

Editorial

We are very happy to welcome you back to *UFAHAMU: A Journal of African Studies*. Our last edition, Volume 38 Issue 1, a Special Edition on South Africa, was widely read and well-received. Some of the articles in that edition have already sparked national debates. William H. Worger's "The Tricameral Academy: Personal Reflections on Universities and History Departments in 'Post-Apartheid' South Africa"¹ and Neo Lekgotla laga Ramoupi's "African Research and Scholarship: 20 Years of Lost Opportunities to Transform Higher Education in South Africa,"² in particular, called into question the continued lack of diversity, specifically of black South Africans, in South African higher academia, twenty years post independence. A shortened version of Ramoupi's "African Research and Scholarship: 20 Years of Lost Opportunities to Transform Higher Education in South Africa" was reprinted in the February 6-12, 2015 hard-copy edition of the *Mail & Guardian*, a South African newspaper. Siona O'Connell, a University of Cape Town (UCT) lecturer, participated in this discourse as well.

O'Connell wrote a column in *Cape Argus* entitled, "What UCT's not telling their first-years."³ This piece highlighted the lack of transformation in the racial structure of the UCT faculty since 1994. After her piece, O'Connell received over 800 hate messages and various threats at her home and work.⁴ According to O'Connell, she was "pretty 'much ostracized' on campus" after writing the piece.⁵ As a Journal, we would like to take this opportunity to stand with and alongside O'Connell and other courageous authors who have sadly become targets of racist or sexist abuse due to their efforts to push for a more pluralistic society. We also take this opportunity to extend *Ufahamu* as a medium for O'Connell and other scholars to highlight the ongoing disparities in academic hiring practices in South Africa and beyond.

Black Lives Matter

On a similar note, we would like to take a moment to share our unwavering support for the #blacklivesmatter movement, which

we believe is not solely significant for black people across the globe, but to all disempowered people as well. We believe and know that the incidents that ignited this new movement's consciousness in the United States did not happen in isolation from each other, nor can they be rightly understood as separate incidents.⁶ Throughout our long history, *Ufahamu* has consistently pushed for a more egalitarian world. We are very excited to continue this tradition. As a Journal, we believe in the need for a collective push for strong examinations of the legal, social, and political systems in the United States that enables such violence and unbalanced forms of justice.⁷ The continued fight for social, economic, legal, and political equality seems to be just gearing up and these tragedies and public responses to them bring a wider awareness to the realities of the underrepresented. We continue to pledge *Ufahamu* as a medium for people to highlight inequality and injustice.

On our UCLA campus, protests over the police-killings of Eric Garner, John Crawford, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice and other unarmed black men and boys have been ongoing. But aside from protest demonstrations, others have used different venues to highlight the need for greater participation in activism around these issues. UCLA's African-American and African community themed residential hall celebrated Black History Month, last month, by producing a wonderful spectacle of performances and activist presentations called Black Extravaganza.⁸ It was a poignant and colourful reminder that it is today's generation's turn to pick up the mantle and push for all forms of social justice, both in our own communities and throughout the world.

Elections in Africa

2015 will see many African countries go to the polls to elect their new leaders and voice positions on a number of important national issues. A dozen or more of these elections will decide national leadership roles, bringing international attention to the races and to specific agendas of those running.⁹ Overall, it is our hope that these elections are safe and fair, and that peoples' wishes be respected, regardless of outcomes.

Acknowledgements

We would like to give a huge thank you to Stacey Meeker. Once again, she has provided us with unflinching support and assistance to produce this edition. We cannot thank her enough as she answered all our various inquiries pertaining to the Journal, at all hours and during every day of the week. This is no exaggeration. We are extremely grateful for her dedication to *Ufahamu* and Graduate Student Publications at UCLA.

We would also like to thank our faculty advisor, Professor Jemima Pierre, for continuing to push us to stick to the Journal's mission. This includes providing a platform for grappling with economic, political, and social issues facing communities, and a continuous space whereby African scholars, scholars within the African continent, and scholars marginalized by mainstream academia can present their research to the world. We would also very much like to thank our copy-editor, Michelle Gaston, for all her work in making sure that these pieces were ready for publication. Furthermore, we would also like to acknowledge Bill Morosi, our layout-editor, for the wonderful work, professionalism, and calm he brings to the Journal. Finally, and of course not least, we would like to thank UCLA's African Studies Center, particularly Sheila Breeding and Claire Pfitzinger, for their continued help in publicizing and supporting *Ufahamu*, and letting a broader community know that *Ufahamu* is alive and kicking again.

Current Edition

We are proud and excited that a sizeable amount of the contributors to this edition are from the African continent, with some also residing there. Like most interdisciplinary journals and editions, this collection of essays is eclectic and covers the width, breadth, and depth of the African continent. Although this issue is not organized around any specifically delineated themes, we are confident that the collected essays will spark some serious discussions in their respective fields and beyond. From fictional short stories, and political and economic analyses, to an art exhibition review, book reviews, and an exploration of continental colonial memories, histories, and legacies of the slave trade, there is surely something included for all our readers. So please enjoy!

Future Editions

Our final edition of this academic year will be released in June, 2015. This will be a commemorative issue, which will feature “voices from the past” coming back to touch us in the present. A number of previously published pieces which proved influential in *Ufahamu's* forty-five year career will be revisited and reconsidered in our contemporary contexts. Along with these reworkings, the commemorative issue will feature a set of original essays authored by previous editorial board members, who will reflect on the Journal's earlier years of activism and scholarship, as well as on the more recent transitions in content and format. Essays in this next issue will also work to locate historically and in present academic discourses, a place for an interdisciplinary *inter*-field of African studies, and where a journal such as *Ufahamu* has fit and continues to situate itself in such matrices.

Another interesting issue to look out for and for which to consider submitting a manuscript, will be Volume 39 Issue 1, set to be published in October, 2015. We are also extremely delighted to announce that we shall be working with *Stichproben: Vienna Journal for African Studies* (<http://stichproben.univie.ac.at/>) to publish a joint-edition, Volume 39 Issue 2, in the Winter of 2016. We shall be making calls for that Edition in the near future, so look out for this exciting collaborative opportunity.

Conclusion

We are extremely happy that our friends and broader community continue to find our Journal suitable to their intellectual needs, tastes, and consumption. We would like to share our gratitude for the support of all our valued readers and contributors, and we hope that this collaborative tradition continues for a very long time to come. Without you, there simply is no *Ufahamu*, so keep reading and writing!

Nana Osei-Opare and Jeremy Jacob Peretz

Notes

- ¹ William H. Worger, “The Tricameral Academy: Personal Reflections on Universities and History Departments in ‘Post-Apartheid’ South Africa,” *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 38, no. 1 (2014): 193-216, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0tm991zw>
- ² Neo Lekgotla Laga Ramoupi, “African Research and Scholarship: 20 Years of Lost Opportunities to Transform Higher Education in South Africa,” *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 38, no. 1 (2014): 269-286, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/13m5c5vp>
- ³ Siona O’Connell, “What UCT’s Not Telling Their First-Years,” *Cape Argues*, January 19, 2015, <http://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/what-uct-s-not-telling-their-first-years-1.1806441#.VPN8k33-ix> (accessed March 1, 2015).
- ⁴ Ilse Fredericks, “UCT Lecturer Ostracised after Column,” *IOL News*, February 27, 2015, <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/uct-lecturer-ostracised-after-column-1.1824551#.VPNd8k33-iw> (accessed February 27, 2015).
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ United States Department of Justice Report/Memorandum, *The Guardian*, March 4, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2015/mar/04/justice-department-reports-ferguson-michael-brown-full-text> (accessed March 4, 2015).
- ⁷ Jon Swaine, “Discrimination in Ferguson: Full Extent of Police Bias Laid Bare in Damning Report,” March 4, 2015 *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/mar/04/ferguson-police-racial-persecution-federal-report> (accessed March 4, 2015).
- ⁸ Lauren Scott, “Themed Community Floor Celebrates Annual Black History Extravaganza,” February 26, 2015, *Daily Bruin*, <http://dailybruin.com/2015/02/26/themed-community-floor-celebrates-annual-black-history-extravaganza/> (accessed February 28, 2015).
- ⁹ John Mukum Mbaku, “African Elections in 2015: A Snapshot for Cote D’Ivoire, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, and Sudan,” *Brookings Institute*, January 2015. <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Reports/2015/01/foresight-africa/african-elections-mbaku-FINAL.pdf?la=en> (accessed February 27, 2015).