Jorgensen held a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship and was the recipient of many grants from the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Mental Health as well as applied research contracts. He gave endowed and guest lectures at over 30 universities around the world, including the Landsdowne Lecture, the Rufus Wood Leigh Diamond Jubilee Lecture, and the Ford Lectures of the Brazilian Anthropological Association. He served on editorial boards of several social science journals, was on the Executive Board of the Human Relations Area Files for 20 years, and took several turns as chair of departments and director of programs.

During his retirement years from 2000 to 2008, Jorgensen split his residential time between Ririe, Idaho, and Salt Lake City, Utah. He was an avid fly fisherman, a boxing aficionado, an opera enthusiast, and a Yankee fan who was a master of baseball statistics. He spent much of his time serving as an information center on the Web, sending messages and articles to friends and family and engaging in spirited e-mail discussions on a great range of topics.

Jorgensen's first marriage, to Katherine Will, resulted in a son, Brigham, and a daughter, Sarah. They later divorced. In 1997, he married Joyce Miller, whom he had known since high school.

The last article Jorgensen wrote was a review essay on archaeological sociology in the Southwest (2005). It surveys archaeological studies that have attempted reconstruction of Pueblo social structure, citing their strengths and weaknesses in view of the literature on Pueblo Indian ethnology and arguing that archaeologists could benefit greatly from that literature. Lauding archaeologists for their scientific approach, Jorgensen laments that it is too often lacking in contemporary ethnology. He says: "Scientific ethnology, in the shadows of ethnological discourse after a couple of decades of deconstructionist and postmodern cant, may or may not be redeemable in the near future, at least not by the persons recently trained in ethnology" (2005:661).

Joseph Jorgensen's dedication to scientific ethnology the insistence on empirical data, the use of the best statistical models, and the testing of hypotheses for their validity, all of which were manifest in his admirable body of work based on these methods and techniques—was a formidable contribution to anthropology. But he was more than a scholar: he was also a crusader for the ethical treatment of Native people.

NOTE

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Elliot Skinner. (Courtesy of Gwendolyn Mikell)

Elliot Percival Skinner (1924–2007)

J. LORAND MATORY Harvard University

"When you go out to play, always take your own ball," Elliot Percival Skinner's mother warned him: depend on the whim or largesse of no one.

In a discipline that long ago eschewed the idea of race, there is much to be learned from the life and career of Elliot P. Skinner, the late Franz Boas Professor Emeritus at Columbia University—where U.S. cultural anthropology began—and doyen of African American anthropology. Among African Americans, anthropology has yet to escape the monstrous shadow of the craniometrists. Consequently, his protégés were as often diplomats or public policy makers as career anthropologists. Indeed, it was not without controversy that, in the 1960s, Skinner became the first black tenured professor at Columbia and then the first black chair (1972–75) of any academic department in the Ivy League. He did so by bringing his own ball to the game.

It is difficult to say whether Skinner's appointment to the discipline's most historic professorial chair reveals or reverses the prevailing trends in our field. In the infancy of Skinner's career, Melville J. Herskovits rejected his application to the anthropology graduate degree program at Northwestern. A student of Boas and the founder of African studies in the United States, Herskovits reputedly judged black scholars incapable of studying Africa objectively (Yelvington 2003:278–280, 2006a:71). Moreover, U.S. race relations may help to explain both the distinctive interdisciplinarity of Skinner's engagements—his writings are no less diplomatic history and international affairs than they are anthropology—and the limited attention his work has received within anthropology.

African American scholars have long found it difficult to ignore the global political context of their studies and to retain the noninterventionist postures that characterized the dominant traditions of anthropology, traditions whose own pretensions of objectivity were only later challenged by the reflexive turn of the 1980s (e.g., Harrison and Harrison 1999). For African American anthropologists, the African was harder to imagine as a mere object of study rather than a struggling counterpart or comrade in a global fight. The "native's" endeavors seemed less like living models of prehistory than like the dilemmas, gambles, mistakes, mitigated failures, and partial victories of another victim of racial oppression.

Consequently, Skinner professed his scholarship and measured his successes by standards transcending the academy. He was proud of saying that he had produced more black Ph.D.s than anyone else in academe, which was a gift not only to the progress of ideas but also social progress. Beyond that, Skinner himself served as U.S. ambassador to Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso, 1966-69); Chairman of the Association of Black American Ambassadors (1988-92); perennial lecturer at the State Department, the Defense Department, and the United States Information Service; and mentor to generations of diplomats and public policy makers. Even in the foreign service, Skinner's linguistic skills reflected a rare degree of commitment to his calling. He spoke fluent French and Moré, the language of Burkina Faso's Mossi people. For his heroic advocacy of Upper Volta's national interests, he received the honorific title of Commandeur de l'Ordre National Voltaique, which he considered in every way consistent with his pride in representing the U.S. government.

A man in between disciplines, classes, and cultures, Skinner was bound to innovate in his field and to render sensitive portraits not only of the culturally hybrid empires of West Africa but also of their descendants, who engineered a way to survive and prosper despite enslavement, colonization, and segregation. Skinner's opus focuses on the agency of elite and mobile black populations around the Atlantic perimeter. Indeed, their story is his story: a tale of people who did not create the rules of the colonial game but found their own ball to kick into play.

Skinner was born on June 20, 1924, in Port of Spain, Trinidad. He came to the United States in 1943 and promptly enlisted in the Army, which gained him U.S. citizenship. After World War II, he enrolled in New York University, studying anthropology with John Landgraf, and graduated in 1951. He went on to Columbia, where his main mentor was Morton Fried. He earned an M.A. and then a Ph.D. with a dissertation based on fieldwork in British Guiana (Skinner 1955). This was followed by his two years of initial research on the Mossi. After teaching at Columbia as a visiting assistant professor (1957-59), he moved to NYU, where he won tenure in 1963, and then rejoined the Columbia department in a permanent position. Apart from leaves of absence, several of which he spent teaching at Howard University, he remained at Columbia until his retirement in 1999.

Skinner's story thus began in a multiracial and classstratified Caribbean colony. His father was a Trinidadian of Barbadian ancestry, from a family of craftsmen and merchants who owned some land. His Trinidadian mother was more modestly born. It is not surprising, then, that his writings luxuriate not only in cross-cultural breadth and attention to black class diversity but also in the humanizing depth with which he explores the daily social and political dilemmas of the medieval Mossi kingdom of Ouagadougou, modern Upper Volta, Ethiopia, Liberia, and Madagascar, as well as those of African-American diplomats and race leaders in the 20th century.

Skinner's ambassadorial service crowned his lifelong status as a man "betwixt and between." While working on a U.S. military base in Trinidad as a teenager, Skinner admired the African American intellectuals, entertainers, and race leaders whose names and images circulated there. He, therefore, strategized to follow his emigrant father to New York City, where, like the subjects of his political ethnographies, he continually bridged and manipulated the multiple communities and identity claims available to him. He was a Caribbean immigrant to the United States, part of a community that, like Barbadian immigrants to Trinidad, regarded itself as harder working and of higher status than the local black population, but Skinner chose to define himself as an African American. He became committed to the uplift of black people generally and to the distinctly African American premise that blacks and mulattoes are family and comrades-in-arms, rather than mutually antagonistic strata in a "white-is-right" hierarchy. However, despite marrying into the African American community, he was frustrated by some African Americans' refusal to accept him as an insider. Moreover, although he felt humiliated by the menial roles accorded to black people in the U.S. military and was critical of the devastating U.S. Cold War policies in Africa and Vietnam, his primary identity was as a U.S. citizen and only secondarily that of a Trinidadian.

Skinner thus wedded pride with pragmatism. He recognized—rather than reviled—the power of power. He not only studied but also played ball on the racially uneven field of the Atlantic perimeter. As if autobiographically, he wrote more about people's "manipulations," "negotiations," "unofficial activities," "symbolic" interventions, and "back-channel influences" in the pursuit of sovereignty or safety than about the social "structures" or "laws" of society that characterized the conventional ethnographies of his day. In his analyses, fixed social positions gave way to the actor's strategically shifting array of personal, racial, and national personae.

Trained in the 1950s, Skinner wrote with one eve on the Manchester School-with a high awareness of local social conflict and social drama-and another on the largescale dilemmas of political identity faced by black elites in a world of white-controlled nation-states and colonial empires. In Skinner's work, the local social dramas and structural tensions theorized by the Manchester School took place against a macropolitical backdrop. Moreover, he invariably took advantage of the extensive written recordsincluding ancient Arabic chronicles of the western Sudan and the diplomatic correspondence of 19th-century African American ambassadors in Africa-to reveal his subjects' intellectual complexity, self-awareness, and strategic agency. Such insights were perhaps less easily imagined by the European and Euro-American ethnographers documenting related populations. At least one reason is that Skinner himself grew up with the same double consciousnesssometimes even triple and quadruple consciousnesses-as the people he studied.

Skinner is the sole author of three major books, the coauthor or editor of nine others, and the author of countless articles. The Mossi of Burkina Faso (1989) charts the medieval foundation of the Kingdom of Ouagadougou in what is now Burkina Faso, its centuries of expansion, and its 20th-century adaptation to European dominance and national independence. Skinner's analysis focuses on the continual genealogical debates and shifts of power among the kingdom's constituent principalities. The historical accounts of the conquered, of the conquerors, of Muslim travelers, and of French invaders are used to reconstruct a multiethnic polity with multiple power centers, in which the sovereignty of the Mogho Naba paramount ruler was never merely a matter of rules, tradition, and absolute power but, rather, entailed a chesslike web of marriages, military alliances, and continual rearticulations of tradition. Inherent dynamism and the rivalry among strategic actors were the structure of this system, which Skinner argued was an enduring example of the political system that had probably characterized the older but now-extinct Sahelian empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai.

African Urban Life (1974) is the most thorough historical and statistical account I have seen of a precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial African city. It details the 20th-century transformations that left Ouagadougou an administrative

center, with an ethnically diverse population; a rich social. political, artistic, religious, and educational life; and a smorgasbord of Western, Middle Eastern, and African cultural models but few means of sustaining itself economically. What is most special about the book, however, is Skinner's vivid documentation of the culturally coded but creative and pragmatic choices with which most families make their way under conditions of scarcity. The most intriguing of his accounts detail the reinterpretations of kin reciprocity and of associational life that "high-status" urban Voltaics undertake to ensure their upward mobility and to lighten the weight of their obligations to rural kin. The study unveils the class diversity and cosmopolitan complexity of African urban life in a manner with few parallels in the ethnographic literature. It is no surprise-although it gave Skinner a sense of vindication-that this book received the African Studies Association's Melville J. Herskovits Prize for the best book of the year.

African Americans and U.S. Policy toward Africa: In Defense of Black Nationality, 1850-1924 (1992) self-consciously uncovers the forgotten or marginalized history of an extraordinarily well-educated, politically savvy, and entrepreneurial class of postbellum African Americans who achieved a surprising degree of influence over American and European policy in Africa amid the neoslavery of colonialism and Jim Crow segregation. With a unique degree of ethnographic detail, Skinner spotlights the contrasting political strategies of Marcus Garvey and W. E. B. DuBois, both of whom shared with many African Americans the conviction that uplifting Africa was a necessary precondition to the redemption of the African diaspora. In Skinner's depiction, Garvey boldly declared his antagonism to the European colonialists and to U.S. perpetrators of slavery and segregation. By contrast, and more successfully, DuBois called for black unity and African uplift through unavoidable cooperation with those who held the guns and the cash: the Europeans and the Euro-Americans.

Two of Skinner's articles were as influential as his books. Through its application and revision of sociologist Georg Simmel's concept of "the stranger," Skinner's "Strangers in West African Societies" (1963) highlighted the normalcy and the diversity of roles accorded to the nonnatives in African societies, inspiring an entire edited volume of writings that illuminated not only the long-running cosmopolitanness of such societies but also the contradictions between, on the one hand, the national sovereignty of postcolonial nations and, on the other hand, the forms of enduring privilege that European colonialism had conferred on whites, Asians, Syro-Lebanese, and immigrant Africans (not to mention supposedly "alien races" such at the Tutsis) in the African colonies.

Skinner's article "The Dialectic between Diasporas and Homelands" (1982) reveals the central but ironic role that Asian, African, and European diasporas have played in the cultural histories and even the nationalist movements of their homelands. This article directly inspired my own study of the mutually transformative "dialogue" between Yorubaland and its diaspora (Matory 1999, 2005) and therefore indirectly furnished the central theme of Kevin Yelvington's Afro-Atlantic Dialogues: Anthropology in the Diaspora (2006b). Long before agency became the watchword of anthropology and hybridity the shibboleth of postcolonial studies, Skinner applied the historian's precision and the novelist's empathy to the symbolically rich strategies of intercultural agents in the black Atlantic world.

Skinner's insights won him a range of fellowships in anthropology and international relations: from Fulbright, the Woodrow Wilson International Center, the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, the Social Science Research Council, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the John Hay Whitney Foundation.

However, like many African American scholars, Skinner ultimately measured his success less in terms of abstract intellectual insights than how those insights benefited a downtrodden race. From lecterns at Columbia, Howard, Lincoln University, and the State Department, he trained generations of anthropologists and policy makers, diversifying their ranks exponentially. Yet he recognized that his interventions required a subtle craft. Amid the bass beat of power, the most effective strategy of the righteous is often a minuet. As the American Anthropological Association debates the ethics of anthropologist "embeds" in U.S.occupied Iraq and the American Psychological Association debates the limits of psychologists' role in torture by U.S. government agencies, Skinner's postambassadorial observation to his students is apposite: "The C.I.A. is everywhere. There's no way to avoid them" (Gwendolyn Mikell, personal communication, September 10, 2008). You can, however, choose what to say, how to say it, and when to withhold an answer. You can, in short, correct misperceptions and scatter tacks in the path of state-sanctioned misdeeds.

As a professor emeritus, Skinner held court amid the refracted evening glow of the Potomac and a generous wet bar. The locale bespoke the irony and the structural reality of a man in between, a rare anthropologist who had mastered the architecture of power, the subtleties of influence, and the cultural hybridity of their exercise in a postimperial world. He denied with his words and yet embraced with a grin his choice to live out his final years in what he described as a "den of iniquity": the Watergate. There his neighbors included the former Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole and George W. Bush's Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice. Like the forms of intersocietal power and influence that Skinner made his expertise, the Watergate condominium complex and the extralegal shenanigans it famously hosted are built not of squares and angles but of interlocking circles and crescents, laced together by curved, indirectly lit hallways in which the visitor can never see one end from the other. Likewise, Skinner showed us social order not from the perspective of the classes that wrote the laws of empires and nation-states-or of the classes who mistook the law for literal truth-but from the perspective of those whose survival depended on discerning the crooked motives of the lawmakers.

Skinner's interventions appear to draw some of their tactics from the political and performance arts of the black Atlantic, where beauty and effectiveness inhere in syncopating, circumventing, and bending the rectilinear lines of empire and nation-state. The Afro-Brazilian martial art of capoeira, for example, demands the outguessing, outmaneuvering, and subtle distraction of one's opponent. Indeed, at the height of the conflict, capoeira is meant to look like a harmlessly jovial game. Yet the results can be deadly.

Elliot P. Skinner became an ancestor on April 1, 2007. Although his death was a grievous loss to his wife of 25 years, anthropologist Gwendolyn Mikell, to the children of his first marriage to Thelma Garvin, Victor, Gale, Sagha, and Touray, and to his stepdaughter Luce, he died a greatgrandfather, and, in both biography and bibliography, he immortalized the art of capoeira where the Marquess of Queensbury rules.

NOTE

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