

CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

NEWSLETTER: FALL 2010, VOLUME XVI

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The RU Center for African Studies, Office of Undergraduate Education, Department of Plant Biology and Pathology, and International Programs present "An African Movie and Dialogue"/ "Ecologies in the balance? The way forward" collaborative documentary film screening about the work of Kenyan Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Wangari Maathai. Professor Jim Simon will introduce the film.

TAKING ROOT: THE VISION OF WANGARI MAATHAI

Date and Time: Wednesday, September 29, 7:30pm

Place: Cook Campus Center, Multipurpose Room C



photo credit: Lisa Merton, Taking Root Signature Image



Dreaming Mali photo credit: Barbara Kowa

Delicious Peace photo credit: JEMGLO



Don't miss *Dreaming Mali* and *Delicious Peace Grows in a Ugandan Coffee Bean* on Sunday, October 10 at the Fall 2010 New Jersey Film Festival at Rutgers! For more details see p.28.

Editor: Ousseina Alidou.....Content and Design: Renée DeLancey

Letter from Director, Ousseina Alidou

Let me begin with the exciting news that on May 16, 2010 the President of Liberia and Africa's first female democratically elected Head of State President **Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf** will be conferred an Honorary Doctor of Law by Rutgers University! The CAS community is extending its deep appreciation to the nominating committee for its high appraisal of the achievements of an African woman Head of State who has distinguished herself on the world stage for her leadership in rebuilding her country in the aftermath of war and for advancing democratic governance and transparency in other African countries.

Another major highlight of the year was the very successful symposium entitled, "**Crossroads: Migration, Language, and Literature in Africa**," that took place February 26-27, 2010 and which was sponsored by **the Center for African Studies, the Department of African, Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Literatures (AMESALL)**, and many more supporters. Once again I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Rutgers sponsors of this event: **The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Museum**, the Office of the Executive Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, the Office of the Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Office of Undergraduate Education, the Office of International Programs, the Dean of Humanities, the Transliterations Project, the College Avenue Campus Dean, the Comparative Literature Program, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the Department of French, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and the Institute for Research on Women. CAS and AMESALL also thank our colleagues from other departments who contributed immensely to the success of the conference: Rick Schroeder (Associate Director of CAS and Geography), Al Howard from the Department of History, Renée Larrier from the Department of French, Gary Rendsberg from Jewish Studies, Fatima Duisebayeva (Visiting Open Society Institute Faculty Fellow from Kazakhstan Women's University), Gabriele Schwab (Distinguished Visiting Professor in the German Department) and Elin Diamond of Comparative Literature. The tremendous success of the Crossroads Symposium was partly due to the extraordinary managerial work of Renée DeLancey at every stage of the planning and running of the symposium. She beat the snow-storm and ran a wonderful symposium! Thank you so much Renée!

The Crossroads event started with a pre-symposium lecture entitled "**African Languages at the Crossroads of History**" by the world renowned writer and literary critic Professor **Ngugi Wa Thiong'o** (University of California at Irvine), followed by a keynote address on "**Circulation of Scholars and Texts**" by **Professor Brinkley Messick** (Columbia University). There were fourteen international and national scholars, including **Hailu Habtu** (University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), **Cécile Vigouroux** (Simon Fraser University, Canada), **Amardeep Singh** (Lehigh University), **Hagar Salamon** (Hebrew University, Israel), **Beverly Mack** (University of Kansas), **Chouki El Hamel** (Arizona State University), **Fallou Ngom** (Boston University), **Nicholas Faraclas** (Universidad de Puerto Rico), and **Abdulaziz Lodhi** (Uppsala University, Sweden). Unfortunately three of our invited speakers, **Loren Kruger** (University of Chicago), **Ghirmai Negash** (Ohio University Athens), and **Savita Nair** (Furman University) were prevented from attending by the snow-storm, however they sent their papers which added refreshing perspectives to the theme of the conference.

The symposium participants were warmly received at the Zimmerli Museum by **Dr. Donna Gustafson**, the senior exhibition curator who gave them a lecture-tour of the exhibition of the internationally acclaimed Moroccan female artist, **Lalla Essaydi**. My colleagues and I at the Center for African Studies are very gratified by the wonderful collaboration with colleagues at the **Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Museum**. Our special thanks go to **Suzanne Delehanty** (Director of the Zimmerli Museum) and Donna Gustafson for their strong support of the activities of the Center for African Studies and for the opportunities to host our events at the Museum.

We are especially excited about the prominence that African women artists are given at Rutgers University and in New Brunswick. **Lalla Essaydi's *Les Femmes du Maroc*** exhibition at Rutgers has been a great success, and the series of events around the exhibition fostered important discussions among the participants and visitors about the interplay between art and society. The Center for African Studies also commends the **Brodsky Center for Innovative Editions** for Women and Arts and the New Brunswick Development Cooperation for sponsoring ***The Last Frontier: Contemporary African Women Artists Use Their Artistic Voices to Mobilize Their Communities***. This was a collection of artwork by five African women artists —namely **Ritah Edopu** (Uganda), **Mercy Moyo** (Zimbabwe), **Liliane Nabulime** (Uganda), **Sara Nakisanze** (Uganda), and **Duhirwe Rushemeza** (Rwanda) – on exhibition at the Brodsky Center Gallery at the Heldrich Hotel until June 1, 2010. **Ritah Edopu** and **Liliane Nabulime** gave fascinating presentations in our class “Comparative Approaches to African Literature” about how their artwork could be read as social and political commentaries on developmental issues in African countries.

Other important highlights have been the accomplishments of the CAS graduate affiliates and undergraduates. First, congratulations to **Dr. Mahriana Rofheart** (Comparative Literature, who already has a job in Montpellier) and **Dr. David Kuranga** (Political Science) for the successful completion of their Ph.D.s. Congratulations also to **Adryan Wallace** for her Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad award for dissertation research in Nigeria and Ghana; to **Chaunetta Jones** for her Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship dissertation research award, her P.E.O. Scholar award, and her MAC Dissertation Fellowship; to **Deborah Scott** for the CAS pre-dissertation fieldwork award and excellent IGERT contribution; and to **Ben Twagira** for being admitted to the Ph.D. Program in History at Boston University. **Stella Capoccia** received two awards in March 2010 for her work in Animal Geography and as a graduate student instructor. Stella's Dissertation Teaching Award was awarded by the Graduate School at Rutgers University for a course proposal on Animal Geography. This course is based on her dissertation and independent research and will be taught through the Rutgers Department of Geography in the Spring of 2011. Stella's second award is for Teaching Excellence through the Department of Geography for courses including “Conservation and Use of Natural Resources” and “Politics of Environmental Issues.”

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank **Stella Capoccia** very much for her leadership in recruiting more graduate students from various disciplines to become CAS Graduate Affiliates and for her tremendous efforts in planning, with **Chaunetta Jones**, the Spring CAS graduate affiliates conference. We are also grateful to her for developing an exciting module for promoting the CAS minor among undergraduate students.

We send our heart-felt congratulations and best wishes to Wislande Guillaume, Latoya Jones and Rebecca Mamone, the selected interns for the 2010 Ghana International Service Learning Program directed by Dr. Abena Busia. Thank you so much Abena for this initiative!

Special thanks to **Rick Schroeder** for his tremendous support, his availability for purposes of consultation, and for his willingness to share his views and engage in critical examination of the challenges and opportunities for advancing the mission of the Center for African Studies. I wish you the very best during your leave, Rick. Thank you also to the CAS Executive Committee for the great support throughout the year! Thank you Renée DeLancey, Cate Wanyana, and Esha Shah for your highly effective administrative support. My deepest gratitude to all the colleagues within Rutgers, nationally and internationally, who have contributed to the Center for African Studies' lectures and outreach initiatives.

To All, have a healthy, enjoyable, and productive Fall! Yours truly, Ousseina



FACULTY AND STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

CDPGS/NIDOA-NJ Education Summit, July 11-17, 2010

Albert Ayeni (Department of Plant Biology and Pathology) coordinated an Education Summit that was jointly organized by the Committee of Deans of Postgraduate Schools (CDPGS) in Nigerian Universities and the New Jersey Chapter of the Nigerians in Diaspora Organization Americas (NIDOA-NJ). The summit was held at the Hilton East Brunswick Hotel from July 11-17, 2010. The theme of the Education Summit was: “Research and Education in Nigerian Universities: Agenda for the 21st Century.”

From Nigeria, eight university members of CDPGS (University of Ibadan, University of Lagos, University of Nigeria, Mike Okpara University of Agriculture, University of Benin, University of Jos, Babcock University, and the Federal University of Technology-Owerri) and three Vice Chancellors (University of Ibadan, Federal University of Technology-Owerri, and Babcock University) participated at the summit. From North America, seven universities (Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Princeton University, Michigan State University, Howard University, University of Chicago-Medical Center, Monmouth University, and Fordham University), the Nigerian Embassy-Washington DC, NIDOA-NJ, NIDO Americas, the Nigerian Higher Education Foundation (NHEF), the Association of Nigerian Physicians in the Americas (ANPA), AfriHub (Washington DC), and E-Don (Missouri) participated.

Participation was enthusiastic and the discussions were highly focused and thorough, with a keynote address delivered by His Excellency, Professor Ade Adefuye, the Nigerian Ambassador to the United States, entitled, “Education and Research in Nigerian Universities: Where we want to go in the 21st Century.” The Rutgers Center for African Studies Director Ousseina Alidou represented President McCormick at the panel discussion that examined the “Roles of Government and University Administration in Research and Education for Sustainable Community Development.”

Participants from Nigeria also had guided tours of Rutgers and Princeton Universities. At Rutgers, the Dean of International Programs, Joanna Regulska, and her team (Director Ousseina Alidou, Renée DeLancey, and Maryella Hannum) organized a highly successful meeting at Winants Hall between the visitors and members of the Rutgers community on Friday, July 15. At the meeting, eminent members of the Rutgers faculty and administration highlighted Rutgers activities especially in the area of international collaborations. This was followed by a breakout session for small group interactions to discuss areas of potential collaborations between Rutgers and Nigerian Universities.



CAS Director Ousseina Alidou (A) delivers President McCormick’s paper and (B) takes questions from participants at the Education Summit. Seated in the middle is the Nigerian Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Professor Ade Adefuye, and to the far left is Professor Labode Popoola, Chair of the Committee of Deans of Postgraduate Schools in Nigerian Universities.

Gabriella Carolini Reports from KaTembe, Mozambique

Greetings from Mozambique! Strangely enough for an urban planner used to the density of cities like São Paulo or Nairobi, I have been working this summer in a decidedly rural part of the capital city of Maputo. The district I am engaged in researching is called KaTembe (translated as “land of the Tembe’s” in Changana, one of the local Bantu languages). KaTembe is testament to the physical (and social-economic) diversity of modern cities, and to the difficulties (believe it or not) of defining that which is “urban.” More often than not, KaTembe is left out of formally presented city statistics outlining the capital’s socio-economic and demographic status by district (of which there are seven). And yet, it is precisely because of its rural-esque characteristics that KaTembe presents itself as an interesting site for planning research.

KaTembe is located across a bay from the city center of Maputo – sort of like northern New Jersey to Manhattan – but is currently only accessible via little passenger boats and a larger slow ferry for cars. A long-promised and envisioned bridge between KaTembe and the city center (or “cidade cimento” as it is called) has finally been secured through a financial commitment and construction contract – accelerating demographic and economic changes in this less dense but technically largest land district of Maputo. At present, KaTembe ranks as one of the districts with the highest poverty index. Most of the resident population here is part of an informal or unregulated economy, farming and selling produce locally and on the sidewalks of the city center. I have been working to establish a baseline of data on water, sanitation, and waste management services and hygiene behavior in KaTembe, alongside a local NGO partner called IMAGINE and the city district government. A small pilot study is revealing that some of KaTembe’s residents face significant challenges in securing clean, potable water and maintaining latrines. Even when water is technically accessible and reasonably close by, residents – and more specifically, women and children – spend a significant part of their day waiting in line to fill 20-litre jerry cans of water to carry back home, as most water points only function for allocated periods of the day. Latrines and personal hygiene represent yet another serious challenge for the community. There are two public toilets – close to the boat port – and no others in a land area comprising 45 percent of the capital’s total. This has meant that transit hub areas and areas off of long roads within KaTembe have also become sites where residents say passers-by relieve themselves or openly defecate – particularly at night. Cholera outbreaks have been common in KaTembe, though fortunately last year was the first in many that saw no official record of the disease in the local health centers. What changes will come as KaTembe grows and opens up to more mobility – and development pressures – with the construction of the bridge remains to be seen, but will clearly be of interest to all engaged in planning for adequate, accessible, and affordable human settlements in vulnerable areas.



Long lines of jerry cans are place-holders – and common sights – as residents await the opening of water points in KaTembe.

Gabriella Carolini is an Assistant Professor in Urban Planning at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy.

Teaching Civic Education in and with Developing Democracies

By Arlene Gardner

As the Director of the New Jersey Center for Civic Education, I have primarily been involved in developing resource materials and providing professional development opportunities for New Jersey Social Studies teachers. Since 2003, I have also had the opportunity to work with colleagues in Senegal as part of *Civitas International*, a civic exchange program between the United States and emerging and established democracies throughout the world, funded by the U.S. Departments of Education and State and administered by the Center for Civic Education located in Calabasas, CA.

Starting in 2003, small delegations of educators and legislators from Senegal have annually visited New Jersey, and New Jersey educators and legislators have gone to Senegal. We've learned about the limited natural resources, the French colonial past, the Islamic religious culture, and the lively musical culture of this wonderful country of 11 million people. A fifth of the population lives in Dakar, the main commercial port for West Africa and the capital of Senegal. Dakar is filled with modern buildings, traffic, and street vendors. Off the coast of Dakar lies Goree Island, where five million Africans were forcibly taken as slaves to the Americas for three centuries. The Slave House has been preserved by the government of Senegal and stands as a sorrowful reminder of how barbarous human beings can be to each other and how intertwined the histories of the two continents are. As we drove north, the paved roads in the city turned into dirt and then sand, and horse and donkey-drawn wooden carts became the major mode of transportation.

Although Senegal spends forty percent of its national budget on education, parents are required to pay for books and supplies. Since many parents cannot afford these costs, many children drop out after elementary school. The school rooms that we visited were small and crowded. Several students sat together on backless benches with a narrow piece of wood as a desk. Yet, both teachers and students were highly motivated.

Like many students in New Jersey, students in Senegal are using *Project Citizen* materials to identify and research local public policy problems, develop alternative solutions to the problem, and decide on the best solution. While some of the projects in Senegal involved issues that we take for granted, such as lack of clean water and lack of electricity, other projects raised concern in both Senegal and New Jersey, such as teen pregnancy, traffic safety, and the environment.

In addition to the *Project Citizen* curriculum, the *Civitas International* exchange program has brought professional development and materials about authority, responsibility, the rule of law, human rights, and conflict resolution to teachers in Senegal and New Jersey. We have also developed an eight-unit curriculum about the history, geography, economics and politics of West Africa, with a focus on Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria. The lessons have been used by teachers across the country (particularly in Los Angeles, California) and around the globe as well as in New Jersey. The lessons are online at <http://civiced.rutgers.edu/AFRICA/Africa-TOC.shtml>.

I was impressed not only by the tolerance and open-mindedness of the Senegalese in dealing with conflict and differing opinions but also by their enthusiastic support for their fragile but growing democracy. After more than 40 years of independence, Senegal finally had an election in 2000 where the party in office was ousted and there was no coup. It was the younger people who led this peaceful transfer of power and the whole country celebrated. Contrary to the admonitions of Jefferson and his colleagues, we in the United States seem to think that our laws, our government, and our society can function on autopilot. Perhaps our friends from Senegal can teach why we need to understand, support, and appreciate our democratic institutions.

Anthropologist Angelique Haugerud's Editor Appointment at *American Ethnologist*

Angelique Haugerud has been appointed the new editor of *American Ethnologist*, for a three-year term that begins in July 2011. *American Ethnologist* is a journal of international reach, which welcomes “manuscripts that creatively demonstrate the connections between ethnographic specificity and theoretical originality, as well as the ongoing relevance of the ethnographic imagination to the contemporary world.”



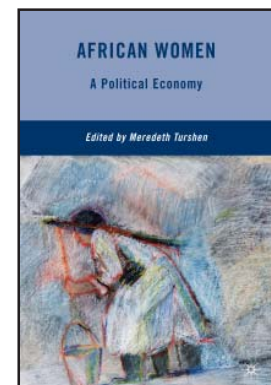
Professor Haugerud is a specialist in cultural politics, globalization, economic neoliberalism, democracy, social movements, political and economic anthropology, ethnicity, politics of development, land tenure, and political ecology. She has conducted ethnographic research in both Africa and the United States and she received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from Northwestern University in 1984. During the past several decades she has carried out a half-dozen years of research in East and Central Africa (most recently in Kenya in 2009). She is author of *The Culture of Politics in Modern Kenya* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); co-editor (with Marc Edelman) of *The Anthropology of Development and Globalization: From Classical Political Economy to Contemporary Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2005); and co-editor (with M. Priscilla Stone and Peter D. Little) of *Commodities and Globalization: Anthropological Perspectives* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2000). In 2004, she began ethnographic research on the cultural politics of wealth and satirical activism in the United States.

Professor Haugerud has been awarded research fellowships from the National Science Foundation, Social Science Research Council, American Philosophical Society, and Rockefeller Foundation, among others. She has served as editor of the scholarly journal *Africa Today* (1996-1998) and has been elected to the executive boards of the American Anthropological Association's General Anthropology Division (2002-2005), the African Studies Association (1999-2002), the Association for Political and Legal Anthropology (1997-2000), and the Society for Economic Anthropology (1992-1995). She has been on the editorial board of *Africa Contemporary Record*, *African Studies Quarterly*, and *Signs*.

Meredeth Turshen, Editor of *African Women: A Political Economy*

African Women: A Political Economy (PalgraveMacmillan, November 2010) edited by Meredith Turshen gives a historically aware overview of the political and economic issues facing African women since independence. It incorporates gender and transnational theory in its theoretical discussion of African women from the perspective of political economy. The three main themes are African feminism, women and work, and women and politics.

The collection opens with Patricia MacFadden's stinging review of feminist debates in Southern Africa. It then turns to political economy in an attempt to pinpoint what moves women towards liberation in Africa. Many volumes about African women emphasize the social and cultural aspects of African women's lives. This one seeks to re-root the debates in the principles of radical political economy. The central chapters of this volume trace the impact of the globalizing economy and neoliberal distortions of capitalism on women's work in Africa. The trajectory runs from domestic work in South Africa, through the proletarianization of women in Tanzania and contract tea farming in Kenya, to women waged workers in a textile factory in Nigeria, and finally the impact of structural adjustment programs on women in Zimbabwe that leads women into the informal economy. Reflecting the broad range of jobs and tasks undertaken by African women, the chapters explore women's work as paid domestic servants, in agricultural production, in wage labor in the formal sector, and in self-employment in the informal sector. The chapters on politics examine women's movements in Angola, Eritrea, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, and Uganda.



Dean Bill Holzemer's Work Enhancing the Quality of Life for Those Living with HIV Infection

Prior to becoming the Dean of the Rutgers College of Nursing, Bill Holzemer was a Professor of Nursing at the University of California in San Francisco. At UCSF, he collaborated with colleagues in Africa to conduct two studies on living with HIV infection as a chronic illness. The first project funded by the Secure the Future Foundation of Bristol Myers Squibb (1999–2004) took work done in the U.S. and collaborated with nurse scientists and clinicians from the University of Botswana, University of South Africa, University of Swaziland, and the National University of Lesotho. This work developed, validated, and disseminated a tailored, culturally appropriate Self-Care Symptom Management Manual for people and families living with HIV infection in local languages. Copies are available at the following web site: <http://aidsnursingucsf.org>.

Next, the team collaborated on a six-year study (2003–2009) on the impact of HIV stigma on quality of life (including HIV-related symptoms) for people living with HIV infection and on quality of work life for nurses caring for people with HIV infection. The study, "Perceived AIDS Stigma: A Multinational African Study" funded by the National Institutes of Health's Fogarty International Center (R01 TW06395; Holzemer, PI; Uys, Co-PI), was a collaboration of UCSF, South Africa's University of KwaZulu-Natal, the National University of Lesotho, the University of Malawi, Tanzania's Muhimbili University, South Africa's University of Potchefstroom, and the University of Swaziland.

The original aims of this study were to: develop and validate two measures of perceived HIV/AIDS stigma for people living with HIV/AIDS and nurses; explore relationships among stigma, quality of health care, quality of life, and quality of work life for nurses; and use community-based participatory research methods to develop and track the impact of a community-level intervention on the perceived stigma of nurses. The research team met from March 8 through March 14, 2005 at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Study and Conference Center in Italy. While at Bellagio, the team developed the two stigma scales and made plans for testing and implementing them. For people living with HIV and AIDS (PLHAs), HIV stigma remains a powerful barrier to HIV testing, disclosure of HIV status, access to antiretroviral (ARV) medication, and access to care services (Maughan-Brown, 2008; Holzemer & Uys, 2004).

The group recently completed a study funded by Fogarty International, NIH, examining HIV stigma in five African nations: Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, and Tanzania. They conducted focus groups in all countries with people living with HIV infection and nurses to better understand HIV stigma. Next they developed instruments to measure HIV stigma by persons living with HIV and nurses. Then they explored the correlation of HIV stigma over time for people living with HIV on quality of life and for nurses on job satisfaction.

They have reported that: contrary to common opinion, HIV stigma is actually higher for PLHAs who are taking ARVs than for those not taking it (Dlamini, Wantland, Makoae, et al., 2009); HIV stigma is positively correlated with missed ARV Medications (Makoae, Portillo, Uys, et al., 2009); and that it adversely affects quality of life (Greeff, Uys, Wantland, et al., 2010). They have further demonstrated, for the first time, that: HIV stigma by association is experienced by nurses working in Africa and that HIV stigma significantly affects nurses' intent to leave their positions (Kohi, Portillo, Durrheim, et al., 2010), and that HIV stigma by association is significantly correlated with job dissatisfaction over time (Chirwa, Greeff, Kohi, et al., 2009).

Based on this work, they pilot tested a health service-based stigma reduction intervention in five countries in Africa focusing on PLHAs and nurses working together to implement stigma reduction activities in their setting. Results suggest that it was effective in reducing HIV stigma perceived by PLHAs and in encouraging nurses to get tested (Uys, Chirwa, Kohi, et al., 2009).

Dr. Holzemer and Dr. Lucille Eller, a Rutgers nursing faculty member, are exploring moving the International HIV/AIDS Nursing Research Network from California to New Jersey (see <http://aidsucsfnursing.org>). They are planning to develop a Center for HIV Symptom Management in Newark, NJ, with existing HIV care providers.

They plan to implement collaboratively the following three objectives: 1) create service learning opportunities for nursing students and other Rutgers students to work in the community coaching clients and families on issues related to symptom management, medication adherence, nutrition, and other topics; 2) secure an environment that allows advanced practice qualified nurses to see patients with their students so that they can model advanced practice nursing in HIV care; and 3) create and sustain an environment that is supportive of developing a robust program of research on the broad topic of living well with HIV infection as a chronic illness, focusing on issues of HIV stigma, medication adherence, symptom management, and quality of life.

Celebrating the Annual “Diaspora Day!” Festival at Rutgers By Cheryl F. Wilson

Whether it's rice and peas from the Caribbean, red beans and rice from Louisiana, *wakye* or *waakye* (beans and rice) from Ghana, *feijoada* from Brazil, or Hoppin' John (blackeye peas and rice) from the south, wherever there are people of African descent around the globe, you will find a beans and rice dish, a dish of cooked greens (*callaloo* in the Caribbean, collard greens in the U.S., etc.), and the list goes on. Or, if you listen to the music of the peoples of African descent from around the globe, again, you will find similarities throughout, the most common and noticeable being the use of percussion. African hairstyles, family customs, expressions of religious beliefs, birth celebrations, mournings for the deceased, recipes, methods of cooking, and more have all been passed down from generation to generation. Customs that originated long ago with the peoples of the African continent have prevailed through their descendants centuries later, often without the aid of paper and pen. I like to call these ways, these customs, these unique ways of living and doing, “Africanisms.” When the peoples of Africa were stolen and sold as slaves around the world, they brought their “Africanisms” with them and secretly, brilliantly, passed them down to their offspring, despite the slave owners' attempts to prevent them from doing so.

This is the reason I created the first “Diaspora Day!” Festival back in April 2004 – to celebrate the common thread that unites all peoples, cultures, and traditions of African descent around the world in general and at Rutgers in particular. In previous years, this day long event has involved various student organizations: the event's official sponsor, the Douglass Black Students' Congress (DBSC), the West Indian Student Organization, TWESE: African Students Association, the RU Salsa Club, RU Capoeira, and more. “Diaspora Day!” workshops include so many exciting cultural activities, such as African jewelry making, African holistic health, belly dancing, and salsa dancing. There is also an interactive workshop demonstrating capoeira, the martial arts discipline passed down by African slaves in Brazil, which is now practiced all over the world. In addition, there are vendors in the lobby, delicious soul food in the café, and free massages! Throughout the day, various bands play a sampling of the many styles of music that originated in Africa. Next year, I plan to combine the festival with another program I developed more than a decade ago, “Jazz ‘N Java,” which is another annual event that has grown to become the largest and most popular poetry program at Rutgers. Next year's “Diaspora Day!” Festival will end with the only “Jazz ‘N Java” of the year. “Jazz ‘N Java” celebrates the African tradition of rhyme and rhythm and has drawn crowds of more than 200 students, alumni, and poets for a night of poetry and music.

The Seventh “Diaspora Day!” Festival will be held on Friday, April 15, 2011. Save the date, and I hope to see you there! *Cheryl F. Wilson is the Associate Director of the Office of Multicultural Student Involvement, Department of Student Life and the Administrative Advisor to the Douglass Black Students' Congress.*

UNDERGRADUATE HIGHLIGHTS

Abena P. A. Busia Directs Fourth Successful Year of International Service Learning in Ghana

Once again, we have had an exciting and challenging year of WGS/CAS Ghana internships (http://ruafrica.rutgers.edu/students/undergrad/ghana_isl/ghana_09.html), despite the financial challenges we, like everyone else, faced. Our interns came away with glowing recommendations



after doing serious work in law, the environment, and again amongst the refugees. This year we also added a few hours a week at a children's home - walking distance from home base. The graduates of the internship have established such a strong track record that organizations have started coming to me to ask when the next cohort will arrive, and have already put in bids for next year! Each year a

governing aesthetic spirit possesses us and inspires our excursions; this year, it was not kente cloth or shea butter, it was beads!

Wislande Guillaume, Latoya Jones, and Rebecca Mamone Reflect on their Stay in Ghana

Wislande Guillaume (Women's and Gender Studies)

The experiences that I have had throughout my journey here in Ghana will remain with me forever. I encountered amazing people that have inspired me in more ways than one. During my internship, I worked at Buduburam, the Liberian Refugee camp, with the Unique Charity Vocational School which was affiliated with the organization called the Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE). Unique Charity seeks to empower women through basic skills such as sewing and baking in order for them to become self-sufficient. Throughout my time at the camp I met with past graduates of the school to assess how the graduates were applying the skills that they learned to support themselves and their families.



My conversations with many of the women allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a refugee. It also allowed me to rediscover the resiliency of the human spirit. Although these women were strangers in another land, they were still trying to find ways to overcome their circumstances. I never could have imagined that I would have such an incredible experience of growth and self-reflection during the course of my stay here. I am going to miss the people, the culture, the environment, and everything else about this country. But most importantly I am going to miss *jollof* rice and chicken, my new favorite dish. I am ready to leave Ghana a changed person equipped with memories that will last my lifetime. I will always remember the incredible experiences that I have had here. The dress that I'm wearing in this picture is courtesy of Unique Charity Vocational School.

Latoya Jones (Geography)

Fufu, kenkey, banku, jollof rice, akwaaba, tro-tro, Ohum festival and the Black Stars have all made the short list of Ghanaian culture I have come to love. At first glance Ghana looks and feels familiar, and, as the days passed, I began to learn why. I am originally from Jamaica West Indies, and I have discovered more about where I am from in the last six weeks than I ever did living in Jamaica.

Upon introduction Ghanaians immediately want to know your story. This was difficult at first, but then I realized they were genuinely interested. Where are you from? Why are you here?

My answer was always, I am originally from Jamaica but I am attending Rutgers University in the States. To which someone would customarily and happily respond, Ah Jamaica! You are Akan people you know.

During my stay in Ghana, I worked for an organization called Women's Assistance and Business Association (WABA). WABA has been providing vocational training courses for women



Bead is everywhere, so bead all you can bead!

and young girls for over a decade. WABA's office is located in Accra, and their training site is in Asafo Akim, located in the eastern region of Ghana. The women of WABA are trained in Batik tie and dye, baking, bead making, soap making, business management, and much more. My job was to create and assist in completing a questionnaire for the women, which will help to understand how those who went through the training are faring.

I lived in Asafo Monday through Thursday and returned to Accra for the weekend. It is a beautiful, lush, friendly village, where each morning

anyone you pass will greet you with, *Makye* (good morning in Twi). Life in Accra, a big city, is very different. With each passing week, I found myself plotting on how I could return to Ghana. Finally, I came up with the idea to apply to study abroad at the University of Ghana Spring 2011!

Rebecca Mamone (History and Political Science)

As we stepped off the plane onto the runway of Kotoko International Airport we were greeted by brightly colored signs declaring *Akwaaba* - welcome. Throughout the past six weeks I have continued to feel nothing but welcome. I am constantly amazed by how genuinely kind and friendly Ghanaians are. Everyone is curious to hear where you are from and why you are in Ghana. They are quick to offer help in navigating the *tro-tros* or to teach you new words in Twi, and they are always eager to demonstrate their culture.

I spent four weeks interning for LAWA (Ghana) Alumnae Incorporated, which is a legal organization founded by Ghanaian women lawyers who graduated from the LAWA program at Georgetown University. I spent the majority of my time composing grant proposals for the continuation of a project concerning the rights of domestic workers. I also had the opportunity to conduct interviews with local girls employed as domestic workers and to attend a working lunch with members of parliament to discuss a bill that will be presented. The amount of responsibility and autonomy I was given while working on these projects was overwhelming at times, but ultimately made the experience exceptionally valuable and made me significantly more proud of what I was able to contribute to such an inspirational and effective organization.



During my time here Accra has come to feel very familiar. Yet, I am constantly surprised by the long list of things I have seen and experienced in such a short time and how many new things I still see and new questions I continue to have. It leaves me wishing I had more time to continue to explore this rich, beautiful country. I have fallen in love with Ghana. I am returning home with a deep appreciation of the culture and tradition of West Africa, a newly acquired obsession with beads, and a determination to return as soon as possible. I am pictured above pounding bark to make the dye used in stamping adinkra fabric.

Aresty Undergraduate Researchers Focus on Africa

On April 23, 2010, over 350 undergraduates presented their work at the sixth annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, sponsored by the Aresty Research Center for Undergraduates. Presenters ranged from sophomores to seniors, in all fields. We were thrilled to note that many, this year, are focusing their attention and energy on questions about Africa: its history, its ecology, its cultures (see the student abstracts, below). We were impressed by the contributions that these students have made to African scholarship, and we look forward to watching their future successes! *For information on the Aresty Research Center for Undergraduates please contact the Administrative Director Justine Hernandez Levine (jhernan@rci.rutgers.edu), who has provided the comments above, or visit Aresty on the web at <http://aresty.rutgers.edu>.*

Southwestern Nigerian Agricultural System, Agricultural Competitiveness, and New Crop Options for New Jersey By Syed Z. Abbas

As part of the ongoing Rutgers' SEBS International Science and Education (ISE) project, we spent five weeks as interns at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, in the summer of 2009 (July 19 – August 22, 2009) to study the agricultural system of southwestern Nigeria. The primary objective of our internship was to identify traditional vegetable crops that are commonly grown and utilized in the food system of southwestern Nigeria and may be cultivated in New Jersey and the Mid-Atlantic to respond to the needs of the increasing immigrant African population in the US. The internship experience exposed us to a highly diverse species of traditional vegetable crops that are integrated into the people's diet, including: fluted pumpkin (*Telfairia occidentalis*), waterleaf (*Talinum triangulare*), peppers (*Capsicum frutescens*), okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*), green amaranth (*Amaranthus cruentus*) and jute (*Corchorus olitorius*). These vegetable crops are nutritionally rich and are also known to have significant medicinal values. In summer 2010, we shall return to the University of Ibadan to conduct further studies on three of these vegetable crops, namely: jute (*Corchorus olitorius*), green amaranth (*Amaranthus cruentus*) and waterleaf (*Talinum triangulare*) to understand their agronomic production requirements, handling, and utilization. The knowledge gained will be used to enhance the transfer of these crops to New Jersey and the Mid-Atlantic for future integration into the United States agriculture and food systems. *Syed Zain Abbas is a Senior at University College with Psychology as his major field of study with a Minor in Plant Science. He is expected to complete his project once he returns from Nigeria with knowledge about the jute vegetable crop and its utilities. Advisor: Professor Albert Ayeni.*

A Modern Riverine Forest as a Model Habitat for a Late Miocene Ancestor and Implications for Human Evolution in the Tana River Primate Reserve, Kenya By Kathleen Barbour

The preliminary vegetation study conducted in Mchelelo West forest of the Tana River Primate Reserve in Kenya is used to assess the feeding ecology of humans and non-human primates in an effort to relate that to the behavioral ecology of our late Miocene ancestor. This study was conducted as a belt stretching from the banks of the river to the outskirts of the forest. There were two geological trenches dug confirming that the forest is the result of, until recently, a once biannual flooding regime. There were an abundance of fruiting trees and trees with edible leaves throughout. There was ample canopy cover in the forest with very little undergrowth which was attributed to the density of the canopy. There are mammals, birds, and reptiles and termite mounds that are used as food sources by humans. From what has been published about the lifeways of humanlike Miocene ancestors, including their environments and feeding ecologies, we can further postulate as to whether the TRPR is indeed a fitting modern analogue habitat. The inferences drawn from the food sources exploited by this foraging group ape allow us to conjecture the conditions for the transition from arboreality to territoriality and the subsequent move into the savannah environment and the behaviors therein. *Kate Salome Barbour graduated in 2010 from Douglass College with a major in Evolutionary Anthropology and French Literary Studies. Advisor: Professor Jack Harris*

The Maasai are Genetically Protected Against Arteriosclerosis and Hypercholesterolemia

By Michael A. Boemo

The Maasai are an indigenous population of Africa who live primarily in Kenya and northern Tanzania. Their unique living environment has bestowed upon them many unique characteristics that are of genetic interest, and the principle goal of our study was to investigate the single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) that facilitate these characteristics. The HapMap III project provided data that facilitated our identification of these polymorphisms, and we then proceeded to experimentally verify their existence and location by performing Sanger sequencing on a series of Maasai DNA samples and controls. Specially designed primers were used to flank the genotypic regions of interest, and we amplified these regions through means of the polymerase chain reaction (PCR). DNA fragments were then separated and purified with gel electrophoresis and use of the Qiagen QIAquick Gel Extraction protocol. These purified DNA samples were sequenced, and the results were analyzed. *Michael Boemo is a junior in the School of Arts and Sciences majoring in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry and Mathematics. Advisor: Professor Shridar Ganesan*

Traditional Leafy Vegetable Production Holds Promise for a Vibrant Small Scale Agricultural Enterprise in Kenya

By Andrew M. Glaser

In Kenya, small-holder vegetable farmers struggle with several agronomic, environmental, and socio-economic problems. Vegetable farming is unprofitable and difficult due to high input costs, drought, insect pests, and low market prices for vegetable such as kale (*Brassica oleracea*) and spinach (*Beta vulgaris* var. *cicla*). Observations between July and August 2009 in central Kenya showed that African traditional leafy vegetables (ATLVs) hold promise for small-holder farmers. African nightshade (*Solanum nigrum* and *S. scabrum*), cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*), green amaranth (*Amaranthus* spp.), and spiderplant (*Cleome gynandra*) are among the ATLVs in Kenya with the highest potential. Through farmer interviews and field visits coordinated by the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, it was observed that there is rising interest in growing and consuming ATLVs. Farmers receive higher market prices for ATLVs (15-20 KSH/bunch) than the exotics (8-10 KSH/bunch for kale/spinach), use less fertilizer and water, and are able to harvest two to three crops during a growing season, compared to one to two harvests for exotics. In Nairobi, there is demand in the formal sector for ATLVs. There is also some anecdotal evidence that ATLVs add some nutritional value to the Kenyan diet. While ATLVs hold promise, scientific data is scarce on crop improvement, and availability of quality seed is a problem. In conclusion, cultivation of ATLVs seems to hold promise as a means to increase farm income and enhance human health in Kenya. Low input costs for ATLV production should also strengthen the sustainability of the enterprise in an evolving agricultural system. *Andrew Glaser graduated in 2010 from the School of Environmental and Biological Science with a double major in Agricultural Science and Environmental Policy, Institutions, and Behaviors. Advisor: Professor Albert Ayeni*

Social Investments in Urban Poor Communities in Maputo, Mozambique

By Ghadeer B. Hasan

Mozambique, one of the poorest developing nations in the world, relies heavily on foreign aid that may significantly impact how domestic resources are spent. Having ended a major civil war in the early 1990s, the newly sovereign Mozambique has been facing economic constraints, growing social problems, political uncertainties, and institutional weaknesses that have caused it to receive the attention of both international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations. It is important to analyze the relationship between local and international spending to better understand the impact it has on development. The purpose of this research is to determine how both international actors and local municipalities spend money on different sectors. By

analyzing municipal budgetary documents, it is possible to determine how and why local government allocates its domestic resources over time because trends in municipal budgets reflect different priorities in local government. Similarly, the aid programs of international agencies can be mapped out in Gantt charts that highlight different sectors and indicate the level of investments in these sectors during certain years. Thus, the juxtaposition of trends in international and domestic spending can reveal valuable insight into the relationship between spending policies and their effect on development. We can analyze these trends and explore how their relationships might reveal whether certain investment sectors have been privileged and by whom, in order to later explore why this is important for local quality of life. *Ghadeer Hasan is a senior at the School of Arts and Sciences majoring in Public Health and Middle Eastern Studies and minoring in Political Science. Advisor: Professor Gabriella Carolini*

Tracking the Legacy of Julius (Mwalimu) K. Nyerere in Tanzania Ten Years after his Death By Latoya A. Jones

To this day, Tanzanians judge their country's leaders against the example of Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, their first President. Economic policy reform over the past two decades has greatly contributed to pro-Nyerere nostalgia. There is a continued influence of his lofty ideals on the people of the nation. Drawing on Tanzanian newspapers, blogs, scholarly articles, news magazines, and documentaries evidence of this continued influence emerges. Mwalimu's untainted leadership has even inspired efforts to canonize him. Each year on October 14, Tanzania observes Mwalimu Nyerere Day as a national holiday in an effort to remember his many contributions to the country. *Latoya Jones is a senior at the School of Arts and Sciences majoring in Geography and minoring in Environmental Policy Institutions and Behavior (EPIB). Advisor: Professor Richard Schroeder*

The Failure of Algerian Reform during the Popular Front: Exploring the Ideological Debate in the French Press By Alexander P. Lang

The failure of the French Popular Front government to deliver Algerian reforms in 1936-1938 has been considered by several historians as France's last opportunity to enact the necessary changes to keep French Algeria. Many influential Algerian Muslims were so discouraged by the failure of the progressives in Paris that they turned to Algerian nationalism. The discussion of the topic has thus far been limited to local Algerian issues. By placing Algerian reform in the context of the political and social debates raised by the Popular Front, we can better understand why it failed. Several Parisian and Algerian newspapers have been examined in order to see how Algerian issues were framed in France's most influential source of information. The articles and editorials about Algeria often connected reform to a wide-range of issues. However, the overwhelming influences were the hostile political debates between right and left. These sharp political differences in France came to Algeria and greatly reduced the chance for reform. Besides expanding our knowledge of French colonialism during the Popular Front, this study helps us to understand the difficulties of isolating a political issue in the public discourse. *Alex Lang graduated in 2010 from Rutgers College with a major in History and a minor in French. Advisor: Professor Temma Kaplan*

Kibwezi Forest as a Modern Analogue to Arimis Ethiopia 4.4 mya By Lawrence C. Lyons

Ardipithecus ramidus is the most important discovery in 40 years regarding the early stages of humahn evolution (Science, November, 2009). The morphology of *Ardipithecus* indicates that it was close evolutionarily to the divergence between that of the last common ancestor of chimpanzees and ourselves. The ecological data effectively refutes earlier hypotheses of bipedality and the evolutionary the divergence from Pan as being a selective consequence to the expan-

sion of open savannah C4 grassland mosaics. Multiple lines of evidence support that *Ardipithecus ramidus* lived in a predominately ground water forest/woodland setting. Paleoecological data of *Ardipithecus* suggests that Kibwezi, Kenya offers an accurate modern analogue of the ecosystem that *Ardipithecus* once lived in. New lines of research are being undertaken by The Rutgers Koobi Fora Fieldschool, The National Museums of Kenya in collaboration with the original *Ardipithecus* researchers that sets out to test the hypothesis that Kibwezi forest is an accurate modern analogue to the ecosystems of Aramis 4.4 m.y.a. I offer a detailed comparative review of the published sources to highlight explicitly the similarities and differences to the flora and fauna at Kibwezi forest, Kenya and those of *Ardipithecus ramidus* at Aramis, Ethiopia. I also present the methodologies and approaches that will be used to systematically collect data on the fauna and flora of Kibwezi forest that will be applied in the field this summer at Kibwezi (2010). *L. Conor Lyons is a senior at the School of Arts and Sciences majoring in Evolutionary Anthropology and minoring in Geology. Advisor: Professor Jack Harris*

Women Organizing for Change: Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)

By Hera Mir

Women living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) is a transnational network of solidarity that provides support and information for groups and individuals who are affected by Islamic laws and Muslim customs. In working with people and customs across borders and cross culturally, WLUML must employ methods and principles of organization that are able to accommodate the variation in experiences and opinions of Muslim women into one stance on the many issues that women living under Muslim laws face. However as a global network, WLUML is linked to local groups that make up the network. My research addresses this facet of WLUML by analyzing how it is organized. I examined WLUML's website, publications which included newsletters, dossiers, and plans of action to analyze what theme were evoked, what principles were held up, how Islam was present and/or interpreted through WLUML's response to events, projects, programs and the "calls to action" that WLUML was involved in throughout its 26 year history. The study shows that it is the "fluid" nature of WLUML's organization that allows diverse groups to exist under WLUML. Transnational organizations such as WLUML are organized in a way that invites/ fosters diversity through the collective work and collective decision-making processes that occur. The investigation also shows that limitations that are put on an activist organization when working with varied experiences and opinions. *Hera Mir is a senior at the School of Arts and Sciences with a major in Philosophy and Middle Eastern Studies and with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies. Advisor: Professor Dorothy Hodgson*

Organizing for Change: AAWORD in Senegal

By Janina L. Pescinski

The Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) is a non-governmental organization based in Senegal and active across Africa that approaches women's rights from a human rights perspective. AAWORD is successful in using its mission to bring economic, social, and political empowerment to middle to upper-class African women. However since the nature of their work is research based, it may be more difficult for them to reach lower class and rural audiences. By reading AAWORD publications and putting its work into context with specific historical and present conditions in Senegal, I found that that AAWORD has performed thorough research in many issues related to women, but does not necessarily implement programs to solve these issues. When we contextualize the work of AAWORD with that of other NGOs advocating for women's rights as human rights, however, it becomes clear that these gaps are filled by initiatives of other NGOs. My findings suggest that advocating for women's rights as human rights through researching specific issues is a successful approach for AAWORD in Senegal. *Janina Pescinski is a senior at the School of Arts and Sciences majoring in French and Cultural Anthropology with a minor in African Studies. Advisor: Professor Dorothy Hodgson*

EWB-RU Hopes to Bring Life To Kolunje, Kenya By David Wallace

The lack of access to clean water is a plaguing problem in Kolunje, Kenya. Nearby water sources often run dry and harbor disease. As water becomes increasingly scarce, women and school children—those most often burdened with the duty of gathering water—are forced to walk further and further for water. Waterborne diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and malaria are widespread and health services at the local hospital are inadequate and often prohibitively expensive for those with marginal income. With support from the local NGO, Endelevu Community Development Services, the RU Chapter of Engineers Without Borders is developing a water supply project for a community of over 18,000.

In January 2010, EWB-RU conducted the first Kolunje assessment trip with a team of four students and two professional engineers. The team hiked through the hills and collected data on water sources and locations of landmarks to create a site map that will aid in system design. Additionally, the team conducted household interviews to collect baseline data on the needs and health of the community. Perhaps most importantly, indispensable contacts were made with the community's Water Project Steering Committee and strong relationships were formed with the villagers. Additional hydrogeology, test well data, and water testing are still needed to aid in the design of a sustainable water system.

Water is the source of life. Yet, for the people of Kolunje their water is killing them. EWB-RU is committed to providing the people of Kolunje with clean water. Using a system of drilled wells, storage tanks, and taps, sanitary water can be supplied consistently. Clean reliable taps of water will improve community living conditions by allowing citizens to focus on more productive activities, while minimizing suffering and medical expense due to waterborne disease.

For more information about this EWB-RU project and others please visit ewb.rutgers.edu or send an e-mail to ewb.rutgers@gmail.com. *David Wallace is a junior in the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, majoring in Environmental Policy, Institutions, and Behavior and minoring in Ecology and Natural Resources.*

Update from Twese's President Gilbert Bonsu

With its inception in 1991, Twese, the Organization of African Students and Friends of Africa, was established as a haven for students with African interests, and as an avenue to better educate the Rutgers community on African issues. These goals are achieved through various activities and events. Twese's general body meetings are the most efficient means by which issues on Africa and Africa in the Diaspora can be discussed and debated. Meetings are held every Wednesday at the Paul Robeson Cultural Center from 8pm-9pm. All are welcome.

Last year was a great year for Twese! We started off the year with the African Pride Banquet, which has been an annual Twese staple for many years. The next big event was a cultural showcase called "Culture Shock," co-sponsored with the West Indian Student Organization, the Black Student Union, and the Haitian Association at Rutgers. In Fall 2009 Twese began a new annual event called "Danceversity." This program is a visual representation that teaches the audience about the cultural significance of dance in Africa, Brazil, and other regions. Twese is also proud to announce that our annual fashion show in the spring semester was awarded Student Life's "*Excellence in Campus Programming: Outstanding Large Event of the Year.*"

For the 2010-11 school year, Twese will continue to educate and inform the RU community about Africa, starting with our African Pride Banquet on Saturday, October 9th, 2010 at 7pm at the Rutgers Student Center (College Avenue). For more information please feel free to email rutwese@gmail.com or call me, Twese President Gilbert Bonsu: 862-596-4625. Hotep.

None on Record By Melissa Gasparotto

On Tuesday, April 6, Rutgers University Libraries hosted a panel co-sponsored by CAS entitled, "None on Record: Stories of Queer Africa." LGBTQ activists representing Senegal, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, and Lesotho spoke about their experiences, current issues, legislation, and activism on the continent and abroad. The five panelists, Pape Mbaye, "Nick" Nanna Hadikwa Mwaluko, Kelebohile Nkhereanye, Victor Mukasa, and Selly Thiam, are all contributors to the digital oral history project founded by Ms. Thiam, also entitled, "None on Record." A spirited q&a followed the panelist presentations, sparking dialog among the RU community about transnational LGBTQ and human rights issues. The panel was moderated by CAS member César Braga-Pinto, Associate Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and Program in Comparative Literature.

As a result of the visit, several donations have been made to the Libraries, including typescripts of four works of drama by panelist "Nick" Nanna Mwaluko of Kenya and Tanzania, and digital copies of some of the oral histories recorded by the "None on Record" project. For more information on these library acquisitions, contact Melissa Gasparotto, Librarian for African and Latin American Studies, Spanish and Portuguese at the Alexander Library, gasparom@rci.rutgers.edu. For information on "None on Record" visit <http://noneonrecord.com>.

History of Modern Africa Student Chelsea Donini Responds to None on Record

I attended the very interesting "None on Record" panel described above, but, sadly, only had time to hear three speakers.

One panelist, Nick Mwaluko from Kenya, spoke about the play he wrote. He came to the U.S. to earn money and to attend Columbia University. He studied theatre and wrote a play about a transgender woman in Kenya. When asked why he has yet to return to Kenya, he responded that he was not mature enough to face the Kenyan consequences of being gay and of not confronting his family. Another speaker, Kelebohile Nkhereanye from Lesotho, told her story about being a lesbian. She came out in 1981 while living in New York. She was curious at the time and started meeting women in gay parts of the city. She has trouble meeting African women because being gay is so frowned upon in Africa. She prays that more African LGBTQ individuals will come out and in so doing add another chapter to African culture. She wants to meet more gay Africans who are comfortable with their sexuality because she values and respects who Africans are as a diverse community.

The last panelist I was able to hear was Pape Mbaye from Senegal. He told us how Senegal is especially harsh on homosexuality because it is an Islamic country. In 2008 there was an Islamic conference there, with more than 100 Islamic presidents gathering to offer Senegal goods and money. The president of Senegal made a decree that smoking was forbidden, that women were not allowed to wear short skirts, and that bars and clubs would be closed. During the conference, Mbaye's friends had a gay wedding which a newspaper exploited the next day. That evening, nineteen buses of armed police officers came to his house. The police broke in and even chased two men until they jumped out of a five story window. The men were arrested and were told that they would only be released if they denounced every homosexual they knew. They refused to sell out their community members and were eventually released. Mbaye fled to Gambia, where he was ordered to leave immediately or face prison time for being gay. Finally he made his way to the United States, where he still resides today.

I found this lecture really intriguing because I have worked closely with the LGBTQ community in creating an equal atmosphere in Connecticut schools. I was touched by these testimonials. In Africa the repercussions of being a homosexual are so much more dire. Queer Africans have much more to worry about than being made fun of – they worry about imprisonment and death.

**The CAS 2010 Honorary Annual Paper Prize Competition Winners Are:
Chinaza Okonkwo and Kerin Eyler
CONGRATULATIONS!**

Claude Ake Undergraduate Paper Prize Winner Chinaza Okonkwo

Nominated by Professor of History Al Howard

“Social Impacts of The Biafran War on the City of Onitsha”

Abstract

The city of Onitsha is one of the most influential localities in Southeastern Nigeria. It boasts the largest market in West Africa and is known for its rich culture and history. The Nigerian Civil War that devastated the city in the late 1960s influenced much of that history. My paper focuses on how the city of Onitsha changed socially before and during the war. Using evidence from newspaper accounts, historical studies, and interviews I examine Onitsha through the lens of family and ethnicity. The paper observes how mass migration from the city during the war affected the way particular ethnicities interacted with one another and how the Onitsha family structure changed overtime. These observations help speculatively determine the social climate of Onitsha during the post war period. Overall, this paper restores missing pieces of the social history of Onitsha during the Nigerian Civil War.



Ruth First Graduate Paper Prize Winner Kerin Eyler

Nominated by Professor of Social Work Rebecca Davis

“Telling Our Stories, Healing Our Community:

Helping HIV-AIDS Infected Communities in Rwanda”

Abstract



With an estimated 200,000 children orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Rwanda, it is becoming more and more important to give these children and their communities an outlet for the emotions they may feel from their loss. Playback Theatre, a form of improvisational drama, uses the stories told by audience members and recreates them onstage. Playback Theatre is performed by four actors, a musician, and a conductor who works to bring out the essence of an audience member's story. Training both children and social work professionals together, Playback can be incorporated into culturally specific agencies and run by community members. Implemented by Rwandan's, it is an empowering methodology that puts them at the center of services. With a virus like HIV/AIDS, the proximity of someone who is struggling with the virus

may provoke fear, anger, and even hatred in a neighbor. These feelings may lead one to act out that which could be mitigated if society is provided a forum to discuss and express their views in a peaceful manner. There are organizations that are working to raise awareness yet they may not provide a community forum where people can come together and discuss how they are feeling free of judgment. Playback Theatre could encourage a collective community action against the stigma of HIV/AIDS by breaking down misconceptions and also by putting a face and a story behind this epidemic.

*To learn more about the Annual Honorary CAS Paper Prize Competition please visit our website:
<http://ruafrica.rutgers.edu/students/prize/index.html>.*

GRADUATE HIGHLIGHTS

Kuranga and Rofheart Join the Africanist Ph.D. Community

Two CAS Graduate Affiliates successfully defended their dissertations in April 2010!

David Kuranga (Political Science) defended, "International Organizations: Wielders of Power in the Emerging International Order" and Mahriana Rofheart (Comparative Literature) defended, "Don't Abandon 'Our Boat': Shifting Perceptions of Emigration in Contemporary Senegalese Literature and Song." We wish them the very best as they forge their career paths!

CAS Graduate Affiliate/ Lead Organizer Stella Capoccia Reviews Spring 2010 Workshop

A special word of thanks goes out from the CAS Graduate Affiliates to CAS, International Programs led by Dean Joanna Regulska, and the Graduate School - New Brunswick led by Harvey Waterman, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The collective efforts of the three programs went to support the Graduate Affiliates research workshop this spring. This was the third time the affiliates hosted a graduate research workshop, a program initiated by Ph.D. candidates Lincoln Addison (Anthropology) and Laura Ann Twagira (History).

Each workshop graduates come together to share the newest developments in African-based studies. This past spring our presenters included work from the following: Jodie Barker (French): "Souffle, Poésie, Hospitalité: Abdellatif Laâbi *chez lui chez l'autre*," David Kuranga (Political Science), a recent Ph.D. whose presentation was entitled: "International Organizations: Wielders of Power in the Emerging International Order;" two presenters from the Department of Geography, Stella Capoccia: "The Influence of NGOs on the Conservation and Management of Wildlife and Wild Animals in Kenya," and Debby Scott, who presented on smallholder agriculture in Africa and the development of farmer movements; and Natalie Tevethia and Chaunetta Jones, both from the Department of Anthropology. Natalie presented on the intersection of development, human rights, and constructions of gender and childhood in anti-child labor campaigns in Ghana's cocoa growing regions, and Chaunetta presented her work on local responses to Anti-retroviral treatment and the existing dichotomy between those *infected with* versus *affected by* HIV/AIDS. (Their individual research summaries follow.)

Panel discussions were lead by workshop co-organizers Chaunetta Jones and Stella Capoccia. Collectively, the graduate student work centered around themes of locally-based social organizations; social perceptions of and international interest in communities, culture, policy, and societies; and human relationships. The scope of the research represented spans throughout west, east, north, and southern Africa. The discussion centered around topics that included "how social perceptions of issues and events in different regions enable community mobilization," "the ways in which international interest influences political outcome," and "the importance of multiple forms of communication for interaction between individuals and between social scales." Lunch-time speaker and discussant, Tendayi Achiume, a human rights lawyer practicing in Johannesburg, South Africa, presented the highlights and challenges of her working experience and augmented the discussions on the graduate research. Participants also benefitted from a special presentation by Teresa Delcorso, Assistant Dean of the Graduate School - New Brunswick and Director of GradFund. Teresa highlighted the wide-range of resources available to graduate students through the GradFund and provided valuable information about the process of applying for external grants and fellowships.

In closing, the CAS graduate affiliates would like to extend our ongoing appreciation to CAS for championing the affiliate group by providing consistency and coherence for a diverse and dispersed group of graduate students. Renée, your priceless encouragement is what enables our community mobilization, thank you! Look for more events sponsored by the Graduate Affiliates over the 2010/2011 year! Contact Renée DeLancey to join: rdelance@rci.rutgers.edu.

“Souffle, Poésie, Hospitalité / Breath, Poetry, Hospitality:

Abdellatif Laâbi *chez lui chez l'autre*”

By Jodie Barker

« *Écrire, écrire, ne jamais cesser. Cette nuit et toutes les nuits à venir.* »
(Write, write, never stop. This night and every night to come.)

In his attempt to breathe fresh air into North Africa, the Moroccan teacher and poet Abdellatif Laâbi found himself almost out of breath: he was arrested, tortured and subsequently incarcerated for over eight years (from 1972 until 1980) for “crimes of opinion.” The “proof” used to imprison him was his own breath, or “*entreprise de subversion*”: the journal *Souffles* (*Anfas* in Arabic), which he co-directed.

Yet the 2.3 x 1.3 meter prison cell was unable to contain Laâbi’s radical poems and politics. Erupting from confinement, Abdellatif Laâbi’s prison poems open to freedom precisely because they open to the Other, hospitably.

The hospitality that Laâbi’s poetry extends is risky: it goes beyond law or duty, even beyond invitation, and requires absolute surprise. It is a welcoming without assimilation that is *unconditionally* open. This hospitality, as Mark Zlomisic states, “keeps an empty space, an openness that is open to the radically Other.” It has to welcome the Other, whoever the Other is, and unconditionally; it has to open itself to the Other.

Let it be clear that Abdellatif Laâbi’s poems do not *passively* unconditionally open to the Other; they *actively open* to the Other unconditionally. This active gesture emphasizes that Laâbi’s poetry moves towards an ontology where, in the words of Emmanuel Levinas, “Being is the verb itself.” As a result, writing with hospitality becomes the radical embodiment of the present which, while unconditionally opening to the Other, paves the way for the future. As Laâbi says in a verse from *Sous le baillon le poème* (Under the Gag, the Poem): “I have a terrible passion for the future.” Laâbi’s poetry, then, is an open, intentional and active embodiment in and of the present, a “doing” that is exemplified in the verse *Écrire, écrire ne jamais cesser*.

Laâbi’s poems are acts that are not limited by or to the present however, for the words and verses carve out ethical ways to become otherwise, to do otherwise, and make space for a future that is otherwise. Rather than perpetuating a politics of *ressentiment*, they show us that a future of “doing differently” is possible precisely through hospitably opening to the radical Other. The act of opening creates a living space and breathing space - a place of hospitality. This is *ethical* space *par excellence* which, according to Gilles Deleuze, “does not aspire, it does not seek ... It gives.” Here vibrates a will to power that is essentially creative and giving. This ethical space, which oscillates in constant negotiation, makes space for the Other, gives the Other room to breathe, and lets him live. And at the same time, it utters or even cries *me voici* (here I am).

The dynamic fluctuation in Laabi’s poetry that consists of making room for the Other and asserting *me voici* is a dance of negotiation. The steps of hospitality engendered by this dance do not fixate on the final, concrete result of their movements, however. What is important is the process of negotiation, the stepping towards the other, the opening movement itself. Nonetheless, despite these extensive steps of hospitality, the epicenter of Laâbi’s ethics is ultimately concentrated in writing and more specifically, in poetry. In *Sous le bâillon le poème* he states: “*Oui la poésie restaurera l’homme.*” Poetry will restore man because it carves the way for the future through its hospitable reverberations that extend far and wide, and also because it forces “man” to make space for the Other within himself.

Erupting into poetry and opening into freedom, Abdellatif Laâbi's spacious *souffles* show that creativity and compassion can emerge even from the most extreme conditions of torture and imprisonment. It is by engaging in the dynamic dance of alterity, hand-in-hand with hospitality, that Laâbi's poetry learns how to breathe - and teaches us how to live - finally.

David Kuranga's Political Science Dissertation Focuses on International Organizations

"International Organizations: Wielders of Power in the Emerging International Order" focuses on the question, do international organizations have power in the international system? The study evaluates the impact of regional international organizations in modern global affairs employing statistical and case study research to uncover the process involved in regional intervention in support of constitutional order. It weighs the impact of regional organizations vis-à-vis regional powers and powerful states at the global-level. The empirical findings show that regional organizations hold power independent and at times greater than powerful states in the international system. While realism remains the dominant theory in international relations, current global trends evidenced from this project question the usefulness of realist-based assumptions that states are the sole dominant actors in the international system, given that world is filled with over 300 international organizations. This project placed most of its focus on regional organizations in Africa. The purpose of this was to demonstrate the theoretical effectiveness of the theory in a region where few expect international organizations to have an impact due to lower levels of political and economic development. Since this study shows the effectiveness of regional organizations in Africa where they are assumed to be least significant, it is likely that regional organizations in other regions of the world have a similar, if not greater impact. *If you would like to learn more about David Kuranga's work please visit <http://kaglobal.net>. K & A Global is an emerging economies consultancy servicing government at the national and local level, supranational intergovernmental organizations, private and non-profit sectors, and academic institutions with active investments and programs in emerging economies.*

Stella Capoccia's Doctoral Geography Research: Wildlife in Kenya

My research examines the role of international priorities and how wildlife-based non-government organizations (NGOs) in Kenya impact the country's wildlife conservation and management practices and policy. Kenya is considered a place of wild animals, not just wildlife. The international focus on individual animals and iconic species dates back over a century as does the use of these animals by wildlife advocates to influence policy. This historical narrative within Kenya's wildlife conservation record led to the formation of national parks and mandates for human-wildlife interactions. Today, Kenya maintains its international spotlight by hosting regional headquarters of high-profile wildlife organizations and initiating wildlife protection actions. Two key examples include Kenya's campaign for the international ban on elephant ivory, initiated in the late 1980s, and the country's staunch position against big game hunting. Kenya is the only country in Africa that maintains a full ban on game hunting, initiated in 1977. Based on an evaluation of wildlife-based NGO perceptions of Kenya, these two initiatives are the country's flagship policies that brand the country as a world leader in conservation. Recent discussions to reinstate hunting have been met with a strong anti-hunting campaign lead by wildlife NGOs. This sentiment goes further to include how animals are managed with regard to issues including human-wildlife conflict, transport and relocation, drought, and the recruitment of donor funding. This study combines interviews with NGO personnel and wildlife management officials and participant observation data with content analysis of popular literature to explain how conservation ideals and management protocol are shaped and unfold in practice. This work builds on the discourse on moral practices in geography (Schroeder 2008; Neumann 2006) and the human-animal experience (Bulbeck 2005; Wolch and Emel 1998); and adds to the growing body of research in animal studies (Beckoff 2009; Haraway 2008). This research also updates work by Rosaleen Duffy and Raymond Bonner by addressing the ways in which, and to what degree do, international wildlife campaigns influence wildlife management on a case-by-case basis and in larger conservation strategies.

African Movements for Food Sovereignty: Re-Envisioning Rural Development

By Deborah Scott

I'm interested in exploring how the African food sovereignty movements relate to and differ from the global food sovereignty movement, focusing on three areas: identity; engagement with the private sector; and engagement with international organizations. The concept of food sovereignty was introduced at the World Food Summit of 1996 as a foil to the largely apolitical concept of food security. It promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the right to food for all, value food providers, bring food providers and consumers closer together, builds on skills and local knowledges, and uses diverse agroecological production.

The global food sovereignty movement is generally considered to be led by La Via Campesina, an international group of 148 organizations in 69 countries. LVC was formed in 1993 and is rooted in Latin America and the peasant cultures in Europe, and has since blossomed across Asia. African groups did not start to join until 2004, and there are only a handful of groups in each region of the sub-continent. La Via Campesina introduced the concept of food sovereignty at the World Food Summit in 1996. Since then they have shaped the debate around what food sovereignty is and, for many, defined the food sovereignty movement. But within Africa, only a small handful of African countries contain an LVC member organization. This gap leads to power struggles as to who can speak as *the* legitimate voice for food sovereignty for the continent. Networks such as the Pan African Farmers Platform include groups that represent large-scale farmers as well as groups strongly affiliated with food sovereignty (ROPFA and PROPAC). This mix of perspectives can be compared to the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa, which is mostly NGOs, research groups, and farmer support groups rather than farmer groups, but whose statements are more consistently aligned with the theoretical perspectives of the global LVC. So while on an international level, the food sovereignty movement appears united under the umbrella of La Via Campesina, in Africa it is a much more heterogenous, diverse and contested identity.

This is further demonstrated in the different ways of engaging with the private sector and government processes. For example, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), an organization founded and supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates and Rockefeller Foundations with the mission to bring a green revolution to Africa, has been clearly condemned by the global La Via Campesina movement. The voices out of Africa are also suspicious of AGRA, but less unified in condemnation. African farmer groups have shown desire for constructive engagement with AGRA, albeit insisting that clear conditions of transparency and mechanisms for participation be decided beforehand. Similarly, while they recognize the harm that the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture has done to African farmers (opening markets in the developing world while allowing for continued support and subsidies to developed world agriculture), African food sovereignty movement members have worked with their WTO government representatives for substantive changes to the treatment of cotton subsidies among other points. LVC's position is firmly on the outside as a voice of protest rather than engagement.

The dominant, naturalized global discourse around African small scale agriculture is that it is inefficient, unskilled, damages the environment, and is at most a catalyst for growth rather than a long-term reality. There is an emerging counter-discourse around smallscale agriculture that primarily recognizes the moral authority of subsistence agriculture and that completely rejects the knowledges produced by and the resources held by agri-business. Between these polar explanations, African food sovereignty movements are plowing a third way. Showing up at tables of power, insisting on their presence and value, and demanding to engage are acts of sovereignty. African food sovereignty movements might be the ones to bring food sovereignty beyond a predictable counter-discourse, succeeding in what Escobar described as displacing the development imaginary.

Field Update from Deborah Scott in Kenya

I was supported by the Center for African Studies and the Rutgers School of Graduate Studies to come to Kenya this summer for Swahili language study and pre-dissertation research. I have spent much of my time exploring the current state of biofuel crop production in Kenya, the development of policy and practices around these crops, and the stances of various stakeholders. So far I have met with representatives of the Ministry of Energy, the Kenyan Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), the Kenyan Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), private finance investors, pro-biofuel NGOs, anti-biofuel NGOs, and some farmers actually trying to grow *Jatropha*, a shrubby tree that has been both heavily promoted and vilified in Kenya. *Jatropha* has been touted as a “miracle” tree that would grow in the most arid and “undeveloped” parts of Kenya. Farmers are discovering that it will only produce enough for oil if carefully managed, irrigated, protected from pests and diseases, and fertilized. Hardly a miracle.

Biofuels in Kenya were initially considered solely in terms of *jatropha*, but researchers, investors and the government are starting to focus on other crops such as *Croton* (a tree indigenous to Eastern Africa) and castor beans. I’m considering focusing in my dissertation proposal on one of these other crops – will they go through the same cycle of being named as a miracle and then falling from grace? Who will benefit from their promotion, and will farmers once again bear the risks of new ventures?

While I’m in East Africa, I am also doing some work for Rutgers’ National Science Foundation-funded Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship program, “Nanotechnology for Clean Energy.” The grant covers research at Rutgers and Princeton and a new integrated curriculum on clean energy, but also calls for American graduate students to spend time conducting research and learning in Africa. I am traveling to various universities and research institutions in eastern and southern Africa to determine what research is currently being conducted in clean energy and to get a picture of how appropriate they might be for Rutgers students visiting with this grant. Rutgers is also looking to host African advanced graduate students and junior faculty for exchanges, so I am meeting with some interested scientists. Fun times!



(Left) Jackson, leader of a Maasai village in Eastern Province, showing off one of the few producing *jatropha* trees in their plot of 727 trees. This is the first crop their village of pastoralists has planted. At the moment they are planting any seed that is produced. It does not seem as though there is an existing market for nuts, but they hope to eventually sell the nuts as opposed to producing oil for domestic use.

(Middle) With a good friend, Ruthpearl Ng’ang’a, in Malindi

(Right) Receiving the 2010 CAS Graduate Enhancement Award from my Advisor, Professor Richard Schroeder

Natalie Tevethia's Research Takes Her to Ghana's Cocoa Farming Families

My proposed research examines the gendered impact of multinational chocolate companies' sponsorship of anti-child labor campaigns targeted to cocoa farming families in Ghana's Western region. Within these campaigns, my preliminary research suggests that the personhood of cocoa farming parents becomes a central focus of campaigns rather than a neoliberal economy that exacerbates the need for family labor among agricultural producers. My research explores how cocoa farming families interpret and respond to ideologies of personhood, child rights, parental responsibility, and corporate social responsibility within these campaigns.

Chaunetta Jones Researches HIV/AIDS in South Africa

During the recent CAS Graduate Affiliate Conference, I had the opportunity to present a paper titled, "The Collective Experience of HIV/AIDS among the Infected and Affected in Grahamstown, South Africa." The paper was drawn from my larger research project that examines how economic inequalities and structural barriers shape responses to HIV/AIDS treatment. In my talk, I challenged the existing dichotomy between those infected with versus affected by HIV/AIDS. Using ethnographic case-studies I illustrated how decisions about HIV/AIDS treatment become an inclusive community negotiation among both the infected and affected.

I shared with the group how this research finding was crystallized through my experience as a co-creator and counselor during Camp Siyaphumelela. *Siyaphumelela*, isiXhosa for "We are coping," is based in Grahamstown, South Africa, and was designed to provide teenagers affected by HIV/AIDS with coping mechanisms to deal with the challenges they face in their everyday lives. For example, many teens have been designated to serve as "treatment buddies" and are responsible for monitoring their parents' adherence to treatment. The task, which seems straightforward, often becomes challenging when the patients themselves are not fully aware of how to properly take their medications. Additionally, some of the campers disclosed during camp that they themselves are HIV-positive, highlighting the ways in which the lives of those affected and infected overlap in ways that make the negotiation of HIV/AIDS an inclusive community experience. Through the use of drama, dance, and music, camp participants are able to use various art mediums to express their emotions, and more importantly, create a trusting group of peers to support them long after camp is finished. With the tools gained during camp, the teens truly can say, "Siyaphumelela!"

Tendayi Emily Achiume's Comments from the Graduate Student Workshop

While visiting Rutgers University briefly this April, Stella Capoccia generously invited me to participate in the Center for African Studies' Graduate Student Conference. I eagerly accepted. As a practitioner I, unfortunately, only rarely have the opportunity to engage with academics, when often we are interested in finding solutions to many of the same problems. The invitation was a happy coincidence. In confronting the daily challenges of human rights work the continuing need for rigorously researched data and robust conceptual frameworks for navigating these challenges, is palpable. I was thus particularly appreciative of the opportunity to hear about the diverse and valuable research that the Rutgers African Studies graduate students who presented at the conference are currently pursuing.

I spoke about my work. Funded by the Bernstein International Human Rights Fellowship, I am spending a year at Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR), a 30-year old South African non-governmental organization based in Johannesburg. LHR is committed to human rights activism through direct legal services, advocacy, and public interest litigation. It provides free legal services to vulnerable, marginalized, and indigent individuals and communities who have suffered violations of their constitutional rights. I am based in the Refugee and Migrant Rights Project (RMRP), which provides legal advice and representation to asylum seekers and refugees. In addition to advocacy work, the RMRP has an immigration detention monitoring unit that

also conducts litigation on behalf of unlawfully detained asylum seekers and refugees.

Working in the area of refugee and migrants rights in South Africa is at once challenging and incredibly exciting. After the end of apartheid South Africa adopted a constitution that ranks among the most progressive in the world. It has ratified the major global and regional international refugee protection treaties and also enacted domestic law that takes meaningful steps toward the realization of these protections. With this framework in place, and as the continent's economic powerhouse, South Africa is the recipient of large numbers of foreign nationals, many of who have fled ethnic, political, or religious persecution in their home countries. In addition to this group are others who have fled equally desperate circumstances such as extreme poverty and economic hardship, and although they find themselves outside of the legal definition of a refugee, they nonetheless require protection. The government of South Africa, as with many others, is thus faced with the challenge of addressing the needs of its citizens, while honoring its human rights obligations to a large population of non-nationals in the context of explosive xenophobia.

The stories of our clients' experiences in their countries of origin and sometimes even once they have arrived in South Africa are invariably tragic and very often horrific. The challenge that my colleagues and I face when we go into work every morning, is to find a way to use this law to respond to crises, largely of political origin, that profoundly impact every aspect of our clients' lives. Sometimes we are successful, in that for example, we can assist our clients to secure important documentation that will allow them to work or study in the country and access basic health care, or we can secure the release of someone unlawfully detained. Other times our traditional tools fail us when, for example, advocating for the rights of non-nationals serves as fuel for xenophobic sentiments among other sectors of society grappling to make sense of their own continuing disenfranchisement. It was a great pleasure to be able to share some of my thoughts on my work with the Rutgers CAS graduate students, and to learn from their work and their questions about my own. *For more information about Lawyers for Human Rights visit <http://lhr.org.za> or contact Tendayi Emily Achiume: at tendayi@lhr.org.za.*

More News from Our CAS Graduate Affiliates

Lincoln Addison and Christina Doonan Conduct Research on a South African Fruit Farm

Since August 2009, Lincoln Addison (Ph.D. Candidate, Anthropology) has been conducting fieldwork on a fruit farm in Limpopo Province, South Africa. His study encompasses gender relations, spirituality, and farm hierarchies among Zimbabwean migrants working on the border farm. Living for long periods of time in the farm compound itself has allowed him the opportunity to participate in the day to day activities of the Zimbabwean migrant community, including prayer services, cooking, and even travel to Zimbabwe. In May 2010, Christina Doonan (Ph.D. Candidate, Political Science) joined him at his field site. Christina's aim in the region is to study the effects, if any, of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) on organizations that do HIV/AIDS outreach among so called "vulnerable" communities, such as migrant farm workers. By virtue of being located on a farm, Christina has also become engaged in the daily routine of migrant farm labour. *Lincoln is pictured on the left in the top photograph; Christina is pictured below.*



Becoming a Driving Person By Omotayo Jolaosho

Omotayo is pictured below in Grahamstown, at the top of the hill leading to the 1820 Settlers National Monument.

Travel allows you to experience yourself differently. Sometimes you discover greater alignment with a new destination than a previous origin. Or perhaps the journey places you so much out of your comfort zone that you appreciate the place you left all the more. Regardless, travel is a growth experience. South Africa thus far has afforded me growth through both affinity and discomfort; I am not the same person who arrived in Johannesburg on the 29th of August, 2009. For one thing, I drive a manual transmission car everyday now, whereas I did not drive once in the three years I studied at Rutgers before departing for South Africa for dissertation research. The communities I work with are highly dispersed, and driving became a necessity for fieldwork. The scratches on my car bear testament to the challenge of becoming a driving person, but when I sit behind the wheel now, my stomach no longer clutches in constant tension as in those early days. Driving has influenced my outlook on life. The greater lesson has been to confront fear and move beyond its limitations.



Recently, I drove the 12 hours it took to get from Johannesburg to Grahamstown and another 12 hours for the journey back. Two friends shared the ride (though not the drive) and I got to experience the National Arts Festival for the first time. I had known about the annual festival since 2004. Although my prior visits to South Africa always coincided with the festival, I didn't have a chance to experience it until I decided to go this year. The journey involved uncertainty—would I be able to drive the whole way and back? A woman I had interviewed gave me courage and assurance. She hitched-hiked from Johannesburg to Lusaka, Zambia, during apartheid in order to see her son who had snuck out of South Africa to train as a soldier opposing the apartheid regime. She had spent years not knowing where he was, if he was even alive. As soon as she discovered his location, she needed to see him no matter the odds. The journey took over a month of days spent in bushes hiding from patrollers, and nights depending on the kindness of strangers on the road. She did make it to the training camp and was able to see the son her heart most needed to see. Reflecting on her story, I am considering what it means to act according to one's convictions, to pursue one's aspiration, without holding back. If she could confront the uncertainty of journey at much greater odds, I certainly could get in my car and drive.

We arrived at night, safely. The next morning, a marvelous unexpected festival experience began. A friend I had just met connected me with the festival media office and I was able to see the shows I wanted using complimentary media tickets. I reaffirmed my love for jazz attending four concerts in two days. At the Oliver Mtukudzi concert, I gained an insight into a puzzling aspect of the freedom songs I was studying—why was it that some of the sweetest melodies contain most vulgar, violent, or unsympathetic lyrics? An unsuspecting listener such as I have been would revel in the sweetness of the melody assuming its lyrics were just as sweet. When Oliver Mtukudzi talked about using the sweetness of melody to diffuse tension as he introduced his well-known song, "Hear Me Lord," I wondered if this was not an impulse in the freedom songs I hear. I look forward to investigating further.

Driving to Grahamstown has been deeply rewarding for my research and for personal growth; indeed they are both connected. I intend to be in Johannesburg till December 2010 to finish my doctoral fieldwork in Anthropology. I feel life expanding as I continue and am grateful for this process that travel cultivates.

African Women Writing Resistance

Omotayo Jolaosho, Jennifer Browdy de Hernandez, Pauline Dongala, and Anne Serafin are the editors of *African Women Writing Resistance, An Anthology of Contemporary Voices*, published on August 19, 2010 by the University of Wisconsin Press. It is the first transnational anthology to focus on women's strategies of resistance to the challenges they face in Africa today. The anthology brings together personal narratives, testimony, interviews, short stories, poetry, performance scripts, folktales, and lyrics. Thematically organized, it presents women's writing on such issues as intertribal and interethnic conflicts, the degradation of the environment, polygamy, domestic abuse, the controversial traditional practice of female genital cutting, Sharia law, intergenerational tensions, and emigration and exile. Contributors include internationally recognized authors and activists such as Wangari Maathai and Nawal El Saadawi, as well as a host of vibrant new voices from all over the African continent and from the African diaspora. For more information please contact Chris Caldwell: 608-263-0734 or publicity@uwpress.wisc.edu.

Approaches to Climate Adaptation in West Africa By Asher Siebert

I just returned from a two-week predissertation visit to Niamey, Niger for my Ph.D. in Geography. My research explores the impacts of and adaptations to droughts and floods in a west African Sahelian context - particularly the possibility of using a type of insurance to hedge against livelihood risks brought about by climate extremes. This was my first visit to Africa.

On the research front, as expected, I had an experience that was a mix of productive, insightful and frustrating. The research institution that hosted my visit was a pan-African organization called ACMAD (African Center for Meteorological Application to Development), a very gracious host. I learned a great deal about their approaches to the challenges of disseminating meteorological information for appropriate public consumption. I met with several other organizations based in Niamey as well (and also made contact with Dr. Alidou's uncle) – including AGRHYMET (an organization that deals with the intersection of agricultural, hydrological, and meteorological issues in west African Sahelian countries), the Niger Basin Authority and ICRISAT (International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics). I emerged from the meetings with many contacts, websites to explore further, and a great deal of information on what has been done, some data, but also with a refined sense of how challenging the task of building resilience to climate shocks is in this context. Several experts with whom I spoke informed me that using insurance as a means to hedge against climate risk would have significant implementation challenges because the bulk of the west African Sahelian population was poor enough that even an “appropriately scaled” premium (on the order of a few dollars per year) might not be affordable. There have been pilot programs in climate index insurance in other regions in Africa and I shared appropriate research and literature with my colleagues, but I will have to be mindful of the line between advocate and researcher.

However, it is abundantly clear that Niger, like much of Africa, is ground zero for the impacts of climate change. I was there during early monsoon season - one of the cooler times of the year – with highs merely in the low nineties Fahrenheit. Evidently, during the hot, dry season, in April this year, the temperatures were unusually high (the nation actually set a new record high this year), leading to a high heat-related mortality rate. A poor harvest last year, the heat wave, the nation's current political limbo, and logistical challenges with transporting food aid have contributed to the present widespread hunger that afflicts much of the population. Thankfully, the regional seasonal forecast is optimistic for above normal rains. It rained a fair amount during my visit. I certainly hope that trend continues through the monsoon, and leads to a better harvest.

On a cultural note, I really enjoyed my stay and I think much of American society could take a lesson or two about hospitality and kindness from west African culture. Being a white American

Jew, my family had reservations about my going to a predominantly Muslim African nation. But those fears proved largely unfounded. This trip has made me feel more dedicated to our common humanity and has made me inclined to advocate for better Jewish-Muslim dialogue on the Rutgers campus. The Hebrew word and vernacular Nigerien word (in Hausa-Zarma!) for charity – a core value of both religions is the same: *tzedakah* and *sadaka*.

Laura Ann Twagira's Studies Take Her to Boston

This fall I will return from a year of research in Mali for my dissertation “The Taste of Development: A History of Gender, the Senses, and Food Production in Mali.” My work comes from close study at the Office du Niger, a large state-run agricultural project that dates to the early twentieth-century. In a region of intermittent famine, the Office became known as the *Grenier de l’Afrique*, or the Breadbasket of Africa. Over the twentieth-century, changing colonial and postcolonial policies aimed at increasing production. Yet farmers felt the effects of the project, not in the amount of their crop production, but through the quality of the sauce that they ate with their rice, or the adaption of new household items like buckets that helped women in their cooking. My dissertation is about this dynamic and women’s sophisticated knowledge of botany, agriculture, and new technologies necessary for the production of tasty food. My husband Ben and I will be moving to Boston and a new academic home at Boston University, where I will be presenting a portion of my work for the Walter Rodney Seminar Series. We both thank CAS and its members for supporting our work at Rutgers! The photo above includes, from the left, Aissata Coulibaly, myself, Bintou Diarra, and Fati Guindo (two rural women development workers at the Office and a lady I interviewed).



African Art Focus at Rutgers and at The Newark Museum

***Water*, A Zimmerli Art Museum Exhibition (September 1, 2009 – January 2, 2010)**

This exhibition explores our relationship to water. Drawn from the Zimmerli’s collection with important loans from the Miami Art Museum, Newark Museum, the Princeton University Art Museum, artists, and private collectors, *Water* is a broad survey across historical time and geographical space. Four pieces in the exhibition reference Africa. Kenyan-born Wangechi Mutu’s video combines images of the artist entering, swimming, and floating in the sea as her voice sings “Amazing Grace” in her native Gikuyu. In contrast, American photographer Cary Wolinsky, describes the beauty of the Namibian desert and evokes the history of colonization and the diamond trade in his photograph of Kolmanskop, Namibia (2001). Two other works, borrowed from the Newark Museum, represent traditional and historic relationships to water. A ritual vessel from Mali from the 20th century whose interior bowl is inscribed with sacred text blesses the water that is held inside; another ritualistic vessel from Égbádò, Nigeria (dated to the late 19th or early 20th century) was designed to hold water and river stones. The lid of this *Vessel for Eyinlè* is anthropomorphized and suggests a face and point of focus for the water and sacred pebbles within.

Water is an interdisciplinary collaboration with our university colleagues at Rutgers. It is part of the university wide exploration of the theme of “Ecologies in the Balance: Looking Forward” for the academic year 2010-2011 organized by the School of Arts and Sciences International Programs, Global Initiatives, and of “Water, River, Raritan” the 2010- 2011 themes of the Byrne family First-Year Seminars, designed to introduce undergraduates to the excitement of research and learning. Inspired by a similar spirit of educational adventure, *Water* was initiated in order to introduce the campus and our other communities to the intellectual and visual diversity of the university art museum at Rutgers. The exhibition is organized by Donna Gustafson, Andrew W. Mellon Liaison for Academic Programs and Curator at the Zimmerli.

On November 3, from 1 to 5pm the Zimmerli Art Museum will host a symposium titled “The Poetry and Politics of Water,” co-organized by the Zimmerli, the Department of African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures, and CAS. The Africanist panelists include CAS members Ousseina Alidou, Abena P. A. Busia, Eric Garfunkel, Al Howard, and David Hughes. An informal reception and an opportunity to view the exhibition will follow. For more information on *Water* and on other Zimmerli programs: <http://www.zimmerlimuseum.rutgers.edu>.

The Institute for Women and Art Features Africa

Ferris Olin and Judith K. Brodsky, Directors of Rutgers Institute for Women and Art (IWA), curated a spring 2010 exhibition entitled, *The Last Frontier: Contemporary African Women Artists Use Their Voices to Mobilize Their Communities*. The show was on view through June 1 in the Brodsky Gallery at The Heldrich Hotel and Conference Center (10 Livingston Ave, New Brunswick). The exhibit was the result of a partnership between the IWA and Brodsky Center for Innovative Editions/Rutgers with DEVCO, F3B, Makerere University, and Women in Leadership at Alcatel-Lucent. The artists, who work in a variety of media, are Ritah Nabuyungo Edopu (Uganda), Mercy Moyo (Zimbabwe), Lilian Nabulime (Uganda), Sara Nakisanze (Uganda), and Duhirwe Rushemeza (Ruwanda). Edopu, who works on empowering women and street orphans through art making, and Nabulime, an AIDS/HIV activist whose grass-roots efforts supports Ugandan women with HIV/AIDS, many of whom had been taken as “child-wives” by guerrilla soldiers, spent the week of March 22 in New Brunswick meeting with students and faculty and lecturing both on their work as visual artists, as well as their activist work in their communities. Rushemeza joined them on March 25 at a reception and auction. In addition to the artists’ work, photographs of Africa by American photographers who visited there with a delegation sponsored by F3B were also on display. F3B is a global service organization founded in 1998 by Diana Tyson and Ursula Kirk. The non-profit sponsors basketball clinics for young women in Africa with the assistance of young American women players to develop leadership skills in a multicultural setting. More than 180 African girls and over 90 American high school and college-level athletes and scholars have participated in the program.

African Films Included in Fall 2010 NJ Film Festival at RU (September 3– November 4)

The Rutgers Film Co-op/ New Jersey Media Arts Center proudly announces the Bi-Annual New Jersey Film Festival’s Fall 2010 showcase! Enjoy the best in independent film and video, featuring premiere screenings of award winning works and guest appearances by emerging and recognized film and video makers. Tickets (\$10; \$9; \$8) can be purchased at the door thirty minutes before the start time. The films listed below will be screened on Sunday, October 10 at 7pm, in the order listed, at Voorhees Hall (71 Hamilton Street, New Brunswick). For more information: <http://www.njfilmfest.com>; tel (732) 932-8482; or e-mail NJMAC@aol.com.

Fear Itself - William Wonders III A short film about a state of dreadful uncertainty. A year ago a pastor was shot in his own church. This is the first time he is returning to the pulpit. 2010; 6 min.

Delicious Peace Grows in a Ugandan Coffee Bean - Curt Fissel Your morning cup of coffee comes to you as the end product of a vast global industry. This lively documentary tells the inspiring story of one coffee-farmer to illuminate the challenges faced by small coffee-growers around the world. The Delicious Peace Coffee Cooperative was started by a Ugandan coffee farmer who organized a group of Christian, Muslim and Jewish neighbors to challenge historical, as well as economic and environmental, hurdles and to enhance mutual economic development. 2010; 40 min.

Dreaming Mali – Barbara Kowa If it is true that art can be a universal language, can artists from totally different worlds and cultural backgrounds work together? In this enthralling documentary film, two visual and performing artists from Germany travel to remote villages in Mali – to co-create works of art with the villagers that fuse together traditional techniques of music, dance, singing, smelting ore, and blacksmithing. 2010; 84 min. In Bamera and German, subtitled.

Present Tense: Arts of Contemporary Africa By Christa Clarke

In May, the Newark Museum inaugurated a new long-term gallery installation, *Present Tense: Arts of Contemporary Africa*, featuring works drawn from the museum's permanent collection. Located on the second floor of the Main building, this gallery is the first such dedicated space in the United States. Contemporary African art represents a recent institutional emphasis and is part of a larger, broad-based collection of African art begun within the first decade of the founding of the Newark Museum in 1909. The new installation complements the museum's existing gallery of historic African art by showcasing the creativity of Africa's artists practicing today, expanding the conceptual, temporal and geographic boundaries of "African art."

The Museum's collection of contemporary African art has grown steadily in recent years and features works from varied countries spanning the continent, including the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Togo. Their art encompasses varied media and genres, from painting and sculpture to photography and video art to textiles and fashion. Their visual practices are equally wide-ranging, engaging tradition, modernism or the avant-garde, and are shaped by diverse personal and cultural histories. Representing only a small fraction of Africa's contemporary arts, together they suggest the scope and range of art-making on the continent today.

Many of the artworks on view are rooted in or engage with culturally specific content. They are informed by local histories and traditions in Africa, as well as the continent's political and social realities. Several of the artists mine the rich symbolic languages of their homelands for expressive purposes. For example, the formal vocabulary of artist Owusu Ankomah includes Akan *adinkra* symbols from his homeland of Ghana. Other artists reflect on cultural identity or reference tradition-based social practices: Samuel Fosso's photographic self-portraits revisit the traditional roles of his Igbo grandfather. Current social and political issues are also addressed, as in a poignant video installation by Sue Williamson in which recent immigrants to South Africa are given visibility and voice.

Yet "Africanness" (certainly a fraught and complicated construct) is not the only viable lens for understanding and interpreting contemporary arts of Africa in a globalizing art world. The visual vocabulary and artistic concerns of many of the artists represented exhibition transcend cultural, national or geographic boundaries and reflect individualized experiences. For instance, autobiography is the basis for much of South African artist Senzeni Marasela's practice, in which embroidered narratives reconstruct personal history. And Ethiopian-born artist Etiye Dimma Poulsen's elegant ceramic sculptures reflect her interest in the universality of totemic forms.

Present Tense seeks to expand the idea of African art beyond the more familiar historical masks and figural sculptures that have long defined the continent's art. At the same time, the universal aspirations of the artists also suggest the difficulties of circumscribing such works within geographic borders. The new installation thus contributes more broadly to the Museum's representation of the art of our time, complementing the contemporary works featured in our existing American, Asian and Decorative Arts galleries. *Christa Clarke is Curator, Arts of Africa, and Senior Curator, Arts of Africa and the Americas, at the Newark Museum: <http://newarkmuseum.org>.*



The two works on the left and right are included in *Present Tense*

(left) Sue Williamson (b. 1941, England; lives and works in South Africa) *Better Lives I*, 2003; 3 DVD portraits, 35mm film transferred to DVD for projection 3.5 minute loop each; Purchase 2008 Alberto Burri Memorial Fund established by Stanley J. Seeger 2008.5

(right) Julien Sinzogan (b. 1957, Porto-Novo, Republic of Benin; lives/works in France) *Return of the Spirits II*, 2008 Colored ink on paper; 27.6 x 39.4 inches; TR35.2010.2



FRIENDS OF AFRICA CONTRIBUTE

From Hollywood to Nollywood By Charles Ambler, President, African Studies Association
The Fifth Annual African Studies Association Presidential Lecture at Rutgers

Since the mid-1990s, a major movie industry—Nollywood—has developed in Nigeria, producing hundreds of films each year. For the first time, it is films made in Africa that dominate movie consumption in Nigeria. Nollywood films are making significant inroads on motion picture markets across West Africa and much of the rest of the continent—and even beyond, for example in the Caribbean and in the USA and Europe. More recently an academic industry has developed to study Nollywood. But as the books and articles proliferate, this scholarship has reinforced Nollywood exceptionalism, characterizing the phenomenon as unique and distinctive because of its indigeneity and because of the nature of production and distribution. Popular terminology reinforces this distinction: rarely is Nollywood described as the “Nigerian movie industry.” Instead, studies describe “Nigerian videos,” reinforcing a boundary between video and celluloid that filmmakers themselves increasingly violate. In Nigeria itself, the films are generally referred to as “home movies,” again underlining local provenance and implying an amateur quality that is hardly consistent with an increasingly sophisticated industry. In my talk at Rutgers on March 4, 2010, “From Hollywood to Nollywood,” I took a different tack—placing the Nigerian film industry in historical context and looking at it from the point of view of consumption. From the audience perspective.

The talk intertwined the history of the development of an audience for films in Africa (dating from the first decade of the 20th century) with an analysis of theorizing about audience. For many decades Hollywood westerns dominated African screens, in every region and in urban and rural areas. In the 1960s other kinds of action movies, and movies from India, superseded westerns. But as African audiences continually demonstrated their affection for these kinds of films, discussions of audience focused on the supposed vulnerability of African viewers to screen imagery and thus to the need for both censorship and didactic films. Reflecting this perspective the new African cinema that emerged after independence was generally highly politicized—but little seen. Audiences for popular foreign movies, far from being defenseless victims of cultural imperialism, embraced these films as powerful evocations of modernity and at the same time invested them with local readings and understandings. In that sense the cowboy world of Hollywood westerns often took on a decidedly African flavor, breaking down supposed boundaries between local or indigenous popular culture and imported. From this perspective, the Nollywood phenomenon can be understood as part of a longer history of audience engagement with motion pictures that began in the heyday of the western, continued through action movies and into the era of the VCR. The filmmakers themselves find many sources for their movies, including local theater and story-telling traditions. But it is also clear that many of them grew up on popular action movies and that these have played an important role in shaping their distinctive film styles—even as those same movies helped shape an audience for them.

For Charles Ambler's bio visit the University of Texas at El Paso's website: <http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=54924>. For information about the African Studies Association visit <http://www.africanstudies.org/p/cm/ld/fid=8>.

Coming to America: Consumption of Nollywood in the United States By Kaia Niambi Shivers

In 1999 I took a chance and bought three Nigerian movies on VHS at a quaint Nigerian specialty shop in Los Angeles. Tucked in between the CDs of Sunny Ade and ample clear bags of powdered cassava were vivid VHS jackets displaying titles of various movies. The artworks reminded me of the famous, modestly-budgeted Jamaican movie, “Dancehall Queen,” but were also reminiscent of the local video camera ventures distributed in black communities that were produced, edited and marketed with clever, guerilla tactics.

I was curious. As an entertainment editor who had attended dozens of movies and film festivals, I wondered, “Just what did a Nigerian movie look like?” Up until then, I had never seen one. What an initial disappointment. The lighting and sound was poor quality, the acting was questionable, and the soundtrack throughout the choppy transitions of each scene was Sade’s song, “Love is King.” It was bad, so bad that I didn’t pay any attention to them until ten years later while walking through Newark.

Many of the local stores have changed in downtown Newark, and in fact through East Orange and Irvington. On various corners you see African braid shops next to African Pentecostal churches that are next to African general stores selling imported food stuffs and clothes. An added feature to a significant portion of these mom-and-pop shops is racks and racks of videos that have accumulated in the last five years.

The reason I bring up these incidents is to provide a visual framework before I respond to Charles Ambler’s discussion at Rutgers University concerning consumers of Nollywood and Hollywood films in Africa. Since time did not permit us to talk in-depth about Nollywood and the African audience, I am writing a few of my thoughts about his fascinating presentation, using the perspective of the African audience watching Nollywood in the United States.

Nollywood consumption is different from the makeshift movie houses or other non-traditional filming sites that have been created in Africa. In Nigeria and in much of the Sub-Sahara African countries that heavily consume these movies, there is a public knowledge, and an infrastructure, be it formal or informal that has been created to view these films. However, in the United States specifically, watching these movies can be conscious and coincidental. Therefore, the sites of consumption become a complicated and layered exchange of culture, but also an establishment and sometimes a reassertion of identity, even if it is for that moment.

Public consumption of these movies is largely found in “tie-in” spaces (Ajibade, 2007) or sites where there is a business operation while movies are being played. For example, Nollywood has found a home in numerous African-operated braiding shops in many urban areas of the US. The clientele represents all walks of the African Diaspora, from the West Indian to the African-American, and there, the consumption occurs while women spending sometimes up to eight hours, getting intricate styles woven into their heads.

A regular form of entertainment has been Nollywood, whether customers like it or not, or have heard of any of the movies. The placing of Nollywood as an easy way for patrons and hair braiders to pass time has become a juncture of many negotiations and posturing of identity that mark a significant difference of audiences in the U.S. In the same room you have natives and immigrants, all labeled “black” in America, but have drastically different experiences in their consumption. These sites shift consumption, and in my opinion, directly and indirectly influence filmmakers. The Diaspora talks and the savvy Nigerian businessmen are listening. As part of the Nollywood audience, I hear the gospel tinged songs of sound tracks and the black American churches gospel stage plays embedded in some of the hallelujah films. I also have noticed the influences and the swagger of hip-hop in the urban, Lagos flicks. And now, films are starting to be shot in America.

Of course this is different if you were in Jamaica or Trinidad where Nollywood is part of regular national television programming. Or even Suriname, Guyana, and St.Kitts where Nollywood is very much intertwined in local consumption, especially at the markets. But that is another lecture at another time. *Kaia Niambi Shivers is a Journalism and Media Studies doctoral candidate in the School of Communication and Information.*

Spring 2010 African-American Literature Visiting Scholar: Fatima Duisebayeva

As an Open Society Institute/ Soros Foundation Fellow and Faculty Development Program participant I was hosted by the Center for African Studies and the Department of African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures during spring of 2010. My research interests cover a wide range of disciplines in the field of African- American Studies. My Ph.D. dissertation at Moscow University/Russia was on creative activities of the distinguished African-American protest movement leader, scholar, writer, and journalist William E.B. Du Bois. For the last year I've researched the non-fiction works of African-Americans who participated, spoke, wrote, and reported on the Civil Rights Movement of 1954-1968. This research will serve as the basis for a course which I will teach when I return to Kazakhstan. (I am pictured above second from the left, with Dr. Alidou second from the right, and Dr. Alidou's students.)



I've learned a lot from my four month stay at Rutgers, mainly from my close cooperation with the Center for African Studies and AMESALL. I have attended and audited the courses of my mentor, the Director of CAS Dr. Ousseina Alidou: "Comparative Approaches to African Literatures," "Crossroads: Classical Literatures of Africa, the Middle East and South Asia," and English Professor Cheryl Wall's course "Black Women Writers and African-American Literary Tradition." These courses helped me to trace back to the historic sources, origins, and developments of Black American literature, to perceive the gender and comparative approach to the literary phenomena under consideration, the theoretical issues of genre, literary hybridity, and the historical interactions and interchanges between literatures of Africa and other regions of the world. Auditing affected me greatly and resulted in contributing an essay entitled, "African-American Women Writings of the Civil Rights Movement" to the Open Society Institute journal.

I also participated in the Rutgers international symposium, "Crossroads: Migration, Language, and Literature in Africa" organized by CAS and AMESALL and met both with the internationally acclaimed African writer Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, and with well-known experts in African Studies from the U.S., Canada, Ethiopia, Israel, and Sweden. I attended events at the Institute for Research on Women, the Center for Women's Global Leadership, and the Center for European Studies. I attended: presentations of prominent public figures Noam Chomsky and Cornell West; a lecture by Brooklyn College, CUNY Professor of Political Science, African & Women's Studies Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome; a trip to the United Nations briefing on girls' education organized by the Global Initiatives and the School of Arts and Sciences International Programs; a visit to Plainfield high school; theatre and movie performances; an art exhibition of the Moroccan modern artist Lalla Essaydi; and monthly meetings with Dr. Joanna Regulska accompanied by talks and discussions on different gender issues. All of these experiences promoted my professional development in terms of identifying and fostering the: democratic, interdisciplinary, and gender focus in modern scholarship; trans-disciplinary approach to many contemporary issues; comprehension of the complex interactions between literature, language and culture; and the discovery of new literary and cultural practices in the field of African-American Studies. Moreover I was introduced to the university and wider international academic community in order to facilitate research collaboration in the future.

I would like to extend my special thanks to: Dr. Ousseina Alidou; AMESALL Department Chair Dr. Alamin Mazrui; the Dean of International Programs Dr. Joanna Regulska; and to the faculty and administrators for supporting my research and so generously sharing their knowledge. Thank you for your very kind hospitality! My home university, Kazakh State Women's Pedagogical University/ Almaty, and its students, will benefit from my invaluable Rutgers experience!

Please Welcome Karen Jenkins, the African Studies Association's New Executive Director

As a sincere believer in and supporter of higher education and African studies, it is a great pleasure to now be with the African Studies Association as the Executive Director. ASA is one of North America's prominent organizations in the field of African Studies, and it is an honor to be among some of the world's leading Africanist scholars.



I'm pleased to share the following new ASA developments with you. In August 2010 we relocated the ASA offices to the Livingston Campus of Rutgers University, in Piscataway, New Jersey. Not only is our new workspace much more appropriate and efficient, but our offices are now located directly next to the offices of the Rutgers Center for African Studies. Ousseina Alidou, Director of CAS, and Renee DeLancey, Assistant to the Director, have been amicable neighbors and attentive colleagues. The ASA is also proud to announce the relaunching of its Presidential Visiting Scholar Program. Upon collaborating with CAS and the American Council for Learned Societies (ACLS), this year's selectee is Dominica Dipio of Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. The program provides the selected scholar with the opportunity to travel to the ASA Secretariat at Rutgers University and meet with faculty and students to discuss his or her research. He or she will also be provided with the chance to participate in the ASA's annual meeting, which this year will be held from November 18 through November 21 in San Francisco. Dipio's Ph.D. is in African Cinema from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Some of her most recent research is entitled, "Gender Representation in Africana Film Narrative: A Feminist Critical Approach."

ASA looks forward to collaborating with CAS in future endeavors, and is excited for the direction that we are moving in. The few small transformations and accomplishments that have taken place recently have invigorated the Secretariat, and have proven the capabilities of our small but exceptional staff. *Karen Jenkins arrived at the African Studies Association after having lived and worked extensively in Zambia and other African countries throughout her career. She received her J.D. from Rutgers University School of Law and an M.A. in International Relations from Yale University. Her undergraduate work was at Fisk University. To access her full biographical sketch please visit the African Studies Association's website <http://africanstudies.org/p/cm/ld/fid=125&article=34>. For more information on the ASA's 53rd annual meeting visit <http://africanstudies.org/p/cm/ld/fid=56>.*

Parisa Kharazi Sends Greetings from Peace Corps, Botswana

On June 11, 2010, I was officially sworn-in as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer. It was the proudest moment of my life. I had been debating on whether or not to apply, as the service entails living in a foreign country for 27 months away from all the comforts of America. However, I was inspired by President Barack Obama to volunteer more in our community. By joining the Peace Corps I am representing the American people abroad and also opening a cross-cultural exchange between my country of service and Americans.

I am currently serving in the Republic of Botswana in a village called Tsabong. My job title is District Community Liaison and I work at the District AIDS Coordinator office. My site is more urban-based and includes administrative work along with spending time in the field acting as a strong liaison between the community served and the government workers who are not usually from those communities. My role as a Peace Corps Volunteer is not the stereotypical assignment of living in a rural African village in a mud hut with no running water or electricity. Because I am working for the government of Botswana at the district level, I have housing provided by the government which includes all these things.



My work will focus on the national response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Botswana has the second highest prevalence rate of HIV in the world (about 18%). With a population of less than 2 million people, almost 1 in 5 Botswana are infected with HIV! There are many factors that contribute to the spread of HIV and everyday I am learning about the challenges that I will have to face in my work here for the response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Being a Peace Corps volunteer is by far one of the most challenging things I have experienced in my life. Everyday is a struggle. Trying to learn a new language, adapting to the slow pace of life and traditions, and witnessing the daily struggles of people living with and being affected by HIV is overwhelming. One challenge I am experiencing is the language barrier. Setswana, the national language, involves various sounds that are foreign to the English vocabulary including a 'click' sound. Because it is uncommon for foreigners to learn Setswana, many Botswana react to my broken-Setswana with laughs. Learning the local language is just one method of integration into my community and I enjoy it very much. The next two years of my life are going to be challenging yet rewarding. I am not in my comfort zone but I am still learning how to adjust as much as I can to this new environment.

Despite the daily challenges I face, I focus on the positive things around me. I am living in one of the most beautiful countries in the world. Botswana fits the stereotypical image of Africa: vast, clear skies, colorful sunsets, flat desert lands, and safari wildlife. Every morning when I walk to work, I appreciate the calm beauty of the gray sky and the friendly greetings from my neighbors. The fast-paced life I once had in New Jersey is foreign to me here. In Botswana I have time for myself because there are no television or internet distractions. I am overcome with a feeling of peace in Africa.

In the next two years, I hope to assist with community capacity building and sustainable projects that spread education of HIV/AIDS prevention at the local level. After I complete my service in the Peace Corps I will apply to graduate school for a Master's in Public Health. In the future, I hope to work for a global development organization and I am looking forward to learning as much as possible about the Third World and public health issues while I am living in Africa.

Parisa Kharazi graduated in January 2010 from Rutgers College and double majored in Middle Eastern Studies and public health; she also has a Certificate in International Studies. Parisa is pictured in an ancient cave in Botswana.

Restructuring South African Education By Anthony Lemon

Professor Lemon (Department of Geography and Fellow of Mansfield College, Oxford University) was the Rutgers 2010 Graduate School of Education's South Africa Initiative Distinguished Lecturer. He gave a lecture at Rutgers on April 7 entitled, "Twenty Years After Mandela's Release: Critical Reflections on Educational Reform and Restructuring in South Africa," which he has summarized below.

On his release from prison in 1990, Nelson Mandela described apartheid education as 'a crime against humanity'. This reflected not only its racially segregated character but the vast gap in per capita expenditure in favour of whites, Indians and coloured (mixed-race) people at the expense of the black African majority, who were given an inferior education designed to equip them for the jobs they were expected to perform. This has bequeathed to the new South Africa millions of poorly educated black workers, a shortage of skills and professionally qualified people in many areas, and a generation of poorly trained black teachers: an inheritance will take decades to remove.

The last white-led government did substantially increase funding for black education from the mid-1980s, but per capita expenditure was still only a quarter of that for whites in 1994. Many former white schools enjoyed facilities comparable with those of British independent schools and many black schools had little beyond the shell of their buildings. Contrasts in human resource provision

were equally stark. My research has focused on attempts to reduce these imbalances, in terms of redistribution of resources and desegregation. I have focused particularly on secondary schools in three of South Africa's nine provinces – the Western Cape, relatively prosperous and with a large proportion of coloureds and whites in its population; the impoverished Eastern Cape, with large numbers of blacks from the former apartheid 'homelands' of Transkei and Ciskei; and KwaZulu-Natal, also poor but home to most of South Africa's relatively well-educated Indian minority.

The realities which I have sought to uncover are closely bound up with national policies. Most critical is the decision to allow school governing bodies to charge fees to supplement what was acknowledged to be inadequate state provision, despite the relatively high proportion of national income spent on education. This has inevitably perpetuated inequality, as former white schools in particular have charged high fees in order to maintain the standard of their facilities and buy extra teachers to top up the number permitted by national and provincial norms. Yet had the state not allowed schools to charge fees, the country's best schools would have deteriorated sharply.

A critical resource problem for education in a semi-developed country like South Africa arises from its inherently labour-intensive nature. The labour needed has to be skilled, and to retain it in an economy with alternative career opportunities for the educated, salaries must be competitive. Salaries account for 90% or more of the education budget, leaving little money to equip schools or reduce inequalities in physical provision.

School desegregation has proceeded further than residential desegregation, with many parents making considerable sacrifices to send their children to former white or Indian schools, often some distance away from their homes so that transport costs often added significantly to the fees.

National education policies have been modelled on what is deemed best practice in the developed world, but seemingly preoccupied with policy symbolism and framed with little acknowledgement of realities on the ground. The government closed many of the former black teacher training colleges too hastily, leading to inadequate provision at present. School results are poor, with South Africa falling behind most countries in maths and science as well as literacy. Pass rates in the Senior Certificate, the school leaving qualification, have declined for several years in succession including 2009.

There are no miracle cures, but a number of measures which could help to alleviate particular elements of dysfunctionality in the school system, for example: measures to encourage the sharing of both physical and human resources between rich and poor schools, including a transport subsidy; a more equitable restructuring of the fee exemption system and the monitoring of its application; and training for school governing bodies. The preoccupation with policy symbolism needs to be replaced with a more pragmatic approach, not least in returning to a curriculum that is deliverable. The government must find the political courage to confront the self-interested South African Democratic Teachers Union. In-service training for both teachers and school Principals needs to be a top priority. The political task is made more difficult by the fact that educational changes never have immediate returns – there are quite simply no educational *coups d'état*.
For Anthony Lemon's bio please visit the University of Oxford's website: <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/staff/tlemon.html>.

Programming Note to Our Newsletter Readers

More exciting CAS programming is in development!

Professor Alidou is working to bring to Rutgers the extraordinary photographs by Boniface Mwangi of the 2007 Kenyan election some time in the Fall semester.

Voices of Rwanda is a program that is being developed in April of the spring 2011 semester.

Please be sure to visit the CAS calendar web page frequently for updates!

<http://ruafrica.rutgers.edu/events/index.html>

Africa and World History: A Discussion of New Directions in African and World Historical Study and Teaching By Joseph C. Miller

Professor Joseph C. Miller (History, University of Virginia) guest lectured at Rutgers on April 22, 2010.

The lecture argued that substantial epistemological reasons exist for why Africa is routinely marginalized from the practice of “world history”: the field of world history has developed around a set of thoroughly modern structural abstractions (formalized in the “human sciences” of political economy, sociology, economics, various structural anthropologies, and so on) characteristic of the “social” turn in the discipline of history. The modern discipline of history itself developed a century earlier around the no less abstract (and unproblematized) concept of the “nation-state”; it was an intensely ideological reflex of the era of highly euro-centric nineteenth-century nationalism within which it celebrated national heroes and military conquests. Although world historians have sought to transcend the core euro-centrism of the discipline by incorporating the recent half century’s research on other world regions, including Africa, they have done so in terms of the exclusively modern phenomenon (and modeling of humanity in terms) of nations, and the earlier military operations characterized as antecedents: kingdoms and empires. Nations have been naturalized to the point of unconsidered premises. World history is fundamentally teleological in its implicit apotheosis of militarism.

To the extent that world historians have managed to include Africans as initiators, they have done so in terms of imagining its empires and kingdoms, and ultimately the nation-states of the second half of the twentieth century. The protagonists are familiar: Egypt, Aksum, Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Zimbabwe, their Atlantic-oriented successors (Asante, Dahomey, Oyo, *et al.*), and the Islamic counterparts based at Sokoto, Zanzibar, and elsewhere. I argued that these exceptional (and highly militarized) instances ignore an African, alternative sensibility, and hence history, based not on militarism and conquest in pursuit of singularity (via domination) but rather on diversity and collaboration. The militarization of the world dates from domestication of the horse in central Asia/eastern Europe in the fourth or fifth millennium BCE. By the third millennium BCE the military empires that form the paradigm for “world history” were emerging in the populous and productive river valleys from eastern Asia to the Mediterranean. Egypt, before the New Kingdom, had consolidated instead as a diverse (and very African) composite of local communities; recent archaeological work by Roderick and Susan McIntosh, together with long-running historical work by Jan Vansina, has demonstrated the ubiquity of other methods of political integration in Africa, none of them militarized, and all of them ideologically composites of many local communities.

The main (and underappreciated) theme in the master narrative of African history in these terms follows African communities’ efforts to quarantine the disruptive potential of contact with the commercialized economies surrounding the continent, from the Mediterranean and Red Seas to the western Indian Ocean. Commercial credit from abroad translated into persistent debt in Africa, ultimately financing militarization – the horses widespread in the western Sudan from the twelfth century or so, later successive generations of firearms in the Lake Chad region, then all along the Atlantic coasts, and eventually also in eastern Africa. As debtors, Africans used short-term extractive strategies to cover external trading deficits provoked by escalating conflict; they had no opportunity to invest in infrastructure or production. It was a short step from extracting gold, ivory, and skins to extracting the people sold into the Muslim world and then into the Atlantic as slaves.

These corrosive costs of militarization to human community – and in Africa specifically the warrior polities usually celebrated as “kingdoms” and “empires” – also provide an emphasis lacking in the usual world history imperial narrative’s uncritical celebration of military violence. The costs of other prize “achievements” of modernity – individualism itself, market economics,

nation-states – become evident as well, when the world’s history is conceived in terms of Africans’ accent on community integration and preservation. Africans in these ways are representative of the entire world prior to the eighteenth century, and of most of it also well into the twentieth century. The African accent on diversity rather than on homogeneity, on experiential rather than “imagined” (i.e. abstract, ideological) communities, on balanced responsibilities rather than unbridled opportunism, on difference as complementary rather than competitive, thus provides a critical perspective on a world history otherwise too teleologically inclined to seek only reflections of our (modern) selves in other times and other places.

World history is properly a multi-centric narrative of diversity and of the energizing and enabling potential of encounters among communities differing significantly at every level. Taking Africans on their own terms – like us as well as unlike us, in infinitely varying and subtle ways – integrates them into a composite world history rather than essentializing them as “different”. Doing so, finally, allows us to critique the terms on which we understand ourselves, as just that: one possibility among the many that have made the world go ‘round, and in less danger of destroying African and other alternative values and strategies than proponents of globalization proclaim.

For Joseph Miller’s bio please visit the University of Virginia’s website: <http://www.virginia.edu/history/user/44>.

Girls to Women: Rites of Passage By Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome

*Professor Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome (Political Science, African & Women’s Studies, Brooklyn College, CUNY), who on the next page is pictured to the right of Professor Alidou, gave a February 17 lecture after Professor Alidou’s screening of *Becoming A Woman in Okrika*. Professor Okome’s full article is posted on her blog: <http://mojubaolu.blogspot.com/2010/07/girls-to-women-responses-to-social.html>*

The article by Gleason and Ibbuya is a good accompaniment to the film, *Becoming A Woman in Okrika*. In it, the Iriapu songs are transcribed and translated into English (Gleason and Ibbuya 1991). From singing at dawn to the waning moon and rising sun, using their body adornments to good percussionist effect, to entering the fattening huts for their transformation to womanhood, the Iriapu began their transition with call and songs that had been sung ad infinitum through the ages. Prescribed bathing and seclusion followed. The songs draw using highly parsimonious and spare lines, graphic tales that detail what life is like for the Iriapu and their society—denoting a world inhabited both by water spirits and temporal beings, where the water spirits could inhabit temporal bodies and deny men of women’s love, bodies, fertility and care.

In these songs, some of the men are fickle, and should be avoided. Some are well known but only the spirits can reveal the intentionality of others and prevent unhappy unions. The male-female union is both inevitable, if procreation is to occur, it is also the source of potential pain and exploitation. Compared with the weight and responsibility of women, the girl’s life is relatively idyllic. Women have the day-to-day responsibility of going through the pain of gathering oysters and periwinkles (important constituents of the staple food), fishing and farming, in general, working so that their families are well-fed. Doing this well earns them the approval of society—the cloth that only older women can wear around their shoulders, and which must be accessed in order for their spirits to depart to the proper domain after leaving their bodies. Girls must learn how to bear these responsibilities with dignity from the elders. Painting the bodies with camwood and indigo connects new and older generations of women, passing down some of the messages corporeally while also infusing the girls on the threshold of adulthood with the spiritual qualities needed to prevail under increasingly harsh conditions.

The spirits also influence existential non-romantic conditions, being responsible for stocking the waters with fish and other seafood and ensuring that the community is well fed. From the Iriapus’ songs, all within hearing distance of their voices hear of their contextualized reading of past, present and future as they see it. They hear within the songs, a melodious rendering of how the visible and invisible interact, how material conditions and the privations experienced

show the hand of the water spirits as well as limit the possibilities of fattening, when the spirits keep the best catch (mullet), to themselves, leaving the skimpy perch for human consumption.



Funnily enough, the 800 pound gorilla in the environs is left out of the picture—the oil economy (Blakely and Blakely 1992) and its blissful ignorance as well as willful destruction of the ecosystem, the way of life, the livelihood and socio-economic milieu of the communities that pre-existed it. This is while the greedy chiefs receive attention for attempting to disrupt the ceremonies by asking for money from the research team and refusing to share the largesse with the older boys/youth, who must be offered drinks in order to play the prescribed role of running during the rites. It is ironical and sad that the leviathan is left at peace while minor players are being harassed. But these are girls. Perhaps when they become old women with the cloth on their shoulders, they would also become far-seeing enough to identify the oil companies as the enemy. Perhaps they would be brave enough to fight this formidable force, which is also supported by the government of Nigeria. Perhaps they would be wise enough to devise the right strategies and deploy them to fight smart, and also transfer, both corporeally and spiritually, this fighting spirit, to the girls that they have the responsibility of shepherding into womanhood. This remains to be seen. In the meantime, ecological destruction continues unabated.

Becoming a Woman in Okrika documents the Iria ceremony of the Okrika, an Ijo community in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The current group of Iriapu are five adolescent girls who must undertake this rite of passage in preparation for womanhood and marriage. While the film is often seen as questioning “the value and continuation of the Iria ceremony in modern society,” its relevance could be seen as even more far-reaching.

As outsiders seeing the film, people cannot help seeing “a visually aesthetic presentation of the Iria rite of passage...an intriguing introduction to a particular practice in the Rivers State.” However, there is much more to the film than even the absences identified by sensitive and respectful critics, who observe that it is devoid of “a full description/ interpretation of the significance of the event depicted. By not having an in depth interview of the women, the film leaves viewers questioning the girls’ feelings about the rite. The emphasis on aesthetics leaves too many questions unanswered and exoticizes the event” (Kornbluh, et al. n.d.).

The rites of passage from girlhood to womanhood are not only meant to be seen in physical and symbolic terms, they also denote the spiritual connectedness of the Okrika people with their environment, such that if things are done the way they ought to be done, the spirits would ensure that expected gains would be yielded. There is thus, communication on many fronts, and at many levels. The elderly women must pass down knowledge of fundamental cultural values and how the community has interpreted them in socially relevant ways; they must also teach the girls that social expectations are important. As part of a community, initiation means that social behavior must be learned, social expectations deciphered, social practices contextualized and made relevant to present and hopefully, future generations. Important also is the departure from one social status, and the attainment of another, as well as preparedness to assume new responsibilities, including the willingness to work for social harmony; provide for the family, study the natural environment and interpret the cues that it gives to the community on how to live the good life within the constraints of structural social, economic and political constraints. Seen this way, it is obvious that all human societies have rites of passage, but deal with the process of travelling from one phase to the other in the cycle of life differently. In Western societies, these rites and processes are sometimes well-removed from the confines of family and community relations, with considerable commercialization, formal institutions for schooling, mentoring and guidance that one may not see in Okrika.

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