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**THE NEW AFRICAN DIASPORA: KNOWLEDGE  
CIRCULATION AND DIASPORIC INTERFACING**

by

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## Introduction

A distinctive category of Africans has emerged in the United States, Europe and elsewhere, labeled as the “new African diaspora”<sup>1</sup> in terms of the time and era of migrations (postcolonial in Africa), instigating factors for migration (voluntary but in the context of constrained or straightened circumstances in Africa), new forms of politics (post-Civil Rights era in the United States), new identities (transnationalists, dual/multiple citizenship), and issues around the role and relevance of migrants in Africa and the African diaspora (brain drain/gain/circulation). The label, “new African diaspora,” can also be considered synonymous, as I do, with “transnationalists” and “immigrants.” Some even refer to them as “continental Africans” to mark them apart from African-Americans. Among Africans in the United States, there are also emerging various identities, such as Nigerian-Americans, Senegalese-Americans, and many more. Within each, there are also identities defined by religion, as with members of the broadly defined Islamic community or of the Nigeria-based Redeemed Christian Church of God.

The “new African diaspora” is transforming the American landscape. They are everywhere as migrant workers—nurses, doctors, and pharmacists in the hospitals and clinics; professors in universities; engineers and researchers, etc. They are everywhere as lowly paid labor—cab drivers, janitors, cleaners, maids. They are part of the commercial landscape—store owners, hairdressers, barbers. They are part of the physical landscape, present in all the major cities and can be found in airports, hotels, and other service industries. They are visible part of the cultural landscape: the majority among them speak English with an accent and use multiple languages that connect them to their African ethnicities and identities while their occupations, locations and interactions are all in the context of a globalized world.

The two interrelated themes of migration and transnationalism are defining elements in the understanding of this “new African diaspora.” The homeland and host societies are connected by constant movements of people, goods, ideas, services, and money. The migrants live in a way that disregards the fixed categories of maps—nationalities and citizenship can be dual and multiple, social relations can be conducted across borders, one can live in one country and consume the culture and products of another. Africa and the United States, to use the examples that shape this keynote, are united by transnationalists as a single space of action, conducting economic, political, cultural, and familial transactions across their borders. A husband may be living in Chicago and his wife in Accra, Ghana. The product of this marriage can be in school in London. The savings accumulated by the man in Chicago can be used to build a house in Accra, defined as the “home.” This example can be multiplied into millions of practices in transnational networks. When it is realized that thousands of migrants live in “clusters” in specific cities—Gambians in Providence, Rhode Island; Senegalese in New York; Sudanese in Columbus; and Nigerians in Chicago, Baltimore, Houston, Dallas, and Atlanta—one notes the emergence of communities of the “new African diaspora,” creating transnationalist villages. These villages are even now governed by rules, with some having their titled chiefs who exercise a great deal of moral authority over their members. The state has its own laws, and transnationalist villages can also have theirs enforceable in the context of powerful codes of informal authority. These transnationalist

villages are connected back to Africa in several ways: exchanges of ideas, remittances of money to Africa, the circulation of cultures (as in the case of Nollywood films), projects aimed at changing politics in Africa, including participation by some in the government and administration of their countries.

Members of the “new African Diaspora” manifest some habits that may mark them apart from the far more established African-American communities. They tend to pursue two strategies simultaneously: a set of African-oriented and -driven practices; and that of integration into the host societies. In other words, as they develop new ties in new lands, they do not sever the ties with their former lands. Reference to “home” is ambiguous, as it may mean where they originated from, rather than where they now live. Many citizens in host societies, looking at Africa as underdeveloped and insecure, are always wondering why immigrants are not contented, grateful to God, and thanking them for the new opportunities. This is a misreading of a rather complex reality: immigrants use languages of contradictions and comparisons, depending on the topics and themes. They may praise American technology and praise African culture, both within the same hour. They may criticize African underdevelopment and American individualism in a string of related sentences.

The answers to the apparent contradictions in the conversations are rooted in the ideologies of individual-society relations. Americans are acculturated to an individualist ethos, while Africans are socialized into a kinship ethos. What Americans call philanthropy will translate into elaborate kinship projects for Africans—while the Americans are looking for the Red Cross, the Africans are looking for members related to them by blood in the “Kinship Salvation Army.” Kinship ideology ultimately imposes not only a notion of “dual citizenship,” with one belonging to separate and multiple concentric rings of actual and imagined communities, old, new and emerging, but also to leading dual or multiple lives. Leaving Senegal for New York means leaving behind parents, siblings, and friends—taking one’s entire kinship group is simply not feasible. Yet communication is never suspended, and the greater the immigrant’s success, the greater the intensity of communication with those left behind. Ties of kinship and ties of affection are powerful glue that ensure that transnationalists continue to see Africa as “home.” Thus, it is not unusual for people to speak of returning to their homeland.

The politics of incorporation into host societies are complex, unpredictable, and time consuming. The politics is even preceded by the stressful process of leaving a country behind and entering another one.<sup>2</sup> Seeking full acceptance in any society is always a hard task, and one cannot but note the resilience among immigrants. Competing for well paying jobs and obtaining economic security is much harder still. Attaining political power is even an impossibility for the larger majority. It is not uncommon to have extensive dialogue on difficulties. It is also not unusual for some to see themselves as victims of race, sometimes regarding themselves as in far worse situations than the African-American minorities. To be sure, we are still not in the post-racial society that Obama’s victory signaled. Discrimination will take a long time to be completely eradicated in any society. In Africa itself, there is discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, and gender. It is also difficult to fully understand the lingering impact of racism in the United States, but there is no doubt that people can still be discriminated against on

the basis of “lookism,” accent, gender, color, age, religion, and sexual orientation. Even in a country such as Brazil where race mixture is more widespread, the fair-skinned have more privileges.<sup>3</sup> Images are equally powerful, as films and media downgrade immigrants and upgrade the others.<sup>4</sup> Race is about exclusion, and it is misguided thinking for someone from Kenya to land in Washington, D.C. with the hope of an immediate inclusion in politics and the economy. Those who fail may present a falsified image and vision of their host societies to their friends and family back in Africa.

Migrants have to pursue strategies of incorporation that require an intellectual understanding of host societies, an enormous amount of networking among fellow migrants, and an awareness of practical measures, including legal means, of gaining permanent residency and citizenship.

The strategies may point to contradictions and confusion, ambiguity, and the difficulty of defining morality with precision. I think that in dealing with the complications of adjusting to a new country, certainty, truth, and reality are not always easy to define and defend. Individuals deal with experiences that lead them towards what I see as ambiguity and confusion in relation to understanding themselves and the fast-changing historical events of Africa and their host societies. The problem is that individuals prefer clarity and certainty, and when both are not attainable, they see confusion. However, the very process of leaving Africa means that ambiguity is also the driving force of life itself. The individual migrants, as they ultimately find out, succeed because they fall on their protean self, imitating the Greek sea god who can acquire different shapes: they are adaptable, flexible, and mobile. In other words, the “new African diaspora” has exhibited enormous capacity for change and transformation. They lack the impulses of fundamentalism and totalism that process reality in just one way and pursue it with all necessary means; rather, they fall instead to protean impulses that accept multiple truths, multiple pathways, the ambiguity of life, the ambiguity of culture. To be sure, to live with ambiguity is also to live with vulnerability.

In merging the politics of maintaining ties with the homeland with that of incorporation, the “new African Diaspora” demonstrates the capacity to seek and use knowledge, expand the frontiers of knowledge, transfer cultural practices from Africa to the West and vice versa, and create new networks, even on the Internet. Time will not permit an elaboration of all these items, but I will highlight a few. Associations are now so many—religious, cultural, home town, ethnic, political, and academic. These associations enable ideas to circulate, and for members to connect within host countries and between host countries and Africa. The collection and distribution of large amounts of money have been made possible by these associations in support of many causes—funeral ceremonies and sending corpses back to Africa, scholarships, emergency support to those in need, and support for those marking social events.

Many are creating businesses, mainly small, but well targeted to specific audiences that consume African products or demand African-oriented services. Entrepreneurship, in spirit and practice, is well entrenched among Blacks, as Professor Juliet Walker has pointed out in several studies.<sup>5</sup> African-based grocery stores, hair salons, restaurants, and many more are becoming part of the urban landscape in cities. Medium-sized stores are emerging, most notably in health-related services, real estate,

clearing and forwarding, and many more. Occupational diplomas are getting better integrated with the market as immigrants establish profession-based businesses.

The majority of African business owners fall into what Karl Marx once called the *petty bourgeoisie*, that is, those who operate their own businesses with their own labor and without the resources (or need) to hire additional labor, and when they do, they hire very few (usually one or two), who may even be their relatives, children, or the people they know. The petty bourgeoisie enjoy the advantage of not working for others, but the inability to hire the labor of others and to control them may serve as an obstacle to business expansion, while they are also vulnerable to a wide range of misfortunes such as illness, loss of income, and inadequate time to devote to both business and family matters. The constraints to expansion remain low startup capital, and the small size of the consumer base.<sup>6</sup> Minority-owned businesses are also undercut by national chains and their capacity to sell cheaper.

African businesses rely on networking to survive and succeed: initial capital can be raised through friends and families. Savings are accumulated, not always through the formal banking systems but through age-old African institutions of cooperative networking in which individuals collect and repay credit among one another on the basis of trust. In conversations with these entrepreneurs, their motivations are clear—they seek independence, self-reliance, and the money to create lasting assets in Africa so that they can retire with comfort. Lacking connections with reliable retirement plans and federal Social Security, many among them, notably traders, remit money to Africa to build houses and create business that they can fall upon either in old age or when they relocate back to Africa. A significant book, *Money Has No Smell*, has provided us with the data on African entrepreneurs based in New York, revealing their business practices, their struggles to make ends meet, and their connections with Africa.<sup>7</sup>

Many transnationalist migrants understand that society has cleavages which promote competition and rivalries. They know the advantages and problems of ethnicity. Those who were driven to leave Africa by circumstances associated with warfare and political instability fully understand the forces of ethnic nationalism. To understand ethnicities is also to understand how identities work. Ethnicities and identities need mythologies to sustain them. The advantage of this ability to know how system works and how cleavages set the limits to what individuals can accomplish contribute in part to the success in negotiating encounters in Western societies. To those who fail, not only do they emphasize the crippling power of racism, they over-emphasize the power of parents to prevent the failures of children. A number of parents are so obsessed with success—defined in the exaggerated terms of wealth and power—that they use extraordinary means, including violence, to instill a notion of discipline in their children so that they will acquire educational capital.

Capitalism has successfully created a powerful mythology: the playing field is even and there is meritocracy. In the United States, meritocracy has a bumper sticker name: the American Dream. A successful mythology, it is very much grounded in the belief of individualism: one succeeds or fails in relation to one's ability and talents. The sky becomes the limit, irrespective of the starting point, as long as one works hard. America, as the land of limitless opportunity, is a mythology. Africans who come from

kinship societies relocate from one mythology to another, and quickly discover that the lessons in kinship may not apply to the lessons in individualism. Like all mythologies, some believe it and others do not. Mythologies, like faiths, have their followers who fully endorse them. To believers, their personal experiences support the mythology of the American Dream.

Members of the new African diaspora are equally divided between those who subscribe to this mythology and those who do not. Personal narratives are yet to move beyond private testimonies and into the public space, thus limiting the ability to construct theories derived from many experiences. Nevertheless, evidence from a much larger pool indicates that meritocracy may be a myth: “it takes money to make money (inheritance); it’s not what you know but whom you know (connections); what matters is being in the right place at the right time (luck); the playing field isn’t level (discrimination), and he or she married into money (marriage).”<sup>8</sup> Irrespective of the position of each individual, it should be fully understood that all societies operate on the basis of merit and non-merit factors. It is important not only to understand both but to also seek the means to overcome possible impediments.

African immigrants clearly understand the concept of cultural capital (the acquisition of knowledge and skills to fit into a society). Indeed, they are very successful (e.g., financially, developing networks, achieving posts in universities and government, etc.) because of their ability to combine Western education with cultural capital. If there is tension between the established African-American communities and the newer African immigrants, it is in part based on the understanding and use of educational and cultural capital. New immigrants, disconnected from the history of slavery and the Civil Rights movement, tend to see as their sole strategy and politics, the maximization of opportunities to acquire and expand their educational and cultural capital to acquire mobility. The immigrants seek mobility in the context of the American middle class, seeking occupations and jobs that will provide mortgages, cars, and savings to draw from to remit money to Africa. In trying to balance financial demands in the United States and Africa, they have to distribute their incomes in creative manners that may prohibit spending on vacations and expensive restaurants.

Thus far, I have been homogenizing the experiences of millions of people that are divided by nationality, ethnicity, religion, age, and gender. Now I want to be more specific, limiting myself to the academic members. In thus doing, I want to chose two case studies, representatives of intellectual production by the members of the “new African diaspora,” to reflect on their contributions, the impact they are making, their voices and agencies. Case studies, like all biographical works, operate within boundaries, some imposed by the limitations of accessible data and also by the inadequacies of our own making. The scholarship provided here may provide connecting threads, and overcome the spatial, cultural, and racial chasm being imposed by the locations of Africans in different parts of the world. The case studies represent scholars who are not only committed to their disciplines but to Black folks, speaking and writing from an Africa-centered platform. Development and progress are issues that cannot be divorced from the narratives and analysis of our two case studies. The two scholars conceive of scholarship in terms of interdisciplinarity of subjects and approaches, the diversity of

peoples and cultures and the theories to study them, and the challenges faced by peoples of Africa and the African diaspora. Incidentally, both of them work at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

### **The New African Diaspora and Knowledge Production: Tanure Ojaide, Poet and Literary Critic**

Professor Tanure Ojaide is one of the few and most distinguished African poets living in the African diaspora. His contributions can be categorized as African and African diasporic. He is part of the “new African diaspora” who lives in the United States, but returns to Africa all the time—a constantly recurring trip to the source of his knowledge. His “home” is neither Africa nor the United States. He lives in both, he contributes to both, he explains each, each one to itself, each to both selves, both to each. Perhaps his background had prepared him for his later eclectic and dynamic contributions. Born in colonial Nigeria, he became a teenager soon after the country attained independence, listening to different stories of how the British governed his country on the one hand, and the stories of the first set of Nigerians in power preparing to lead their country to a civil war (1967-70). He survived it all, later migrating to Syracuse in New York where he obtained his Ph.D. in English. The search for education has provided him with a transatlantic biography, one that is voluntary, but not without the knowledge of the preceding, involuntary transatlantic biographies. Indeed, irrespective of when African scholars relocate to the United States, they all tend to be familiar with the rudimentaries of race relations. At the minimum they are familiar with the transatlantic slave trade, Pan-Africanism, the biographies of Marcus Garvey and W. E. B. Dubois, the Cold War and African American contributions to decolonization and apartheid in South Africa.<sup>9</sup> And like Ojaide, these scholars admire the profound philosophical traditions associated with C. L. R. James, Frantz Fanon, Edward Blyden, and other notable scholars of the Pan-Africanist tradition.<sup>10</sup>

On returning to Nigeria, he moved to the northeast to teach at the University of Maiduguri, observing Nigerian politics on the one hand and probably not immune to the politics of the two neighboring countries of Chad and Niger. In this part of the world, it is not possible to escape the power of Islam. Thereafter, he moved to the United States and he has been teaching at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte since 1993. In a prodigious career, he has published many books, and hundreds of poems and essays. His works have also been recognized in competitions: he was the 1987 recipient of the African Regional Winner of the Commonwealth Poetry Prize, and in 1988 he won the BBS Arts and Africa Poetry Award.

Living in the United States has had a transformative impact on Ojaide not only in terms of his prolific output, but the quality and content of his work. He looks at the world with more than two eyes: multiple gazes, and countless insights. He understands Africa from his diaspora location, he understands the diaspora from his African background, and he fuses the knowledge of both to insert them into a universal language and grammar. Ojaide has refused to surrender his intellectual commitment to the uplifting of Africa and people of African descent, setting his ideas in the paradigm of liberation pedagogy and

emancipatory humanism. His poems reveal multiple journeys—away from home and back to home; the fusion of near and far places; the blending of families with communities, communities with nations, and nations with the world. Journeys are full of surprises, the chemistry of joy and pain, energy and fatigue. Confinement can occur even in free places, alienation can become the theme of self reflections, darkness can come even when there is light, and separation from something, whatever that is, cannot be avoided.

His poems are full of images of happy and troubled minds, the poor suffering in agonies, the dispossessed, the ruthlessness of power. I was reading one and I saw a humanlike apparition, appearing from a dark corner, staring at me in the eyes, and commanding me to do something positive. I am not superstitious, and I quickly interpreted what I saw as an emergency call to action, positive reflections about community engagement. This is the power of Ojaide's words, creating flashes of light and inspiration to instigate our liberation—racial liberation, ethnic liberation, universal liberation, humanitarian liberation.

Ojaide presents us not only with the challenges of modern Africa, but also the beauty of its peoples and places, the richness and depth of its history, the diversity and brilliance of its culture. An Urhobo man from the southwestern part of Nigeria, he has portrayed the art of his people as vibrant, linking art with society and communication—it is a “moral medium.”<sup>11</sup> Many African societies, as the Urhobo that he talks about, live in the world of the metaphysical and physical at the same time, balancing the requirements in both to live a peaceful life. If art imitates life, life, too, can imitate art—gods and humans can dress alike and eat the same food!

The theme of power—its abuses, uses, manifestations—shapes the contents of many of his poems. When African countries were under military regimes (from the 1960s to the 1990s), Ojaide wrote devastating poems on the deadly role of the soldiers, the police states that they established, and their thirst for blood. They killed without apology or remorse, he lamented. Blood and the smell of foul blood was everywhere—the more they killed, the more they wanted to kill, unbothered by the smell, the violence, the atrocities. In “When Soldiers Are Diplomats,”<sup>12</sup> he mocks the deception of giving authoritarian generals civilian jobs. The diplomat could dress well, smile broadly, even speak with finesse, but the “savage sophisticraft”<sup>13</sup> does not forget the gun in his pocket, and is eager to use it. In an anti-military poem, “State Executive,”<sup>14</sup> he chastises the generals in power for killing critics, devastating the opposition, and destroying scholars. In “From Liberation,” a poem written in 1997, Ojaide portrays Nigeria as a failed state. With a bleeding heart, he calls for an immediate change:

Let this season end, let the hope-bereft land revive  
after recovery all will be on guard against  
another infection of illiterate gunnery;  
let this season end, even if it has to be  
with the libation of the despoiled land

with the head vulture's own blood.<sup>15</sup>

In a poem dedicated to Jack Mapanje, the Malawian professor jailed for political reasons from 1987 to 1991, he sounds combative and aggressive, saying that no punishment, not even the accusation of treason, should stop one from seeking the means to overthrow an illegitimate government. He commends the efforts of Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948) of India who led the Indian struggles for independence against Britain. A nonviolent man, he was assassinated. So also were Murtala Mohammad of Nigeria and Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso, two promising African leaders, the former in 1976 and the latter in 1987. Emboldened by these assassinations, he overcomes fear, turning himself into a "human" in a fighting spirit to promote justice, unity and the recovery of his nation. In his struggles, he hopes to create new warriors who will recreate the land. Depressed and angry, he chooses to give up his own life, his own blood, to abandon talking, to become possessed by the "Daemons of resistance," and to keep fighting until there is change. "For how long," he poses a question in "My next step,"<sup>16</sup> "will eyes stand bullshit?" and "watch rather than break up the offensive dance of those sworn to break rules?" Here is a revolutionary call to action, warning us all of the danger of tolerating dictatorship, saying that if we do not rise up, we will lose everything. His poem speaks to the events in the Middle East in 2010, and when Africa follows, it will become the war anthem.

In spite of all the agonies, he enjoins us to seek peace in nature, celebrate the wonders of land and hills, the greens, the plateau. In "City in My Heart," written in Jos in 1993, his sense of emotional balance reaches a peak, elevated by the land's beauty, the nature that gives peace, contentment and warmth. In this poem, one can actually feel the hills! Earlier in 1990, he had celebrated the joy of nature:

What will we look up to without birds  
beating their wings above our heads,  
what will we look up to without trees  
thrusting their arms into the sky,  
what will we look up to without the crest of hills?  
Our roots drive deep into the soil;  
they sustain us in our search for fortune.<sup>17</sup>

The poet-preacher can also become a praise singer, eulogizing the good person and good deeds. He may also choose to become motivational, even if in a pessimistic mood. In a poem titled "No,"<sup>18</sup> Ojaide warns against the excessive urge and need to please everyone at all times, thus destroying oneself in the inability to decline proposals, or to show, as did Okonkwo's in *Things Fall Apart*, an excessive display of strength to one's enemies, or excessive generosity to one's friends to show empathy, to see unnecessary praises from friends who can later turn foes. A poet has become a preacher,

warning individuals to check their own feelings and emotions, not to respond to the reckless demands of others.

In understanding the diaspora, Ojaide uses a powerful phrase, “Branches of the same tree” to connect Africans with African-Americans. From the Harlem Renaissance to recent writings, a number of African-American literary writings have tapped into African ideas, stories, and other aspects of culture and folklore to produce an African-American literary tradition. Ojaide moves beyond the ideas of cultural affinities, which he acknowledges to be important, to show how African-American literary traditions avoid being absorbed into European cultures by adopting a host of strategies. Using the themes of identity, poverty and self-assertion, he has analyzed the poems that engage these three themes to compare works generated by Africans and those by African-Americans. He regards the post-emancipation experience of African-Americans as the equivalent of the post-independence experience of Africans, creating “situational similarity” that leads to creative works that do resemble one another in content and form. Drawing from the works of African poets, notably Arna Bontemps, Sonia Sanchez, Carolyn Rodgers, and Audre Lorde, he shows how their work exhibits the consciousness that is also found in the works of African poets.

In the manifestation of this consciousness, “blackness” becomes a tool to promote emancipation, to create a difference with others, to create the contents to teach in schools, to decolonize minds. Ojaide tracks the history of cultural assertiveness since the Harlem Renaissance through the Civil Rights era in the 1960s and 1970s, plugging the contributions of the poets he chooses into the different historical phases, and showing their militancy as they oppose slavery and manifest their Africanity. As he does so, Arna Bontemps’ works such as “God Give to Men” are seen as part of the Negritude tradition, with the poet calling for a unique Black identity, and praising African cultural tradition as in his poem, “The Return.” Like Senghor’s work, Bontemps praises African heritage and calls on African-Americans to return to their African roots. Ojaide uses the poems of Carolyn Rodgers from the 1970s, most especially her collection *How I Got Ovah*, to show how she advocates the support for Black institutions. All the poets speak to harsh conditions, make political statements, seek an end to poverty and powerlessness “The history of African Americans,” Ojaide concludes, “is inextricably linked to that of Africans. As African literature, for instance, reflects African history, so does African-American literature reflect Black history.”<sup>19</sup>

Africa and the African diaspora are fused in his work in terms of his cosmopolitanism, rhetorical style, and the agony of realities fixed in poverty. The vision and spirit of the African to analyze Africa can become converted to surrealism to explain the African diaspora. There is often so much pain in his voice, but the pain reflects sensitivity and passion about individuals. When he writes about Africa, he often uses a disguise, as if of one whose face is covered by a mask but whose body is located in the distant land of the developed country. He will then engage in rage, defending the dispossessed, the weak, the suffering. The people have been betrayed, and Ojaide condemns those who have done so, pointing to their injustice. Ojaide is in search of a humane society in Africa and the African diaspora.

Ojaide is also a literary critic. He has written on other poets, as in his analysis of the work of Syl Cheney-Coker of Sierra Leone who wears the mask of a crucified Christ to criticize his country.<sup>20</sup> In an essay on Wole Soyinka, he shows how his poetry is shaped by two forces: first, Yoruba myths, superstitions and beliefs, love of ceremonies, and worldview; and second by Western literary traditions and Christianity.<sup>21</sup> Ojaide does not see any conflict in the use of foreign and indigenous materials; rather it gives “variety and vitality to the poetry.”<sup>22</sup>

### **The New African Diaspora and Knowledge Production: Akin Ogundiran, Archaeologist and Historian**

Akin Ogundiran has shown how the histories of Africa and the Americas are connected and embedded in one another. His complicated archaeological field research has supplied evidence to show how societies in West Africa were transformed by the Atlantic economy in ways that reveal that what we previously presented as “local histories” are actually integral to global economic and political forces. In an essay on the Yoruba-Edo hinterland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he supplies data and analysis on the Ilare people in central Yorubaland, showing how their state formation and transformation did connect with the “expanding commercial relations on the coast, the networks of trading contacts between the coast and the hinterland, and the dynamics of political transformations of the period.”<sup>23</sup>

As this statement becomes validated by the original products of his excavations and solid ethnography, we begin to note that Ilare, and even hundreds of other villages and towns in West Africa, were living in the “shadow of the Atlantic economic system.”<sup>24</sup> The degree to which these places were affected varied, reflecting the extent to which their production and consumption were integrated with the Atlantic economy. The impact on their material cultures was evident in the spread of such items as cowries, tobacco, corn, beads, textiles, and metals, all of which became key products in daily use and consumption patterns.<sup>25</sup> These new products, coming from abroad and traded regionally and locally, show the formation of new tastes and habits.

New tastes and habits, I would like to argue, are also about new and expanding institutions of production and distribution. The products would not just have to be bought within a regional network of trade, but also circulated to generate capital which was then invested into power. The commodities had to be processed and connected with other ones to generate newer products, as in turning cotton into cloth, mixing alcohol with plants to produce herbal medicines, etc. In the process, production created new forms of social capital with consequences on how communities were organized and how institutions reproduced themselves. For one thing, differential access to the goods would suggest the nature of stratification and power, but could also have triggered competition for the control of markets, resources and power. As evidence elsewhere has shown, as in the case of the Old Oyo Empire, kingship could have consolidated its hold on power, and centralized the access to guns and gunpowder, both needed for state expansion and consolidation. The poor would be defined not necessarily as those without access to locally grown food, but to imported objects.

From his evidence, Ogundiran surmises that Ilare, and other West African peoples, altered the technologies of producing iron, made possible by imitating imported iron objects. Tobacco pipes were made, as the habit of smoking spread from the late sixteenth century onward.<sup>26</sup> This and other examples show how West Africa was not just being drawn into early capitalism, but becoming an economic frontier connected with the American plantations and European manufacturing businesses. As those in Europe and Americas sought profits, commercial connections were made with Africa, thus pressuring Africans to respond to them, fulfilling the task allocated to them in a global division of labor. Ogundiran's study ultimately forced me to reread Immanuel Wallerstein's *The Modern World-System*<sup>27</sup> where the combination of class, capital and nature reveal the working of a global expansive capitalist network. Wallerstein had linked agro-ecological transformation to the transition from feudalism to capitalism, pointing to serious contradictions in feudalism. Ogundiran sees some ruptures as well in the case of West Africa, in the extent to which their connections to the Atlantic trade began to transform their societies. He is right to point to the technological changes, not just as new products, but as reconfigured objects as well. One of the main processes in world history after the nineteenth century, noticed in Ogundiran's excavation works, was the spread of various new technologies in connections with crops, guns, and gunpowder. As he also noticed in his fieldwork, the products also triggered production and organizational changes. His observation about tobacco growing and tobacco use was actually far widespread in different parts of Africa. He noticed how the trade in tobacco, a powerful stimulant, grew along with the consumption of tea, coffee, and chocolate, which were sweetened by the increasingly available sugar. Maize spread as well, putting more land under cultivation, and leading to new maize-derived foods such as porridge and flour. African productive capacity probably increased with devoting more land and labor to the cultivation of maize, and also of cassava.<sup>28</sup>

The most decisive impact might have been the introduction of guns and gunpowder which in turn led to the proliferation of gun-related technologies and products. No doubt, the nature of warfare was transformed—we saw the intensity of this among the Yoruba during the nineteenth century in the dramatic raising of the maximum capacity to destroy. Samuel Johnson captured the wars so brilliantly and engagingly in his contemporary accounts of the era.<sup>29</sup> Johnson noticed the trends in the use of gunpowder and guns, and how access to them induced inter-group conflicts. To pay for guns and gunpowder, kings and chiefs had to tighten their control of the markets and trade routes. As we saw in the nineteenth century, they diverted a large number of war captives to domestic production so as to integrate themselves more fully with the market to make money to buy imported items and gunpowder. The chiefs and kings took more active role in commerce. As for the war captives, the chiefs and kings put them to work as slave labor force.

In the cumulative body of his work, Ogundiran has focused on under-investigated aspects of West African history, as well as under-theorized topics and fields. In doing both, he transcends the training and orientation offered to historical archaeologists in West Africa, and he also transcends the conceptually based but empirically deficient studies in the United States. He fills the gap and marries two orientations: empirically rich studies and fertile theorization. Using the Yoruba data, he has successfully

synthesized the history of the long precolonial period with theories drawn from studies on Atlantic history and the African diaspora.<sup>30</sup> The transitional phases in the precolonial era that he notes, as in his example of the Oyo in *Sources of African History*,<sup>31</sup> are innovative, urging us to rethink our parameters on the conceptualization of timeline.

He may disagree with me, but I observe new elements suggested by his data. I see very strongly the ideas around “value,” drawn from the works of Karl Marx, in which the value of labor becomes connected with the imperatives of capitalism to shape the nature of change. In connecting West Africa to the Atlantic economy, Ogundiran is pointing to what can be characterized as the “metabolic rift”<sup>32</sup> between supply and demand, with African economies on the supply side in terms of global division of labor that compelled them to produce for the Atlantic economy and, at the same time, to consume the products from external sources. This division of labor, and the productive mechanism unleashed by the demand side, ultimately had implications for all aspects of institutions. Not only does Ogundiran have to grapple with the meanings of “local history,” but also the definition of the “world” in which the local is situated against the background of rapidly changing events. And if, as he treats the local, he engages in issues around production and trade—as all his objects indicate—he is forced to engage in the understanding of how society relates to nature, that is, how humans ultimately relate to their environments, using and destroying them at the same time, and sometimes renewing them as well.

His data actually suggest to me that he can also do a set of fine essays on “political ecology,” using the products of his excavations to tell us more about socio-ecological changes in West Africa since the fifteenth century. Let me draw from his recent essay on Oyo to explain my idea and argument. As Robin Law noted, the foundations of Oyo as an imperial power were laid during the sixteenth century. It became and remained a strong empire until its fall in the early nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Its expansion manifested not just the traits of what an empire was, but the way many states behaved in the context of emerging capitalism of the “early modern” and encounters with capitalism in the context of the Atlantic world after the fifteenth century. The nucleus of Oyo was in the northwest of Yorubaland, but it subsequently incorporated other groups and exercised power over a large area, becoming, by the end of the sixteenth century, the “largest political unit in West Africa south of River Niger.”<sup>34</sup> The strategies of this expansion were multiple, and Ogundiran has isolated one element of it, “colonization,” which he defines as shifting population from the core to the frontiers and then extracting resources from them in form of market dues and tolls. He excavated at Ede-Ile (part of Upper Osun), which he regards as the first site to be colonized during the sixteenth century. The basis of Ogundiran’s argument rests on drawing from “the perspective of the landscape as a socially constructed space in the negotiation of political and economic relations, usually between unequal powers.”<sup>35</sup> As his data unfold, the details emerge on how Oyo was able to manipulate Ede-Ile’s landscape and its resources for imperial aggrandizement. The evidence of his excavations are dominated by ceramics, horse remains, and landscape—what I will call the cluster of “political ecology.” Ceramics indicate an extensive industry connected to available clay resources, but also to trade in a “ceramic sphere” where the objects had to be exchanged.<sup>36</sup> Used every day for a variety of purposes—cooking, decoration, containers, lamps, etc.—they reveal the stories of everyday and the culture of connections between the center and its colony. Noting the

widespread planting of baobab trees, he interprets it as an attempt by Oyo to change the landscape of its colony, taking the product of the savanna to the rainforest landscape. With regard to horse remains, he sees this as evidence of the need to secure Ede-Ile, building a cavalry both to strike fear in people's minds and to use against them if necessary.

He definitely speaks to the concept of "early modern," the period between the late fifteenth century and the early nineteenth, to which Fernand Braudel has devoted three massive volumes.<sup>37</sup> Rather than see the period as essentially driven by the Europeans, Ogundiran gives an agency to Africa. They received products and ideas, but they transformed both. And in return, essentially, they gave labor and the ideas that we now label as "Africanisms" in the New World. This connection means that we have to rethink the entire idea of "traditional Africa" if it has been integrated with the Atlantic world for so long. Framing West Africa as disconnected from the global impulses and as "exotic" becomes grossly misleading. The changes that others witnessed elsewhere also impacted on West Africa, some negatively, such as population loss. Ogundiran has shown many of these changes, and some were actually rapid and intense.

The conditions that triggered the capitalist expansion drew Africa into the European world and Atlantic economy. Global sea passages linked the world together, providing an enormous advantage to Europe, which invested in maritime activities. "A reliable ship," writes J. H. Parry, "competently manned, adequately stored, and equipped with means of finding the way, can in time reach any country in the world which has a sea coast, and can return whence it came."<sup>38</sup> Europeans reached the West African coastline, and the region became connected with the Atlantic world. Ogundiran shows how the hinterland was not disconnected from the coast.<sup>39</sup> The extensive global interactions created a world economy by connecting many economies in different parts of the world through long-distance trade. Overland routes were limited compared to global maritime trade. Rare commodities, bulky items, and human products could be traded over long distances, from deep inside the West African hinterland to faraway Brazil. Land use was remarkably transformed, especially in the Americas where settlers on the frontier expanded production, which required more labor and the markets to dispose of their products. The Dutch moved to South Africa, and internal colonization took place in various parts of the world as market forces and powerful states pressured people to move or to produce. Tendencies that later led to the Yoruba wars of the nineteenth century or the outbreak of the Islamic jihad in the savanna were being laid by the processes of changing land use. Monetary systems emerged and became global, with West Africa relying on the cowries imported from outside of the region. Bigger and more stable states emerged as part of the process of this "early modern" history, benefitting from the increasing economic activities. Empires like Oyo and Benin flourished, resembling others in Europe and elsewhere that showed large size and complex organization. The stronger ones tried to be stable, and were able to become more efficient in building military systems which also enhanced their capacity to control markets and trade routes. If Africa lost population, other parts of the world gained, with some calculations putting the global increase to between 350 and 550 million over a three-hundred-year period.<sup>40</sup>

Ogundiran is not saying that the Yoruba-Edo region and others do not constitute social, cultural and political units—as nationalist historiographers, including myself, have presented them—but that they were not autonomous of larger forces that shaped the “early modern.” He himself has contributed to the location of some states in their regional context, as in his analysis of the imperialist expansion of the Old Oyo Empire into Upper Osun in Central Yorubaland.<sup>41</sup> However, when his fieldwork yielded such items as cowries, glass beads and tobacco pipes, patterns of integration within a regional market and between a regional market and Atlantic world were exposed. The objects reveal the emerging taste patterns that were beyond the ability of the local economy to produce. The cowry-currency network was certainly not local, as Ede-Ile could not have produced the cowries; it needed linkages with a bigger market to have access to those cowries.<sup>42</sup> The movement of population, even when it was part of an imperialist design of colonization, as in his example of Oyo, does show that a number of those who moved had economic interests to pursue, especially seeking the means to participate in economic activities that were integrated to the larger Atlantic commerce. Colonization enabled Oyo, as Ogundiran argues, to provide the security and space to control trade routes and markets that linked the hinterland, via the Ijebu, with the coast.

### **The Two Case Studies In Context**

It is clear that the “new African diaspora,” defined here to mean the diaspora of voluntary migrants not connected with the diaspora of the transatlantic slave trade, is comprised of different categories of people divided by ethnicity, nationality, gender, and class. The number runs into millions. There are transnational networks of migrants. Within these networks, knowledge circulates, as in the example of the USA-Africa Dialogue discussion list that I moderate.<sup>43</sup> The category that I have focused upon here is that of knowledge-cum-creative generator. There is an established “knowledge community” dealing with the knowledge of the self, knowledge about their new homes, knowledge about migrations, knowledge about the African diaspora, knowledge about change, new vision, and new pathways. This knowledge is enriched by larger currents in the disciplines (as in Ogundiran connecting ideas drawn from the literature on the Atlantic world to his studies of the Yoruba).

The knowledge generated by the new diaspora overlaps with the older knowledge in terms of themes—slavery, race relations, colonization—but moves us to newer ideas—globalization, new networks of local and regional engagements, re-Africanizing Black American intellectual traditions, engagement with new technologies to deliver development-based ideas. The transnationalists want to tap into the knowledge of the past to revise the knowledge of the present. Their own memory, shaped by the experience of voluntary migration, is connected with that of forced migration of the Atlantic slave trade and colonization by the European empires. Perhaps as members of a post-Civil Rights era, they hold no complexes about their color and race, thus departing from some elements of the Black American experience characteristic of the highly racialized eras. The new African diaspora’s scholars manifest the ideology of development and power to Black people, but not necessarily seeking psychological needs to overcome the trauma of enslavement and colonization. The voices of diaspora scholars are very much shaped by the environments in which they grew. The conditions of their people and the

underdeveloped states in Africa affect their creative imaginations and scholarly production. Whether as poets or historians, they seem united by the need to speak out in exposing mismanagement, corruption, injustice. They use the language of “brotherly love,” hoping for change in the poor areas of the African diaspora and Africa.

It is important to underscore the fact that this knowledge is often different from many others, marked mainly by moving away from what may be characterized as “Black orientalism” that frames the knowledge of Africa in relation to preconceived notions of Africa and the received knowledge of the Africa invented by the Europeans in the context of slavery, racism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Knowledge circulated on Africa in the United States can sometimes be preceded by stereotypes, the old wives’ tales, and the fables about Africans in private homes, barber shops, and street corners. This cumulative body of circulated oral stories is powerful in terms of shaping images, expectations, even the valuation of Africa. Ojaide and Ogundiran’s foundational template is not based on stereotypical imaginings of Africa. In the stereotypical template, one seeks knowledge of Africa either to validate or invalidate the stories that have previously circulated, that is, to connect or disconnect a preexisting orality from an academic ontological engagement. Birth and firsthand experiences have shaped the ontological reality of Ojaide and Ogundiran; stories and stereotypes have shaped the ontological reality of many Black Americans, stories that are not always positive.

But there is also the more powerful influence of how others have shaped the image of Africa. The slave trade and its legacies have not only shaped the Black American self-image but the understanding of Africa itself. Here lies another critical difference in which Ojaide and Ogundiran’s experiences are disconnected from these overly racialized origins and ontologies. In a racialized image of Africa, Africans and Africa had been presented to Black Americans as inferior and bad. Ojaide and Ogundiran may be disappointed with the performance of leaders and the failure of institutions, but their comments and criticisms are not derisive of peoples and cultures and neither do they portray Africans in the negative image of the “dark continent.”

In talking about Africa and the Black experience, the writings of Ojaide and Ogundiran are influenced by humanitarian and universal concerns, the redemptive vision of power to bring about changes, the brotherhood of humankind to do away with evil and oppression. Their own individual experiences are important, but it is clear that their concerns are driven by the larger issues of nationalities, race, identities, and development. Whether as poetry or history, they offer guidelines to understand human continuity and change. Ogundiran tells us about communities and ideas before our time. The stress on continuity is in itself a theory of symbolic immortality, how we are being told that both our ancestors and ourselves are alive. As Ojaide tells us about ourselves here and now, our collective experiences and culture connect us with our history, symbolizing the very essence of our immortality that links us with the past. If others want to see themselves as strong nations in the image of gods with power, Ojaide and Ogundiran remind us that we are travellers with limitations in an ever-changing world.

We face the crossroads and new paths as transnationalists in a globalized world. The global economy is interlocked, and Africa and the diaspora are very much embedded in it. We want to be active within this global economy, not as suppliers of slaves and

labor, and producers of cash crops, domestic servants and other exploitable categories. but as creators, inventors, managers, leaders, and entrepreneurs in control of the economic forces that shape our lives. The integration of Africa with its diaspora—in knowledge production and policies—has to reinforce ideas of empowerment within the global economy. Powerful global forces may try to impose limits on us, just as they have done for centuries in the creation of Atlantic and colonial economies, but we have to fashion a new beginning in which we constitute the center and not the periphery.

There are several ways to strengthen the connections between Africa and its diaspora and vice versa, and then use these connections to generate relevance, progress, development, and peace.

First, we as scholars have to keep extending the frontier of knowledge, use our resources to transform scholarship in Africa, and ensure that our studies also inform mainstream scholarship. We must be fully inserted into all the mainstream knowledge systems and must struggle to be at the center. While we should continue to support area studies, we have to understand their limitations in academies that use the universalism of ideas as a key source of power. Africa is part of “universal knowledge,” and not so-called local knowledge with less value. This advancement of the “universality” of African/African diaspora knowledge (about them, and by them) must be presented in such a way that the academic world, irrespective of location, will see both value and need in the knowledge being generated.

To individuals, the acquisition of quality education remains the main source of mobility, especially to the segment of the population lacking access to inheritance and start-up capital to establish businesses on their own. This education has to be based on various components: the acquisition of knowledge in various disciplines; the acquisition of skill sets connected with occupations, the formal and informal sectors of the economy; and the cultivation of emotional intelligence to process data and information in a careful, objective, rational manner.

As scholars, our research and the way we teach must reflect not just the concerns of our specific disciplines but of the universities where we work, the locations where we live, our community and people that constitute our communities and colleagues. We have the special role to link the Americas with Africa, the academy with the public, knowledge with occupations. On our campuses, we have to represent the very best in the understanding of Africa and the people of African descent, the value of diversity and culture. Off campuses we need to let entrepreneurs, politicians, and policy makers benefit from our knowledge. As cultural brokers, we must bring the knowledge of Africa to the Americas, and that of the Americas to Africa. Insularity must give way to internationalization. As we promote study abroad programs for those in the United States to go to Africa, those from Africa must come to the United States as well. And there must be domestic “study abroad” programs as well in which students understand different and diverse communities within and beyond their regions.

The suggestions on education combine merit and non-merit factors of success. Quality education will ensure the understanding of the very process of development, even the ability to question the ideology of meritocracy and confront it with alternatives.

Abilities and talents have to be discovered, then cultivated, and then put to use. As all first-generation migrants do genuinely understand and practice, there is no shortcut to success, no substitute for hardwork. The large number of immigrants since the 1980s still belong to a first generation. As they succeed, many will leave inheritance to their children as a “non-merit” factor to not only consolidate but also expand the wealth and knowledge base of their successors. We are already noticing the trend in the placement of Africans in all the major colleges and institutions across the country. Focused and interested in degrees tied to occupations, the evidence is becoming clearer that the second generation may acquire greater influence than the first.

Second, the knowledge must be converted into value added for institutions and people to grow. The growth can be by way of humane values, the cultivation of cosmopolitan minds, the ability to understand the complexity of society, the management of resources and people, and the promotion of global peace. Sure, many will expect far more tangible things by way of technical advancement, poverty elimination, massive development. It is not selfish for some to demand that the knowledge we generate must transform Africa and Black people. If they are transformed, the entire world is transformed; also millions of people will be less poor, migrations will reduce, interstate relations will improve, and market and democratic spaces will expand.

Third, we have to theorize more on the nature and uses of power, with the main goal of seeking the means for more and more migrants to be part of the institutions and structures of governance. Without power, it is difficult to control resources and create appropriate mechanisms of allocation. Power is difficult to acquire without social capital. Immigrants find it very difficult to acquire social capital, that is, an extended network of highly connected people. Social capital is an integral part of how the institutions of society work in relation to the acquisition of power and wealth. Immigrants can access the churches, but they tend to be their ethnic churches, and not yet the country clubs and spaces to trade information and create entry points to obtain resources.

Fourth, we have to increase the rates of business ownership, and then generate more sales, hire more people, and create more profits. For success to occur, we must understand the importance of financial and human capital and seek the means to create startup capital that can make businesses more competitive. The possibility of creating higher startup capital lies in only one strategy: the ability to pool and combine resources. Just as we have been successful in forming religious and ethnic associations, we have to move beyond both to create business associations. Through the acquisition of greater managerial skills and capital, there is now a large pool of immigrant petty bourgeoisie who can now move to the next stage in the Marxian categorization: entrepreneurial capitalists who work in their own businesses and are also able to hire the labor of others. In other words, the entrepreneur-capitalists are able to use the proletariat (those who sell their labor) to create more capital.

Finally, be it in politics or business, alliances have to be forged, the creation of what Martin Luther King once described as the “network of mutuality.” This network will be in stages, within cities, between cities, and between hosts and homelands. The USA-Africa Dialogue discussion group is an initiative that has created a Pan-Africanist framework with a global reach. Today, the USA-Africa Dialogue discussion group has

become the most successful in using the Internet to link black people in different continents, to document, interpret and disseminate the experiences of the “new African diaspora.” The alliances need to revive some of the agenda of older Pan-Africanist networks that sought the elimination of exploitation and domination of Black people. The members of the new diaspora must support those of the older diaspora to attain empowerment and full citizenship. Networking has to be conceived in terms of the creation of support mechanisms within the United States, and of development mechanisms between the United States and Africa.

Both Tanure Ojaide and Akin Ogundiran, two key members of the new African diaspora, are already showing us the way, through knowledge acquisition and dissemination, to move forward in the context of globalization, transformation, empowerment and visibility. Thus, the infrastructures of capacity building are being created and consolidated. Ogundiran has shown how the study of Africa can interface with that of Europe and the Americas, giving us ideas on how we can even begin to rethink how we teach and organize the disciplines, and how some area study programs can think outside of their boxes. Ojaide has linked the community with the academy, with poems seeking our activist engagements to put the Ivory Tower in the service of the community. He shows how creative people are so valuable in the conceptual values that they bring to the table, and in their portrayal of marginalized subjectivities. In Ogundiran and Ojaide, a combined knowledge reveals ideas on culture, race, people, and aspirations in ways that help us talk about various subjects and issues that are crucial to the pedagogy of the Black experience. Intellectual power is the very first condition for both economic and political power. As we generate sound scholarship, as our two case studies have shown, we are now laying a solid foundation of intellectual power to transform lives and societies.

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<sup>1</sup> See the use of this terminology in Isidore Okpewho and Nkiru Nzegwo, eds., *The New African Diaspora* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> David C. Brotherton and Philip Kretsedemas, eds., *Keeping Out The Other: A Critical Introduction to Immigration Enforcement Today* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> A solid study on this subject is by Edward E. Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). Where an ideology of socialism has been tried, evidence suggests that race issues are still difficult to eliminate. On this, see Mark O. Sawyer, *Racial Politics in Post-Revolutionary Cuba* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Cedric J. Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning: Blacks and the Regimes of Race in American Theatre and Film Before World War II* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Juliet E. K. Walker, *The History of Black Business in America: Capitalism, Race, Entrepreneurship* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> The limitations to minority business are analyzed in Robert W. Fairlie and Alicia M. Robb, *Race and Entrepreneurial Success: Black-Asian and White-Owned Businesses in the United States* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> Paul Stoller, *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Stephen J. McNamee and Robert K. Miller Jr. , *The Meritocracy Myth* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 1.

<sup>9</sup> On the most salient topics familiar to Africans, see, among others, James H. Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935-1961* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Bettyle Collier-Thomas and V. P. Franklin, eds., *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> A good introduction to this line of thinking is by Paget Henry, *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Tanure Ojaide, "How the Urhobo People See the World Through Art," in Perkins Foss, ed., *Where Gods and Mortals Meet: Continuity and Renewal in Urhobo Art* (New York and Ghent: Museum of African Art and Snoeck Publishers, 2004), 73-79.

<sup>12</sup> In J. A. Wainwright, ed., *Border Lines: Contemporary Poems in English* (Toronto: Corp Clark Ltd., 1995), 105-106.

<sup>13</sup> This word should have been "sophistocrat" or "sophisticrat", since it is odd to call a person a craft. But poetry itself is odd, and Ojaide is using a poetic license.

<sup>14</sup> In *OBSIDIAN 11: Black Literature in Review*, 5, 3 (Winter 1990), 113-114.

<sup>15</sup> Tanure Ojaide, "from Libation," *Illuminations: An International Magazine of Contemporary Writing*, 14 (Summer, 1998): 9.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 106-107.

<sup>17</sup> Ojaide, "From Our Own Reasons," *OBSIDIAN 11: Black Literature in Review*, 5, 3 (Winter 1990), 112.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 110-111.

<sup>19</sup> Tanure Ojaide, "Branches of the Same Tree: African and African-American Poetry," in Femi Ojo-Ade, ed. *Of Dreams Deferred, Dead or Alive: African Perspectives on African-American Writers* (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1996), 101.

<sup>20</sup> Tanure Ojaide, "The Half-Brother of the Black Jew: The Poetry of Syl Cheney-Coker," *CLA Journal*, vol. XXXV, no. 1 (Sept. 1991): 1-14.

<sup>21</sup> "Two Worlds: Influence in the Poetry of Wole Soyinka," *Black Literature Forum* (1989): 775.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 767-776.

<sup>23</sup> Akinwumi Ogundiran, "Living in the Shadow of the Atlantic World: History and Material Life in a Yoruba-Edo Hinterland, ca. 1600-1750," in Akinwumi Ogundiran and Toyin Falola, eds., *Archaeology of Atlantic Africa and the African Diaspora* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 97.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Akinwumi Ogundiran, "Of Small Things Remembered: Beads, Cowries, and Cultural Translations of the Atlantic Experience in Yorubaland," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, 2-3 (2002): 427-457.

<sup>26</sup> Akinwumi Ogundiran, "Material Life and Domestic Economy in a Frontier of Oyo Empire during the Mid-Atlantic Age," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 43, 2 (2009), pp. 351-385.

<sup>27</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

<sup>28</sup> Akinwumi Ogundiran, *Archaeology and History in Ilare District (Central Yorubaland, Nigeria), 1200-1900*. Cambridge Monograph in African Archaeology No. 55 (London: Archaeopress, 2002).

<sup>29</sup> Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas*, edited by O. Johnson (London, 1921; reprinted, London, 1966).

<sup>30</sup> Akinwumi Ogundiran, "African Atlantic Archaeology and Africana Studies: A Programmatic Agenda," in *The African Diaspora Archaeology Network Newsletter*, June 2008: 1-25; Ogundiran, "Themes and Directions in the Precolonial History of Nigeria," in *Precolonial Nigeria*, A. Ogundiran, ed. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press Inc., pp. 3-49.

<sup>31</sup> "Chronology, Material Culture, and Pathways to the Cultural History of Yoruba-Edo Region, Nigeria, 500 B.C.-A.D. 1800," in Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings, eds., *Sources and Methods in African History: Spoken, Written, Unearthed* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 33-79.

<sup>32</sup> On the elaboration of this concept, see John Bellamy Foster, "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift: Classical Foundations for Environmental Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 105 (1999): 366-405.

<sup>33</sup> R. Law, *The Oyo Empire c. 1600- c. 1836: A West African Imperialism in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

<sup>34</sup> Akinwumi Ogundiran, "The Formation of an Oyo Imperial Colony During the Atlantic Age," in Cameron Monroe and Akin Ogundiran, eds., *Landscape of Power: Regional Perspectives on West African*

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*Politics in the Atlantic Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), chapter 8. Cambridge University Press (in press, Fall 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Also see Ogundiran's "Ceramic Spheres and Historical Process of Regional Networks in Yoruba-Edo Region, Nigeria, A.C. 13th-19th centuries," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 28, 1&2 (2001): 27-43.

<sup>37</sup> Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1981-84).

<sup>38</sup> J. H. Parry, *The Discovery of the Sea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 16.

<sup>39</sup> For another case study, see, Akinwumi Ogundiran, "Frontier Migrations and Cultural Transformations in Yoruba Hinterland, ca. 1575–1700: The Case of Upper Osun", in Toyin Falola and Aribidesi Usman, eds, *Movements, Border and Identities Formation in Africa*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press (2009), pp. 37-52

<sup>40</sup> See, for instance, Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones, *Atlas of World Population History* (London: Penguin, 1985).

<sup>41</sup> Ogundiran, "The Formation of an Oyo Imperial Colony During the Atlantic Age," in Monroe and Ogundiran, eds., *Landscape of Power: Regional Perspectives on West African Politics in the Atlantic Era*. Cambridge University Press (in press, Fall 2011).

<sup>42</sup> Akinwumi Ogundiran, "Of Small Things Remembered: Beads, Cowries, and Cultural Translations of the Atlantic Experience in Yorubaland," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, 2-3 (2002): 427-457.

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