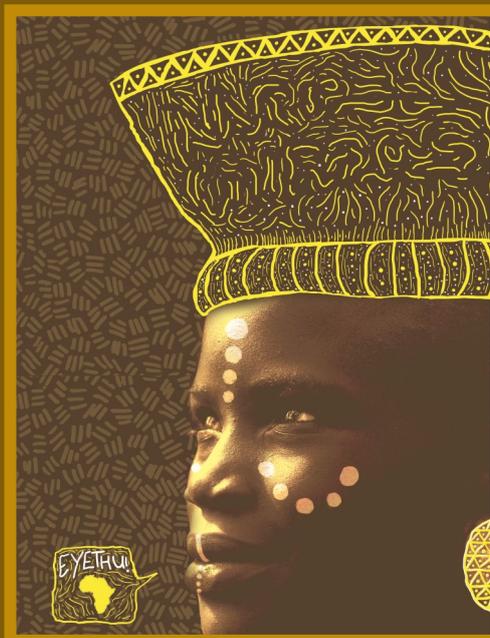


# **Africa, Africanity, Afrocentricity: A New Rhetoric**

**A Roundtable organized**

**By the Editor, *African Journal of Rhetoric* (AJR)**

**Interdisciplinary Research Building  
Howard University, Washington DC**



**March 28, 2019**

**PROGRAM**

## EDITOR'S GRATITUDE



DR SEGUN IGE

The African Association for Rhetoric, the Editor and the Editorial Board of the *African Journal of Rhetoric* (AJR) along with our partners and collaborators over the years use this occasion to mark the 10th anniversary of the Association's flagship publication, *African Journal of Rhetoric* (AJR). Although the Journal primarily services the biennial conferences of the African Association for Rhetoric (AAR) and other interested scholars whose projects intersect with those of the Association, there is evidence of its impact not only in scholarly circles, but also in policy and government circles. Through the promotion of rhetoric broadly on the continent of Africa and abroad, the journal has served as a major, and distinctly rhetorical means of disseminating groundbreaking research, critical views and

drawing the attention of leaders to the work of rhetorical scholars that can inform best practices in their various sectors.

The Journal was first published in 2009 by Mousehand, a reputable publishing company then based in Cape Town, South Africa. Following the sale of the company, it has since been moved to The Martinsons Institute Press which has ensured its regularity and frequency. In 2014, the journal was accredited by SAPSE, the government Department in South Africa, that regulates and helps the state in managing research productivity and reward system in South African higher education. The Journal is indexed by SABINET and EBSCO and has almost a hundred institutional subscriptions.

Following this Roundtable, the supplementary journal, *Balagha: African Rhetoric Review*, will recommence publication and we hope to sustain this both in frequency and regularity. We intend to use this journal to produce knowledge purely on global African projects. Among those is the proposed series on African Presidential Rhetoric and in-depth examination of the various forms of indigenous rhetoric on the continent and Diaspora Africa. These projects will help develop appropriate methodologies to adopt when conducting research in the area of African Rhetoric and related subjects.

I am particularly grateful to the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, for the rare opportunity given in the early 2000s to initiate such a laudable project. There have been some great institutions that have chosen to collaborate with the Association and in some cases allocating meaningful resources to support the collaborations, namely: Pan Atlantic University, Nigeria; University of Namibia; UNISA and the Durban University of Technology, Durban, South Africa. This approach has fostered networking and collaborations between scholars and among rhetorical scholars from Africa and overseas to work together and sometimes have served as visiting fellows at African institutions. We hope that there will be reciprocal movements of rhetorical scholars and that given the right kind of resources, the project will endure and last long enough to serve the African continent in discovering methods of articulation and best practices in governance, leadership, cultural and social relations.

We are grateful to Howard University and the distinguished scholars who have supported the project since 2014 when arrived at the 'Mecca.' The Departments of Classics and English have been outstanding in promoting and supporting rhetoric related projects. I am particularly grateful to Dr Dana Williams for her continual and ever abiding support. To all I say, *Ese o* [Thank You!].

**Call for Papers:  
Invitation to participate in panels and roundtables on  
African Rhetoric**

**on the theme,**

**“Africa, Africanity and Afrocentricity: A New Rhetoric”  
at  
Howard University**

Roundtable organised by the Editor, *African Journal of Rhetoric* (AJR)  
In commemoration of the Journal’s 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**Date:** March 28 2019

**Venue:** Howard University, Washington DC

For the past five decades, scholars and researchers in anthropology, ethnology, communication, linguistics, and classical rhetoricians have investigated and shown the depth of African rhetoric as both a study and a practice on the continent. Of these varied research programs, one of the most distinctive and enduring has been the African Rhetoric Project. This research initiative is arguably the most prominent collective investigating African rhetoric today ever since it emerged two decades ago out of the University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, as part of the institution’s effort to promote African scholarship. Its activities have included organizing workshops and conferences, publishing the most widely disseminated scholarly journal focused on African rhetoric, and inspiring books and course curricula.

This roundtable, assembled to commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the African Rhetoric Project’s flagship journal, the *African Journal of Rhetoric* (AJR), calls on emerging and established voices in African rhetoric to participate in panel conversations and reflective roundtables on the contours of African rhetoric. There is now a growing realization that African rhetorics are not confined to practices on the continent. The goal of the roundtable is to display the spectacular breadth of African rhetorical theory, criticism, and practice – spanning topics from national to diasporic identity, political to economic rhetorics, oral to written literacies, analog to digital media.

Toward this end, this call for papers invites scholars and intellectuals to reflect on the state of African rhetoric on the broad theme, “Africa, Africanity and Afrocentricity: A New Rhetoric.” This roundtable is an opportunity for scholars to ruminate on the definition, theory, methodology and practical applications of African Rhetoric in all its ramifications. Each interested panellist is encouraged to submit an abstract (of not more than 300 words) by January 1, 2019. Essays submitted will be published in a special edition of *Balagha: African Rhetoric Review* [Online and print]. Please submit your essays [6000 words max] in the form of a word doc. or word docx document to Dr. Segun Ige at the following address: [Johnson.ige@howard.edu](mailto:Johnson.ige@howard.edu)

**Convener:** Dr Segun Ige, Howard University, Washington DC

**SPEAKERS:**

**Professor Omedi Ochieng, Denison University, USA**  
**Professor Gilbert Motsatheebe, University of Johannesburg, RSA**  
**Professor Clement Akassi, Howard University, USA**  
**Professor Earl Ettienne, Howard University, USA**  
**Professor Elizabeth Ferguson, George Mason University, USA**  
**Professor Patrick Goodin, Howard University, USA**  
**Professor Hailu Alem, Howard University, USA**  
**Dr Wincharles Coker, University of Cape Coast, Ghana**  
**Professor Erik Johnson, St Lawrence University, USA**  
**Professor Darryl Harris, Howard University, USA**

**Convener:**

**Dr Segun Ige**  
**Editor, *African Journal of Rhetoric (AJR)***

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**African Rhetoric Roundtable, March 28, 2019  
Program**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Panels</b>	<b>Chair/Moderator</b>
9. 00- 9. 30 am	Tea on Arrival	
9.30-9.40 am	Opening Address, Dean COAS, Dr James Davis (representing Dean Edna Greene Medford)	Dr Segun Ige
9.40—9-45	Remarks Dr Alexander Tulin	
9.45.00—11.45 am	<p><b>Dr Omedi Ochieng, Lead Speaker</b> <i>Can the African Think? Philosophy, Theory and the Geography of the Speculative Imagination</i></p> <p><b>Dr Clement Akassi</b> <i>Decolonising the Imaginaries, epistemology and rhetoric in African and African Diaspora Studies</i></p> <p><b>Dr Erik Johnson</b> <i>“Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana, and the ‘King’s Two Bodies’ in the Postcolony: An Afrocentric Model of Statecraft”</i></p> <p><b>Dr Hailu Alem</b> <i>Rhetoric, HBCUs and the Transformative Power of Engaged Institutions: The Legacies and Contributions of the Partnership Model of Higher Education</i></p> <p><b>Professor Darryl Harris</b> <i>Black Politics: Its Meaning and Purpose</i></p> <p><b>Award Presentation by Dr Yasmin DeGout</b></p>	<p><b>Moderator</b> Dr David Green</p>
11.45-12.00	Tea break	
12. 00 .– 2.45 pm	<p><b>Professor Gilbert Motsatheebe</b> <i>Rhetoric, Orality and Embryonic Trends in Africa and Beyond</i></p> <p><b>Dr Patrick Goodin</b> <i>Shifting the Architecture of Reason: On the Politics of Africana Philosophy—With Special Reference to Edward Blyden</i></p> <p><b>Professor Earl Etienne et al.</b> <i>Is Africa the next Destination for the Opoid Crisis?</i></p> <p><b>Dr Elizabeth Ferguson</b> <i>Decolonializing Disease: The 2014 Ebola epidemic and warnings against bushmeat</i></p> <p><b>Dr Wincharles Coker</b> <i>Afrifuge and the New African Rhetoric: Grappling with the Ambivalence of Difference and Equivalence</i></p>	<p><b>Moderators</b> Dr David Green/ Dr Leonard Muaka</p>
3. 00– 4 pm	Radio Room, Multidisciplinary Research Building	Dr Earl Etienne



### **Lead Speaker**

**Dr. Omedi Ochieng** teaches rhetorical theory and criticism; the rhetoric of philosophy; political theory and practice; and aesthetic praxis at Denison University. He is the author of *Groundwork for the Practice of the Good Life: Politics and Ethics at the Intersection of North Atlantic and African Philosophy* (Routledge: 2016) and *The Intellectual Imagination: Knowledge and Aesthetics in North Atlantic and African Philosophy* (University of Notre Dame Press: 2018)

### **ABSTRACT**

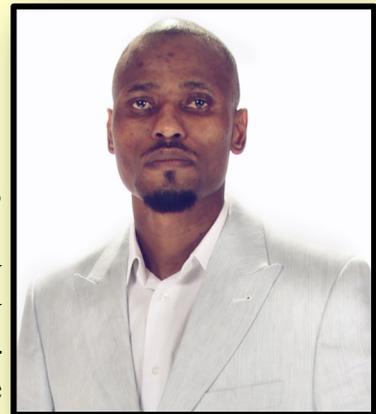
#### **Can the African Think? Philosophy, Theory and the Geography of the Speculative Imagination**

In this roundtable, I want to reflect on the phenomenon wherein, on the one hand, North Atlantic philosophers have seen Africa as a fertile ground for speculative flights of the imagination, they have, on the other hand, vociferously – often violently – destroyed spaces and formations for African speculative thought. I argue that while North Atlantic speculation has traditionally congealed into a deeply absolutist, violent, and hierarchical disciplinary body of knowledge commonly referred to as “philosophy,” African speculative thought offers the opportunity for radically alternative ways of being.

### **Rhetoric, Orality and Embryonic Trends in Africa and Beyond**

**Dr Gilbert Motsatheebe [Bio next page]**

Rhetoric, broadly understood as the art of persuasion, has been pivotal in many practices across Africa and beyond. Rhetoric is especially prominent in oral poetry particularly praise poetry which occupies a very special place in many cultures across Africa. As Brown (1987) observed, “all African societies had poets who performed poems about the rule and lineage of chiefs and kings and about his relationship with their subjects.” Kings and chiefs themselves as rhetoricians with certain exceptional abilities to captivate and pursued their subjects were considered great orators. In this paper I attempt to discuss the way in which this art form has evolved over the years and the way it is being adapted and refashioned in various parts of the world in order to remain relevant in the era where European imagination and hegemony have eroded the appreciation of anything African. This obliterations continues in spite of the fact that Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato and Pythagoras, for example, studied in Africa. In my discussion, I take a closer look at the work of one of South Africa’s poetry sensations, Mzwakhe Mbuli, who rose to fame in the 1980s and is often credited as having filled the vacuum left by expelled cultural and political activists when the apartheid government banned anti-apartheid organisations. I look at how his themes and concerns connect with the rest of the African continent and the diaspora and the way in which he updates his work in order to remain relevant as an *imbongi* (oral poet).



**Coloured Women –  
Visibility, respectability and Sex in South African Cinema:  
Interrogating the representation of coloured womanhood in *Noem My Skollie*  
(2016)**

Charne Simpson  
UCT, Cape Town

**Abstract:** This research investigates the representation of coloured women in the South African film, *Noem My Skollie* (2016). The work relies on a consolidation of film analysis and qualitative audience research to triangulate the findings. I argue that the film offers a limited representation of coloured womanhood that, practically and discursively, relegates women to the confines of various domestic spaces such as kitchens and bedrooms. This analysis reifies stereotypical notions of coloured femininity and respectability: women who are always shown in the kitchen are portrayed as asexual and subservient; while women in the bedroom are rendered promiscuous and sexually deviant. To parse my findings, I conducted an audience reception study with five coloured women about the film. Findings show that very few participants even remembered anything significant about the women characters owing to their limited time, which in turn, emphasizes the peripheral nature of the female characters - they are the background onto which male narratives are cast. This paper contributes to the relatively sparse academic literature on the representation of coloured women in South African cinema. The work makes use of literature by Sean Samson (2007;2014) and Zimitri Erasmus (2001; 2017) as well as bell hooks (1992) and Judith Butler (2004).

**Lead Speaker**

**Gilbert Motsaathebe** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Journalism, Film & Television at the University of Johannesburg. He is an NRF-rated researcher with over 20 years of experience in academia, government communication and media practice. Prior to joining the University of Johannesburg, Motsaathebe taught at the United Arab Emirates University in the UAE. He held a substantive position as Senior Lecturer of Media Studies at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Cape Town for ten years, and taught at educational institutions in Japan and India in the intervening years. Before joining academia, Motsaathebe worked as News Producer and Output Editor for television stations such as Bop Television, SABC and e-TV. He also worked as Deputy Director of Media Relations at the Office of the Premier, North West Provincial Government.

**Moderator**

**Dr. David Green**, Co-Director of the Writing Centre, Department of English, Howard University, Washington DC. Dr Green's studies Hip-Hop, composition pedagogy, cultural rhetoric focusing on democratic learning and multilingual writing instruction. His forthcoming publication: *It's deeper than rap: A study of Hip Hop, composition and Vernacular Rhetoric* is in the press. Dr Green is a member of MLA and NCA.

**Shifting the Architecture of Reason:  
On the Politics of Africana Philosophy—  
With Special Reference to Edward Blyden**

**Professor Patrick Goodin**  
Philosophy Department  
Howard University

“I envision this book as a river with many tributaries, since history and all things flow toward us now. Europe is no longer the center of gravity of the world. This is the significant event, the fundamental experience, of our era. And we are only just now beginning the work of measuring its implications and weighing its consequences. Whether such a revelation is an occasion for joy or a cause for surprise or worry, one thing remains certain: the demotion of Europe opens up possibilities—and presents dangers—for critical thought. That is, in part, what this essay seeks to examine.”

This is how Achille Mbembe begins his important new book, “Critique of Black Reason”, a riff, as it were, on Immanuel Kant’s “Critique of Pure Reason”.

What does it mean to decenter Europe and what are its implications for Africana philosophy?

If Africana philosophy, seen from a sufficiently high altitude, can be construed as the application of European philosophic modes of thought to African and African diasporic socio-historic problematics, it is not easy to see how the decentering of Europe frees us from its conceptual grip. Caliban’s curse, directed to Prospero—The red plague rid you for learning me your language—comes to mind.

In this paper I propose and develop another way of construing Africana philosophy. It involves what I call in the title “Shifting the Architecture of Reason”. Reason appears differently depending on its conceptual architecture.

Building on some insights from the thought of Edward Blyden, I develop this alternate way of construing Africana philosophy.

**The conflation and confusion of the politics of “change and exchange” and  
“renewal of the old” within the ANC: Implications for Gender Equality.**

**Prof. Simphiwe Sesanti**  
UNISA,  
Pretoria, South Africa

What I want to argue is that despite strong calls for “renewal” in the ANC, this renewal actually translates in the negation of making “new”, and that instead, “renewal” actually translates into the “recycling” of the politics of patriarchy within the ANC, and that, in fact, as opposed to a genuine commitment to “change” the reality is that the ANC’s men strive for “exchange”, that is, taking the seats of the racist and sexist masters of yesterday. The theory to be utilised is Afrocentricity.

## **TO BE OR NOT TO BE AN AFRICAN: IMAGES OF AFRICA IN CINEMA**

**Prof Advice VIRIRI (PhD)**

Midlands State University, Zvishavane Campus

P. O. Box 100, Zvishavane, ZIMBABWE

E-mail : viririad@gmail.com

Because of its unique history, that of slavery and colonialism, Africa suffered serious cultural dislocations. Europe's "civilizing mission" in Africa, is absolutely an evil act meant to subdue Africa's resistance. This paper seeks to protect and protest the denigration in a world that turned the continent banal and made its inhabitants insomniacs. It also examines African voices that have been haunted and submerged by the Europeans in the creation of New World culture and history through film. Filmmaking is considered a modern form of storytelling. This paper chose film as an art to illustrate how facts were brutally twisted to the advantage of the Whites. It seeks to change the perception of misrepresentation of the Africans and his social institutions which were created to justify European colonialism. Film was a method of controlling the African's perception of himself vis-à-vis the whiteman. Concepts invoked from this paper are issues of African identity, question of belonging, of reconnecting to one's own history, of rediscovering one's roots. Films have been viewed as vehicles that vacillate between reality and fiction. Film as art is a vision of reality. African people are required to re-assert a sense of agency so as to achieve sanity in the continent. The paper's argument will be underpinned by the Afrocentric philosophy which is not only a revolutionary shift in thought but a paradigm which enthrones the centrality of the African by proposing a constructural adjustment to black disorientation and decentredness. This theory asserts the central role of the African subject within the African historical context. It further analyzes how the colonial policy on films was fashioned within the broader cultural enslavement framework, borne out of the realization of cultural manipulation. This therefore calls for the new African rhetorical theory that seeks to humanize a dehumanized people.



# **The Martinsons Institute**

## the wind of a thousand imprints

*written by Segun Ige for Pius Adesanmi*

Relentlessly,  
Gallantly ascended.

Bigger,  
heavier,  
louder.

The evil wind  
That shattered  
The craft of Boeing  
That hatched on the African 'scape  
Released your restless soul  
To fly higher  
To Soar yonder  
To behold wonders most holy  
And horizons most sacred.

Why, O Why did you have to leave so soon?

Are you the son of Àfònjá  
The legendary bow man  
Killer of a battalion on an arrow most single?  
Or the thunder of Sàngó;  
That terrifying fury that rages  
Across the sky at noonday  
Against his foes?  
Or the staff of Òrànmíyàn  
The index finger of the hallowed earth  
Pointing to the distant realms  
Of the unknown heights?  
Are you Kàkó, Elégbèje Ode or Àkàrà Oògùn,  
The wandering hunters on wild side  
Of the mythical range  
Of the mountains of marauding spirits?

Your changeling act defies my logic!!

Why use the Jewish sacred text if you were Emèrè,  
Or the words of a foreign god  
If you were an ancestor of a thousand tribes,  
Or left your produce unharvested  
If you have sown from your pouch of a thousand seeds?

I shall not thrice summon you,  
Or scout your trots in the crags  
Or crevices of battered walls

I shall not seek your flight among the ravenous birds,  
Insidious creatures that prey on innocent souls,  
Or,  
Sprints among the deers,  
The victuals of predators disguised as marshals of the  
jungle  
Or in the appetite of the nanny goats  
Fed now thereafter caned for obdurate insolence;  
Nor among the lizards whose  
Belligerent tail fights stir the dust  
In the rubbles of incongruous  
Moral debilitations.

I shall seek you out among the lustrous sons of Africa.

You are royalty!  
The scion of the lineage of legends:  
Oduduwa's child.  
You are the itinerant nugget:  
The tantalising rhapsodies of the oracle,  
The scintillating wisdom of the African mind.  
You are the effervescent, vociferous feathercock pen  
gliding facily on the wax plates of a thousand tablets.

You are the boisterous wind of a thousand imprints!

You are PIUS:

Peaceful; Peaceable; Peace-loving

Intelligent

Unassuming

Sociable



**PIUS ADESANMI**

Feb 27, 1972-March 10, 2019

# AAR's Publications in `10 years

*African Journal of Rhetoric*

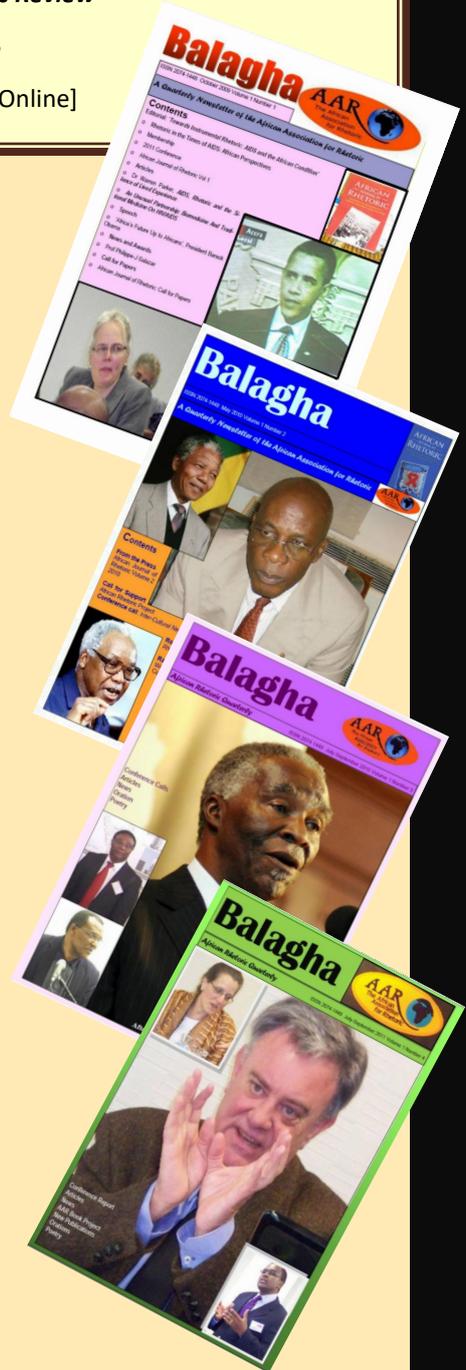
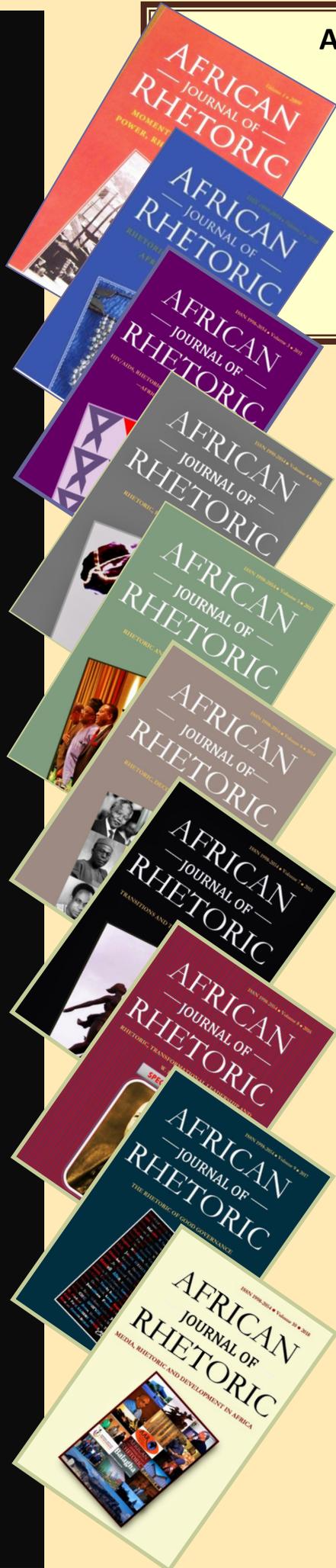
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Afr. J. rhetor

**BALAGHA: African Rhetoric Review**

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[Supplementary Journal: Online]



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## **Afrifuge and the New African Rhetoric: Grappling with the Ambivalence of Difference and Equivalence**

Wincharles Coker, PhD  
Department of Communication Studies  
College of Humanities and Legal Studies  
University of Cape Coast Cape Coast, Ghana  
Email: wcoker@ucc.edu.gh

The study of contemporary African Rhetoric is confronted with two basic challenges. The first concerns the appeal to situated difference, by which some scholars strive to demonstrate how unique African Rhetoric from Western rhetorical theory. Another group of writers also makes an appeal to equivalence by creating an unintended impression that it is only by reifying the rhetorical canon afforded in Western thought that they can legitimize African rhetoric as a discipline. In this paper, I argue that one way to grapple with the ambivalence of difference and equivalence that characterizes scholarly inquiry in African Rhetoric is to theorize the field through the lens of Afrifuge. I will posit that Afrifuge is a dialectic that seeks to recognize the valences of African rhetoric unto itself not as a way of paying obeisance to indigeneity but as a tactic of conceptualizing African rhetoric on its own terms. An Afrifugal study of African Rhetoric, I hope to show, should be emancipatory in focus by deconstructing, unpacking, and unsettling all forms of rhetorically thinking, speaking, and writing about communication phenomena in a conceptual Africa that disempower.

### **Black Politics: Its Meaning and Purpose**

**Professor Darryl Harris**  
**Howard University**

In this presentation, my main concern centers on the conceptual dimensions of what is nominally called Black Politics (the field of study or discipline) because they encompass the orienting ideas and values that undergird sociopolitical phenomena. These ideas and values, moreover, are part and parcel of a historical and cultural lineage that acquired sociopolitical meaning via the thought and behavior of Black people themselves. In explaining Black Politics, my contention is that for Black Politics (the discipline) to mature it must be oriented according to the values and ideas that evolve in Black history and culture.

## **African Rhetoric as African Ontology: A Proposal**

Adedoyin Ogunfeyimi  
Dartmouth College

This paper defines *African rhetorics* as African ways of being or ways of being Africans. First, I locate these ways of being in African ethical orientations within the framework of African personhood, community, and religion. Relying on the works of Mbiti, Mobolaji, Wiredu, Gyekye, Menkiti, Gbadegesin and others, I define African person as ethical being, that is, one whose existence or act of becoming relies on the existence of others; this co-existence—not of a mere collective effort but of an ontological essence—constitutes African ethical community. And the processes of becoming—rites of passage, initiations, and moral episteme—an ethical being, what Menkiti calls “ontological progression,” also finds expression in African religion. Second, I map out ways/sites in which this ontological orientation is lived, performed and repurposed by Africans for multiple rhetorical purposes: i) to initiate and participate in culturally inflected rituals such as greetings and divinatory procedures (Agawu; Abimbola); ii) to negotiate hospitable eco-conditions (Sarowiwa), iii) to cast a post-slavery black identity (Clarke; Love); iv) to decolonize governance (Nyeyere; Nkrumah; Senghor), and v) to domesticate western theology (Mbiti; Mobolaji). Third, I track other discursive sites—gendered, religious, digital, etc.—in which Africans also interrupt these orientations, noting, however, that such instances underscore divergent African ways of being. I claim that African rhetorics are embodyable, performative experiences of Africans—and are ontologically so; fluid, receptive, and dynamic.

## **Decolonising the Imaginaries, epistemology and rhetoric in African and African Diaspora Studies**

Dr Clement Akassi,

Howard University

**-Awaiting full Abstract-**

## IS AFRICA THE NEXT DESTINATION FOR THE OPIOID CRISIS?

Earl B. Ettienne, Adaku Ofoegbu, Allen Steele Dadzie, Albert G.B. Amoah, Arthur C. Sackeyfio, Yacoba Atiase, Jeronimo Augusto, Anthony K. Wutoh

Howard University College of Pharmacy, University of Ghana School of Medicine, University of Ghana School of Pharmacy

The current opioid crisis in the United States is a significant public health burden resulting in an estimated 130 deaths per day and costing \$78.5 billion annually in economic loss. Although the United States has been faced with several substance use disorder (SUD) crises in the past, the rhetoric surrounding SUD has shifted diametrically. Notably, the crack cocaine epidemic, which primarily impacted African-American communities, was regarded as a moral failing correctable with incarceration. Contrastingly, the present opioid crisis is regarded as a chronic disease requiring the concerted efforts of a multidisciplinary health care team. The United States witnessed that the rhetoric of the crack epidemic resulted in long-lasting repercussions to the impacted communities, such as family dissolution, morbidity, and mortality, and learned that rhetoric designating opioid use disorder as a disease leads to improved outcomes.

While the opioid crisis is ravaging the United States, a similar crisis may be developing on the African continent with the increasing abuse of tramadol, codeine and marijuana laced with other synthetic substances, to name a few. Given the lessons learned in the United States regarding treatment approaches for SUD, key stakeholders have the advantage of taking innovative approaches to address the emerging SUD crises before heavy costs to society are incurred. However, existing sociocultural, economic, and religious norms may converge into rhetoric that influences the development of policies promoting stigmatization, marginalization, and criminalization of persons with SUD. Rhetoric that is geared toward compassion, rehabilitation, and family resolution can lead to policies that promote innovative treatment modalities incorporating a bio-psycho-social approach. Moreover, medication-assisted treatment for SUD underpinned by pharmacogenomics can help to individualize disease management and improve treatment outcomes. Although the emerging SUD epidemic on the African continent poses a potentially significant challenge, it simultaneously presents an opportunity to improve rhetorical approaches in health promotion that can be applied to other prevailing issues.

## **Decolonializing Disease:**

### **The 2014 Ebola epidemic and warnings against bushmeat**

Elizabeth Ferguson  
George Mason University

“Ebola: Is bushmeat behind the outbreak” the headline from BBC News in October, 2014 by Melissa Hogenboom made the audience wonder if the first Ebola victim had contracted Ebola through eating bushmeat. Just below the headline the article states “bushmeat is believed to be the origin of the current Ebola outbreak. The first victim’s family hunted bats, which carry the virus. Could the practice of eating bushmeat, which is popular across Africa, be responsible for the current crisis?”. The headline and subsequent paragraph framed the Ebola epidemic as an African crisis, which African brought on themselves through uncivilized practices of hunting and eating wild animals. At the same time the article states that this type of meat is “popular,” but that does not immediately imply that this is necessary food because other sources of protein are not available. Further in the article Hogenboom states, “in some remote areas it [bushmeat] is a necessary source of food” but if Ebola was contracted by eating bushmeat and not through a bite, then the food source for people living in remote areas is at risk. In this paper and presentation, I examine how the framing of *bushmeat* by the international media constructed the 2014 Ebola Epidemic within the colonial narrative of Africa as the “Dark Continent” and argue that this framing contributed to what Brice de le Vingne, the operations director for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) labeled an “epidemic of fear.”

### **“Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana, and the ‘King’s Two Bodies’ in the Postcolony: An Afrocentric Model of Statecraft”**

Erik Johnson  
St. Lawrence University

After Kwame Nkrumah and the Convention People’s Party assembled a mass movement that won independence from colonial rule, they faced the challenge of adapting the crowd politics of the anti-colonial struggle to the task of postcolonial governance. This essay considers the rhetorical culture of Ghanaian statecraft in relationship to two formulations of sovereign power: (*i.*) symbols of social organization within Akan cosmology and (*ii.*) the political–theological concept of the “king’s two bodies” that stretches from medieval Christian theology to contemporary doctrines of popular sovereignty. In doing so, I trace the ways that emergent Ghana’s political culture articulated a model of statecraft that runs in alternative to the dominant norms of Western political spheres and British coloniality. Throughout the media of Ghana’s First Republic, Nkrumah and Ghana were repeatedly substituted for each other within a

cont’d next page

## **Rhetoric, HBCUs and the Transformative Power of Engaged Institutions: The Legacies and Contributions of the Partnership Model of Higher Education**

Professor Hailu Alem  
African Studies Department,  
Howard University,  
Washington DC

Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were established with the paramount mission of educating African Americans, who were denied access to educational opportunities. As a result, HBCUs became the principal means for providing postsecondary education to African Americans. As noted by politicians, "At a time when many schools barred their doors to black Americans, these colleges offered the best, and often the only, opportunity for a higher education." These institutions, however, did not just serve as the places where the professional and educational needs of the people were met. They provided significant cultural, social and scholarly environments in which the systems of academic training were buttressed by the extraordinary components of engagements with constituent communities as well as the broader members of the nation and the world. Mainstream institutions of higher learning adopted the orthodox paradigm of the Ivory Tower model in which education was viewed as the walled off pursuit of knowledge divorced from the concerns of justice, equity and sustainability. In contrast, HBCUs, led by the exemplars of their engaged education system, have brought about global transformations. Rhetoric as the paradigm of social change and continuity in the African World has been central to the mission of the HBCUs. At the core of their vision and curriculum has been the concept of the architecture of higher education that integrates teaching, learning and knowledge building as a dynamic process that involves educators, students, independent thinkers and activists in revolutionizing the structures, principles as well as the public policies and cultures of public institutions. The paper attempts to examine the legacies, dynamics and impacts of these interconnected factors on the United States and the world as a whole. The roles of the stakeholders in the universities and the larger world are appraised to illustrate the contributions of the actors and the continuing lessons they offer for the present and future of our integrated world.

### **Erik Johnson cont'd from pg. 16**

composition of power that territorialized Nkrumah's figure into the political geography of the new national community. I'm calling this symbolic fusing and confusing of *Nkrumah* and *Ghana* a "postcolonial king's two bodies," and I argue that the habit of equating Nkrumah with Ghana worked to provide a legitimate form of authority by which to transfer the mass energies of the anti-colonial movement to the post-colonial state following independence. However, as the figuration of Nkrumah-as-Ghana has been extended as the dominant image of Nkrumah's state within contemporary and pan-African political cultures, I argue that the figuration of Nkrumah's two bodies has lost its potential as a symbol of mass political belonging and instead become a shorthand by which to idolize the leader. My argument includes analysis of Nkrumah's speeches and writings as well as the print media and visual practices that circulate within Ghanaian and pan-African press.

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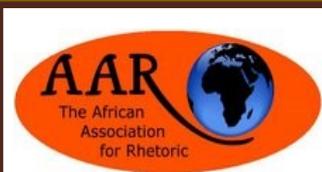
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