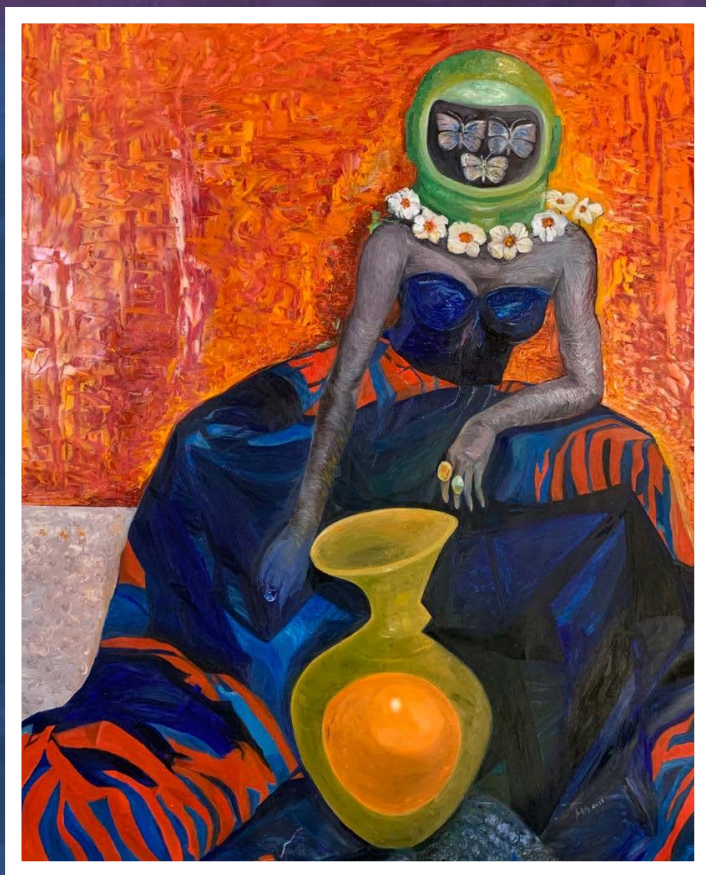


RUTGERS
School of Arts and Sciences

Afrofeminist Ecologies

Relations, Disruptions, and Futures

Intercollegiate Symposium · April 7-8, 2022



Cover artwork: "Queen Xerxes Blue" by Adérónké Adésolá Adésànyà

Global Africa and the Humanities

Description of the Symposium

We evoke Afrofeminist ecologies to recognize the centrality of relation in African feminist epistemologies—within families and communities, between and among women whose fates are intertwined, and with the natural world that sustains them; to acknowledge the tightly woven nature of oppressive and extractive systems and institutions and the intersectionality of obstacles to freedom and full political agency for African women. We also aim to highlight the mutuality and interconnectedness of the modes and forms of resistance and alternative world-making that continue to constitute feminist struggle across the continent and throughout the diaspora. African feminists have long recognized both that the sustained violence of environmental degradation and resource extraction has gendered effects, and that the ecological impacts of extractivist modes of accumulation cannot be disentangled from exploitative and violent social relations that disproportionately impact women.

The symposium will explore and engage women's resistance to colonial plunder, to displacement and tenure insecurity, to resource exploitation and mismanagement by governments and transnational corporations, to gender-based violence in extraction zones, to the unequal impacts of global climate change, and to the long histories of disruption and erosion of women's productive and reproductive economies. We seek to explore women's movements, women's organizing and collective action, and women's art-making in their militancy and insurrectionary power and in their transformative potential. We ask: As knowing, practicing agents of change, how are African women and gender non-conforming members of African societies engaging in politics and poetics of resistance? In what modes, genres, languages, media do the arts of protest emerge in response to ongoing oppressive structures and destructive systems in African environments? How have feminist activists galvanized around indigenous cosmologies, alternative forms of ecological relation, and regenerative practices? What transformative visions for socially and environmentally just futures are offered by the narratives, songs, memoirs, and embodied practices of feminist activists and artists on the continent and in its diasporas?

Image right: Amina Weira (still from *African Apocalypse*)

Pre-Symposium

Thursday, April 7, 2022

Opening Reception

Location: Zimmerli Museum, Lower Dodge Gallery

5:00pm–6:30pm

A shuttle to the reception for out of town guests will leave the University Inn at 4:45pm.

Welcome remarks: Donna Gustafson, Curator and Director of Academic Programs, Zimmerli Museum; and Anjali Nerlekar, Chair, AMESALL

Refreshments will be served.

Film Screening: *African Apocalypse*

Location: Voorhees Hall 105

6:30pm–9:00pm

Introduction: Meheli Sen, Director, Cinema Studies; and Patrick Stetner, Chair, Film Lab
Roundtable Discussion with Rob Lemkin, Amina Weira, Femi Nylander, and Barbara Cooper

Film Synopsis: *African Apocalypse* is an urgent and timely non-fiction retelling of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Armed with a copy of Conrad's classic novel, British-Nigerian Oxford University student Femi Nylander goes in search of the meaning and legacy of colonial horror in West Africa. He discovers the story of a French army captain, Paul Voulet, who descended into unspeakable barbarity in the conquest of Niger at the very moment Conrad wrote his book. Femi finds communities still traumatized by the violence of Voulet. Amidst a tragic history, Femi also encounters a beautiful spirit of hope: young people learning to find a way out of colonialism's darkness, and a country determined to harness the power of its most precious resource, the light of the sun.



Global Africa and the Humanities Symposium

Friday, April 8, 2022

First Half—8:00am-12:45pm

Location: Traves Hall, Douglass Student Center

8:00am-8:30am Registration and Breakfast

8:30am-8:50am Welcome and Opening Remarks:
Executive Vice Dean of Arts & Sciences James Masschaele, Director of Center for Women's Global Leadership Ousseina Alidou, Director of Center for African Studies Olabode Ibiroinke

8:50am-10:20am Panel 1: Women's Labor, Embodied Practice, and Gendered Space

Moderator: Gabriel Bámgbóṣé

Janet Adomako: "Diverse Ontologies: A Decolonial Feminist Political Ecology of Mining and Implications in Ghana"

Zakia Salime: "Gendered Counter-Archive: Mining and Refusal in Morocco"

Grace Musila: "Lena Moi and Gendered Economic Empowerment in Kenya"

10:20am-10:30am Coffee Break

10:30am-11:30am Keynote Address: Imbolo Mbue

11:30am -12:45pm Lunch and Book Fair

Second Half— 1:00pm-6:00pm

Location: Douglass Lounge, Douglass Student Center

1:00pm-1:20pm Adérónké Adésànyà, Artist Statement: "Black Bodies' Fragility and Resilience in an Ecology of Hostility"

1:20pm-2:50pm Panel 2: Eco-matriarchy and Ethics of Care

Moderator: Meg Arenberg

Besi Muhonja: "Elective Lone Parenting, New Matrilines and Matriarchies"

Eve Nabulya: "Rethinking Maathai's Contribution to African Ecofeminism: the Vision of Eco-matriarchy"

Brahim El Guabli: "African Desert Feminism: Eco-Feminist Insurgency against Human and Ecological Death"

2:50pm-3:10pm Razinat T. Mohammed: Reading from *Habiba*

3:10pm-3:20pm 10 minute coffee break

"Collecting and Recollecting," right and back cover, by Adérónké Adésànyà

Global Africa and the Humanities Symposium

Friday, April 8, 2022

3:20pm-4:20pm Panel 3: Decorum, Defiance, and the Female Body

Moderator: Camille Dantzler

Rudo Mudiwa: "Splintering the Category of 'Woman': Space, Class, and the Policing of Sex Work"

Naminata Diabate: "Notes Toward Disrobing for the Human-Ecology"

4:20pm-4:35pm Baba Badji: Reading from *Ghost Letters*

4:35pm-5:35pm Panel 4: Afro-feminist Futures

Moderator: Hasnaa Mokhtar

Uchechi Okereke-Beshel: "Shaping Extraordinary Futures: Afrofeminist Ecologies in Nnedi Okorafor's *Kabu Kabu*"

Baba Badji: "Négritude Futures: Reframing Black Solidary Transnationally: Paulette Nardal, Jane Nardal, and Suzanne Roussi Césaire"

5:35pm-5:55pm Mamadou Diallo Boubou Sangare: Reading from *Chroniques du Mangari*

Final Reception and Dinner—6:30pm-8:00pm

Location: Douglass NJC Lounge, Douglass Student Center

An Evening of Food, Music and Poetry



Keynote Speaker

Imbolo Mbue

A “bright and captivating storyteller” (The Washington Post), Imbolo Mbue is the author of two novels. Her stunning debut, the *New York Times* bestseller *Behold the Dreamers*, was an Oprah Book Club selection and winner of the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. In this “quintessentially American” work (NPR), Mbue explores marriage, immigration, class, race, and the trapdoors in the American Dream through the unforgettable story of a young Cameroonian couple making a new life in New York just as the Great Recession upends the economy. Praised by *The New York Times* as “savage and compassionate in all the right places,” *Behold the Dreamers* has been translated into eleven languages, adapted into an opera and a stage play, and optioned for a miniseries. It was named a Best Book of the Year by *The New York Times* Book Review, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Guardian*, and the Chicago Public Library among others. A *New York Times* Top 10 Book of 2021, *How Beautiful We Were*, is a sweeping story about the collision of a small African village and an American oil company, offering “a brilliant exploration of modern colonialism and capitalism—and the fight for justice” (People). The book was longlisted for the 2022 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, and *USA Today* raved “This one’s going to grab you.” A native of Limbe, Cameroon, and a graduate of Rutgers and Columbia Universities, Mbue lives in New York City.

Speaker Bios and Abstracts

Janet Adomako

“Diverse Ontologies: A Decolonial Feminist Political Ecology of Mining and Health Implications in Ghana”

The decade following the 2008 financial crisis witnessed unprecedented expansion of foreign investment in “small-scale” mineral extraction. In Ghana, millions of local and foreign miners, particularly Chinese miners, became involved in gold mining. Despite women’s ubiquitous roles, mining spaces and gender roles have remained intact. Men and women occupy specific spaces and activities which shape extraction, livelihoods, and health implications. My research analyses have focused on differences in health vulnerabilities, mining spaces, and gender roles as they are shaped by notions of men and women’s abilities and roles and ontological understandings of biophysical entities and human reproductive materials. I draw from feminists and political ecologists’ methodologies and theoretical tools to call attention to why ontologies matter in gendered extractive practices. The study argues that gendered relations of power alone do not fully explain the complex socio-ecological relations mediating access to, use of, and control over mineral resources. Efforts to understand the complexities of gendered resource practices must attend to complicated understandings of bodies and objects of extraction.

Janet Adomako is currently a doctoral candidate at Rutgers University in the Department of Geography. Her research employs feminist methodologies and political ecology approaches to examine the global and local political economic processes of gold extraction and implications for gender and health. Janet earned a M.A. in Geography and Rural Development from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. Her Master’s research explored the implications of urban expansion on peri-urban dwellers whose livelihoods depend on natural resources. Janet has also worked with local NGOs in Ghana to gain experience in health and environmental education. Her research interests include political ecology, gender, health, labor differences, social reproduction, indigenous ontologies, ethnography, and resource extraction.

Baba Badji

“Négritude Futures: Reframing Black Solidary Transnationally: Paulette Nardal, Jane Nardal, and Suzanne Roussi Césaire”

The fact that most problems raised in the criticism of Négritude are the founding fathers’ politics, philosophy, and poetry should remind us that gendering and remapping Négritude through Suzanne Césaire and Paulette and Jane Nardal’s works allows us to conceive another idea of Négritude narrative history universally. This paper argues that even though they are included in scholarly discourse of Négritude and gender politics in the francophone world, we still need to probe further in their archives to reveal what has not been shown. With particular focus on the Nardal sisters and Césaire, the paper prioritizes and merges the different roles they played in promoting the concept of Négritude as it has been recognized as a descriptor of “Black Internationalism.” In doing so, this paper reveals that these female authors affirmed their blackness to promote the concept of Négritude through a delayed and altered black internationalist thinking. While these women (purveyors of a feminine Négritude) embody a less theoretical and a more accessible notion of Négritude, they did ultimately promote the need for racial solidarity (anchored and situated in their Caribbeaness). The chapter thus explores the constitutive tensions of Négritude solidarity (as well as their potential resolution), while also examining how these authors’ slow ideological evolution became a primary cause of their inadequate representation in the critical discourse of Négritude.

Baba Badji is a Senegalese American poet, translator, and researcher. He is a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice, and Comparative Literature. He earned an MFA in poetry and Translation (French and Wolof) at Columbia University and PhD in Comparative Literature at Washington University in St. Louis. He works on the links between the various forms of postcolonial studies, theory, and practice, with a particular focus on debates about postcolonial translation theory and Négritude in Anglophone and Francophone cultures. Besides English and French, he is fluent in Wolof, Mending, Pulaar, and Diola.

Naminata Diabate

“Notes Toward Disrobing for the Human-Ecology”

Many see in environmental activism a matter of life and death. The perceived death and life of the planet and that of living entities is thus inextricably entangled in this social and intellectual landscape that is mostly animated by social movements and tactics including Occupy Wall Street, World Naked Bike Riders, PETA, and Spencer Tunick’s famous and large-scale exhibitions. Taking seriously this putative entanglement, the paper investigates news reports on land disputes in Uganda, visual arts on the mismanagement of natural resources in Nigeria, and cultural products on the devastating effects of the importation of toxic waste in Cote d’Ivoire. The analysis provides compelling examples of the ways in which certain last resort contestation strategies, in particular defiant disrobing, are deployed in connection to the ostensibly endangered ecology. In this trans-African context, women’s collective uncivil self-exposure in the name of the human-environment illustrates both the increasing vicious attacks on the environment as well as women’s increasing distrust of conventional strategies—voting, participating in political parties, lobbying, and writing letters to politicians—to prosecute grievances or to bring about positive change.

Naminata Diabate is associate professor of comparative literature at Cornell University. A scholar of gender, sexuality, and race in Africa and African diaspora studies with linguistic expertise in Malinké, French, English, Nouchi, Spanish, and Latin, her work seeks to redefine

how we understand specific forms of embodied agency that determine the neoliberal present in global Africa. Taking as her archives literary fiction, cinema, visual arts, digital media, and field research, Diabate's most recent work has appeared in a monograph, peer-reviewed journals, and collections of essays. These include *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*, *Research in African Literatures*, *African Literature Today (ALT)*, *Interventions*, *Routledge Handbook of African Literature*, and *Fieldwork in the Humanities*. Her book, *Naked Agency: Genital Cursing and Biopolitics in Africa (Duke University Press, 2020)* is the winner of the *African Studies Association 2021 Best Book Prize*. Diabate also contributes to newspapers, women's magazines, and podcasts. Her forthcoming work will appear in *African Studies Review*, *The Journal of African Literature Association (JALA)*, and the edited volume, *New Visions in African and African Diaspora Studies*. This year, she holds the *Ali Mazrui Senior Research Fellowship at the Africa Institute of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates*, working on two monographs, "The Pleasure of Problem in Global Africa" and "Digital Insurgencies and Bodily Domains."

Brahim El Guabli

"African Desert Feminism: Eco-Feminist Insurgency against Human and Ecological Death"

Ecofeminism has established a strong link between the oppression of women and disregard for the environment. This paper seeks to demonstrate how texts that are not normally read as ecofeminist articulate a feminist position vis-à-vis the ecological devastation that takes place in the Sahara. By creating desert worlds in which women play crucial roles in caring for human and non-human subjects in their communities, ecofeminist works push against notions of the desert as a dead and empty space, where a "necrological" onslaught on people and the desert biome unfolds. Drawing Aziz al-Ansary's *Hirz tālā (Tala's Amulet, 2015)* in conjunction with Mbarek Ould Beyrouk's novel *Le Tambour des larmes (2015)* (translated as *The Desert and the Drum* in 2018) and the deeply feminist Amazigh anzār ritual (rain seeking rituals by women), I argue that literary and ritualistic practices in and about the desert contain myriad forms of an indigenous ecofeminism. Although these works are not explicitly ecofeminist, the paper demonstrates that the logic underlying them consists of a writing against human and ecological death, opening up space for various forms of liberation and questioning of hierarchical authorities by a combination of women-led actions and awareness of the damage done to the environment.

Brahim El Guabli is Assistant Professor of Arabic Studies and Comparative Literature at Williams College. Brahim's research interests encompass Tamazgha (the broader North Africa), the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. He probes questions of trauma and memory, and the way aesthetics enable various forms of coming to terms with violent pasts. His forthcoming book is entitled Moroccan Other-Archives: History and Citizenship after State Violence. His journal articles have appeared in Interventions, The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry, Arab Studies Journal, and The Journal of North African Studies, among others. He is co-editor of Lamalif: A Critical Anthology of Societal Debates in Morocco During the "Years of Lead" (1966-1988) (Liverpool University Press, forthcoming) and Refiguring Loss: Jews in Maghrebi and Middle Eastern Cultural Production (Pennsylvania State University Press, forthcoming). He is completing a second book entitled Saharan Imaginations: Between Saharanism and Ecocare.

Rudo Mudiwa

"Splintering the Category of "Woman": Space, Class, and the Policing of Sex Work"

This paper analyzes how black women in Zimbabwe have responded to an unsettling

exigence; the arbitrary arrests of women on city streets for the crime of prostitution. Drawing from ethnographic research and interviews, I highlight the different rhetorical tactics employed by sex workers, feminist activists, and female politicians. Through an analysis of women's accounts of their own encounters with police, this paper argues that women drew tactically from local discourses about female respectability and urban life, positioning themselves either in accordance with or against notions of respectability. These fluid enactments of feminine decorum, shrewdly performed by women during encounters with police, were timely improvisations designed to curtail their exposure to harassment and arrest on the streets. Finally, the paper examines how sex workers wield claims to respectability against their higher status male assailants in a tactical adaptation to their situation. In sum, this paper examines how even in public campaigns that hinge on a shared claim to female precarity, womanhood is splintered by and negotiated along class, geography, and divergent political and professional interests.

Rudo Mudiwa's scholarship focuses on the promise that decolonization movements held for women across Africa. She is Assistant Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of California, Irvine. At present, she is at work on a manuscript titled "A Nation of Prostitutes: Gender, Urban Space, and the Invention of Zimbabwe." This book will examine how the prostitute—a symbol of the mobile and transgressive black woman—mediated anxieties regarding the challenge of remaking urban space, policing, and gender relations in the wake of colonial rule. This research was supported by the Social Science Research Council and the Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship at Princeton. In addition to her academic work, Mudiwa has published essays in Transition, Chimurenga, New Frame, Ebony, and Africa is a Country.

Besi Muhonja

"Elective Lone Parenting, New Matrilineal and Matriarchies"

This qualitative study contests the moralizing of select personhoods that equates married motherhood to fulfilled womanhood by examining a growing yet rarely addressed group of women in Kenya—partner free professional women in their late thirties to late forties. Their experiences are instructing new constructions of womanhood, which are generating novel motherhoods and matriarchies. Choices of alternative approaches to attaining motherhood by this, until now, uninvestigated set of individuals, are rewriting conceptions of womanhood, and with it, family, as well as the concepts matriarchy and patriarchy. Rituals and demands of professional womanhood, which define a single professional woman's (SPW's) social and career patterns, sometimes lead to single adulthood and/or delayed parenthood. Increasingly, for a plethora of reasons, more SPWs in urban Kenya are not participating in rituals of bridehood and wifehood. This, in many ways, actuates their states and performances of identities that can result in contestations of patriarchal womanhood and motherhood, which are limited by the fact that they are defined in relation to men. This inquiry into maternal rituals, cultures, and processes, designates and delineates what I christen elective lone parenthood (ELP).

Besi Muhonja is Associate Vice Provost for Scholarship and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at James Madison University. She is a professor of African, African American, and Diaspora Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Dr. Muhonja's work engages the interfaces of transnationalism, gender and sexuality in the politics, identities, philosophies, and products of/from Africa, the larger Global South, and the Black Diaspora. She is also a leading Wangari Maathai scholar. Dr. Muhonja is author of Radical Utu: Ideas and Ideals of Wangari Maathai (Ohio University Press, 2020) and Performing Girlhood and Womanhood: Rituals of Kenya's Twenty-First Century Middle Class (Lexington-Rowman & Littlefield, 2018) and Turn Down the Volume on Silence (a collection of plays, forthcoming in 2022); and co-editor of

the book volumes Gender and Sexuality in Senegalese Societies: Critical Perspectives and Methods (with Babacar M'baye, 2019), Mothers and Sons: Centering Mother Knowledge (with Wanda Bernard Thomas, 2016) and Gender and Sexuality in Kenyan Societies (with M'baye, forthcoming in 2022).

Grace Musila

“Lena Moi and gendered economic empowerment in Kenya”

Helena ‘Lena’ Tungo Moi is an elusive figure in Kenyan public imaginaries, in large part owing to her near-absolute absence from Kenyan public life for over two decades. Between the formal end of her marriage to Daniel arap Moi in 1979 and her death in 2004, Kenyan media observed an almost absolute silence about her. At the same time, throughout 24 years of Moi rule, Kenya did not have a first lady, as the president remained unattached. This official absence coupled with president Moi’s hypervisibility has largely overshadowed Lena Moi’s contributions to Kenyan public life and history.

Through a biographical portrait of Lena Moi’s life and initiatives, the paper demonstrates how, prior to leaving the public political landscape, Lena Moi drew on her distinct African Inland Mission church upbringing and its emphasis on thrift to push for women’s vocational training and education. Importantly, I argue, Lena Moi strategically imagined and articulated a distinct set of ideas on women’s economic empowerment, which coincided with the nationalist rhetoric of self-help and development in 1970s Kenya. Alert to her Kalenjin community’s anxieties about women’s involvement in wage labor, Lena Moi carefully couched her rhetoric and self-help initiatives in the logic of family wellbeing rather than women’s independence; and emphasized national development rather than gender autonomy. Although there is no evidence she identified as a feminist, her perspectives and interventions offer important insights into women’s confrontations with economic inequalities, at a time when women’s economic citizenship was sharply contested.

Grace A Musila teaches African Literature at the University of the Witwatersrand. She is editor of Wangari Maathai’s Registers of Freedom (2020), author of A Death Retold in Truth and Rumour: Kenya, Britain and the Julie Ward Murder (2015); and co-editor of Rethinking Eastern African Intellectual Landscapes (2012; with James Ogude and Dina Ligaga).

Eve Nabulya

“Rethinking Maathai’s contribution to African ecofeminism: The vision of eco-matriarchy”

Contemporary ecofeminist scholarship mostly engages with how patriarchal structures relegate the woman to a position abreast with or lower than nature, and how environmental despoliation or injustice directly affects the woman. However, this focus on victimhood has greatly eclipsed engagement with the potential of the woman to save the earth. On the African continent, the urgency of environmental injustice related issues has left little room to explore indigenous ecofeminist epistemologies emerging from the work of key figures like the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai. This paper takes interest in the conceptualisation of woman-nature relations emerging from Maathai’s autobiography *Unbowed* (2006) and a selection of rhetorical speeches. I note that while Maathai’s writing and activism has been widely recognized for its contribution to ecofeminism, it has been mostly read as an effort to challenge ecologically deleterious patriarchal designs in her immediate context. In departure, this paper draws attention to the matriarchal underpinnings of Maathai’s representation of woman-nature relations. I argue that as represented in Maathai’s work, women’s engagements with environmental issues are rooted in a matriarchal system evident in the social setup described. Drawing

on the theoretical reflections of Ifi Amadiume, I assert that the matriarchal perspective to woman-nature engagements is more identifiable with the African gender terrain and that an eco-matriarchy might generate empowering debates.

Eve Nabulya is a Lecturer in the Department of Literature Makerere University, Uganda. She completed her PhD studies at Stellenbosch University in 2017, under which program she researched on environmental-activism in East African Literature. Nabulya has engaged in several research projects including: The African Peace Network project on storytelling as a tool of promoting peace, The Andrew Mellon funded programme on indigenous environmental Wisdom in the orature of the Baganda and The African Humanities Program (AHP) project on Communitarianism in human-nonhuman relations in East African literature. Her other research interests are in African Literature, drama, ecocriticism and literary theory.

Uchechi Okereke-Beshel

“Shaping Extraordinary Futures:

Afrofeminist Ecologies in Nnedi Okorafor’s Kabu Kabu”

African women on the continent and the Diaspora must often grapple with a lack of resources for various reasons: tradition limiting access, economic downturn and/or natural disasters. To address these problems and the possibilities of change, this essay aims to explore the role of Speculative fiction and/or Fantasy Literature in creating alternatives and forms of access. The loss of resources and its regeneration has been a concern of African Speculative Fiction- specifically the Africanfuturist genre as defined by Nnedi Okorafor. According to Okorafor who coined the term on her “Wahala Zone Blog,” “Africanfuturism is concerned with visions of the future, is interested in technology, leaves the earth, skews optimistic, is centered on and predominantly written by people of African descent (black people) and it is rooted first and foremost in Africa. It’s less concerned with ‘what could have been’ and more concerned with ‘what is and can/will be’. It acknowledges, grapples with and carries ‘what has been’”. Following this aesthete of Africanfuturism, my presentation reads selected short stories from Okorafor’s *Kabu Kabu* as mapping new Afrofeminist ecologies aimed at generating supportive futures.

Dr. Uchechi Okereke-Beshel teaches courses in African literary studies in the Department of African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures (AMESALL) at Rutgers University. Her areas of research interest include African Folklore and Literature, Postcolonial Literature, African Diaspora Literature, Fantasy Literature, and Gender in Literature. She is also a poet.

Zakia Salime

“Gendered Counter-Archive: Mining and Refusal in Morocco”

In August 2011 villagers climbed Mont Alebban, in the South East of Morocco, to shut off the valve diverting water from the mountain’s reservoir to flush a neighboring silver mine. They established an encampment that resisted prison sentences, state violence, and soft policing for eight years. I analyze the camp as a living counter-archive of mining and illustrate how life in the camp and around it inscribed and worked through social, sexual, and gendered registers. The notion of counter-archive captures the spatial, subjective, embodied, and poetic intrications of power, extraction, subalternity, and record-making, as resistance.

Zakia Salime is a Fulbright scholar, and Associate Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies, and Sociology at Rutgers University. She was The Presidential Visiting Associate Professor in the Department of Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies at Yale University, and a Visiting Professor at the University Paris-8 Vincennes- Sanit Denis. She is the author of Between Feminism and Islam: Human Rights and Sharia Law in Morocco (Minnesota 2011) and

co-editor of *Freedom Without Permission: Bodies and Space in the Arab Revolutions* (Duke 2016). She has published extensively on gender, women's movement, Moroccan Islamism, and youth cultural and political movements in the MENA region, and is currently working on a book manuscript on gender and land rights in Morocco. Salime's work was featured in the New York Times and the Washington Post.

Artist Bios

Adérónké Adésolá Adésànyà

"Black Bodies' Fragility and Resilience in an Ecology of Hostility"

In a series of new works (paintings, poetry, and drawings), I am responding to climate as the environment and as a metaphor of hostility. The poetry and drawings emanate from and transcend the restiveness that occurred in Nigeria because of EndSARS activism. They also highlight the complicity of the ruling elite in the state violence unleashed on Nigerian youths, and the deaths of some of them at Lekki Toll Gate on October 20, 2020. My reflections on the police brutality and hostility in that cultural space connect with those occurring to black bodies in America and in other places. I also began to contemplate on vulnerable species and the environment. Thus, in the paintings, I reference species becoming extinct (such as birds and butterflies), wildfires, space travels, and black women. I am using the images to comment on climate change, hostile cultural climate, and the historical exclusion of and/or assault on black women. The threats to our biosphere, ruptures to inclusion, and the need to promote the culture of tolerance are critical conversations that must be had and be mediated as the world strives to write new chapters and chart new horizons. A central argument in my conversation is that if humanity treats (mother) earth with the tenderness that women require, we just might be able to save our ecosystem for generations unborn. Also, the works advocate that everyone gets dignity, respect, and support for social harmony to be possible.

Adérónké Adésolá Adésànyà, art historian, artist, cartoonist, poet and a professional mediator and conciliator is a Professor of Art History at the James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia. Adésànyà trained at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, and the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She is a fellow of the Peace and Conflict Studies international program of Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden; a laureate of CODESRIA Gender Institute, Dakar, Senegal, a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (ICMC), Nigeria, and current Vice President, African Studies Association, among other professional affiliations. Her publications include *Migrations and Creative Expressions in Africa and the African Diasporas, 2008*; *Etches of Fresh Waters, 2008*; *Carving Woods, Making History, 2012*; *Art Parody and Politics, 2013*; *Akinola Lasekan: Cartooning, Art, and Nationalism at the Dawn of a New Nigeria, 2020*, several book chapters, and peer-reviewed journal articles.

Rob Lemkin

Rob Lemkin has produced and directed over 50 documentaries for BBC, C4 and other broadcasters around the world. His most recent cinema documentary, *African Apocalypse*—a non-fiction retelling of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*—premiered at the London Film Festival in October 2020 and was broadcast on BBC2 in May 2021. His previous feature, *Enemies of the People* (2010) was a ground-breaking account of the Killing Fields of Cambodia which he wrote, directed, photographed and produced. One of the most lauded documentary features of recent years, it won many international awards including Special Jury Prize at Sundance, Best Documentary BIFA and 2012 Emmy for Investigative

Documentary. It was nominated for Best Screenplay at the Writers Guild of America awards and shortlisted for the 2011 Academy Award. He is the founder of Old Street Films and from 1999 to 2006 ran Channel 4's Independent Investigations Unit which won 5 Royal Television Society Awards and a BAFTA. Other work includes music films with Nina Simone, Curtis Mayfield, Bobby Womack and Chet Baker and art installations.

Razinat T. Mohammed

Razinat T. Mohammed PhD, Professor of English, Feminist Literary Criticism and Creative Writing at the University of Abuja. An award winning author of *A love Like a Woman's and other Stories* (2006). Her novel, *Habiba* (2013), was a finalist for the ANA prize for prose 2014; she is the author of *The Travails of a first Wife* (2015), *Intra-gender Relations between Women: A Study of Nawal El-Saadawi and Buchi Emecheta's Novel* (2012), *My Daughter, my Blood* (2021), and *Female Representation in Nigerian Literature* (www.africanwriter.com) among others. She is Chair of the Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Abuja, Nigeria.

Femi Nylander

Femi Nylander is a Panafrikan activist, filmmaker, poet and actor of West African descent who grew up in the UK, graduating from the University of Oxford in 2016 with a degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. His debut feature film, which he co-wrote and presented, is a dramatic investigation of the French colonization of Niger and the ongoing impacts on the local population. Delivered in French, English and Hausa, *African Apocalypse* premiered at the BFI London Film Festival to strong reviews. At 25, he has given two Ted Talks in the form of poems, on migration and public health respectively. As an anticolonial and Panafrikan activist and organizer of the "Rhodes Must Fall" movement, he has appeared on 'The Big Questions', 'Daily Politics', 'Good Morning Britain' and 'The One Show'. Femi is also a keen musician who creates music, both solo and alongside his jazz funk band Pangolin. He enjoys mixing his passion for music with his passion for languages and African culture, and *African Apocalypse* includes scenes of musical collaboration in Hausa with traditional griot singers.

Mamadou Diallo Boubou Sangare

Mamadou Diallo Boubou Sangare is a retired civil servant from the Niger Republic. His first book of short stories, *Chroniques du Mangari*, published underground, focuses on everyday life in Mangari, a region in Niger Republic.

Tosin Gbogi

Tosin Gbogi is an assistant professor of English at Marquette University where his teaching and research focus on African literature, race, and popular culture. Before joining Marquette, he taught in the Department of English at Adekunle Ajasin University and worked as an arts editor with Nigeria's leading publisher Kraft Books. Gbogi is the author of two collections of poetry—*the tongues of a shattered s-k-y* (2012) and *locomotifs and other songs* (2018)—and the co-editor of *One Poem, Fifty Seasons* (the poetry anthology of the Association of Nigerian Authors).

Amina Weira

Amina Weira was born in the city of Arlit where she attended her primary and secondary schools. She earned a bachelor degree in Video Editing from Niamey Institute for Training in Information and Communication Techniques (IFTIC). She holds a master's degree in creative documentary production from the Gaston Berger University of Saint-Louis, Senegal.

In 2011, she produced her first short film entitled “la musique de film/ Music for Film”. So far, she has produced four short films: “Des études au miel / Studies in honey” released in 2012; “C’est possible/ It’s possible” released in 2013; “Un geste, un cœur /A gesture, a heart” which was released in 2018 and “une scolarité confinée/ a confined schooling released in 2020. Amina is mostly known for her denunciation documentary, *La colère dans le vent / Anger in the Wind* released in 2016. The film won many international awards and recognition.

Moderator Bios

Gabriel Bámbgbóṣé

Gabriel Bámbgbóṣé is a writer, critic, and translator. He is completing his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at Rutgers University-New Brunswick on a Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship. His research focuses on how African women poets writing in English, French, Portuguese, and Yorùbá rethink négritude poetics. Bámbgbóṣé is the founding editor of *Ijagun Poetry Journal*. His scholarly and creative work has appeared in *African Literature Today*, *Journal of African Literature Association*, *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, *Contemporary Humanities*, *Ideas & Futures*, *Footmarks: Poems on One Hundred Years of Nigeria’s Nationhood*, *Ake Review*, *The Criterion*, *The New Black Magazine*, and *Àtéléwọ Pélélé*, among others. He is the author of the poetry collection, *Something Happened After the Rain*.

Barbara Cooper

Barbara Cooper’s undergraduate and graduate training ranges from the “great books” of the Western tradition to the languages and cultures of Africa, with detours into experiential learning and art school. Her doctoral work at the African Studies Center of Boston University exposed her to the Hausa language, the political economy of agriculture, and the anthropology of gender. Professor Cooper’s research draws upon both oral and archival sources to reconstruct the social and cultural history of West Africa. Her focus is on the former French colonies of the Sahel, particularly Niger, where she has conducted fieldwork for thirty years. She is the author of three books and numerous articles and chapters on the history of Niger and the Sahel.

Camille Dantzler

Camille Dantzler is a researcher with an expertise in African film and literature, gender studies, critical race theory, public policy, and critical trauma studies. The product of Mississippi migrations North, her lineage has inspired her passion, research, advocacy, and writing on Africa and the Diasporas, particularly on the experiences of women and girls. Dantzler teaches a variety of African studies and African American and Diaspora studies courses at Rutgers University and Middlesex College. She has published poetry in *Becoming Undisciplined Literary Journal*, *Radical: An Anthology*, *Rigorous Mag*, and has held multiple teaching and research fellowships, including the Frederick Douglass Doctoral Fellowship, Just-Julian Research Fellowship, and Sasakawa Young Leaders Foundation Fellowship.

Hasnaa Mokhtar

Hasnaa Mokhtar started her tenure as the Director of the Global Village at Douglass Residential College, Rutgers University on March 15, 2022. Prior to this position, Hasnaa was the Postdoctoral Associate at Rutgers University’s Center for Women’s Global Leadership. She holds a Ph.D. from Clark University, and her dissertation is focused on narrative power and the invisible trauma of gendered violence in Kuwait. She is a scholar,

researcher, and activist, with expertise in the Arabian Gulf, focusing on narratives of Muslim survivors of gender-based violence.

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It has been over 25 years since Robert H. Bates, Valentine Y. Mudimbe and Jean O’Barr produced their edited volume, *Africa and the Disciplines*. The text was crucial in delineating some of the important contributions of research in and on Africa to both the humanities and the social sciences. In addition to the many new and complex developments that have continued to unfold in the quarter of a century or so

since its publication, the book covered research in only two areas of the humanities—literature, primarily in European languages, and philosophy. In addition, the book defined Africa in its narrower, continental frame. The three symposia that are part of this series, to run over a period of three academic years, are intended to continue this trans-disciplinary conversation on Africa and the humanistic disciplines, but taking Africa in its more global meaning. Global Africa and The Humanities Series is an Initiative of The Department of African, Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Literatures (AMESALL) in collaboration with School of Arts and Sciences-Humanities and the Center for African Studies. Its co-convenors are Professor Ousseina Alidou and Professor Alamin Mazrui.