

THE DIASPORA

Department of African American Studies • University of California, Berkeley

BON VOYAGE



FALL-WINTER 2011

INTERVIEWS WITH PROFESSORS

PERCY C. HINTZEN

ROBERT L. ALLEN

CHARLES P. HENRY



THE DIASPORA

The Diaspora is the newsletter of the Department of African American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Contributions are welcomed from UC Berkeley's faculty, staff, and students. We also invite submissions from guest columnists and scholars who may not be affiliated with the university. Articles may be edited for length, clarity, and style.

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Words from the Chair

by Charles P. Henry

“Lessons Learned”

Forty years ago I started my teaching career at Malcolm X City College in Chicago. After full time positions at in political science at Howard University and a joint appointment in Black Studies and political science at Denison University, I have spent the last thirty years in African American Studies at Berkeley. As I transition into retirement this summer, here are a few lessons I’ve learned along the way.

Schools in general and universities in particular are special places, which I guess is why I have stayed in school since the age of six. While colleges are often derided as ivy towers divorced from the real world, they have their share of mundane problems. In a fundamental sense, however, they are different in that they create a space where we can try out new ideas and question old values and traditions. In short, they help us find out our true identities and give us the skills to pursue a fulfilling life. That freedom to explore should be protected and nurtured at all costs because it is continually under threat. Black Studies has constantly been under threat in part because it created a space to see race and racialization in new ways that were not always flattering to the dominant powers.

Universities have power centers too, but they are usually more decentralized than institutions such as government and business. In an institution like the University of California, power is divided between the Regents, the Administration, faculty and to a lesser extent, the students. Within each of these power centers there are secondary power centers. On some issues

these entities are in direct conflict as when the Regents representing the state of California demand that UC-Berkeley expand while the city of Berkeley resists any further growth. At other times, the conflict is more subtle as when departments compete for scarce faculty positions. It took me a number of years to learn that the Budget Committee of the Academic Senate is the most influential base of faculty power. Unfortunately, this committee has had negligible minority faculty representation over the past three decades.

At research universities, the engine that drives the institution is the graduate program. It is the research program that attracts major outside grants and graduate students provide the research assistance and teaching assistance that permit faculty to develop their research. In such an environment it is easy to overlook the importance of undergraduate education. Freshmen and sophomores need the space to take courses that are intellectually interesting or challenging with no concern about whether they will lead to a career or not. Students who want to take African American Studies are often encouraged not to by parents and counselors who are career-oriented. Many of our major and minors come to us late in their academic careers having searched for meaning in a number of disciplines before “finding themselves” in African American Studies. That is why the department is excited about the establishment of the VeVe Clark Institute that will help us reach students early in their matriculation at Cal.

Getting off campus is also an excellent way to broaden your

educational horizons. African American Studies has offered summer sessions in Zimbabwe, Cuba, Brazil and Barbados. We encourage students to take a summer, semester or year abroad. But you don’t have to go abroad to gain a new perspective. Community service programs and internships give students an opportunity to learn new skills and/or share skills with those who could benefit from them. This sharing of resources was a major impetus behind the creation of Black Studies and students invariably gain as much or more than those they are assisting.



I wish it were possible to sum up forty years of experience in a few pithy proverbs, but I can’t. I can say protect the free space you have and open yourself up to new experiences. Find allies where you can and treat your opponents with respect. Look for organic teachers off campus as well as the brilliant professors on campus. Finally, enjoy and appreciate the rare opportunity you have because it has come with the price of struggle.

*Charles Henry,
H. Michael and Jeanne Williams Chair*

Editor's Note

This is a year of struggle, growth, and transformation in the department of African American Studies. The University of California's austerity measures and Operational Excellence, the Occupy movement, and the retirement of three of our beloved professors will certainly shape the trajectory and atmosphere of the Department. Although each of these momentous events will surely impact us in their own way, as the articles in this issue reveal, the Department of African American Studies stands on a firm and wide-reaching foundation that will enable it to continue to thrive as a space where innovative and dedicated scholars come together for intellectual, social, and community engagement.

Professors Charles Henry, Robert Allen, and Percy Hintzen are integral parts of the community on the 6th floor of Barrows, and we will miss them as they move on from their time at Berkeley. They have between them almost a century of leadership, mentorship, groundbreaking theoretical interventions, and immeasurable service to the Department and all their students, colleagues, and the Cal community. Corny as it seems, they say all good things come to an end—that appears to be even more the case when three professors retire at the same time. On November 30th, friends, family, colleagues and students came together at Alumni House to celebrate the careers and impact Professors Henry, Allen, and Hintzen have had here at Cal, and in the field of African American Studies in general. Guests and retirees were treated to a delicious dinner, Glenn Robertson lead us on a photo trip down memory lane, and the Dean of the Social

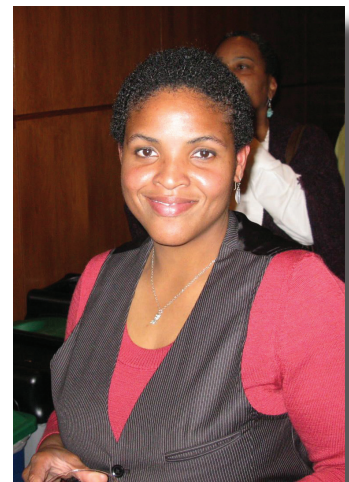


Science Division Carla Hesse and Executive Vice Chancellor George Bresslaur honored our Professors and recalled their prolific careers and accomplishments. After the Professors recalled their time at Cal and emotionally said their farewells, the mayor of Oakland paid them tribute by naming November 30th Professors Henry, Allen and Hintzen Day in the city of Oakland. To end the night, Aya de Leon presented a spoken word offering to our Professors, highlighting the lasting legacy they have left while revealing the massive shoes they leave to fill.

This issue is dedicated to Professors Henry, Allen, and Hintzen. We thank them for their countless contributions to our lives, both inside the department and out. The writers and interviewees in this issue touch on the history of the Department of African American Studies, both its origins and where it is headed in the future. Professor Henry's "Lessons Learned" reflects on his journey of over 3 decades in the Department, calling on us to appreciate the unique opportunities that a life of the mind offers. Professors Ugo Nwokeji, Brandi Catanese, and Leigh Raiford interview our retiring professors and give us an in depth look at the transformations that have made the Department the trailblazer it is today. We meet the African Diaspora Studies Student Collective, an urgently needed

coalition, via one of its founders, Rob Connell. Christopher Petrella reflects on the Occupy Oakland movement in an impassioned poetic rumination, "Seed and Blossom." Kim McNair gives us an update on the VèVè Clark Institute For Engaged Scholars of African American Studies, introducing us to the first cohort of scholars. Guest writer and UCLA student, Manouchka Labouba, offers a film review of contemporary Congolese film, *Viva Riva!*, looking at the ways in which African people are represented, and the potential impact those representations might have on Africa.

Thank you to all of the contributors and readers of the Diaspora newsletter.



J. Finley is a Ph.D. candidate in African Diaspora Studies.

Interview with Professor Percy Hintzen

by Professor Ugo Nwokeji

In wide-ranging conversation with Professor Ugo Nwokeji, Professor Percy Hintzen patiently and forthrightly discusses how he journeyed from Guyana to Berkeley. They discuss Professor Hintzen's more than 30 years of service to the department and UC Berkeley and the breathtaking changes that have taken place in the department, including the development of the first ever Ph.D. program in African Diaspora.



Nwokeji: In what capacities have you served the university and the department?

Hintzen: Of course I began as an assistant professor and then I moved up to a full professor. And during those years I served first as Vice Chair of the department in 1989 and then I became Chair in 1993. At the same time, I became Director of Peace and Conflict Studies. At one time, the two positions overlapped. I also served as Acting Director of the Center for Race and Gender in the later part of the last decade. And currently I'm serving as Director for the Center for African Studies. I've also served as the Consultant for the development of the Barbados Education Abroad Program. I developed a number of education

abroad programs, one in Barbados and one in Brazil. And I served let's see campus-wide in a number of capacities, including with the Education Abroad Programs and I am now Co-Director of the Multi-Campus Research Group for African Studies on all the campus systems and a number of other capacities including a number of positions on various advisory boards and in various different departments and programs both on campus and other centers.

N: What about the Ford Foundation?

H: One of the things we did was that the department was reviewed and, in the 80s I think, and one of the suggestions was that we move to a Ph.D. program and I felt that one way to do that was to get support to plan the program. And myself and Margaret Wilson, who was chair at the time, we did a proposal for a Ford Foundation to basically develop the Ph.D. program and it was successful. And subsequently, when I became chair, we renewed the grant. We have two separate renewals. I think the total amount of money for the 3 grants was about \$1.2 million. That became the basis for us to develop the Ph.D. program in African Diaspora studies.

N: I want to take you back some time, so that we get some context to the question that is going to follow. What were your first impressions when you arrived at the department?

H: Well I think that at that time the department was very vibrant. The undergraduate program was much more vibrant than it is now. Because I think that there was an open-ended commitment by the university to develop the department. And it might have been politics because I think that the department began as part of an Ethnic Studies department that was not within the College of Letters and Science but was under

the aegis of the Vice Chancellor. And I think that the university was apparently uncomfortable with that and encouraged the chair of the department at the time, and I think this was in 1972, to break off from Ethnic Studies and to become part of the division of social sciences. In exchange what the university did was to offer sort of an open ended commitment to the department so the department could grow. We had a number of scholars whose focus were both in Africa and in the Caribbean, including myself. And then we also had a lot of visiting faculty all the time, a lot of lecturers, a lot of adjuncts. And some persons who were at Stanford would come and teach courses here, particularly in African studies. St. Clair Drake [of Stanford] was one person who was very much involved in the department. And a lot of other persons were coming to teach here, particularly for African studies. There was not necessarily a problem with resources at the time. Of course the economy was fine, and the university's commitment was very open-ended.

N: You have anticipated my next question somewhat, but I'll ask them because I believe there is some more ground to be covered. How would you compare the department, when you arrived and now?

H: The university's support for the department has diminished dramatically. Our FTEs have gone down. Our access to lecturers, and visiting, and part time faculty have gone down. The end of Affirmative Action has affected somewhat the interest in the department. Even then, that's not the only issue, and I'll tell you why. I think that what the department had to do was in terms of developing, was to really begin to push for a Ph.D. program and we began by working

with Ethnic Studies to have a Comparative Ethnic Studies Ph.D. program and at that time a number of us began to work with Ethnic Studies. But, first of all, Margaret Wilkinson developed the first proposal, along with myself, for a Ph.D. program. And then we got the Ford Foundation grant, which really gave us a lot of resources to properly develop and properly plan for the development of a Ph.D. program. And with that ultimately, after a number of questions and queries and criticisms, and objections, we were able to prevail. It became problematic for us to begin to think about how we are going to service the PhD program on the one hand and continue to serve the undergraduate program on the other, while having less faculty resources. So we had to reorganize the entire undergraduate program, and we did a number of retreats in order to organize these programs. In a particular way, it worked very well on the surface, in the sense that we decided to sort of restructure the undergraduate* program to be consistent with diaspora studies and to make it more interdisciplinary. I think that a number of students who take our courses for other reasons have become interested in it because of their exposure to what we do and the way we do it. There has been a significant increase in the minors. There are more persons enrolled in the graduate program as there are in the majors. And that has been very much of a saving grace. And I think that in the graduate program we have really pushed to do Diaspora studies and I think it has been very, very successful and we have become very much integrated with a number of other programs...like the Center for Race and Gender, Gender and Women's Studies, and a number of other programs where our students are engaging with other students, such as African studies. And of course there are a number

of relations with departments like music, geography, and others that are beginning to sort of unfold. So there are the pros and cons of where we are at the moment.

N: Finally, what has been in your view, the single most important development in the department since you've been a part of it, over time?

H: I think the development of the Diaspora studies PhD program has been the single most important development...in terms of everything it has done, the students it has produced. In terms of beginning to focus the faculty, and also to begin to determine the direction of the department. Rather than us thinking that we have to hire people in disciplines, we really focus now in terms of hiring practices on interdisciplinarity and transnationality. It's beginning to sort of shape the department into a truly interdisciplinary outfit. And of course the students we are producing are also making an impact. They're the pioneering students of Diaspora studies, and there have been a number of entities like SSRC, which has really responded to the development of Diaspora studies. Andrew Apter [of UCLA] and me have organized the dissertation development workshops on a campus-wide basis. Now, our former students are teaching and writing their papers and books. And no matter what we say, Berkeley is still one of the few universities with African American Studies departments whose focus is truly on African Diaspora studies. Florida International University, University of Arizona, and Brown University are now offering the program, and they sought and received our advice, so we were very integral in the development of their programs. All the programs began to develop from programs into departments and now doing Ph.D. programs. We've done a good job. Unfortunately, the focus

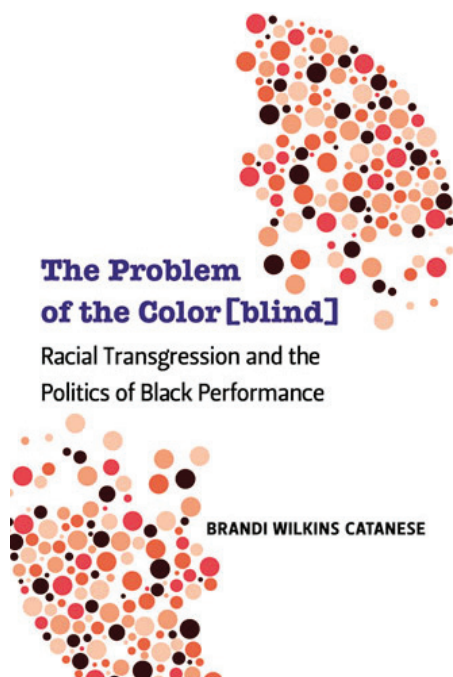
on Africa has dropped significantly for a lot of the reasons I said before. I think potentially if we could begin to focus on not only Africa but Latin America, Africa, Caribbean nexus that would be the next trajectory of our work. When we begin to think about Africa we have to think about it in a different way. Not in an area studies focus where you study people in a particular place at a particular time in that geography but how the idea of Africa has moved across space and across time and impacted people in different regions, particularly on the level of identity. That would be a very significant development, particularly given what is happening in the world now, with the shift to the global South. With new centers of the world, like Brazil, South Africa, China and India and so on.

N: What happened to the position of vice-chair?

H: Basically, what was happening was that Margaret Wilkerson was in Theater, Dance and Performance. She held a joint appointment in Theater, Dance and Performance and in Women's Studies. She came over to African American Studies and she was still in Theater, Dance and Performance. She was concerned with that, and she felt that she was not a social scientist and needed one to assist her and that her engagement to the department had not been as deep as she had wanted to. And so she wanted someone who was a social scientist and who constantly in the department to help her out with running the department. So she asked me to be vice-chair. And that's how I became Vice Chair. It was not an official position. There is a sort of informal Vice Chair who is now the director of graduate studies. It was very informal. We also felt that in terms of replacing the chair, it would be good for someone to act under the tutelage of an administrative position of vice chair.

N: Thank you very much.

Faculty Book Announcements:

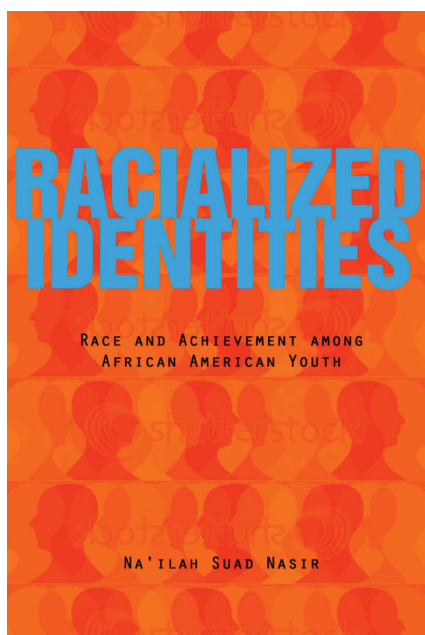
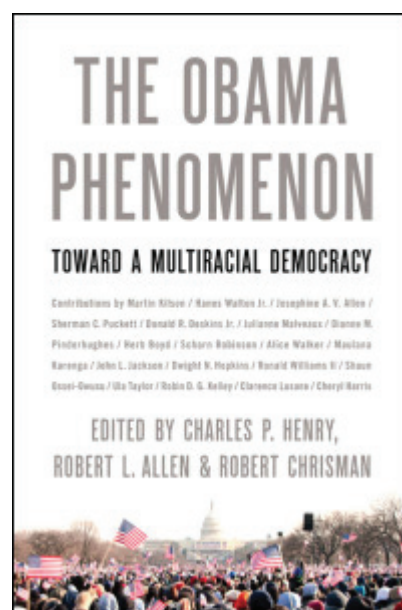


“Catanese’s beautifully written and cogently argued book addresses one of the most persistent sociopolitical questions in contemporary culture. She suggests that it is performance and the difference it makes that complicates the terms by which we can even understand ‘multicultural’ and ‘colorblind’ concepts. A tremendously illuminating study that promises to break new ground in the fields of theatre and performance studies, African American studies, feminist theory, cultural studies, and film and television studies.”

—Daphne Brooks, Princeton University

Barack Obama’s campaign and electoral victory demonstrated the dynamic nature of American democracy. Beginning as a special issue of *The Black Scholar*, this probing collection illustrates the impact of “the

Obama phenomenon” on the future of U.S. race relations through readings on Barack Obama’s campaign as well as the idealism and pragmatism of the Obama administration. Some of the foremost scholars of African American politics and culture from an array of disciplines—including political science, theology, economics, history, journalism, sociology, cultural studies, and law—offer critical analyses of topics as diverse as Obama and the media, Obama’s connection with the hip hop community, the public’s perception of first lady Michelle Obama, voter behavior, and the history of racial issues in presidential campaigns since the 1960s.



“Bottom line—this volume represents a unique and important body of work. Nasir stakes out new territory as she describes how identities are shaped through local interactions within and outside of school. By anchoring the discussions around African American youth, she interrogates assumptions that have guided practice and policy about learning and motivation. This book will be a classic in the field.”—Carol Lee, Northwestern University

Unique in its attention to the challenges that social and educational stratification pose, as well as to the opportunities that extracurricular activities can offer for African American students’ access to learning, this book brings a deeper understanding of the local and fluid aspects of academic, racial, and ethnic identities. Exploring agency, personal sense-making, and social processes, this book contributes a strong new voice to the growing conversation on the relationship between identity and achievement for African American youth.

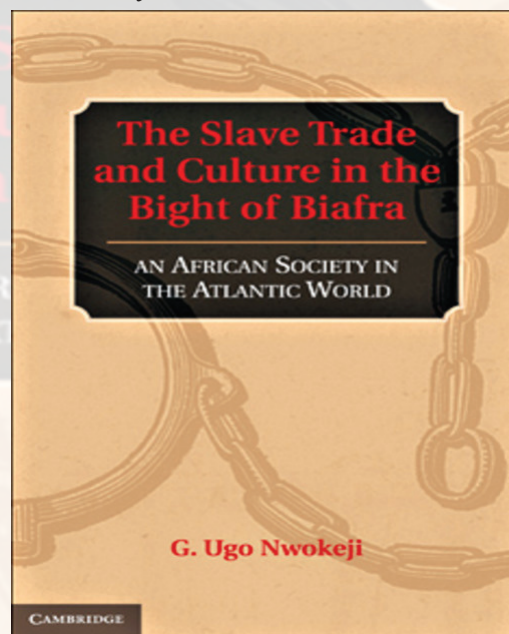
Book Awards:

Congratulations to Professor Ugo Nwokeji,

winner of The 2011 Melville J. Herskovits Book Award for his book

The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society in the Atlantic World (2010).

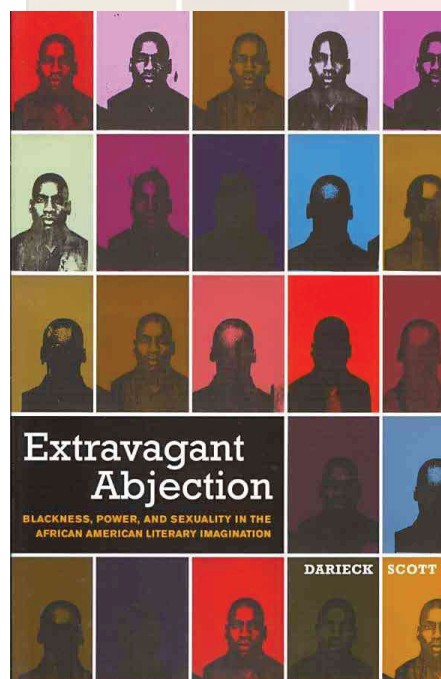
Awarded to the author of an outstanding original book published on Africa in the previous year, The Herskovits Award has been awarded continuously since 1965 in honour of preeminent American anthropologist, Melville J. Herskovits, who was instrumental to the emergence of both African studies and Afro-American studies as academic disciplines in the United States.



Congratulations to Professor Darieck Scott,

winner of the Alan Bray Memorial Book Award for his book

Extravagant Abjection Blackness, Power, and Sexuality in the African American Literary Imagination (2010).



The award is given to the best book in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer studies in literature and cultural studies from the GL/Q Caucus of the Modern Language Association.

Advocacy, Unity and Service: The Founding and Evolution of the African Diaspora Studies Student Collective

by Rob Connell

On the evening of February 17, 2011, a gathering of undergraduate and graduate students from African American Studies, Ethnic Studies and Gender & Women's Studies met in Barrows Hall. Summoned together to discuss a matter of great importance to all three departments, the information presented was sobering and distressing. The Organizational Simplification Committee, a subset of the UC Berkeley-wide Operational Excellence (OE) restructuring program, was going ahead with heavy austerity measures for all three departments, resulting in staffing reductions, terminations, and an overall administrative merger. Dismayed by the university's lack of vision in coping with the fiscal crisis of public education in California, and acknowledging the pivotal support roles that the staff had played in already understaffed departments and the wider university community, the gathered students resolved to form a coalition against the cuts and fight for the continued health and integrity of their departments.

Although the austerity measures went through despite opposition from the student body, and the tri-departmental coalition eventually dissolved, the experiences of spring 2011 impressed upon the African American Studies participants of the coalition, the need for the department to have its own internal organization. Indeed, out of a combined effort from the coalition to craft a written response to Organizational Simplification taking into account the specific needs of each department, active African American Studies students were able to create their own specific demands and proposals.

This collective effort of advocacy initiated the first act of what would become known as the African Diaspora Studies Student Collective (ADSC).

The collective envisioned a series of proposals and demands dealing with both the immediate crisis situation at the time and more long term goals for departmental preservation, delivering these on March 18th, 2011. Reaching out to the faculty in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity, the ADSC outlined and explained in detail the demands that were due to be delivered to OE representatives as part of a coalition-wide action the following day on March 19th. The demands were that Glenn Robertson's appointment be restored to 100% FTE; four new faculty hires be made for the department; the creation of work-study programs to assist staff facing expanded workloads; and more student representation and decision making in the OE process. Furthermore the statement suggested the initiation of fundraising from outside academic sources as a stop-gap measure.

However, the students that came together to form the ADSC envisioned the collective's purpose to be more than just advocacy in a time of crisis. Students felt that it was necessary for a student organization to be established in the department in order to better prepare undergraduates for advanced study in the field and to build a scholarly community amongst undergraduates, graduates and faculty while organizing politically in the interest of the field and department when necessary. In essence, advocacy, unity and service to the student body became the ethos and *raison d'être* for the collective.

As spring 2011 drew to a close the ADSC began the process of formally incorporating as a student group, completing all



necessary requirements in the fall, thus augmenting the collective's versatility and access to resources. However, the same problems identified by the collective in spring persisted into the new academic year as the fiscal crisis of public education in California continued to unfold in unpredictable ways. As a new organization there is much more to be done in terms of long term strategizing, organizational development, and increasing the unity between undergraduates, graduate students and faculty. These tasks are made more complex by the great transformations currently underway in the department. As we celebrate the coming of 2012, and another year of African-American Studies, the ADSC is in a position to become a vital and indispensable organization within the department capable of both tenacious advocacy and improving student life in the department. Yet its success is ultimately dependent on the energy that students are willing to invest in the collective's evolution.

Robert Connell is a student in the African Diaspora Studies Ph.D. program at the University of California, Berkeley.

Seed and Blossom (Reflections on Occupy Oakland)

by Christopher Petrella

Shudders seize me into daylight iridescence. Though unlonely, I'm alone.

Kaleidoscopic memories of flash grenades, tear gas, and bellowing, writing bodies insurrect my morning mind. I'm back on 14th street standing speechless, blanched by the screams of a young man struck in his temple by a rubber bullet. The money-changers are coming... I watch indefensibly as my tax dollars cleave his flesh with contempt. His name is Scott Olsen. Complicity. Belligerence. Time alone will adjudicate my paralysis, and his.

Defiance, derision; audacity, aversion; abasement, and abuse.

Since yesterday morning over 160 peaceful "Occupy Oakland" demonstrators have been arrested by the O.P.D. An additional 170 occupiers were impetuously evicted from their encampment in Oscar Grant Plaza, a home that they had placidly established nearly three weeks prior. Tyrants always seem to don a thin veil of rectitude; they serve the law before sabotaging it.

Flash grenades illuminate the untamed specter of impermanence; they speak to the liability of lability, of the unchanging truth of change. The vaporous tear agents echo the evanescence of late capitalism— serpentine, slithery, like the unremitting constancy of the ocean's tide as it batters the shore. The water leaves not a single cavity unsearched. Accommodate, privatize, adapt, capitalize. Indocile rubber bullets charge from hallowed chambers, just like credit on a long leash or choke-chain Calvinists whose faith leans on things unseen.

And from the discord and the violence I hear chants pullulating to the rhythm of morning hearts and midnight feet. "We | are | the 99 per cent, | We | are | the 99 per

cent!" First within, then without, the calls for unity summon order from chaos as we hum to the melody of the sacred. A bit louder we cry, "We | are | the 99 per cent," but repetition isn't resistance, it's inertia. What we mean to say is that if Oakland isn't leveled, then it'll be raised, and if it can't be raised above the threshold of dignity, then why speak of leveling at all?

Ours is a revolution cradled by love and carried by hope. We're adjusting the sails so that when the earth shakes and the seas howl, we move. We rise not with, but against, the wind, the gasping earth, commoditized congresspeople, and the pageantry of punditry.

We're beginning to remember what we've known all along, that revolution is little more than the intentional removal of tacit consent to power. Withdraw consent.

I do not consent to normality.

I do not consent to state violence perpetrated upon emissaries of peace.

I do not consent to impartiality, a proud name for indifference.

I do not consent to the reality of three-and-a-half billion people living on less than \$2.50 a day.

I do not consent to rapacity.

I do not consent to twenty-four brands of toothpaste but only two major political parties.

I do not consent to mendacity.

I do not consent to 8 million poverty-related deaths among children each year despite worldwide food surpluses.

I do not consent to brutalized bodies.

I do not consent to being reduced to a "consumer" or "client."

I do not consent to complicitous silence.

I do not consent to gods or masters .

I do not consent to plutocracies.

I do not consent to Barack Obama,

George Soros, or Barbara Lee.

I do not consent to second helpings before we've all had firsts.

I do not consent to the ideology of scarcity.

I do not consent to prisons with invisible bars.

And above all, I do not consent to darkness.

Fraudulence. Forgery. I've removed my signature from the manifest because the truth is that I don't consent to capitalism, or to patriarchy, or to white supremacy. I do not consent to racism or to stay-in-your-place-ism. And despite the recession, my ethics can't be dispossessed.

I consent to the commons.

I consent to Patrice Lumumba.

I consent to friendship.

I consent to Malcolm X.

I consent to warmth.

I consent to Eugene Debs.

I consent to peace.

I consent to Angela Davis.

I consent to self love.

I consent to Salvador Allende.

I consent to slowness.

I consent to Grace Lee Boggs.

I consent to non-exploitative relationships.

I consent to Septima Clark.

I consent to accountability.

I consent to Bobby Hutton.

I consent to life: seed *and* blossom.

And above all, I consent to revolutionary love wise enough to know the beauty of both stillness and movement. Our heartbeat is the river that flows ceaselessly in between...

Christopher Petrella is a student in the African Diaspora Studies Ph.D. program at the University of California, Berkeley.

Meet the First Year Cohort

The Department of African American Studies enjoys welcoming each new cohort of graduate students who begin their studies towards the Ph.D. in African Diaspora Studies. The students featured here certainly illustrate the best and brightest of future scholarship in African Diaspora Studies and African American Studies. We welcome them to the department and to the graduate community at Berkeley and look forward to their emergence as preeminent scholars in the field. These individuals come from different parts of the country and each student in the fall 2009 cohort brings unique motivations, background and research interests to his or her graduate work. We are certain these students will further our department's reputation as a center for diverse and engaged scholarship and learning.

Kathryn Benjamin



Kathryn earned her BA in English with a concentration of African American literature from the University of California, Riverside in 2008. In December, 2010, she earned her MA from Columbia University where she studied at the Institute of Research in African American Studies and served as Chief Research Coordinator at the Center of Contemporary Black History. Kathryn's research focuses on African American revolt and resistance in the Antebellum American South. Her work restores the significance of marronage in the United States as a critical, yet virtually absent historical narrative of African American freedom struggle within collective American memory. Kathryn makes important connections between patterns of power in knowledge production to contemporary public recognition of African American historical agency.

Essence graduated Magna Cum Laude from UC Berkeley in Spring 2011 receiving her B.A in History. Her current research interest include twentieth century Black cultural politics with particular focus on expressive culture and bodily representations as sites for intra-group consciousness. Essence is a native of Berkeley and loves a good bike ride and eating Cheeseboard.

Essence Harden



Selina Makana



I earned my Bachelor's degree in Education with a minor in Linguistics and African Literature from Kenyatta University, Kenya. I went to Stanford University in 2009, as a visiting scholar under the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching program. I have scholarly interests in Linguistics and gender and women's studies. My research interest is to examine the shift in social and political behavior and practices between men and women of African descent and their use of language as a powerful tool for challenging the male political behavior. I am particularly interested in how women in sub-Saharan Africa subvert patriarchal ideologies through social and political activism.



I received my B.A. in American Studies from Connecticut College. I also earned an M.A. in American Studies at Columbia University. My research focuses on an investigation of the shifts in definitions of liberation and strategies of resistance in the transition from the Civil Rights Movement to Black Power era. I was born and raised outside Boston but consider New York City my second home. Despite being a lifelong east coaster the Bay Area seems like an ideal home in which to pursue this exciting new chapter in my life. Thus far my time here has been nothing short of a pleasure, and I look forward to my future within this department.

Brukab Sisay:



Hello everyone, my name is Brukab Sisay. I'm originally from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia but I grew up in Seattle, Washington. I come to this program with a B.A. in American Ethnic Studies and minors in Education and Diversity from the University of Washington. My research interests focus on the intersecting dynamics of race, identity, and contemporary schooling, especially the ways in which college education is experienced and transformed by underrepresented and nontraditional youth. In the near future, I intend to conduct an ethnographic study of students, faculty, and administrators, to analyze the broad and lasting implications of racial categorization among diverse African American populations. I am particularly interested in the impact of racial categorizations on educational access, college experience, and academic performance of all students. I am also more generally interested in studying the contemporary experiences of East African immigrants in the United States. I am very excited to be a member of this department and I look forward to learning and contributing as much as I can.



New Graduate Cohort 1 to r:

Brukab Sisay, Selina Makana, Zachary Manditch-Protas, Essence Harden, & Kathryn Benjamin

On legacy and literacy: The VèVè A. Clark Institute for Engaged Scholars of African American Studies

by Kim McNair

The inaugural year of the VèVè A. Clark Institute for Engaged Scholars of African American Studies, began this fall with a small cohort of seven scholars majoring in African American Studies at UC Berkeley. The aim of the program is to aid these students in forming an intellectual community of students, staff, instructors and faculty that will prepare them to meet the rigor and academic demands of not only their current major curriculum, but also top graduate programs, professional schools, and postgraduate careers.

As the Graduate Student Coordinator for the program, I see the Institute as an asset to their overall educational experience. Each scholar is given personal attention through interactions with faculty mentors and academic advising, that will help them develop their personal and career interests in the field of African Diaspora Studies, by giving them an opportunity to explore and conduct original research in their specific area(s) of interest. Working closely with faculty research mentors, pursuing research opportunities, participating in academic skills workshops that reflect on their learning processes, successes, and challenges, and monthly institute meetings designed to broaden their understanding of the contributions individuals have made to the field will also enrich their overall experience at the University.

The Institute was established by faculty members and instructors from the African American Studies department and the Student Learning Center at UC Berkeley, with the goal of achieving both academic excellence and social responsibility in African Diaspora studies. Our task is to help scholars set departmental



Steering Committee

Pictured l to r: Professors Leigh Raiford, Na'ilah Nasir, Brandi Catanese; Cara Stanley, Professor Ula Taylor, Lindsey Herbert, and Quamé Patton

standards, institutional standards, and personal standards. This helps to further illustrate that black students are valuable and that black studies is valuable on this campus.

"We must always be vigilant in regards to issues of injustice within our work.... You will be enticed by outside forces to venture away from your cause as a scholar, and all of those enticements are 'sweet.' But don't fall for it. Keep your mind focused on your purpose."

— Professor Robert Allen

The Institute was created in honor of Dr. VèVè A. Clark, and continues the scholarly tradition modeled after her legacy and example. The institute was designed to give students an orientation into the field of African Diaspora Studies, not only as a body of thought but also as a way to link theoretical work with practical endeavors and their personal interests. We began with meetings that introduced scholars to senior faculty in the department, such as Professors Charles Henry and Robert Allen, who gave their personal stories and insights into why they chose to pursue a career in the discipline and

reflections they've had on the progression of the field overtime. We also incorporated graduate student perspectives from Ronald Williams and Ameer Loggins, on their journey through graduate school in black studies, and student and Graduate Student Instructor relationships. As the semester progressed, we were delighted to witness scholars initiating discussions and debates regarding contemporary issues affecting the collective and individual experiences of people of African descent.

"The first year of the VèVè Clark Institute for Engaged Scholars has been amazing! It has provided a forum to support the intellectual, personal, and political growth of the scholars.

During our luncheon meetings, the conversations with the scholars and faculty have been really exciting and truly transformative."

— Professor Na'ilah Nasir

The steering committee, which includes Professor Ula Taylor, Professor Na'ilah Nasir, Cara Stanley, Professor Brandi Catanese, Quamé Patton, Professor Leigh



1 to r, back row: Clark Scholars Cherilyn Davis, Antonio Casco, LaTasha Pollard, Shanika Blunt, Theo Roper; 1 to r, front row: Naomi Wilson, and Omonivie Omolade

Raiford, Rasheeda Woodard, Shola Shodiya, and Kim McNair, all felt it was important to introduce the scholars to the institute's namesake through intellectual engagement. Accordingly, at our last meeting of the fall semester, which occurred one day after the fourth anniversary of her joining the ancestors in December 2007, we watched a video which featured Professor Clark along with other former UC Berkeley black faculty and staff at a roundtable discussion on African American recruitment, enrollment, and retention; we also read and discussed one of her most challenging articles and contributions to African Diaspora Studies, "Developing Diaspora Literacy and *Marasa* Consciousness" (1991) at our November meeting, which has been my most memorable moment thus far.

"I can tell you that Professor Clark embodied diaspora, she didn't just write about it. So she was on the cutting edge of diaspora studies theory because she was diaspora literate. She spoke multiple languages therefore she was able to communicate diasporically in multiple spheres. So her article on "Developing Diaspora Literacy and *Marasa* Consciousness" was an illustration of what VèVè lived and practiced."

– Dr. Ronald Williams, III

At only seven pages, this brief essay seemed undecipherable to me, until my *third* reading. Unlike the scholars, who dissected the text with help from committee members from the Student Learning Center. I struggled with the piece the day and night before our monthly institute meeting and thought to myself, "Is Professor Clark up there with the ancestors laughing at this highly educated negro who thinks she can step to VèVè?" In all honestly, and shamefully so, this piece gave me an

when they decide to enter into this field of study." Though I didn't have the opportunity to meet or work with Dr. Clark, I definitely feel her at the table. We are at the beginning of what should have a lasting impact on our campus community, and on the lives of all those involved with the institute.

More than a pedagogical exercise, it is my hope that the scholars are both intellectually and spiritually nourished in developing their ability to not only analyze and engage, but to understand the charge they're given as scholars in this field. That is to continue the scholarly exploration and interpretation of the black experience, while laboring to transform the reality of those our scholarship will be in service of.

Please visit the Clark Institute's website (<http://africam.berkeley.edu/VeVeClark/clarkinstitute.html>) <http://africam.berkeley.edu/clarkinstitute> for additional information, including prerequisites for acceptance into the program.



Pictured 1 to r: Clark Scholars Reginald James, Cherilyn Davis, Antonio Casco, LaTasha Pollard, Professor Cornell West, Omonivie Omolade, Shanika Blunt, and program Graduate Student Coordinator Kim McNair

cerebral whoopin'; and I along with everyone else knew that this was a sure way to show future scholars that they must first, quoting Ms. Cara Stanley, "Show some respect,

*Kimberly McNair
Doctoral Student
African Diaspora Studies
UC Berkeley*

An Interview with Professor Robert Allen

by Professor Brandi Catanese



I had the privilege and pleasure of sitting down for a talk with retiring Professor Robert Allen in January of this year. Here are some highlights from our conversation.

Brandi Catanese: What year did you begin teaching here at Berkeley?

Robert Allen: I consider the start in 1995 when I was hired to come in and teach Professor Carlos Munoz's class on the 60s. He was going on leave, asked if I would come cover the class, and I said I would be glad to, and I was subsequently asked to come cover a class in African American Studies, and it developed that way. And you know, I wasn't even thinking about a teaching career at Berkeley, because I was working at *The Black Scholar*, I was doing my own writing and everything, I had a career that I was pursuing elsewhere, and I considered this as something I enjoyed doing, but I still wasn't thinking so much in terms of a career.

The thing that has really kept me coming back is that I love teaching and that I love all of my

colleagues in both departments. I have great appreciation for the work that everyone is doing. I'm happy to be here every day, and that's why I leave my door open for the most part, even though I know I can't get anything done, because people will stop by. But that's part of why I'm here, I like to have people come in and tell me about their work.

And I love being grad adviser, because it puts me in touch with the graduate students and their research in a way that's always supportive. It's always about trying to help them get through the program, advance their work, and get out of here and get on with those careers.

BC: Can we talk just a little bit about African American Studies and Ethnic Studies as different fields where they are not always perceived as such. Some people perceive African American Studies has having been extracted from the umbrella of Ethnic Studies—

RA: Actually, I think it's the other way around. African American Studies came first, and Ethnic Studies followed. When we think of it in terms of the actual historical line of development, it's the development of the Civil Rights Movement, and out of that then the black student movement and the demand for Black Studies, and then that begins impacting wider communities who mobilized in various ways. So I argue for the primacy of the Civil Rights Movement here, not in some chauvinistic way, but just look at the history. I would argue that it tells us something about the deep well of energy that's in the black freedom movement, so much so that it wells up and affects the whole society, not once or twice, but throughout history. And it has had the effect, as we know, of shaping

the dominant culture in this country, it has affected global cultures now, we see that it reaches throughout the entire world, and I love it! (*laughs*) That's all I can say, I love it, I love it, I just love it. And being a southerner myself, that just makes it even better for me, because I feel like this is just in me, it just flows through me, having come up in the South. All of this is who I am but I didn't come to appreciate it until I started studying African American history. I had no idea who I was. And I knew though as a result of getting involved in the Civil Rights Movement that it was something that I needed to know and that I didn't. And that's when I began to study African American history. And it has been the great light of my life, really. But I could have taken a different path. I could be one of those bourgeois Negroes in Atlanta—pardon me for saying that! (*laughs*).

BC: Shifting gears again, can we talk about changes that you have observed in the student populations that you've taught here at Berkeley, from 1995 to 2012?

RA: When I first arrived, there were a lot more black students from Oakland, the Bay Area. And I thought that was such a great thing, because many of these students would not have had an opportunity if it hadn't been through affirmative action, and it made all the difference in the world in their lives. Over time I've noticed a shift, with various elements to it. One is that the emphasis now seems to be on recruiting from southern California, recruiting more middle-class kids, who are quote, unquote, "better prepared." But also, I think, kids who are more apolitical, at least until they get here. (*laughs*) And then I think, to the surprise of the

administration, they suddenly get politicized in very powerful ways. And then the other component here in this population now are non-American black students, who've become an increasingly large proportion of the population. And, even more interesting, are the black students who are the children of immigrants, but who were born here. I think something new is developing in these new populations, because they are just that, new populations, with new backgrounds, and different kinds of consciousness that's emerging, and I think they're playing a bigger and bigger role. Their politicization, though it may happen late, is very powerful, which is leading to a kind of activism, which is a good thing. So I see my job, being here, is to help them develop that kind of consciousness because my view is that this being the elite but still public university that it is, it's producing the leadership for the next generation. We who teach here have a unique possibility: the privilege of influencing the development of this new leadership.

BC: Can you just say a little more about how African American Studies and Ethnic Studies as different disciplines influence you as a scholar? How does being situated as a scholar of Ethnic Studies differently but also importantly influence your work?

RA: Well, remember, I was teaching Ethnic Studies at Mills, and because that was a small program, we were always looking comparatively at these experiences. That was profound. That was an experience I had not anticipated, had not had before. Growing up in the south, especially in the time that I did, you only thought in terms of black and white. So coming to California was a startling experience for me, because I had no idea of the varieties of experiences that

people had had, and I was totally fascinated by them. Teaching in Ethnic Studies at Mills gave me an opportunity then not only to deepen my knowledge of African American issues, but also for the first time to encounter the experiences of other people, and to realize that racism was fundamental to all of their experiences, although they played out in different ways and each one had its own particular history of racism which was determined in part by their circumstances. So that was always the thing that interested me in studying in Ethnic Studies, is the possibilities of solidarity, while at the same time always being cognizant of the differences and the conflicts that have erupted in the past, my argument being that we can't develop solidarity if we don't know the things that have kept us apart in the past, and if we're not figuring out new ways of dealing with those.

BC: Looking forward, I don't imagine that retirement means you are hanging up your pen and turning off your computer, so what are some of the scholarly projects that you see carrying you forward in the years to come?

RA: I'm increasingly interested in biography, and so the book on C.L. Dellums, I'm looking forward to finally getting that done, because more and more I'm impressed with who he was, who that union was [The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters], and what they accomplished, and how undervalued they are in this society, in the African American community, and in African American Studies. They're still sort of dissed as being old school and we don't appreciate what we can learn from them as organizers. The Port Chicago work will continue in various forms. But you know, there are so many other stories out there, and I would like to help tell a few of them. The other

day I was watching a documentary on Rachel Carson, and she said, "The writer does not choose the story, the story chooses the writer." And I said, "That's my experience." So, that's a little bit mystical maybe, but I do believe that these stories behind every door have a life of their own, they continue to unfold in our lives, but there's another dynamic that the story itself has too. And that that's itself a living thing. I don't know, maybe that is mysticism. If so, I'm a mystic. I'm a materialist mystic. *(laughs)*

BC: (laughs) Things we did not know about Robert Allen.

RA: So. The future lies ahead, the struggle continues, and we are a part of it.



Film Review: VIVA RIVA!

Directed by Djo Tunda Wa Munga, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2010.

Available on DVD since September 2011, distributed by Music Box Films.

by Manouchka Labouba

Kinshasa – Democratic Republic of the Congo. There is a big shortage of gas. Riva, a small time gangster, returns there with the equivalent of 25,000 liters of precious fuel, stolen from his Angolan partner, Cesar. Riva's homecoming is not for family reunions. Instead, in a city where a liter of gasoline can be sold for up to \$10, Riva came back with the sole intention of getting rich. He teams up with his long-time friend J.M., and the two set out to enjoy the night life in Kinshasa. This is how Riva develops a crush on Nora, the girlfriend of a respected local thug named Azor. While Riva focuses on stealing Nora from Azor, Cesar and his gang arrive in town to get the gasoline back, and a female law enforcement officer, the Commandante, helps them track down their thief. The film engages in a chase, where everybody wants a piece of Riva and his stolen gasoline.



Viva Riva! is a fine exploitation film, which is rather surprising from non-Nollywood [Nigerian Hollywood] African cinema.

Technically, the film is remarkably well-crafted, as well as very modern in style and in content compared to other productions from Sub-Saharan Africa. *Viva Riva!* is fast-paced, punchy, and explicit with its depiction of sex and violence. It is obvious that director Djo Tunda Wa Munga did not intend to make an art film, like other Africans directors such as Abderrahmane Sissako (*Heremakono, Bamako*) or Mahamet-Saleh Haroun (*Darratt, A Screaming Man*). Instead, the Congolese filmmaker decided to go with pure entertainment for his first feature film.

Unfortunately, because he focused so much on creating this good exploitation flick, Djo Tunda Wa Munga disappointingly did not try to work on a stronger screenplay. Being from black Africa myself, and being a filmmaker too, I am very cautious about the images that circulate about our continent, as well as the ones that we create by ourselves. Thus, even though *Viva Riva!* is one of the most entertaining and pleasurable African films to be released in many years (we are not bored a single second), it can also be offensive in many respects.

First, the movie is rather misogynistic and quite insulting to women. All the female characters are reduced to sex objects for men's pleasure. The only woman who is not treated as such, is the Commandante, but it is merely because she is depicted as a closeted lesbian. Second, at one point or



Film's Director Djo Tunda Wa Munga

another, all the women in the story receive a beating from men. In the most brutal scene of this kind, J.M. violently beats his wife in front of their children. This sequence is particularly uncomfortable to watch, as the editing alternates with close-ups of the kids' faces, who are the powerless witnesses of that situation. The viewer is left wondering: what is Munga's point in mistreating all women like that in his plot? One might have expected more considerate statements concerning the status of women in Africa, especially in the 21st century.

As well, all the visual sex is not necessary or integral to the story. Usually, African films contain very little explicit sex because there are many issues concerning decency and images of sexual activities in African cultures. Therefore, one might have preferred more pertinent and relevant justifications for visual sex in this plot. However, the many close-ups around the genitals, along with the characters having sex either as porn stars (in the bathtub) or like animals (just a "quickie" outdoors next to the trash), actually do not advance the representation of sex in African fictions.

Furthermore, the relationship between Riva and Nora, which is supposed to be understood as a “love at first sight,” revolves around a strange “fetish” with bathrooms. Every time Riva is going after Nora, she is either going to the restroom (when he watches her urinate), coming from the restroom (in the nightclub) or trapped in one (when he is performing oral sex on her). This is a bizarre association between love and waste...

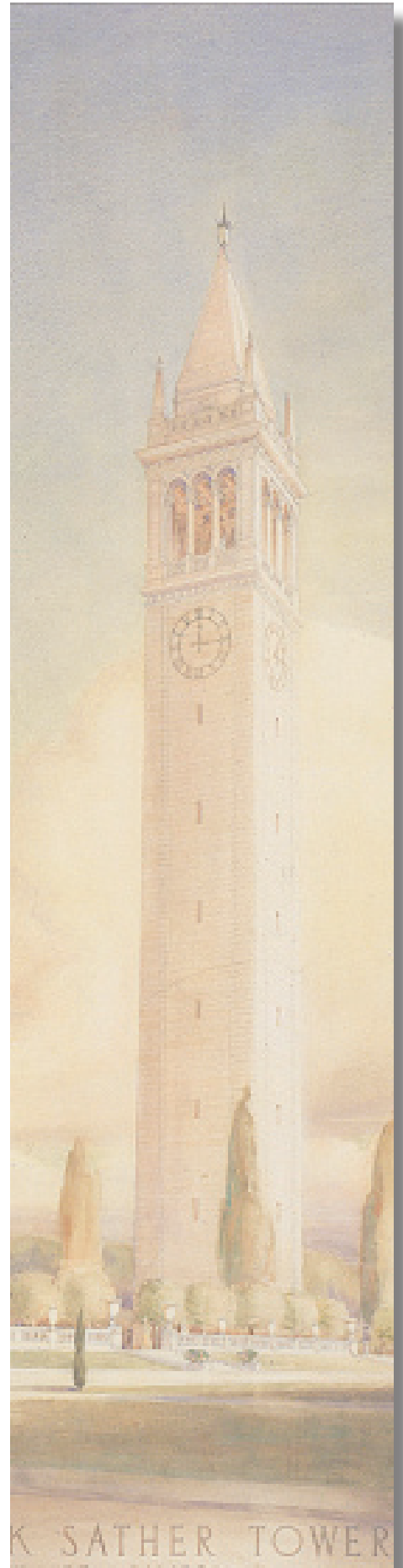


Finally, another great weakness of the screenplay is how the characters are constructed. There are all villains. Not a single one is portrayed in a way that we can identify with, or at least feel for. Everybody is bad and corrupted: the policemen, the thugs, the prostitutes, and even the priest. Riva, the “hero,” he is definitely closer to a “zero.” There are no higher ambitions behind his actions. He is selfish, self-centered, and only interested in the fast life. He is disrespectful to people, including his own parents. He even ends up starting a physical fight with his father. There is nothing to like or to admire about him. We are almost happy when he dies at the end. It is another disappointment because there was sincerely a lot of room to turn Riva into an African equivalent of Priest (*Superfly*) or Goldie (*The Mack*), as a morally questionable anti-hero.

Nevertheless, I am aware that my opinion is one out of many. The movie can and will find an audience, because it is a very marketable product. At a time when studios, producers, and distributors are all only interested in figures, *Viva Riva!* is a product that they can safely bet on. It is not an “auteur film,” it is just entertainment. However, just as American blaxploitation exemplified, one cannot only focus on the entertainment aspect when

depicting a minority group that is trying to create a better screen image. Hopefully Djo Tunda Wa Munga will be aware of that with his next feature, because he is a truly talented filmmaker, proudly representing the African cinematic new wave.

Manouchka Kelly LABOUBA
MA Critical Studies School of
Cinematic Arts University of
Southern California <http://www.youtube.com/MBOYIProd>



Charles Henry for President

by Professor Leigh Raiford



Charles Henry wants to be the first African American president.

At least that was his childhood dream growing up in _____, Ohio, a predominantly white town in the 1950s and 60s. In order to shore up his presidential credentials, Dr. Henry decided that a degree in Political Science would be the best preparation. But instead of a route to the White House, he found a love of engaged scholarship and rigorous research within the always hotbed subject of black politics. Galvanized by the civil rights and black power movements of the 1960s which Dr. Henry said, “opened my eyes into the power of people to change the world,” he committed himself to making a contribution not as an elected official but “through ideas.” He has since transformed these interests into more than eight books and eighty articles, on subjects ranging from reparations, black politics, public policy, human rights, African American diplomat and Nobel Prize winner Ralph Bunche and yes, an edited collection on the Obama presidency. Dr. Henry, the H. Michael and Jeanne Williams Chair of African American Studies, retires this May after 31 years at UC-Berkeley and 36 years in the

academy, with stints along the way as a member of the National Council of the Humanities (1994-2000) appointed by President Clinton, Chair of the board of directors of human rights organization Amnesty International (1986-1988) and past-President of the National Council for Black Studies. He does not regret his decision to forgo the presidency and pursue a career in the academy. And besides, he quips, “Obama beat me to it.”

I recently sat down with Dr. Henry to discuss his distinguished career, the changing field of African American Studies, and his thoughts on retirement.

Leigh Raiford: Tell me how you, as a political scientist you found your way to Black Studies.

Charles Henry: As a student I was agitating for Black Studies in the late ‘60s with my colleagues, my fellow students. We managed to get [Denison] University to institute its first Black Studies course. I became the GSI for the course because there weren’t a lot of faculty working on things in that area. So we got that on the books and I went off to grad school. Then I started teaching at Howard and I got a call—this was 5 years later—to come back to my alma mater because the BS program had fallen on hard times. This is something we helped start. I can’t let it disappear. This was at Denison in 1976. So I came back with a joint appointment to chair the Center for Black Studies and as an Assistant Professor of political science and then within a year or two they asked me to be Assistant Dean of the College. So I’ve been doing a lot of administrative work since I was 29. It was exciting to develop this center. But I went there with the idea that I wasn’t going to stay. I was going to turn around

Black Studies and then I wanted to be in a research university because I wanted to write.

LR: So what did you find when you got here to UC-Berkeley in 1981?

CH: It was more conservative than I thought. But Harry Edwards [Professor Emeritus of Sociology and author of *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*] had warned me... I said, “It must be great teaching at a liberal school.” And he said, “Are you kidding?” “Yeah well I hear about all these protests.” “Yeah that’s why we’re protesting. We’re protesting *because* it’s conservative!” So I got here and found out that [the] Political Science [department] had never had a black or Latino faculty member and there was a neo-conservative school within Political Science.

LR: What are the successes will you most look back on?

CH: Starting the African Diaspora Studies PhD program [in 1997]. Ten years before that we had the Ethnic Studies Graduate Group [with the late] Ron Takaki [Professor of Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies] as the main force behind that. Ron came to me and asked me to be the Chair of the ESGG to show solidarity. Another thing Takaki initiated and I got involved in was the American Cultures requirement. But initially it started out as an Ethnic Studies requirement. I was Chair of the drafting committee... for the Center for Race and Gender during the Ethnic Studies strike of 2000-2001. And [I] recruited Evelyn Glenn and that’s up and running and doing very nice things now. I was involved in some of the early discussions around creating Peace and Conflict Studies. I think it’s important to keep PCS going, now more than ever.

The other thing we were able to institutionalize on campus is the position of now Gibor Basri and Angelica Stacy [Faculty Equity Assistance]. [Initially] there were 2

halftime positions. After Prop 209 passed [the administration] decided that they needed to make it one full time position. The Dean asked me to serve as the first fulltime Faculty Equity Associate and because of 209 I agreed to drop my research for 2 or 3 years...because we have to preserve whatever diversity we have on this campus. One of [our] recommendations was for a fulltime Vice Chancellor or Vice Provost for faculty equity. Chancellor [Robert] Berdahl [1997-2004] wouldn't do it. He said "I don't want to ghettoize affirmative action." And the response was "Hey! It hasn't been ghettoized this whole time. No one's *doing* anything. We need somebody responsible so at the end of the year we can say, 'What have you done [to improve diversity]?' And we need some resources, we need a staff."

I'm a big believer in institutionalizing these things because people retire, people pass on, and you need institutionalize that change. So that's what I've done on this campus.

LR: It's really amazing for me to hear how your work has made intellectual contributions but also the amount of administrative work you've done to institutionalize and really create space for exactly the kind of work that we do in African American Studies to continue to have a place in the University.

CH: And that's what you've got to do. You've got to institutionalize because Chancellors come and go and some are favorable and some aren't. But if it's in the Academic Personnel Manual that you have to value diversity in promotions, then budget committees have to act on that.

LR: How has the field changed and how has your teaching changed in your time here?

CH: The kinds of things I do are fading away. When I was studying Political Science if you had a

subfield it should be economics because that's what [was thought] determine[d] elections. I think the real change is going to be when people who are trained in traditional disciplines like me retire and people who are trained from the beginning in an interdisciplinary way, like you, are in departments and can truly teach courses that move easily between cultural studies and social sciences. I think we're going to see that reflected in methodology and scholarship.

I always tell graduate students, "You want to pick my brain. I'm expecting *you* to make the big next theoretical leap because I'm still—I've fought against it my whole life—but I'm still in this [political science] box. I see the whole world in certain ways and for me reading [Associate Professor of African American Studies and Theater, Dance and Performance Studies] Brandi [Catanese]'s paper on the senate debates on lynching as performance was just eye opening. It's just a way I'd never thought, I know people are acting and all, but to bring a whole methodology is really mind-bending. I would love to work with someone like that to jointly produce something. But I think students who are interested in politics need to be aware of that perspective. And they're going to produce some methodological, theoretical breakthroughs. The cultural shift has not penetrated mainstream political science. At all. And I don't know that I'm the person to bridge the gap.

But I think that someone who's comfortable with the empirical social science stuff and also comfortable with reading texts, and that's going to make a real breakthrough in how we see and how we research politics. I expect that to happen across the board. I expect someone to come in here who does neurological science and look at how our brains react

to seeing race and write on that in meaningful ways. They have people in economics doing this but rather than studying how people can sell things more effectively, looking at your brain in economics, I'd be very interested in how we deal with race. Somebody needs to be well-versed in biology, neurobiology and psychology to do that. I think we have to be open to recruiting people in these totally new areas. I'm looking forward to seeing all these things I couldn't even have imagined sometime ago. And I'll continue to write my little stuff on Obama and so forth.

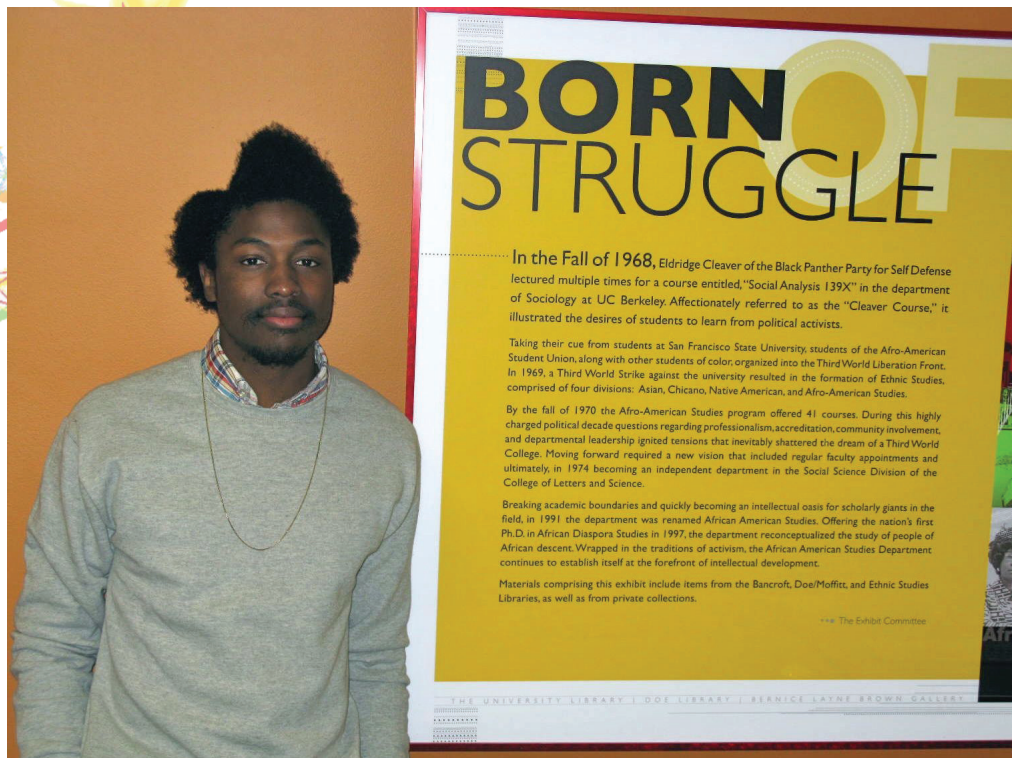
LR: What would you like to see happen...once you leave? And what advice would you give us as faculty and as students in the department?

CH: To be flexible. I don't expect there to be African American Studies departments as such 30 years from now. One of the things I've found is that once you institutionalize something it's very hard to get rid of it. Or even to change it. Because turf battles develop and people's careers are tied into one thing. I see this all the time about civil rights organizations. Some of them need to disappear. SNCC was the most productive civil rights organization that I've ever studied. It's no longer here, but *man*, it's manifested in many, many ways. The NAACP doesn't have to hang on forever. And neither does African American Studies or the Vice Chancellor for this or that. So I think one has to be flexible. I'm not saying do away with it without having something better to replace it. But be open to that kind of institutionalized change. I've long ago learned not to say, "Well we did it this way 30 years ago." Situations are so different...

I'm very excited about our core faculty now. I feel good about retiring. You say I'm gleeful. In part, I'm gleeful because I'm leaving the department in good hands.

Congratulations to

**Congratulations to
Michael M. McGee**



on completing his Qualifying Exams in the areas of diaspora studies, African diaspora history, and resistance and maroon studies, on the 14th of December 2011.

He submitted the following position papers in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Ph.D. Qualifying Exam in African Diaspora Studies:

“Fugitivity and Freedom in the African Diaspora”

“Rethinking African American Literature in the 21st Century.”

Congratulations to

Jason and Erica Hayes Schultz
On the birth of their baby girl



Michaela Simone Schultz

November 11, 2011

5:47 AM

6 lbs 8 oz

19"



20th Anniversary Celebration! March 16–17, 2012

June Jordan's

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Ariel Luckey
Terry Taplin
Sandra Garcia-Rivera
Milani Pelley
Shia Shabazz
Lateef McLeod
Alicia Zakon
Javier Zamora
P4P Director Aya de Leon

Saturday, March 17th

FREE conference

A day of conversations, workshops, performances, booksignings, open mics & honoring the memory and legacy of founder June Jordan.

We invite current & former P4P poets, STPs, Bay Area artists & activists, teen poets, aspiring writers, slammers, page poets, community builders, poetry lovers, EVERYONE...