

EDITORIAL

African Studies: New Challenges

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*The rain has beaten me
The sharp stumps cut as keen as knives
I shall go beyond and rest,
I have no kin and no brother,
Death has made war upon our house.
(Kofi Awoonor, 1935-2013)*

A poet is killed; a scholar retires; a baby is born; a government changes; an aid agency in demise; but African Studies continues to rise.

As we near the end of 2013, the *Australasian Review of African Studies* welcomes you to Volume 34, Number 2 – we simultaneously lament the challenges faced during this year and welcome the newest member of our extended family – Jasper Marlowe, born September 15, reminding us all of the continuing cycle of our academic and calendar year, as well as the lived experiences of ourselves as scholars, thinkers, and diasporic fellow-travellers. Our best wishes to co-editor Jay Marlowe and his wife Penny – congratulations!

By the time this journal goes to press, the 36th Annual Conference of the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific will have been held in Perth, and our members would have been re-inspired by the research presented. The community of Africanists in Australia and globally need to understand how crucial it is -- indeed now more important than ever -- to ensure that after an inspired period of productive new engagement with Africa (as under the previous Australian government) that we continue to advocate for the interests and needs of Africa and Africanists, particularly when political landscapes change. We encourage you all to continue your research in

African Studies. On 1 November 2013, the merging of AusAid into the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) signified its demise. The massive budget cuts to the Australian overseas aid program should be sounding warning bells to the Australian community that has always supported Africa and Africans through charitable donations and other assistance. Researchers in particular will be concerned with the extent to which the Australian Development Research Awards (ADRAS) will survive and maintain its 13 percent focus on Africa, as it did in the last round, benefitting so many successful research projects.

In the meantime, your ongoing support of both the AFSAAP organization, and the ARAS journal, will be required to ensure we can meet publication costs. As always, this journal is produced by the co-editors and an editorial team in a volunteer capacity, a great commitment, which by no means diminishes its quality as a peer reviewed journal, independently competing with the big publishing houses: same quality – but more modestly priced for members. ARAS is committed to ensuring African Institutions receive the journal for free, and back issues are available freely and widely. In addition to the journal, our annual AFSAAP conference is entirely volunteer run, and offers a great opportunity for our community to come together to celebrate our victories and commiserate over our challenges.

In this latest issue of the journal we are pleased to offer articles on the ‘state of play’ back home in Africa, as well as issues related to and for Africans in the diaspora, demonstrating the growing interest in African studies research amongst Australian and New Zealand scholars, both established and emerging. The contributors included in this issue of the journal include the two winners of the AFSAAP Postgraduate Prize in 2012, O’Brien and Muchoki. We are also pleased to be able to feature the work of early career researchers Burke and Juuk both of whom are demonstrably carrying the Africanist banners in their fields of research. Bishop and Binns combined have over forty years of experience in African Studies, but merge the emerging with the established scholar to create opportunities for new researchers mentored through the process. Mude, Burgess and Mwanri are well-established researchers and widely-published authors on African-Australian issues and we are so pleased to have them all represented in this issue.

We are also pleased to offer you yet another collection of diverse and timely articles exploring the great breadth of African Studies in Australia and beyond. *Corporate Responsibility and Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa* by **Joanna Bishop and Tony Binns** invites readers to engage with the complexities of post-apartheid South Africa

and its long road to economic independence. They offer a realistic and perhaps surprising look inside corporate responsibility and the need for greater attention to long-term development that parallels the social development that continues apace. In **Stephen O'Brien's** *A Qualitative Study of Impressions and Experiences of HIV in Zimbabwe*, he highlights the complexity of development work in countries recovering from long internal conflicts.

In *Media Framing of Violence Against Tanzanians with Albinism in the Great Lakes Region: A Matter of Culture, Crime, Poverty and Human Rights*, **Jean Burke** explores some of the cultural practices, values and attitudes to difference in Tanzania, and helps readers understand a human rights perspective on the issue. Both **Samuel Muchoki** and **Buol Juuk** explore cultural differences between life in Australia and home countries, particularly as they emerge in gender relations both inside and outside of the home. Their articles: '*[In Australia] what comes first are the women, then children, cats, dogs, followed by men*': *Exploring accounts of gender relations by men from the Horn of Africa* (Muchoki) and *South Sudanese Dinka Customary Law in Comparison with Australian Family Law: Legal Implications for Dinka Families* (Juuk) represent important new 'insider studies' which can address such sensitive core issues of resettlement and life in the diaspora with the complexities and nuances that are informed by their understandings and African contributors.

Lastly, **William Mude, Teresa Burgess and Lillian Mwanri** extend readers' exposure to further research within the Sudanese Australian communities (this time in South Australia) with their article '*We should eat it wisely, in a good way*': *Knowledge, perceptions and understanding of childhood obesity and overweight among Sudanese refugee parents in South Australia*. We are confident you will find all the articles in this issue of ARAS make an important and substantive contribution to the body of literature on African Studies in Australasia.

The Book Reviews section has expanded under the capable editing of Nikola Pijovic, and we would like to thank him for his efforts in sourcing new reviewers and covering new and recent publications of interest to our readership. Book reviews are time-consuming and for this reason it is always difficult to find reviewers in sufficient number. Yet it is a crucial service to our shared fields of endeavour and various disciplines, and certainly advances the new work generated. So we encourage all readers – especially early career researchers and graduate students – to consider reviewing a book for this journal. It's a great way to get an early publication, and marks you as a collegial and dynamic

member of this community. For those who would like to review a book but don't have a particular book in mind, please contact Nikola and he will advise on what books we currently have up for review.

This edition features a review by Ken Menkhaus, perhaps one of the world's leading experts on Somalia, of Stig Jarle Hansen's *Al-Shabaab in Somalia. The history and ideology of a militant Islamist group, 2005-2012*, a history of Al Shabaab. This history is sadly a timely book which will provide important background and historical contextualization to the group which recently terrorized and killed the Nairobi Mall shoppers, including two Australians, other nationals, and certainly many more Africans. It is the first full-length study of this group, and is both important and frustrating reading, as Menkhaus tells us. Sadly this group is also responsible for the premature death of the great Ghanaian poet, scholar and statesman Kofi Awoonor, who died in the Nairobi attacks, an incredible loss to African literature.

This issue's book reviews section also includes a film review of *Nairobi Half Life* (2012) by Samantha Balaton-Chrimes, and several other reviews of varied texts. We are deeply grateful to all reviewers. Such book reviews offer readers an absolutely crucial guide to some of the latest books in African Studies, deepening our understanding of Africa, Africans and Africanists interests.

We sincerely hope you enjoy this new edition of ARAS journal, and as always encourage all readers to consider submitting your own work for publication here. On behalf of the entire editorial team, and the board of the AFSAAP, we wish you a very happy and healthy holiday season, and New Year for 2014.