

# CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

NEWSLETTER: FALL 2007, VOLUME X

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Editor.....Barbara Cooper  
Content, Layout, Design.....Renée DeLancey

## THE BATTLE OF THE SACRED TREE

By Kenyan Filmmaker Wanjiru Kinyanjui  
Dinner, Movie and Dialogue presented by

The Center for African Studies and  
The Office of Academic Engagement and Programs

Date: Tuesday, October 9, 2007

Time: 7pm Dinner (International Lounge)

8pm Film (Center Hall)

Place: Busch Campus Center



Battle of the Sacred Tree still; photo credit Birne-Film



Mark Your Calendar for ASA's Celebration!  
The African Studies Association 50th Annual Conference  
October 18-21, 2007  
Sheraton Hotel and Towers, NYC

**Please consider making a donation to support CAS!**

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THE STATE UNIVERSITY  
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Dear Friends,

Having arrived here in Accra at the beginning of the month just ahead of the first group of RU Women's And Gender Studies interns, I am writing this looking out on mango trees, feeling a long way from New Brunswick, New Jersey. Our interns have arrived and, after a hectic week of visiting potential internship sites, they have settled into their first week of work at their chosen women's organizations. I am now free to reflect upon the academic year just past.

Through the jumble of events, from the visit of the Campesino Farmers including Malian organizer and peasant farmer Mariam Sissoko, which was made possible by the diligence of William Kramer and the support of our friends at the Center for Women's Global Leadership amongst many others, to the Second Annual African Studies Association Presidential Lecture at Rutgers, delivered by ASA President Pearl Robinson and made possible by Mary Hartman's and the Institute for Women's Leadership's commitment to providing role models in women's leadership in all spheres of life, what I feel most is an overwhelming sense of gratitude. We ended the year with a spring conference entitled, "Circulating People, Circulating Cultures: Legacies of Slavery in Africa and the Americas." Thanks to the participation of several fine Africanists (see pages 5 and 6) and the financial support of, among many others, the RU Committee to Advance our Common Purposes, the Center for Cultural Analysis, the English Department and the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, the program was enriching both intellectually and culturally.

In my letter at the start of the year, I made mention of the challenge we faced collectively as a university of suddenly diminished resources. It has been heartening to discover that diminished resources did not mean diminished hopes. We have been able to do everything we planned, and more. We have mounted our usual programs, such as "Dinner, Movie and Dialogue," and enhanced them with others, such as the collaboration with American Studies that brought us "The Twelve Disciples of Nelson Mandela" or that with The Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life that brought us "The Diary of Immaculée."

Those who have supported us have been many throughout the year, and I must mention in particular the offices of Philip Furmanski, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Isabel Nazario, Associate Vice President for Academic and Public Partnerships in the Arts and Humanities, whose loyal support enabled us not only to mount our Spring conference, but in particular to bring in the Osagyefo Players to perform in front of their teacher and mentor Dr. Mohammed Ben Abdallah, Ghanaian playwright and our keynote speaker.

I am grateful to our friends, old and new, who so supported our efforts at fundraising that we put on all the programming we wanted to and still ended the year with a healthy account balance. We also began our attempts at more structured giving by having the first of what we hope will be many meetings with our "Friends of CAS" group to plan fund raising programs for the future which will begin in the Fall with a Yoruba Oduduwa Festival organized for us by The Alpha Club. We hope this will be the first of many such events.

In seeking greater collaborations with community groups, whether for programs or for internship placements, we have met wonderful people along the way such as Wanja Michuki, Kenyan C.E.O. of The Highland Tea Company and Zeinab Eyega, Executive Director of Sauti Yetu. In all of this I must tip my hat to the executive committee of CAS who serve beyond the call of duty, and to exemplary Renée DeLancey along with student assistants Araba Kumi, Mumah Tawe, Lola Adenuga, David Kuranga and TWESE .....without whom this work would not have been thinkable.

Finally, I end where I started, reflecting on the presence of RU students in this city. Soon, hopefully, thanks to the presence of Professor Stephen Reinert, Dean of Rutgers Study Abroad and Associate Professor of History, there will be more students here as the Memorandum Of Understanding with the University of Ghana, Legon has indeed been signed and plans are underway to recruit students for our first Semester Abroad in Spring 2008.

I have had a happy year in this office and I am equally happy to say, 'Over to you Barbara, welcome back!'

With Best Wishes for a Brave New Year,



Abena P.A. Busia  
Outgoing Acting Director



Mahmood Mamdani visited RU for a Global Initiative talk on October 25, 2005

## EVENTS OF NOTE

The African Studies Association will hold its 50th Annual Meeting October 18-21, 2007 in Manhattan. Please visit their website for further information on this exciting event: <http://www.africanstudies.org>.

## FACULTY NEWS

**Akinbiyi Akinlabi** (Linguistics) received the Silver Jubilee Award from the Linguistic Association of Nigeria (LAN), in recognition of his contributions to the development of Nigerian languages. He was also awarded a three year NSF grant to document two endangered languages of Nigeria, Defaka and Nkoroo. The grant started on March 1, 2007 and will be in effect until February 28, 2010. **Abena P.A. Busia** (English, Women's and Gender Studies) was elected School of Arts and Sciences representative to the Senate last year, and has just been elected Senate representative to the Board of Trustees. **Susan Martin-Márquez** (Spanish and Portuguese, Cinema Studies) was elected School of Arts and Sciences representative to the Scholarship Committee. **David M. Hughes** (Human Ecology) was honored by the Rutgers Board of Trustees Fellowships for Scholarly Excellence for his studies of the issues facing southern African societies, including his work on conservation and national resource management in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. **Julie Rajan** has received a Visiting Assistant Professorship for 2007-2008 in the Women's and Gender Studies Department.

## CAS FACULTY BOOK PUBLICATIONS

**Abena P.A. Busia** (Acting Director CAS and Associate Professor, English) *Des femmes écrivent l'Afrique* (Co-director and Associate Editor; Karthala; 2007) and essayist for *Ghana: An African Portrait Revisited* (Peter E. Randall; 2007) **Arthur B. Powell** (Associate Professor, Urban Education) *Drawings from Angola: Living Mathematics* (Translator Portuguese to English; Lulu; 2007) **Meredeth Turshen** (Professor, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy) *Women's Health Movements: A Global Force for Change* (Author; Palgrave Macmillan; 2007)

## GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

**Kate Burlingham** (Doctoral Student, History) has won the following grants for this year and next: Graduate Fellow, American Academy of Political and Social Science; Africanist Doctoral Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; Grantee, Luso-American Foundation for Development; Grantee, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Portugal. **Laura Ann Pechacek** (Doctoral Student, History) has won a Foreign Language Area Studies fellowship and a Special Study grant from the Rutgers Graduate School. **Ben Neimark** (Doctoral Student, Geography) and **Dillon Mahoney** (Doctoral Student, Anthropology) have been honored with Graduate Student Dissertation Teaching Awards. **Michael Dougherty** (Cook College Undergraduate) won the Claude Ake 2007 CAS Paper Prize competition for, "*Nature Through Binoculars: Birders, Beauty, and Industry in South Africa*" and **Mamadou Wattara** (Graduate Fellow, French) won the Ruth First graduate paper prize for "*Esthétique de la folie et androgénie dans Les Yeux baissés de Ben Jelloun.*"

## ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS

**The Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights** Alex Hinton (FAS-Newark) was awarded \$50,000 to establish and launch a new institute to be hosted by the Division of Global Affairs at Rutgers–Newark. **Exchange Program with Constitutional Court of South Africa** Janine Smith (School of Law–Camden) was awarded \$30,000 to promote cooperation and understanding between countries with different governments and cultures to be used to support the International Judicial and Judicial Clerkship Development Program, a collaboration between the Constitutional Court of South Africa, the U.S. Federal District Court of New Jersey, and the School of Law–Camden.

## STAFF NEWS

### Abena P. A. Busia, Outgoing Acting Director



Photo credit: Mardey Ohui Ofoe, Foundation for Female Photojournalists (Ghana)

I've had a happy year in this office and I am equally happy to say, 'Over to you Barbara, welcome back!'

### Barbara Cooper, Director



I am freshly returned from a restful and productive leave that I devoted to catching up on work in French on the politics of infant mortality and reproduction for my new project on the history of maternity in French West Africa. It's good to be back!

### Renée DeLancey, Assistant to the Director



Nairobi based designer Linda Camm works with Maasai artisans to create a stunningly stylish, fair trade product line (<http://w.lindacamm.com>). I'm so glad that American fashion magazines are recognizing the beauty of these wearable works of art!

### Adebukunol "Lola" O. Adenuga, Student Assistant



I am a senior majoring in Public Health and I have been recruited to assist with the planning arrangements for the 50th annual African Studies Association conference that will be held October 18-21 in Manhattan. It is such a thrill to work on an event of this size and importance!



## **New Director of International Programs Lends her Global Expertise to the School of Arts and Sciences**

By Patricia Lamiell Reprinted from FOCUS May 30, 2007

Joanna Regulska's goals are to strengthen interdisciplinary clusters of faculty whose global work intersects in some way and to make international opportunities available to a broader range of faculty and students.

New Jersey is third, behind New York and California, in the number of residents who are foreign born. Joanna Regulska drops that statistic into a discussion of her new job as director of international programs at the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS).

Then, she spins out some corollaries: Rutgers has one of the most diverse student bodies in the country. Foreign students from all over the world add to a significant cohort of first-generation Americans on campus, and their different backgrounds and experiences are a tremendous intellectual asset. Rutgers has faculty with expertise in every region of the world and working agreements with 150 universities around the globe. Finally, she observes that modern colleges and universities need not only to offer but to embed a global perspective into their curriculum and experience. "As an institution, we have a responsibility to create a generation that's globally connected, globally aware," she concludes.

Regulska, a longtime faculty member, is chair of the women's and gender studies department and director of the Local Democracy Partnership at the Center for Comparative European Studies. Last summer, she was appointed to her new position at SAS – without relinquishing any other responsibilities – to analyze, expand, and coordinate the hundreds of global opportunities available to faculty and students at Rutgers–New Brunswick. Because so many of these programs have been developed and run by different groups within the university, unnecessary overlaps or missed opportunities for working together abound.

Regulska's task is to change all that. A first step was to informally survey faculty members about their involvement in research and teaching abroad. With that information, Regulska is working to strengthen interdisciplinary "clusters" of faculty whose global work intersects in some way and to make international opportunities available to a broader range of faculty and students.

As part of the university's transformation of undergraduate education, SAS has added a three-hour global awareness requirement to the general requirements, beginning in fall 2007. To fulfill the requirement, Rutgers students can choose from a wide variety of opportunities including research, service learning, internships, and studying at other universities, either in the United States or abroad.

Because of the diversity of the campus, students are exposed every day to cultures and civilizations different from their own, but Regulska believes, "they must be trained to look for and value those connections."

Regulska, 56, grew up in Warsaw, in a family so immersed in politics, they discussed it over breakfast. Her experience as a young person in Soviet-controlled Poland sparked in her a drive to experience the world outside her intellectually repressed country, first earning a master's degree in geography from the University of Warsaw and a then a doctorate in geography from the University of Colorado in Boulder. She joined the Rutgers geography faculty in 1982.

In 1989, when the Polish people revolted against Communism, Regulska returned to Poland to help build organizations that would foster local democracy, citizen participation and decentralization reform in her homeland. Regulska continues that work throughout the newly decentralized Eastern Europe and Central Asia through the Local Democracy Partnership. She has twice been knighted by the government of Poland.

Between several trips a year to Eastern Europe, Regulska oversees academic centers and programs focused on six geographic or interdisciplinary areas: Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Southern Asia, Latin America, and women's global leadership. By combining existing expertise and "cluster hires" of new faculty in specific academic areas, Regulska hopes that SAS will promote interdisciplinary exploration of issues such as global warming, energy use, nutrition and health, and slave labor, and coordinate academic research on these topics here in New Brunswick and abroad.

The ultimate goal is to have a package of global opportunities that will meet the needs of Rutgers' diverse student population and respond to the mandate of every college and university to educate future citizens of the world.

"It's not that globalization is somewhere out there, beyond us," Regulska said. "It *is* us. We are creating it. In many ways, we are the driving force."

## Douglass College Student Raises Awareness on Campus of Darfur Genocide

By Ashanti M. Alvarez Reprinted from FOCUS May 30, 2007

Douglass College graduating senior Dewan Farhana was riding a Rutgers bus in New Brunswick when she read a newspaper story about Darfur, Sudan, where a group of armed gunmen known as the Janjaweed are largely blamed for the genocide taking place in that country. "The Janjaweed went into a home, shot the father, and they raped the daughter for 10 days straight," Farhana said. "It was one of the most horrible things I have ever read." Farhana's commitment to women's issues, nurtured at Douglass College through her leadership and involvement on campus, spurred her to create the Darfur Action Project (<http://darfuractionproject.org/>) in order to raise awareness among students of the calamities taking place in Sudan. "Women are being oppressed in that region. It is important that women get involved, not just in general, but also to understand things on a personal level and make a difference," she said.

The organization hosted a well-attended lecture in March featuring a Sudanese refugee who addressed the United Nations about the genocide in 1999, and its coordinators have collected thousands of signatures on a petition to the United Nations, stating that Rutgers students do not accept genocide. "When I started thinking about this project, some students didn't even know what the word genocide meant," said Farhana, a native of Paterson, New Jersey. "I thought that even if I can't do something really big, the least I can do is make more students aware."



Photo Credit: Nick Romanenko

The formation of the Darfur Action Project was the culmination of Farhana's successful career as a Rutgers student. Rutgers College recognized Farhana's achievements by naming her "Outstanding Student Leader" as part of the annual Rising Women of Rutgers Awards, and Douglass College awarded her the "Outstanding Individual Contribution" award at the Mabel's Leadership Recognition Awards.

She was a resident assistant, a Scarlet Ambassador, president of the Cook/Douglass Co-op executive board, and a writing tutor. As a cell biology and neuroscience major, Farhana also pursued several research opportunities, at the W.M. Keck Center with Professor Wise Young, at the Center for Molecular and Behavioral Neuroscience at Rutgers–Newark, and at Yale University during a summer fellowship. "I went to different meetings to figure out what I may be interested in," Farhana said. "Rutgers was a great place for someone like me who was very involved in high school."

The social network she acquired and became a part of helped the Darfur Action Project to flourish while Farhana was a student at Rutgers. Now that she has moved on – she is looking forward to pursuing a joint M.D./Ph.D. – Farhana plans to spend one year doing intensive research in the Molecular Neurogenetics lab at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), then apply to medical schools.

What is the connection between Farhana's global activism and life in the lab as a molecular biologist or wearing a physician's coat? "The crisis in Darfur is a humanitarian cause," she said. "If you are interested in being a researcher, you want to influence the world by finding cures that will help people. After being involved with so many different things, I realize that everything is interconnected."

Farhana connected with many student groups in order to publicize the action project, most notably Women Empowered, the student organization for the Douglass College Equal Opportunity Fund Program. The group regularly arranges activities relating to female empowerment and involvement in politics and public policy.

MTVU recognized the promise of the Darfur Action Project – and Farhana learned a lot about the grant writing process – when it awarded the project a \$1,000 grant. Farhana will leave the program's organization in the hands of some of her residence life student-colleagues, but hopes to maintain involvement in the group and perhaps volunteer in Sudan, if it's ever possible. "That's a very far-sighted idea, but that is the latest idea," she said. "They don't even accept any food donations. The only thing you can donate is money. It's just not possible to send in aircraft and airplanes right now."

Project organizers are hoping to raise the groups profile next year, perhaps with a large-scale fundraiser or concert. At the same time, Farhana will work with the NIH and ponder whether to get her M.D., Ph.D., or M.P.H. (master in public health) – maybe all three. "I eventually want to do something involving medicine and public policy," Farhana said. "I have been pretty good at balancing a lot of things."

## Al Howard Recaps Conference on Legacies of Slavery

The conference "Circulating People, Circulating Cultures: Legacies of Slavery in Africa and the Americas," held on May 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> was the most recent segment of the Center for African Studies' continuing project on the internal slave routes of Ghana and Benin, the cultures of resistance, and the contested memories of slavery. It was especially appropriate that the acclaimed playwright Prof. Mohammed Ben-Abdallah, of the University of Ghana, delivered the keynote address Friday evening. He spoke about up-dating his powerfully moving 1972 play, "The Slaves," which was seen in Ghana by the New Jersey educators who did curricular research under CAS auspices during the summer of 2005. Ben-Abdallah repeatedly evoked the image of the "Great White Monster by the Sea" – the fortress with its dungeons holding captives about to be sold to European slavers – in order to remind his listeners of the "rotten seed in the womb of the future." A new global slavery exists today, he averred, and thus the legacy of slavery and colonialism must be eliminated for Africa to flourish economically and culturally.

Earlier in the day, CAS in cooperation with the Center for Historical Analysis had run a workshop for 15 high school educators around the themes of the project. Prof. Allen Howard gave power point presentations on the history and contested memory of the slave trade and resistance in Ghana and Benin and of abolition and the experiences of Repatriated and Liberated Africans in Sierra Leone. Cheryl Wilson, Assistant Director of Multicultural Affairs, followed with a description of her course which has grown out of research she conducted while a part of the project group. Her goal is to give students a sense of the cultural legacies of the slave trade. The workshop was then very fortunate to be



From Left to Right:

Allen Howard, G. Ugo Nwokeji, Benjamin Talton, Sandra Richards, J. Lorand Matory, Emmanuel Akyeampong, Kofi Anyidoho, Mohammed Ben Abdallah, Jessica Harris

joined by Prof. Abena Busia, Acting Director of CAS, Prof. Kofi Anyidoho from the University of Ghana, who has been the project's Associate Director, and Prof. Emmanuel Akyeampong and Prof. J. Lorand (Randy) Matory, both of Harvard University. They led all the participants present in an energetic and lengthy discussion of the impacts of the slave trade, slavery, and racism in Africa and the U.S.

On Saturday both Joanna Regulska, Director International Programs, and Abena P.A. Busia, Outgoing Acting Director Center for African Studies and Prof. English, opened the conference with a welcome to the faculty, graduate students, and members of the larger community who attended. Emmanuel Akyeampong spoke about culture, power, and the body during the era of the slave trade, which is the subject of his forthcoming book. By examining dress, hair styling, funerary practices, and harm visited upon bodies, he provided novel insights into the meanings of slavery and experiences of various actors. The presentation by Prof. Ugo Nwokeji, of the University of California, Berkeley, provided a counterpoint. He spoke of the maelstrom of violence experienced by the people in the hinterland of the Bight of Biafara and the resulting new value system that grew up around a militarized culture, firearms, and oppressive dependent relations.



Abena P. A. Busia's Keynote Introduction

Widening the scope to the Atlantic, Prof. Jessica Harris, of Queens College, CUNY, took us on her career-long journey of documenting African and diasporic food cultures along a crescent arc from Morocco to the U.S. via West and Central Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean. Mouths were watering as she depicted the diverse culinary crucibles of starchy staples, vegetables, and chiles found in each place. Randy Matory cautioned against employing the concepts “survivals” and “Africanisms” and, instead, illustrated Atlantic-wide adaptations and reverberations involving practices and ideas originating among speakers of Yoruba and neighboring languages. Such dialogues, however, do not necessarily take place among equals and are complicated by continuing searches for an unobtainable “purity.”

In the afternoon, panelists turned to “Memory, Myth, and Meaning: Ghana at 50.” Prof. Sandra L. Richards of Northwestern University told of the ways places talk, of performances of meaning at slave sites where multiple voices speak, and of new films and other media that address the pain of the past in the present. Benjamin Talton, of Hofstra University, concluded the formal presentations with a recitation of his own experiences as a researcher in northern Ghana. He described recording and analyzing complex discussions about the relations of northern to southern Ghanaians and Ghanaians to African Americas with regard to skin color, language, place of birth, the legacy of slavery, and claims on national identity.

The conference concluded with a round-table discussion chaired by Kofi Anyidoho, who also summed up and commented upon the main themes of the two days. He and Abena Busia, both renown poets, posed two of our largest questions: “why are certain stories not told?” (which implies “why do certain stories dominate?”) and “why are landmarks of a common history not automatically connected?” Participants expressed concerns about what memory actually means and how best to memorialize the slave trade in a context of tourism and commodification, and a history of injury and misunderstanding. Pressing issues involve defining inclusive citizenships within African countries and conducting fruitful diasporic dialogues that become instruments of change.

### **Cheryl Wilson on the Osagyefo Theater Group: Bringing Ghanaian Culture to Rutgers**

I had the wonderful opportunity to attend, as both a presenter and a participant, the conference "Circulating People, Circulating Cultures: Legacies of Slavery in Africa and the Americas" held May 11-12. The two-day conference began with a teachers workshop on Friday entitled “History, Literature and Memory of the Interior Slave Routes of West Africa and the Atlantic Slave Trade” and concluded on Saturday evening with a climactic performance by the Ghanaian Osagyefo Theater Group.

Sitting in the audience at Voorhees Chapel and watching the actors and singers took me back to almost two years prior when I sat outdoors at the University of Ghana watching a dramatic performance by the same celebrated playwright, Dr. Mohammed Ben-Abdallah. In fact, as I sat alongside two other participants from the five-week Fulbright-Hays program in 2005 entitled, "Teaching the History of the Slave Trade Routes of Ghana and Benin," we were all reminded of that summer in Ghana through the scenes and songs of the performance. Wanda Smith, Rose Harris and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves as we watched and laughed and clapped.

The performance stressed the importance of being willing to listen and, more importantly, how detrimental selfishness can be -- a lesson many of us can stand to hear again and again, even as professionals and scholars! However, the highlight of the evening had to be the interactive session where the performers had the audience members stand and try the various dances and movements. It got our energies flowing. A good time was had by all.



Osagyefo Group Rehearsal

Top Row Left to Right:

Habib Iddrisu, Nana Yaw Asumani, David Akramah-Cofie

Bottom Row Left to Right:

Georgina Kotoka, Kwesi Brown, Gifty Doku



## **African Studies Association 50th Anniversary: October 18-21, 2007 NYC Local Arrangements Committee Executive Summary and Update**

By Carolyn Brown

The African Studies Association [<http://www.africanstudies.org/>] is a non-profit organization of scholars, administrators and other specialists on Africa. Founded in 1957 with the independence of Ghana it is holding its 50th Anniversary Meeting in New York City at the Sheraton Hotel, October 18-21, 2007. The Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) is sponsoring a number of events and auxiliary projects both before and during the conference. For four days the conference will bring to New York over 2000 scholar specialists on Africa, development officials, government representatives, artists, linguists, language teachers, performers, and technicians. This offers an unprecedented opportunity for the public to have access to expertise on Africa. The conference itself has over 200 panels of scholarly work on a vast range of topics, including health, African aesthetics, history, popular culture, music and art, economics, philosophy, geography and performing arts. These offerings facilitate an engagement with the general public, the business community, the media, teachers and teacher educators, and students. Attendance at the conference is open to all upon registration. The conference will also feature the largest book exhibit of trade and commercial books on Africa as well as a "Video Market Place" run by California Newsreel of some 25-30 African films available for rental and purchase.

To mark this anniversary the LAC has organized a "New York Welcomes Africa Week," during which organizations, businesses, restaurants, art galleries, and theaters have scheduled events focused on Africa. The LAC will launch the week's festivities with an event on Sunday October 14th at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

The conference begins with a Gala Reception on Thursday, October 18th at TheTimesCenter,<sup>TM</sup> the New York Times headquarters on Times Square. The reception will both honor the 50th Anniversary of the Association and the independence of the Republic of Ghana. Along with ASA participants, a number of prominent local and national dignitaries with interest in Africa have been invited: Mayor Bloomberg, Congressmen Charles Rangel and Donald Payne, Senators Barak Obama and Hillary Clinton, Mayor Corey Booker, and Bill Clinton. President John A. Kufour of Ghana has also been invited to commemorate his country's independence. The National Council of Ghanaian Associations will organize a durbar, which is a festive ceremony of chiefs.

The conference itself will also have some very exciting panels and speakers centered on the conference theme, "21st Century Africa: Evolving Conceptions of Human Rights." The Association's Board is in the final stages of finalizing the appearance of former Secretary General Kofi A. Annan as a keynote to honor the United Nations and to speak on his legacy in human rights as well as the significance of the independence of Ghana. Additionally, the Board is sponsoring several panels featuring other prominent Africanists. One will have two of Africa's Nobel Prize awardees, Wole Soyinka and Wangari Maathai, on a panel co-sponsored by the Social Science Research Council on "African Public Intellectuals and Darfur." In a second, Jeffrey Sachs, of Columbia, will be on a panel with Thandika Mkandawire, Director of UN Research Institute for Social Development on "The Poverty/Policy Trap," which promises to be a lively debate. Howard Dodson, Chief of the Schomburg, Joseph Inikori, eminent historian of the economics of the slave trade and Kofi Anyidiho, Director, CODESRIA Humanities Institute will be on a commemorative panel for the "Bicentennial of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade." A final panel is being planned with the U.S. State Department on "China and Africa," which will feature several Chinese Africanist scholars sponsored by the U.S. International Visitors Program. As you can see this is promising to be an exciting program worthy of a 50th Anniversary!

Concurrent with the conference, the Association's Outreach Council of Professional Outreach Directors and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Education Division will hold a day-long teachers' workshop at the Museum on the teaching of Africa from the K-12 level. Partners include the New York City and New Jersey Departments of Education. Some 100 teachers from New York and New Jersey will attend and receive curricular materials and training in the teaching of Africa. Sessions will include such topics as: "Teaching Africa through African literature," "Using African art as a teaching tool," "Using historical maps as primary sources," "Teaching Africa beyond crisis," "Africa in AP world history." The workshops will be offered for professional development credit and are especially relevant for those teachers who have African immigrant students. Corporate funding will support over \$100 worth of curricular materials per teacher. The Children's Africana Book Award will be given to the best children's book on Africa published during the preceding year.





## AFRICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

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### ***Tentative Schedule - 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting 2007 October 18-21, 2007***

#### **Preliminary Events - AFRICA WEEK Monday Oct. 15 – Sunday Oct. 21**

- **Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup>** – Launch event for '**New York Celebrates Africa' Week** at the Schomburg Center.
- **Monday October 15<sup>th</sup> – Sunday October 21<sup>st</sup>** – '**Africa Week**' Events at various venues. ASA Hotel rates apply.

#### **Conference Events - ASA 50<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING Thursday Oct. 18 – Sunday Oct. 21 Sheraton Hotel.**

- **Thursday, October 18<sup>th</sup>** –
  - **5:15 PM - 6:15 PM ASA Business Meeting**
  - **8:30 PM - 10:30 PM Gala Opening Reception** at the New York Times' TheTimesCenter. [<http://thetimescenter.com/>] Commemoration of 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASA and of Ghana's independence. There will be a *durbar*, ceremony of chiefs. Invitees include President John A. Kufuor of Ghana and other African U.N. representatives.; Mayor Bloomberg and other city officials; Congressmen Charles Rangel and Donald Payne; Senators Barak Obama and Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton, and heads of expatriate African organizations.
- **Friday, October 19<sup>th</sup>** –
  - **8:30 AM - 4:30 PM Teacher's workshop.** The Education Department, *Metropolitan Museum of Art* and the ASA Outreach Council (Outreach Directors of Title VI NRC Africa Centers). NYC Chancellor of Education's office to collaborate. Target audience is NYC and New Jersey teachers from areas with significant African immigrant populations.
  - **8:00 PM – 9:30 PM ASA Presidential Lecture and Awards Ceremony**
  - **8:30 PM - "A Night of Africa in New York"** – Conference participants will have a free night to participate in the cultural life of the city.
- **Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>** –
  - **6:00 PM – 7:30 PM African Studies Association - Abiola Lecture**
  - **9:30 AM– 12:30 PM Annual Association Dance** at Sheraton Hotel. Programming to include local African bands.

#### **Other Possible Events to Include (Optional for participants)**

- Bus tours of relevant sites, including the Schomburg Center, 'Little Senegal', Harlem. African Burial Ground and other historic Black New York sites.
- Visits, to museums and art galleries
- Visits to African and African diaspora social centers, clubs and cabarets

Please visit the African Studies Association's website at <http://www.africanstudies.org> for more information on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. To register for the conference please visit their registration page at <http://www.africanstudies.org/2007REGGRATES.html>.

## Summer Internships in Africa

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This summer, three undergraduate scholars had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live, work, and study in Ghana. Chosen by a faculty committee from a competitive field of over twenty students, Jessica Akunna, Karina Martinez, and Marta Zuleta worked with three women's organizations in Accra, the capital.

Jessica, a Public Health/ Africana Studies double major, sought a placement in a health organization. For Marta Zuleta, who is interested in becoming a doctor and eventually working with Doctors Without Borders, the summer in Ghana would deepen her knowledge about African culture. She is an Anthropology major minoring in Women's and Gender Studies. Karina Martinez, a Criminal Justice major with minors in Africana Studies and Women's and Gender Studies, used her internship to learn more about how the legal system works for women. Under the supervision of Professor Abena P.A. Busia (English and Women's and Gender Studies; Editor of the four-volume collection *Women Writing Africa*), students studied the history and culture of Ghana. They each took an Africa-related course in spring 2007 to prepare for their summer experience. The students lived together in Accra and worked four days a week at their internships. They met once a week with Professor Busia, who took them on several trips to other areas of Ghana. This experience was structured to teach them about how African women are working to solve social, economic, political and legal issues. They also explored African feminist thought.

The internships were made possible by a generous donation from Wendy Lee, a graduate of Rutgers College and member of the School of Arts and Sciences Dean's Council. Lee notes, "It is an increasingly important educational experience for students to spend time abroad living and working among peoples of different cultures, ethnicities, and religious beliefs. I am delighted to provide the opportunity for students to travel this summer to Africa. I have been fortunate enough to visit this continent with its rich history, natural beauty, and warm and welcoming people. I wish our three young students – Jessica, Karina, and Marta – an enriching experience that will have an enduring influence over the course of their lives."

*Look for narratives written by Jessica, Marta and Karina about their Ghana experience in the Spring 2008 issue.*

## Gordon H. Sato Receives *Doctor of Humane Letters* at 2007 RU Commencement

A lifetime of achievement in the sciences—as an accomplished research biologist and a member of the National Academy of Sciences, author or coauthor of more than 150 scientific papers, faculty member at such institutions as the University of California, and director of the W. Alton Jones Cell Science Center—helped prepare Dr. Gordon H. Sato for one of the most rewarding projects in his life: cultivating mangrove trees along the coast of Eritrea, a drought-stricken African nation. There, in one of the world's poorest and driest nations, sustainable, affordable agricultural practice is a constant struggle, and famine is frequent. Sato recognized that mangrove trees, already growing along some of the country's coast, could be made to tolerate and even flourish in the brackish tidal wash of coastal Eritrea. Beginning in 1988, Sato and his nonprofit Manzanar Project—named after the camp in which he, his parents, and many other Americans of Japanese ancestry were interned during the early days of World War II—have planted thousands of mangroves. The leaves of the plants provide fodder to raise enough animals to feed several thousand people. Local Eritreans use the mangrove branches for fuel, and the roots of the plants create the perfect natural environment for fish farming. There in the shallow water, crab, shrimp, and fish all thrive on the plankton, algae, and organisms that grow among the mangrove roots. Since 1988, Sato has invested more than \$500,000 of his own money in the Manzanar Project. A 2002 recipient of the prestigious international Rolex Award for Enterprise and the 2005 Blue Planet Award, Sato has created one of the world's most remarkable humanitarian projects and is working to help impoverished, coastal Eritrean communities develop a low-technology, sustainable agricultural economy.



## **Congratulations to the Winners of the CAS 2007 Paper Prize Competition!**

### **The Claude Ake Undergraduate Prize was awarded to Michael Dougherty**

**Abstract: Nature Through Binoculars: Birders, Beauty, and Industry in South Africa**

Birding is a unique form of wildlife viewing that enables observers to isolate the subject both through their trained vision and the technology that they employ. Often, the landscape that surrounds the bird is also isolated, diminishing the various meanings and utilities that it holds. Birding is also distinctive in that it involves a compromise between birders' interests in seeking nature and their desire to utilize the facilities of industry. Through three case studies, I show how a particular birding community in South Africa navigates between nature and industry in three particular parks. In addition, I show how birders' ability to isolate birds allows them to find nature in unusual locations, a phenomenon that in some instances has fueled land use conflicts with others who have different perceptions of the landscapes. As Pollan (1991) has argued, the popular notion that nature and culture are somehow antithetical is largely a myth, and birders constantly find ways of reconciling the two.

My study consists of a case study of three parks within Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, all of which are the location of distinct land use conflicts: Queen Elizabeth Park near the expanding Victoria Country Club, Darvill Resources Park within the municipal sewage works, and Bisley Nature Reserve which may become a game reserve. The legacy of apartheid and the authoritarian conservation policies that were enforced offered a fascinating setting in which to observe these local land use conflicts. The sites were chosen because they represent the three areas within Pietermaritzburg most frequently visited by birders because of the different habitats and the biodiversity they offer. The three case studies may actually be unusual cases; nevertheless, they demonstrate how birders can find a balance between nature and industry via the unique manner in which birders view landscapes. In addition, the case studies present particular land-use conflicts that have emerged.

The balance between nature and industry is highly sensitive. It is crucial that birders recognize the sensitivity of land use conflicts in South Africa and the role they play in them. Both as concerned conservationists and privileged citizens, they have an opportunity to contribute to the goals of reconciliation. The motivation to pursue and protect birds must be done within a framework that takes other users into consideration, especially those who have been previously restricted. The construction of nature within contested landscapes can ultimately disadvantage all users if this is not the case.

### **The Ruth First Graduate Prize was awarded to Mamadou Wattara**

**Abstract: Esthétique de la folie et androgénie dans *Les yeux baissés* de Ben Jelloun**

La folie est l'un des lieux communs de la littérature. Depuis le Moyen Age jusqu'à nos jours ce thème a toujours inspiré les écrivains qui l'ont diversement exploité dans leurs œuvres. Dans la présente étude j'analyse comment Ben Jelloun a recours à ce thème comme stratégie narrative dans *Les Yeux baissés* ; il sera fort utile aussi de faire ressortir les motivations qui seraient derrière un tel choix.

Par souci de clarté je donne un bref aperçu du traitement du thème de la folie depuis le Moyen Age; puis je définis ce qu'il faut entendre par esthétique en écriture. Quant à la notion de folie, il est plus approprié de cerner sa compréhension dans le contexte précis de la littérature francophone postcoloniale.

Contrairement à d'autres œuvres de Ben Jelloun, l'androgynie dans *Les yeux baissés* ne doit pas être comprise au sens physiologique du terme. C'est un outil de dénonciation, de subversion et une stratégie de survie pour la femme dans un ordre patriarcal oppressif.

De culture et de tradition arabo-berbere, l'imaginaire maghrébin s'est nourri aussi des valeurs islamiques. Très souvent inspirées de l'islam orthodoxe qui valide le principe de la création divine fondée sur deux sexes, masculin et féminin, ces valeurs islamiques ont servi de prétexte pour subjuguier et museler la femme.

Dans cette étude j'analyse les aspects qui participent de l'androgynie dans *Les Yeux baissés* en m'intéressant à deux personnages clé : Slima et Fathma la narratrice.

J'insiste sur ce thème comme un double choix narratif de la part de l'auteur pour fustiger un ordre social décadent et un certain dogmatisme religieux d'une part ; et pour réaffirmer les limites d'une écriture soumise à la contingence de la langue d'autre part.



## Roundtable: African Women Envision the Future

Four African women scholars converged at Rutgers University on April 4, 2007 to discuss the topic of African women envisioning the future, promoting their forthcoming anthology, *Women Writing Resistance in Africa and the African Diaspora*. Two of these four scholars (Pauline Dongala and Tayo Jolaosho) are part of the project's editorial team while Marame Gueye is a contributor to the anthology. The fourth panelist, Nimu Njoya, is an RU Doctoral student in Political Science.

Dr. Marame Gueye is originally from Senegal where she received a B.A in African Literature and a M.A in English and Literature from the University of Dakar. She worked as a translator and interpreter before coming to the U.S. and is a certified translator in Wolof, French, English, and German; she is also fluent in Arabic. She received her Ph.D in Comparative Literature from the State University of New York at Binghamton in 2004. Her dissertation was entitled "Wolof Wedding Songs: Women Negotiating Voice and Space Through Verbal Art." Currently an Andrew Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Africana Studies Program at Vassar College, Dr. Gueye has taught numerous courses there in African literature and culture. Her publications include "Wedding Songs of the Wolof" and "Singing the Laabaan, Teaching Sex: Songs as Space for Education on Sex and Sexuality" (both forthcoming in collections to be published by Indiana University Press), and "Women's Songs as Gender Epistemology," in the forthcoming volume *African Women's Feminist Epistemology*.



### Marame Gueye Envisions the Future



While reflecting on the topic of our roundtable one question came to my mind. What is the future? Is it tomorrow, this summer, in three years, in a decade or twenty years from now? Then I realized that the future for me is today and how I negotiate my dual positioning as an African woman living in the US. I started to dwell on my identity and the question of home. At this moment I call Senegal my home and try as much as I can to stay connected to it. However, this so-called connectedness is questionable because every time I go home, I realize the gap that separates me from my sisters is getting wider and wider. Whether I want it or not, I am not the same sister that left eight years ago. My dance moves are watched and my sense of style is questioned. The reality of my ongoing "outsideness" did not hit until my mom told me that I speak Wolof with an American accent. To her great astonishment, she could not understand why I was so upset by this comment. She told one of my sisters that I have become too sensitive now and that I could no longer take a joke.

Little did she know that this joke brought to light the reality of my displacement and my hybridity — a displacement that does not place me anywhere because the America that she seems to be claiming for me does not perceive me as part of it. I still have to apply for a visa to get in and at the port of entry I am still going to the line reserved for visitors. I am an alien. In America I am an African who also speaks English with an accent and am continually asked when I am going back home. So, to realize that the place that I called and thought of as home all my life has or is about to let me go so easily, is painful.



Left to Right: Pauline Dongala, Maramé Gueye, Tayo Jolaosho, Nimu Njoya, Ousseina Alidou, Abena P. A. Busia

Should I see America as it sees me? A place where I work and do not belong? Or should I make it my own? The second choice seems to me the most possible one. Because I do not think one can work and live in a place without caring for the place. It just is not possible for me. The same question applies to Senegal. Should I close my eyes on the suffering and precariousness with which my brothers and sisters live and perceive them as long lost cousins? I could never do that. Despite the fact that most people in Senegal think of me as Americanized, they still expect me to claim Senegal as my home. Also I do think of my self as Senegalese. Thus the future for me is finding ways to reconcile the two worlds that I live in simultaneously. Is it too much to ask for when I want to claim both? Should I favor one over the other? How do I create balance?

Coincidentally today Senegal is celebrating 47 years of independence from France. Unemployment has never been higher, university students have been on strike for more than 3 months and girls still have less of a chance of attending school than boys. Hospitals are full of dying patients for lack of medications and proper care.

When I think about the future whenever that is, I think about changes I want to see happen in my two worlds. On a poetic note, let me summarize how I envision the future in terms of all the things I want and strive to have today.

- In the future, I want to see a proud Africa whose sons and daughters would not feel the need to leave or be displaced in order to survive.
- In the future, I want every young boy or girl in every African village to be given the opportunity to attend school.
- In the future I want every African child to go to bed with a full stomach and a roof over his head.
- In the future I want to see AIDS, which claims so many African sons and daughters, to be no more.
- In the future civil wars and genocides will be history, a history that never should and never will be repeated.
- In the future, African women will stop bleaching their skins in order to be someone they will never be.
- Also in the future, urban renewal in Harlem will be stopped and its residents will live in neighborhoods free of crime and prostitution.
- In the future, poor Black, White and Latino inner-city children will have good schools and given the same opportunities that the kids in Suburbia have.
- In the future, eighteen year old soldiers will not die for an unjust war.
- In the future, Iraqi people will recover their dignity and live in a country free of extremism and bigotry.
- In the future, the color of one's skin and the accent in his words will not determine how much respect one is given.
- In the future, my mother will understand why I speak Wolof with an accent and why I am not ashamed of it anymore.
- In the future, I want my two worlds to cohabit within me in harmony.
- In the future, my children will be proud to be citizens of the world — a world free of racism, nationalism, poverty, war, fundamentalism, greed, and corruption.

## ONGOING GRADUATE RESEARCH: Kate Burlingham, Marc Matera and Mary Kay Jou

### “In the Image of God”: Missionaries and the Mapping of Angolan Politics

By Kate Burlingham

The following paragraphs are part of the application essay that I submitted to the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars for one of their summer Africanist Doctoral Fellowships. In April, I was awarded one of these fellowships and I am spending summer 2007 conducting archival and secondary research in Washington DC.

In the 1966 issue of the *All African Conference on Churches Youth Newsletter*, North American evangelical missionary William Sidney Gilchrist published an article entitled “Church and Mission in Angola.” Addressing Portuguese accusations that missionaries were aiding anti-colonial forces, Gilchrist quoted a senior missionary who responded, “Yes, of course we are at least partly responsible for what has happened. We have taught the Africans that they are men and women in the image of God and deserving of full and equal rights with other human beings!” But missions had a much more complex influence on Angolan society. Using a combination of archival records and personal interviews, my dissertation examines the period from 1950 to 1975, in order to understand the relationship between North American evangelical missionaries and Angolans at the Dondi mission in the province of Huambo. I argue that through African initiative the mission became an oppositional public space of dialogue for Angolans, a dialogue otherwise denied under the Portuguese. I also argue that Angolans used evangelical beliefs about the equality of man to make a similar argument for their equality in the secular state setting. Further, I contend that in order to fully appreciate the long-term impact of these relations one must consider it within the context of a repressive colonial system as well as the wider super-power rivalry of the Cold War in which southern Africa would be the next major front. The implications of this relationship between North American missionaries and Angolan citizens would reach far into the nation’s future, ultimately helping to redraw the political map of Angola.

The importance of evangelical missions to Angola is evidenced by the fact that when the country finally gained its independence from Portugal in 1975, the great majority of the nation’s political leaders had been educated in evangelical missions. The Evangelical Church, particularly the Congregationalist Church to which Dondi belonged, continues to play an important role in civil society today through its human rights advocacy, its commitment to community development through water and sanitation services, and its HIV/AIDS education in communities that are still under-served by the state. Through its advocacy, the church, in some ways, has resumed the oppositional stance that it maintained under the Portuguese, making the decision to join the church a political one for people whose access to political rights is otherwise negligible. However, given that many of the current heads of state in Angola were themselves educated in evangelical missions (including at Dondi), the relationship between the church and state is different than in earlier times and the Evangelical Church is a threat that is tolerated to an extent that other organizational threats are not. For all the above mentioned reasons it is impossible to understand the current political climate in Angola without taking into account the long and complex history of the evangelical missions. Of crucial importance to this history was the Dondi mission, the only mission in the nation that provided high-school-level education and full medical services for Angolan *indigenas*, the local African population that were considered beyond “civilization” and denied much of the state-sanctioned social services that were available to Europeans and to people of mixed race (*metiços*).

Dondi was located in Angola’s fertile central plateau of Huambo, which had long been the nation’s breadbasket as well as a retreat for wealthy Portuguese settlers fleeing the humidity and congestion of Luanda. The main city in the province, known as Nova Lisboa under the Portuguese, was also a bustling commercial center that relied on its status as an important stop on the Benguela Railroad. The railroad achieved its importance thanks to the fact that it carried minerals for the landlocked nations of Congo and Zambia to port. The Dondi mission was established at the beginning of the nineteenth-century, and its approach to working with the local Angolan population immediately drew criticism from the mostly Catholic Portuguese settler community. Most questionable, in the eyes of the Portuguese settlers, was the fact that missionaries’ primary goal was to convert *indigenas*, who occupied the lowest rung of the colonial hierarchy. Dondi missionaries aggressively reached out to these local African villages and, rather than speaking in Portuguese, worked to communicate with Africans in their local languages. They published Bibles and flyers in Umbundu and taught Africans to become pastors so that they could minister to local populations and convert their own communities.

My dissertation seeks to look beyond the historical narrative that casts evangelical missionaries as colonizers in their own right. When one examines missionary intentions and the ways in which Angolans reacted to, used, and shaped mission resources and Evangelical beliefs, it becomes clear that far from being passive recipients of the missionaries’ proselytizing, Angolans were active and informed participants in their evolving relationship with the missionaries and the mission. Through their transformative participation at Dondi, Angolans ultimately shaped mission goals toward their own ends, including that of ending Portuguese colonial rule. As a result, the relationships that developed between missionaries and Angolans prior to independence have had an enduring influence well beyond the nation’s independence.



## **Afro-Metropolis: African and Caribbean Intellectuals and Black Internationalism in London, 1919-1950**

By Marc Matera (RU Graduate Fellow, History)

The presence of people of African descent in London is usually associated with the postwar period, indelibly linked in public narratives of the rise of multi-ethnic Britain to migration since the 1950s. But the early twentieth century also witnessed a sustained, if much more limited, growth in the number of colonial subjects in the imperial metropole. The capital of the far-flung British Empire, London attracted students, artists, petitioners, activists, and migrants from the colonies and brought them into contact with one another within an atmosphere of relative freedom. By the early twentieth century, the city had become the center of black resistance to the worst abuses of British imperialism, and it was in the cosmopolitan space of the imperial metropole that black internationalism first gained a foothold in the minds of many West Indian and African intellectuals.

During the years between 1919 and 1950—a period in which the Colonial Office's approach shifted from a policy of "indirect rule" to colonial development—African and West Indian intellectuals, university students, artists, and activists established a number of organizations and publications that facilitated dialogue with the colonial state and the circulation of ideas and news around the Atlantic and throughout the British empire. Black associations became homes away from home, centers of cultural and intellectual exchange, and new means of voicing social commentary and political dissent. Through them, colonial intellectuals influenced the political imagination of British colonial officials, politicians, and others interested in Africa and the colonies, contributing to the major fluctuations in colonial policy during the final decades of imperial rule. Many of these individuals returned to Africa and the Caribbean in the years after World War II to become leaders of incipient anticolonial movements and prominent postcolonial politicians. African and Caribbean intellectuals' experiences at the heart of the empire were often decisive in their intellectual and political development, making them a significant part of the prehistory of decolonization.

African and Caribbean intellectuals often mobilized the very terms of the colonial regime—contested concepts such as "citizenship," "Commonwealth," "democracy," and "development"—to articulate a variety of extra-national identifications and to press the state for reforms. In the end, of course, colonial intellectuals and activists were unable to expand the political imagination of British officials enough to create a truly equitable relationship within the framework of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and by the 1950s, the continued existence of empire, in whatever guise, became abhorrent to increasing numbers of colonial subjects and sympathetic groups in the metropole alike. Nevertheless, the anticolonial nationalisms of the 1950s and 1960s and the particular form of postcolonial states that emerged were not the results of an inevitable development, but rather triumphed at the expense of a number of extra-national or internationalist visions of community that circulated in the years prior to decolonization, from various conceptions of pan-Africanism to socialist internationalism to "partnership" in the Commonwealth. West Indian and African intellectuals' black internationalism and their visions of a "United West Africa," "West African Soviet Union," or a "Federation of the British West Indies" emerged from this complex background. My project demonstrates that the political imagination of black intellectuals extended beyond (and challenged) the model of the nation-state before and even as the dissolution of the major European empires led to the emergence of new independent states around the world, at, in other words, the apogee of the nation-state as the dominant form of political organization.

Although men dominated black pressure groups in London, Caribbean and West African women played significant roles in their development, established the first black women's groups in Britain, and attempted to link the struggles against gender-based and racial exclusions in a black feminist internationalism. While part of my dissertation attempts to recover the history of Caribbean and West African women in the metropole, I also draw attention to the ways in which assumptions regarding sexual propriety and gender difference, including notions of black masculinity, shaped colonial intellectuals' everyday lives in London as well as their intellectual and political activities. My analysis of black internationalism in London is based on a reading of the whole social lives of African and West Indian men and women, from their personal relationships to their political activities and cultural production.

Finally, my project includes an examination the relation between black internationalism and music through an analysis of the principle spaces of black musical performance in London (such as social clubs, "bottle parties," ballrooms) and events organized by the West African Students Union or the League of Coloured Peoples, which, by the late 1940s, featured West African Caribbean musicians like Ambrose Campbell and Happy Blake. Black intellectuals frequented a number of different restaurants and nightclubs in London featuring performers whose musical repertoires combined waltzes, jazz, swing, blues, and calypso, including Amy Ashwood Garvey's Florence Mills Social Club, which opened in 1936, not only served Caribbean fare but also hosted weekly cocktail parties and nightly performances. These cosmopolitan sites of performance and consumption were, as the South African novelist Peter Abrahams recalled, "the seedbed of the later unity of African, American and Caribbean black folk."

## Healing from Genocide in Rwanda

By Mary Kay Jou (Doctoral Student, School of Social Work)

As an Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) facilitator, I serve as a team member bringing the AVP model of nonviolent conflict resolution to different groups in need of skills, knowledge, and in most cases healing. This summer I was in the Ngoma region of Rwanda working with a mixed group of genocide survivors and ex-prisoners who were accused of participating in the genocide.

The morning discussion revolved around a very simple question, "something I thought about last night." The answers to that question were far from simple. Two of the participants shared their experiences in the basic workshop. As escapees of the genocide, this was their first time to be in a room with those who had been accused and imprisoned for their participation in the genocide. It was terrifying to them. How could AVP put everyone in the same room? With so many family members and loved ones lost to the massacres, how could AVP now invite them into the circle? An amazing process took place in which both participants were able to find a way to welcome them into the circle and to see that even though their actions were horrific they are still human beings.



In one small group activity, the participant found himself the only escapee in the group, everyone else had participated in the killings. This was a transforming moment for him to this day. He shared that after taking the AVP Basic workshop, he was called to Gacaca to try the man who had killed his family. All this time, he had been waiting for this moment to face this man and watch him suffer terribly for what he did. But he could never have imagined what he would experience that day at the courthouse. As the man confessed and described in great detail all the atrocities he had committed against this man's family his being became full of love and forgiveness, so much so that he surprised himself.

We used an exercise called Magic Carpet in the U.S.; here we improvised with Magic Chair. Each person thinks of a time when either they did something wrong to someone else and never asked to be pardoned, or when someone did something wrong to them and never asked them for forgiveness or an apology. They then wrote down the words that they would like to hear the person say to them. As would be expected there was palpable resistance from both the escapees and the ex-prisoners. After some encouragement along with the facilitators sharing their own personal experiences, the participants slowly started to understand. They chose someone in the group to read the words that they needed to hear, while sitting in the 'magic chair' in the center of the circle. The reader places his/her hand on the participant's shoulder and reads the message. This motion was followed with an embrace or traditional Rwandan greeting of amitie. People shared their experiences of the genocide as well as other difficult personal times.

After the exercise it was obvious that the work was not yet done. They were extremely hesitant to answer any of the reflection questions and stayed quiet until I asked, "Do you have to wait for the person who did you wrong to come to you and ask forgiveness in order to forgive them?" They passionately responded, "OF COURSE! I shouldn't have to be the one to go to them. I can't forgive anyone who isn't willing to ask it of me." Then I asked, "Does forgiveness always have to be a verbal conversation between two people? Or can it be something you do privately, silently for yourself?" That set them reeling. What was I talking about? They immediately began to question if I thought forgiveness meant accepting the bad behavior.

Elie, a co-facilitator, stepped in and showed them the steps to forgiveness. He started with the place of hurt, then moved to hate and anger and how to differentiate between the two, then discussed coming to a place of healing where you can still see the humanity and pain of the other person involved, and concluded with arriving at the step of coming together. This visual aide really made it clear to them where they were in the process, and that it was a process.

One participant remarked that after he had been on the chair the hurt and pain was not gone, but that maybe he was about half way to forgiving or to being willing to forgive. I praised him for this huge step because, sadly, forgiveness doesn't come automatically or quickly. It takes time and reflection but it is something that you can do for yourself to ease your own suffering. Elie, the other facilitator, stepped in again. "We are not here to tell you to accept all the horrible things that have been done to you and your family. We are here to help you heal yourself from the great pain that you are experiencing, and to give you some tools that may help you along the way." Later on in the discussion, he asked them to look at the chart and tell the group where they are in the process. Some shared that after this conversation they were able to begin the 'coming together' step. I felt the resistance in the room subside.

## STUDENT DEVELOPMENTS

### Araba Kumi Will Use MSW in Ghana

My first year in the Master of Social Work (MSW) program was challenging but exciting. Graduate school at Rutgers is nothing like my experience at the University of Ghana where I graduated with a BA in Sociology and Psychology. I had to work extra hard and had no time to be a part of student and community organizations.

My interest in pursuing Social Work stemmed out of my involvement in social services groups in Ghana including the University of Ghana Outreach group, Child Evangelism, the Legon Pentecostal Movement and the University Christian Fellowship. The common mission of these groups was to reach out to the poor and needy by offering them spiritual, emotional, and material help. I visited schools, prisons, hospitals, villages and engaged in forums. I attended talks and campaigns on important topics such as personal hygiene, choosing a career, managing a small business and coping with challenges in life. I also took part in raising funds and acquiring material needs for the poor.

Social Work is one of the most fulfilling careers. The experiences I had spending time with the poor, students, prisoners, and the sick have transformed my life in many ways and has made me who I am today. After my MSW program, I hope to pursue my goal of becoming a private therapeutic practitioner. It is also my goal to start a special education school for at-risk groups in Ghana and other parts of the world. To become a Social Worker requires a special heart, a heart that loves to help people and work with them. I believe the world is a better place because of the sacrifices made by social workers. I cannot wait to graduate!

### Laura Ann Pechaceck: Back to Bambara

I previously studied Bambara as a Peace Corps volunteer in Mali, and am grateful for the opportunity to review and improve my skills at the 2007 Summer Cooperative African Language Institute hosted by the University of Illinois before I go into the field. For my PhD dissertation in history, I plan to conduct oral interviews for a history of women's associations and literacy groups. My summer study is funded by a Foreign Language Area Studies fellowship and a Special Study grant from the Rutgers Graduate School. This is a photo taken in Mali with me and my jatiggy muso, Aoua Diarra.



### Benjamin Neimark's New Course

The Graduate School-New Brunswick presented Geography graduate student Benjamin Neimark with the 2005-2006 Dissertation Teaching Award- a prize given to a graduate student to facilitate the development of a course devoted to his or her PhD research project. Ben's new course, "*Geographical Issues in Science, Technology and the Commercialization of Biodiversity*," will be offered in Spring 2008. This interdisciplinary course welcomes all students from the biophysical and social sciences.

*Course abstract:* Natural products are everywhere- they are the small compounds derived from nature that make up everyday health-care products, vitamins, and major pharmaceuticals and can be found in the spices of your favorite foods, perfumes and hand creams (see pic). The course will cover and debate the political, social, economic and geographical realities of *commodified nature* in the US and abroad. The first section of the course covers some core geographical, historical and theoretical concepts and explores sustainable development, intellectual property, patent rights, equitable sharing of benefits, access and environmental justice and the burgeoning technological advancements in biotechnology and genomics.



Rosy periwinkle leaf from Madagascar

The second half of the course is divided into thematic sections focusing on diverse case studies including perfume collectors in Costa Rica, vanilla harvesters in Madagascar, and drugs made from coral sponges off the coasts of the Caribbean. Taking advantage of the centrality of Rutgers in regard to natural products research and development, the class will include field trips and invited speakers, providing students with face to face encounters with those working in the industry. After taking this unique interdisciplinary course, students will have the theoretical and practical toolkit needed to understand the complex legal, ethical and technological issues surrounding the commercialization of nature- a practice that will dominate the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



## Going 'Home' to Africa

By Walton Johnson

Africa has a remarkable way of making almost everyone feel at home. Consequently, going 'home' to Africa for retirement crosses the minds of almost everyone who has ever lived there. W.E.B. DuBois did it and he certainly knew a thing or two. For potential migrants of African descent, countries like Ghana and Tanzania even offer various attractive incentives. Furthermore, aside from being an incredibly beautiful continent in most parts, for those of us who have spent much of our professional lives in Western countries – as academics for example – life in Africa is good because we can sidestep the hardships of the African poor and enjoy an extremely comfortable lifestyle. But the decision to retire to Africa, considered by many of us, is a struggle between sets of pros and cons.

For me, one of the major pluses of living in Africa is that one escapes the interminably oppressive environment created by 'race' in the United States. Paradoxically perhaps, even living in South Africa is like a constant breath of fresh air despite the fact that the country has only recently emerged from apartheid. This atmosphere is good for one's soul and even more appreciated at the end of a career in 'the land of the free and home of the brave.'

On the 'race' issue, some people of African descent often say that Africa's attraction to them is that the people there share their skin color or that their ancestral roots are there. Even when it is not stated, it is frequently assumed (perhaps to continue disparaging the continent) that this is Africa's primary lure for African Americans. I honestly do not feel that way. I think I would be powerfully attracted to Africa regardless of my ethnic background – an assessment that seems to be corroborated by the great many people of other ethnic backgrounds who love that continent. The feeling of 'fresh air' applies to anyone who has lived for extended periods in the United States.

Another plus of living in most parts of Africa is that one can be in a relatively stress-free environment while enjoying most, if not all, of the amenities to which one has become accustomed. Professors are not particularly well paid. Our lifestyles, therefore, though very satisfying in most respects, are not very high-on-the-hog in terms of material comforts. In the major cities of most African countries, the material comforts we have come to require are readily available.

Perhaps the biggest plus of living in Africa, however, is being able to enjoy the uniformly agreeable cultures of that continent. Generally speaking, people are very friendly and very open. There is an ease to social life and social relations, rooted probably in distinctively African 'family values' and in basic ubuntu worldviews. Especially for people not born into such a culture, the quality of social relations in Africa is a joyous and appealing experience. We admire that attribute.

Finally, there is the question of giving back. Most of us feel extremely grateful for what Africa has given us and are deeply saddened by the low standard of living for most people and by the slim economic, political, educational and physical infrastructure upon which to build a better life for them. We wish we could help in some more tangible ways. Retiring to Africa therefore puts one in a position to do more to help. We have skills that can be contributed in a number of very useful ways.

There are downsides to 'going home to Africa' though. Two 'cons' overshadow all others. Firstly, professors almost always retire when they are older because few of us are independently wealthy, because there is no forced retirement and because we love what we do. But retiring as an older person inevitably means being concerned about health. Being among those in America who have adequate health insurance, most of us get superior health care. With the exception of a very few small pockets, health care in Africa is not of comparable quality. That can lead to a 'just when you need it, it's not there' feeling.

An equally serious disadvantage of retiring to Africa is that, over the years, we have all built many very strong personal relationships. We have important friendships and institutional relationships that structure our current lives. Sure there will be important relationships in Africa, but the ones here will still be somewhat compromised. This predicament becomes even more complex if one has a spouse and/or children who do not want to retire to Africa with you or if one is leaving children and grandchildren behind.

So, since most of us feel at home in Africa, how do we sort out these pros and cons of retirement? Most of us, I suspect, will wind up compromising. I will. Some years ago, I bought a condo in Cape Town and, when I retire, I will spend four or five months there every year but I will not relocate on a permanent basis. (Or, at least, that's how I feel at the moment. When I am there, though, staying permanently is awfully tempting.) Meanwhile, I will find some ways to give back. That will be important. I am sure that investing more of myself in Africa as a retiree will give me even a greater sense of 'being at home.' That's a good feeling and one I look forward to.

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## African News Below The Radar: the April 1989 Mauritanian-Senegalese Crisis

By John Vincent

*Given our continuing interest in representing Africa we are pleased to present a contribution by John Vincent, a friend of the Center for African Studies and lecturer on international labor. He served in the U.S. Foreign Service for 30 years, mostly either in Africa or on Africa-related assignments, as Deputy Chief of Mission (Mali, Mauritania) and as Chargé d'affaires a.i. in Benin. His wife, Rutgers historian and Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Delia Pitts, served in West Africa for both the World Bank and U.S. Information Service.*

Scholars have long decried the U.S. media's deficit on African news but, at times, this void has seemed unusually severe. My wife and I learned this first hand when we were serving in the U.S. embassy in Nouakchott, Mauritania in 1989. U.S. media editors largely ignored a series of incidents, beginning April 8, that almost led to a war between neighboring Mauritania and Senegal. These included a deadly pogrom on April 25-26 aimed at black Africans in Nouakchott, a retaliatory "Mauritanian hunt" in Senegal on the following two days and large scale anti-black African ethnic cleansing throughout Mauritania. (For a detailed account of this crisis, see *The Senegal-Mauritania Conflict of 1989: a Fragile Equilibrium*, Ron Parker, J. of Modern African Studies, 29, 1 (March 1991), pp. 155-171.)

Politically, economically and culturally Mauritania is dominated by its Beydanes (Moors), Arabic-speaking nomadic Berbers, who have ruled since independence in 1960. They control the Haratines (black Moors), Arabic-speaking descendants of captured black Africans, nominally free but still treated socially if not literally as slaves. This racialized social structure made life hard for the minority black African Mauritians, mostly based in the Senegal River valley. They sought to resist Arabization, to sustain their own cultures, to maintain access to French language education and to retain their lands. Their resistance and the severity of the 1989 crisis with Senegal inspired the Beydane elite to try to consolidate their political control permanently through the ethnic cleansing of 60-70,000 blacks, most Mauritanian citizens, replacing whole villages with Haratine settlers.

Senegal rejected the fiction that the expelled Mauritians were Senegalese and placed them in temporary refugee camps. The two countries closed their border crossings, banned all flights and deployed their armed forces along the border. Scattered exchanges of artillery and light arms reportedly occurred at times. Mauritania, thanks in part to its traditional close ties to Iraq due the Beydane affinity for Baathist pan-Arab ideology, was able to prevail upon Saddam Hussein to airlift weapons and ammunition to Nouakchott.

Yet the crisis was finally defused, largely due to imaginative diplomatic efforts and timely intervention. Years later, most of the expellees were able to return home. France and the U.S. worked incessantly to head off the confrontation and, failing that, to contain it by preventing the deaths of detainees, arranging for their evacuation, and promoting diplomatic solutions.

The U.S. embassy, under Ambassador William Twaddell's energetic leadership, not only saved the lives of about one thousand of its own at-risk local employees, spouses and their children camped out on the embassy compound but also rallied the American staff and Peace Corps Volunteers to lead diplomatic corps efforts to dig latrines in open air detention centers, purchase food and help feed about 14,000 detainees awaiting deportation to Senegal. Parallel, if less melodramatic, high intensity efforts were made by the U.S. embassy in Dakar. Most interestingly, and much to Mauritania's chagrin, North African governments refused to support Mauritania's cause or break ranks with the West on embargoing military assistance to the near belligerents. Remarkably Algeria and Morocco put aside their differences so that their air forces could cooperate effectively in providing most of the aircraft that shuttled refugees back home from detention centers in Nouakchott and Dakar.

So why was this confrontation, widely reported in Europe, scarcely noticed by the U.S. media? It involved a near war, deaths, significant ethnic cleansing, a two-way air bridge to evacuate threatened detainees, some weapons from Iraq (pre-Gulf War but Saddam Hussein was already highly suspect in U.S. perceptions) and unprecedented Algerian-Moroccan humanitarian cooperation.

The answer lies in the common practice of U.S. media editors. Because the conflict in a little known country did not seem to involve important U.S. interests or Americans in danger, editors felt it was not worth reporting to the U.S. public. This means that today Americans are unable to appreciate fully the remarkable political and social turnabout underway in Mauritania - if they ever learned this news, that is. A military coup ousted Mauritania's longtime autocrat in 2005. The remarkable part, however, was the coup leaders actually allowed genuine press freedom, promoted rule of law and multi-party governance, sought to end persecution of black Mauritians and encouraged Haratine self-expression and development. So, below the editorial radar, credible Mauritanian legislative and presidential elections were held in 2006 and early 2007 to nationwide acclaim that restored civilian rule.

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