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UFAHAMU
JOURNAL OF THE AFRICAN ACTIVIST ASSOCIATION

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UFAHAMU accepts contributions from anyone interested in Africa and related subject areas. Contributions may include scholarly articles, political-economic analysis, commentaries, review articles, film and book reviews and poetry. Manuscripts must be between 20-30 pages, clearly typed, double spaced, with footnotes on separate page(s). We currently use Microsoft Word 6.0 and request that your submission be sent on one 3.5 inch diskette if possible. In addition, authors must submit two copies of their manuscripts and a brief biographical note, including position, academic affiliation and recent significant publications, etc. Contributors should keep copies of their manuscripts. The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit any manuscript to meet the objectives of the journal. All correspondence - manuscripts, subscriptions, books for review, inquiries, etc. should be addressed to the Editors-in-Chief at the above address. We regret that once submitted, materials cannot be returned.

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Cover: Mask. Carved; stretched; blackened; basketry; wood; skin; fiber, metal. Ejaghem Ekoi; Cross River; Southern Nigeria or Cameroon. Height 23.00 cm. Fowler Museum of Cultural History X65.8236.

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EDITORIAL

The metaphors suggested in the sculpture that appears on the cover of this issue of *Ufahamu* reflect the ideas of the articles included herein. The mask from the region of Cameroon and Southern Nigeria implies a multiple perspective. The two faces sharing the same head encounter experiences from different directions — offering at times dichotomous opinions emanating from incongruent experiences. This distinction in vision is fundamental to the sculpture. For instance, one face may be looking to the future while the other is focusing on the past. This combination can prove useful when evaluating African experiences and/or issues. Also, one might see a perpetual dialectic or perhaps a synthesis of a dialectic; one might imagine the struggle of two subject positions wanting to explore that which lies in their field of vision, but is impeded by the other; or perhaps one might imagine two outlooks constantly feeding into a central brain, the one complementing and enhancing the other. If the mask could be seen in its true colors of earthy brown (male) and a vibrant yellow (female), it would reveal gender differences and commonalities, suggesting yet another range of interpretations and readings. In short, we chose this sculpture because it evokes a spectrum of discussions and discourses on perspective, vision, subjectivity, partnership, coalition-building, and direction in much the same way as do the essays in this issue of *Ufahamu*.

The articles we have chosen reflect the metaphoric possibilities of the mask. Each article questions the categories and discourses through which politics, history and culture are thought of, both on the ground and in the academy — taking as their topics: economic history, national language development, political transitions, urban migration, development, gender politics, and film. These issues demand accountability from the narratives commonly espoused. Thirty-five years after most of the continent successfully overthrew the political and economic constraints of colonialism in favor of African independence, and after thirty-five years of institutionalized African studies, an important period of re-examination and re-evaluation must continue. The exploitative foundation on which most of the globe's economies, governments, and academic practices function continues to produce colonized bodies and subjectivities, but more importantly it persists in occasioning its own opposition. Recent political struggles in Nigeria, Rwanda, Liberia, South Africa compounded with recent debates within international donor agencies and further intensified with the recent debates in the African Studies Association over issues of race belie the crisis of an exploitative foundation. Fortunately, it has been the tradition of *Ufahamu* to zero in on the ruptures and ambivalence of imperialism in order to advance progressive politics concerning Africa and people of African descent; the articles in this issue, by examining perspectives,

subjectivities, and histories, do no less. Similar to the mask on the cover, the underlying metaphor of the essays is vision and the authors, in their attempts to take full political advantage of the current ruptures in neo-imperialist claims to power, ask; where do we look, from what perspective, and into which bodies of knowledge do we feed?

C.C. Luchembe's article, "Legacy of Late Nineteenth Century Capitalism: The Case of W.R. Grace and C. J. Rhodes," carefully analyzes shifts in international finance and transformations of investment patterns in Europe and the Americas as they produced an increased need for colonial business projects. Luchembe, a former *Ufahamu* Editor-In-Chief, decenters current discourses on nationalist, colonialist practice by writing biographies of money and power-driven men who took advantage of colonialism and world-economic restructuring to further their own interests. Luchembe notes how personal greed in turn served to entrench the colonial project. The argument reminds us that the monolithic colonial administration was hardly so monolithic. In the final analysis, Luchembe ties late nineteenth century capitalism directly to political projects of the 1960s in Zambia, a legacy he says still lingers. In like fashion, Loren B. Landau explores new directions in thinking about urbanization and gender. "What Role Can History Play for the Newly Urbanized Women of Kenya and Tanzania?" interrogates commonly cited urbanization theories, discourses on women in economic development and history to suggest that a progressive gender-based development scheme would articulate horizontal organizations revolving around new symbolic economies.

Former UCLA graduate student Darnell Donahue expands Luchembe's argument that current political practice in Africa continues to respond to 19th century European economic activity, yet also progressively articulates new forms of political economy. His article, "Democracy in Africa: After the Cold War," discusses ways in which various East African governments are attempting to initiate transition through legitimacy building, redefinition of democracy and economic reform.

The final two articles turn this debate of economics and politics to the everyday practices of language and entertainment. Neither moves away from economics and politics; rather each maintain the progressive position of linking culture directly to the material realm. Deo Ngonyani, a UCLA graduate student in Linguistics, in "Language Shift in National Identity in Tanzania," explores the relationship between nation, culture, and language in Tanzania. Ngonyani's article brings a new voice to all of the current theorizing of nation in the postcolonial context. From a radical perspective, especially from within African Studies, nation remains at best an ambivalent category. In Ngonyani's analysis, Swahili simultaneously provides an anti-imperialist, non-European mode of

communication and does damage to indigenous languages and cultures. From this we might ask, what is gained and what is lost in the national project?

The final article, "The Character of Popular Indigenous Cinema in Nigeria," by Onookome Okome wraps up the other articles of this issue, serving as an excellent conclusion. Okome questions what qualifies as indigenous in Yoruba, Nigerian and African culture. Isolating strands of Yoruba theater, Bombay and Hollywood cinema, West African mythology, political and economic history and multiple genres of comedy and drama, Okome weaves a depiction of "indigenous" cinema. Okome rejects analyses that pit Nigerian cinema against that of the United States and instead sees a very progressive and energetic cinema generating itself and its future. Like the two-faced head on the cover and like his companion writers, Okome looks back in order to look forward, while understanding the ambivalence of the multi-faced head of postcolonial Africa.

This volume of *Ufahamu* marks our twenty-fifth year of centering and decentering African Studies scholarship around radical understandings of politics and culture. Sustaining such a history of publication could not have been achieved without the generous commitment of editorial board members past and present, generations of scholars who found in *Ufahamu* a welcome home, all of the subscribers and readers who continued to look to the journal for otherwise unheard voices and UCLA's James S. Coleman African Studies Center. Our next issue will commemorate this anniversary with special contributions by such important scholars as Edward A. Alpers, Sheila Clarke-Ekong, Christopher Ehret, C.C. Luchembe, Guy Martin, and Ali Mazrui, to name a just a few. Please keep watch for this special issue. While we are giving thanks, we would like to express our gratitude to Kier Riemersma, from whom we took over Editor-In-Chief responsibilities. His fine work ensures yet another year for the life of the journal. Most of all, we thank Susanna Wing, Production and Circulation Editor, for her devotion to produce a high quality journal with a minuscule budget, limited time, and a too small cadre of proof readers and copy editors. Without Wing's commitment, we quite literally would not have seen *Ufahamu* for the past two years. A luta continua.

Matthew J. Christensen and Lezlee S. Cox