

To the African Studies Community,

We regret that our previous response to the retraction petition did not fully address the substantive issues raised by the petition signatories. We apologize that the response left members of our community feeling disappointed and dismissed. Missing from our initial response was a statement addressing structural racism and extractive research practices that have historically shaped African Studies and scholarly publishing. We take these issues seriously and wish to address them herein.

African Studies has its roots in colonial encounters and histories of Cold War imperialism. These origins have not only created a context in which Black scholars have been marginalized, but in which unethical researchers have extracted from and harmed Africans. We recognize the legacy of these histories that catalyzed the signatories' concerns. We also understand that these are not simply histories but lived realities for many Black scholars. Given the importance of the concerns raised and the underlying histories, we would like to again assure the African Studies community that all applicable ethical protocols for the review essay were followed. The authors have confirmed that they received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for their previous research referenced in the review essay including informed consent for their work. IRB and related materials are on file at their respective institutions. We acknowledge that the IRB system is not without its flaws and itself needs to be decolonized. With respect to the ASR specific peer review process, this article was subjected to the process outlined previously. The ASR continues to actively contribute to the further development and implementation of an improved, and more inclusive, system for scholarly journal publishing.

The signatories also raised broader questions surrounding citation, appropriation, and race that we wish to address. Specifically, they highlighted that work which superficially invokes a decolonial agenda reproduces the harms of settler colonial practices. This is a serious concern for African Studies, and we support the active and ongoing processes of decolonization in our field. Discussions about race and power are some of the most critical to engage in if we wish to confront not just African Studies' past, but its possible futures. We welcome critics' interventions and recognize the risks, especially for early career and Black scholars, to raise these concerns in a profession that is often hostile to questioning.

Recognizing these concerns, we issued a call for forum contributions on ethics, methods, and autoethnography to be published in a future issue. We believe these contributions will deepen and further nuance conversations about ethics and publication in African Studies. We are undertaking the following actions to facilitate critique and debate:

- 1) We invite the signatories and other scholars to contribute to a forum addressing the wide-ranging debate surrounding the method of autoethnography in African Studies (<10,000 words).
- 2) We are launching a commentary section on our website on decolonizing African Studies and other contested material (2,000–5,000 words).

- 3) We will continue our ongoing efforts to support early career and African researchers, and to encourage diversity in ASR's authoring and reviewing processes. We welcome conversations that will contribute to the future of ASR's initiatives.
- 4) The ASR will convene a new standing committee at the ASA Annual Meeting in November to which all are invited. This committee will develop new mechanisms that address the concerns raised including policies for receipt of petitions, retraction, correction, and addenda.

The ASR is intended to be a space that promotes scholarship of the highest quality and contributes to shaping an increasingly inclusive and just research community. We believe that the debates over the last few weeks bring us closer to this vision. The debates have highlighted the ongoing need to address questions of race, exclusion, and colonial legacies in our work. We thank our critics for their feedback and the thoughtful conversations they have generated.

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