LEADING THE WAY

From advocacy to emerging scholars, ASA Members are reimagining the discipline and 2020 Best Book Prize winner Dr. Adom Getachew shares her contributions in a special interview.
LETTER FROM THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR, KATHRYN SALUCKA

Each edition of ASA News is carefully designed with our community in mind. The ASA seeks to share member highlights, from publications to promotions, and works to feature stories, updates, and information that we hope will benefit and interest our community of members. The idea of community drives the ASA Secretariat as we think about new programming, initiatives, and goals. How can we best serve our community? How is our community growing, changing, evolving? How can we keep pace? While the past two years have proved difficult for our community, just like many others, the Fall 2021 edition of ASA News showcases the resiliency of our community and looks to opportunities for future growth.

Emerging scholars have long been a bedrock of the African studies community, challenging the status quo, pushing the field in new and innovative ways, and infusing excitement into the ASA. 2021 marks the 20th anniversary of the Graduate Student Paper Prize, one of the earliest initiatives of the ASA to recognize the importance emerging scholars have in the pursuit and production of knowledge. It is especially poetic that the first recipient of the Graduate Student Paper Prize now currently serves as the Editor-in-Chief of African Studies Review, and guided the journal to its highest ever Impact Factor. 2021 not only marks an important anniversary, but a launching point for the new Emerging Scholars Network. Led by a group of emerging scholars, from PhD students to recent graduates, this steering committee has revitalized programming for emerging scholars at the ASA, with more plans in the works. It is our delight to introduce these dedicated members of the ASA to you in this issue, along with their ideas and goals for the future of African Studies and the ASA.

Furthermore, the impact of emerging scholars can be seen in two of our featured interviews. Jumoke Verissimo, author of A Small Silence, winner of the Women’s Caucus 2020 Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize, and Adom Getachew, author of the 2020 ASA Best Book Prize Winner, Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination are both emerging scholars. It is our honor to showcase their work and reflect on their impact on African Studies, both now and in the years to come.

Recognizing the importance of supporting emerging scholars, the ASA has continued to work to increase programming opportunities, expand fellowship availability, and design new leadership pathways in the ASA for emerging scholars. At the same time, the ASA is working to re-evaluate membership tiers to make membership in the ASA community more feasible and attainable for emerging scholars studying Africa across the globe. It is our hope that these new initiatives will allow more opportunity for engagement and participation, growing our ASA community to welcome those who have been previously excluded.

But the work does not stop there. Growing the ASA community also means partnering with other organizations to work together on common causes, and to support our mutual constituents. As highlighted in the interview with the Queer African Studies Association, coordinate organizations of the ASA have tirelessly worked to expand what it means to study Africa, and to open the African studies community to more participants. The ASA Women’s Caucus spent this year putting together invaluable resources to support women in academia as we continue to work through the pandemic. From guidance for members who must draft COVID impact statements and navigate uncertain job markets, to sharing best practices for colleagues in academic administration roles, these guides exemplify the evolving notion of what is needed to support and promote the work of our community.

In a time when communities have been tried and tested, it has been exciting to see this issue of ASA News come together that celebrates the very best in ours.
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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.
PROMISING SIGNS FOR HUMANITIES FUNDING IN THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

By Alexandra Klein, NHA Communications and Government Relations Manager

The Biden administration’s request for a funding increase for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and other humanities programs earlier this year was a welcome change from the Trump administration’s yearly calls to eliminate the NEH along with other programs that support humanities scholars and organizations.

Each year of the Trump administration, we mobilized the humanities community to cultivate bipartisan support in Congress to reject these proposals. Humanities advocates had a clear impact, building strong support in Congress. Happily, with this congressional support, we were not only able to turn back the Trump administration’s threats, we were also able to win increases for the NEH and other priorities. The legacy of these battles is the increased mobilization of the humanities community and the resulting increased level of support for humanities funding in Congress.

Now, with the Biden Administration’s FY 22 request as a starting point, humanities advocates are poised to work toward even larger funding increases. In late May, the Biden administration released its FY 22 President’s Budget Request with increases for nearly all humanities funding streams. In addition, the agencies’ budget justifications ensured that the administration sees the humanities are tied to its overarching priorities, including advancing racial equity and providing economic relief in the wake of COVID-19.

Under the budget request, the NEH would receive $177.5 million, a $10 million increase. The NEH foregrounded the administration’s priorities throughout their budget justification: “The Administration’s priorities for NEH fall into five categories: advancing racial equity and support for underserved communities; confronting the climate emergency; restoring America’s global standing; responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis; and strengthening our democracy.”

The National Archives and Records Administration would receive $403 million, an increase of $26 million and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission would receive $9.5 million, an increase of $3 million. In their budget justification, the National Archives states they will further racial equity by addressing “staffing needs across the agency and funds targeted recruitment activities to ensure a diverse pool of applicants.” Additionally, an increase in funding would also “provide online, electronic access to one of NARA’s most prominent collections of U.S. Government records associated with underserved communities.”

One disappointment in the budget request was that it included only level funding for the Department of Education’s international education programs Title VI and Fulbright-Hays despite the crucial role these programs play in ensuring that higher ed institutions provide a robust education in world cultures and languages.

We welcomed more good news in June and July as the House released its appropriations bills and passed them out of committee. The House Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies bill contained an even more robust increase for the NEH, proposing an increase of $201 million.

The House Financial Services and General Government, meanwhile, matched the president’s request and included $403.6 million for the National Archives and Records Administration, an increase of $26 million, and an additional $9.5 million for NHPRC, an increase of $3 million.

Unlike the administration, the House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill included an increase for the Department of Education’s international education programs—Title VI received $79.4 million, a $10 million increase, and Fulbright-Hays received $13.8 million, a $5 million increase.

In late July, the full House passed an omnibus of appropriations bills including the three bills that fund each of our priorities.

The Senate began their portion of the appropriations process the first week of August. Given the FY22 Dear Colleague Letters written in support of the NEH, NARA, and Title VI and Fulbright-Hays that have garnered support in the Senate, we anticipate support for funding increases.

While the prospect for robust funding increases are better than they have been the last four years, advocacy remains important in making clear how the humanities connect to all of the challenges of our current moment. We will continue to keep our members up to date about when and if any action is needed to increase support for the federally funded humanities. If you are interested in receiving occasional email updates about upcoming events, the appropriations process, and when we need advocates to take action, please visit our website, www.nhalliance.org, to sign up for our email list.
The ASA Advocacy Committee was created to realize the Association’s goal of advocating for greater attention to the study of Africa in the United States through funding of and support to African Studies, as well as to bring attention to ethical, human rights, and academic freedoms relevant to the field of African studies, whenever possible. In the last year, the ASA has released statements condemning the destruction of educational institutions in the Tigray region of Ethiopia in the context of that escalating conflict, statements speaking out against the restrictions on freedom for University students and staff in Eswatini and about the loss of priceless materials after a fire at the University of Cape Town. In addition, the ASA signed onto joint statements with other organizations about the efforts to restrict education about racism in American history curriculum, events at the US Capitol in January 2021, and the impact of COVID-19.

While preparing advocacy statements and endorsing statements of related organizations on crucial issues of mutual interest has been central to the work of the committee, this year we have been able to undertake additional activities to highlight and advance the mission of the ASA. In February the ASA and the Scholars at Risk organization co-hosted a talk by Dr. Semahagn Gashu Abebe of Endicott College, a former SAR, on “Ethnic Federalism, Conflict, and Humanitarian Crisis in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia.” This ASA members-only event included a presentation of key historical and contemporary events related to an emerging and deadly conflict in Ethiopia and a crucial chance for discussion. In addition, Dr. Abebe joined leaders of the ASA Task Force for the Protection of Academic Freedom in March of 2021 for further discussion, both of his own experience and of what more can be done to promote academic freedom and human rights across Africa. The ASA Task Force is comprised of all the ASA coordinate and affiliate organizations and allows the Advocacy Committee to broaden its remit beyond academic freedom.

I have found serving on this committee a true highlight of my time at the ASA because I see advocacy as fundamental to the work of the Association. We are an organization whose members are engaged in various ways with the citizens of Africa, with their social, political, economic, cultural and ecological past, present and future. If we are not advocates in the activist sense then we are, I think, squandering our research and teaching activities. I have always understood that my interest in an intellectual field called “African
“Studies” was to advance its centrality in the world of ideas, to promote it as a place to study in its own right. But I know many of us also recognize there is also a tension around advocacy in our work as a committee which is rooted both in the plethora of potential issues within which we could become involved (if we say, defined our remit very broadly in human rights or democratization), and in the long history of ‘saviourism’ which has has characterized African Studies in the global north and in the predominantly-white serving academic institutions from which many of ASA founders came.

Therefore it was appropriate I believe that our Committee and the Executive Board approached a revision and clarification of the advocacy policy this year with care and some caution. We understood that the history of our Association and its relationship to structural and systemically racist institutions, including many of our home universities, as well as the membership policies and practices of the ASA as documented by several past presidents and the Association’s own archival work, complicated our project of revision. As well, a significant amount of scholarship produced in the past in African studies was about serving colonial and post-colonial projects that were steeped in a ‘white saviorism’ and ‘developmentalist’ project that leaves advocacy as a task fraught and complex.

At the same time, human rights and activist issues across Africa today can be dangerous and politically sensitive, and could embroil the ASA and its members in numerous domestic and regional issues that would distract from its scholarly and professional mission.

That does not mean, however, that as an Association we can or should be oblivious to the fundamental concerns which impinge on our members, and in fact, systemic racism in the US and across Africa, often manifest as violent policing and state-sponsored violence, is foremost among these. That is why I personally was in favor of statements in 2020 that expressed our condemnation of police violence and racism in the wake of the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Michael Brown and so many others, and against police violence in Africa, particularly in the wake of COVID-19. In fact, being an Association with a commitment to anti-racist policies and practices is not obvious when one looks at the history of the ASA, and requires active engagement and taking a position on the events in the world that matter, in the US and across Africa. It is in fact because of the history of the ASA as not being engaged in anti-racist work despite...
being an Association that is focused on African studies that I supported the ASA taking a stand on police violence and racism in the US and across Africa.

This is my view, not the view of all of my fellow committee members or of the ASA Secretariat. It reflects one perspective on the spirited and respectful conversations that I have valued among my colleagues as we prepared the revised policy this year, as well as the work of my predecessors who established the Committee and led it in previous years. I am cognizant of the concern that we not take up every important potential advocacy cause in Africa, nor call out every President or regime that begins acting undemocratically. I am not even sure the ASA Board would agree on all those cases, and surely the ASA membership would not. This would all be a distraction, and it might also restrict the work members could do in some places. So our narrowed policy focus helps us be clear on what is important. And what is that? A focus on funding is both obvious and perhaps trite at first glance but the gross underfunding of area studies in general and Africa in particular is an urgent and perennial matter and the Association will need to stay solidly focused on it. Through the work of both the Committee and especially, the ASA Secretariat Staff and individual members’ advocacy, we can lobby members of Congress, and other appropriate legislative and philanthropic representatives to ensure support for African Studies.

At the same time, advocacy around ethical and human rights related to the field of African Studies and higher education does allow the Association to support universities, departments, even individual scholars and students in particular African countries when they are under threat or targeted, and we will continue to do that. My personal view would see us walk the line even closer and make perhaps a few more statements, but I am not always sure where that line is. It may be that ascertaining what types of advocacy to take a position on, whether in the form of statements or events that the Association will host, will likely have to continue to be determined as the events and circumstances arise, and cannot be predetermined. That results in a somewhat time-consuming process of discussion and debate but that work within the Committee and with the Secretariat is invaluable in balancing the imperatives of not becoming embroiled in too many conflicts but also not being risk-averse or failing to take a position on matters that our members and constituents care passionately about.

I do believe we have gotten even closer to striking that balance in recent years and I am excited about the possibilities with the current membership and energy in the ASA. While the statements on policing and racism in the US and policing in Africa emerged from within the ASA Advocacy committee and the ASA Board, they were understood by these individuals to be both necessary and critical to the moment but also to be statements that we might not have issued as an Association in prior epochs of American or African political history.

"THE GROSS UNDERFUNDING OF AREA STUDIES IN GENERAL AND AFRICA IN PARTICULAR IS AN URGENT AND PERENNIAL MATTER AND THE ASSOCIATION WILL NEED TO STAY SOLIDLY FOCUSED ON IT."

In fact, the ASA Secretariat received the feedback that some were surprised and heartened to see the ASA take a position on such issues. In a different way, the statements on Ethiopia and Eswatini came to the committee through members and non-members (who became members) who urged the Association to take up these concerns and issue statements, and after some research and deliberation, the Committee and Board agreed. This is the multi-faceted and multi-vocal approach that I see as the future of advocacy in the ASA, where members are helping shape what concerns matter, but also where advocacy will help grow our Association and bring in new voices and perspectives. I am excited to see where that takes the ASA.
JOIN US TODAY

Institutional Membership is perfect for organizations that have a growing or well-established community interested in African Studies. The unique benefits offered to institutions allows you to support your constituents in their goals, expand your reach to our global community throughout the calendar year, and raise your visibility.

COST

$2,500 per institution. Payment should be made as early in the year as possible to facilitate maximum benefits for the 10 beneficiaries.

KEY DATES

All memberships begin January 1 and end December 31, regardless of purchase date. Names and emails of individual beneficiaries must be sent within 10 business days of payment.

UNIQUE BENEFITS

- Up to 10 individual ASA memberships, with a requirement that 50% of those support Emerging Scholars.** All memberships will receive full ASA individual benefits.

Institutional Specific Benefits Include:

- Automatic membership to the Association of African Studies Programs (AASP)
- Visiting Scholars: First right of refusal to host an ASA Presidential Fellow
- A right to first proposal for topics/scholars to lead digital AfricaNow! seminars throughout the year, hosted and promoted by the ASA
- Listing in ASA Institutional Members Guide
- Two gratis job postings per calendar year
- One gratis banner ad on the ASA Website (during any quarter of the Institution’s choosing)
- 25% Discount on Full Page Annual Meeting Program ads (booth packages excluded)
- Gratis print subscription to the biannual ASA Newsletter (single US address must be provided)
- Institutional Updates and Announcements disseminated to our network of 7,000+

**If your organization does not have emerging scholars (which the ASA defines as in pursuit of one’s terminal degree, or within five years post completion), the institutional membership may be applied to relevant junior team members, visiting scholars, or other affiliates at the discretion of the organization.
The Annual Meeting grants sponsors access to nearly 2000 participants from more than 60 countries, representing over 600+ universities, colleges, and organizations. Annual Meeting attendees include professors, department chairs, independent scholars and consultants, development experts, activists, representatives from government institutions, non-profit agencies, and students.

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The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders is seeking qualified U.S.-based post-secondary educational institutions including accredited U.S. colleges and universities and non-governmental organizations to host and implement six-week Leadership Institutes in summer 2022. Institute Partners will host 25 Fellows from early June to mid-July 2022 for a non-credit, non-degree, six-week Institute. Due to the ongoing global pandemic, and with the safety and well-being of Fellows and Partners as the highest priority, selected U.S. Institute Partners must demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness to adjust planning and programming as necessary to meet the needs of the Fellowship and individual Fellows.

Learn more at mwfellows.info/2022instituteapp and apply by October 15, 2021.
MEET THE EMERGING SCHOLARS NETWORK

After a brief restructuring hiatus, the Emerging Scholars Network is back with a volunteer leadership team that is as inspired as it is industrious. Meet some of the current team members and find out how you can get involved.

Andrew Heffernan
4th Year PhD Candidate in Political Studies
University of Ottawa

What excites or interests you about being involved with the ASA ESN?

African studies have always been a great passion and interest of mine and one of the greatest things about those involved is they tend not to be the most widely offered areas in undergraduate programs and especially at the secondary level. As a result, those who are involved truly want to be there which leads to some of the most fruitful collaborative, and cross disciplinary approaches to some of the most fascinating and important global issues.

What do you research?

I research global environmental governance specifically in the southern African context. Generally interested in anything to do with African politics or climate change as well as the politics of food. My main research projects are on Community-Based Natural Resource Management studying it within the context of the global political economy as well as an ongoing project on the future of sustainable protein and the planet.

What are you passionate about teaching or collaborating on?

I really love teaching about anything to do with Africa, as it is so often a region that is less well-known/less studied especially at the undergraduate level. Those taking the courses tend to have a real interest in them and there is such an endless variety, diversity, and wealth of enriching topics to discuss. Similarly with the politics of climate change which is the challenge of our generation as well as the quintessential global issues I love to discuss its endless complexities and work through the many competing sets of questions and challenges that both students and myself have.
Bryan U. Kauma
PhD Candidate in History
Stellenbosch University

What excites or interests you about being involved with the ASA ESN?

Increasingly, the challenge of being an (African) emerging scholar and historian in particular has been that of locating yourself within a fast and ever-growing academic environment. From finding funding and job/research placement opportunities or having a safe space to be actively involved in academic discussions. However, the ASA ESN has become that panacea. It intersects senior scholars with emerging ones, to provide a conducive and supportive platform for mentorship. ASA ESN offers a safe space for academic growth and networking. The interdisciplinary diversity is excellent for how it then horns members to be rounded scholars with a richer appreciation for multiple disciplines. In today’s world, such networks have become the mainstay for academic survival - no doubt this improves the quality of work one produces.

What are you passionate about teaching or collaborating on?

I am a proud social and environmental historian. My research interests are firmly grounded within appreciation of the everyday added with a deep passion for underprivileged histories. These are the stories that matter to me. My current research explores the social and environmental history of African small grains in southern Africa and Zimbabwe in particular from the precolonial...
past to present, and continuing with that steam I look to collaborate with scholars that are working on scholarship that explores human - crop/plant relations across different communities. There is no doubt that human-crop relations allow us to explore the complex nature of human society and how we relate not only to the environment but to one another as well. This type of history fascinates me, and being involved in its documentation offers me a golden opportunity to enrich my understanding of the shifting social, economic and political dynamics of society.

Seulgie Lim
Bates College (ME)
Assistant professor in Politics

What excites or interests you about being involved with the ASA ESN?

Meeting new people, organizing events, getting to know more about the ins and outs of the ASA!

What do you research?

My research mostly revolves around the political participation of women in Senegal, making connections between the political, social and religious elements. More recently, I am trying to expand my research to the rest of the West African region, as well as looking into diasporas and refugee communities in the US.

What are you passionate about teaching or collaborating on?

I love teaching everything Africa honestly, as I am currently in a small liberal arts school that does not have a big program in African studies and is in the middle of Maine (aka not very diverse). I especially am passionate about deconstructing the prejudices that young students in America might have about the continent, especially in terms of the role of women and the role that Islam plays in different societies.

I have not had the chance to collaborate yet with colleagues in African studies, but would love to collaborate on how to teach about Africa in the States, how can we best convey the realities of the continent all the while increasing their interest in this place that is across the globe for the students, as well as the ins and outs of doing fieldwork (especially as a woman).

Tell us about your experiences at the ASA.

One thing I do regret is not having come to the ASA annual conferences sooner honestly. As a graduate student, I thought that I needed a solid paper and presentation to attend the conference, and/or was pushed to attend the larger political science conferences such as the American Political Science Association (APSA) one. I realize that ASA is so much more convivial than other associations, people are so much more diverse and while it’s a large enough community that facilitates networking, it is still a “cozy” community that is very welcoming in different ways. I really look forward to the next one "irl" and of course to the work with the ESN. And ASA overall offers a wide variety of resources outside of the conference too!

GET INVOLVED

Become an official ESN Member in MyASA under "Coordinate Organizations." Membership tiers allow Emerging Scholars to pay what they can afford (including $0) and 100% of the funds collected go to ESN programming.

Upcoming Events:

Promoting & Publishing Our Knowledge: A Conversation
Friday, October 22, 12:00pm EDT/UTC-4
Free, Registration required to receive the Zoom link

ESN Business Meeting
Tuesday, November 16, 12:00pm EST/UTC-5
ASA Annual Meeting Registration Required
JOIN THE AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION'S EMERGING SCHOLARS NETWORK

Friday, October 22, 2021
12:00pm-1:30 EDT/UTC-4

PROMOTING & PUBLISHING OUR KNOWLEDGE: A CONVERSATION

With Expert Panelists:

Dr. Moradewun Adejunmobi, Journal of the African Literature Association
Dr. Peace Adzo Medie, African Affairs
Dr. Benjamin Lawrance, African Studies Review
Dr. Kim Yi Dionne, The Monkey Cage (Washington Post) and Ufahamu Africa podcast

This event is free. Registration is required to receive the event link.
AFRICA NOW!
A CASUAL CURRENT EVENTS FORMAT

2021 TOPICS COULD INCLUDE:

- Developments in Ethiopia, Chad, Eswatini, etc.
- TikTok, WitchTok, Internet Rituals, & Black Lives Matter
- COVID Vaccination
- The 2021 Olympics
- Literary Analysis: We Are All Birds of Uganda, Black Sunday: A Novel, Unbury Our Dead With Song, etc.
- All 2021 Memorials

OPENING AUG. 2
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VISIT AFRICANSTUDIES.ORG/AFRICANOW FOR MORE DETAILS
A TALE OF TWO COLLEAGUES

2021 Program Chairs, Gretchen Bauer and Akosua Darkwah, had unique circumstances surrounding their ASA service. An uncertain world, a virtual program, and a delayed start set the year’s tone, but Gretchen and Akosua were an unusual pairing for Program Chairs from the start: they’re colleagues and friends.

How did you meet and what was the first project you worked on together?

AD: We first met on email in early 2013 I think. I was then the Director of the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy at the University of Ghana and Gretchen was visiting Ghana with her family. She got in touch requesting to do a presentation at the Centre and I got the staff to facilitate the lecture. I do not actually think I was present at the lecture but we stayed in touch sporadically on email. I went on to write a letter of support for her Fulbright stay in Ghana which is when we really got to know each other. In our first project together, we explored the extent to which gendered electoral financing schemes fundamentally expand women’s rates of participation in politics.

GB: We had met a few times over the years inside Ghana and out, but really got to know each other when I had a Fulbright at the University of Ghana in the spring of 2016. Akosua lives a short way away from the Fulbright House where my son and I were staying and was at the time director of the Center for Gender Studies and Advocacy where I was based for my research. Akosua was very helpful as we were settling in and our sons – despite being five years apart – developed a fondness for each other. Akosua hooked me up with a Saturday morning walking group and before long the four of us were going out regularly for Saturday night dinners. Our first project started soon after I arrived; I had been invited to join a group of researchers based at the University of Bergen in Norway looking at gendered electoral financing mechanisms for women aspirants and candidates for elected
office, with Ghana as one of the case studies. I quickly realized I did not want to do the Ghana case alone and invited Akosua to join, to the delight of all involved. That initial project led eventually to three co-authored publications – in the edited book that emerged from the project, and a journal article and book chapter to which we contributed after being invited.

**How have your research projects evolved to fit the needs of both your primary disciplines?**

**GB:** Well, African Studies is very clearly interdisciplinary and as such we were both used to working outside our own disciplinary boundaries. Being a political scientist and a sociologist, our disciplines complement each other. There have been funny moments, like with a fourth recent project and co-authored journal article that Akosua was a little less keen about – taking the model developed by a group of North American political scientists for understanding the cabinet appointment process and using it to understand the composition of cabinets in Ghana. As I explained to Akosua: ‘that is what political scientists do’ (seek to apply the models of others), somewhat to her dismay. Today we are back to where we started with an invitation, again, to join the same group of researchers from the University of Bergen looking to include Ghana as a case study, this time investigating political violence during elections. That said, each of us has also pursued our own projects and publications in the intervening years, though we have always had something we are working on together.

**AD:** I don’t think our research projects have evolved to fit the needs of our primary disciplines so much as evolved to fit our changing interests in answering particular research questions. The fact that we both use qualitative social science methods has made our collaborative projects easy. There have been no major discussions about the value of our qualitative research approach. Our disciplinary differences show up sometimes though. I vividly remember not being particularly interested in one research project we did together largely because it involved taking a concept developed in the West and seeking to apply it to Ghana. I blamed that approach on political scientists although truth be told, it does happen in Sociology too. As a Sociologist trained in grounded theory though, I am generally averse to such an approach. What experiences or lessons can you share with emerging scholars on how to establish strong, interdisciplinary networks?

**AD:** A strong interdisciplinary network has to be preceded by a strong interest in interdisciplinary research. Without an interest in reading widely outside of one’s own discipline, it is difficult to set up a strong interdisciplinary network. Secondly, one needs to be open to different ways of seeing the world. Tunnel vision regarding the most appropriate lenses or concepts to explain the world does not help. Humility to say I don’t know what that concept is, I have never heard of it, I don’t know what it means and the graciousness to accept the other’s lack of knowledge is also par for the course.

**GB:** Our collaboration over the years has no doubt led to each of us expanding our own professional networks – through interaction with each other’s networks. We have introduced each other to members of our respective networks, both behind the scenes and in person. Through membership in interdisciplinary organizations like the Ghana Studies Association and the African Studies Association, including the Women’s Caucus (and work with their associated efforts like scholarly journals and awards and other committees), and institutions like the Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa based at the University of Ghana, we have shared a wealth of professional (and personal) contacts and interactions.
Outside of academic research, do you collaborate and if so, in what capacities?

GB: You mean do we go shopping together? Yes, we have our favorite dressmakers and markets in Accra which we visit whenever I am in town. But we have also shared notes and interacted on almost every other facet of academic life. We have both been department heads and deans; we have collaborated over study abroad programs in Ghana. We have compared notes on teaching and fellowship opportunities and shared our professional networks. We keep each other informed of political developments in our respective countries, especially as they concern women in politics. We have exchanged plenty of advice and tips over the years, as each of us has navigated some new chapter in our professional lives.

AD: We are friends. We started out doing weekly dinners with our families; our sons became fast friends over the six month period inspite of the five year age gap. Our weekly dinners enabled us to touch base regarding our first research project but it also allowed a friendship to grow. We have done many things together since then; figured out public transportation in a Scandinavian city, climbed a mountain in another Scandinavian city, gone in search of handbags in Paris, hang out on the beaches of Elmina and Ada in Ghana and there have been countless, in fact perhaps way too many trips to get clothes in shops across Accra.

How has your work as Program Co-Chairs been impacted or shaped by your preexisting relationship?

AD: Program co-chair activities have been folded into our preexisting relationship. We do communicate fairly often on WhatsApp about anything and everything so discussions about program co-chair activities were folded into these conversations pretty easily. Zoom conversations to catch up have in the last year also included opportunities to fine tune an idea, discuss a question Alix has asked us...Pulling off the [program] concept note over the holiday season would definitely have been a challenge if we weren’t already close friends who would have been communicating quite frequently over the holidays anyway. There were a couple of late nights given the 4 hour time difference between us as well which would perhaps have been harder to manage if we were having to navigate a relationship as well.

GB: The annual meeting for which we are program co-chairs will again be remote, as has been all the planning for the meeting. We are very used to frequent what’s app calls, emails and zoom meetings and our ASA business easily became a part of those. Since we have a long history of working together and a foundation of mutual trust and respect, decision making around the program has been greatly facilitated. We are used to interacting with each other and with others as a team.

Joint Publications:


ASA 2020 Best Book Award Winner

Adom Getachew was awarded the ASA’s 2020 Best Book Award for, *World Making After Empire: The Role of Self-determination*, Princeton University Press, 2019. The award recognizes the most important scholarly work in African studies published in English and distributed in the United States during the preceding year. The ASA began awarding the prize in 1965.
What drew you to the study of political science and specifically African and Caribbean political history and theory?

I initially came to study political science with the hope that it would lead me to work in international politics which would be a path back to working on the African continent. I had grown up in Ethiopia and Botswana and wanted to figure out a career that would lead back somehow. I assumed that if I wanted to work in international institutions studying international politics would help. At the same time I was interested in African American studies because I had only lived in this country for 4 years when I started college and I thought this would help understand my American context better. What I found, however was that African American studies provided a different angle on international politics through pan-Africanism and Black Internationalism. I came to be drawn to this work and the ways it made it possible to think transatlantic connections and across the Black Atlantic world.

Your first book, *Worldmaking after Empire: the Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* was based on your dissertation of a similar title. Can you tell us more about the intellectual and personal process of developing your dissertation into a published manuscript?

My book ended up being quite close to the dissertation I wrote so I didn’t radically rewrite it. Instead I focused on reframing the project to speak to the questions that seemed most pressing to me. I also worked on ensuring the architecture of the book worked and that the pieces all fit together. In my process I found it very helpful to present different parts of the book to various conferences and workshops. This really helped me see where my ideas were still inchoate and also learn from how readers reacted to the piece. I also had a day long, very intense but incredibly useful book manuscript workshop where colleagues from UChicago, but also guests from other universities read the entire manuscript and gave me lots of feedback. I really enjoyed this process and got a lot out of it.
You earned your PhD in Political Science and African American Studies from Yale University in 2015, making your 2020 Best Book Prize the first to be awarded to an Emerging Scholar.* What advice do you have for other recent graduates working on a manuscript while beginning a career in teaching?

Before describing my process, I want to acknowledge that I had the incredibly lucky and rare position of getting to write my book in a tenure track job with relatively limited teaching. Many emerging scholars do not find themselves in that position as they balance heavy teaching loads, move from one job to another, and deal with other challenges of precarity in the academy. I think it is important for ASA and other professional associations have conversations about this material context and fight collectively for job security in the academy.

As for my process, I found the first year of my job challenges as I figured out how to think about my different roles as teachers, advisor, researcher, and committee member. It was important for me to figure out when I worked best and try to carve out that time (daily if possible) for my own work. I also found it very helpful to sign up for workshops or conferences (some of which were just at my institution) as a way of setting deadlines for myself and getting feedback on chapters. I also think it’s important to recognize that sometimes distance from a project can be a good thing. After submitting the dissertation, I didn’t open it for about 8 to 9 months. That time away reading and work on other things gave me space to reapproach the project with new energy and insight.

* the ASA defines “emerging scholar” as in pursuit of one’s terminal degree, or within five years post completion.

Samuel Moyn, Professor of Jurisprudence at Yale Law School and Professor of History at Yale University said the following: “Worldmaking after Empire is a breathtaking achievement on the history and theory of global justice. Anticolonialism, it turns out, mattered not for its emphatic nationalism so much as for its subaltern cosmopolitanism. The resources of the traditions Adom Getachew pioneeringly

I was interested in writing this book precisely because I thought the anticolonial vision of global justice had received insufficient attention. I think the ambition and scale at which anticolonial worldmaking was articulated will be necessary in our contemporary moment to respond to a wide range of issues from the pandemic to climate change. There are also ways in which come contemporary struggles like reparation for instance as picking some of the same questions of racial hierarchy and unequal integration with which I dealt in the book. At the same time I don’t think there are straightforward lessons that can simply be culled from the moment of decolonization for our own times and I think many of the projects struggling for justice and equity now offers critiques of mid-century anticolonialism. Just to name a couple of examples. Contemporary mass movements from Black Lives Matter to #EndSARS have made the state and its violence the central object of their critique. Much of the global climate justice activism rejects economic growth as a perpetual horizon. An investment in the state’s capacity to transform political and economic society as well as vision of on-going economic growth were central assumptions that animated anticolonialism in the mid-century.

African studies is an inherently interdisciplinary field. How has interdisciplinary work shaped your authorship, research interests, and teaching methods?

Because as an undergraduate and graduate student, I had part of my intellectual home in African American Studies, I have always drawn from a wide range of texts in my work and teaching. This background helps shape the kind of questions I ask and the sources on which I draw. For instance, in a recent article, I draw on work by literary and cultural theorists on aesthetics to examine 1920 Universal Negro Improvement Association Convention in New York. In my teaching, I seek out co-teaching opportunities when possible and seek to incorporate literature and visual arts when possible. For instance with my colleague Natacha Nsabimana, we taught a class titled “The Idea of Africa” last year which

reconstructs are far from being exhausted even today.” How do you see your ongoing work within the larger framework of contemporary global justice and the ongoing anticolonial struggles in many places?
"AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROVIDED A DIFFERENT ANGLE ON INTERNATIONAL POLITICS THROUGH PAN-AFRICANISM AND BLACK INTERNATIONALISM. I CAME TO BE DRAWN TO THIS WORK AND THE WAYS IT MADE IT POSSIBLE TO THINK ABOUT TRANSATLANTIC CONNECTIONS AND ACROSS THE BLACK ATLANTIC WORLD."

incorporated a playlist, film and visual art. Because questions of representation and imagination were so central to this class, these forms gave us an opportunity to explore the multiple scales and modalities through which an idea of Africa has been staged.

As an author and political scientist, do you have a favorite book or author to teach? What do you enjoy reading outside scholarly books?

I love to teach the work of W. E. B. Du Bois. I taught a class on his international thought a few years back and we covered works like The World and Africa as well as many of his essays from the interwar period. Outside of scholarly books, I like to read fiction, especially from the African and African diasporic world. I recently read Chris Abani’s Graceland, which came out in 2004 and loved it. I also found the multigenerational story in Namwali Serpell’s The Old Drift gripping.

A major component of finding a job in academia can be relocation. How was your transition to a new city and what do you enjoy about living and teaching in the Chicago area?

I didn’t know anyone when I moved to Chicago so it took a while to make friends and get a lay of the land. I live in Hyde Park and I really enjoy being very close to the lake, which is sublime. Walks and runs there are great and especially came in handy during the worst part of quarantine. Chicago is a great city for the arts and live music. I have enjoyed having these elements of a big city nearby while enjoying quiet and green neighborhood of Hyde Park. UChicago has also been a great place to start my career. My colleagues have been incredibly supportive of my work, and the students are earnest and inquisitive.

If you didn’t follow this career path into the professorate, what other careers could you see yourself in?

It’s a hard question to answer now because I feel very much committed to the trajectory I ended up pursuing. I also didn’t know what options were available to me. The other possibility I thought seriously about was work in international politics, perhaps within the United Nations or another international agency.

Are you working on any new projects currently, scholarly or otherwise?

I am working on a few things. First, I just wrapped an edited volume of W.E.B Du Bois’s International Thought with my colleague Jennifer Pitts, which should be out next year. Second, I am beginning a new project on the intellectual origins and political practices of Garveyism. Finally, I am part of a research group with Antawan Byrd (Northwestern/Art Institute), Elvira Dyangani Ose (MACBA-Barcelona), and Matthew Witkovsky (Art Institute) work on multi-year project titled Pan-Africa: Histories, Aesthetics, Politics.
What is the Queer African Studies Association (QASA)’s mission?

The Queer African Studies Association (QASA) held its inaugural meeting at the 2015 African Studies Association Annual Conference, which was held in San Diego. One of the main missions of QASA is to facilitate communication, develop networks, and share information among scholars, activists, students, and artists working in the areas of gender, sexuality, and queer studies in Africa. It is worth pointing out that QASA is an inclusive group of scholars and activists interrogating what “queer” and “African” mean. We do not presume that they are monolithic and separate; they are multi-sited interactions. QASA welcomes anyone interested in these questions. QASA is more than an intellectual group; we recognize that there are queer lives and bodies on the continent that deserve advocacy. QASA supports African queer scholars and activists raising their voices and seeks to connect queer African studies scholarship to wider audiences.

QASA has indeed had a sizeable Facebook community with just over 3000 members. QASA has also had an email distribution list which has allowed for the circulation information on CFPs, jobs, fellowships etc. focused on gender and sexual diversity in Africa. Formalizing QASA is important in that it allows the association to expand its reach beyond the organization of panels at ASA conferences. Since February this year, close to 30 members have formally joined QASA and duly paid their membership dues.

QASA launched two new essay prizes in 2021, one for graduate students and one for junior faculty. Can you tell us about both prizes and the thought processes behind them?

As you may know, one of the ways that nascent fields advance is through book and article prizes. Prizes play an important part in helping scholars in new fields garner jobs and tenure. The Queer African Studies Association has long wanted to set up such a prize as a way of advancing the careers of its junior scholars, many of whom are in graduate school and/or searching for work. At the last QASA business meeting at ASA, those in attendance thought that it was not yet time for a book prize, and that evaluating papers...
papers presented at the conference would be tricky logistically. The group thought a good place to start would be a prize for the best paper published by a graduate student or junior scholar in the previous academic year (i.e., the ASA 2021 conference prize would be awarded to an article published between September 2020 and August 2021). We feel that this is a historic and important step forward for the field.

In 2020, QASA hosted the most sponsored sessions at the Virtual Annual Meeting. What sessions are you excited to sponsor this year, and what do you hope to see more of on the program?

At this year’s Virtual Meeting, QASA will be sponsoring three sessions. These are: “Working Class Homosexuality in South Africa: Voices from the Archives”, “Emerging Work in Queer African Studies” as well as “Beyond Silos: The Transnational, Destabilizing Potential of Queer African Entanglements”. It is our hope that these sessions will lead to fruitful deliberations on pertinent work on Queer African studies. We, particularly, look forward to more active participation by scholars based on/from the African continent. Interestingly, there is also another session which is not sponsored by QASA, “Re-centering Africa: dissecting agency through knowledge production, sports, and LGBTQI+ lenses”. These sessions point towards how the field of Queer African Studies is flourishing to include fields such as sport. We also hope to have more queer practitioners/activist in addition to just regular academic work and panel presentations.

What are some of the trends in Queer African Studies research and publishing that you’re seeing? What trends are you most excited to see develop in this field?

Some of the most interesting trends in Queer African Studies scholarship has been the focus on devising queer archives and methods from the continent. For example, Keguro Macharia’s 2019 book Frottage: Frictions of Intimacy across the Black Diaspora (winner of the Alan Bray Memorial Prize given by the GL/Q Caucus of the MLA) offers ways of thinking about the intersection of Black diaspora and queer studies by problematizing care and pleasure in our understanding of identities. Another interesting trend in on the centrality of intimacy in imagining queer lived experiences in Africa. A special issue of the Journal of African Cultural Studies entitled “The possibilities and intimacies of queer African screen culture”, curated by Lindsey Green-Simms and Z’ètoile Imma, has groundbreaking work that examines how screen cultures allow for a thinking through what intimacy means and its role in imagining queer lives. There has also been a fascinating trend that has seen queer studies coming into conversation with speculative fiction. Bibi Burger edited a special issue of the journal Scrutiny2 on “Engaged queerness in African speculative fiction.” These trends point to how the field of Queer African Studies is growing in interesting and innovative ways.

How can the ASA community members join QASA and/or support its programming and organizational goals?

ASA community members can join QASA through their MyASA dashboard. Members can choose from five different categories based on their needs and abilities:

- Level 1 membership: $5
- Level 2 membership: $30
- Level 3 membership: $100
- Level 4 membership: $250
- Level 5 membership: $500
"FROM BLACK SPACES, NEW THINGS CAN EMERGE"

Author of A Small Silence and 2020 Aidoo-Snyder Prize Winner Jumoke Verissimo follows up on her ASA Meet the Author to share more of her process and passions as an award-winning novelist and poet.

What inspired you to become a writer?

We writers were mostly voracious readers, and writing seemed like a see-do-do activity, something to bring our imaginations to life. As a result, it is natural to say that reading influenced my decision to pursue a career as a writer. However, I believe the "what" in your question is looking for something more specific than that broad reference, such as a person, an object, a location, or a thing. Finding that thing, however, is difficult as I sift through the events that inform the never-ending negotiations in my imagination that have plagued my day-to-day existence. In a similar vein, because I enjoyed all types of creative activities that involved imagination and creation, I could have discovered visual arts if I had the necessary structures in place. So, once again, I find myself asking, "What inspired me to pursue a career as a writer?"

I used to love writing as a kid. Indeed, I wrote a "novel" in a notebook for our landlord's daughter when I was about eight or nine years old (I am not sure). I realised at this age that I liked the way writing made me feel and how I could disappear into it and emerge as something containing my disparate interests. I felt different every time I finished writing and wanted to return to begin a new project. So, while it seems natural to attribute my motivation for becoming a writer to only books, as they served as a foundational outlet for my writing, I believe the total cultural and social encounters are as important as well. For me, being inspired to return to writing means being stimulated,
finding oneself aroused to a particular vocation on a regular basis, which can happen when something desires to be produced. It means that, beyond the quick responses intended to validate one’s writing journey by referencing books, I see inspirations as cumulative experiences and ongoing encounters that validate the reading. I meet people, I am a part of communities, I am a member of societies, I have personal experiences, and all of these things are read in such a way that my imagination—already invigorated by books—calls for a reimagining. So, while reading allows me to express my feelings and enliven my creativity, writing allows me to assert the multiple identities I construct and navigate. In writing, I confront an unacknowledged desire to investigate my childhood curiosities and then investigate their loss as an adult in each new experience. Bangambiki Habyarimana, a writer whose quote I recently discovered, says that many writers exist because they have been there, seen that, done that, and burned their fingers. My motivation for becoming a writer would then be a personal quest to make sense of events that I am constantly attempting to articulate as mine, ours, and yours—without necessarily being your voice. I believe that my motivation to write stems from a desire to escape and that my inspiration comes from revisiting experiences for meaning that may have escaped me. In this way, each writing project is like a new meeting where I can be re-inspired to be a writer again and again.

Before your novel *A Small Silence*, you published other types of works including books of poetry and a short story. Can you share a little bit about the different writing styles you engage and what you enjoy about each?

I believe the first piece of writing I ever shared with anyone was fiction. Still, I discovered writing poetry and became obsessed with capturing the sum of experiences in brevity best. In contrast to my poetry, my approach to fiction is exploratory; even when interrogative or reflective, I want to emphasize how what can emerge when I encounter characters, places and things in my fiction. To put it mildly, I am fascinated by the psychology of transformative experiences that fiction allows, which is why I enjoy writing fiction with strong characters. On the other hand, I enjoy writing poetry because it makes me feel like a piece of myself is being expressed. It does not automatically mean that the writing is autobiographical; instead, I would like to think that it focuses on the affective in a way that aids in grasping the unsaid moments that poetry typically explores. This approach has proven useful even when writing fiction, where I attempt to incorporate all my senses in the same way that I do when writing poetry. Even my non-fiction, I would argue, benefits from this sense of intense giving of the self to my writing. I have received compliments and occasionally, too, frustrations from those who believe my writing, despite its simplicity, is quite poetic. This means, I suppose, indicates that the writing is deliberate and attentive to connecting to the reader in a way that asks them to engage with the writing actively. Primarily, poetry is like a connector in my writing. I find that doing this gives me constant joy that offers new approaches to writing. I am constantly negotiating a middle ground that works and ties my writing together.

**What poets or authors do you enjoy teaching or reading? Who’s work inspires you?**

The notion that one can be inspired by a single thing, I believe, ignores the all-encompassing nature of how ideas are formed. I am particularly wary of silos. Do I respond based on contemporary writers whose honesty connects me to the realities of our time, or whatever time they bring into the present, or do I start with writers whose works formed me but also released me from their grasp to become something new? It is an unfair question, but I would gladly ask it myself if I were in your position. In recent years, I have become more interested in writers who tell stories that invite us to listen, whose stories are genuine and authentically connected to the lives they write about in an unpretentious way, and who say, “I see you, and you see what I see.” Sarah Ladipo Manyika, Leila Aboulela, Yewande Omotoso, Rasaq Malik, Nawal el Sadaawi, JP Clark, Audre Lorde, Aminata Forna, Toni Morrison, Olajide Salawu, Andre Brink, Helon Habila, Dionne Brand, Tolu Agbelusi... these writers come to mind because I am currently reading their works.

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I do not yet have a large teaching portfolio. I have only recently returned to school. However, my teaching has largely focused on works that respond to questions that I develop my syllabus/course around. Nonetheless, I make an effort to highlight writers who are frequently overlooked on reading lists. I refer to canonical writers as references from which students can gain a broader understanding of what they are learning, but my primary
focus when teaching is to create spaces for those whose works are typically hidden at the back of bookstores. Ama Ata Aidoo and Nawal el Sadaawi’s social commitment also inspires me.

You originally published the short story *The Lightless Room*, from which your novel grew. What aspects of the story moved you to continue developing it into a full-length book?

Nothing more than the story’s indication that it had more to offer, and didn’t want to be a short story. Once I finished the short story, it was evident it was going to be a novel. I could not take my thoughts away from Prof and Desire and their lives. The story accompanied me wherever I went, and I knew there was more to learn about these two characters, or I may never be at peace.

Your main character, Prof, is in part, an exploration of what happens to society’s heroes when they leave the limelight. What did you discover?

I joined the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) as a teenager, and until my early twenties, I was a regular at the readings that brought together journalists, activists, and university professors, among others, who wished to do nothing but write. I spent my adolescent years listening to the stories of these men whose lives were transformed during Nigeria’s phase of an intense oppressive government. Some of them I knew well enough to understand how quickly society forgets its heroes; others I saw evolve into humans who recognized how much they needed to survive and bent to their stomach’s will. As I previously stated, I am particularly interested in how people change because I am also assessing how I have changed and attempting to connect the events and people that tainted the innocence of my ignorant days. Perhaps, as for discovery, I don’t know if one of it is how we become unique only when we encounter things that alter our preconceived notions.

You describe the darkness you explore through the book as potentially generative – “a space of continuous interrogation [and] contemplation.” Can you expand on that, specifically how your explorations of darkness and Profs’ overlap and diverge?

I must begin by saying that the inspiration for this novel came to me in a dark room while I was sitting in a friend’s sitting room, discussing the depressive state of our beloved country, just as a power outage occurred. Because of how it came to me, negotiating how darkness becomes a place for generating potentials became significant in the story’s writing. As the poet, Mary Oliver once said, “Someone I loved once gave me a box full of darkness. It took me years to understand that this, too, was a gift.” The darkness provided a space for me to explore a new idea, which is how the writing came to me. It was a place for Prof to let go and possibly reinvent himself. In this case, his country gave him darkness, and it became a place where he met and measured his past. While writing the novel, I kept returning to this pivotal moment in the story’s development – Prof returning to the dark room and thinking of it alongside the way the idea sprung up in my mind, despite the depressing silence that accompanied the power outage in the room I was in with my friend, as we talked about our fears for the future and the country, we lived in. So, you see, I think of Prof’s fear is a darkness that he chooses to live in because it is what he is resigned to understand, but it is also the place where Desire prods him to learn more about him, and in the process, she meets herself as well. Desire cannot see him in the dark, but she is so attentive to him that she carries the presence he reveals with her when she leaves the room. Her imagination is more active now that she can connect what he says and what he doesn’t. The darkness allows her to enter his silences and interpret them based on what she knows about him. I understand how we think of darkness as a place where we are mostly hidden and unobserved, but as “a space of continuous interrogation and contemplation,” there is always room for reflection. The sense we get in the dark is that something needs to be said, something that needs to be revealed, and from this comes the never-ending exploration into which new meanings may emerge.

We often encounter Prof through the eyes of Desire, a young woman. Why is Desire’s point of view essential to the narrative about Prof and his life in the dark?

There is a distinction between how those we interact with see us, and how we perceive ourselves. This is the point of having Desire’s point of view in the narration of Prof. While I will not say that Desire as a character gives us an authentic understanding of Prof’s struggles, I will say that it positions the reader to judge Prof’s intentions and character closely. The him they see and the one Desire
projects him as. This is important to me because I want the reader to be actively engaged in the reading process and to come to the story with imaginations that allow them to explore the events in the book with me. We have a man who lives in the dark because he lacks desire. Desire drags him out of the shadows, allowing us to investigate not only the mood of the room, but also how it affects the society Prof and Desire live in.

Prof suffers from PTSD and depression following a long period of political incarceration. Trauma like this can reach beyond the individual into a culture, particularly in light of systematic state violence. How can artistic and creative pursuits such as writing poetry facilitate individual or collective healing?

This question, interestingly, is related to my current Ph.D. research, which focuses on a combination of critical essays that interpret grievances in the collective trauma of the Nigerian Civil War and a collection of poems that aim to facilitate individual or collective healing by interpreting the various grievances at the War’s end. According to my research, the first writing in response to the War’s end was primarily fiction. However, while fictional works aim to establish in collective memory that mostly projects ressentiment and ethnic biases, poetry offers something different in the narration of a sense of the event poetry on the War. For example, JP Clark’s "The Casualties" shows us how the wound in front of us is a pain we all feel. Poetry, then, in cultural trauma, goes beyond simply reenacting events for the sake of memory; it disassembles memory so that we can inscribe emotions to what we are suffering from. In the case of the War, or political incarceration and societal oppression that inflict collective trauma, a form like poetry provides people with the opportunity to recognize the extent of their injury and find a way to express affects they were never able to speak—this, in and of itself, is healing. Healing is a gradual process that ends when the possibility of a scab appears rather than when the scab falls off.

**"POETRY, THEN, IN CULTURAL TRAUMA, GOES BEYOND SIMPLY REENACTING EVENTS FOR THE SAKE OF MEMORY; IT DISASSEMBLES MEMORY SO THAT WE CAN INSCRIBE EMOTIONS TO WHAT WE ARE SUFFERING FROM."**

between stage and screen makes his control of emotions natural, and useful for portraying Prof’s internal struggles. For Desire, I may have to give careful thoughts to that. The actress that comes to mind is Uche Mac-Auley (formerly Uche Osotule), based on her role in Tunde Kelani’s Oleku and Saving Alero. She hasn’t featured in many films of late, though. But, that was a long time ago.

You are currently completing a PhD at the University of Alberta. Have your recent academic pursuits shaped or changed your writing and if so, in what ways?

Sure, it has. I have only recently realised how to fully ensure that the change is mutually beneficial and not destructive in the long run.

Do you have any advice for aspiring novelists?

Finish it.

Are you currently working on anything new?

Yes. Yes, I am. Because I am superstitious, I will not go into further detail. But I like what I am working on.

If your book became a film, who would you cast in the roles of Prof and Desire and why?

I’d say, if Olu Jacobs were younger, he’d be perfect as Prof. My second choice would be Richard Mofe Damijo. He is a good actor, whose ability to move
The African Studies Review is excited to announce that the journal’s Impact Factor for 2020 was 1.706, a remarkable increase from its 2019 score, 1.034, and an over 100 percent increase from the journal’s score a mere four years ago. As such, the African Studies Review is now the top-ranked African Studies journal based in North America, and the second most cited worldwide, after African Affairs. The Impact Factor is measured by the frequency in a given year in which articles from the past two years are cited. To celebrate this achievement, the ASA asked some of the ASR editors to share their favorite articles from the past two years.

Akosua Darkwah highlighted the 2019 article, “The Materiality and Social Agency of the Malaḥfa (Mauritanian Veil)” by Katherine Ann Wiley, noting that this article is “a fascinating account of women’s agency in the Mauritanian context,” and that it “brings a fresh perspective to discussions of the veil in Muslim Societies.”

Claudia Gastrow’s pick was “Lagos Art World: The Emergence of an Artistic Hub on the Global Art Periphery” by Jess Castellote and Tobenna Okwuosa. Gastrow shared, “This article beautifully illustrated what many people working on African cities claim, but don’t always show: that African cities are as much a centre of the globe and centre for production of innovative ideas and debates as any other major urban centres in the world. Focused on the Lagos art scene, the authors move the reader through histories of artistic debates, thematics, and also urban infrastructures such as workshops and galleries to give the reader a sense of how Lagos has emerged as an important global hub for artistic production and debates. While there has been a rapidly growing focus within African Studies in recent years on African urbanisms, much of it still focuses on more established themes such as informal economies, urban governance, and planning. This article builds on the political economy underpinnings of that literature by thinking seriously about global flows of capital and...
"AFRICAN STUDIES REVIEW IS NOW THE TOP-RANKED AFRICAN STUDIES JOURNAL BASED IN NORTH AMERICA."

ideas, but roots them in a detailed account of Lagos’s artistic debates, educational institutions, exhibitions, and more generalised urban artistic infrastructures.”

ASR Editor Benjamin Talton selected two favorites. First, he highlighted the 2018 ASR Distinguished Lecture, “When ‘Green’ Equals Thorny and Mean: The Politics and Costs of an Environmental Experiment in East Africa” by Peter D. Little, noting that “In addition to examining the precipitating factors behind desiccation, including the introduction of invasive plants, it engages the broader debates in African studies and policies in African countries in ways that makes it interdisciplinary and political relevant.”

He also picked “You Are Where You Build: Hierarchy, Inequality, and Equalitarianism in Mandara Highland Architecture” by Melchisedek Chetima, stating “the author presents a rich study of local politics and culture that demonstrates the ways in which local communities in the Mandara Highlands employ architecture, history, and physical space to assert notions of social status.”

And finally, be sure to check out the winner of the 2019 ASR Best Article Award, “Xenophobia’s Contours During an Ebola Epidemic: Proximity and the Targeting of Peul Migrants in Senegal” by Ato Kwamena Onoma. Selected by the Editorial Review Board of the African Studies Review, this article uses ethnographic research to show how xenophobia towards Peul migrants in Senegal during the Ebola crisis followed pre-existing personal patterns of relations rather than simply blanket animosity towards the entire group.

The ASR will announce the 2020 Best Article Award later this year.
ASA MEMBER NEWS

Celebrating the 2021 accomplishments throughout our global community.

Recent Member Publications


Jose Cossa, Pennsylvania State University, "Cosmo-ubuntu Theorizing about the Global Citizen in Modernity's Frontiers: lived experience in Mozambique, United States, Swaziland, South Africa, and Egypt" Susan Wiksten (Ed.), *Enactments of Global Citizenship Education: Social Justice in Public Spheres of Education* (Routledge, 2021)


Ousmane Kane, Harvard University, " edited *Islamic Scholarship in Africa. New Directions and Global Contexts* (London: James Currey, 2021)


Member Announcements

Ousmane Kane, Harvard University, was named Weatherhead Center Distinguished Faculty Research Associate.

Maria Martin, University of California, Merced, conceptualized and participated in the successful *Centering Our Voices: Perspectives on Race, Equity, and Access in Fulbright*, part of the Fulbright Forum: Celebrating Black History Month during the 75th Anniversary of the Fulbright Program.
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STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION

After the close of the CFP the ASA Board of Directors voted on the action items listed below. The 2021 board members are:

Carolyn A. Brown, President
Ousseina D. Alidou, Vice President
Ato Quayson, Past President
Mary Osirim, Treasurer
Akosua Adamako Ampofo, Member
Nana Akua Anyidoho, Member
Leonardo Arriola, Member
Didier Gondola, Member
Abdoulaye Gueye, Member
Adeline Masquelier, Member
Dumi Moyo, Member
Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie, Member
Lahra Smith, Member

2021 Board Decisions

- The Board approved a Statement (by the African Studies Association) on the Destruction of Educational Institutions in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia.
- The Board approved a Statement (by African Studies Association Members) on Restrictions on Freedoms for University Students and Staff in eSwatini.
- The Board approved a Statement (by the African Studies Association) on the Loss of Priceless Materials at the University of Cape Town.
- The Board approved Program Co-chairs for the 2022 and 2023 Annual Meetings.
- The Board voted to amend the ASA’s Policies and Procedures to select program chairs two years in advance.
- The Board approved the immediate creation of the Development Advisory Council.
- The Board approved an increase to the Gretchen Walsh Book Donation Award amount.
- The Board approved ASA’s participation in the International Congress of African and African Diaspora Studies.
We’re proud to support the African Studies Association

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AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

HOW TO ENGAGE IN MEMBER-DRIVEN ADVOCACY

1. READ OUR ADVOCACY POLICY
   Read through the ASA’s Advocacy Policy to ensure that the issue you wish to raise falls within the ASA’s advocacy mandate (and check past statements to see what we have advocated for or against).

2. RENEW YOUR ASA MEMBERSHIP
   Per our Advocacy Policy, only current ASA Members may submit a statement to the Advocacy Committee for consideration. Renew your membership or become a member in the MyASA Portal.

3. ARTICULATE THE ISSUE
   Write your desired Advocacy statement and include the necessary documentation outlined in the ASA Advocacy Policy to support the statement.

4. GATHER MEMBER SUPPORT
   To be considered, your Advocacy issue must have 10 ASA Member signatories. Use our membership directory, social media, or email to find signatories for your statement.

5. SUBMIT YOUR STATEMENT
   Submit via email to members@africanstudies.org for our Advocacy Committee to consider. You should hear back in about one week.

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