Letter from the WARA President

Much has happened since our last WARA Newsletter. In part—as our faithful readers will have noticed—that is because it has been a longer-than-usual period since that last newsletter. We regret that fact, but hasten to add that it is itself due in part to the much that has happened, and most of it very exciting. Read on!

The most significant change since our last newsletter comes in the form of transitions, *alternances* we might say, on both sides of the Atlantic. Edris Makward, whose energy, enthusiasm, unbounded good cheer and fabled charm kept WARA functioning and prospering from its headquarters at the University of Wisconsin, has retired, both as professor of African Literature and from the WARA presidency. (Those who know him will not be surprised to note that Edris’ version of “retirement” has him on a new mission in his birth town of Banjul, The Gambia, working hard to help create that country’s first university!) I cannot hope to fill Edris’ *maraaikis*—or even his *carax*—but at his urging I agreed to try to follow in his footsteps. As it turns out, having agreed to do so, I found myself making another transition as I moved to the University of Florida to become director of the Center for African Studies. As part of that process, the dean of UF’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences agreed to help support WARA in the form of a graduate assistantship, and it is thanks to that support that this newsletter has been produced, and that future ones will follow. And thanks to the generous support of Boston University’s African Studies Program, WARA’s administrative headquarters are now well-established there.

Across the Atlantic changes have also taken place within our sister organization, AROA, the *Association de Recherches Ouest Africaines*. Oumar Ndongo, who worked hard for many years to help build WARC, our Center in Dakar, has passed the torch on to newly-elected AROA President Ousmane Sène and to a newly-elected board. We thank Oumar for his dedication to the Center and his help to innumerable American colleagues, and we welcome Ousmane and the new board. Having just returned from spending a few days—and many hours of discussion—with Ousmane and WARC director Wendy Wilson-Fall, I can report that our mission of trans-Atlantic cooperation continues forward with much wind in the sails.

Our major event of the past year was the holding of WARA’s second international symposium in Dakar last June. On the theme of “Fieldwork in Africa,” the symposium was a smashing success as 140 scholars from 16 countries on three continents met for three days and—and with much enthusiasm, unbounded good cheer and fabled charm kept WARA functioning and prospering from its headquarters at the University of Wisconsin, has retired, both as professor of African Literature and from the WARA presidency. (Those who know him will not be surprised to note that Edris’ version of “retirement” has him on a new mission in his birth town of Banjul, The Gambia, working hard to help create that country’s first university!) I cannot hope to fill Edris’ *maraaikis*—or even his *carax*—but at his urging I agreed to try to follow in his footsteps. As it turns out, having agreed to do so, I found myself making another transition as I moved to the University of Florida to become director of the Center for African Studies. As part of that process, the dean of UF’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences agreed to help support WARA in the form of a graduate assistantship, and it is thanks to that support that this newsletter has been produced, and that future ones will follow. And thanks to the generous support of Boston University’s African Studies Program, WARA’s administrative headquarters are now well-established there.

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Report from the Director of WARC

The past year has been both exhilarating and difficult for the Center. The Center continues to expand and enhance its programming. This expansion has naturally come with some challenges. Maintaining internet access and lowering its cost to the Center was finally achieved after much effort. Thanks to outgoing President Oumar Ndongo, as well as concerted staff collaboration, Sonatel agreed to re-classify WARC’s use to that of an educational institution, cutting its internet costs in half. One other major challenge has been to focus on fine-tuning what we have, rather than over-extending ourselves beyond present capacities. Another challenge has been to identify institutional needs with a view towards eventual staff development and organizational stability.

We have also been challenged by personal tragedies which have touched us all. Astou Touré Gaye, the former WARC Administrative Assistant, lost her husband suddenly during the month of February in a car accident on the Mbour road. In February, the WARC staff, and WARA/AROA members were dismayed and saddened to learn that our "doyen," Iba Fallou Thiam, passed away on the day of Tabaski. All WARC friends have been wonderfully responsive, and we are glad that because of these responses we have been able to make financial contributions to both families as a symbol of our condolences and shared sense of loss. Please see the picture of Thiam and a short article about him on page 6. A ceremony was held at WARC for Thiam at the end of the month of February, to which representatives of his family were invited.

The Center continues to increase its popularity with Study Abroad programs, and it seems that this year we have regained much of the attendance that we lost due to 9/11 in 2002. Hobart William Smith College, the Minnesota MSID Program, Wells College, and Mount Holyoke all hosted their overseas undergraduate programs at the Center this year. The presence of these students certainly adds to the vibrant atmosphere that all visitors associate with WARC. Michigan State University and William and Mary College began their Study Abroad programs in collaboration with WARC this year, as well. These two programs, under the direction of President Ex-Officio of AROA Oumar Ndongo, are tied in with programs at UCAD and enhance our visibility as well as our relationship with the University of Cheikh Anta Diop.

(see "Report" on page 6)
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WARA Newsletter
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This newsletter is published twice a year by the West African Research Association at the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida, with the support of the Center for African Studies and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Florida. It is distributed to all members and associates of WARA. Material for publication in upcoming newsletters should be submitted to the editor at the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida. Please send an electronic version together with a hard copy of your submission. WARA has the right to reject items that do not comply with the goals and purposes of the organization and reserves the right to edit and/or modify any submissions for content, format or length.

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WARA Symposium Report

WARA and WARC co-sponsored an International Symposium on Fieldwork in Africa, held in French and English at the West African Research Center in Dakar, Senegal in June 2002. It consisted of 25 panels, roundtables, and short workshops. Fieldwork has constituted a key element in the production of knowledge about Africa, and doing fieldwork has long been a rite of passage for Africanists in many disciplines. Thus, the goal of this second WARA International Symposium was to stimulate interdisciplinary dialogue on the nature and implications of fieldwork in Africa, across the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, as well as with practitioners and others who work in the field.

While all events and papers dealt with the practice and interpretation of fieldwork in some way, the perspectives adopted by participating scholars and practitioners were numerous and extremely varied. Themes included the challenges of carrying out fieldwork in one’s home community, the practice of fieldwork in a globalizing world, the contribution of fieldwork to HIV treatment and programs, gender issues in fieldwork, the challenges of studying youth in contemporary Africa, and constraints faced by African scholars based in resource-poor institutions. Many disciplines were represented, including such diverse fields as medicine, psychotherapy, political activism, rural development, and literacy. The Symposium attracted 140 participants in all, hailing from 16 countries on 3 continents. The proceedings of the Symposium will have the opportunity to reach a wider audience as WARA has been invited to guest edit a special issue of the academic journal Practicing Anthropology, using select symposium papers.

From a Participant: The West African Research Association’s “Interdisciplinary Symposium on Fieldwork in Africa,” held from June 12 to 15, 2002, was an outstanding conference on a variety of levels. The most common measure of a successful conference is the quality of the papers presented and the discussion that follows. In this respect WARA’s second international symposium was a clear success, with a number of papers offering a variety of perspectives on questions of fieldwork. The papers dealt with issues ranging from “nuts-and-bolts” discussions of how to get the data to frank discussions of the ethics of doing research – from the perspective of both the outsider and the insider. In almost every panel I attended there was ample time left for thoughtful discussion after the presentations. This fact made good papers even better.

As academics all know (even if we try to keep it from the wider public), the second measure of a good conference is the opportunity for high-quality socializing. Here WARA set a standard for mixing work and pleasure. Dakar’s many opportunities for thought-provoking sightseeing and excellent dining were easily accessible to the participants, and the conference organizers did their job and organized a number of receptions that allowed scholars to interact on a less formal level. Goodness knows how many collaborative research projects got their start on the lawn of the WARC.

Perhaps most importantly, however, the symposium was an example of African Studies living up to its own rhetoric. Rarely does one get to experience a conference with such a diverse representation of the various “constituent groups” from within the field. More so, this diversity was followed by interaction and collaboration. More than any other conference I have experienced, the 2002 Symposium brought together African and Western-based scholars, Francophone and Anglophone scholars, white and black scholars, senior and junior scholars, faculty and students. Just about any way you can think of our field being divided, the WARA conference smooshed it back together – and that was a rare and beautiful thing.

Jonathan Reynolds
Assistant Professor of History
Northern Kentucky University

Spring 2003
Rapport du voyage d'étude à Boston

Du 18 au 29 avril 2002 nous avons effectué un voyage d'études à l'Université de Boston. Ce voyage entre dans le cadre du Programme d'échanges entre le Centre d'études Africaines de l'université de Boston en collaboration avec le West African Research Association (WARA) et le West African Research Center (WARC) basé à Dakar. Ce voyage d'études a été sponsorisé par Ford Fondation. Nous sommes deux Doctorants ayant bénéficié de cette bourse: Moussa Dieng, géographe (Sénégalais) et Moulaye Ismaël Keita sociologue (Mauritanien) de l'université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, et par ailleurs membres de l'Association de Recherche Ouest Africaine (AROA). Nous comptons parmi les animateurs du Groupe de Réflexion sur les Villes Ouest africaines (GRV) au sein de l'AROA à Dakar. Le voyage prévu initialement au mois de mars devait nous permettre de participer à la conférence annuelle des doctorants, organisée par l'université de Boston (BU) et qui s'est tenue du 14 au 29 mars 2002. Pour des raisons de calendrier et d'avion, nous n'avons pas pu prendre part à la dite conférence. Néanmoins, notre voyage à Boston a été maintenu, mais cette fois-ci, du 18 au 29 avril 2002. Dès notre arrivée, en collaboration avec la coordinatrice du WARA à Boston, Dr Leigh Swigart, nous avons établi un programme d'activités.

Ce voyage nous a permis de participer à plusieurs activités dont des conférences, des visites dans différents établissements et grandes écoles de Boston mais surtout d'échanger avec les étudiants et rencontrer les enseignants-chercheurs, spécialistes des questions africaines.

Au niveau de la bibliothèque, les consultations ont été facilitées par le réseau électronique dense et performant pour la recherche des documents et ouvrages relatifs à nos centres d'intérêt. Nous avons pu accéder à une documentation très fouillée, variée et spécialisée. Ce qui a contribué à alimenter nos problématiques de recherche et approfondir nos connaissances théoriques surtout que les documents de grands auteurs Américains sont souvent rares voire introuvables dans les bibliothèques francophones; même les traductions manquent cruellement. Les responsables de la gigantesque bibliothèque ont fait montre de disponibilité et de compréhension à notre égard dans le cadre de nos recherches quotidiennes. A ce sujet, nous avons pu photocopier, à notre guise, plusieurs documents, archives, articles scientifiques récents ou anciens.

Par ailleurs, nous avons eu le privilège de faire une visite guidée à la prestigieuse université de Harvard où le vice président du WARA Emmanuel K. Akyeampong nous a longuement parlé des objectifs de l'association et le rôle qu'elle doit jouer pour rapprocher les chercheurs Américains et Africains.

Plusieurs conférences ont été organisées durant notre séjour à Boston. Toutes traitaient de sujets d'actualité. Au Centre d'Études Africaines, les professeurs visiteurs tiennent l'auditoire en haleine. Ainsi, nous avons pris part à la conférence de Pash Obeng du Ghana dont le thème était African Indians of Karnataka, South India le 22 avril 2002 dans la salle de conférence du centre. La deuxième conférence axée sur The Eritrean Refugee Crisis, s'est tenue à Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) le même jour dans l'après-midi. Elle a été animée par Selam Daniel. La troisième et dernière conférence a eu lieu le 24 avril 2002 et le thème portait sur la Globalisation et l'Afrique du Sud.

Nous avons eu, chacun en ce qui le concerne et selon son domaine d'étude, à rencontrer les autorités des Départements de Géographie et desociologie. Nous avons rencontré Messieurs Curtis Woodcock, chef du Département de Géographie de l'Université de Boston et Bill Anderson Professeur de Géographie au dit département. Nous avons visité le Centre de télédétectation de BU. Au niveau du Département de sociologie, le chef de département et le Pr. Daniel Monti étaient particulièrement enthousiastes pour nous recevoir et discuter avec nous de leur recherches et l'intérêt qu'ils portent à l'Afrique. Le Pr. Danièle Monti nous a offert ces deux derniers ouvrages qui traitent des phénomènes urbains et de la question de la jeunesse. Au Social Work School, Kay Jones, MSW LIC associate professor nous a bien reçu. Là nous avons eu un échange avec les étudiants et certains enseignants de l'école. A notre demande, certains enseignants nous ont offert des livres destinés à la bibliothèque du WARC de Dakar. La visite au National Center of Afro-American Artists nous a permis de découvrir la richesse culturelle de ce centre et le talent de ses artistes.

Nous avons rencontré des étudiants d'origine africaine (Ghanéenne, Nigérienne, Marocaine) ou américaine et qui travaillent sur des thèmes divers et variés, mais qui sont tous axés sur l'Afrique, la diaspora et la place de l'Afrique dans le monde. C'est ainsi que nous avons rencontré des ethnologues, des anthropologues, des musicologues, des géographes. Ces rencontres ont été très fructueuses et d'un grand apport pour nos recherches.

Nous avons profité de notre séjour à Boston pour faire quelques excursions notamment à la célèbre ville de New-York mais aussi dans certaines petites villes de l'État du Massachusetts. Il s'agit des villes de Gloucester où nous avons visité son port de pêche et de Holyock où nous avons été au Collège.

Le voyage d'étude a été d'un grand apport. Outre les contacts fructueux, il nous a permis d'accéder à des documents inédits d'auteurs Américains très rares voire introuvables dans les pays francophones. Ce qui a été d'une grande importance pour alimenter nos problématiques de recherches et consolider nos connaissances théoriques, dans nos domaines respectifs.

L'ambiance intellectuelle à l'université de Boston, notamment au centre d'études Africaines fut riche en enseignements. Les contacts que nous avons menés aussi bien avec les étudiants que les enseignants continuent à porter leurs fruits. Nous ne serons terminer sans adresser nos remerciements à tous ceux qui ont rendu notre voyage agréable et fructueux. Aussi, nous adressons une mention spéciale à Leigh Swigart Directrice du WARA, Professeur James McCann, Directeur du Centre d'Études Africaines de l'université de Boston et espérons que pareille initiative se multiplie.

Moussa Dieng  
Doctorant en Géographie  
Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Sénégal

Moulaye Ismaël Keita  
Doctorant en Sociologie  
Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, Sénégal
African Language Materials Archive (ALMA)

African Language Materials Archive is a project of the West African Research Center and the American Overseas Digital Library (an initiative of CAORC – Council of American Overseas Research Centers), supported by UNESCO and Columbia University. The pilot phase of this project has just been completed and the results are impressive: an archive of electronic books in Mandinka, Wolof, and Pulaar in PDF format has been compiled for the Internet and on CD-ROM. The Internet version consists of 34 E-Books at: http://www.aiys.org/aodl/EBOOKS/index.html. Each E-Book is accompanied by a full catalog record and summaries in 3 languages: English, French, and the African language of the publication. The CD-ROM version has the added feature of a menu in 5 languages: English, French, Mandinka, Pulaar, and Wolof. The CD-ROM will be issued by UNESCO for free distribution primarily in West Africa.

Joseph Caruso
African Studies Librarian
Columbia University

For the second phase of the ALMA Project using the funding provided by WARA, John Hutchison of the African Studies Center at Boston University proposes spending four weeks this summer in the Republic of Mali in pursuit of authors and manuscripts in the thirteen languages of Mali. Hutchison spent more than a year there in the mid-90s working in maternal language publishing and as a consultant for The World Bank in educational reform. Since that time he has returned regularly and maintained contact with Malian language writers, authors, publishers, and civil servants working in educational reform, and textbook and curriculum development in local languages at the literacy service and also at the National Pedagogical Institute, as well as in the private and NGO sectors. He hopes to go beyond just the major languages of Bamankan, Songhai, Fulfulde and Tamasheq, to try for a fuller representation of Malian language literature on the ALMA website. Upon leaving Mali he expects to be able to pass through Dakar to visit WARC and to make contact with Abdoulaye Niang, who has worked extensively on the ALMA website. He will continue on to Guinea to visit the town of Dalaba in the Futa Jalon where he has established contacts with people working in literacy, and where he hopes to gather a number of Pulaar manuscripts for consideration for ALMA.

In collaboration with Leigh Swigart, Hutchison continues to research funding opportunities for the future of ALMA, and they intend to prepare a number of proposals during the spring semester.

John Hutchison
Associate Professor of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures
Boston University

Letter (continued from page 1)

days to debate and exchange perspectives on the many aspects of primary field research on the continent. Following on the symposium, WARA organized a follow-up roundtable at the December 2002 ASA meeting, entitled “Ethics, Methods, and Pragmatics in Fieldwork: Issues from the Dakar Symposium.” We were particularly pleased to be able to invite two West African participants in the symposium, Boubé Namaiwa from Niger and Ngozi Nwodo from Nigeria, to participate in the ASA roundtable. We hope to be able to continue to invite West African colleagues to participate in WARA-sponsored ASA panels in the future.

Thanks largely to the efforts of WARA US director Leigh Swigart, in November we submitted what we think is a very strong application for a continuation of WARA’s funding through the US Department of Education’s Title VI program. The Title VI program allows us primarily to fund WARC’s operation (on a shoestring, to be sure), but we also detailed in our proposal a number of the new and exciting programmatic initiatives that WARA has undertaken, and which are discussed elsewhere in this newsletter. One of these involves the organization of summer institutes for college and university faculty at WARC, which will begin this year with an institute on Islam in Senegal. Another important initiative is the expansion of the African Languages Materials Archives (ALMA) project. We are particularly pleased that most of the Title VI African Studies National Resource Centers agreed to collaborate in including support for ALMA in their own applications for funding this year, and we look forward very much to a significant expansion of this very successful project.

Title VI funding is clearly very important to WARA and WARC, as is the funding we receive from the Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) section of the State Department through our membership in CAORC, the Council of American Overseas Research Centers. This funding makes possible most of our WARA fellowships and grants. But most centrally important is the support we receive from our members in the form of your memberships dues and contributions. I would like to thank the many of you who have faithfully sent in your dues and made our work possible, as well as all of those who have recently joined or renewed lapsed memberships. The members are not only our support but our very raison d’être; WARA belongs to you. We would ask you to encourage others to join, and even more importantly to please ask (beg, pester, plead with...) your respective institutions to consider becoming WARA institutional members. As the only sub-Saharan member of the CAORC, WARA/WARC should properly be seen as the joint endeavor of the entire Africanist scholarly community in the United States.

In this spirit of a communal effort, we welcome not only your membership checks and your contributions, but also your input, suggestions, feedback and constructive criticisms on this newsletter, as well as on all WARA and WARC activities and initiatives. We hope to see many more of you through Dakar again this year, where WARC remains a hub of intellectual activity as well as a haven for all researchers to come meet, join in conversations, read in our library, or have one of Amelia’s great lunches in our delightful café-restaurant.

Leonardo A. Villalón
WARA President

Spring 2003
Report (continued from page 1)

This year AROA voted in a new President (see column with new President Ousmane Sène’s report). The General Assembly and subsequent Officers’ meetings were lively and full of discussion. One of the major issues debated was the desire and need for greater collaboration between the officers of WARA and the officers of AROA. All members agreed that they look forward to greater participation of the joint board which should be active in the development of WARC. New officers were also voted in, as is noted on the facing page.

As most of you know, the Center lost some of its old programs this year and further developed new programs. For example, the Thomson Testing Service (Prometric) closed 84 computer testing services this fall (2002), including the one at WARC. On the other hand, the digitalization project grew considerably and has done much to contribute to the WARC archived resource base as well as the MSU database. Corey Brandt, who was so helpful and creative while at WARC, has moved on to a full time position at the UNDP. His assistant, Fatou Fall, married and moved to Italy. Abdoulaye Niang and Nene Diop have therefore moved in, with their combined and considerable expertise in data management and scanning, to keep this unit’s activities going.

In terms of organizational stability, we have submitted a proposal to several West Africa Representatives of donors with the purpose of enhancing institutional sustainability. These proposals focus on improving WARC’s infrastructure and capacity to raise income locally through on-site programs. We are now waiting for responses from three of these potential partners: Shell Oil, Soros Foundation (Osawa) and Oxfam. Another institution-building endeavor has been the creation of a local Advisory Council. This Council includes representatives from national institutions (like the National Agricultural Research Institute, ISRA), from regional institutions (like the Centre de Suivi Ecologique), the diplomatic corps (the Chief of the Public Diplomacy Office for the American Embassy, and a representative from the Embassy of Mali) as well as a few researchers, current and past WARC and WARA/AROA Presidents, a representative of the Senegal President’s staff, and a representative from the private sector. The purpose of the Council, as paraphrased by the Ambassador of Mali, is to identify a few “Godfathers or Godmothers” for the Center throughout the region. These persons will help the Center to raise funds, increase its visibility, and increase knowledge of its antenna sections in various countries in the region. So far, only two meetings have been held.

Another step toward organizational stability is the drafting of a procedures book, which has only just gotten underway. We have asked AROA to investigate local resources to assist us in developing this important reference tool for Center management. In terms of further administrative improvement, the Center has hired a professional accountant to join the staff and to take over all bookkeeping and other financial management matters. We are happy therefore to introduce you to Bambo Cissokho who has taken on these responsibilities. We regretted the departure of Astou Touré Gaye, who formerly was Administrative Assistant, but we congratulate her on her new position at the British Council.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all WARA and AROA members for the continued support of the Center and its activities. We look forward to seeing you in Dakar in the coming year. During this spring, while the WARA President is visiting Dakar, we hope to draft announcements of various programs which will be available to scholars interested in coming to Dakar. They will reflect the interests that most greatly characterize the requests which we receive for partnerships and collaboration. More information on this activity will be posted on our website at www.warc-croa.org.

Wendy Wilson-Fall
Director of WARC

In Memoriam

It is with great sorrow that we inform you that Ibou Fallou Thiam left us on Wednesday, February 12th as a result of what appears to have been a heart attack. He had slaughtered his Tabaski sheep and joined in the family celebrations when he complained of a pain in his chest. He died on the way to the hospital, where he was being taken by car by a family member. We remember “le doyen” fondly.

Thiam was the first staff of the West African Research Center, working with the first Director, Eileen Julier, when the Center was still located on Boulevard de la Republique. Thiam was an energetic person who truly enjoyed responsibility and getting things done. He was a polyvalent staff, taking care of minor electrical problems, computer cabling, grounds and maintenance, courier services and many other innumerable tasks that keep a center like WARC going. He boasted of knowing any kind of artisan anybody ever needed, and he never disappointed anyone in helping find the talent and craftsmanship needed for any task. Former WARC Director Fiona McLaughlin remembers him as “l’homme a tout faire.”

Thiam traveled earlier in his life throughout West Africa, visiting Mali, Niger, and Côte d’Ivoire, among other places. He had a good understanding of the purposes and goals of the Center, and was committed to doing his part. He will be sorely missed by all.

Ibou Fallou Thiam
**Ousmane Sène, New AROA President**

Ousmane Sène, the new AROA President is an alumnus of the Department of English, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, where he was awarded a B.A. and an M.A. in English Language and Literatures. Subsequently, he enrolled at the Sorbonne (Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris III) and at École Normale Supérieure de Saint-Cloud (France). He holds a PhD in Literature and currently teaches African and African-American Literatures in the Department of English, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar. He is also Instructor of African Literature at Suffolk University, Dakar Campus, and for U.S. students involved in study abroad programs in Dakar. He has published a number of articles and offered several lectures on african literature, african-american literature and other issues pertaining to african affairs.

Professor Sène is a former Senior Fulbright Research Scholar at the University of Florida. He is a frequent traveler to the United States, where he has been invited several times as visiting professor to institutions such as Michigan State University, University of Minnesota, Loyola Marymount University at Los Angeles, Wofford and Converse Colleges in South Carolina, and Beloit College at Beloit, Wisconsin. He is Resident Director for several study abroad programs initiated in Senegal by a number of U.S. universities: University of Minnesota, Wells, Mount Holyoke and Beloit Colleges, Binghamton University, and University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee.

He is married and has three children, and he enjoys traveling and biking.

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**From the AROA President**

Dear friends and members of the Association,

When I first came to the West African Research Center, it was primarily in the quest of a quiet and comfortable place to settle in for work, research and other academic pursuits. It was, indeed, immediately after I had stepped down as Chair of the Department of English, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, which I managed for close to ten years. The job had simply worn me out and given me untimely grey hair. My decision was simply to avoid any official position, elective or otherwise.

But I had made the decision without taking into account the determination and power of conviction of some friends and fellow members of the Association who, after overcoming my initial refusal and subsequent hesitation, broadcast almost everywhere in Senegal and the United States the premature news that I would be a candidate for the AROA Presidency. E-mail messages of “congratulations, satisfaction, and renewed confidence” started literally “wapping” my laptop. I knew then and there that there was nowhere to run and that I had to acknowledge and accept the trust of so many friends and well-wishers.

I only hope that I’ll be up to the task and will contribute to consolidating the foundations of our mutual Association and the West African Research Center. I was among the first initiators of the AROA/WARA project with Professors Dave Robinson, Ken Harrow and Ray Silverman and several other colleagues in Senegal and the U.S. years ago while I was serving as Visiting Professor at Michigan State University. So, let’s forge ahead in this stimulating task of building intellectual and academic bridges across the Atlantic.

Ousmane Sène
AROA President

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**New AROA Officers**

We are pleased to congratulate the new AROA officers, elected at the AROA General Assembly on Saturday, December 21, 2002.

**President:** Ousmane Sène

**Vice President:** Ibrahima Thioub

**Secretary General/Secrétaire General:** Ibrahima Seck

**Assistant Secretary General/Secrétaire General Adjoint:** Moustapha Touré

**Treasurer/Tresorier General:** Mamoudou Sy

**Assistant Treasurer/Tresorier Adjoint:** Marianne Soumaré

**WARC Director:** Wendy Wilson-Fall (ex-oficio)

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Spring 2003
Conserving Cultural Heritage with Microcredit in Mali

Through the generous support of WARA's pre-doctoral summer research grant and the assistance of the African Cultural Conservation Fund, an NGO based in Bamako, Mali, I had the opportunity to spend ten weeks in Fombori, Mali this past summer researching the CultureBank, an innovative local initiative in the Dogon region that aims to conserve cultural heritage using a microcredit approach. In recent decades, the expansion of tourism in Mali and the rising value of Dogon art in the international market have led to a large-scale exportation of cultural objects from Dogon villages to urban centers in Mali where they are sold to customers from around the world, thereby diminishing the country's rich cultural heritage. Although laws such as the Malian antiquity export bans (1985-86) and the Cultural Property Agreement between the U.S. and Mali (1993) have attempted to formally address rampant cultural heritage loss, these measures have done little to curtail the ongoing disappearance of Malian art that occurs mainly through the black market.

Initiated in 1997, the CultureBank in Fombori is a successful local response that enables community members to conserve valuable cultural objects in a community museum and to use these objects as collateral to obtain small loans for income-generating activities. In this way, individuals gain a financial benefit from their objects while retaining ownership of them. The loan value is determined by the amount of verifiable historical information that the owner can provide about his/her object using a questionnaire formula. Upon reimbursement, borrowers may opt to renew their loan for an equal or greater amount, which provides a steady stream of additional income over time. The CultureBank received outside assistance (from USAID) in 1997 to begin making loans but now functions as a locally sustainable institution by using loan interest (3% per month) to provide new loans. The CultureBank currently holds a collection of 430 objects and has welcomed over 1500 visitors since its opening. Using the concept of a “living museum,” CultureBank participants may temporarily remove their objects for use in festivals and community events.

The objective of this study was to evaluate and assess the socio-economic impacts of the CultureBank in Fombori. A central question is how individual borrowers have used loan funds over the past five years and if there has been a significant change in income generation due to the CultureBank intervention. The methodology consisted of interviews with a random sample of thirty people stratified by gender (60% women and 40% men) who have obtained loans from the CultureBank. I also interviewed individuals who have played an integral role in establishing the project, such as the President of the CultureBank, the Museum Coordinator, the Loan Fund Manager, and the Co-Presidents of the Women’s Association as well as notable members of the Fombori community including the village chief, imam, blacksmith, and sculptors. Issues explored with study participants included the economic, social, and cultural impacts of the CultureBank in the community; perceptions of cultural conservation, tourism, and the sale of artifacts; knowledge of local history and cultural traditions in Fombori; and level of participation in CultureBank activities including Dogon literacy classes, artisan workshops, and community festivals.

Overall, the CultureBank has contributed to a greater sense of cultural pride and awareness of the need to protect and conserve local cultural heritage on the part of community members. In terms of economic impact, CultureBank loans provide participants with access to capital that allows them to diversify sources of income in an agriculture-based economy. Since 1997, the CultureBank has made 451 loans with objects as collateral to 70 individual borrowers (60% women and 40% men). The average loan size is 14,500 FCFA (22 USD).
Loans are generally repaid within four to six months with a 94% rate of reimbursement. In total the CultureBank has provided 9,281,410 FCFA (14,279 USD) of loan funds to the community since 1997.

Of the thirty participants interviewed, all reported using loan funds to increase pre-existing commerce activities or to initiate new ones at the weekly market in the town of Douenanza. For women the most common activity is buying and reselling millet grain while men engage mainly in the livestock trade (sheep, goats and cows). Respondents reported a statistically significant increase in profits accrued from income-generating activities after receiving loans from the CultureBank (p = .0005). The successful model of the CultureBank has great potential for replication in other regions of Mali and West Africa. The African Cultural Conservation Fund (ACCF) is currently establishing two new CultureBanks in the Bambara region of Mali with funding from the World Bank. For more information, visit the ACCF website at www.culturebank.org.

I am currently using the data collected in Mali to complete my master’s thesis and will be presenting a paper at the annual meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in March 2003. I also plan to edit videotaped interviews to produce a short documentary video about the CultureBank in Fombori. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the staff at WARA, ACCF, the CultureBank in Fombori and to the entire Fombori community for enabling me to complete this research project.

Tara Deubel
Graduate Student of Anthropology
University of Arizona

Igbo Translation Project

My colleague, Dr. Bertram I. N. Osuagwu, and I were beneficiaries of a grant from the West African Research Association which enabled us to collaborate on a research project last summer. The grant was under the auspices of the Collaborative Research program of WARA. The grant made it possible for Dr. Osuagwu (of the Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri, Nigeria), a sociolinguist and leading authority in Igbo language and I (then of St. Augustine’s College, Raleigh, North Carolina) to travel to Dakar, Senegal to work on the final phase of a bi-lingual biography which I had initiated and had been working on for seven years. Prior to our work in Dakar, I had been working on an English edition of the biography of a retired Nigerian Episcopal Archbishop, His Grace, Most Reverend Benjamin Chukwuemeka Nwankiti. The WARA grant made it possible for the biography to be translated into the Igbo language.

Archbishop Nwankiti was consecrated Bishop in the heat of the Nigerian civil war on April 25, 1968. His first major task was to cater for the millions of displaced and dispossessed Biafrans in the war-torn region of Eastern Nigeria. He catered for thousands of refugees and prisoners and took part in peace efforts initiated by churches of all denominations in West Africa to bring the war to an end. When he retired in 1998, he was the longest-serving Anglican Bishop in Nigeria, and possibly all of West Africa. What made his biography a necessary endeavor was his specific historical role in leading the Anglican Church in its transition from the colonial to the independence era. But equally spectacular was his own evolution from an orthodox Bishop to a “radical” Bishop who devoted enormous amounts of time to the defense of human rights and the rights of prisoners – a Bishop who strongly advocated that Christians should not shy away from active politics in their countries. If politics was a “dirty game”, it needed people of conscience to sanitize and move it in the right directions. Because of these roles, Archbishop Nwankiti had transcended religious and ethnic barriers to become exceedingly popular among all Nigerians irrespective of religious affiliations or ethnic loyalties. He was also greatly respected on the international scene, so much so that some observers he had become “the Archbishop Tutu of West Africa”. The story of his life was, therefore, a necessary reading in all environments where religious co-existence and cross-cultural accommodation were essential to human survival and peace.

Although we did not get the full grant that would have enabled us to stay our anticipated duration of two to three months, the partial grant was, nonetheless, very useful. We stayed in Dakar from June 24 to July 24, 2002. One advantage of this was that we had to endeavor to do in four weeks what we could have done in ten to twelve weeks. Impossible as it looked initially, we were able to achieve our goal within the limited period. The English edition of the biography A Good Shepherd: A Biography of Most Reverend Benjamin Chukwuemeka Nwankiti was finished and the first draft of the Igbo translation was also completed. The credit for that remarkable achievement goes mostly to the overwhelming support of the WARC staff in Dakar. They were singularly cooperative and went out of their way to make our task less rigorous. In particular, we remain grateful to Mrs. Astou Touré Gaye (Administrative Assistant), Ms. Nene Ndiaye Diop (Assistant to the Director), Mr. Abdoulaye Niang (RED Assistant), and Mr. Cheikh Tidiane Thiim (Library Assistant) for their extra kindness and care. We are also grateful to Ms. Rouguiyatou Sow and Mr. Hassan Ould Hamed, both of the Department of English, University of Dakar, who went out of their way to be truly helpful as guides and “interpreters” during sight-seeing and shopping! They turned what could easily have been “all work and no play” into a pleasant, exciting and educational experience leaving in us the longing desire to return to Dakar at the next possible opportunity!

We are happy to report that the English edition of the biography has since been accepted for publication by African Heritage Press, San Francisco, California. The Igbo edition is in the final stage of preparation for publication.

Ernest N. Emenyonu
Chair of the Department of Africana Studies
University of Michigan - Flint
Rain is life in the semi-arid Sudano-Sahelian Central Plateau of Burkina Faso. Precipitation measures approximately 600 mm per year but is also extremely variable. Mossi farmers have subsisted and built kingdoms in this marginal zone of West Africa for hundreds of years. Some research suggests that the ways in which Mossi farmers negotiate the rains play an important role in their ability to survive and thrive in this semi-arid region. For three months, I systematically documented how some Mossi rural producers forecast seasonal rainfall and what they do with these predictions. The experience and data will assist me in formulating a dissertation proposal within the Department of Anthropology at the University of Arizona. I gratefully thank WARA and my field assistant Aimé Somé for making my fieldwork both possible and successful.

Other scholars had done similar work among Mossi rural producers around Bouloua in Namentenga Province, Burkina Faso. Based on their work, I knew that farmers observed the behavior of flowering trees, insects, migrating birds, winds, stars and dreams to predict seasonal rainfall. I intended to build on their insights and empirically test these local techniques with meteorological data. The hope was to find proxy records of these local indicators and compare them with meteorological data.

I spent the bulk of my time in the village of Rollo, which is located in Bam Province, northern Burkina Faso. Rollo is predominately inhabited by the Mossi who are the dominant ethnic group of the Central Plateau, which makes up approximately one-third of the area of Burkina.

My research revealed that Mossi farmers in Rollo use many of the same indicators to forecast rain as their counterparts in other parts of Burkina. One focus group discussed how winds that precede the rainy season in May predict whether the rains will be abundant or meager. If these winds blow from the southwest to the northeast, the season will have inadequate rainfall and long periods of drought. If, on the other hand, these winds blow from the north to the south, then farmers believe that rainfall will be adequate and evenly distributed. These farmers spoke in terms of analogies and stated that in the former case, it is as if “the winds are coming from the ocean to the desert in search of salt.” In the latter, it is as if “the winds are coming from the desert and going to the coastal forests in search of kola.” Kola nuts are a prestige item that is given to chiefs and elders as a sign of respect. Salt is associated with dryness while kola is associated with abundance and these characteristics play a role in how signs are read in terms of pre-rainy season winds.

With only a few exceptions, farming decisions are based primarily on received, as opposed to predicted, rainfall. But these exceptions are revealing. Mossi farmers commonly plant maize in fields immediately surrounding their village compounds. In one instance, a farmer had planted millet. He explained that every year he conducts an experiment whereby he plants maize, sorghum and millet in three separate jars at the beginning of the rainy season. These jars rest within his compound walls and he then selects the variety that matures fastest for planting around his home. This year, millet outperformed the other varieties in his experiment. The particular variety he planted is a short-cycle millet that matures quickly and performs well even under drought-like conditions. This case was one of the few examples of agricultural decision-making based directly on predictions.

Overall, Mossi rural producers observe a wide-variety of signs within nature to forecast seasonal rainfall. In many cases, it is not the indicator, per se, but its ability to serve as an analogy for rain that lends it explanatory weight. Nonetheless, the link between local forecasts and agricultural decisions is indirect. In these rare cases, it appears that the decision itself was based on direct individual observations. Since some of these local signs do inform agricultural decisions, the potential for them to explain atmospheric interactions is at least plausible. Thus, in future fieldwork I intend to further explore the relationship between winds at the debut of the rainy season and its possible connection to regional rainfall.

Colin T. West
Graduate Student of Anthropology
University of Arizona

Thesis-Writing Trip to Germany

I was awarded a WARAX travel grant to visit the Department of Biogeography of the University of Bayreuth, Germany and the Max Planck Institute, Germany from mid-February through mid-May 2002. The objectives of the visit were: i) to do more efficient literature research, ii) to complete my data analyses, iii) to complete my thesis writing, iv) to work on joint publications with my German counterpart. As expected, these visits gave me the chance to have access to many more resources than I could ever expect to in Côte d’Ivoire. This report provides an overview of the activities carried out during my stay in Europe.

During my stay in Germany, I was based at the department of Biogeography with the status of a research associate. That status offered me access to all of the resources of the university, including a well-equipped office, photocopy machines, specialized libraries and assistance by the personnel of the university. My working conditions were much better than expected. I could have access to most top-ranking journals in the field of behavioral ecology and conservation biology either at the library or by doing online research, with the possibility of ordering articles from other universities on behalf of the Department of Biogeography.

In Bayreuth, I had the opportunity to learn the statistical package SPSS and some advanced statistics, such as Hierarchical Loglinear Models. The assistance of my counterpart and other people from the department was highly appreciated in this respect. I was able to complete my data analyses and continue writing my thesis, the first draft of which was almost finished by the time I left Ger-
many. I hope to defend the thesis in a few months in Abidjan. I also had the chance to work on two scientific paper proposals with my counterpart. WAR A will be acknowledged in these papers that will be submitted to the Cambridge University Press for publication. A one-week visit to the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig gave me the chance to have access to journals that I couldn’t find in Bayreuth, making it unnecessary to order some articles.

Being in Germany made it easy for me to be invited to other European countries. In fact, I was able to participate in an international seminar organized by Tropenbos International and the European Tropical Forest Research Network (ETFRN) in The Hague, Netherlands on March 20-21, 2002. The topic was “Forest Valuations and Innovative Financing Mechanisms for conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests”. I was also able to attend a one-week GIS training course in the botanical gardens of Geneva, Switzerland (April 8-15, 2002) and meet a statistician in Montpellier, France (May 1-5, 2002).

Inza Koné
Graduate Student
University of Cocody, Côte d'Ivoire

Sahelian Music and American Blues

I conducted a joint research project over the summer of 2001 in Senegal, Mauritania and Mali with Dr. Ibrahima Seck. Our research was supported by a Collaborative Scholars-in-Residence Fellowship. The purpose of our collaborative research was to create a short documentary as a visual component to Dr. Seck’s Ph.D. dissertation. The subject of this related research was the relationship between African traditional music of the Sahel Region and that of the American Blues form found along the Mississippi Delta.

We began our visual documentation during the second week of July, traveling into Mauritania by land with Wendy Wilson-Fall, Oumar Ndongo, and Moulaye Keita, a sociologist and scholar who served as our liaison and translator. In the city of Nouakchott, we set up appointments to videotape interviews with other scholars and popular musicians in the area. We also participated in a presentation from the West African Research Center’s director, Dr. Wilson-Fall and president, Dr. Oumar Ndongo, to faculty members at the University of Nouakchott. Accompanied by representatives of the university, we paid a visit to the American Embassy to announce our research and to establish cultural alliances.

One week after our return from Mauritania, Dr. Seck and I traveled into the interior of Senegal, to the Fouta Region. There, we videotaped interviews and performances by a family of Griots and traditional musicians in the location of Njum Waalo, their village within the boundaries of Podor. This journey extended into Matam, the home of Dr. Seck’s family and we recorded interviews with local elders to document their cultural knowledge-memory of slavery. The oldest elder we interviewed was said to be 110 years old, a Fulbe woman.

In early August, we presented the research-in-progress as unedited video to a Fulbright-Hays group of American teachers and members of the WARC community. Dr. Seck spoke of his research on the Blues form along the Mississippi Delta and of his efforts to produce the first annual Bouki Blues Festival in St. Louis, Senegal in January 2002. We also spoke of our travel objectives for Mali.

We left very early the following morning by air to Bamako with the intention of traveling in country to Nyefunke to interview Ali Farka Touré. Upon landing in Bamako, we learned from a reliable source that Ali Farka Touré was coming to Bamako from Nyefunke. We also discovered that the subject matter of our joint research was timely. While in Bamako, we encountered a large film crew from a PBS network in New York seeking answers to some of the same questions about these historical and genetic relationships in African traditional music and the American blues. Nonetheless, we were successful in finding and making viable contacts there. Regardless of the fact that we could not offer large honorariums to the participants, the cultural community in Bamako showed us a great deal of support and hospitality.

I was scheduled to leave Dakar for home the last week in August. In that small amount of time, much happened. We were able to obtain the interview of local musician, Vieux Mack Faye, and while doing so, happened upon the spontaneous performance of a troupe of Fulbe Acrobats. We promptly recorded them in action, dancing, singing and playing traditional instruments. Dr. Seck invited them to perform at the West African Research Center the following day. They did so, and we were able to videotape their performance and interviews as well as provide cultural entertainment for the lunch crowd at WARC. Dr. Seck also invited them to perform at the upcoming Bouki Blues Festival.

Since returning to Milwaukee, I began a full year Sabbatical. As a follow-up to our project, Dr. Seck and I met in New Orleans to present the work-in-progress to an audience at a cultural bookstore. This served two purposes; 1) to raise the awareness of the local community of the ties between New Orleans and Senegal and, 2) to secure some local support and build an American audience for the Bouki Blues Festival. We also recorded an interview with Dr. Seck’s mentor, historian Dr. Gwendolyn Midlo-Hall, who attended the festival in January. Shortly after my return from New Orleans, I began logging footage and making cassette tape copies of the spoken interviews for the purpose of translation from Pulaar to English and French.

Traveling to the Fouta region of Senegal was awe-inspiring for me as a visual artist. I hope to have the opportunity to return in the near future and am planning to develop a proposal for a Fulbright Fellowship to facilitate research in the region. I would especially like to say thank you to Dr. Makward for encouraging us to submit our joint proposal for this project. I wish him all the best.

Portia E. Cobb
Associate Professor of Film
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
Gambia/Senegal Language Research

Late in 2001, I began planning a research/study trip to Senegal and The Gambia for about five months in 2002. I was planning on beginning a degree at Teachers College, Columbia University in the fall and wanted to do some work in the field ahead of school.

The point of the trip was to continue research begun at IBM in West African languages and to continue study of Pulaar and Wolof. I lived in a Mandinka village in The Gambia for three and a half years as a Peace Corps forestry extensionist from 1996 until 1999, so I had many contacts in The Gambia and a couple in Senegal, as well, before I left. I contacted WARA shortly before leaving and met with enthusiasm and a grant of partial support, as well, for my trip.

Arriving in Senegal, I lived in Dakar for one month with a family that I was directed to by the staff of the West African Research Center. I had been in and through Dakar about nine times during my Peace Corps service, so I had some familiarity with the city. While in Dakar, I busied myself most of the time studying Wolof. I was also able to review the materials that were being included, scanned in by the staff at WARC, for the UNESCO-funded African Language Materials Archive (ALMA). I studied with a man I met at WARC and also made many friends through the family I was living with and the Baobab center nearby. The people of Dakar were wonderfully hospitable and kind.

I left for The Gambia in late March and happened upon a kindred soul, a forester and Mandinka from The Gambia, on the bus south. I took a small chance and stayed with him and his family for one week in Sukuta, outside of Banjul, and then moved to a small, nominally Pulaar community near the coast. This suited me perfectly, as my aim was to study Pulaar and be close enough to the city to go there once a week. The village I ended up in, Youna, was especially wonderful in that there were family compounds contained in the village that were Wolof, Serehuli (Soninke), Pulaar, Mandinka, Jola, and even Manjaago. It was quite rural in character, but very close to the capital area. I spent five days of each week there studying Pulaar with the sons of the Alkaali (mayor, roughly) and teaching English an hour each day in the primary school. The other two days of the week I traveled five or six miles in three vehicles to Fajara and Kanifing, closer still to Banjul, to do background work for a Text-to-Speech engine in Pulaar, a Mandinka Roman/Arabic script transliteration filter, and word lists for an automated weather-forecasting web site. I did the Text to Speech work with a couple of Pulaar Peace Corps trainers that I knew. The transliteration filter research was with some people I knew in Sukuta and with a group of fifty high school students in Bundung; some of the weather lists were created in the United States (Pulaar, Mandinka) and then checked over in The Gambia, while the Wolof list was created there. The people who helped me with that were a couple of Gambian literacy experts, the state meteorological division staff, and a couple of missionary literacy groups, as well.

Cellular telephones had come into use since I had left in 1999, and I got myself one. It turned out to work in the village, which was an incredible time-saver, as I was able to make and receive calls, make appointments, and the like, all from Youna before getting on the road each week.

I was able to nearly finish the Pulaar database – I am putting the finishing touches on it right now. I have arranged with the people at the MBROLA project in Mons, Belgium to process the speech data once I have made the recordings and edited them down. This is a university research group that will process speech information free of charge for non-commercial, non-military projects. The final lists for the weather words are still circulating around and are available to anyone who wants to take a look and/or offer suggestions. The transliteration project is the first of two planned exercises. This first one was with high school students from all over The Gambia. Next I hope to do one with older Mandinka speakers, either here in New York or back in West Africa somewhere. I am now in my second semester of work toward a Masters of International Education Development with a focus on Language, Literacy and Technology at Teachers College, Columbia University. I hope to make a trip to France in the next couple of years to learn more French and broaden my horizons.

You can go and look at some of the preliminary data and works-in-progress on my research page at: http://www.columbia.edu/-jad2034/research/index.html.

Jacob Dyer, III
Graduate Student of International Education Development
Teachers College, Columbia University

Women’s Healing Associations and Fertility in Nigeria

Every Friday in the small village of Elu in Southeastern Nigeria, Igbo women of the Owummiiri healing society gather together in a resident compound to sing, dance and offer sacrifices to the water spirits. In exchange, the water spirits offer their devotees health, fertility and wealth and, through possession, provide valuable healing knowledge to Owummiiri priestesses. In a country where infertility and infant mortality are prevalent and socio-economic conditions unstable, women of Owummiiri attempt to neutralize these realities through indigenous ritual and healing practices.

During my field research this past summer, I worked closely with the women of Owummiiri in an effort to understand how infertility was both understood and confronted by women at the local level, especially in light of Nigeria’s relatively new concern with family planning and population control. Women’s fertility has always been an important issue in Nigeria. However, the way that it is being approached by governmental policies and NGO’s represents a fundamental break with the perceptions that many Nigerians have, both currently and historically. On the national level, the
discourse on women’s fertility emphasizes the need to curtail high fertility rates through the use of family planning methods and modern contraceptives. Yet, on the local level, high fertility is often valued and desired by men and women in both rural and urban areas. Whereas national policies are working to transform these local perceptions, healing societies like Owummiri are instead accommodating them, which has ultimately contributed to their popularity and success.

Owummiri priestesses specialize in the treatment of social, physical, and spiritual ailments associated with fertility. These include solving marital problems, preventing infant mortality, treating patients for sexually transmitted diseases and curing infertility. For the members of Owummiri, infertility is understood not as a biomedical condition but as a social and spiritual condition, which also requires a social and spiritual cure. This is quite different from the view espoused by family-planning clinics in the area that seek to explain and treat infertility with the help of western biomedicine. These clinics are not trusted by many Nigerian women, nor are they affordable for them.

Because fertility is so deeply tied to local understandings of female personhood, the Owummiri society may also be viewed as a forum in which women can construct and negotiate their identities outside of formal kinship structures. Membership in Owummiri cross-cuts kinship ties by attracting women based on their common experiences of affliction. Once initiated, members actively define and promote the values of the society through a strict set of rules and taboos. In addition, the role of Owummiri priestess not only provides a woman with supplemental income, but also endows her with a higher social status. Thus, by circumventing formal structures of authority and creating a space where women have the ability to define themselves in their own right, Owummiri is as much about the social empowerment of women as it is about curing their physical ailments.

Thus, while NGO’s like the Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria continue their efforts to teach Nigerians about contraception and family planning, the women of Owummiri seek out their local water spirits to increase their chances of having children. Although the national population policy describes children in terms of statistics and stresses the strain that high fertility has on the country as a whole, Owummiri women acknowledge that having many children affords them social status and their own personal form of social security. In postcolonial Nigeria where such things like social prestige and social security are not so easy to come by (especially for women), the importance of such healing societies cannot be ignored.

Christey Carville Routon
Graduate Student of Anthropology
Southern Illinois University

Nigeria in the Twentieth Century

From March 29-31, 2002, I participated in a conference entitled “Nigeria in the Twentieth Century”, held at the Flawn Academic Center, the University of Texas at Austin, and made possible by the award of a Travel Grant by the West African Research Association. Speakers addressed and discussed various issues relating to Africa and Nigeria, including literature, drama, health, agriculture, environment, the military, the police, democracy, religion, culture, and traditional institutions. These issues were considered from the Pre-Colonial period up to the present time.

My paper, entitled “Cultism and the Future of Nigerian Youths in Institutions of Higher Learning in Nigeria” came up for presentation on the last day of the conference under the Panel “Educating the Nation: Policies and Practices”. The paper generated a lot of discussion as participants condemned cult practice among students and supported a multifaceted approach to solving problems arising from the practice.

Other events at the conference included a dinner at a Nigerian restaurant in Austin and a Conference Banquet, where participants

had the opportunity to meet informally with other researchers based both within and outside the country. This facilitated extensive networking in the various areas of research.

The conference gave me the opportunity to meet other researchers in my area of interest and to consolidate some areas of my research. It was noted that researchers in similar fields are not aware of some of the works of their colleagues. It was decided at the conference that participants should come together to form a research group and that a database of research works in various fields should be put together.

The conference ended on March 31, 2002 with participants determined to implement many of the suggestions aimed at improving the situation in Nigeria in the new century.

Oluymisi Bamgbose
Senior Lecturer, Head of Department of Private Business and Law
University of Ibadan, Nigeria

April 2003
Views on the African University: a discussion with Patrick Seyon and Wande Abimbola

On May 1, 2002, WARA U.S. Director Leigh Swigart sat down with two former heads of West African universities to talk about their past experiences and future hopes for universities in the region. Dr. Patrick Seyon served as president of the University of Liberia from 1991-96. Dr. Wande Abimbola was the vice-chancellor of the University of Ife in Nigeria from 1982-89. Both currently teach in the Boston area and are research fellows in the African Studies Center of Boston University, where WARA is also headquartered. Following are excerpts from a wide-ranging recorded interview that lasted over 90 minutes.

Leigh Swigart: What kind of career path took you gentlemen toward your respective university positions?

Patrick Seyon: I worked my way straight up from the lowest rank of the academic ladder all the way through to the presidency. I started off in an administrative post as assistant to the president. Then I became director of a Liberia government project to establish an agricultural college. Out of that experience I later traveled to the U.S. to study and returned to head what then became a major effort at planning and relocating the university from its location in downtown Monrovia to the new campus. And we couldn’t get away from the two-campus operation. We ended up splitting it. Science and technology and agriculture were moved to the new campus.

At that point I got to be Vice President. There were other political problems in the ’80s. Soldier Boys had come to power who were in an uproar trying to redefine state/university relations. We needed to be accountable to taxpayers. At the same time, we knew that the Soldier Boys didn’t know what a university was, what it did, how it would be operated. They thought that being leaders of state meant that they were leaders of the university and we had to take orders.

LS: What was their educational background?

PS: There were some who were outright illiterate, some who couldn’t read their names if you wrote them as big as this building. Some said that Doe had at some point finished high school, but the most I got to know about his level of education was he went through the ninth grade. Yet there was an arrogant feeling that he knew, and could therefore tell university professors what to teach and how to teach it in their classes.

LS: Did they recognize the potential impact of the University of Liberia education on future citizens and leadership?

PS: Vaguely! In my own personal case I ran into trouble, because a month after the coup took place, when there was all the euphoria about revolution, I made a presentation at the university and said that we didn’t have a revolution. We had a military coup. That was the start of my problems.

LS: And what year was that?

PS: That was in 1980. The coup took place in April, and in May at a former university colloquium I made the statement. A formal presentation in a university setting that was criticizing the government. Then of course in 1984 there was a raid on the university, which was a difficult time for us. I had participated as a member of the constitutional commission in writing a draft of the new constitution following the overthrow of the government in 1980. And we were all excited about the opportunity to really build a democratic society from the ground up.

1984 came to a head when the military raided the campus. I was supposed to be among some of the people who were targeted to be killed on the campus. The Doe government strenuously denied that students were killed on the campus. At least 2 or 3 students were reportedly killed on the campus. We knew they were brutally raped and mercilessly beaten up and so on. We asked for a commission of inquiry and were charged with being agitators, communists, and so on—and got no help from the Reagan government. Then of course in ’84 Doe changed uniforms and then declared his intentions to run. In ’85 the elections were held. I left at the end of ’84 due to several threats. They were literally tracking me down wherever I went.

LS: And where did you go in ’84?

PS: In 1984, I came to the U.S. I came as a visiting scholar to the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. I returned to Liberia after being in the U.S. from 1984 to 1990. In 1991 I became president of the university.

LS: Let me move to you Wande. Just tell me the same story. I suppose Patrick’s story raises the issue of what your
university’s relationship has been like with the Nigerian government over successive regimes.

Wande Abimbola: I suppose that, like Patrick, I started from the lowest level as a faculty member. I started in 1963 in the position of junior research fellow in the Institute of African Studies. As a matter of fact, that was the very first African Studies Institute in Nigeria, established in '62. At that time, I had not yet graduated from the same university with an honors degree in history when I was adopted into African Studies. So, I decided to change my discipline from history to linguistics.

Then I came to the United States to Northwestern University, where I took a master’s degree in linguistics. But when I returned to Nigeria, the military had taken over. I went to the University of Lagos where I had a position in the School of African/Asian Studies, where we had just established a program for the teaching of languages and literature. I taught in that program from 1966 to 1972. I also enrolled as a part-time student for the study of my Ph.D. in literature at Lagos. I took the first Ph.D. of that university in 1971.

In 1972 I was invited to the University of Ifé to start a similar program, which was finally approved in 1975. I became the first acting head of the department. In 1976 I was appointed by the university to the Chair of the Study of African Languages and Literature.

LS: And which languages were taught?

WA: In Ifé we decided to teach only Yoruba. We left the possibility of adding other Nigerian and African languages later on.

LS: Was this seen as an answer to the dominance of the English language?

WA: No, I don’t think there was that type of competition. We saw it as a need to develop our native languages, and to promote traditional scholarship in Ifé so that we were able to function as academics using those languages.

LS: Do you think that establishing these centers served to raise the status of those languages?

WA: Oh very much so, very much so. That was back in 1976. In 1980 I came to Amherst College as their second Professor of Comparative Religious Ethics. Before I left for Amherst, from 1977-1979 I was elected as Dean of the Faculty actually for a few years. Then in 1982 I was appointed as Vice Chancellor. I served in that university for 7 years. As you may know, the University of Ifé was, and is still to some extent, the most volatile academic spot on the African continent.

LS: How do you explain that?

WA: It is a sign that it is a university. Universities should be a center of debate.

PS: Let me touch on that point about a campus being a center of debate. At the time there was the cliché of nation-building. The university was supposed to take all of the ethnic groups of society and form them into one national whole. But what happened at the university was that these groups came and formed ethnic associations. There we came under attack by the government, because there we were supposed to be fostering nation-building and we seemed to have been fostering ethnic identities. So on the one hand, there was a feeling that we were reneging on what was a major national policy goal. At the other end was the lack of understanding of the policy makers, that the university is a center of debate and that it was healthy for the students to come and form opinions, and debate these opinions and have the opportunity to do so. We didn’t know at the university, no one knew how to tell the direction of the whole exercise of nation building, but that it was going to evolve from those debates, that those debates needed to take place in order to shift the national character. That debate between the university and the national policy makers didn’t die. It literally got to be that if those debates on the campus were directed at a particular national policy then we needed to tell the students to keep quiet. The perception of education was that the students were there to learn and getting in debates of national concern was meddling in national affairs, and we needed to make the distinction between learning on the campus and what happened at the capitol, which was just across the street.

LS: And this tension lasted from the 1980s up through the 1990s?

PS: It still does today! There is the perception, depending upon who is in power, that professors and students are saying to those in authority that they know better, they are in the driver’s seat. The policy makers, the politicians, hold on to your life, because they give out the money. So this is a way to hold money until you put those students in line. [National directives said] our duty is to teach, and leave these matters alone!

WA: Nigeria has always had more universities than anywhere on the African continent. Even though Nigerians, or Africans, need us generally, they have still not grasped the point that Patrick was talking about with regard to the fact that, if you are functioning nicely within your ethnic group, that is seen as you taking something away from being the good citizen of your own country. We still have not grasped that.

LS: People tend to think that those two notions are necessarily in conflict instead of co-existing together?

WA: Yeah! I think it is a point that we should stress, because many of them think that – and I think it is a problem of African intelligentsia generally – the more they cut a distance from the ethnic group to which they belong, the more they will be considered or called “civilized,” or well-informed. I think
that this is a real problem in Africa. Nigeria is not an exception. But we didn't have that kind of tension [that Patrick describes] between the university and the government except under Abacha. That was the only time.

**LS:** He was intimidated by the university population?

**WA:** Of course, the university would demonstrate about things, and professors would raise issues and so on, which I think he didn't like. At a point, the universities were closed down for one-and-a-half years during the dictatorship of Abacha. The 5 years of Abacha's rule were very devastating to the university system. I had already finished my time and retired from the university system. I had been there for 27 or 28 years when I retired in 1991. Actually when I retired I went into politics. I contested an election as a Senator, and 91 Senators were conferred in the Senate, and the party that I belonged to won a majority of the seats. So we were entitled to choose the officers of our party contribution to the House of Representatives, because it was under an American-type constitution. So I was there for one year before the Abacha coup. That coup was directly the occasion for me to come to the United States.

**LS:** Now both of you gentlemen are living and working here in the United States. This brings up the perennial question of "brain drain."

**PS:** Even if the African graduate leaves the school and leaves the country... If you look at the case of India, it produced huge numbers of engineers, doctors, and so on. They could not be absorbed in India and they left the country. People said that is how not to do it. If you look now at the submission of the doctors, engineers and so on, when you look at what they sent back home, that is huge money. So in a way, these people who could not be absorbed, who were in a way a loss of revenue or money invested in their education, turned out to be benefitting the Indian society much more than the government itself.

**WA:** Actually the mission of the university is not just to train people to be looking for jobs, but the mission is to train people, to have technical know-how, more than that. Their minds have to be so well-developed that they can also be employers of labor themselves. They can create jobs rather than just be working for someone else. You may be working for someone in the beginning, but then perhaps if the conditions are right, in the end you may be able to start something on your own. If you look at the statistics of people who graduated from any university in Nigeria, or any other African country, you must look at the subjects they took or read in their major area when they were in the university and they will match that with what they are doing, ten years after their graduation. If you were trained as an engineer, perhaps you are no longer an engineer, or if you were trained as an agriculturalist you may be perhaps a politician. Perhaps you were trained as a lawyer and decided that is not what you wanted to do anymore, so you may be a farmer, and so on. The mission of the university should not just be to train people who will be absorbed by the job market, even though that may be an immediate need for many people graduating from the university system.

**LS:** The notion of brain drain, then, is founded on the idea of some geographic place from which people are fleeing. If you come back with the argument that there are huge non-resident populations or diasporas that are outside the country, but whose money is flowing back in, then there is no brain drain as such because there is a benefit deriving from their departure.

**WA:** That is another question I think, but it may be related. Even if you absorb people into the job market and you are paying them, when you look at it, if it is not enough for them they will go outside. When you look at the monies given to him or her, it may not be enough to keep them there. So the brain drain is something that has affected the university system in African countries, generally. And I think the main cause of that is the depreciation and value of our currencies. In 1980, when I came here, the Nigerian naira was still about 1 naira, 30 to $1. In 1990 when I came back to Amherst College, the Nigerian naira had depreciated to about 16 or 20 naira to $1 American. Today it is 114 naira to $1. Nigerian professors now earn, full professors, something like the equivalent of $1,000 per month. So I think the problem of brain drain is important, which African countries need to tackle. Various ideas and strategies have been put forward to do that, none of which have helped the economies of these countries. I'm not an economist, but my thinking, my own guess is that a lot of these policies have nothing to do with the economy. It is politics.

**PS:** One needs to be concerned about brain drain. I returned to Liberia in 1991 after having been here from 1984 to 1990. I was at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. The level of violence in individual countries has contributed more to people fleeing and being unwilling to return than economic considerations. When I went to return to Liberia, my salary, as President of the university was $27 a month. I didn't take it. So it is not the case that there are no jobs and so people feel so materially and economically deprived that they cannot survive in those environments or economies, but the level of instability and capriciousness and violence that leave people to say "I can't take this anymore."

**WA:** I agree with you, but you also have to recognize one fact. Let me give you a good example. I moved here in 1998 or 1999. I received a copy of a newspaper, the caption was of the homicide rate reductions in Boston. But it was still over one hundred people were killed that year! If fifty people were killed in my town [in Nigeria] in one year, most people would...
flee because they would feel like they could not live there. There is more violence in other parts of the world than African countries. I think it is important to stress this to some of our own people, especially those who have lived in America for a long time. The insecurity that I think is in a situation like Patrick’s case in Liberia, the war situation where there is active warfare and everything is up for grab by warlords and so on, that is a different case. What would be the excuse that a Nigerian would not have in terms of insecurity that he could not go to Nigeria? I go to Nigeria twice a year. You see, it is so relative.

You are right in one respect. Where you have war, ongoing war, like in many African countries, that is very difficult. Imagine a place like Somalia. I was talking to a Somali taxi-driver who told me that he was going home. I said, “What? Your country has no central government!” He told me that Somalia was doing better without a central government than ever before. Insecurity in many places is not as bad as some people imagine. I think that African governments should create opportunities for people who are abroad to come home and participate in those opportunities. There are Nigerian boys here that work in boiler rooms and I tell them that they need to go home. They tell me that they don’t want to go home because the place is not safe.

LS: Let me come back to a final question about African universities. It is a two-tiered question. What do you think the universities in your countries need in order to get back on their feet? And what can those of us who work on West African issues do to contribute to that effort?

WA: I would say that it is very important to supply books and products. The conditions of libraries are appalling. There are so many universities that do not have the latest journals, but journals that are ten years old. This goes back to the issue of currency depreciation. It becomes very difficult to acquire.

This is just one area where all of our colleagues in America can help. We should encourage people when they go on research to take with them publications, journals, books, even if they are used. They can give them away, and leave them behind. I think that is one area. If the World Bank or USAID wants to help us, that must be enforced to update the library materials. I think we still need training in manpower. This country needs to help train burdened African countries and academics, offer short-term visits for academics from the continent for three months.

PS: There is a bigger question. Africa does need training personnel across the board. The needs of African societies are not necessarily the needs and values of non-African societies, the values and attitudes of consumerism. The African universities are not going to service the needs of African societies if they are only the realizations of Western or developed universities passing their knowledge and so on.

For example, malaria in West Africa kills millions. Few African universities are putting in money for malaria research. There are herbalists in West Africa who have grown herbs and roots to treat malaria. Why not help African universities so that they can develop and to do the research to determine the chemical properties of these herbs and roots? Setting up research institutes or laboratories that address such problems may be one solution.

WA: There are two universities [in Nigeria] funded for research of herbs. So we organized what we called a Drug Research Center. We had pharmacies that were there to do all of the quality control and everything. At a point we had probably more than thirty-eight Ph.D.s. Some of them who trained in this country were there in that center. I think that you hit on it when you were talking about research and development. There were several addresses that I gave when I was President of the university on this subject. We needed to make sure that multinationals or companies that were working in that area were tied up to the university. So that research and development would also, so that local academic people could also participate in that. When you are participating in, say, a pilot project, which we did at the University of Ife, how or where do you go from there? The project was awaiting the Nigerian entrepreneur who would be patriotic enough and have enough money to say “I will put down so much money and produce it in mass and sell it within Nigeria and even beyond.” One of the realities of development back home is that when we carry things to a certain level we don’t have the economic or political organization and will and implementation to carry them to fruition. So maybe somebody else from America or somewhere would benefit from that if the professors who developed all that were to be connected to the company to sell the ideas to them. The university cannot be the same institution that would do the research and do the production and market it. That is not the mission of the university.

PS: The university has in many instances been flattened by violence. Our colleagues in America have not raised concern about these institutions and scholars and students. The universities and the libraries should be internationalized so that they come under the protection of UNESCO. If a university’s library is hit, that is the fountain of knowledge. If people don’t have teachers, people will come there and teach themselves. We have to have a library. I think that some of the people don’t know what a library is. Doe and his people didn’t know what a library is. Doe couldn’t make the connection. So supporting the library resources is important and our colleagues can do that. When the library is hit there should be indignation and outrage.

LS: Thank you very much, Patrick and Wande, for taking the time to speak with me today.
Igbo People and the New African Diaspora

As an ethnographic researcher who has documented a chain migration of Igbo-speaking immigrants to the Chicago area, I am working to enhance understanding of this new diaspora and to examine its confluences in the American, African and global political economy and linguistic landscape. (My dissertation at the University of Illinois at Chicago was “Welcome Ndi Igbo: West African Immigrants and the Rhetoric of Community”, UIC, 2002). The members of the Igbo speaking communities abroad are usually economic and educational emigrants, many of whom are establishing multilocal forms of Igbo community across the globe, while anchored emotionally and (sometimes) economically in the homeland. Two new publications outline this research, one in the Review of African Political Economy (vol 29, issue 92, July 2002), and another entitled “Bless this little time we stayed here: Prayers of Invocation as Mediation of Immigrant Experience among Nigerians in Chicago,” a chapter in Marcia Farr, ed. Ethnolinguistic Chicago: Language and Literacy in Chicago Neighborhoods, Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum Publishing (due spring 2003).

At present, I am working on a larger study that will statistically document, qualitatively describe, and theoretically evaluate why and how the ‘brain drain’ from Nigeria continues to gain momentum. As I seek out new frameworks to understand these recent Igbo migrations, I ask: how might the new diaspora be framed across the centuries of interchanges with, expulsion from, and forcible removal of Africans from the continent? This is a new challenge in understanding the transatlantic flow of African human capital and in investigating a situation that raises new questions about African and American interactions into the future. Portions of this research will be integrated into intercultural communications courses at Drexel University where I am Assistant Professor of Culture and Communication (contact me at: rrr28@drexel.edu).

Recently, there has been a significant efflorescence of Igbo studies reflected especially in an upcoming two-day international conference in honor of Simon Ottenberg, April 4-5, 2003 at Cornell University. For further information contact Prof. Don Ohadike at do20@cornell.edu. Another interesting new development is that the University of Pennsylvania’s African Studies Center has added Igbo language courses to its curriculum. An informal conversation with students in the current semester course (fall 2002) indicated that several are the children of Igbo parents in diaspora. For more information, go to: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/AS.html. Finally, the Igbo Studies Association, which continues to gain momentum, will be meeting formally at the ASA 2003 in Washington, DC on Friday evening. For more information on the Igbo Studies Association, write to: isa@truman.edu or contact the author of this article.

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The Neuropsychological Impact of Cerebral Malaria in Senegal

Emphasized throughout international developmental literature is the need for evaluative techniques with at-risk children that are culturally valid, yet sensitive to the cognitive benefits derived from educational and health interventions. In light of this approach, what is essentially at issue for developmental neuropsychology is the extent to which universal features of brain/behavior development and cognitive ability can be assessed in a similar manner in a variety of cultural contexts.

To illustrate, as a WARA fellow in 1997, my Senegalese co-workers and I completed a neuropsychological evaluation of the effects of early cerebral malaria on Senegalese children. Cerebral malaria (CM) includes as its principal symptoms high fever, recurring chills, lethargy, severe headache, delirium, seizures, coma, and finally, death. It is caused by the parasite P. falciparum, one of four types of malaria-causing blood-borne parasites transmitted primarily by the bites of female anopheles mosquitoes found in the tropics worldwide. Three quarters of all deaths in cerebral malaria patients happens within 24 hours of hospital admission and one of the major indicators of fatal outcome is profound coma. To document the extent and severity of this public health threat, CM is associated with at least 2.3 million deaths annually, from an estimated 400 million cases of malaria each year worldwide.

In our study, twenty-nine Senegalese children survivors of cerebral malaria (CM) performed more poorly on the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (K-ABC) Simultaneous Processing domain and on Test of Variables of Attention (TOVA) attention-capacity indicators in comparison with a matched control group. We concluded that CM is a major public health and human resource threat in Senegal and throughout Sub-Saharan Africa by disrupting neuropsychological integration during critical developmental periods. CM exerts its public health impact throughout the developing world not simply in terms of mortality and morbidity, but also on global neurological integrity, attention vigilance, perceptual acuity, and development of visual-spatial processing and memory in survivors. These effects can be documented in CM survivors, even when no other residual clinical neurological effects seem to be apparent.

In our research, a subsequent structural equation model confirmed that rural children were at greater risk than urban children for CM, leading to attention deficits, impaired cognitive performance, and other developmental risk factors. We documented CM as one of a host of developmental risk factors within the complex web of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa, limiting children’s ability to achieve their full brain/behavior development potential. Our neuropsychological research documents that the human cost of this and other disease epidemics in the tropics go beyond general measures of mortality and morbidity to the human resources necessary for the educational, economic, and social revitalization of these regions.
In conclusion, the integration of neuropsychological theory and practice with the public health domain as part of community and international development is long overdue, and desperately needed for achieving a better understanding of the factors critical in more fully realizing human potential for the future development and well-being of West Africa.

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Beings Perceived:
Muslim Girls in French Schools and Society

"My life is so complicated...You know, for an African, France is a land of dreams. Everyone dreams of coming here, but they don't know what it is." (Tita, 18 years old)

"Me, I find myself totally integrated in France, so I feel at home everywhere. Given that I was born in France, that I speak French, that my culture is French, that I learned French history – France is my country... My identity is: French of Algerian descent, of Muslim religion. I don't feel frustrated at all; on the contrary, I consider my identity an advantage and an asset!" (Fatimah, 16 years old)

Meet Tita and Fatimah: two of twelve focal high school students featured in Beings Perceived, Muslim Girls in French Schools and Society, my forthcoming book based on an ethnography conducted in the Parisian “outer-cities” between 1995 and 1999. Through the lens of an African-American scholar and sojourner to France for more than fifteen years, this text focuses on how socially-excluded youth of North and West African origins are at the nexus of contradictory, yet simultaneous, movements – cultural conformity toward the “national identity” and the social reproduction of inequality through French schools and society. Using the case of Muslim girls born, raised, and schooled in the “other France” – the putative antithesis of a French “national identity” – I document how the triple forces of (1) sub-standard public housing, (2) segregated, secular schooling and (3) competing social and cultural expectations result in a self-representation that these youth paradoxically articulate as “French of ‘x’ descent” (i.e., French of Algerian or Senegalese descent) – a racialized classification in a country where such representations do not officially exist and are popularly rejected.

Indeed, the identity politics unfolding in contemporary France centers upon this generation of youth, and more contentiously those among them who assert, against popular perceptions and opposition, and often with conviction, that they, too, are French. This issue begs several broad, important questions, principal among them being: what are the greater implications of disadvantaged youths’ claims on a socially constructed fiction, termed a “national identity,” in European societies wherein they are deemed, by definition, far removed from this understanding in the courts of public opinion and in the content of national education? Further complicating these matters is the generalized, public stigma assigned to such youth who are deemed violent delinquents, identified as the perpetrators of increased social aggressions and incivilities in France, and objectified as criminals – the targets of racial profiling and curfews in their neighborhoods. And yet, what they are not perceived as is French.

These and a number of timely issues are discussed in Beings Perceived, issues that transcend the French context, as will be shown in an upcoming research project, entitled Bridges and Barriers to Learning “America(n).” This study is designed to examine how first and second generation youth of African (North and West) origins residing in New York City are adapting to what is presented and what they perceive as “American society and culture(s)” in their schools and neighborhoods. In many ways, these projects speak to the disconnect in immigration and migration scholarship involving the African Diaspora, and more specifically to the lived-experiences of youth growing up and being schooled within those contexts.

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Leverage Formation and Deployment in Mediation

Leverage refers to the tangible and intangible resources of power and influence that a third-party mediator brings to bear on adversarial parties to move them to agreement. It may consist of positive agents (carrots), negative agents (sticks), or a mix of positive and negative agents (carrots and sticks). It is the main determinant of a mediator’s ability to induce desired changes in the behavior of parties and, as such, forms the core element in mediation success. But leverage is also one of the least studied subjects in mediation research.

My project aims, therefore, to add to mediation theory by focusing on the various sources from which third parties derive their leverage, and the factors that shape the deployment of leverage in mediation. It investigates three successful mediations (Northern Ghana [1994-1996]; Peru-Ecuador [1995-1998]; and Ethiopia-Eritrea [1998-2000]) and draws general conclusions on how leverage is developed and employed by mediators to produce desired outcomes. The cases were picked for the varied scenarios and degrees of complexity they present. The Peru-Ecuador and Ethiopia-Eritrea cases are both international border conflicts resolved against the backdrop of international law. They vary significantly, however, in their mediation dynamics. The Northern Ghana case, on the other hand, is an internal conflict managed by two competing mediators (the Ghanaian government and an NGO consortium) armed with different incentives. Jointly, the cases span the breadth of conflict situations that are most common in third-party mediation.

Leverage comes in different forms and from varying sources. Theoretically, there is little consensus on the exact nature and role of leverage in effecting changes in adversarial-party behavior. A probe into the causal linkage between negotiated outcomes and choice of, as well as processing of leverage is therefore necessary. There is a need also to understand where leverage comes from and how it evolves into a major channel for inducing desired changes.

The project responds to these needs by exploring how mediators identify and develop leverage at the outset of intervention, and how
they deploy leverage to secure desired goals. It examines the nature of leverage with the aim of highlighting constituent elements and the ranking regimes that delineate the relative advantages of each element vis-à-vis mediation tasks. The study also looks at the important roles of interests and perceptions of both the mediator and adversarial parties in leverage formation. The relationship between the nature of conflict (as determined by its underlying issues, power symmetry, intensity, duration and dynamics) and leverage formation will also be explored as a contribution to the discourse on constructive matching of leverage to the scope of a crisis. On the issue of deployment, the study examines the cost of leverage to the mediator, the merits of leverage packaging, the impact of a mediator’s partiality toward one party, and the issue of timing in leverage deployment. It will also probe how deployment decisions are affected by escalations and competition from other interested third parties.

Adversarial parties often accept or reject a mediator on the basis of perceived ability to produce desired agreements. That ability hinges largely upon the kind of leverage a mediator possesses. Understanding the sources and nature of leverage is therefore central not only to unraveling why mediation works or fails, but also why warring parties prefer some mediators to others. These are the central issues underlying successful conflict management today. The project’s modest contributions will therefore enrich both mediation theory and the practical business of ending conflict through negotiations.

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Entitlement Failure and Food Insecurity in the Ghana-Togo Border Area

This article is a summary of a chapter — “Looking Up to the Victims: Land Scarcity and Women’s Role in Food Provisioning on the Ghana-Togo Border Area,” which I have prepared for a book, Sex, Work and Survival: Gendered Struggles and Coping Strategies in Ghana at the Close of the Twentieth Century. (This book is being edited by Christine and Yaa Oppong). Based on findings from a study, which I carried out in a cash crop growing district of the Ghana-Togo border area (GTBA) in the Volta Region of Ghana, this paper aims to contribute to our understanding of the apparently contradictory position of women in most African communities. (My thanks to WARA for extending its 2001 Travel Grant to me. This has enabled me access more information to update my original findings, which were published as, Changes, Ambiguities and Land Conflicts: Negotiating Land Rights in Buem-Kator, Ghana, which was submitted as a Ph.D. dissertation to The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1999).

Findings have shown that even though women in the GTBA have historically been the main growers of food crops in the area, they, in contrast to their male counterparts, have an inferior status in terms of access to, and control over, land in the area. In other words, women, as opposed to their male counterparts, have played only a small role in the transfer of their kin-based land to migrant farmers and today, they constitute a negligible proportion of cash crop farm owners in the area; and yet, it is they who, either as wives or household heads, face the inescapable responsibility of dealing with increasing household food insecurity that has resulted from the use of the land for cash cropping in the area. Women have little room to escape from the food supply responsibility primarily because it is they who, more so than their male counterparts, shoulder the greater burden of spending time at home. It is the women who are closer to the children and their dependent relatives. It is a common scene in Buem towns to find men sitting under a tree enjoying their pastime activities while their women encounter struggles to ensure the procurement of food and other essentials for the household.

A better understanding of the burden which these women face can be gained when other services that they perform in addition, or as a supplement to food supply, are taken into account. For example, unlike their male counterparts, it is the women who ensure the supply of firewood, the main source of household energy in the area. The search for firewood in the GTBA is a laborious and toilsome task. Because the woods in the surrounding bush have been depleted due to overexploitation, the women and their children have to walk long distances, usually along narrow and winding paths, some of which entail the crossing of streams and/or climbing of hills.

Two arguments are central to this study: (i) that the denial of the women in the GTBA of their customary rights of access to their kin-based land by their male counterparts is a violation of their entitlement and (ii) that the situation thus created is a matter of concern, not only because women generally produce the bulk of food in most of these communities, but also because effective access to productive property is a matter of social justice and a means for the women to improve their welfare.

In his numerous writings, Amartya Sen noted that entitlement connotes rights, which define the relationship between people and the commodities which they need to acquire in order to lead certain kinds of lives. However, as a relational concept, the exercise of people’s entitlement or its lack thereof cannot be reasoned out without reference to the sociocultural context within which it is to be exercised.

At the policy level, the key question is: If membership in a group was traditionally fundamental to one’s eligibility of having access to land in the GTBA, irrespective of gender, why then have women been disadvantaged in the transfer and allocation of land in the area? The policy usefulness of this question lies in the assumption that the mere incorporation of gender components in development programs will not necessarily translate into improving the welfare of women and girls. In other words, in applying the notion of entitlement to the contemporary gender-sensitive development programs in Ghana and, indeed, Africa, in what way can it be assured that gender-sensitive components in contemporary development programs can be translated into opportunities which will improve the living conditions of women and girls in these societies.

Ben Kwame Fred-Mensah
Assistant Professor
Howard University
The crisis that has erupted in Côte d'Ivoire since September 2002 has destabilized the entire region. Given the importance of Côte d'Ivoire's conflict, WARA has asked two scholars to comment on the situation. René Lemarchand is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Florida. From 1992-1996, he served as Regional Advisor on Governance and Democracy for USAID in Abidjan. He continued in the same position from 1996-1998 based at the USAID office in Accra. Babacar Ndiaye is a Senegalese who has served as a UN peacekeeper in Bosnia. He holds a Docteur ès Lettres in Philosophy.

The Venomous Flowers of Ivoirité

The scenario is depressingly familiar: in the midst of bitterly contested elections a fraction of the army tries to seize power, the forces loyal to the government fight back, inexcusably leading to inter-ethnic violence and ultimately to the fragmentation of the national territory into warring factions. With some variations this could be Burundi, or the Congo, or the Central African Republic or Guinea-Bissau. But this is Côte d'Ivoire, a country of 15 million people, accounting for almost half of the world production of cocoa, once the showcase of West Africa, and long regarded as a bastion of stability and economic prosperity. What is at stake is not just the lives of thousands of Ivoirians caught in the cross-fire, but the territorial integrity of the state and the stability of a large swathe of countries through West Africa.

At the root of the crisis lies the potentially murderous notion of “ivoirité”, the core concept of an ideology which calls into question the citizenship rights of perhaps as many as three million long-time Ivoirian residents of foreign extraction, and now raises serious doubts about the political future of the entire northern half of the country, inhabited by Muslims, globally referred to as Dioula.

Like the Hamitic myth in Rwanda ivoirité was first invented to distinguish, then to discriminate and denigrate and ultimately to kill. The worst human rights violations recorded in recent times are all in one way or another traceable to this thinly-disguised form of xenophobia. An estimated 15,000 Burkinabé, all long-time residents, including many born in the country, were forcefully expelled from their homes, in November 1999, and sent back to Burkina Faso; scores were massacred before they reached their destination. An estimated fifty-seven Dioula residents of Yopougon, one of Abidjan’s largest townships, were killed by paramilitary gendarmes in the wake of the bungled elections of October 23, 2000. In December of last year several mass graves were reportedly discovered in Man, in the western part of the country, containing the corpses of some 280 people, mostly Yakouba and Dioula, presumably murdered by loyalist army units after briefly retaking the town.

“The collective ‘we’”, wrote Niamkey Koffi, one of the leading ideologues of ivoirité, “must be distinguished from ‘them’”. But the we/they polarity took on radically different meanings over time. The concept was first given a semi-official formula-
tionable by the abstention of a large portion of northern voters.

Gbagbo’s fatal misstep was his decision to demobilize a large number of troops from the north and northwest, most of them recruited into the army during Guei’s interregnum. The mutiny of September 2002 – immediately followed by the assassination, gang-land style, of Robert Guei and his wife by a loyalist death squad – was the spark that ignited the revolt of the north against the south. ivoirité had now come full circle. From a half-baked xenophobic ideology directed against immigrants, it was now targeted against all northerners. Presumably, their Muslim identities, coupled with their cultural affinities with the Malinke people of Mali and Burkina, cast the strongest doubts about their claims to being genuine citizens of Côte d’Ivoire. Consciously or unconsciously, Ouattara’s sins were now projected against the entire northern half of the country.

Today, with the entire northern half of the country under rebel control, and 2,500 French troops positioned as a fragile peacekeeping force between north and south, the prospects for an early resolution of the crisis are very dim. Greatly complicating the north-south split is the fragmentation of the rebel movement into three rival factions, and the strong probability that some are receiving military assistance from neighboring states, Liberia and Burkina being the most likely candidates to play the role of external patrons. Furthermore, armed militias and death squads have proliferated in both north and south, calling into question the capacity of the parties to the conflict to enforce the recently negotiated cease-fire. To make the situation even more intractable, the key protagonists, Gbagbo and Ouattara, are not on speaking terms. After the latter narrowly escaped an assassination attempt and watched, powerless, from the grounds of the French Embassy, his magnificent villa being burned to the ground by FPI militiants, the gulf between them has become unbridgeable. A Sharon-Arafat type of visceral enmity draws them apart, leaving a leadership void that is rapidly being filled by rebel juntas consisting of obscure non-coms and angry young men.

However well-meaning, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin’s guiding principle – “neither interference nor indifference” – has little practical value as a conflict-resolution strategy. The crisis in Côte d’Ivoire is a classic case of too little too late, as in Rwanda, in Burundi and the Congo. For indifference was indeed the hallmark of France’s attitude when intervention could have made a difference, in 1999, and even more decisively in October 2000, when Gbagbo proclaimed himself the winner of a deeply flawed electoral contest.

What to do? The worst path would be to let the parties to the conflict fight it out and wait for a winner to emerge. The result would be to transform the entire sub-region into a maelstrom of extremely dangerous neighborhoods. Another option is to take sides. For a number of observers, ranging from Jean Ziegler, the Swiss deputy and leading light of the Socialist International, to former US assistant secretary of state Herman J. Cohen, the only way out of the thicket is to recognize Laurent Gbagbo as the sole legitimate claimant to the presidency. “To treat (the rebels) as equal in negotiations undermines the whole idea of democratically elected regimes” Cohen declared in a recent interview (NYT, January 12, 2003): “In effect”, he added, “the message to other countries is ‘Any bunch of guys with guns can shoot their way into power’”. But as anyone familiar with the circumstances of the October 2000 must surely realize, it is only with the strongest reservations that one might describe Gbagbo’s regime as democratically elected. In point of fact the US (unlike France, whose socialist government treated Gbagbo with a solicitude bordering on blindness) did not hesitate to openly condemn the irregularities and human rights abuse brought to light during the elections. As for Jean Ziegler’s characterization of Gbagbo as “one of the very rare real statesmen of his generation” the least one can say is that few informed observers outside the narrow circle of the Socialist International would agree. The bottom line, however, is that Gbagbo is universally detested by northerners. Indeed, one of the key points on which all rebel factions agree insist that there will be no peace until he resigns. A third possibility is to recognize partition. Yet there is little evidence than any of the factions, let alone the Gbagbo government, would accept such a solution, for historical and economic reasons. What is left is a negotiated settlement that would provide the basis for a reconstruction of the state. This implies far more than a new constitutional arrangement, new elections and effective human rights guarantees for all Ivoirian citizens. It means initiating a responsible dialogue between north and south, laying the foundations of a civil society shot to bits by ethnic violence, and a redistribution of national wealth to meet the needs of economically deprived communities – in short nurturing a soil free of the venemous flowers of ivoirité.

René Lemarchand
Professor Emeritus of Political Science
University of Florida

Le conflit en Côte d’Ivoire

Naguère considéré comme le pays le plus stable de l'Ouest Africain, la Côte d’Ivoire s’est progressivement mise dans une situation de crise, puis de conflit depuis l’amorce de la question de la succession de son père-fondateur et premier président, Félix Houphouët-Boigny. La mort de ce dernier, en décembre 1993, a inexorablement enclenché le mouvement sur la pente qui mène tout droit au chaos, à la violence et surtout à la guerre civile, à l’image de la Sierra Leone et du Liberia voisins. Aujourd’hui, ce
grand pays (322000 km² et plus de 15 millions d’habitants) se classe parmi les états en déliquescence, renforçant ainsi une certaine idée de la faillite des états-nations du continent noir (malgré les avancées démocratiques institutionnelles observées par-ci par-là, la poussée du multipartisme, l’avènement des conférences nationales et l’organisation régulière d’élections) et contredisant aussi du même coup tous les pronostics favorables liés à une certaine forme d’afro-optimisme basé sur le seul facteur du développement économique.

Certes, le conflit en cours dans ce pays mérite une ou des solutions appropriées, mais surtout des éléments d’intelligibilité clairs. Sans épuiser tous les aspects relatifs à l’analyse des déterminants de la situation actuelle de la Côte d’Ivoire, nous esquissons ici quelques aspects explicatifs de l’état de fait que vit cette ancienne vitrine de l’Afrique de Sub-saharienne, véritable locomotive économique de la CEDEAO (Communauté Économique de l’Afrique de l’Ouest) et tête de pont du pré-carré français.

1. Le conflit ivoirien met d’abord à nu une certaine forme d’échec de la démocratisation dans une certaine Afrique. (D’autres pays ont réussi des transitions démocratiques paisibles, avec des élections transparentes sanctionnées par l’arrivée de l’opposition au pouvoir : Sénégal, Guinée-Bissau, Ghana, Mali…) En effet, le problème du contrôle du pouvoir est au centre de l’atmosphère de violence qui recouvre ce pays. Les hommes politiques semblent avoir échoué dans leur rôle primordial qui consiste non seulement à gérer les affaires de la cité, mais également à organiser la transition politique et à établir des règles républicaines de la concurrence politique, lesquelles règles se doivent d’être justes et conformes à l’idéal du seul peuple souverain. (Elections activement boycottées en 1995, interdiction de candidature à certains leaders politiques [Djeni Kobena et Alassane Dramane Ouattara notamment].)


3. Des lignes de fractures à caractère ethnique et identitaires sont apparemment entretenues depuis que le concept d’ivoirité a fait école. La Côte d’Ivoire qui rassemble le plus grand nombre d’immigrés, à cause certainement de son potentiel économique, a vu se développer une certaine vision de l’autre marquée du sceau de la différence, de l’alterité et parfois même de la condescendance pure et simple (cas des milliers de travailleurs burkinabés dans les plantations de café et de cacao). Cette déferlante identitaire n’a même pas épargné les propres fils du pays qui, bien des fois, se sont retrouvés apatrides et exilés chez eux. Cet état de fait reflète d’ailleurs des relations peu appaisées entremises avec les pays voisins, toujours soucieux du traitement réservé à leurs ressortissants (Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Liberia…).

4. Enfin, les tentatives de sortie de crise et les propositions de solutions apportées au conflit en Côte d’Ivoire prouvent une certaine forme d’impotence fonctionnelle des organisations régionales et sous régionales. Depuis la montée de tension du 19 septembre 2002, qui a produit une quasi-partition du pays avec la moitié nord sous le contrôle des différents mouvements rebelles (Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest [MIPGO], Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix [MJP], Mouvement Patriotique pour la Côte d’Ivoire [MPCI]), la CEDEAO n’a pas pu intervenir immédiatement par le déploiement de l’ECOMOG (Economic Community Of West African States Monitoring Group), son bras armé. Cela est non seulement la traduction d’une incapacité logistique à supporter une telle opération, mais aussi le reflet de rivalités sous-jacentes en terme de leadership entre anglophones et francophones. Egalement, la létargie constatée est le signe d’une difficulté foncière à mettre en œuvre en temps réel et au plan pratique les concepts opérationnels américains et français d’ACRI (African Crisis Response Initiative) et de RECAMP (Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix).

Tels sont quelques-uns des déterminants à la lumière desquels le conflit ivoirien pourrait s’appréhender. Et sans doute, ils entreront en considération dans la résolution de ce conflit supplémentaire, et surtout de trop, en Afrique de l’Ouest pour un véritable agenda pour la paix.

Babacar Ndiaye
Docteur ès Lettres
Former UN peacekeeper (UNMIBH)

Les vues exprimées dans cet article appartiennent seulement à l’auteur, et ne représentent pas nécessairement les vues de WARAO ou d’aucune autre organisation à laquelle l’auteur est affilié.
A Review of:

These two thick volumes go back to the end of the Algerian war and forward to the dawn of the new millenium to document a French intervention in Africa so pervasive, sustained, and pitiless as to call in question whether “independence” had any meaning at all. They are not, properly-speaking, academic books, but they should be of great interest to any academic trying to understand Africa, no matter what her or his discipline. Verschave’s books obviously deal with politics and economics, but they extend also to linguistic and cultural policies through “cooperation” and “assistance technique,” to the subversion of development efforts, and to ecological devastation in parts of the continent as well. Think of Oliver North illegally running Reagan’s Central America wars from the basement of the White House, multiply this by forty years, add in freelancers like General Secord, and you have some idea of Verschave’s portrait of French policy in Africa. And, in fact, the closest American analogy for Verschave himself is Noam Chomsky. Like Chomsky’s, these books are intelligent, fearless, heavily documented, and suffused with irony.

The story told by *La Francafrique* and *Noir Silence* starts with the little-known massacre of perhaps 300,000 “bamileke” with French military help in Cameroon around 1960, then reminds us of the thalium poisoning of Cameroonian opposition leader Felix Moumle, the slow-motion murder of Togolese President Sylvanus Olympio in the courtyard of the U.S. Embassy, and Jacques Foccart’s catastrophic support for Biafra, including his systematic use of planes with Red Cross markings to carry arms shipments. (Led by a French army sergeant named Gnassingbe Eyadema, recently returned from service in Algeria, Olympio’s killers telephoned the French ambassador at home at two in the morning in mid-assassination to ask for further instructions!). Add the installation of Omar Bongo to care for French oil interests in Gabon, and the replacement of Sankara with Compaore in Burkina, and you have the foundations of a system which proved surprisingly durable until Houphouet’s death, despite its bloody origins and the continuous violence needed to sustain it.

Verschave also shows that Charles Taylor’s campaign, which ultimately laid waste to both Liberia and Sierra Leone, was launched from Ivoirian territory with Houphouet’s full support, and supplied from Compaore’s Burkina with French arms and French blessing. The same folly that motivated Foccart in Biafra and the later support for “Hutu power” in Rwanda seems to be behind the support for Taylor, namely, the Fashoda syndrome or the desire to compete with “Anglo-Saxon” rivals. *Noir Silence* updates the story with an account of the massive violence (including the use of leftover “Hutu Power” troops!) deployed in 1998 to keep Denis Sassou Nguesso in power in Brazzaville.

Both books are densely footnoted, and Verschave would be the first to acknowledge that he is standing atop a mountain of research done by many others. Knowledgeable readers will already be familiar with many of his individual revelations. What makes the books so extraordinary is their massive act of integration, putting all of this material together in a coherent fashion, so that we can see the same thugs appearing in one country and then in another, the same policy trends producing disastrous results over and over, the same refusal of the French justice system to really investigate state crimes, the same torture methods exported from Algeria to Cameroon to South Africa, etc. These networks are not static, but have changed over time to adapt to new circumstances. During the Gaullist period, Francafrique was centered on Jacques Foccart and run from the Elysee, but the complexities of political cohabitation have fractured and “privatized” Francafrique, with one strong network centered on Charles Pasqua and others around socialist politicians. Many early operatives were veterans of Algeria, Indochina, and even the resistance, but recent generational turnover and political change in France has meant that more and more operatives come from the security milieu around Le Pen’s National Front. However, Francafrique has been and continues to be a creature of both the left and the right, with Mitterand and his people participating just as enthusiastically (and profitably!) as the Gaullists or Chirac and Pasqua.

Many trends emerge from Verschave’s account, including a French policymaking tendency to think ethnically (to the point of calling rivals “Anglo-Saxons” rather than “Americans” or “Anglophones”), to create or exacerbate ethnic conflicts when possible, and then to profit from them in classic “divide and conquer” style. Verschave shows that the racial discourse disseminated by the French Army during the “bamileke” massacres of 1960 is nearly identical to that articulated in support of Hutu Power in Rwanda, and again during Sassou Nguesso’s massacres of 1997-98.

It is important to underline that Verschave has not written one of those books in which all agency belongs to the evil, powerful Europeans, and Africans appear only as passive victims. “Francafrique” refers to an international network that includes both Africans and Europeans. At various times, Africans like Houphouët and Bongo have been more powerful than many Europeans in the network, as almost daily phone calls from the Elysee to Houphouët at some periods testify. More important, Verschave opens *La Francafrique* with an account of himself as a hopeful activist, and closes *Noir*...
Silence with a long section on activist African resistance, including portraits of heroic resisters like Norbert Zongo in Burkina and Pius Njewe in Cameroon. Clearly the idea is that Africans and Europeans of good will can work actively together to stop the horrors.

Verschave works in collaboration with many African researchers, and shows great concern for the suffering of Africans, but he is also concerned for French citizens who are deceived and cheated by their government, and who pay the bills for African adventures they would not approve of. By the end of Noir Silence, it’s clear how the Francophone networks have advanced African governments and made a mockery of fair elections and transparency in many African countries. But it’s equally clear that corruption and covert operations have seriously undermined French constitutional democracy. Jacques Chirac has (in)famously said that “Africa is not ripe for democracy,” but readers of Verschave’s books will be left wondering whether France is ripe for democracy.

Charles Sugnet
Associate Professor of English Language and Literature
University of Minnesota

Nouvelles Dramaturgies d’Afrique Noire

The University of Rennes 2 (Brittany, France) hosted an international conference titled Nouvelles Dramaturgies d’Afrique Noire. The University of Francophone/New Theatre from Francophone Africa Black Africa March 8-9, 2002. The conference provided a panorama of talks and events intended to demonstrate that francophone African theatre should not be understood as an exotic or folkloristic art, as it is a vibrant form of artistic expression. A performance of Koffi Kwahulé’s moving play Jaz, in addition to readings from plays by José Pllya, Kossi Efoui, Léandre Baker, Sony Labou Tansi, Marcel Zang, Caya Makhlé, Koffi Kwahulé, Koulsy Lamko and Michèle Rakotoson brought energy and life to the proceedings. Efoui, Kwahulé, Mercédès Fouda, Makhlé and Maxime N’Debeka were participants in the conference, as were publishers (Françoise Kourilsky/UBU Repertory), festival organizers (Nocky Djédanoum/Fest’Afrique, Monique Blin/Festival de Théâtre Francophone de Limoges) and directors (Daniela Giordano, Guy Lenoir, Alain Piallat). Academic presenters focused on issues of cultural hybridity and exile, subversion and politics, and orality in contemporary African theatre. WAR member Lisa McNee (Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario) presented a paper titled “La dictature de l’opinion: Censure et théatre en Afrique.”

Lisa McNee
Professor of French Studies
Queen’s University

Linguistic Theory and African Languages


Fiona McLaughlin
Associate Professor of Linguistics
University of Florida
Announcements and Opportunities

Francophone Studies in Dakar, Senegal

Study in Dakar, Senegal for the spring semester on a program affiliated with the Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD). Senegal is one of the most beautiful and diverse countries in Africa and yet remains relatively little-known. Located on the Atlantic coast of West Africa, Senegal has long been seen as a crossroads where black African, Islamic, and European civilizations have met, clashed, and blended. Gain first-hand experience and study in this fascinating country that combines a history of gold and slave trade, the impact and residue of French colonialism, and the contemporary vibrant Islamic culture.

The program lasts 20 weeks (January - June) and is taught in French. Course offerings include French language, Francophone culture, Francophone literature, and Wolof, the prominent local language. Advanced students may study courses such as Sociology, Philosophy, History, and Geography. Students will stay with host families. Eligibility requirements include 3.0 GPA at the time of application, minimum junior status by January 2004, and two years of college-level French prior to participation. The application deadline is October 1, 2003. For further information, check out http://studyabroad.msu.edu/programs/senegalfranco.html.

Cindy Chalou
Assistant Director of International Studies and Programs
Michigan State University

A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal

“A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal” will be on view at the Fowler Museum of Cultural History at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) from February 9 until July 27, 2003. Sponsored by the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities and seen in a large gallery measuring 6000 square feet (about 325 square meters), the exhibition concerns a wide range of popular, devotional, healing, musical, architectural, and contemporary arts created by Mourides - a movement based upon the life and lessons of the Senegalese Sufi saint, Sheikh Amadou Bamba (1853-1927). Curators Mary Nooter Roberts (Deputy Director and Chief Curator of the Fowler) and Allen F. Roberts (Professor in the UCLA Department of World Arts and Cultures and Director of the James S. Coleman African Studies Center) have conducted nearly ten years of research in Dakar and adjacent cities with Ousmane Gueye, their research associate. The voices and works of visual artists shape the exhibition and its programming.

Activities to accompany the exhibition include “Art and Spirituality in Senegal and the Mouride Diaspora,” a talk by the curators on February 9, 2003; “Global Saints, Local Lives: Images and Icons in Urban Space,” a major interdisciplinary and interregional conference on April 12, 2003, and a Festival of Senegal in early June 2003. Mouride artists from Dakar will participate in the opening and April conferences. An early preview of the exhibition is available at http://www.fmch.ucla.edu/passporttoparadise.htm, and the exhibition and all activities are open to the public free of charge.

Allen and Mary Roberts have also written a book called A Saint in the City (available after February 2003 from the University of Washington Press). It features a preface by Prof. Mamadou Diouf (University of Michigan) and over three hundred color illustrations. A long introduction on the aura of Amadou Bamba (that is, his baraka as well as the iconic power of his images) is followed by a chapter called “Mystical Reproductions: Photography and the Authentic Simulacrum,” with reference to the fact that all portraits of the Saint are based upon a single photograph taken in 1913. The talismanic impact of the image is demonstrated in chapters on sanctifying domestic space and an “architecture of the Word,” while another chapter discusses glass paintings by Mor Gueye as “visual hagiography.” The works of street artist “Papisto” Samb are presented as agents transforming postcolonial memory, and mystical arts of writing and inscription by Massamba Djigal and Elimane Fall heal personal and collective affilictions. The vocal arts of Mouride women are considered, as is the patchwork “dress of devotion” of Baye Falls, a Mouride subgroup. Finally, the works of internationally acclaimed artists Viyé Diba, the late Mustapha Dimé, Chalys Leye, and Moussa Tine are understood for the beauty of their spiritual dimensions, while a final chapter is devoted to pilgrimage to Touba, the sacred city where the Saint is buried, and the Mouride diaspora that now extends from Touba to most corners of the world.

Inquiries may be directed to the Fowler Museum at (310)825-4361 or the UCLA African Studies Center at (310)825-3686; or see http://www.fmch.ucla.edu.

Allen F. Roberts
Professor of World Arts & Cultures, Director of the James S. Coleman African Studies Center
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
A Special Appeal for Your Support

As those of you who have visited WARC know, the library is an important part of WARC’s infrastructure. Accessible to local scholars, students, and visiting researchers in Dakar, the library provides a welcoming environment and access to many scholarly works that are otherwise inaccessible or difficult to find in Dakar.

Despite its importance, there is no budget line for the library, and it depends entirely on contributions. WARA board member Linda Beck has taken the first step in our campaign to strengthen and expand the WARC library. We encourage all WARA members to consider a contribution in one of the forms noted below.

A Challenge from a Board Member: Journal Subscriptions for the WARC Library

Although a growing number of journals are now online, we all know how invaluable access to academic journals is to our research; indeed, many of us continue to rely on hardcopy distribution. To assist researchers using the WARC library, I would like to request that fellow WARA members join me in supporting the center by donating a subscription to WARC. The hope is that you will renew this subscription annually. I recommend that you consult with WARA to identify a journal in your field that has been prioritized. My husband, Mark Pires, and I have taken the lead, contributing a subscription to the bi-lingual, interdisciplinary journal, The Canadian Journal of African Studies. I hope many fellow WARA members will join us in our support for WARC in Dakar.

Linda Beck, WARA Board Member
Barnard College, Columbia University

A major donation

As this newsletter goes to press, we are pleased to announce a major donation to the WARC library. Dr. R. Hunt Davis, Professor of African History at the University of Florida, has donated a complete collection (35 volumes and over 100 issues) of The International Journal of African Historical Studies to the WARC Library. In his honor, Fiona Mc Laughlin and WARA president Leonardo A. Villalón will contribute a subscription to the journal to maintain the collection up-to-date.

Three Ways to Help

☐ Yes! I would like to contribute a journal subscription to WARC. Please contact us at wara@bu.edu to determine which titles are most needed.

☐ Yes! I would like to contribute funds for purchasing materials for the WARC library. Please send cash or a check (made payable to WARA with “WARC Library” in the Memo line) to: WARA / African Studies Center / Boston University / 270 Bay State Road / Boston, MA 02215.

I can contribute:

☐ $25
☐ $50
☐ $100
☐ Other

☐ Yes! I would like to donate copies of my own publications (books, journals, articles) to the WARC library. Please mail contributions within the USA to: WARC / Center for African Studies / University of Florida / PO Box 115560 / Gainesville, FL 32611-5560. Contributions from outside the USA can be mailed directly to the WARC library at: WARC / B.P. 5456 (Fann-Residence) / Rue E x Léon G. Damas / Dakar, Senegal.
Contemporary Islam in West Africa: Senegal in Perspective

A summer institute for college and university faculty

15-29 June 2003
West African Research Center
Dakar, Senegal

Program statement: As a contribution to the urgent need to increase American understanding of the Muslim world, the West African Research Association is offering this intensive two-week summer institute for college and university faculty. The institute will be based at the West African Research Center in Dakar, Senegal, and its focus will be on this important West African Muslim country, noted for its stability, social harmony, and working democracy. The institute is intended for faculty who wish to enhance and develop either teaching or research related to the issue of Islam in Africa. To the extent possible, the Institute director and the staff of WARC will help participants pursue individual interests in making research contacts or developing teaching materials.

Tentative Schedule and Itinerary: In order to provide as broad a perspective as possible on the various facets of contemporary Islam in Senegal, participants will be offered a series of lectures, seminars and discussion sessions at WARC, with both Senegalese academics and with various religious leaders and activists. They will also travel to religious sites and to “ordinary” non-urban centers outside of Dakar to examine the practice of Islam in everyday Senegalese life. An initial three days of lectures in Dakar is planned, followed by a trip to the holy city of Touba (center of the Mouride Sufi order) and to the historical city of St. Louis. Week Two will include further seminars and talks in Dakar, as well as a two-day trip to Muslim sites, including non-urban settings. We will conclude with a day in a pleasant beach resort in Sali-Portudal.

Costs: The cost per participant is $2,500. This fee will include the full cost of the seminar sessions at WARC (all lectures and seminars); fourteen days of single-occupancy hotel accommodations; all local transportation costs, breakfasts, lunches, and approximately one half of the evening meals; and all local and in-country transportation. Participants will be responsible for their own airfare to and from Dakar; bar, telephone and other incidental hotel expenses; and occasional evening meals.

The Institute Director will be Dr. Leonardo A. Villalón, director of the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida and current President of the West African Research Association. Prof. Villalón is a Political Scientist with extensive teaching and research experience in Senegal. He speaks both French and Wolof, and is the author of Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal: Disciples and Citizens in Fatick (Cambridge UP, 1995).

Application: Participation in the seminar will be limited to 12. For more information or additional application forms, please contact WARA at adambis@africa.ufl.edu. A $500 deposit is required to reserve a space upon notification of acceptance to the institute. This deposit will be non-refundable after 15 April 2003. The balance of $2,000 must be paid before the start of the institute. A detailed program will be sent to all participants in early May.
Application Form

Name: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________

Title: _______________________________

Institution: ___________________________

Tel: __________________ Fax: __________ Email: ____________________________

Area(s) of research interest: ____________________________

Courses taught: ____________________________

Please attach a brief statement of 1-2 pages addressing the following:
- Your previous African experience(s) (research, teaching, travel)
- Your previous experience in the Muslim world
- Your expectations of the institute in terms of its contribution to your research agenda and for your teaching

Applications may be submitted electronically to adamkis@africa.ufl.edu or by mail to:

WARA Summer Institute
c/o Center for African Studies at UF
427 Grinter Hall
PO Box 115560
Gainesville, FL 32611-5560

Spring 2003
**Individual Membership Form**

With your membership, you become eligible to participate in the activities of the West African Research Association, receive first-hand information about grants and fellowships sponsored by WARA, and gain access to the facilities of the West African Research Center (WARC) in Dakar, Senegal. In addition, you will receive the biannual WARA newsletter. The WARA membership year extends from October 1 through September 30. Please type or print clearly and return this form with your check payable to the West African Research Association:

WARA
African Studies Center
Boston University
270 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215

Tel: 617-353-8902
Fax: 617-353-4975
wara@bu.edu

Name: ______________________________________

Address: ____________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________

Title: _________________________________________

Institution: ____________________________________

Tel: __________________ Fax: __________________ Email: __________________

Area(s) of research interest: ________________________

How did you hear about WARA? ____________________________

Are you a member of the African Studies Association? _____ Yes _____ No

Enclosed is a check or money order for (check all that apply):

**Individual membership**

- [ ] $25 regular
- [ ] new
- [ ] renewal

**Institutional membership**

- [ ] $250
- [ ] new
- [ ] renewal
Institutional Membership Form

Please remit $250.00 for institutional membership in the West African Research Association during the 2002-03 academic year. Checks should be made payable to “West African Research Association” and mailed to:

WARA
African Studies Center
Boston University
270 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215

Tel: 617-353-8902
Fax: 617-353-4975
wara@bu.edu

Institution Name: ____________________________
Contact Person: ______________________________
Address: ____________________________________

Tel: __________________ Fax: __________________ Email: __________________

Which African languages does your institution teach, if any?
_____________________________________________________________________

Which WARA benefits particularly interest you?
_____________________________________________________________________

What kinds of services or programs would you like to see WARA offer in the future?
_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

__________ New Membership  ____________ Renewal
WARA Officers and Board of Directors

Officers:
**President:** Leonardo A. Villalón, *University of Florida*
**US Director:** Leigh Swigart, *Brandeis University*
**Secretary:** Eileen Julien, *University of Maryland*
**Treasurer:** Catherine Boone, *University of Texas at Austin*
**Past President:** Edris Makward, *University of Wisconsin and University of The Gambia*

Board:
Robert Baum, *Iowa State University* (serving until 2005)
Debra Boyd, *Winston-Salem State University* (until 2005)
Gracia Clark, *Indiana University* (until 2005)
Barbara Cooper, *Rutgers University* (until 2004)
Godfrey Uzoigwe, *Mississippi State University* (until 2004)
Wendy Wilson-Fall, *WARC Director* (ex-oficio)

WARA extends special thanks to the following outgoing board members:
Fiona McLaughlin
Vera Viditz-Ward
James Delehanty

Institutional Members of WARA

- Brandeis University
- Concordia University Wisconsin
- Council on International Educational Exchange
- Emory University
- Hobart and William Smith Colleges
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- Rutgers University
- University of Florida
- University of Illinois
- University of Kansas
- University of Oregon
- Yale University