernal identifies him with the legendary Memnon from the Greek Heroic Age. Greeks who came to visit Kemet apparently expected to find evidence of their "Memnon." Since no Greek is known to have learned how to read the Medew Netcher (hieroglyphs), they could not find the real Amenemhet III. As a result, they made a mistake and identified the two Eighteenth Dynasty colossal statues of Amenhotep III on the west bank of the Hapi (Nile) opposite Waset as "Memnon." Amenemhet was also the king who built the famous Labyrinth.

It is important to recall here that Kemet was established or liberated from the south for each of its Golden Ages or Kingdoms. Mena, who in the First Dynasty founded the Old Kingdom, was a Southerner. The Intef and Mentuhotep, founders of the Middle Kingdom, were Southerners. Sequenenre Tao (1575–1560 B.C.E.), the Seventeenth Dynasty liberator who started the war of liberation and made possible the founding of the New Kingdom, was a Southerner. The whole royal family of the New Kingdom was of Southern origin. Finally, the Twenty-Fifth Dynasty, the Late Kingdom (the Restoration Kingdom), was initiated by Southerners from the deep south at Napata and was ruled from the south.

The Kemites regarded themselves as Southerners. Their legends tell of their origins in the south at the sources of the Hapi. Rose, in *The Sons of Re,* cites the Edfu text as authority for the legend of a southern origin of the predynastic Kemites. The land "up south" was called *Ta Ntr,* or the land of God. They faced south to get their bearings. The word for *left hand* and the word for *east* are the same, as are the words for *right hand* and *west.*[15] The southern part of Kemet was the most frequent place of origin for the kings.[16]

With this information and insight, we can move on from Amenemhet III and from the Middle Kingdom to the New Kingdom.

The New Kingdom 1554 to 1070 B.C.E.

The New Kingdom was started after the Second Intermediate Period, a period that included the first meaningful invasion of Kemet by a group of Asian "Hyksos Kings." They established their capital in the Delta region of the river.

It is important to note that they never established effective control over the southern provinces. A subdued but unconquered Waset maintained its cultural and partial political leadership.

Seqenenre Tao (1575–1560 B.C.E.)

The fight to expel the hated Hyksos invaders began with Seqenenre Tao. The story is told of an argument between Seqenenre and the Hyksos King, Apopi (Apophis), who lived several hundred miles away, down north in the Delta region. Apopi is said to have sent a message to Seqenenre complaining about the noises being made by a hippopotamus at Waset, obviously a taunt. Seqenenre's verbal reply to this thinly veiled challenge was not saved in the records.

Seqenenre's mummy was found with the collection of royal mummies in the royal cache at Deir-el Bahari in the Valley of the Kings, on the west

15. Newby, *Warriors Pharaohs,* 15.

16. Riefstahl, *Thebes,* 13.

bank of the Hapi (Nile) opposite Waset. His mummy, like virtually all of the old royal mummies, is black. Some say that the facial features resemble those that are quite typical of the Masai. His son Wadjkheperre Kamose by his Queen Ah-hotep, usually called Kamose, continued the liberation war to prepare for his brother, Nebpehtire Ahmose. Ahmose was the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty and initiator, therefore, of the New Kingdom.



Seqenenre Tao



Queen Nefertari

Ahmose Nefertari (c. 1550–1500 B.C.E.)

The great Queen Nefertari was the sister of King Ahmose and his Great Royal Wife. She also served as co-regent with her son Amenhotep I, second king of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Both she and her son were later worshiped as God and Goddess. Queen Nefertari, Queen Hatshepsut, and Queen Tiy were the three most powerful queens of the great Eighteenth Dynasty.

Maatkare Hatshepsut (1484–1462 B.C.E.)

Queen Hatshepsut is well-known to students of Kemetic history as the queen who ruled as a king, and not merely as a regent. She was the daughter of King Jehewty Moses I and Queen Ahmes. Some say that she co-reigned with her father and with her half brother and husband Jehewty Moses II. However, she did seize the throne from her nephew Jehewty Moses III.

Many students of Kemetic history believe falsely that Hatshepsut was the first queen to rule in her own right. She was neither the first nor the last.[17] However, she was certainly the most powerful and daring. She had the most magnificent funerary temple in the Valley of the Kings. A record of the expedition that she sent to Punt (Somaliland) is preserved in her temple. This expedition is important for what it tells us about her view of the South. To Hatshepsut, the South was the Holy Land, Punt in particular. She ordered many things from Punt, including the vegetation of Punt that she placed around her mortuary temple. She said that she wanted to "create a Punt in Kemet." Some of the remains of things that were planted from Punt are said to still be in their place, though long dead. Nowhere in the Kemetic literature do we find such references to any places in the East. Her mummy has not been found and many of the images of her were destroyed by her nephew Jehewty Moses III. She described herself as follows:

> Her fragrance was like a divine breath, *her skin made of gold, it shines like the stars.* She is a great marvel . . . . She was selected for the protection of Egypt . . . for arousing bravery among men. She lives, she is stable, she is in good health. She is . . . forever and ever."[18]

Her name is omitted from the kings list at *Abḏw* (Abydos). Yet, she was indeed a superior "King."

17. Rose, *The Sons of Re,* 1985; Diedre Wimby, "The Female Horuses and Great Wives of Kemet," *Black Women in Antiquity, Journal of African Civilization,* ed. Ivan Van Sertima (1984): 36–48.

18. Simpkins Splendor of Egypt, *The Temple of Luxor* (Cairo, n.d.), 4. (emphasis added)



Hatshepsut

Menkheperre Jehewty Moses III (1483–1429 B.C.E.)

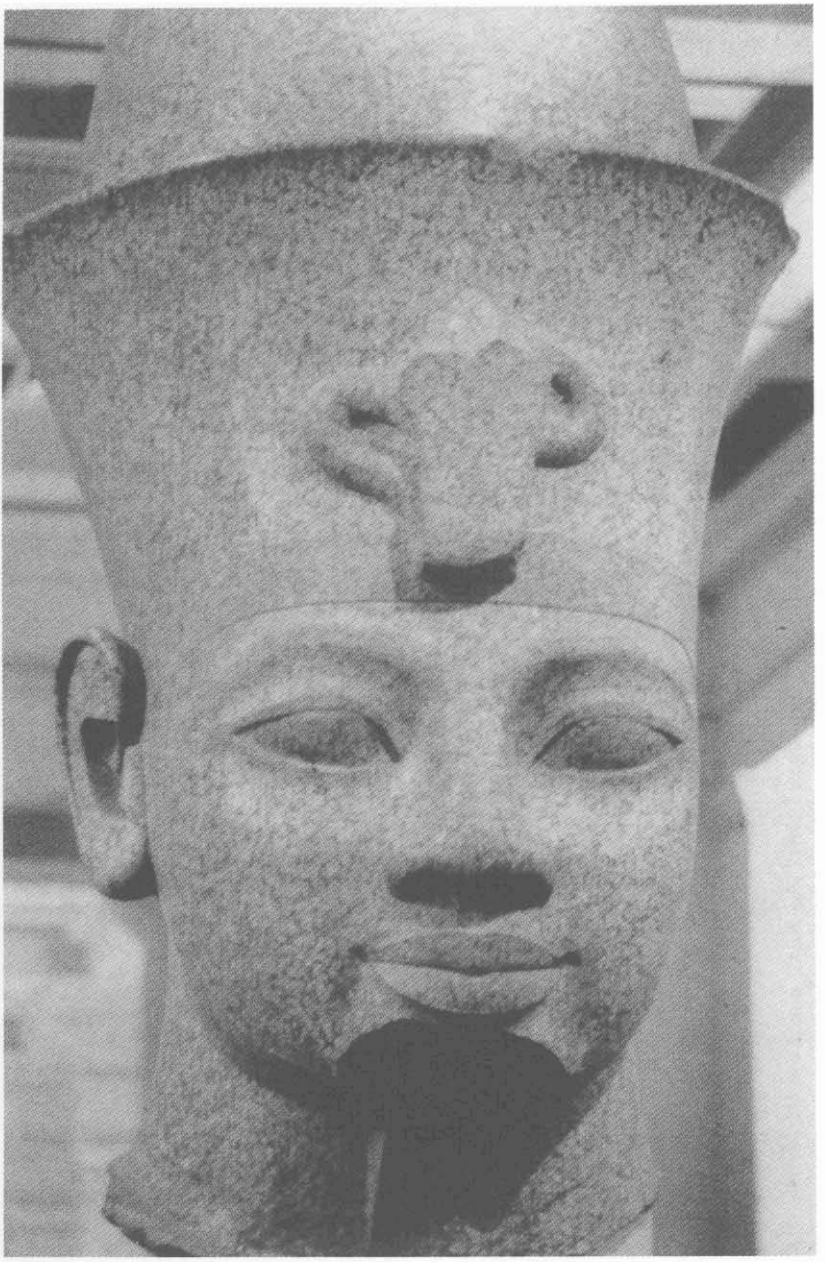
Jehewty Moses III is said to have been the greatest, the most powerful king of all. It was during his reign that Kemet reached the peak of its imperial power. At one time Jehewty Moses III's army numbered nearly 700,000 men.[19] Kemet embarked upon a phase of imperialism because of the invasion of the Hyksos. It sought to establish a buffer to thwart further attempts at invasion.

At the height of its power, under the leadership of Jehewty Moses III, Kemet controlled the known world at a time when Asia had yet to develop its great civilizations. The rule of Jehewty Moses III reached all the way to the Aegean, to mainland Greece, and to the Euphrates River. He, like all the other Jehewty Moses kings, followed the diplomatic practice of marrying Asian women, the daughters of foreign kings, as extra wives. Jehewty Moses III had three Asian wives. None became his Great Royal Wife (Steindorff). With the exception of Akhenaten and Jehewty Moses IV, who married the daughter of the King of Mitanni, no Kemetic king took foreign wives as his Great Royal Wife. Perhaps this was because the African custom was that the royal bloodline ran through the female or the Queen, the Great Royal Wife.

Jehewty Moses III is remembered among other things by certain monuments. It is ironic that two of the principal ones, his giant tekhenu (obelisks) today are called by names that ignore him.

> One of the Theban obelisks was taken by order of the emperor Constantine the Great to Byzantium, the eastern capital of the Roman Empire, which had been renamed Constantinople in his honor: it was not, however, until the year 390 that the emperor Theodosius caused it to be erected in the Hippodrome, where it stands to this date. The mate to this obelisk—a shaft a hundred and five feet in height. . . was removed to Rome and set up in the Circus Maximus about 363. It was overturned in some manner, however, and lay buried in rubbish for centuries, until Pope Paul V excavated it in 1588 and had it erected on a new foundation before the palace of St. John Lateran. Still more remarkable were the wanderings of the two Heliopolitan obelisks. By order of the prefect Barbarus they were brought in the eighth year of Augustus (23 B.C.) to the Egyptian capital Alexandria in order that they might be erected before the Caesareum in the new suburb of Nikopolis. These shafts are the famous 'Cleopatra's Needles,' as they were named for the great queen by the Arabs. But they were both destined for still further travels. After one of them, a shaft of about sixty-eight feet in height, had lain on the ground for over a thou-

19. Steindorff, *Egypt Ruled the East*, 66.



Jehewty Moses III

> sand years, it was presented by Muhammad Ali to the British government and removed at the expense of a private citizen to London in 1877, to be erected on the Thames Embankment, where, nearly ruined by smoke and soot, it stands today. Its mate was brought in 1880 to New York as a gift of the Egyptians to the United States government, and has now become one of the most famous landmarks of Central Park.[20]

And so in death and across the ages, King Jehewty Moses III, The Great, rules in spirit in four major cities of the world: Constantinople, Rome, London, and New York.

Tiy (c. 1390s–1340s B.C.E.)

Queen Tiy, Great Royal Wife and virtual co-regent with Amenhotep III, mother of King Akhenaten, *was perhaps the greatest Queen of the entire Kemetic historical period. She reigned at the peak of Kemetic imperial power and during the cultural flowering of its greatest Golden Age. Both during the time of her husband's reign and her son's reign, it was she to whom the kings of foreign lands wrote when they were desperate.* She is shown with her husband in a colossal statue in the Cairo museum. They are seated side by side and are the same size, indicating equal status according to Kemetic canon.

Her likeness is not familiar to most persons who are interested in Kemet. It is not shown frequently in books about Kemet. This likeness and other pictures of primary source material that are presented here destroy convincingly the myth of Kemet as a nation of "white" people, establishing it as clearly "black" during the periods of its greatest achievements.

Amenhotep, Son of Hapu

Amenhotep, son of Hapu, lived during the time of Amenhotep III. He was a man of lowly birth who had risen to great heights to be the High Priest at Waset. He is said to have been the architect who established the canon for the building of the great University of Ipet Sut (Karnak Temple).

> In the early years of his reign the king's attention had been directed to this man because of his exceptional knowledge of the 'divine words' (the hieroglyphics), and he had appointed him to an undersuperintendency of royal scribes. After a period of loyal service, as we learn from his autobiography, Amenhotep was pro-

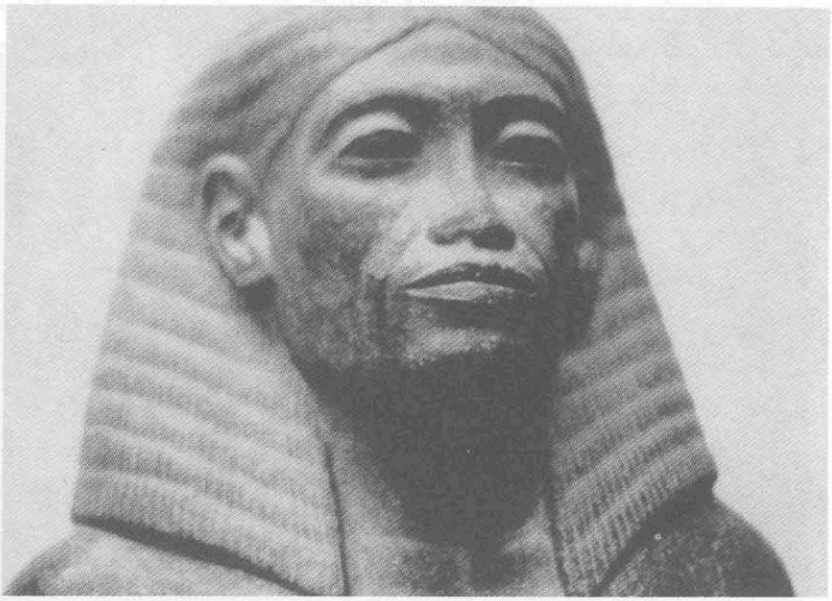
20. Steindorff, *Egypt Ruled the East,* 63–64.



Queen Tiy

> moted by the king to the position of 'Chief Royal Scribe of Recruits.'
>
> .....
>
> But all of Amenhotep's achievements as an administrative official and military leader were greatly surpassed by his accomplishments in his third sphere of activity as chief architect. 'My lord honored me a third time . . . . he appointed me overseer of all works, and I perpetuated the name of the king forever. I did not imitate what had been done before.'[21]

In later years Amenhotep, Son of Hapu, would be revered as a wise man and would be worshiped as a God.



Amenhotep, Son of Hapu

Anut Tawi

Sometime during the Eighteenth Dynasty, Anut Tawi functioned as a priestess of Amun. (Identification of the mummy in this photograph from the archives of the Cairo Museum in Egypt was made by the Director of the Museum to me in the Summer of 1986.) No other details of her life were made available to me. Additional research is being done to get more information.

21. Ibid., 76–77.



High Priestess Anut Tawi

Neferkheperure Waen Re Akhenaten (1358–1340 B.C.E.)

Born Amenhotep IV, Akhenaten is best remembered for changing his name and, more importantly, for changing the national religion of Kemet.

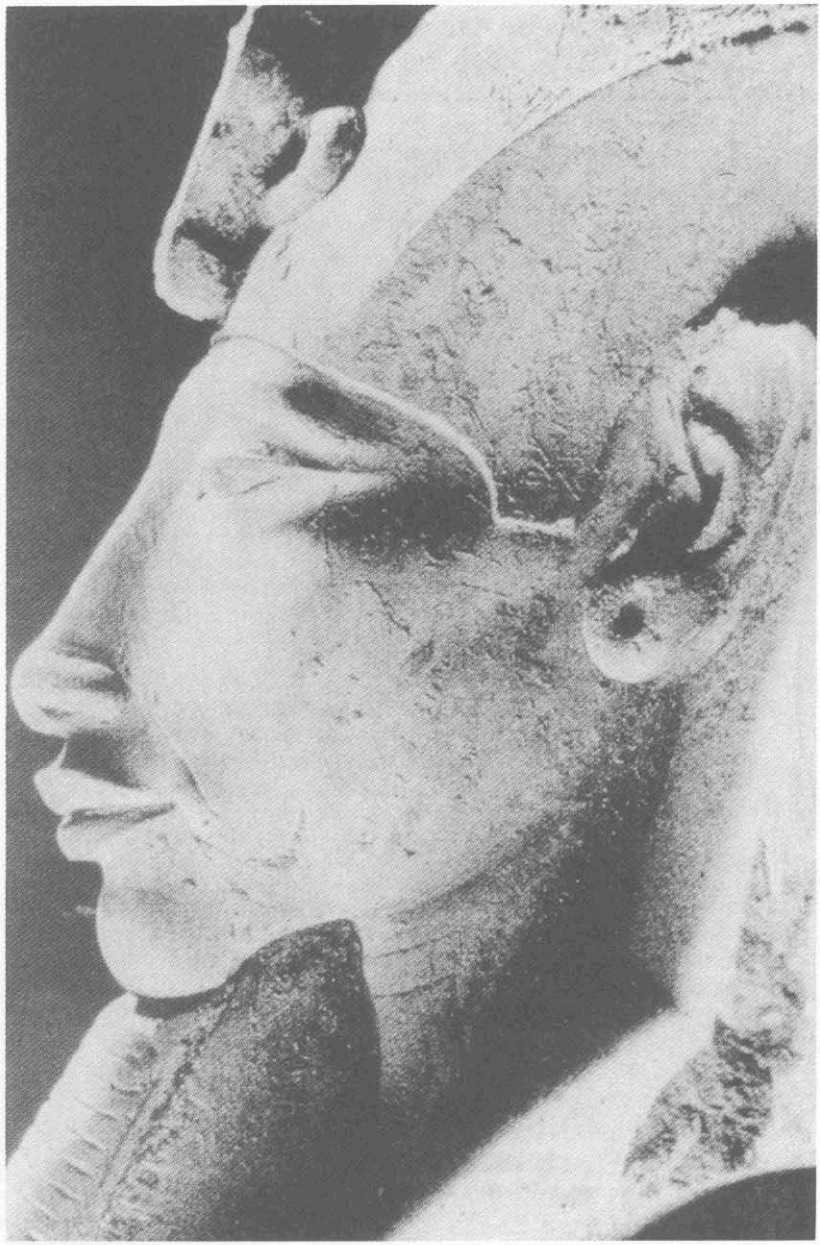
It is wrong to say that he changed the religion from polytheism to monotheism, since at no time in Kemetic history was the nation anything other than monotheistic.

> Both the Aten heresy and its great rival the Amun orthodoxy believed in a Supreme creator, a Sole One, who was hidden or far off. Both were solar cults, but the new religion placed rather more emphasis upon the visible image of godhead in the light that radiated from the sun disk, the Aten.[22]

The ancient roots of monotheism are best shown by reference to a summary of the citations from the Peret em Heru (Egyptian *Book of the Dead,* literally the *Book of Coming Forth by Day*).

> God is one and alone, and none other existeth with him—God is the One, the One who hath made all things—God is a spirit, a hidden spirit, the spirit of spirits of spirits, the great spirit of the Egyptians, the divine spirit-God is from the beginning, and He hath existed from old and was when nothing else had being. He existed when nothing else existed, of beginnings—God is the eternal One. He is eternal and infinite and endureth for ever and aye—God is hidden and no man knoweth His form. No man hath been able to seek out his likeness; He is hidden to gods and men, and He is a mystery unto His creatures. No man knows how to know Him-His name remaineth hidden; His name is a mystery unto his children. His names are innumerable, they are manifold and none knoweth their number—God is truth and He liveth by truth and he feedeth thereon. He is the king of truth, and He hath established the earth thereupon—God is life and through Him only man liveth. He giveth life to man, He breatheth the breath of life into his nostrils—God is father and mother, the father of fathers, and the mother of mothers. He begetteth, but was never begotten; He produceth, but was never produced; He begat himself and produced himself. He createth, but was never created; He is maker of his own form, and the fashioner of his own body—God Himself is existence, He endureth without increase or diminution . . . .God is merciful to those whose reverence Him, and he heareth him that calleth upon

22. Cyril Alfred, *Akhenaten and Nefertiti* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), 23.



Akhenaten

> Him. God knoweth him that acknowledgeth Him, He rewardeth him that serveth Him, and He protecteth him that followeth him.[23]

And so we have in the words of the Kemites themselves unmistakable proof that monotheism predates Akhenaten by at least fifteen hundred years.

Akhenaten is well-known as the husband of Nefertiti. He is described as a visionary. He was the son of Queen Tiy and Amenhotep III. He was the brother of King Tutankhamun.

Akhenaten did lead a religious revolution toward a new form of monotheism. This religion of Aten, using the sun as the symbol of the one God, did not survive him as the national religion. Some believe that the Prophet Moses was a student of this religion, if not a student of Akhenaten. In the New Testament, Book of Acts, the Seventh Chapter and the 22d Verse, we are told that Moses was "learned in all of the wisdom of Egypt." Sigmund Freud did a detailed study of the relationship of Moses to the Kemetic religion.[24]

Akhenaten did not rule from Waset, having changed the capital to a city named from himself, further north. Yet he never really preempted the power of the Waset priesthood. Nevertheless, we include him in the Waset gallery.

Nefertiti (c. 1350s–1340s B.C.E.)

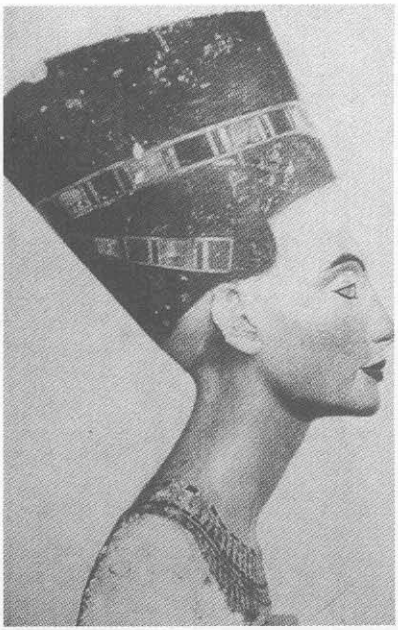
All the world recognizes the face, the Berlin Bust, a small statuette that is reported to be the image of Queen Nefertiti. She was the wife of King Akhenaten. Both of them were key players in an attempted religious revolution, changing from the religion of the Amen priesthood to the newly created religion of Aten, the solar disk.

But just who was Nefertiti? What did she really look like? Why is the Berlin Bust accepted as authentic and projected worldwide as "the most beautiful" queen ever and, even more, as the single image that calls Kemet to mind? Why does she eclipse all of the other images of Kemet such as those presented here?

Akhenaten and Nefertiti changed the royal residence from Waset to the city of Akhenaten to the north. Akhenaten took, as we shall see, a foreign woman as his Great Wife. He and Jehewty Moses IV were the only kings in the Eighteenth Dynasty to do so. These moves by Akhenaten weakened the power of the Waset priesthood temporarily. So the new religion that this royal pair, Akhenaten and Nefertiti, initiated was alien and foreign to Kemet. Was Nefertiti herself also alien and foreign?

23. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead (The Papyrus of Ani) Egyptian Text Transliteration and Translation* (New York: Dover, 1967), xcii–xciii.

24. Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (New York: Vintage, 1967).



Nefertiti



Nefertiti (from her temple)

Alexandre Moret said that Nefertiti was a daughter of a foreign king:

> The breach with tradition was already marked by a first innovation-the Mitannian marriages. Scruples regarding purity of Solar blood, complicated calculations of dynastic rights, according to the decree of heirship on the mother's side, all the centuries old jurisprudence of the royal family, yielded to political necessities when the Pharaohs decided to take Mitannian princesses as their Great Royal Wives. Thothmes IV married the daughter of Artama, King of Mitanni, and she was treated as the true Queen of Egypt, where she bore the name Mutemuia. Amenhotep III, at the height of the glory of the Egyptian Empire, took into his harem first the sister and then the daughter of Dushratta, King of Mitanni, but his Great Royal Wife was Tii, who was not 'born' at the court, a foreign lady, whose father, Iuya, was probably Syrian. *Their son, Amenhotep IV, took as his Great Wife Nefertiti, as the Egyptians called Tadukhipa, Dushratta's daughter; she having been sent to Egypt to marry Amenhotep III a few days before his death, married his son instead.*[25]

25. Alexandre Moret, *The Nile and Egyptian Civilization* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1972), 316. (emphasis added)

The bust that we recognize today as that of Nefertiti was found 1912 to 1913 in grid 47 at Armana by Professors Hermann Ranke and Ludwig Borchardt (Vandenberg 1978). It was out of circulation from that time until 1920, when it was found in Berlin. It has no inscriptions. Identification of this as a bust of Nefertiti is done mainly by reference to the royal headdress and by its proximity to a destroyed bust of Akhenaten in an artist's workshop. Also, it is inlaid with lapis lazuli, an expensive precious stone that was reserved for royalty. What is important is that there are numerous wall reliefs that depict Nefertiti with certainty, yet they are very different from the Berlin Bust. One of them is shown above.

Several Egyptologists claim that Nefertiti was Kemetic. Cotrell says that Queen Tiy's brother was Ay, later to become the king, and that Ay was the father of Nefertiti. Alfred also says that Nefertiti was Ay's daughter, since he is referred to in some inscriptions as the "Father-in-law of the King." However, since most Eighteenth Dynasty kings had many wives, the reference to a single father-in-law as certainly the father of the one queen Nefertiti cannot be a confident one. John Anthony West had this to say:

> The famous bust of Nefertiti, Akhenaten's wife, and one of the most beautiful women ever depicted, is in all likelihood not Nefertiti. This bust was found with other treasures, in the abandoned sculpture studio at Akhetaten. Since Nefertiti disappeared from the inscriptions some seven years prior to the disbanding of Akhenaten's city, the bust, unfinished at the time and still being worked on, is almost certainly not Nefertiti, but perhaps one of her daughters.[26]

Given the history of attempts in Germany, beginning in the mid-1700s to degrade and to distort Kemetic history (Bernal), and given the racism permeating German culture at the time of the find of the bust, one must be very cautious with speculations by Professors Ranke and Borchardt, and indeed the entire community of Egyptologists.

To say that Nefertiti was a beautiful woman is one thing. To say that the "Berlin Bust of Nefertiti" was the most beautiful image of a woman in Kemet, and perhaps the most beautiful image of a woman ever, is a bit much. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Was Queen Tiy not beautiful? Is this European image found in the midst of Africa felt to be beautiful mainly by comparison to African women?

It is an irony of ironies that the world "knows" an alien woman and an alien image as the most famous symbol of Africa's Grand Golden Age!

26. West, *Travelers Key,* 217.



Tutankhamun

Nebkheperure Tutankhamun (1338–1328 B.C.E.)

One of the best known kings of Kemet is the boy king, Tutankhamen, known to the world by the nickname, King Tut. He was approximately nine years old when he became king. He died as a teenager. However, since his tomb with all its incredible riches was discovered intact, it attracted the attention of the world. King Tutankhamen's mummy was found; however, the image that the world knows is that of the Golden Mask that was on the mummy.

With the rise of King Tutankhamen, whose original name was Tutankhaten, signifying his identification with Akhenaten's God Aten, the old-time religion of Amen returned to power. It is hard to believe that the boy king was exercising real leadership. His significance as a king, therefore, does not go beyond the fact that so much information about his times came from the analysis of the materials in his tomb.

Usermaatre Setepenre Rameses II (1279–1213 B.C.E.)

Rameses II is well-known, mainly for his military exploits and for an extensive building program as well as for claiming to have built things that he did not build. He was important as a Nineteenth Dynasty king. His mummy was found.

Rameses II and the people of his time were not so much cultural innovators as producers of things in quantity. In fact, the quality of things seemed to suffer during this time. A clear example of this deterioration in quality can be seen in the Temple of Seti I, the father of Rameses II. The temple is in two major parts. The first part was built by Seti I, and it is the part that has the most perfectly executed bas reliefs. As Rameses II added to his father's temple, the workmanship was clearly inferior to the older part of the temple. However, Rameses II deserves to be cited as a great Waset King because of his power and vast building schemes.

Conclusion

Waset was called the "Eye of Ra" and the "Abode of Maat." It was a special place. It was the home of the most powerful rulers during two Golden Ages. When we view these rulers, their mummies, or their images, we see that they were not of European or Asian racial origin. They were indigenous African people. Moreover, we see that they were world leaders. Most important of all, they were world leaders at a time when the head of state truly was regarded as the representative of the One God on earth at the city that was the very Eye of Ra. For the Kemite, this meant that God's law, Maat (truth, justice, balance,

order, reciprocity, and righteousness), ought to be manifest in the lives of the people, and especially in the life of the Son of Ra, the king.

Africans ruled from Waset. The monuments, tombs, temples, papyri, paintings, carvings, and remains in general speak eloquently to the fact that, as much as anywhere in the ancient world, Maat prevailed.

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Chapter 7

Civilization or Barbarism
The Legacy of Cheikh Anta Diop

C. A. Diop

Civilisation ou Barbarie: Anthropologie sans complaisance, Présence Africaine, Paris, 1981

Reviewed by Leonard Jeffries, Jr.

In his latest work, *Civilization or Barbarism* (1981), Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop presents us with an extraordinary intellectual achievement, the culmination of thirty years of multidisciplinary scholarship. His analytical and scientific presentation of the history of African peoples from an African-centered perspective cuts across various disciplines, yet it provides us with conceptual and comparative frameworks needed to see the parts as well as the whole of history. The book reconfirms the controversial concepts and ideas of his earlier works with a critical analysis of the latest historical and scientific discoveries. As a result, he has made another outstanding contribution to the intellectual process of rethinking and rewriting African and world history which he helped initiate many years ago. *Civilization or Barbarism* is appropriately subtitled, *Anthropology without Compromise.* The value of the work, however, is not limited to anthropology, it is also an invaluable treasure for the sociologists, the scientists, the biologists, the archaeologists, the political scientists, the linguists, the mathematicians, and above all the historians.

Without a doubt, *Civilization or Barbarism* is a monumental culmination of a life long scholarly effort. A primary objective of Diop's work has been to provide a catalyst to further the cultural and political revolution of

This review is of the original French edition and was written prior to the publication of the English translation. English translation: *Civilization or Barbarism, An Authentic Anthropolgy,* trans. Yaa-Lengi Meema Ngemi (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Lawrence Hill Books, 1991). Reprinted with minor changes from *Great African Thinkers,* vol. 1, ed. Ivan Van Sertima and Larry Williams (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1986), 146–160 by permission of the author and publisher.

African people. His investigations convinced him that the West has not been objective enough to teach African history correctly without crude falsifications. As a result, he would like to see the formation of teams of African researchers who will be committed to work long and hard to explore and substantiate his ideas.

In the Introduction, Diop states that his major objective was raising the idea of a Black Egypt to the level of an Operative Scientific Concept. Others have recognized the importance of Egypt in world history, but have failed to reach this scientific level. He attacks the idea of a "white" Egypt and links its recent development to grotesque falsifications by modern Egyptology, which was born at an opportune time, around the 1820s, and was subsequently linked to the ideology of imperialism and racism. The new Egyptology reinforced the theoretical basis of the imperialist ideology. Diop makes the charge of a monstrous falsification of the history of humanity. In previous works, he explains his charge of falsification of history by attacking the creation of the Negro Myth. He links these efforts to a Euro-American process of cultural and intellectual genocide of African and Asian peoples.

In the Introduction to the outstanding English publication of *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality* (1974), Diop explains the meaning of his years of intensive research and scientific investigations. He began his research in September 1946, when the political problems of colonialism dominated all others. While continuing his scholarly work, he became the Secretary General of the student wing of the RDA, the post-World War II, French speaking African political movement, from 1950 to 1953. He published an article entitled "Toward a Political Ideology in Black Africa," in the first issue of the RDA student publication.

This article contained an outline of ideas and concepts he had already completed in the manuscript of his earliest major publication, *Nations negres et cultures* (1955). Diop describes the comprehensive nature of this work as follows:

> All our ideas of African history, the past and future of our languages, their utilization in the most advanced scientific fields as in education generally, our concepts on the creation of a future federal state, continental or subcontinental, our thoughts on African social structures, on strategy and tactics in the struggle for national independence, and so forth, all those ideas were clearly expressed in that article.

He notes that there are three factors which compete to form the collective personality of a people: 1) a psychic factor, susceptible to a literary approach often called national temperament, 2) a historic factor, and 3) a linguistic factor; the latter two are susceptible of being approached scientifically. Diop's lifework over the past thirty years has concentrated on the historic and linguistic factors through a rigorous scientific approach.

In his preface to the *African Origin of Civilization, Myth or Reality* (1974), Diop called for younger scholars to form teams to expand on his research. He summarized the critical ideas for further examination as follows:

1. "Ancient Egypt was a Negro [African] Civilization. The history of Africa will remain suspended in air and cannot be written correctly until African historians dare to connect it with the history of Egypt. It will be impossible to build . . . a body of African human sciences, so long as that relationship does not appear legitimate. The African historian who evades the problem of Egypt is neither modest nor objective, nor unruffled; he is ignorant, cowardly and neurotic. . . . The ancient Egyptians were Negroes [Africans]. The moral fruit of their civilization is to be counted among the assets of the Black world. Instead of presenting itself to history as an insolvent debtor, that Black world is the very initiator of the 'western' civilization flaunted before our eyes today. Pythagorean Mathematics, the theory of the four elements of Thales of Miletus, Epicurean materialism, Platonic idealism, Judaism, Islam, and modern science are rooted in Egyptian cosmogony and science. In a word, we must restore the historical consciousness of the African peoples . . . ."

2. "Anthropologically and culturally speaking, the Semitic world was born during proto-historic times from the mixture of white-skinned and black-skinned people in Western Asia. This is why an understanding of the Mesopotamian Semitic world, Judaic or Arabic, requires constant reference to the underlying black reality."

3. "The triumph of the monogenetic thesis of humanity (Leakey) even at the stage of 'Homo sapiens-sapiens,' compels one to admit that all races descended from the Black race, according to a filiation process that science will one day explain.

4. In *L'Afrique Noire Precoloniale* (1960), Diop developed a research design based on socio-history, not on ethnography. Many scholars have since utilized his method. His major objectives were: "a) Write a history

free of a mere chronology of events; b) Define the laws governing the evolution of African sociopolitical structures in order to explain the direction that historical evolution has taken in Black Africa . . . ."

5. In *Black Africa: Economic and Cultural Basis for a Federated State* (1974), he demands we work "to define the image of modern Africa reconciled with its past and preparing for its future."

6. "Once the perspectives accepted until now by official science have been reversed, the history of humanity will become clear and the history of Africa can be written . . . .The essential factor is to retrace the history of the entire nation."

7. Modern black literature has focused on minor aspects of life's drama. Diop believes some black writers should pose the question of mankind's fate.

8. In *L'Unite Culturelle de L'Afrique Noire* (1960), Diop "tried to pinpoint features common to Negro African Civilization."

9. In *Nations negres et cultures* (1955), Diop "demonstrated that African languages could express philosophic and scientific thought."

10. Diop called for more research into the pre-Columbian relations of Africa with America in his work, *L'Afrique Noire Precoloniale.* This area of research was taken up by Professor Harold G. Lawrence in an article. (A major contribution, however, has been made by Professor Ivan Van Sertima in his book, *They Came Before Columbus.*)

Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop opens his new work by stating clearly that this material is intended to raise the idea of an African Egypt to the level of an Operative Scientific Concept. He points out that for the classical European writers (Herodotus, Aristotle, Diodorus, Strabo et al.) who were contemporaries of the ancient Egyptians, the Africanity of the Egyptians was visible and evident and did not call for any special reference. About 1820, on the eve of the birth of Egyptology, Count C. F. Volney, the French scholar, reminded the world that the recent slavery of Africans had created an amnesia concerning the glorious past of these people. Not long thereafter, however, Egyptology emerged as an instrument for scholars who used it to achieve a grotesque crime against science with the conscious falsification of the history of human-

ity. Egypt became "white," a European creation, and Africans were pushed systematically beyond the pale of history. Unfortunately, this false science was supported by the governments of Europe and merged with the new ideology of imperialism and racism that dominated the nineteenth century. As a result, Egyptology and imperialism were easily able to drown out the voice of science by covering historical truth with a cloak of falsification.

Diop continues his indictment of European scholarship and science with an analogy. He equates imperialism with the prehistoric hunter who first kills spiritually and culturally before trying to kill physically. He then follows this with his strongest charge that "the negation of the history and intellectual realizations of African people is a cultural and mental death which preceded and prepared genocide here and elsewhere in the world."

Dr. Diop points out in his Introduction that there is a gap that separates himself and others from some Africans who are content to flirt with Egyptian culture. He states very clearly that "for us, the return to Egypt in every domain is the necessary condition to reconcile African civilization with history, to build a body of modern human sciences and to be able to renew African culture." He adds that "Egypt will play the same role in the rethinking and renewing of African culture that ancient Greece and Rome plays in the culture of the west."

In so far as Egypt is the distant Mother of the science and culture of the West, Diop points out that this book will reveal that the major proportion of the ideas we consider foreign are often only the modified, turned over, and perfected images that were the creations of our ancestors: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, the Dialectic, the theory of being, exact sciences, arithmetic, geometry, mechanics, astronomy, medicine, literature (novel, poetry, theater), architecture, arts, and so on.

He predicts that, "When this historical legacy is understood we [will] realize how false is the notion of importing foreign ideologies into Africa." He feels that this stems from a profound ignorance of the African past.

He concludes by stating that:

> Universal knowledge runs from the Nile Valley toward the rest of the world in particular toward Greece which served as an intermediary. As a result, no thought, no ideology is foreign to Africa which was the land of their birth. Consequently, Africans must draw from the common intellectual heritage of humanity, guided only by the notions of what is useful and effective.

Finally, Diop cautions us that no thought and particularly no philosophy can develop outside its historic land. Thus, he added:

> Our young philosophers must understand this and develop as rapidly as possible the necessary intellectual means to re-establish themselves with the home of philosophy in Africa instead of becoming involved in a false combat of ethno-philosophy. In re-establishing a connection with Egypt we will discover one day an historic perspective of 5,000 years which makes possible diachronic study on our own land of all the scientific disciplines that we can integrate into modern African thought.

Part I includes the first 4 chapters and focuses on an approach to paleontology. Professor Diop presents a scientific analysis of facts from an absolute chronology based on prehistoric archaeology and physical anthropology which established Africa as the birthplace of humanity at the "Homo sapiens" stage of development. Chapter 1 provides a general summary of these ideas on the origin of humanity. Chapter 2 presents material of a more detailed nature, concentrating on paleontologic evidence and critically reviewing the most recent thesis on the origin of mankind. Diop presents the scientific evidence for the monogenetic and African origin of the human race, and rejects the polycentric theories of separate human development in several centers on different continents. In Chapter 3, Diop shows how archaeology, using the radio carbon methods, has helped clarify the myth of Atlantis by applying science and comparative historical methodology. He provides the factual evidence linking Atlantis to Crete and Minoan Civilization to the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt. He uses Atlantis to establish the Egypto-Nubian presence in the Mediterranean during the outward expansion and empire building of the kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty when a volcanic explosion of the Island of Santorini gave birth to the myth. He points out that the Egyptian presence also explains the appearance of the Linear A & B writing systems in the Mediterranean area. In Chapter 4, he analyzes the latest archaeological discoveries from Nubia by a team from the University of Chicago, which provide further evidence that Egyptian civilization has its roots in the heart of Africa and moved from the South to the North. Furthermore, these finds clearly established the Nubian monarchy as older than that of Northern Egypt, and adds additional support to Diop's effort to raise Black Egypt to the level of an Operative Scientific Concept.

Part II of this monumental study covers Chapters 5 through 13. Diop describes the laws which govern the evolution of societies through their different phases of development—the clan, the tribe, and the nation. He identifies four different types of nation-states and provides a special study of the

"Motor of History" in African-Asian States described as MPA—"Mode of Production among Africans and Asians" and compares their development with that of the Greek city-states, specifically ancient Athens and Sparta. He concludes this section with a general law that applies to the transformation of societies and is a significant addition to the theory of revolutions. In Chapter 5, he initiates his analysis by focusing on clan and tribal organizations. He states that "Clan organization based on the incest taboo marks the beginning of civilization." At this stage man was no longer a simple biological animal. Future sexual relations were regulated by very strict social rules and regulations, which accelerated the development of clans and tribes. In Chapter 6, he analyzes the kinship structures of the clan and the tribe as part of the process of nation building. In Chapter 7, Diop shows that race and social class are affected by certain ethnological laws which are important in determining race relations. Chapter 8 provides an outline of four different types of states that have evolved. In Chapters 9, 10, and 11, Diop analyzes Key Revolutions in history, their causes, their successes, and their failures. He focuses on the MPA States in Africa and Asia and the Greek City-States and presents a significant challenge to Marxist theories on revolution and the development of society. In Chapter 12, he provides a study of the particularities of African political and social structures and their impact on history. Professor Diop presents a special case study of royalty in Senegal in the Kingdom of Cayor where the designation of Damel or King illustrates the relationship of the African monarchy to the pharaonic model.

In Part III, Diop includes a short two-chapter section dealing with cultural identity. In Chapter 14, he defines cultural identity and relates the individual to his people. He notes that there are three factors which go to make up the collective personality of a people: 1) Historical factor, 2) Linguistic factor, and 3) Psychological factor.

These factors undergo constant change, particularly the psychological aspects, and the linguistic and historic aspects provide coordination of relationships. The linguistic and historic factors are the most important for Diop. He points out that the blacks in the Diaspora have had the linguistic ties cut but the historic factor remains as strong as ever, perpetuated by memory. Similarly, the cultural heritage of Africa is obvious in the Americas and attests to the continuity of cultural customs. The historic factor is the cultural cement which unites the disparate elements of a people to make a whole.

Historical consciousness is the most solid rampart of the cultural security of a people. Historical continuity is the effective cultural arm of a people against outside cultural aggression. Diop had said earlier that a people without a historical consciousness is just a population. He believes that loss of

historical continuity can lead to stagnation and retrogression, as was the case of the Egyptians under the Romans.

The linguistic factor is important in cultural identity. Africans should seek the unifying elements of their many languages. The Egyptian-Nubian language group may provide a unifying underlying factor as has the Indo-European language.

Part IV is entitled, "The Contribution of Africans to Humanity in the Sciences and in Philosophy." In Chapter 16, Diop reviews the scientific contribution that the African Egyptian World made to Greece and shows that Egyptian science was extremely theoretical. He proceeds to reveal in the next chapter how enormous was the debt owed Egypt by the Greeks in science and philosophy. He illustrates the exactness and theoretical nature of Egyptian mathematics and geometry, particularly in comparison with the empirical geometry of Mesopotamia.

In Chapter 17, Diop defines the main current of Egyptian philosophy and shows its relationships with developments in Greece and the world. He delineates the African philosophies and shows how Egyptian philosophical thought throws new light on the heritage of African peoples. His work also underlines the historical relationships of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam to Egyptian religious thought.

The final chapter is a short appendix of Greek words that have an African origin. Diop attempts to show the early influence of Egypt on Greek thought and culture.

In the first Chapter of Part I, "Prehistory: Race and History, and the Origin of Humanity and Racial Differentiation," Cheikh Anta Diop presents the scientific and historical data for the concept of the monogenetic and African origin of humanity. Based on the latest paleontologic research and particularly the work of Dr. Leakey, it is clear that humanity's birthplace was in East Africa in the Great Lakes region around the Omo Valley. As a result of these developments two conclusions are evident:

1. Humanity born at the latitude of the Great Lakes near the Equator is by necessity pigmented and African. This is substantiated by *Gloger's Law* which states that warm blooded animals are pigmented in hot and humid climates.

2. All races are issued from the African race by direct relationships, and other continents were peopled from Africa at the Homo Erectus stage as well as the Homo Sapiens stage which appeared about 150,000 years ago. Earlier

> theories that have Africans coming from elsewhere are not valid.

The author further develops his thesis by stating that the first Africans peopled the earth by migrations through the Straits of Gibraltar, the Isthmus of Suez, and perhaps Sicily. He cites the extensive existence of cave paintings of the Upper Paleolithic period in Europe and Africa as confirmation of these developments. He refers to the early migration to Europe and Asia by the African Grimaldi Man and the Aurignacian industry of painting and materials that can be radio carbon dated for an absolute chronology. Diop insists that Europe did not see the birth of Homo Sapiens Sapiens until the African appeared by migration. The first so-called "whites," the Cro- Magnon Man, did not appear until around 20,000 B.C.E., probably as a result of the mutation of Grimaldi Man necessitated by adaptation to the cold environment. Diop also cites the existence of the pre-Hellenic Black Virgins around the Mediterranean as evidence of an earlier African presence.

The ancient Cult of the Black Virgin that the Catholic Church has sanctified in modern times is derived from the Cult of Isis that preceded Christianity in the Mediterranean area. Diop notes that although we are missing the scientific proof linking the prehistoric Aurignacian Venus to this later Cult, their existence confirms the southern origin of the civilization.

At the end of the first chapter he provides a Chronological Table of the Evolution of Humanity in general and the African World in particular. This table includes dates from prehistoric times through the Arab invasions of Egypt in 639 C.E. with parallel events and commentaries.

In Chapter 2, Diop presents a "Critical Revue of Recent Theses on the Origin of Humanity." He is highly critical of the utilization of the new science of molecular biology which supports a polycentric thesis of human development. Diop maintains the monogenetic and African origin of humanity and rejects ideas that this evolution stopped at the Homo Erectus stage and that sapienization took place at the level of each continent. He believes that the work of Dr. Leakey and other experts has resulted in the triumph of the monogenetic theory of humanity's origin in Africa which was by necessity black before becoming white through mutation and adaptation at the end of the last glaciation in Europe in the Upper Paleolithic period.

To clarify his concept of racial differentiation, Diop presents a simplified scheme of the probable process of development under the effects of physical factors. He traces mankind's development through Australopithecus (5,500,000 to 2,000,000 years); Homo Habilis (2,500,000 years); Homo Erectus (1,000,000 years); Homo Sapiens Sapiens (150,000 to 130,000 years); Grimaldi Man's

appearance in Europe (40,000 years); Cro-Magnon's first appearance (20,000 years); Yellow Man's appearance (15,000 years).

Part II of this monumental work is entitled "The Laws Governing the Evolution of Societies: Motor of History in Societies with MPA and in the Greek City-States." In these chapters Diop presents several key concepts concerning human and societal development in the African-Asian and Indo-European worlds. He analyzes these concepts from various perspectives and provides special insight into the African-centered view of these developments. He makes a major contribution by providing an African-centered critique and enlargement of Marxist and revolutionary theory. He demonstrates how the African-Asian system of societal development contrasts with that of the Indo-European City-State, pointing out the capabilities of the differing systems and their historical results. His analysis of revolutionary and evolutionary history clarifies the processes that developed to produce clans, tribes, city-states, nation-states, and empires.

In Chapter 5, a key concept and process is outlined. Diop points out that Clan organization is founded on Incest Taboo which marks the beginning of civilization. He notes that in the Clan, man is no longer a simple biological animal. He must regulate his sexual and social relations by very strict rules. As a result, Clan formation developed clear notions of parenting, property, inheritance, and individual and group responsibilities. Marrying outside of the Clan, exogamy, produced neighboring clan relations and led to a sense of ethnicity and tribe. Environment played a major role in determining whether a Clan became patrilineal (father's lineage) or matrilineal (mother's lineage). The nomadic environment inevitably produced a patrilineal system while a sedentary agricultural environment produced a matrilineal system. Diop states that the division of work at the Clan stage produced processes of social stratification and primitive accumulation which engendered a "clan" system and a tribal structure. As the tribal structure expanded and became complex, it developed processes that led to monarchy. At the end of the chapter, Diop presents a clan chart which contrasts the characteristics of the African Matrilineal Clan that developed around agricultural society and the Indo-Aryan Patrilineal Clan that emerged from the nomadic life of the Euro-Asian Steppes. This environment was difficult and under constant attack from the outside enemies, which put a premium on the strength of the warriors, resulting in the processes that caused the emergence of a military aristocracy. The easier agricultural environment developed forces of production that created a surplus and led to the emergence of a monarchy and priesthood to control the society. These clan structures have remained at the base of African and European societies.

Some of the largely contrasting characteristics of the African system and the Indo-Aryan systems are:

African Matrilineal Clan	**Indo-Aryan Patrilineal Clan**
Sedentary	Nomadic
Agricultural Subsistence	Pastoral Subsistence
Clan Exogamy	Clan Exogamy
Religion, Ancestor Worship	Religion, Ancestor Worship
Burial Funeral Rites	Cremation Funeral Rites
Man Brings Dowry	Woman Brings Dowry
Matrilocal Marriage	Patrilocal Marriage
Matrilineal Succession	Patrilineal Succession
Wife Keeps Legal Status	Wife Loses Legal Status
Wife Keeps Family Name	Wife Loses Family Name
Inheritance From Maternal Uncle	Inheritance From Father
Wife Can Divorce	Wife Cannot Divorce
Land is Collective Property	Land is Private Property
Communalism Special Virtue	Individualism Special Virtue
All Children Raised	Excess Babies Killed
Matriarchal Society	Patriarchal Society
Cosmogonically Optimistic	Cosmogonically Pessimistic
No Notion of Origin Sin	Original Sin Fault of Woman
Pacifist Morality	Warrior Morality

In his analysis of the kinship structure at the clan and tribal stage in Chapter 6, Diop notes that kinship, inheritance, and naming are not fixed but part of a transitional process which is not racial as much as environmental. He cites Irish family relations to make his point. He summarizes this process of development by restating the importance of incest taboo.

> The passage from clan to monolingual tribe or ethnic groups to the nation or nationality is a consequence of exogamy of the clan. Mankind's prohibition against incest marks a starting point toward civilization. Since endogamy of the clan is prohibited, several neighboring clans establish marriage arrangements which became over time kinship ties through alliance. Several clan groups began to share language and culture and develop into ethnic groups and nationality. The individual will even carry the clan name after detribalization.

In his chapter on "Race and Social Classes," Diop discusses the laws which regulate ethnic relations throughout history. The first law is the *law of percentage.* When a minute percentage of foreigners are among an indigenous population, there is often curiosity and sometimes sympathy. However, when the percentage increases substantially and represents 4 to 8% as in the case of immigrant workers, then racial aspects become predominant. The greater the increase, the more the class struggle is transformed into social confrontation. The second law is the *law of assimilation.* If the majority and minority are part of the same ethnic group and share the same culture, assimilation will take place progressively. If the ethnic and cultural differences are too great, then the racial tensions will increase over time. The third law is the *law of distance.* Two ethnic groups that are not struggling over the same space or markets and occupy clearly separate territories can maintain normal relations and alliances as did Germany and Japan during World War II. The fourth law is the *law of phenotype*—based on physical distinction. The class struggle laws of historical materialism only apply after a society has been made ethnically homogeneous by violence. The same analysis ignores the preceding phase of Darwinian bestial struggle. This is a stage experienced by many nations today. Throughout history, conquerors have often built their domination on an ethnic basis. Thus the exploitation of man by man takes on an ethnic framework with social class status linked to the dominant group.

Diop cites the example of Sparta as the classic example of this form of economic exploitation founded exclusively on ethnic difference. The Spartans were probably of Doric origin and invaded and conquered the region of Laconia inhabited by the Helots. In order to maintain this ethnic dominance, Sparta developed the most ferocious military regime in history, living in separated army camps, building the education system around the military from birth to death, organizing pogroms periodically against the Helots to maintain ethnic balance of the conquered and conqueror. Fortunately Sparta had only nine thousand citizens and could not exercise absolute control over an extended territory. It is important to note that although the Spartans and Helots were of the same race, their ethnic difference cannot be overlooked or forgotten and overshadowed by the difference of economic class. It would be historically incorrect to deny the ethnic origin of the class struggle and the violent Darwinian forms it initially took. Diop describes the relationship of Rome and Carthage, the Franks and the Gauls, and most recently the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi as examples of this pattern of ethnic dominance and destruction.

Diop's discussion of race and class leads into his analysis of the birth of different types of states in Chapter 8. He claims that there are at least four types of states:

1. **States called "Asiatic" or Mode of Production in Asia and Africa (M.P.A.).** These states were described by Marx and Engels as emerging from their great hydraulic works. Diop points out that the most outstanding model of this state was Pharaonic Egypt, so it really should be called, "the African State Model or Type."
2. **States resulting from Resistance to an Enemy.** This type of state is born out of struggle to defend a common territory and often welds together separate entities. The importance of the military functions inevitably produces a supremacy of the warrior clans which form the basis of an aristocracy.
3. **States represented by the Ancient Athenian City-State.** Diop states that this model is a consequence of the dissolution of the ancient mode of production in which the state is nothing more than a legal instrument for the domination of one class over another. In Athens, the dominant class was centered around the initial property owners.
4. **States resulting from Genocidal Conquest—Spartan and Tutsi Model.** This type of state is the result of domination of one ethnic group over another in which the conquering groups maintain genocidal practices institutionalized around the state structure. The ancient Spartan and the more recent Tutsi State in Rwanda and Burundi are excellent examples of the domination and elimination of the indigenous people.

In Part II, Diop makes a major contribution to an analytical understanding of the development of societies from the clan-tribe stages to the city-state and nation. He further clarifies the laws that govern this evolution and effect race and social class structure. He presents a general concept of clan development as a key motor of history and analyzes this development from an African-centered perspective, which allows him to compare the characteristics of the African Matrilineal Clan with the Indo-Aryan Patrilineal Clan. Through this framework he shows how distinct African-Asian and Indo-European societal and state systems emerge out of different sedentary and nomadic environ-

ments. These include processes of socialization (clans), production (division of labor), accumulation (surplus), and militarization (classes). Out of these processes have come certain value systems and laws which effect race and social structure. As a result of the total historical process, different types of state systems have evolved.

In the second half of Part II Diop provides a comparative analysis of different types of state systems, concentrating on states of African-Asian M.P.A. Model and the ancient Greek City-States. In Chapters 9, 10, and 11, he discusses in detail revolutions in history and their causes and conditions of success and failure. He points out the limitations of Eurocentric and Marxist analyses of African-Asian state systems and proceeds to correct and expand Revolutionary and Developmental theory.

In these chapters, Diop makes a major theoretical breakthrough in analyzing history from a non-Eurocentric perspective and establishing the analytical value of the African-Asian world view. He points out the limitations and errors of Marx and other European theorists who were not able to thoroughly analyze African-Asian societies. Marx characterized African-Asian formations (M.P.A.) as "ephemeral," transitory societies outside of the pale of historical revolutionary movement. Diop corrects this view, while noting that this error has been repeated by theoreticians over the years. After studying the failure of revolutions in Africa, China, and Greece, he demonstrates how insights into processes will add new elements and greater clarity to theories of sociology and revolution. Marx and others incorrectly analyzed the African-Asian state system and misunderstood collective consciousness, communal benefits, and cooperative production, land use, and ownership. As a result Marx referred to African-Asian production as "generalized slavery" in contrast to the private slavery of Greco-Latin states. He also believed that the closed village communities of African-Asian (M.P.A.) states were the reasons for the stagnation of these societies.

Diop corrects this erroneous analysis of African-Asian societies and points out that revolutions and revolutionary conditions did occur in these states, but several inherent factors prevented indigenous movements from being successful. After analyzing the failure of revolutionary activities throughout history, Diop notes that one is brought back to the historic-economic factors that produced territorial unification in one place (Egypt-China) and not in others (Greece).

He concludes that the creation of the state apparatus of African-Asian (M.P.A.) societies allowed for the coordination of social, military, and political actions on a grand scale, forging chains that could not be broken except by modern progress which makes education and information available to the

masses and facilitates coordination of the struggles of the working class. As a result, revolution becomes impossible when the state takes the ancient African-Asian form, whether in Greece, Rome, or Persia. In spite of the fact that these states developed the conditions and fundamental contradictions needed for revolutionary activity, the socialization process, the complexity of the state and the bureaucracy, and the size of the territory inevitably prevented the success of revolutionary movements.

In Chapter 9, Diop analyzes revolutionary processes in the history of the African-Asian (M.P.A.) States as well as in the Greco-Latin City-States. He outlines the characteristics of the African-Asian (M.P.A.) States and explains the special relationship of the civil bureaucracy and the people. This relationship was necessary in order to organize the great irrigation and construction projects that benefited the whole society. As a result of the nature of the M.P.A. State and its capacity for problem solving, he concludes that the public role of the bureaucracy and its ability to intervene made the people less revolutionary and less desirous of change. In contrast, the Greek City-State of the Athenian individualistic type and the Spartan militaristic type were subject to constant revolutionary activity because they were based on slave dominated populations with limited territories and bureaucracies.

In Chapters 10 and 11, Diop provides several examples of significant unsuccessful revolutions. He points out that although the fundamental contradictions in these societies existed and revolutionary conditions were widespread, other factors were at work that produced failure. He gives extensive details about the first large scale revolution in history which occurred in Egypt about 2100 B.C.E. at the end of the Sixth Dynasty during a period of chaos. Miserable conditions in Memphis, the capital, led to the sacking of the town and the spread of popular revolt along the Nile River. Diop calls this mass movement the "Osirian or Proletarian" Revolution. It failed, however, because of the complexity of the state apparatus and the size of the nation. Clearly, it lacked the force and coordination of other similar movements in modern times.

Another major example of unsuccessful revolutionary activity occurred in China during the ninth century C.E. at the time of the T'ang Dynasty. Problems of land use and expropriation created conditions of impoverishment for the peasantry and produced a veritable agricultural proletariat. This violation of their inalienable rights to land led to widespread revolt which forced the Royal Court to flee to the neighboring Turks who intervened, crushed the revolt, and restored the emperor to power.

In this case, although the revolution was defeated by outside intervention, the complexity of the State and size of the territory were nevertheless

major factors. Diop also looks at the failure of the Islamic revolution in Africa, which could have been a true revolutionary movement but coalesced with aristocracy and did not become a force for change. By looking at the failure of revolutionary movements in history, Diop has been able to make a significant addition to the theory of change in societies.

In Chapter 16, Diop presents a detailed analysis of the African contribution to science and provides documentation to illustrate the theoretical basis of Egyptian mathematics, particularly its geometry. Utilizing the scholarly works of the Egyptians, which came down to us through various papyri, Diop makes very revealing comparisons between what is attributed to Greeks such as Archimedes, Pythagoras, Hippocrates, and Aristotle and what was actually achieved previously by Nile Valley specialists thousands of years earlier. He refers to the work of Paul Ver Eecke, *The Complete Works of Archimedes* (1960), and notes that he accuses Archimedes of dishonesty because he did not acknowledge the theoretical mathematics he borrowed from the Egyptians.

Diop cites other scholars, such as V. V. Struve whose volume, *Study of the Mathematical Papyrus of the Moscow Museum* (1930), shows that Egyptian mathematicians had established a rigorous formula for the surface of a sphere. Similarly, mathematical knowledge which has been attributed to Pythagoras can be found in the Rhind Papyrus, which contains the calculation of problems that affirm the Egyptian knowledge of geometry and trigonometry. This ancient document was completed two thousands years before Greek intellectual efforts and is analyzed by T. E. Peet in his book, *The Rhind Mathematical Papyrus* (1923). The *Edwin Smith Medical Papyrus* contains the first known mention of the brain, acknowledging its importance to the body. This document is a recording of part of the extensive knowledge the Egyptians possessed concerning medicine, particularly anatomy. The *Ebers Papyrus* and other ancient documents recording scientific development also revealed the high level of achievement in chemistry and metallurgy. Diop gives various illustrations of the mathematical basis for the art and architecture of the Egyptians and the significance of the sacred square in their artistry. Similarly, the calendar development in prehistoric times provides evidence of the importance of astronomy.

In Chapter 17, Diop asks the question, does African Philosophy exist? He then proceeds to detail the Egyptian contribution to World Philosophy. He points out that in the classic sense philosophical thought must have at least two fundamental criteria: 1) It must be conscious of itself and exist as thought, and 2) It must realize, to a satisfactory degree, the separation of myth and concept.

He points out that the Egyptian cosmogony was centered around three great systems of thought:

1. Hermopolitan System.
2. Heliopolitan System.
3. Memphite System.

He adds a fourth school of thought referred to as the Theban System.

In the presentation of the evidence for the existence of African philosophical thought, Diop relates the concepts of the universe's existence as chaotic matter and the creation of order by Ra as the foundation for the materialist and idealist schools of Greek thought. He notes that the Osirian Drama, Resurrection and Renewal, the Trinity, and *The Book of the Dead* underlie the Judeo-Christian philosophical tradition. He continues to develop this analytical approach to Egyptian philosophical thought making comparisons with the Dogon cosmogony and the significance of their knowledge of the star Sirius. He maintains this approach as he analyzes Bantu philosophy as well as the medieval philosophy of Timbuktu.

Finally, Diop raises the question as to whether the African philosophical tradition can help provide the means for a new philosophy that will aid humanity in its search to reconcile man with himself. Diop's *Civilization or Barbarism* is truly an extraordinary scientific and scholarly masterpiece, which represents a challenge to all scholars, particularly those Africans who accept the call to create a new social science, a new humanity, and a new society. This work will undoubtedly become a classic of African-centered scholarship. It has been published in France by *Présence Africaine.* We must do all we can to make sure that it is published in English, Spanish, and Portuguese so that it can be a creative unifying force in the African World.

Part IV
African-Centered Perspectives

Chapter 8

From Tef Tef to Medew Nefer

The Importance of Utilizing African Languages, Terminologies, and Concepts in the Rescue, Restoration, Reconstruction, and Reconnection of African Ancestral Memory

By Adisa A. Ajamu

This paper is dedicated to the memory of our Ancestors: Ulysses "Duke" Jenkins, Listervelt Middleton, Vivian Gordon, and Amos Wilson who devoted their lives to making sure that our *vocation's utterances* were heard.

Otito: Statement of the Problem

You hearers, seers, imaginers, thinkers, rememberers, you prophets called to communicate living truths of the living way to a people fascinated unto death, you called to link memory with forelistening, to join the uncountable seasons of our flowing to unknown tomorrows even more numerous, communicators doomed to pass on truths of our origins to a people rushing deathward, grown contemptuous in our ignorance of our source, prejudiced against our own survival, how shall our vocation's utterance be heard?

— AYI KWEI ARMAH

Sebai[1] John Henrik Clarke, respected African doma,[2] characterized history as "a clock that a people use to find their political time of day . . . [and as] the compass that they use to locate themselves on the map of Human geogra-

Otito is a Yoruba word meaning "truth." See in M. T. Drewal, *Yoruba Ritual - Performers, Play, Agency* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 204.

1. *Sebai* is defined in the Medew Netcher as meaning "Teacher" or "Instructor." This term is employed throughout this discourse in an attempt to abandon Western appellations such as *professor* and *doctor* which find their meanings in another cultural context. See E. A. Wallis Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary,* vol. I s.v. "sebai."

2. *Doma* is a Malian term for "the keeper of ancestral memory" (history). The French term *griot* is often used to describe Dogon historians.

phy."[3] This point of view suggests that African deep thinkers are the cultural timekeepers, the cultural compass makers, the cultural cartographers, and the protectors and preservers of ancestral memory. It is in this context that Armah's deeply profound and penetrating query reverberates and sets the context for this discourse. "How shall our vocation's utterance be heard?" That is to say: Who shall define African reality? Who shall tell the story of African peoples? And how shall it be told?

The breadth and scope of this discourse modestly endeavors to advance a compelling, though discursive, argument for the methodological and epistemological importance of learning and utilizing African languages, concepts, and terminologies in the rescue, reconstruction, restoration, and reconnection of African ancestral memory. By African ancestral memory, I mean the comprehensive and organic ontological narrative of African peoples and their "living traditions." It is the force that charts our course in a fundamentally different direction from what is commonly known as Western historiography. Moreover, in following our new compass course, this essay will locate the use of European intellectual (scientific) colonialism in the onslaught on African ancestral memory in general and the use of the European languages in particular as one of its main apparatuses for the incarceration of the African mind.

The method for achieving this aim is fivefold: 1) a discussion of the illusion of objectivity with regard to the function of theory and method in the Western intellectual enterprise in general and historiography in particular; 2) an examination of the notion of intellectual (scientific) colonialism as it relates to the incarceration of African ancestral memory; 3) the establishment and examination of the relationship between language, thought, and world view by concisely looking at the connections between intellectual (scientific) colonialism, language, and the corollary of conceptual incarceration; 4) a proffering of preliminary thoughts on the African conception of the Word and its centrality to the African world view; and 5) an examination and exploration of the utility, value, necessity, and imperativeness of learning and utilizing African languages, concepts, and terminologies in (re)constructing and (re)connecting African ancestral memory (i.e., historiography).

3. John Henrik Clarke, *Notes for an African World Revolution: Africans at the Crossroads* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1991), 401.

Ndoongo Ya Ita: The Illusion of Objectivity—The Function of Theory and Method in Western Historiography

The function of theory [in the West] has not been to expose ideas maximally to falsification, it has been to justify the current ideological program . . . . After all, it is not ideological programs that grow from theoretical ideas to which evidence gives rise to; rather ideological programs are set forth and then justified by theory, and the role of methodology becomes one of protecting theory from falsification.

—W. C. Banks

To the intelligent scholar it should come as no surprise that science (or scholarship) is ideology. Equally apparent is the reality that theory and methodology do not evolve from an objective and valueless vacuum. Rather, theory, method, and their resulting products evolve in the context of, and in response to, certain sociocultural realities.[4] Within the domains of Western academia, the traditional milieu of verificationist empiricism has been the barometer by which the integrity of *modern* and *post-modern* erudition, inquiry, and research has been judged as having value.

Furthermore, in the West the most salient factor in scholarly inquiry and research is the degree to which theories can be authenticated by data derived from the empirical method. The empirical method, in this regard, thus provides the paradigm within which truth is pursued and the evidence of such is verified. Within this milieu, theory is advanced as the tool that exposes ideas to falsification.[5]

The illusion of objectivity in the West has been promulgated and maintained, in part, by implicitly asserting that although the products (empirical evidence) of the Western academic enterprise *may* be adulterated by cultural, social, political, economic, and psychological biases, the prevailing logic argues that the projects (theories) and processes (methodologies) of Western research and inquiry are nonetheless objective—and thus universal.[6] Hence, in the West the prevailing logic insinuates that the problem lies with interpre-

Ndoongo ya ita is a Gikuyu term meaning "War-Cry." See Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mt. Kenya, The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 314.

4. Jacob Carruthers, *Science and Oppression* (Chicago: Northeastern Illinois University, Center for Inner City Studies, 1972).

5. P. K. Feyerabend, *Science in a Free Society* (London: NLB, 1978).

6. See Jacob Carruthers, "An African Historiography for the 21st Century," Chapter 3, p. 47.

tation of the evidence and not with the theoretical and methodological protocols that guide the Western academic enterprise. Consequently, it has been posited in variegated ways that the projects and processes of Western academia are part and parcel of an *objective* endeavor to authenticate truths about temporal and spatial phenomenons and/or phenomena based on scientific appeals to *empirical* evidence.

However, a look behind the veil of universality and the illusion of objectivity reveals the opposite: the methodological demands of scholarship have not given rise to *objective* efforts that reconcile theoretical postulates through authentication; to the contrary, it *subjectively* protects them from it. Sebai Curtis Banks, citing T. S. Kuhn, rightly notes that theory is constrained both by certain methodological conventions and by the world view that governs the monolithic paradigm within which the scholarly community operates.[7] Furthermore, it should be clear that theory and methodology are culture bound, that is, they are derived from a people's world view and accompanying epistemological assumptions about the nature of reality. In the West, *scientific* notions of what constitutes truth and, by extension, evidence are invariably connected to the Western epistemological assumption of *ontological corporeality,* or the belief in material reality. Hence, theory and methodology are both derived from and informed by this cultural view.

To illustrate this, in the areas of Western psychology and sociology, complex human behavior and its equally complex social order are methodologically reduced to statistical quantifications that then become the evidence upon which psychological and sociological theories are viewed and validated. Thus, the whole expanse of human interaction is reduced to that which can be measured and quantified, that is, to a material manifestation. The same holds true in the area of anthropology (or the "science of otherness"). Here the anthropologist or ethnographer *objectively* studies the *cultural other* from the outside. Objectivity is ensured methodologically by taking every possible precaution to leave cultural biases behind. Theoretically, it is the illusion of objectivity that suggests that this is methodologically possible. However, even if that were possible, the data gathered still have to be analyzed and interpreted from someone's cultural frame of reference, and more often than not, it is the ethnographer's frame of reference through which the culture of the *other* is interpreted. As will be shown below, this same illusion of objectivity is manifest latently in the area of historiography.

In the West, the function of theory has not been to advance ideas, but to simply justify them. Thus, in Western episteme, inconsistencies in the theory

7. W. C. Banks, "The Theoretical and Methodological Crisis of the Africentric Conception," *Journal of Negro Education* 61, no. 3 (1992): 264.

are rectified not by invalidating the theory, but rather by simply finding the right method to explain the inconsistencies in the theory.[8] In this regard, some African deep thinkers have regarded this logical positivist orientation to be completely useless. Thus, arguing this position from that standpoint suggests that it is the responsibility of the African deep thinker to reject any system of ideology, theory, and methodology that proves itself to be antithetical to the sociocultural interest of the African community.[9] With this in mind, some African deep thinkers are beginning to pay attention to the protective demands of theory for an African-centered methodological framework.[10]

With regards to the *science* of Western historiography, the logical positivist orientation has been in operation and advanced as the objective (i.e., universal) method. Hence, appeals to evidence are mediated and authenticated by the conventional framework of the logical positivist or verificationist empiricism method. Thus, in Western historiography, the written word, which is empirically or materially verifiable (and therefore consistent with the European world view and epistemology) is believed prima facie to be the more *authentic* form of evidence, while, the oral tradition, which is consistent with the African world view and its consonant epistemology, is dismissed as lacking *empirical* reliability and validity (authenticity). In response to this erroneous line of reasoning, Sebai Hampâté Bâ perceptively noted that,

> the whole problem is whether we can place the same trust in the oral as in the written when it comes to evidence of things past. In my view that is not the right way to put the problem. Written or oral evidence is in the end only human evidence and it is worth what the man is worth. . . . What is involved, therefore, behind the evidence itself, is the actual value of the man who is giving the

8. One need only to trace the invidious Western theories regarding African intelligence from Fran in Galton's theory of eugenics in 1869 (see *Hereditary genius: Its laws and Consequences*) to Arthur Jensen's theory of the heritability of intelligence and the concomitant intellectual inferiority of Africans in America in 1973 (see *Educability and Group Difference*) to Murray and Hernstein's *Bell Curve* in 1995 to get a firm grasp of ways in which the *theory* of African intellectual inferiority has been protected despite its myriad of falsifications (refutations). In this regard, it has been the theory of African intellectual inferiority that remained constant, while only the methodologies employed in pursuit of *proving* the theory correct have changed. Toward this end, it is apparent that methodology in the West has served to protect theory from falsification, rather than to expose it to falsification.

9. See Wade Nobles, *Africanity and the Black Family* (Oakland, Calif.: Black Family Institute Publications, 1985); Na'im Akbar, "Africentric Social Sciences for Human Liberation," *Journal of Black Studies* 14, no. 4 (1984): 395–414; C. Clark et al., "Voodoo or I.Q.? : An introduction to African psychology," *Journal of Black Psychology* 1 no. 2 (1975): 9–29; and Amos Wilson, *The Falsification of African Consciousness: Eurocentric History, Psychiatry and the Politics of White Supremacy* (New York: Afrikan World Infosystems, 1993).

10. Banks, "Theoretical and Methodological Crisis of the Africentric Conception," 265.

> evidence, the value of the chain of transmission he is part of, the trustworthiness of the individual and collective memory and the price attached to that in a given society.[11]

Space does not permit an exposition on the lack of authenticity (truthfulness) with regard to the written and spoken word in the European world view. Suffice it to say that one needs only to examine the U.S. Constitution and its eloquent appeals to the equality of humankind and contrast those *written* words with the actions of those slaveholding framers of the Constitution to get a cogent sense of the tenuous veracity of the written word in the West.

Numerous African deep thinkers have rightly noted that theory and method develop out of, in response to, and in defense of the demand functions of a particular world view.[12] Hence, there can only be *world view specific* theories and methodologies, which are rooted in *culturally derived* epistemologies. Moreover, it should be clear that what is authenticated as truth in one culture may not be perceived as such in another. Thus, truth would have little, if any, authenticity, relevancy, or saliency when applied in a different cultural sphere other than to perpetuate cultural domination and epistemological hegemony. Therefore, the theoretical and methodological demands for authenticating truth must be developed within a given culture and they must be consistent with that culture's epistemological orientation, if they are to reveal truths to and about that culture.[13]

Accordingly, in this context, scholarly, or scientific, inquiry becomes an extension of a people's world view as a codified system of truthful claims about reality that have cultural relevance, authenticity, and agency. Service and scholarship are intimately connected to the people in whose culture it is anchored. It is therefore the role of the African deep thinker "to present the 'truth' of one's people in a scientific manner."[14] This then suggests that when black scholars[15] uncritically adopt a European-centered methodological framework, the scholar also inherits European-centered epistemological paraphernalia. Furthermore, when black scholars attempt to apprehend African reality

11. Amadou Hampâté Bâ, "The Living Tradition," *UNESCO General History of Africa*, vol. I, *Methodology and African Prehistory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 166–167.

12. Carruthers, *Science and Oppression*, passim; Banks, "Theoretical and Methodological Crisis of the Africentric Conception," 265.

13. Wade Nobles, "African Consciousness and Liberation Struggles: Implications for the Development and Construction of Scientific Paradigms" (paper presented at the Fanon Research and Development Institute, Port of Spain, Trinidad, 1978).

14. Ibid.

15. The term *black scholar* is used in this discourse to denote a distinction between those

(ontology) utilizing a European epistemological paradigm, the black scholar becomes incarcerated by the European *utamawazo*[16] (world view). The result is that the black scholar often ends up mimicking European thought and unwittingly producing *European truths* about African realities, while giving the appearance of producing African gnosis and/or interpreting African deep thought.

This is precisely why any attempts to uncover, recover, and restore truths about African ancestral memory must be authenticated by utilizing an African methodological framework that is rooted in an African utamawazo and its consonant epistemology. Thus, as African deep thinkers move to extricate themselves from the hegemony of the European utamawazo, the African deep thinker by definition engages the European in an Epistemological Battle[17] over African ontological capital (i.e., African reality). This Epistemological Battle might best be elucidated and understood in the form of three queries: 1) Will Africans or Europeans define African reality?; 2) Out of whose frame of reference, normative assumptions, and world view will that reality be authenticated?; and 3) Whose definitions, theories, and methodologies will prevail in the definition and explication of African reality?

When one acknowledges and understands the axiom "power is the ability to define reality, and have other people respond to your definition as if it were their own,"[18] it becomes increasingly evident that what is at stake in this Epistemological Battle is no less than the power to define (authenticate) African reality. And ultimately the winner will either liberate or extirpate African probabilities and potentialities. It is clear, in this regard, that the African deep thinker is engaged in something more vital than the mere writing of a people's history (historiography). The African deep thinker is presented with the

African scholars (black scholars) who employ a European epistemological orientation in an attempt to elucidate African cultural realities from those African scholars (African deep thinkers) who are engaged in African deep thought rooted in an African epistemology and world view.

16. Marimba Ani introduces *asili, utamawazo, and utamaroho* in her brilliant work on European thought and behavior entitled *Yurugu: An African Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior*. The asili is defined as the seed of culture and may be understood in colloquial terms as the deep structure of a culture (ontology, cosmology, and axiology). Utamawazo as she defines it is the way a people must think in order for the culture to be perpetuated; however, its shorthand definition may be closer to world view. Utamaroho is literally the "spirit of the culture." In this discourse, it is used to connote the cultural manifestations or surface structure of a people's culture.

17. Adisa A. Ajamu, "Nommo or Nomenclature: The importance of African languages in the reconceptualization of healing and praxis in African psychology Spiritual Disarrangement of African Peoples and its effect on the Sakhu" (paper presented at the Twentieth-eighth Annual Convention for the Association of Black Psychologists in Chicago, Illinois, 1996).

18. Nobles, *Africanity and the Black Family*, 106.

Narmer-ian challenge of liberating the African mind. I submit, therefore, that this liberation of the mind can be achieved only by rescuing, restoring, reconstructing, and reconnecting "African ancestral memory" to powerful praxis.

Orogi: Intellectual Colonialism and the Incarceration of the African Mind

Liberation as a human possibility must express itself as both an intellectual and social situation and practice. But cultural or intellectual liberation precedes and makes possible social liberation. In a word, until we break the monopoly the oppressor has on our minds, liberation is not only impossible, it is unthinkable. For one is not likely to achieve what one cannot even conceive.

—MAULANA KARENGA

Perhaps the most potent contemporary form of the *Maafa*[19] has been the colonization of the African mind. In colonizing the African mind, Europeans and their progeny have not only attempted to limit African freedom, they have attempted to circumscribe the ability of Africans to even conceive of the conditions necessary for liberation.[20] This intellectual colonialism has been one of the most effective weapons employed by Europeans in their more than "two thousand seasons" of inhumane attack against African peoples.

In colonizing African peoples intellectually, Europeans have not only colonized African history, they have also colonized the reality of African peoples as well. The importance of this is underscored by Sebai John Henrik Clarke who noted that it is nearly impossible to oppress a consciously historical people.[21] The efforts by Europeans and their disciples to colonize African ancestral memory have been multifarious, as African peoples have often found themselves consigned to the footnotes of the historical narratives of other

Orogi is a Gikuyu term meaning "poison" or "witchcraft." See Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mt. Kenya*, 316.

19. *Maafa* is a concept introduced by Marimba Ani that identifies the historic African enslavement and contemporaneous oppression of African peoples as a great misfortune of death and destruction beyond *human* comprehension and convention. Some have referred to the Maafa as the African holocaust. I believe this comparison to be patently incorrect and culturally incongruent with the African experience. The word *holocaust*, derived from the Greek word *holokaustos*, is defined in *The American Heritage Dictionary* as "burnt whole." This word is consistent with and has import for the experience of Europeans of the Jewish faith and the genocidal pogroms that were employed by the Germans during the Second Great European War.

20. The fact that there are a substantial number of liberated and liberating thinkers in the African community is evidence that the colonization of the African mind has not been totally successful.

21. See Clarke, *Notes for an African World Revolution* (Trenton: African World Press, 1991).

people[22] or written out of human history altogether.[23] This felonious appropriation of African ancestral memory has not been an accidental occurrence, but a part of the deliberate, culturally consistent, and calculated effort to disconnect African people from their ancestral memory. Thereby, African people have been subjugated to the traditions and cultures of other people (Greco-Roman, Germanic, French, British, Anglo-American, etc.). It is this malevolent and pernicious process of colonizing information in order to disconnect a people from their heritage and culture, which disempowers African people, that we identify as *intellectual colonialism.* Any serious effort at establishing an African methodological framework for authenticating African ancestral memory must attend to the issue of intellectual colonialism.

Colonialism rests on three fundamental premises: 1) the involuntary removal of indigenous wealth by an outside group, 2) an illegitimate claim to the right of access to that wealth, and 3) an external power base that manages the indigenous wealth. When these factors are present, a colonial relationship exists,[24] and I contend that such a relationship exists between the African and the European—Africans being the colonized and Europeans the colonizer. Under this arrangement, intellectual property is likewise controlled by the colonizer.

Sebai Nobles wrote that *scientific colonialism,* which I have expanded to include intellectual colonialism, "is the process wherein knowledge and information are rigidly controlled by the methodology or mechanisms of destruction, distortions, fabrications, and suppression."[25] He further noted that "through the collateral processes of unsophisticated falsification, integrated modification and conceptual incarceration, Western social science has served to colonize African reality, by decentering the African."[26]

This discourse is principally concerned with *conceptual incarceration,* one of three aspects of intellectual colonialism. Thus, it provides only cursory examinations and exemplars of the other two aspects, *unsophisticated falsification* and *integrated modificationism,* and refers the reader to other discus-

22. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History,* vol. I (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

23. Georg W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover, 1956).

24. Wade Nobles, "Extended Self; Rethinking the So-Called Negro Self Concept," in *Black Psychology* 3d ed., ed. R. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 100.

25. Wade Nobles, *African Psychology: Towards Its Reclamation, Reascension and Revitalization* (Oakland: Black Family Institute Publications, 1986). Although Wade Nobles defines this process as scientific colonialism, I have amended this to read *intellectual colonialism* in order to preserve the flow of the text while maintaining the integrity of his intent.

26. For a more detailed discussion of scientific or intellectual colonialism, see *African Psychology* by Wade Nobles. It is also important to note with regard to the three features of scientific colonialism that I am by no means suggesting a linear, ordinal progression in stages. I assert that Europeans at various times have used all three simultaneously and at other times simply

sions that treat those areas with a greater sensitivity and rigor.[27] According to Sebai Nobles, the first feature of intellectual colonialism is unsophisticated falsification. Here facts, information, and ideas are simply destroyed and/or falsified. The myth of the "Great White Race" and its anteriority to the ancient Nile Valley Civilization that was advanced by Breasted and Reisner in the early part of the twentieth century[28] is but one example of the myriad attempts to destroy, distort, and/or falsify African ancestral memory by utilizing the process of *unsophisticated falsification.*

The second feature of intellectual colonialism is integrated modificationism. In this process, original facts, information, and ideas are distorted, suppressed, and/or modified in order to create *new* fabricated facts and ideas. Exemplars in this regard are the philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Philosophers like Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Frederick Hegel, and René Descartes, in their quest for rationality, rational man, and the universal axiom of reason, which became "the supreme seat of judgement before which anything that made a claim to validity had to be justified,"[29] aided and abetted the specious belief in African social, historical, and cultural impotence. Philosophers of this persuasion believed that the *universal* concepts of reason, rationality, and rational man eluded the African and thus paved the intellectual way for the African to be positioned as less than human and thus expatriated from human history—at least from the intellectual vantage point of Kant[30] and Hegel.[31]

Several instances of integrated modificationism are found in Martin Bernal's *Black Athena,* vol. I. In his text, Bernal cogently documents how the intercourse between Christian fanaticism, the emergence of the *modern* concept of progress, and the rise of racism and *Romantic Hellenism* in the eighteenth century gave birth to the "Aryan school" at Gottingen which deliberately attempted to write African peoples out of the human historical narrative by *modifying* the Nile Valley origin of civilization and *integrating* a fabricated neo-Hellenistic origin.[32]

used only one feature. The mode and method was predicated on what was necessary for the end goal to be achieved.

27. Tony Browder in *Nile Valley Contributions to Civilization* provides a convincing argument for this line of reasoning.

28. James H. Breasted, *Ancient Times* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1935).

29. J. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity,* trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 16–18.

30. Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feelings of the Beautiful and Sublime,* trans. John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 110–111.

31. See Théophile Obenga, *A Lost Tradition: African Philosophy in World History* (Philadelphia: The Sources Editions, 1995), 3–7.

32. Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization,* vol. 1, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785–1985* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 189–223.

Conceptual incarceration, the third feature, is central to this discourse. In this instance, the scholar is provided with a predetermined set of concepts and definitions requisite to the process of knowing. These factors delimit what is known and what can be known. Consequently, the knower or scholar becomes a representative of the emergent body of ideas and an interpreter of its fundamental precepts. In instances when the precepts are fundamental to a culture other than that of the knower or scholar, he or she becomes a prisoner of alien concepts, theories, and methodologies.

This discourse is principally concerned with conceptual incarceration because until the African breaks the monopoly that the oppressor has on the African mind, "liberation is not only impossible, it is unthinkable." In the West, nowhere has this monopoly been more evident than in the arena of scholarly inquiry and research. The black scholar as a result of Western training is often incarcerated by the theoretical and methodological protocols of the West. As a result of this conceptual incarceration, the black scholar has oftentimes engaged in what is described euphemistically herein as *intellectual mirroring.*

Intellectual mirroring is the process wherein the black scholar, having been trained in a particular Western discipline (psychology, history, sociology, philosophy, etc.) and becoming aware of the diminished, distorted, and/or dehumanized African presence (or absence in some cases), attempts to locate, correct, and authenticate African truths (reality) utilizing a European epistemological framework. Consequently, this black scholar uncritically and in some instances unknowingly mirrors European intellectual thought, failing to questioning its cultural congruence, relevance, appropriateness, and/or reconcilability of that body of thought to an African asili.

In addressing the notion of intellectual mirroring, one could randomly select almost any area of Occidental Information Production,[33] variously termed

33. Information and knowledge production are different. *Information* is the agglomeration of decontextualized abstract facts that do not require reconciliation with lived ontologies. Consequently, facts have little meaning outside of intellectual manipulations which produce fabricated *truths* about reality. Hence, the fragmentary and disjunctive structure of the University system in the West: the human sciences are separate from the biological sciences, which are disconnected from the social sciences. This accounts for the emphasis on content (information) mastery in the Western educational system over knowledge (character development). *Knowledge* is here defined as the correct and pragmatic application of acquired information about the nature and substance of universal relationships rooted in and connected to a people's experiential, sociocultural ontology (real world experiences). I believe that it was the African emphasis on knowledge production that resulted in a very different system of education in the Nile Valley and by extension traditional African educational systems like and Sankore at Timbuctoo under the direction of Ahmed Baba. See John Jackson, *Introduction to African Civilization* (New York: Citadel Press, 1970); Asa Hilliard III, *The Maroon Within Us* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1995); K. A. Akoto, *Nationbuilding: Theory and Practice in Afrikan Cen-*

academia, the university, higher education, and so on, to expound on this point. However, there are few disciplines in the Occidental Information Production enterprise in which intellectual mirroring is more evident than in the evolution of the academic discipline Black Psychology.[34]

Born in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the political vortex of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, Africans in America[35] (alternately identified as blacks, Afro-Americans, and African Americans) trained in the discipline of Western psychology began to recognize *some* of the inherent problems of psychology with regard to its use, historically and contemporaneously, as a tool in the oppression and dehumanization of African peoples. Consequently, these psychologists sought to develop within the domains of Western psychology a culturally distinct appendage that would speak to the authentic experiences of blacks in America.[36]

However, because these black psychologists sought to integrate the existing paradigm, they failed—and continue to fail—to ask the fundamental epistemological questions. Consequently, many of their projects and processes produced reactionary justifications for "Black Strivings in a Twilight Civilization"[37] (to use Cornel West's phrase), rather than proactive solutions rooted in, derived from, and connected to the African asili.

Moreover, these projects and processes often ended up reflecting a myriad of "ghettocentric" and "negrocentric" products such as "Radical Black Behaviorism" and theories of "Psychological Nigrescence." These products in their more ambitious moments were often designed to account for African psycho-cultural dilemmas resulting from the opprobrious legacy of racism and oppression by utilizing European processes to authenticate African truths and, in the less imaginative moments, to unintentionally validate Africans as merely dark-skinned Europeans or Afro-Saxons. A cursory reading of much of the literature of contemporary black psychology continues to reflect this mirroring of European psychological thought.

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tered Education (Washington: Pan Afrikan World Institute, 1992).

34. Here I make an important distinction between black psychology, which is based on a European epistemology, and African psychology, which is based on the African epistemology and its concomitant world view.

35. I use *Africans in America* rather than *African Americans* to connote a Pan-Africanist orientation.

36. For a more in-depth discussion on this matter, see Nobles, *African Psychology;* R. Guthrie, *Even the Rat Was White* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976); Asa Hilliard, "I.Q. As Catechism: Ethnic and Cultural Bias or Invalid Science," *Black Books Bulletin* 7, no. 2 (1981); and J. White, *The Psychology of Blacks: An Afro-American Perspective* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1984).

37. Cornel West and Henry L. Gates, *The Future of the Race* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).

As a result of mirroring European psychological thought much of what has traditionally passed for black psychology has amounted to slightly more than Western psychological theorems and methodologies masked in theoretical blackface.[38] Some might even say that in black psychology's less creative moments, it has amounted to little more than Sigmund Freud dressed in *intellectual kente cloth.* Consequently, the overwhelming majority of efforts to comprehend and articulate the nature of normalcy for the African has lacked theoretical originality and methodological precision because these efforts have lacked the requisite centricity that an African-centered analysis would provide. Sebai Carruthers, looking into the mirror of African history and reflecting on the dangers of uncritical adoption of European thought, cautions that "African thinkers should carefully think through European logic before adopting it as our progeny."[39]

One of the deleterious consequences of uncritically mirroring European epistemological orientations for the purpose of understanding African (psychological) reality is the inadvertent exacerbation of African psycho-cultural dilemmas in some cases and the creation of new aspects of these dilemmas in other cases.[40] Sebai Na'im Akbar in attempting to explain this "transubstantive error" echoes the sentiments of a small but growing *egbe*[41] of African deep thinkers, when he writes that "African social scientists have failed to come to grips with the fact that the tools that they have acquired in the course of their training in the Western social science tradition have ill-equipped them to deal with the fundamental task of liberating African people—socially, politically, economically and psychologically."[42] He further notes that "uncritical acceptance of the assumptions of Western science by African people is to participate in our own domination and oppression."[43] In brief, these black psychologists have been intellectually incarcerated by the very theories, methods, and concepts that they have been utilizing in an effort to obtain psychological (intellectual) liberation for African people.

38. A good example of this would be William Cross's model of psychological nigrescence, which at its root is merely an attempt to apply an Eriksonian model of psycho-social development to African psycho-cultural phenomena by virtually painting it in theoretical *blackface.* See William E. Cross, "The Negro to Black Conversion Experience: Towards the Psychology of Black Liberation," *Black World,* 20 (1971): 13–27.

39. Jacob Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr: Divine Speech* (London: Karnak House, 1995), 51.

40. Adisa Ajamu, "Khennu Ka: The Spiritual Disarrangement of African Peoples and Its Effect on the Sakhu" (paper presented at the Twelfth Annual Convention for the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations in Detroit, Michigan in 1995).

41. *Egbe* is a Yoruba word that depicts a group of persons on a spiritual journey.

42. Akbar, "Africentric Social Sciences for Human Liberation," 395–414.

43. Ibid.

Although some black psychologists have raised questions regarding the integrity of African representation in the discipline of Western psychology, for the most part the fundamental conceptual questions have not been addressed. One such question is what is psychology? The answer to this question and questions related to other disciplines establishes at least four coordinates: 1) From whose world view and epistemology is the discipline derived?, 2) Are the epistemological underpinnings of the discipline consistent with an African epistemic orientation?, 3) Is the concept congruent with the cultural substance of African people?, and 4) Is such a concept reconcilable with an African utamawazo (world view)? The position established relative to these coordinates then locates and determines the African place relative to the particular alien discipline and thus determines whether or not there can be an African variant.

The same critical posture must be assumed toward our everyday use of language and terms in the academic enterprise in general since this is our primary means of transmitting ideas. Thus, the question of language itself much be addressed. More specifically, the question of the nature and substance of European languages must be raised, and in doing so the above issues must be addressed and amended to include the issue of a more appropriate vehicle for the transmission of African ideas and knowledge production.[44]

The aforementioned example notwithstanding, the most fundamental and deeply entrenched aspect of conceptual incarceration resides at the level of language. To adopt the language of another culture is to also adopt its ways of viewing the world. In this regard, Sebai Rekhety Wimby posits that "since most of our conscious modes of conceptualizing, acting and moving about are conditioned in part by our language, to use the language of another culture is to use that culture's ideas; and to use another culture's ideas in place of one's own is to relegate the latter to a position of de facto inferiority."[45] In effect, the degree to which the world views of two different cultures are divergent or diametrically opposed is the degree to which the one using the alien language becomes conceptually incarcerated. In reading the intellectual compass the coordinate of language, thought, and world view suggests the next direction.

44. Pauline M. Rosenau, *Postmodernism and the Social Sciences: Insight, Inroads, and Intrusions* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1992), 77. It notes that a great many of the postmodernist thinkers have rejected the Western notions of truth and theory because they argue that all knowledge is language-bound and thus culture-bound.

45. Rekhety Wimby, "The Unity of African languages," in *Kemet and the African Worldview: Research, Rescue and Restoration*, ed. Maulana Karenga and Jacob Carruthers (Sankore Press: Los Angeles, 1982), 162.

Nommo or Nomenclature: Language, Thought and World View—The Mechanisms of Intellectual Liberation or Conceptual Incarceration

The choice of language and the use to which language is put is central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe. Hence language has always been at the heart of two contending forces in the Africa of the twentieth century.

—NGUGI WA THIONG'O

The thesis herein directs the compass needle to the coordinate of language, thought, and world view and the capacity of world view to either incarcerate or liberate African intellectual efforts. As noted earlier, as African deep thinkers endeavor to liberate themselves from European intellectual hegemony, they are inevitably faced with what we have termed the Epistemological Battle, that is, the battle over whose world view will ultimately define African reality and the basis upon which that reality will be authenticated.

In this regard, it is clear that language plays an essential role in the Epistemological Battle. Sebai Nobles notes that "it is, in fact, through the processes of language and culture that one can analyze and understand both the issues of human oppression and liberation."[46] One need only consider that upon the colonization of Africa, one of the first weapons that the colonizers deployed in their attempt to disrupt African cultures was the imposition of their language, for in so doing they recognized that they were imposing their utamawazo.

Sebai Ngugi notes that there are three important aspects of language as culture: 1) culture as a product of history that the language in turn reflects, 2) the language of the culture as an "image forming agent in the mind of the child," and 3) language as a "means of transmitting and imparting images of the world and reality through the spoken and the written, that is through a specific language."[47]

In terms of the pernicious effects of the imposition of alien language, again Ngugi posits that "since culture does not just reflect the world in images but actually through those very images conditions a child to see that world in

46. Nobles, "African Consciousness and Liberation Struggles."

47. Thiong'o Ngugi wa , *Decolonizing the Mind* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1986), 15–16.

a certain way, the colonial child was made to see the world and where he stands in it as seen and defined by or reflected in the culture of the language of imposition."[48]

These critical and incisive points chart the importance of African languages and their relationship to the propagation, perpetuation, and preservation of African cultures, particularly as they relate to the reconstruction of an African world view and the attendant reconnection and restoration of African ancestral memory. Toward this end, African deep thinkers must attend themselves to the study of African languages if we are to truly provide new and penetrating insights into African cultures, because language expresses modes of cognition that are in fact cultural and which codify, explicate, and express the asili and utamawazo of a particular people. What is more, the syntactical, semantic, and morphological structures of any language seek to fulfill the demand function of its asili. Consequently, a people's language serves to inform those within the culture as well as those peripheral to it as to what is germane, constitutive of, as well as nonessential to the culture. Thus, just as language is informed by world view, it in turn informs world view and serves to cohere the culture in question.[49]

Moreover, one is moved to ask the questions: what happens when African people use as a primary language the language of a culture that is from all available indices diametrically opposed to their culture?; and what happens when the alien language is used as the primary conceptual tool for the analysis of African reality? In an effort to respond to these queries, let us first turn to an examination of the cultural origins of the African and the European.

The divergent and diametrically opposed world views of the African and the European that developed as a result of differential ecological niches (or cradles) has been well documented; hence, only a brief recapitulation is required. Sebaiw Diop, Wobogo, and others have cogently posited that human culture was spawned from two divergent and distinct cradles of civilization, the Southern (African) Cradle and the Northern (Indo-European) Cradle.[50] For our purposes the development and emergence of these two very different cradles can best be understood in contradistinction to one another.

In the Southern Cradle, the land was hospitable, the climate warm, and food sources abundant. Thus, the Southern Cradle ecology afforded a sedentary and agrarian lifestyle. These factors combined to produce an asili whose ontology (orientation towards reality) was based on the belief in the ubiquity of spirit and a cosmology based on interdependence with nature, an axiology (value orientation) based on harmony and balance, and an epistemology (sys-

48. Ibid., 17.

49. Wimby, *Kemet and the African Worldview,* 162.

50. The reader is directed to the following works for a more detailed discussion: Cheikh

tem of truth) based on a delicate balance between affective (the spirit) and palpable perception (the material). This in turn engendered a praxiology (system of human conduct) that emphasized matrilineal ascent, monotheistic spiritual systems, collectivistic social systems, xenophilic dispositions, and burial as part of the death ritual.[51]

Conversely, in the Northern Cradle during the Würm glacial period, the land was frozen, making it nearly impossible to grow food, and the arctic climate and dearth of food sources made living conditions extremely harsh. The ecology of the Northern Cradle stood in stark contrast to the ecology of the Southern Cradle. These circumstances combined to produce a nomadic mode of living, a cultural asili whose ontology was based on the belief in materialism, a cosmology based on independence from nature, an axiology based on ideals of conflict and competition, and an epistemology based on palpable perception. This in turn gave rise to a society that emphasized patrilineal descent, polytheistic religions, individualism as a social system, xenophobia in relation to outsiders, and cremation as part of the death ritual.[52]

Sebai Marimba Ani in addressing the relationship of world view to language asserted that "every world view generates a set of metaphysical definitions and can only be explained and understood using those definitions as reference points. . . . The European and African world views are so different, in such crucial aspects, that explanations of the African world that use European definitions are blatantly absurd.[53] In depicting fundamental differences between the world views of the South and the North, Sebai Ani stated that "the African world view is characterized by unity, harmony, spirituality and organic interrelationship . . . [and that] the European is characterized by compartmentalization (isolation, separation), control (power relationships), conflict (tension), materialism, and mechanical relationship."[54]

In this regard, it is clear that just as African languages reinforce and reflect the African world view, which in turn inform the culture and its concordant epistemology, so too do European languages reinforce and reflect the

A. Diop, *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1959); Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology* (Lawrence Hill Books, 1981); and Wobogo, "Diop's Two Cradle Theory And The Origin Of White Racism," *Black Books Bulletin* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1976): 20–29, 72. In this regard, it is important to note that David Walker's *Appeal* (1829) anticipated Diop by more than a century in his analysis of the differences in the African and Greek world views.

51. Several African psychologists following the lead of Cheikh Anta Diop, Jacob H. Carruthers et al. have begun to use the *two cradle theory* to articulate the differential psychocultural dispositions between Africans and Europeans.

52. Wobogo, *Diop's Two Cradle Theory*, 20–29, 72.

53. Dona Marimba Richards, *Let the Circle Be Unbroken: Implications of African Spirituality in the Diaspora* (Trenton: Red Sea Press, 1989), 9.

54. Ibid.

European world view and its Northern Cradle origins. Let us consider for the moment some examples from the European American version of English (which in terms of its grammatical structures is really a corrupted form of German). Most of the general people signifiers in the English language are represented by the masculine determinatives. Consider, for example, *mankind, humanity, manager, management, mandate,* and *chairman.* In American sports, furthermore, most of the descriptors are generally conflict laden with bellicose undertones, such as "Notre Dame versus Florida State" or "War Eagle," the name of the Auburn University mascot, or reports like "Notre Dame was dealt a crushing defeat at the hands of Florida State" and "in order for UCLA to be successful today, it must demoralize its opponent." In the world of business, the involuntary acquisition of one corporation by another is called a "hostile takeover." Moreover, in the business world, it is common to hear phrases such as "I need to spend my time more efficiently"; "you're wasting my time"; or, the favorite axiom in the business world, "time is money." Notice the English vernacular's individualistic emphasis on time as if it is a *personal commodity* that can be controlled. The negative designations for the word *black* in the English language are well-known. Not even God who is suppose to be a ubiquitous spirit is above cultural constraints: the Bible is replete with masculine references to the creator. The evidence that the English language reflects the Northern Cradle emphasis on patriarchy, competition, conflict, and xenophobia is beyond circumstantial.

Thus, it should be clear that the English language expresses modes of cognition that are cultural and codify, explicate, and express the European asili and utamawazo. Moreover, the syntactical, semantic, and morphological structures of any language seek to fulfill the demand function of its asili.

Consequently, the English language serves to inform those within the culture as well as those peripheral to it as to what is germane to and constitutive of that culture (e.g., European men, competition, conflict, control of time, and racism, inter alia) as well as what is nonessential to it (e.g., non-Europeans and women). Hence, just as language is informed by how one sees the world, it in turn shapes the world we see and thus perpetuates the culture from which it was spawned. This salient acknowledgment leads us to the arresting problem of using European languages in dealing with African phenomena.

I submit, therefore, that the asili (ontology, axiology, cosmology) of a people is codified in their language and serves to reinforce, inform, and at times transform the utamawazo and *utamaroho*[55] of those who utilize that particular language. Moreover, when one concedes the diametric opposition of

55. Ani introduced this term in *Yurugu,* pp. 13–21. She defines it as the "spirit-life of a

the African and European world views, the implications of using European languages and concepts with regard to African phenomena become embarrassingly lucid.[56] In a phrase, the diametrically opposed functions of language in the African and European world views can in summary be defined as Nommo versus nomenclature.

Nommo represents the African conception of the generative and productive power of the word. In this context the use of language becomes a means of giving potency, authenticity, and agency to the human experience while simultaneously creating and affirming reality. Nommo is correct speech connected to correct action. Nomenclature herein is codified as a construct and defined as the European use of language to circumscribe the parameters of the human experience through *appellate manipulation* of reality. Nomenclature is similar to Sebai Ani's *rhetorical ethic*[57] in that it is meant solely for exportation and seeks to disconnect thought from praxis. In many ways, nomenclature represents the European utilization of language as a degenerative and destructive weapon that convolutes and obfuscates reality.[58]

A glance at the "compass" brings us to one of the "cardinal" points of this discourse: when African deep thinkers utilize European nomenclature (languages, concepts, and/or terminologies) instead of Nommo when attempting to comprehend, elucidate, and/or explicate African phenomena, they are not only in danger of becoming conceptually incarcerated but may unknowingly be employing a European epistemology (system for authenticating cultural

culture and the collective personality of its members."

56. Western scholars such as S. I. Hayakawa, in "What is meant by Aristotelian Structure of Language?" (1954); H. C. Stafford, in *Culture and Cosmology: Essays on the Birth Of World View* (1981); and B. L. Whorf, in *Language, Thought and Reality* (1956), have made similar observations. S. I. Hayakawa (1954), writing about Korzybski, whom he identifies as the "father of general semantics," proceeds to inform us that the main weakness of Indo-European languages is its *aristotelian* structure. The second facet of the *aristotelian* structure is elementalism. By this Korzybski means that traditional Indo-European languages divide the indivisible world into atomistic, self contained entities, e.g., substance, form, body, mind, cause, effect. The most notable philosophical instance of elementalism is perhaps the mind/body duality. Korzybski further notes how our languages are laced with polarities of value: true/false, black/white, right/wrong, up/down, etc., p. 218.

57. In *Yurugu,* xxvi, Sebai Ani defines *rhetorical ethic* as the "culturally structured European hypocrisy. It is a statement framed in terms of acceptable moral behavior towards others that is meant for rhetorical purposes only. Its purpose is to disarm intended victims of European cultural and political imperialism. It is meant for 'export' only. It is not intended to have significance within the culture. Its essence is its deceptive effect in the service of European power."

58. It is important to note that Post-Modern philosophers such as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault have made similar arguments in their writings. See J. Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," *New Literary History* 6, no. 1 (1974): 5–74; M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge: And the Discourse of Language* (New York: Pantheon, 1972).

truths) to understand and elucidate African phenomena (cultural truths). As a result the African deep thinker's efforts and ability to understand the African world—ancient, traditional and contemporary—are severely circumscribed.

Yet, another cardinal point is the problem of historical discontinuity. Sebai Cheikh Anta Diop, speaking about the relationship between the linguistic factor, cultural identity, and historical continuity, wrote that "the essential thing, for people, is to rediscover the thread that connects them to their remote ancestral past. In the face of cultural aggression . . . the most efficient weapon with which a people can arm itself is the feeling of historical continuity."[59] It is clear that the linguistic factor is a constituent element of cultural identity and is a quintessential means of advancing cultural unity and thereby historical unity. Sebai Carruthers argues that the movement away from our language represents "a step towards the alienation of Africans from the African heritage."[60] Sebai Lacinay Keita notes how the use of Arabic by African scholars during the medieval period, as the primary academic language, served to obscure African historical contributions.[61] "Until we have a body of African scholars," Sebai Carruthers writes, "trained not only in the ancient Egyptian language, but also in the traditional languages of Africa and the ancient languages of the world, our efforts to command World history will be hampered."[62]

Our attempts to respond to the question of learning ancient and traditional African languages must consider two especially important points: 1) most African deep thinkers in the United States speak English as their primary language and, in many instances, it is their only language and 2) the overwhelming majority of Africans in America do not speak an African language. How then do we attempt to (re)solve the problem of conceptual incarceration imposed by the English language?[63] To grasp both the magnitude and complexity of this situation, one need only observe the inherent linguistic paradox: writing about the importance of utilizing African languages in English, a non-African language. The coordinate of logic, circumstance, and condition inform the course we must take: understanding the African conception of the Word in African languages, its centrality to the African world view, and its relationship to our project.

59. Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism*, 212.

60. Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr: Divine Speech*, 73.

61. Lacinay Keita, "The African Philosophical Tradition," in *African Philosophy*, ed. Richard Wright (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 67–69.

62. Jacob H. Carruthers, *Essays in Ancient Egyptian Studies* (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1984), 25–26.

63. It is important to note that although this discourse focuses primarily on English, this point of view holds true for all non-African languages (Afrikaans, French, Portuguese, German, Italian, Arabic etc.).

So Dayi: Distinguishing Essence from Expression—Embryonic Reflections on the African Conception of the Word

From the time of Pharaonic Egypt, the spoken word has been sovereign in Black Africa. From time immemorial, there have been not oral civilizations (as ethnologists and foreign anthropologists call them) but civilizations of the powerful, creative word. . . . It is clear that ancient Egypt was also a high civilization of the mighty and magical Word!

—THÉOPHILE OBENGA

Any serious attempt to discuss and convey the importance of African languages to our project(s) must speak to the African concept of the Word, its centrality to the African world view, and its concomitant, deep thought. In this regard, when one approaches the study of African deep thought, one is at once awed by the simplicity of its complexity and the complexity of its simplicity.

Perhaps the most salient example of this phenomenon is the concept of Nommo introduced by the Dogon doma, Ogotommeli, in the text *Conversations with Ogotommeli.* Nommo is explained as the generative and productive power of the Word, the ability to create reality through the force of the spoken word. In this conception, Nommo becomes the Word made manifest through speech. The utilization of the concept of Nommo has become increasingly popular, so much so, that it has often been oversimplified to the point that it at times tends to reflect the Christian analogue of "name it and claim it." In more than a few African community circles, Nommo is invoked as a sort of verbal panacea. While this in some ways reflects a simplistic truth, it also portends a more complex reality.

A myriad of African deep thinkers have written extensively on the centrality to and essentiality of the "power of the word" to African deep thought. Two of the more noteworthy efforts are Amadou Hampâté Bâ's "The Living Tradition" and Jacob H. Carruthers's *Mdw Ntr: Divine Speech.* Toward that end, this discourse has little to contribute beyond what they have said. My efforts are directed towards an apprehension of the origin of the Power of the Word, that is, the conception of the Word, or *living verb* in African thought.

It has been tacitly implied in some African scholarly circles that the essence of the Word in African deep thought and its expression (affective

So Dayi is a Dogon concept meaning "Clear Word," which "concerns itself with the edifice of knowledge in its ordered complexity." See M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen, *The Pale Fox* (1986), 70. Sebai Marimba Ani (1995) defines it as self knowledge or vision with perspective.

speech) are synonymous, often using the Power of the Word and the Word interchangeably. The difficulty with this line of reasoning is that it assumes that the parent (the Word) and the child (the power of the Word) are one and the same. It is at this diacritical juncture that what at first may appear to be a radical—in the etymological sense—departure from the prevailing thinking on this matter is inserted. However, it is important to note in this regard that this is not an attempt to make any bold pronouncements, but rather a modest effort to follow the "needle of the compass" in a different direction from where the prevailing logic currently situates the discourse surrounding the African conception of the Word.

Therefore, I submit that the concept Power of the Word (and its intra-Continental variants, i.e., Nommo, Ofo Ase, Kuma, *Mdw Nṯr* etc.) in African deep thought is not synonymous with the African concept of the Word; rather the Word is a distinct but not separate entity. This location equates the concept of the Word in African thought with *primordial essence,* quintessential thought that antecedes creation, if you will. In the parlance of physics, the Word in this context represents both potential and kinetic energy. This can best be articulated by employing the following formula: Source + Force x Effect = Affect. Source represents the Word or the point of primordial essence; Force represents the energy that emanates from the primordial source; Effect represents its manifestation; and Affect is the change that is produced as a result of powerful expression of the "Word," that is, speech. If one regards the Word as primordial source or essence, then the Power of the Word is its powerful expression.

This formula can be better elucidated by examining the cosmologies of two African cultures of very different temporal and spatial locations, one classical, Kemetic, and the other traditional, Yoruba. In doing so, I hope to establish a position using the following points: 1) a tacit, though compelling, argument for the cosmological unity of Africa, 2) an African cultural unity based on African cosmological unity, and 3) the centrality of the Word to African deep thought. The triangulation of these three points, then provides support for the notion of an immutable asili that transcends time, geography, and space via the power of the word. Let us explore this line of inquiry more closely by locating the use of the conception of the Word in the Kemetic and Yoruba traditions.

According to the "Memphite Theology" (Kemetic tradition), the beginning is expressed as Sep Tepy (The First Occasion).[64] Here Ptah emerges from

64. Sebai Carruthers notes that "the conditions, properties and processes that are necessary for existence, good life and eternity came into being the first time (*hpr sp tpy*). Thus, we may say that everything came into being *sp tpy.* Hence, we see in the Kemetic conception the notion that everything that would be already potentially was. See Carruthers, *Essays,* 58.

the primeval waters of Nun; Atum then emerges from the primeval waters to sit on top of Ptah. From this duality, cosmic order is established first through the universal laws: Nun and Nunet; Amun (hidden) and Amunet (revealed); Hehu/Hehut (infinite/finite); Keku/Kekut (darkness/light).[65] These universal laws gave rise to the natural laws: Shu/Tefnut (air/moisture), Geb/Nut (earth/sky). In turn this gave rise to humanity.

From this cosmology, we can infer that the element of Source or the Word is identified and equated with the primeval waters of Nun. In this regard, the "Shabaka Text" (Memphite Theology) informs us that "all divine speech happened in the thoughts of the mind and the commands of the tongue."[66] In this case, the logic of this point declares itself, for it is well-known that thought precipitates speech; in fact, thought is silent speech.

In the Kemetic tradition, this concept presents itself as Medew Netcher, which identifies itself as the "powerful expression" of primordial essence, hence, divine speech. Sebai Carruthers, in this regard, notes that the root word *medew* translates as "staff" or "cane" and that the word for staff is comparable to the notion of authority or authoritative utterance: "Writing the word for speech with the picture of an elder's cane which is the symbol of the staff of authority accords with the universal African association of the staff with the potent word."[67]

In other words, Medew Netcher can be defined as the powerful expression of the divine or primordial essence, that is, the Word. Three related concepts may be considered constitutive elements of divine speech or Medew Netcher: Sia, clarity of thought; Hu, clarity of speech; and Heka, the powerful or transformative speech generated by the synthesis of the Sia and Hu. Hence, when the triumvirate of Sia, Hu, and Heka are present, Medew Netcher or Divine Speech is expressed. On the relationship between Sia, Hu, and Heka, we again let Sebai Carruthers speak for himself on the matter:

> The relationship is symbolized through the divine concepts Sia, Hu, Keka. Sia is the concept of exceptional intellectual clarity, Hu represents articulate command and Heka symbolizes extraordinary power. So indeed the mind thinks, the tongue orders and the body obeys—in that order. That is, when the mind sees with exceptional clarity, then the tongue speaks with authority and the limbs perform with extraordinary effectiveness, all good things come about,

65. Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism,* 311, 313.
66. Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr,* 43.
67. Ibid., 39.

> all things succeed. The command is obeyed when it is rightly conceived and articulately uttered because it is Maat (Truth)![68]

It appears then that the constitutive elements of Good Speech, Medew Nefer, are clarity of thought (Sia) and clarity of speech (Hu).[69] These elements in turn provide the preliminary conditions or foundation for Medew Netcher, Divine Speech. Consequently, Medew Nefer can be said to be the result of one's heart/mind (thoughts) being clear of Isfet (disorder) and one's speech (actions) being properly aligned with Maat (truth). In short, Medew Nefer is the result of one's practice being consistent with one's thoughts. [This idea appears to be conceptually related to the Yoruba concept of Ori Ire, one whose consciousness (thought) is properly aligned with one's destiny.] Correspondingly, when correct thought (Sia) and action (Hu) are connected with extraordinary power (Heka), the resulting product is Medew Netcher.

The coordinates on the "chart," then, position Medew Nefer (Good Speech) as the process that makes Medew Netcher possible. In the Kemetic tradition, there is an example of this relationship in the petitions of the eloquent peasant Khun Inpu.[70] In seeking Maat (justice), Khun Inpu put forth a persuasive and impassioned appeal for justice by deftly employing clarity of thought (Sia), clarity of speech (Hu), and extraordinary power (Heka), which in this context is manifested as eloquent speech that stirs the spirit and moves one to correct action.

In the first appeals, he employs Medew Nefer (Good Speech), Sia, and Hu, and with each subsequent appeal the level of discourse is elevated until Heka is present, at which point Medew Netcher is produced (or prevails) and his appeals are granted. Thus, both Medew Netcher and Medew Nefer become the prescriptions for thinking and doing Maat. In returning to the formula, it would be applied to the Kemetic tradition thusly: Source (Nun, primordial consciousness or Word) + Force (Hu/Sia/Heka) x Effect (Medew Netcher or Divine Speech) = Affect (Medew Nefer or Good Speech). In another temporal and spatial milieu, we find similar conception of the Word amongst the Yoruba whose cultural relationship to Kemet has been well documented.[71]

In examining the Yoruba spiritual system, Ifa, there appears to be a similar conception of the Word. Succinctly stated, in the beginning Olorun (the owner of heaven) creates the universe, ex nihilo, by establishing the order of the

68. Ibid., 45.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid., 143–170.

71. See J. O. Lucas, *Religions in West Africa and Ancient Egypt* (Apapa: Nigerian National Press), 1970.

cosmos. Olorun further creates the elemental forces known as Orisas to help humans establish, maintain, and operate in harmony with the cosmic or natural order. Each of these Orisas is aligned with, and given a responsibility for, a particular force in nature. Of particular interest to this discourse is the Orisa Esu, for it is Esu who is the possessor of Ase (transformative force or energy). However, it is Olorun who gives Ase to Esu, thus Olorun is the source of Ase and Esu is merely the intermediary; and hence the Baba'lawo accesses both Olorun and Esu through Ofo Ase (power of the Word) and Iwa Pele (balanced character) or good speech/action. From this depiction, it takes little in the way of intellectual acuity to see the conceptual resemblance between Olorun (preexistent source) and Nun (primordial essence); between Ase (transformative energy) and Heka (extraordinary power); between Medew Netcher (creative or divine word) and Ofo Ase (the power of the word); and between Iwa Pele (harmony between properly aligned thought and action) and Medew Nefer (balance, good speech, and correct action). In reference to the Yoruba tradition, the formulaic equation would look like this: Olorun (source) + Ase (force) x Ofo Ase (effect) = Iwa Pele (affect).

In effect, the shorthand version of this thesis about the Word can be succinctly articulated as the ethereal essence of the Word and its powerful expressions, or the power of the Word. Thus far we have addressed the question of source with regard to the Word in African deep thought. Let us direct our attention to the issue of the product and process of the Word through a brief examination of Speech, the Powerful Expression of the Word in African culture. It takes little in the way of insight to see the relationship between Nun, the demiurge, and Olorun, the preexistent life force, between universal forces in Kemetic cosmology and the irumole in the Yoruba cosmology and between the Netcherew and Orisas.

The Powerful Expression of the Word in the African World View

Arguably the most lucid and comprehensive exposition on the centrality of the Word in the African world view was articulated by the late Sebai Amadou Hampâté Bâ in his illuminating essay, "The Living Tradition." In this regard, it has been suggested that he "has stated and documented all that is necessary and appropriate concerning the relationship between contemporary 'traditional' African thinking and Divine Speech."[72] Thus, at best what follows is merely a reiteration—albeit insufficient—of some of the central themes of his exposition.

72. Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr, Divine Speech,* 65.

Sebai Bâ noted that the Word is "the fundamental force emanating from the creator," and as such it is the primary "instrument of creation."[73] It was submitted above that the Word in the African world view represents primordial consciousness. But how does one come to understand that primordial consciousness? I believe that the ancient Africans in their wisdom understood the tenuous and futile nature of such a proposition and thus sought to understand this primordial essence as it revealed itself through the language of nature and the cosmos, a *divine conversation* if you will.

Over time the ancient Africans came to understand all phenomena in nature as forms of speech in that they spoke (communicated their natural essence through patient and careful observation) to the African. As the African observed nature and the cosmos and sought to live in harmony with the natural and cosmic laws, Africans spoke back, generating a divine conversation between woman/man and nature (Ptah), ergo Divine Speech. In this regard, Sebai Bâ noted that "speech is the externalization of the vibrations of forces, every manifestation of a force in any form whatever is to be regarded as its speech. That is why everything in the universe speaks: everything is speech that has taken on body and shape."[74]

Hence, speech and action came to be inextricably linked as one; there would be no separation between thought and practice; the foundation of Medew Nefer was established. Speech then became the process that restored balance to the cosmic and natural forces. Accordingly, just as the Creator's speech awakened the potential forces in man, so too does woman/man's speech animate and set in motion the inert forces in nature as the Creator's (re)presentative.

It is clear that what serves to cohere the African world view is the ethereal essence of the Word and its transformative or powerful expressions, or speech. Throughout most of the African world there is a belief in the generative and productive power of the Word, the activating force that animates life. The power to speak reality into existence is literally the word made manifest, the synthesis between the material and spiritual, visible and invisible realms.

Sebai Bâ notes that the Word is the essential force originating from the Creator. "It is," in the words of Bâ, "the instrument of creation." Humanity having been created of divine substance is the amalgamation of all that exists. Thus humanity "received its legacy as part of the divine creative power, gift of Mind and the Word." Thus as the divine Word was made manifest amongst humans, it was transformed into the sacred Word, hence the perpetual exchange between the divine Word from the Creator and the sacred Word to the Creator generated a divine conversation, which Sebai Bâ identifies as "sacred

73. Amadou Hampâté Bâ, "The Living Tradition," in *General History of Africa*, vol. I, *Methodology and African Prehistory*, ed. Joseph Ki-Zerbo (California: UNESCO, 1981), 168.

74. Ibid., 170.

vibrations." Speech is at once divine in its descent from the Creator to humanity and "sacred" in its ascent from humanity to the Creator.[75]

At this point it should be evident that speech, the Powerful Expression of the Word in its variant articulations (i.e., among the Dogon, Nommo; Yoruba, Ofo Ase; Bambara, Kuma; Africans in America, Testifying; Kemites, Medew Netcher) is essential to the African conception of reality. In fact, reality cannot exist apart from the spoken word. Once again, this phenomenon is present in the Dogon creation story where Amma gives life through creative thought and the use of the seven creative words that give rise to creation. Furthermore, its sacredness can be seen in the Apayee or Ijuba, the libation ceremony that begins every important function in the African community. We see its connective power in our relationships with the Amadlozi, the Nsamanfo, and the Egun (ancestors). Its essentiality is manifest in the importance that Africans place on naming their progeny. Sebai Théophile Obenga writes, "In Black Africa to call someone by name is to reveal a 'human being,' that is, a human being from this village or that ethnic group, from this family having these ancestors. The aim is to situate the individual in space and time and, at the same time, to give that person being 'in its entirety.' "[76]

As noted above, another important function of speech (the powerful expression of the Word) is exemplified in its relationship to thought and practice in the African world view. In a great many African languages there is no distinction in the language between thought and speech, as Sebai Carruthers notes: "thinking is a form of silent speech" and "in fact one thinks in speech." In African deep thought there is no division between thought and action.[77] This is best illustrated by the following passage taken from the Shabaka Text (Memphite Theology):

> *sk ḫprn is mdw nṯr nb m k33t ḥ3tyw wḏwt ns*
> All divine speech happened in the thoughts of the mind and the commands of the tongue.[78]

An equally important, yet often, overlooked aspect of the Powerful expression of the Word is the power of the unspoken word, the ability to gener-

75. Théophile Obenga, "African Philosophy of the Pharaonic Period," *Egypt Revisited, Journal of African Civilizations,* 2d edition, ed. Ivan Van Sertima (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1993): 316.

76. Carruthers maintains that the relationship between thought and speech is symbolized in the text by "Horus [who] represents thought and Djehewty [who] represents speech. Horus as the divine prototype of the Pharaoh and Djehewty as the symbol of the Prime Minister exemplify divine order in the human community." See Carruthers, *Mdw Nṯr,* 44.

77. Carruthers, *Mdw Nṯr, Divine Speech,* 44.

78. Ibid., 43.

ate force based solely on *cogitative orality* or thought. It is in some sense the power generated from the ability to recognize the appropriate time to speak and the appropriate time to remain silent.

Yet another attribute of speech in the African world view is rhythm or yaa-warta, which in Fulfulde is the force which generates movement and rhythm and therefore life. The importance of the relationship between rhythm and movement to speech cannot be understated with regard to its essentiality to African deep thought. This aspect of speech is dealt with in the following section on the utilization of African languages and concepts.

From Tef Tef to Medew Nefer: The Power of the Word and Importance of African Languages, Concepts, and Terminologies in the (Re)Construction and (Re)Connection of Ancestral Memory

The discussion of the compass of directions makes it obvious that a command of the language of ancient Egypt is essential for its restoration as a vital part of African historiography. This has long been one of the stumbling blocks to the African intellectuals who have engaged in the enterprise.

—JACOB H. CARRUTHERS

There's a connection between the capacity to have other people speak your language and to call things by the names you give them, and power. If we wish to assume power then we must assume the capacity to name and define things.

—AMOS WILSON

If one is to fully appreciate the role of language in the African world view, it is important to understand two concepts that will serve both as explanatory and exploratory constructs for our discussion. Medew Nefer, good or morally correct speech, and Tef Tef,[79] idle chatter or speech that disconnects movement and rhythm from speech. As we stated previously, Medew Nefer is the process that produces Divine Speech. Medew Nefer is the good Word that is connected to morally correct practice, which leads to or produces Medew Netcher.

Tef Tef, when codified, becomes a construct that can then be deployed to postulate that the utilization of European languages, terms, and concepts in identifying and explicating phenomena is idle chatter (Tef Tef) that divorces

79. Tef Tef is a Kemetic concept discussed by Sebai Jacob H. Carruthers in *Mdw Ntr: Divine Speech.* Within this essay, I use the term to connote the use of European terms and/or concepts in an attempt to identify and explicate African reality.

African reality from its power, purpose, and meaning and thus disconnects movement and rhythm from speech. Rhythm in this context represents the state of being *stylistically* and *kinesthetically* in harmony with time and space in such a way that it creates a sense of place. This understanding is paramount because in African conception all forces in humanity are latent until speech activates them through vibration.

This, then, accentuates the importance of using (and speaking) African languages when one examines the role of rhythm in African languages. Again, turning to the African doma, A. Hampâté Bâ, who informs us that "for the spoken words to be fully effective they must be chanted rhythmically because movement needs rhythm, [African] speech produces the movement that is the essence of rhythm." He further notes that "speech is . . . the materialization or externalization of the vibration of forces."[80] Let us take a moment to reflect on this point. We do not simply hear the drum, we feel the drum. When we listen to the Fugees or Tribe Called Quest or Miles or Coltrane or Kirk Franklin and the Family, we feel the music which animates our being. We turn up the volume when our favorite song is played, not because we want to hear it more clearly but because we want to feel it. This is also the power that African speech possesses. African speech has power to act on spirits (forces, netcherew, abosoms, orisas) because its harmony generates movement that generates force which in turn animates the orisa, abosom, or the netcher. Consequently, just as we feel music we also feel the power of a good sermon in church or a good lecture on African history and culture. And just when we think we have a handle on our understanding of rhythm, vibration, and speech, we jump back across the ocean to the Motherland and find the Dogon talking about vibration as a constituent element in the creation of the world.

The points about rhythm and vibration become evermore salient when one acknowledges the tonal and the rhythmic nature of a great many African languages including Yoruba and Zulu. Let us take a brief look at Yoruba. In Oshogbo, Nigeria, when the Baba'lawo or Iya'lawo (Yoruba priest) begins a Daafa (divination process), he/she is careful to say the proper adura (prayer) with the correct tone and rhythm. The priest may begin by giving praise to the cardinal directions by saying: "Iba ase gbo gbo Oorun, Iba ase gbo gbo orun, Iba ase gbo gbo ariwa, Iba ase gbo gbo guusu." She/he may proceed to thank the Creator, the orisa, and the ancestors: "Iba ase gbo gbo Oludumare, Iba ase gbo gbo Orisa, Iba ase gbo gbo Egungun." Here, the content of the prayer, the tone, and the rhythm in which it is articulated are equal in their value to the efficacy of the ritual. Thus, when we use European languages and concepts, we may be divorcing ourselves from the full power of the Word.

80. Bâ, *General History,* 170.

Moreover, something is invariably lost in the translation when one attempts to import ideas from one linguistic context to another. For instance, *Amadlozi*, a Zulu word, that is defined in the Zulu/English dictionary as ancestor, when in fact its literal translation, "those who have fallen in defense of the people," suggests something fundamentally if not radically different from the English translation. It suggests that everyone who dies is not automatically an Amadlozi (ancestor) and that only those who have distinguished themselves in defense of their people are worthy of the honor of being referred to as an ancestor. Hence, language performs the additional function of being culturally descriptive and prescriptive simultaneously, that is, descriptive in that it delineates and explicates the contours and complexities that provide a people with a "general design for living" and prescriptive in that it prescribes or circumscribes the "patterns for interpreting reality." In this regard, Medew Nefer becomes a necessary propaedeutic in the rescue, restoration, reconstruction, and reconnection of African ancestral memory.

In order to fully apprehend the power of Medew Nefer, let us look at Sebai Wade Nobles's notion of *Sakhu Sheti.* Sakhu means "the understanding, the illuminator, the eye, the soul of the being, or that which inspires." Medew Netcher gives the meaning of *Sheti* as "to go deeply into a subject, to study profoundly, to search magical books, to penetrate deeply." Sakhu Sheti, then, is "the deep and profound study of the human spirit or the study, mastery, and understanding of the process of human illumination."[81]

In this context, the role of Sakhu shetiist is to assist the human being in moving towards human illumination and spiritual elevation, to assist the human being in metaphysical transcendence such that the human being seeks to liberate her/himself from the manacles of global white supremacy. This suggests something fundamentally different than the study of the mind or psychology, which is fraught with Platonic ideals of objectification and Cartesian notions of physical separation and alienation.

The danger here is that this discourse might be misunderstood such that attempts are made to merely take European ideas and attach African labels to them (and adopt them). This would be a mistake analogous to the draping of Europeans in African clothing and then making the claim that they are Africans. What I argue for, here, is a critical engagement with African deep thought that is based on an African world view and not reconstructed and reconstituted European thought dressed in African terminology and prostituted as African deep thought.

81. Wade Nobles, foreword to *Light From Ancient Egypt,* by Na'im Akbar (Tallahassee, Florida: Mind Productions & Associates, Inc., 1994).

Again we turn to the Elder Sebai Carruthers who writes:

> the formulation of an African worldview is the essential beginning point for all research which is based on the interest of African people. There can be no African history, no African social science without an African worldview. By African I do not mean merely a history or social science of Africa but a world history and a universal method of analysis designed by and for Africans.[82]

With regards to the (re)construction of ancestral memory, here are some examples of convention that should be made in the spirit of Medew Nefer. Wsir should always be referred to by his name and not Osiris; Aset instead of Isis; Djehewty instead of Hermes or Thoth; Hor Em Akhet instead of the Sphinx; Kemet instead of Egypt; Ta seti instead of Nubia. Carruthers notes that Medew Nefer is speech that is "morally correct." Second, African deep thinkers must learn at least two African languages: Medew Netcher, the classical language, and one traditional language, that is, Yoruba, Twi, Gikuyu, Kiswahili, Wolof, Zulu, and so on. This traditional language should be a culturally based language, instead of a trade language, so as to avoid or at least severely circumscribe the foreign intrusions in our interpretations of African cultural patterns. In this way we restore order and do justice to our ancestral memory by restoring Maat. To do less than this is to engage in Tef Tef (idle chatter) words disconnected from meaning, context, thought, practice, and power.

Lastly, we must avoid Medew Djew,[83] which is the opposite of Medew Nefer. Medew Djew is Evil Speech, that is, speech that is inconsistent with correct thought and disconnects the rhythm, thereby cutting us off from fully apprehending ancestral memory. When Europeans renamed us Negroes instead of referring to us as Africans, they were engaged in Medew Djew (Evil Speech). When they argued that Kemet was not culturally part of Basic Africa, they were engaged in Medew Djew; when they referred to Kemet as Egypt, they were engaged in Medew Djew. We have always known as part of the African constitution that to call someone out of their name is to offend at best and to declare war at worst.

Whenever we knowingly call our people outside of their names, we are engaged in Medew Djew. African ancestral memory is unique and distinct in its ontological (reality), cosmological (relationship to the Divine), axiological (values), epistemological (understanding of truth), teleological (purpose) orientations and therefore its praxis. This suggests, then, that we are engaged

82. Carruthers, *Essays*, 17.
83. Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr, Divine Speech*, 73.

in—or at least should be—an enterprise radically different from what Western historiography prescribes.

Moreover, our projects, processes, and products (historical narratives) in the reconstruction and reconnection of African ancestral memory must reflect the best of what it means to be African in both historic and contemporary terms. In utilizing Medew Nefer, we rescue, restore, and reconnect African ancestral memory (historiography) to powerful praxis and in so doing we can assist the return to our Way:

The Way of African love and connectedness; the Way of balance and reciprocity; the Way of virtuous thought and correct action not as disparate entities but as an inextricable whole ; the Way of collective purpose populated with, and propelled by, African intentions; the Way of seeing truth and justice not as abstractions but as practiced principles; the Way of collective courage deeply motivated by communal concern; the Way of seeing good character and integrity as the measure for human development; the Way of spiritual realities unfettered by material illusions; the Way of complementary relationships between African women and men engaged in unlocking ancient secrets of love, beauty, and profound reproduction; the Way of Godlike aspirations in the face of human frailties; the Way of excellence informed by notions of perfection; the Way of Aset and Wsir; the Way of Maat and Djehewty; the Way of harmony with God and nature that is informed by ancestral connections and keeps the "circle unbroken."

Thus, "our vocation's utterance will be heard" and our people will be returned to the Way. "Amandla Wamadlozi Ngawethu!" — The Power of the Ancestors is Ours.

Chapter 9

Maat
The Cultural and Intellectual Allegiance of a Concept

By Mario H. Beatty

The Djehuty Project
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- I am a listener: I hear Maat and ponder it in the heart.[1]
- Anyone attempting to write on the African world-view has to approach his subject with much humility, realizing that rather than teaching Africa anything by his writing, he is trying to learn from tradition.[2]
- I am because we are; since we are, therefore I am.[3]
- If we are to defend our (Western) culture and its basic values to the death—and a death that might destroy the entire human race—we certainly need to know precisely what we are trying to preserve.[4]

Knowledge of African history and culture is essential in the process of reflecting upon the nature and purpose of our lives and how to conduct them in the best interests of African people. The significance of the echoing

1. I have made an independent analysis of this portion of the Stela of Antef using *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae,* etc., in the British Museum, vol. II (London, 1912) pl. 23. See Appendix A, p. 241, for a descriptive analysis of this passage.

2. Alexander Okanlawon, "Africanism—A Synthesis of the African World-View," *Black World* (July 1972): 41.

3. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1970), 141.

4. Shepard B. Clough, *Basic Values of Western Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 3.

unison of African scholars in unmasking the pejorative subjectivity of much of Western discourse relative to African people and renouncing an unobtainable objectivity in historical interpretation is not to be underestimated. For African historiography, this has meant the recognition of a legitimate place for values in historical interpretation in tandem with scholarly and rigorous investigation. For us, then, history becomes the living past, not a detached and reified thing to interpret. The idea of pursuing an objective historical truth for its own sake with a detached indifference to a commitment to preserve and perpetuate culture and community is alien to the African world view. The ancestors speak to us and through us, yet as Ptahhotep affirms "no one is born wise."[5] Our task is to listen, learn, and study the wisdom of our ancestors and ponder it in our hearts in order to guide the restoration of our ancestral legacy and derive usable truths from it.

Maat is a concept that is fundamental in understanding the Kemetic (ancient Egyptian) and hence the African world view. Embedded in Maat are a number of critical assumptions about the nature of the cosmos, society, the person, and their inextricable interrelatedness which are in stark contrast and, indeed, alien to the narrative of Western Civilization. Thus, in translating African concepts into modern European languages, we must strive to go beyond literal appearances to understand the cultural substance and mental processes that spoke these concepts into existence. In explaining Maat, this means going beyond the definition of it as truth, justice, righteousness, and universal order to provide some sense of what African people meant by these notions because they do not even remotely parallel the Western sense of these terms.

Two of the above quotations, one representing a Western point of view and the other representing a fundamental assumption of African people, speak to this dynamic and have tremendous implications for how we interpret these concepts and, more importantly, how we use them to interact with other cultures.

When African scholars juxtapose the African notion "I am because we are; since we are therefore I am," against the Western Descartean notion "I think, therefore I am," more is suggested than a mere difference of values. They also allude to how a culture perceives reality.[6] Thus, in the West each

5. Zybnek Zaba, *Les Maximes de Ptahhotep* (Prague: *Editions de L'academie Tchecoslovaque des Sciences,* 1956), lines 41, 19; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature,* vol. I, *The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 63.

6. The point I want to convey here is that *I* and *we* suggest more than what a culture values. More importantly, they allude to the "patterns for interpreting reality" by a culture. Wade Nobles defines culture as "a scientific construct representing the vast structure of language, behavior, customs, knowledge, symbols, ideas, values, matter and mind, which provide a people with a general design for living and patterns for interpreting their reality." See Wade Nobles, "The Reclamation of Culture and the Right to Reconciliation: An Afro-centric Perspective on

person is fundamentally seen as an *I,* a conscious entity set off from the cosmic order and social community. If this is the logic of the culture, then concepts are created to guide the culture toward manipulating reality to conform to this image.

Shepherd Clough sets this task for himself in his work *Basic Values of Western Civilization.* He discusses major values of Western culture such as "the end of man is man," materialism, the glorification of progress, and technology in order to make Western peoples conscious of the cultural matrix that they must preserve, perpetuate, and defend, even if it means the destruction of "the entire human race." The substance of this view is not an anomaly even though it may be concealed under such seemingly altruistic terms as *national pride, national interest, patriotism,* and *humanitarianism.* In the modern era, Western culture continues to view African history and culture as exhibiting an intractable illness of barbarism, the return to which must be prevented if Africans want to take advantage of the fruits of *civilization* and *progress.*

African people fundamentally understand the world in terms of *we,* in terms of the interrelatedness and interconnectedness of the Creator, cosmos, society, and the person. This view determines what we see as truth, how we see truth, and how we act upon the world with this truth. This *we* is not to be misunderstood as a humanizing mission, nor is it to be reduced to a balkanized mentality that frowns upon interaction with other human cultures. We must be politically astute enough to recognize that we must self-consciously protect and defend the sacredness of African history and culture in the face of enemies who are equally, if not more, committed to preserving the sacredness of something different that has absolutely nothing to do with humanizing the world and who have no problem erasing African traditions in the process. Thus, *we* implies nothing less than the cultural unity of Africa, Pan-Africanism, and nationalism.[7]

The above form of historical inquiry has an honorable and respectable lineage among African people. These scholar/activists have shown that the question of intellectual and cultural allegiance is always present in historical interpretation. For my purposes, I want to use Maat as a springboard to speak to this issue which Maulana Karenga refers to as the "modern Maatian" discourse that must involve a unique "transcendent dimension" to speak to the

Developing and Implementing Programs for the Mentally Retarded Offender" (reprint, Oakland, California: The Institute for the Advanced Study of Black Family Life and Culture, 1982), 44. Herein, my use of *I* and *we* speak to both a culture's "general design for living and patterns for interpreting reality."

7. The power of the concepts of the cultural unity of Africa, Pan-Africanism, and nationalism is in their ability to see African people holistically and to use this knowledge politically as a springboard to provide a vision of African liberation that transcends the geographical borders erected by the European concept of nation-state.

contemporary condition of African people.[8] Hence, my discussion of Maat in its historical context will be admittedly more narrative than descriptive. I will provide a rudimentary, symbolic presentation of Maat to fill a visible lacunae in the literature focusing on how various scholars have conceptualized Maat and the practical implications of their interpretations relative to the question of intellectual and cultural allegiance.[9]

Maat
A Symbolic Presentation and the Problematic of Translation

A major strength of the African world view is its ability to at once distinguish aspects of reality without arguing for separation. African people create rich metaphors and symbols in order to convey "dramatic presentations of truth seeking and revelation of truth."[10] These symbols reveal a profound and multilayered knowledge of the universe that illuminates and uncovers the unity between their lives, their natural environment, celestial phenomena, and the Creator. Indeed, as Asante affirms, "we can never know all aspects of the symbol. It is unlimited, infinite."[11] Yet these symbols both represent and reflect how African people see reality and how they convey and transmit this knowledge.

The sense of *we,* the sense of interrelatedness, interdependence, and interconnectedness, is intrinsic to Maat. This is precisely why Maat cannot be encapsuled or rendered properly by any Western parallel term.[12] The necessity to translate Maat as cosmic order, truth, justice, righteousness, harmony, balance, and reciprocity in the English language profoundly reflects the frag-

8. Putting Maat in soci-historical context, Karenga states that "there is nothing in Maatian ethics historically which justifies going beyond socially-sanctioned norms." Therefore, the contemporary condition of African people calls for a "transcendent dimension" to Maat for it to be applicable. See Maulana Karenga, "Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt: A Study of Classical African Ethics," vol. II (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1994), 553–554. It also should be noted that African Americans would probably be the primary focus in executing this "transcendent dimension," not African people in general. See his rubric of "priority focus" in Maulana Karenga, "Black Studies and the Problematic of Paradigm: The Philosophical Dimension," *Journal of Black Studies* 18, no. 4 (June 1988): 405.

9. The inspiration for my interest in posing this as a relevant issue in discussing Maat comes from a work by Jacob H. Carruthers. See Jacob H. Carruthers, *African or American: A Question of Intellectual Allegiance* (Chicago: Kemetic Institute, 1994).

10. Jacob H. Carruthers, *Essays in Ancient Egyptian Studies* (Los Angeles: The University of Sankore Press, 1992), 52.

11. Molefi Kete Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, Inc., 1992), 87.

12. In describing Maat, Henri Frankfort provides a similar commentary admitting that "where society is part of a universal divine order, our contrast has no meaning. The laws of nature, the laws of society, and the divine commands all belong to one category of what is right." See Henri Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers), 54.

mentary *mess* we find ourselves in. All the categories that we must use to approximate this concept was for the Kemites one word. It is even more profound to note that in Kemet, to my knowledge, you cannot find any discourse which asks what is truth, justice, righteousness, and so on. This shows that the essence of Maat could be communicated without being misapprehended or misinterpreted. Hence, Maat did not need to be politically debated, argued over, nor reformulated. When *isft* (disorder) occurs, Maat must simply be restored, but its meaning was never questioned. This, of course, is unlike Western philosophy where notions of truth, justice, and righteousness are relative and existential terms that have no true essence, and because of this, they are endlessly debated.

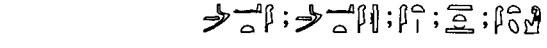
The insufficiency of Western concepts relative to translating African reality is a major issue in African historiography. Finnestad admits that, all too often "the European outlook on life appears in an Egyptian guise, and the question of historical plausibility is not even raised."[13] In translating Maat as cosmic order, truth, and justice, we must be cognizant of this issue so as to avoid the reification of these notions such that we believe that they have an inherent meaning that transcends culture. On this point, Finnestad is again perceptive when he submits that words can function "almost like axioms, because even when efforts are made to avoid transferring these categories on to the Egyptian material in the translating process, they may indirectly exert their influence through being embedded in the analytical concepts applied, and in the very terminology at the translator's disposal."[14] This is not to say that conventional terms such as truth, justice, and cosmic order cannot be used in translating Maat, although knowledge of African languages can do nothing but aid in this process. It is meant to say that these conventional terms must not be projected culturally into the Kemetic past with the mind of Western prejudice which will inevitably yield a situation whereby we begin to compare incomparables.[15]

13. Ragnhild Bjerre Finnestad, "Egyptian Thought About Life as a Problem of Translation" in *The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians: Cognitive Structures and Popular Expressions,* ed. Gertie Englund (Uppsala 1987), 37.

14. Ibid., 34.

15. Admittedly, this is a struggle that will require a team of African scholars, specifically in the area of linguistics, to create African models based on the assumption of the cultural unity of African people to aid in the process of translation. Dr. Théophile Obenga has been foremost among African scholars in the endeavor to detach the Kemetic language from being analyzed in the context of the Semitic or Afro-Asiatic cultural and linguistic universe and restoring it to its proper place within the cultural and linguistic universe of Africa. His forthcoming book, "Ancient Egyptian Grammar," will move us forward in this endeavor. For Obenga's position on these issues in French, see Théophile Obenga, *Origine Commune de l'Egyptien, du Copte, et des Langues Negro-Africaines Modernes: Introduction a la Linguistique Historique Africaine*

Because Maat is not an object, it cannot be known as an object. Maat is not a Newtonian machine with isolated or separate parts interacting by law. Maat does not have distinct parts or entities, but possesses interrelated and interconnected manifestations of a cosmic whole. It is a *we* awareness that does not divide up the world into separate and self-contained units. Distinctions are made, yet there is never any fragmentation. Maat is expressed at all levels and conveys the unitary nature and order of the universe. As universal order, Maat was intimately linked to, although not limited to, the creation of the world; the orderly movement of the sun, moon, celestial bodies, and the seasons; and the divine role of the king, leadership, society, family, and the relationships between people. The harmonious interaction and co-existence of these aspects ensured the maintenance of Maat. One did not need philosophical reflection nor religious dogma to apprehend the essence of Maat. Consequently, Maat can also be seen as "a path in front of him who knows nothing."[16] Since I assume that Maat must be seen first and foremost as a unified whole before commenting on its many manifestations, it becomes important to undertake a *symbolic* analysis of a few of the various ways Kemites visually represented this divine concept.[17] The following are variations of Maat as symbolically represented by Kemites:



As both a proper and abstract noun, Maat is composed of three ideograms: the sickle-shaped end of the sacred *wi3* boat (), a pedestal, platform

(Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1993). For the Semitic/Afro-Asiatic position, see J. H. Greenberg, *Languages of Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, 1963). Finnestad, whose analysis of the problems of translating Kemetic thought is keen, proposes holistic models in Western thought that use such intellectual figures as Giordano Bruno, the sixteenth century Italian philosopher, and Benedict Spinoza, the seventeenth century Dutch Jewish philosopher, as helpful aids in the process of translation. It is interesting to speculate on why he felt the need to comb the annals of Western philosophy to pose the thought of two seemingly heretical philosophers of the Western tradition as aids in translating Kemetic thought. In a profound way, it speaks to the intractable nature of translating African concepts into Western languages and implies that the narrative of Western philosophy is incapable of an accurate rendition of African deep thought. See Finnestad, "Egyptian Thought About Life," 38. I bring this issue up to specifically say that translations are not neutral; they involve cultural interpretation and are, indeed, a contested intellectual terrain that we must deal with.

16. See Zbynek Zaba, *Les Maximes de Ptahhotep,* line 91, p. 23.

17. I use *symbol* intentionally to suggest both how the Kemites understood reality and the multilayered intellectual depth of this understanding. Bonnel, among other Egyptologists, would disagree with this use. He states that "when we try to analyze or interpret what in our modern language we call 'concept,' 'notion,' 'symbol,' or 'principle,' we must keep in mind that such was not the way of thinking in Pharaonic Egypt. Abstraction was an unknown ap-

or a primeval mound? (), and a forearm (). It also has a loaf of bread t () placed at the end which not only grammatically indicates that it is a feminine word, but is also an indication of her divine role as a Goddess who was, among other epithets, "Mistress of all the Gods," "Lady of the Sky," and "daughter of Ra."[18] These epithets indicate her relevance in sustaining creation and her essential role in maintaining divine order and equilibrium in the cosmos. The loaf of bread t () also distinguishes Maat from *m3ᶜ* [i.e., (to be) true, just, and right] and thus, symbolically conveys not only her absolute and all-encompassing presence, but also the notion that she provides sustenance for everything in the cosmos. The remaining symbols function as determinatives, that is, they are symbols placed at the end of the word to clarify, in a more precise manner, the word in question. The determinatives have no phonetic value meaning that they are not pronounced, transliterated, nor translated. They are used with semantic intent. The following symbols are to be read as determinatives: the egg (), the feather (), the papyrus rolled up, tied, and sealed ().

These variations provide a rudimentary, albeit essential, indication of Maat and its relevance in speaking to truth, justice, and order on the cosmic, social, and personal level.[19]

One of the epithets of Maat is "Lady of the Bark."[20] Ra, the Creator of gods, people, and the universe, is accompanied by Maat and Djehuty in the sacred solar barque when they emerge from the primeval waters of Nun at Sep Tepy (The First Time).[21] Maat was essential to the creation of the world and

proach to reality and such was evidently the case of consciousness of which the Ancient Egyptian does not seem to have had full awareness . . . ." See Roland G. Bonnel, "The Ethics of El-Amarna," in *Studies in Egyptology: Presented to Miriam Lichtheim, Vol. I,* ed. Sarah Israelit-Groll (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1990), 78. If by abstraction, Bonnel means that the Kemites did not have a mentality that withdrew from their surroundings in order to reflect on them, he would be correct. The African mentality does not have to be withdrawn in order to reveal profound knowledge of the universe. If by symbol he means that the Kemites did not create images that merely "stood-for" something else, he would also be correct. Africans believe in the creative and powerful force of the word. Abstract thinking for African people does not involve the ontological separation of spirit and matter. With this assumption, Kemites created a profound spiritual and scientific knowledge that was never divorced from the living human lifeworld.

18. For a visual representation of these and other epithets of Maat, see Théophile Obenga, *Icons of Maat* (Philadelphia: The Source Editions, 1996).

19. For more symbolic and semantic variations of Maat, see E. A. Wallis Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary,* vol. I (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1978), 270–271; Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1991), 101–102; Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Worterbuch Der Aegyptischen Sprache,* vol. II (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1928), 18–20.

20. Dilwyn Jones, *Boats* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 14.

21. Veronica Ions, *Egyptian Mythology* (NewYork:Peter Bedrick Books, 1982), 112–113.

the epithet *s3t R^c* (daughter of Ra) shows her genetic link to Ra which is why her influence is seen throughout all creation. Ra sails across the sky in the sacred barque which is often seen as being guided by Maat.[22] From the sacred barque, Ra governs the world, bringing it light. In fact, this light, a communication and manifestation of divine energy and order, was Maat. For the deceased, this sacred barque is also symbolic of crossing to the abode of the blessed. This provides some insight into the use of the sickle-shaped end of the *wi3* bark ().

As indicated above, the symbol () has been the source of some scholarly debate. Champollion, the most successful early translator of the Kemetic language, sees this symbol as a *coudee egyptienne* (an Egyptian cubit).[23] Assmann asserts that Champollion's interpretation attempted to link Maat to the Greek concept of *kanon* and the corresponding Latin concept of *regula*, two concepts that are defined as *ruler*, yet metaphorically extend to notions of character in terms of rules of conduct and standards of excellence.[24] Gardiner tentatively sees this symbol as a pedestal or platform,[25] but the consensus among most scholars seems to see in the symbol the idea of the primeval hill. S. Grumach claims that it is "a hill symbolizing the rise of vegetation from the earth which denotes both the primeval hill and the throne-base."[26] Other scholars would concur with this analysis, adding that this physical and unchanging ground or foundation of all life is symbolically extended to convey at once the ruler's throne and thus the right to rule and notions of uprightness, levelness, and straightness.[27] Brunner is the foremost scholar who championed the interpretation of this symbol at the throne-base extending to notions of justice, and

22. Ra had two sacred barques, the Mandjet, the day barque, and the Mesektet, the night barque. As guider of the sacred barque of Ra, Maat is consistent with its root *m3^c* in the sense of to lead, guide, direct and steer. See Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian,* 102.

23. P.A.A. Boeser, "The hieroglyph " in *Studies Presented to F. Ll. Griffith* (London: Oxford University, Press, 1932).

24. Jan Assmann, *Ma'at: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit in Alten Aegyten* (Munchen: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1990), 16; *Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon: Founded Upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scotts Greek-English Lexicon,* s.v. "kanon."

25. See (Aa 11) and (Aa 12) in Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs,* 3d edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 541. Boeser sees this symbol as being akin to a pedestal or platform, preferring to label it a "terrace with a step." See Boeser, "The hieroglyph ."

26. Irene Shirun-Grumach, "Remarks on the Goddess Maat" in *Pharaonic Egypt: The Bible and Christianity,* ed. Sarah Israelit-Groll (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1985), 174.

27. See Siegfried Morenz, *Egyptian Religion,* trans. by Ann E. Keep (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 113; John A. Wilson, "Egypt" in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man,* Henri Frankfort et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), 108–109; Vincent Tobin, "Maat and Dike: Some Comparative Considerations of Egyptian and Greek Thought," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* XXIV (1987): 115; Maulana

Assmann has implied that it is biblically inspired.[28] Certainly, this "biblische Wendung" in interpretation, as Assmann calls it, necessitates a critical look at this symbol from an alternative African-centered perspective.

Following Bleeker, Grumach sees this symbol () as being interchangeable with this symbol () which Bleeker sees as a "measured piece of land."[29] For Gardiner, this symbol () is a garden pool,[30] not a measured piece of land. Gardiner notes that this symbol () is the Old Kingdom form of this symbol (), but he does not claim that this Old Kingdom form is interchangeable with what he calls the garden pool (). If this symbol () is seen as being interchangeable with this symbol (), it could also speak to the possibility of reference to the ordered primeval waters of the first time.[31] Carruthers informs us that "the time before the beginning is thus, a set of eternal mandates which direct the basic parameters of that which came into being. The act of creation is, thus, not an arbitrary action; it is ordered by a preexisting state or condition which again is not chaos, but the source of sources of the beginning."[32] The possibility that this symbol () could, at once, refer to this ordered, preexisting state and the primeval hill does not seem to be a contradiction or inconsistency, especially when we know these ideas, in harmony with a fundamental belief among African people, do not assume a split between the spiritual and material aspects of reality. In fact, in the Kemetic language there is no generalized concept of matter in the abstract. A more appropriate way to convey this notion is to say that there were physical manifestations of a spiritual reality because all that exists possesses spirit. Maat, then, could refer to the orderly process of creation and the primeval hill—a visible object that is at once its solid self and a manifestation of a preexisting cosmic and spiritual order.

When Nun, the primeval waters that filled the universe, subsided, the primeval hill appeared where Atum-Ra comes forth and creates himself. Atum-Ra came forth from the primeval hill, the place of creation, after Maat was in place. This context is extremely imperative to understand because what is important is the cosmic relationship that the primeval hill symbolizes, not its physical form and substance. The primeval hill cannot be perceived of as separate, foreign, nor merely loosely connected to the primeval waters. The primeval waters can actually be seen as the spiritual, intrinsic, activating force of

Karenga, "Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt: A Study of Classical African Ethics," vol. I (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1994), 7–8.

28. Assmann, *Maat,* 16.

29. C. J. Bleeker, *De Beteekenis van de Egyptische Godin Maat* (Leiden, 1929), 10, quoted in "Remarks on the Goddess Maat," Irene Shirun-Grumach, 173–174.

30. See (fn. 37) in Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar,* 491.

31. Richard H. Wilkinson, *Reading Egyptian Art* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1992), 137.

32. Carruthers, *Essays in Ancient Egyptian Studies,* 61–62.

the primeval hill. Consequently, the primeval hill is a concrete, physical symbol that conveys the idea of Maat as a spiritual and cosmic force that at once precedes and is part of the creation of the universe.

Moreover, Maat is symbolic of the divine energy in the universe that sustains and maintains the relationship between unseen cosmic forces and physical realities. African cultures comprehensively assume that unseen cosmic forces serve as a foundation of movements of coming to be and ceasing to be. Because of this assumption, the invisible aspect of a physical reality is equally as real, if not more real than the visible aspect of it. Thus, for the Kemites, the physical reality of the primeval hill is not only a reality in the visible realm, it is also a reality in the invisible realm. The primeval hill can exist only in combination with the primeval waters. If there were no primeval waters, there would be no primeval hill. Whereas the two are distinct from each other, the former is that by which the latter is. Because this is such a key symbol in interpreting the breadth and depth of Maat, it is a grave conceptual error to continue to view this symbol in a limited physical sense and thereby marginalize its deeper spiritual implications. It would seem to be common sense for the Kemites to see spirit and water in the primeval hill and, thus, common sense to see Maat as concretely manifesting in the physical realm but not mistaking this realm as its origin. From this assumption, notions of truth, justice, balance, and order speak to the quest of being in harmony with what has always been since Sep Tepy (The First Time).

As Obenga affirms, the egg (𓆑) has symbolic significance throughout Africa, and for the Kemites it contains the "breath of life at the dawn of the world."[33] The egg links Maat not only to conceptions of the beginning of the world, but also to everything that will be created in the future. The egg, as the germ of life and movement, speaks to the inexhaustible dynamism of life and Maat's applicability to life as a holistic phenomenon. Obenga states that the egg is a symbol "of wholeness, of perfection, of integrity, purity, of youth and of life."[34]

The ostrich feather (𓆄)[35] worn on her head was often shown independently as her emblem as in the "weighing of the heart" scene in the *Book of*

33. Théophile Obenga, "African Philosophy of the Pharaonic Period," *Egypt Revisited, Journal of African Civilizations* 10 (Summer 1989): 300.

34. Ibid., 301.

35. The symbol of the feather is also used to refer to the air god Shu. Even though the feather is an attribute of both, Maat is more often linked with Tefnut rather than Shu, who separated the sky (Nut) from the earth (Geb). For an interesting discussion on linking Shu with Maat through their "mythological activity" in the "Coffin Texts," resulting in the possibility of Maat being also seen as an air goddess, see Shirun-Grumach, "Remarks on the Goddess Maat." Another interesting avenue of research relates to the unusual occurrence of multiple feathers (i.e., two or four) linked to Maat in various funerary papyri between the XIX and XXI Dynas-

Coming Forth By Day, commonly known as the *Book of the Dead.* Here, the feather as a symbol of truth is weighed against the heart of the deceased. If the heart were weighed against the feather as a physical specimen, the scales would never be balanced.[36] Hence, the heart is metaphor for a person's will and desire to be in harmony with Maat which is reflected in behavior and conduct. The heart, being in harmony with Maat, reflects the moral and spiritual worthiness necessary to enter the abode of the blessed. It is important to note that a person's behavior and conduct, both in the context of society and the "afterlife," were not evaluated by a prescribed system of laws or "Commandments," but by how far it conformed with Maat.[37]

As Maat's sacred symbol, the ostrich feather intimately links Kemet with the other African nations of Punt, which the Kemites referred to as the "Land of the Gods," and Nubia, not only in terms of trade, but also in the feather's shared cultural significance by all as a sacred symbol.[38] It is not an accident that the ostrich is the "first species of bird for which we have picto-

(i.e., two or four) linked to Maat in various funerary papyri between the XIX and XXI Dynasties, indicative of the subtle transformations in iconography taking place in the New Kingdom, especially under the reign of Akhenaten. See Emily Teeter, "Multiple Feathers and Maat," *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* 7 (1985/86): 43–52.

36. Obenga, *Icons of Maat,* 48.

37. The Kemites did have *hp,* "law," and judicial officials were often called *hm-ntr M3't* "priest of Maat," lit. "God's servant of Maat." This title is an indication of the spiritual importance of law, and notice too the absence of the indirect genitive *n* "of" in the epithet, a further indication of the priest's importance in upholding Maat. "The Eloquent Peasant" affirms that "rightly filled justice neither falls short nor brims over." See Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature,* vol. I, 179. This is an indication that law in Kemet was not equivalent to the zero-sum political and emotional circus that it is reduced to in the West. The goal was to create harmony, not rigid winners and losers. Carruthers states that "conflicts of interest were handled through litigation of private individuals and groups rather than through politics among constitutionally or philosophically based power groups." See Jacob H. Carruthers, "The Wisdom of Governance in Kemet" in *Kemet and the African Worldview: Research, Rescue, and Restoration,* ed. Maulana Karenga and Jacob Carruthers (Los Angeles: The University of Sankore Press, 1986), 4. In a similar vein, Ward claims that "there was a certain justice in this procedure since every case was in some way different from any other and the individual could feel that a verdict was rendered on the basis of the pertinent circumstances and not in conformance with some impersonal code of written laws." See William Ward, *The Spirit of Ancient Egypt* (Beirut: Khayats, 1965), 161.

38. Chancellor Williams, *The Destruction of Black Civilization* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1991), 79; Patrick F. Houlihan, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1988), 4; Berthold Laufer, *Ostrich Egg-shell Cups of Mesopotamia and the Ostrich in Ancient and Modern Times, Anthropology Leaflet 23* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1926), 16. For a tribute from Punt received by the vizier Rekhmire at Thebes that includes ostrich eggs and feathers among other items, see Norman De Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-mi-re at Thebes* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 17–20, Plate XVII. For a Nubian tribute, see N. M. Davies, "Nubians in the Tomb of Amunedjeh," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 28 (1942): 50–52.

rial evidence from Egypt."[39] It not only squarely places Kemetic origins in the South, but it also speaks to their shared cultural universe because ostrich feathers and eggs were always primary items that were brought north to Kemet from the south. From antiquity to contemporary times, the ostrich feather remains a significant sacred symbol among many African cultures.[40]

The papyrus rolled up, tied, and sealed (𓋴) speaks both to Maat's relationship to writing and to what Carruthers refers to as "deep thought."[41] Oddly enough, the issue of whether or not Kemites were capable of deep, abstract thought has been raised by a number of scholars. Tobin claims that the Kemites gave "concrete expression to an abstract reality. Unlike the later Greek, the Egyptians had not yet developed the intellectual ability to think in abstract terms."[42] Mercer, in line with Tobin, assures us that "the Egyptians never became abstract thinkers. Their script is sufficient evidence for that. They always felt the need of expressing themselves in concrete terms."[43]

The underlying assumption is reflective of the cultural judgment of Kemetic thought as merely a routine, unthinking activity juxtaposed against the pioneering, rational Greeks. Despite the pejorative tenor of this particular assessment, what these scholars really reveal is that Kemet does not fit into the cultural paradigm of the Near Eastern world. Ani rightly states "that in all societies and cultures people must abstract from experience in order to organize themselves, to build and to create and to develop. Abstraction has its place. It is not a European cognitive tool (methodology), but a 'human' one."[44]

39. Houlihan, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt,* 1. It is also important to point out that the ostrich is technically known as Struthio camelus in Western taxonomy, words having Greek and Roman roots meaning "sparrow camel." Thus, the ostrich was seen as being part bird and part mammal to the Greeks and Romans. See John Pollard, *Birds in Greek Life and Myth* (Plymouth: Thames and Hudson, 1977), 86; *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon: Founded Upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon,* s.v. "Struthio camelus." For the Kemites, the ostrich was called *niw*. It is not a mere coincidence that the phonetic and ideographic representation of the primeval waters in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts is also *niw*, exactly matching the Old Kingdom Pyramid Text writing for the ostrich, the only difference being an ideogram of an ostrich placed at the end of *niw* to serve as a determinative. Hence, the ostrich seemed to remind the Kemites of the primeval waters. This provides even stronger support for the above analysis linking Maat to both the primeval hill and the primeval waters! See (G 34) and (W 24) in Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar,* 470, 530. See Appendix B for an analysis using Dogon cosmology to further understand the connection between the ostrich and the primeval waters.

40. Obenga, *Icons of Maat,* 85–92.

41. See Jacob Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr: Divine Speech* (London: Karnak House, 1995).

42. Vincent Arieh Tobin, "Mytho-Theology in Ancient Egypt," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* XXV (1988): 169.

43. Samuel A.B. Mercer, *Growth of Religious and Moral Ideas in Egypt* (Milwaukee: Morehouse Publishing Co., 1919), 20.

44. Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton, N.J.: African World Press, Inc., 1994), 71.

Yet Kemetic abstract, deep thought could at once reveal spiritual, moral, intellectual, scientific, and artistic knowledge without separation. The fundamental African assumption of unity between the Creator, nature, and people is alien to Western thought. For the Kemites, the relationship between things thought, things felt, things spoken, and things done was dynamic. Hence, speaking Maat and doing Maat were informed by divine law and order; it was not a mere theory to explain practice. Theories can change, but Maat was immutable. In the West, law, the embodiment of truth, justice, and order, is essentially seen as the regulation of self-interest and is enforced by threat of punishment. Truth then, being predicated on the regulation of the selfish *I* mentality, becomes an arbitrary and inevitable by-product of the denial of any primary divine, moral order in the universe. For Kemites, Maat was reflective of a person's relationship to both a social order and a cosmic order. This *we* mentality made it unnecessary to appeal to a particular law in order to judge whether or not one's behavior was true and just.[45] Yet, just individually doing anything was not practice, nor was it Maat. Individuals had a responsibility in preserving and perpetuating the social order and the cosmic order and the sacredness of this felt obligation was based on a common frame of reference and a common understanding of the essential significance of Maat which was not relative or individually arbitrary.

It is important to reiterate that the above different writings of Maat are variations of the same substance, not different substances. While Maat's essence is always recognized, particular facets could be highlighted and emphasized depending upon the context and/or situation. The determinatives do not just provide us with clues to understanding the specific semantic intent. Within Maat, the determinatives also represent the transformation and transference of an unchanged, indestructible cosmic energy in the universe. Hence, saying that feature *x* of Maat is important is not to claim that *x* is its complete essence or ultimate nature. The notions of truth, justice, harmony, righteousness, and universal order hugged and kissed one another in Kemetic thought and could not be usefully separated.

Maat
The Problematic of Framework and Interpretation

There are different intellectual pictures of Maat that serve different purposes. Whether or not a scholar's interest is in religion, ethics, rhetoric, or social systems, it inevitably impacts the interpretation of Maat. Granted, no single description or explanation can exhaust the meaning of Maat. The fundamental question of allegiance must be considered if this concept is to benefit the res-

45. Ward, *The Spirit of Ancient Egypt*, 162.

toration of African history, the process of African nation-building, and the contemporary African struggle against the steamrolling onslaught of Western culture. In his monumental work on Maatian ethics, Maulana Karenga states that "an interpreter of a tradition text contributes to building the tradition by his/her very interpretation."[46] I would amend this to say that "building the tradition" does not take place in a vacuum; therefore, every interpreter does not build the African tradition. Indeed, some interpretations of Maat are to be seen as inimical to this project.

Theoretical frameworks are based on fundamental assumptions about the world. At the heart of interpreting Maat seems to lie the issue of how should truth from the past relate to and interact with the historical dimensions of the present and the future. This dynamic can result in a situation where Maat is used as a disguise to mask and obscure the creation of a new system of truth, rather than as a cultural and historical extension of an old one. In locating the interpretation of scholars, these interests that are incorporated in the interpretation of Maat must be revealed. Some scholars, usually African, are honest relative to this issue, and others, usually European, require a very close read in order to unmask their veiled subjectivity. There are five key issues revolving around the interpretation of Maat that have been the source of debate, albeit essentially silent:

1) What theoretical framework is most beneficial to interpret Maat: religion, ethics or some other framework?

2) Is Maat reflective of an *I* mentality that fundamentally values the individual or is it fundamentally reflective of the *we* mentality which places a primary value on the community?

3) Is Maat reflective of a society that was class-based where the ruling class, especially the king, constructed notions of truth, justice, and order to cement their status, or is Maat a divine concept, reflective of an essentially egalitarian society, where each person had a role in the society to preserve and perpetuate Maat and the king in this regard had a divine role?

4) Does Maat reflect a society that was optimistic or pessimistic about human nature and the future?

46. Karenga self-consciously takes the study of Maatian ethics out of the realm of Egyptology and attempts to revitalize it in order to speak to modern ethical discourse. See Maulana Karenga, "Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt," vol. II, 752, 755.

5) Is Maat, fundamental to Kemetic civilization, to be contextualized within the cultural matrix of the Near East/ Mediterranean or Africa or some combination of the two?

Although Maat has been discussed in sundry ways, most frequently it has been discussed within the context of religion. The notable exceptions to this are primarily found in the work of African scholars such as Théophile Obenga, Jacob Carruthers, Molefi Kete Asante, and Maulana Karenga although each approaches this task in different ways. We have already referred to Karenga's recent dissertation on Maatian ethics that stands alongside Jan Assmann's work,[47] published in the German language, as the most descriptive and authoritative treatments of Maat. Indeed, the interpretation of Maat from these two scholars is essential in addressing the above queries.

For Assmann, the concept of religion is merely a sociological cloak for managing reality and a rationale of the class-based social and economic order.[48] A concept that provides some cursory insight into his theoretical framework is *connective justice* which means "if an action implies violation of a law, then as a consequence there will be a penalty. The nexus between crime and penalty is to be defined by jurisdiction and to be enacted by judiciary and executive institutions, i.e. by society and the state."[49] Since society and the state become the supreme arbiter of Maat, religion and politics are fused, the will of the king becomes preeminent, and Maat is stripped of its cosmic and

47. Jan Assmann, *Ma'at: Gerechtigkeit und Unsterblichkeit im Alten Agypten* (Munchen: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1990). For a somewhat descriptive review of this work, at least theoretically, see J. Gwyn Griffiths, "Translating Ma'at," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 80 (1994). For an article in English that provides a narrative, albeit essential indication of his theoretical framework and interpretation of Maat, see Jan Assmann, "When Justice Fails: Jurisdiction and Imprecation in Ancient Egypt and the Near East," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 78 (1992).

48. Because I have found only one article published by Jan Assmann in English, I have purposely kept my critique to a minimum although it is reflective of his basic position. Maulana Karenga also has a critique of Assmann in his dissertation. See Karenga, "Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt," vol. II, 486–494. There are some scholars, like Morenz, who recognize some of the problems with the concept of religion, but because he uses it, he implies the benefits outweigh the problems. He is more accurate than Assmann in his treatment of Maat in recognizing, among other things, that "the perception of maat and divine instruction or inspiration belong together." See Morenz, *Egyptian Religion,* 3–4, 124. John A. Wilson, although contrary to Assmann's position, still distorts Maat by viewing it as a kind of suprareligious concept that was difficult in its practical application to people's lives. He states that, "but justice, Maat, was of the gods and of the divine order; it was not easy for the goddess Maat to find her home among ordinary men." See John A. Wilson, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 143.

49. Assmann, "When Justice Fails," 150.

divine significance. Maat then becomes reflective of an institution of expediency and justice becomes an arbitrary activity whose object is immediate advantage in the goods of this world rather than the upholding and maintaining of societal harmony.[50] Since necessity is the mother of invention, Maat seems to provide two fundamental things in Assmann's framework, one being a justification and legitimation of state interests and the other being spiritual compensation for more tangible, material needs.

Assmann's view projects such an unadulterated European materialism into an African concept that it even becomes plausible to see Kemet as a manifestation of the Northern Cradle[51] and indeed this is shown, in part, through his attempt to understand Maat within the context of the cultural universe of the Near East. Karenga challenges, head on, Assmann's portrayal of Maat as reflective of a society that assumes human nature is evil and masks an internal class struggle that is put in check by the state.[52] Karenga rightly asserts that the king's role in upholding Maat is a cosmic role, not just an earthly one, and because of this, Assmann's negligence is apparent in delinking Maat from its primordial significance.[53] For Karenga, Maat assumes the good in human nature and points to "the triumph of the good,"[54] in stark contrast to the evil assumed by Assmann. In addition, Maat is "pre-eminently other-directed, communitarian and humanistic."[55]

In his framework, Karenga self-consciously dispenses with the concept of religion in discussing Maat and opts for the concept of ethics. The concept of ethics seems to provide him with the conceptual latitude to do a number of things:

50. Although not explicitly talking about Maat, Eric Carlton makes a similar analysis of Kemetic society. Although much of the work is devoted to analyzing the social order of Kemet, his theoretical framework and point of view are encapsuled in the chapter entitled "Comparative Typologies: Egypt and Athens." See Eric Carlton, *Ideology and Social Order* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).

51. For Cheikh Anta Diop, the Northern Cradle included Germany, Greece, Rome, and Crete. For Diop, the historically cold and harsh environment and geographical location of these nations influenced their cultural disposition, yielding values such as individualism, xenophobia, and patriarchy among others. See Cheikh Anta Diop, *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa: The Domains of Patriarchy and Matriarchy in Classical Antiquity* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1990), 72.

52. Karenga, "Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt," vol. II, 486.

53. Ibid., 491–492. John A. Wilson submits an analysis in harmony with Assmann's, claiming Maat "was a created and inherited rightness which tradition built up into a concept of orderly stability in order to confirm and consolidate the status quo, particularly the continuing rule of the pharaoh." See John A. Wilson, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt,* 48.

54. Ibid., 494.

55. Ibid., 493.

1) Maatian ethics, as distinct from religious ethics, restores a classical African tradition and poses a contemporary paradigm of human possibility that is not incarcerated by rigid theology.[56]

2) Maatian ethics enables him to interpret Kemetic thought "in terms of their professed or ascribed intentions."[57]

3) Maatian ethics allows him to discuss both the philosophical conception and ideal of Kemetic society and the human practice needed to achieve it.[58]

4) The goal of his work is to construct a contemporary, nonreligious ethical system along the lines of Confucianism that is able to not only be of use for African people, but speak to modern moral discourse and function as a "cultural paradigm for the surrounding world,"[59] even as he claims Kemet did in antiquity.

Karenga rightly admits that the classification of Maatian ethics into categories such as ontology and theology is "more implicit than explicit,"[60] yet there are still a number of concerns that need to be raised. In his quest to create an ethical system based on the Maatian tradition that all human beings can aspire to, Karenga implicitly advocates more permeable boundaries between African traditions and other human traditions, but in the process he avoids making certain distinctions between cultures which are important. One concern here is his apparent intellectual reflex to attempt to understand Maat in terms of Confucianism.[61] Because Confucianism attaches great dignity to human moral capacity and is viewed as a major nonreligious ethical system in the world, it is clear that Confucianism becomes a major source of inspiration for Karenga's reconstruction of Maatian ethics. In fact, he implies that Tao, a

56. Ibid., 557.

57. Maulana Karenga, "Towards a Sociology of Maatian Ethics: Literature and Context," in *Reconstructing Kemetic Culture: Papers, Perspectives, Projects,* ed. Maulana Karenga (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1990), 67.

58. Ibid., 87.

59. Ibid., 68.

60. Karenga, "Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt," vol. II, 402.

61. This dynamic is mainly existent in his article on Maatian ethics and it only seems to enter his dissertation when he has extracted passages from the article.

key concept in understanding Confucianism, provides the closest philosophical parallel to Maat.[62]

Just as Confucianism is a virtue-oriented system consisting of four cardinal virtues: righteousness (*yi*), propriety (*li*), wisdom (*chih*), and benevolence (*jen*),[63] so too has Karenga combed the Kemetic tradition for cardinal virtues and he cites seven: truth, justice, propriety, harmony, balance, reciprocity, and order.[64] Just as Lau implies that Confucius "realizes that in the last resort *yi* is the standard by which all acts must be judged while there is no further standard by which *yi* itself can be judged,"[65] so too does Karenga subsume all cardinal virtues under the rubric of righteousness.[66]

My claim is not that African people have a monopoly on knowledge. But to claim that Maat is akin to Confucianism is not only an analysis, it is a claim that these two systems are essentially equivalent. Thus, Confucianism becomes a salient ethical system that African people can aspire to, at least in its essence. What Karenga does not do is present what is deeply troublesome and problematic about this equivalency. A major issue is summed up by Lau:

> Unlike religious teachers, Confucius could hold out no hope of rewards either in this world or in the next. As far as survival after death is concerned, Confucius' attitude can, at best, be described as agnostic. When Tzu-lu asked how gods and spirits of the dead should be served, the Master answered that as he was not able even to serve man how could he serve the spirits, and when Tzu-lu further asked about death, the Master answered that as he did not understand even life how could he understand death.[67]

Herein, Confucius clearly affirms the impossibility to know God, the spiritual world, or anything beyond material phenomena. This is in stark contrast to any fundamental African cultural belief. For me, then, Karenga's comparative analysis of Maatian and Confucian ethics loses its potency and indeed becomes strained because the above quotation helps to contextualize Confucian ethics which Karenga overlooks in his metaphorical treatment.

62. Karenga, "Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt," vol. I, 16.

63. Bongkil Chung, "The Relevance of the Confucian Ethics," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 18 (1991): 146.

64. Karenga, "Towards a Sociology of Maatian Ethics," 90.

65. Confucius, *The Analects,* trans. with an Introduction by D. C. Lau (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 27.

66. Karenga, "Towards a Sociology of Maatian Ethics," 90–91.

67. Lau, *Analects,*12.

Karenga's hope for the application of Maat in the modern world is akin to Chung's hope for Confucianism. Chung believes that if Confucianism "is not revitalized as moral norms for the world it can be no more than a philosopher's plaything." The major problem with this is the concept of virtue has to be individually centered to carry out this mission and thereby downplay the implications resulting from the cultural universe that produced it. There is a tension between the inherent cultural nationalism that concepts like Maat and Tao are expressions of and the modern quest to present these concepts to humanity, transcending their cultural framework. Both Karenga and Chung seem to be aware of these issues.[68] For me, this dynamic raises a number of queries. Can African people liberate themselves without liberating Europeans? Is it necessary for African people to use their concepts to save Europeans from themselves and others and thereby save ourselves in the process? Can African concepts cajole Europeans away from using their thought and practice to preserve and perpetuate their world domination, particularly in light of the fact that although this domination is contemporary, the "patterns for interpreting reality" that fuel it spawned in antiquity? My position is that Maat must not be reduced to some type of amorphous Aristotelian notion of the "Supreme Good" that is equivalent to equating the ultimate goals of African resistance as being in harmony with the European concept of nation-state. This type of "Supreme Good" logic results in African people asking how can I be a better American as opposed to how can I be a better African and how can I commit to promoting what is in the best interest of African people worldwide.[69]

Since culture provides people with "a design for living and patterns for interpreting reality," Confucian ethics, at the very least, is unwarranted as a primary metaphor in Karenga's analysis without providing some sense of Chinese patterns for interpreting reality so that we are able to better appreciate both the congruency and incongruency between the two.

While Karenga reconstructs Maat as a virtue-oriented ethical system, Obenga discusses Maat in the context of "spheres of reality" (the sacred, the cosmos, the state, the society, and man) with "five dimensions of significance" (religious, cosmic, political, social, and anthropological). This framework for interpreting Maat is a kind of cosmic permutation whereby all of the "dimensions of significance" are interconnected and are also inextricably linked to all "spheres of reality."[70] In Obenga's words, "Maat includes the sum total of

68. See Chung, "The Relevance of the Confucian Ethics," 143, 145; Karenga, "Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt," vol. II, 641–646.

69. For Aristotle's comment on the "Supreme Good," see Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 5–6.

70. In this regard, Obenga concurs with Assmann's general categories and aspects in

experience, knowledge, and activity, including such areas as all of the sciences, theology (the Sacred), cosmology (the Cosmos), political science (the State), sociology (the society), and anthropology (human beings). Maat wove all of these pieces of reality into a well-matched globality."[71] Just as Karenga's scholarly innovation to expand the conceptual boundaries of Maat to include notions of harmony, balance, propriety, and reciprocity, which have not been normally linked to Maat, so too does Obenga push the conceptual boundaries forward by simply translating Maat as reality in all of its manifestations, spiritual and material.[72] Notice, too, the clear distinction between Obenga's and Assmann's framework. Whereas Assmann begins his discussion of Maat with the state and society, Obenga implies that the state and society cannot be understood without reference to the sacred and cosmic dimensions of reality.

Carruthers, in harmony with Obenga and Karenga, stresses the cosmic foundation and ethical manifestation of Maat as "universal order."[73] He says that "Maat is the principle of balance in the universe whether that balance refers to weights and measurements in the market, law in the courts, judgment of the heart of the dead, or the universal cosmological patterns."[74] Seeing Maat as being inextricably linked to the "African universe," the importance of his framework lies more in its bold vision. He initiates the call for African scholars to abandon the concepts of religion, ethics, political science, and the like when discussing African reality because these frameworks not only constrict how we think about African reality, but they also provide the African scholar with tools to further escape from dealing with African deep thought.[75] His

describing the scope of Maat, although he would not elevate the state order above the cosmic and social order and thereby imply that the populace was dependent on the state which arbitrarily dispensed Maat. See Obenga, *Icons of Maat,* 96; Assmann, *Maat,* 38. The reader should keep in mind that the reason Obenga must delineate so many "spheres of reality" in describing Maat has more to do with trying to fit a sacred African concept into a Western epistemological order that is driven by the secularization of reality more so than it is an accurate reflection of Kemetic thought.

71. Obenga, *Icons of Maat,* 77.

72. In a private conversation that took place on July 30, 1996, Théophile Obenga revealed the following: "I say Maat is reality because Maat is perfect already. It cannot be changed nor debated. Western Civilization takes a different philosophical path in conceptualizing reality which is why reality tends to be questioned and abstracted to the point where it becomes divorced from people's lives. You cannot do any more than perfection which is why the force of Maat was concretely felt in the movement of the sun, the moon, and the celestial bodies down to the everyday lives of the people. Maat was not limited to the relationship between the Creator and the person and the moral expectations among people. Maat was a divine force that encompassed and embraced everything existing and alive. Today, Western Civilization has created technology such as nuclear weapons that are actually against reality."

73. Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr: Divine Speech,* 56.

74. Carruthers, *Essays in Ancient Egyptian Studies,* 58.

75. Ibid., 114; Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr: Divine Speech,* 54.

self-conscious labeling of Maat as "the African universe"[76] seems to reflect this call and also stresses the fundamental importance of the cultural unity of Africa and the need to uncover the underlying unity of African deep thought through time and space.

Molefi Kete Asante attempts to view Maat largely within the confines of the concept of rhetoric which he defines as a "theory of authoritative utterance."[77] Although Asante accurately claims that in Kemetic society "it was considered 'right' to maintain unity of heart and tongue, conviction and speech,"[78] the use of the term *rhetoric* mystifies rather than clarifies this dynamic. As commonly understood, rhetoric is essentially a Western individualistic concept where deception is taken for granted and is excusable and justifiable at all times. Rhetoric does not have to be truthful; its primary aim is to persuade, impress, and blur the lines between truth and falsehood.[79] Moreover, the concept of rhetoric is philosophically and morally unequipped to interpret a civilization that existed in relative peace and stability for almost three thousand years without rigid legal codes that came with the advent of Persian domination. Hence Maat, contrary to rhetoric, was indicative and reflective of a stable and reassuring cosmic and social order.

For Asante, Maat is a "social, ethical, and rhetorical term."[80] Maat inextricably links the universe, nature, and the person together in a cosmic union that must be preserved and reinforced.[81] Like Obenga, Asante sees Maat as "the fundamental reality,"[82] yet he misses a critical point when he claims that Maat is "not a worldview but more correctly a world voice."[83] We know Maat speaks from a specific world view, an African world view. To define Maat as a world voice cannot take precedence over the African world view. If there is an essential transcultural and transpersonal world voice which is capable of be-

76. Ibid., 44.

77. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge,* 80.

78. Ibid., 82.

79. In describing the process of the "secularization of speech" in Ancient Greece whereby myth gives way to rational thought, Detienne claims that this process was intimately tied to the emergence of the notions of rhetoric, philosophy, law, and history. He asserts that "the aim of sophistry like rhetoric, is persuasion (peitho), trickery (apate). In a fundamentally ambiguous world, these mental techniques allowed the domination of men through the power of ambiguity itself." See Marcel Detienne, *The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece,* trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: Zone Books, 1996), 104, 118. In a similar analysis, Hinks states that "probability, even while possessing the authority of a working approximation to truth, has in the eyes of the sophistic, rhetorician a still greater advantage, that one can argue from it independently of truth." See D. A. G. Hinks, "Tisias and Corax and the Invention of Rhetoric," *The Classical Quarterly* XXXIV (1940): 63.

80. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge,* 83.

81. Ibid., 90.

82. Ibid., 95.

83. Ibid., 98.

ing treated independently, this position must be the outcome of systematic cultural comparison; it cannot be postulated a priori.

Like Karenga, Asante views the notion of righteousness as being central to Maat, yet he clarifies that "one cannot be righteous, it is a continuous process by which we align ourselves with the harmony we find in nature. Thus, righteousness is processional and when we say 'be righteous' we only mean it as a process for the moment, for the particular context."[84] This position does not seem to be in harmony with the Kemetic mentality, at least not grammatically when we note that *m3ᶜ* is a verbal adjective meaning (to be) true, just, righteous and the epithet *m3ᶜ ḫrw* (to be) true of voice, frequently evoked by the deceased also has this same quality. Without a life in harmony with Maat, no remembrance is possible. Thus, to be righteous is not a static character trait denoting absolute perfection, so it does not have to negate the process or be seen as separate from it. If being righteous were solely a process for the moment, Maat could easily be reduced to arbitrary individual interpretation and thereby lose its essential quality and importance for the society that felt the power of Maat in every aspect of their lives and environment.

The strength of Asante's framework for Maat lies, as he admits, more in his methodological direction than description. He takes five Kemetic terms and attempts to apply them metaphorically to African life and culture for the purpose of illuminating a "Maatic response to injustice and disorder in the world."[85] Under the rubric of tep (beginning) are love of children, late weaning, age-grouping, and value fertility. Pet (extensions) consists of society above individual, extended family, and honor to ancestors. Agricultural rites, art for ritual, dance/music, gift-giving, ceremony for passages, and ululations fall under heb (festival). Burial, extended funeral, and living ancestors illuminate sen (circle). And meh (crowning glory) consists of the supreme deity, search for harmony (Maat), and freedom from shame.[86] It is unique and creative in its attempt to link Maat to the totality of the person's life cycle while suggesting key African themes that speak to the metaphorical use of these Kemetic concepts. This framework, although having more descriptive personal implications than Obenga's, essentially seeks to also reveal the contours and nuances of what reality means for African people. Putting more flesh on the bare bones of this framework in terms of operationalizing these notions should prove helpful in revealing a critical aspect of Maat.

It is important to note that the above African scholars would be united against any interpretation of Maat as being reflective of a society that reflects a pessimistic view of life that primarily values the individual and is class-

84. Ibid., 84.
85. Ibid., 93.
86. Ibid., 93–94.

based. In addition to the views of Assmann discussed above, Mercer implies a similar analysis when he claims that Kemetic society was "comparatively backward in moral practice," possessing a limited idea of the divine and a materialistic outlook on life.[87] Wilson, in a similar vein, points to the conquering of a "feeling of uncertainty and insecurity" as being a major motivating factor for the creation of Maat.[88] Baines sees Maat as a concept that is crucial to understanding social stratification in Kemet, tentatively divided along the lines of elites and non-elites. Maat is seen as a concept used by the elites to not only mask, but to justify their authority and control over the societal institutions and thus, the populace. The function of Maat was to divert attention from the inequities in the social order and act as a bulwark against critique. Baines concludes that "the Egyptians created an attractive but in a sense superficial public ideology and iconography that concentrated on positive experiences and ignored the darker side of life or pushed it to the margins of the cosmos."[89] Indeed Assmann, along with Baines, believes Maat points to a society that tends toward evil and chaos, and both dress an African concept up in Near Eastern robes mirroring Greek alienation and pessimism.

This brings us full circle to an important query that has a number of implications. Is Maat to be understood as fundamentally indigenous to the "African universe" or can Maat, reflective of Kemetic society, be genetically linked to the "surrounding world" since Kemet functions as an expansive "cultural paradigm?"[90] If we combine Karenga's expansive areas of culture (i.e. spirituality, history, social organization, economic organization, political organization, creative motif, and ethos)[91] with his definition of paradigm as a cognitive and practical exemplar used as a model by others "to conceive, execute, and substantiate their work,"[92] it must be asserted that Kemetic knowledge did not function as a cultural paradigm for the Near East;[93] it was a

87. Samuel A. B. Mercer, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt* (London: Luzac & Co. Ltd., 1949), 405.

88. Wilson, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt,* 48.

89. John Baines, "Society, Morality, and Religious Practice" in *Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice,* ed. Byron E. Shafer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 199.

90. Karenga, "Towards a Sociology of Maatian Ethics," 68.

91. Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies* (Los Angeles: The University of Sankore Press, 1993), 26.

92. Karenga, "Black Studies and the Problematic of Paradigm," 401.

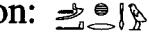
93. Karenga does understand and appreciate the cultural differences between Kemet and the Near East. My concern here is that a distinction be made between the concepts of Kemetic influence and Kemetic cultural paradigm. The concept of influence implies substantial borrowings from Kemetic civilization by the civilizations of the Near East, yet these civilizations could not borrow the Kemetic world view that produced them. Thus, the Near East used this knowledge to create essentially new cultural products based on their own cultural paradigm. Hence, this knowledge is not to be seen as an extension of an African cultural paradigm.

borrowed and "stolen legacy" stripped out of its cultural context and made to serve the logic of a European cultural matrix. This is a matter of the utmost importance, not only for the sake of historical accuracy, but also for the sake of what Karenga calls "Modern Maatian ethics."[94]

The issue seems to be clear: African scholars cannot emphasize Kemet in order to primarily integrate it into the Near Eastern/Mediterranean cultural universe and thereby relegate the issue of the cultural unity of Africa to the back of a research file cabinet of secondary importance. This type of priority focus subtly detaches Kemet from the cultural unity of Africa even as it praises its accomplishments. Kemet, and thus Maat, must be used to primarily provide African people with the cultural and intellectual elbowroom, so to speak, to carry out Cheikh Anta Diop's vision of "reconciling African civilizations with history, in order to be able to construct a body of modern human sciences."[95] The strength of this Pan-African vision is not enhanced by focusing on the parts of the African world; it is enhanced by unraveling the unifying threads of African cultural unity through time and space and providing African people with a contemporary vision of truth, justice, and universal order that is, at once, an extension of our shared cultural universe and transcends our stultifying commitments and allegiance to arbitrary geographical boundaries erected by Europeans. For Africans in the United States, this nation-state boundary coerces us to imagine that we have more in common with Europeans in America than we do with Africans on the African continent. It reinforces a false sense of pride, allegiance, and separateness. We cannot allow these boundaries to infect the vision for the total liberation of African people. We must conceptually free ourselves from these boundaries so that we can cultivate the space to develop this "body of modern human sciences," free of irrelevant impediments.

94. Karenga, "Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt," vol. II, 554.

95. Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology* (Brooklyn: Lawrence Hill Books, 1991), 3.

The Vision: *M3ᶜ ḫrw* (Maa Kheru) "To Be True of Voice" and  *M3ᶜ r ḫrw* (Maa r Kheru) "To Be Triumphant Over the Enemy"

The wisdom of Ptahhotep is more than sufficient to communicate the essence of this vision:

> Every man teaches as he acts
> He will speak to the children
> So that they will speak to their children:
> Set an example, don't give offense
> If justice stands firm your children will live.[96]

Notions of truth, justice, righteousness, and universal order reveal both a cultural design for living and patterns for interpreting reality. Because of this fact, it is impossible to speak about Maat apart from the African mentality and world view that spoke this concept into existence. Maat is based on the African we mentality of interdependence and stresses people's responsibility to one another, to the community, to nature, to the Creator, and to the cosmos. This is in stark contrast to the Western I notion of individual rights. The notion of rights is based on the assumption of what others owe you; the notion of responsibility is based on the assumption of what we owe one another. In the West, concepts such as truth and justice become applicable only in the public domain when an individual has violated the rights of another individual. And, of course, in the private domain your own home and your own life is your own business! This is the schizophrenia of the public/private split in the West. It is not an accident that ethical questions are primarily raised in the public domain; thus, they do not have to impact your way of life like Maat. Nor is it an accident that, in the West, there is never true moral satisfaction, only moral outrage, indignation, and complaint! Ivan Van Sertima reminds us that we are locked in a 500-year room, yet this room must be seen as part and parcel of a historical and cultural house with a foundation in antiquity. In comparing Maat and dike, a term that Tobin sees as speaking to the essence of the Greek world

Since *m3ᶜ* is grammatically a verbal, I have translated it as (to be) "true of voice" and (to be) "triumphant over the enemy." The word *m3ᶜ* also can be translated in both words as (to be) "true, justified, vindicated, and triumphant." The preposition r "over" lies between *m3ᶜ* and *ḫrw* in *m3ᶜ r ḫrw* (to be triumphant over the enemy). Although *ḫrw* in both words have the same phonetic value, they are written differently.

96. Zybnek Zaba, *Les Maximes de Ptahhotep,* line 593–597, p. 62; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature,* vol. I, 75.

view, he says "with regard to the aspect of justice, maat appears as a benevolent and creative force while dike is essentially negative, being the equivalent of restraint and punishment."[97] He also affirms that "dike does not necessarily order certain things because they are right; rather things are right and just solely because they are ordered by dike."[98] The logic of this cultural matrix has not, does not, and cannot yield harmony for African people. For this is the essential point from which our investigation starts: the germ of truth in Western Civilization lies in man's unceasing and unadulterated attempt to understand and control people, nature, and ultimately the world. One question that African people must confront is: Can we continue to expect a harmonious *we* mentality from Europeans? A *we* mentality is something that they have never shown indeed among themselves and only show it vigorously when they encounter the *Other.*[99] Concepts like *multiculturalism* provide the veneer of this *we* mentality, but in reality they are the essence of dike: "things are right and just solely because they are ordered."

Because of the public/private split in the West between the *I* and the *we,* Karenga's restoration of Maat as a virtue-oriented ethical system involving truth, justice, propriety, harmony, balance, order, and righteousness becomes an important component to aid Africans in combating the moral and ethical atrophy in the West. Karenga stresses Maat as a way of life that can provide Africans with a set of values, action-guides, and belief-commitments integrated into a holistic unit. Maat is practical and ethical to the extent that it directly relates to and affects our lives and our vision for African people. Maa Kheru, being true of voice, was an epithet that was evoked by the deceased to

97. Tobin, "Ma'at and Dike," 121. In comparing a Greek translation of the Kemetic phrase "I made what is right strong," Zabkar asserts that the Greek reduction of Maat to dike in this phrase "expresses an Egyptian idea in a grecized form" that cannot convey the idea of Maat properly. See Louis V. Zabkar, *Hymns to Isis in Her Temple at Philae* (Hanover: Published for Brandeis University by University Press of New England, 1988), 153. Even Themis, the Greek goddess of law, order, and justice, amounts to "interpretatio Graeca" when juxtaposed against Maat. See A. G. McGready, "Egyptian Words in the Greek Vocabulary," *Glotta* XLVI (1968): 253. The Greeks did not have the cultural universe to support a concept like Maat which is why Maat resisted translation even in the Greek language. Cheikh Anta Diop provides us with a keen exposition of why this would be the case. He says that "by virtue of their materialistic tendencies, the Greeks stripped those inventions of the religious, idealistic shell in which the Egyptians had enveloped them. On the one hand, the rugged life on the Eurasian plains apparently intensified the materialistic instinct of the peoples living there; on the other hand, it forged moral values diametrically opposite to Egyptian moral values which stemmed from a collective, sedentary, relatively easy, peaceful life . . . ." See Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality,* trans. Mercer Cook (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1974), 230.

98. Ibid., 114.

99. For a descriptive analysis of the *Other* and how Europeans relate to it, see Ch. 5, "Image of Others," in Ani, *Yurugu,* 279–308.

express the rightness of the whole life of a person, the rightness of the heart, and the rightness of the accumulated thought, speech, and deeds of a person.[100] This shows that Maat could not be merely understood and acknowledged in the abstract, but that it must also be lived! "The Eloquent Peasant" urges us to "speak justice, do justice for it is mighty, it is great, it endures. Its worth is tried. It leads one to reveredness."[101] Because Maat is enduring, only the speaking and doing of Maat results in the person being Maa Kheru: true of voice, justified, triumphant, and worthy of a place in the abode of the blessed.

Because all relationships, whether they be cosmic or social, possess ethical considerations, Karenga defines virtues as "excellences of human character which sustain practices which enable persons to achieve various desirable goods, but also sustain them in their quest for the good."[102] This definition of virtue, although human-centered, can paradoxically function to cloud the issue of cultural allegiance. Karenga's project of situating Maat within the context of modern ethical discourse essentially means funneling an African concept through Western virtue-oriented ethical paradigms and terminology. The idea of transporting Western concepts to African reality seems to distort our traditions more so than it clarifies them and induces us to mistake Western ethical discourse for African culture in the process. For example, Karenga states that "Maatian ethics are not strictly consequentialist in their reasoning although it is clear that there is a concern for consequences in terms of relations with God, others, and nature. Moreover, Maatian ethics are reflective of act consequentialism rather than rule consequentialism."[103] Borrowing the concept of consequentialism from modern ethical discourse to say that the actions of Kemites were generally judged by their consequences, not by conformity to rigid moral rules, can ironically function to sidestep the fundamental issue of culture. Harris states that there are two main types of consequentialism: egoism and utilitarianism. For him, "egoism holds that actions are to be judged by the extent to which they promote a person's self-interest. Utilitarianism holds that actions are to be judged by the extent to which they promote the welfare of humanity in general."[104] Neither one of these types of consequentialism is fruitful for discussing the historical and contemporary relevance of Maat because they essentially confine a sacred

100. For a more descriptive discussion of Maa Kheru, see Rudolf Anthes, "The Original Meaning of *M3ᶜ ḫrw*," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* XIII (January–October, 1954): 21–51.

101. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature,* vol. I, 181.

102. Karenga, "Toward a Sociology of Maatian Ethics: Literature and Context" in *Reconstructing Kemetic Culture,* ed. Maulana Karenga (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1990), 90.

103. Karenga, "Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt," vol. II, 721.

104. C. E. Harris Jr., *Applying Moral Theories,* 2d ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992), 12.

African concept to a choice between being either a recipe of self-interest or a remedy for promoting an amorphous humanism that blurs cultural boundaries. In addition, these cultural boundaries become even more important when we note that a great deal of Western virtue-oriented ethical discourse traces the roots of its intellectual genealogy to Aristotle, especially in discussions of how virtue is acquired.[105] For Aristotle, "moral or ethical virtue is the product of habit (ethos)."[106] Hence, practicing virtues actualizes virtuous traits or dispositions of character in the person. For Aristotle, then, "it is correct therefore to say that a man becomes just by doing just actions and temperate by doing temperate actions; and no one can have the remotest chance of becoming good without doing them."[107] The issue of culture must be inserted here to affirm that what may be just, temperate, and good for Aristotle can, at the same time, be anti-African. Aristotle does not have to reveal the philosophy behind the practice because it is taken as a given and, indeed, he frowns upon alluding to philosophy when discussing virtue.[108]

It is for this reason that I extend Karenga's definition of virtue to be defined as the excellent quality in an African person that enables the individual to help preserve and perpetuate an African cultural way of life and thus the African community. A virtue is not only individual, it is also both cultural and political, being based on shared patterns of interpreting reality, shared interests, and shared goals. If this is not taken into account, these virtues become confused, diluted, and cannot be usefully separated from Marxist ethics, Christian ethics, Islamic ethics, and so on. Without the allegiance to the African world view, Maat provides no basis for the preference of preserving and perpetuating an African cultural universe over an alien cultural universe. Hence, rather than abstracting a modern virtue-oriented ethical system to analyze Maat, it seems to be more beneficial to situate it in the holistic context of the African world view and thereby avoid taking sides in an essentially Western philosophical family debate. Maa r Kheru is important here because it asserts that Maat must also be seen as an African social theory along with stressing its importance relative to conduct and character. Bobby Wright suggests that "a social theory determines the destiny of a people by establishing guidelines of life, i.e., it defines their relationship with other living things, it defines values and rituals, methods of education, how enemies are to be dealt with."[109] Locating the agenda of our enemies is essential because it is masked

105. Bernard Rosen, *Ethical Theory: Strategies and Concepts* (Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield Publishing Co., 1993), 190–194.

106. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* 71.

107. Ibid., 87.

108. Ibid.

109. Bobby E. Wright, *The Psychopathic Racial Personality and Other Essays* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1990), 34.

behind notions of truth, justice, righteousness, balance, and order. These notions are not incompatible with European world domination and are, indeed, expressions of their *rhetorical ethic, "a* superficial verbal expression that is not intended for assimilation by the members of the culture that produced it."[110] Ani is perceptive on this issue, asserting that "the body of literature known as "ethical theory" has to a large degree been conducive to the growth of moral hypocrisy in European culture."[111] Hence, ethical theory functions as a cultural shield that allows Europeans to philosophically adhere to virtues in the abstract while continuing their concrete practice of world domination. Maat cannot paradoxically yield a reluctance on our part to come to grips with the deception of our enemies. If not careful, African people can be subtly seduced into advocating the spurious belief that our most intimate cultural and political interests should mirror the traditions and visions of Europeans. This belief creates zombies of African people, and Europeans will inevitably continue to direct our worldwide will like puppets. Of course, this plays right into the hands of the European rhetorical ethic and dilutes African cultural resistance in the process. Ethics is inextricably tied to the cultural universe of a people and can never be delinked from it.

Speaking and doing Maat is the most profound spiritual and intellectual libation that we can give to the Creator, the ancestors, and the yet unborn. Screams of millions of maimed and moribund Africans, nameless yet named, were screams for Maat. These screams must always haunt our consciousness because they provide us, in part, with the strength and the will to wrest our past from obscurity and from the pejorative slipshod generalities of European propaganda that masquerades as historical truth. African history is not a finished building; it is a busy work site that is ready for African people to take command of. When Carruthers poses *Mdw Nfr,* Good Speech, as a major concept for African people, he seems to be suggesting that the creation of reality comes into being through speech. Our speech must be bold enough to stand up against the hazy and all-pervasive chaotic totality of the Western world and courageous enough to provide a vision of Maat for the liberation of African people that transcends the geographical and resulting mental blockade of African people within the confines of the European concept of nation-state. When we speak this vision to our children, "justice will stand firm and our children will live." The "Instruction of Merikare" assures us that "justice comes to him distilled shaped in the sayings of the ancestors."[112] I hope that the ancestors

110. Ani, *Yurugu,* 315.

111. Ani takes this position because ethical theory is reduced to mere verbal expression and it is not reflective of their ideological commitment to maintain European world domination. See Ani, *Yurugu,* 315, 328.

112. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature,* vol. I, 99.

will be pleased with my listening of their truth. I have heard Maat and pondered it in my heart. To them, all credit is given; only the mistakes are mine. I hope that this snapshot of African history is taken as a contribution that moves us forward to the fulfillment of the overall portrait of African liberation.

Shem em hotep.

Appendix A
A Note on "Listening" in the Stela of Antef



ink sḏm sḏm.i mꜣꜥt swꜣwꜣ is st ḥr ib

I am a listener: I hear Maat and ponder it in the heart.

I have made an independent analysis of this important portion of the Stela of Antef that succinctly, yet profoundly, lays out the essential characteristics of an effective listener.[113] Clearly, the worst of the present translations can be found in R. B. Parkinson's *Voices From Ancient Egypt*.[114] His translation reads "I was one who harkened, hearing truth, who passed over matters of no concern." He fails to translate the independent pronoun ink, "I am," which is also the subject and, in this case, is followed by a nominal predicate *sḏm*, "listener." Thus, the phrase "I was one who harkened" is mystifying. The phrase "hearing truth" indicates that he also fails to translate the first person, singular suffix pronoun *i*, "I," which, in this case, is used as a nominative with the simple tense of the verb *sḏm*, "to hear." The ending "who passed over matters of no concern" is not even remotely close, failing to translate the verb *swawa*, "to ponder," the enclitic particle *is*, the dependent pronoun *st*, "it," the preposition *ḥr*, "in," and the noun *ib*, "the heart."

Miriam Lichtheim's translation of the passage as "I am a listener who listens to the truth, Who ponders it in the heart" is an improvement, but her mistake in translating the suffix pronoun *i*, "I," as the relative pronoun *who* and inserting an unwarranted relative pronoun who as a logical nexus between ma't and swawa detracts from the deeper implications of this passage.[115]

In *Selections From the Husia*, Maulana Karenga makes a further improvement, translating it as "I am a listener, one who listens to Maat and who ponders it in the heart."[116] His improvement, in particular, is to be seen in his separation of the independent pronoun ink and the nominal predicate *sḏm* from the remainder of the sentence with a comma. But, like Lichtheim, he does not translate the suffix pronoun *i*, choosing the relative pronoun *who* instead. In addition, *sḏm* in conjunction with the preposition *n* (to) would have made the translation of "listen to" more plausible in both Karenga's and Lichtheim's

113. For this analysis, I have used *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, etc.*, in the British Museum, vol. II (London, 1912), 23.

114. R. B. Parkinson, *Voices From Ancient Egypt* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 63.

115. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 122–123.

116. Maulana Karenga, *Selections from The Husia: Sacred Wisdom of Ancient Egypt* (Los Angeles: The University of Sankore Press, 1989), 98.

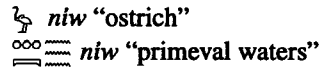
rendition, but since the form is absent, the translation is incorrect. More importantly, I believe both Karenga and Lichtheim make the mistake of translating both occurrences of *sḏm* as "listen" because it is clear by the two different ways in which the Kemites symbolically presented *sḏm* in this passage, one with the ear, the owl, and the symbol for conveying abstract notions as the determinative and the other with the ear alone along with the stroke determinative and the symbol for conveying abstract notions as the determinative, that they wanted to convey two different, yet interdependent notions.[117] I try to capture this nuance in my translation. Since the independent pronoun in Kemet is used emphatically, I translate *ink sḏm* as "I am a listener" and separate it from the rest of the passage with a colon. Thus, the rest of the passage describes what a listener is. It is at this point that I visually see the importance of the suffix pronoun *i*, "I," along with the simple tense of the verb *sḏm* that is presented by the Kemites as a lone ear. I take this form of *sḏm* to convey the notion "I hear" which does not repeat the notion of listening and, indeed, shows that there is a distinction to be made between listening and hearing. This seems to suggest that there is an external ear and an inner ear. In this passage, *to hear* means that one is aware of Maat by the external ear, but it takes something else in addition to this awareness to truly be a listener (i.e. to hear Maat internally). And that something else is the pondering of Maat in your heart. Thus, the sense of equilibrium, or balance, between hearing Maat and pondering it in the heart is vital to effective listening. To be a listener, one must transcend the corporeal sense of hearing Maat and also employ the heart which thinks and speaks silently. In our quest to restore African traditions, *good listening* is a prerequisite for *good speech* and when they are in harmony, the tongue will naturally speak Maat which has been pondered in the heart.

117. In analyzing this line of the Stela of Antef, Karenga is only partially correct when he asserts that he is contemplating Maat "not so much as an abstract Truth or ideal, but as an engaging moral practice. This is attested to by the long list of Maatian virtues he cites as definitive of his character." See Maulana Karenga, "Maat, The Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt: A Study of Classical African Ethics," vol. I (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1994), 244. While moral practice is an important concern in the context of the stela, Maat, as an abstract notion and ideal, is not to be downplayed especially in this particular line where the symbol for conveying abstract notions is used as a determinative for Maat and both uses of *sḏm*.

Appendix B
A Note on the Ostrich and the Movement of Divine Water in Kemetic and Dogon Cosmology

The ostrich is an important species of bird in Kemet, not only because it is the first bird for which we have pictorial evidence, but also because of its symbolic importance. Since the ostrich feather is so intimately linked to conveying Maat, further study of the ostrich might provide us with more information about Maat and the links between Kemet and other African cultures that indicate a shared cultural pattern of expressing and experiencing deep thought.

For the Kemites, the ostrich, called *niw*, is symbolically presented exactly like the Old Kingdom Pyramid Text writing of the primeval water which was also called *niw*. Both writings show the horizontal zigzag line for water (—), the flowering reed (𓇋), and the quail chick (𓅱); the only difference between the two being the symbol of the ostrich as a determinative.[118] The different writings are visually depicted as follows:



There are at least two different ways in which the ostrich was visually depicted by the Kemites. In this particular writing of *niw*, the ostrich is shown with its wings extended upward conveying the notion of movement as opposed to another depiction where the wings are not extended.[119] This background information leads us to a challenging query. Why did the movement of the ostrich remind the Kemites of the primeval waters? It is Dogon cosmology that provides useful insight into this query.

Like Kemet, the Dogon often depict water using a single zigzag line.[120] Ogotemmeli informs us that the Water Spirit (Nummo) is "often depicted as a

118. Adolf Erman and Herman Grapow, *Worterbuch Der Aegyptischen Sprache*, Vol. II (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlun, 1928), 202; Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1991), 125.

119. See (G 34) in Sir Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3d ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 470.

120. Marcel Griaule, *Conversations with Ogotemmeli: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 212. This zigzag pattern is frequently seen in Kemet, especially during the "predynastic" period. This pattern is frequently shown on ostrich eggs, but for the most part, its importance has essentially been unexplained. See Helene J. Kantor, "A Predynastic Ostrich Egg With Incised Decoration," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* VII, no. 1 (January 1948): 51. Despite this fact, the southern Sudanic origins of these zigzag patterns on incised black pottery has been recognized. See A. J. Arkell, "The Sudan Origin of Predynastic 'Black Incised' Pottery," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 39 (1953): 76–79.

wavy line, indicating the movement of water, which is also very commonly seen in the form of vertical zigzag lines representing the course of terrestrial streams as well as the way in which the Nummo falls on to the earth from heaven in the form of rain. And this movement may sometimes be suggested by the picture of an ostrich, whose body, shown by concentric circles, is marked with chevrons, and whose zigzag course, when pursued, is unlike that of any other winged creature of the plain."[121] There is clearly an interesting parallel here between the Kemites and Dogon in attaching such importance to the ostrich and the movement of divine water, Nummo in the case of the Dogon and the primeval waters in Kemet. This parallel extends beyond the ostrich to point to the fundamental assumption that spirit is present in all physical realities and water functions as the life force. According to Ogotemmeli, water and Nummo were one and the same. Moreover, "without Nummo . . . it was not even possible to create the earth, for the earth was moulded clay and it is from water (that is, from Nummo) that its life is derived . . . . The life-force of the earth is water. God moulded the earth with water."[122] From an African world view, this provides further evidence of why it is not only a mistake, but a fundamental error to detach the primeval hill from the primeval waters in Kemetic cosmology, especially when discussing the breadth and depth of Maat.

121. Griaule, *Conversations with Ogotemmeli,* 110.
122. Ibid., 18–19.

Chapter 10

Womanism and Black Feminism: Issues in the Manipulation of African Historiography

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The Djehuty Project
African-Centered Think Tank and Research Institution 1996

Things which have been of great advantage to Europe may work ruin to us; and there is often such a striking resemblance, or such a close connection between the hurtful and beneficial that we are not always able to discriminate.

—Edward Wilmot Blyden, 1881

A Survey of the Landscape

In the last decade, there has been a significant increase in the publication of scholarly books and articles about African[1] women intellectuals and activists in our history. While this long overdue scholarly attention to the prolific intellectual ideas, activism, and traditions of resistance that African women in America created in concert with like-minded African men is laudable, the emergent practice of posthumously conceptualizing these African women as either feminists[2] or womanists is problematic for a variety of reasons.

1. Throughout this essay I use the designation *African* to refer to people of African descent. This designation covers those people who are referred to as African-American, Afro-American, blacks or Negroes. Occasionally, the term *black* is used interchangeably with the term *African*. Additionally, this examination focuses upon, but is not limited to, Africans born in the United States.

2. The terms *Western feminism, American Feminism,* and *white feminism* are treated as synonyms in this discussion. The term *feminism* unmodified refers to one of the aforementioned terms. In the literature of feminism one often finds the word *feminism* unmodified unless one is speaking about an ethnic version of feminism such as black feminism or about a specific theoretical school of thought within the general philosophy of feminism such as Marxist feminism, radical feminism, psychoanalytical feminism, postmodern feminism, and liberal feminism.

This analysis questions the explanatory value and usefulness of Western feminist theories and philosophical frameworks for interpreting any aspect of African history, including African women within African history, and the value and usefulness of such to any effort to write our history. I challenge the historical accuracy and corollary conceptualizations rendered by a black feminist or white feminist methodological approach which: 1) severs history along gender lines, 2) discusses women in history as if they have made history independent of men, 3) operates linguistically and conceptually as if the concepts of gender and race are separate and mutually exclusive, and 4) takes as a given that women across cultural and racial boundaries share interests in common as women which supersede the cultural unity, common interests, and interdependence that women share with the men of their own racial group, especially those with whom they have family and kinship ties. Additionally, I problematize the conscription of the intellectual tradition of African women in America of the nineteenth and early twentieth century into a black feminist genealogy, particularly in light of the historical rejection of white and black feminism by the overwhelming majority of African women and men. The exception to this general rule of rejection is largely localized to a highly visible, equally vocal, but very small group of African women in academia.

Overview

The control by outsiders over the construction of a people's historical narrative inevitably shapes, influences, and defines what that people will do or fail to do in their own best interest. Since our forced and hostile arrival in America as enslaved Africans, we have not controlled the production of knowledge about African people (men or women), African history, or African culture—the progeny of Europe has. This legacy of domination by outsiders has not been without consequences, given that control of the writing of history is a means of controlling how a people think about themselves and their future possibilities as well as how they locate themselves in the world throughout time.[3]

Historical memory is essential to the life and well-being of a people just as is oxygen to an individual. A sustained lack of oxygen can be fatal or lead to brain damage; likewise, a sustained lack of historical memory, historical continuity, and historical consciousness can make a people vulnerable to a painful and certain cultural death, if not an eventual spiritual and physical demise.[4] African men and women have a documented tradition of intellectual

3. Barbara Omolade, *The Rising Song of African American Women* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 106.

4. Théophile Obenga, *A Lost Tradition: African Philosophy in World History* (Philadelphia: The Source Editions, 1995), iii–iv.

battles waged to wrest control of the production of knowledge about African people away from outsiders who have (re)written our history to reflect their interest(s).

Neither African women or men have fared well in America or Western historiography. For far too long white historians, male and female, have viewed the recording and documentation of our history as their own special prerogative. The emerging effort of African-centered historians and scholars to forge an accurate history of our presence in America and elsewhere in the world is challenged by Western historiography. The West has deleted us from the historical record simply by not mentioning our words or deeds. In instances where exceptions exist, these inclusions have been made in a manner that reflects the point of view of the interlopers and in a fashion that complements their interests. In other instances, Africans have been written into Western historical projects as vulgar and convenient caricatures and negative stereotypical characters such as sambos, mammies, matriarchs, "happy slaves," and a host of other pathological deviants—all creatures of the European's imagination.[5]

The distortion of African history does not boil down to an overly simplistic formula that reads: "men left women out of history"—end of analysis. Based upon the phrasing of this simple statement, one could reasonably interpret it to mean that African men left white women out of history. This interpretation is incredible because African men have not controlled the writing of European or American history and thus they cannot be responsible for the removal of white women from the historical record of white people. Hence, this generalization is inherently incorrect and misleading because it fails to specify which men did what to which group of women, since neither women nor men are a monolithic group. The language of feminism tends to linguistically imply otherwise. The use of generic terms such as *men, male supremacy,* or *male domination* homogenizes manhood and implies that there is an essential sameness about men regardless of the differences in their global power, world views, cultural values, and racial (familial) interests. The a priori tenets of feminism explicitly advocate this position. This premise implies that it is only opportunity and not motive forces that prevents black men from actualizing domination over women (black and white) to the same degree or in a substantially similar fashion that white men have.

This assumption of homogenized manhood is as invalid as the American feminist fallacy of homogenized womanhood, which is a notion that has

5. Patricia Morton, *Disfigured Images: The Historical Assault on Afro-American Women* (Connecticut: Praeger, 1991). In this book, Morton uncovers and examines the dehumanizing constructions of African womanhood that have appeared in American historiography extending from the late nineteenth century to the present.

been invalidated by a host of black feminist theorists.[6] Audre Lorde stated that "by and large within the women's movement today, white women focus upon their oppression as women and ignore differences of race . . . .There is a pretense to homogeneity of experience covered by the word *sisterhood* that does not in fact exist."[7] Likewise, there is no brotherhood of men based on the homogeneity of their experiences as males. Historians and writers must be more categorically precise when utilizing the terms *men* and *women*. Who are they actually talking about and describing? The failure to be categorically precise (i.e., using adjectives to modify and clarify the categories *men* and *women*) creates the risk of routine distortion and misinterpretation of reality. For instance, Gerda Lerner, a white feminist historian, is often referred to as a pioneer in the field of "Black women's history" because she edited *Black Women in White America,*[8] a book of primary sources. In another often quoted book, Lerner makes the following critique of American historiography: ". . . history as traditionally recorded and interpreted by historians has been, in fact, the history of the activities of men ordered by male values—one might properly call it 'Men's history.' Women have barely figured in it . . . ."[9] Lerner in this statement uses the generic terms *tradition* and *male values*. However, in actuality she is referring to the American or Western tradition of historical accounting and not an African tradition. Her text gives no indication that she has examined or seriously evaluated African historiography, nor does she claim inclusion of such in the scope of her project. The bottom line is that the males Lerner refers to in this quote are white males, who, because of the European tradition of colonization, enslavement, and domination, have had the unprecedented ability to control, shape, and rewrite African history. Feminist literature is replete with examples like this, which illustrate that the failure to be categorically precise leads to over generalization and crude mistakes in interpretation. In other words, the true subject of the analysis is obscured in the generic abstraction of the category *men*. The real unit of analysis is revealed

6. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and The Metalanguage of Race," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 251; See fn. 2. In this note, Higginbotham enumerates a list of African women writers from a variety of academic disciplines who have challenged the notion of a homogeneous womanhood, a concept commonly assumed to exists in white feminist theory. See also Deborah K. King, "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology," *Signs: Journal of Women in History and Culture and Society* 14, no. 1 (Autumn 1988): 57–58.

7. Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (California: The Crossing Press, 1984), 116. See also Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (Winter 1992).

8. Gerda Lerner, ed., *Black Women in White America: A Documentary History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972).

9. Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 168.

only if one looks carefully and critically at the described actions and activities (sometimes employing a time line) and asks specific, concrete, and historically contextualized questions.

The creation and perpetuation of a discipline called *Black Women's History* or *Black Women's Studies* does not correct the problem of African women being absent from history books. African men and women are still subject to and victimized by white supremacy and European cultural hegemony in the production of knowledge and history about African people. The continued presence of these pivotal forces in the lives of African people helps to explicate why African historiography is still in an ongoing state of recovery. Most of us who went through an American public school system were forced to read history books that routinely left out highly significant African women such as Amy Jacques Garvey, Anna Julia Cooper, Fanny Jackson Coppin, Queen Mother Moore, as well as a host of other noteworthy African women intellectuals and activists. These very same history textbooks have also failed to mention great African men intellectuals and activist such as William Monroe Trotter, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Marcus Garvey, and Martin R. Delany. My point is plain: the historical annals of America are silent on the ideas and deeds of numerous Africans, both female and male. Thus Africans share a common fate at the hands of white history writers or those trained by them.

African women and men share a mutual problem, a common foe, and a joint fate. It is our collective historical record, made in tandem with one another—not just black men's history or black women's history—that has been tampered with and violated. Thus, for us, the concepts of black women's history or black men's history are spurious concoctions. The advent of an academic discipline, Black Women's History, is not a solution. It is merely an addendum and continued adherence to the philosophical assumptions of Western methodological approaches to history; these approaches lead to the distortions and fragmentation in the production of knowledge about Africa, which we justly problematize. The promotion of Black Women's History ought to be as offensive as the perceived existence and exclusive promotion of Black Men's History would be. We need a holistic and comprehensive approach to the salvation and restoration of our collective historical memory. Rediscovering and writing about African women in history is not the same thing as creating a separate discipline or area of inquiry called African Women's History. These two notions are distinct and carry different assumptions. They ought not be treated as interchangeable projects. The former is something that must be arduously done, backed by all of the resources we can muster; the latter, however, is a project that in the end will not change the status quo, but instead reinscribe the power and legacy of colonization and enslavement upon the

record by reinforcing the marginalization of African women and encouraging the alienation of African women from African men.

Historically, African people have challenged the inherent assumption of white supremacy ubiquitously embedded in Western scholarship. The contemporary African-centered challenge to Western scholarship not only challenges this fundamental, historiographical assumption, it also challenges the age-old domination of the production of knowledge about African people, females and males. In this process, one of the formidable tasks for Africans who research and write African history is to bring the philosophical assumptions, cultural values, and methodological approaches that inform our process under very close scrutiny in search of remnants of foreign intellectual imposition; this must be the case in order to purge ourselves of alien elements that undermine our collective movement toward reestablishing and regaining the cultural integrity of African historiography. Feminism is a front which requires that we employ this vigilance with vigor.

The a priori assumptions of feminism are based upon the experiences, interests, and issues of its founders, middle class white women. Whatever the usefulness, promise, or problems that feminist theory may hold for white women, I contend that feminist theory simply does not hold similar analytical properties and explanatory value for understanding the gender constructions of African women and African men living within the social and political context of an America dominated in virtually every sphere by white Americans. Feminist theory does not seriously examine the African construction of gender. The central focus of their theory has been on the European construction (i.e., the ideals and expectations) of white manhood and white womanhood, although they have given some thought to measuring and discussing the proximity of African womanhood and African manhood to their gender standards.

Whether to emphasize the perceived commonality or important differences between various groups is a political choice with cultural connotations. Hence, despite the anatomical similarity between African females and European females, the historical relationship between African and European women demonstrates that they do not share the same experiences, issues, agendas, problems, solutions, and cultural destiny; nor have they shared the same historical relationship with their men. Although African and European women are both female, this biological fact did not and does not result in the similar treatment of both groups of women. During the period of American enslavement of Africans, for example, the treatment of black women was distinctly different from the treatment of white women.

Moreover, black and white women have not historically shared a common gender identity. For example, the white gender ideology of the "cult of

true womanhood" of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century defined African females outside the category of women.[10] Moreover, the system of chattel slavery challenged the very humanity of African women, attempting to reduce African females (and African males) to the status of objects and subhumans, or alternately animals. Historically, in America, more than one gender ideology has existed simultaneously. The significance of this is located in the divergent constructions of manhood and womanhood ideals that systematically made a distinction between African and non-African people.[11]

Moreover, while white males have been in the forefront of European imperialism and the implementation of white supremacy historically, they have not acted alone and neither have white males been the sole beneficiaries of this system. White women and by extension white families have also been participants in and rewarded by the oppression of others, and white men *and* white women continue to reap benefits from the creation of "white skin privilege."[12]

The advent of feminism and its *syntax of universalism*[13] attempt to mask this crucial point of difference between the life experiences of African and European women, particularly as it pertains to the different power relationship vis-à-vis white supremacy and its dissimilar consequences on the lives of black men and black families. Nor has there been a thrust within feminist discourse to deconstruct white skin privilege or end white supremacy. The

10. Barbara Hilkert Andolsen, *Daughters of Jefferson, Daughters of Bootblacks: Racism and American Feminism* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1986), 45–64. See also Shirley Yee, *Black Women Abolitionists: A Study in Activism (1828-1860)* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 40–59.

11. Shirley J. Carlson, "Black Ideals of Womanhood in the late Victorian Era," *The Journal of Negro History* LXXVII, no. 2 (Spring 1992). See also Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, "Black Male Perspectives of the Nineteenth Century Woman," in *The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images,* ed. Sharon Harley and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn (New York: National University Publications, 1978). These two sources discuss some of the ideals and expectations that African men and women held of African womanhood. Their ideals and expectations were markedly different from the ideals and standards white men and women held about white womanhood.

12. bell hooks, "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women," in *A Reader in Feminist Knowledge,* ed. Sneja Gunew (London: Routledge, 1991). This article discusses white supremacy and white women's failure to "own" up to their role and interest in maintaining this aspect of the system. Further, bell hooks contends that "in the United States, maintaining white supremacy has always been as great if not a greater priority than maintaining strict sex-role divisions. It is no mere coincidence that interest in white women's rights is kindled whenever there is a mass-based anti-racist protest" (p. 34). hooks is referring to the widely acknowledged fact that both the Abolitionist Movement and the Civil Rights Movement served as midwives to the white women's movement in the nineteenth century and the resurgence of feminism in the 1960s.

13. Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (New Jersey: African World Press, 1994).

main object of their focus is male supremacy, which ought to be more accurately labeled white male supremacy.

The Western origin of American feminist thought is uncontested. It is, after all, Western not African cultural values that achieve hegemony and prominence within American feminist discourse. In light of this, African women on the continent of Africa and those away from home have had to question whether or not American feminism represents yet another form of European cultural imperialism. Susheila Nasta questions the potential implications of being seduced by the notion of *universal feminism* when she poses the question, "does to be a 'feminist' therefore involve a further displacement or reflect an implicit adherence to another form of cultural imperialism?"[14] Trinh T. Minh-ha wonders if feminism really means Westernization.[15]

The core feminist assumption of universalism mistakenly conflates the experiences and oppression of African women and white women without a true accounting of the variable of race and how it interposes differences in the experiences of these discrete groups of females. White feminists have enjoyed a long history of analogizing sexism to racism.[16] However, comparing the plight of white women to the oppression of African women (African people for that matter) under the system of white supremacy has about the same merit as comparing the rope burns on the hands of a mountain climber with the rope burns around the neck of an African person who has just been lynched.

American feminism is not an ideologically innocuous concept, nor is it culturally neutral. Thus, it becomes imperative to interrogate and engage feminist theory because the uncritical appropriation of feminism is detrimental to the development of a truly culturally grounded African historiography. Moreover, the core concepts of American feminism lead to routine misinterpretation and distortion of African history as it pertains to the investigation of African women intellectuals and activists.

In this analysis, I do not dispute or evaluate the usefulness, relative merit, nor the explanatory value of American feminist theory for white women. Perhaps feminism provides them with a viable theoretical tool for illuminating their experiences and historical location within Western Civilization. This analysis does, however, challenge the explanatory value, the relevance, and the overall intellectual efficacy of American feminism and by extension womanism and

14. Susheila Nasta, ed., *Motherlands: Black Women Writing from Africa, The Caribbean and South Asia* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992), xv.

15. Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 106.

16. Linda Burnham, "Race and Gender: The Limits of Analogy," in *Challenging Racism and Sexism: Alternatives to Genetic Explanations*, ed. Ethel Tobach and Betty Rosoff (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1994), 143–162.

black feminism vis-à-vis the attempt by the African-centered effort to forge an analysis which sheds light upon the historical location, issues, and experiences of African women and African people living within the United States and our experiences with Western cultural domination.

Contested Grounds
The Black Feminist Revisionist History Project

To be without documentation is too unsustaining, too spontaneously ahistorical, too dangerously malleable in the hands of those who would rewrite not merely the past but (the) future as well.

—PATRICIA WILLIAMS

The (re)production of knowledge by African women and about African women is an area of concern for African historiography.[17] African women have been a pivotal force in African history in particular and world history in general. However, the assumptions, values, and principles often used to interpret world history by those trained in the West demonstrate a discernible devaluation and willful neglect of this actuality. There is an insufficient accounting of the place of African women in history, that is, a lack of rigorous and systematic discourse on the intellectual ideas of African women in America and the meticulous recording of the contributions of African women to world history. Alice Walker poetically asserted that we have the responsibility to retrieve and systematically explore the intellectual legacy bequeathed to us by our African foremothers when she wrote: "a people don't throw their geniuses away and if they are thrown away, it is our duty as . . . witnesses for the future to collect them again for the sake of our children, and, if necessary, bone by bone."[18] The absence of African women in history, except as quintessential victims, not only represents a glaring deficiency in our historiography, but it bespeaks a pernicious and unfounded supposition that African women have produced very little, if any, noteworthy knowledge and have done nothing worthy of historical recollection.

17. It is my basic position that historical writing about African women is not the exclusive domain or primary job of African women scholars, but instead it is the joint responsibility of both African men and women. We must all be engaged in this process of investigation. Moreover, accounting for the historical actions of African women as well as African men is fundamental to a comprehensive African historiography. The study of African women is not a secondary sub-field of investigation, but an integral part of a well-rounded historical narrative.

18. Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 92.

American historiography reflects the perspective and interest of those who control this country. One consequence of this is the absence of the African women from the written accounts of the past. This historiographical tendency cannot be reconciled with our need as African people to have a fuller and more extensive understanding of who we are as a people and what it is that we must do to perpetuate our existence on our own cultural terms. It is this discrepancy, among others, that African historians and writers must redress with methodologies that circumnavigate the replication of the very processes responsible for the distortion of the record and our present historical circumstances.

A prerequisite to fulfilling this task involves abandoning the traditional Western way of thinking about history and thus its criteria for the selection of subject matter and activities for historical investigation. If an appropriate African historiography is to emerge, its priority must be the capture and unfolding of a clear demarcation of our unique cultural imperatives engendered by the grand convergence of the circumstances (enslavement, white supremacy, racism, colonization, etc.) that have challenged our right to be who we are, our right to ritualize our remembrance, and our right to determine in an unfettered manner what shall become of us. This task becomes a critical and immediate purpose of our historical writings.

This essay is centered squarely on the premise that African women have a rich yet unsung intellectual tradition made in conjunction with like-minded African men intellectuals. However, current African historiographical approaches have yet to develop and systematically unfold this tradition so necessary to the repair of the damage done our historical narrative(s) by Western colonization of the production of knowledge about African women and African men. Currently, there is an effort spearheaded by black feminists (womanists) in the academy to systematically revise Western feminist revisionist history.[19] The Black Feminist Revisionist History Project, as I call this trend, involves the conscription of the aforementioned unsung intellectual history under the banner of feminism. This project balkanizes the intellectual/activist history of African woman and men along gender lines. Additionally, the project involves the arbitrary assignment of the label *feminist* to African woman who have engaged in any type of thought or action in the nineteenth and early twentieth century without regard to the political and ideological positions that informed their behavior. This revisionist project treates the terms *woman* and *feminist* as though they were synonymous. The litmus test for

19. Clenora Hudson-Weems, "Cultural and Agenda Conflicts in Academia: Critical Issues for Africana Women's Studies," *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 13, no. 4 (1989). See also Nancie Caraway, *Segregated Sisterhood: Racism and the Politics of American Feminism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

inclusion by this project is biologically determined. In others words, the mere mention of womanhood by these African woman thinkers warrants feminist appropriation resulting in the grafting of African women into the white Western feminist genealogy. A major by-product of this project has been a steady proliferation of books, articles, anthologies, and reference material that follows the practice of mislabeling African women, thereby distorting the intellectual tradition of African women thinkers and activists.

The explosion in the number of authors located in academia engaged in this renaming process and acts of historical appropriation has not been limited to black feminist writers. There are examples of this revisionist impulse in the writings of nonfeminist scholars also. For instance, Henry Louis Gates, general editor of the *Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers,* in the forward to this series, refers to scholar Anna Julia Cooper as a "prototypical Black feminist."[20] Likewise, some Afrocentric scholars have tacitly endorsed this practice. For instance, one of the most commonly used introductory texts in Black Studies, which is authored by Maulana Karenga, subsumes some African women scholar/activists of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century under the rubrics of black feminist or womanist. In fact, in this textbook, Anna Julia Cooper's book, *A Voice from the South,* written in 1892, is referred to as one of the first and most significant publications in the "feminist/womanist" discourse.[21]

The fact that nonfeminists readily engage in this practice bespeaks the success that feminists have had in making the terms *black women* and *black feminists* seem synonymous. In their writings, black feminists have a tendency to conflate the terms *black woman* and *black feminist.* Oftentimes they alternate usage of these terms in their writing, which leaves the uninitiated reader likely to conclude that they are one and the same. This practice implies that all of the historical black women intellectual giants of the past era were ideologically feminists. The following example of this practice comes from the seminal text, *Black Feminist Thought,* authored by Patricia Hill-Collins, who writes:

> . . . Black women intellectuals are engaged in the struggle to reconceptualize all dimensions of the dialectic of oppression and activism as it applies to African-American women. Central to this enterprise is reclaiming the Black feminist intellectual tradition . . . . Reclaiming this tradition involves discovering, reinterpret-

20. Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice From The South* (1892; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

21. Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies,* 2d ed. (California: University of Sankore, 1993), 283.

> ing, and in many cases, analyzing for the first time the works of Black women intellectuals . . . .[22]

What criteria is used by black feminists to determine if the women and men who they label feminists are indeed feminists? Their overly broad and ambiguous definition of black feminism has boundaries so highly permeable that the term *black feminism* fails to demarcate useful distinctions. Thus the term means almost anything and nothing at the same time. In an attempt to define *black feminism,* Patricia Hill-Collins, one of the leading experts and premier theorists of black feminism, discovered that it is "widely used rarely defined, [and that] Black feminist thought encompasses diverse and contradictory meanings."[23] Another highly regarded black feminist and widely published author of feminist theory (as distinct from black feminist theory)[24] is bell hooks. She observes: "a central problem within feminist discourse has been our inability to . . . arrive at a consensus of opinion about what feminism is . . . ."[25] In this same paragraph, hooks quotes from an essay titled "Towards A Revolutionary Ethics" by Carmen Vasquez in which the writer denotes her frustrations with the lack of a clear definition of feminism. Vasquez writes, "Feminism has come to mean anything you like, honey. There are as many definitions of feminism as there are feminists . . . ."[26] It is the definitional dilemma of black

22. Patricia Hill-Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and The Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 13.

23. Ibid., 19.

24. There is a rarely highlighted but subtle distinction between *black feminists* and *feminists who are black* according to Sheila Radford-Hill. Radford-Hill points out the fact that "not all Black feminists practice and believe in Black feminism. Many see Black feminism as a vulgar detraction from the goal of female solidarity under the banner of feminism." See Sheila Radford-Hill "Considering Feminism as a Model for Social Change," in *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies,* ed. Teresa de Lauretis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986): 165. The stance of bell hooks relative to black feminism is distinct from that of Patricia Hill-Collins. Patricia Hill-Collins advocates black feminism and has lead the way in the creation of its theory. bell hooks, on the other hand, has concentrated on constructing *feminist theory,* not *black feminist theory.* hooks is perhaps the most published black women scholar in feminist theory, and if one checks the titles of her numerous books and articles, they typically find the term *feminism,* rather than the term *black feminism.* hooks views the creation of black feminism as an accommodation to the racism of white feminists. hooks writes, "of course many white women (are) very accepting of those black women scholars who are willing to institutionalize a separate but distinct 'black feminist movement' for that meant that there was no demand that the mainstream (i.e. the white-dominated feminist movement) would need to undergo major changes in theory and practice." See bell hooks, "Feminism in Black and White," in *Skin Deep: Black Women & White Women Write About Race,* ed. Marita Golden and Susan Richards Shreve (New York: Nan A. Talese, 1995), 275.

25. bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 17.

26. Carmen Vasquez as quoted in bell hooks's *From Margin to Center,* 17.

feminism and feminism as well as the a priori assumptions of white feminism that make the use of a feminist framework (black or white) problematic when applied to the life experiences of African women. African history writers must not acquiesce to the political practice of renaming African women intellectuals as feminists, whether this be done by feminists or nonfeminists.

As it stands, if a black woman intellectual merely mentions the topic of black women, regardless of her philosophical perspective, she is likely to be labeled a feminist. Despite the fact that the ideological perspective of these historical figures is unambiguously Pan-Africanist, black nationalist, Marxist, Freudian, and so on—this seemingly does not matter to the Black Feminist Revisionist Project—these African women intellectuals may still be labeled feminists. Patricia Hill-Collins in reviewing Patricia Bell Scott's "Selected Bibliography on Black Feminism" recorded the following observations about Scott's bibliography:

> [She] . . . classifies all African-American women, regardless of the content of our idea, as Black feminists. From this perspective, living as a Black women provides experiences to stimulate a Black feminist consciousness. Yet indiscriminately labeling all Black women in this way simultaneously conflates the terms woman and feminist . . . .[27]

In no way is Patricia Bell Scott alone in her definitional perspective. Many of the members of the Black Feminist Revisionist Project share her rather expansive definition of black feminism.

African women, along with African men, have long been staunch advocates for the liberation of African people. To state the obvious, the category *African people* has both a male and female component, so naturally there will be discussion about African women and how we have experienced oppression in America and our function in changing our collective condition, just as there will be discourse about African men. African women intellectuals such as Amy Jacques Garvey engaged in this dynamic process and struggle as an important part of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). The efforts of Amy Jacques Garvey as the editor of the Women's Page of the *Negro World* entitled "Our Women And What They Think" have lead black feminists to call her a Feminist Black Nationalist[28] and a Feminist Pan-Africanist. Some

27. Patricia Hill-Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 19.

28. Karen S. Adler, "Always Leading Our Men in Service and Sacrifice: Amy Jacques Garvey, Feminist Black Nationalist," *Gender & Society* 6, no. 3 (September, 1992): 346–375.

scholars go even further by endorsing the idea of characterizing the UNIA as a "training ground for Black feminists of the 1930's . . . . [This] deserves a place in the history of black feminism in the diaspora,"[29] some black feminists contend. It cannot be emphasized enough that one can be an advocate for the end of oppression of black women and not be a feminist. Just as being born a black and talking about the condition of black people does not make one automatically a Pan-Africanist, being born a black woman and talking about the condition and welfare of black women does not automatically make that person a feminist philosophically. The terms *feminism* and *women* are not one and the same. Feminism represents one approach and not the only approach to examining the place of women in the world. It is a particular and specific ideological viewpoint and not the all encompassing, monolithic, metalinguistical voice of all women.

Despite the sheer magnitude and scope of the Black Feminist Revisionist Project, it has gone virtually unchallenged, and it has been met with silence, by and large, by the community of African-centered scholars. One notable exception to our complicity with this project, through our silence, has been a critical commentary written by Clenora Hudson-Weems. Hudson-Weems contends that this revisionist process of inappropriately labeling African women is both arbitrary and capricious. Similarly, she argues that a feminist procrustean agenda de-emphasizes and recasts the primary concern of African women of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. According to Hudson-Weems, the primary concern of the women and men of this era was the life-threatening plight of African people, male and female. Black feminist revisionism changes this focus into a narrow feminist concern which prioritizes the plight of women as delinked and somehow different from the condition of the men in their community.[30]

The Black Feminist Revisionist Project is attempting to create a new feminist historiography. They are deliberately challenging the standard works

29. Beverly Guy Sheftall, ed., *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought* (New York: The New York Press, 1995), 11–12. Both Sheftall and Adler (fn. 28), in recasting Amy Jacques Garvey as a feminist, place the term feminist before Amy J. Garvey's avowed philosophical position. It is significant that these scholars did not call her a "black nationalist feminist" but rather a "feminist black nationalist." While this may seem a mere case of semantics, it shows that the primary *analytical allegiance* of these scholars is to the ideology of gender as constructed by feminism. Moreover, in spite of the black feminist discourse about the interlocking systems of oppression of race, sex, and class, their basic feminist instinct would and does have them operating on a gender-primary focus. This practice is inherent to feminism. Secondly, they are labeling Amy Jacques Garvey as a feminist, not a black feminist. These terms are often used interchangeably by black feminists and helps to demonstrate that there are only minor conceptual demarcations between black and white feminism.

30. Clenora Hudson-Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves* (Troy, Michigan: Bedford Publishers Inc, 1993).

on the history of feminism. The history texts of feminism properly do not include or make reference to African women or their organizations within the intellectual genealogy of American feminism.[31] As white feminists began to write feminist history texts and revise American historiography to include the American feminist thought, the white feminist revisions had little to say about the plight and condition of African women since this was never the focus or a significant concern of the white feminist movement. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, author and black feminist, describes her conceptualization of the mission of the Black Feminist Revisionist Project in the following way: "[H]istories of Black women leaders and their organizations often play a double-revisionist role in as much as they [must also] reinterpret the revisionist works of White feminist historians."[32] White feminist Nancie Caraway argues that it is against what she believes to be a white feminist, biased documentation of the origins of feminism and the significant contributors to its birth and growth that the emergent Black Feminist Revisionist Project is reacting.[33] The self-proclaimed mission of this project is to document the "long" tradition of black women's feminist activism and consciousness dating back to the nineteenth century. I argue that no black feminists existed in America prior to circa 1970. It is only after this point that we can find a handful of black women who willfully joined the white feminist movement. Only after this period did a small group of African women self-consciously embrace the term feminist.[34]

There are historically plausible reasons as to why African women have not been a part of the early Western feminist tradition and intellectual genealogy other than racism, ethnocentrism, and bias as asserted by black feminists. The

31. Caraway, *Segregated Sisterhood,* passim.

32. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and The Metalanguage of Race," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17 no. 2. (Winter 1992): 255.

33. Caraway, *Segregated Sisterhood,* 118.

34. In the nineteenth century there were black women who actively advocated that all of the people disenfranchised in America receive the right to vote. This included black women, black men, and white women. The advocacy of *universal suffrage* on the part of black women must be distinguished from the efforts of white women in their suffrage movement. White women agitated for a narrow access to the vote when they called for an *educated suffrage,* a policy designed to exclude both black women and black men who had limited access to the educational institutions in America because of racism. White women feminists and suffragists expressly appealed to white men to give them (white women) the right to vote as a strategy for maintaining white supremacy and white political dominance. This became their battle cry with the technical enfranchisement of black men via passage of the Fifteenth Amendment. Some white women suffragists such as Carrie Chapman Catt went so far as to detail how the vote of the black woman could be neutralized, when *women* obtained the right to vote. See Barbara Hilkert Andolsen, *Daughters of Jefferson, Daughters of Bootblack: Racism and American Feminism* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1986), 25–44.

aforementioned is the strongest because there were no self-identified black feminists before circa 1970. The owning and appropriation by black feminists of the African women's intellectual tradition under the banner of feminism is problematic for the following reasons:

1. The incontrovertible fact is an overwhelming majority of African women (African people) have historically rejected feminism and participation in the feminist movement.[35]

2. The handful of African women who have campaigned for inclusion into the white feminist movement, by their own account, have been virtually ignored and marginalized within the (white) feminist movement.[36]

3. The core matrix of feminist thought is grounded in and predicated upon the experiences of white women, Western cultural values, and the gender construction of white womanhood.[37]

4. Undeniably, middle class white women control and dominate the production of feminist theory and their theory reflects this connection.[38]

5. Black feminists have spent far too much time in their literature "proving" the obvious, that is, that white feminists can and have been racist within the feminist movement, rather than devoting appropriate time to submitting evidence to the African community that demonstrates how feminism could effectively challenge white supremacy and racism in and/or outside of the

35. Black feminists admit that they are a small, exceptional part of the black community and that the majority of the black community has rejected feminism. hooks writes, ". . . Black women have not organized collectively in huge numbers around the issues of 'feminism' (many of us do not know or use the term) . . ." hooks, *From Margin to Center*, 10; See also bell hooks, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981), 12; Essie Rutledge, "Black/White Relations in the Women's Movement," *Pennsylvania State University Source: Minority Voices* 6, no. 1 (Fall 1989): 54–56; See also Patricia Hill-Collins in *Black Women in America, An Historical Encyclopedia,* vol. 1., ed. Darlene Hine Clark et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 422–423.

36. hooks, *From Margin to Center,* passim. See also Caraway, *Segregated Sisterhood,* passim.

37. hooks, *From Margin to Center*, 4; Clenora Hudson-Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves* (Troy, Michigan: Bedford Publishers, 1993), 21; Elsa Barkley Brown, "Womanist Consciousness: Maggie Lena Walker and the Independent Order of Saint Luke," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14, no. 3. (Spring 1989): 611.

38. bell hooks. "Feminism in Black and White," in *Skin Deep: Black Women and White Women Write About Race,* ed. Marita Golden and Susan Richards Shreve (New York: Nan A. Talese Doubleday, 1995).

feminist movement.[39] The ideology of sexism is an aspect of Western cultural traditions and praxis. It cannot be delinked from the philosophical ideas of the West and its cultural logic.

The practice of owning the African women's activist tradition under the banner of womanism or black feminism is strongly continued in a slew of recently published books. Some black feminist revisionists tend to be more intellectually honest and up-front about their feminist agenda. There are others, however, who engage in this practice in a covert manner. An enormously popular, two volume encyclopedia on African women in America edited by historian Darlene Clark Hine contains a plethora of examples. One such example was written by Patricia Hill-Collins, a pioneering architect of the theory of black feminism. Hill-Collins wrote an essay ostensibly discussing the origins and movement of black feminism in the encyclopedia entitled "Feminism in the Twentieth Century." This title is noteworthy because it is under the rubric *feminism* and not *black feminism;* this practice of treating the two terms as if they are synonyms indicates the interchangeability of the terms *feminism, black feminism,* and *womanism.*[40] In the first paragraph of this encyclopedia entry, Hill-Collins lists the names of a host of African women intellectuals and labels them as "prominent nineteenth-century black feminists." This list includes Sojourner Truth, Mary Ann Shadd Cary, Maria W. Stewart, Harriet Tubman, and Lucy C. Laney. Later in

39. Sheila Radford-Hill. "Considering Feminism as a Model for Social Change" in *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies,* ed. Teresa de Lauretis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 162–165.

40. Within white and black feminist literature, the terms *feminist* and *black feminist* are more often than not used interchangeably, depending on the context in which they appear. Typically, if the analysis is specifically addressing the topic of racism and the treatment of black women by white feminists, then we are likely to see the term black feminist used. Likewise, if the analysis is dealing specifically with the thoughts and ideas of black feminism, *black feminist* will appear. Otherwise, in general contexts, one would see black and white feminists refer to black women as feminist without the adjective *black* attached. This fact is notable regarding my argument that there is very little distinction between black feminism and white feminism. It is also notable that white feminism is generally referred to as feminism without the adjective *white* as a modifier. The term *black* before feminism is primarily used as a descriptor, a mere adjective to describe, and does not signify a substantive ideological demarcation between black feminism and white feminism. For example, Patricia Hill-Collins in her essay "Feminism in the Twentieth Century" gives her perspective on the evolution of black feminism, yet in her title she uses the term feminism and not black feminism. Beverly Guy-Sheftall in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought* (New York: New York Press, 1995) refers to Anna Julia Copper's book, *A Voice from the South,* as the first "book-length feminist analysis of the condition of African women" (p. 8). Sheftall throughout the book alternates between the use of the generic terms *feminist* and *black feminist* to refer to African women. However, neither Sheftall nor Collins is alone in doing this; it is the normal practice within this genre of literature.

the essay, other African women who struggled in the early twentieth century are also "called out of their names," being proclaimed "black feminists."

Hill-Collins, acknowledges that these African women "did not identify themselves as Black feminists." This admission by Hill-Collins was a pre-emptive strike issued in anticipation of critiques such as this one. Hill-Collins assumes that the failure of these women to call themselves black feminists is irrelevant as evidenced by her immediate turn about and claim: ". . . yet, [these African women] did construct and shape Black feminism as a political movement and Black feminist thought as its intellectual voice and vision."[41]

In this same vein, a recently published anthology entitled *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought,* edited by Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Women's Studies professor at Spelman college, has become very popular among African women students. In discussing the content of the book, Guy-Sheftall describes the writers included in the anthology as a diverse group of African women who had "emancipatory vision" and engaged in "acts of resistance." She made the political choice to use the concept of feminist to describe this vision and these acts. Guy-Sheftall further writes: "selections were not chosen because the authors self-identify as feminist *or are being defined by me as feminists;* some may even reject this terminology altogether"[42] (emphasis added). These types of throwaway statements have become sort of obligatory within black feminist texts. Indeed, they appear almost regularly in many of these revisionist works, functioning as standard black feminist exculpatory clauses. Black feminists write them with the intent to circumnavigate or deflect a critique of the practice of calling these African women feminists. Clearly, our intellectual ancestors never applied the term feminist to describe themselves or their work. Additionally, textual or other evidence that these African women would systematically ascribe to the analytical categories, a priori assumptions, and praxis of modern day feminist/womanist methodology is lacking.

Guy-Sheftall's assertion that she is not "defining them as feminist" is interesting given the title of the work which purports to include those African women who contributed to "African American feminist thought." Mere inclusion appears to be an act of defining.

41. Patricia Hill-Collins, "Feminism in The Twentieth Century," in *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia* Volume I, ed. Darlene Hine Clark (New York: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1993), 420. Darlene Hine Clarke has been in the forefront of this trend. In addition to this two volume encyclopedia, she has published numerous articles and served as editor for other notable works on black women. Most important is a sixteen volume series that republishes a host of articles written by and about black women scholars. See *Black Women In United States History: From Colonial times to the Present* (New York: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1990). Most recently she published another volume of black women entitled *Hindsight: Black Women and The Re-Construction of American History* (New York: Carslon Publishing, Inc., 1994).

42. Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire*, xiv.

In order to address this prima facie contradiction, Guy-Sheftall cites bell hooks's argument: "we can act or (write) in feminist resistance without ever using the word 'feminism.' " This statement is indicative of the overly expansive net of black feminism and their revisionist project. The fact remains that the very practice of renaming by virtue of the attachment of that label defines these women as feminists. Sheftall's assertion that she is not labeling the writers in her anthology as feminist is a dissimulation in the following ways: first, she identifies feminism as the topic of her book; second, she describes a category of activity (i.e., acts of resistance and emancipatory visions) that is so broad that any black woman or all black women could fit into the category; third, she labels those things under the purview of this amorphously defined category as feminist; then, finally, she disingenuously asserts that the mere inclusion of a writer in her anthology on African American feminist thought should not be read to mean that she is claiming or defining the included writers as feminist. The very act of including a writer in this anthology implicitly defines each individual author as a black feminist. This conclusion is reinforced by the epilogue to *Words of Fire* penned by Johnnetta B. Cole, president of Spelman College. President Cole writes: "She [Guy-Sheftall] claims the name [feminism] . . . . This is the extraordinary value of the book. It is the very first collection of readings on the evolution of black feminism in the United States."[43]

To reiterate, with the exception of a small group of African women concentrated primarily in the academy, the widely acknowledged fact, by both feminists and nonfeminists alike, is that most African women in America have rejected feminism.[44] For the most part, African women have not called themselves feminists, nor have they in any significant numbers participated in the construction of feminist theory or in any important way been a part of so-called women's studies programs across the country. Black feminists readily acknowledge and lament that the black community has historically rejected feminism, which creates quite a paradox for the black feminist movement.[45] They are the leaders of a social movement with few followers among the very people they claim to speak for, a seemingly insurmountable dilemma.

43. Ibid., 551.

44. Brenda J. Verner, *Africana Womanism: Why Feminism has Failed to Lure Black Women*, unpublished manuscript (Chicago Illinois: Verner Communications, P.O. Box 496715).

45. See Sheila Radford-Hill, "Considering Feminism as a Model for Social Change" in *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*, ed. Terasa de Lauretis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986). Radford-Hill's analysis in this article addresses the issue of whether or not feminism can ever represent a viable vehicle for social change which both appeals to and empowers

However, black feminists have been innovative in addressing this paradox through the creation of a number of strategies that minimize the importance of their dilemma. One critical tactic has been the birth of the Black Feminist Revisionist Project. This project has called for a redefining and relabeling of the intellectual and race activism of African women as feminist activism. One author argues that the work these African women did in the areas of abolition of slavery, self-improvement, and community uplift represented a *self-conscious feminism.*[46] Again, the categories created to locate African women in feminism have been cast so broadly that it is difficult to exclude any black woman from these highly flexible and subjective categories.

As a result of these amorphous boundaries set forth by black feminists, not only have African women been seized and redefined as feminists, so too have a few African men such as Alexander Crummell, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Martin R. Delany.[47] Some historians have noted that white women more readily accepted the presence of black men in their reform organizations than black women, although they did discriminate against both black men and black women. Historian Louis Filler calls attention to the fact that very few black women were prominent in the so-called women's rights movement. Filler contends that the best known women's rights advocates among blacks were men. Given that the terms *women's movement* and *feminist movement* are used interchangeably in feminist historiography, he is in essence positing that the best known feminists among black people were black men.[48]

Black feminists have been motivated to engage in this revisionist historiographical mission in order to recruit more African women to their ranks. First, it is a backdoor appeal to African women (African people) to set aside their political acumen and join the feminist movement. In essence it is de-

African women in light of the present composition of feminism and the noticeable lack of participation by African women (p.159); Tiffany Patterson, "Toward a Black Feminist Analysis: Recent Works by Black Women," in *Black Women's History: Theory and Practice,* ed. Darlene Clark Hine (New York: Carlson Publishing Series 1990); Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 363.

46. Adrienne Lash Jones, "Abolition and Feminism: Black Women in the North," in *New Historical Perspectives: Essays on The Black Experience in Antebellum America,* ed. Gene D. Lewis (Ohio: Friends of Harriet Beecher Stowe House and Citizen's Committee on Youth, 1984), 82.

47. Patricia Hill-Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 19.

48. Rosalyn Terborg-Penn and Sharon Harley, eds., *The Afro American Woman: Struggles and Images* (New York: National University Publications, 1978), 19. See also, Patricia Bell Scott, "Selected Bibliography on Black Feminism," in *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us are Brave: Black Women's Studies,* ed. Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith (New York: The Feminist Press, 1982). It lists works written by prominent African men such as Alexander Crummell in a section called "general works of Black feminism, prior to 1950," 23; Hill-Collins, *Black Feminist Thought,* 19.

signed to legitimize black feminism within the African community which has traditionally dismissed feminism. Overt appeals have not convinced African women in substantial numbers to join the feminist movement. Perhaps, the feminist renaming of beloved African thinkers such as Amy Jacques Garvey, Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer, and W.E.B. Du Bois will make feminism more politically palatable and appealing to African women. After all, if these historical giants were feminists, then how can we continue to justify our nonparticipation in this movement? Thus, this project shifts the burden of proof away from those who have accepted feminism to those who have rejected it. The second motivation for this revisionist project is the desire to integrate into the intellectual genealogy of Western feminist thought and to be validated and accepted as genuine feminists by the feminist establishment. The third object of the revisionist project, which is recent in origin, is an attempt to legitimize itself by giving the impression that black feminism began in the nineteenth century rather than the 1970s. Hence, if they claim women like Maria Stewart, France Ellen Watkins Harper, or Amy Jacques Garvey, then they push back their origins and create the notion that they have a "long" tradition, even if there are few adherents left today.

Hijacked Discourse
The Methodological Assumptions of Feminism

The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.
—AUDRE LORDE

The terms of any debate are neither neutral nor objective. Instead, terms of debate ought to be created and framed by people to serve their interest. Thus, the issue becomes one of who sets the terms of feminist debate; whose interests are served by these terms; and if researchers of African history adopt a black feminist or American feminist framework or methodological approach to investigate and examine the role of African women in history and by extension the African experience, what basic tools will be gained from this framework?

I will grapple with the last question first. The language and political vocabulary of American feminism represents feminism as the exclusive or, at least, primary arbitrator over "women's liberation" and questions related to gender. However, one can be concerned with gender and the condition of African women and not be a feminist. In this respect feminists do not have ownership of the subject of women. Therefore, while it may be possible for an American feminist and an African-centered thinker to agree that African women have been devalued, exploited, and oppressed in America, it is probable, how-

ever, that they would differ on the approach and strategies to change these circumstances, differ on the vocabulary used to describe this condition, and differ on the vision for the future as well as the origins of the problem.

The vocabulary of feminism, with terms such as *male domination, male supremacy, patriarchy,* and *phallocentrism,* encourages African people (male and female) to think of their oppression in exclusively male terms. Furthermore, it encourages historians to conceptualize the oppression of African people as the exclusive domain of white males. These terms imply that white females have little if no agency and have never been a force in their own cultural history. This is an untenable position. Are we to accept that the Queen of England, Margaret Thatcher, Madeline Albright, or Hillary Clinton have less power than and are somehow disadvantaged vis-à-vis the "male privilege/male supremacy" of an economically poor black man working at McDonald's in Compton, Detroit, or the Mississippi Delta? It is as if their victimization by white males has somehow absolved them from complicity, even though they share the same cultural beliefs, attitudes, behavior, and world view of their husbands, brothers, sons, and fathers.[49] This is simply not the case. White women enjoy membership in all classes of this society. The family money and status of upper class and middle class white women historically have allowed them to exercise power and privilege over African men and women even while they may have labored under the oppressive gender ideology implemented by white men to maintain domination within their sphere of influence.

There are several major problems with the Black Feminist Revisionist Project that are rooted in the basic philosophical assumptions of white feminism and the symbiotic intellectual relationship (i.e., shared fundamental beliefs and political vocabulary) between the ideas of black feminism and white feminism. The study of historiography is an investigation of the root values and assumptions of those who write history. These assumptions definitively influence and shape the inferences that the writers make as well as the meanings they derive from what they find.[50] Due to the limitation of space, I am unable to treat black and white feminist theories comprehensively. I have chosen for examination the more salient feminist assumptions and their corollary consequences relative to African historiography, that is, the feminist assumptions that are most likely to lead to routine distortion and misinter-

49. Aside from using their victimization in order to shield and sanitize the fact that some upper class and middle class white women wield power in this society, feminists actively use terminology such as *women's culture* and *women's psychology* to imply that they do not share the cultural beliefs of white males. The search for a distinct women's or feminist epistemology is deployed to reinforce this premise.

50. Norman F. Cantor and Richard I. Schneider, *How to Study History* (Illinois: Harlan Davidson Inc, 1967), 35.

pretation of the place of African woman in African history. These assumptions are as follows:

1. Men are the enemy and all men dominate all women or at the very least black men who are not in power still share in the benefits of being male in a white male patriarchy.[51]

2. Gender can be separated from race and the primary and exclusive focus of American feminism is gender.[52]

3. Women share a common oppression that transcends their racial, class, and cultural differences. This common oppression is the basis of the universal oppression of women by men and the bond of sisterhood, which is an outgrowth of this common struggle.[53]

4. Black women have two separate and distinct struggles, one as African, the same as all Africans, and one as woman, the same as all women.[54]

5. Black women must prioritize gender over race or vice versa. We must rank our oppression, creating a hierarchy of oppression.[55]

6. Acting under the assumption of the disconnection between race and gender has led African men and women to the "comparative suffering" game. African men and women have been engaged in a dangerous, antagonistic, and adversarial debate trying to measure, quantify, and compete against each other in order to determine who is worse off in white America under white supremacy.[56] For example, some African males take pride in the slogan that they are an "endangered species," which they think proves that they are the greater target of white supremacist policies and therefore the most

51. bell hooks, "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women," in *A Reader in Feminist Knowledge*, ed. Sneja Gunew (London: Routledge, 1991), 30–31; Andolsen, *Daughters of Jefferson*, 107–108.

52. Elizabeth V. Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988).

53. Sheila Ruth, *Issues in Feminism: An Introduction to Women's Studies* (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1990).

54. Spelman, *Inessential Woman*, 122.

55. Hill-Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 222–230.

56. Gloria Wade-Gayles, "Staying on Go: Changing The Rhythm of Struggle," *Black Books Bulletin* 8 (1991): 180–181. A section of her essay examines the negative consequences of African men and women measuring the weight of our oppression across gender lines. We must be concerned with the plight of both African women and men and not just one-half of this family equation.

decimated by them. On the other hand, some African women feel that African women deserve the title "Ms. Worst Off in America" because they take pride in saying we suffer a "triple oppression" based on gender, race and class as if African men do not have the variables of gender, race, and class in their lives. This new habit of "ranking oppression" is a major problem, which leads to costly divisiveness and conflicts based on absurd assumptions.

7. Some black feminist theorists argue that the experiences of African women are different and distinct from African men because of their belief in the triple oppression matrix, rather than viewing the experiences of African people as interconnected, interrelated, and mutually dependent consequences of white supremacy. White supremacy sometimes results in gender-specific, surface manifestations of oppression, but these surface manifestations are rooted in the very same deeply structured problem.[57]

8. The aforementioned black and white feminist assumptions have lead to the severing and conceptualization of African history and intellectual traditions along gender lines. They have systematically balkanized the historical activity and relationships of African females and males into separate and oppositional camps. This polarization is accomplished primarily by decontextualizing the subjects from their African cultural roots and their immediate material circumstances. In the end this practice projects into the past highly questionable present-centered assumptions and motives.

One of the major ramifications of the adoption of the American feminist perspective for doing research on African women is that the above feminist assumptions have endured and cannot be detached from the white feminist methodological approach. Some of these assumptions have been debunked in the writings of black feminists. For example, black feminists convincingly argue that race cannot be separated from gender completely. They have petitioned white feminists to expand their definition of feminism to account for the racism experienced by African women and men. Yet feminism has not been able to move beyond its basic concern, which is gender.[58] Even though black feminists believe that within their own theories they have expanded the boundaries of the definition of feminism to deal with race, they inevitably

57. Vivian Gordon, *Black Women, Feminism and Black Liberation: Which Way?* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1987); Floya Anthias et al., *Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour, Class and the Anti-racist Struggle* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 116.

58. I am encumbered by the English language on this particular point. Although I say "gender" is a primary focus, I do not mean it to be seen as distinct from race. I do not think that

revert to an exclusive gender focus, linguistically if not conceptually. Thus, their works and activism are seemingly focused on women's liberation, women's issues, and women's history exclusively. For example, black feminists in their advocacy of gender as a category of historical analysis operationalize this category consistently with the white feminist premise of gender as being divisible from race despite their discourse on the interlocking character of these aspects of oppression.

To the African, the pursuit of African women's liberation separate from African people in general must be perceived as oxymoronic as it pertains to African men and vice versa. The concept of liberation cannot be dichotomized, for we are either both free or we are both in bondage—there is no middle ground on this matter. Feminist slogans have misdefined liberation. How can African women be free if half of the group (our menfolk) are enslaved, and how can African men be free if African women are enslaved? Author Linda LaRue summarizes this idea cogently when she states, "we can conclude that Black women's liberation and Black men's liberation are what we mean when we speak of the liberation of Black people."[59] Striving for our mutual liberation is not an option but a prerequisite for the perpetuation of our existence as a people. This is from a perspective that views our collective fate and destiny as bound together by blood, culture, and world view.

Feminists find it no longer politically correct to overtly call men the enemy. However, the essential ideas of feminism were formulated and are predicated on this basic tenet, even though rarely stated overtly. The notion of women's issues is problematic precisely because the assumption that undergirds this feminism is the idea that men are the enemy. Issues that concern women such as child care, rape, domestic violence, and reproductive concerns are community issues because they impact the entire community (men, women, and children), rather than just women. Is child abuse a child's issue simply because the child is the one who physically and psychologically feels the brunt of this violation?[60] It would be unthinkable to classify child abuse as a child's issue because the well-being and defense of children is the entire community's

feminism and the white women theorists who construct it focus exclusively on their gender while ignoring race, as they have often been charged with doing. They focus on their own racial identity as it manifests specific to gender constructs that encumber white middle class women. Feminist theory does not ignore whiteness (a racial identity). More accurately, what feminist theory has not done is articulate a systematic critique of racism and white racial domination as experienced by black women (and black men) and the ensuing problems of our living under cultural imperialism.

59. Linda La Rue, "The Black Movement and Women's Liberation," in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought,* ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall (New York: The New York Press, 1995), 172–173.

60. Several of the students in a course I taught at Temple University in the spring semes-

responsibility, hence child abuse rather than being considered a child's issue is considered an issue of priority for the entire community. However, the feminist concept of women's issues asserts that whatever is identified as such is an exclusively female problem for women to handle.

A Review of Select A Priori Assumptions of American Feminism

American feminists have argued that there is a difference between the terms *sex* and *gender.* They argue that the term sex denotes the biology of a person, that is, the anatomical and physiological properties that makes one either male or female. On the other hand, gender is the culturally shaped attribute and behavior ascribed to people—in other words, the ways that a culture expects women and men to think, act, and feel.[61] American feminists assert that one's sex, male or female, is present at birth, but one's gender, manhood and womanhood, is made, created, and constructed by cultural groups through the meanings and expectations of a given society attached to biological differences.[62] Therefore, in feminist parlance, to say a person is a female is one thing, but to say a person is a woman is an altogether different ideological and cultural statement.[63] Oyeronke Oyewumi, a Nigerian woman scholar and specialist in Western gender discourses, argues that variables other than gender must be factored into any analysis of African gender constructions. Oyewumi writes: "[T]o analyze how gender is constructed in any contemporary African society, the role and impact of the west is of utmost importance, not only because most African societies came under European rule before the end of the nineteenth century, but because of the continued dominance of the west in the production of knowledge."[64]

The same holds true for Africans in America, for example. We too must factor in the importance of the West and its hegemony in the representations of African manhood and womanhood within borders dominated and controlled by Europeans. All gender constructions are cultural creations which tend to be racially specific. Since cultures speak in a myriad of voices, one could reasonably expect to find differences, large and small, in the gender ideals, expectations, and constructions between various cultures rather than a uniform,

ter of 1996 formulated this analogy during a class discussion.

61. Spelman, *Inessential Woman,* 14.

62. Oyeronke Oyewumi, "Inventing Gender: Questioning Gender in Precolonial Yurobaland," in *Problems in African History The Precolonial Centuries,* ed. Robert Collins et al. (New York: Markus Weiner Publishing, Inc. 1993), 244.

63. Maggie Humm, *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, Second Edition* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1995), 259.

64. Oyeronke Oyewumi, "Mothers not Women: Making An African Sense of Western Gender Discourses" (Ph.D. diss., University of California Berkeley, 1992), 4.

universal, monolithic, manifestation of gender oppression that transcends race, culture, time, and geography as feminist theory argues.[65]

A widely accepted assumption within feminist circles is the belief that "gender and race cannot be conflated except in the instance of the Black women's voice."[66] However, I would argue that race and gender are always conflated. Gender and race are never separate in the real world. The feminist usage of the word *gender* as a synonym for the term *woman* tends to cause the uninitiated to disregard the reality that black males also have a gender identity. They experience a specific and targeted form of racialized gender oppression in America. This gender oppression[67] is not unique to them, and it is not unconnected to the gender oppression of African women. The gender oppression of African females and African males in America is interlocking and interconnected.

The central problem is the fact that the English language does not have a word or concept, to my knowledge, that adequately represents and reflects the inseparability and oneness of the concepts of gender and race. In concrete reality, gender and race are always conflated; it is only in theoretical abstractions that we have the illusion of separateness.[68] Since race and gender in the English language represent different aspect of one's identity, many people, unfortunately, conceptually view race and gender as separate and severable social constructions. Moreover, the political stance and vocabulary of feminism further exacerbates this linguistic and conceptual problem. Novelist Ama Ata Aidoo concisely speaks of the difficulty of expressing oneself using the language of the colonizer. Aidoo writes: "what positive is there to be . . . . I have only been able to use a language that enslaved me, and therefore, the

65. Ibid., 1.

66. Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice From The South* (1892) in *The Schomburg Collection of Nineteenth-Century Writers,* ed. Henry Louis Gates (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), xiv.

67. In this paper, I use the term gender oppression, which is an imprecise and inaccurate term for what I am trying to convey. The term gender oppression reinforces the feminist assumption that race and gender are severable and that one can experience one's gender isolated from one's racial makeup. This simply is not the case. Hence, the use of the English language causes a seemingly unavoidable conceptual problem, in this particular case.

68. Some scholars have attempted to create terminology to convey the convergence and interrelatedness of the concepts of race and gender. For example, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham uses the category of the "racial construction of gender," to evoke the oneness of these terms. Alternately, authors Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis use the term "racialization of gender." Additionally, the black feminist concept of the "interlocking systems of oppression" (i.e., race, gender, class, etc.) views the variables of race and gender as intersecting and intertwined. Even though black feminists see the variables of race and gender as intimately interconnected, they do not necessarily see these concepts as commingled and collapsible. See Evelyn Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, no. 2 (Winter, 1992): 256; Floya Anthias, Nira

messengers of my mind always come shackled."[69] Language carries culture; it is not neutral. Hence, English becomes a major source of miscommunication when one speaks cross-culturally.

The point is that gender stereotypes or expectations have not been the same for African women and white women simply because both are female. Racialized gender constructions have mediated and dictated differences in treatment, status, and expectations as regards African women (and men) vis-à-vis white women (and men). It becomes important then to dispel the feminist myth that gender problems for women are monolithic and universal. The same holds true for African men and white men. For example, in nineteenth century America, wealthy white women of leisure were described and depicted as the ideal woman. They were placed upon a pedestal and viewed as fragile and morally pure. During this same period, the white gender ideology of African manhood and womanhood was entirely different. This tradition of difference in standards and ideals continues today. In contemporary American society, the white gender stereotype constructs African women as welfare queens and African men as the quintessential predator, criminal, or menace to society. In addition, black men are portrayed in the media[70] as oversexed men who wantonly abandon their women and children. Similarly, African women are portrayed as immoral sex objects and sexual toys. Another gender stereotype originated by outsiders is the notion that African women are overbearing and dominate African men. Our men, in turn, are said to be castrated and emasculated because of our strength as women.[71] The aforementioned gender constructions and images of African men and women in America are not African in origin. White men are not said to be castrated and emasculated because of the strength of their women. It reiterates Oyewumi's point that other factors such as colonization and racism must not be excluded from any analysis of gender. Additionally, these examples reinforce the idea that it is impossible to accurately sever race from gender. This disconnection is an a priori premise of white feminist discourse. Nigerian Oyewumi succinctly critiques this basic tenet of white feminist philosophy in stating: "[I]n the declaration of [the] universal subordination of women and in the search for the origins of male dominance, many western feminists make no reference to history—a history

Yural-Davis, et al., eds., *Racialized Boundaries* (New York: Routledge), 124.

69. Ama Ata Aidoo quoted in *Motherland: Black Women's Writing from Africa, The Caribbean, and South Asia,* ed. Susheila Nasta (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press), xv.

70. In debate, we blame the media for a lot of the problems concerning the creation and perpetuation of negative images of African people. However, we must be mindful that the media is not a human entity, but instead it is a vehicle which carries the ideas and thoughts of the people who program and control it.

71. Hill-Collins, *Black Feminist Thought,* 67–90.

of imperialism, colonization, racial domination of non-Western peoples and the emergence of Western hegemony world wide." [72]

In sum, a central assumption of feminism is the belief that the category of gender can be neatly isolated and separated from other categories such as race, culture, and class. The idea that gender is separate from race is a major cornerstone of American feminist theory. The claim that all women share a common history of oppression that transcends other variables such as race, class, culture, time, and space, which therefore necessitates a women's struggle against their common oppression (sexism and male supremacy) and their common oppressor and enemy (men), is based on this key assumption.

Another consequence of the basic assumption of the separateness of race and gender is the premise that African women can divide their identity into at least two separate and distinct components. The inherent assumption is that we as African women can subtract our racial identity from our gender. This notion of divisible gender and racial identity has been called the *additive analysis,* or alternatively the additive model of Black women's oppression.[73] The term *additive* is derived from the mathematical connotation of the feminist viewpoint which presupposes that gender (i.e., a homogenized womanhood) is the basic building block of feminist theory. Under this additive theory, if a researcher wanted to isolate the experiences of black women in an analysis of gender, a researcher need only add on race and racial consideration to the basic building block of gender. Philosopher Elizabeth Spelman summarizes the additive analysis in the following way: "[A]ccording to the additive analysis of sexism and racism, all women are oppressed; some women are oppressed further by racism.[74]

American feminists using the additive analysis framework assert that black women experience two forms of oppression: one as a woman, the same as all women, and another form as a black, the same as all other blacks. Consequently, they believe that black women have two struggles, one as a woman and another as a black.[75] Black women are required to compartmentalize and separate their liberation struggles into two separate and mutually exclusive struggles, one for women's liberation and another for black liberation.

The assumption that black woman, or white women for that matter, can feasibly subtract from gender their racial identity only exists in the realm of abstract feminist theory. Spelman observes that "much of feminism has pre-

72. Oyewumi, "Mothers Not Women, 11.

73. Spelman, *Inessential Woman,* 123–125.

74. Elizabeth V. Spelman, "Theories of Race and Gender: The Erasure of Black Women," *Quest: A Feminist Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1982): 46.

75. Ibid., 42.

ceded on the assumption that gender is indeed a variable of human identity independent of other variables such as race and class, that whether one is a woman is unaffected by what class or race one is."[76] The everyday reality of African women reveals this premise to be grossly distorted. As an African woman, I am not a woman during the week and an African on the weekend. I am an African and a woman simultaneously. In real life and in concrete reality, at no point can one ever divorce one's race from one's gender—this includes white women. Furthermore, it therefore follows that a philosophical distinction exists between the statements, "I am a black woman" and "I am 'black' and 'woman.' " The former treats one's racial and gender identity as one entity, while the latter position separates the factors of race from gender.

Feminist theory does not systematically address the issue of white supremacy and racism and their impact on African women and men, nor does it expose and articulate how white women in conjunction with the fruit of their wombs (their sons, brothers, fathers, and husbands) initiate, perpetuate, maintain, and benefit from the imposition of white supremacy on the lives of African men and women. It is this failure of the feminist philosophical paradigm that is significantly responsible for its routine misinterpretation of the lives of African women.

The life experiences, issues, and allegiances of African women and European women are not the same simply because they share a common physiology and anatomy. If one examines the historical record, one finds that the relationship between European and African women has not been a "bond of sisterhood" that transcended the divergent interests of these two different groups of women.[77] As noted by bell hooks, "the vision of sisterhood evoked by women's liberationists was based on the idea of common oppression . . . . [T]he idea of 'common oppression' was a false and corrupt platform disguising and mystifying the true nature of women's varied and complex social reality."[78] During the period of enslavement of African people in America, many of the husbands of white women repeatedly and systematically raped African women as well as engaged in other acts of sexual terrorism such as using their wombs to breed. White women, as a group, did very little to assist, protect, or help her African so-called *sisters* from being devalued, abused, and hurt in the most intimate way. Instead, white women often felt humiliated, angry, and jealous because their husbands were intimate with African women and "fathered" children other than her own. In reaction to the transgressions of their husbands, some white women demanded that the children of African women be sold

76. Spelman, *Inessential Woman*, 81.

77. Eleanor Smith, "Historical Relationship Between Black and White Women," *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 4, no. 4 (Winter, 1980).

78. hooks, *From Margin to Center*, 44.

away because they were constant reminders of the actions of their husbands. White women failed to consider these rapes as violent acts of aggression against African womanhood rather than mutually desired, voluntary liaisons. Many white women shared the dominant ideology that African women were promiscuous and immoral sexual animals whose wanton personalities somehow initiated or caused these acts.

Rape was a vile tool of political oppression, economic exploitation, and terrorism used freely to dominate African people. Moreover, the selling of the children away from their African mothers punished both mother and child and not the white husbands of white women. In many ways it was a petty act of revenge, reprehensible beyond rehabilitation when one weighs the magnitude of human suffering it caused. Whether it was the complicity through their collective silence in the face of the actions of their husbands, brothers, or sons or their overt participation by having a hand in the separation of African children from African women and families, white women set themselves apart from African women, thus dispelling any notion of a common perspective on the issue of rape or any notion of a common oppression with African woman.

Rape during slavery was not a mere act of sexism. Sexism is a far too sanitized, polite, and politically impotent concept to describe the true nature of this aggressive act of cultural genocide that took place during enslavement and its political and social aftermath in the early twentieth century. This points to feminist cross-cultural generalizations, a major feminist shortcoming that has existed from the inception of feminism. Its mission, concepts, and political vocabulary were designed to speak about the inter-gender relationships of white men and white women. Because of this, feminism has been woefully incapable of expanding its analysis to handle the complexity of the inter-gender racialized discourse between blacks and whites. There are significant differences in the dynamics present between inter-gender relations within a group and the inter-gender relations between groups. This analysis contends that while a feminist framework may be helpful for explaining and understanding the inter-gender relations of white women with white men, it cannot translate or properly explain the inter-gender relations of African men with African women, and finally because it does not deal with the variable of white supremacy, it cannot possibly posit itself as a decoder of the racialized inter-gender relations between African people and European people.

A contemporary example of the divergent interests of white women and African women is *affirmative action.* Once white women were classified as minorities (black women and other women of color were already considered minorities), they became one of the largest benefactors of affirmative action.[79]

79. Mary Christine-Phillip, "Feminism in Black and White" *Black Issues in Higher Edu-*

White women, and by extension white families, have reaped the greatest tangible benefits from affirmative action in terms of jobs, promotions, contracts, and other benefits. Yet when affirmative action came under siege, the collective silence of white women, with a few notable exceptions, bespeaks their overwhelming nonsupport as a group for affirmative action. This may seem paradoxical since they have benefited so greatly from this government program. It seems logical that they would be the major supporters of affirmative action. What happened to their *sisterly* allegiance in this instance? In real political terms, their primary allegiance is to the fruit of their wombs: their sons, brothers, husbands, and fathers. The myth about affirmative action is that great numbers of white males lose out on jobs, promotions, contracts, and admissions to universities because their opportunities are given to unqualified, so-called minorities in order to fill government quotas. No statistics, outside the world of fantasy, support this myth. In reality, whenever we move away from feminist slogans of sisterhood and common oppression and introduce concrete political examples, the perceptions, perspectives, and interests of white and African women are defined differently.

Who Set the Terms of American Feminist Debate?

The terms of debate or core concepts set forth in feminism have been born in the minds of white women more often than not. The inescapable fact is that white women dominate feminist discourse, and it is they who, in the main, are the architects of feminist theory. Their definitions, descriptions, and categorical creations are used primarily to discuss the notion of gender and gender issues. Feminist scholar bell hooks concedes that white women have monopolized the creation of feminist theory when she asserts that "White women who dominate feminist discourse, who for the most part make and articulate feminist theory, have little or no understanding of white supremacy as a racial politic. . . ."[80] The intellectual and political acumen of white feminists is grossly underestimated by hooks, when she asserts that white women writing feminist theory have failed to apprehend the meaning of white supremacy.

It is not a crime to write, to think, and to act in the interest of oneself and in the interest of one's group. Yet, it becomes a criminal act to pretend that one is doing otherwise. This then is one of the most important flaws of feminism. Stated differently, the most subversive idea of feminism is embedded in the cultural arrogance of white women. This allows them to totalize their cultural and gender experiences as the definitive and universal experience of all women. In essence, feminism superimposes the cultural concerns of Western white

cation 10, no. 1 (March 11, 1993): 12.

80. hooks, *From Margin to Center,* 4.

women upon all women. Indeed, most of the concepts, perspectives, and methods of so-called women's history, so-called women's studies, and feminism have been developed without consideration for the life experiences, conditions, and issues confronting African women and by extension African people.[81]

The issue is not one of whose movement feminism is—because that is clear. The issue is a question of assimilation and integration. The a priori assumptions of feminist theories are constructed to reflect the interests of those who created them. Black feminists and womanists have not been the only ones impacted by American feminist ideology. African-centered thinkers and others who have rejected the feminist label still use the organizing concepts and vocabulary that undergird feminism to discourse about African male and female relations. Many of us continue to use terminology like *sexism, women's history, women's issues,* or *women's studies* without acknowledging that these are value laden terms that are rarely independently defined outside of a feminist context. So, despite the historical rejection of feminism on one level, on yet another level many feminist definitions, descriptions, categories, and methods of inquiry have successfully infiltrated the perceptions of African-centered thinkers and colored our perspectives regarding notions of gender and race. How do the manifestations of sexism differ in the African community from what is found in the white community? Is there a distinction to be made between the inter-gender relations of African men and African women and the inter-gender relations between black and white people? How do we define sexism in an African context? Do we even question why we are looking for sexism? Elizabeth Spelman marks some of the complexity of this search when she examines an excerpt from the writings of philosopher Richard Wasserstrom. Spelman quotes Wasserstrom's articulation of what is typically believed to be a standard example of sexist ideology in America: " 'Men and women are taught to see men as independent, capable, and powerful; men and women are taught to see women as dependent, limited in abilities, and passive . . . .' "[82] Spelman asks the almost rhetorical question: "Who is taught to view African men as independent, capable, or powerful?" Are not African women, young and old, bombarded with the message that "there are no good black men" and taught to repeat like a mantra the phrase "all black men are dogs, liars, untrustworthy, and undependable"? Do white women receive the same message about white men? No, they do not! Instead white men are depicted as all-powerful and capable leaders of the so-called free world. Furthermore, who is taught to believe that African women are passive and limited in abilities? Are

81. Elsa Barkley Brown, "Womanist Consciousness: Mega Lena Walker and the Independent Order of Saint Luke," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14, no. 3 (Spring 1989).

82. Elizabeth V. Spelman, "Theories of Race & Gender: The Erasure of Black Women," in *Quest: A Feminist Quarterly* 5, no. 4. (1982): 39.

not African women depicted inter alia as the *backbone*[83] of the community as well as stereotyped as dominating matriarchs who overpower their black men?

Wasserstrom's statement illustrates how oftentimes we passively use terms supported by definitions that fit the experiences of white women rather than our own. Moreover, it once again demonstrates how the lack of categorical preciseness in using the generic terms *men* and *women* unmodified can and does lead to misinterpretation, depending upon which particular group of men and women is referred to. In addition, the terms men and women unmodified by an adjective tend to leave the uninitiated reader confused as to who the subject really is. Whites rarely modify the terms men and women when they are referring to themselves, for they view themselves as the norm and the standard. For example, if one reflects on the linguistic habits of the media in America, in both television news and newspapers, whenever a reporter simply states that a man or woman committed a crime, they are usually speaking about a white man or woman even though they do not say "white man" or "white woman." These terms tend to be modified with adjectives when applied to other groups. When writing or reporting about black women or Asian women exclusively, the message explicitly states so. But the same practice does not hold true in designating white women—they simply indicate "woman."

I have no quarrel with white women controlling and dominating the feminist movement. After all, it is their movement. If you trace the history and origins of feminism, it is a social project that was nurtured into being by middle class white women. It, in essence, articulates their problems with their menfolk. However, white feminists have been castigated by black feminists for doing this. Sheila Radford-Hill, a black feminist, cogently delineates the essential nature of black feminist anger with white feminist theory. First, she observes that black feminists have been engaged in a protracted struggle to help white women transcend their racism. This protracted struggle by black feminists has created cognitive conflict for black feminists, and this has placed them in the awkward position of urging African women to join a movement that they have devoted a considerable amount of energy depicting as racist and non-welcoming. The balance of black feminist intellectual en-

83. Black feminist Deborah King enumerates a variety of ways in which black women intellectuals and activists have helped black people survive in America. King reports that, ". . . [Black women] founded schools, operated social welfare services, sustained churches, organized collective work groups and unions, and even established banks and commercial enterprises. That is we were the backbone of racial uplift and we also played critical roles in the struggle for racial justice." In other words, we, like black men, did whatever was necessary to ensure the survival of the race. See Deborah K. King, "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of A Black Feminist Ideology," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14, no.1 (Autumn 1988): 54.

ergy has concentrated on designing ways for white feminists to modify *their* movement to fit the needs of *African women.* Radford-Hill succinctly puts it like this: "Black women now realize that part of the problem within the movement has been our insistence that White women do for/with us what we must do/for with ourselves: namely frame our own social action around our own agenda for change. In the long run, it does little good to attack White women for their failure to organize on behalf of Black interests."[84]

Other scholars concur with Radford-Hill's analysis. For instance, Clenora Hudson-Weems argues that black feminists have insisted on adopting the terminology and theoretical framework of white feminism and tried unsuccessfully to force them to fit their circumstances rather than to create their own paradigm to speak to their cultural, political, and historical uniqueness.[85]

Womanism/Black Feminism— Derivatives of White Feminist Thought

> Language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantics and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all out of the dictionary that the speaker gets his words!) but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own.[86]

It is the fulfillment of this last objective, that is, the removal of the concept of feminism from the context of white feminism, which serves the intentions of white females, and the appropriation of the concept of feminism populated with African "intentions" that has proven illusive for black femi-

84. Sheila Radford-Hill, "Considering Feminism as a Model for Social Change," *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies,* ed. Teresa de Lauretis (Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1986), 162.

85. Clenora Hudson-Weems, *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves* (Troy, Michigan: Bedford Publishing, 1993), 36.

86. Michael Holquist, ed., *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bahkitn,*

nists. Womanism and black feminism, with a few minor differences, are theoretical derivatives of American feminism. There is very little real conceptual demarcation between black and white feminism relative to the core concepts and beliefs of feminism. The concepts come with the label, hence feminism can never serve African intentions. Judith Grant, white feminist, contends: "Ironically, feminists of color continue to use the core concepts that contributed to their exclusion from the early feminist movement. This is not surprising. For the language of the core concepts became the language of feminism so quickly, that to align with feminism meant to use the core concepts."[87]

Hypothetically speaking, if a group of people has a bottle of poison labeled "Poison" and another group of people comes along and merely changes the label to read "Candy," what have they done? They have not made any substantive changes to the content of the bottle, so although its label reads "Candy," it is still poison. If the group who changed the label, along with others they recruit, drink from the bottle, their belief that the substance of the bottle is safe because the label reads "Candy" will not change the outcome they will experience after ingesting poison. Similarly, the mere act of adding the adjectives *black, Afrocentric, Africana,* or *African* before the word *feminism* does not change the substance and essence of feminism nor divorce feminism from its a priori assumptions. The concept of *womanism* suffers the same analytical fate as the term *black feminism.* It is not theoretically independent and it shares in common many of the premises of feminism as well as its political vocabulary. The term womanism is only a label change, not a theoretical alternative to feminism. Alice Walker is credited with coining the term womanism. Walker aligns the term with feminism by positing that a womanist is "a Black feminist or feminist of color," proclaiming that "womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender."[88] Based upon her definition of the term, Alice Walker intended womanism to be a synonym for feminism. Some black women view womanism as a viable alternative for African women who have feminist sensibilities, but who do not want to be openly aligned with the white feminist movement. The term feminism and its relevance to African people still proves to be a very heatedly debated and polemical issue within the African community. Others have tried to expand beyond Walker's concept. bell hooks responds to the current trend of black women academics embracing the term womanism as follows: "I hear Black women academics laying claim to the term 'womanist' while rejecting 'feminist.' I do not think Alice Walker

trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 293–294.

87. Judith Grant, *Fundamental Feminism: Contesting the Core Concepts of Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 27.

88. Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers Gardens* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), xii.

intended this term to deflect from feminist commitment, yet this is often how it is evoked . . . . It is viewed as constituting something separate from a feminist politic shaped by white women."[89] Beyond the labels, womanism and black feminism are genetically connected to white feminist intellectual ideas. American feminism and its ideological derivatives, black feminism, womanism, and Afrocentric feminism, are built upon a foundation of ideas which distort more than they uncover vis-à-vis the cultural and political travail of the last five hundred years of African women and African people in America.

Therefore, the relevance of black feminist theory for African historiography is questionable at best. In the end, a black feminist framework offers very little, if any, explanatory or probative value for illuminating the experiences of African men and women. More specifically it does not facilitate our quest to preserve our ancestral wisdom or plot the course that reconnects us to our African moorings. Black feminism is but one of a myriad of competing perspectives within Western feminist philosophy. Yet despite seemly divergent feminism (black feminism, liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, radical feminism, postmodern feminism, etc.), there exists a fundamental feminism, that is, commonly held beliefs or core concepts fundamental to feminism shared by and bonding all of the different schools of feminism together.[90]

Black feminists have labeled feminist theory as racist because the structures of meaning and methods of inquiry are predicated on the priorities, agenda, and experiences of white women exclusively. White women, they argue, have had the predominate access and resources to publish, broadcast, and dominate feminist thought.[91] One of bell hooks's most celebrated books is entitled *Feminist Theory: From the Margins to the Center.* In it she discusses how to move black women to the center of the feminist movement. Clearly, black women have little power and influence within feminist discourse. The effort of black feminists to become centered in feminist theory can prove highly instructive in many ways. In some respects, this effort on a micro-level reflects some of the very same problems and issues that black people have faced on the macro-level as some of us have attempted

89. bell hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston: South End Press, 1989), 181–182.

90. Judith Grant, *Fundamental Feminism: Contesting the Core Concepts of Feminist Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 4-6. Grant, among other things, contemplates the relationship of feminist theory to and use of other Western theories (e.g., psychoanalytical, liberal, Marxist, postmodernist) to explain itself. One series of key questions she raises is: "what is this feminism which has been added to traditional western political thought to yield so many variations? What leads one to recognize liberal feminism as 'feminist' and not simply liberal?" In short, is there a fundamental feminism?" (p. 4).

91. Caraway, *Segregated Sisterhood*, 3.

to assimilate into American culture and politics. hooks laments over the subjugated position of the handful of black women who have attempted to become a solid and recognized part of feminism:

> No matter the number of books I write on feminist thinking, the lectures I give, wherein I share the reality that feminist politics is not a country occupied and owned by white women, that it is not a door marked "whites only" that women of color are seeking permission to enter, many White women see it as just that. They continue to regard me and other women of color as meaningful presences within the feminist movement only to the extent that we are willing to serve agendas they set.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> [S]o far, despite our continuing efforts to transform feminist thinking, we reside on the margins of the feminist movement . . . overall, within most feminist circles power continues to be distributed in ways that maintain and perpetuate existing racial hierarchies wherein White women always have greater status and power than Black women.[92]

This lamentation is from one of the preeminent, publicly visible, and prolific black feminist thinkers and writers who has devoted many years and several books in trying to expand feminism.

Conclusion

Why should African women recognize their interests qua women as separate from African men, particularly those with whom they have sexual, familial, and kinship connections? Is it plausible to assume that the political and cultural allegiance and the interests of white women under the banner of sisterhood and feminism could transcend their loyalty to the fruit of their wombs, that is, their sons, brothers, husbands and fathers under the banner of family ties? White women do not separate their gender from their race. They do not tend to place their gender above their racial identity. Neither did African women of the nineteenth century. African women had a conceptualization of African struggle that simultaneously sought the liberation of their incarcerated womanhood and the fettered manhood of African men from white racial domination. They fought to restore human dignity to the entire race. There was no question of prioritizing race issues over gender issues or vice versa because

92. hooks, "Feminism in Black and White," 268, 270.

they never delinked the two. Their words and deeds exemplify this fact. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper proudly announced, "I belong to this race and when it is down, I belong to a down race and when it is up I belong to a risen race."[93] She recognized, like many others, the mutuality of fate of African men and women. Likewise, Harper observed: "the condition of our race, the wants of our children and the welfare of our race demand the aid of every helping hand."[94]

By no means is Harper's viewpoint atypical. Anna Julia Cooper, a prominent African thinker of the nineteenth century and cohort of W.E.B. Du Bois and other African intellectuals, emphasized in her seminal text, *A Voice From The South,* the interdependent and interconnected destiny of African men and women. She asserted that the barometer of our well-being is not to be measured by any individual, but instead by focus on the condition of the whole. Cooper in her astute and concise prose wrote: "For woman's cause is man's cause: (we) rise or sink together, dwarfed or godlike, bond or free."[95]

In the final analysis, gender as it is deployed within feminist/womanist theory, or black feminist theory if a distinction can be made, does not offer a useful category for historical analysis. It fatally fails to address systematically the continuing and historical role and impact of the West on the collective African gender construction, that is, the gender construction of both black males and females. Most importantly, it still relies heavily upon the very core feminist conception that their literature seemingly debunks, namely, the concept that gender operates distinctly from race and that one can accordingly isolate this variable in order to create an academic discipline called African women's history as if it were independent and distinct from African history. The idea of gender as a separate category of historical analysis was born within a white feminist, gender-based paradigm. Western feminist assumptions offer a culturally abortive blueprint for the liberation of African historiography.

In closing, I hope that more is taken away from this essay than the idea that feminism is a "white thing." Indeed, it was a widely acknowledged fact before I even put pen to paper that middle class white women, initiators of the feminist idea, control and dominate the making of feminist theories. The true cautionary note of this analysis is embedded in calling attention to the subtle yet potent influence of the subversive nature of the feminist ideal. The feminist ideal has impacted the thinking of many of those who may have rejected the label feminist yet have accepted feminist vocabulary, definitions, descriptions, and categories in examining the inter-gender relations of African fe-

93. Gerda Lerner, *Black Women in White America: A Documentary History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 535–536.

94. Shirley Yee, *Black Women Abolitionists* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee, 1992), 60.

95. Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice From The South,* 61.

males and males. Many of us glibly repeat feminist generalizations when referring to African men. We use the vocabulary of feminism, which is populated with the intentions of white women and designed to work for them, to speak about ourselves, thereby taking feminist ideas out of context. Indeed, there are some African women and men who actually believe that we have a historical tradition of black male supremacy functioning similarly to the white male domination, albeit tempered by white racism. Feminism has been quite successful in seductively masking itself as a culturally neutral and innocuous pro-woman advocacy concept. It is crucial to recall Dr. Blyden's words quoted at the beginning of this essay. While feminism may be advantageous for European women and improve the condition of their lives in America, it could work ruin for us. The historical treatment of European women in the West, from ancient Greece to the present, does not mirror the African construction of gender and the treatment of African womanhood, from the time of Kemet (ancient Egypt) to the present.

A major task of our historiography is to remove the ruin and rubble left in the wake of enslavement, colonization, and the ongoing fall out of white supremacy in order to recoup and relearn our tradition. In this process we must discard those ideas that handicap, retard, or even ruin the regeneration of a culturally-grounded African historiography. The Black Feminist Revisionist Project which appropriates the intellectual tradition of African women under the banner of feminism should be rebuked and systematically challenged in view of the problematics of feminist assumptions for describing African reality. Present-day African-centered thinkers and historians are the temporary custodians of African culture and history bequeathed to this generation by our ancestors. We have a duty to protect this tradition in preparation for the next generation of custodians. Our continued silence in the face of this revisionist onslaught is a dereliction of our moral duty to engage in *Mdw Nfr,* Good Speech.[96]

96. Jacob H. Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr: Divine Speech: A Historiographical Reflection of African Deep Thought From the Time of The Pharaoh to the Present* (London: Karnak House, 1995), 45–46, 53–55.

Chapter 11

The African-Centered Philosophy of History: An Exploratory Essay on the Genealogy of Foundationalist Historical Thought and African Nationalist Identity Construction

By Greg E. Kimathi Carr

The Djehuty Project
African-Centered Think Tank and Research Institution 1996

This essay seeks to place before Pan-African nationalist researchers the challenge of fleshing out the intellectual and ideological genealogy upon which we have constituted our contemporary organizational struggle. Of particular interest are African nationalist historical thinkers and others who have contributed to what Dr. Jacob H. Carruthers, Jr. has described as *Foundationalist* ideology and research methodology. The term *Foundationalist* identifies those African thinkers and/or activists who have pursued the rescue and reconstruction of African history and culture premised upon a reclamation of classical Africa as an operational epistemological concept.[1] In other venues, these thinkers have been referred to, among other designations, as the "Nile Valley" school of "Afrocentrists."[2]

1. See pp. 65–66. See also Appendix 1, Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the African World History Project, Detroit, Michigan, February 10–11, 1996.

2. There is an increasingly urgent necessity in the nationalist movement to distinguish between the various ideological sites which are popularly grouped under the imprecise term *Afrocentric*. I have attempted to approach the conceptual distinctions within the intellectual constellation of Afrocentricity elsewhere, utilizing a modified variant of Dr. Winston Van Horne's "integrationist/separatist" paradigm. See Greg Kimathi Carr, "Temple, Afrocentricity and Knowledge: An African-Centered Perspective (A Critical Inquiry Into the Intellectual

In keeping with the preliminary nature of this volume, this essay is exploratory and suggestive. It is not comprehensive by any means and should be read as an attempt to contribute to the study of African-centered historiography. Its footnotes should be used by those readers unfamiliar with the broad range of literature that makes up the African-centered movement so that they might more easily take the initiative to read the literature before commenting on the nature or complexity of the movement.[3] As John Bracey has observed in a commentary on the paucity of students familiar with the literature of Black Studies, "people spin theories on very thin margins of knowledge."[4] The African-centered movement needs its young soldiers to be conversant in the work of their elders and ancestors, hence this attempt to provide a rudimentary road map to some of the literature. Those who would be future leaders of the African nation must heed the speech provided by our elders and ancestors: "Imitate your fathers and your ancestors. Their speeches endure in writings.

Genealogy of Afrocentricity and the Significance of the Afrocentric Idea to African Nationalist Institution Building)" (paper presented at the Seventh Annual Khepera Graduate Student Conference, Temple University, April 26, 1997). See also Winston Van Horne, "Integration or Separation: Beyond the Philosophical Wilderness Thereof," in *Race: Twentieth Century Dilemmas—Twenty-First Century Prognoses*, ed. Winston Van Horne (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin, 1989), 290–314.

There is for me a clear ideological distinction to be made between *African-centered* and *Afrocentric* knowledge production, stemming, inter alia, from the relationship of the latter concept to the epistemological premises of European knowledge production and the institutional constraints of Western academia that have served to infuse much of Afrocentric discourse with a liberal humanism akin to multiculturalism. This posture has served to instill a marginality and socialization to mediocrity in the work of many academic Afrocentrists, most of whom have a difficult or impossible time explaining what Afrocentricity is. This difficulty stems, I contend, from the hopeless self-referentiality of what has come to be known in some quarters as the discourse on *location* and *dislocation*. See Carr, "Temple, Afrocentricity and Knowledge," 1–2.

3. For more wide-ranging study guides and bibliographies, readers are directed to, inter alia, *ASCAC Study Guide (Building for Eternity), Book One* (Los Angeles: ASCAC Foundation, 1991) and Asa G. Hilliard III, *The Maroon Within Us: Selected Essays on African-American Community Socialization* (Baltimore, Md.: Black Classic Press, 1995), 219–233. In addition, Ernest Kaiser provides one of the most comprehensive single bibliographical essays on the subject. See Ernest Kaiser, "The History of Negro History," *Negro Digest* XVII, no. 4 (February 1986): 10–15, 64–80. Earlier bibliographic essays that provide excellent guides to sources of African historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are Helen Boardman, "The Rise of the Negro Historian," *Negro History Bulletin* 8, no. 7 (April, 1945): 148–154, 166; John Hope Franklin, "Pioneer Negro Historians," *Negro Digest* XV, no. 4 (February 1966): 4–9; and Carter G. Woodson, "Negro Historians of Our Times," *Negro History Bulletin* 8, no. 7 (April, 1945): 155–156, 158–159, 166.

4. Mary Crystal Cage, "Graduate Students Have an Unprecedented Range of Choices as Ph.D. Offerings in Black Studies Proliferate," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Nov. 1, 1996): A11.

Open and read them and copy the knowledge."[5] This essay is a small contribution to this effort.

The essay is divided into three sections. The first section addresses the creation and function of African identity in particular and human identity in general, culminating with the emergence of the Foundationalist philosophy of history as a growing factor in the narrative construction of Pan-African identity. The second section sketches the broad lineage of those Africans who have contributed to the shaping of Foundationalist methodology, using the year 1954 as a symbolic marker and a *bridge* from which the convergence of various transnational strands of Foundationalist intellectual work can be viewed. The final section of the paper revisits some of the constituitive elements of Foundationalist thought and methodology and offers closing commentary on the task of identity (re)construction before us.

Toward the Pursuit of African Identity

The Congolese, historical thinker Théophile Obenga has asked the question, "who are we?," a query formed at the collective level by the basic rejoinder "who am I?"[6] The question of *identity* lies at the heart of the African quest for global agency and liberation. Entangled in the conceptual fetters of Van Sertima's "500 year room" of European global aggression and the hierarchical matrix of *race* that it developed as both a manifestation and a justification of its cultural and social self, African people have too often sought the seemingly convenient nomenclatures of Western Modernity to give shape to global African identity.[7] The most obvious and widely used sign to indicate global

5. From the "Instructions for *Mry-K3-Re,*" translation taken from Jacob H. Carruthers, Jr., *Mdw Ntr, Divine Speech: A Historiographical Reflection of African Deep Thought From the Time of the Pharaohs to the Present* (London: Karnak House, 1995), 116. Cf. Maulana Karenga, Selections from *The Husia: Sacred Wisdom of Ancient Egypt* (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1984), 50.

6. See Dr. Obenga's essay in this volume; Obenga, "Cheikh Anta Diop aux U.S.A." in *Cheikh Anta Diop, Volney et le Sphinx* (Paris: Khepera/Présence Africaine, 1996), 329–350; and Obenga, *A Lost Tradition: African Philosophy in World History* (Philadelphia: The Source Editions, 1995), 84–85.

7. A broad discussion of the conceptual categories of *modernity, postmodernity* et al. extends beyond the scope of this exploratory essay. *Modernity* can be usefully referred to as a term used to describe the era and concept of (global) white supremacy. In the seventeenth century, European thinkers began what is referred to as "the scientific revolution" by looking to nature to provide classificatory categories to apprehend the meaning of existence. Writers such as Carl von Linné, Immanuel Kant, Francis Bacon, and Georges-Louis Leclerc sought to understand nature's system of classification and to employ a similar system to the human "family." The engagement with nature was undertaken with the express desire to exert more effective control over it, either directly (through the appropriation or control of natural forces for European human desires) or indirectly (through understanding the systematic functions of na-

African identity has been *blackness*, a category contrived—the perception of the cultural unity of Africans notwithstanding—by its artificially created, defined, and superiorized cognate, *whiteness*.[8]

As John Henrik Clarke has observed, however, "Black, or Blackness, tells you how you look without telling you who you are . . . ."[9] The challenge for African people remains that of knowing ourselves according to markers of identity that are at once informed by and transcendent of our most recent experience with Europeans, the *Maafa*.[10] In pursuit of that challenge, the conundrum plaguing those devoted to this task has been the attempt to move

ture to better manipulate this knowledge vis-à-vis less preoccupied non-European human beings). Simultaneously, Europeans encountered new goods, new technologies, and systems of transportation and communication and fused this knowledge with their new epistemological categories to create a global system of labor exploitation and cultural blight known in some circles as "the World System." (The term *Modernity* is usually distinguished from the concept of *Modernism* by European-influenced thinkers. The latter term is used to refer to a movement in nineteenth and twentieth century Western humanities "which criticizes objective and unified notions of truth and reality in favor of an increased concern with subjectivity, experience and multiple perspectives.") See, inter alia, Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997), 1–9; Peter Amato, "African Philosophy and Modernity," in *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997), 71–99; Joyce Appleby et al., eds., *Knowledge and Postmodernism in Historical Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 2–3, 558; Immanuel Wallerstein, *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth Century Paradigms* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1995), 265–272; and Valentin Y. Mudimbe, ed., *Open the Social Sciences: Report of the Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1966), 1–32.

8. Marimba Ani has given African people a major tool with which to dissect the oppositional logic of *white* (European) ontology in her pathbreaking work *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1994). Peter Rigby, a European anthropologist, recognizes similar hierarchical limitations in the European world view and expresses what might usefully be called an *internal critique* of his relatives in a particularly insightful volume published posthumously entitled *African Images: Racism and the End of Anthropology* (Washington, D.C.: Berg Press, 1996).

9. Dr. Clarke's well-known and oft-repeated maxim is discussed by him in the context of the sociology of African nationalist intellectual production in John Henrik Clarke, "Africana Studies: A Decade of Change, Challenge and Conflict," in *The Next Decade: Theoretical and Research Issues in Africana Studies*, ed. James E. Turner (Ithaca, N.Y.: Africana Studies and Research Center, 1984), 31–45. Still, Foundationalist thought must meet the feeble contention that "Blackness" is only a "social construct" which gives the only *valid* contours to any notion of global African identity. See, inter alia, Leonard Harris, "The Horror of Tradition or How to Burn Babylon and Build Benin While Reading 'A Preface to a Twenty-Volume Suicide Note,'" *The Philosophical Forum*, XXIV, nos. 1–3 (Fall–Spring, 1992–93): 94–118. This becomes necessary only because it has captured the imagination of so many African people in the wake of the continuing efforts of white elites and their disciples to explore African identity. See Greg Kimathi Carr, "Race, Sex and Philosophy: The Scramble for 'Africa,'" (paper presented at ASCAC 10th Annual Kemetic Studies Conference, Los Angeles, California, March 16, 1994).

10. Kiswahili for "disaster." See D. V. Perrott, *Teach Yourself Swahili Dictionary*, s.v. "maafa." This term has been used and popularized largely through the efforts of Ma-

beyond a binary epistemology informed by European categories of race to recover a preexisting and still functioning African identity.[11] This process of the liberation of African deep thought has been identified and explored by Carruthers as "the often implicit purpose of the tradition of the Champions of African Thought,"[12] a trans-temporal and trans-spatial[13] contingent of African researchers and commentators on the nature, sources, and function of African identity.

In their determination to uncover the sources and meaning of African identity, the Champions of African Thought, whose genealogy informs the methods and objectives of The Association for the Study of Classical African

rimba Ani. The notion of an African *holocaust* gives way to the notion of Maafa, which affords a larger conceptual frame in which to view the processes of human aggression visited by Europeans upon African people globally over the past half millennium.

11. The nature of this preexisting African identity construct has been commented upon for a generation in African-centered texts. It is more commonly referred to as the "deep structure" of African culture. See, inter alia, Kobi Kambon, *The African Personality in America: An African-Centered Framework* (Tallahassee, Fla.: Nubian Nations Publishers, 1992); Wade W. Nobles, "African Philosophy: Foundations for Black Psychology," in *Black Psychology,* ed. Reginald L. Jones (Berkeley, Calif.: Cobb & Henry, 1991), 47–63; and Daudi Ajani ya Azibo, "Articulating the Distinction Between Black Studies and the Study of Blacks: The Fundamental Role of Culture and the African-Centered Worldview," in *The Afrocentric Scholar* 1, no. 1 (May, 1992): 64–97.

12. Jacob Carruthers has framed the discursive space in which this essay operates in his rigorous and introspective *Mdw Ntr, Divine Speech.* Carruthers's body of work, including the essay in this volume, places him squarely in the apprenticed tradition of Walker, Delany, Blyden, Houston, Diop, James, Clarke et al., with the generational advantage of a full understanding of the aggregate tradition of the relationship of nationalist political exigencies to the pursuit and production of knowledge.

13. In the African world view, time and space assume contextual importance relative to the relationship of the living, the ancestors, the yet unborn, and the Creator (See Dorothy Pennington, "Time in African Culture," in *African Culture: The Rhythms of Unity,* ed. Molefi and Kariamu Welsh-Asante (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1985), 123–139; also Joseph Adjaye, ed., *Time in the Black Experience* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994), 1–16. As such, time is essentially social and intemporal and concepts of *mythical* and *historical* time can be (and often are) co-equal. See Boubou Hama and J. I. Ki-Zerbo, "The Place of History in African Society," in *UNESCO,* ed. Ki-Zerbo, 65–76. Cedric Robinson reveals the contemporary implications of the African concept of time by noting the difference between ordering events, personalities, and theories in chronological sequence and giving them order or arranging events by significances, meanings, and relations. He argues that "the construction of periods of time is only a sort of catchment for events." See Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: Zed Press, 1983), 253. [See Robinson's operationalization of this concept of historical time in his history of African political insurgency entitled *Black Movements in America* (New York: Routledge Press, 1997)].

Averting the frequent criticism of African nationalist deep thought as imbalanced with respect to issues of spirituality, it is clear that a "sacred chronology" of African time/space appears to the African historical thinker who places the rhythms of African intellectual, cultural, and social resistance to white supremacist overtures in the serviceable chronological framework of the past century.

Civilizations (ASCAC), provided two indispensable contributions to contemporary African-centered historical thought. The first was the factual information that they retrieved, often from secondary sources but also from direct research experiences in primary venues.[14] Second, and increasingly more important in the contemporary era, they provided methodological examples for (re)constructing African identity, demonstrated by their sophisticated understanding of the nexus of identity, ideology, politics, and spirituality as they interrelate to inform knowledge and meaning production. This research approach, fully interpenetrated with a spiritual zeal that at once obviates and replaces what has come to be known as religion in the West, is squarely in the tradition of African spirituality in which the pursuit of excellence is coequal to the attainment of spiritual clarity.[15] It also reflects the fact that, by seeking a historical consciousness which is grounded in the *long view* of African history, African-centered historical thinkers have been able to maintain the responsibilities of the historical thinker in African society.

Excellence is defined in African spiritual traditions as much by respect for and understanding of tradition as anything else. In the Kemetic (Ancient Egyptian) tradition, elder scribes such as Ptahhotep sought to instruct studied apprentices in the "speech of those [speakers] who heard,"[16] the mastery of which would allow the next generation to assume the position of the

14. The nineteenth century saw African historical thinkers utilize training they had received in other fields in the service of researching African history. Martin Delany's *Origin of Races* benefited from his training in medicine. George Washington Williams, trained as a lawyer, exhibited a thorough approach to available documents in his books. Advanced ministerial education, including training in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. can be found in the exegesis of biblical passages describing Africa and African people by writers such as James T. Holly, Edward W. Blyden and W. S. Scarborough, inter alios. Examples of primary research undertaken by later Foundationalists include Chancellor Williams's *The Destruction of Black Civilization* and *The Rebirth of African Civilization,* the applied and theoretical scientific work of Diop, the translation work of Diop and Obenga, and, in a more populist vein, the extensive study-tour programs developed over the past generation by ben-Jochannan, Anthony Browder, Asa Hilliard III, Manu Ampim, Anderson Thompson, Leonard Jeffries, Jacob Carruthers, Charles Finch III, Wade Nobles, Patricia Newton, Marimba Ani, Ashra Kwesi, and a host of others. Additionally, the Kemetic Institute is formulating plans to lead an archaeological expedition to the Nile Valley before the close of the millennium.

15. Daudi Azibo equates excellence with the attainment of the deep structure of African cultural aspiration to holistic human beingness-in-the-world in his pathbreaking article cited supra. Azibo's article is also among the first to attempt the construction of a summary genealogy of the African-centered intellectual movement, made necessary in part by the appearance of the historically inaccurate and otherwise overly-broad assertions of select schools of Afrocentric scholarship.

16. For translation and commentary on Ptahhotep and the function of speech and education vis-à-vis identity construction, see Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr,* 115–131. Also refer to Mario Beatty, "*Wp Maat r Isft* (Separating Truth From Falsehood)," (paper presented at ASCAC Fourteenth Annual Kemetic Studies Conference, Tuskegee, Alabama, March 14, 1997).

repository of national identity. In this fashion, the people of Kemet provided the blueprint for African "social history," nowhere more succinctly demonstrated than in the "Royal List" of the Hall of Ancestors in the temple of Seti I in Abydos—indeed a statement of national identity.[17]

Among the Bambara of Senegal, those who keep the traditions, the "social historians" of the people, are known as *doma* or *soma*, "those who know."[18] According to Amadou Hampâté Bâ, they are responsible for the sum total of knowledge necessary for living as well as the narrative of what has gone before. As such, they "have a scrupulous regard for truth" and are not allowed to exaggerate or in any way distort the understanding of reality as they have received it.

In wedding the implications of Bâ's observations of West African knowledge (re)production to Nile Valley systems, Carruthers notes that there are several classes of oralists in African societies. Among them in the Bambara system are the *dielis* (literally "blood"), a class commonly referred to as *griots* in Western-influenced discourses on Africa. These historians are employed by various members of society to entertain, mediate, or compose historical narratives upon demand by their employer. They have no special obligation to historical accuracy; rather, their responsibility is to fulfill the needs of those who have contracted their services.

There is, however, a sub-category of *dielis* for whom the veracity of the accounts they (re)construct is a sacred obligation. According to Bâ, this group, the *dieli-faama* (or royal blood), "stimulate[s] and bolster[s] the courage of people at difficult times by invoking the qualities of their ancestors and, in the past, they had no hesitation in dying in battle alongside their masters."[19]

It requires no leap of imagination to acknowledge that the Maafa saw the transportation and essentialization of the traditions of African historical thought and identity construction from Africa to western Atlantic sites via the discursive and geographical construct that Paul Gilroy has referred to as "the

17. For a brief discussion of the Pharaonic *lists* and their relevance to Kemetic chronology, see Peter A. Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaohs: The Reign-by-Reign Record of the Rulers and Dynasties of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 10–12. Of particular interest to the Kemetic notion of "social history" is the fact that in the Abydos list the names of those "per-uahs" (pharaohs, or "great houses") who were not considered representative of the nation were omitted, leading the researcher to consider the methodology of historiography in classical Africa. For a discussion of the Abydos King List in light of the Kemetic view of the past, see Barry J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 20–27.

18. See Amadou Hampâté Bâ, "The Living Tradition," in *UNESCO General History of Africa,* vol. I *Methodology and African Prehistory*, ed. J. Ki-Zerbo, (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1981), 166–203. See also the abridged version of this volume, 62–72.

19. Bâ, *UNESCO General History of Africa* (abridged edition), 69.

Black Atlantic."[20] It is the way that African people coped with this shift in the existential moment and its implications for the construction of historical narratives of African identity that frame the people and texts recognized in this essay.

It is my hope that, in considering the nature and function of identity, particularly as it relates to African people at the end of the (Western) twenty-first century, African-centered historical thinkers will follow the lead of ASCAC and renew the commitment to ideological clarity and spiritual authenticity as evidenced in the methods of inquiry, truth seeking, and truth-telling represented by Ptahhotep, the *Doma*, and the *Dieli-faama,* thereby avoiding the alluring glitter of dieli historiography, the more egregious manifestations of which might fit into the category of *Sambo historiography* as conceptualized by Anderson Thompson, evidenced in many Eurocentric, multicultural, and Afrocentric sites of identity construction.[21]

Before considering the genealogy of African-centered historical thought, a summary word on the process of identity construction is warranted. The construction of human identity is achieved through the function of memory, the primary capacity which separates human beings from the rest of living creatures by fueling the capacity of reason, an ability to comprehend and infer more commonly categorized as *intelligence.*

The faculties of memory and reason afford humans the ability to apprehend time and space, thereby placing themselves as sentient creatures with identities, purposes, and independent decision making capacities in a *present* juxtaposed between a *past* and a *future. Without the uniquely human ability to apprehend time and space and the corollary ability to construct a narrative of the past and project that narrative into the future, human identity as we know it would not exist.*

20. The acknowledgment of the preservation of African cultural structures for identity construction has been discussed largely in terms of folklore and spiritual traditions. See Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) and Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and The Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 3–97. This preservation, however, saw African people institutionalize examples of resistance to white supremacy vis-à-vis the often fictive historical narratives. See John W. Roberts, *From Trickster to Badman: The Black Folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989). On the transportation and transformation of African cultural sensibilities generally, see Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992, passim; Jon Michael Spencer, *The Rhythm of Black Folk: Race, Religion, and Pan-Africanism* (Trenton, N.J.: African World Press, 1995).

21. For a discussion of Sambo historiography, see Thompson, this volume; also Jacob H. Carruthers, Jr., *African or American: A Question of Intellectual Allegiance* (Chicago: Kemetic Institute, 1994), 42–48.

The ways in which humans apprehend and order time and space—and their particular definitions of *memory* and *reason* as well—reflect their particular experiences and the cultures that they have developed to make sense of those experiences in a systematic, structured, and institutional fashion. Still, there are commonalities in the materials and methods that humans use to know and use to make sense of time and space that form the basic building blocks of human identity.

Humans construct and institutionalize identity through identifying and ordering traces of activity—human and nonhuman—that have been made through time. The identity markers that give rise to the material and spiritual complex known as culture (e.g. languages, dress, customs and rituals, and historical narratives) are generated from aggregates of ordered traces. Two of the more consistent fields of aggregated traces are bloodline kinship and regular or periodical biological and/or natural phenomenological occurrences.

From cultural constructs, the product of ordered traces of human experience, come the collective senses of identity from which individuals draw their sense of identity. The answer to Obenga's preliminary query, "who are we?" and its corollary, "who am I?," is an interrelationship, as is evident in the Zulu observation *umuntu ngumuntu ngubantu,* "a person is a person because there are people." Among the more familiar configurations of collective identity are ethnic groups, clans, nations, polities, and more recently *races.*

Key to the extension of group identity is the transmission of that group's collective understanding of human existence to future generations. This intergenerational transmission of information and understanding (wisdom) represented in African culture by traditions such as the scribe, *doma* or *dieli-faama* relies upon carefully considered, constructed, and institutionalized narratives of the past to provide a blueprint for both contemporary activity and behavior and future group and individual responsibilities and activities.

This use of history as narrative must be distinguished from the concept of *history as event.* Identity is ensconced in the former because, as Michael Stanford writes, ". . . we have no direct knowledge of the past; all that we claim to know is indirect knowledge. This means that we have to derive our beliefs from what we can *directly* know in the present—i.e. from what we call evidence."[22]

The ways in which we interact with the world on a daily basis, however, are given meaning in the context of the institutions that have developed under the collective weight of all previous human activity, or history as event. It is the impact of the collected events of the past—such as the Maafa, for ex-

22. Michael Stanford, *A Companion to the Study of History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Press, 1994), 3.

ample—that shapes the contours of how African people construct narratives of identity. Looking at the construction of historical narratives in the context of the social forces that produced them is the process of historicization.[23]

What happens when memory is interrupted, more correctly, radically intersected by an alien experience, or uprooted from its familiar existential context and repositioned in a hostile and potentially fatal environment? The Foundationalist construction of African and global historical narratives has been historicized by the Maafa. Paget Henry contends that African people adapted their world view to fit the challenges posed by the burdens of this experience. He argues that the immediate and ongoing challenge of resisting the annihilation of African existence shaped African attitudes in a way that introduced two, theretofore unexisting, challenges to non-being: the possibility of damnation represented by the Christian tradition; and the negation of cultural, spiritual, and possibly physical existence represented by *race*.[24]

The appearance of these heretofore unfamiliar discursive spaces shifted the ways in which African historical thinkers constructed narratives of identity. It also shifted the tools that they employed to practice their craft. The ideologies, social agendas, and deep thought methods of ordering historical narratives can be usefully referred to as the African *"philosophy"*[25] *of history.* The "body of techniques, theories and principles of historical research and presentation" that were used to transmit these narratives can be thought of as African historiography (literally, the *science* of writing what is known by inquiry,[26] though the definition of *writing* must be reconsidered to incorporate non-script ways of transmitting memory).

We return, therefore, to our original inquiry: how have those Africans who would have been a scribe, *doma*, or *dieli-faama* in pre-Maafan society at-

23. Paul Hamilton, *Historicism* (New York: Routledge Press, 1996), 2.

24. See Paget Henry, "African and Afro-Caribbean Existential Philosophies," in *Existence in Black: An Anthology of Black Existential Philosophy,* ed. Lewis R. Gordon (New York: Routledge, 1997), 13–36.

25. Foundationalist thinkers have moved steadily from the use of the concept *philosophy* (literally, a "lover of wisdom"), largely because it has come to embody the *fundamental alienation* and detached discourse on "abstract truth" that emanates from Europe, beginning with the Greeks. See Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr,* 7–14; 89–105. While Obenga has demonstrated the strong "competitive plausibility" that the word *philosophy* itself has Kemetic origins (partially in the concept of *sb3,* or "teachings" or "the method of instructing," from the Kemetic "Pyramid Texts"), the corruption of Kemetic deep thought by its truncated interpretation through the refracted lens of the Greek cultural template resulted in the emergence of something markedly different than the deep thought tradition of Africa. See Théophile Obenga, *Ancient Egypt and Black Africa: A Student's Handbook for the study of Ancient Egypt in Philosophy, Linguistics and Gender Relations* (London: Karnak House, 1992), 49–67.

26. *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language,* Unabridged, 2d Edition, s.v. "historiography."

tempted to achieve their rank and perform their duty of transmitting the sacred knowledge and duties to subsequent generations? Under what circumstances did this tradition lead to the appearance of a small cadre of thinkers associated with African-centered historical thought over the past two generations? What was the historical context that precipitated their rise, and who were the key figures that cleared the discursive space in which the intellectual work, undertaken by a growing phalanx of Pan-African, nationalist historians, is now taking place?

A Working Genealogy of Foundationalist Historical Thought: A View From the Bridge

In his seminal text *The Destruction of Black Civilization,* the Foundationalist thinker Chancellor Williams constructed the metaphor of the *bridge* to describe the vantage point occupied by contemporary African historical thinkers from which they have an obligation to comment on the trajectories of the African past and the African future.[27] From the vantage point of the bridge, broad patterns of historical interpretation can be identified as emanating from African historical thinkers in the Maafa.

The cycles and patterns that describe the narratives of African historical experience constitute philosophies of history. These cycles and patterns, the building blocks of what Cheikh Anta Diop has identified as "historical continuity," one of the constituitive elements of cultural identity along with psychological and linguistic factors, are constructed under the burden of history as event. For some African historians, this has meant a myopic view of African history as the journey "from slavery to freedom."[28] For others, including Foundationalists, it has meant a narrative drawing on the *long view* of African and world history, resulting in what is increasingly coming to be known as the African-centered philosophy of history.

27. Chancellor Williams, *The Destruction of Black Civilization: Great Issues of a Race From 4500 B.C. to 2000 A.D.* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1987), 292–294.

28. Though he does give some slight attention to the African past, elder African historian John Hope Franklin has nevertheless provided nationalist ideology with an appropriate metaphor for integrationist historiography with the much-maligned title of his history of "African-Americans," originally published in 1947 and now in its seventh edition. Franklin rejects any Foundationalist philosophy of history in the preface to the first edition, stating that ". . . only so much of African history was considered here as evolved in the area from which the vast majority of American Negroes came, and as much more as helped to shape Afro-American institutions in the Old World and the New." Nile Valley cultures are mentioned only twice (once to say that "The Egyptians enslaved whatever people they captured"), and the "more extreme" Afrocentrists (undoubtedly the Foundationalists are placed among this group) are attacked. John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African-Americans* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), xxxi, 11, 27, 552.

When did the Foundationalist philosophy of history begin to crystallize into an operational concept that could guide future research methods and narrative construction in a systematic fashion? Two distinct but conceptually interrelated strains of intellectual work in the field of the African philosophy of history converged symbolically in 1954, the year that marks the appearance of a triumvirate of historical works from African authors representing three distinct but interrelated historical/cultural contexts. These texts provide the bridge from which the work that came both before and after can be assessed.

Nineteen fifty-four saw the publication of the Senegalese born and French-trained Cheikh Anta Diop's *Black Nations and Culture,* the Ghanaian born and Scottish- and English-trained John Coleman deGraft-Johnson's *African Glory,* and the South American born and United States-trained George Granville Monah James's *Stolen Legacy.*[29] Diop's text provided the methodological and ideological road map for much of the work that has come after it; James's and deGraft-Johnson's texts lend conceptual support to Diop's research and concurred in his assessment of the unity of African history and its importance for contemporary African identity and the African future. These works, written independent of each other, represent the symbolic convergence of ideological and philosophical directions.

In the wake of these works, a cross-fertilization of ideas on the African philosophy of history began to take place which has gained ground steadily since their appearance. From the bridge, however, it is equally possible to gain some sense of the events, personalities, and ideas generated in the *modern* African world *prior* to 1954 to set the context in which a proper understanding of the African-centered genealogy can be achieved.

For most continental Africans self-conscious of Africa and, more accurately perhaps, Africans in the Diaspora, the continent and concept of Africa exists as a symbol, that is, it exists as a metaphor for hope, despair, and/or expectations that transcends the immediate moment to evoke a complex emotional universe of socially-constructed memories.[30] Since the advent of the

29. The symbolic significance of 1954 to African-centered intellectual history was brought to light almost simultaneously by two current African thinkers who directly represent two of the three traditions present in the 1954 triumvirate. The United States-born intellectual Carruthers discusses the symbolic significance of 1954 elsewhere in this text. Carruthers, a junior protégé of John Henrik Clarke, is joined in his assessment of the historical importance of 1954 to the African philosophy of history by Théophile Obenga, the Congolese philosopher, Egyptologist, linguist, historian, and protégé of Cheikh Anta Diop.

30. The "invention" of "Africa" reflects the constantly changing perspective of whatever social group is involved on what its relationship is to Africa and African people. While the reasons for this constant shift are still very much open to debate [see, inter alia, Ndaywel É. Nziem, "African Historians and Africanist Historians," in *African Historiographies: What History for Which Africa?*, ed. Bogumil Jewsiewicki and David Newbury (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986), 20–27 for a discussion of the debate between materialist and idealist con-

Maafa, the ambiguity of African identity, produced by the externally-imposed, omnipresent concept of blackness,[31] has been the unrequested, but nonetheless inescapable context in which African people have attempted to survive our half millennium encounter with *Western* absurdity.

Accordingly, the challenge thrust before African people in the wake of a continuing conflict with Europe and things European has been the construction of a global African identity that current memory does not recall having existed—or having had to exist—prior to being called forth in this moment of necessity. This Pan-African identity seeks to occupy what is at once a new and old conceptual space, given that, prior to the unilateral declaration of war on African people, no self-conscious global sense of African identity existed, even if a global consistency of African thought and behavior did.[32]

structions of social formation], the *nature* of the shift is not: human beings seek an ordered system by which they can apprehend reality (called *epistemology* in the West, V. Y. Mudimbe's rough equivalent of *gnosis* notwithstanding) and at the center of the system exists human identity (individual and collective). If an "Africa" has indeed been invented, it has been invented in a fashion similar in intent to the invention of all human cultures. See Valentin Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1988), passim; 187–203 in which Mudimbe discusses Cheikh Anta Diop's notion of truth and its relationship to African history.

31. Research on African people has been carried out according to what can generally be referred to as Hegelian philosophy. Since African people—and all non-Europeans, for that matter—are people on the margins of European concepts of global history, marginal disciplines have been created to study them.

For example, anthropology deals with the study of humanity. When applied culturally, anthropology deals with the study of marginal human cultures, those cultures not European. The discipline of Anthropology was developed by whites (chiefly continental Europeans) who went to Africa and Asia to record the lifestyles of so-called *savages*. These studies were conducted, not to understand non-Europeans as much as to demonstrate their varying levels of subhuman practices and standards (art, literature, religion, kinship and marriage, sexuality, etc.). The practice of ethnography developed as a kind of domestic anthropology, wherein non-European cultures (or even those European cultures that fell beneath the intra-European standards of normalcy) were studied for their *deviance* from the accepted cultural norm.

The greater tragedy in this situation is the internalization of Hegelian standards of historiography and knowledge by people of African descent. Many African scholars subscribe unknowingly to Hegel's philosophy of history by arguing that the study of African culture and people should focus only on those aforementioned *exotica* instead of on the real issues of historical continuity and consciousness. Many *black* scholars believe, for example, that there is a *black* philosophy (called ethnophilosophy) or a *black* psychology which is based on confining the African mind to the standards set for it from Europe. There can be no true exploration of African history while using standards set for African people by others with a clearly opposing cultural agenda.

32. There are, of course, issues of chronology that extend beyond the scope of this particular project which, when engaged, may reveal that a global African identity may have existed in an era prior to the ones about which we may currently speak with relative authority. See, inter alios, Drusilla Dunjee Houston, *The Wonderful Ethiopians of the Ancient Kushite Empire, Book One* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1985), Godfrey Higgins, *Anacalypsis, an*

The current necessity for the development of a self-conscious global African identity is a prerequisite for the continued physical existence of African people on this planet. It adds a circumstance under which prior attempts at African identity construction have not had to labor: the circumstance of the overtly political nature of identity construction in the contemporary context.[33] Hayden White has remarked elsewhere on the often hidden philosophical assumptions which lie back of historical narratives and historiographical approaches.[34] Groups of African historians and philosophers of history have taken the position that the political nature of the construction of African identity must be acknowledged and some consensus of its role decided upon in order to properly identify the ideology, philosophy, and political allegiance of those who have engaged or who profess to engage in the specific area of historical research and writing.[35]

Nineteen fifty-four marks a singularly significant year in the convergence of historical thinkers of African descent for whom the pursuit of a higher method of historical reconstruction in the service of African intellectual, cultural, and political liberation was and still is a primary concern. For over two

Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis; on an Inquiry into the Origin of Languages, Nations and Religions (Brooklyn, N.Y.: A&B Publishers, 1994). On the issue of chronology, see Charles Finch [e.g. *Echoes of the Old Darkland: Themes From the African Eden* (Decatur, Ga.: Khenti, Inc., 1991), 115–128 and *The Star of Deep Beginnings* (forthcoming)] and Vulindlela Wobogo [essay in this volume, p.73 and *The Prehistoric Origin of White Racism* (unpublished manuscript), 85–86].

33. All history (as can be argued is the case with all knowledge) is in some sense political. However, as can be apprehended in the context of African systems of inter-group activity restriction (enslavement), the *assimilation* of a captured person into the lineage and tradition of their captor(s), usually in circumstances involving prisoners of war, was not a loss of heritage and/or tradition that was necessarily frowned upon as culturally decimating. See, inter alia, Suzanne Meir, and Igor Kopytoff, *Slavery in Africa* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991) and Gustavus Vassa, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (London: 1794).

34. Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 126–127.

35. The political nature of Maafa-era African identity construction implicates the analysis of every area of African activity. Clearly, ideological positions have undergirded the identity politics of all Africans recognized as *politically active* during the post sixteenth century era, from African liberation struggles (e.g. the use of identity by Boukman in Haiti, Yaa Asaňtewaa in Ashantiland, and Martin Delany's "Blaucus" in *Blake*) to global networks of African unity (e.g. the Pan-African Congresses, the African global stance on the Partition of Africa, the Italio-Ethiopian War, and Apartheid). See, inter alia, Jacob H. Carruthers, *The Irritated Genie* (Chicago: Kemetic Institute, 1989); Joseph Harris, *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1982); Sylvia Jacobs, *The African Nexus: Black American Perspectives on the European Partitioning of Africa, 1880–1920* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981); and Bernard Magubane, *The Ties that Bind: African-American Consciousness of Africa* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1989).

generations prior to 1954, African historical thinkers who had engaged Western institutional and intellectual traditions produced a steady stream of historical writing of uneven quality from the four primary sites of African population distribution: Africa; Central and South America and the West Indies; North America; and Europe.

The United States was the site of most of this intellectual production, though non-U.S. based figures such as Haiti's P. V. Vastey (*An Essay on the Causes of the Revolution and Civil Wars of Hayti,* 1823) and Africa's Africannus Beale Horton, George Nicol, James Holy Johnson, and later John Mensah Sarbah and J. E. Casely Hayford certainly occupied important roles. This was so probably because Africa had not been thoroughly invaded by Europe and its institutions, including educational institutions, prior to the twentieth century. The rise of continental African thinkers who engaged and often triumphed over European intellectual aggression seems to fall in direct proportion to their access to European institutions.[36]

One of the hallmark characteristics of this writing was the concern given to the spiritual, cultural, social, and political uplift of the African. The nineteenth century witnessed the appearance of texts such as Hosea Easton's *A Treatise on the Intellectual Character, and Civil and Political Condition of the Colored People of the United States* (1837) and J. W. C. Pennington's *A Text Book of the Origin and History of the Colored People* (1841), two of the earliest attempts in the United States by Africans to construct a philosophy of the African place in world history in texts devoted singularly to the topic.[37] Easton's text is particularly interesting. In it, he makes an early statement on the nature of African and European cultures, contending that African societies were disrupted because they were too peaceful and that the continually warring Europeans had very likely still not achieved the level of ancient African civilizations.[38] This early fitting of the narrative of African historical experi-

36. See Robert L. July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought: Its Development in West Africa During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Praeger, 1967).

37. For a summary of some of the more prominent books and pamphlets of the nineteenth century, see Kaiser, cited infra, and an early article by August Meier entitled "The Emergence of Negro Nationalism (A Study in Ideologies), Part II," *The Midwest Journal* IV, no. 2 (Summer 1952): 95–110. Meir notes that the arguments used by these writers "were almost entirely scriptural and historical" and many of them included notions that Africans, as descendants of Ham, were responsible for the first great civilizations on the earth (Egypt, Ethiopia, Assyria, Phoenicia, Babylonia, etc.) as well as the lineage that produced Jesus (Meier, 96).

38. See Hosea Easton, "A Treatise on the Intellectual Character, and Civil and Political Condition of the Colored People of the United States; and the Prejudice Exercised Towards Them: With a Sermon on the Duty of the Church to Them," in *Negro Protest Pamphlets,* ed. Dorothy Porter (1837; reprint of facsimile, New York: Arno Press, 1969), 12. Also, Meier, "The Emergence of Negro Nationalism," 97 and Jacob H. Carruthers, "Reflections on the History of the Afrocentric Worldview," *Black Books Bulletin* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 5.

ence with Europe into cycles of aggression and accommodation resonates in contemporary Foundationalist work, finding conceptual common ground in the "two cradle" theory of Diop, expounded upon by Wobogo, Clarke, Jeffries, Carruthers, Ani, Nobles, Kambon, and others.[39]

Earlier uses of African history to undergird a philosophy of historical progress, couched in sentiments of what has come to be known as "Ethiopianism," stressed that African people had presided over highly advanced classical societies, only to fall to degradation, ready to assume an ascendant role once more. Among the texts which employed this type of historical logic were, of course, David Walker's famous *Appeal in Four Parts* and the speeches of Maria Stewart.[40]

Authors such as Robert Benjamin Lewis (*Light and Truth,* 1844); James Theodore Holly (*A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race for Self-Government,* 1857); William Wells Brown (*The Rising Son,* 1874 and *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements,* 1865); Martin R. Delany (*Principia of Ethnology: The Origin of Races and Color,* 1879); Edward Wilmot Blyden (*The Negro In Ancient History,* 1859 and *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race,* 1887); and Rufus L. Perry (*The Cushite, or the Descendants of Ham,* 1893) evidence the same Ethiopianist sentiment in the pursuit of a contemporary identity construct and sense of historicity for African people. Delany even devotes chapters ten and eleven of *The Origins of Races* to a discussion of *Mdw Nṯr* (Ancient Egyptian language) and the Ethiopian language system.[41]

It cannot be overlooked that many of these authors were Christian ministers and/or deeply engaged in interrogating and adapting preexisting spiritual systems to contemporary African exigencies. While many of them would reject the outward manifestation of *traditional* African spiritual systems, it is clear from their writings that they apprehended a spiritual mission for people of African descent, a "vindication of the race" that was only strengthened by a close reading (exegesis) of the Bible that had been given them for the purpose

39. For one of (if not the) earliest definition of Diop as "two cradle theory," see Vulindlela I. Wobogo, "Diop's Two Cradle Theory and the Origin of White Racism," *Black Books Bulletin* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1976): 20–29.

40. On Ethiopianism, see Wilson Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism,* 23–24, 156–57, 160; also see Moses, ed., *Classical Black Nationalism,* 68–89, 90–98 and Gerda Lerner, *Black Women in America: A Documentary History* (New York: Random House, 1972). For a broad survey of the vindicationist school of African historiography, see Drake, *Black Folk Here and There,* vol. I., 309–332.

41. Martin R. Delany, *Principia of Ethnology: The Origin of Races and Color, with an Archeological Compendium of Ethiopian and Egyptian Civilization, from Years of Careful Examination and Enquiry* (Philadelphia: Harper & Bros., 1879), 46–56.

of engendering docility under servitude.[42] The pages of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Review* are full of works that (re)construct narratives of African history in the Foundationalist tradition. Among the more frequent authors were Perry, Theophilus B. Steward, Holly, George Peabody, J. Augustus Cole, and Orishatukeh Faduma.

Some of the more provocative historical pieces in the *Review* include George Wilson Brent's "Origin of the White Race," in which he delves into the myth of the "curse of Ham" and places the onus of racial aggression squarely on the shoulders of Europeans;[43] J. A. M. Johns's "The Proverbial Philosophy of the Colored Race," which seeks to show some of the pre-Maafa origins of African deep thought;[44] and J. C. Embry's "Barbarism in Our Civilization," in which he asserts that "Egypt produced a governmental and social system—a civilization that was African," and goes on to deride contemporary *civilization* for "the barbarous practices and manners descended from the rude centuries past."[45]

The most prolific commentator in the *Review* on historical thought and philosophy was Holly. In one particular demonstration of biblical exegesis entitled "The Divine Plan of Human Redemption in its Ethnological Development," Holly determines that, far from being "cursed," African people are actually the group designated by God to lead the earth into the millennial era of peace, preceded by the ages of "the revealed word" (Semites) and evangelization (Europeans, the children of Japeth). Holly derides Europeans for having accomplished their divine mission, the spread of the Holy Word, while simultaneously exporting imperialism and violence. In the end, however, Africans are to lead the world in the fulfillment of what for Holly is clearly a teleological philosophy of history.[46]

42. For excellent references to the vast *redemptionist* literature in African church publications of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, "Mapping the World, Mapping the Race: The Negro Race History, 1874–1915," *Church History* 64, no. 4 (December 1995): 610–626; and Timothy E. Fulop, " 'The Future Golden Day of the Race': Millennialism and Black Americans in the Nadir, 1877–1901," *The Harvard Theological Review* 84, no. 1 (1991): 75–99.

43. George Wilson Brent, "Origin of the White Race," *AME Church Review* 9, no. 3 (September 1892): 278–288.

44. J. A. M. Johns, "The Proverbial Philosophy of the Colored Race," *AME Church Review* 1 (October, 1884): 126–133.

45. J. C. Embry, "Barbarism in Our Civilization," *AME Church Review* 12, no. 4 (April 1896): 180–182.

46. James T. Holly, "The Divine Plan of Human Redemption in Its Ethnological Development," *AME Church Review* 1 (October, 1884), 79–85. For an extended discussion of Holly's text, see Fulop, 89–90 and Greg Kimathi Carr, " *'Wp W3t* (Opening the Way)': ASCAC, Tuskegee, Monroe Work and African-Centered Institution Building on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the American Negro Academy," (paper presented at ASCAC Fourteenth Annual Kemetic Studies Conference, Tuskegee, Alabama, March 14, 1997).

The general history most widely recognized as the signature *vindicationist* work of the nineteenth century is that of the Ohio researcher George Washington Williams's 1887 *History of the Negro Race in America, 1619–1880* (2 Vols.), which includes a lengthy part one of eleven chapters in which he traces the evolution of African people from prehistoric time through the moment of enslavement. Chapter titles include "The Negro in the Light of Philology, Ethnology, and Egyptology," "Primitive Negro Civilization," "Negro Kingdoms in Africa," "Languages, Literature and Religion," and "The Negro Type."[47]

By the end of the nineteenth century, the contours of the university discipline known as History had been established in the United States and its disciplinary matrix grounded in the opening overtures of empirical research. The first great step towards the grounding of history in the epistemological standards of the emerging natural and social sciences took place at Harvard University under president Charles W. Eliot.[48] Eliot was the president at Harvard under whose watch developed the historical and philosophical sensibilities and training of W.E.B. Du Bois, the first African historian of the African experience in the United States trained in the discipline as such.[49]

At Harvard, Du Bois's exposure to philosophers and historians such as Albert Bushnell Hart, William James, and George Santyana, among others, shaped his philosophy of history as a pragmatic venture aimed at exposing *truth* through the increasingly precise revelation of factual evidence. Du Bois's doctoral dissertation, the first monograph published in the Harvard Historical Series, set the tone for a life which would impact the standards and direction of African historical writing in a category exclusive to all others in the twentieth century save two: Carter Godwin Woodson and Cheikh Anta Diop. A third figure, William Leo Hansberry, labored equally diligently and laid an extensive foundation for the popularization of the study of classical Africa by Africans in the United States and abroad.

Over the course of his career, Du Bois wrote at least one major scholarly treatment of every significant epoch in the history of African people: a) continental African history: *The Negro* (1915), *Black Folk Then and Now*

47. George Washington Williams, *History of the Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880: Negroes as Slaves, as Soldiers, and as Citizens, Together With a Preliminary Consideration of the Unity of the Human Family, an Historical Sketch of Africa, and an Account of the Negro Governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia,* vol. I, *1619–1800* (Salem, N.H.: Ayer Company, 1989).

48. Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), 515–517. Also Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 67.

49. David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race,* vol. I (1868-1919) (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), 117–149.

(1939), and *The World and Africa* (1947); b) enslavement and colonialism: *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade* (1897) and *The World and Africa* (1947); c) rural United States: *The Souls of Black Folk* (1909), *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935), and d) urban United States: *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899). In addition, he wrote of the experiences of Africans in the United States and assessment of the nature and significance of African cultural production: The *Souls of Black Folk* (1909) and *The Gift of Black Folk* (1924). Moreover, Du Bois authored novels, magazine and newspaper articles, and scholarly surveys.

Du Bois's impact on future generations of African historical thinkers rests largely in both his politicization of the use of African history as the key element in the construction of a global sense of African identity and in his attempt to marshal empirical research techniques to advance his political thesis.

During the period when Du Bois had begun his most significant historical writing on the concept of a Pan-African historical identity, Woodson, a Harvard-trained African historian, and Hansberry, an African trained in history and archaeological research techniques, emerged to give guidance to a burgeoning phalanx of African historical thinkers, many who have been largely neglected by literature on the subject and who contributed directly to the genealogy of African-centered historical thought.

Woodson, who founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915 and the *Journal of Negro History* in 1916, either served as a mentor, contemporary, or rival of most of the African historical thinkers of his period. His philosophy of history coincided with Du Bois's in that he viewed history as essential to identity construction. He evidenced his commitment towards a Pan-African identity through activities such as writing for Marcus Garvey's *Negro World* newspaper.[50] Some of the earlier African historical thinkers contributed in their sunset years to the *Journal of Negro History.* Of particular interest is an article by George Wells Parker entitled "The African Origin of the Grecian Civilization," the transcript of an address before the Omaha, Nebraska Philosophical Society on April 1, 1917.[51]

Woodson's historical writings evidence a strong support for notions of African historical continuity from the early text co-authored with Rayford Logan entitled *The African Background Outlined* (1936), the standard African American textbook in the field until the appearance of discrete works by John Hope Franklin and Lerone Bennett, Jr. and *The Negro in Our History* (1922),

50. Tony Martin, "Carter G. Woodson and Marcus Garvey," in *The Pan-African Connection: From Slavery to Garvey and Beyond,* ed. Tony Martin (Dover, Mass.: Majority Press, 1983), 101–110.

51. George Wells Parker, "The African Origin of the Grecian Civilization," *Journal of Negro History* 2, no. 3 (July, 1917): 334–344.

which Woodson co-authored with Charles Wesley. Woodson also popularized African history through books such as *African Heroes and Heroines* and *African Proverbs.* A trip to Egypt chronicles Woodson's appreciation of the link between classical Africa and contemporary African identity.

The eventual publication of William Leo Hansberry's extensive lecture notes, study monographs, outlines, and book manuscripts will intensify the attention currently devoted by African-centered thinkers to his work.[52] According to Hansberry, it was his reading of Du Bois's *The Negro* (1915) one Mississippi summer while working at a health resort that set him on the path to study the remote African past. Hansberry traveled to Atlanta University in search of the books in Du Bois's bibliography. When he could not locate them there, he relocated to Harvard University, becoming eventually the foremost expert of African descent on ancient Africa.[53]

Among the professionally-trained contemporaries of Du Bois, Woodson, and Hansberry who were interested in Africa was Monroe Nathan Work, a sociologist by training who had studied for the ministry at The University of Chicago before deciding upon the systematic study of African people as a life's vocation. Work spent the balance of his career at Tuskegee Institute, where he brought a perceptive understanding of African history to bear on his students and even on the institution's (in)famous founder/principal, Booker T. Washington. Washington's 1909 history book, *The Story of the Negro,* was ghost written by Work and bears his appreciation for classical and medieval Africa.[54]

52. E. Jefferson Murphy writes, "when he died, in 1965, Leo Hansberry left drafts of several major works on African history. When these works are published, his deep, empathetic understanding of African history, based on knowledge and faith, will become much more widely known." See E. Jefferson Murphy, *History of African Civilization* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1972), xi-xii. Joseph Harris writes that "The spirit of Hansberry mingled among those proponents of the African-centered perspective on Black history, and several of the leaders of the Black Studies movement of the 1960s and 1970s were his protégés." See also Joseph E. Harris, ed., *Africa and Africans As Seen by Classical Writers: The William Leo Hansberry African History Notebook,* Volume II (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1977), xiv.

53. James G. Spady, "Dr. William Leo Hansberry: The Legacy of an African Hunter," *A Current Bibliography of African Affairs* 3, nos. 11, 12 (n.s.) (November–December, 1970): 25–40. See also William Leo Hansberry, "W.E.B. Du Bois' Influence on African History," *Freedomways* 5 (Winter 1965): 73–87.; also, Nnamdi Azikiwe, "Eulogy of William Leo Hansberry," *Negro History Bulletin* 28 (December 1965): 63.

54. Work wrote a number of articles on African history and culture for Hampton Institute's *Southern Workman* publication. Additionally, he lectured on Africa at Tuskegee. On Work generally, see Linda O. McMurry, *Recorder of the Black Experience: A Biography of Monroe Nathan Work* (Baton Rouge, La.: LSU Press, 1985). On Work's knowledge of African history and its impact on Washington, see Vernon J. Williams, Jr., "Booker T. Washington: Myth Maker," in *A Different Vision: African-American Economic Thought,* ed. Thomas D. Boston (New York: Routledge Press, 1997), 202–211.

Still, the issue of the systematic study in the United States of the past as a method of African identity construction was even more pronounced in the work of a group of loosely associated historical thinkers whose primary distinguishing characteristic was their lack of institutional training. Following in the tradition of Pennington, Lewis, Delany, and Williams, these figures, called "historians without portfolio" by Earl Thorpe,[55] provided the most direct link between the professional African historical thinkers (e.g. Woodson, Du Bois, Hansberry, Work, Charles Wesley, and Rayford Logan) and those who would come under their tutelage in the "street academies" and study groups held in bookstores, churches, recreation centers, and other similar community venues.

These thinkers were uniquely positioned to take advantage of the embryonic nature of the distinction between university-trained and non-university-trained thinkers of African descent at the time, particularly in the field of history. Often, the distinction between the "historians without portfolio" and the institutionally-trained thinkers was unclear at best and a source of only minor acknowledgment in most areas of concern. This was probably due in large measure to the fact that many of the lay scholars were bibliophiles, having assembled most of the finest collections of books and materials on African people in African hands.[56] From 1920–1928, Arthur Schomburg even served as the president of The American Negro Academy, a collection of primarily institutionally-trained African thinkers founded in 1897 by the nineteenth century savant Alexander Crummell.[57]

Ultimately, these historical thinkers provided their progeny with a philosophy of historical study that they would in turn bequeath to their historical descendants. It is the convergence of their line with that of African historical thinkers working quite independent of them on the continent of Africa that produced what has come to be described as "African-centered" historical thought.

Among the most significant of these "historians without portfolio" were Arthur A. Schomburg, John E. Bruce, William H. Ferris, and Hubert Henry Harrison. Schomburg, Bruce, and Ferris were instrumental in establishing the Negro Society for Historical Research in New York in 1911. The group's mem-

55. See Earl E. Thorpe, *Black Historians: A Critique* (New York: William Morrow, 1958), 143–153. Also John S. Wright, "Intellectual Life," *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History,* vol. 3, ed. Jack Salzman, David Lionel Smith, and Cornel West (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 1371.

56 . See Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, Paul W. Coates, and Thomas C. Battle, eds., *Black Bibliophiles and Collectors: Preservers of Black History* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1990).

57. Alfred A. Moss Jr., *The American Negro Academy: Voice of the Talented Tenth* (Baton Rouge, La.: LSU Press, 1981), 221–230.

bership certificate held its motto, "race is the key to history," which was framed by Kemetic pyramids and palm trees.[58]

Hubert Harrison, a Danish West Indies-born African, was a brilliant orator and socialist thinker who articulated his philosophy of the uses of history in two collections of writings that have survived, *The Negro and the Nation* (1917) and, more important with regard to his impact on those who would shape the African-centered philosophy of history, *When Africa Awakes* (1919). Harrison, who was handpicked by Marcus Garvey to become the first head of Garvey's projected African University, died suddenly in 1927 in Harlem, New York.

New York City was the incubator for the intergenerational dialogue between these lay scholars and their immediate apprentices. The Schomburg group, soliciting assistance from other researchers and bibliophiles such as Joel A. Rogers and Charles Siefert, participated in regular meetings of young thinkers at the Harlem branch of the Young Men's Christian Association beginning in the early 1930s. This group, known as the Harlem History Club, later changed its name to The Edward Wilmot Blyden Society in commemoration of this early Pan-African nationalist thinker. It was led by Willis N. Huggins, who had chaired The Institute for Social Study, and his young protégé John Glover Jackson. Its membership included the Caribbean bibliophile Richard B. Moore, Grace Campbell, and Harrison. Another group, the St. Mark's Lyceum study group, included Harrison, J. E. Bruce ("Bruce Grit"), and Schomburg.[59]

William Leo Hansberry and F. H. Hammurabi lectured before the Blyden Society,[60] which was founded by Huggins, a New York City public school teacher, bookstore owner, and lay scholar/bibliophile. It studied works on African people from a wide field of texts and authors. Jackson, who assisted Huggins, held a particular interest in religion that can still be detected in the

58. Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, *Arthur Alfonso Schomburg: Black Bibliophile and Collector* (Detroit: New York Public Library/Wayne State Press, 1989), 42.

59. See Jeffrey B. Perry, "Hubert Henry Harrison, 'The Father of Harlem Radicalism': The Early Years—1883 Through the Founding of the Liberty League and 'The Voice' in 1917," (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1986), 120.

60. Information about the Blyden Society has traditionally traveled largely through oral tradition in the African nationalist community. Two succinct sources for information on the Society are Donald Franklin Joyce's *Black Book Publishers in the United States: A Historical Dictionary of the Presses, 1817–1990* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1991) and *Gatekeepers of Black Culture: Black-Owned Book Publishing in the United States, 1817-1981* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983). On pp. 32–33 of *Gatekeepers*, Joyce indicates that the Blyden Society had a membership of approximately 150 people and an extensive mailing list through which they sold self-published books and pamphlets by subscription. For additional information on Huggins, see Robert Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, vol. VII (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1990), 777–778, fn. 2.

reading lists of contemporary nationalists for whom the works of Albert Churchward, Godfrey Higgins, Gerald Massey, and Alvin Boyd Kuhn, late nineteenth and early twentieth century English and American esotericists, is fundamental.[61]

The Blyden Society also produced one of the texts that has since become a cornerstone of the African-centered historical movement, *An Introduction to African Civilization, With Main Currents in Ethiopian History* (1937) by Huggins and Jackson. In addition, the Society helped to raise funds to send Huggins and Rogers to Ethiopia to report back to Africans in the United States about the status of the Italio-Ethiopian War of the mid-1930s.[62] This type of political activity and the use of history to undergird it blended easily with the emerging philosophy of Pan-African identity that the Society symbolized.

The most significant junior figure in the Blyden Society besides Jackson was Jackson's junior protégé, John Henrik Clarke, a recent transplant from Georgia who Jackson nominated for membership in the Society. Clarke was profoundly affected by interactions with Huggins, Hansberry, Rogers, and particularly Schomburg[63] and Jackson, who had been profoundly impacted by the study regimen and philosophy of Hubert Harrison. By 1938, Schomburg was dead. Two years later, in December of 1940, Huggins died under mysterious circumstances, and the Blyden Society eventually dissipated. The seed that had been planted in its younger members, however, took root and flourished through the 1950s and 60s, largely through the continuing efforts of Hansberry and others, including bibliophiles and booksellers such as Seifert, Richard B. Moore, and Lewis Michaux.[64]

John H. Clarke, John Jackson, Chancellor Williams, and Yosef ben-Jochannan comprise the four most significant American-born figures produced during the early to middle part of the twentieth century in the African-cen-

61. St. Clair Drake provides a functional summary of the *redemptionist* school of African historiography and the place in it of Massey, Churchward, and Higgins, who he refers to as "arcane defenders of 'blackness.'" See St. Clair Drake, *Black Folk Here and There: An Essay in History and Anthropology,* vol. I (Los Angeles: UCLA Press, 1987), 309–332.

62. See William R. Scott, *The Son's of Sheeba's Race: African-Americans and the Italio-Ethiopian War, 1935–1941* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1993). Also see Hill, ed., *Garvey Papers,* vol. VII, 777–778, fn. 2.

63; John Henrik Clarke, "The Influence of Arthur A. Schomburg on My Concept of Africana Studies," *Phylon,* XLIX, no. 1 (1992): 4–9.

64. Though a thorough discussion of African booksellers in New York extends beyond the scope of this essay, it is clear that their role has been largely neglected relative to the development of many different strains of African thought. On the topic generally, see the two books by Joyce, cited supra, and Colin A. Beckles, "Black Bookstores, Black Power and the F.B.I.: The Case of Drum and Spear," *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 20, no. 2 (1996): 63–71. Clarke talks about Hansberry's continuing influence on his development in John Henrik Clarke, *My Life in Search of Africa* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Africana Studies and Research Center, 1994), 32.

tered genealogy of historical thinkers. Clarke's philosophy of history was shaped by his interaction with the "historians without portfolio," as was Jackson's. Williams, a 1949 Ph.D. in history from American University, was a Howard University faculty colleague of Hansberry's and contributed what some consider to be the single most important historical text of the African-centered movement produced in the United States, *The Destruction of Black Civilization* (1974).[65]

Clarke is fond of recalling that, while Hansberry taught him "the philosophical meaning of history" and Schomburg taught him "the comparative study of history," it was Huggins who taught him "the political meaning of history."[66] Huggins's political activities had undergirded his assessment of the function of African history as a key element to the construction of a proactive community of organized African people. Schomburg, for whom the pursuit of African history had easily meshed with an outspoken support of revolutionary movements in his native Puerto Rico and, later, political organization on behalf of his beloved Prince Hall Masons, taught Clarke the importance of seeing African history in the larger context of what has come to be known today as "the world system."

Hansberry, whose zeal for documentation to refute opinion probably more closely matched that of Diop, was a political organizer as well. His activities on behalf of African students (particularly Ethiopians and Nigerians) at Howard University are well documented. In partial tribute, Nnamdi Azikiwe dedicated a research center in Nigeria in Hansberry's honor.[67]

As these thinkers began to develop a philosophy of history that conceptualized the study of the African past as the cornerstone of the development of a contemporary Pan-African cultural and political consciousness, a much smaller group of thinkers with a similar philosophy and objective began to stir on the continent of Africa. In fact, though he had antecedent thinkers who apprehended the usefulness of the mission that he would undertake, it would be fallacious to refer to the philosophical shift in Africa as being the result of more than a single figure, the Wolof iconoclast Cheikh Anta Diop.

Born on December 23, 1923 in Diourbel, West Senegal, Diop attended Koranic school in the tradition of his family. He had been profoundly influenced by the Mourides, a Muslim brotherhood whose affiliation with the Muslim cleric Ahmadu Bamba undergirded their widely-recognized cultural

65. For an excellent biographical summary of Chancellor Williams's life and work, see Anderson Thompson, foreword to the *The Rebirth of African Civilization* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1993), i–vi.

66. Barbara Eleanor Adams, *John Henrik Clarke: The Early Years* (Hampton, Va.: United Brothers and Sisters Communications, 1992), 27.

67. William Leo Hansberry, "Africana At Nsukka," (Schomburg Collection, 1964), 23.

independence from the heavily Arab-influenced versions of Islam prevalent throughout the Muslim world.[68]

When Diop emerged from the crucible of training and intellectual warfare in France, which honed his skills as a historian, Egyptologist, linguist, anthropologist, chemist, physicist, and botanist, he began to assume the status of the foremost champion of the rescue and reconstruction of African history in service of the African and human future. Diop saw history as a grand cycle much as his lay counterparts on the other side of the Atlantic had. He possessed the training, however, to undergird his political sensibilities. This combination of African nationalist political sensibilities and intellectual incorruptibility often placed him at odds with proponents of Negritude, a philosophy of blackness espoused by figures such as his countryman, Leopold Senghor, and quite rightly regarded as the most direct ideological precursor to Afrocentricity.[69]

Diop began his scholarly career in earnest in the late 1940s, writing on African language and laying the foundation for his later work. Nineteen forty-eight marked the appearance in the newly-founded *Présence Africaine* of a two-part essay on the origins of the Wolof language and race entitled *Etude de linquistique oulove, Origine de la langue et de La Race Walaf.* Diop had written before this date, both as a scholar and as a student activist, pushing for a unity based on common political, cultural, and intellectual interests among the African students studying in France.[70]

68. See, inter alia, James G. Spady, "The Cultural Unity of Cheikh Anta Diop: 1948–1964," *Black Books Bulletin* 3 (Spring 1975): 28–35, 80–84. On the Mourides movement generally, see Peter Joseph Baxter, "The Mourides and the Senegalese State: A Question of Symbiogic Societal Differential Dynamism" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 1992); and after a more popular journalistic fashion, Scott L. Malcomson, "West of Eden," *Transition: An International Review* 6, no. 3 (Fall, 1996): 24–45.

69. An extensive discussion of the relationship between the conceptual and ideological premises of Negritude and Afrocentricity is beyond the scope of this essay. However, it is important to note that one of the major critiques of Negritude and Afrocentricity is that both concepts draw in large measure upon categories of identity that were constructed in whole or in principal part by European thought and behavior. In fact, just as Martin Bernal has been extolled by some Afrocentrists as a proponent of Afrocentric scholarship, Jean Paul Sartre has been given credit in some intellectual quarters for having laid part of the conceptual foundation for Negritude. Bernal has made increasing overtures toward defining himself as an Afrocentrist. See Martin Bernal, "The Afrocentric Interpretation of History: Bernal replies to Lefkowitz," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education,* no. 11 (Spring 1996): 86. For the relationship of Satre and his essay "Black Orpheus" to the definition of Negritude, see Mantihia Diawara, "Pan Africanism and Pedagogy," *Black Renaissance/Renaissance Noire* I, no. 1 (Fall 1996): 178–187.

70. See the recently published collection of essays by the early Diop entitled *Towards the African Renaissance* (London: Karnak House, 1996), particularly his plea for African unity and intellectual excellence entitled "When Do We Speak of an African Renaissance?"

It was the 1954 publication of his first Sorbonne dissertation and first major published work, *Nations, Negres et Culture,* however, that forever altered the landscape of the African philosophy of history and forged the link between the heretofore independent efforts of like-minded researchers to conceptualize, articulate, and operationalize a systematic African philosophy of history and subsequent historical methodology (historiography).[71] The full title of the text (English translation) gives a summary sense of Diop's philosophy of history: *Negro (Black) Nations and Culture, from Negro (Black) Egyptian Antiquity to Culture Problems of Negro (Black) Africa Today.*

In this text, Diop advocates the themes that mark all of his later work in some fashion: the African origins of Ethiopian and Kemetic society; the spread and antiquity of African people globally; the divergence of cultural characteristics to be apprehended in African and European geographical spaces; an underlying unity of African culture; and the importance of the future contribution of African thought and culture to the advancement of humanity in general.

Two years later, at the Paris Conference of Negro African Writers and Artists, James Baldwin would reflect after hearing Diop deliver a speech on his theses that "this question [of Egyptian anteriority and its African origins] has never greatly exercised my mind, nor did M. Diop succeed in doing so . . . ."[72] Baldwin's myopia aside, Diop's emergence in the imagination and scholarship of other African thinkers in the West was assured after John Henrik Clarke read the transcripts of both the First and the Second Conferences of Negro African Writers in a special 1959 edition of *Présence Africaine.* Clarke recounts the following reactions upon having read Diop:

> His work was a revelation to me personally because I had not encountered in print African scholars who were so forthright in challenging prevailing misconceptions about African History and putting forth a new, creative view with documents. When I read his contribution to the First Conference, 'The Cultural Contribution and Prospects of Africa,' I began to inquire about his other writings . . . . [M]y curiosity grew concerning this new voice in the African wilderness of historiography . . . . I later corresponded with him as one of the founding members of the black Academy of Arts and Letters, and when I was asked to compile a list of the

71. See James G. Spady, "Negritude, PanBanegritude and the Diopian Philosophy of African History," in *A Current Bibliography on African Affairs* 5, no. 1 (n.s.) (January 1972): 11–29.

72. James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son* (New York: Dial Press, 1961), 43.

> 20 most important books on Africa written by Africans, his book, already referred to, was listed.[73]

Clarke's reaction was not unique. In the decade between Clarke's first encounter with Diop and the 1966 selection of Diop and Du Bois at the first World Festival of Negro Arts as the English-speaking and French-speaking African thinkers who had wielded the largest influence over the African world in the twentieth century, Diop's thesis had spread into pockets of advanced African intellectual work in the West. The appearance date of Diop's first major work, 1954, assumes a particular symbolic significance because that same year marked the appearance of J. C. deGraft-Johnson's *African Glory* and George G. M. James's *Stolen Legacy,* two works that support the tone and tenor of Diop's work and that emerge from two distinct but interrelated interfaces between African historical thinkers and Europe.

J. C. deGraft-Johnson, born in Accra, Ghana in 1919, received an early education there and enrolled in the University of Edinburgh, Scotland in 1939. He eventually received a M.A. and a Ph.D. in Economic Science from that institution and left for England, where he worked in various capacities in banking, marketing, and the civil service, all related to England's management of the Gold Coast. One of the most significant events in the development of deGraft-Johnson's emerging philosophy of history was his participation in the Fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester, England in 1945. A twenty-six year old student at the time, Johnson's political sensibilities no doubt received a boost from the conference, which was attended by a number of African students and young leaders who would go on to leadership roles in the African independence movement.[74]

J. C. deGraft-Johnson himself contributed *African Glory* to the intellectual capital generated in the heady days of the independence struggle. Published less than two years before the independence of Ghana, the text served as an attempt to link the African past to the rising tide of nationalist consciousness sweeping the African continent. He states explicitly in the preface to the text that his was not an attempt at a comprehensive history of Africa. Instead, he wrote, he sought only to "fire the imagination of African scholars and historians, who alone can do full justice to the history of the continent of Africa."[75]

73. John Henrik Clarke, "Cheikh Anta Diop and the New Concept of African History," in *Great African Thinkers,* vol. I: *Cheikh Anta Diop,* ed. Ivan Van Sertima (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1986), 110.

74. See Hakim Adi and Marika Sherwood, eds., *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited, With Colonial and . . . Colored Unity (The Report of the 5th Pan-African Congress edited by George Padmore)* (London: New Beacon Books, 1995), 137.

75. J. C. deGraft-Johnson, *African Glory: The Story of Vanished Negro Civilizations* (New

In a similar attempt to "fire the imagination" of future researchers, George G. M. James, a South American-born African scholar, whose educational experiences took him to England and the United States, produced *Stolen Legacy,* a treatise which doubled as a polemic calling for African organizations, particularly those on African college campuses, to abandon their worship of Greek culture in favor of an antecedent and superior African culture in Egypt. James earned a B.A. in Theology at Durham University in England and did postgraduate work at Columbia University. He was proficient in Greek and Latin and served as a professor of Latin, Greek, mathematics, social sciences, and logic in a teaching career that spanned twenty plus years and ended with his mysterious death in Arkansas.[76]

James's basic premise that Greek philosophy was stolen Egyptian philosophy resonated ideologically with the conclusions that Diop had determined using a battery of scientific techniques independent of collaboration with James. Though the quality of James's scholarship certainly reflects his limitations of training and resources,[77] the impact that his work would have on later generations indicates its importance as one of the triumvirate of works that appeared in 1954 and set the stage for the convergence of the African philosophy of history.

The generation of African thinkers that emerged from the mid-1950s was profoundly impacted by the global events that attended the African push for self-determination. In the United States, 1954 marked the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, a decision that was a harbinger of the destruction of independent African institutions in the name of an amorphous and ill-defined notion of *integration* and the opening salvo in a fifteen year struggle for Civil Rights that littered the American landscape with bloodied victims. Across the continent of Africa, the push for self-determination was reaching fever pitch, and by the early 1960s, African nations were achieving at least what came to be known as *flag independence.*

York: Walker and Company, 1954).

76. See Asa Hilliard, "Biographical Notes on George G. M. James," in *Stolen Legacy: The Greeks Were Not the Authors of Greek Philosophy, but the People of North Africa, Commonly Called the Egyptians* by George G. M. James (1954; reprint, San Francisco: Julian Richardson Associates, 1985), i–ii.

77. See the critique raised by Jeffrey Crawford entitled "Cheikh Anta Diop, the 'Stolen Legacy,' and Afrocentrism," in *African Philosophy: Selected Readings,* ed. Albert G. Mosley (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1995), 128–146. For an extension and commentary on the relationship between Kemetic and Greek philosophical systems stemming from a reading of James's work, see Anthony Preus, "Greek Philosophy: Egyptian Origins," *Research Papers on the Humanities and Social Sciences, Sponsored by the Institute of Global Cultural Studies of Binghamton University, State University of New York,* RP 3 (1992).

The intellectual production that took place in the African-centered genealogy in the decade and a half after the appearance of the works of Diop, deGraft-Johnson, and James did so under the handful of thinkers who had been directly shaped and influenced by the pre-World War II thinkers mentioned above. John Henrik Clarke, familiar now with Diop, began to integrate his philosophy of history with the similarly intuited perspectives on the nature and function of African history as articulated by his early teachers: Schomburg, Hansberry, Huggins, and Rogers. Hansberry was still alive, dying in 1965 after having exerted a profound influence on Chancellor Williams.[78]

James had long since been deceased, but one of his students, Yosef ben-Jochannan, developed the sentiments in his thesis on Kemetic (Ancient Egyptian) anteriority and popularized the study of Kemet (Egypt) as an African culture relevant to contemporary Africans in America through a phalanx of self-published texts. Ben-Jochannan, Clarke, Williams, and Jackson formed a quartet of "esteemed elders,"[79] who traveled across the United States during the 1970s and 1980s popularizing the philosophy of history born in the aforementioned sites and others.

Two of the larger sites of the intergenerational transmission of wisdom involving ben-Jochannan, Clarke, Jackson, and Williams were New York and Chicago. Jackson moved to Chicago in later years, dying there in 1993. Williams, who died in 1992, spent his active career in Washington, D.C. The New York progeny of the group includes Leonard Jeffries, James Turner, and Marimba Ani. The Chicago "school," widely recognized as the epicenter of contemporary African-centered thought, counts as students of the group Iva Carruthers, Jacob H. Carruthers, Jr., Kobi Kambon, Lorenzo Martin, Harold Pates, Anderson Thompson, Conrad Worrill, and the late Bobby E. Wright. Their influence also contributed significantly to the philosophical underpinnings of the Kemetic Institute of Chicago, which was founded in 1978. In addition, Third World Press, an independent black publishing company founded in Chicago by Haki Madhubuti, published Williams's treatise, *The Destruction of Black Civilization* (1974), evidencing his influence upon the growing nationalism of Haki Madhubuti and others associated with him including the Institute of Positive Education.

Diop continued to produce at a prolific clip throughout the 1960s and 70s, and although he was isolated from the *mainstream* of continental African

78. On the relationship between Williams and Hansberry, see Drake, *Black Folk Here and There,* vol. I, 318–319 and Williams, *Destruction of Black Civilization,* 361–362.

79. As an aspect of cultural location, it is fascinating to note that Jackson (South Carolina), Williams (South Carolina), and Clarke (Alabama) were all from the southern United States. Ben-Jochannan is originally from Puerto Rico. Additionally, Hansberry was a native of Mississippi and Huggins was from Selma, Alabama.

scholarship and persecuted for his political activities, he nevertheless found the time and commitment to train a talented young Congolese student, Théophile Obenga, his lone, direct intellectual descendant. Diop's and Obenga's 1974 battle with white Egyptologists at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Symposium on the Peopling of Ancient Egypt and the Decipherment of the Meroitic Script has become part of African-centered intellectual lore.

One year later, Carruthers visited Diop in Senegal. Ifé Carruthers writes that "His [Diop's] ideas provided a framework for linking the 18th and 19th century traditions of African centered thought to our present project." She continues, writing that "Diop impressed upon Dr. Carruthers the importance of the study of ancient Egypt and more importantly the need to center that study around the command of the Egyptian language, commonly called hieroglyphics."[80] By September of 1985, Diop would visit the United States at the invitation of some of the Foundationalist researchers who had been impacted by his work, including Asa Hilliard III, Larry Obadele Williams, Charles S. Finch III, and Ivan Van Sertima.

The conference proceedings from this "Nile Valley Conference," held in Atlanta, Georgia, were published in a volume edited by Van Sertima entitled *Nile Valley Civilizations,* the first in a series of volumes edited by the New Jersey-based scholar. Among the contributors to the text were Hilliard and Legrand H. Clegg II, two Foundationalist researchers who had been writing on African history and culture for years.[81]

The Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC), a national cultural nationalist organization with international affiliations, was founded in February of 1984 by Clarke, ben-Jochannan, Carruthers, Jeffries, Hilliard, and Maulana Karenga.[82] This organization came into existence at the First Annual Ancient Egyptian Studies Conference in Los Angeles, California and marked the formal consolidation of Foundationalist researchers in the United States.

The founding of ASCAC signaled the largest attempt to date to organize Foundationalist research cells and systematize the dissemination and popular-

80. Ifé Carruthers, "History of the Kemetic Institute," *Kemetic Voice* 2, no. 4 (March, 1994), 4.

81. For some of Clegg's early work, see Legrand H. Clegg II, "The Beginning of the African Diaspora: Black Men in Ancient and Medieval America, Parts I and II," *A Current Bibliography of African Affairs* 2, nos. 11, 12 (Nov.–Dec., 1969): 13–32, 13–34; Legrand Clegg II, "The Black Origin of 'American' Civilization: A Bicentennial Revelation," *A Current Bibliography of African Affairs* 9, no. 1 (1976–77): 2–24.

82 . Jacob H. Carruthers, Jr., "Reflections on the Founding of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations," *Kemetic Voice,* vol. 2, no. 4 (March, 1994), 1, 6, 7.

ization of African history, known in ASCAC as "the study group process." Important ASCAC study groups have flourished across the United States and have now begun to appear in other countries as well. Among the better known member organizations are the First World Alliance in New York City, Chicago's Kemetic Institute, and the Institute of Pan African Studies.

The convergence of the now intertwined intellectual trajectories emerging from 1954 was further solidified when, in 1994, Obenga began a tour of several years duty at Temple University in Philadelphia. From this base, he organized The Source Editions, a small publishing company, and began to network heavily with the African-centered movement in the United States. Ultimately, he became a board member of ASCAC before returning to his native Congo in 1996.

Common Themes, Philosophical Locations, Implications

The genealogy and development of this convergent line of African historians and philosophers of history have brought the African-centered movement to its present status. Those who embody the thrust of the movement are primarily from the United States. However, in addition to the obvious inclusion of Obenga, historians and/or historical thinkers of African descent from other areas of the world have contributed to the ongoing development of this African philosophy of history.

Many in this group have been categorized in the paucity of previous literature on the subject as *cultural nationalists* regarding their philosophy, intellectual production, and political activity.[83] According to Alphonso Pinkney,

83. Among the better summaries of the philosophy of cultural nationalism and some of its more prominent figures is Alphonso Pinkney, *Red, Black and Green: Black Nationalism in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 127–150; Manning Marable, "Race, Class and Conflict: Intellectual Debates on Race Relations Research in the United States Since 1960, A Social Science Bibliographical Essay" in *Paradigms in Black Studies: Intellectual History, Cultural Meaning and Political Ideology,* ed. Abdul Alkalimat (Chicago: Twenty-First Century Books and Publications, 1990), 163–204; and the entire early run of both *The Black Scholar* and *Black Books Bulletin* as well as the last decade of *Negro World/Black Digest.* More recently, William Van DeBurg has attempted a popular reconstruction of the context in which cultural nationalist intellectual production took place entitled *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965–1975* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992). Other writers on the subject of African nationalism include John Bracey, Jr. and August Meier, "Black Ideologies, Black Utopias: Afrocentricity in Historical Perspective," *Contributions in Black Studies: A Journal of African and Afro-American Issues* 12 (1993–94): 111–116; and the following articles by Ernest Allen, Jr.: "Afro-American Identity: Reflections on the Pre-Civil War Era," *Contributions in Black Studies: A Journal of African and Afro-American Issues* 7 (1985–86): 45–93; "The New Negro: Explorations in Identity and Social Consciousness, 1910–1922," *1915: The Cultural Moment,* ed. Adele Heller and Lois Rudnick (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 48–68; "Religious Heterodoxy and Nationalist Tradition: The Continuing evolution of the Na-

the concept of cultural nationalism, a subset of black (or African) nationalism, "assumes that peoples of African descent share a way of life, or culture, which is fundamentally different from that of Europeans and other non-Africans." This way of life is Pan-African and has been studied and codified to varying degrees in the social theory, historical narratives, and political organizations initiated by cultural nationalists over the past generation.[84]

Within cultural nationalist philosophy, however, there are divergences of opinions. The cultural nationalist intellectual movement has more recently spawned a concentrated nucleus of thinkers who have begun to approach the question of history as tool of identity construction in a systematic manner.

The question of how African thinkers have attempted to make sense of the African experience in the Maafa has been approached from a variety of perspectives, from the publishing and analysis of narratives of enslaved Africans; to the deliberations of anti-enslavement African abolitionists; to the survey of texts produced by African political, cultural and social leaders; to the lesser-chronicled but infinitely more prolific cultural productions of the masses of African people .

There are numerous theories as to the ideological location of those Africans who have attempted to think about and/or comment on the meaning of African identity over the past half-millennium. For example, one of the more popular ideological continua upon which African thought is placed, is the broad space between the advocacy of *integration* and *separation*.[85] A number of studies have appeared that seek to chronicle the various social and political ideologies of African thinkers. And many of their most important writings have been republished.

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tion of Islam," *The Black Scholar* 26, no. 3–4 (Fall–Winter 1966): 2–34; and "Waiting for Tojo: The Pro-Japan Vigil of Black Missourians, 1932–1943," *Gateway Heritage: Quarterly Journal of the Missouri Historical Society* 16, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 38.

84. Pinkney, *Red, Black and Green,* 127. Examples of cultural nationalist social theory include *Kawaida* (Ron Karenga), *Njia* (Molefi Asante), and the broad social philosophies of Marimba Ani, Jacob Carruthers, Kobi Kambon, and others. Political organizations (which often carry intellectual responsibilities as well) include The National Black United Front, the Republic of New Africa, The Council of Independent Black Institutions, US, The Kemetic Institute, and The United African Movement, among others.

85. Winston Van Horne provides a summary of the impetus for and manifestation of both integration and separation ideology in "Integration or Separation," cited supra. See also Harold Cruse, *Plural But Equal* (New York: William Morrow, 1987); Wilson Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850–1920* (New York: Oxford Press, 1978); Howard Brotz, *African-American Social and Political Thought, 1850–1920* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1992); August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880–1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1963); and Sidney J. Lemelle and Robin D. G. Kelley, eds., *Imagining Home: Class, Culture and Nationalism in the African Diaspora* (New York: Verso Press, 1994).

Studies have appeared which group African thinkers into a number of vocational categories such as poets, artists, sociologists, psychologists, orators, politicians, civil rights leaders, ministers, and so on.[86] There have been relatively few studies, however, that have attempted to portray the development of philosophical perspectives among historians of African descent,[87] and none that discuss the genealogy and current activities and work of African-centered philosophers of history. Most anthologies seek to effect a rudimentary location of various collected articles or book chapters produced by historians and others along one of the aforementioned ideological continua. Consequently, a real lack of compiled and systematically analyzed sources exists from which broad observations can be made as to the philosophy of history espoused by historians of African descent in the Maafan world. The dramatization of the lack of material of this sort is emphasized by the fact that a single African intellectual historian, the late Earl Thorpe, is responsible for the works most frequently cited as attempting some sort of intellectual history of African historians in the United States. His books, *Negro Historians in the United States, Black Historians: A Critique* and *The Central Theme of Negro History,* seek to construct a genealogy of African historians and comment on their work.[88]

There are several key themes, however, that emerge to undergird the African-centered philosophy of history in a manner that makes the reinterpretation of all works that affect its lineage necessary. One of the principal themes

86. Numerous anthologies could be cited here. In addition to the anthologies listed in the preceding footnote, among the better ones are Alain Locke, *The New Negro* (New York: Atheneum Press, 1968); Addison Gayle, *The Black Aesthetic* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1971); LeRoi Jones and Larry Neal, eds., *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing* (New York: William Morrow, Inc., 1968); Sterling Brown, ed., *The Negro Caravan* (New York: Arno Press, 1968); Arthur P. Davis, J. Saunders Redding, and Joyce Ann Joyce, eds., *The New Cavalcade,* vols. I and I I (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1992); Martin Kilson and Adelaide Hill, eds., *Apropos of Africa: Afro-American Leaders and the Romance of Africa* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1971); Gerald Early, ed., *Speech and Power: The African-American Essay and its Cultural Content from Polemics to Pulpit,* vols. I and II (Hopewell, N.J.: The Ecco Press, 1992); Darlene Clark Hine, *The State of Afro-American History* (Baton Rouge, La.: LSU Press, 1986); and Wilson J. Moses, *Classic Black Nationalism: From the American Revolution to Marcus Garvey* (New York: New York University Press, 1996). See also William L. Andrews, Frances Smith Foster, and Trudier Harris, eds., *The Oxford Companion to African-American Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

87. Among them are the Hine anthology and Dwight Hoover's *Understanding Negro History* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968). Meier and Rudwick's pathbreaking study aside, anthologies of writings by historians of African descent are scarce, as are summaries of the philosophy of African history in the Maafa (see the work of Earl Thorpe).

88. Thorpe also wrote a commentary on the European philosophy of history in a little-known work entitled *The Critique of Man: A Critique of Philosophy of History* (Baton Rouge, La.: Ortlieb Press, 1958).

to be explored is the emphasis in all of the work on the spiritual destiny of African people. A second theme is the commitment to race consciousness and the belief in a transnational African identity that is not constituted wholly on the grounds of mutual oppression by non-Africans. The unique combination of this spiritual awareness and race consciousness serves to distinguish African-centered work from other types of historical thought and production.

James A. Noel has written that, "for African-Americans, history is cathartic and serves not only to describe facts but also to penetrate the data of experience with the understanding that can guide a praxis aimed at social transformation."[89] For Noel, the spiritual unity that undergirds African historical production is the belief in an eventual triumph, the optimism imbricated in African spiritual traditions across the globe. This belief in an optimistic teleology is consistent with Paget Henry's observation of the ability of African cultural systems to adapt to the Maafan world and extract therefrom signs of triumph from the symbols and conceptual materials imposed upon them from without.

From the methodology employed in the biblical exegesis of J. T. Holly and the early writers of the nineteenth century to the apprehension of a deep structure of culture predicated upon spirituality found in the work of contemporary African-centered thinkers, the tradition of spiritual distinction (from Europeans) and optimism remains constant in Foundationalist thought. There are, to be sure, pitfalls to avoid in veering too steeply into a spirit-informed narrative of African history. The question of historiography is one ultimately of knowledge production based on a balance of ways of knowing. Obenga has identified three primary ways of knowing: knowledge by faith, knowledge by opinion, and knowledge by reason. It is the careful interplay of these epistemological postures that will produce historical narratives that are sound in spirit and material venues, which cannot, at any rate, be separated.

The political imperative to organize Africans globally caused in principal part by the Maafa is evident in all of the literature considered as African-centered and Foundationalist. All events in African history are given political meaning, or, more aptly put, the political meaning of all events in world history is sought in the African-centered philosophy of history. Hence, from the state-building and state-protection efforts of Nile Valley cultures through the rise and decline of the greater and lesser states of the central and western Sudan and southern Africa to the resistance movements of the Maafa (intra-continental and extra-continental), Foundationalists seek to construct a narrative of African and world history in which the behavior of the actors involved

89. James A. Noel, "Memory and Hope: Toward a Hermeneutic of African-American Consciousness," *The Journal of Religious Thought* 47, no. 1 (Summer–Fall 1990): 26.

at any particular moment can be placed in a larger framework of political interpretation commensurate nevertheless with the historical context of the moment under study.

The struggle for Foundationalists has been to excavate and operationalize ways of interpreting behavior that do not draw their epistemological sustenance from the ways of knowing produced by European historical thinkers (chiefly Enlightenment-era and since). This has been a strident criticism of Afrocentric thought, for reasons which bear further consideration.

As a result of being in close and unhealthy spiritual and intellectual proximity to European institutions (educational, religious, popular cultural, etc.), many African nationalist thinkers, particularly those of my generation and younger, have come to associate African identity with conceptual categories that undervalue sustained study and rigorous methodological training and scholarship in favor of a system which relies too often on research provided by others. The battle for African-centered historical thinkers is to (re)create African methodology, institutionalize an African-oriented scholarly rigor and training, and pursue, in a systematic fashion, what Femi Biko has correctly called "the African Data."[90]

The lessons of the individuals discussed herein and many thousands of others besides will assist us in avoiding the pitfalls of the past. The understanding of the nature of African spirituality and the rituals of praise as they manifest in the production of scholarship, as well as the ideology of Pan-African Nationalism, will assist us in understanding as well.

The charge that African-centered thought bears similar handicaps to the assimilationist strains of Afrocentric and multicultural work is met in part with the observation that African-centered thinkers do not share the conceptual incarceration of Western institutions and epistemological frameworks that many Afrocentrists, particularly academicians, do.[91]

This is not to indicate that African-Centered thinkers, particularly historical writers, are less rigorous than any other body of intellectual workers. On the contrary: the standards of African tradition are, if anything, more rigorous and exacting than those of other traditions precisely because of the rela-

90. See Femi Biko, "Re-animating The African Data: The Message of the Master and His Disciples," *Nu Vision: Journal of African Humanities* 1, no. 1, (n.d.) 24, fn. 1.

91. I have discussed and will continue to discuss the distinctions between various strains of Afrocentric and African-centered knowledge production elsewhere. One of the critical distinctions, however, as was noted supra, is the distinction between *location* and *orientation*. An African person, claiming the self-referentiality of their existential status, can claim to be *located* as an African, absent any discernible criteria that can include or exclude. However, to be *oriented*, Africans must exhibit certain culturally healthy behavior, the elements of which have been usefully articulated by writers such as Kambon, Nobles, Ani et al. See Azibo, "Articulating the Distinction," *The Afrocentric Scholar* 1, no. 1 (May 1992).

tionship between intellectual work and standards of human conduct. The motto of The Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations is "Building for Eternity." Shoddy scholarship and slipshod reasoning—or spirituality, for that matter—are unacceptable before the ancestors.

Many of the charges of inadequate intellectual work leveled against African-Centered and Foundationalist work have been answered by this volume. Many more will be answered in upcoming months and years, as the African World History Project unfolds. The days of labeling and categorizing African thinkers as "nationalists," "separatists," "hate mongers," "anti-Semites," and so on are fast approaching a close as African people rescue and reconstruct our own narratives and reclaim our own discrete identities.

Afterword

Let us again emphasize that this volume is a summary of the preparatory dialogue of the African World History Project. While the essays are both informative and substantive, they are nonetheless merely prefaces to the more comprehensive work that lies ahead. The completed project will consist of several volumes, and it will be the foundation for the African-centered curriculum.

The concepts, proposals, and suggestions put forth here are open to inspection and evaluation by the universe of African students and scholars. Revisions, additions, and deletions will occur as the dialog continues among the authors and those who will join us as the project grows.

The editors of *The Preliminary Challenge,* in letting the writers speak in their own voices with as little interference as possible, held in abeyance the editorial criteria for consistency in style and documentation and other more substantive issues. These matters will be dealt with during the critique of this volume, which will follow the launching of *The Preliminary Challenge.*

The call for a meeting to evaluate this volume will coincide with an invitation to the African scholarly community to plan for the completion of the project. The spirit of our gathering for this purpose can be epitomized by the Kemetic greeting Yimhotep (May you come in peace).

Appendixes

Appendix 1

Inaugural Meeting of the African World History Project

Inaugural Meeting of the African World History Project

The Association
for the Study of Classical African Civilizations

Convened by Nzinga R. Heru, ASCAC International President;
Dr. Jacob H. Carruthers (Jedi Shemsu Jehewty),
Project Chairman: Subcommittee on World History; ASCAC
National Research Commission (Dr. Anderson Thompson, Chair)
February 10–11, 1996
Detroit, Michigan
Prepared by Greg Kimathi Carr and Valethia Watkins

Session One: Saturday, February 10, 1996

The first meeting of the History and Historiography Commission Subcommittee on the African World History Project (hereinafter, AWHP) of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC) convened on Saturday, February 10, 1996 at 1:00 P.M., with opening remarks from Nzinga Ratibisha Heru, ASCAC International President, and Dr. Jacob Carruthers (Jedi Shemsu Jehewty), Subcommittee Chairman and Editor of AWHP.

Committee members present at the opening session included:

Adisa Ajamu, Washington, D.C.
Abdul Aquil, Detroit
Mario Beatty, Philadelphia
Greg Kimathi Carr, Philadelphia
Leon C. Harris, Chicago
Yvonne Jones, Chicago
Tony Martin, Boston
Oronde Miller, Washington, D.C.
Théophile Obenga, Philadelphia
Harold Pates, Chicago
Phil Smith, Cincinnati
Anderson Thompson, Chicago
Valethia Watkins, Philadelphia
Vulindlela Wobogo, San Francisco

Summary of Discussion

Dr. Carruthers charged the committee with meeting two main objectives over the course of the two-day conference: 1) working out the broad skeletal details of the production of the ASCAC AWHP and creating the format for same; and 2) assigning drafting responsibilities for the first volume of the AWHP series, a preliminary book on historiography and methodology. In addition, Dr. Carruthers proposed the generation of a "Great Works of African Thought" series, to be discussed infra.

In order to facilitate discussion and give direction to the conferees, Dr. Carruthers (with the assistance of the Detroit chapter of ASCAC, under the supervision of Mr. Aquil) assembled a collection of articles and questions regarding general and specific issues pertaining to African historiography. The articles served as focus points around which dialogue on approach and content were generated. Each conferee was given a copy of these articles, which included the following texts:

1. Jacob Carruthers, "An African Historiography for the 21st Century." Kemetic Institute. Photocopy.
2. Vulindlela Wobogo, "Critical Issues in Nile Valley Studies: Unification, Periodization, and Characterization," Photocopy.
3. Anderson Thompson, "Developing an Afrikan Historiography," *Black Books Bulletin,* Vol. 3 (Spring, 1975): 3–13.
4. Jacob Carruthers, "Reflections on the History of the African Worldview," *Black Books Bulletin* 7, no. 8 (1980): 4–7, 13, 25.
5. Jacob Carruthers, "A Proposal for Launching ASCAC's World History Project-March, 1995." Kemetic Institute. Photocopy.
6. Jacob Carruthers, "A Proposal for Publication of the African Library." Kemetic Institute. Photocopy.
7. Anderson Thompson, "Developing an African Historiography," (a revision in 1996 of 1975 publication listed above) Kemetic Institute. Photocopy.

President Heru said that the publication of volume one of the series by the summer of 1996 was a priority for the subcommittee and the national organization. She said that several articles had already been submitted, some of which were selected for inclusion in the materials to be discussed during the two-day session. Conferees discussed the balance of the materials and the plan for the publication of a preliminary volume, scheduled for publication

before the (inter)national ASCAC conference to be held July 4–8 in Accra, Ghana. This preliminary collection of essays on issues related to historiography and methodology will come in advance of volume one, in which the subject will be treated in-depth.

Opening Remarks of Jedi Shemsu Jehewty

Dr. Carruthers began the formal deliberations with the question of whether the AWHP was "a threat or a promise." This remark was made in light of the continuing efforts of ASCAC to begin and sustain the research and publication of its 10 year research agenda,[1] efforts which have been frustrated by a number of delays.

After thanking all of the conferees present for their time and dedication to the project, Dr. Carruthers gave a special thanks to President Heru for serving as the generative force behind the conference; to Abdul Aquil, President of the Midwest Region of ASCAC, for his organizational work; and to Dr. Thompson for his recommendation that Dr. Carruthers chair the subcommittee on the AWHP.

Dr. Carruthers then gave a brief history of the AWHP as follows. The 1975 publication of Dr. Thompson's "Developing an Afrikan Historiography" in *Black Books Bulletin*[2] sparked the interest in developing an African-centered history of the African experience. This article, along with the research and lectures of Drs. Yosef ben-Jochannan and John Henrik Clarke, fired the imagination of a number of nascent African-centered thinkers to envision the undertaking of a rewriting of African world history.

In 1975 Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop met with Dr. Carruthers in Dakar, Senegal. At that time, Dr. Diop, a member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a General History of Africa (GHA), shared with Dr. Carruthers a copy of the transcript of the 1974 UNESCO symposium on "The Peopling of Ancient Egypt and the Deciphering of the Meroitic Script."[3] At this historic meeting in Cairo, Dr. Diop and his protégé, Dr. Théophile Obenga,

1. For a fuller discussion of the ten year research agenda (as well as the other commissions of ASCAC), see *Reconstructing Kemetic Culture,* ed. Maulana Karenga and Jacob Carruthers (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press).

2. Anderson Thompson, "Developing an Afrikan Historiography," *Black Books Bulletin* 3 (Spring, 1975): 4–13.

3. See Gibral Mokhtar, ed., *General History of Africa,* vol. II, *Ancient Civilizations of Africa* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1981), 58–82. The transcript of the meeting (January 28–February 3, 1974) contained in Volume II of UNESCO is an abridged version of the final report of the symposium. The full transcript was published under separate cover in the series, *The General History of Africa—Studies and Documents, No. 1.* (Paris: UNESCO, 1978).

staged a frontal assault on the prevalent myth of the non-African origins and nature of Nile Valley civilizations.

At the time of his meeting with Dr. Diop, Dr. Carruthers began to think about the possibilities of writing an African world history which would take African history beyond the cultural mélange, limited conceptual scope, and lack of ideological focus of the *UNESCO GHA*. In addition to Dr. Thompson's article, the Association of African Historians (AAH) had begun to address selected issues in the reconstruction of African history in conferences and in their journal, *The Afrocentric World Review.*[4]

The work of the AAH and other scattered groups and individuals continued until February of 1982, when the Kemetic Institute of Chicago generated a memorandum on a World History Project. For several years after the publication of this document, articles about its content, scope, and direction were published, and seminars were held.

In 1984, the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations was founded in the wake of the first Kemetic Studies Conference, a collaborative effort of "foundationalist" (see pp. 335–336 for definition), intellectual workers from across the United States.[5] At that time, National Commissions were created to deal with specific tasks. The Research Commission's agenda focused on an expansion of the Kemetic Institute's original proposal, a ten year research agenda.[6]

For a decade, various African intellectual workers from across the cultural spectrum labored to maintain the commitment to reclaim classical African history through research, publication, travel, popularization, and curriculum reform. Many of the most successful exponents of the rescue and reconstruction of African history were scholars affiliated with ASCAC. The research agenda proposed in 1985 was subsequently republished in several ASCAC projects, including the *ASCAC Study Guide No. 1.*

After years of independently conducted research and exploration, ASCAC's Research Commission was sparked into reviving the World History Project by a presentation at the March 1995 National Conference in Detroit, Michigan. At this conference, Professor Vulindlela Wobogo proposed the radical recontextualization of the Kemetic chronology, based on his reading of primary and secondary texts.

4. See the inaugural issue of the *Afrocentric World Review* 1, no. 1 (Chicago: Association of African Historians, 1974).

5. See Jacob Carruthers and Maulana Karenga, ed. *Kemet and the African Worldview* (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press). Also, see Jacob Carruthers, "Reflections on the Founding of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilization," in the *Kemetic Voice* 2, no. 4 (Chicago: Kemetic Institute, 1994), 1, 6–7.

6. This agenda was republished in *ASCAC Study Guide, No. 1.*

In the weeks and months following Professor Wobogo's presentation, Dr. Carruthers moved to organize a Research Commission Subcommittee which would assign and supervise specific research and writing tasks relative to the World History Project. The March 10–11 conference, then, is the culmination of his efforts in conjunction with key ASCAC members from across the country.

Dr. Carruthers then identified two primary needs that the World History Project Subcommittee should commit to addressing: the generation of an authoritative text on the history (memory) of African people and the creation of the "African Library," a collection of the best written works by African people and the best in recorded African Deep Thought across the centuries.

Dr. Tony Martin asked whether the African Library series fell beyond the scope of the African World History Project. Dr. Carruthers said that the two projects were separate undertakings, though they complemented each other.

Professor Wobogo suggested that the library should contain audiovisual materials. Toward that inclusion, he suggested the deployment of audiovisual support staff to record the thoughts of those living thinkers selected for inclusion in the African Library. Dr. Carruthers, while agreeing on the increasing importance of audiovisual resources in contemporary society, stressed that he did not want to discourage the act of reading the printed word. Professor Wobogo agreed.

Greg Kimathi Carr asked if the African Library series would be edited and published by ASCAC. Dr. Carruthers said that it would, with ASCAC taking the responsibility of selecting texts based on the profundity of African thought expressed. The texts would then be republished under the title of the ASCAC series.

At this point in the meeting, discussion of the African Library Series concluded and the attention of the body turned to the operational definition of the World History Project.

Definition of the World History Project

Dr. Carruthers began discussion of the first volume of the World History Project by stating that the preliminary volume would examine issues of historiography, methodology, and historical framework. Stressing that this examination was crucial to the beginning of the larger task of writing an African world history, he said that the concentration on methodological issues would cause the authors of the subsequent volumes of historical narrative to either agree on issues of historical interpretation or agree to disagree within the context of the ideological focus of the project and its concomitant methodological parameters.

According to Dr. Carruthers, European and/or Eurocentric historians have abused the national memory of African people, and African historical writers have the task of reconstructing that memory. The most effective method of accurate reconstruction is to transgress the strictures of European definitions of historical method and simply "let Africa speak for herself."

Professor Wobogo suggested that the subcommittee make a general call to the African intellectual community for papers on issues of historiography. Dr. Carruthers agreed that a call for papers was probably in order at some point, but added that there needed to be a mechanism in place to insure that those authors solicited would be clear on the philosophical position of the project without feeling that the transcendent themes of their work were being dictated to them.

With regard to the scope of the general call for papers, Dr. Carruthers suggested that African people beyond the subcommittee and beyond even the ASCAC membership should be invited to submit work. This wider call would particularly seek contributions from continental African thinkers.

In attempting to conceptualize the philosophical framework in which the research and writing of a volume on African historiography would be written, Dr. Carruthers stated that the question of foundation is particularly useful to generating conceptual focus. He said that there exists a need to avoid the discussion of what history should look like and focus instead of letting the history, the ancestral record, speak for itself. In this fashion, writers can indicate that they are being faithful to the historical record, avoiding questions of inauthenticity, and so on.

Dr. Thompson suggested that rather than soliciting additional works on historiography from outside of the organization, the committee might more fruitfully spend its time reacting to the works already generated from within ASCAC. In his estimation, this provides a point of departure which, after the resolution and reconciliation of questions and issues of various committee members, insures the probability of a clear conceptual agenda. Toward this end, Dr. Thompson suggested that the classic works of African history and historiography comprise the basis for a larger discussion (including inter alios, the works of Chinweizu, Diop, Obenga, and Williams).

At the urging of President Heru, the committee moved to consider the issue of constructing the historiographical framework of the World History Project around the papers presented for consideration. At this point, Dr. Obenga presented a general working framework for the discussion of historiography which reflected his interpretation and critique of Dr. Carruthers's paper on historiography.

Remarks of Dr. Obenga

Dr. Obenga began his remarks by stating that historiography does not exist apart from philosophy. He said that there are varying philosophies of world history, each of which reflects specific cultures and in turn gives shape to various approaches and techniques of writing history. Indian, Chinese, and European cultures, for example, have all conceptualized an approach to recording the events of the past which they utilize both for their own discrete histories and the histories of others.

According to Dr. Obenga, what African people lack is a philosophy of world history which is consistent with the world view of African people. The *UNESCO GHA* project, in his opinion, did not accomplish the fundamental task of creating such a philosophy, devolving instead into a collage of separate perspectives on African history with no overarching historiographical thesis.

In the interest of constructing an African philosophy of world history, Dr. Obenga suggested the following four points:

1. **There is an urgent necessity for African people to build a world historiography.**
   The scope and vision of the AWHP must be shaped by a fundamental perspective on the global human experience. This is the first time that African people have attempted to construct such an interpretive framework, largely because the necessity of such a project did not predate the *Maafa* (holocaust of enslavement). Because African people were enslaved and colonized, there was a loss of control of African memory. This control of memory must now be reasserted.

2. **There must be a construction of the genealogy of African historiography.**
   In the process of building a world historiography, African-centered thinkers must research, categorize, and extract epistemological lessons from those Africans who have preceded them in this effort. The construction of this genealogy should include an examination of the philosophy of these forerunners (W.E.B. Du Bois, Edward Wilmot Blyden, George Washington Williams, J. C. deGraft-Johnson, George G. M. James, Cheikh Anta Diop, et al.), all of whom desired to generate a philosophy of history.

3. **Specific goals and approaches must be established for African historiography.**
   The first order of business is the discussion of the African philosophy of history as a living tradition with roots in the collective African memory. As such, the examination of key moments in the African historical continuum is key to the construction of African historiography. One of these key

moments is the period of classical Africa and the nature, philosophy, and function of Nile Valley historiography.

Next, clear goals for African historiography must be stressed, including first and foremost the achievement of a fundamental conceptual unity. This conceptual unity must be consistent with the African world view, a Pan-African cultural phenomenon which is based on the concept of fundamental unity, unlike the conceptual paradigm of fundamental dissonance endemic to the European world view.

Although their world view is couched in a conceptual paradigm which incorporates conflict and dissonance at its cosmological, axiological and epistemological levels, Dr. Obenga noted that European historians practice a historiography which reflects a unity of cultural perspective, if not a cultural perspective of unity as harmony (or Maat). This adherence to paradigmatic consistency is a lesson which African historians would do well to emulate relative to the unique African world view.

Dr. Obenga went on to suggest that an African historiography must consider the dynamism of African history: the movement, adaptations, and progress of the African global experience. The failure to see African history as a unified and at once dynamic concept has led to the fragmentation of the systematic study of African people. This is why, for example, the study of African people is relegated to disciplines such as ethnography and anthropology as opposed to falling completely under the rubric of an all-encompassing history.

The nature of historical knowledge and its fragmentation by Europeans into discrete disciplines leads to a deeper question: "What is the meaning of 'history'?" According to Dr. Obenga, history is the record of human experience—social memory—and historiography reflects the way in which human values are brought to bear in the reconstruction of that record.

The question must be posited: "What values do Africans bring to the interpretation of the human experience?"

These are the basic issues upon which African historians must agree before defining the criteria for historical interpretation that stem from them and moving on to write history.

4. **Science must be included as a key component of African history.** According to Dr. Obenga, one of the neglected aspects of the global African experience has been the role of science in African history. Any African historiography must incorporate the role of science in history. In addition, there should be generated a historiographical approach to the study of African science.

(At this point, the conferees adjourned for a lunch break. Just prior to adjournment, the conferees agreed to a schedule of presentations at the mini-conference on historiography taking place in the basement of the church. After opening remarks by President Heru and Dr. Thompson, Professor Wobogo lectured to the assembled ASCAC membership and Detroit community, followed by Drs. Carruthers and Obenga.)

Discussion of Obenga's Points

Professor Wobogo agreed with Dr. Obenga that there is a need for conceptual and terminological unity. In order to continue the dialogue and movement toward the latter, however, the establishment of the former is imperative.

Dr. Tony Martin added that the committee should agree on the topics to be addressed in the preliminary volume on historiography as soon as possible and decide upon the authors. He stated that, while there will naturally be points of disagreement among the committee members, the general consensus on the scope and nature of the project should obviate most conceptual problems. He also reiterated Dr. Obenga's call for an overview of the historiography employed by the work of African historians of the past.

Dr. Martin continued, adding that the examination of the ways in which Africans have attempted to write history in the past would produce a genealogy which would closely parallel the struggle during the Maafa. He said that pulling out key figures and writing intellectual biographies of them would clarify the present work. Dr. Carruthers agreed, adding that such a project would also serve to chronicle much of the reaction of Africans to the philosophical construct of white supremacy. The work of Richard Allen, Prince Hall, David Walker, and others, inter alia, bears an examination for their insurgent nationalist thought.

Dr. Carruthers stated that one of the responsibilities of this committee is to be frank and open in the assessment of the current and historical positions of African scholars and leaders. He said that Harold Cruse attempted to undertake such an assessment of the *nationalist* and *assimilationist* strains of African thought and practice in *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual;*[7] however, this analysis did not go far enough. Dr. Carruthers added that, while Cruse would likely consider himself in the nationalist tradition, he would not consider the nationalist tradition that he worked in as the same as Cruse's.

The desire to clarify the overboard use of such terms as *nationalist* and to create more salient and functional distinctions in African social thought and practice led Dr. Carruthers to conceptualize the term *foundationalist.* This

7. Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: Quill Press, 1984).

term identifies those African thinkers and/or activists who work in the tradition of the rescue and reconstruction of African history and culture premised upon a reclamation of classical Africa as an operational epistemological concept.

Dr. Martin suggested that the preliminary volume include an article on the current onslaught/counterattack on the foundationalist school by non-African and African proponents of Eurocentrism and white supremacy.

Dr. Thompson, in categorizing those Africans who have appended themselves to this anti-African movement, said that they were "romancing the nomads." The only stance to take in the face of this clear opposition is one of ideological strength.

Professor Wobogo went on to say that the assumption of a stance of decisiveness with regard to the foundationalist position would show a unity and strength which would in turn inspire those not currently aligned in either camp. President Heru added that she favored the conceptual categories developed by Dr. Carruthers, identifying African thinkers as assimilationists, foundationalist, and other types of nationalists.

Dr. Martin suggested that a chronology of the struggle for African intellectual self-determination be developed which would reflect epochal moments such as the Black Power/Black Arts Movement, the Black Studies Movement, and the Black Books Revolution. It occurred to him that, in the early 1990s, when the forces of opposition finally discerned that the thrust of the most recent generation of African thinkers had taken an aggressively nationalist bent with cultural, economic, educational, and other social implications, they attacked in earnest. This present era of African intellectual insurgency can be categorized as a contemporary Weheme Mesu (rebirth).

The question was then raised, "What is the philosophy of history of the AWHP?" In other words, what are the basic assumptions of African culture which will undergird the interpretation and presentation of the past? There were several key conceptual categories which were mentioned that require discussion, including time (how events are ordered), space, and identity. A suggestion was made that one of the points of conceptual focus in the drafting of history should be on themes and events, thereby freeing the writer from the strict confines of chronological historiography.

Mr. Adisa Ajamu added that the Yoruba have a term, "alo'ina'tan," or "sacred events," which refers to those events which transcend spatial and temporal boundaries to chronicle the history of the people. He also suggested that the correct ideological stance to assume relative to the foundationalist construction of an African historiography is embodied in the Yoruba term "alu'nipa," which can mean both "protector or guardian of the culture" and "executioner."

This is the person responsible for the curatorship of "sacred history," whose function includes the preservation of the record against any and all adverse circumstances. Mr. Ajamu added that this use of African language addresses one of the key issues in the construction of an African world history: the learning and use of African languages as a technique for decolonizing the African mind.

Ms. Valethia Watkins added that solving "the language question" by utilizing concepts articulated in African languages would go far to resolve issues of gender balance in the African world historical record. Many of the issues raised by feminists, social historians, and women's historians would dissipate with regard to an African-centered historiography that began with the employment of pre-European concepts of gender construction and roles.

As the discussion of African cultural values continued, the question of how African culture was sustained in the Maafa era was raised. How, in other words, have Africans maintained their culture and the basic themes of African reality in the face of the continuing African Holocaust?

One of the philosophical assumptions inherent in the AWHP is that "Africa," in a cultural sense, is "reborn" with each subsequent generation of African people. Each generation then, represents the potential for a Weheme Mesu. There is a lineage of struggle which represents the continuing community of African cultural resiliency, though more recent efforts at cultural/intellectual warfare in the foundationalist community seem to lack the youthful energy of previous historical moments.

Rather than eschew the pursuit of the broader ideological and philosophical questions raised by the discussion of how Africans have maintained culture in favor of a more "practical" line of discourse, Dr. Thompson urged the committee to continue the consideration of these issues, not getting sidetracked into discussions of immediate practicality.

With this encouragement, committee members advanced various concepts which concertize ways of thinking about the collective (historical) African experience and therefore seemed to warrant continuous examination over the course of the sessions. Among these concepts were the Weheme Mesu and the Maafa. This commitment to searching for galvanizing concepts and themes having been made, the committee turned to the examination of the collection of articles previously distributed.

Responses to and Discussion of Papers

Professor Wobogo began the discussion of the issues raised by Dr. Carruthers's essay, "An African Historiography for the Twenty-First Century," by reiterating

that the Weheme Mesu should be taken as an operational concept, as a constant theme in African history. He also joined President Heru in voicing his concurrence with Carruthers's concept of *foundationalist* to describe this particular current phase of Nile Valley, Pan-African, nationalist intellectual work.

In seeking to relate the concepts of Weheme Mesu and Maafa, Professor Wobogo suggested that the former term be applied to "parenthetical" moments in African historical progress, that is, "interruptions" in the cultural advance of African life. He also stressed his continuing belief that serious African historians must master *Mdw Nṯr* (Medew Netcher). President Heru stated that learning *Mdw Nṯr* was an ASCAC organizational imperative.

Dr. Carruthers stated that there is a need for as many African scholars as possible to learn *Mdw Nṯr,* but that it was not necessary for everyone to master the language. It is necessary, however, for every African scholar to be at least as conversant with Kemetic terminology as Europeans are with Greek terminology. Hand in hand with this assertion is the demonstrated commitment to take George G. M. James at his word and "stop quoting these Greeks."

Mr. Kimathi Carr asked how Dr. Carruthers envisioned the operationalization of the Weheme Mesu as a concept which extends beyond its Kemetic historical context. Dr. Carruthers responded by raising questions from more recent African history to undergird his assertion that the Weheme Mesu is a continuing force in the African experience. How, for example, did Boukman (Dutty), the priest/revolutionary leader of the Haitian Revolution, know how to pray and what to pray for during his famous oration? How did he know to draw the sharp cosmological distinction between Africans and Europeans if not by drawing upon the ancient African traditions? Why did the Haitian people look back beyond their immediate historical circumstances to the Deep Well of African history?

How, Dr. Carruthers continued, did David Walker know to similarly differentiate between the God of the "Ethiopians" (Africans) and the God of the Europeans if not through his reliance upon African historical and cultural foundations? In short, the concept of Weheme Mesu, or "repeating the birth," is a concrete way of conceptualizing the African reaction to "interruptions" in the African cultural stream by drawing upon the deep well of ancestral memory.

Dr. Carruthers went on to mention the constitution of Sundiata (Sundjata or Son-dari) as an attempt to draw upon and revise preexisting African concepts of governance. This example again affirms his contention that one of the criteria for the appearance of an African Weheme Mesu is evidence that Africans have attempted to go back to (pre)established cultural forms. Professor Wobogo concurred, adding that the Palmares resistance in Brazil and the Suriname revolts are other examples of Weheme Mesus.

The question was raised as to the project of creating a historical narrative which would serve to protect the essential interests of African people.

Dr. Carruthers responded by stating that Schlesinger has defined history as a weapon, adding that there are different types of history which can be roughly separated into "Top Dog" history and "The History of the Underdog," each reflecting the battle stance and outcome of the contestants involved. In terms of the intellectual genealogy of the foundationalists, thinkers/activists such as Richard Allen, Prince Hall et al. began to turn to Ethiopia in part as a defensive tactic in the face of the onslaught of white supremacist thought and practice.

In contrast, the objective of the AWHP is to (re)create a history which will lead African people to a restoration. The ASCAC goal differs as well from the Hegelian mission of defining a "universal" theory of history which applies to all peoples alike. If the thinkers and writers employed in this project will keep the goal of African restoration paramount in their work, they will do what is necessary both to defend African people and launch an attack on the enemies of African people and avoid the pitfalls of attempting to chart a historical record and course for the entire universe.

Mr. Ajamu revisited the language question, asking how language will be specifically employed in the writing of the AWHP to "allow the ancestors to speak." Dr. Carruthers reemphasized that, where possible, African terminology should be sought out and employed by the writers, but that he was not fully certain that African languages were beyond the co-optation of European cultural advances.

Dr. Thompson contended that *Mdw Ntr* must be stressed as a tool in writing the history, adding Cheikh Anta Diop's assertion that Kemet (ancient Egypt) is to Africa as Greece is to Europe. By asserting the primacy of Nile Valley society and culture in linguistic as well as historical form, the rest of the African experience, continental and diasporan, will fall into line. He also said that the idea of a Kemetic based historiography must be agreed to by all parties involved, including putting the overall African calendar in as proper a temporal frame as possible.

Continuing with his suggestions, Dr. Thompson added tactics for insuring the presence of the ancestral voice in the AWHP, including opening chapters with historical quotes from the elders and ancestors and teaching intratextual lessons with sayings and proverbs.

Returning to the issues of time and space, Dr. Thompson said that non-Africans have put the Mediterranean Sea and its abutting land masses at the center of the global historical record. This circumscription—actually a usurpation—of time and space can ultimately do nothing but serve Europe. This is

why the AWHP must shift the center of the African historical continuum to the Nile Valley and thereby upset the existing balance of historical power.

In reflecting on Dr. Carruthers's description of the "garden varieties" of European and Asian historiography in his paper, the question was raised as to how the AWHP writers might reach a consensus on speaking about the place and value of these concepts. This question led to the larger question of work-product timetables: When might the subcommittee be able to produce a body of work that can be engaged by the African public?

Dr. Carruthers stated that, to the extent that papers are produced (i.e. written, edited, and prepared for publication) by August 1996, they will be of the type produced by UNESCO in the early stages of its GHA project and published as preliminary, "working paper" documents. He also suggested the publication of a transcript of the subcommittee meeting to use as a guide and issue-oriented map for the larger project. In addition, as had been previously mentioned, the papers already before the committee could be used as a corpus of work which would generate larger discussion once commented upon by the committee and revised by the respective authors.

In short, a collection of papers already extant and commissioned from the subcommittee would give an overview of the project and set a projected standard for future work. A fully expansive Volume I of the AWHP, then, would follow. The notion, however, that many of the more nettlesome and detailed discussions necessary for the broader AWHP can be included in the preliminary volume is unrealistic. For example, the fundamental issues of Kemetic chronology raised primarily by Professor Wobogo's paper are too important not to devote appropriate time and critical attention to. History has been based on the chronology of Kemet and the revision of those dates will greatly affect the rest of the historical record. Nevertheless, Professor Wobogo's paper should be included in the preliminary volume, regardless of the preparedness to engage his assertions, at the present moment, by those who will ultimately do so.

Dr. Carruthers began to sketch out the tentative assignment of chapters for the preparatory volume to be prepared by year's end. He suggested that Dr. Martin might construct an essay on the attempt of European Jewry to dominate African history as well as a chapter on those Africans in the Diaspora who have attempted to (re)construct the African historical record.

Dr. Carruthers then suggested that Dr. Obenga might produce a commentary on the works of Cheikh Anta Diop that have been published in English. In terms of issues of the historiography of African writers in other historical moments, Mr. Carr was identified as a possible commentator.

At this point, Dr. Thompson interjected the suggestion that other Africans be invited to participate on the subcommittee, specifically the Gikuyu

writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the Nigerian historian Chinweizu. As a way of insuring intellectual, if not physical participation of other Africans in the AWHP, Dr. Carruthers assigned the subcommittee the task of photocopying the chapter on "Decolonizing African History" from Chinweizu's book, *Decolonizing the African Mind,* with an eye towards possibly including it in the first volume of the AWHP. He also suggested that everyone read Amadou Hampâtè Bâ's article, "The Living Tradition"[8] found in the first volume of the *UNESCO GHA.*

While on the passing subject of the *UNESCO GHA,* Dr. Carruthers suggested that a critique of each of the eight volumes in the series be done. This comprehensive critique would reveal the various cultural influences (European and Arab) on the GHA. Dr. Carruthers noted that, while Chinweizu was critical of the first four volumes of the GHA, he himself has an article in Volume VIII.

Given the lateness of the hour, the committee adjourned to participate in the last stage of the ASCAC mini-conference. Evening presentations were made by Ms. Valethia Watkins, Mr. Mario Beatty, Mr. Carr, and Mr. Adisa Ajamu, and the feature lecture of the evening was delivered by Dr. Tony Martin.

Session Two: Sunday, February 11, 1996

Summary of Discussion

Session two of the ASCAC History and Historiography Commission Subcommittee on the African World History Project convened on Sunday, February 11, 1996 at approximately 10:00 A.M. with opening remarks from Dr. Carruthers. Dr. Carruthers stated that the goal of this final working session was to leave with an idea of what would be included in the preliminary volume and which committee members would be committed to either draft essays or revise existing essays for inclusion in the volume. This having been stated, the committee continued discussing the issues raised by the previously circulated essays. The first essay approached was Professor Wobogo's paper, "Critical Issues in Nile Valley Studies: Unification, Periodization and Characterization."

Dr. Carruthers began the discussion of the issues raised by Professor Wobogo's essay by reiterating that it was key to examine issues of periodization and chronology in the construction of the AWHP. At some point, it will become necessary as well to decide how to apply elements of a revised chronology to the actual writing of the history. Both of these points involve the historical liberation of the Nile Valley and the rest of Africa as well, instead of the singular effort of deconstructing European history and historiography.

8. Amadou Hampâtè Bâ, "The Living Tradition," in *The UNESCO General History of Africa,* vol. I, *Historiography and Methodology,* ed. J. Ki-Zerbo (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1981).

In a rhetorical question pertaining to chronology, Dr. Carruthers put forth a query about why (other than conforming to standard European convention) Drs. Diop and Obenga settled upon 3100 B.C.E. Answering his own query, Carruthers indicated that Diop probably resolved to use the "short chronology" based on his training as an empirical scientist, preferring to extend speculation only based upon experiments and proof generated personally.

This speculation as to the nature of Diop's chronology decision raised the concern of the metaphysical locus of the zodiacal element of Professor Wobogo's calendar argument. One of the issues raised was the basic acceptability of some common terms to frame the chronological discourse.

Professor Wobogo stated that much of his work was based upon his interpretation of the chronology assessments of Dr. Charles Finch.[9] Finch's studies rely heavily upon the work of British Diffusionist Folklorist, Gerald Massey. It was suggested, in including Professor Wobogo's paper in the preliminary AWHP volume, that a statement be made that his (and, by extension, Finch's and Massey's) assertions with regard to dating are part of a larger debate around chronology, rather than saying that the Wobogo assertions have been accepted by ASCAC as final. In fact, though the issue of the dates of Classical African Civilization are ultimately extremely important, it does not seem prohibitive to use the "short chronology" to subsist for the time being.

With regard to the research and hypotheses currently involving melanin and its properties and effects, the committee agreed that intense and high-quality research and discussions need to continue in forums such as this one, but that African-centered thinkers should refrain from broadcasting scantily researched assertions in public forums.

Mr. Ajamu asked how the possible revision of the Kemetic dynastic chronology might affect the fixing of the Kemetic "Golden Ages." What, in other words, might the clearing of such broad tracts of chronological space do with regard to posing historical questions? Will African-centered historians be "talked out of their conceptual game" by not boldly occupying conceptual ground not previously charted by European chronologists?

Dr. Thompson took this opportunity to challenge the committee to revisit the African calendar, thereby raising essential conceptual questions of space and time. He asserted that Africans must define where they stand and sit in these dimensions, literally (re)creating our space/reality. Again, the centrality of language to achieving this goal was stressed.

Dr. Thompson asked that someone intimately familiar with *Mdw Nṯr* and Kemetic culture in general flush out the definition and application of the concept of *Maati* ("two truths") as employed by Professor Wobogo. The so-

9. See Charles Finch, *Echoes From the Old Darkland: Themes From an African Eden.*

called "Denderah Zodiac" is another key text employed by Professor Wobogo which bears further examination and definition. Though the metanarrative framework for considering a revision of African chronology has been suggested by Professor Wobogo, other voices in the ASCAC foundationalist community such as LeGrand Clegg have offered commentary on chronological revision.

In response to the issues raised, Professor Wobogo stated that the committee should move towards the use of terms and concepts that everyone could agree on. On the issue of Diop's commitment to the short chronology and the scientific support for it, he stated that there was a real void in empirical evidence for any chronology. He cited that to the best of his knowledge, there is no carbon dating of materials from the classical era that would support the short chronology. Perhaps, he speculated, Diop had simply been waiting for conclusive physical evidence before discarding the short chronology in favor of a longer one. Finally, Wobogo asked how members of the committee might suggest the conceptual separation of astronomy and astrology, given the apparent genetic nature of the relationship between the two areas in his work.

Dr. Carruthers said that pushing the date of the Kemetic chronologies back did not necessarily require the readjustment of any periodization that the AWHP might come up with. The goal of the project at this point is to focus on themes in history as opposed to dates, moving away from singular attention to dates and focusing on how students and thinkers conceptualize time and space. Whatever eventually finds its way into print, he added, regardless of its point of view, must reflect intellectual honesty.

President Heru commended Professor Wobogo for his provocative intellectual work, which she said forced people to reconsider their easy assumptions by challenging everything.

Discussion of General Themes for All Volumes

At this point, the committee focused its attention on attempting to sketch the basic thematic approach to the entire AWHP.

The first issue discussed was whether or not each volume would be written around chronological schematics, spatial groupings (e.g., geographical locations, etc.) or thematic guideposts. The first example proffered was that of Nile Valley Civilizations (Kemet, Nubia, etc.). There might be, for example, a focus chronologically on Nile Valley Civilizations, or a geographical focus on the broader spatial parameters of Tricontinental Antiquity[10] or the

10. Tricontinental Antiquity includes northeast Africa, southwest Asia, and southeast Europe. The term is more appropriate than the Eurocentric designation "Mediterranean World." See "An African Historiography for the 21st Century," 55.

world in general. From this starting point, the examination of Axum, Christian Ethiopia, and so on could lead chronologically or thematically into a discussion of other regions of the Continent and the world (e.g., West African societies). There are, of course, themes which could emerge from any approach to historical reconstruction, themes which could serve as organizational guideposts for the history. One such guidepost might be the focus on the nature and results of various invasions of African people by non-Africans from antiquity forward through modern times.

One of the issues that should receive extended attention is the attempt to place whatever events that are being written about into a broad, trans-African experiential framework.

In his article, Dr. Carruthers addresses the "first and second coming" of Christianity and Islam into Africa, noting that history changes as invaders come with their different perspectives on the writing of history. Dr. Carruthers said that people look for ancestors in their history (e.g., Ethiopians, Arabicized Africans, etc.) and that history, done differently by different people, reflects that essential search for self. In African historiography, for example, this is reflected in both oral (e.g., Sundiata) and written (Kebra Negast) historical narratives.

In Dr. Carruthers's estimation, the "second coming" of Christianity and Islam (represented historiographically by the appearance of leaders such as Dan Fodio), reflects a particularly virulent assault on African historical sensibilities. He suggested that the African response to this aggression might have assumed a coded subversiveness, which would become the task of the AWHP to uncover. Perhaps the theme of cultural resistance through the apparent submission to non-African aggression can be teased out of extant African historical texts, such as the writings of African Christians or African Muslims. As supporting evidence of his contention, Dr. Carruthers mentioned the historical traditions initiated and preserved by Africans who resisted in the Diaspora (e.g., Haiti and Suriname).

Professor Wobogo added that the writers of the AWHP might attempt to test the assumptions of Cheikh Anta Diop's theories of societal construction and relations including the "Two Cradle Theory" and the "Structures of State Formation." In the process, Dr. Diop might be critiqued internally and either validated or extended by contemporary research. How, for example, does the Two Cradle Theory influence the foundationalist thesis of environmental social determinism and how Europeans operate socially in the present historical moment? In an attempt to experiment with Dr. Diop's assertions, Professor Wobogo has attempted to blend Diop's concept of state formation with his own understanding of the *two truths* concept.

Dr. Carruthers stated that the volume on historiography and methodology should include a section with one or more articles on the methodological contribution of Dr. Diop. To the degree that Dr. Carruthers and Professor Wobogo, among others, have areas of substantial agreement with Dr. Diop and points of clarification and contention to raise both with Dr. Diop's work and the extension of that work by his close disciple and colleague, Dr. Obenga, such a section devoted to Diop's methodological impact would clearly establish a new standard in foundationalist historiography.

Discussion of the Role of Science and Technology in the AWHP

The committee considered preliminary issues with regard to the incorporation of *science* in the writing of the AWHP.

One of the issues raised was the difference in classical Kemet between various approaches to the epistemology of science, particularly focusing on revelation as a mode of scientific exploration.

Mario Beatty stated that the Kemetic image of the universe runs counter to the European image, which despiritualizes and separates reality. This segmentation causes a cognitive dissonance of sorts in African-centered epistemology as African historians, scientists, thinkers, and so on struggle to reconcile their work with their innate recognition of that separation.

One of the concerns raised at this juncture was that the foundationalist movement does not seem to be producing scientists in the types of numbers necessary to sustain a refutation of this European segmented scientific world view. "At what point," the question was put, "do Africans quell their fear of the physical sciences?" If these sciences are simply systematic explorations of reality, and reality is of the spiritual base that Africans claim it to be, then African thinkers should not be afraid of it.

Dr. Carruthers said that most of our problems stem from not understanding the terminology, origins, and essence of what we have come to refer to as science. In Greece, for example, two key terms begin to frame the discussion of science: epistemé (epistamai)[11] and techné (tecnh).[12] He described epistamai as "disinterested knowledge, or knowledge with no practical significance," and techné as "know how." So, political science and medicine are examples of techné, or applied knowledge (know how).

When the Romans began using words to describe what they observed the Greeks doing, they did not take the words or concepts techné or epistemé. Instead, they took schiné (literally, "to divide or separate"), which became

11. Liddell and Scott, eds., *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 302.

12. Ibid., 804.

science. So begins a clear division between science and technology with regard to the speculative nature of the former and the practical nature of the latter, with science being viewed as practically worthless until the twentieth century, when the lines again converge with some consistent frequency.

Tracing one of the early sites of this division, Dr. Carruthers contended that it was Sir Francis Bacon who regarded the marriage of science and technology as one achievable only at great ontological and cosmological costs. Bacon's assertions that all major technological discoveries were accidents (e.g., gunpowder, the compass, and the printing press) led him to the conclusion that science was "overrated."

As African thinkers, attempting to unfetter our thinking from these conceptual strictures, Carruthers asked how, in the work of ASCAC and other similarly oriented groups, the "traps" of uncritical and/or undisciplined scientific thinking might be avoided. Professor Wobogo replied that African-centered thinkers must address the material progresses and advances made by African people through space and time. Only after such a rigorous and exacting search might the assertions made by various groups espousing theories such as levitation, astral projection, and so on be validated or invalidated.

The committee agreed that, absent such a searching evaluation, those who feel more comfortable approaching African science from the metaphysical realm will probably continue to do so and cannot be allowed to distract other African intellectual workers from the difficult task of ferreting out the historical foundations and practical applications of African science. In bringing the discussion to a close, Dr. Carruthers noted that the attempt to remarry science and spirituality is still a tenuous proposition for many African-centered workers, who seek more of a tangible ("here and now") expression of science and prefer to separate science from spirituality, which still suffers from the dichotomous logic of Western ontology. Still, he remarked, there is a practical necessity for the "here and now" concepts of many in the African-centered movement, a necessity which will keep them motivated until such a time that continuing work allows the links between science and spirituality to reemerge.

Additional Concerns

Dr. Carruthers suggested that we need to be in better contact with people doing work in the foundationalist community (Runoko Rashidi, Asa Hilliard, Manu Apim, LeGrand Clegg, et al.) and invite them into the running discourse. Additionally, there is a need to give close examination of the "renegade whites," those Europeans whose research and/or analyses serve to give the closest internal critique of European thought and behavior possible.

Once again, the need for conceptualizing rebirths of African culture across time and space is important, both in the precolonial (Sumer, Ghana, Monomotapa, etc.) and postcolonial eras. There is the aforementioned need for the assimilation of the "natural sciences" in the historiographical process, either as a discrete disciplinary pursuit or as an integrated element in an epistemological process or a research methodology.

Professor Wobogo asked how the AWHP might merge the different *Weheme Mesus* so that there is a continuity of definition and categorization. Dr. Carruthers noted that Weheme Mesu should be transliterated without vowels (***Whm Msw***) to allow for consistency in spelling. Professor Wobogo agreed, stating his position that the transliteration should be written and the pronunciation left to a separate issue.

Dr. Carruthers noted that the issues of spelling and pronunciation of Kemetic words will change relative to the context of the audience addressed. A scholarly text, to be directed at the African-centered, intellectual worker community might involve itself more deeply in the issues set forth above. A publication for the general public might facilitate the introduction of nonspecialists to *Mdw Nṯr* by spelling out words phonetically and thereby facilitating vocalization. Mr. Carr suggested that members of the committee might consider learning Coptic or some "living" language from the contemporary Nile Valley in order to generate a more "authentic" phonetic system from which to "regenerate" correct Kemetic spellings.

Mr. Ajamu said that foundationalists need to launch an offensive on language, dealing from the basis of a common language and a common linguistic understanding. Dr. Carruthers added that an essay on language was necessary for the first volume of the AWHP.

Revisiting the topic of "Maati," Dr. Carruthers said that he found arguments for the use of the concept convincing, but that the overuse of the "two truths" concept might run the danger of reification and formulation. Professor Wobogo said that he had played with different terms, such as *anokwale enyo,* in Yoruba, Akan, Bambara, and other languages, which would bring people into the broader discourse of African science and philosophy. The issue again is really the use of African terms to begin to bring Africans back into line conceptually.

Dr. Carruthers assigned Mr. Beatty as a representative of the apprentice scholars on the committee to deal with ferreting out the various manifestations of Maat, thereby visiting the proper context of Maati.

On the proper terminology to apply to the Nile Valley cultural complex, the committee agreed that it would be worthwhile to create a dictionary of terms and concepts related to Classical African Civilization. Professor Wobogo

suggested that as many terms as possible—with their origins—be included in the preliminary volume. Dr. Carruthers added that the distinction between the definitions of words and the description of how words have been or are currently used is an important one to make. He continued, noting that although formalization of concepts is important, everyone will not automatically adopt such formalized definitions immediately or entirely.

Mr. Ajamu volunteered to take the lead in creating a list of terms. He reiterated his earlier assertion that people should begin to use the same language. Dr. Carruthers said that, given the narrow time frame, the immediate problem is to generate a functional "dictionary of terms" that the authors who contribute to the preliminary volume could use to standardize their language. Perhaps a subcommittee might be established to create an editorial manual of style for use by the writers of the AWHP. Ms. Yvonne Jones was recruited to join with Adisa to create the dictionary of terminology and usage.

Dr. Carruthers continued to express his thinking on the conceptual significance of the ***Whm Msw,*** noting that the concept of "repeating the birth" is not restricted to a specific time (as in Wobogo's initial conceptualization of the Sep Tepy, First Time) but denotes a condition of African liberation, the creation of conceptual space by obviating the strictures of time.

Professor Wobogo suggested that clarifying the space/time relationships relative to the usage of terms such as ***Whm Msw*** and *Sp Tpy* will assist greatly in the use of the terms. He said that his students have frequently asked where the *Sp Tpy*, First Occasion, is chronologically. Freeing the language from the strict chronological interpretation carries the possibility of making it more useful.

Dr. Carruthers noted that Amenemhat took on the title ***Whm Msw*** as his ***Hrw*** title in order to lead the Kemetic society into a return to established forms. This return took as a model the prophecies of Neferti, a text attributed to the founder of the fourth Kemetic Dynasty, Seneferu ("the proper one"). This dates the text, but it also demonstrates that an additional concept, *properness,* bridges at least the Fourth and the Twelfth Kemetic Dynasties as an operative African concept to be emulated and aspired to. At the end of the prophecies of Neferti, it is predicted that Isfet will be expelled and Maat will ascend again. This larger context of "proper behavior," particularly as a manifestation of Maat, frames the manner and method of human relations—the process of properness.

Dr. Carruthers reminded the committee that the job of the AWHP is not to "produce" knowledge but to "reproduce" it. The ideas generated from the systematic study of the past are a part of the collective African heritage and

the job of the AWHP is to apprehend those ideas, add a new context, and reinstate the African vision.

Discussion of the Content of the Preliminary Volume

Dr. Carruthers suggested that Professor Wobogo's early essay on Dr. Diop's Two Cradle Theory be included in the preliminary volume. It was suggested that Professor Wobogo's current article be paired with Dr. Carruthers's historiography essay in the first section of the preliminary volume.

Leon Harris, whose computer and editorial skills will be vital to the success of the project, indicated his preference for papers to be submitted on a Macintosh formatted diskette, preferably using ClarisWorks or PageMaker as well as a hardcopy facsimile. He said that the deadlines for submission, once set, have to be met in order for the editorial team to have the appropriate time to properly perform its duties with maximum effectiveness. Charts and tables, which authors might include, should be sent in hardcopy form.

Dr. Martin was targeted for two possible articles: Eurocentric Intellectual Tyranny in the African World and/or an essay on the genealogy of the Defenders of the African Way, focusing primarily on the twentieth century.

Mr. Ajamu and Ms. Jones were assigned the project of pulling together a glossary of terms. In addition, Mr. Ajamu will draft an essay on language and terminology.

Mr. Carr was instructed to produce an essay on historiography. He will focus on the concept of historiography, African and European concepts of history, time, and space, and the foundationalist production of historical meaning.

Mr. Beatty will draft a commentary on Maat, focusing on the various representations of the term in Kemetic Deep Thought.

Ms. Watkins will write an essay on the current onslaught on historiographical representations of African women, seeking to reintegrate the feminine principle in African history.

Prior commitments allowing, Ms. Jones will compose an essay on language, literature, and historiography.

Dr. Thompson will make revisions to his essay on African historiography.

Dr. Obenga will be given the option of including an essay of his choice, though an essay which deals with some aspects of Dr. Diop's methodological approach would fit ideally in the preliminary volume. Mr. Carr commented that Dr. Obenga had been working on a comparative analysis of African and European values.

Mr. Miller was given the assignment of coordinating an annotated bibliography of the works cited by each essayist. Each writer was then given the

task of generating a very brief annotated bibliography of the key texts used in their essays.

Stylistic Parameters, Editing, and Publication Logistics

Dr. Thompson reminded the committee that each essayist should give serious consideration to the concept of time. He was not sure how phenomena such as inundations and the solar and lunar cycles will interact to influence this concept, but he made it clear that a discussion of time and space must be central to the pursuit of an African historiography.

Dr. Carruthers related well-wishes and blessings from Elder Dr. John Henrik Clarke, Chairperson of the ASCAC Council of Elders. Elder Dr. Clarke also consented to contribute to the preliminary volume. Dr. Carruthers suggested that Elder Clarke be allowed to contribute whatever writing he deems appropriate, including a general foreword to the AWHP. In addition, President Heru will contribute an introductory statement.

Mr. Carr and Ms. Watkins were given the task of producing a transcript of the committee's proceedings, which they suggested would be completed by February 25, 1996.[13] After editing, a written version of the meeting will be developed for inclusion in the preliminary volume.

Dr. Carruthers issued a challenge to those who committed to working on the AWHP to give serious thought to the issues raised in the papers and committee deliberations and focus attention on producing clearly-drafted articles for publication.

Dr. Martin asked whether there would be an article included in the preliminary volume which summarized the ASCAC view of classical Kemet, particularly given the widespread and varying commentary on Kemet by various "Afrocentric" scholars. Dr. Carruthers, in suggesting that a certain level of precision and intellectual clarity should be reflected in ASCAC work on the subject, commented that in his forthcoming book, *Intellectual Warfare,* he has attempted to sort out the strands of African thinking on the Nile Valley and, in so doing, explain why and how foundationalists have come to use and describe the area.

Mr. Carr brought up the subject of the ASCAC journal, stating that he wished to see it come to fruition at some point in the future and that his own work had prevented him from contributing more substantially towards its publication. Dr. Carruthers said that a journal would be ideal to serve as a feeder for material for the AWHP as well as give a high profile to the project.

13. Editorial note: The transcripts were not prepared, edited and mailed until April 6, 1996.

The committee then turned its attention to issues of essay style and format. It was decided that each essay should utilize footnotes for all citations and references. Internal citation style (e.g., American Psychological Association style internal footnotes) are not to be used. Each author is to generate an annotated list of key words of one or two sentences per work cited.

Once written, the papers will be forwarded to a central site for distribution to committee members. President Heru will head up a distribution team assisted by Mr. Abdul Aquil and Mr. Phil Smith. The initial drafts will be reviewed by an editorial committee that will read the manuscripts and give comments to each author. President Heru, Professor Wobogo, Dr. Martin, Dr. Thompson, and Mr. Carr will serve on the Editorial Committee, which will be headed by Dr. Carruthers. Once each article has been received for publication, they will be given to Mr. Harris, who will assist with manuscript editing and the copy editorial process. Mr. Harris will coordinate publication efforts with President Heru and Mr. Smith. Mr. Larry Crowe of the Kemetic Institute will coordinate artwork for the volume, and Mr. Seba Roosevelt Roberts of the Kemetic Institute will provide technical assistance with any *Mdw Nṯr* appearing in the final document.

Each article should be typed, double spaced, in a general font (i.e., "Times"), with footnotes. The article should be submitted in hard copy, with an additional copy submitted on a 3.5 inch computer diskette. Articles should be saved to "text" on diskette, from which they can then be translated into either Macintosh or IBM compatible format.

The absolute deadline for the submission of initial drafts of articles is April 30, 1996, though articles should if at all possible be submitted by April 15, 1996. Copies of each article should be sent to Dr. Carruthers.

The committee then reviewed the drafting assignments for the preliminary volume, which are as follows:

Tentative Table of Contents

Foreword: Elder Dr. John Henrik Clarke
Introductory Statement on ASCAC and AWHP: Nzinga R. Heru

a. Introductory Essays: Jacob Carruthers and Vulindlela Wobogo
b. Tony Martin: • Eurocentric intellectual tyranny and colonialism
• Genealogy of Defenders of the African Way
c. Adisa Ajamu: Article on terminology
d. Kimathi Carr: Historiography
d. Mario Beatty: Commentary on Maat
e. Valethia Watkins: Current Onslaught and the Paradigm of Gender

f. Yvonne Jones: Language, Literature, and Historiography
g. Anderson Thompson: Developing an African Historiography (dovetailed with his March 1996 presentation at the ASCAC conference)
h. Théophile Obenga: Article(s) of his selection
i. Oronde Miller: Annotated bibliography

Funding the Project

The committee then briefly discussed the issue of raising the funds necessary to publish the preliminary volume. President Heru mentioned the cautious optimism which is emerging with regard to ASCAC's national meeting in Ghana, West Africa in July, 1996. This ambitious project has commanded the balance of the organization's operational resources, leaving little margin for support of the preliminary volume at this time.

Suggestions were made to involve each ASCAC member study group in raising funds, including mailing a letter to each local group soliciting their support. Proceeds from the sale of the preliminary volume might be best utilized in the support of subsequent volumes in the series and the support of the AWHP Subcommittee toward such work. Mr. Carr suggested that a "conference debut" of the preliminary volume be held at which each author might present a summary of their contribution. Proceeds from this mini-conference might then be plowed back into a publication fund. Advance sales of the preliminary volume might also facilitate publication.

Official Nomination of Dr. Carruthers as General Series Editor and Concluding Remarks

The committee agreed by general acclamation that, upon his acceptance, Dr. Jacob H. Carruthers (Jedi Shemsu Jehewty) should serve as the Editor-in-Chief of the ASCAC African World History Project. President Heru spoke for every member of the committee with her assertion that it was the singular vision, intellect, and Maatian character of Dr. Carruthers that had finally seen the project to a stage of solid beginning.

In accepting the duties of Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Carruthers reiterated in typical fashion that any contribution that he has made or hopes to make in the future is the direct result of the collaborative think tanks in which he has listened, learned, contributed, and germinated his research and ideas, including first and foremost the lineage and critical mass of African-centered thinkers and workers in Chicago, Illinois.

Dr. Carruthers expressed his personal gratitude to the host ASCAC chapter of Detroit, Michigan and Mr. Aquil, for their support and typical standard of organizational excellence. President Heru was commended for her vision and tenacity in bringing the conferees together at great personal effort. With concluding wishes for safe passage back to the individual destinations of each committee member, the inaugural meeting of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations, African World History Project Subcommittee was officially adjourned.

Appendix 2

Memorandum

Appendix 2

A Memorandum on an African World History Project

By Jacob H. Carruthers

The current UNESCO project, *General History of Africa,* is a step in a direction that should logically lead to the development of a World History by Black scholars. Black scholars have made substantial and often brilliant contributions to world history by their primary interest in exposing the truth about African people. Most of these studies have been pursued under the most difficult and isolated conditions. As a result the studies, when viewed as a whole, contain many gaps and a great deal of duplication. Furthermore, there are often conflicts in matters of fact as well as interpretation. Even more problematic is the dependence of many of the studies on secondary Eurocentric sources. The great wonder is that these studies have been nevertheless quite brilliant in spite of the almost prohibitive obstacles confronted by these brave and dedicated scholars. The works of Martin Delany, J.A. Rogers, George G. M. James, John Jackson, Chancellor Williams, Yosef ben-Jochannan, John Henrik Clarke, and Cheikh Anta Diop are outstanding in this regard.

The time has now come when black scholars must come together and design a massive project which will culminate in a multivolume history of the world. Since strong archeological evidence indicates that African people were the original inhabitants of the habitable parts of the world, it is appropriate that African scholars develop such a history. Certainly black scholarship would be enhanced by such a project. It should be noted that the Europeans have already developed such projects; witness the Cambridge and Oxford histories of practically every area of the world. Unfortunately we have to rely on these sources all too often.

Such a project must be carefully planned and developed in stages so that effective utilization of resources and division of labor may be determined. The project would depend in the first place on the establishment of a broad range of consensus among leading African scholars. The consensus could be

achieved through a series of working conferences with foci on theoretical foundations and historiography.

European historiography, which has of course been incorporated into the framework of Egyptology as well as African and world history generally is largely based upon the ideas of Ibn Khaldun, the fourteenth century Arab historian, who is given little credit by his European benefactors. Khaldun brought to the Aryan historical method a high degree of perfection. The basic trends can be found in the Greek and Roman historians such as Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius. One can also see its earlier foundations in the mythology of the Hindus, Early Iranians, Greeks, Celts, and Vikings. We can call it Nomad Historiography. It is essentially the story of plundering, looting, raping, and so on. For example, Herodotus begins his histories with the so-called rape and kidnapping of Helen of Troy. Polybius emphasized the rape of the Sabine women as crucial to the historical rise of Rome. In the modern world this tradition is seen in the works of Gibbon (*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*), Montesquieu (*De l'esprit des lois*), and particularly in textbooks on World, European, or American History. What Khaldun brought to this tradition was a systematic framework that provided all the answers which had eluded the more ancient Aryan historiographers. For example, Herodotus could not quite figure out what caused the rise and fall of cities nor could Polybius quite determine the cause of the confrontation of the major powers, Rome and Carthage. Khaldun offered a solution to these problems with his concept of dynasty as the motive force of history.

Without attempting a complete exploration of Khaldun's historiography, suffice it to say that Khaldun explained the historical process thusly: "Great civilizations are begun by savage nomadic or Bedouin conquerors of peaceful, sedentary peoples who are generally more cultured than themselves. The lust for superiority and dominion are innate." These savages, united by what Khaldun calls group feeling and blood ties and directed by a holy war mentality, triumph and establish a dynasty over their fallen foes. Because of their primitive and simplistic traditions, these savages bring justice and prosperity to the new society which leads to a flourishing civilization. After several generations, the dynasty becomes corrupt with luxury and the society becomes decadent and vulnerable to takeover by another dynasty or tribe of barbarians.

This theory has, of course, been criticized, modified, and denounced. But in the context and spirit of Aryan culture it has one virtue: it is better than any other historiography. Thus, with proper adaptations and equally proper omission of credits, the Egyptologist have incorporated the nomadic historiography. Manetho's chronology, of course, fitted this natural proclivity very

well. The analysis of how these culture pirates fitted the data into this framework has long been a marvel to black scholars who have reviewed the travesty. For the most part, these reviews have been done in a rather unsystematic and reactive manner. Certainly additional research could be done in this area.

The problem with this nomadic historiography for black scholars is that most black scholars have had to use secondary sources (either because they have been systematically barred from access to the primary data and/or they have not developed the research skills necessary to examine much of the primary data). Thus, they have been unable to separate data from biased, distorted, and inaccurate copies, translations, and interpretations in many cases. In addition, much of the data has been selected, ignored, and even suppressed and destroyed by considerations that grow out of the Eurocentric perspective. In sum, few, if any, black scholars have been able to disentangle the data from the dictates of nomadic historiography and this has resulted in obstacles to the full development of an African historiography.

A brief review of the history of black thinkers in this country concerning Kemet (ancient Egypt) will demonstrate the point. The first group to emerge developed a tradition that Professor Anderson Thompson has identified as the "old scrapper" tradition. These old scrappers, without any special training but with a sincere dedication to ferreting out the truth about the black past and destroying the big lie of black historical and cultural inferiority took whatever data were available and squeezed as much truth from them as circumstances allowed. At first, men like Hosea Easton, Henry Highland Garnet, and Martin Delany took the biblical myth of Ham and used it to establish blacks as the authors of the great "Nile Valley" Civilizations. They also used ancient European works such as Herodotus, Diodorus, and whatever modern European works they could find. This tradition has been an honorable endeavor and has taught us much. The old scrappers are still among us slugging it out as per our beloved Professor John G. Jackson.

The next group of blacks to deal with the Egyptian data seems to begin with George Washington Williams. Williams, along with W.E.B. Du Bois, started a strain of integrationist thought on Kemet. They argued only that blacks had a share in building the Egyptian Civilization along with other races. This strain, which is completely enthralled to European historiography is continued today by such blacks as John Hope Franklin, Anthony Norguera, and Ali Mazrui. Some of these also demand a black share in Greek antiquity, which properly understood, is true, but for the most part these "Negro intellectuals" have no grasp of the true meaning.

John G. Jackson was born April 1, 1907 and expired October 14, 1993.

The third group to emerge is a progressive extension of the old scrappers. These scholars, who include John Henrik Clarke, Cheikh Anta Diop, Théophile Obenga, Yosef ben-Jochannan, and Chancellor Williams, have developed the multidisciplinary skills to take command of the facts of the African past which is a necessary element of the foundation for an African historiography. The scientific formulation of the two cradle and cultural unity themes of Diop are outstanding examples of the viability of the foundation. The task is, however, far from complete.

The impact of the colonizers's historiography on the educational process is so overwhelming that only a collective consensus on the part of African scholars can deal with the great historical issues which confront us. Individual contributions have been significant and in the past practically all we could hope to achieve, but now we must work together to develop the comprehensive perspectives necessary for a correct interpretation of the world.

The history of Kemet is still shrouded in mystery and alien assumptions. For example, the explorations of the period from unification of the two lands to the "Eighteenth Dynasty" are largely a matter of conjecture. Yet most black scholars more or less accept these interpretations. The idea that Kemetic history represents the rise and fall of dynasties which became corrupt with success is so permeated with nomadic or Khaldunic assumptions that we should have a conference to deal with this issue and draft a historiographical statement on the pre-Eighteenth Dynasty period of the Kemetic past.

History, as we know it, began in Kemet and by Kemites. Using texts, we see that it was at first the history of peace, national development, and moral and material achievements until at least the so-called Sixth Dynasty. The building of roads, irrigation systems, canals, and dams was prominent among the historical achievements. Thus, Kemetic historiography was founded on a concept of positive human achievement and stood in marked contrast to the annuls of war, plunder, and rape recorded by the Aryans. The devastating impact of the growing efficiency of the aggressive Asian hordes in time corrupted that tradition so that by the time of the so-called dynasty, military achievements had begun to replace the projects of peace as exemplary national activity.

The clash of these two contrasting historical traditions ushered in a new era of history, one which ultimately saw the gradual military triumph of the Aryan societies over the African ones. Along with this military victory, the Aryan mode of reckoning chronological events all but destroyed the African way of thinking in this regard. The rebirth of African Civilization must be accompanied by a restoration of the African view of chronological significance. Such a framework will provide a basis for a valid African World History.

Essential to an African historiography and African theoretical foundations are consensuses about the organization of chronology and spatial orientation. Since chronology as we know it began in Kemet, it is proper that we who claim Kemet as a part of our racial culture develop a system of chronology based upon events that are a part of that heritage. The most logical date for year 1 would be based upon the unification of Kemet and the emergence of Tawi (formal name of ancient Egypt) as the motive force for world history and civilization, because history and civilization as we now know them began then and that is really understandable. Thus, the Christian, Moslem, and Jewish systems of reckoning would be abandoned and an African system restored.

In that regard, African scholars would determine the proper chronology for the history of Kemet, especially the date of unification. The Breasted-Myers convention, which was established in deference to European priorities, should be set aside in favor of an African convention on that unprecedented event.

The spatial orientation of the Kemites should also be restored. For the blacks of that era, south was equated with up. As one pharaoh put it, "my southern boundary is at the top of the world." It, therefore, makes a great deal of sense to reorient ourselves to a southern world perspective. While such a convention is perhaps less than earth shattering, it would allow African people to stop traveling through time on our heads and walk upright in the Kemetic tradition.

Another facet of this approach should be developed. Black scholars should follow the suggestion of George G. M. James who challenged us to stop quoting Plato and other Greek pundits and instead go to the source and quote the Kemites. In other words, our writing should show a pronounced and profound respect for the literature and language of the Kemites. We should not only use the Kemetic texts as data but as sources of guidance and wisdom also. Our terminology should be permeated with Kemetic phrases and words just as European terminology is permeated with Greek and Latin words and phrases. In fact, Medew Netcher (hieroglyphs) should be our classical scholarly language just as Ki-Swahili should probably be the contemporary universal black language.

The ideas discussed in this paper are designed to suggest agenda items for an introductory conference on an African World History. The inventory is by no means exhaustive and hopefully other issues will be suggested for inclusion. The consideration of these issues and the subsequent consensuses will hopefully provide a framework for the development of the project.

In summary, I will merely list the issues suggested in this memorandum. The possibility of consensus on this list with appropriate additions and/or deletions would be the focus of the Association of African Historians Conference, February 18–21, 1982 at the Center for Inner City Studies in Chicago.

1. Generation of an African-centered historiography
2. Development of a Chronology of Antiquity
3. Adoption of an African Spatial Orientation
4. Emphasis on Kemetic texts as historical data

January 1982

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and the Origin of White Racism" in which he utilized Diop's theory to explain the prehistoric origin of white racism. This work is soon to be published in expanded form as a book. Wobogo is also known for his writings on the classical African principle of Maati (two truths). He holds a master's degree in physical chemistry and currently serves as president of the Bay Area Kwanzaa Committee. He resides in East Palo Alto with his wife, of thirty-two years, Nozipo, and his daughter Ama.

Index

A

African historiography. *See* Historiography
African history 10, 22
  United States
    American Stream 25–26
    African Stream 26
  Herodotus 49
  influence on Greeks 49
  Instruction of Ptahhotep 48, 290
  Ki-Zerbo, Joseph 48
African identity 290–294, 297
  Maafa 291, 297–298
African Library 329
African philosophy
  Obenga 174–175
African philosophy of history 296
African Principle 9–10
  Garvey, Marcus 15
African scholars
  African historiography 212
  and objectivity 212–214
  challenge 44
African World History Project viii, 1, 2, 5, 329. *See also* Appendix 2
African world view 212
African-centered calendar
  beginning date 119–120
  days 114–115
  Denderah Zodiac 82–83
  description 106–109
  Diop, Cheikh A. 76, 77
  establishing beginning date
    Carruthers, Jacob 73, 75–76
  Kemetic Institute 103
  Maati 85
  Mena (Menes) Unification 75–76, 78
  months 112–113
  Narmer Palette 83
  periodization
    Asante, Molefi 86
    Clegg, Legrand 86
    problems 85
    Weheme Mesu 88
  Plato 119
  Reese Calendar Theory 104
  seasons 111–112
  tablet of *Djr* 80–82
  Ta-Setian Incense Burner 83
  Tricontinental Antiquity 74
  Twins-Bull Transition 84
  versus European calendar 105–106
  white supremacy 77
  year 108–109
American historiography. *See* Historiography
Aristotle 19, 238
Armageddon history 51, 54. *See also* Nomadic historiography
Asante, Molefi 214, 225, 231–232
Association for the Study of Classical African Civilization
  founding of 314, 328
Association of African Historians 2, 47, 328, 360

B

Bâ, Amadou Hampâté 291
Baldwin, James
  on Diop 310
ben-Jochannan, Yosef xvi, 307, 313
Black feminism
  African historiography 279–282
Black Feminist Revisionist Project 254, 257–259, 264, 266, 284

Black Hebrews/Jews. *See* Historiography
Black Studies 334
Blyden, Edward 289, 306, 331
Blyden Society 306
  Willis Huggins 307
Bruce, John 305, 306
C
Captive history 16–17. *See also* Chronology
Carruthers, Jacob 4, 37, 73, 81, 90, 191, 198, 201, 205, 209, 326–330, 333–334
  meets Diop 314
  nationalism 65
Chinweizu 48, 339
Christianity 62
  and Egyptian thought 163, 166
  Maafa 62
  written word 43
Chronology 129–130. *See also* Periodization; African-centered calendar
  Kemetic chronology
    Breasted, James 120
    Egyptologists 54
    Meyer, Edward 120
  era, Kemetic 118
  era, Western 117–118, 119
  history and chronology 74
Churchward, Albert 307
Clarke, John H. 31, 47, 186, 307, 311, 313, 358
  Blyden Society 307
  impact of
    Diop, Cheikh A. 310
    Hansberry 307, 308
    Huggins 307, 308
    Jackson 307
    Rogers 307
    Schomburg 307, 308
Coffin Texts 38
Coptic calendar 114
Crummell, Alexander 264
  American Negro Academy 305
  and feminism 264
Cultural identity
  Hume, David 43
  Maat 43
Cultural nationalists
  Foundationalists defined 315–316.
D
deGraft-Johnson, J. C.
  African Glory 67, 311
  Fifth Pan-African Congress 311
Delany, Martin 289, 298, 357
  feminism 264
Dielis 291–292
Diaspora
  historiography, early development 1–2
  reaction to white supremacy 1
Diop, Cheikh A. 337
  African historiography
    role of ancient Egypt 163
  development of society 168–174
    African/Aryan contrasts 169
  Egyptology
    falsification of history 160, 162–163
  European scholarship 163
  genocide 163
  monogentic theory 166–167
  Nations negres et culture 67–68
  Obenga, Théophile, protégé 313
  recommended research 161–162
  value of his work 159–160
Divine order
  Coffin Texts 38

Divine Speech 36–40, 48, 201, 202
African American Studies
Diop 41
defined 201
divine order
Pyramid Texts 38
education 39–40
Good Speech 202
history and culture 38–40
modern African languages 40–41
Djelis 49, 61
Douglass, Frederick
feminism 264
Du Bois, W.E.B. xvi
feminism 264
E
Egyptology
European historiography 53
Maat
Assmann 225
Baines 233
Wilson 233
Eloquent Peasant 57
Ethiopian Chronicles 63
European historiography. *See* Historiography
European imperialism 16
feminism 251–252, 252
Egyptology 160
European methodology
black writers 22
European Principle
black intellectuals 23–24
Edward Wilmot Blyden Society. *See* Blyden Society
F
Feminism. *See also* Black Feminist Revisionist Project
language of 247
assumptions of 250, 252
Fifth Pan-African Conference 26
First Annual Ancient Egyptian Studies Conference vii, 314
First World Alliance 315
Foundationalists 65–66, 67, 287, 301, 318–319, 333, 336
defined 285
genealogy 295–315
pivotal year (1954) 296, 298, 310
United States 299–320
Fundamental alienation 43–44, 50
G
Garvey, Amy 257
Genocide 15, 163, 298
Golden Ages. *See* Periodization
Good Speech 202, 203, 239. *See also* Medew Nefer
and action 204
and African world view 207
and The Eloquent Peasant 202
Griot 61, 291
H
Hammurabi, F. H. 306
Hansberry, William 302, 307, 308, 313
Blyden Society 306
Harlem History Club 306
Harrison, Hubert 305–306
Hegel, Georg 52, 53, 67
Herodotus 49
Higgins, Godfrey 307
Historiography 15–19, 29
African historiography 28, 32, 62–64, 253, 254, 331.
black Hebrews/Jews 64
challenge 9, 10–12, 28
Christianity 66
Maafa 62

deGraft-Johnson, J. C.
African Glory 67
Diaspora, early development 1–2
Diop, Cheikh A.
Nations negres et culture 67, 68
feminism 254
foundationalists
defined 65, 285
goals of 332
Haitian Revolution 64
Islam 62–63, 66
James, George 19
Stolen Legacy 67
Kemet and black African 40–43
living tradition 49
methodology 67
Blyden, Edward M. 32
Diop, Cheikh A. 32
Nation of Islam 64
nationalism 65
Plato 49
Rastafarian Movement 64
vindicationists
defined 64–65
Western concepts 215
white supremacy
European thinkers 67
Williams, Chancellor
Destruction of Black Civilization 68
American historiography 254
black writers 22–23
feminism 248–249
Aryan historiography 18
European historiography 50–53
ancient Egypt/Near East 40
Asian influence 50
Bacon, Francis 53
fabrication of history 51
Hegel, Georg 52, 53
Hume, David 53
Khaldun, Ibn 50–51
Locke, John 52, 53
Montesquieu 52, 53
St. Augustine 52
triple heritage
Mazrui, Ali 54, 63
Nkrumah, Kwame 54
Feminism
Black Feminist Revisionist History Project 254
Kemetic historiography 54–68.
Christianity 62–63
Coffin Texts 57
Josephus 50
living tradition
Diaspora 61
Maa Kheru 57
Oral tradition 61
periodization 86
Clegg, Legrand 86
Pyramid Texts 57
Sma Tawi (United Two Lands) 55–56
tradition of death/coronation of pharaoh 60
Maat 60
Osirian drama 60
Negro historiography 22–23
Nomadic historiography 50–51
Sambo historiography 3, 20–21, 24, 292
Western historiography 17, 18, 32–36, 247
Hegel, Georg 34
Hume, David 32–33
Sambo Paradigm 21

History 16, 17
African Stream of history 26
African-centered history 10
African-centered philosophy of history 317
American Stream of history 25
Aryan history 18
Black history 22–23
Captive History 16–17
entertainment history 21
Western history 10, 16, 18
Holly, J. T. 318
Hudson-Weems, Clenora 258
Huggins, Willis 306, 313
death of 307
impact on Clarke 308
Institute for Social Study 306
Hume, David 1, 53, 67
I
Intellectual leadership
Clarke, John H. 13
Cruse, Harold 13, 22
Maglangbayan, Shawna 13–14
Islam 28, 51, 62, 63, 161
and Egyptian thought 163, 166
written word 43
J
Jackson, John 307, 357
and John H. Clarke 307
Institute for Social Study 306
move to Chicago 313
religious interest 306
James, George G. M. 19, 20
Stolen Legacy 67–68, 312
Josephus 50, 63
Judaism 163
and Egyptian thought 161, 163, 166
written word 43
K
Kant, Immanuel 1, 67
Karenga 213–214, 225–229, 236–239
Kemetic calendar. *See* African-centered calendar
Kemetic chronology 129–130
Kemetic Institute 47, 290, 313, 315, 316
African World History Project 47–48, 328
Kemetic calendar 103
Ki-Zerbo, Joseph 48–49
Kuhn, Alvin xi–xii, 307
L
Living tradition 49, 61, 200, 204, 212, 331
Locke, John 52, 53
M
Maa Kheru 236, 237
Maafa 88, 186, 291, 297, 316, 318, 331, 333, 335, 336
African thought 288–289
impact on African thinkers 316
Maat 38, 202, 220, 223–227, 332
African world view 212, 214–215
Asante, Molefi 214, 225, 231–232
Assmann
on Champollion's translation 218
Carruthers, Jacob 225, 230
connection to deep thought 222
daughter of Ra 38
defined 216
discussion of symbol 216–219
interpretation of 224–234
Asante, Molefi 231–232
Assmann, Jan 225–226

Carruthers 230–231
Karenga, Maulana 226–229
Obenga, Théophile 229–230
interpretation of symbol
Brunner 218
Carruthers 219
Champollion, Jean 218
Gardiner 219
Grumach, S. 218–219
Obenga 220
Karenga, Maulana 213–214, 225, 226–227, 236–239
Kemet
connection to South 221
Obenga, Théophile 225, 229
prophecies of Neferti 346
translation of 214–220
Western limitations 215
Maati 73, 85, 340
Manetho
European historiography 54, 60
Marx, Karl 54, 172
Massey, Gerald 307, 340
Mazuri, Ali. *See* European historiography
Mdw Nfr. *See* Good Speech
Mdw Ntr. *See* Divine Speech
Medew Nefer. *See* Good Speech
Medew Netcher. *See* Divine Speech
Meni. *See* Menes
Methodology 3, 67
black feminist 246
Blyden, Edward M. 32
character of 181–186
Diop, Cheikh A. 32
Science and history 164
foundationalist 318
Mazrui, Ali 63
Nkrumah, Kwame 63
white feminist 246
Michaux, Lewis 307
Moore, Richard xi, 306, 307
Montesquieu 52, 53, 67
Mudimbe, Valentine Y.
African philosophy 35
N
Nation of Islam. *See* Historiography
National memory 48, 49, 50 60, 61
Nationalism. *See* Historiography
Negro Question 20, 22
white supremacy 25
Nkrumah, Kwame. *See* European historiography
Nomadic historiography. *See* Historiography
O
Obenga, Théophile 92
historiography 318, 331
P
Pan-Africanism
African cultural unity 234
Blyden Society 307
cultural nationalism 316
Du Bois 303
need for global identity 297
Periodization 17. *See also* African-centered calendar; Chronology
Asante, Molefi 86
Clegg, Legrand 86
European historiography
Egyptology 54
European periodization 17
Golden Ages xiii, 4, 86, 129
Western historiography 17
Ptahhotep 212, 235
Pyramid Texts 38
R
Rhetorical ethic 197, 239

Rogers, J.A. xvi, 307, 313
Harlem History Club 306
Royal Table of Seti I 58
Repetition of the birth. *See* Weheme Mesu
S
Schomburg, Arthur 305, 306, 307, 313
Siefert, Charles xvi, 306
Sma Tawi. *See* Union of Two Lands
Sundiata 61, 63
T
Terminology
African historiography 88–92
Anokwalei Enyo 94
Carruthers 90
Diop, Cheikh A. 91
Maati as dialectics 93–94
Maatian and Non-Maatian 92
Thiong'o, Ngugi wa 48, 339
Thorpe, Earl 317
Tricontinental Antiquity 55, 74
Tricontinental cultures 51
Turin Canon 58
Twenty-first century xvii, 9, 292
Clarke's challenge to African writers 47
African world 29
European challenge 25
U
UNESCO
General History of Africa 327, 331, 339, 355
model for AWHP 338
Union of Two Lands (Sma Tawi) 54, 55–56
European historiography 54
Universal history xviii, 50, 51, 52, 54. *See also* Captive history
feminism 251–252, 252, 276
V
Vandercook, John xvii
Vindicationists 64, 302. *See also* Historiography
Volney, Count xii, 162
Voltaire 67
W
Walker, David 1–2, 336
Waset 58
Amenemhet III 137
Amenhotep IV 149, 151
Amenhotep Son of Hapu 145, 147
Anut Tawi 147
Hatshepsut 141–142
Jehewty Moses III 143–145
Mentuhotep II 131–133
Middle Kingdom 131–134
Nefertari 141
Nefertiti 151–153
New Kingdom 138–141
Rameses II 155
Senwosret I 135–137
Seqenenre Tao 138–139
Tiy 145
Tutankhamen 155
various names 129
Weheme Mesu 56–58, 67, 88, 336
Good Speech 56
Western calendars
Gregorian calendar 117
history 115–117
Julian calendar 116–117
moving calendar 107–108
Western Civilization 17, 213, 236
Western historiography
African history 247
feminism 247–253
defined 18

Western scholarship 32
  challenge of 250
White supremacy 17
  Hegel, Georg 34–35, 38
  Hume, David 32–33, 38
Williams, Chancellor 68, 307, 313
Womanism
  African historiography 279–282
  defined 280
Wright, Bobby 238