

ASA NEWS

ENHANCING THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ABOUT AFRICA



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THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

ASA Members share how the pandemic has impacted their lives and ASA Vice President Carolyn A. Brown discusses the Africa and COVID-19 Series.

AN AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION

EDITOR'S LETTER

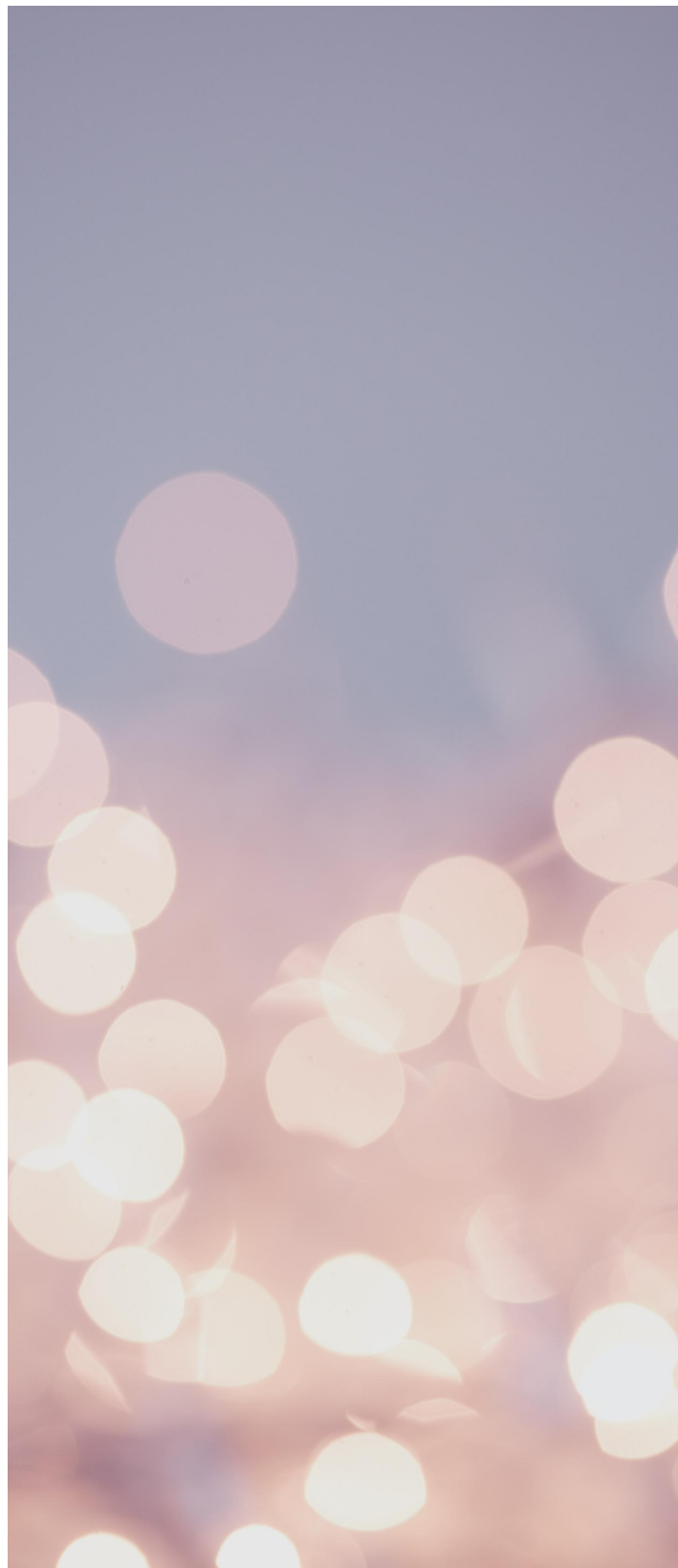
To say that publishing this issue of ASA News is a triumph is an understatement. A preliminary outline of our ideal fall edition was sketched out in early February, long before we knew what 2020 would bring. We have joked internally that by December, the Secretariat would have reinvented the wheel no less than 52 times, on every Monday of the year. This ASA News represents many of those reinventions – evolving each week to include or address salient issues while doing our best to avoid overburdening our obliging contributors.

This issue requires a special acknowledgement of those contributors, who went above and beyond to provide thoughtful insight and rumination for each piece. Thank you to the National Humanities Alliance for keeping us apprised of the Capitol Hill advocacy happening in D.C. and for authoring a piece to that end (p.3). Thank you to the American Council of Learned Societies and particularly the ACLS President Joy Connolly for your supportive leadership and vocal advocacy. We are proud to have signed onto the ACLS authored letter (p. 49) and to reprint Joy Connolly's proactive op-ed on supporting diverse faculty (p. 41). Thank you to those inspiring individuals featured in this issue for taking the time to answer our questions so introspectively during what has otherwise been a chaotic year.

Finally, a special thank you to all of our members who contributed an unprecedented number of positive updates and events to celebrate. Remembering to dwell upon good news – big or small – sometimes requires some collective effort and we are honored at the ASA to share your exciting updates with the world (p. 33).

As always, if there is something you hope to see in a future edition of ASA News, please feel free to suggest it to us at members@africanstudies.org.

Stay Safe and Happy Reading,
Alix Saba



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The ASA along with many ACLS Members signed on to this statement supporting higher education funding for the Humanities and Social Sciences.



Founded in 1981, the **National Humanities Alliance** (NHA) is an advocacy coalition dedicated to the advancement of humanities education, research, preservation, and public programs. NHA is supported by more than one hundred national, state, and local member organizations and institutions.

RALLYING SUPPORT FOR THE HUMANITIES SECTOR DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

By Beatrice Gurwitz, NHA Deputy Director

As museums, libraries, scholarly societies, colleges, universities, and other humanities organizations shut down in mid-March due to COVID-19, we, at the National Humanities Alliance, worked to understand and quickly communicate to Congress how the pandemic was affecting humanities educators and organizations.

Colleagues at museums, historic sites, and independent libraries told us that they were facing severe economic losses due to closures and were anticipating further losses due to cancelled festivals and fundraising events. Without additional support, they predicted that these losses would lead to layoffs and possibly closure for smaller organizations. These repercussions were likely to be all the more significant for organizations in communities that were already economically disadvantaged. Humanities educators reported strains as they worked to educate students in unprecedented circumstances, and we anticipated that educators who were casually employed or on contract would be especially vulnerable to the impacts of the crisis. Finally, we heard from scholarly societies who were concerned about the financial challenges associated with cancelling in-person conferences and struggling to support their members as they moved to virtual teaching and research.

Early in the Great Recession, Congress did not include funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 even as it provided stimulus funding to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). This time, after years of sustained work by advocates to communicate the public value of the humanities and build support on Capitol Hill, we were hopeful for a better outcome.

We quickly identified advocates whose Members of Congress would play a key role in negotiating the relief bill and facilitated direct outreach to them and their staff. In collaboration with the Federation of State Humanities Councils, we sent a letter to the members of the House Appropriations Committee calling for funding for the NEH and the state humanities councils to provide direct emergency grants to support humanities organizations. We also called for non-profit eligibility for Small Business Administration (SBA) loans and support for casually-employed and on contract educators. We worked closely with the offices of Representatives Chellie Pingree (D-ME) and David Price (D-NC) as they wrote a letter to leadership in support of the NEH and the NEA.

When the CARES Act ultimately passed on March 27, it included \$75 million in supplemental funding for the NEH and non-profit eligibility for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Of the \$75 million appropriated to the NEH, 40% would be administered by the state humanities councils for cultural institutions in their states.

And in late June, with an emphasis on preserving and creating new jobs, the NEH awarded 317 grants to support a wide range of cultural organizations and higher ed institutions. Pacific University in Oregon, for example, will use its NEH CARES grant to retain 14 humanities teaching positions in philosophy, English, and world languages. The University of Arizona Press will retain six permanent full-time jobs and create a temporary full-time position to expand the digitization and production of humanities e-books. Greenwood Community Development Corporation received a grant to add staff members to prepare an exhibition and tours at the historic site of the Tulsa Race Massacre.

While this support will be important in sustaining humanities organizations, it is far from meeting the overall need. The NEH was only able to fund 14% of applications received, while on average the state councils have only been able to fund 38%.

Anticipating this gap and the likely need for additional funding, we have been working to document the needs of the humanities community and share that information with Members of Congress and their staff since the CARES Act passed. We have been hosting virtual congressional briefings—emphasizing ongoing financial challenges and the role of humanities organizations and educators in addressing current challenges, whether related to COVID-19 or racial justice and anti-racism. And now that the NEH CARES grants have been released, we will be collaborating with the grantees to document the impact of that funding through surveying students and program participants. Most importantly, we have been ensuring that Members of Congress hear directly from their constituents since late March.

We anticipate that the challenges facing the humanities sector will be ongoing and that conversations on the Hill about the need for relief funding will ebb and flow over the next several months as the public health situation and related economic challenges continue to change shape. Our goal is to ensure that Members of Congress hear from as many humanities organizations and educators as possible so that the humanities sector is part of the conversation when Congress ultimately considers additional relief. Please be in touch if you are interested in contacting your Members of Congress. We are happy to help.



The ASA Board of Directors has opened a special call for proposals relating to Africa and COVID-19. Submissions close at 5pm EST Monday, September 14. Read the call on pp. 9-10 and submit online. All art highlighted in Taking the Virtual Leap was developed by independent artists in association with the United Nations COVID-19 Response campaign.

TAKING THE VIRTUAL LEAP

ASA Board of Directors Vice President Carolyn A. Brown, Shares the Association's Thought Process Behind the 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting and the Development of the Africa and COVID-19 Series.

In February 2020 we were excitedly planning our 63rd Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. The Annual Meeting was set to introduce our new Executive Director, Abdul Tejan Cole, a human rights lawyer, and a former anti-corruption head in Sierra Leone. As plans went forward, COVID-19 slammed the United States, including the New York/New Jersey area. Rutgers University, where the ASA Secretariat is based, joined many colleges and universities throughout the US in shutting down.

Though the ASA Board of Directors had yet to realize the extent to which the virus would disrupt nearly every aspect of our lives, at the Spring Board meeting we made the decision that an in person meeting would be an unsafe and untenable option in 2020. The ASA had to provide a space in which those of us who study Africa and activists who struggle for social justice to rise to

the challenge and hold a virtual meeting. We faced this with some trepidation as we thought (or perhaps, feared) a virtual meeting would be beyond our ability to organize. We were not at all convinced we could do this, but were encouraged when several other professional associations moved quickly to this format. Our sister organization, the 14,000 member Latin American Studies Association (LASA) organized their meeting in two months, which featured over 600 sessions. We are happy to follow their lead.

A pivot to a virtual meeting in 2020 provides the ASA Board of Directors with opportunity for the future. As of Fall 2020, it remains unclear how long the COVID-19 virus will be circulating in our society. Virus aside, international scholars and ASA members were already questioning the exclusivity of the US model of big, expensive

international conferences held in hotels. Such conferences exclude scholars from the Global South and replicate inequalities in the production of knowledge. A virtual conference allows the ASA to address these barriers. This year, participants will have flexibility to integrate the conference into their schedules, as well as view archived presentations at a later date. Prohibitive travel costs and visa policies will not deter the participation of international, especially Africa-based, scholars along with a good number of US scholars for whom the cost of a traditional Annual Meeting was prohibitive.

The virtual format fits comfortably with the current demands of our membership to foster networks with international, and especially Africa-based colleagues that could lead to intercontinental research projects, exchanges and collaborations.



Though a virtual meeting removes travel barriers in participation, challenges remain. It is our goal to increase technological accessibility of the conference throughout Africa despite varied bandwidth connections, different time zones, shortage of computers, unreliable electricity, the expense of internet access. We are working with partners such as The Africa Institute Sharjah and the Carnegie Corporation of New York to build out this capacity and accessibility.

Higher education has become a casualty of COVID-19. The pandemic's financial impact has been devastating on the institutions where ASA members work and on the Association. Much of the ASA budget comes from our Annual Meeting. Our ability to support publications, fellowships, and other membership initiatives depends on revenue received from the Annual Meeting. We are impacted by the shutting down of universities and colleges, and the shrinking of government fiscal support which caused severe cost-cutting measures. Conference support was one of the early casualties. This has increased the hardship for our members. Despite our own crisis we are offering flexible registration rates for the meeting. Though much of higher education has been impacted by COVID-19, our members' research and knowledge production remain as critical as ever. The ASA looks forward to continuing to support the academic output of our members in new and exciting ways, such as our Africa and COVID-19 series.

The Africa and COVID-19 series will feature interdisciplinary sessions as part of the virtual meeting that address COVID-19 and Africa. When the virus was designated as a



pandemic we recognized its historic significance as an existential threat to the continent. The Africa and COVID-19 series allows us to tap into the flurry of activity among international organizations, state agencies, NGOs, and academics as they respond to the pandemic. The series will provide a space for dialogue between our members and specialists in the US, Africa, and Europe. As a uniquely interdisciplinary organization we bring perspectives to this international discussion that link many existing initiatives. Our series pays special attention to the wide-ranging impact of the disease--political, social, economic, cultural--on continental Africa and Africans abroad. We hope to explore the range of strategies being used in

Africa to cope with the virus and to educate the community to prevent the spread of the disease.

Many of the meetings, conferences, and webinars on COVID-19 organized to date are predominately policy oriented or focus on public health specialists. Our series will offer an interdisciplinary lens in which presenters from varied disciplines and diverse perspectives can capture the full impact of the pandemic. Although we are a scholarly organization, our Call for Papers encourages the participation of both scholars and non-scholars, politicians, activists from the continent or the US, public health workers and creative artists. We want to reflect the 'full court

push' most countries are making to break the spread in the communities.

The effects and responses to COVID-19 are multidimensional. As we plan the COVID-19 series, we hope to see these various themes reflected in the sessions. As the pandemic spreads, it may provide cover for governments to increase inequality and oppression. Social media and global disinformation campaigns, sometimes championed by political leaders, have stoked fear or "fake news." Efforts to combat these campaigns have been cross-disciplinary: for example, UNESCO's #DontGoViral initiative mobilized artists to combat such misinformation.

Having weathered the Ebola crisis African states are drawing upon best practices that proved effective in ending that pandemic. When assessing the response to COVID-19, these lessons must be considered. The role of traditional healers should be explored. We are also interested in African immigrants and refugees for whom admission to the US requires that they accept "essential" jobs that expose them to high infection rates. We seek to alert our members to the severe conditions of African immigrants and refugees being held in detention facilities.

At this unprecedented time, the ASA recognizes the role it must play in documenting lived experiences for

"THOUGH MUCH OF HIGHER EDUCATION HAS BEEN IMPACTED BY COVID-19, OUR MEMBERS' RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION REMAIN AS CRITICAL AS EVER."

historical record. As an international organization, the ASA holds a distinct role in developing a unique archive. Our constituency of members, which includes a large number of African scholars, gives us an opportunity to both document the impact of the pandemic on our lives, and COVID's impact on our families and colleagues abroad. For this reason the Secretariat is collecting COVID-19 vignettes. We realize the sensitivity of COVID so you may submit anonymously or with a pseudonym. We ask for your support and experiences as we document this moment.

This is truly a time unlike any other. We hope to make virtual lemonade out of the lemons we've been dealt, and in the context of this crisis, facilitate long term on-line communication, collaboration, and networks. We strive to promote the important work of our members, and continuously serve our community. We thank you for your support, and hope to connect with you in November.





ASA 2020 Virtual Meeting **THE AFRICA AND COVID-19 Series** **November 19-21, 2020**

The African Studies Association (ASA), the largest U.S. based organization of Africanist scholars, invites proposals for a series of panels and roundtables focusing on COVID-19 within the 2020 virtual Annual Meeting.

The African Studies Association Board of Directors invites proposals on a broad range of subjects related to COVID-19. This interdisciplinary series will engage scholars, activists, artists, practitioners, policy makers, scientists, and others to broaden the dialogue and knowledge sharing on the subject. By late Fall of 2020, the very character of the pandemic is likely to have evolved. We want to learn from others' innovations and insights with special attention to how governments, community organizations, and international organizations are negotiating, navigating, and managing ways forward.

Suggested Session Topics

The ASA invites you to consider the following suggestions for possible interdisciplinary COVID-19 sessions. Proposals addressing any of these topics are welcome and participants are welcome to suggest others.

- Gendered and generational dynamics around management of care in families (including food and health)
- African migrants in and out of detention centers in Europe, Latin America, the United States, and North Africa
- The impact on development aid programming, including the crisis of food security, and other areas of limited resources
- The experience of displaced African health professionals in the West
- The precarity and peril of work for a segment of African immigrants (for example, in meat-packing plants, as healthcare workers, etc.)
- The impact on refugee camps, IDP camps, urban informal settlements
- Policing strategies during COVID-19
- Anti-COVID strategies as instruments of state repression
- Global South interdisciplinary and innovative strategies of success
- The engagement of Africa-based artists as public health advocates

- Historically-informed examinations of health policy, treatment, and vaccine considerations
- Initiatives of international and transcontinental organizations
- International conflicts over scientific research, patents and restricted access to medical therapies and vaccines
- Religion, religious organizations, and civil society's engagement with COVID-19
- Youth initiatives and innovations around COVID-19

Types of Submission

The ASA welcomes proposals of panels, roundtables, and individual papers.

Submission Guidelines

The COVID Series submission portal **will close at 5 pm EST, on Monday, September 14, 2020.**

COVID Series sessions will be peer-reviewed. The **general CFP participation rules do not apply** to COVID Series sessions. Presenters who are already on the program may submit original proposals. Abstracts that were already submitted prior to the submission deadline cannot be resubmitted for COVID Series consideration.

Contact the ASA at members@africanstudies.org.





COVID-19 VIGNETTES

We asked our global community how COVID-19 had touched their lives and shaped their interactions. These are a few of the beautiful miniature entries we received.

Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamps

Pretoria rural, South Africa

June 27, 2020

On my way back from grocery shopping, safely isolated in my car, wearing a mask, I see this guy begging on the crossroads. He stands there, alone, maskless, among the big cars that pass him by. This lockdown: for me it is easy. But what do you do if your income stopped coming in three months ago? If you haven't even received the \$20 government grant? If you live in a shack and share your toilet with the rest of the block? If you don't even have a home? This lockdown: in South Africa it's a luxury.

George Ofori-Atta

Athens, Ohio, USA

June 1, 2020

Alone in my apartment. I wake up every morning gazing through the window. All I see and hear is darkness. I wonder when the light will appear and drive away this darkness. Yet, I am hopeful that joy comes in the morning.

Sekyi-Brown Reginald

Kasoa, Ghana

April 29, 2020

As front-liners, my team and I keep educating all clients both physically and online on safety measures. And for our elderly patients with co-morbidities, we fill prescriptions to reduce visits.

Sekyi-Brown Reginald's photo is the cover image.

**Jacob Tropp**

Bristol, Vermont, USA

May 13, 2020

I recently had one of my most moving experiences as a teacher, participating with students in my introductory African history course in remote online discussions of Maaza Mengiste's beautiful novel *Beneath the Lion's Gaze*, as we all contend with the current crisis. The book explores the impact of the violent rise of the Derg on a middle-class family in Addis Ababa in the mid-1970s. As students reflected on the novel's exploration of trauma, the meaning of life and death, the value of family, and the capacity for healing and hope, they drew some incredibly profound connections with our own troubled times.

Cori Wielenga

Pretoria, South Africa

May 14, 2020

Disorientation. Everything is fine in our little home bubble while the world outside irrevocably changes so that when we walk out of our lockdowns we won't recognise it anymore.

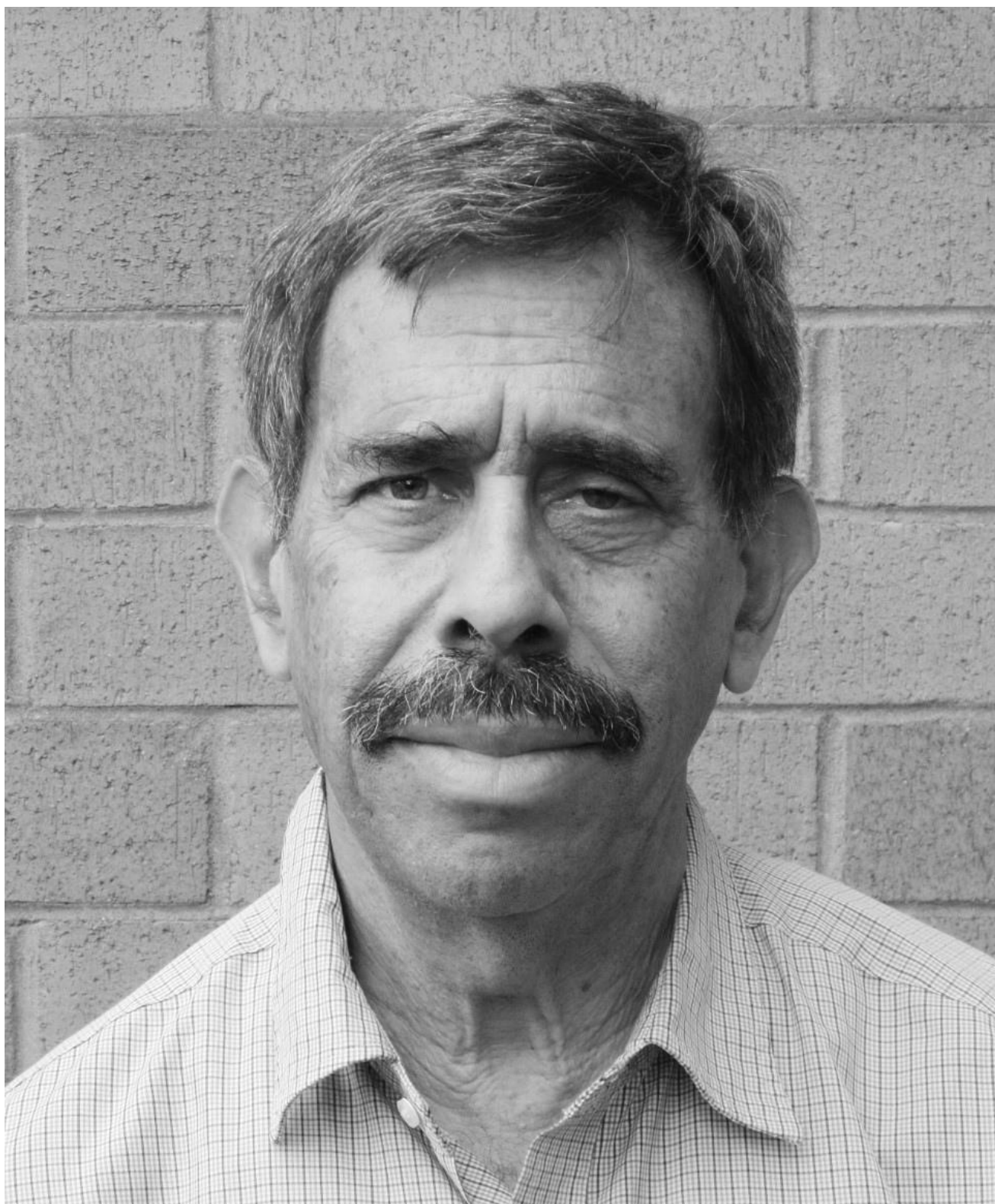
Disequilibrium. Nowhere in the world is safe. Nowhere in the world is as it was. No one can anticipate what next.

Vertigo. In my house, the ground feels steady under me, but the moment I look up (at Twitter, the news, WhatsApp, the helicopters flying over), the ground moves. It feels as if it will never stop moving.

Hope. Moments of kindness, solidarity, selflessness. A word of encouragement. Maybe we'll survive this afterall.

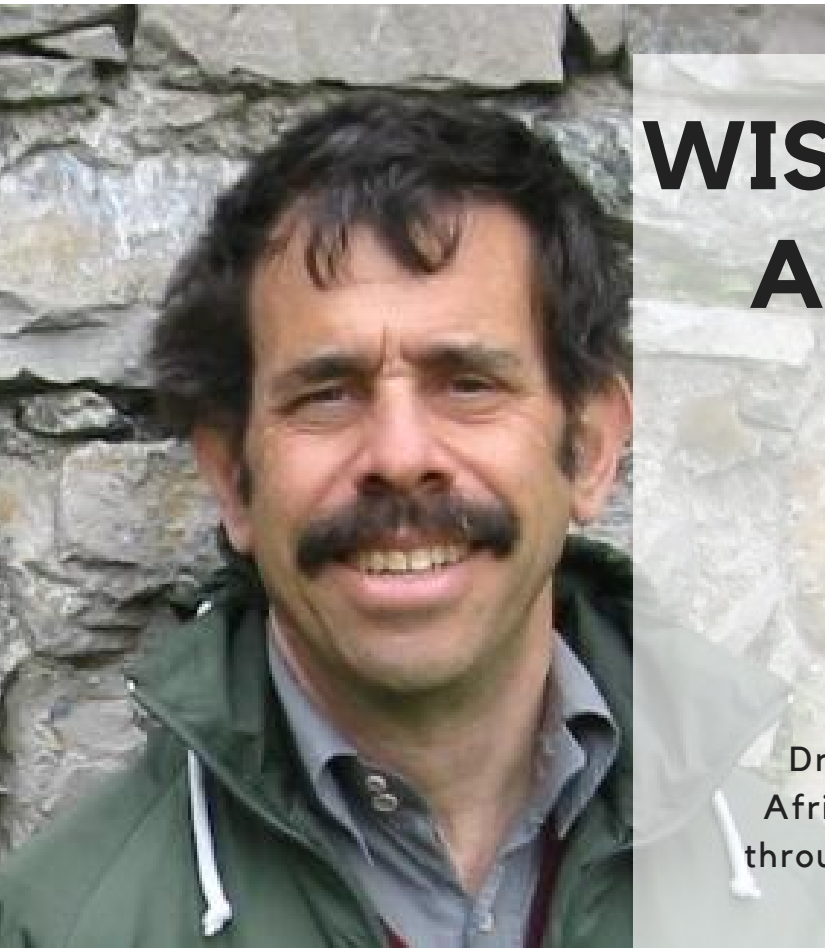
"HOPE. MOMENTS OF KINDNESS, SOLIDARITY, SELFLESSNESS. A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT."

CORI WIELENGA



ASA 2020 Distinguished Africanist: Dr. Frederick Cooper

Please join us as the ASA 2020 Virtual Annual Meeting Closing Ceremony on Saturday, November 21, 2020 to honor Dr. Frederick Cooper's lifetime achievements in the field of African Studies and enjoy his acceptance speech. Information about the event can be found on our website at africanstudies.org.



WISDOM AND WIT: A DISTINGUISHED AFRICANIST REFLECTS

Interviewed by Lisa A. Lindsay and
Moses E. Ochonu.

Dr. Frederick Cooper, the 2020 Distinguished Africanist, shares the inspiring lessons learned throughout his career as an African Historian in this intimate interview.

Frederick Cooper, who recently retired from the history department at NYU and for many years taught at the University of Michigan, is one of the giants of African studies, history, and qualitative social science. Since the mid-1970s, he has produced ten single-authored books, numerous co-authored and edited books, and over 115 articles and chapters, many of which have been translated into a number of different languages. His books have won prizes from the ASA (1981, and finalist in 1988 and 1997), the World History Association (2011), and the American Historical Association (2014). He has been awarded more than twenty fellowships, including by the NEH, ACLS, Guggenheim Foundation, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Institute of Advanced Study of Nantes, and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. The quality and originality of Cooper's work has shaped not only African studies, but also the theory and

methods of the social sciences more broadly. In addition, through his commitment to mentoring Ph.D. students, Cooper has played a distinguished role in producing new generations of Africanist historians, anthropologists, and scholars in other fields.

Even a highly abbreviated summary of Frederick Cooper's publications indicates their breadth and significance. Cooper's first three books—*Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (Yale, 1977), *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925* (Yale, 1980), and *On the African Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa* (Yale, 1987)—traced the history of slavery and its aftermaths on the East African coast, reaching through a wide space—comparing Africa with other parts of the world—and moving forward in

time—carrying his focus on African labor from the early 19th century into the mid-20th and beyond. His next project, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996), is an ambitious and masterful account of how labor policies led to decolonization through a dialectical relationship between African activism and colonial attempts to control African workers.

In influential works published in the 1990s and 2000s, Cooper re-shaped how historians of Africa and elsewhere frame the colonial encounter. "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," published in the *American Historical Review* in 1994, and the volume he co-edited with Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (California, 1997), both continue to be staples in many graduate seminars in modern African history and in the history of

colonialism and empire. Cooper's textbook, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge 2002, 2nd edition 2019), introduces a field-orienting argument about the creation and perpetuation of the "gatekeeper state," a "co-production" of colonial officials, African elites, and international businesses which links African politics and economic formations. *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (California, 2005) alerts scholars to the limits and pitfalls of a wide range of concepts they deploy in explaining oppression, marginality, self-assertion, and sociopolitical and economic interconnections. In several searing essays, Cooper exposes the problems of deploying terms such as "identity," "modernity," and "globalization" without signaling their contingent properties, their genealogy, and the political projects that underpin them.

In the extensive and erudite *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, 2010). Cooper and co-author Jane Burbank point out the historical youth and contingency of the nation-state as a political formation, in comparison with the long history of empires. Cooper provides an extended example of this phenomenon in his most recent, award-winning monograph, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton, 2014). As he reveals in this radical new view of decolonization, leaders of political and social movements in French Africa sought, until quite late in the game, alternatives to both colonial empire and the nation-state, seeking some form of federation or confederation among the different African territories as well as with France. Through extensive archival research and

masterful prose, Cooper captures the political imagination of African activists, the dynamism of ensuing policy debates, and the poignancy of outcomes that no one, at the start, actually wanted. He broadens this analysis further in *Citizenship, Inequality, and Difference* (Princeton, 2018), which offers a concise and sweeping overview of citizenship's complex evolution, from ancient Rome to the present.

The influence of Fred Cooper's work has extended far beyond the academy. As he rose to prominence in the 1970s, he became a forceful and influential contributor to debates over African economies and strategies for economic development. In his famous 1981 essay "Africa and the World Economy," Cooper argued for reaching beyond smug assumptions of teleological economic change by which Africa might eventually move toward

European-style industrialization and "modernity" while at the same time taking issue with radical stances that blamed African poverty on the continent's subordination to and exploitation by the world economy. His insistence on the primacy of African actors, and on respecting and documenting the reasons they chose to pursue particular strategies, has influenced scholars as well as development practitioners, economic planners, and public spheres in Africa. Similarly, the power of his work on empire has been a critical counterweight to successive waves of apologists for European colonialism, who not only sanitize the brutal history of empire but argue for reimposing it on countries deemed "failed states."

As important and significant (and voluminous) as Cooper's written work

has been and continues to be, his role as a professor and academic colleague is also distinguished. During his tenure at the University of Michigan (1982–2001) and New York University (2002–2019), Cooper served as adviser or dissertation committee member for doctoral students working in diverse geographical and topical areas within African history and anthropology. These former students are now training future African studies professors and professionals engaged in Africa-related work. The graduate seminar on empires in world history that he co-taught with Jane Burbank at both the University of Michigan and NYU has been the starting point for many dissertations and books in different geographic fields, and at NYU Cooper has served on numerous dissertation committees in Middle Eastern and French history. Moreover, he is known as a generous colleague, sharing insights and feedback on others' scholarship with his characteristic attention to detail and significance. Indeed, when former students and colleagues organized five roundtables on his publications for the 2018 meeting of the African Studies Association, Fred Cooper provided extensive, probing, and generous commentary at each of them! (*History in Africa* published five historiographical essays resulting from those panels in its June 2020 issue.)

Twelve former students co-signed the letter nominating Fred Cooper for the ASA's Distinguished Africanist Award, and several colleagues, from around the world, sent in supporting letters. The questions that follow were generated by several of his former students, who have moved on to their own academic positions but who still relish the opportunity to gain fresh insights from Frederick Cooper.

What drew you to the study of African history? Please tell us about the intellectual journey that led you to African studies.

I was drawn to studying Africa by the Vietnam War, odd as that might sound. I was an undergraduate at Stanford from 1965 to 1969, when the anti-war movement got going. The struggle against imperialism in its various forms seemed to me a central question of my time. In my 19-year old naiveté, I thought that Southeast Asia was being destroyed by American imperialism; Latin America was mired in its own class system; but Africa, where new states had thrown off the colonial yoke and were led by young and dynamic leaders, seemed like the region most likely to move beyond its past. That perception didn't last beyond a few weeks of the first course I took on Africa, taught by a newly-minted political scientist, David Abernethy. In those days, political scientists actually studied politics, doing in-depth fieldwork, reading newspapers and political pamphlets, interviewing key figures, and looking at politics in its historical context. David's teaching about the colonial era and the struggles for independence taught me about the constraints that were the other side of the possibilities of the movements against colonialism. By the time the course was over I was hooked on the study of Africa and thinking about the relationship of possibilities and constraints. I had for some years been interested in history, even when I thought I'd be a science major, and the combination of my growing interest in the discipline of history and my new perspective on Africa, pushed me into the field of African history. The relationship of possibilities and constraints as they played out over time has been a theme of my research and writing ever since.

Mamadou Diouf recently described your overall intellectual project as dealing with connection and comparison. How much do you agree with this characterization? What do you see as the "through line" that connects the themes and questions that have interested and inspired you?

These themes have interested me since I was an undergraduate history student. In addition to my work on Africa, I took a course on the history of the Southern United States taught by David Potter, who introduced us to the already-rich literature on comparative slavery in the Americas, as well as the work of Eugene Genovese that connected slavery to the rise of global capitalism. Some years later, when I was a graduate student at Yale and beginning to work on slavery on the East Coast of Africa, I returned to this literature. At the time, scholarship on slavery in Africa was just beginning and the much more sophisticated work on the Americas provided questions and perspectives, illuminating fundamental differences, connections, and comparisons.

Pursuing comparison and connection was a politically loaded issue at the beginning of my career. African historians wanted to differentiate themselves from imperial history, the field in which some of them (like Kenneth Onwuka Dike and Phillip Curtin) had been trained. To some pioneering scholars, this meant focusing on particular African communities, sometimes looking at connections in Africa, but above all trying to write indigenous histories in indigenous terms. That was an important innovation and it made it possible not only to get away

from the limits of imperial history—the history of white people in Africa—but also from tendencies within anthropology in this and earlier periods to treat the unchanging "tribe" as the unit of analysis. But it had its costs too. The colonial period appeared mainly as a methodological obstacle, introducing distortions in the transmission of the memories of earlier eras that historians wanted to bring out. It tended to make African history into a self-contained field—in a way making it more of an addition to the history curriculum without implying that the rest of the curriculum had to be rethought. Comparison and connections were not the point if the mission was to establish a truly African history. While migration within Africa before colonization was a major theme of early historiography, connections and comparisons beyond the continent were if anything less prominent than they were in W. E. B. Du Bois's book of 1946, *Africa and the World*. My first book, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*, was in fact criticized for its comparative approach that looked to the Americas, even if one of the points of the comparison was to illuminate differences and to locate change in the nature of slavery as a consequence of long-distance commerce.

If anything, my perspective has moved more toward connection and less toward comparison. Other scholars are showing the time-depth of Africa's connections to the world. My own research since the 1980s has emphasized the complexity of Africa's connections to Europe. We don't have a very good vocabulary for discussing connections that are unequal, even

From Slaves to Squatters

Plantation Labor and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890–1925

Frederick Cooper



Most of your scholarship, in one way or another, has related to colonialism and the colonial period in Africa. How do you think that some of the issues you have examined—like slavery as labor history, trade unionism and labor stabilization in colonial politics, citizenship and political communities—might help us understand the postcolonial period? Do earlier controversies over slavery and emancipation, for instance, provide insight into more recent discussions of migration and human trafficking? What are the continuities in the politics of claims making in later periods? What lessons can the histories of alternate political imaginaries in the late colonial period provide to newer forms of political or economic integration?

extremely so, but nonetheless two-way. Léopold Sédar Senghor had a revealing way of expressing the issue. He contrasted two modes of connectedness:

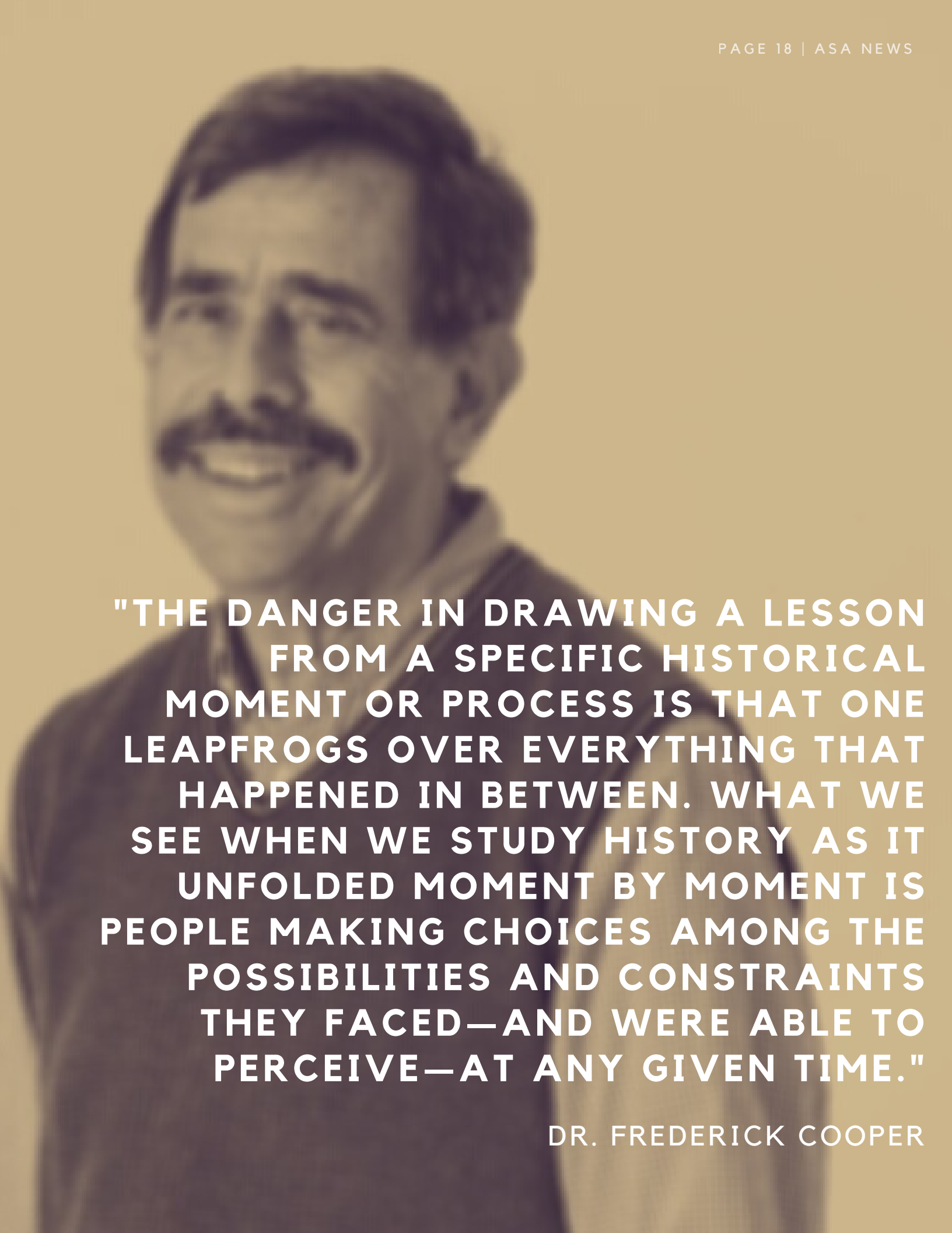
“horizontal solidarity,” that is of people in a similar cultural or social relationship, and he was most interested in Africans’ connections with each other, versus “vertical solidarity,” that is unequal relations. In his mind, horizontal solidarity by itself meant unity in poverty, while vertical solidarity in itself meant colonialism, but if Africans could work together they could turn the vertical connection to Europe into a demand for resources and the ending of discriminatory practices. One of the themes of my research has been the relationship of these two axes in the history of French Africa, of Africans trying to work with each other and trying to turn the exploitative and denigrating colonial connection into something that would enable Africans to improve their economic and political situation.

Studying history helps us think about the present. The question is how. I am skeptical about drawing direct lessons from the past, about looking for legacies. The danger in drawing a lesson from a specific historical moment or process is that one leapfrogs over everything that happened in between. What we see when we study history as it unfolded moment by moment is people making choices among the possibilities and constraints they faced—and were able to perceive—at any given time. We need that sense of acting within a limited range of possibilities—and the importance of thinking about consequences—as we face the future.

Thinking this way—about historical trajectories—emerged out of my own research trajectory. When I began to do research on the political history of French West Africa, I was coming from labor history. I had learned how much the labor movement after World War II

framed its demands around the claim of equal pay for equal work. It was a claim—with profound consequences for both workers and the colonial government—made within the framework of the French empire, which had just tried to stabilize its politics by granting, in a controlled and limited manner, citizenship to the people of its overseas territories. Seeing this made me question the standard narrative of African independence, with every militant action folding into a quest for the nation-state. There was a serious tension in the labor movement between demands made in the name of French citizenship—which when backed with strike action were achieving partial success—and desire for political independence. Political leaders themselves were engaged in a changing pattern of claim-making much more complex than the nationalist narrative. Senghor, along with the more radical Sékou Touré and the more conservative Félix Houphouët-Boigny, pushed for different ways to turn colonial empire into a federation or confederation of equals, including European France and its former African territories. Before 1957, when politics broke open, the only significant advocate of national independence in sub-Saharan French Africa was the UPC in Cameroon, which was the object of repression much more intense than that experienced elsewhere.

Post-independence Africa has been shaped as much by the consequences of political mobilization against colonialism as by colonial policies themselves. The partial success of political and social movements in the 1950s made African rulers in the 1960s conscious



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DR. FREDERICK COOPER

conscious of the dangers continued mobilization might pose for them. Most post-colonial governments tried to demobilize leading sectors of the population: trade unions, farmers' associations. The record of the ensuing decades is highly uneven. The challenge to historians and analysts of politics is not to create a single narrative of "Africa" but to understand the varied trajectories on a continent where struggles for liberation and social progress and efforts to entrench the power of small elites have been going on for over half a century.

You've published several influential essays that interrogate widely used terms and concepts like "development," "identity," "modernity," and "globalization." Why is conceptual precision such an important project in your engagement with Africa and the Global South? What other terms and concepts in our field cry out to you for greater scrutiny?

Some of my friends call me the "concept cop." And when I give a talk that uses a concept like "empire" or "citizenship," someone usually tries to trap me by asking why I am using terminology that itself could be called into question. Such a question is appropriate. A conceptless-history is impossible; an unexamined vocabulary of inquiry is even worse than the use of concepts that are both questionable and being questioned. Thoughtful interventions have explored the tension between "nation-state" and "empire" and they have expanded notions of citizenship to look beyond a relationship between the individual and a formally-constituted state to explore questions of membership in

collectivities defined by rural societies or urban forms of affinity. Of course, critiques like those in my *Colonialism in Question* of identity, modernity, and globalization could address other concepts. "Neo-liberalism" would be a good candidate, given how it is often used as a catch-all for everything bad in the world rather than in a more precise sense as an ideology that has had a large (and to my mind pernicious) impact, but does not characterize the way the world actually operates. But the work of the concept cop is best done by many people coming from different vantage points.

In the age of Black Lives Matter, scholars and the general public are paying renewed attention to historical systems of oppression and exploitation—slavery, colonization, racism—and their memorialization and preservation in institutions and structures. What might BLM activists learn from Africanists and other scholars who have studied inequality in different contexts?

There is a real tension between the importance of addressing the pain that comes from the history people of African descent have faced of enslavement, colonization, and racism, and addressing issues of inequality across time and space. This tension can be a source of fruitful exploration. The histories of enslavement, colonization, and racism are not "out there" but right here; one cannot understand the United States or France any more than Nigeria or South Africa without a focus on these subjects. We live in a day and age when most thinking people will not defend, as was possible until a startlingly recent time,

these structures, but the way they shaped the institutions we live with remains profound. It is important as well to keep our attention on how political actors have engaged with unequal structures and tried to change them. Revolution and oppositional solidarity are essential parts of the story, but not the only ones. That is why I am drawn to Senghor's insistence on conjugating horizontal and vertical solidarities. Unequal relationships are still relationships and they can be pushed and pulled on. Studying history gives us instances where small cracks in an edifice of power can be forced open as well as instances where there has been no realistic alternative to all-out struggle. Studying history doesn't tell us what strategies should be pursued in the present and historians should be aware of both the value and the limits of what they have to offer to new generations of activists. But studying history does give us examples of different forms of engagement and their consequences. Right now, the need for political engagement even within deeply flawed structures is particularly acute.

As a white American historian of Africa who early in his career had a foot in African American history, how do you interpret the racial politics of our field, which has gone through several phases and tends to resonate differently with different generations of Africanists?

African Americans have been interested in Africa since the 19th century, and African American scholars were among the pioneers of studying Africa in the 20th century.

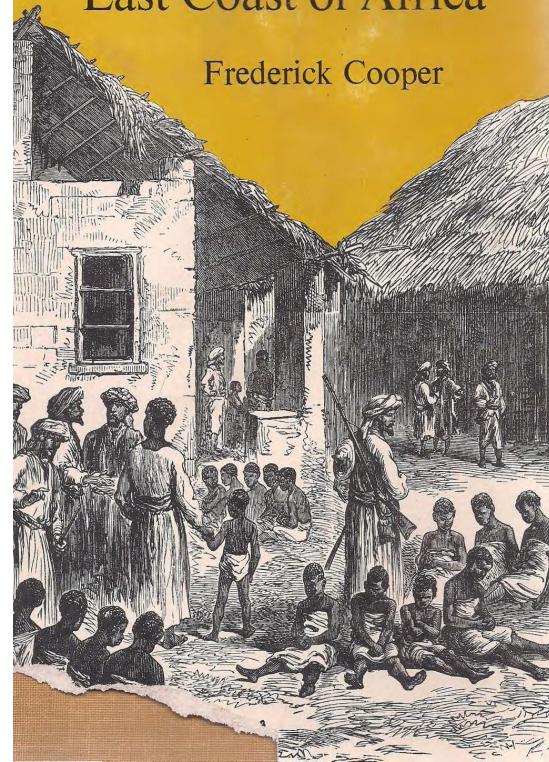
As Jean Allman showed in the Presidential Address to the ASA in 2018, some of the pioneers of African studies in the United States, including Melville Herskovits, worked to marginalize African American scholars as they sought to make African studies respectable to elite universities. By the early 1970s, when I was in graduate school, the ASA was among the institutions whose failure to address the situation of African Americans in the profession and the particular meanings that Africa had to people of African descent was coming under fire. The relatively few people of color in senior positions faced burdens that their white colleagues did not; they were likely to be put on every committee studying any question having to do with race and to embody themselves universities' slow repudiation of decades of discrimination. At that time, African American graduate students were more likely to focus on African American than African history, and the presence of African Americans in the field has only slowly improved. The field of African history is more inclusive than it was then and tensions are less, but there is nothing to be complacent about. African American students I have worked with have certainly challenged me on many questions, but none has challenged me on the basis of my race. Perhaps there were students who didn't take my courses for that reason, and I think it is important that students see that there are white scholars who have interesting things to say about African history and that there are African American scholars who are contributing to French, British, German, or American history.

One trend that has greatly affected African history in the United States is

the relationship of American scholars to our African colleagues, both here and in Africa. When I went to Kenya as a doctoral student in 1972-73 and returned in 1978-79, I found at the University of Nairobi an intellectual atmosphere far more inspiring than anything I had encountered in the United States or England. The debates in seminars were intense, the level of scholarship very high. There were annual meetings of historians and a lively journal. In the 1980s, Kenyan historians suffered a dual blow, the repressiveness of the government of Daniel arap Moi and the loss of resources following the global recession, exacerbated by the arrogant and cruel policies of structural adjustment. These factors pushing the most critically engaged scholars out of some African countries were added to the fact that African scholars, like those anywhere else, responded to opportunities in an academic community that crossed continents. The American academy has been greatly enriched by this Africa connection. When I started doing research in Senegal in 1986, Dakar was still the place to be. I encountered there a group of historians who were both extraordinarily talented and welcoming. I remember a particular evening when Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch happened to be in town and I went to a dinner in her honor. Catherine and I both sat spellbound as we listened to a dialogue between members of the younger and older generations of Senegalese historians, a dialogue that was both respectful and challenging. Some of the people I met then have since found the conditions for teaching and research to be too constraining for them to exercise their talents and they too

Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa

Frederick Cooper



have enriched the American academy, while others have stayed the course in Senegal. African scholars have benefitted from the efforts of CODESRIA to develop intra-African networks for research, debate, and publication. I just participated in a seminar for graduate students in Senegal organized by Babacar Fall of the Université Cheikh Anta Diop—virtual because my visit was cancelled because of COVID—that discussed some of my work on labor and citizenship in which over 50 people joined the Zoom. Taken together, these stories underscore the importance of institutional support for African institutions and exchanges linking Africa with other parts of the world. The talent and the interest are there. What are lacking are resources and well-functioning institutions.

What is the relationship between your scholarship and your pedagogy? How do you approach being a mentor for graduate students and others?

You are probably in a better position to answer this question than I am. I've never thought there was a real split between teaching and research. My writing on slavery, colonialism, empires, development, and other subjects has been as much shaped by teaching courses (graduate and undergraduate) on these subjects as my research has shaped the courses I have taught. I have also enlarged my own horizons as well as those of students by co-teaching courses on slavery, emancipation, colonialism, and empire, putting students of Africa into conversation with students working on other parts of the world.

The point about mentoring is that mentoring is exactly what faculty teaching graduate students should be doing. We need to bring a variety of approaches to the attention of students, engage with their thinking about subjects that interest them, provide support for their endeavors (including endless letters of recommendation), but remember that it is up to them to devise their own projects and research agendas. I don't like programs (the European Research Council is an example of this) that slot doctoral dissertations into somebody else's well-funded program. History faculties tend less than most of the social sciences to insist on doctoral research conforming to a particular theoretical or methodological framework, and that is one reason I have found the history departments at Michigan and NYU to be environments in which an Africanist does not have to do constant battle with colleagues. We're not always so good at talking about each other's scholarship, but at our best we combine giving students a lot of space to think on their own and providing the feedback and critical reading of texts that helps them to do work that is both rigorous and creative.

"MENTORING IS EXACTLY WHAT FACULTY TEACHING GRADUATE STUDENTS SHOULD BE DOING. WE NEED TO BRING A VARIETY OF APPROACHES TO THE ATTENTION OF STUDENTS, ENGAGE WITH THEIR THINKING ABOUT SUBJECTS THAT INTEREST THEM, PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THEIR ENDEAVORS (INCLUDING ENDLESS LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION), BUT REMEMBER THAT IT IS UP TO THEM TO DEVISE THEIR OWN PROJECTS AND RESEARCH AGENDAS."

What are you working on now, and why?

Jane Burbank and I have been thinking for some time about writing a sequel to our empires book, but the project might be taking a new direction. We're working on what began as a talk, turned into an attempt to write an article, and may end up as a short book to be called something like "EurAsia, EurAfrica, and AfroAsia: Reimagining Political Space." We're interested in how people, in different political contexts, thought of futures that crossed continental divides, addressed head-on histories of unequal power relations—particularly the hegemony of western European states—and sought to reduce

inequality through thinking of new forms of mobilizing connections. The project is in part inspired by Senghor's writings about vertical and horizontal solidarities, the very different trajectories of the three forms of political imagination, and the consequences of so much of the world being unable to transcend conventional political boundaries. We'll see how far we go along these lines.

What big questions do you think should shape the field in the future?

I don't think it's the place of a 72-year old Africanist to answer that question. It's for younger scholars to figure out.



AfricaNow! Call for Proposals



The African Studies Association (ASA) is excited to continue our **AfricaNow!** format to accommodate emerging issues on our Annual Meeting program. These sessions will feature late-breaking issues that emerged subsequent to the close of the ASA CFP.

Format:

Sessions can be proposed as **group discussions** (maximum of five presenters), **individual presentations**, or **memorials**. Please ensure that your AfricaNow! proposal meets the following criteria:

- Proposals must relate directly to current events on Africa and/or African Studies.
- All AfricaNow! organizers and presenters must register for the Annual Meeting when notified of acceptance.

Suggested Topics for 2020 (but not limited to):

- State Violence & Protests
- Shifts in Higher Education
- COVID Response
- Botswana's Elephant Mystery
- Kenya's Google Balloons
- Literary Analysis: All Boys Aren't Blue, The First Woman etc.
- All 2020 Memorials

Submit:

Please prepare a **(1)** basic title, **(2)** an abstract that describes the session and confirms its timeliness, **(3)** the format, **(4)** the names and affiliations of each presenter, **(5)** the duration of the session, and **(6)** your preferred date and time. We will do our best to accommodate your preferences.

AfricaNow! proposals must be received by 5 pm EST, on Monday, September 14.

Please Note: AfricaNow! sessions will **not be peer-reviewed** and submissions of formal panels and papers **will not be accepted** in this format. The participation rules do not apply to AfricaNow! sessions. Presenters who are already on the program may submit proposals. Abstracts that were already submitted prior to the submission deadline **cannot** be resubmitted for AfricaNow! consideration. All requests for sessions will be reviewed by the ASA Secretariat for general appropriateness.

Contact ASA at members@africanstudies.org

MEET: ABDUL TEJAN COLE

The ASA's New Executive Director



Abdul Tejan Cole joined the African Studies Association as the new Executive Director in mid-2020 amidst the chaos of COVID-19 and the Association's landmark shift toward an entirely virtual Annual Meeting.

RUMINATIONS FROM OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Three months have quickly passed since I joined the African Studies Association (ASA) and stepped in Suzanne's giant shoes as the new Executive Director. A graduate of the oldest western-style university in West Africa, Fourah Bay College, and the first university to be established in London, University College London, my career journey has taken me across Africa. A descendant of former slaves who settled in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, and traces deep roots to Yorubas in Nigeria, I have lived and worked in most regions in sub-Saharan Africa, including Cape Town, South Africa, and Dakar, Senegal. In the course of my work, there are roughly about 15 out of 54 African countries that I have not visited. I have worked in state and non-state institutions in human rights, good governance anti-corruption, environmental and social justice, post-conflict reconstruction, transitional justice, and the rule of law sectors.

Before joining the ASA, my career included several years of teaching law at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, and the Sierra Leone Law School. Teaching is my passion. I would probably not have left the classroom but for my frustration with our inability to translate into real policy changes and the challenges dealing with the red-tape at the University. However, I have always remained connected, and I have helped out with guest lectures and taught in several summer courses, including at Central European University and Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar. I know firsthand the realities that educators face and look forward to working with ASA members and the Secretariat to support our important work.

I am a firm believer in Africa and Africans. Contrary to the misinformation, lack of knowledge, and stereotypes, I have seen firsthand how industrious we are. From the women who crisscross the Benin/Togo border to the 13-year-old boy who taught himself engineering and built his radio station, the continent is not short of bright minds that have a dream, a vision, and destiny. Governance and leadership challenges have been a hurdle to the realization of many dreams. In addition, there is a need to correct the misinformation about the continent.

Helping to cultivate a better understanding of Africa and addressing the many myths and misinformation about the continent was one of the key reasons I joined ASA. As Executive Director, one of my primary goals will be to work to increase our membership numbers, especially on the continent, and foster greater collaboration between scholars working on Africa, within and without the continent. A key priority will also be working to strengthen and support ASA's Emerging Scholars Network. I hope we can stimulate new thinking in African Studies and encourage the publication of high-quality academic papers. We will also seek to establish a database of tenured professors and other Africanist faculty in various countries. The database will include a list of current research projects and names of academics who are willing to contribute their time to mentor scholars, especially those on the continent. With my academic and civil society backgrounds, I see a lot of opportunities to foster collaboration between academics and civil society organizations as well as the media and policymakers. We can strengthen our advocacy work to ensure that the findings of a lot of the excellent research being conducted make a difference in the lives of people. Although I am a lawyer by training, I strongly believe in a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing and researching many of the issues related to the continent.

I look forward to the years to come at the ASA. However, since I came on board, my primary focus has been on working with the team to ensure that our first virtual annual conference is successfully organized. I am pleased to announce that even though we will meet virtually, the ASA Virtual Conference will feature over 200 sessions, including keynote lectures and a special series on COVID and Africa. We will bring together more than 800 attendees from across the globe. Kathryn, Lori Ann, Alix, and I are working hard on this and hope you can join us.

I look forward to meeting you all, albeit virtually.

Abdul Tejan Cole
Executive Director, African Studies Association



READING THE RAINBOW

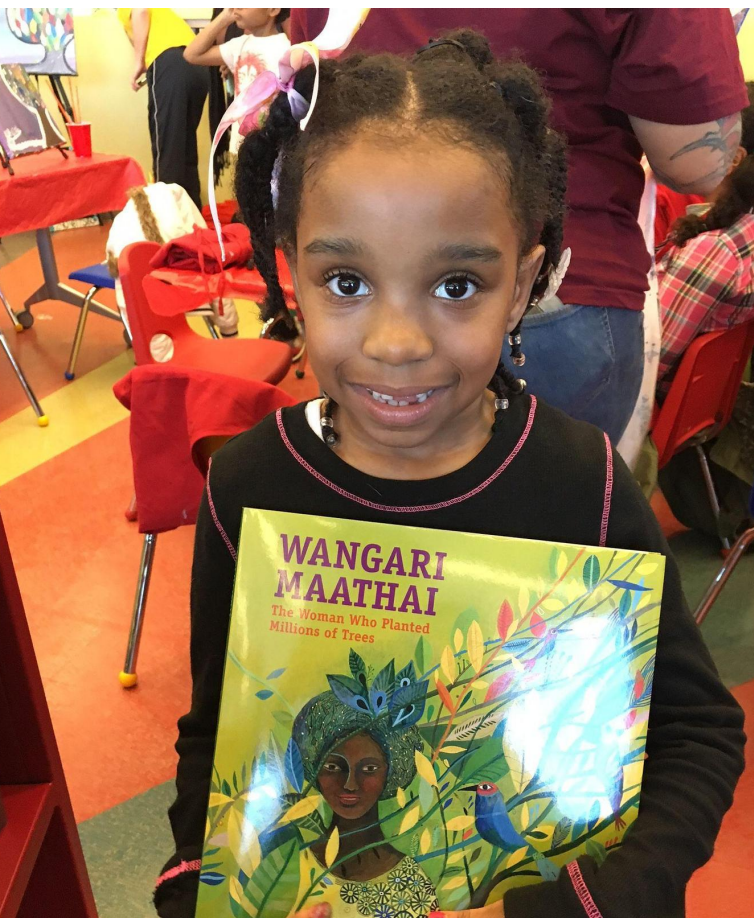
Founder of the Children's Africana Book Award, Brenda Randolph and her colleague Vanessa Oyugi share their passion for children's literature and the importance of reading diversely.

Brenda Randolph, Howard University and
Vanessa Oyugi, Howard University

Brenda, you founded the Children's Africana Book Award (CABA) in 1991. What inspired you to create this award? What did it take to get the prize off the ground?

I was inspired by a 2nd grader. After I read the book *Galimoto* to her class, she whispered to me, "Please read more books like this to my class. It shows what Africa is really like." A recent immigrant from Liberia, she was distressed by the ridiculous things classmates said to her about Africa. Her comments sparked an epiphany. As a school librarian, I knew well the power of the Newbery and Caldecott book awards. Could a prize that recognized books about Africa encourage educators and parents to choose better books? When I approached the Outreach Council and ASA executive board with the idea of an award, they enthusiastically agreed.

Getting the prize off the ground was a group effort. ASA members Ed Keller, Edna Bay, Gretchen Walsh, Barbara Brown, Jo Sullivan and Patricia Kuntz were early and enthusiastic supporters. Africanist scholars wrote book reviews and served on award committees as did children's literature scholars Meena Khorana and Vivian Yenika Agbaw. Funding and national recognition were our biggest challenges. A few early winners paid their way to the awards ceremony but most had not heard of CABA.



Partnerships with the Library of Congress, Teaching for Change, and the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art provided direct funds, in-kind funds and a national publicity platform. Volunteers were crucial. Charlene Brooks, a brilliant programmer, helped design a review database, and Harriet McGuire performed a myriad of tasks in addition to providing much-needed financial support. Most important has been the support and encouragement of my former professors Mbye Cham, Bob Edgar and other members of the faculty at the Department of African Studies at Howard University.

Vanessa, you having been working at Howard alongside Brenda including on the CABA for the past few years. What has been the most challenging part of working on the award? What is most inspiring?



Every year the CABA process begins with receiving book submissions, sending them out to reviewers, organizing CABA committee consultations that lead to the selection of winners. The work then moves to notifying and inviting the winners to the CABA Ceremony and Festival. And then the planning begins.

In some years we have quite a large number of winners which means we stay busy arranging their travel and accommodation, their schedule and itinerary which includes coordinating speaking events. These days are the busiest yet the most rewarding. Meeting the talented authors and illustrators is a treat we look forward to every year. CABA winners tend to come from all walks of life: different backgrounds, ethnicities, unique and diverse career backgrounds. Their stories are the driving force behind what we do! Therefore, celebrating their work and shining a light on their accomplishments is the highlight of our year.

The CABA is really a collaborative effort between multiple people and institutions. What are some of the initiatives that Howard, CABA, and Africa Access have been able to collaborate on that have excited you the most?

The newest and most exciting initiative is The Gold Road, a web-based, interactive map of people, places and trade items connected to medieval Ghana, Mali and Songhai. Other collaborators on The Gold Road include David Conrad (Empires of Medieval Africa CABA, 2005), Elsa Wiehe of the African Studies Center at Boston University and our Center media specialist Ania Ueno. We are currently adding enhancements to the map, based on teacher feedback. Another important initiative, the annual Global Read Webinar, features live book talks and interviews with CABA winners. Recorded sessions are available online and include Meja Mwangi (Mzungu Boy), Elizabeth Zunon (Grandpa Cacao), and Arushi Raina (When Morning Comes). We are looking forward to the February 2021 webinar with Zimbabwean writer Na'ima Roberts (Far from Home).

How have you seen children's literature change over time? How has CABA changed with it?

Books are better!! In the 1960s children's books set in African countries were often shockingly racist. I learned about the problems when a parent complained about

crude stereotypes in *The Voyages of Dr. Doolittle* by Hugh Lofting. Gradually we have seen improvements. There are still far too many books that treat Africa as a country, divide Africans into “tribes” or highlight outsiders rather than Africans as agents of change but we are seeing more books that we can recommend. A welcome trend is the increase in books by second generation African Americans, Nigerian Americans Nnedi Okorafor and Tochi Onyebuchi, Ivorian-American Elizabeth Zunon and Ugandan-American Nansubuga Nagadya Isdahl. Born in the US, but attuned to their parents’ cultures, their books bring fresh depictions of Africa that speak to American youth, many of whom are seeking characters who look like them. Another promising trend in children’s literature is the small but growing availability of books from African publishers. African Books Collective has been an important means of connecting publishers in Africa to the US market. CABA has recognized several titles published in Africa including four titles from Ghana’s Sub-Saharan Publishers. In an effort to increase the pool of African writers available to young people, in 2017 CABA created the New Adult category. The award recognizes adult books written by African authors that are suitable for mature teens. Recent New Adult titles include *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah and *Behold the Dreamers* by Imolo Mbue.

Each year you have a wonderful ceremony for the CABA winners but unfortunately this year the in-person celebration was canceled due to COVID-19. What are the digital ways that you connected with authors and readers this year?

This summer we launched CABA Book Talks on the CABA YouTube channel. Readers can access videos of CABA winners reading and discussing their award-winning books. In November we will celebrate the 2019 CABA winners during the ASA Outreach workshop. In December we will introduce social studies teachers to CABA books virtually during the National Conference on Social Studies.

The CABA website has made it very easy for teachers and parents to identify exceptional books for children (and themselves). Why do you believe it’s important to invest in Africana books for classrooms and at-home bookshelves for all children?

Africana books are useful tools in the dismantling of racism and notions of white supremacy. The picture book *Desmond and the Very Mean Word* (about Desmond Tutu) shows how racism hurts and provides strategies for handling bullies. *Hector* (about Hector Pieterse) profiles a South African child shot during a demonstration and how his community and country have honored his life. *Stones for my Father* (set in South Africa) gives voice to a white Afrikaner girl whose views and actions differ from those of the racists in her family and community.

Africana books are also a valuable means of imparting universal lessons. *Seeds of Change* (about Wangari Maathai) and *Gizo Gizo* (the trickster spider) can help students identify and rectify problems of soil erosion and water pollution in their own communities. *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (about William Kamkwamba) highlights scientific curiosity and encourages youth to unleash their own ingenuity. *The Rise of the Golden Cobra* (set in ancient Nubia) champions good governance and promotes rules of engagement that protect prisoners of war and civilians.

We have seen many books about race and racism flying off bookstore shelves in recent months. Has this demand and the Black Lives Matter movement had an impact on children’s literature and/or literary education?

There has certainly been an uptick in the demand for socially relevant children’s books. The August 17 issue of Publishers Weekly highlights several librarians who are incorporating antiracist literature into their literary programs. Bianca Spurlock, a school librarian in Richmond, VA, notes that requests for relevant books have increased, not only from school administrators and parents, but from students themselves. According to Spurlock, “...the students bring it up, because our city has been a hotbed for protests and the students are aware.”

The larger question is: will the current demand for antiracist books spur lasting change in children’s literature? In large measure that depends on a publishing industry which Publishers Weekly editor Calvin Reid describes as “overwhelmingly white at every level.” Will publishers hire more people of color as editors and bring diversity to other key jobs in the industry? David Unger of CUNY’s City College is skeptical. “Often the book industry looks to show commitment to Black Lives Matter and diversity with the least amount of effort it can offer

A group of diverse young people, including a young man on the left and several young women, are holding copies of the book 'ABINA AND THE IMPORTANT MEN'. The book cover features a line drawing of a group of people. The background is a warm, orange-toned overlay.

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**CABA WINNERS TEND
TO COME FROM ALL
WALKS OF LIFE:
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AND DIVERSE CAREER
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DRIVING FORCE BEHIND
WHAT WE DO!**

“

before moving on.” In the July 13 issue of Publishers Weekly, author L.L. McKinney put it more bluntly, “we don’t get that support until we start dying in the streets.” CABA winner Tochi Onyebuchi concurs. To keep pressure on publishers he founded the Transparency Project which collects data on who is hired and payment differentials. “If publishers consistently make smaller bets on specific types of authors, it’s likely because they assume those authors are less desirable and marketable.” To assist people of color who want to work in the industry, David Unger invites them to enter CUNY’s Publishing Certificate Program. Founded in 1998 with the help of novelist Walter Mosley, the program aims to help students, especially students of color, get jobs in the publishing industry.

Do you have any advice for parents and teachers trying to inspire a love of reading more diversely?

BEGIN EARLY. American children as young as three view ‘all of Africa’ as a vast animal kingdom. By four or five, they can name several Asian and European countries but few can name even one country in Africa. Home and school libraries should reflect the world but because Africa has been so maligned and mis-represented, it should receive special attention.

READ ALOUD. Children of all ages enjoy a good story read aloud. Reading aloud expands their knowledge of the world, builds empathy while stimulating their imagination. Audiobooks are another read aloud



option, especially for auditory learners. Research has shown that audiobooks increase reading accuracy by 52% and reading comprehension by 76%. Recent CABA audiobooks include *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky* (Mbalia), *Mirage* (Daud) and *War Girls* (Onyebuchi).

JOIN OUR READ AFRICA CHALLENGE. Parents and teachers can access the Read Africa Challenge at AfricaAccessReview.org. The 'Challenge Options' invite youth to participate in a variety of literary activities.

The CABA is already in its 28th successful year. What do you see for the future of the Children's Africana Book Award over the next three decades?

Recently, the Outreach Council included support for CABA in the Outreach by-laws. This strong institutional commitment will ensure the continuation of CABA for many years.



ASA was the first national area studies association to establish a book award for young people. Renewed commitment means CABA will continue to be a model for global understanding.

CABA participates in national social studies and literary conferences through partnerships with sister Title VI Centers. We need a presence at national diversity conferences including, People of Color, National Association of Black School Educators and Black Caucus. We also need to extend our reach to important international conferences including the Bologna Children's Book Fair and IBBY conferences (International Board of Books for Young People).

Getting more CABA books in the hands of youth is also critical. Through our partnership with An Open Book Foundation, hundreds of children in metropolitan Washington have received free CABA books. We hope to expand our gift book program regionally and nationally. Dolly Parton provides thousands of gift books each year through her Imagination Library program. Why can't we?

VICTORIA EXPLAINS IT ALL

Emerging scholar and 2019 Graduate Student Paper Prize winner, Dr. Victoria Gorham, shares how her academic path led her to her prize-winning article and details from her first experience publishing in a journal.

Any student that presents at the ASA Annual Meeting is eligible to submit their presentation paper the following January for consideration for the Graduate Student Paper Prize. The winning article is expedited for Peer Review for publication in the [*African Studies Review*](#).

You did your PhD in Political Science and Government at the University of Florida (UF). What are your academic areas of interest? How did they develop over the course of your doctoral program?

Perhaps because I grew up in the American South, I've always been really interested in the ways that communities tell stories about identity, and in the ways that power is embedded in the process of memory keeping and identity-making. My current academic interests are nation-building, identity formation, and the intersection of state and society contributions to these processes. I am a political scientist, but had the opportunity to do coursework in anthropology and archaeology at UF to learn from their discipline methodologically and substantively; that experience encouraged me to broaden my research agenda, particularly with regard to studying material culture and discourses about identity in museum spaces. As I've learned more from my Tanzanian friends and colleagues about the ongoing contestation surrounding democracy and state power in Tanzania, I've become increasingly interested in the ways that identity and state-articulated ideas about citizenship and patriotic duty become part of the conversation surrounding the quality of contemporary democracy. With an election coming up in October 2020, I think these issues are centrally important to the study of Tanzanian politics and can help teach us more about American (and global) political dynamics.



What inspired you to focus your research in East Africa?

While an undergraduate student, I did a summer field study in Peramiho, in Ruvuma, Tanzania with one of my earliest academic mentors, Julian Murchison. The trip was the type of experience that teaches students to think about the politics of community life and cultural representation, which was formative for me as a young scholar. While in Ruvuma, we went to the Maji Maji Museum in Songea, which became the first time that I started thinking about the ways that state museums were being used to teach the nation. This trip ended up being inspiration for part of my dissertation and, more importantly, was an experience that taught me to love Tanzania and made me certain that it would be a permanent part of my professional and personal life.

In 2019 you won the Graduate Student Paper Prize for a piece entitled *Display the Nation: Museums and Nation-Building in Tanzania and Kenya*. (This was the same year you completed your doctoral program!) What motivated you to submit your conference paper for the prize?

Most directly, two friends and colleagues, Sebastian Elischer and Julie Weiskopf, suggested that I submit the paper for the Graduate Student Paper Prize, which



African

Studies Review

PUBLISHED FOR THE AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Editorial
The Climate Crisis: The Challenge
for a New African Consensus
FORUM: THE SOMALI REFUGEE
AND MIGRANT EXPERIENCE
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Governance: Somalis in Kenya
Nareida Ripero-Muñoz
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Nairobi and Johannesburg
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Fatuma Ahmed Ali
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Scholarly Review Essay

encouraged me to rework it for submission. More broadly, this paper is pulled from part of my dissertation that is particularly close to my heart and entailed many hours of work in the field. It was a really fun and positive experience to discuss this paper with other scholars at the ASA meeting, so I was eager to share it and hear feedback, which further motivated me to submit it for the prize.

Can you tell us a little bit about your process of converting a conference paper for submission?

I would mainly describe the process as polishing a work in progress. When I submitted the paper, I had already written the dissertation chapter it was based on, so one of the most important things was to be mindful of how I wanted to edit myself to fit within the formatting parameters and make sure I was balancing discussing the empirical work of museum case studies with providing important context and analysis from the existing literature. In preparing the conference paper for submission, I found the feedback of fellow panelists, panel attendees, and colleagues to be enormously helpful, so being at ASA and having the opportunity to discuss my work was an important step in the process of improving the paper for submission.

Your winning article will be officially published this September in the forthcoming issue of *African Studies Review* and is available now on Cambridge First View. What surprised you most about the ASR Review Process?

This is actually my first publication, so to be honest, I wasn't sure what to expect. Overall, it was an entirely positive experience that pushed me to improve my work

and, through the review process, enabled me to benefit from feedback from more established experts in the field. It was particularly helpful to get the sense that I wasn't hearing just from experts in my own discipline, but also from scholars coming from other fields that could speak to my research in ways I hadn't addressed. I found it to be both a humbling and empowering experience to read the reviews and push myself to make my work better.

Do you have any advice for other emerging scholars planning for their first presentations at the ASA?

ASA, in my experience, is a supportive and collegial community, so I think the best advice is to come prepared to share your work, ask questions, and solicit feedback from scholars whose work you admire or who you meet through panels and shared interests. My experience has always been that the people that will come to your panel are interested in the work and will ask tough questions in the spirit of academic curiosity, which is a great way to gain new insight and interact with challenging new ideas, so be open to that! The only other advice I have is to seek out other scholars – established scholars in your field or junior scholars that are doing interesting work – in order to find new mentors and colleagues. Some of my most significant connections with other academics have been facilitated by being able to come together with colleagues at the ASA meeting every year.

Now that you've finished your doctoral program and published this article, where is your research taking you?

Since finishing my doctorate at UF, I've taken an assistant professor position at Millsaps College, a small liberal arts college in Jackson, Mississippi, and look forward to including undergraduates in future research trips to Tanzania and Kenya. My plan now is to further develop my dissertation for publication down the road and to pivot in future projects slightly away from nationalism and more toward studying the idea of citizenship. When I'm able to conduct more fieldwork in East Africa, I want to look at how citizens' understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship intersect with the concepts of democracy they learn, interpret, and negotiate through public discourse and political practice. In other words, how do the ways that we talk about democracy, authoritarianism, and the provision of good governance by the state inform the ways that we think about citizenship, the privileges and duties it entails, and the role of individuals and society in democratic practice?



ASA

MEMBER NEWS

Celebrating the incredible 2020 accomplishments throughout our global community.

Recent Member Publications

Nwando Achebe, Michigan State University, *Female Monarchs and Merchant Queens in Africa* (Ohio University Press, 2020).

Kwasi Ampene, University of Michigan, *Asante Court Music and Verbal Arts in Ghana: The Porcupine and the Gold Stool* (Routledge Press, 2020).

Joyce Ashuntantang, University of Hartford, co-edited *Bearing Witness: Poems from a Land in Turmoil* (Spears Books, 2020).

Joyce Ashuntantang, University of Hartford, co-edited *Routledge Handbook of Minority Discourses in African Literature* (Routledge, 2020).

Alfred Babo, Fairfield University, "Postwar Recovery and Student Academic Freedom in Côte d'Ivoire" (2019) *Journal of Academic Freedom*, Vol. 10.

Oluwakemi M. Balogun, University of Oregon, *Beauty Diplomacy: Embodying an Emerging Nation* (Stanford University, 2020).

Oluwakemi M. Balogun, University of Oregon, "Beauty and the Bikini: Embodied Respectability in Nigerian Beauty Pageants" *African Studies Review* 62(2): 80 – 102.

Kathryn Barrett-Gaines, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, *Lake Katwe Salt and History of the African Great Lakes* (Fountain Press, 2020).

Victoria Bernal, University of California, Irvine, guest editor for special issue "African Digital Diasporas: Technologies, Tactics, and Trends," for *African Diasporas* Vol. 12, 2020.

Maria Cattell, Field Museum, "Memory, Attic Research, and a Family Legacy," *Anthropology News* website, April 29, 2020.

Rainy Demerson, University of California Riverside, "Sensing the Stage: Decolonial Readings of African Contemporary Dance" in forthcoming anthology *African Somaesthetics* (Brill, 2020).

Anthony Diala, University of the Western Cape, with JC Diala 'Normative intersectionality in married women's property rights in southern Nigeria' (2020) 24(1) *Law, Democracy and Development* pp. 86-108.

Hlengiwe Portia Dlamini, University of the Free State, *A Constitutional History of the Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland) 1960-1982* (Palgrave, 2020).

Jacob S. T. Dlamini, Princeton University, *Safari Nation: A Social History of the Kruger National Park* (Ohio University Press, 2020).

Kelly Duke Bryant, Rowan University, "Education and Politics in Colonial French West Africa," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Kelly Duke Bryant, Rowan University, "A 'Sentiment of Humanity?': Child Protection, Surveillance, and State Guardianship in Senegal, 1895-1910," in *Diverse Unfreedoms: The Afterlives and Transformations of Post-Transatlantic Bondages* (Routledge, 2020).

Austin Emielu, University of Ghana, "Cape Town Harmonies: Memory, Humour and Resilience," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* Vol. 54, 2020.

Robert R. Edgar, Howard University, *Josie Mpama/Palmer: Get Up and Get Moving* (Ohio University Press, 2020).

Yaari Felber-Seligman, City College of New York, "Painting in Turbulent Times: House Wall Art, Culture, and Commentary in Colonial East Africa," *African Arts* 53, no. 2 (Summer 2020): 54-65.

Rachel Gabara, University of Georgia, "Complex Realism: Paulin Soumanou Vieyra and the Emergence of West African Documentary Film," *Black Camera* 11.2 (2020): 32-59.

Lisa Gilman, George Mason University, *Africa Every Day: Fun, Leisure, and Expressive Culture on the Continent*, edited volume with Oluwakemi M. Balogun, Melissa Graboyes, and Habib Iddrissu (Ohio University, 2019).

Trevor P. Hall, Antonio de Noli Academic Society, *Before Middle Passage: Translated Portuguese Manuscripts of Atlantic Slave Trading from West Africa to Iberian Territories, 1513-26* (Routledge Taylor & Francis, 2020).

Myra Ann Houser, Ouachita Baptist University, *Bureaucrats of Liberation: Southern African and American Lawyers During the Apartheid Era* (Leiden University Press, September 2020).

Cecilia Idika-Kalu, University of Massachusetts Lowell, "The Socioeconomic Impact of the Boko Haram Insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin Region," in *Terrorism and Developing Countries*, Syed Abdul Rehman Khan and Zhang Yu, (Intechopen, 2020).

Allen F. and Barbara S. Isaacman, University of Minnesota and Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, *Samora Machel: A Life Cut Short* (Ohio University Press, 2020).

Debbie Jewitt, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, "Keeping an eye on conservation," in *Drone Professional 1*, Louise Jupp (Independent Publishing, 2020).

Terry-Ann Jones, Lehigh University, *Sugarcane Labor Migration in Brazil* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

Tabitha Kanogo, University of California, Berkeley, *Wangari Maathai* (Ohio University Press, 2020).

Catherine Lena Kelly, National Defense University at Fort McNair, *Party Proliferation and Political Contestation in Africa: Senegal in Comparative Perspective* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

Chima Korieh, Marquette University, *Nigeria and World War II: Colonialism, Empire, and Global Conflict* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Chima Korieh, Marquette University, edited *African Encounter with Christianity and Social Change: The Essays of Felix K. Ekechi* (Glassboro, NJ: Goldline and Jacobs Publishing, 2020).

Jana Krause, University of Amsterdam, "Restrained or Constrained? Elections, Communal Conflicts and Variation in Sexual Violence," *Journal of Peace Research*, 57:1, 185-198.

Felix Kumah-Abiwu, Kent State University, "Changing Trends in West Africa's Drug Policy Terrain: A Theoretical Perspective." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 57 (1):52-70.

Felix Kumah-Abiwu, Kent State University, "Urban Education and Academic Success: The Case of Higher Achieving Black Males." *Urban Education* 54 (4):1-27.

Felix Kumah-Abiwu, Kent State University, "Media Gatekeeping and Portrayal of Black Men in America" *The Journal of Men's Studies* 1-18.

Alicia Hayashi Lazzarini, London School of Economics and Political Science, "Reinvestment, Resource 'Rushes,' and the Inalienability of Place: Land's Active Layerings in Mozambique." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*.

Alicia Hayashi Lazzarini, London School of Economics and Political Science, "Review: Bound for Work: Labor, Mobility, and Colonial Rule in Central Mozambique, 1940-1965," *International Migration Review* (2020).

Peace Medie, University of Bristol, *Global Norms and Local Action: The Campaigns to End Violence against Women in Africa* (Oxford University Press, March 2020).

Peace Medie, University of Bristol, *His Only Wife* (Algonquin Books, September 2020).

Jacqueline-Bethel Mougoué, University of Wisconsin-Madison, *Separatist Politics and Embodied Nationalism in Cameroon* (University of Michigan Press, 2019).

Jacqueline-Bethel Mougoué, University of Wisconsin-Madison, guest editor introduction "Forum Introduction: Bodily Practices and Aesthetic Rituals in Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Africa," *African Studies Review*, 62(2).

Jacqueline-Bethel Mougoué, University of Wisconsin-Madison, "Over-Making Nyanga: Mastering 'Natural' Beauty and Disciplining Excessive Bodily Practices in Metropolitan Cameroon." *African Studies Review* 62, issue 2 (June 2019): 175-198.

Cara Moyer-Duncan, Emerson College, *Projecting Nation: South African Cinemas after 1994* (Michigan State University Press, 2020).

Susanne D. Mueller, Boston University, "Life in the Time of Hamna and Social Distancing," *The Elephant*, May 8, 2020.

Besi Brilliant Muhonja, James Madison University, *Radical Utu: Critical Ideas and Ideals of Wangari Muta Maathai* (Ohio University Press, 2020).

Francis Musoni, University of Kentucky, *Border Jumping and Migration Control in Southern Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020).

Francis Musoni, University of Kentucky, *Voices of African Immigrants in Kentucky: Stories of Migration, Identity and Transnationality* (University Press of Kentucky, 2020).

Christian Lambert Nguena, University of Dschang, "Workforce Productivity Growth and Inequality Reduction in Developing Countries: The role of Mobile Banking & Financial Services Development in Africa", *Economics Bulletin*, 40(2), pp 1146-1158.

Christian Lambert Nguena, University of Dschang, "On financial Innovation in Developing Countries: Mobile Banking & Financial Services Determinants in Africa" *Journal of Innovation Economics and Management*, No. 56.

Michael Ogu, Babcock University, co-authored with Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso "Internally Displaced Persons and Security in Nigeria" in *Security in Nigeria: Contemporary Threats and Responses* (Bloomsbury Press, 2020).

Oludamini Ogunnaike, University of Virginia, *Poetry in Praise of Prophetic Perfection: A Study of West African Arabic Madīḥ Poetry and Its Precedents* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Nana Osei-Opere, Fordham University, "When It Comes to America's Race Issues, Russia Is a Bogeyman," *Foreign Policy Magazine*, July 6, 2020.

Nana Osei-Opere, Fordham University, "Around the world, America has long been a symbol of antiblack racism," *The Washington Post*, June 5, 2020.

Soji Oyeranmi, Olabisi Onabanjo University, "Crisis and Reform in the Nigerian Oil Industry, 1999-2015" in *KIU Journal of Social Sciences* 6(1): 275-288.

Dave Peterson, National Endowment for Democracy, Sr. Director, Africa Program, *Africa's Totalitarian Temptation: The Evolution of Autocratic Regimes* (Lynne Rienner Press, 2020).

Elizabeth Pfeiffer, Rhode Island College, co-authored with Harrison M. K. Maithya "The cultural politics of secrecy during HIV home counselling and testing campaigns in Kenya," *Culture, Health & Sexuality* (2020).

Devaka Premawardhana, Emory University, "A Cure for Tribal Politics? Try Learning from actual 'tribal' people" *Los Angeles Times*, February 20, 2020.

Robert M. Press, University of Southern Mississippi, "The Voices of African Migrants in Europe: Isaka's Resilience" in *Mobile Africa: Human Trafficking and the Digital Divide* (R.M. Press, 2019).

Carina Ray, Brandeis University, "Interracial Intimacies and the Gendered Optics of African Nationalism in the Colonial Metropole." *Journal of West African History* 5, no. 2 (2019): 57-84.

Carina Ray, Brandeis University, "Could the Police Kill Me, Too?' My Young Son Asked Me." *New York Times*, June 2020.

Celia Reddick, Harvard University, "Refugee Education and Medium of Instruction: Tensions in Theory, Policy and Practice" in C. Benson & K. Kosonen (Eds.), *Language Issues in Comparative Education: Policy and practice in multilingual education based on non-dominant languages* (Brill Publishers, 2020).

Celia Reddick, Harvard University, "Learning in Refugee Education: Early Grade Literacy in a Refugee Camp in Kenya," *Journal on Education in Emergencies* 5(2), 70-107.

Elisha P. Renne, University of Michigan, co edited with Professor Salihu Maiwada, Ahmadu Bello University-Zaria, *Textile Ascendancies: Aesthetics, Production, and Trade in Northern Nigeria* (University of Michigan Press, 2020).

Rachel Riedl, Cornell University, *From Pews to Politics: How Religious Ideas Can Influence Modes of Political Engagement in Africa and Beyond* with co-author Gwyneth McClendon (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Rachel Riedl, Cornell University, co-authored with Dan Slater, Joe Wong, and Daniel Ziblatt "Authoritarian-Led Democratization" *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2020.

Rachel Riedl, Cornell University, co-authored with Ndongo Samba Sylla "Senegal's Vigorous But Constrained Election" *Journal of Democracy*, 2019.

Muey Saeteurn, University of California, Merced, *Cultivating Their Own: Agriculture in Western Kenya During the 'Development' Era* (University of Rochester Press, 2020).

Voices. of African Immigrants in Kentucky

Migration, Identity, and Transnationality

Francis Musoni
Iddah Otieno
Angene Wilson
Jack Wilson

Kathleen Sheldon, UCLA, "Women in Africa and Pan-Africanism," in *The Routledge Handbook of Pan-Africanism*, ed. Reiland Rabaka, 330-342 (Routledge, 2020).

Kathleen Sheldon, UCLA, "'Down with Bridewealth!' The Organization of Mozambican Women Debates Women's Issues," in *Women's Political Communication in Africa: Issues and Perspectives*, ed. Sharon Adetutu Omotoso, 9-26 (Springer, 2020).

Kevin Shillington, Independent Scholar, Patrick van Rensburg: *Rebel, Visionary and Radical Educationist, a Biography* (Wits University Press, 2020).

Rebecca Shumway, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, "Emerging Modernities in Nineteenth-Century Africa," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (Oxford University Press).



Rebecca Shumway, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, "Naming our African Ancestors: Pushing, and Respecting, the Limits," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 40:2 (2020), 195-200.

Rebecca Shumway, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, "Identifying Enslaved Africans Beyond Ports of Departure," in *The Panorama: Expansive Views from The Journal of the Early Republic* (2020).

Maya Angela Smith, University of Washington, *Senegal Abroad: Linguistic Borders, Racial Formations, and Diasporic Imaginaries* (Wisconsin Press 2020).

Shaden Tageldin, University of Minnesota, "Abu Shadi, Tagore, and the Problem of World Literature at the Hinge of Afroeurasia," *Journal of World Literature* 4.3 (2019): 350-73.

Shaden Tageldin, University of Minnesota, "World Literature, World War: Revisiting Tayeb Salih's _Season of Migration to the North._" in *A Companion to World Literature Vol. 5a: 1920 to Early Twenty-First Century I*. Ed. B. Venkat Mani and Ken Seignurie. (John Wiley & Sons, 2020).

Lynn M. Thomas, University of Washington, *Beneath the Surface: A Transnational History of Skin Lighteners* (Duke University Press, 2020).

Egodi Uchendu, University of Nigeria, co-authored "The Stages of Igbo Conversion to Islam: An Empirical Study," in *Review of Religious Research* 62 (2020): 121-132.

Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike, University of Alberta, co-edited with Dr. Nduka Otiono, *Wreaths for a Wayfarer: An Anthology in Honour of Pius Adesanmi*. (Daraja Press, 2020).

Joya Uraizee, Saint Louis University, *Writing that Breaks Stones: African Child Soldier Narratives* (Michigan State University Press, 2020).

Leonardo A. Villalon, University of Florida, with Rahmane Idrissa contributed to and co-edited *Democratic Struggle, Institutional Reform, and State Resilience in the African Sahel* (Lexington Books, 2020).

Benaiah Yongo-Bure, Kettering University, *Regional Development Poles and the Transformation of African Economies* (Routledge, 2020).

Elleni Zeleke, Columbia University, *Ethiopia in Theory: Knowledge Production and Social Change, 1964-2016* (Brill and Haymarket Books, 2019/2020).

Sarah J. Zimmerman, Western Washington University, *Militarizing Marriage, West African Soldiers' Conjugal Traditions in Modern French Empire* (Ohio University Press, 2020).

Dissertations

Anita N. Bateman, Duke University, successfully defended a PhD dissertation, "Ethiopia in Focus: Photography, Nationalism, Diaspora, and Modernization," in 2020, and earned a Graduate Certificate in African & African American Studies from Duke University.

Rainy Demerson, University of California Riverside, successfully defended a PhD dissertation, "Decolonial Moves: Re-membering Black Women in South African Contemporary Dance in 2020.

Samara Dantas Palmeira Guimaraes, University of Birmingham, successfully submitted a PhD dissertation, "Comprehending Statebuilding Through the Roles of Traditional Healers (Nyangas) in Statebuilding Processes: Where Healing Meets Justice" in 2020.

Anicka Fast, Boston University, successfully defended a PhD dissertation, "Becoming Global Mennonites: The Politics of Catholicity and Memory in a Missionary Encounter in Belgian Congo, 1905-1939," on April 7, 2020, in the School of Theology.

Claire Lim, successfully defended a PhD dissertation "Exploring the Theoretical, Social, and Political Aspects of Gender Parity in Senegal," in Political Science on March 27, 2020.

Evalyne Orwenyo, Rutgers University, successfully defended a PhD dissertation, "Online Participation, Acculturation, Empowerment and Social Isolation: A Virtual Ethnography of Kenyan Diaspora Women in North America" in Social Work.

Mary Owusu, Dalhousie University, successfully defended a PhD dissertation "Nationalism in Question: A Study of Key Categories in Ghanaian History."

Member Announcements

Anita N. Bateman, Duke University, was awarded the graduate student Mary McLeod Writing Award, which recognizes excellence in student research and writing.

Catherine Boone, London School of Economics, has been elected as a member of the American Academic of Arts and Sciences (April 2020).

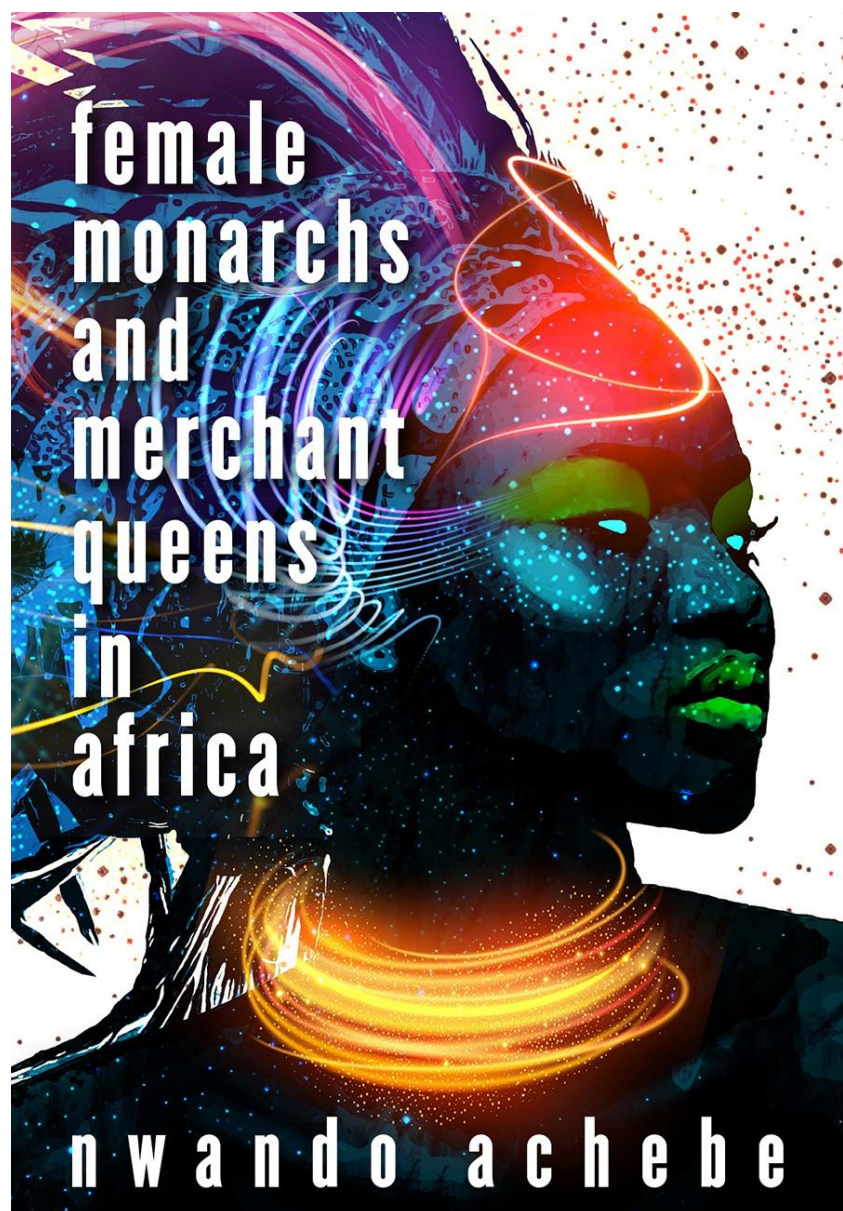
Maria Cattell, Field Museum, was elected president of Association of Senior Anthropologists.

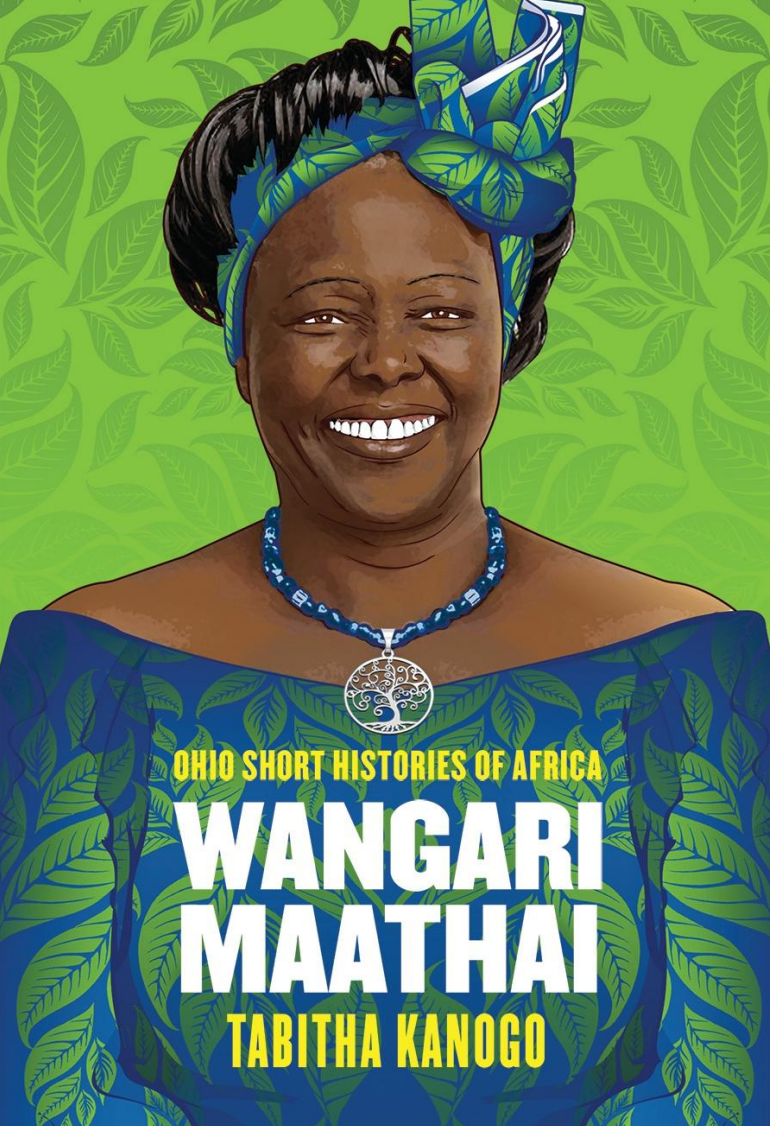
Rainy Demerson, University of California Riverside, accepted a tenure track lectureship at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill and is co-creating a new African/diasporic dance program.

Austin Emielu, University of Ghana and ASA Presidential Fellow 2019, has received an honorary three-year appointment as Visiting Professor to Rhodes University, Grahamstown (Makhanda), South Africa starting January 2020.

Austin Emielu, University of Ghana, has released a song entitled 'Land of my Birth' which combines musical resources and perspectives from West, East, Central, North and Southern Africa eulogizes Africa with its varied peoples and cultures and preaches 'unity in diversity.' The single was released on August 4, 2020 by Distrokid, a U.S.-based record company and is available on major digital platforms including Apple music, iTunes, Medianet, Google play, Napster and Deezer.

Anicka Fast, Boston University, accepted a position with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission in Burkina Faso.





Janet Goldner, Independent Artist, was awarded the Fulbright Specialist Grant, Kyoto Seika University, Kyoto, Japan February-March 2020.

Janet Goldner, Independent Artist, held an exhibition entitled Fences & Neighbors/Fire & Water, Segou'Art, Festival sur le Niger Foundation, Segou, Mali, February 2019.

Bright Gyamfi, Northwestern University, was recently awarded the Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship (IDRF) as well as selected for a 2020-21 Fulbright U.S. Student Award to Ghana.

Cecilia Idika-Kalu, Teaching Excellence Award 2019/2020 (GLS Lecturer). Classes Taught: African Politics, Comparative Politics. Political Science Department, University of Massachusetts, Lowell.

Jacob Jean-Pierre, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies Geneva, was granted a one year position as an associate researcher at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Nantes starting in October 2020.

Dela Kuma, Northwestern University, was awarded the SSRC Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship and the University of Missouri Research Reactor Center Pre-doctoral Award.

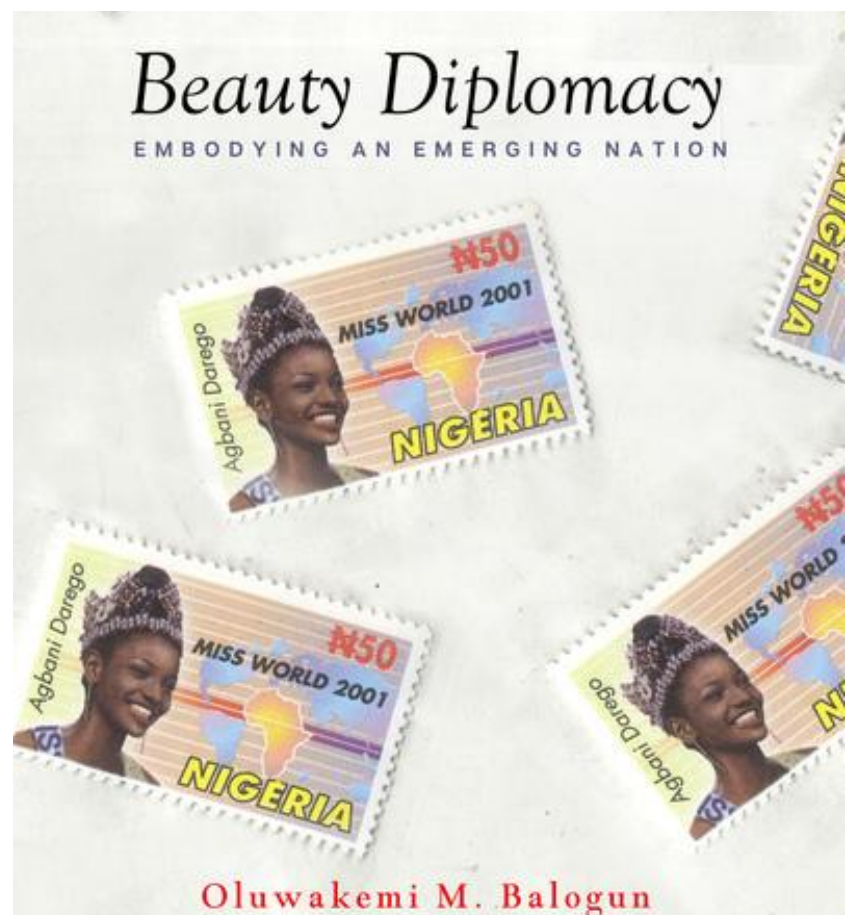
Felix Kumah-Abiwu, Kent State University, has been tenured and promoted to Associate Professor at the Department of Pan-African Studies at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.

Carl LeVan, American University, was promoted from Associate Professor to Professor in the School of International Service at American University in Washington, DC.

Claire Lim, Boston University, accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies and Political Science at Bates College.

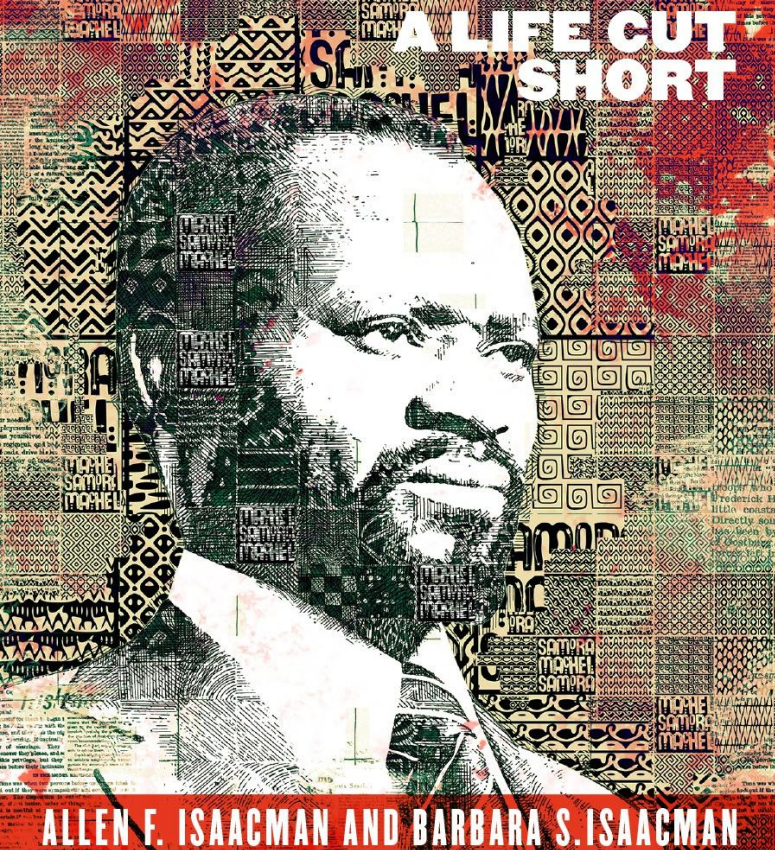
Christian Lambert Nguena, University of Dschang, was selected as Visiting Researcher at the The Nordic African Institute (Sweden) in 2020.

Nana Osei-Opere, Fordham University, was awarded the 2020 Beacon Exemplar Certificate of Excellence Award, Highest Award from the United Student Government, Fordham University in recognition of outstanding dedication to inspiring, supporting, and motivating students.



MOZAMBIQUE'S SAMORA MACHEL

A LIFE CUT SHORT



ALLEN F. ISAACMAN AND BARBARA S. ISAACMAN

Kwamina Panford, Northeastern University, received Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Award for Capacity Building, Teaching and Research at Ghana's University of Energy & Natural Resources June-August 2020.

Ashley Parcells, Jacksonville University, received a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend for 2021.

Elizabeth Pfeiffer, Rhode Island College, received an external research grant through the Social Interventions Research & Evaluation Network (SIREN), administered through UCSF for the following research project: "Exploring and Describing the Barriers and Facilitators of Patient Interest in Acceptance of Health Care-Based Assistance in Addressing Social Needs within Urban Federally Qualified Health Centers: An Implementation Sciences Approach"

Devaka Premawardhana, Emory University, received a Fulbright U.S. Scholar grant to teach and conduct research in Mozambique at the Eduardo Mondlane University in 2021.

Carina Ray, Brandeis University, joined the editorial team for Ohio University Press's New African Histories book series.

Celia Reddick, Harvard University, received a Merit/Graduate Society Term-Time Merit Fellowship for 2020-2021 and a Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Mid-Dissertation Grant for 2020-2021.

Rachel Riedl, Cornell University, was granted the Institute for Advanced Study, Nantes, France. 2019-2020 Fellowship Award as well as a Fulbright Scholar Award Africa Regional Research Program (Zambia and Senegal) 2019 - 2021.

Marcia C. Schenck, University of Potsdam, Germany, has accepted the position of professor of global history at the University of Potsdam close to Berlin in Germany.

Michael Woldemariam has accepted the position of Center Director at the Boston University African Studies Center beginning July 2021.

Jonathan Sears, Menno Simons College, accepted a promotion to Associate Dean, Menno Simons College; Program Coordinator, Conflict Resolutions Studies and International Development Studies.

Susan Shepler, American University, will be a Visiting Fellow at the Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame for the 2020-21 academic year. She will be working on a book manuscript on complex sovereignty in Sierra Leone.

Rebecca Shumway, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, was granted tenure at UWM-Milwaukee.

Daniel Jordan Smith, Brown University, was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in African Studies for the project: "Infrastructural Deficiency, State Complicity, and Entrepreneurial Citizenship in Nigeria."

Shaden Tageldin, University of Minnesota, received a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship.

Beth Elise Whitaker, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, has been promoted to the rank of Professor effective July 1, 2020. She adds: It's nice to have some good news in the midst of all the bad news these days!

SIX WAYS TO SPEED UP INCLUSION AND POSITIVE CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY CULTURE NOW

Joy Connolly, President, American Council of Learned Societies

Black faculty, students, and staff know the pattern. Under pressure from local or national events, administrators and other campus leaders call on them to share their experiences of racism with the community — but no structural changes are made.

Here are six concrete actions that can be taken at the departmental level right now to improve the experience of Black people and other marginalized groups in academia.



"CULTIVATING KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD IS BEST DONE WHEN SOME CONTACT WITH THE PUBLIC IS WOVEN INTO REGULAR DEPARTMENTAL PRACTICE."

1. Talk about how we want faculty effort and time to be rewarded

Thirty years ago, on the first page of *Scholarship Reconsidered*, former Carnegie Foundation President Ernest Boyer put his finger on the heart of the problem. Faculty at research universities spend their time in varied pursuits: they teach, mentor, manage their departments and schools, communicate the value of their research to an often skeptical administration and the public, and they work with colleagues in their disciplines and fields in direct collaboration or looser direction-setting activities like conferences. But faculty are rewarded

with promotions and raises for achievements in just one area: published research.

This approach ignores the work done by scholars of color, especially Black faculty members, in mentoring and teaching. It overlooks the extra labor required of them to get recognition and funding support, as demonstrated, for example, by Tressie Cottom's *Thick* and the contributors to *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (2012, 2020). And it erases alternative approaches to knowledge production that have been pioneered by scholars of color. Colleagues in African American Studies shake their heads when

they hear white colleagues in humanities centers act like they invented interdisciplinary work. Faculty who are scholar-activists or who adopt a dialectic between academic research and community work are likely to create CVs that do not fit neatly into the “peer reviewed article and book” mold. As a result, they are held back or passed over — at the hiring stage, at tenure and promotion time, in salary reviews.

What can faculty, and here I am concentrating on the majority white faculty, do to change this? Like astronauts, keep a calendar of the way you spend your time for a typical month in term time and during longer breaks. Make a pie chart. How much time do you spend in each activity? Which do you value most, yourself? Which advances your career? And then ask the toughest questions: Whom do current evaluation standards serve and whom do they punish? What does the world need most?

Faculty will answer the last question differently. Scholars of race, class, religion, or other issues in the daily news might see a need for their expertise in public discourse. Or they may need to spend time asking members of the public what they need. Scholars of history or of cultures outside the US might argue that they should focus on teaching undergraduates, since these are areas that have seen marked decline in enrollments and majors. Classicists (of whom I am one) are concluding that we have a lot of work to do revising the central assumptions and research questions in our own field.

Asking these questions is just the first step in taking systemic action. The next is agreeing with colleagues, first at the departmental level and then at the level of the school (or at whatever level the promotion and tenure committee lives) that requirements for tenure and advancement must bear some reasonable relation to your pie charts, to the diverse contributions faculty make toward the production and circulation of knowledge beyond the research article and monograph. But we must start with ourselves. Boyer’s short 1990 book is a good place to start that conversation.

2. Change how we recruit applicants for graduate school

At some point in our lives, most faculty will pull an

undergraduate or master’s student aside and encourage them to consider applying to graduate school to pursue the PhD. Most often the prompt is an outstanding paper or two, perhaps a presentation — something that maps directly onto the scholarly activity that (as we have already established) at research-intensive institutions today is a professor’s most highly prized achievement.

But even research-intensive institutions need faculty with creativity, multiple talents beyond the paper or the presentation, and the willingness to ask tough foundational questions. Let me make this vivid in your imagination with descriptions of a few students *I wish* I had encouraged to pursue graduate school:

- The undergraduate who asked to submit a YouTube video instead of a standard paper. I wouldn’t do this today, but 10 years ago I brushed him off with a few automatic comments about the importance of writing. I didn’t interpret his keen desire to experiment as I should have: as a sign he would make a top academic.

- The first-year business major in a large general education course, who came up to me after a lecture to ask why I assigned papers over five pages in length or indeed, why I assigned papers at all. His questions, asked with what I interpreted as a mixture of hostility born of anxious unfamiliarity with long writing assignments and sheer curiosity (how would I react?), made me write an explanation for the entire class, and I never approached assigning papers with the same set of assumptions again. His interest in the form of scholarly communication I was uncritically promoting and his insistence that I explain my assumptions should have sent me a strong signal that he would make a strong academic.

- The brilliant writer who started an environmentally responsible company in China while still in college, whose core passion was literature, but whose multiple interests I viewed as scattered and too loosely tied to academia as I then understood it.

- Two undergraduates in a small seminar, a queer student of color and an observant Orthodox Jew, who argued over the course of several weeks about sexuality, gender, religious belief, and the propriety of arguing about these things in the classroom. They

didn't like one another, but they sustained their arguments with conviction. Their energy, stubbornness, unpredictability, and willingness to take risks should have made me plead with them to apply to graduate school.

All them were strong students. They tended to question authority (mine, that of the professoriate, and older people's more generally), push against expectations, and ask "why" at every opportunity, not always in a "nice" way that was easy to handle. I liked and admired them as people, for the most part (as far I could, given my limited time with them), but I didn't see them as students who would fit neatly into the mold I recognized for "model professors."

Today, thanks to the persistent efforts of colleagues of color, I understand why it is highly likely that I didn't identify as many students of color as likely graduate students as I did white students. Accepted norms are not immutable facts. We have, as a culture, occasionally learned to recognize that social structures are created, not natural. I have come to see my colleagues and students who challenge assumptions and want to shake things up as crucially necessary to the academy's flourishing.

Connected to this are requirements for graduate school. In my own field, multiple years of Greek and Latin are still required for entry to the PhD, though everyone knows this is a class-ridden bar that excludes students who discovered the field as a junior or who attended a school where budget cuts have eviscerated upper level languages. These requirements demand a close look through the lens of class and accessibility. When they are changed, you and your colleagues will also face the need to...

3. Change graduate curricula

Invite your doctoral students to a conversation right now about what is working and what is not working in their coursework, research, and preparation for the diverse careers that await them. Let them lead the conversation. Make sure students of color are invited to play a leading role. You will likely find that they need and want:

- Courses in languages or skills that we can no longer call "remedial;"

"A MOSTLY WHITE SYSTEM WON'T CHANGE WITHOUT EXTERNAL SHOCKS."

- Experience working with and learning from people outside academia, where a third to half of them are likely to work after the PhD;

- Serious assistance with teaching, not all of which you may be best placed to offer;

- Close study of the discipline or interdisciplinary area to understand its historical goals and habits, and discussion of its current research goals and future;

- Understanding of how the university works;

- A space to discuss racism and anti-racism efforts at the institution and in the department, including in curriculum design.

4. Bring people working outside research academia into scholarly practice

A mostly white system won't change without external shocks. What more positive shock than inviting people outside the academy — especially people of color interested in what the academy might offer them — into departmental space? Cultivating knowledge for the public good is best done when some contact with the public is woven into regular departmental practice. Two ways to get this done:

- Invite non-academics who are generally sympathetic to the emerging generation (graduate students) and interested in scholarship but who will speak their minds, to sit on dissertation proposal committees, so that the student and advisers are prompted to discuss the value of the work, its accessibility to a larger public, and the style of writing the scholar will adopt. This is a tricky area. The point is to push against assumptions about hyper-specialization and to cultivate communication skills.

- Get to know your local high school faculty. They are your colleagues and best placed to teach you in understanding the needs of diverse young people. And they may help grow the pipeline of students into your department or ultimately, the professoriate.

5. Learn what others are doing

Many people are working on anti-racist action in the academy. Get familiar with at least three actions that are being taken in your learned society, by colleagues in other fields, and within your own institution.

6. Call a departmental faculty meeting

Make a plan to take these steps, or better ones, right now. What are you waiting for? If not now, when?

At the American Council of Learned Societies we are dedicated to encouraging and supporting the types of changes outlined here, while advancing and strengthening humanistic scholarship to best serve the present and future needs of the academy. New initiatives like the Emerging Voices and Leading Edge fellowship programs are supporting the new generation build toward that future.





ASA President Ato Quayson greets new members and old friends at the 2019 Annual Meeting opening reception held in Boston, Massachusetts.



STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION

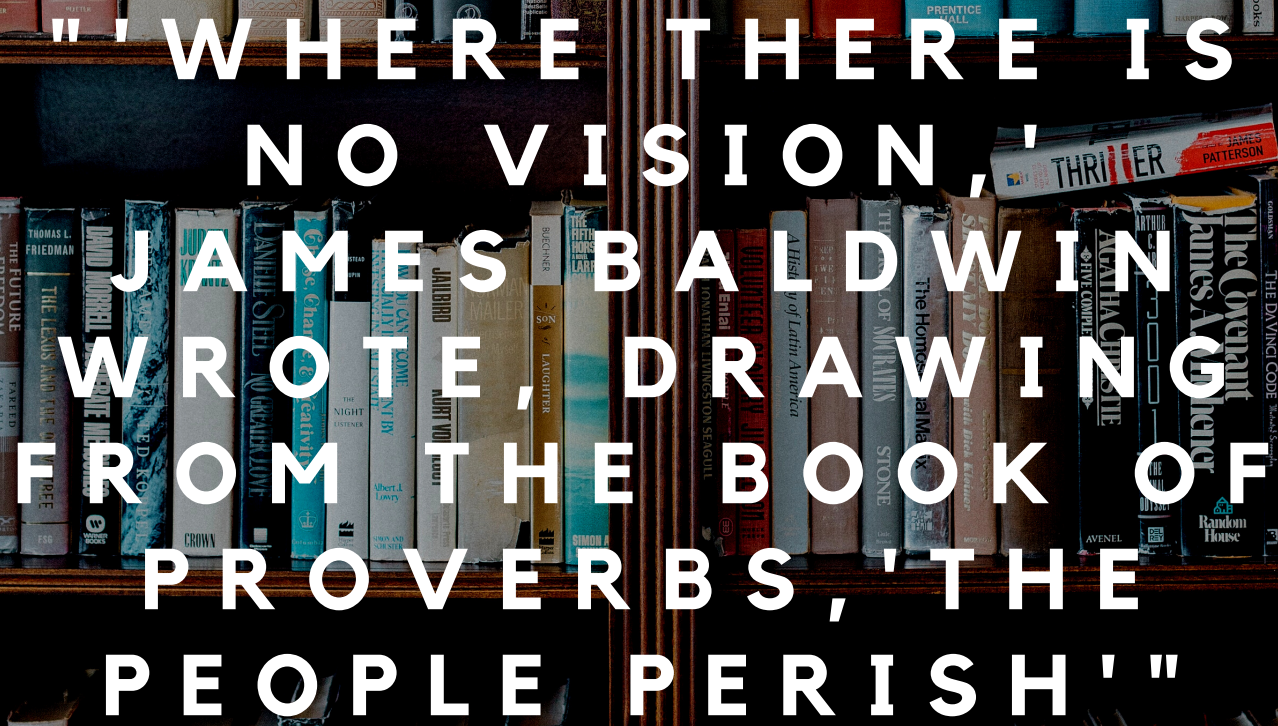
After the new year, the ASA Board of Directors voted on the action items listed below. The 2020 board members are:

Ato Quayson, *President*
Carolyn Brown, *Vice President*
Maria Grosz-Ngaté, *Past President*
Akosua Adomako Ampofo, *Member*
Leonardo Arriola, *Member*
Didier Gondola, *Member*
Bessie House-Soremekun, *Member*
Sean Jacobs, *Member*
Dumi Moyo, *Member*
Ebenezer Obadare, *Member*
Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie, *Member*
Mary Osirim, *Treasurer*
Lahra Smith, *Member*
Yusuf Serunkuma Karuja, *Emerging Scholars Rep.*



2020 Board Decisions

- The Board agreed the November Annual Conference be held virtually.
- The Board agreed to set up a taskforce to help organize an Africa and COVID19 series around the Annual Conference.
- The Board approved a Statement (by the African Studies Association) on Police Violence and Racism in the United States.
- The Board approved a Statement (by the African Studies Association) on Police Violence in African Countries
- The Board approved a Statement (by the African Studies Association) in support of the Ghana Studies Association on the country's proposed Public University Bill
- The Board approved a (ASA) Statement Concerning Police Violence at Makerere University, Uganda
- The Board approved that ASA sign on to Joint Statement: COVID-19 and the Key Role of the Humanities and Social Sciences in the United States
- The Board approved that ASA sign on to the Letter to Immigration and Customs Enforcement Concerning Its Decision to End Visa Exemptions for International Students Exemptions-for-International-Students
- The Board approved to maintain the prize cycle for 2020



"'WHERE THERE IS
NO VISION,'
JAMES BALDWIN
WROTE, DRAWING
FROM THE BOOK OF
PROVERBS, 'THE
PEOPLE PERISH'."

COVID-19 AND THE KEY ROLE OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN THE UNITED STATES

Consider the spread of COVID-19, global environmental degradation, and the deep divisions around race in this country. Our collective responses to these and other challenges arise from understanding human behavior, the stories and beliefs that guide us, the cultures and values that we build and share, and the visionary aspirations of thinkers past and present. "Where there is no vision," James Baldwin wrote, drawing from the book of Proverbs, "the people perish."

At this critical moment in history, humanistic knowledge – the study of languages, history, culture, the arts, anthropology, archaeology, communication, philosophy, political science, psychology, religious studies, rhetoric, sociology, regional studies, and interdisciplinary areas – is crucial to envisioning and realizing a better future for the world. For this reason, we believe that humanistic education and scholarship must remain central to campus communities and conversations.

On behalf of the thousands of students, faculty, and members of scholarly societies devoted to the study of humanity, we call on all leaders of institutions of higher education to uphold the central importance of the humanities and the social sciences as you make important decisions that will shape the institutions under your stewardship for years and perhaps generations to come.

This is a time for institutions to explore new modes of organization that facilitate innovation while maintaining the integrity of a diverse range of academic disciplines, and to do so with a full embrace of American higher education's tradition of shared governance.

COVID-19 and its economic consequences are placing immense pressures on college and university budgets across the United States. Preparing for decreases in tuition revenue or state funding or both, many institutions have announced freezes on hiring, reductions in numbers of contract and adjunct faculty, and cuts in funding for research. Some are considering eliminating entire departments and programs.

We respect the autonomy of every institution of higher learning and the good-faith efforts of administrators forced to make difficult decisions in historically unprecedented conditions of uncertainty and financial shock. With that respect must come an urgent reminder of the vital contribution made by the humanities and social sciences to the public good – a keystone of charters and mission statements adopted by colleges and universities across the country.

Humanistic study in American colleges and universities provides communal contexts in which students, increasingly diverse in background and experience, learn together about human reasoning, beliefs, and aspirations, social and political systems, and acts of creative expression produced across centuries and around the world. Humanistic study compels us to wrestle with complex questions, with difference and conflict as well as similarity. It furnishes us with diverse visions of the world and encourages us to refuse to take things for granted – capacities necessary to sustain a just and democratic society.

Humanistic education provides not only skills for democratic life, but also skills sought by employers, such as the analysis of conflicting evidence, complex problem-solving, clear communication, and the ability to judge matters in cultural and interpersonal context.

As stewards of humanistic scholarship, we are in a position to share our knowledge of our fields, their condition, current directions, and value to students and to global society. To sustain the centrality of humanistic studies in one of our nation's greatest assets – our private and public system of higher education – we offer our support to colleges and universities seeking the best path forward in difficult times.

Joy Connolly

President
American Council of Learned
Societies

William C. Kirby

Chair, Board of Directors
American Council of Learned
Societies

David Oxtoby

President
American Academy of Arts and
Sciences

Richard Ekman

President
Council of Independent Colleges

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The New York Public Library

Lynn Pasquerella

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and Universities

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Robert D. Newman

President and Director
National Humanities Center

Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman
Center for Scholars and Writers at
the New York Public Library

Federation of State Humanities
Councils

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Social Science Research Council

National Humanities Alliance



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CONNECTING THE VOICES
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JOIN THE CONVERSATION THIS
FALL AND SHARE YOUR IDEAS
ON HOW THE ESN CAN HELP
YOU ACHIEVE YOUR RESEARCH
AND PROFESSIONAL GOALS.

November 19-21, 2020

** The ASA defines Emerging Scholar as current graduate students (both masters-level and doctorate-level), and recent graduates or early-career professionals who are still within 5 years of receipt of a terminal degree.



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