



NEWSLETTER

Volume 16 Number 63

April 2011

Comment

If the British press is anything to go by, a wave of 'Afro-optimism' seems to be sweeping the world. A *Guardian* editorial of 19th February admitted that decades of reporting had focused on 'poverty, famine, pestilence, corruption, drought, AIDS and war', crowding out other news. Now, we are told, 'the African story has changed'. Most notably, African economic growth rates are predicted to average 7% over the next two decades, and a hundred African companies have revenues greater than a billion dollars. Social democratic movements sweeping North Africa just serve to emphasise that the continent is being re-shaped as 'confident, assertive, successful, bold and proud.'

Of course we must welcome the recognition (perhaps a little late in coming) that Africa is not after all a 'dark continent'. 'Afro-optimism' has a great deal more to recommend it than 'Afro-pessimism', though it shares the usual drawbacks of confident continent-wide assertions, failing to distinguish between examples of apparently sustainable growth and political reform, and less encouraging ones of exploitation and injustice. But representations matter, and what is most evident in this recent reporting is a new recognition of the dynamism, energy and inventiveness which characterizes the adoption of new technologies even in the poorest African communities, and a sense that Africa is a youthful continent, looking to the future.

More mundanely... at ASAUK we have continued with our programme of journal writing workshops (the most recent in South Africa, and a forthcoming workshop in Nigeria). We are very pleased to have been successful in our application for funding from the British Academy's BASIS programme, though also acutely aware that this is the final year of such funding. We are delighted to be able to advertise a new Teaching Fellowship, but we are still looking for a sustainable source of funding for this initiative. We are now planning the 2012 biennial conference which will take place at the University of Leeds.

Professor Megan Vaughan, President, ASAUK

ASAUK Conference, 2012

The next ASAUK conference will be held at the University of Leeds and will run from 2pm on Thursday September 6th to 1pm on Saturday 8th September 2012.

There will be no overarching 'theme', but there will be a number of 'streams' running through the conference. A 'stream' could be anything between 4 and 9 panels (of 3 or 4 speakers each). We would like to encourage individuals to make preliminary proposals for streams, so that we can begin to plan. We would welcome anything that reflects a current area of research. Panels would ideally include both more established and junior scholars (including advanced graduate students).

We are not attempting to give the conference a single theme. However, we are encouraging journals, centres, networks and individuals to offer panels, or series of panels, on particular topics so that there can be sequential debate through the conference. We hope in this way to attract linked papers that will facilitate discussion and which may form the basis for a variety of conference publications. At this stage we are asking for interested parties to submit panels for the conference (the deadline for paper submissions is 27th April 2012). To submit a panel you will then need to register via the link: <https://asauk.conference-services.net/authorlogin.asp?conferenceID=2615&language=en-uk>

Once you have registered you can then log into the online submission system and set up a panel. In the system that we are using panels are called symposia and so to register your panel, please go to the 'set up a new symposium' section of the system. Panels require abstracts; however, these can be submitted once the panel has been set up. Once you have submitted your panel/symposium it will appear on the website and those who are giving papers can register and submit papers into your panel. It is worth noting that you can use your one email and password to propose several symposiums and abstracts. Should you wish to amend your personal, panel or paper details you can this by logging into the system at any time up until the close of submissions.

David Kerr, ASAUK Administrator: d.kerr@bham.ac.uk

ASAUK Writing Workshop in South Africa

ASAUK held a writing workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, on 17th February in association with the Wits Institute of Social and Economic Research. It was timed to coincide with the launch of the Nairobi Report on African-UK Research Collaboration at the University – hosted by the Vice-Chancellor of Wits, Professor Loyiso Nongxa. The workshop was funded by a grant from the British Academy; Professor Graham Furniss and Rachel Paniagua attended part of the workshop on the BA's behalf.

Five journals participated, *Africa* (represented by Insa Nolte) and *JSAS* (William Beinart) from the UK and the *South African Historical Journal* (Mucha Musemwa),

South African Review of Sociology (Marcelle Dawson and Shireen Ally) and *African Studies* (Liz Gunner) based in South Africa. Given the very short timeframe available for organization (by ASAUK administrator David Kerr), we had fewer papers submitted than on earlier occasions, but the overall quality was good and the editors collectively dealt with 18 papers overall. Participants were mostly drawn from universities in the Gauteng province, but a few also came from the Western Cape, Durban, Botswana and Zimbabwe. It was a diverse group, as Wits in particular is attracting doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars from both European and African countries beyond South Africa.

In the first session, as has become established in the workshops, each of the editors spoke about their journals and the kind of research and writing that they were seeking. This was followed by an extended informal discussion about the process of submission and refereeing of papers. The session proved interesting both for editors as well as other participants. The scale of journal publishing in South Africa has expanded rapidly in recent years, and all the participating South African journals are now in the global *Taylor and Francis* stable. This has given them a greater international reach. In addition to discussing the different editorial practices, and the ideal submission, we learnt a good deal about the changing scale and character of journals in South Africa.

The workshop then divided into small groups, where each editor, and all those assigned to their journal, worked collectively and carefully through the papers submitted. We were able to devote well over an hour to each paper. The JSAS papers that I dealt with were particularly interesting: two on the history of popular politics in South Africa, and one each on fast track land reform and irrigation in Zimbabwe.

We have received excellent feedback both from editors and participants. For the workshops to make an overall difference to the rate of submission and publication by younger scholars generally, and those based in African universities particularly, they need to be sustained and multiplied. ASAUK has now sponsored six workshops and has plans for more. Specific journals such as *JSAS* and *Africa* are taking them forward in other contexts and the Africa Institute in South Africa is developing a similar programme for postgraduate students. It is also important that those who attend workshops revise and submit their papers.

Professor William Beinart, University of Oxford

ASAUK Teaching Fellowship, 2011-12

In 2011 the ASAUK Council will be offering a teaching fellowship of up to £9,000 to a UK based academic for work in an African University during 2011-12. ASAUK Council is committed to developing partnerships and academic relations between British and African Universities. Ideally we are looking for applications from early career academics that have recently finished doctoral degrees on

African topics in British Universities. But we will also consider doctoral students, especially those with some teaching experience, and other applicants based in British universities. The award is open to applicants of any nationality trained in British universities.

The award is designed to cover travel expenses and about six month's subsistence at £1,300 a month. However, ASAUK Council has a flexible approach to the award and would be keen to support co-funding or exchange arrangements that could last over a longer period. The award can cover any field in the social sciences and humanities. Applicants should negotiate links and teaching responsibilities themselves. The successful applicant will be asked to write a report for the ASAUK newsletter or a journal and to participate in developing the scheme. For further details on the ASAUK fellowship please look at the ASAUK website: www.asauk.net

ASAUK Teaching Fellowship at the National University of Rwanda, by Winnie Eckardt

Rwanda is part of the Albertine Rift, which is one of Africa's biodiversity hotspots harbouring an impressive assemblage of endemic floral and faunal species, including one of the two remaining wild mountain gorilla populations. The natural resources of Rwanda provide essential ecosystem services to its population and are significant for the country's economy. However, the conservation of Rwanda's natural resources and rich biodiversity is extremely challenged by the needs and demands of its growing human population, known of having one of the highest densities in Africa, severe poverty, climate change, and political instability in this African region. Rwanda urgently needs well-trained and committed conservation biologists to cope with these critical conservation issues. This immediate need is set against the backdrop of the lack of local capacity and the loss of qualified individuals ('brain drain') in academic institutions, which are the nurseries not only for future managers and planners, but also for decision-makers, researchers, educators and professionals working in governmental and non-governmental organisations, and this needs to be addressed immediately.

From 2004 to 2007, I lived along the boundary of a protected area in Rwanda, while studying one of the last mountain gorilla populations at the Karisoke Research Center - Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International (KRC – DFGFI), which was founded by Dian Fossey in 1967 for the protection of the mountain gorillas. These years could not have demonstrated more clearly the urgent and serious humanitarian problems. For this reason, I sought for an opportunity, such as that offered by the ASAUK Teaching Fellowship, to return to Rwanda and help contributing to the academic capacity building.

I chose the National University of Rwanda (NUR) as base for my Teaching Fellowship because of my previous experiences in supervising NUR Biology students gained as a Research Assistant and a Ph.D student with the KRC that

collaborates closely with NUR. Furthermore, Bachelor's and Master's programmes in Conservation Science were recently implemented at NUR with funding from the MacArthur Foundation (2006-2008). While the curriculum have been developed for these programmes, the lack of academic teaching capacity at NUR meant that both programmes required further support to be strong and sustainable at this stage. The current loss of two experienced teachers in the area of Zoology and Conservation in 2010 left the department with particularly serious problems in those areas, including the supervision of many Bachelor students during their final dissertation projects. Therefore, one of my main responsibilities was to closely supervise 22 Biology students specialising in Zoology, Botany, and Conservation throughout their final dissertation projects. The current shift from French to English in the Rwandan education sector added another challenge to the supervision, since dissertation students in 2010 were the first who had to write theirs in English.

Although being incorporated in the curriculum of programmes in Biology, field trips and internships that provide opportunities to transfer knowledge and skills learned in lectures to field examples in Rwanda are still insufficient mainly because of financial limitations and a lack of supervision. Due to my field experience in Rwanda and long-term association with the KRC, my initiatives for NUR were partly based at Karisoke that offers course open to second, third and fourth year biology students. Together with a dedicated team from the Biodiversity and Education Programme at Karisoke, I implemented a new internship programme in Biodiversity Conservation for fourth year Biology students. The aim was to establish two long-term monitoring programmes to allow a more effective conservation of the flora and fauna of the Volcanoes National Park (VNP), one focussing on butterfly populations and their abundance and distribution in the park and another on the post-fire regeneration process of a burned area along the slope of the Muhabura Volcano.

During my stay at Karisoke, I also reviewed the internship material for second and third year students to update information and match the material with the curriculums and modules taught at NUR, which have been continuously modified and rescheduled over the last years. Furthermore, I aimed to propose a new internship programme on mountain gorilla conservation at Karisoke available for students of the new Master's programme in Biodiversity Conservation at NUR. Such an internship would provide an exceptional opportunity to synthesise the knowledge and skills learned during the Master's programme based on an example of a successful conservation story, including its past and future provide with the provision of internships. At this stage, several potential links where Karisoke could complement modules of the two years Master's course with practical experiences have been identified and are currently under discussion with NUR.

Beyond the teaching support delivered during the Teaching Fellowship, I aimed to develop a basis for a long-term partnership between the University of Chester (UC), where I conducted my doctoral work, and NUR to allow knowledge transfer between both institutions and a continuing support in capacity building in Rwanda. At this stage, the focus of the partnership was exclusively set on the Biology Departments, while keeping the option to integrate other departments at a later stage. Together with Dr Alison W. Fletcher, who has been involved in gorilla research in Rwanda since 1990, and has been my principal supervisor at UC, ideas for a long-term collaboration have been worked out between NUR and UC. For this purpose, Alison Fletcher visited Rwanda in November 2010. In preparation of her pilot visit, I conducted interviews with NUR staff to identify urgent needs and potential ideas for collaborative activities with UC. This also allowed Alison to get a first feedback from the Head of the Department of Biological Sciences at UC, Dr Ian McDowall, before her departure to Rwanda. On the 10th November 2010, the first official meeting between NUR and UC attended by Alison Fletcher took place at NUR in Rwanda. After an introductory presentation about UC, a summary of the preliminary identified needs and suggestions for long-term links followed by the first feedback from UC provided the base for a stimulating and fruitful discussion about the character and priorities of a partnership and how these can be realised in future. In course of the meeting, key people from both universities were selected who take the lead in the realisation of the partnership. To date, a Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and is currently approved by UC, two suitable funding sources have been identified, and the proposal is in process to be submitted in the beginning of March.

During Alison Fletcher's visit in Rwanda, a meeting with Dr Katie Fawcett, Director of the KRC, was also organised to discuss how to continue and strengthen research links between UC and KRC and the potential role of UC in providing education in the Albertine Region in particularly with regard to the future plan of a Karisoke Center of Excellence for Biodiversity Sciences, a regional centre for biodiversity conservation.

During the ASUK Teaching Fellowship, I gathered a wide range of precious experiences as educator at a Rwanda university which perfectly complemented my previous experiences as researcher in this country and stimulated my future plans and initiatives as conservator in the Albertine Region. In addition, the Teaching Fellowship provided a unique springboard to establish a basis for long-term research links between UC and Rwanda research institutions. Therefore, in behalf of both NUR and UC, and as recipient of the Teaching Fellowship, I would like to thank ASUK for providing us such a unique opportunity in supporting capacity building and an international knowledge transfer in Rwanda. All parties remain committed to continue developing a long-term partnership that furthers a high quality of teaching and research at Rwandan's oldest and largest university.

Winnie Eckardt: winnie_VSG@web.de

Conferences Future...

UNITED KINGDOM

'Critical Reflections on Research Practice and Knowledge Production in Africa', 12th Annual Researching Africa Day Workshop, St Antony's College, Oxford, 14 May 2011. Researching Africa Day provides graduate students with the opportunity to network with fellow researchers, exchange information, discuss research strategies and develop ideas in a constructive, stimulating and engaging environment. The workshop is open to all graduates working on Africa within the disciplines of history, politics, economics, development studies, literature, anthropology, social policy, geography, public health and the natural sciences. For enquiries to attend, contact Ian Cooper: ian.cooper@sant.ox.ac.uk and Leslie Fesenmyer: leslie.fesenmyer@sant.ox.ac.uk

'Global Health Governance and African Health Systems: Issues, Actors, and Outcomes', Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, 31 May 2011. Heightened attention to both Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) pertaining to health as well as to specific African health crises underscores the importance of strengthening state capacities and global health governance norms, as well as rethinking policies. The relationship between capacities and norms, however, is under-theorized, despite its central importance to developing health policy.

Although global health aid accounts for only 6.5% of total health expenditures for all of Sub-Saharan Africa, this includes more than 30% of total health expenditures among the poorest Sub-Saharan Africa states, 40-60% of the Kenyan, Tanzanian, and Ugandan budgets, and rising to as much as two-thirds of the national health budget of Mozambique. The recent proliferation of health funding initiatives has underscored the importance of the calls in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action to strengthen country ownership, defined as the exercise of effective leadership over policy development, strategy and coordination. The 2007 International Health Partnership similarly aims to improve ownership through increasing donor coordination in the context of 'country compacts' but their net effects upon national capacity are unclear, particularly when donor accountability is absent.

This conference therefore will explore the transnational and domestic African contexts and empirical reality of governance, ownership and coordination, as well as questions regarding the process by which health governance norms are developed and change over time. For further information, contact Dr Andrew Lawrence: Andrew.Lawrence@ed.ac.uk

'Dag Hammarskjöld, the United Nations and the End of Empire', Senate House, University of London, Friday, 2 September 2011. This conference will examine the role and legacy of Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary-General of the

United Nations, in relation to decolonisation in the 1950s-60s, in the context of global power shifts, the Cold War, and white supremacist movements. It will look across the European Powers, specifically France, Belgium and Britain, and at the experience of newly-independent countries joining the UN. Whereas previous work on decolonisation has been dominated by a national focus, either in terms of the metropolitan powers or of the colonies, this conference will look at the inter-connected nature of this development. The conference is timed to mark the 50th anniversary of Dag Hammarskjöld's death in a plane crash in Zambia, and will be preceded by a public debate on the evening of 1 September. The conference is organised by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, in association with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation at Uppsala and the Westminster Branch of the United Nations Association. Details will be posted on the Institute's website: www.commonwealth.sas.ac.uk; in the meantime, enquiries may be addressed to: mandy.banton@sas.ac.uk or susan.williams@sas.ac.uk

'Remembering Slavery, Forgetting Indenture?', Bangor University, 9-10 September 2011. 2011 marks the ten-year anniversary of the French Taubira law of 21 May 2001, which recognized the slave trade and slavery perpetrated in the Americas, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and Europe as a crime against humanity. This key date provides an opportunity to examine responses to memories of slavery which have emerged in France and internationally over the past decade. It enables us to reflect upon the recent substantial body of research that has been conducted into the cultural processes of remembering and representing slavery and the slave trade. Importantly, however, it also leads us to question whether this 'memory law' has opened up a space in which to explore memories of other, interconnected forms of colonial exploitation, such as indentured and forced labour. Has the emphasis on the need to defend the memory of the enslaved equated to a failure to recognize other forms of colonial and post-slavery exploitation?

Organised by Bangor University in conjunction with the Centre for the Study of International Slavery in Liverpool, the focus of this two-day conference will be on comparing the continuities and discontinuities between the ways in which slavery, indenture and forced labour have been remembered, narrativized and commemorated. It will bring into dialogue academics working on memories of slavery with those working on memories of indentured and forced labour systems, particularly in France and the former French colonies, but also extending to other global contexts. Taking a comparative, interdisciplinary approach, the conference will call into question the chronological and semantic divides between slavery and indenture by fostering debate around key questions, such as: historical and contemporary definitions of, and drawing the lines between, slavery and forms of enslavement, indenture and forced labour; processes of remembering, forgetting, commemorating and memorializing that

have shaped representations of slavery, indenture and forced labour (in historiography, museums, literature, film); France's 'memory wars': colonialism, slavery and the problem of the *devoir de mémoire*; constructing identities and cultural memories of slavery and indentured labour in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (for example, literary and political movements such as *négritude*, *créolité*, *coolitude*); on-going economic, cultural, social and political effects of slavery, indenture and forced labour in former colonial contexts. 250-300 word abstract and a brief biodata to Nicola Frith: n.frith@bangor.ac.uk or Kate Hodgson: k.hodgson@liverpool.ac.uk

'Myths and Fairy Tales in African Art', Africa in Motion 2011 Symposium, Edinburgh, 29 October 2011. The Africa in Motion (AiM) Film Festival 2011 focuses on films and events that open doors to children and youth in Africa. The festival and this symposium look at artistic representations for, by and about children and young people in Africa. As a vital aspect of children's lives is their education both within and outside of the family structure, we will look at how (his)stories and myths are told, changed and exchanged through time, and how they influence the form, style and structure of film in the relatively young cinema from Africa.

The symposium invites renewed interpretations of stories, myths and tales as a means of reflecting on and inheriting Africa's past, present and future. Storytelling is an essential aspect of African cinema and literature as the role of the African griot has deeply influenced writers, poets and filmmakers such as Ousmane Sembène and Férid Boughedir. The symposium seeks to interrogate the dramatic, poetic and visual character of culturally foundational stories (fairy, mythic, classical and religious), the formal operations and cultural forces of their diverse tellings and showings across media, and the ways in which their psychological, social, political and aesthetic functions have been interpreted and employed. Papers could include themes such as: the identity of the African griot, the performance of stories and myths, the intervention of tales and myths in the narrative structure, adaptation from story to screen, fairy tales for children, fairy tales for adults, anti-tales, and trans-culturing of inherited myths. 250 word abstracts and short biodata by 30 June 2011 to: symposium@africa-in-motion.org.uk

INTERNATIONAL

'Indigenous Knowledge and Global Changes in Africa: The Challenges in the 21st Century', University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria, 8–11 June 2011. In recent times, several strategies for the enhancement of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) of the African people are at the danger of complete neglect due to rapidly changing natural environments and the transformations in the areas of economy, politics, and culture of the people. The tragedies of these vanishing ideas are already

obvious to those who developed them and make a living through them. The implication is that as the people become less dependent on themselves in solving their problems, then the government is saddled with more responsibilities. When such peoples' values, skills, technologies, artefacts, problem-solving strategies and local expertise are lost, questions are also raised by scholars and policy-makers as to what we have made of the strategies for indigenous knowledge. Sub-themes include the conceptual framework of IK; cultural astronomy and the knowledge economy; the African child and the philosophy of Tabula Rasa; mathematics and the expression of IK; special needs children and the acquisition of knowledge; ethno-physics and IK; counselling strategies in the development of knowledge; African history and the development of IK; Igbo language and the expression of IK; English in Nigeria and the expression of IK; African music and arts in the expression of IK; archaeoastronomy and the alignment of ancient buildings and monuments; crime control and IK; globalization and IK; government policy and IK in Africa; health systems and IK; and agricultural systems and IK. 200 word abstracts by 25 April 2011 to: iasunn2011conference@unn.edu.ng and ias.unn@unn.edu.ng

'Nollywood in Africa, Africa in Nollywood: An International Conference', School of Media and Communication, Pan African University, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria, 21–24 July 2011. There has been a boom in the scholarship of Nollywood lately, so that it is now appropriate to speak of an intellectual niche that we may, for want of a better phrase, refer to as 'Nollywood Studies'. As part of its template, this area of African Studies is concerned with the cultural product, the Nollywood film. There are also aspects dealing with production style, distribution, exhibition and financing, which the Nollywood industry inaugurated so quickly and spontaneously. Indeed, a body of mythologies has congealed around the way Nollywood makes its film. One documentary film after the other rehashes these mythologies ad infinitum. One remarkable feature of Nollywood as Africa's 'dream factory' is that it came into life and has lived its life without the express support of any Government or other institutional means. However, understanding the popularity that Nollywood enjoys across the African continent and its diasporas is a complex matter. Nollywood was able to achieve and sustain this popularity because it has managed to find new ways of migrating in and outside Africa without let or hindrance. Yet, its growth and unprecedented popularity as Africa's 'popular cinema' did not happen without peculiar challenges for the producers. In the early days, Nollywood was vilified as the art of idiots and some even vented to called it the 'peddler's art' in the same way that Hollywood was vilified in the 1890s. Even today, not everyone is happy about what it reads as local cultures. Many still regard it as 'fake art'. Some still describe it as 'infantile' in the ways it reads, makes and circulates culture. Inattentive to what the cultural brouhaha is all about, Nollywood producers have gone on to do what they know how to do best: produce more

Nollywood films for their captive audiences across African and in the black diasporas.

This conference seeks to rephrase the significance of Nollywood as a popular vehicle for the production of culture and the provision of a systematic way of reading the Nollywood film (and industry) as popular art. To answer these questions, the conveners solicit papers that deal with: the production and circulation of culture in Nollywood; Nollywood in Africa and the African diasporas; Nollywood's Africa and the representations of Africa in Nollywood; the audience of Nollywood; women in/of Nollywood; transgressive and un-cultural Nollywood; sexualities and sexual preference in Nollywood film; exhibition, financing and distribution in Nollywood; the internet and Nollywood; Nollywood and the development of national cinemas in Africa; and Nollywood in the world. Abstracts and inquiries clearly marked, 'Nollywood in Africa Conference' on the subject line of the email by 30 June 2011 to Añuli Agina: aagina@smc.edu.ng and Vivian Ojiyovwi-Adeoti: vadeoti@smc.edu.ng and Ijeoma Nwezeh inwezeh@smc.edu.ng

'Media and Democracy towards Sustainable Stability', Accra, Ghana, 17–19 August 2011. Africa's emerging democracies in the last two decades have had to co-exist with a vibrant media. The media has relatively emerged as a formidable constituent as it vies for legitimacy in representing the broad masses. This contestation provides the framework for critical examination on how the media impacts on the democratic process. Papers should address specific media practices in the context of democracy in Africa, such as the role of radio commercials as political communication tool in electioneering, the corrosive effects of partisan media practices in popular democracy or the role of the media in the concept of popular democracy. Sub-themes include: media, language and democracy; media and political violence; media and political communication; media, democracy and traditional governance; media, national institutions and democracy; media, ethnic identity and democracy; media, religious conflict and political stability; media, conflict and crises management; media ownership, democracy and governance; media and the concept of 'good of governance'; media and coup d'états; media, democracy and political education; media, political activism and governance; media, democracy and aid; media law and regulation; media, gender and democratization; media, democracy and human rights; community media and democracy; media and ethics; media and African centredness; media and cultural politics; new media and democracy; digital media and the renewal of local democracy. One page abstracts and short bio by 22 April 2011 to: info@amdmc.org

'The Futures of Culture Anthropology', Southern Africa Association 2011 Conference, Stellenbosch University, South Africa, 3–6 September 2011. During apartheid, anthropology taught at Afrikaans universities, volkekunde,

supported a racist polity through teaching essentialist, biological and evolutionist notions of culture. Such social evolutionist notions of human difference were what anthropologist Franz Boas wrote against when he referred to habituated knowledge and tradition in his notion of the culture concept. In South African liberation struggle discourse, racial and cultural classifications were also understood to be socially and politically constituted, rather than essential. Now, here in southern Africa as well as elsewhere in the world, 'culture' is often again used to mean innate, unconscious drives - so it is sometimes used as an alibi for misogyny, sometimes as an alibi for race-hatred. Contributing to a popular tendency to redefine both race and culture as biological, genetic scientists tell us that culture can be found in human DNA. Where do we, who study humans past and present, stand in relation to the tradition of a culture concept? Do we write against a notion of culture, presenting our work in terms of 'community', income-group, language-group, race, class, citizenship? What are the futures of 'culture' as a category to think with? Does the privileging of the 'culture' concept end up eliding questions of class, materialities and political economy? And we wonder what the future of anthropology, and other disciplines in which sociality is considered (such as the social sciences more generally, English Literature, Film and Media studies, Race, Gender and Queer Studies, Disability Studies, African Studies, Cultural Studies, Heritage Studies, Archaeology and History) would look like without a notion of culture.

The organizers encourage submissions that concern conceptual frameworks as well as those that present fieldwork analysis. Professor Achille Mbembe and Professor Charles Piot are keynote speakers. Proposals for panels *until* 15 April 2011 to: asna@sun.ac.za The proposed panels and the contact details of the panel coordinators will be circulated once they are available. Abstracts for papers can be submitted *from* 15 April 2011 to asna@sun.ac.za

'Stimulating Creative and Sustainable Survival Strategies for Families Amidst Emerging National and Global Challenges: Research Options and Imperatives', 12th Annual Home Economics Research Association of Nigeria, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria, 21–24 September 2011. Individuals, families, communities and the society are being bombarded with these unpredictable and ever-emerging challenges. In most cases government can no longer help and solutions appear far-fetched. Individuals and families therefore need to seek and evolve solutions. Home Economics by its very nature should contribute actively to stimulating this paradigm shift of turning problems into survival opportunities. The questions that necessarily arise are: what creative and sustainable solutions could be evolved from the present and emerging national and global challenges; how can individuals and families be helped to evolve solutions from their problems for their own sustainable survival; and what are the implications of these questions for Home Economics and other family-oriented professions and professionals? Sub-themes for papers include creative

and sustainable family survival options, as well as family survival and entrepreneurship and poverty reduction; food, nutrition, hospitality and food security; clothing, textiles and fashion industry; family resources management; housing the family; education and related issues; health issues; agriculture and rural development; consumer issues and education; value reorientation, human rights, peace education, security issues; internet opportunities, cyber-crime, and related issues; voter education and civic responsibilities; and retirement challenges and social security options. 200-word abstracts by 29 July 2011 to Professor Elizabeth Anyakoha: euanyakoha@yahoo.com

'International Conference on the Theorization and Classification of African Regional Movies', Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria, 27–29 October 2011.

African movies across its regions have grown to the extent that there is need to critically do their in-depth studies with the purpose of generating theories on their packaging, analysis and proper classification into genres. Most movies produced in Africa are packaged without recourse to definite theories. Broadly speaking, most of the movies can be categorized into three groups namely, cultural or epic, modern and religious movies. While the religious and cultural movies could be in local or foreign languages, modern movies are so described because they are often located in the context of urban or rural populace and are produced in foreign or local languages, treating themes bothering on modern issues. But where they are in local languages, they are often laced with Pidgin English or code mixed. However, these groupings possess the tendency to overlap if these categories are to be retained. Thus, it is difficult to arrogate to these groupings as genres on their own, more so that these grading are not guided by definite theories.

This conference is therefore organized with the intent of gathering interested scholars and practitioners within and outside Africa so as to evolve specific theories of packaging, analysis, and map out what genres African movies could be grouped. Taking a leap from the fact that movies are audio-visualisation of literature and literary texts and are analysed based on definite theories, the objective therefore is to cut a niche for African movies like literature, and place them strategically in the world movie categorizations but based on African development ideals and thus globalise what hitherto were local mediations. Sub-themes include: trends in movie theories; existing literary theories and the need or not for distinct African movie theories; emergent genres in African movies; movies and the relevance of African-specific genres; classifying African urban and rural movies; gender and social issues in African movies; war and crime movies and proper classification; travel movies and issues of depiction; African movies and the global media culture; representation of economic and political issues in African movies; Africans' contributions to the Theories of Gaze; and sociology and psychology of African movies. 200 word abstracts by 1 July 2011 to: moviescholars@gmail.com

'Indigenous Knowledge Technology Conference', Windhoek, Namibia, 2–4 November 2011. Indigenous knowledge systems differ fundamentally from the knowledge systems that underlie technology development. Numerous initiatives aim to enable remote diverse communities to share their wisdom and practical know-how with conventional digital technologies but often overlook the very systems that they use to organize and make sense of the world. Further, many indigenous communities, especially those in rural places, have few opportunities to appropriate new technologies emerging in ubiquitous computing, such as social networks, flickr, virtual and augmented realities.

The aim of this conference is to bring together researchers and practitioners, from different disciplines, who are engaged in supporting indigenous and local knowledge representation and dissemination. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to: the use of technologies that link to the overall theme of the conference, such as digital storytelling, local content creation, knowledge representations and architectures, visualization and agent technologies. Also of interest are papers on methods to design for and support communities that are marginalized in the global knowledge economy, such as projects aimed at the digital inclusion of rural communities, collaborative frameworks for IK, community-centred design approaches, digital representations of life story telling, as well as perspectives on the politics, social and cultural dimensions that contribute to tensions between digital artefacts and marginalized knowledge systems. Abstracts by 30 April 2011 via the website: <http://www.iktc2011.org/>

'Linking Ghana and the Caribbean: Legacies, Memories and Belongings', University of Cape Coast, Ghana, 12–19 December 2011. The conference is organized by the Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples, York University, Canada, through its MCRI Project ('Memory, Slavery and Citizenship') and The University of Cape Coast, Ghana. Papers are invited for presentation at a conference focusing broadly on the historical and contemporary connections between Ghana and the Caribbean. Using the Atlantic Slave trade as the progenitor of this link the organisers seek papers which explore the memories of displacement and loss, the rituals of reconnection, and the claims for belonging on both sides of the Atlantic. The conference aims at bringing together scholars who are working on the archived as well as the lived and/or imagined connections between those Africans who were deported from the general area known as Ghana (the Gold Coast) and their descendants in the African Diasporas of the Caribbean. A major scholarly concern of this conference is the examination of the ways in which these connections have shaped ideas of historical belonging and contemporary citizenship. The conference is wide ranging in scope and invites the participation of those scholars who are working in a variety of disciplines which attempt to illuminate this historical and contemporary connection. The following themes are suggested but are not exclusive: establishing the link: histories of departure and

arrival; cultural production and the African diasporic imagination; spirits across the waters: connections in the religious sphere; reproducing history and memory in diurnal ritual; the political strategies of decolonization; and reconnecting: historical and contemporary repatriations and reconnections. Abstracts and short CV by 1 May 2011 to The Ghanaian-Caribbean Diasporas Conference Organizers: tubman@yorku.ca

...Conferences Past

'Nigeria: the Biggest and the Best? 50 years of Independence, Coventry University, 10 November 2010. The African Studies Centre in partnership with the think tank Chatham House, hosted in November the UK's premier conference on Nigeria in 2010. It marked the 50 years of Nigeria's independence by reflecting on the country's past, analysing its present and assessing its future. The 120 delegates represented the many stakeholders, from Nigeria and across the world, concerned with Africa's most populous country – business, diplomats, NGOs, academics and a good number of Nigerian students from our own University and elsewhere. In addition, the acting High Commissioner of Nigeria was present for the day.

The keynote speaker was Professor Jean Herskovits from State University New York, who gave a very sobering assessment of some of the political challenges facing the country today. Other speakers came from the US Department of State, the University of Oxford, UK businesses with interests in Nigeria (AfricaRecruit, Shell, Orion Pax) and NGOs with a Nigerian agenda (The National Think Tank and Platform). Together they provided a searching examination of the key issues and provoked lively debate. Those that missed the conference can watch videos of the main presentations on the African Studies website: www.coventry.ac.uk/africanstudies

Theses Recently Accepted at UK Universities

Julian Brown (2010) 'Public Protest and Violence in South Africa, 1948-76', D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford. Supervisor: Professor William Beinart.

Sue Cutter (2010) 'Sierra Leonean Grassroots Perspectives of Peacebuilding, 1991-2006', Ph.D thesis, University of Coventry. Supervisor: Professor Bruce Baker.

Caroline C. Kuo (2010) 'Health Impacts amongst Carers of Orphans and Other Children in a High HIV Prevalence Community in South Africa', D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford. Supervisors: Dr Lucie Cluver and Dr Don Operario.

Arnim Langer (2010) 'Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Conflict: A Comparative Study of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana', D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford. Supervisor: Professor Frances Stewart.

Gabrielle Lynch (2008) 'Kenyan Politics and the Ethnic Factor: The Case of the Kalenjin', D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford. Supervisor: Professor David Anderson.

Marion MacLellan (2010) 'Child Headed Households in Rwanda: Challenges of Definition and Livelihood Means', Ph.D thesis, University of Coventry. Supervisor: Professor Bruce Baker.

Katie Marie Manning (2009) 'Mobility, Climate Change and Cultural Development: A Revised View from the Lower Tilemsi Valley, Northeastern Mali', D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford. Supervisor: Professor Peter Mitchell.

Mandisa Mbali (2009) 'The New Struggle: A History of AIDS Activism in South Africa', D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford. Supervisor: Professor William Beinart.

Priscilla S. Muthoora (2010) 'Essays in Public Finance and Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa', D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford. Supervisor: Dr Christopher S. Adam.

Ebenhaezer le Roux (2010) 'Action Research into a Learning Initiative with Environmental Managers in a Transitional Local Government, South Africa', Ph.D thesis, The University of Manchester.

Paul Swanepoel (2010), 'Indifferent Justice? A History of the Judges of Kenya and Tanganyika, 1897-1963', Ph.D thesis, University of Edinburgh. Supervisors: Professor Paul Nugent and Professor Alan Barnard.

Kate Wilkinson (2010) 'Putting Children First? Tax and Transfer Policy and Support for Children in South Africa', D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford. Supervisors: Professor Michael Noble and Martin Evans.

Recent Publications

Martin Banham, James Gibbs and Femi Osofisan (eds) (2010) *African Theatre: Histories, 1850-1950: Compromise and Creativity*. James Currey, 199 pages, 978-1847010148, £17.99.

Andrew Burton and Helene Charon-Bigot (eds) (2010) *Generations Past: Youth in East African History*. Ohio University Press, 432 pages, 978-0821419243, £27.99.

John Iliffe (2011) *Obasanjo, Nigeria and the World*. James Currey, 340 pages, 978-1847010278, £45.00.

Thomas G. Kirsch and Tilo Grätz (eds) (2010) *Domesticating Vigilantism in Africa*. James Currey. 190 pages, 978-1847010285, £40.00.

Iain Walker (2010) *Becoming the Other, Being Oneself: Constructing Identities in a Connected World*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 270 pages, 978-1-4438-2337-1, £39.99; www.c-s-p.org/flyers/Becoming-the-Other--Being-Oneself--Constructing-Identities-in-a-Connected-World1-4438-2337-6.htm

News

Amaury Talbot Prize for African Anthropology

Ramon Sarro's *The Politics of Religious Change on the Upper Guinea Coast: iconoclasm done and undone*, published in the International African Library series (Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute, 2008)) has been declared the joint-winner of the 2009 Amaury Talbot Prize for African Anthropology. The co-winner was Trevor Marchand's *Masons of Djenné*.

Professor Bruce Baker wins American Society of Criminology's Prize for Best Book in Comparative and International Criminology 2010

Professor Bruce Baker of Coventry University won the American Society of Criminology's Prize for Best Book in Comparative and International Criminology.

The citation reads, "The outstanding book award goes to Bruce Baker for his book on *Security in Post-Conflict Africa. The Role of Nonstate Policing*, published by CRC Press. The book provides a finely detailed description and analysis for anyone interested in how personal and social security is and can be provided in post conflict states in Sub-Saharan Africa. Baker summarizes his extensive qualitative research on non-state policing to argue that any domestic or internationally inspired security sector and policing reform efforts which neglect the substantial contributions non-state policing can make will be "doomed to failure" and become "untenable." In this way, Baker acknowledges the role that many other actors in society aside from the state can contribute to a community's security – including traditional, tribal leadership, local grassroots organizations and private companies. The book's argument and the analysis combine sophisticated policing theory, policy and context knowledge and local data, extensively supplemented by quotes from interviews. Baker easily shifts across levels of analysis but in the end always returns to the local level, to how people perceive, value, organize and support policing and security services they need and want. Ultimately, policing looks and is valued differently from the bottom up than the top down. This book will be required reading for anyone who wants to understand the interconnection of formal and informal policing systems, not just in Africa but worldwide; it is empirical, it is theoretical, it restates the

problems of policing developing and transitional countries in a nuanced, balanced, non-ideological and unblinking manner’.

The Martin Lynn Scholarship

Thanks to the generosity of the family of the late Martin Lynn, the Society has pleasure in announcing the establishment of an annual award in his memory. Martin Lynn was Professor of African History in the Queen's University, Belfast, the first scholar to hold a chair in African history in Ireland. His scholarly career was devoted to the history of West Africa and he published most extensively and importantly on the 19th and 20th century history of Nigeria. His scholarly achievements were matched by the reputation he enjoyed as an exciting and concerned teacher and a delightful, generous colleague and friend.

This award reflects the interests of the man it commemorates. Annually the Society will make an award of up to £1,000 to assist an historian pursuing postgraduate research on a topic in African history. Eligible students will be registered with a UK university history department and will have successfully completed their first year of full-time or first two years of part-time study by the time the award is taken up. Applicants intending to use the award to carry out research within Africa will be especially welcomed. Application forms from: www.royalhistoricalsociety.org/martinlynnawardappform.doc Post completed forms by 31 May 2011 to: The Administrative Secretary, Royal Historical Society, University College London, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT.

Leventis Nigerian Post-Doctoral Fellowship at SOAS, 2011-12

The Leventis Foundation supports collaborative research between the Centre of African Studies (University of London) and colleagues in Nigerian universities. Successful applicant(s) will be attached to the Centre of African Studies, based at SOAS, for a period of three months. The Centre of African Studies gratefully acknowledges its collaboration with Goodenough College, which provides the scholars with accommodation. The two Leventis Scholars in 2010 were: Ozioma Onuzulike, Department of Fine Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka: ‘Creative individualist and innovation in Ceramic Art: A Study of the Works of Benjo Igwilo and Chris Echeta’, and Oladoku Taiwo Olaniyi, Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization: ‘Mainstreaming Ifa Worship Through Television in South-Western Nigeria: A Search for Understanding?’

Applications should include a CV, a 1,000 word statement of current research interests and aims to be achieved during the research period in London. This scheme might be particularly appropriate for scholars working up a Ph.D thesis into publishable form. Applications by letter by 30 May 2011 should be addressed to The Chair, Centre of African Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG, UK.

Working with Africa: Human and Social Science Research in Action

Working with Africa has long been a priority for the British Academy. Often it is science and technology which are seen as the key for future prosperity and survival but without the essential humanities and social science research to underpin these new advances and make sure they fit into communities and cultures, progress cannot and will not be made.

The British Academy booklet, *Working with Africa: Human and Social Science and Research in Action*, was formally launched on 3 March 2011. It brings to life the exciting humanities and social science research that is happening in the country thanks to funding from the British Academy amongst others. The British Academy provides a variety of support for scholars working on and in Africa. It offers seed-corn funding to develop and work on new research ideas and inter-institutional links and provides opportunities for African-based researchers, and for UK researchers to work in Africa. Fascinating examples from this wide range of work are presented within the booklet, from research into 'bride price' in Uganda to alcohol consumption in Kenya and chronic food shortages in Malawi. The booklet is available to download: https://www.britac.ac.uk/intl/Working_with_Africa.cfm/ Hard copies of the booklet can be requested from: africa@britac.ac.uk

Obituary

Harold Smith (29 April 1927–3 January 2011) was a Colonial Officer in Nigeria. His service to the Nigerian people did not end at Independence in 1960. He fought on for another 50 years.

Smith was not regarded with favour by the British Authorities in Nigeria, nor by Her Majesty's Government (HMG). It is contended that the British press a very long time ago were informed by MI5/ British Government officials, that if they received stories about Harold Smith, they should ignore them. Harold Smith, they said, did not exist. He was a fiction. Of course, Harold Smith did exist. His is a household name in Nigeria; his memory is revered.

In 1956, the British Administration at Lagos, told Smith to organise some British officials and transport, and send them to Warri—now known as the oil-rich capital of the Niger Delta—to assist the NCNC, one of the two main parties contesting the 1956 West Regional elections.

If the NCNC were successful, there was a good chance Chief Awolowo – who had been making life very difficult for the British – and his Action Group Government at Ibadan might be dislodged. The British, it seemed, regarded this *ad hoc* venture as worthy and desirable. Smith, however, recognising that what he was being asked to do was a Criminal Offence under Nigeria's Electoral Laws,

said 'No.' His superiors insisted. He was warned. There would be serious repercussions if he did not obey.

Unfortunately for the British Administration and Nigeria's Governor-General Sir James Robertson, they made a grave error. They chose the wrong man. Smith, a Mancunian, and scholarship man from Ruskin, and later Magdalen Colleges, Oxford, had also impressive Trades Union and Labour Party credentials. For him, hierarchy and 'line of command' were *not* the final authority. He was ordered to 'do as he was told.' Smith refused.

Repercussions were indeed serious. He never held a permanent job for the remaining 50 years (1960-2010) of his life. He was never permitted to publish his story. It is further alleged that HMG ensured his communications and movements were monitored. He was struck down near-fatally in 1960 – and suffered grave and painful recurrences for the rest of his life – by what eventually was identified as 'sprue.' Sprue is a rare tropical disease, not easily diagnosed, and known to few outside Porton Down – HMGs Scientific and Research Establishment near Salisbury.

As his widow Carol stated in her moving eulogy at his funeral: 'It wasn't a difficult decision for Harold. He was there in Nigeria to serve the interests of the Nigerian people. He knew what he was being asked to do was illegal. There was never any doubt in Harold's mind that he could do anything other than what he did.'

Smith's story is a sad, sobering and tragic one. Yet like the miner's 'canary in the cage' whose life is extinguished by deadly emissions deep underground; Smith's experience provided a powerful warning of the fate of Westminster-style liberal democracy in Nigeria. It is no consolation that the condition persists to the present day.

The high regard in which Harold Smith was held was mirrored in the wide range of persons, African and European, from near and far, attending his funeral, held 20 January, at Bath. He is survived by his widow Carol, and two daughters, Helen and Louise.

Dr Michael Vickers: mvickers@mvickers.plus.com

Note to Contributors

Send items for inclusion in the next *Newsletter* by 15 June 2011 to Dr Simon Heap, Editor, ASUK Newsletter, 76 Waynflete Road, Oxford, OX3 8BL or effaheap@aol.com

Any opinions expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the ASUK.

For all matters relating to membership of ASUK/RAS contact: Pat Jensen, 36 Gordon Square, London, WC1H 0PD; telephone: +44 (0)20-3073-8336; email: rasmembership@soas.ac.uk

Check the website: www.asauk.net