

Evan Maina Mwangi named Melville J. Herskovits Professor of African Studies

Professor Evan Mwangi from Northwestern University's English Department has been named the Melville J. Herskovits Professor of African Studies in a ceremony that took place on March 10, 2022 in the Guild Lounge where he received his title from Weinberg College Dean, Adrian Randolph. As he received his title, Mwangi shared his academic journey from sciences to English major, what it means to say you are an Africanist, and Herskovits's legacy regarding African languages and liberation. He highlighted the profound impact some of his woman professors had on his approach to understanding and teaching African literature.

Mwangi joined Northwestern in 2005 after teaching for two years at Ohio State University. He obtained his PhD from the University of Nairobi in 2002. He specializes in 20th century Anglophone African literature, focusing on the intersection of nationalism, gender, and sexuality in canonical and popular artistic expressions, relating local texts to global theories.

Mwangi has published on Nazizi Hirji, Chinua Achebe, K. Sello Duiker, Amandina Lihamba, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, David Maillu, Henry ole Kulet, Margaret Ogola, and Francis Imbuga, among other modern African artists and intellectuals.

Mwangi has published six books, the most recent of which is *The Postcolonial Animal: African Literature and Posthuman Ethics* (Michigan, 2019). His other works include *Africa Writes*

Back to Self: Metafiction, Gender, Sexuality (State University of New York Press, 2009) and *Translation in African Contexts* (2017). His articles and poems have appeared in Mwangaza, TDR: The Drama Review,



Chair of English Department Katherine Breen, Herskovits professor Evan Mwangi, and Weinberg Dean Adrian Randolph. Photo by prof. Peter Mwangi

Research in African Literatures, African Studies Review, ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature, English Studies in Africa, The Nairobi Journal of Literature, PMLA, and Africa Today. In addition, he is a public intellectual and has published frequently in the Nairobi's influential newspaper The Daily Nation, commenting on social issues, politics, and popular culture.

Currently, Mwangi is working on two book projects. The first explores the global rewritings of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the second surveys Indian Ocean literatures and philosophies.

Previous Herskovits Professors of African Studies

Gwendolen Carter, 1964–1974

Akin Mabogunje, 1979–1980

Ivor Wilks, 1984–1992

Sara Berry, 1995

Caroline Bledsoe, 2003–2021

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In Memoriam: Amos Claudius Sawyer (1945–2022)

By Will Reno



Dr. Amos Claudius Sawyer, interim president of Liberia from 1990 to 1994, died this past February 16th in Baltimore, Maryland. He was a towering defender of freedom in his Liberian homeland.

In his extensive writings and in his work, he maintained a faith that organizing for liberation requires a grassroots approach in which the spontaneity of common people's actions is not separate from organization. This belief grew from his personal experience and observations of Liberian politics, the subject of his political science dissertation at Northwestern University (1973). On his return to Liberia, Sawyer took a post as a professor of political science and rose to become dean of the College of Social Sciences and acting director of the University of Liberia. He used his position to decry how Liberia's ruling oligarchy did not shrink from the use of violence but maintained power more insidiously through denigrating common people as "uncivilized" to encourage internalized notions of inferiority. Through the 1970s and 1980s, his writings also uncovered the details of the inner workings of a massive patronage system designed to extract wealth from common people to further enrich the privileged.

Sawyer played a notable role as a political figure to put his ideas into action. He was one of several prominent intellectuals who founded the Movement for Justice in Africa in 1973, a Pan-African organization with branches in Gambia and Ghana that focused on political change. He ran a night school dedicated to nurturing the intellectual tools that enabled his students—ordinary Liberians taking time after their busy days—to become masters of their own fates. In 1979, he ran as an independent for mayor of

the capital city Monrovia. He remained in Liberia after the military takeover in 1980 and in 1981, was chosen to head the National Constitution Commission to draft a new democratic constitution. The military government did not appreciate his influential voice and he was forced to leave the country. Sawyer found refuge at Indiana University's Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, where he dedicated his energies to addressing Liberia's substantial problems of governance.

Sawyer's influential *Emergence of Autocracy in Liberia: Tragedy and Challenge* (1992) appeared shortly after he returned to Liberia as president of the Interim Government of National Unity from 1990 to 1994. He led this UN and ECOWAS-backed authority amidst a brutal civil war that broke out in 1989 and ended only in 2003. Sawyer used his time as Liberia's head of state to put his ideas about dialogue and debate to the task of building popular trust in a democratic government. Peace and security were not restored to Liberia under Sawyer's government, but he remained active in Liberia's politics as a voice for democratic governance. He served as chairman of the Governance Commission of Liberia from 2007 to 2018, a powerful voice for the appointment of experienced and technically competent government officials and the reform of the governance of Liberia's natural resources.

In 2011, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf awarded him the Grand Cordon of the Knighthood of the Most Venerable Order of the Pioneers, Liberia's highest distinction. In 2018 he was awarded an honorary degree from Indiana University, where he maintained strong ties through many decades.

Will Reno is chair of the Department of Political Science and a former director of PAS.

Message from PAS director Chris Abani

In Afikpo Igbo, the morning greeting, *nnaa*, elicits the response, *nahicha*. As in many West African languages, words are often elisions of longer phrases or sentences. The morning greeting, *nnaa*, is an elision of the question, *Inahiri onwu?* Did you escape death? The idea is that sleep is akin to death and that to wake up is to escape death. *Anahichara'm*, I escaped well, the response to this question is shortened to *nahicha*, escaped well.

The orientation of Afikpo-Igbo is towards the philosophical and existential over direct communication. Languages like this are deeply embedded in myth and account for multiple positions of experience and existence. A linguistic form that embeds existential ideas within the quotidian, and ensures that every interaction is a chance for a quantum exchange to occur. Worldviews that allow for us to think in simultaneity are perhaps a better way to cope with the increasing crises of our lives. To have a conversation in Afikpo-Igbo is to “weave

a conversation” (*kpa nkata*) and is one tonal mark away from “weaving a basket” (*kpa nkata*). The concept is that things exist in common and for common use.

As we emerge out of the isolation of the last two years, we find we are altered. While we managed to escape death, literal and metaphorical, I for one have not done it as well as I thought, and maybe that is a good thing. Before COVID, everyone, it seemed, was clear about their positions, their individuality, and even exclusivity. This may have been a result of taking community for granted, and imagining we were less interdependent than we were.

As COVID raged, we all clung to the chant and hope, “when we return to normal.” But as we emerge back into the world, we realize that not only are things not going back to “normal” but that normal was shorthand for all manner of things. As we move forward with plans, we realize that what

(Continued on page 7)

Ato Quayson presents his new book

Ato Quayson, the Jean G. and Morris M. Doyle Professor in Interdisciplinary Studies and Professor of English at Stanford, gave a virtual presentation, “The Ambiguities of Colonial Modernity: Tragedy, History, and African Literature,” in April.

He argued that historians have outlined how unevenly infrastructural development was distributed during the period of colonial modernity, with a focus on certain urban areas and a bias toward resource extraction. Colonial modernity also assumed that Reason was concentrated in the colonial bureaucratic apparatus of courts, administrative procedures, and the legislative councils, among many other features of the colonial system. Contrasting examples of these are to be found in Amadou Hampate Ba’s *Fortunes of Wangrin* and Chinua Achebe’s *Arrow of God*, among others. One aspect of colonial modernity that historians ignore, however, is the generation of the ambiguation of colonized attitudes to their individual selves as well as to their communities. We see this ambiguation in African literature. Thus, Okonkwo’s decisive act against the white man’s messenger at the end of *Things Fall Apart* represents an epistemological impasse for the people of Umoufia (“Why did he do it?” they ask in bewilderment), while Elesin Oba’s failure to successfully complete the ritual suicide is interpreted by him to

Iyaloja as the “blasphemy” of relief in seeing for one fleeting moment the hands of his own gods in the intrusion of the white police commissioner. Quayson explored the terms of this historical ambiguation, and of the related concept of the difficulty of giving an account of oneself (Butler) when the instruments of self-accounting are corrupted by history itself through reference to Achebe’s rural novels, Soyinka’s plays, and various other novels.

Prior to joining the faculty of Stanford, he served as Professor of English and inaugural Director of the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies at the University of Toronto (2005–2017) and Professor of African and Postcolonial Literature at New York University (2017–2019). Quayson has published six monographs and eight edited volumes. His monograph, *Oxford Street, Accra: City Life and the Itineraries of Transnationalism* (2014) was cowinner of the Urban History Association’s 2015 Best Book Prize (non-North America) and named by The Guardian as one of the ten best books on cities in 2014. His most recent book is *Tragedy and Postcolonial Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).



Pan African Youth Conference promotes common understanding of Africa's challenges

By Trevor Lwere



The Pan African Youth Conference, jointly organized by the Pan-African Students Union (PASU)

at Northwestern University and the African Students Association (ASA) of Notre Dame, hosted its second conference in March on the theme “Which Way Africa?” Over 145 young African participants from over 30 countries on four continents convened virtually to discuss issues relating to Africa’s past and future. Dr. Lwazi Lushaba, a political science lecturer from the University of Cape Town delivered the keynote address.

The 2022 deliberations built on the 2021 PAYC discussions that analyzed lessons from Africa’s past and how they inform both the present and the future, PAYC 2022 discussions critically analyzed Africa’s often futile development efforts by interrogating the assumptions underlying modernization as the predominant concept of continental development since independence.

Like its inaugural conference, PAYC 2022 demonstrated the power of Pan-African cooperation. Our team came from seven countries with team members living and/or studying on three continents and specializing in fields as diverse as economics, anthropology, cultural studies, political science, and mechanical engineering. The conference also demonstrated the power of intergenerational collaboration. While the organizing team consisted of only students, we invited scholars to serve as committee chairs to curate and deliver the conference. As the younger generation, the PAYC team brought a critical attitude to bear on the experience and insight of the committee chairs. In addition, PAYC 2022 demonstrated the ways in which a changing world influences the nature of this protracted struggle. Because of our

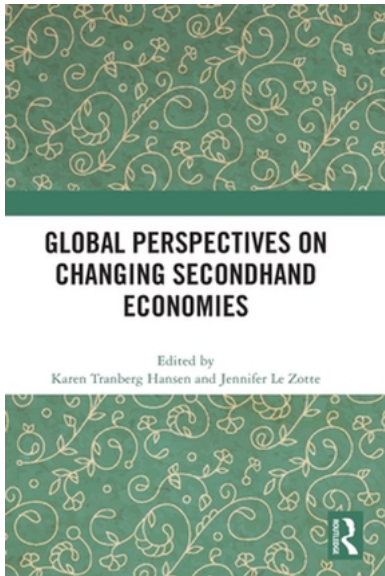
geographically and nationally diverse team, the planning process was done remotely. Further, the conference was entirely virtual, which made it possible for people from all over the world to take part.

Although the internet allowed us to plan and execute a successful conference in an entirely virtual world, it is not lost on us that the internet is not available to everyone, which limits attendance. Moreover, the fact that PAYC was conducted in English posed a significant challenge as we attempted to translate our experience and concepts into English to make sense of our reality. Thus, the foundations of knowledge on which we draw for our discussions are not necessarily rooted in indigenous tradition but from the influences of the places where we have been schooled. This has consequences for interpreting our reality and determining future possibilities. Our positionality colors our outlook as students of African descent living and studying in the diaspora. How do we successfully mobilize our people while speaking a language and drawing on concepts that may not be readily accessible to everybody? Grappling with these questions constitutes part of the work we have ahead of us: to democratize and embed the process of conscientization for each person and for all people. PAYC seeks to mobilize a critical mass of young Africans with a clear understanding of Africa’s challenges, an appreciation for Pan-African cooperation, and an unwavering commitment to Africa’s struggle for freedom and development.

The 2022 conference received financial support from the Program of African Studies, the Buffet Institute for Global Affairs, and the Middle East and North African Program at Northwestern University as well as the Kellogg Institute for International Affairs, the Glynn Family Honors Program, and the African Studies Association at the University of Notre Dame.

Trevor Lwere is an undergraduate student at the University of Notre Dame.

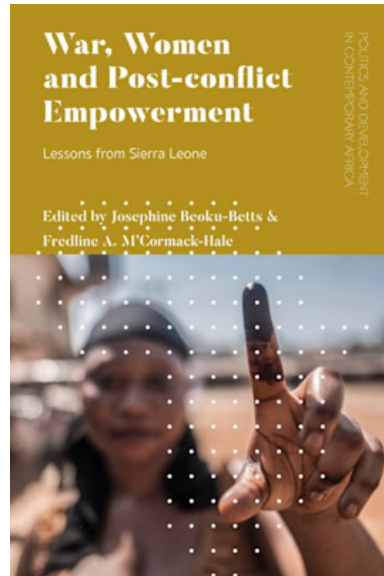
PAS bookshelf



Global Perspectives on Changing Secondhand Economies, edited by Karen Tranberg Hansen and Jennifer Le Zotte

(London: Routledge, 2022)

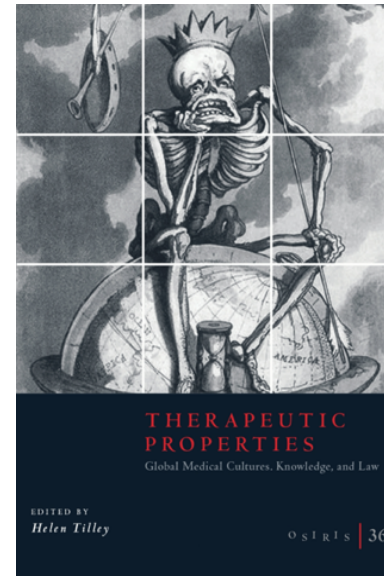
Providing interdisciplinary and global perspectives, this collection examines historical and contemporary changes in secondhand economies, including the emergence and specialization of secondhand venues, the materials involved, and the cultural significance of secondhand things and the professions associated with them. The chapters focus on objects ranging from used clothing, scrap and waste materials, to antiquities and used cars, thrift stores and circular economies. These contributions demonstrate, that recent concerns with the fast pace and adverse effects of global commodity flows have increased the scholarly attention to secondhand economies, both in terms of their history and their significance for livelihoods and sustainability.



War, Women and Post-conflict Empowerment: Lessons from Sierra Leone, edited by Josephine Beoku-Betts and Fredline A. M'Cormack-Hale

(London: Bloomsbury, 2022)

This is a collection of studies by Sierra Leonean and Africanist scholars and experts from a broad range of disciplines, this volume analyses the historical and contextual factors that shaped women's political and socio-economic development in the country. It draws on a diverse array of case studies—from health to education, refugees to international donors—that examine the contradictions, successes, and challenges of women's lives in a postconflict environment. Included among the chapters is “Zainab Hawa Bangura's Early Career as an Activist in Sierra Leone, 1994–2005” by LaRay Denzer (PAS).



Therapeutic Properties: Global Medical Cultures, Knowledge, and Law, special issue of Osiris, vol. 36 (2021), edited by Helen Tilley

This volume of *Osiris* reviews the complex historical interplay between medicine and law across the globe. It presents insights on the worldwide ascendancy of biomedicine, the persistence of nonofficial and unorthodox approaches to healing, and the legal contexts that shape these dynamics. The contributions draw upon source material from the Americas, Africa, Western Europe, the Caribbean, and Asia to trace the influence of penal and civil codes, courts and constitutions, and patents and intellectual properties on not only health practices but also the very foundations of state-sanctioned medicine.

Community News

Alumna Priscilla Adipa (sociology '17) has published two short stories: "Hope upon Hope" on Afritondo (afritondo.com/afritondo/hope-upon-hope) and "The Woman Across the Street" on AfricanWriter.com (africanwriter.com/priscilla-adipa-the-woman-across-the-street/).

Chernoh Bah (T. H. Breen Graduate Fellow, history) convened the Chabraja Center for Historical Studies hybrid conference, "Global Perspectives on the Prison and Systems of Punishment," in April. He also presented a paper, "Death, Disease, and Forced Labor in Freetown Prison, 1914-1925."

Adia Benton (anthropology) received a 2021/2022 Alice B. Kaplan Institute fellowship. As part of the fellowship program, she led a Kaplan conversation entitled "The Fever Archive: Race, Risk, and Survival in the Wake of Sierra Leone's Ebola Outbreak."

Alumna **Jean Hunleth** (anthropology 2011) coauthored an article, "Care at the Gate," on the Anthropology News website, June 23, 2021. She is currently Assistant Professor of Surgery

and Anthropology in the Division of Public Health Sciences at Washington University's School of Medicine in St. Louis.

Congratulations to PAS's first-ever Swahili FLTA, **Seline Okeno**, who has graduated from Ohio University with an MA in applied linguistics.

Will Reno (political science) and alumnus **Jahara Matisek** (political science, 2018) published a chapter, "African Militaries and Contemporary Warfare" in *Rethinking Civil-Military Relations in Africa: Beyond the Coup D'état*, edited by political science alumni **Moses Khisa** (2016) and **Christopher Day** (2012), published Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2022.

Rebecca Rwakabukoza (history graduate student) is a coconvener for monthly dialogues at African Feminist Initiative (AFI), a global platform for feminist scholars and activists to engage in interdisciplinary collaborative knowledge production in and about Africa and its diaspora. The AFI is housed by Pennsylvania State University.

Alumna **Aili Tripp** (political science '90) was a cohost of the symposium in memory of Professor M. Crawford Young at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, April 1-2, 2022. Among the many participants at that symposium were former PAS directors **Richard Joseph** and **Will Reno**.

Zekeria Ould Ahmed Salem (ISITA director and political science) presented the 32nd Bradford Morse Distinguished lecture, "Islam and the Post-colonial State in Africa: The Formation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (1960-2022)," at the Boston University African Studies Center on April 14. He also presented a version of the same paper at the virtual conference, Religion and Democracy on the African Continent: Colonial Legacies and Postcolonial Possibilities, hosted by the University of Virginia Democracy Initiative's Religion, Race & Democracy Lab in May.

Alumnus **Jim Sanders** (history '80) writes "Through a letter-writing campaign aimed at both public and private officials, I have endeavored to draw

Congratulations to PAS faculty recipients of 2022 fellowships and honors

Wendy Griswold (sociology) is one of four Northwestern faculty elected to the 2022 class of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Sean Hanretta (history) received a NEH fellowship to work on his book, "Dying and Marrying Muslim in Ghana: Ethics of the Body, Secrecy, and Privacy."

Amanda Logan (anthropology) named to the 2022 class of Andrew Carnegie Fellows.

Zekeria Ould Ahmed Salem (ISITA director and political science) awarded a New York University Abu Dhabi Senior Humanities Research Fellowship in its Arab World program.

attention to the obscure world of emerging market, (EM), bond deals and their impact on Africa. Part of the effort entails urging financial journalists to tap their muckraker heritage and expose the murkier side of EM bonds. Shining a light on this dimension of global finance requires media to shift its focus from how EM bond offerings benefit Western investors, and investment banks, to the consequences of them for African economies, governments and people. With \$7 trillion in debt to refinance this year, emerging market economies are likely to experience a level of stress that may threaten governments. The pandemic, supply chain crisis, China's commercial real estate bubble, and war in Ukraine are accelerating the current debt crisis."

Alumnus **Alexander Thurston** (religious studies '13) presented a paper, "The Politics of Writing Sokoto's History in Independence-era Nigeria," at the virtual conference, Religion and Democracy on the African Continent: Colonial Legacies and Postcolonial Possibilities, hosted by the University of Virginia Democracy Initiative's Religion, Race & Democracy Lab in May. He has also published several articles in the national press: "West Africa: Rethinking the International Response to Coups," *The Africa Report*,

February 9, 2022, <https://www.theafricareport.com/175263/west-africa-rethinking-the-international-response-to-coups/>; "After a Fourth Coup in West Africa, It's Time to Rethink International Response," *The Conversation* (Johannesburg), January 31, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/after-a-fourth-coup-in-west-africa-its-time-to-rethink-international-response-175991>; and "The Sahel's Oasis of Stability Isn't Really Stable," *Inkstick*, March 3, 2021 <https://inkstickmedia.com/the-sahels-oasis-of-stability-isnt-really-stable/>.

Chris Urdy copublished two articles, "Heterogeneity, Measurement Error, and Misallocation: Evidence from African Agriculture," in *The Journal of Political Economy* 129(1), 2021, doi.org/10.1086/711369; and "Agricultural Technology in Africa," in *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 36(1), 2022: 33–56

Alumnus **Ariel Zellman** (political science '13) coauthored "Uneasy Lies the Crown: External Threats to Religious Legitimacy and Interstate Dispute Militarization," in *Security Studies* 31(1), 2022: 152-182, doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2022.2038664. Zellman is a faculty member of the Bar-Ilan University in Israel.



(Continued from page 3)

interested us two years ago no longer holds a shine, what we thought was important no longer gives us any urgency. We are struggling to calibrate to the world as we return. The world is asking us for a simultaneity in language and thought that we never had to calibrate for prior to COVID.

What is humbling and encouraging to me, as someone whose role is largely that of facilitating conversations and research amongst and between very intelligent and focused people around the subject of Africa, is that there seems to be a new generosity among this constituency. The willingness to work alongside each other, to listen deeply to each other, to talk, to argue, has always marked this community. But it seems there is a deeper empathy at play now, a willingness to find ourselves within each other's intellectual orbit – we are seeing harmonic resonances within our work and are gravitating towards working more deeply and collaboratively. Perhaps not surviving well has made us more intellectually curious and open and generous. Perhaps we are witnessing the beginnings of a new kind of community, one not bound by limited lines of research. Instead, we are beginning to see connections across disciplines, ideas and ideologies and other interdisciplinary crossovers in a new way. Perhaps not surviving death well has given us new hopes for how to weave new conversations and the requisite baskets to hold them.

Welcome back to the world, not as it was, not normal, but with a new post-covid reality.

Send stories and news items to laray.denzer@northwestern.edu so that PAS can share them with the Africanist community at Northwestern and beyond.

NEH award supports development of digital manuscript collection

By Rebecca Shereikis

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has awarded a \$59,571 planning grant to Northwestern's Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa (ISITA) and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) to pilot a digital collection of Arabic manuscripts from West Africa in English translation. The collection, called *Maktaba* (meaning "library" in Arabic), will display images of selected manuscripts from the UIUC and NU libraries, alongside English translations and essays that provide historical and cultural context for each manuscript.

The project joins the rich West African Arabic manuscript holdings of the two universities' libraries, which include over 7,000 works in prose and verse written by African Muslims in Arabic and in Ajami (African languages written in an enriched Arabic script) dating from the 19th through the mid-20th centuries. With works from Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, and Ghana, the collections constitute the largest set of African Arabic manuscripts available in North America. Products of a longstanding tradition of reading, writing, and intellectual production in West Africa, they counter stereotypes of Africa as a continent of that lacked written traditions before the arrival of Europeans.

Maktaba's purpose is to make the contents of these manuscripts more accessible, legible, and teachable for non-specialists. "Researchers from around the world have used manuscripts from the Northwestern and UIUC collections for their scholarship for over four decades," notes ISITA associate director Rebecca Shereikis. "*Maktaba* will introduce these materials—and Africa's Arabic manuscript culture more broadly—to English-speaking students and a broader public." The manuscripts displayed in *Maktaba* will connect with a range of humanities themes, be suitable for undergraduate

teaching, and accessible to the public. The *Maktaba* website will serve as a unified resource that will make it easy for a variety of users to learn about, examine, and engage with the manuscripts held by the UIUC and NU Libraries.

The interdisciplinary *Maktaba* team is led by Mauro Nobili (history, UIUC), who will serve as project director and Zekeria Ahmed Salem (political science and ISITA director), who will serve as principal investigator for Northwestern's portion of the grant. Additional Northwestern team members include Rebecca Shereikis, ISITA associate director; Esmeralda Kale, curator of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies; and Carolyn Caizzi, head of Repository and Digital Curation at NU Library, who will coordinate the work of library staff in preservation, digitization, and other areas.

At the end of the two-year planning grant period (which begins in June 2022), the *Maktaba* digital collection will be publicly available, populated with a sample set of twenty manuscripts, translations, and contextual essays. The team will use the planning period to test concepts and establish processes that will guide expansion of the project after the NEH grant ends.

Kale observes, "We finally have an opportunity to make the contents of these manuscripts available to a wider audience. But that is just the beginning. This project paves the way for comparative studies and critical conversations in a multitude of subject areas, work which until now has been hindered due to access to and, indeed, even the knowledge of, these truly unique materials."

Rebecca Shereikis is associate director of ISITA.

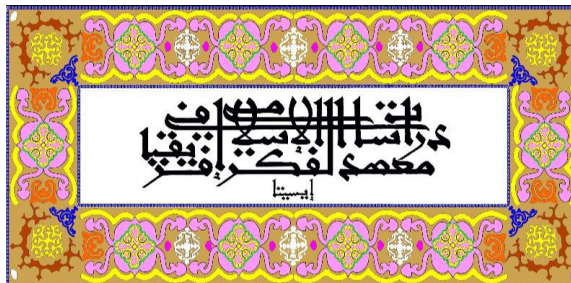
ISITA Dialogues Speaker Series resumes

By Rebecca Shereikis

The ISITA Dialogues Speaker Series resumes in spring quarter 2022. The series is being offered in a hybrid format, in contrast to spring 2021, when it was held entirely online.

“We have invited six exciting scholars to campus to share insights from their new books or current research,” said ISITA director Zekeria Ahmed Salem. “They are speaking to audiences in person and on Zoom. It is wonderful to have real people in the room again and the speakers seem to be enjoying the interactions. At the same time, we are applying what we learned during the pandemic about using technology to be more inclusive. I’m so pleased that colleagues outside Northwestern, especially those in Africa, can also attend our talks.”

Speakers and topics this quarter include: Ariela Marcus-Sells (religious studies, Elon University), “Miracles, Science, and Sorcery: The Sufi Texts of the Kunta Scholars”; Michelle Moore Apotsos (art history, Williams College), “The Masjid in Contemporary Islamic Africa”; Mara Leichtman (anthropology, Michigan State University), “Da‘wa as Development:



Kuwaiti Islamic Charity in Africa”; Shobana Shankar (history, Stony Brook University), “An Uneasy Embrace: Africans, Indians, and the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam”; Charles Stewart (emeritus, history, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), “Literary Authority in West African Islam”; and Dahlia E. M. Gubara (history, Koç University, Turkey), “Returning to Luqm n: Wisdom, Subjectivity, and Islamic Tradition.” For the schedule and more information, visit the ISITA website: <https://isita.northwestern.edu/index.html>.

Rebecca Shereikis is associate director of ISITA.

New publication explores history of the “Caliphate of Hamdallahi”

A new publication has resulted from ISITA’s collaboration with the Center for African Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign on a 2018 conference exploring the history of the Caliphate of Hamdallahi. Titled “The ‘Caliphate of Hamdallahi’: A History from Within,” the international conference shed light on the history of the nineteenth century Islamic state located on the inner Niger Delta, founded by Muslim reformer Ahmad Lobbo (d. 1845). Although the Hamdallahi caliphate has left a deep imprint on Malian history, it has been largely neglected in the scholarly literature, especially in comparison with other nineteenth century West Africa Islamic states. The conference sought to remedy this neglect and

approach Hamdallahi’s history largely through the use of Arabic sources.

Selected papers from the conference have been published in a special issue of the open edition journal *Afriques* (12/ 2021), curated and introduced by Mauro Nobili (history, University of Illinois) and Amir Syed (history, University of Virginia). The issue includes contributions in French and English by Bernard Salvaing, Ismail Warscheid, Joseph M. Bradshaw, and Mohamed Diagayété.

“Mosques, Culture Clubs, and Embodied Ritual Debates: Re-making Islam in a New African Diaspora” by Michelle Johnson (Bucknell University).

Documenting Black student experience at Northwestern University

By Florence Mugambi and Charla Wilson

We have embarked on an oral history project to document the Black student experience at Northwestern University in the 1960s and 1970s. The project aims to capture a variety of perspectives and voices through interviews and personal accounts to shed light on three questions: How similar or different were the experiences of African and African American students at Northwestern during this period? What was the nature of African and African American students' interaction on campus? How did contemporary societal issues impact their student experience.

Background: Recruitment of Black students

The 1960s was a period when many African nations gained independence and promoted the recruitment of many African students at universities in North America, Europe, and Asia, fueled largely by decolonization and their workforce needs for development. Thousands of African students Africa received scholarships to study in US universities. The African Scholarship Program of American Universities (ASPAU) officially commenced on April 1, 1961 for the general purpose of enabling highly qualified African secondary school graduates to obtain first degree training at US institutions of higher learning. Under its auspices, 1,594 grants were made from 1961–1970, and an additional twenty African Transfer Study Awards awarded in 1971–1972. These grants and awards were distributed among 236 participating American colleges and universities to students from 34 African countries.

While Northwestern recruited African students through the ASPAU, the existing Program of African Studies (PAS) had been engaged in recruiting African students since its inception in 1948. In the hearings

conducted on African Students and Study Programs in the United States by the Subcommittee on Africa (Committee on Foreign Affairs) in 1965, Gwendolen Carter, then PAS director, explained the importance of having a separate building for African studies at Northwestern, which held weekly sessions that provided opportunities for intellectual and social engagement among the university faculty, students, and members of the wider community.

The earliest documented Black student admitted to Northwestern was John Jacob Astor Goode in the 1880s. In 1903, Lawyer Taylor became the first Black student to get an undergraduate degree while Naomi Willie Pollard became the first Black woman to earn an undergraduate degree (1905). The first Africans to obtain PhDs were the Nigerian economist Pius Okigbo in 1956, the Mozambican revolutionary leader Eduardo Mondlane in 1960, and Hannah Abeodu Bowen from Liberia, who was also the first person to obtain a PhD in African History in 1962.

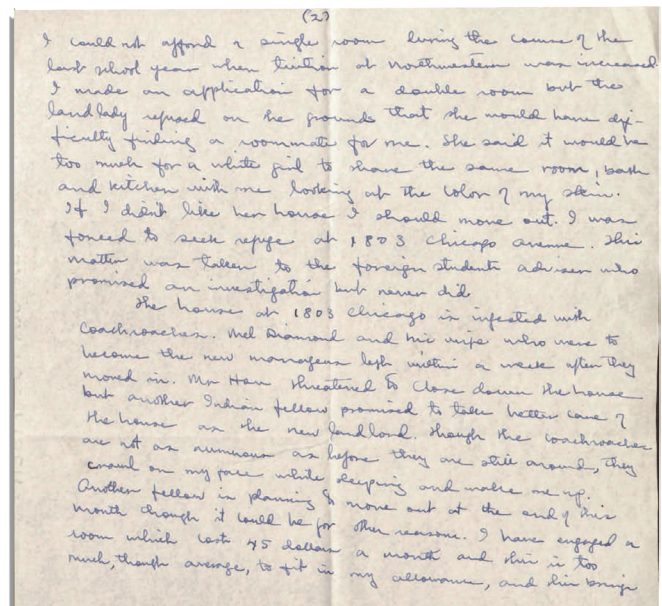
“...in 1965, Gwendolen Carter, then PAS director, explained the importance of having a separate building for African studies at Northwestern, which held weekly sessions that provided opportunities for intellectual and social engagement among the university faculty, students, and members of the wider community.”

Momar Diagne, undergraduate student from Senegal, in the School of Business, (2nd left) with PAS director Gwendolen Carter at Africa House 1966. PAS Archives, Herskovits Library



Throughout the early twentieth century, Black student enrollment remained small, ranging from five to twenty students in a given academic year. By the 1950s, Northwestern had begun unofficially recruiting African American male athletes, but it was not until 1965 that the university adopted a policy specifically to recruit Black students, largely a response to civil rights legislation that prohibited discrimination in education based on race.

In 1965, William Ihlanfeldt, the director of financial aid, and Jack Hinz, the director of admissions, devised a recruitment program called Northwestern University Chicago Action Project (NUCAP). Additionally, national programs such as Project Upward Bound funnelled Black students to Northwestern. Through NUCAP, Ihlanfeldt and Hinz identified Black students at the top of their classes from seventeen high schools in Chicago and invited them to apply for a six-week summer academic enrichment program that included off-campus excursions, academic counseling, and a work-study assignment. If the students chose to enroll at Northwestern, they participated in an extension of the program in their first year. By 1967, this program resulted in the enrollment of eighty-nine Black students, mostly male athletes, at Northwestern from diverse backgrounds outside of athletics.



Bowen Abeodu H. (1960–1961), Melville J. Herskovits (1895–1963) Papers, 1906–1943

Social life and housing for Northwestern Black students

The two main challenges for Black students were social life and housing. On arrival Black students encountered a social climate that was not prepared for a demographic change. Northwestern was a predominately white school that privileged white social norms. Joseph Okpaku, a Nigerian undergraduate civil engineering student recalled that Black students were made to “feel like guests instead of an integral part of campus.” Black students experienced racial discrimination in the classroom and were excluded from pledging to Greek organizations. They felt humiliated. For example, some white students refused to accept Black roommate assignments yelled racist epithets at them. Moreover, Black students felt confined to a hostile world that did not have room for them to enjoy normal social life events like dating. Interracial dating was informally discouraged. To overcome these challenges, Black students concentrated on building community by forming social groups and brought attention to these issues in on-campus forums and editorials in the student paper.

While Northwestern did not have an official policy of racial segregation, there are documented accounts as far back as 1902 of housing discrimination against Black students who sought on-campus housing. In response, the university established International House in 1947 for overseas students, including Black students. Likewise, overt racism and restrictive housing covenants often prevented Black students from renting apartments in Evanston. Unwilling to inflame their relationship with Evanston landlords, university leaders did not do enough to support the students against this discrimination. For example, Hannah Abeodu Bowen, a PhD student, wrote to Professor Herskovits in 1960 about how a prospective landlady turned down her application to rent a double room because “it would be too much for a white girl to share the same room with me.” Bowen complained to the foreign students’ adviser who promised to investigate but never did.

The 1968 Bursar Office takeover

Some white students, particularly women, wanted to select Black roommates, especially friends they had already made, but their requests were often denied. However, if a white student requested a white roommate, that was typically accepted. This led to the involvement of many Black students in advocacy for open housing in Evanston. On May 3, 1968, over 100 Black students organized a “takeover” of the Bursar’s Office until the university administration agreed to their list of demands for changes to improve their student experience on campus. Among other issues, they called on the university to reserve a living unit for Black students, to support open housing in Evanston, to desegregate real estate holdings, and to include Black student participation in open housing review committees.

The oral interviews

We spoke with four alumni in the summer of 2021, three Nigerians and one Kenyan. They were Ferdinand Ofodile (WCAS’65, FSM’68), Joseph Okpaku (McC’65), Fola Soremekun (WCAS’62, WCAS’65), and Njoki Kamau (PhD candidate, McC’78). They told their stories as international students, reflecting on their national backgrounds, their families and upbringing, and how they came to the United States and Northwestern. They discussed their student experience, including academics, housing, and participation in student organizations. Finally, they talked about their lives after Northwestern, including further education and career paths. In the next issue, we will profile the story of Joseph Okpaku who graduated with a BSc in civil engineering in 1965. He became the first Black vice president of the student senate in 1964–65.

(Continued on page 13)

New acquisitions

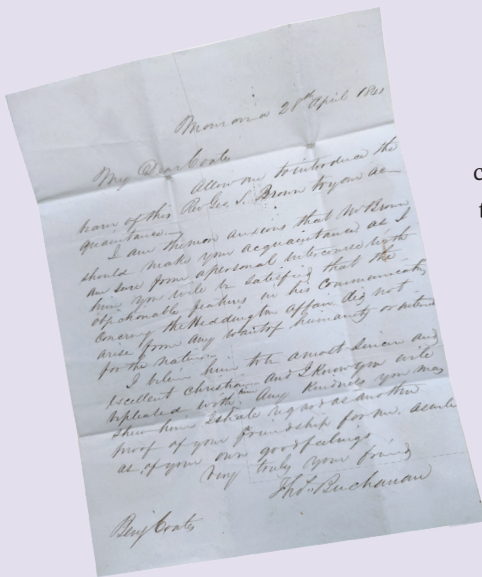
by Esmeralda M. Kale

The rare book collection of the Herskovits Library has acquired two new additions. The first is an issue of the Liberia Herald, Liberia's first newspaper, founded in 1826 by Charles Force. This issue is from volume 1, number 12, February 6, 1831, which is of particular significance for it contains the Laws of Liberia, 17 in all. It is a single sheet of paper that has been folded into to four that not only contains the laws but also includes the arrival and departure of ships in the port, reports of piracy, the deaths of prominent people in this newly established country and current events in France.

It is a wonderful primary source document that provides us with insight into life in Monrovia, the work of the American Colonization Society, and John Brown Russwurm the first editor of the paper.



First page of the newspaper



Excerpt from the Buchanan letter

The second item is a letter from Thomas Buchanan who had an extensive career in the American Colonization Society, which played an important role in the foundation of Liberia. He served as an envoy to Liberia and then went on to administer the region of Grand Bassa of Liberia, (its capital is name after him). He then became the first of governor of Liberia. This letter was written to Benjamin Coates in Philadelphia, carried by George S. Brown, dated Monrovia 28 April 1841. Coates, a Quaker, was involved in the abolition of slavery in the United States and worked with others in the settlement that became Liberia. Thomas Buchanan was a cousin of James Buchanan, fifteenth president of the U.S.

(Continued from page 12)

Acknowledgement

This project was facilitated by a research grant in the summer of 2021 from the Black Metropolis Research Consortium's Archie Motley Archival Internship Program for two interns. The two interns, Calista Smith (University of Chicago) and Malik Pitchford (Depaul University) were instrumental to the progress of our inaugural work. They assisted with background research on the narrators and the transcriptions of the

interviews.

We are seeking interviewees!

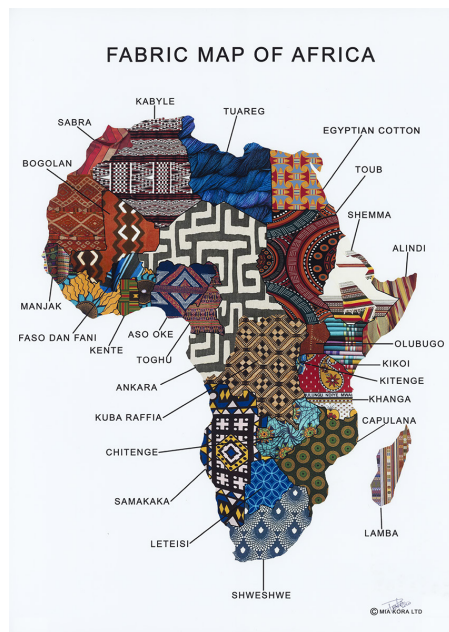
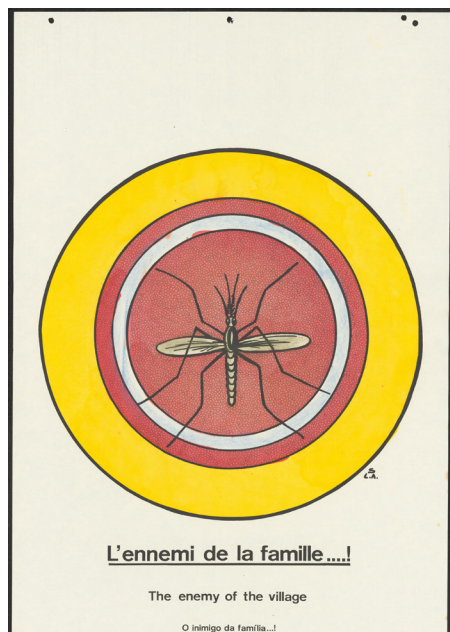
If you are interested in participating as an interviewee or know of Black alumni from the 1960s-1970s, please contact us.

Florence Mugambi is the Librarian for African Studies, (florence.mugambi@northwestern.edu) and Charla Wilson is the Archivist for the Black Experience, charla.wilson@northwestern.edu).

Herskovits Library

Posters in the Herskovits Library collection are often overlooked primary resources

By Gene Kannenberg



Selected posters on public health, travel and art from Herskovits Library

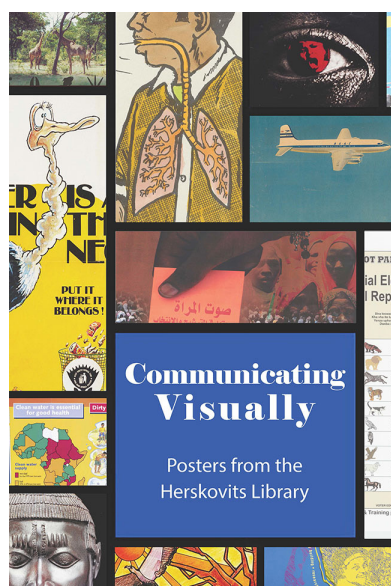


Exhibit Poster

As you travel through the cities and countrysides all across Africa, your senses are stimulated in various ways. One unmissable sight along the way: the ubiquitous poster, which was the subject of the Herskovits Library's Winter 2022 Exhibit.

Posters are used to announce public health initiatives, funerals, religious rallies, elections, and products. They are created by the government, various organizations, and the general public. This extremely cost effective yet viscerally powerful form of communication can serve as an important primary source of information for students and other researchers.

The next time you visit the Herskovits, take a moment to look at the 36 poster recreations now on permanent display around towers 5E and 5S. We hope that they will remind you to explore and make use of our more than 5,000 posters, all of which present diverse voices and potentially valuable information sources for your scholarly work.

To browse our digitized posters visit bit.ly/MJHL-PostersOnline.

Gene Kannenberg, Jr. is the Research & Media Assistant, Herskovits Library

Students perform Swahili culture

By Janet Lucky Ochieng

My foremost responsibility as a Foreign Language Teaching Assistant is to serve as a cultural ambassador. I am privileged to introduce Swahili learners to Swahili culture. During the spring quarter I had the opportunity to lead our Swahili learners to perform at this year's Harambee festival organized by the African American community at Northwestern University that marked the end of Black history month. We performed the song "Wageni wako wapi," a Swahili song we use in the classroom to teach basic Swahili grammar and vocabulary. It is a welcoming song used to demonstrate how happy we are to receive visitors to an event or celebration. We followed this with a dance performed to "Shekere", a video performed by Nigerian Afro-pop artist Yemi Alade and Beninoir star Angélique Kidjo. I picked the song because of the rich Maasai attire and dances of the Ushanga women's group used in the video, which we tried our best to copy.

Together the songs have enormous cultural richness. In addition, the welcoming song displayed the students' proficiency in the Swahili language and appreciation of East African etiquette. In presenting this song and dance, we provided our Harambee audience with a taste of Africa,

which we hope would encourage them to celebrate the history and culture of their African ancestors. The students wore the East African kanga, colorful and jingling ornaments, necklaces, and headbands. They took many photos and enjoyed the food and togetherness, invoked by the festival's name, Harambee.

At the beginning of May, we attended the Living Water Community Church in Chicago, a congregation of mostly East Africans, who conduct their services in several languages, including Swahili. We were invited through the senior pastor's son, a Northwestern student who took elementary Swahili in the fall and winter quarters. The students sang "Hakuna Mungu kama" ("There Is No God Like You"). The whole congregation joyfully joined in.

Such activities as these enhance learners' comprehension and proficiency in the language. In addition, we hold weekly language tables where we converse in Swahili and serve Swahili snacks and spicy Swahili tea. Our fired-up Swahili learners are looking forward to performing at the first Northwestern University Language Festival, which will be held in mid-May.

Janet Lucky Ochieng is the Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant for Swahili at Northwestern University



Swahili students before going on stage at Harambe festival.

Swahili corner



By Audrey Klopfer

Northwestern's Swahili program is part of what attracted me to the University. I knew I wanted to learn a nontraditional language and I had a broad interest in African Studies. My family history played a large role in sparking this interest, and thus far, I have been impressed by how much I've learned in the way of African tradition, culture, and language through the Swahili program.

My grandparents, David and Martha Jones, were the first African Americans to integrate the village of Skokie. Martha Jones grew up in the small town of Okmulgee Oklahoma where she graduated valedictorian of Dunbar High. She went on to graduate with a degree in chemistry from the College of St. Francis in Chicago. It was during this time that she met David

who had recently graduated from the University of Illinois. Soon after getting married, they began looking for a home in the Chicago suburbs. Between 1960 and 1961, they faced significant challenges finding a neighborhood willing to accept Black residents. They were rarely treated with respect in real estate offices, and in some cases, ignored completely. In 1961, however, they found a broker in Skokie who sympathized with their struggles and helped them select a beautiful brick house near the local schools, but ultimately decided against selling to them fearing for his reputation. Luckily, Martha had made friends with a local Jewish couple who were willing to help them circumvent such prejudiced roadblocks. The wife, a survivor of the holocaust, agreed that she and her husband would buy the home and immediately resell it to Martha and David, explaining that "we want to do what we can to fight such evil" in this world. By the time the homeowner found out about their plan, it was too late to back out, and the house was sold.

My grandparent's struggle, however, was far from over. Before they even moved into the house, its front and back windows were destroyed during a community protest in which people

gathered on their lawn to chant derogatory slurs. Nevertheless, the couple moved into their home as planned the following morning. For the first two months, racial tensions were so high that they had to install floodlights in their backyard, and have police guard their front yard 24/7. Harassment continued: their locks were soldered, windows broken, bricks painted, and much more. Some of their neighbors suggested that "the Christian thing to do was to move and let the neighborhood return to its peaceful state." David and Martha refused and went on to become integral members of the community, raising their three daughters in that house and remaining there until 2019. Their legacy set a precedent for the integration of nearby towns.

My grandparents' story inspired me growing up, and I am lucky it was so well documented. Often the discrimination faced by those like my grandparents resulted in censorship of African American stories, knowledge, and culture. Learning African languages is one way to promote the understanding of wider forms of Black knowledge and culture among students like myself looking to learn more. This ultimately resulted in my participation in Northwestern's Swahili program. Beyond learning the language, exposure to cultural discussions, artwork, performances, and current events, the Swahili program has enriched my understanding of African knowledge and history. I look forward to taking more classes in the Swahili department as it has provided me with a truly invaluable experience.

Audrey Klopfer is a sophomore majoring in environmental science with a minor in business institutions.

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