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Contributors' Introduction
***ufahamu-n.* [Swahili] understanding** 6

Editors' Introduction
Kim Yi Osose and

Ufahamu, UCLA's multidisciplinary Africanist student journal, seeks contributions that challenge broadly accepted conceptualizations of African studies. Since 1970, *Ufahamu* has maintained its original vision of creating a forum for protest against the increasingly western-dominated and exclusionary African Studies establishment. The journal continues to publish the work of those marginalized by the academic press—Africans, people of African descent, students, and non-academics. Together with our readers and contributors, we reaffirm our commitment to create intellectual linkages and feature current critical views.

Political Parties and Women's Political Leadership in
Nigeria: The Cases of the PDP, the ANPP, and the AD
Isiaka Alani Eshoan 31

Post-Colonial African Literature as Counter-Discourse:
J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* and the Reworking of the Canon
Ayubami Fekede 92

Winning Back Our Good Luck: Bridewealth in Nowadays
Mogale
Paulo Granjo 123

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Contributors 6

Editors' Introduction
Kim Yi Dionne and
Zachariah Mampilly 8

INTERVIEW

Interview with Abdulrazak Gurnah Conducted at the
University of Kent, Canterbury, 15 July 2005
Emad Mirmotahari 11

ESSAYS

Black Africans in Barcelona, Spain: An Exploration
of Integration into Catalan Society
Chinyere Osuji 31

Political Parties and Women's Political Leadership in
Nigeria: The Case of the PDP, the ANPP, and the AD
Isiaka Alani Badmus 55

Post-Colonial African Literature as Counter-Discourse:
J.M Coetzee's *Foe* and the Reworking of the Canon
Ayobami Kehinde 92

Winning Back Our Good Luck: Bridewealth in Nowadays
Maputo
Paulo Granjo 123

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Emad Mirmotahari is completing a dissertation at UCLA on the contemporary eastern African novel. Specifically, he is interested in the impact of Islam on identity formation on the eastern African coast. His interests also include the literatures of the African diaspora.

Ayo Kehinde has taught at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria; presently, he is at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, where he teaches courses in African Literature (oral and written), New Literatures in English, Modern Authors and Literary Theories. He has published or has forthcoming articles in *Revista De Filologia Ingles*, *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses*, *African Literature Today*, *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, *African Studies Monograph*, *Ufahamu*, *Proverbium*, and *Studies in the Humanities*.

Paulo Granjo is a PhD in anthropology, research fellow at the Social Sciences Institute of Lisbon University, and visiting professor at the Eduardo Mondlane University (Maputo, Mozambique) since 1999. His recent research focuses on how uncertainty and danger are conceived and managed in different social contexts, and how different practices and conceptions combine along the processes of cultural and social change. He previously published, in Portuguese, the books *Bridewealth in Maputo - an old idiom to new conjugalities* (Campo das Letras, 2005), "*We work over a gunpowder barrel*" - men and danger in Sines oil refinery (Imprensa de Ciencias Sociais, 2004) and *Visions on Trade Unions - workers and leaders* (Cosmos, 1994). He is also the author of several articles on industrial relationships, divination and healing practices,

domestication of aleatoriness, dynamics of cultural change, "informal" learning, and family strategies and conscription.

Isiaka Alani Badmus is currently an independent researcher based in Lagos, Nigeria. Formerly of the Centre for Social Science Research and Development, his research concerns democratization, peace and conflict, international law of war and peace, humanitarian affairs/emergencies, arms control, and security sector reform. He has been a Swedish Government funded scholar-in-residence at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Sweden; Fellow of the Transregional Center for Democratic Studies at New School University; and Uppsala University/Swedish Government Scholar to the United Nations Office. He is published in: *Africa Insight*; *Contexto Internacional*; *Afrique et Developpement*; *Peace Research: The Canadian Journal of Peace Studies*; *Journal of Social Sciences*; *The Anthropologist: International Journal of Contemporary and Applied Studies of Man*; *Development and Socio-Economic Progress*; *Law and Politics in Africa, Asia, and Latin America*.

Chinyere Osuji is a Sociology PhD student at UCLA. Her research focuses on racial stratification in the African Diaspora and the assimilation of immigrants in Western societies. For her masters thesis, she examined the size and racial diversity of Puerto Rican and Dominican social networks. Currently, she is examining racial inequality in Latin America with a special focus on Brazil.

Editors' Introduction

An Open Letter to All *Ufahamu* Subscribers and Supporters;

It has been 35 years since *Ufahamu* began publishing at UCLA thanks to the aspirations of a small group of motivated UCLA graduate students. From those humble beginnings, the journal has touched the lives of thousands of scholars, activists, and artists. Throughout its existence, *Ufahamu* has faced countless challenges, many of them serious, to its ability to publish. But thanks to the impressive efforts of generations of graduate students at UCLA, we have persevered.

This past year, *Ufahamu* once again faced a mortal threat to its existence when the James S. Coleman African Studies Center—our longtime home—cut financial support for the journal from its annual budget. With the loss of the majority of our financial support, we were forced to make some very difficult choices, including whether we should close the doors on our beloved journal. Faced with such an overwhelming challenge, the *Ufahamu* community responded forcefully, and with the help of a small group of dedicated supporters, we have found a way to not only continue publishing, but also restructure the journal to make it more independent and better capable of dealing with such challenges in the future.

The result, as we hope you can see from our current issue, is a better *Ufahamu*. With more hands on deck due to the restructuring of the managerial positions, we are able to produce a superior journal that respects the legacy of *Ufahamu* while improving the overall quality of the journal. We are confident that the changes we have made will allow

us to maintain the highest standards while publishing *Ufahamu* in a timely manner. We thank you for all your support and patience throughout this difficult period.

In this issue, we present a selection of insightful pieces that maintain the quality that you have come to expect from *Ufahamu*. We kick things off with a special interview with noted Zanzibari author Abdulrazak Gurnah conducted by UCLA's own Emad Mirmatohori. Continuing *Ufahamu*'s tradition of examining Africa as well as the Diaspora, Chinyere Osuji presents the results of her study of the lives of African immigrants in present-day Spain. We follow this with a discussion by Isiaka Badmus on the impact of women on political parties in Nigeria. Ayobami Kehinde discusses the work of Daniel Defoe as reimagined by J. M. Coetzee, arguing that Coetzee poses a fundamental post-colonial challenge to the Western literary canon. And finally, Paulo Granjo explores the role of "bridewealth" in contemporary Mozambican society.

Sincerely,

Kim Yi Dionne

Zachariah Mampilly

Co-Editors-in-Chief

