

TEACH AFRICA

Irohin: Taking Africa to the Classroom

**Africans in the Media:
New Wave of Influencers
New Voices Fighting
for Change**



**Africans in the Media:
New Wave of Influencers
New Voices Fighting for Change**

TEACH AFRICA

Irohin: Taking Africa to the Classroom

2024

Cover Photo:

Zenile Ngcame of Masiphumelele High School raises her fist during a protest for action against climate change outside Parliament in Cape Town, South Africa.

(Ashraf Hendricks, 2019)

Editor

Dr. Agnes Ngoma Leslie

Associate Editor

Dr. R. Hunt Davis, Jr.

Designer

Leila Aragon

Table of

Contents

3	The Center for African Studies Outreach Program	28	African Youth: The Voices That Matter! <i>Charlotte Henry</i>
4	Understanding the Size of Africa	30	Feminine Beauty: Sowe Mask <i>Jillian Blazas</i>
5	Corrected Maps	32	The Importance of African Proverbs <i>Hattie Petty</i>
6	Views of Africa in the United States: Exploring the Gaps in the U.S. Media and Education Systems <i>Kevin Vernon</i>	35	Musical Instruments of Africa <i>Carolyn Turner</i>
10	Exploring Major Cities in the Five Regions of Africa <i>Shilah Carroll</i>	37	Contemporary African Music <i>James DeRemer</i>
14	600 Million Following: A New Wave of African Influencers <i>Marilynn Anderson</i>	40	Experiencing and Explaining Life Through the Lens of Yoruba's Orisha <i>Chad Holloway</i>
16	All People are People: Historical Empathy via Technology, Making African History Alive Through Instagram <i>Carrie Geiger, Ed.D.</i>	42	Resilience Embodied: The Yoruba & the Yoruba Diaspora <i>Kevin Kelsey</i>
20	Creating a Learning Environment that Honors African Cultures <i>Dr. Carrie Wells</i>	47	The Significance of the Sycamore Fig Tree and The Voice of the Woman <i>Katrece Freeman-Boyd</i>
23	African Countries Lead the Way with Women in Positions of Power <i>Angie Perchalla</i>	51	The Art of Storytelling: Contemporary African Women Artists <i>Dr. Karen Wallace</i>
25	Economic Impact of Women Entrepreneurs in Botswana <i>DeAndréa Johnson</i>	56	Works Cited

The Center for African Studies at the University of Florida

Outreach Program

The Center for African Studies at the University of Florida is one of the nation's leading centers for the study of Africa. The Center directs, develops, and coordinates interdisciplinary instruction, research, and outreach on Africa. The Outreach Program includes a variety of activities whose objective is to promote and improve the teaching of Africa in primary, secondary schools, colleges, universities, businesses, and communities in the United States. The following are some of the regular activities conducted by the outreach program:

Publications

The Center publishes and distributes teaching resources including TEACH AFRICA: *Irohin: Taking Africa to the Classroom*, a publication for educators. Electronic copies of TEACH AFRICA are available online. You may also request free hard copies of the publication from the Center for African Studies.

Teachers' Workshops

The Center offers free in-service workshops on Africa for K-16 educators throughout the academic year.

Business Workshops

The Center offers information and business workshops to assist and promote business in Africa.

Community & School Presentations

Faculty and graduate students make presentations on Africa to local communities, schools, and colleges.

Summer Institute on Africa

Each Summer the Center offers a virtual summer institute for K-12 teachers. The teachers produce articles which are published in TEACH AFRICA. The articles in this 2024 publication were produced by K-12 teachers who participated in the Center's summer institutes of 2022 and 2023. Please feel free to use the materials in your classroom and research. You may access more publications of TEACH AFRICA online.



Screenshot of the 2023 Teacher's Institute final presentation day.



Dr. Robin Poyner leading a tour of African art for teachers at the Harn Musuem.



Teachers in front of El Anatsui's Old Man's cloth at the Harn Musuem.

Understanding the Size of

Africa

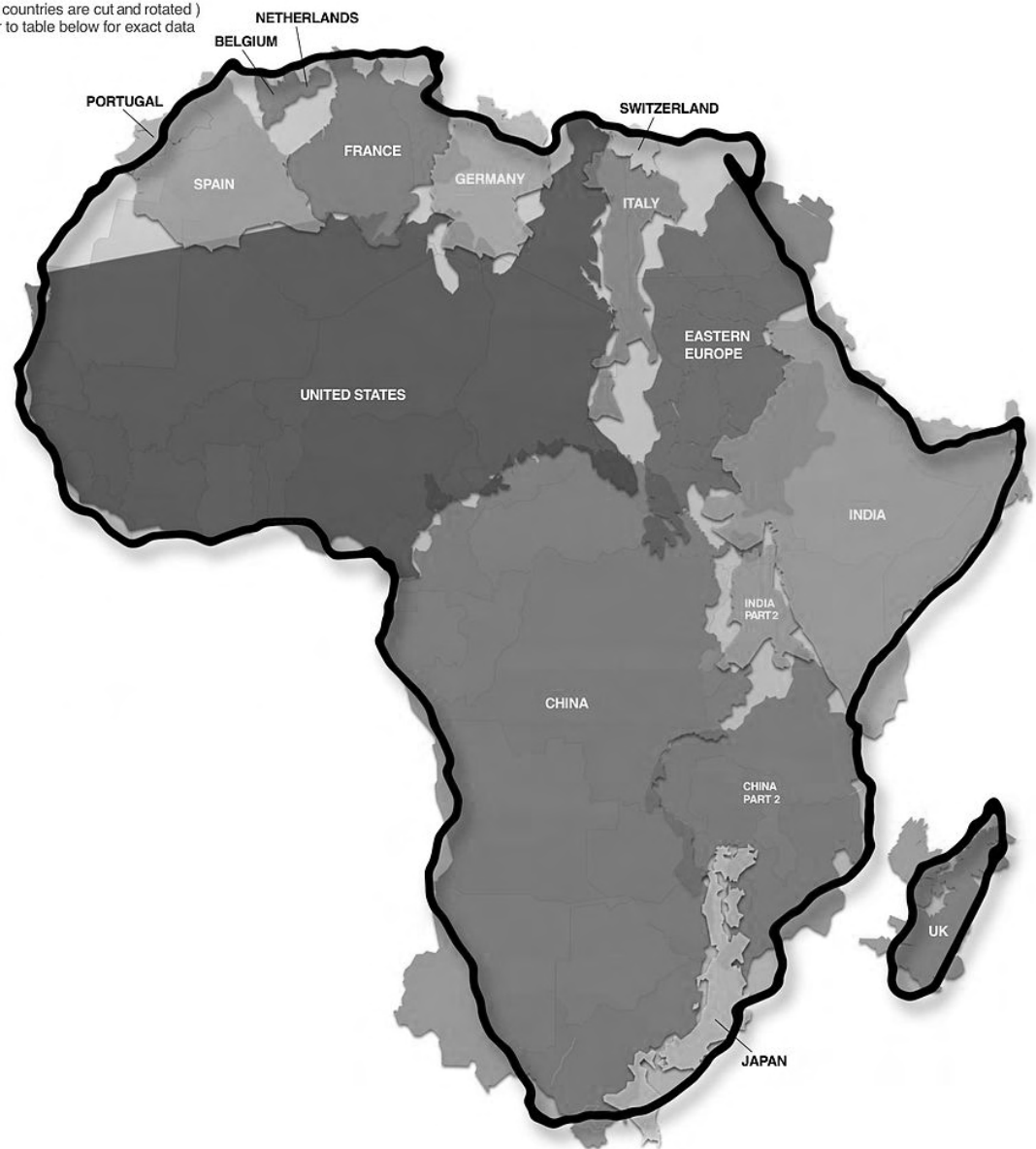
Africa is more than three times the size of the contiguous United States; there are more than 2,000 extant languages spoken across more than 50 countries; and the landscape spans from desert to rainforest. Languages, cultures, scenery and even the hemispheres change as you traverse Africa. This map may help us understand the true size of Africa and it's diversity.

The True Size of Africa

A small contribution in the fight against rampant *Immappancy*, by Kai Krause

Graphic layout for visualization only (some countries are cut and rotated)
But the conclusions are very accurate: refer to table below for exact data

COUNTRY	AREA x 1000 km ²
China	9.597
USA	9.629
India	3.287
Mexico	1.964
Peru	1.285
France	633
Spain	506
Papua New Guinea	462
Sweden	441
Japan	378
Germany	357
Norway	324
Italy	301
New Zealand	270
United Kingdom	243
Nepal	147
Bangladesh	144
Greece	132
TOTAL	30.102
AFRICA	30.221



New Look for Africa on

Corrected Maps

In an age of “fake news” and “alternative facts”, authorities in the city of Boston believe their new school map offers something closer to the geographical truth than that of traditional maps, and hope it can serve an example to schools across the nation and even the world.

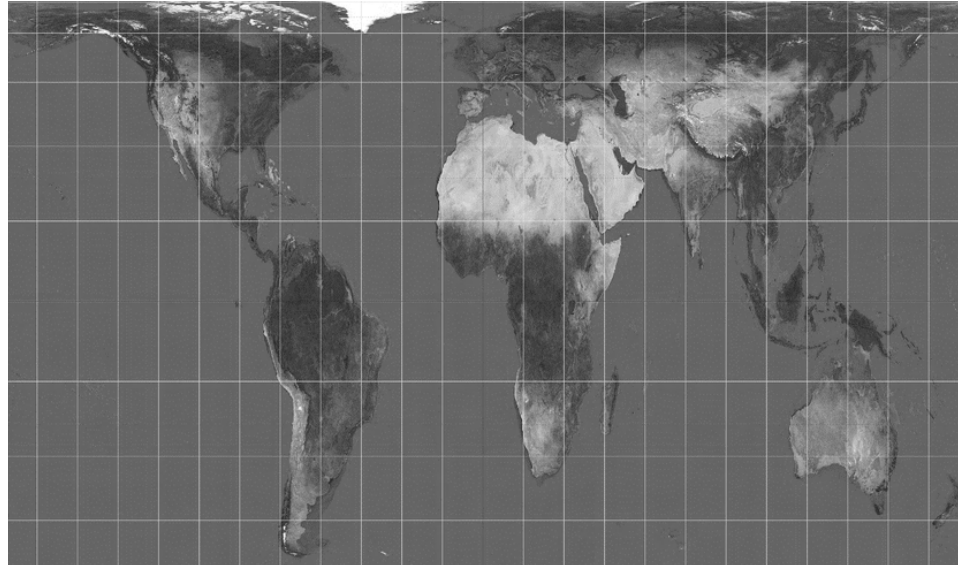
The school district dropped the Mercator projection, which physically diminished Africa and South America, for the Peters, which cuts the developed world down to size.

The Gall-Peters projection shows land masses in their correct proportions by area, putting the relative sizes of Africa and North America in perspective.

When Boston public schools introduced a new standard map of the world, some young students felt their world had changed.

The USA was small. Europe too had suddenly shrunk. Africa and South America appeared narrower but also much larger than usual. And what had happened to Alaska?

For almost 500 years, the Mercator projection—designed to aid navigation along colonial trade



The Gall-Peters projection shows correct proportions putting the right size of Africa.

routes—has been the norm for maps of the world.

In the Mercator system, North America and Europe appear bigger than South America and Africa. Western Europe is in the middle of his map.

South America is made to look about the same size as Europe, when in fact it is almost twice as large, and Greenland looks roughly the size of Africa when it is actually about 14

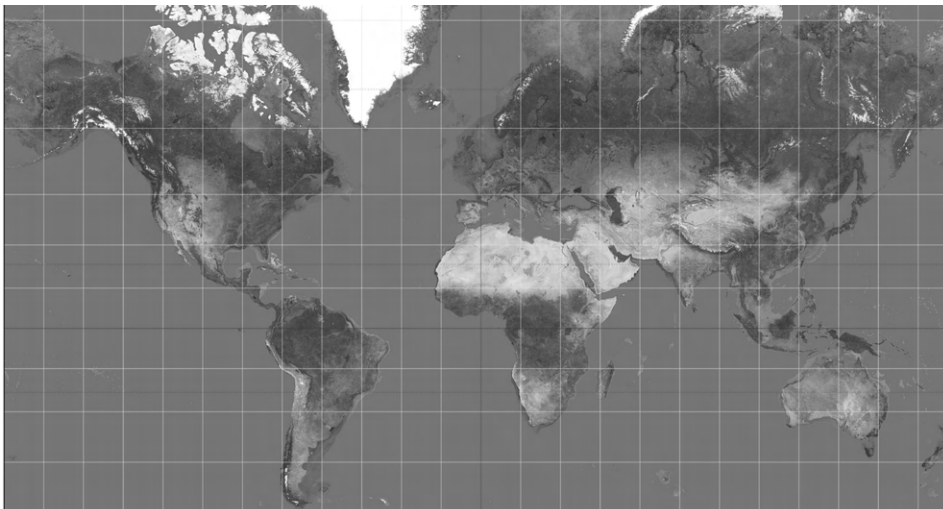
times smaller.

Alaska looks bigger than Mexico and Germany is in the middle of the picture, not to the north.

The switch to the Gall-Peters Projection sees Boston’s public schools follow the lead of the United Nations, which has advocated the map as a more ‘fair’, less Eurocentric representation of the world, as have several aid agencies.

Teachers in the 2nd, 7th and 11th grades received their new maps, and said the reaction from their students has been fascinating. “It’s “interesting to watch the students saying ‘Wow’ and ‘No, really? Look at Africa, it’s bigger’”, Natacha Scott, director of history and social studies at Boston public schools, told *The Guardian*.

“Some of their reactions were quite funny,” she added, “but it was also amazingly interesting to see them questioning what they thought they knew.” Mar. 20, 2017 (GIN)



The Mercator projection, the map most commonly seen hanging in classrooms and in textbooks, gives the right shapes of land masses, but at the cost of distorting their sizes in favor of the lands to the north.

Kevin Vernon

Views of Africa in the United States: Exploring the Gaps in the U.S. Media and Education Systems

According to Life Lessons of African Proverbs, “The voice of (the) community is the voice of God” (Obiakor et al.). In a democracy such as the United States, this concept is well-reflected. The people elect representatives that reflect their values, and the people expect these officials to uphold their ideals and values within government. In this way, the perception of what is important to the American people translates to political agenda, and, ideally, shapes political actions that impact the country and world in very real and often tangible ways. If a politician in the United States wants to be re-elected, he or she must become a champion for his or her constituents’ beliefs while simultaneously leading them toward a brighter future. But what happens when the community’s perceptions of key issues are mired in the past? If what we perceive and value informs our political views, and those views shape policies, what about all that we do not perceive or of which we are unaware?

As a college graduate who listens to world news daily, I considered myself to have a basic grasp of the world and its affairs. So, when I attended the Teacher’ Summer Institute on Africa hosted by the University of Florida’s Center for African Studies, I was shocked to discover how ignorant I was. For example, did you know that there are 54 sovereign countries on the African continent? Did you know that the United States is less than one-third Africa’s size? These are a few of the

basic facts from the institute that surprised me on the first day, and I was not alone. I spoke with others in attendance who felt similarly oblivious. The more I learned about Africa, the more I felt a sense of inadequacy in my previous world view and Africa’s relative importance within it. A democracy like that of the United States is served best by an informed citizenry, and if my fellow teachers and I felt uninformed, it made me wonder how others were receiving and interacting with information on Africa. Additionally, I wanted to try to account for this lack of awareness among my peers and myself. Did the fault lie in my memory, or were there societal factors which may have contributed to my lack of knowledge?

Before I explore these factors further, it is important that the readers of this article have a basic understanding of Africa and its importance on the world stage. Charles Ray, a retired US Foreign Service officer who served as ambassador to Cambodia and Zimbabwe and deputy assistant secretary of defense for POW/ Missing Personnel Affairs, wrote an article entitled “America, You Better Believe that Africa Matters” for the online journal *American Diplomacy* in May of 2022. Ray writes about the mindset that most American and Europeans have of Africa being peripheral to world affairs, and he goes on to say that it is far from peripheral; it matters. In the article, he describes Africa as a rapidly urbanizing continent

filled with a growing and generally young populace with a wealth of precious minerals and resources. Despite these advantages, Africa faces many challenges including poverty, corrupt governance, natural disasters exacerbated by climate change, and man-made disasters from governmental instability (Ray). Ray goes on to talk about major investment in the continent by China and other superpowers such as the United States and finishes with a look at the implications this information should have on US Foreign Policy. The facts and figures in this article are truly staggering and I suggest that anyone looking to have a fuller and more accurate picture of Africa on the world stage read it completely.

Education

I decided that the United States Pre-K-12 public education system was the most logical place to start to gain an understanding of how our society perceives and interacts with the African continent. Since each state of the union has a different department of education with different learning objectives, standards, and assessments, I decided to narrow my focus to the states of Florida and Ohio; two states in which I have personally taught and studied. Education is more than state standards, so I wanted to bolster my understanding of the issues with as much personal knowledge as I could bring to bear on the topic of education on Africa. *U.S. News & World Report* ranks states



each year in several areas including education, so I decided to see what it published before analyzing the state standards as they pertain to Africa in public schools. In terms of Pre-K-12 education, Florida was ranked 14th in the country and Ohio was ranked 21st (“Rankings: Education”). Looking into their methodology, we see that they utilize a variety of contemporary data points to arrive at their rankings such as graduation rates, standardized testing scores, and Pre-K enrollment. To further ensure that these rankings were reasonably accurate and as unbiased as possible, I checked media bias and reliability reports from **adfontesmedia.com** and **allsides.com**. The former website gave *U.S. News & World Report* a center-leaning bias, while the latter reported a slightly more left-leaning tendency. Interestingly, **allsides.com** listed an initial or low confidence rating in their left-leaning assessment of the news source and cited that the community somewhat disagrees with the assessment with the dissenters believing it to be center-biased as well. Additionally, **adfontesmedia.com** gave *U.S. News & World Report* a high reliability score, while **allsides.com** issues no such score. With this information we can assume that *U.S. News and World Report* is a reliable source that may or may not have a slight left-of-center lean.

After determining the relative quality of the two states’ Pre-K-12

education systems, I wanted to look at their World History standards to see how they are approaching instruction about Africa within their classrooms. Comparing the social studies standards of the two states, one can find a “World History” section in Florida’s Standards, which were last updated in 2008 (Florida’s State Academic Standards), while Ohio’s Learning Standards contain a “Modern World History” section that appears to have been last updated at adoption in 2018 (Ohio’s Learning Standards for Social Studies). Florida’s current social studies standards as they pertain to Africa only refer to significant events, figures and contributions of Sub-Saharan African civilizations such as the Sudanic kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai. They fail to consider post-colonial contributions of African countries despite most of them gaining their independence during or even long before the 1960s (Wikipedia contributors). In the Ohio Learning Standards, we see direct reference to Africa in the topic of imperialism as well as in the following content statement under the topic of the Cold War (1945-1991). “Postwar global politics led to the rise of nationalist movements in Africa and Southeast Asia” (Ohio’s Learning Standards for Social Studies). There are a few more vague standards that may bring Africa into more modern focus within the topic of Globalization (1991-Present) in

the Ohio Learning Standards. These content standards refer to regional and ethnic conflicts, political and cultural groups struggling to achieve self-governance, emerging economic powers, rapid global population growth, and environmental concerns, but none mention Africa (or anywhere) by name. This analysis would suggest that the state with the lower ranked Pre-K-12 education system (Ohio), which admittedly has more recently updated social studies standards, may address the topic of modern Africa in its classrooms better than the higher ranked state of Florida. This idea is supported by a fellow teacher, James DeRemer, a participant in the University of Florida’s Center for African Studies Summer Institute who has taught world history. James stated that the Florida World History unit which talks about Africa tends to focus on pre-colonial and colonial times and only lasts about a week of the school year. The concern of this being that the brief and antiquated discussion of Africa combined with dramatized and/or erroneous television programs and movies, cements the Africa of the past into the minds of many of Florida’s children. In summary, while the Ohio Learning Standards leave the door open for a more complete and modern discussion of the African continent, both states could do more to directly address the contributions of Africa on the world stage during the last several decades.

News & Politics

Beyond our education system, the next lens through which American citizens are likely to receive and perceive information on Africa is in the news. From newspapers to television news networks to podcasts, there are several ways in which news is consumed. For several reasons, I decided that news podcasts would be the focus of my research. First, as I was encouraged to address this topic because of my own perceived

lack of awareness, and because news podcasts are one of the main ways I consume my news, I was interested in what my research might uncover. Second, research has shown an increase in podcast listenership over the past decade with the largest number of listeners coming from younger generations (Shearer, et al.). Lastly, since my time was limited and it was difficult and time-consuming to find and view or read other forms of news media in a reasonable amount of time, I felt that podcasts would be a manageable media to investigate. Most news podcasts list all their episodes online, which makes them easy to access and audit. The Pew Research Center surveyed more than 5,000 U.S. adults from December 5th to December 11th, 2022, which was weighted to be representative of the population of the U.S. in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education, and other factors (Shearer, et al.). According to the survey, about half of Americans had listened to a podcast in the past year, and one-in-five listen almost daily. While just one-in-five podcast listeners say they listen to a podcast that's connected to a news organization, most listeners say that news is at least a part of their experience with podcasts (Shearer, et al.). Additionally, the survey stated that 41% of people turn to podcasts about politics and government, another key focus of this article. Armed with this information, I was confident in my choice to study news podcasts.

To narrow my focus further, I decided to choose two podcasts that were highly reliable according to adfontesmedia.com's media bias chart and that I felt were well-recognized names in the news space. For these reasons, I chose to analyze NPR's *Up First* podcast as well as ABC's *Start Here* podcast. NPR is at the height of the reliability-side of the media bias chart, and while ABC skews a little left of center in terms of bias, it also scored very reliably



and has won multiple awards for excellence in podcast and internet content according to [IMDb.com](https://www.imdb.com). I decided to look at the last year of their news coverage, between June 22nd, 2022 and June 22nd, 2023. For each podcast, I pulled up the description and read the summary of the discussed news stories, making note of any that mentioned or were related to Africa or its countries. Studying over a longer period would be better, and I would have loved to include a comparison with this past year to a year a decade ago. However, the compendium of one of the podcast's episodes I had to work with contained fewer than 1500 episodes, fewer than five years.

Both podcasts upload multiple times on a weekly basis, but their consistency as well as what news they choose to cover varies. NPR's *Up First* features the top 3 news stories each day Monday through Saturday and tends to focus on one bigger story on Sundays, occasionally featuring other NPR podcasts and their stories. Looking at their coverage between June 22nd, 2022, and June 22nd, 2023, including roughly 365 podcasts, Africa and/or its countries made the headlines 21 total times (or about 5.75% of days). There were 2 stories on official visits or attempts to strengthen ties in Africa,

4 on African country elections, 3 on effects of climate change and environmental issues in Africa, 6 on war and conflict (covering the fighting in Sudan), 3 on migration, and 1 on political scandal. Most of these stories focused on Africa as a place of natural and man-made problems and failed to recognize African countries as growing and valuable with things to contribute, thus furthering the perception as Africa being a place of people in need. As for ABC's *Start Here*, the podcast posts Monday through Friday except on and around certain holidays. In the year and period in which I was studying, they posted 272 podcasts. Most of the time they featured 3 stories, but this was slightly less consistent. Some podcasts only featured 2 stories, and some were bonus episodes posted later the same day as a regular posting updating a particularly close-watched story. Of the 272 podcasts I looked at, only 5 had Africa or its countries in the headlines, an abysmal 1.8%. Of these stories, 3 focused on the fighting in Sudan, 1 on a famine in Somalia, and 1 on a story about a suspect from Libya being handed over to US authorities in connection to a terrorism investigation going back to the Lockerbie 1988 plane crash. The stories reported by ABC failed to

address a single positive thing that happened in Africa in the past year. While both podcasts could cover more and more positive stories on Africa, this does paint a compelling picture about the importance of news source choice. A person who listens to NPR's *Up First* will receive, if these numbers are relatively consistent, on average four times the news stories on Africa than one who listens to ABC's *Start Here*.

Depending on how informed you are, you may wonder what sort of positive, progressive, and important stories there may have been to report on within Africa in the same period as the above study of the two podcasts. During the Summer Institute, we learned that Vice President Kamala Harris took a historic tour of African countries starting in late March of this year. We learned more broadly about the many developments and urbanization that the countries of Africa are undergoing. For example, according to *The Continent*, an African Newspaper which publishes weekly from journalists across the continent, Nigeria recently opened the largest oil refinery on the continent (Abdulahman et al.). We also discovered that six African presidents went on a peace mission to Ukraine and Russia in June. These are three news stories across consecutive, recent months (as of the time of this writing) that frame the countries of Africa more positively on the world stage than the 26 stories covered by either of the 2 podcasts I researched. This is not to say that the stories covering the tribulations of African countries should not be covered, but if news sources are only covering the disasters, the genocides, and the mass migrations, it is going to reinforce a harmful, limited perspective of Africa as a humanitarian project. With a continent more than three times the size of the United States, the stories of the peoples of the African countries are as diverse and varied as the continent is large. More consideration should be given for the

positive events and accomplishments of African countries, their leaders, and their peoples.

Enacting Change

This article marks the end of my summer institute on Africa, but not the end of my journey of growth as an educator and lifelong learner. Like many of my colleagues in this publication, I had planned to include a lesson plan at this article's conclusion. Now that it is in its final stage, however, I find it more appropriate to focus on how we might address the deficiencies of our education and news media organizations and pass a more accurate picture of Africa on to our students.

As educators, we draw upon our knowledge and experiences when it comes to teaching. Dr. Jacob Gordon, presenter at this summer's institute, spoke at length about how we can better prepare ourselves for teaching about Africa, but many of the things he spoke about also apply to learning about Africa. He said that before we learn and teach about Africa, we must first be willing to admit to and try to mitigate our limited and biased perspectives. While the scope of this article has been narrow, as necessitated by time and resource

restraints, I hope it has served to highlight in a small way the tendency of our education system and news organizations to present incomplete and distorted views of Africa, its countries, and its peoples. Second, we need to get informed about the contemporary realities of Africa and its countries, which is no small feat – Africa is a large continent! When informing others (or yourself) about Africa, Dr. Gordon said it is important to include an Afrocentric lens and African voices in the conversation. To help with this, try to incorporate a reputable news source like *The Continent* (created by and for Africans) at least occasionally into your media consumption. As you learn, try to reflect upon how that information affects and can inform your beliefs and world view. As you learn more, hopefully you will find yourself talking about Africa less and more about Zambia. More about Rwanda. More about Sudan and Senegal and South Africa. If you can get yourself even part of the way there, you will find yourself ready to incorporate planned lessons and extemporaneous talks about those countries with your students. Because remember, at our earliest stages of life, we start learning by simply listening to and speaking with one another.



Shilah Carroll

Exploring Major Cities in the Five Regions of Africa



Cairo, Egypt

The African Continent – Debunking Myths and Misconceptions

The continent of Africa is a massive land of ethnic groups, languages, cultures, and traditions. Many misconceptions about the continent have been engrained in our educational framework when learning of this diverse continent. Some of these misconceptions are that Africa is a country, Africans speak African, Africa is a desert, all Africans are darker skinned, Africa has no access to modern items such as vehicles and technology, Africa is a famished and impoverished place and needs constant aid from the United States, and lastly, people who reside

in Africa live with wild animals in huts.

Though our views are shaped by what we see in the media, movies, and our educational system, such statements are totally divorced from African realities. To debunk these claims, here is more factual proof about Africa. Africa is a continent, not a country. Fifty-four countries make up the continent of Africa. Africa is the second largest continent behind Asia. There are over two thousand one hundred languages spoken on the continent. Innovative ideas have been coming from the African continent for many years before written history, such as the bow and arrow, fishing hook

and boats. Africa has an essential connection in global expansion and society. Each continent can adhere some roots to Africa, whether it be from the slave trade, musical influences, cultural influences and even the beginning of human civilization. The notion that Africa is uncivilized, and primitive is an archaic way of thought and needs to be reshaped with the modern continent of today.

There are five main regions throughout the African continent (Northern, Western, Middle, Eastern and Southern Africa). The focus for each region will highlight a major city detailing its modern essence based on infrastructure,

population, job market and lastly, technological advancements. The recent growth of cities in Africa and other emerging areas has attracted widespread attention (Thomas, 1970). While detailing each region and city please keep in mind that there are other urbanized and developed cities besides the ones expounded in this article.

Northern Africa

Cairo, Egypt is the largest city in this region. Historically known for the famous pyramids and sphynx monuments as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World credited to the Ancient Egyptians. Early 14th century Cairo was the larger than any other city in Africa, Asia Minor, or Europe. Cairo is a bustling metropolis with a unique culture. Twenty-one million people call this river city home. The growth of cities in Africa is a phenomenon that dates back a number of decades. “Cairo is a congested city with rare uncrowded spaces” (Denis, 1996, p. 9). Cairo has grown to be a mecca of resources, trade, and innovation. “Circulation of population between town and country is a characteristic feature of social life and much of contemporary Africa. There is also considerable movement between towns. The spatial distribution of urban centers within a country, and

the relations that develop between them” (Epstein et al., 1967, p. 282). Cairo is centrally located on the Nile delta. Egyptian industrial products are created in this city or pass through Cairo on the Nile River. Items such as textiles, commerce, trade, and production are essential to this bustling economy. Cairo is Egypt’s largest city and epicenter for economic production and financial control. The transportation network in Egypt connects most of the urban centers with Cairo. It is projected that the population of Cairo will grow to over twenty-three million people in the year 2024.

West Africa

Lagos has become the startup capital of Africa. It is the largest city in Nigeria and the second most populous city in Africa. “Every hour seventy-seven people move to Lagos from other parts of Nigeria” (Adeoye, 2021). The population as of 2020 is over fourteen million. Lagos has made a name for itself as a “major technological hub”. Nicknamed “The Silicon Valley of Africa”, Lagos is rich with access to precious metals and materials used in technological devices, such as iron ore, chromite, and tantalite. Along the lines of other careers, the main manufacturing industries in Lagos include electronics equipment,

automobile assembly, food and beverage processing, metal work, and the production of paints and soaps. Textiles, cosmetics, and pharmaceutical manufacturing are also economically essential to this metropolis. Most of Nigerian manufacturing industries are based in the city of Lagos. Financial institutions and other service industries are also located in this bustling city. The main drive of growth in the population of Lagos has been rural to urban migration. Many people have been encouraged to leave their rural jobs for the increase of pay as well as opportunity in the growing markets. The population of Lagos is also very youthful since most migrants that come to the city are under the age of fifty. The population of Lagos is anticipated to continue to grow due to the region’s technological advancements.

Central Africa

Bangui, Central African Republic. Bangui is the capital and largest city of the Central African Republic. It serves as an administrative trade and commercial center. The city is located by rivers and main roads that connect to other countries such as Cameroon, Chad, and Sudan. Agriculture and agricultural exports are the main source of income in this



Lagos, Nigeria



Johannesburg, South Africa

region, as the area is overflowing with natural resources. Goods like diamonds, timber, cotton, and coffee help this agrarian land. The current population is almost eight hundred ninety thousand people. Population wise this is the largest region in central Africa. The area is poorer in monetary value, as there has been much political strife and revolt historically and recent years. With these constant issues, development and growth are needed for the region, but due to the political nature and revolt, the growth has been slow. Compared to the whole continent, the central region of Africa has been gridlocked between many political outbreaks in competing countries, thus directly affecting the area.

Eastern Africa

Addis Ababa is the capital of Ethiopia. It is a massive and bustling city. There are over five million people that call the city home. Addis Ababa is the political capital of Africa. The African Union is headquartered here, along with the United Nations Economic Commission of Africa. These major institutions have given the city political and diplomatic significance

on the continent. The city itself has some of the lowest rates of poverty in the country. The economy of Addis Ababa is very diverse. The main industries are trade and commerce, manufacturing and industry, civil administration and transport and communication. The population of Addis Ababa is expected to grow to over six million in the year 2027!

Southern Africa

Lastly, in a globally well-known region, Johannesburg. Johannesburg is the biggest city in South Africa. It is the wealthiest city in Africa based on private wealth held by the elite. It's main industries are mining, manufacturing, and finance. Certain metals including platinum, gold, and chromium have been mined in Johannesburg for many years. Johannesburg is also known for automobile assembly, metalworking, and machinery. The city generates seventeen percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Service industries such as banking, information technology, print media, transport, real estate, and private healthcare also add to the thriving market in this megalopolis. Africa's largest stock exchange, the JSE, is

also located in Johannesburg.

Conclusion

Africa is a diverse and massive continent of wealth, prosperity, and resources. Some of its developed and flourishing cities easily compete with “developed” societies in the United States and elsewhere in the world! To better understand all that Africa offers on a global scale, we first need to change our thoughts and perceptions of the continent. Teaching about the resources and misconceptions is an initial start. Development and innovation in the continent's diverse countries are spearheading Africa's emergence as a leading global force, and this needs to be recognized as such. With continuing knowledge, research, and understanding we will be able to transform the misconceived notions of the continent. As we continue to educate ourselves and expose those around us to the wealth, resources, culture and diversity of Africa we will help to educate and reach current and future generations for a lifetime. Africa is rapidly evolving into a global powerhouse, and we must never forget it.



African Union HQ, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Lesson Plan

1. Analyze. Research the population of a major city in one of the five geographical African regions. Breakdown the population. Why is the population of the city dispersed as it is?
2. Identify. Find an urban U.S. city in one of the regions (North, South, Midwest, West). What similarities and differences does this city have to a major city in one of the regions in Africa?
3. Create. Draw a map of a U.S. region and an African region. Compare the two regions based on their location, size, climate, and jobs.
4. Challenge. Locate and identify two other major cities from a region in Africa that were not discussed in our article.

Discussion Questions

1. Why are the regions and countries dispersed as they are?
2. What jobs and careers are popular in the rural areas? Why?
3. What jobs and careers are popular in the developed areas? Why?
4. Select a city in a region of Africa. How does the area you selected compare to our local area in Gainesville, Florida?

Marilynn Anderson

600 Million Following: A New Wave of African Influencers

Imagine following a stranger for 10 seconds of their life, then consequently following their every move, using their image as the cornerstone of many life choices. This is the impact of a modern-day influencer. A voice that is heard by millions of people from all over the world. It is all possible because of social media, via the internet. The Internet houses various social media platforms, many of which are exploding in Africa.

There are many misconceptions that exist pertaining to technology in Africa, but in 2022 there were 570 million internet users on the continent itself, more than one-third of its total population. Given this large amount, internet use is still expected to increase, with no end in sight. Among the various modes of transmitting information across

the globe, social media is at the top of the list. It includes platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok, Twitter, WhatsApp and YouTube. The biggest beneficiaries of these platforms are what we know as “influencers”. Like the term implies, an influencer must impact a large number of individuals by having support in the form of “likes”, “shares” and “follows”.

The face of one influencer in particular is enjoyed the most in the entire world. His name is Khaby Lame. Khaby was born in Senegal and has 161 million followers on TikTok. He started on social media sharing his videos of comedic solutions to everyday problems. His sensibility and quirky personality delighted people all over the world, and he quickly became a sensation. Though TikTok is huge right now in

the younger generation, there are many other popular platforms. Their popularity is based on the region of African subscribers. Northern and Southern Africa have the highest overall use of any social media. Currently, Facebook is the dominant social media in all of Africa. Ghana, Kenya and South Africa prefer WhatsApp. Statistics show there are 271 million Facebook users in Africa and projected to reach 377 million by 2025. YouTube has around 81 million users, while Twitter stands at 24 million.

Khaby Lame is the most well-known, but there are many other influencers in Africa such as Sarah Langa, Lesego Legobane and Nana Antwiwaa Nuamah. They all started with a simple social media post, sharing their passion and turned it into a lucrative business. Most influencers fall into the main categories of comedy, arts, fashion, travel and lifestyle. Influencers are able to spread the beauty of their life in Africa as well as challenges and solutions.

There is not only opportunity for entertainment on social media but also use in amplifying voices. Each platform has also been used to bring attention to pressing social issues and activism. African innovators and entrepreneurs such as Olugbenga Agboola have found a platform for showcasing their work and receiving investment on social media. Online communities such as AfroTechConnect on Twitter, bring entrepreneurs and enthusiasts together to share resources and knowledge. Platforms like WhatsApp are in high use to create communities



Khaby Lame



Lesego Legobane

to share news and provide citizen journalism outlets. Thanks to YouTube, there has been widespread of Afrobeats in the world music industry.

There is also some non-traditional social media that is finance driven. In Africa social

media such as WhatsApp is used for crowdfunding, and sending money digitally. Some individuals who have never had access to a bank or bank account are able to do e-commerce through mediums such as M-PESA (mobile money). The opportunities are endless with 384 million social media users in Africa.

Many traditional daily tasks are now being converted to e-transactions, which is extremely useful in remote or rural areas. The isolation caused by the COVID pandemic drove a lot of internet interactions as well. Mobile phones have proven to be more convenient than laptops or desktops computers. Phones are smaller, require less power and allow applications for easy use. Some new services that have become virtual include e-health assessment, e-learning for education, e-governance, e-travel and e-DIY services. Influencers can make money from ads, sponsors and brand marketing but there are also jobs available for content creators as well. Many businesses hire content creators to appeal to their target

audience.

While Africa may have lower connectivity compared to other parts of the world, it has seen the most respective growth in social media engagement. Technology of the upcoming generations and population growth only provides more opportunity for social media reach. Like the rest of the world, social media does have various restraints that will always arise. Although cell phones have lessened some of the burden of low access areas, there are many places with limited electricity. This creates an increased need for solar energy technology, and there is an abundance of solar energy. Cybersecurity needs to be advanced far beyond mobile applications to prevent fraud and theft, also the unfortunate misinformation and disinformation that has the potential to mislead millions of people. All in all, now is the time view or maybe even “like” some African innovators and influencers who deliver beautiful content, while using their platform to entertain, inform, educate and inspire the entire world.

Lesson Plan

MATH

1. Have students choose from a prepared list of African influencers. They will choose from screenshots of recent posts.
2. Students will have the task of analyzing the post date, time, likes and shares to make predictions on how the numbers will change (using mathematical formulas) at a predetermined date in the future.
3. At the end date have students compare their predictions with the actual social media statistics of the post and influencer they chose.
4. Students may discuss constraints and advantages of the post that were shared and their success.

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Have students study the rural and urban regions in Africa and compare their internet, cell phone and social media usage using data websites.
2. Students should be able to identify a relationship between internet usage and geographical statistics such as population size and urbanization.

Science

1. Students will find (or choose from a prepared list) a widespread example of pseudoscience or myth that has been spread as truth on social media.
2. The students will design an experiment that proves or disproves the myth that has been generated.

English Language Arts

1. Students are given the task of identifying 5 social media posts of African influencers for each category of writing (persuasive, narrative, descriptive and expository).

Arts

1. Students will analyze photography or musical work from an African influencer and decipher the message, tools used to create and summarize their interpretation

Carrie Geiger, Ed.D.

All People are People: Historical Empathy via Technology Making African History Alive Through Instagram

It is the human being that counts.
I call gold; it does not answer.
I call cloth; it does not answer.
It is the human being that counts.

~ Proverb from Ghana

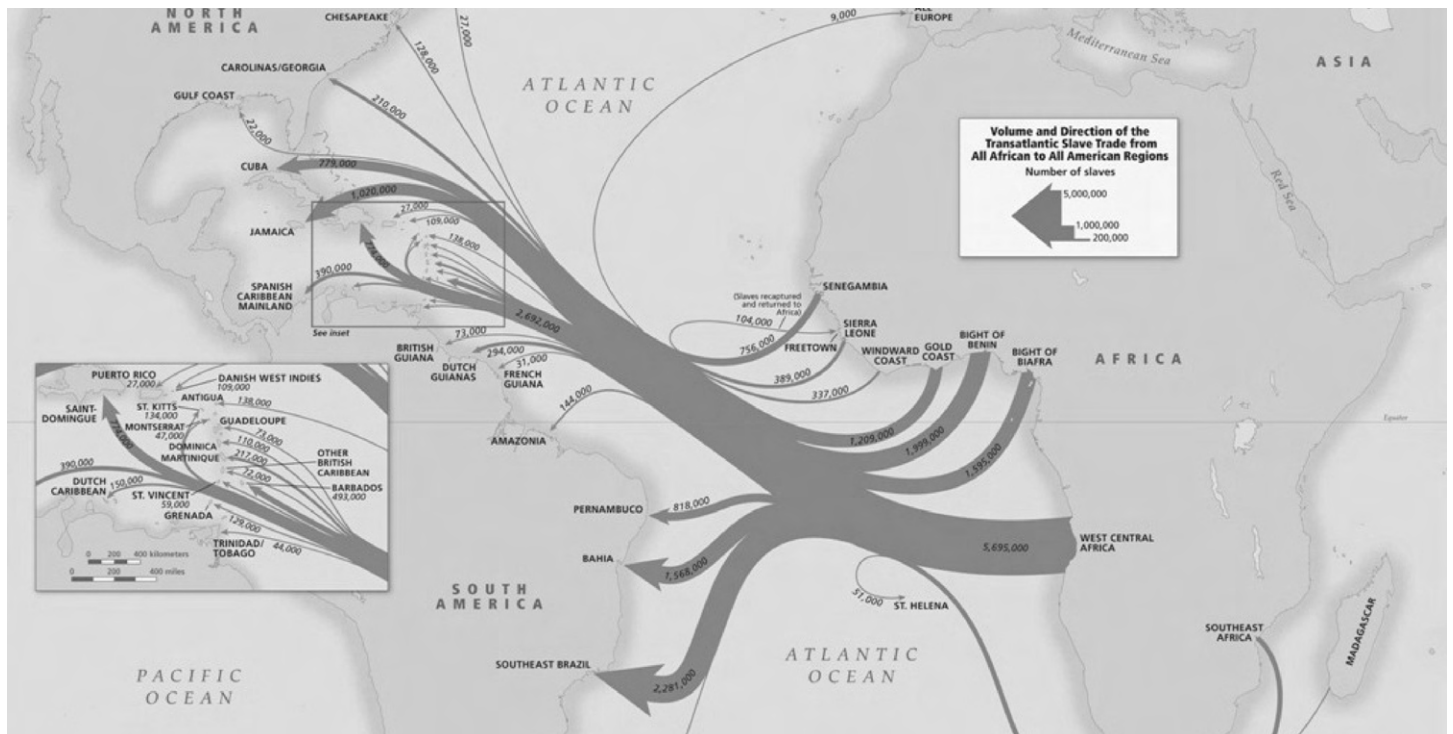
The continent of African is said to be the birthplace of civilization, and yet many American high school students know little about it. Our students consistently score poorly on

geography exams, mainly because geography instruction is limited at best. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reports that students' knowledge of

geography is declining rather than improving (2018).

In the state of Florida, standards related to African history are included in the state mandated teaching of African American history required by statute s.1003.42(2)(h), F.S.

Standards include the history of African peoples before the political conflicts that led to the development of slavery; the passage to America; the enslavement experience; abolition; and the history and contributions of Americans of the African diaspora to society.



Directional map of Trans-Atlantic slave trade routs via the Slave Voyages Database

Admittedly, from my personal experience, the history of African peoples prior to colonialism and enslavement have received less dedicated instructional time than the experience of Africans once they reached American shores. I would argue that this is an oversight that continues to perpetuate stereotypical views of Africa and African peoples and contributes to the depersonalization of the millions of people who were forced from their homeland against their will. Slavery looms large in American history, and rightly so. But African American history began long before Africans first arrived in colonial America in 1619.

According to HistoryForKids.org, “In West Africa and West-Central Africa, Europeans took millions of people against their will to Europe and the Americas between 1500-1900. Between 13 and 15 million people were taken from their homes to the Americas, primarily from West Africa.

It is easy to become numb to these numbers; they are too large for us to fully comprehend. But each of these people who made up the millions of enslaved Africans had a name, a home, a family, and a story. The authors of HistoryForKids.org poignantly state, “To refer to the Africans who were enslaved simply as “slaves” disregards their individuality. They farmed, traded, served in the clergy, fought in wars, worked with gold, and performed music. They were married couples, fathers and mothers, sons, and daughters, among others. They might be Yoruba, Igbo, Akan, or Kongolese.”

While numbers are difficult to fully grasp, stories resonate. Aaker (2020) asserts that we remember stories “22 times more than facts alone.” This concept led to an approach called Data Storytelling, which employs narrative techniques along with both qualitative and quantitative information to make a



Image from *Equiano Stories*

point (Denbo, 2015).

Stories also build empathy, connecting students to historical figures through vicarious experiences. Endacott and Sturtz (2015) define “historical empathy” as “the process of students cognitive and affective engagement with historical figures to better understand and contextualize their lived experiences, decisions, or actions. Historical empathy involves understanding how people from the past thought, felt, made decisions, acted, and faced consequences within a specific historical and social context.” Mai (2018) conjectures that, “Historical empathy not only helps students connect with the past, but also provides them with the tools to better understand how that past has shaped the present” and she encourages educators to “inspire” their students to be activists in their own communities as they learn about history and present conditions from an empathic stance.

Not all students feel inspired by history, however, and there are challenges in engaging students in

the subject, especially history of people and places that may seem remote. Best pedagogical practice indicates the use of primary source documents, yet these often contain archaic language that feels distant and irrelevant to 21st century adolescents. Lack of engagement results in a lack of learning, however, and so it is imperative that educators find ways to capture students’ interest and spark their desire to learn.

The integration of instructional technology is one method that often piques student attention and increases engagement. Using technological tools to teach African history related to the Triangular Slave Trade, specifically, can meet several instructional goals, including enhancing student engagement and learning; increasing student knowledge of African history; personalizing the masses; developing empathy; and making history more relevant.

Two unique computer applications exemplify the potential of technology to increase student



Olaudah Equiano, 1789

interest in African history. I will describe each tool and provide suggestions for how each could be used with high school students.

Equiano Stories is a creative adaptation of the primary source “The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano,” an autobiography published in 1789. Born in the area that is now called Nigeria, Olaudah Equiano was sold into slavery as an eleven-year-old boy. He toiled in Barbados, Virginia, and was a servant to an officer in the British Royal Navy, before his final master, an English merchant, let him purchase his freedom. He became an outspoken abolitionist and a successful writer and speaker.

Equiano Stories is a project in which the creator imagines what it would have been like had Olaudah Equiano been able to capture his story through the Instagram platform. Equiano’s narrative is told through video vignettes that chronicle his daily village life, including his family members and everyday activities and then continue through his capture and beyond. The social media format is well-known to American teens who frequently document their own stories through video posts; therefore, the experience of viewing Equiano’s life through this familiar lens makes history come alive for them.

In my African American History class, I share excerpts from the primary source with my students, and then I share several posts from the Instagram page to introduce them to a living, breathing Olaudah Equiano. After experiencing these few posts together, I encourage them to explore the Instagram profile on their own, providing them with the opportunity to choose parts of Equiano’s life in which they are most interested.

Finally, I ask my students to create a response using a framework that I use often with them. They respond to one or more of these types of responses: Affect (how the

text/experience made them feel), Association (what the text/experience reminded them of or connections they made) or Perception (what jumped out at them or caught their attention). These responses can be generated verbally, in writing, or through a non-linguistic representation, such as a mind map or an artistic response. I allow volunteers to share their responses, adding another layer of learning for all students as they hear their peers’ reactions.

Equiano Stories provides an engaging pathway by which students can access the life experiences of an African child, not too distant in age, who shares many commonalities with them – love of family and home. This vicarious journey personalizes the experience of an African boy before and after enslavement.

Developed by Rice University and with contributions from many researchers, The **Slave Voyages** database offers a different, yet equally powerful, experience for students. The website states of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database that, “This database compiles information about more than 36,000 voyages that forcibly transported enslaved Africans across the Atlantic between 1514 and 1866.” Viewers are encouraged to “Search and analyze the database for information on the broad origins of enslaved people, the tortuous Middle Passage, and the destinations of Africans in the Americas.”

The website offers access to a wealth of resources including animations, time-lapse videos, essays and articles, and vast amounts of data documenting the thousands of voyages along with detailed information about those who made these voyages. Under the “People of the Atlantic Slave Trade” tab, students can explore lists of passengers, sorting data by language groups, age, sex, height, weight, ship name, embarkation, and disembarkation ports, and by their

names.

Names are important. And I want my students to realize that each of these statistics is tied to a human being with a name and a story. When we explore this data base, I ask my students to find someone who resembles them in age, sex, height, and weight. Then I ask them to click on the icon which allows them to hear their counterpart’s name. I ask them to hear the name and say the name. Then, using information they find in the database, paired with their imaginations, I ask them to tell this person’s story orally, through pictures, or through text. Who was this passenger, this African, this person?

Both **Equiano Stories** and **Slave Voyages** develop historical empathy and help to personalize the masses, going beyond statistics and incomprehensible numbers to lives, experiences, and stories. Perhaps these types of human connections will increase students’ interest in African history. Perhaps they will come to know history as a human enterprise that reaches far deeper than faraway places, distant times, and specific events. History is about people, and all people are people.

Dr. Carrie Wells

Creating a Learning Environment that Honors African Cultures

Introduction

Africa is an incredibly diverse continent with 1.1 billion people across 54 different countries with over 2,000 languages spoken. When studied in school, however, Africa is generally overlooked in academic instruction or represented as a cultural monolith. In this article, we will explore the importance of representation in literature, how to challenge biases and stereotypes about the continent of Africa, how to select appropriate literature for your classroom, how to enhance the learning environment to incorporate elements of African cultures, and the potential impact on student achievement.

Importance of Representation in Literature

Young people are receiving, organizing, integrating, and interpreting information about culture, ethnicity, and race from the world around them. Rudine Sims Bishop, in a 1990 article, stated “when children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read...they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part.” While the characters, subjects, topics, and themes of children’s books have grown and evolved significantly over time, there’s still a concerning lack of diversity and representation. In a survey of approximately 3,415 children’s books published in 2021, only 450 had significant African or African-American content and characters,



and of those 450 books, only 313 were created by Black authors and/or illustrators.

In her TedTalk “The Danger of a Single Story”, Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie (2009) describes her experience as a child reading books from England, with food, weather conditions, and circumstances that were unrelatable, and how important it was to find her authentic cultural voice. The “problems with stereotypes is not the fact they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.” Her love of literature grew tremendously when she began reading books from authors throughout Africa because she was able to relate to the characters and situations. This sparked her future passion as a writer herself; just one example of why representation is so important in children’s literature.

Countering Biases

Children arrive at school in kindergarten with limited

understanding of the world outside what they have been exposed to within their families. This exposure may include the inadvertent teaching of biases and stereotypes that can impact how children perceive the world around them. In order to challenge those biases, children must be exposed to quality, culturally responsive teaching that aims to reframe students’ thinking through meaningful lessons and learning materials. Commonly held biases by Americans about the continent of Africa, according to Africa.com, include the following:

- Africa is a country
- Africa has one language
- Africans live in huts/shacks
- Africans do not have access to technology
- African countries are poor, rural, and need outside help
- Africans share a homogenous culture

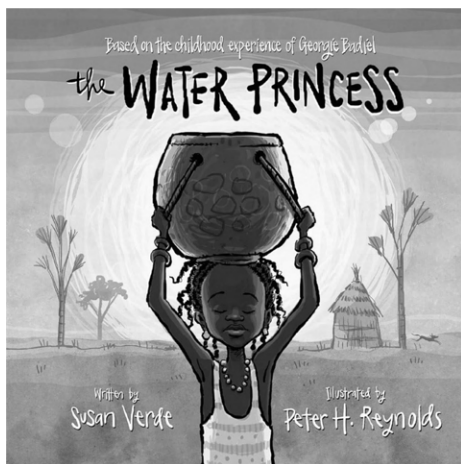
Through meaningful, engaging, and honest instruction about the diverse cultures and lands within Africa, these biases can be corrected. Creating a literature-rich learning

environment that honors African cultures and societies, for children in grades kindergarten through twelve, is key.

Selecting Literature

Building a classroom library may seem like a simple task, but the books within your classroom reflect the culture of your room and the experience of being your student. The benefits of intentionally selecting diverse children's literature are two-fold. "Children, especially underrepresented students, can benefit from reading stories featuring characters they relate to in terms of culture and lifestyle...Students can also learn about a culture or experience other than their own, which promotes empathy and an understanding of the world around them" (Blankenship, 2021).

To build your classroom library, begin by simply reviewing the books you have in your classroom currently to ensure they do not contribute to any misunderstandings, cultural biases, or stereotypes. In addition to reviewing the books you have, notice if there are any gaps in the materials in your room. You can ask yourself several questions: Have I considered a variety of fictitious stories and informational texts? Do the characters represent different cultures, with stories that portray the customs and traditions accurately? Are the images an accurate representation? Are the



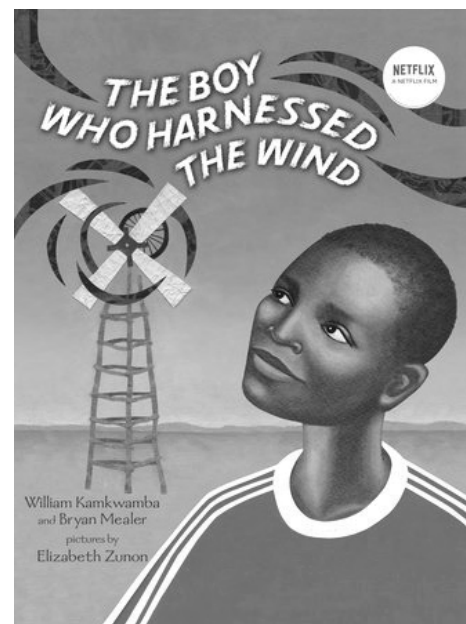
books written by authors who can speak authentically to the content of the book? Once you have removed inappropriate books and made a list of needs for your library, take time to research diverse children's book authors, book reviews, and lists of recommended children's literature. Speaking with your school media specialist or county librarian may be another way to learn about new authors, illustrators, and books to purchase. Consider your current students as well and what books they may identify with to reach all the readers in your classroom.

When speaking specifically of the continent of Africa, include stories of resilience, overcoming challenges, and unique successes. Here are examples of traditional and contemporary fiction stories:

- *Anansi the Spider* stories
- *Thank You, Omu!* by Oge Mora
- *Christmas in Lagos* by Sharon Abimbola Salu and Maria Nikla
- Retelling of classics set throughout Africa by Rachel Isadora, such as *Rapunzel*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *The Princess and the Pea*
- *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* by John Steptoe
- *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* by Verna Aadena and Beatriz Vidal
- *Auma's Long Run* by Eucabeth A. Odhiambo
- *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe
- *Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi

Here are some examples of books based on true stories:

- *The Water Princess* (the story of Georgie Badiel) by Susan Verde
- *Wangari's Trees of Peace* by Jeanette Winter
- *Njinga of Ndongo and Matama* by Ekiuwa Aire and Natalia Popova



- *Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yemoah* by Laurie Ann Thompson
- *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* by William Kamkwamba (picture book and novel versions)
- *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park

Enhancing the Learning Environment

Beyond just building a diverse classroom library featuring books from cultures around the world, it is also important to create a fully immersive global experience for students. "Children shape their reality according to the models they build with many bricks: stories, songs, films, plays, experiences and many other factors which help them in codifying the reality into common patterns to be reproduced. Through these elements, they discover the world they live in and themselves, too" (Braga, 2022). The following are examples of ways to enhance your classroom learning environment to incorporate materials that honor the beauty and diversity of the people and places throughout the continent of Africa:

- Display maps that show the size of Africa and the different countries labeled
- Share images of traditional and modern artwork
- Hang projects students have made that reflect what they have learned
- Read articles about current events throughout the continent of Africa
- Play music from different cultures throughout Africa
- Share age-appropriate films accurately depicting life and events throughout Africa

(for example, the Disney film *Queen of Katwe*)

Impact on Student Achievement

By intentionally building a classroom environment that honors some of the many cultures, places, and people present throughout the continent of Africa, teachers create students who are culturally literate, who challenge biases, who take a more global perspective, and who respect differences. Culturally responsive teaching has the power ”

...to unlock the educational potential of historically marginalized students” (Dee & Penner, 2016). Educators can reach all students when students believe they are represented, not just for one day, week, or month of the school year, but when they are part of a classroom that honors their heritage and the heritage of their peers. Additionally, by teaching about the continent of Africa, educators provide background information for future learning experiences in all subject areas.



Lesson Plan

The following lesson plan ideas are appropriate for students at a variety of age ranges and abilities.

1. Have younger students correct biases with factual information. Examples:
 - How many languages are spoken throughout Africa?
 - How large is Africa?
 - How many countries are there in Africa?
 - What are some housing styles in Africa?
 - What are important scientific advances that began in Africa?
2. Have students of any age put together a multimedia presentation that includes literature, artwork, language sample, and music from a specific culture found in Africa.
3. Plan a novel study for older students by offering a choice of several different books. Have the students reflect upon “a-ha” moments that challenge previously held beliefs, outline the resilience of the characters, and discuss the significance of the work.

Angie Perchalla

African Countries Lead the Way with Women in Positions of Power

The marginalized position of African countries depicted in international media shapes global perceptions of African women, thus limiting the perception of African women as being helpless victims of war, famine, or genital mutilation. Media informs us of the lack of educational opportunities for primary students in African countries, particularly girls. However, advancements in this area are often under-reported.

There is the misinformed perception that women's activism globally is due to the influence of Western feminist movements. Africa has not only been influenced by international women's rights movements but has added value to the cause as well. In fact, African countries have long had higher percentages of women in power than the United States and other countries around the world.

African countries have some of the world's highest rates of parliamentary representation.

Country	% Female
Rwanda	64
South Africa	45
Seychelles	43
Senegal	42
US Senate	28
US House	29

At the executive level, African countries also lead. Six African countries have had women serve in the top executive office, including two countries currently.

In addition to female presidents, there have been nine female prime ministers, and twelve vice presidents. One fifth of African parliaments have female speakers of the house. African women are also taking over key ministerial positions in defense, finance, and foreign affairs.

The judiciary has also seen

advancement of an increased number of women at all levels. Four of the five African judges on the International Criminal Court are women.

Not only have there been a respectable number of female executive leaders in African countries, but their administrations have proven to be particularly successful. Let's look more closely at two of those leaders, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Joyce Banda.

Country	President
Tanzania	*Samia Suluhu Hassan
Liberia	Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
Ethiopia	*Sahle-Work-Zewde
Mauritius	Ameenah Gurib-Fakim
Malawi	Joyce Banda
Central African Republic	Catherine Samba-Panza

*Currently serving

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was born October 29, 1938 in Monrovia, Liberia to a family of privilege. She was well-educated and earned her Master's Degree in Public Administration from Harvard University. After completing her education, she returned to Liberia where she worked for the Liberian government, UN Development Program, and Citibank before becoming an opposition leader in the 1980s. She was jailed twice and forced into exile for her opposition to Liberian President Samuel Doe. In 2005, she was elected

■ 2000 ■ 2020

Primary school completion



Lower secondary school completion



Upper secondary school completion



Source: UNESCO via BBC

the first female president of Liberia, at the same time becoming the first elected female head of state in Africa. During her presidency, she oversaw repair, improvements, and new development in infrastructure, stabilized and grew the economy, and played a key role in bringing peace to Liberia after years of civil conflict. Further, she established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address the causes of conflict. Her presidency was not without challenges. Liberia faced an Ebola outbreak, and she played a key role in preventing further spread. She served as president for thirteen years stepping down in 2018.

In 2011, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition for her non-violent struggle for women's safety, women's rights, and full participation in peace-building work. In her acceptance speech, she spoke of the importance of women's participation in politics and peacebuilding. She also acknowledged the challenges that women still face.

Joyce Banda

Joyce Banda was born in Southern Malawi April 12, 1950. As a girl, she attended Catholic School and later studied at Atlantic International University and National University. She held many political positions prior to becoming the first female president in 2012. She served as a member of Parliament, Minister of Gender/Child Welfare/Community Service, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Vice President of Malawi.

During her Presidency, she implemented economic reforms to strengthen the economy, stabilize the currency, and fight inflation. She signed bills to end child marriages and gender-based violence and pushed for more female representation in political positions. She initiated programs to improve the country's infrastructure, such as boosting electricity generation,

improving access to water, and building roads. Globally, she strengthened relationships with other countries, especially the US, where she had a close relationship with Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton. Banda founded several global initiatives, including: the UN Special Envoy for Women's Health (to improve healthcare for women all over the world), the Joyce Banda Foundation (to empower women and children by providing education and training opportunities), and worked on the UN International Commission of Financing Global Education.

Joyce Banda was selected three years in a row (2011, 2012, 2013) by Forbes Africa as one of the most powerful women on the continent. She was named Africa Woman of the Year in 2017 by the New Africa Woman Awards. A statue of Banda was erected in Malawi in recognition of her contributions and achievements. Her legacy is an inspiration for many young women in Malawi and across the continent.

Possible Factors in the Rise of Women: African Matriarchal Societies

Some African communities have practiced matriarchy for centuries. European colonialism disrupted some such communities, but many matriarchal communities and traditions remain. In matriarchal societies, women are the center of power and authority, have a strong voice and leadership roles and the power to advocate for the rights and needs of their community. This gives the people of these communities and surrounding areas a unique perspective of female power and leadership. Some examples of matriarchal societies include: the Basotho in South Africa, the Dahomey Kingdom whose female warriors are known as "Amazons", the Igbo people of Nigeria, and the Akan people of Ghana.

Women play prominent roles within many religions as well. They are priests, prophetesses, medical healers, diviners, intermediaries. Women are thought to possess natural sacred powers, especially when pregnant.

Post Conflict Countries

Post-conflict times, especially after civil conflicts, offer a unique opportunity for positive change. There are often peace negotiations and constitution-making exercises that allow women to press for more rights and representation.

Women were often seen in a new perspective during this time also because of their involvement in the conflicts, either as warriors, strategists, or peacekeepers.

Quotas

There is a change in international norms regarding women's rights and political representation. In 1995, the UN adopted a platform of action that encouraged countries to advance political leadership. One thing that came out of this initiative is a wide acceptance of quotas for female representation. Many African countries now have (either voluntary or compulsory) quotas for female representation. In fact, many African countries are surpassing these quotas by a large margin.

In Conclusion

If international media will focus more on the traditions, practices, and successes of African countries regarding female leadership and representation; it will go a long way towards changing world perspectives. We may even be able to find our own way to more gender equality.

DeAndréa Johnson

Economic Impact of Women Entrepreneurs in Botswana

“Yo, is Lola’s last name Falana?”

“(No) Well, my cousin lives in Botswana.”

“(Are they in war too?)” “Is a heel on a shoe?”

“My man, they know apartheid like I know you. The president is Masire, the capital Gaborone,”

Rapped the group *Stetsasonic* in 1986 in its song called A.F.R.I.C.A. in which the group hoped the song would raise awareness about the state of affairs on the continent at that time (Free South Africa Lyrics, 2020). In reviewing the lyrics, there is an inference of Botswana as a war torn country, and it’s the expectation that the country would be at war.

However, Botswana is much more than what is contained in those lyrics and even the minds of individuals who are unfamiliar with this 224,607 sq.mil. country that borders South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The country is split into three regions: arable land, sand, and lake beds. Since it is in the Southern Hemisphere, summer lasts, summer lasts from October to March, but winter is from April until September. But, more excitingly, it is booming with the culture of women entrepreneurs who can undoubtedly impact the economic landscape.

Background

Before Botswana was called by its name that it is known as today, it was called Bechuanaland, which is a

variant of the current name (Parsons, 2022). Botswana became a British protectorate in 1885 (Robinson, 2009), meaning Britain acted as the country’s protector. However, Britain’s relationship with Botswana seemed to be one of economic control and burden without support; it was expected for Bechuanaland to pay a tax to ensure it did not become a burden to Britain’s taxpayers (Mafela, 2008). As Botswana grappled with its interaction with Britain, the neighboring white-ruling countries were seeking to gain control of the land; however, with its forward thinking, Botswana used “diplomatic and political methods to petition” Britain to enforce its role of protector against these neighboring countries. This act of resistance laid the foundation for the country to gain its complete independence in 1966 (Tlou, n.d.). After independence in 1966, the pronunciation and the spelling of the country was altered. Along with the name change is the change in reputation as the aforementioned—a change to be recognized as a “peaceful, increasingly prosperous democratic country” (Parsons, 2022). It played a key role in helping South Africa in its journey to independence. Moreover, Botswana has embraced political opportunities by becoming an active member of international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the African Union, and the Southern African Development Community [SADC works to foster economic collaboration in Africa (Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia, 2018)].

People

Contrary to the vast majority of images that appear when one Googles Botswana, Over 70% of the population live in urban areas. There are 2,742,000 residents (Britannica, The Information Architects of Encyclopaedia, 2022) with the dominant ethnic group comprising $\frac{2}{3}$ of the population from Tswana descent; Khalagari is the next dominant group. Of the collective Batswanas, there are over 7 languages spoken among its citizens: Tswana (most spoken), English (the official language), Khoe, San, Kalanga, Sekgalagadi, Herero, Mbukushu, and Yei (Parsons, 2022)—an example of diversity within this country alone, not considering the entire continent.

Women

“In 2020, Botswana’s female population amounted to approximately 1.21 million, while the male population amounted



to approximately 1.14 million inhabitants” (O’Neill, 2022). Data also shows that women have a longer life expectancy than men and a higher rate of literacy (Britannica, The Information Architects of Encyclopaedia, 2022). Whilst women may dominate in numbers, in pre-colonial times, the tradition of the land has been that roles in society are separated by gender leaning in favor of a patriarchy. A popular colloquialism, “*mosadi ke ngwana wa monna*” notes that “a woman is a man’s child” (Mafela, 2008). “Customarily, however, women submitted to men and in general, the men’s decisions prevailed (Mafela, 2008). Patriarchal influence began to transition when migrant labor placed women in the center of making decisions for the household. Initially, migration began to fund the imposed British tax, but then became a standard option in how individuals would earn a living. In 1947, over 45% of a household’s income was generated through means of migrant employment (Mafela, 2008). Most of the men who migrated were between the ages of 15-44: marital ages. Although it seemed to place women in a vulnerable position, it permitted women to explore control, problem-solving, and decision making. In the more modern era, women are not confined to employment that is deemed a traditional gender-specific role.

Business In Botswana

As a result of the political control and conflict to rule Botswana, migration became a prominent avenue for economic resources. Alternatively, Botswana is a land of industry and business that expands across multiple categories. According to the Botswana Government’s “Opportunities for Business” site, there are 14 sectors of products and services that corporations or individuals can explore. After the discovery of diamonds in 1967, the

diamond industry has become Botswana’s most exported items and most sought after; “almost 70-80% of export earnings are attributed to diamond mining” (AZO Mining, 2012) combined with other copious minerals, in particular, silver, copper, nickel, iron, and coal. “In recent years, Botswana has transformed itself into a middle-income country with a GDP amounting to \$30.09 billion in 2011” (AZO Mining, 2012). It is the second-largest diamond producing country in the world. However, the country is looking to diversify its economic power in other industries like tourism and retail. On the government’s website, it further explains that there is a mission to “stimulate economic diversification and growth” (GOV.BW, n.d.). Furthermore, incentives are enacted to encourage investors, foreign and domestic, to engage and embrace entrepreneurship within its borders (Doing business in Botswana, n.d.).

Incentives Provided by the Government of Botswana

- “—We provide investors with preferential access to the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) entire marketplace – over 292 million people;
- Botswana provides duty-free access to South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland;
- Botswana provides duty-free and quota-free access to the European Union (EU) market.
- We have no foreign exchange controls or restrictions on business ownership.
- —Taxes are very low - 15% for manufacturing and International Finance Service Centre (ifsc) companies, 22% for other businesses and 25% for individuals;
- We allow remittance and full repatriation of profits and dividends;
- We offer duty-free import of machinery and equipment for manufacturing

purposes.”-(Doing Business in Botswana)

Benefits Of Entrepreneurship On Economy

Investopedia quoted Howard Stevenson from Harvard Business School defining entrepreneurship as the “pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled” (How entrepreneurship affects the economy). Essentially, creating a business provides a freedom that is not ordinarily available to an employee. It is the groundwork to wealth that could be inherited by the following generation. Furthermore, entrepreneurs play a vital role in any country’s national economy. “Beyond simply investing their own funds, entrepreneurs also attract capital from the market” (Indeed Guide, n.d.). Thus, job creation is inevitable with the demand for assistance in newly birthed fields and innovations. Jobs allow individuals to earn income that will contribute to a household and supply for buying power, hence, circulating more currency in the economy. Despite there being a risk of volatility, employees express more satisfaction with entrepreneurship and increased total sales and higher levels of royalty from a given (university) invention (Van Praag and Versloot, 2007).

Women Entrepreneurs In Botswana

According to the Mastercard Index, Botswana is second in leading the charge of the fastest growing number of women entrepreneurs (Mastercard Newsroom, n.d.). As technology advances, opportunities for business creation become more proliferated. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, more households turn to online shopping to fill their needs. “Ensuring access to technology or digital solutions, affordable data and modern trade



resources will empower more women to succeed in business (Mastercard Newsroom, n.d.). In many conversations around people who are disenfranchised, the conversation leads to access to resources that will enable an individual the opportunity to alter that individual's circumstances.

Botswana women have taken the charge of impacting the nation's economy through business development. Reflecting on the role of women in the past as mention in previous paragraphs, women had less autonomy and contribution to decision-making within a household because of tradition and patriarchy, but when men began to migrate for work, the women were able to experience a shift in control and eventually joined the migration as well to generate income. In the modern age, women have taken this charge further into entrepreneurial advancement. "Botswana's burgeoning women entrepreneurs are important drivers and contributors of the country's sustainable socio-economic growth (Nyela, n.d.).

Melissa Tafila | Tech

Melissa Tafila founded an award-winning, educational software company Conexus with Ostil Tafila that is headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana. The company serves 50 different elementary to secondary-level schools. It's an app that allows scholars "to access information for revision and testing in subjects such as math and science" (Botswana Rising Stars, n.d.). "Melissa Tafila was the person who converted the educational materials into an electronic format and stored this format in the servers" ("Melissa Tafila; Botswana's Leading Entrepreneur and Role Model, 2019). Conexus can provide jobs while preparing individuals who will contribute to Botswana's society and economy.

Theo Khumo | Fashion

Theo Khumo is a fashion designer who employs local seamstresses



who utilize their skills in bringing Botswana textiles and other materials from the continent to life. Customers submit orders on social media and the team of seamstresses create the order and can ship locally and internationally. Khumo describes her teams as, "a very strong qualified team of 4 tailors, two designers and 1 receptionist who work hard to take the brand to higher places. They learn new designs all the time and are so passionate about it" (Hawen, 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Botswana is consistently working to be on the forefront of progress and equity. In this feat, women are leading the charge by creating new and innovative fields as well as working creatively in existing traditional industries. Therefore, women are impacting the growth of Botswana's economy and drawing the eyes of the world to the Continent.

Lesson Plan

1. Have students research the natural resources of Botswana and their own countries. Create a business that fills a need in your community that could benefit the community in 2 ways.
2. They will find a woman entrepreneur that they will petition with a proposal to invest in the company the scholars create.
3. Scholars may pair in twos or split the class in half to complete the assignment.
4. Scholars will dress for a business meeting to present their proposals.

Charlotte Henry

African Youth: The Voices That Matter!



Cape town March for System Change, September 2022

“A voice crying out in the wilderness...” (Mark 1:3) epitomizes the sentiments of many African youth protesting against many injustices. It is a call for their demands, ideas and suggestions to be heard and executed. Across the continent of Africa, these voices are demanding changes on wide ranging issues from human rights to climate changes. They are appealing to their governments and other world leaders to change and what “their inaction was doing to the African continent and its people.” (Global Citizen)

The demands come from youth like Alaa Salah, a Sudanese Human Rights Activist and Emmanuel Cosmas Msoka, a Tanzanian activist

on water, sanitation, hygiene solutions. African youth are “standing up and speaking out for what Africa deserves.” (Global Citizen) Though there are more issues that are being addressed like the “End SARS” protest in Nigeria, the demand for climate change has become the most urgent. Apparently there has been some signs that the young voices are making an impact.

One such activist for climate change is Elizabeth Wathuti, a Kenyan youth activist who addressed delegates at the COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow which was a significant accomplishment. The 2021 “Conference of the Parties” COP26 was a gathering of the United

Nations leaders from 197 countries to discuss what can be done globally to protect the planet. “The agreement—although not legally binding—will set the global agenda on climate change for the next decade: emissions. It was agreed countries will meet in 2024 to pledge further cuts to emissions of carbon dioxide...” (BBC News) Wathuti urged the Global leaders: “to prioritize people and our planet over short-term profits.” (BBC News)

Another African youth, Zimbabwean activist; Nkosilathi Nyathi, has been speaking up for climate change. His demand has caught the ears of the UNICEF (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) and

the G20 (a group of 20 international governments and central bank governors from twenty countries)-backed Global Infrastructure Hub in 2016 to build a biogas digester at his primary school. (Global Citizen resource) Nyathi declares: “We must have a seat at the table for fighting for climate justice solutions.” (Nkosilathi Nyathi: A next-generation solution to the climate crisis). Nyathi demands that the youth should be taught more about climate change and “...include it in our subjects, in our school curriculums at all levels. If we, as a generation, are more informed, we will have more to offer...” (ditto)

Perhaps the most prominent voice among the youth in Africa is that of Vanessa Nakate, an activist from Uganda and the founder of the “Rise Up Movement,” an organization that “amplifies” the voices of climate activists in Africa. Nakate led a campaign to stop deforestation in the Congo rainforest. She was named a Young Leader of the Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations in 2020. Her journey started in 2018 when she discovered the

challenges like climate change in her country. In her quest to help the people of Uganda, Nakate has helped 31 schools install solar panels for the students and teachers so that they can have access to electricity. Moreover, she has helped plant trees, especially fruit trees not only to help the environment but also to provide food for the people. (The global opportunity to accelerate Africa’s sustainability)

As these and other youth from all parts of Africa continue to pressure their governments, their voices are resounding throughout the world. Many others are rising to protest for improved conditions for the planet and for their countries. This fight has become a ubiquitous mantra that is capturing the attention of leaders of different countries on a global scale including the UN. Because of these young advocates, many understand that the effects of climate change are real. Even though the changes are worldwide, “Africa is among the most affected and the least prepared regions of the world to cope with climate change and its disruptive effects and contributed least to its



Vanessa Nakate

causes.” (Jacob & Mysiak, 2022) However, like Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmental activist, points out in the African folklore: “The story of the Hummingbird,” do what you can; do the best you can do. Assuredly, the youth can agree with Vanessa Nakate that “...no action is too small to transform the world.” (Nakate Feb. 2023)

Lesson Plan

1. As a youth, why is it important to have a voice?
2. Coming from voices of youth, what effect do protests like “Climate Change” have on society? Are these voices being heard? Cite evidence.
3. Watch the video: “I Will Be a Hummingbird.” What message does the author convey?
4. Complete a Venn Diagram in which you draw parallels between an African youth activist with an American youth activist. Use this information to write an essay discussing the impact of the voices of youth.
5. For what cause in Africa would you become an activist? Prepare a power point presentation in which you explain your cause – why; identify your audience; include pictures and cite evidence.
6. Define activism, protest, Africa (identify Africa and a map of Africa).
7. Research Chimanda Adichie Ngozi and write down facts about her concentrating on information that portrays her as an example of a primary activist.
8. Participate in a school wide awareness day or in a debate club in which you educate fellow students of the issues you see pertinent in Africa for which youth would protest.

Jillian Blazas

Feminine Beauty: Soweï Mask A Mask Made by Men for Women

The tradition of masquerades is used throughout many cultures serving various functions. Masks are used to represent spirits, conduct rituals, tell stories, heal, and more. They are rooted in tradition. The Soweï mask is a sculpted helmet worn by women during the initiation ritual into the Sande Society.

To understand the Soweï mask, we must first understand its roots. Located on the continent in West Africa, is the country of Sierra Leone. This country is made up of many ethnic groups. The second largest ethnic group being the Mende (Anglès, & Riera, n.d.). The Mende people are typically located in Southern and Eastern Sierra Leone. They speak the language Mende. Within the Mende people are two secret societies. These societies are known as the Poro and Sande (Phillips, 1978). The Poro society is for men and the Sande for women. The purpose of these societies is to prepare young Mende boys and girls for adulthood. The Sande Society is responsible for the education of young girls and their responsibilities as a woman such as; attitudes towards men and authority, childbearing, and sexual behaviors (1978). It is expected that all Mende women become part of the Sande Society.

Young girls will begin their journey to become part of the Sande Society once they hit puberty. During this time, they will learn the ways of a woman. Once ready to become part of the society, the initiation process will occur. The initiation period used to last for several years, however, today it lasts a few weeks to months

(Phillips, 1978). Throughout the initiation process, Soweï masks are used to keep the public informed of important milestones (1978). The mask is used to represent the divine Sande (Richards, 1974). The Sande spirit upholds Mende ideals and authority of the society, and is known as the society's teacher, healer, and judge (Snyder, 2017). The dancer who wears the mask is known as *ndoli joweï* (Phillips, 1978). Dancers should not be identified as human and therefore every part of them must be covered. Along with the Soweï mask, the dancer will wear blackened raffia palms and cloth (2017). The Soweï mask is worn by a Sande society member of high ranking who is a skillful performer (Annenberg Learner, 2019).

Soweï masks are carved from wood and finished in a black color made from vegetable dye (Snyder, 2017). The glossy black finish symbolizes the beauty of clean,



healthy, oiled skin (Clarke, 2006). The masks are worn as helmets. Because these masks are worn over the head, they must be light in weight, typically weighing between two to four pounds (Richards, 1974). Although the masks are worn exclusively by women, they are created by Mende men. The men use these masks to portray their ideals of beauty. Men creating masks of women is not uncommon amongst many cultures. Author Elisabeth Cameron states, "Throughout Africa, men portray their ideals of and ideas about womanhood through such masquerades, providing a means by which women's gender roles are discussed and negotiated within a community (1998)." What makes the Soweï mask so unique is its tradition of women wearing them. According to Ruth Phillips, the Soweï mask is, "the only documented mask in Africa worn by women" (1978).

The Soweï mask contains four



distinct features: the neck, face, forehead, and coiffure (hairstyle). These features represent the ideals of Mende female beauty. The first feature of the mask is the neck. The neck will typically feature two to three rings of flesh. This signifies the Mende desire for plumpness, which is a sign for childbearing and prosperity (Snyder, 2017). This feature also allows for the dancer to wear the mask as a helmet, fitting comfortably over their head and resting on their shoulders. All the masks have holes at the bottom for the dancer to attach the raffia palms.

The next two features are the face and forehead. The Sowei mask has a broad and rounded forehead

with small, delicate facial features (eyes, lips, and ears). A broad forehead signifies knowledge. The eyes on the mask will be looking down. Occasionally, underneath the eyes will be scars, also known as scarification. This feature serves as a decorative marking and is based on the mask maker's stylistic preference (Snyder, 2017). The lips will be small and closed tightly. The closed lips imply self-control (Clarke, 2006).

The last feature of the mask is the elaborate coiffure. These masks will have a representation of hair and other embellishments built on top of the helmet. The purpose of the intricate coiffure is to symbolize the importance of initiates taking

proper care of their hair (Richards, 1974). Embellishments could include a turtle, bird, snake, animal horns, or many other significant Mende symbols.

The Sande Society still exists in the Mende community today, as does the tradition of the Sowei mask. Specific initiation details have changed to accommodate the secondary school calendars (Clarke, 2006). Due to its secretive nature, there is still much more to learn about the Sande Society. The Sowei mask continues to portray the ideals of feminine beauty and the woman's role in their community.



Sande society initiates, Sierra Leone

Lesson Plan

1. Classroom Discussion:

Can you think of some “initiations” we go through to become an adult in our society? What marks adulthood in our society? How do we celebrate becoming an adult?

2. Mask Design:

Create your own mask that you feel depicts feministic beauty in your own culture.

3. Research:

Given different pictures of Sowei masks, note the symbols on the mask. Research the significance of these symbols. Are there significant meanings? Why are they included on this mask?

Hattie Petty

The Importance of African Proverbs

Only a fool tests the depth of a river with both feet

Proverbs are condensed but memorable sayings that embody some important fact or experience that is taken as true by many people. Furthermore, proverbs are like metaphors, they are sayings or stories intended to assist learning, either for learning or in informal, family or folk learning. This characterizes proverbs as an acceptable form of communication. Proverbs have been and will always be timeless. The use of proverbs is a type of human communication. Like most communication, it is basically a giving and a receiving of meanings. As a medium of communication, one who speaks in proverbs initiates communication, encodes it and at the same time, expresses their mode of perception. The receiver or hearer accepts the message, decodes it, interprets, and add meaning in line with their own experience. The basic problem of any philosophy is the theory of knowledge, this is the method which the mind follows to arrive at reliable knowledge.

The *Ibibio* word for proverb is *NKE*. The word is a generic name for all those types of verbal expression which have more than one meaning—the second having a hidden and more profound one. Proverbs are wise saying that give advice about life. It

is a brief popular saying or a phrase that gives advice and effectively embodies a commonplace truth based on practical experience or common sense. Proverbs are culturally specific, yet their meaning has the universality; everyone can relate to them in some way and on some level.

There is a proverb for almost every situation that we encounter. We may sometimes not understand a big lecture, but we understand a small proverb very easily because the truth speak can span the globe.

Proverbs are a kernel which contains the wisdom of the people. They are philosophical and more expositions shrunk to a few words and form a mnemonic device for effective communication. The outer sweetness is intended merely to help listener to swallow the hidden ingredients and to internalize,

without fears, the behavioral norms, folk attitudes, and societal values that they convey. Whether you realize it, you probably speak in proverbs every day. Phrases like “Actions speak louder than words” and “When it rains, it pours” are so common we rarely think about how much meaning is packed into just a few words. Proverbs will remain timeless and will keep on shedding light to warn people against pitfalls and show the correct way. Generally using proverbs in the best effective way will make one feel more confident than speaking normal language.

Medier (2004) defined proverbs as a “short, generally known sentence which contains, wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation”. Proverbs bring out the essence of a given phenomenon, code of conducts, advice or give direct orders,



prohibitions and are commonly used in communicating important and deep meanings in Africa and almost everywhere else.

Proverbs are generally sprinkled into conversation in Africa. For instance, in Ethiopia, in the Amharic language proverbs are taken so seriously that each year a revised book of thousands of proverbs and riddles is published and used as a textbook in public schools. Children are expected to learn them and their meanings, and adults are praised and respected for skillful use of them.

Most African languages are rich in proverbs. Proverbs have had a great influence on the lifestyles of many people, mainly through means of religion and culture. Proverbs are an integral part of African culture. Passed on from generation to generation for centuries, they are still in wide use today and are very much part of everyday speech. Proverbs are used to illustrate ideas, reinforce arguments, and deliver messages of inspiration, consolation, celebration, and advice. The great Nigerian author Chinua Achebe once wrote: "Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten." In many cases, failure to grasp an African proverb is tantamount to failure to grasp the subtleties, the nuances, and the didactic finesse of African wisdom. Sayings of Africa are some of the most profound words you will ever hear. A famous example in Nigeria is the proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." In American society this proverb is a regular saying from the pulpit to the laundry mat and many do not know that this is an African proverb. African proverbs share with the world the practical wisdom the people have learned in their way of life. The Zulu proverb, "You cannot chase two antelopes at once," developed when African people found they could only capture one animal at a time because if they tried to focus on more than one, the animals they hunt would get away. This practical wisdom of tackling one thing at a time applies



African proverb: When Elephants Fight it is the grass that suffers.

to people all around the world not just those chasing wildlife. Proverbs provide an understanding of the way of life in Africa. The view on gender roles in Africa is summed up by the proverb from Ghana that says, "A woman is a flower in a garden; her husband is the fence around it", revealing that the wife was the frailer and gentler party whereas the husband deemed as a protective barrier and defense, perhaps more aggressive and possessive.

African proverbs teach wisdom and moral lesson. They are used to convey, moral lessons and advice on how to live a good prosperous life. They are an important tool for teaching moral and social values, and how to conduct oneself successfully in life. They also have the power to change people's conduct, because the truths portrayed in them are so plain and unchallengeable that those who understand the morals and advice contain, feel compelled to conduct their lives in the manner prescribed in the proverbs by wise elders.

Children as young as six years old in Africa are taught proverbs to help them navigate through many of life's challenges. African proverbs about life and wisdom are tied to the earth and the animals who inhabit it to convey daily life lessons. Some proverbs are romantic, some are comical, and some are thought provoking. Though proverbs vary

from group to group, many cover the same themes including community, family, work, and hospitality.

Proverbs also provide hard hitting messages in a profound way rather than in a nasty or demoralizing manner. One such example is the Zulu proverb, "when you bite indiscriminately, you end up eating your own tail". Another example is from Gambia "words are like bullets; once they escape you can't catch them again". These proverbs contain warning to people on the consequences of their action.

Proverbs are so central in some societies that meta-proverbs exist to extol the importance of learning one's proverbs. For the Kpelle, the largest ethnic the largest ethnic group in Liberia, tales and proverbs are routinely used to instruct children, to support arguments, and to warn against ill-considered behavior. Stories are commonly told in the evening as children listen and learn. In Ghana and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire it is a source of pride for an Akan elder when children display proverbial eloquence, as it is considered a make of intelligence. The importance of proverbs in many cultures is made apparent by the elevated status afforded to those who have mastered the art of the proverbs.

Proverbs also help to dispel the mistaken belief that one culture is

superior to another. Rather proverbs unify people around the world. The Yoruba of Nigeria clearly emphasize the worth of proverbs with a proverb of their own, by saying, “A proverb is the horse that can carry one swiftly to the discovery of ideas”. They can also give greater potency to any message you are trying to convey. For instance If you wanted to explain to someone the consequences of lying, the Yoruba proverb “you may tell little lies, small as a thorn, but they will grow to the size of a spear and kill you” will do it.

Proverbs were and still are relevant. They open doors to insightful and entertaining discussions. In many cases, failure to grasp an African proverb is considered a failure to grasp the subtleties, the nuances and the didactic finesse of African wisdom.

Africa has abundance inspirational sayings, many of which provide a captivating insight into the rich and vibrant culture that crafted them. Here are some examples of famous African proverbs and their meaning:

“Teeth do not see poverty”

Even when circumstances are dire, people will manage to find something to smile about.

“Do not look where you feel, but where you slipped

Rather than dwelling on your mistake, look at what caused you to make the mistake.

“The best way to eat an elephant in your path is to cut him up into little pieces”

The best way to solve a problem is to tackle it bit by bit, one step at a time”

“He who does not know one thing knows another”

No one can know everything but everyone knows something

So, whether you are reading African proverbs in 2021, 2030, 2045 these lessons will always be relevant, and they will help guide you on your life’s journey.



Carolyn Turner

Musical Instruments of Africa

Music is the heartbeat of Africa and as we drum so we
are drummed by the pulse of Africa

We celebrate as we stamp our feet, we celebrate as we
join the beat. The beat for Africa

Music is the harmony of Africa and as we sing, so we
are sung by the melody of Africa

We celebrate as we sing our song. We celebrate as we
hum along. We hum for Africa.

Music is the glue of Africa, and as we bind. So we are
bound by the unity of Africa

We celebrate as we join our hands. We celebrate as we
link our lands. We link for Africa.

Music is the movement of Africa, and as we move, so
we are moved by the life of Africa.

We celebrate as we band for Africa. We celebrate as
we stand for Africa. We stand for Africa!

Wayne Visser 2017

Africa, the birthplace of mankind, the second largest continent, is home to over 50 countries and over 2000 languages. Africa is also a land of beautiful musical instrumental genres (styles), classifications and timbres.

Usually, when we think of the music of Africa our minds automatically wander to the drums. We are not made aware of the genres of all the beautiful instruments of this wondrous continent and its people. In this article we will explore a few of the instruments of Africa including the classifications, timbres, and genres.

In Africa it is unrealistic to separate music from dance or bodily

movements. In the west there is more of a separation of these arts, but this article focuses on the instruments of Africa.

The instruments of the continent of Africa are divided into four (4) classifications: Idiophones, Chordophones, Aerophones and Membranophones. Each classification brings its own style and timbre. This article will describe each of these types of these instruments.

Membranophones

The membranophone is any of a class of instruments in which a stretched membrane vibrates to produce sound. According to the



Djembe Drum

shape, drums are classified as barrel, conical, cylindrical, footed, frame, goblet, long, vessel and waisted.

The most popular of the membranophones is the Djembe drum. The Djembe instrument is from West Africa and comes from the Bambara language which means “dje” from the verb “gather” and “be” is translated as “peace.” The body is carved out of hardwood and a drumhead made of untreated rawhide (most commonly goatskin). Traditionally the Djembe is played only by men. Other membranophones include the Dundun and Talking Drum to name a few.

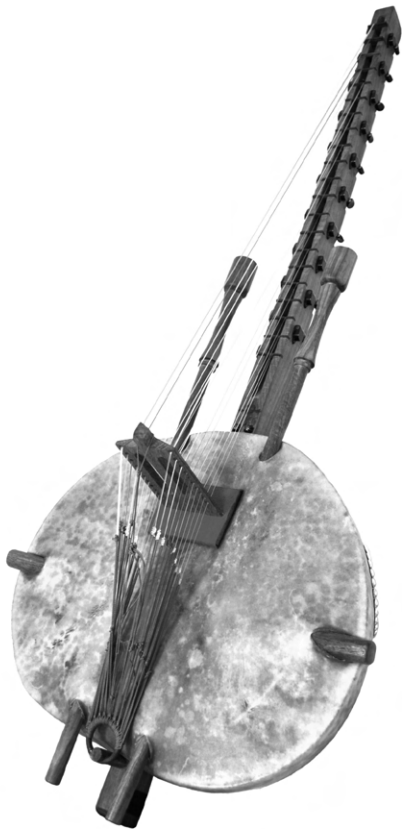
Aerophones

Aerophones are wind instruments and are found in various regions of the Continent. These regions range from southern Africa through the eastern Congo, Uganda, South Sudan, southern Ethiopia,

and Mozambique. Some of the aerophones of the continent of Africa include the Traverse Clarinet (West Africa Savanna) which has a single reed and Hausa where more than one or 2 notes are seldom produced.

Chordophones

Chordophones are stringed instruments of which any class of musical instruments in which a stretched vibrating string produces the initial sound. The chordophones are classified as the Triangular Harp and the Musical Bow. The most popular of



Kora

Ethiopian Mosengo Bowed Lute.

The Kora is a long-necked harp of the Mandinka people of Western Africa. The Kora is composed of a long hard-wood neck that passes through a calabash gourd resonator, which is covered by a leather soundboard. There are 21 leather or nylon strings that are attached at the top of the neck. This instrument is found commonly among the people who live near the Gambian River.

The Ethiopian Mosengo Bowed



Thumb Piano

Lute is a single stringed spiked bowed lute with a square or diamond shaped resonator. There are four (4) small wooden boards glued together then covered with raw hide parchment.

Idiophones

A class of musical instruments in which a resonant, solid material (such as wood, metal or stone) vibrates to produce the initial sound. There are eight basic types of idiophones. The types are concussion, friction, percussion, plucked, scraped, shaken, stamped, and stamping.

The Thumb piano is one of various musical instruments made of strips of metal fastened to a resonator and played by plucking with fingers and thumbs. The name comes from the Shona language of Zimbabwe.

The Balafon is an ancient West African instrument and is a kind of idiophone (an instrument that creates sound by vibrating). Balafon is a gourd resonated xylophone closely associated with neighboring Mande, Senoufo and Gur peoples of West Africa, particularly the Guinean branch of the Mandinka ethnic group.

Just as the continent of Africa is the birthplace of mankind, it is also the birthplace of so many musical instruments and genres. As I have spent my days reading and absorbing more and more about the continent and its music, I am even more thankful for the Center for African Studies Summer Institute through the University of Florida than ever. My eyes have been opened wider and, in the process, it will allow me to open the eager eyes of the many young people I work with.



Goede Hoop Marimba Band, 2019

James DeRemer

Contemporary African Music

African music has a rich and diverse history that goes back thousands of years and continues to flourish today. Like with any other region of the world, the music has changed- the genres have changed, the instruments have changed, and the purposes of the music have changed. Even without the same communication we have today to spread ideas and culture, music has progressed in similar ways throughout the world. The earliest forms of music are creating and using the most basic of instruments, typically made from trees or animals. As these instruments evolve, each region of the world takes on its own musical identity and becomes more traditional over time. As transportation improved, cultures began to influence each other more, including influences in art and music. In modern times, music from around the world is influenced by technology, media, and other cultures,

but continues to try to keep its own cultural identity while being globally accessible.

Traditional African Music

Traditional African music uses a variety of instruments from around the continent, though many of the instruments are similar to those from other countries. Instrument families are divided into four main groups for classification (not including electronic): aerophones (using air), chordophones (using strings), idiophones (hitting the instrument), and membranophones (stretched material, as in a drum). Some of these traditional instruments used throughout the continent are xylophones, mbira, flutes, harps, drums, horns, and shakers. This article will provide a brief description of popular music from different regions of Africa.

Music of North Africa

Northern African music includes Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, and Tunisia. Islam was an influence on the culture of North Africa, including art, music, and religion, after Muhammad's followers spread Islam west throughout North Africa.

DJ Snake is one of today's leading music artists in North Africa and is from Algeria. In his 2022 song "Disco Maghreb," the intro starts off with a stringed instrument before percussion and ghaita becomes the focus for the majority of the song. This song relies on these traditional-sounding instruments with Middle Eastern influence and adds drum samples to make it sound modern. DJ Snake wanted to fuse tradition with today's music and said "I imagined 'Disco Maghreb' as a bridge between different generations and origins,



DJ Snake, 2024



Crowd at a Fally Ipupa Concert in DR Congo, 2022

linking North Africa, the Arab world and beyond... This is a love letter to my people.”

Music of South Africa:

In Southern Africa, most of today’s music comes from South Africa. Some current music artists are Master KG, Wanitwa Mos, Kabza De Small, K.O., and Makhadzi. Amapiano is a popular genre in South Africa and is a mix of jazz, dance, and R&B.

Jerusalema is by Master KG and was released during the Covid pandemic. The song is in the Zulu language and some of the lyrics translate to “Jerusalem is my home/ Guide me / Take me with You / Do not leave me here.” The song uses clap samples, drum samples, background synth chords, and a female voice. There was a “Jerusalema” challenge on social media- dancing to the song, recording it, sharing it to social media, and challenging others to do the same.

Music of West Africa:

West African music is mainly in English and French and comes from countries like Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire, Senegal, and Ghana. Nigeria is one of the biggest producers of music

in Africa and relies on the genre Afrobeats. Afrobeats is upbeat and combines a variety of R&B, hip hop, rap, and reggae. Some popular artists of West Africa include Rema, Burna Boy, KS Bloom, Viviane Chidid, and Oxlade.

“Calm Down” was released by Nigerian music artist Rema in 2022. Six months after the release of “Calm Down,” Rema released a remix with Selena Gomez. As of June 2023, the remix with Selena Gomez was #3 on the Billboard Hot 100 and had been on the chart for 42 weeks. The song features an acoustic guitar throughout, trap beat, synth, and sampled sounds.

Music of East Africa

Popular music from East Africa comes from multiple countries, including Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, and South Sudan. Some music artists of East Africa are Vic West, Diamond Platnumz, and Pallaso. There have been several recent genres, such as Ngoma (traditional instruments), Taarab (Swahili songs with Arab melodies), Genge (hip hop), Boomba (hip hop and reggae), and Bongo Flava (hip hop, R&B, and afrobeats).

“Kuna Kuna” is a 2022 song by Vic West, a music artist from Kenya. The lyrics are in both English and Swahili, which are the two official languages of Kenya. “Kuna Kuna” uses synth, drum samples, and an acoustic guitar to make it sound modern, but also uses congas throughout to give it a traditional sound. These instruments, along with the background cheering, make it seem as though the song is taking place at an outdoor celebration or festival.

Music of Central Africa

Like with East Africa, music from Central Africa has a variety of styles from a variety of countries, including Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Cameroon. Some music artists of Central Africa include Locko, Ko-C, and Fally Ipupa.



Screenshot from the Kuna Kuna music video by Vic West

Congolese is genre from Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Congolese rumba mixes Cuban and Caribbean sounds to the traditional African music and, more recently, have used jazz, funk, rock, and electronic music.

“Bloqué” is one of the songs on Fally Ipupa’s 2023 album *Formule 7*. He is a music artist from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and speaks Lingala, French (the official language of the Democratic Republic of the Congo), and English. “Bloqué” has French lyrics, but Ipupa also sings songs in Lingala. The song starts with the traditional congas and adds synths that mimic brass and

woodwind instruments. The rhythms and synth sounds give the modern song a traditional sound.

Influence on Western Music

African music has been influenced in the past, such as with the spread of Christianity and Islam, but African music has also influenced popular music outside of Africa. The Atlantic Slave Trade brought millions of Africans to the New World over several centuries and with it, brought African traditions and African music. Over the centuries, the traditional African music progressed with

Christianity to spirituals. After slavery was outlawed in America, African American music continued to flourish, especially during the Harlem Renaissance. This cultural renaissance introduced blues, jazz, and R&B to the rest of the country, which evolved into Rock and Roll. Following the 1950s, R&B continued for decades and introduced the genres of hip hop and rap. Much of today’s popular western music is influenced by R&B, which has evolved for centuries and generations from traditional African music to today’s popular music in many countries throughout the world.



Screenshot from the *Family Problem* music video by KO-C

Lesson Plan

Bringing African Music in the Classroom:

1. The instructor will first present a PowerPoint on traditional African music, along with a background on Africa. The background information could include a map of Africa (and its size in comparison to countries and continents around the world), discussing the various regions, and some countries in each region. For traditional African music, information about the purpose and uses of music, the types of instruments and how each of these types are played, and what some of the instruments look and sound like.
2. Students will be assigned to a region of Africa and will research and present popular contemporary music from that region. Depending on the class size, students can be divided into pre-chosen countries that are most popular in today’s music in Africa instead of by region. Students would be expected to have information on countries in the region, genres that are popular, instruments that are used in music from the region, current popular artists, and popular songs. If multiple students have the same region, some artists and songs might be duplicated, but every duplication should emphasize the popularity of the artist or song. Given different pictures of Sowe masks, note the symbols on the mask. Research the significance of these symbols. Are there significant meanings? Why are they included on this mask?

Chad Holloway

Experiencing and Explaining Life Through the Lens of Yoruba's Orisha

Across all cultures a litany of common themes manifests quite often and most students in the global north have not had the opportunity to examine life through the lens of ANY west African cultures (Rainone 2020). Eurocentricity and colonization have become de facto barriers of ancient knowledge, culture, and customs. Curricula dictate ancient Grecian and Roman and even Egyptian cultures be explored while deliberately omitting the western African deities that rival their contemporaries in age, influence, spirituality, and complexity. The Yoruba people found in southwest Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana can trace their origins to the 1st millennium BC producing a history with breadth and depth that explains the intricacies

of life using *Ifa* (Robinson 2022). Cultures that have persisted over many millenia deserve the dignity of observation and acknowledgement in educational frameworks. *Ifa* is the bond that binds the eternal and other ephemeral themes that cultures share while avoiding quixotic statutes to which every follower must adhere.

Attempting to explain and comprehend human origin offers a quandary that begs resolution and the explanations are only limited by the number of societies that have manifested and the boundaries of human imagination. The Yoruba credit earth's creation to a council of *orisha* (gods). *Obatala* (the creator of the earth and all beings in the Yoruba religion) saw that there was no earth just water and sky so he partitioned the other gods to be the chief architect of the formless. Juxtaposed to other religions there is an intersection that may not be ignored. Where a formless void existed and a wise superior being made it so (KJV Genesis 1:2). After the creation, the eternal being became restless and created man in his own image guiding them in some endeavors (KJV Genesis 1:26).

Love in all of its forms play an integral role in most religions. In Judaism and Christianity, various types of love exist (eros, agape, etc.) (Soble 1989). In Greek, Latin and Hebrew the forms could not be interchanged therefore one could deduce in *Ifa* there are separate *Orisha* for separate types of love and relationships. *Oba* is an *Orisha* of love, but very specific types of love,

she was neglected by her husband and wish for his affections to return. *Oba* is the goddess for people whose love has been unrequited, abused, or misaligned. The honey pot that she carries can be a reward for those that have genuine affection or it may be a punishment of sour for those that have no regard for lovers (Bádéjò 1998). *Oshun* is the *Orisha* of romance and beauty; in the Bible the book Song of Solomon is dedicated to beauty and romance. This indicates a premium on the subject and shows its ubiquitous nature. Love in all its multitudes gets addressed often in religions and history it is a cornerstone of any society but again is rarely explored through the lens of indigenous west Africans (Bádéjò 1998).

In man's search for meaning, conflict arises. Life is the residual of choices and resolution of conflicts (Lowenhard 1991). Religions delivers examples of how to resolve conflict interpersonally and politically. In Yoruba(land), these conflicts may be explained or guided by *Ogun* or *Shango* (Lawuyi 1988) *Ogun* is the *orisha* of iron and war; his role is to make weapons and exude wrath but not for long (Lawuyi 1988). Another favorite of warriors is *Shango*. *Shango* brings thunder and lightning upon foes. Last but not least is *Kokou*. This *orisha* is also known as 'the destroyer'; he fought against a nation and won and eliminated invaders. There is an advantage to looking to different deities for different types of wars because there are a variety of reasons for human conflict (Butler



Yoruba sculpture of Oni, Oshira of life, 1100-1500

2006). Offering myriad methods of war resolution is better for mankind and the western African view of war and warriors provide additional layers and options for war and resolutions.

A key component or cornerstone characteristic of life and religion is growth. *Ifa* is no exception to this trend. There is a movement among evangelicals called the prosperity gospel that idealizes the possibility of being wealthy and amassing riches (KJV 1 Timothy 6:17). The idea of prosperity is as old as man and so it is fitting that there is an accompanying *orisha*. The goddess of riches and prosperity is *Aje*. She is the benevolent provider (Adeleye 2020). Verses in every sacred text refer to storehouses running over and abundance; this *orisha* conveys the same message (Adeleye 2020). Humankind is obsessed with posterity, advancement, and expansion and the Yoruba bring a

unique perspective to wealth. Also, the idea of growth covers family in most religions. In Islam, Judaism, and Christianity having descendants and family is intertwined with wealth (Keister 2003). A growing family is a component of growth. Continuing the theme, there are *orisha* that correspond with fertility and pregnancy. *Oshun* reappears on the parallel list as she, the *orisha* responsible for fertility. The river waters she controls bring forth life and there is a festival where partitioners bring sacrifices; the aforementioned practitioners of *ifa* usually want a child.

Death is the piper that must be paid and civilizations have wrestled with how to usher members of societies into the afterlife (Garces-Foley 2006). Western culture has made us aware of Satan, then devil, Beelzebub, the river Styx, etc. Death does not pass by (or Passover) Yorubaland. *Oya* is one of the deities

responsible for death (Gleason 2000). There are several but this goddess brings storms and is said to be one of the most powerful of all *orishas* (Gleason 2000). She controls the balance of life and death; her origin is that she disliked that the land was barren so she created a great storm that was sufficient enough to renew the land (Gleason 2000).

Teaching west African culture and religion could be integrated into the curriculum. There is overlap with western religion and ancient mythology in almost every west African religion. There is a plethora of beliefs to choose from but very few state curriculum place an emphasis on west Africa. Other cultures are prioritized and infused in courses while this portion of the continent is a knowledge vacuum. Highlighting the Yoruba should give perspective on the cultural complexity and relevance of a region that often gets overlooked.



Yoruba Egungun dancers

Lesson Plan

- Compare and contrast European Gods and Goddesses and their respective powers
- Look for Orisha references in pop culture
- Create playing cards for Orisha (kin to magic the gathering or Pokémon)
- Write a comic book based on one Orisha

Kevin Kelsey

Resilience Embodied: The Yoruba & the Yoruba Diaspora

Introduction

Ask any educator and they will tell you: the past three years have been some of the toughest times for teachers that the profession has known. The COVID-19 pandemic, political polarization, and the world-wide fight for economic, environmental, and racial justice have made the educational landscape fraught with difficulties. Children and young adults have been particularly impacted, and many bring mental health issues and trauma from their personal experience into the classrooms. Adding to this is the fact that, all over the world, an increasing number of displaced people are crossing borders to escape corruption, violence, and a lack of opportunity in their homeland. The

challenges seem almost endless.

For these reasons, I believe there has never been a better time to explicitly teach the virtue of resilience. Resilience is the ability to withstand and overcome difficult situations or challenges; to continue to move forward and be successful despite obstacles. It requires toughness, but also elasticity. As human beings continue to be negatively impacted by complicated local and global realities, growing in resilience is critical.

There are many methods for teaching resilience to students. One method is to analyze and draw lessons from an individual or group of people who embody this quality. In my mind, one of the foremost examples of resilience is the Yoruba people from West Africa.

Who are the Yoruba People?

The Yoruba are an ethnolinguistic people group of approximately 40 million primarily found in what is called “Yorubaland” spanning the southwest part of Nigeria, and into Benin, and Togo. They are one of the larger ethnic groups of people on the African continent (Wee, 2017). The Yoruba also have a large diaspora presence in North and South America and the Caribbean. The Yoruba people comprise one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria (making up 15.5% of the population, according to the CIA World Fact Book) and in Benin (12%).

For centuries, the Yoruba people have been united by a common language and culture, but never under a single governance. Rather, a patrilineal king ruled city-state kingdoms of varying size. While we consider “urbanized” people to be a modern historical phenomenon, the Yoruba were an urban people long before the colonial period. Their kingdoms were grouped around what are now present-day cities like Oyo, Ile-Ife, Ilesha, and Ibadan (Britannica, 2022).

Despite the Yoruba and Yorubaland being a major force on the African continent in the 17th and 18th centuries, Yoruba people were a small part of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade until the 1790s when Lagos became West Africa’s leading slave port (Ojo, 2008, p. 79). Approximately one million Yoruba were taken on the Middle Passage during this era (Ogundiran, 2021). Most enslaved Yoruba were taken to Brazil and to the Caribbean, namely



Map of Yorubaland

Cuba, Hispaniola, and Trinidad. Despite their enslavement, they managed to retain many of their cultural characteristics.

Back on the African continent, during the 19th century the British Empire colonized Yorubaland, bringing English customs, language, and religious practices to the area. In 1892 the British declared war on Ijebu, one of the Yoruba kingdoms, in response to the Ijebu's trade barriers imposed on the British. Emerging victorious, Britain annexed Ijebu, and eventually all of Yorubaland, into its protectorate as its Nigerian colony began to take shape.

Today, the Yoruba still retain their linguistic and cultural identity amid pluralistic societies like those of Nigeria. While a "first wave" of the Yoruba diaspora were forcibly brought to North and South America and the Caribbean in the 18th and 19th centuries, a "second wave" of the Yoruba diaspora has occurred in the 20th century, as Yoruba, particularly those from Nigeria, have chosen to migrate to countries like the U.K. and the United States (Akinrinade and Ogen, 2011, p. 73).

Distinctives of Yoruba Culture

One of the most distinctive aspects of Yoruba culture, and one that is central to their identity, is their religious beliefs. While it is true that many Yoruba today practice Christianity or Islam (due to the influence of British colonialism regarding the former, and Islamic expansion from North Africa the later), the fundamental religious beliefs of the Yoruba still provide a core source of belief, culture, language, and personal identity.

While a detailed discussion of Yoruba beliefs is beyond the scope of this article, the Yoruba religious system can be described as a complex form of polytheism. There are various versions of the origin myth, but most Yoruba believe that in the beginning, "there was only Olodumare, a being without definition because its essence cannot be comprehended by mortal man" (Gordon, 1979, p. 235). Olodumare is the supreme being but is distant from the affairs of humans. The gods and goddesses of Yoruba religion are known as orisha and have their origin in Olodumare. The orisha helped create the world, and most orishas

are said to have taken human form, or to be humans who were divinized after they died (Ogbodo, 2022). After spiritual infighting among the first orishas, a mortal man, Obatala, was created to rule the earth. One version of the myth tells the tale of how Obatala, upon being commissioned to create the world, engaged in drunken and disorderly behavior, and was replaced by Oduduwa, whom many Yoruba claim is the progenitor of humanity, and who is revered among most Yoruba (Udo, 2020, p. 30). Incestuous relationships among the Yoruba pantheon led Obatala's daughter Yemaja to die from sorrow in what would become the holy city of Ile-Ife. Upon death, Yemaja's belly burst open, whereby fourteen new orisha came into existence (Gordon, 1979, p. 236). From there, the number of orisha continued to grow through the Yoruba practice of mythmaking, storytelling, music, and art. There are said to be about 400 orisha, although some sources claim more. The orishas of Yoruba religion take on different names based on the geographical location and linguistic background of the people, yet the essence of Yoruba theology retains its core.



Osun-Osogbo festival, 2023



Yoruba dancers at the World Yoruba Carnival of Arts and Culture festival

Another distinctive aspect of Yoruba culture is its vibrancy and expressiveness. The Yoruba have long been known as some of the most skilled craftspeople in Africa. Basketry, blacksmithing, glassmaking, leatherworking, and woodcarving are trades in which the Yoruba have thrived (Britannica, 2022). Yoruba arts, crafts, and music all serve a practical function, particularly in enacting and embodying their religious beliefs (McNaughton and Pelrine, 2014, p. 169). The Yoruba celebrate at least thirteen important festivals each year and these communal events are full of music, dancing, and colorful, elaborate costumes and masks. Drums are one of the principal instruments in these public ceremonies, and they draw thousands of participants and observers from all over Yorubaland and the Yoruba diaspora.

A final distinctive aspect of Yoruba culture worth noting is its adaptability. The Yoruba adapted to their environment and grew in power and wealth over centuries of its ancient and pre-colonial history. Despite being forcibly taken from their homeland and trafficked to the “New World” during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the first wave of the Yoruba diaspora adapted to their new surroundings and maintained the core of their culture. As Udo (2020, p. 39) notes, enslaved

Yoruba taken to the Americas and the Caribbean, “preserved through adaptation those elements of Yoruba culture that slavery could not halt and the pains and toils of the plantation could never completely obliterate.” During the colonial period, despite British and French imposition of Western cultural customs and languages, the Yoruba maintained their traditional language and practices. Up to the present day, from colonialism, through the political turmoil of the independence movements in Western Africa, and civil war in Nigeria, the Yoruba endure.

The Yoruba Diaspora

While other people groups were taken from Africa during the Trans-Atlantic slave trade (and some in greater numbers), the Yoruba people have a fascinating presence in the African diaspora. Filmmaker Toyin Ibrahim Adekeye, who directed the documentary film *Bigger Than Africa*, declared that “the most pronounced African culture in the diaspora is Yoruba” (Ighobor, 2019). Space does not permit an exhaustive treatment of the first wave of the Yoruba diaspora as part of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. However, a few locations must be noted.

The largest and most historic Yoruba population in the diaspora is found in Bahia state in Brazil. It is estimated that almost half a million enslaved Yoruba were brought to Bahia, representing about 40% of all Africans brought to that area (Udo, 2020, p. 29). Bringing their Yoruba language, culture, and religious traditions with them, yet encountering the Portuguese culture of their captors, enslaved Yoruba in Bahia developed a syncretized religious system, overlaying many of the saints of Roman Catholicism with the orishas of their homeland. The result is Candomblé, a religion still practiced in Bahia today and centered



Yoruba Festival of Yemanja, Bahai, Brazil



A group of Yoruba Dancers from Osun State, Nigeria in their traditional Adire attire

in the capital city of Salvador. African historian Jacob Gordon notes that Candomblé “has remained one of the ‘purest’ religions, with respect to Yoruba ritual, and has been one of the most conservative and Africa-oriented of the sects” (1979, p. 238).

A similar phenomenon occurred in Cuba, where it is estimated that 12% of the enslaved African population were Yoruba (Udo, 2020, p. 28). There, Yoruba people created another syncretized religion, Santería. Like Candomblé, Santería fuses Roman Catholic influence (this time from Spain) with Yoruba theology. Both Candomblé and Santería continue to use the Yoruba language, deity names and personalities, music, and dance styles in their liturgy. Also, like Candomblé, Santería identifies orishas with Roman Catholic saints. Following the Cuban Revolution in 1959, Santería quickly spread to other countries in the Americas, particularly those with Afro-Latin populations: Argentina, Columbia, Peru, and Puerto Rico, to

name a few (Udo, 2020, p. 32). More recently, the political connections between Cuba and Venezuela have seen a rise in Santería adherence among Venezuelans (Associated Press, 2008).

Sizeable Yoruba populations also grew during the first wave in Saint Domingue (now Haiti) and the islands of Trinidad and Tobago. The links between Yoruba religion and Haitian Vodou have been well-researched (Fandrich, 2007), as has the link between Trinidad and Tobago’s Orisha religion and the religious practice of the Yoruba (Trotman, 1976). In all these cases—the Portuguese in Brazil, the Spanish in Cuba, the French in Haiti, and the English in Trinidad and Tobago—Yoruba religion adapted and thrived despite the cultural encounters and pressures from the major European colonial powers.

No discussion of the Yoruba diaspora would be complete, however, without mentioning the second wave. As noted above, Yoruba

peoples have continued to migrate to other areas of the world. Many second wave diaspora Yoruba are from Nigeria. Here in the United States, Nigerians are the largest source of African immigration (Migration Policy Institute, 2015). As my Nigerian friend Arinze likes to tell me, “Nigerians are everywhere!” That also means the Yoruba are everywhere! When they immigrate, Yoruba people generally have a tight kinship, establishing community through cultural enclaves and religious observance. This also provides a way for people of African descent born outside the continent to connect to their roots. Indeed, an increasing number of African Americans are drawn to Yoruba culture and religion to connect with their long-lost history and culture (Johnson, 2013). In turn, this has led to a burgeoning tourism industry, particularly in Nigeria, where African Americans are traveling to engage with Yoruba culture in its homeland (Adebola, 2023).

Why teach the Yoruba?

All of this begs the question: why teach about the Yoruba? There are several reasons but let me highlight three.

First, in an increasingly pluralistic, multi-cultural society, many of our students will have a direct connection to the Yoruba people or come from places where there is a Yoruba presence. Since I teach ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) at the high school

level, my students come from all over the world, but primarily Central and South America and the Caribbean. Many of my students come from Brazil, Columbia, Cuba, Haiti, and Venezuela, all of which have been influence by Yoruba culture and religion. Knowing about the Yoruba people can help my students connect more deeply with their own culture, in addition to teaching them about an important culture in Africa.

Secondly, while evidence indicates that religious adherence is declining in Europe and North

America, it is growing and thriving in the Global South: Africa, Southern Asia, and Central and South America (Stark, 2015). Religion is a vital factor in the lives of many of our students, particularly those from the Global South. In my view, students get few opportunities to talk about their religious beliefs in the classroom. Learning about the Yoruba and their theology can open avenues for deeper discussions with our students about what they believe and why. This kind of dialogue is critical in order to build a cohesive society where human beings learn how to live together peacefully, despite having differing views on fundamental beliefs.

Third, as mentioned before, students need to learn resilience. As Brooks and Goldstein say, effective educators understand “the lifelong influence they have on students, including instilling a sense of hope and resilience” (2008, p. 116). Teachers have the power to instill resilience in their students. Given what we know about the history of the Yoruba people, their ability to adapt to their surrounds, to thrive amid challenges, and to remain a vibrant, expressive culture, I can think of no better people for us and our students to learn from than the Yoruba.



Yoruba Shekere instrument

Lesson Plan

Ethnic Group Research Project

Although this paper focused on the Yoruba, the teacher could pick another ethnic group to portray the diversity in Africa.

1. Teacher will share a presentation about the history and distinctives of the chosen group.
2. Students will find a point of connection with their group’s culture and will engage in independent research on that topic.
3. If students come from a country with a Yoruba presence, they can be encouraged to research the Yoruba people in that context. Otherwise students may choose to research a different ethnic group.
4. Students will create a PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation showing the fruit of their research. If possible, the teacher can give feedback and help strengthen the presentation.
5. Students will present their research orally to their classmates and write a reflection paper about their experience.

Katrece Freeman-Boyd

The Significance of the Sycamore Fig Tree and the Voice of the Woman

Introduction

Who and what determines the value of a woman? How does her existence impact a world that cultivates a force aiming to silence her voice? Does the value of one person rely on the existence of another? The complexity of a woman's value is not predicated on one factor. The fight and mission to be acknowledged and valued by all of humanity is a mission amongst many women. Her voice releases the hopes and dreams that resonate along the hearts of women across the world. To be silenced would mean to withhold the earth from the value of wisdom, beauty, determination, and strength. While studying and reviewing the essence of the Sycamore Fig Tree and the wasp, I found common strands that unify the woman's voice, her livelihood, and the conservation of land through the eyes Nobel Peace Prize laureate Wangari Maathi.

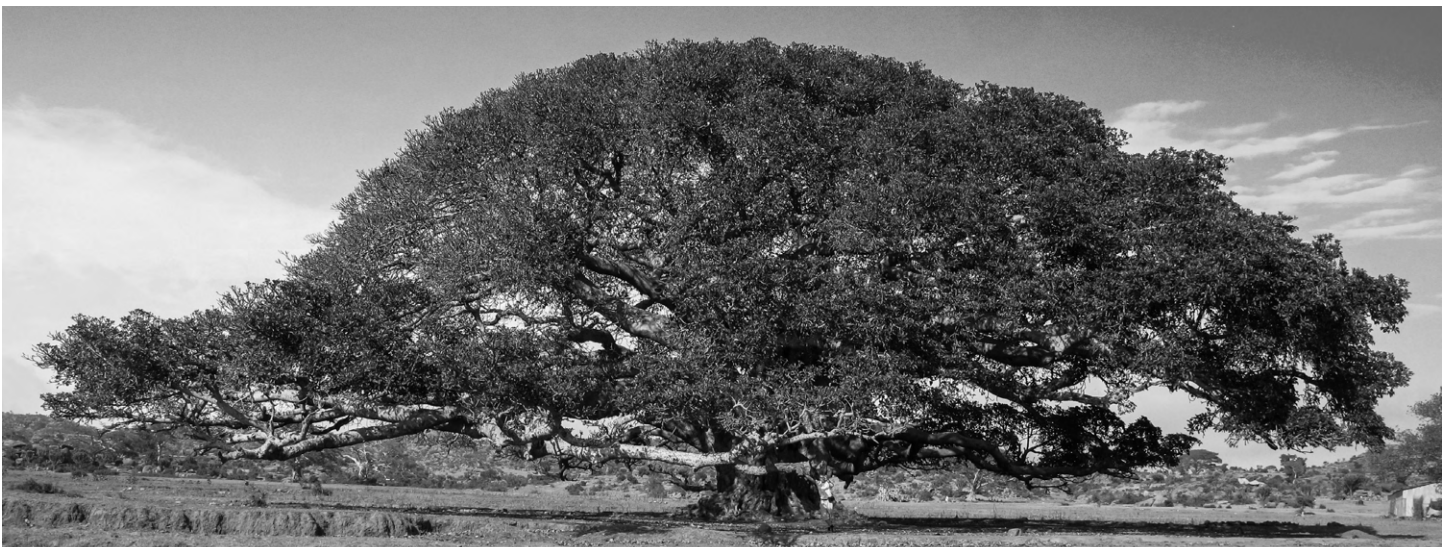
The Sycamore Fig Tree

Reaching heights of over sixty feet tall, the Sycamore Fig Tree also known as the *ficus sycomorus*, the "Queen of Trees", mikomo, mugumo, and the mikuyu can be found in central and northern Africa (Slow Food, 2022). Kenya is one place where the Sycamore Fig Tree grows. The Kikuyu people of Kenya connect the tree with their spiritual beliefs. To the Kikuyu, the tree possesses the ability to increase fertility amongst women, and cattle. Underneath the tree's broad branches and leaves, the Kikuyu gather to offer prayers for rain in hopes that the land will be vital for their crops. According to Samantha Wilde in "The Greenbelt Movement: Queen of Africa's Sacred Trees: The Fig Tree", "Kikuyu men still pray for riches and for the blessing of rain, without which their crops will not grow, nor will there be

fresh green grass for their cattle and sheep. To ensure pregnancy Kikuyu women smear themselves with the milky juice of the tree and pray beneath the tree that they may bear offspring." (Wilde, 2012)

It's also considered a place where the Kikuyu people work out their differences. Elders would gather underneath the Sycamore Fig Tree to settle difficult choices and decisions. The "cases would be heard and determined by elders [as well] .. a shrine, a place of worship and sacrifices." (BBC, 2020)

Another notable attribute of The Sycamore Fig Tree is the fruit it bears. It provides a fleshy, sweet fruit filled with seeds that can be consumed raw or cooked. The leaves provide nutrition for cattle. The bark provides wood for cooking as well as fibers for weaving. The tree also bears a milky latex that is utilized for medicinal purposes. Many Kenyans



Ficus Daaro Sycamore at Segeneyti, symbol of Eritrea



use it for “for treatment of dysentery and chest diseases, or is applied to inflamed areas, while ringworm is treated with the bark and milky latex. Leaves are said to be effective treatment against jaundice and as an antidote for snakebite, while the roots have laxative and anthelmintic properties” (Infonet Biovision, 2022)

Symbiotic Living

The Sycamore Fig Tree exists with a unique cohabitor, the Fig Wasp. Both the Sycamore Tree and the Fig Wasp depend upon each other through symbiosis. A fertilized female wasp carries pollen on her body and enters the syconium of the fig to lay her eggs. The fig is unique because its female and male flowers lie inside the fig. In the process of laying eggs, the female wasp pollinates the flowers that lie inside the fig. While the fig matures, the larvae develop. Male larvae mature into wasps. Eventually, the male wasp begins to impregnate female wasps located in the gall formed by the flower ovaries inside of the fig. Once the female emerges from the gall, she leaves to search for another fig tree to deposit her eggs. This symbiotic cycle provides pollination for the fig tree and a place for the wasp to mature and grow. (Britannica, 2013)

Likewise, there is symbiosis or similar existence between the Sycamore Fig Tree and the Kikuyu people as well. Its significance holds

value that extends beyond Pre-colonial Africa.

The Kikuyu people revered the Sycamore Fig Tree for its shade and belief of providing fertility. The Sycamore Fig Tree also depends upon a ground that stabilizes life. It binds the ground together to hold the minerals and nutrients needed to enhance and nurture growth. Similarly, the Kikuyu people grow and depend upon the trees’ nurture to bind their lives together as well. Wilde further delineates that the Sycamore Fig Tree, the Kikuyu people, and the land possess a symbiotic relationship that unites them and protects them. The functionality and symbiosis of unity lies in the core of the land, the Sycamore Fig Tree and belief system of the Kikuyus in Kenya. “The Fig Tree not only binds communities through these shared beliefs, or ‘eco-spiritualism’ as it has been labeled, but practically upholds the land against environmental degradation.” (Wilde, 2012)

The Sycamore Fig Tree in the Bible

The Sycamore Fig Tree is also mentioned in the Bible. In Luke 19:1-10, 1) “Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2) A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3) He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see

over the crowd. 4) So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. 5) When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” 6) So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. 7) All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.” 8) But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” 9) Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10) For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Biblica, 2011)

Zaccheus, a rich man and despised tax collector, wanted to get a glimpse of Jesus. Jesus was said to have the answers to problems and Zaccheus wanted to see who this man was. One may ask or say, “What’s so odd about wanting to see Jesus or climbing a Sycamore Fig Tree?” On the onset, one must understand that Zaccheus’ height would not allow him to see beyond the people who were taller than him. In short, he was “short”. So, he climbed a Sycamore Fig Tree.

The odd part is that a man of his stature would not be seen in a tree. It was considered something beneath his socioeconomic status. But, his faith and desires superseded the social norms of those around him. On that day, Zaccheus reached a new level of clarity. “This story led to the association of the sycamore tree to clarity and this can be seen as a sign that [one is] able to go through all the troubles in [one’s] way. If [one is] currently facing troubles in [one’s] life and [one does] not know what to do next, the presence of the sycamore tree around [one] can be seen as a sign that [one] will find the solution soon.” (Tree Symbolism, n.d.)

Just like Zaccheus, Wangari

Matthai's clarity would challenge the social norms of Kenyan women. She would not surrender to the relegated rules of society. She would challenge the expectations at the risk of her life and reputation and find a solution to problems that engulfed the land, and the women in Kenya. She would climb a symbolic Sycamore Fig Tree to fight for the voice of women and the vitality of the land.

Wangari and the Greenbelt Movement

When considering the importance of the Sycamore Fig Tree in Kenya, one must review and understand the legacy of Wangari Maathai and her establishment of the Greenbelt Movement. "Wangari Maathai was the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. She was also the first female scholar from East and Central Africa to take a doctorate (in biology), and the first female professor ever in her home country of Kenya. Maathai played an active part in the struggle for democracy in Kenya, and belonged to the opposition to Daniel Arap Moi's regime." (The Nobel Prize, 2004)

In 1977, Maathai heard the outcries of the women in Kenya. Their resources for water and nutrition were rapidly disappearing due to deforestation and the degradation of their land. In addition, the women felt oppressed and desired to be recognized as valuable contributors to their families and their communities. In response to their concerns and challenges, Maathai took action to bring about a change that would produce economic gain for women, political changes, and environmental changes long into the distant future. (Maathai, 2006)

Maathai relentlessly pursued the conservation of land. As water resources began to dry up, she knew that families, especially women would suffer from the deterioration of the soil. In *Unbowed*, Wangari Maathai states, "I later learned that

there was a connection between the fig tree's root system and the underground reservoirs. The roots burrowed deep into the ground, breaking through the rocks beneath the surface soil and diving into the underground water table...The trees also held the soil together, reducing erosion and landslides. In such ways, without conscious or deliberate effort, these cultural and spiritual practices contributed to the conservation of biodiversity." (Maathai, 2006) The trees needed

the soil and the women needed the trees for their families. This cycle of reciprocity provided a tight eco-structure for the Kikuyu people. The breakdown of the cycle evoked a cry for healing. Thus, Wangari birthed the Greenbelt Movement.

Wangari's Greenbelt Movement identified the ways in which women's liberty and land conservation intersect. Deforestation threatened the livelihoods of many Kenyans and broke the natural interaction of the people with the land. Maathai's vision



Wangari Maathai

and purpose demanded that she use her hands and more importantly her voice for change. She wanted to reverse the effects of desertification. Maathai encouraged and taught the local women about the importance of planting trees and how it would improve the soil and empower their lives. Thus, thousands of trees were planted to provide the necessary means for the Kikuyu people.

“The Green Belt Movement uses a watershed-based approach to restore degraded watersheds of key water catchments so as to improve their functions and improve the livelihood of the local communities.” (GBM)

Unfortunately, many people and politicians fought against Mathaai’s philosophy and approach to conservation. In this great effort, Maathai’s opposition greeted her demands that beat her emotionally and physically, demands that attempted to strip her pursuit of freedom, joy, and zeal to the bare nakedness of defeat. However, their daggers of envy and oppression would not be exchanged for triumph. Maathai rose to empower women to be the change they wanted to see in life. Her voice drove countless women to fight for their land, their health, and their power. Each tree planted placed the Greenbelt Movement closer towards the victory of change (Mathaai, 2006).

The Voice of Change Through the Fig Tree

Maathai’s voice resonates change not only in Kenya but internationally as well. Her push for women’s rights through the planting of over 900,000 trees opened the doors for many women to change their economic status. It lifted women out of poverty and into a momentum thrust of change. “The Green Belt Movement instituted seminars in civic and environmental education, now called Community Empowerment and Education seminars (CEE), to encourage individuals to examine

why they lacked agency to change their political, economic, and environmental circumstances. Participants began to understand that for years they had been placing their trust in leaders who had betrayed them and that they were sabotaging their lives by not working for the common good and failing to use their natural resources wisely.” (GBM, 2022)

As agitators and protesters pressed Maathai to end her pursuit of change, she grew with passion. Maathai’s voice would not be silenced. She even faced deep discontent from her own spouse, who challenged her desires for equality, strength and power. “Her husband, Mwangi Maathai, divorced her for being “too strong-minded for a woman.” She challenged the divorce in court, and when she lost she called the judge “incompetent and corrupt.” The remarks landed her in jail for six months.” (Ighobor, n.d.)

Yet, Maathai’s hopes and dreams would not be smothered under fear and hopelessness. Her relentless example of patience and tenacity germinated the seeds of change and hope. At times, the women pursuing change and liberty would feel discouraged and anxious for immediate results. Maathai said, “What I have learned over the years is that we must be patient, persistent, and committed. When planting trees sometimes people will say to me, ‘I don’t want to plant this tree, because it will not grow fast

enough.’ I have to keep reminding them that the trees they are cutting today were not planted by them, but by those who came before. So, they must plant the trees that will benefit the communities in the future. I remind them that like a seedling, with sun, good soil, and abundant rain, the roots of our future will bury themselves in the ground and a canopy of hope will reach into the sky.” (Mathaai, 2006)

Conclusion

Mathaai planted the seeds of hope in the Kikuyu people, women across the world and her children as well. Her daughter, Wanjira Mathai expressed the ideology of “the power of one” and how to be a conduit of change in a TED Talk, 3 Ways to Uproot a Culture of Corruption. She reminisces about a lesson from her mother stating that “each of us can be potent agents of change and that together, we are a force. If we put our hands together, we can change the situation. No problem is too big.” (TedTalk) Through the planting of trees and the driving force behind Wangari Matthai, the voices of those who longed for change are able to experience the fruits of their labor. The efforts that are implemented today will be the harvest of the future.



Karen Wallance

The Art of Storytelling: Contemporary African Women Artists

There is an African proverb which explains why it is important to tell your story. The proverb is,

**Until the lion
learns how to
write every
story will be
about the
hunter.**

The story of Africa and people throughout the continent has been typically written from a Western perspective. Now contemporary African artists, writers, and musicians are changing the narrative of what it means to be 'African'. The continent of Africa is full of diversity from the languages, cultures, and religions to its geography. Contemporary African female artists are telling their stories from the lens of Afrofuturism and Afropolitanism through a female perspective.

Storytelling has been a tradition on the continent of Africa for thousands of years. Storytellers in West Africa (griots) were responsible for documenting a society's history. According to Tuwe (2016), "The function of storytelling has been identified as meditating and transmitting of knowledge and information across generations, conveying information to younger generations about culture, worldview morals, and expectations, norms, and

values." Storytelling is not limited to oral tradition. Contemporary African artists and artists from the diaspora are documenting history, traditions, and culture using visual storytelling. Sarpong (2021) noted, "It is our duty to document and share this art for future generations. We are living through history, and although we made read it or hear it, history is brought to life when we can see through imagery. History has too often been hidden from us, nowhere more so than the history of Africa and its people."

There are many functions and variations of contemporary African art. It depends on the artist, their country of origin, and what story they want to tell. African women tell their stories through art in different ways. Artists such Njideka Akunyili Crosby (Nigeria), Wangechi Mutu (Kenya), Zanele Muholi (South Africa), and Ghada Amer (Egypt) create art which demonstrates the evolution of African culture over generations. All of these artists are visual storytellers who use their art to enlighten people about the struggles of people in contemporary Africa.

The aim of their art is to show the beauty and the struggle in being an African woman. Njideka Akunyili Crosby creates collage paintings which weave together intimate moments with commercial images from Nigeria to show the evolution of Nigeria before colonialization through the contemporary age. Njideka Akunyili Crosby said,

"You don't exist if you are not represented... I felt a need to claim my own social existence by making the representation happen" (Quotes by living artists, n.d.) Wangechi Mutu creates stories through mixed media design to show how powerful women are. Wangechi said, "For me collages manage to- it satisfies all of my madness, like I'm able to make these obsessive things, but then I'm also able to make these very strong statements" (Brainy Quotes, n.d.). Zanele Muholi uses photography and film to advocate for members of the LGBTQ community who are often risking their lives to by living authentically (Tate, n.d). According to Greenberg (2019), "Muholi prefers to be called an activist rather than an artist. Art for them, is a means to an end, a tool to convey messages about social empowerment and visibility." Ghada Amer creates embroidery to bring awareness to women's struggle to be viewed for all of their attributes not from a male perspective that degrades and objectifies them. Ghada Amer said, "No woman can call herself free who does not control her own body."

Contemporary African Art

What it means to be a contemporary African artist has been defined by Western artists and art curators. It was not until the 1990s that Africans have taken responsibility of defining and writing their own story. The evolution of art in Africa has changed over time.

Contemporary African art is more focused on what it means to be Black and the experiences of being Black. According to Badinella and Chong (2015), Blackness is a state of consciousness that peoples of various pigmentation have experienced, empathized with, and responded to.” Modernist or contemporary African art is often viewed through a Western perspective by people who have no connections to the African continent. Bandinella and Chong observed, “Contemporary African art no longer refers only to a geographic space, and identity is no longer exclusively linked to one’s country of origin. A diasporan form of identity exists.” Several artists act as visual storytellers. However, the artists featured in this article, all demonstrate that art can be used to tell women’s stories through a feminist lens. According to the Smithsonian Institution (n.d.), “Contemporary feminism is not based on any single narrative of womanhood, but explores the vital contributions of women to numerous issues including the environment,

identity, politics, race, sexuality, social activism and faith.”

Contemporary African Female Artists

Njideka Akunyili Crosby- NIGERIA

Njideka Akunyili Crosby is a Nigerian born mixed-media artist who resides in Los Angeles California. She is the recipient of a 2021 United States Artists Fellowship and a 2017 MacArthur Fellow and was awarded the Financial Times Women of the Year in 2016. Njideka Akunyili Crosby’s artistic style is centered on creating murals combining paint with collage, printmaking and drawing to create intricate layered scenes (Relf, 2020). She is often inspired by photographs from artists around the African continent and the influence of African culture in the diaspora and on a global scale. She is part of a movement called Afropolitans. Afropolitan is a term used to describe an African person who has roots in Africa, but has been inspired by global influences because of leaving

the continent to get jobs, become educated, or to escape persecution (Whitney Museum of American Art, 2018). Brendah Naykydya, editor of Afropolitan Magazine explained, “An Afropolitan is someone who has roots in Africa, raised by the world and still has an interest in the continent and making an impact” (Tutton, 2012). Njideka Akunyili Crosby grew up in Nigeria but moved to the United States when she was a teenager. Her work is inspired by her upbringing in Eastern Nigeria, her exposure to British culture due to her parents’ upbringing during the independence movement in Nigeria, and her current home in the United States (Solway, 2017). Njideka describes herself as having an ‘hybrid identity’ which is one based on her strong attachments to her birthplace in Nigeria and her adopted home in the United States. Njideka’s art is often associated with her contemporary Wangechi Mutu who also creates mixed media art with a message. According to Van Verran (2019), the works of Njideka Akunyili Crosby and Wangechi Mutu tell stories about gender, race, sexuality, colonialism, war, consumption, migration, memory, and visual art from a fusion between traditional Nigerian culture and the contemporary world. Njideka Akunyili described the purpose of work as, “a place to explore the spaces where disparate cultures overlap (Victoria Miro, n.d.).

Wangechi Mutu- KENYA

Wangechi Mutu is a Kenyan born mixed media artist. Mutu’s art is inspired by the female body. Her collages, drawings, sculptures, and film portray images of the female body as powerful, self-possessed figures (Art 21, n.d.). Her art comes from a variety of sources such as natural materials to fashion magazines, medical diagrams, and traditional African art. According to Art 21, “The artist creates otherworldly realms



Njideka Akunyili Crosby, *Ejuna na-aga, ọ kpulọ nkọlikọ ya*; New Haven (Enugu) in New Haven (CT), 2022



Wangechi Mutu, *Le Noble Savage*, 2006

that examine cultural identity, the feminine, colonial history, and global consumption.” In 2019, Wangechi Mutu was commissioned to create an exhibit in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The exhibit is called *The New Ones will free us*. Wangechi

Mutu infused her style of art which glorifies women and their place in society with the classical Greco-Roman sculptures which occupy the same space in the museum. In an artist talk with the Metropolitan Museum, Mutu discussed how

women in Greek and Roman art were used to hold up structures and women in African art had a similar purpose to hold up children, pots, and even king’s stools. Mutu explained that she wanted to change the conversation about women by putting women in an active pose without carrying something or someone. Wangechi Mutu added rings as a sign of protection and lip rings which were used as a symbol for being a woman of status in Ethiopia. Wangechi Mutu’s art tells a story about the intersection of race gender, and culture through a feminist lens. Guerogueiev said, “Mutu’s visual voice is distinct and knowing, the Postmodern method is still effective and the issues she works with remain acutely vital.” Mutu turned the lip rings into mirror to catch light and flash from a distance. Wangechi Mutu said, “Women’s bodies are always at the front of so much of expression, the hostility, of how humankind sees itself. I see these women as characters that have the capacity, the freedom, and the opportunity, to be where they need to be to say what they have to say. They’re here... They’re present and have arrived” (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019). The art which Wangechi Mutu creates is categorized as Afrofuturism. Afrofuturism was coined by a cultural critic named Mary Dery in 1993, and addresses themes and concerns of the African diaspora through figurative science fiction and techno-cultural framework (Leiman, 2018). Afrofuturism is a way to articulate the future as well as present day experiences and deconstruct the narrative of Africanness and tradition as standing in the way of technological progress (Leiman, 2018). Mutu’s work primarily explores the violence and misrepresentation that women, specifically Black women experience in the contemporary world. Mutu said this about her art, “I’m really trying to pay homage to the notion of



Zanele Muholi, *Manzi I*, West Coast, Cape Town, 2022

the sublime and abject together and using the aesthetic of rejection, or poverty, or wretchedness as a tool to talk about this that transcendent and hopeful” (Leiman, 2018). Wangechi Mutu’s art tells a story about the intersection of race gender, and culture through a feminist lens. She creates collages of everyday, for as Guerogueiev said, “Mutu’s visual voice is distinct and knowing, the Postmodern method is still effective and the issues she works with remain acutely vital.”

Zanele Muholi – SOUTH AFRICA

Zanele Muholi is a South African artist who typically creates art that reflects activism. Zanele Muholi self identifies as a visual activist and their development as a photographer is intertwined with their advocacy on behalf of the LGBT

community (Guggenheim Museum, n.d.). According to Tate (n.d.) Zanele Muholi has documented and celebrated the lives of South Africa’s Black lesbian, gay, trans, queer, and intersexual communities. Zanele’s artistic medium is photography. In an early series called *Only Half the Picture*, Zanele Muholi captures moments of love and intimacy as well as images alluding to traumatic events. According to Tate (n.d.), although the South Africa’s Constitution promised equality, it’s the LGBTQIA community who remains a target for violence and prejudice. Muholi’s art asserts the presence of the historically marginalized and discriminated LGBTI community (Art 21, n.d.). During an artist talk through the Princeton Art Museum (2017), Muholi explained why they consider themselves as a visual activist. They said, “Using art as a means of articulation because when people

are excluded and not included in the mainstream media, literature, or sports. It means that it is my duty or responsibility as an activist to produce a work they speak to those issues.” Muholi’s work often shows images of women being brutalized because of who they love or what image they are portraying. South Africa’s Minister of Arts and Culture declined to display an art exhibit by Muholi because of the depiction of intimacy between Black women in the photographs. According to Van der Villes (2012), the Minister regarded their photographs as, “pornographic, immoral, and offensive and going against nation-building.” Muholi’s art often documents trauma. A photograph called *Aftermath* was displayed in an art exhibit in the Johannesburg Art Gallery. The subject was a story of someone who was raped by someone she knew to show she was not a “man.” This statement appeared

with the photograph, “Many lesbians bear the scars of their difference and those scars are often in places that cannot be seen” (Van der Villes, 2012). Zanele Muholi’s art is activism because they use their experiences and the experiences of others to bring awareness to the need for social change in South Africa.

Ghada Amer- EGYPT

Ghada Amer is an Egyptian artist who creates art in several mediums. She creates embroidery, sculptures, ceramics, works on paper, garden, and mixed media installations. Ghada Amer creates art images to empower women to take ownership of their own bodies and thoughts. Amer stated, “I believe that all women should like their bodies and use them as tools of seduction” (Ghada Amer, n.d.). According to Ghada Amer’s biography, her art is described as, “By depicting explicit sexual acts with the delicacy of need and thread, their significance assumes a tenderness that simple objectification ignores.” Art historians describe Ghada Amer’s

work as a highly personal exploration of ‘femininity’ and meditation. Ghada Amer describes herself as a painter and has won international recognition for her abstract canvases embroidered with erotic motifs. According to an interview with the Brooklyn Museum, Ghada Amer’s art represents, “The submission of women to the tyranny of domestic life, the celebration of female sexuality and pleasure, the incomprehensibility of love, the foolishness of war and violence and overall quest for formal beauty constitute the territory that she explores and expresses in her art” (Brooklyn Museum, 2008). Ghada Amer’s art often contains feminist slogans, which are repeated over the works’ surfaces. In a Portrait with One Earring, a female face is partially obscured and the overlaid text states, “Do not judge a woman on her knees, you never know how tall she is when she stands.” Ghada Amer’s advice to emerging women artists is, “Do not say you are a woman... pretend to be a man.” She explained that it is harder for a woman to get paid a wage

comparable to her male counterparts and get booked for solo shows. Ghada Amer’s art demonstrates that life is art. She encourages women to live their truth and do not let others dictate how they should express their sexuality and womanhood.

Conclusion

Contemporary female artists from Africa share similar experiences with their art. All are visual storytellers who consistently bring awareness to the marginalization of women and the trauma that they have faced. All of the artists in this article have been influenced by their countries’ experiences with European colonization and many of these artists were educated in schools outside of their countries, specifically in Europe or the United States. Contemporary female artists from Africa have influenced women in the diaspora who are also passionate about social change.



Ghada Amer, *My Nymphs #2*, 2018

Lesson Plan

1. Choose one of the artists and create a digital exhibit of five of their works and explain how their art adds to narratives about the lives of contemporary African women and their roles in global society.
2. Compare and contrast different mediums of artforms by women artists in African countries by region (North, Central, South, and West).
3. Discuss intersectionality. How has the perception of women in African countries changed over time?

Works Cited

New Look for Africa on Corrected Maps

Daniel R. Strebe, Mercator projection, 2011

Daniel R. Strebe, Sallie-Peter projection 2011

The United States' Views of Africa: Exploring the Gaps in the U.S. Media and Education Systems, Kevin Vernon

Abdulrahman, Adebayo and Adetayo, Ope “New refinery may transform economy – if it gets enough oil” *The Continent*, 27 Mar 2023 https://www.thecontinent.org/_files/ugd/287178_b7b5c1fba538469b8ff442d38431146d.pdf Accessed 28 June 2023

“Media Bias Ratings.” *AllSides*, www.allsides.com/media-bias/ratings. Accessed 27 June 2023.

Obiakor, Festus et al. *Life Lessons of African Proverbs*. Cissus World Press, 2017

Shearer, Elisa, et al. “Podcasts as a Source of News and Information.” *Pew Research Center*, 2023, www.pewresearch.org/journalism/2023/04/18/podcasts-as-a-source-of-news-and-information/.

“Rankings: Education - States with the Best Education - U.S. News & World Report.” *Usnews.com*, www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings/education. Accessed 27 June 2023.

Ray, Charles. “America, You Better Believe that Africa Matters.” *American Diplomacy*, May 2022, americandiplomacy.web.unc.edu/2022/05/america-you-better-believe-that-africa-matters/

“Start Here - Awards.” *IMDb*, 2023, m.imdb.com/title/tt18253986/awards/?ref_=tt_awd.

United States, Florida Department of Education. *Florida's State Academic Standards – Social Studies*, 2023 www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/20578/urlt/5-3.pdf. Accessed 27 June 2023

United States, Ohio Department of Education. *Ohio's Learning Standards For Social Studies education*. ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Social-Studies/Ohio-s-Learning-Standards-for-Social-Studies/SSFinalStandards01019.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US. Accessed 27 June 2023

“US News and World Report Bias and Reliability.” *Ad Fontes Media*, adfontesmedia.com/u-s-news-and-world-report-bias-reliability/#:~:text=Overview,Reporting%20in%20terms%20of%20reliability. Accessed 27 June 2023.

Wikipedia contributors. “Decolonisation of Africa/a.” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 21 Jun. 2023. Web. 27 Jun. 2023.

Exploring Major Cities in the Five Regions of Africa, Shilah Carroll

Adeoye, A., Rest of World reporting fellow based in Johannesburg, South Africa. (2021, July 16). Lagos finally grows into its role as

Africa's Silicon Valley. Rest of World. Retrieved June 16, 2022, from <https://restofworld.org/2021/tech-hubs-lagos/>

Denis, E. (1996). Urban Planning and Growth in Cairo. *Middle East Report*, 202, 7–12. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3013031>

Thomas, B. E. (1970). On the Growth of African Cities. *African Studies Review*, 13(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.2307/523678>

600 Million Following: A new wave of African Influencers, Marilynn Anderson

Galal, S. (n.d.). Topic: Social media in Africa. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/topics/9922/social-media-in-africa/#:~:text=Facebook%20dominates%20the%20African%20market&text=YouTube%20and%20Twitter%20followed%20with,over%20377%20million%20by%202025>.

Horowitz, J., & Lorenz, T. (2021, June 2). Khaby lame, the everyman of the internet. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/02/style/khaby-lame-tiktok.html>

Kagan, J. (2023, June 22). What is M-pesa? definition, how the service works, and example. Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/mpesa.asp>

Odesomi, O. (n.d.). Biggest social media influencers in Africa. *African Leadership Magazine*. <https://www.africanleadershipmagazine.co.uk/55391-2/>

All People are People: Historical Empathy via Technology Making African History Alive Through Instagram, Carrie Geiger, Ed.D.

Harnessing the Power of Stories (Aaker, 2020), <https://womensleadership.stanford.edu/resources/voice-influence/harnessing-power-stories> Retrieved June 22, 2023

Data Storytelling and Historical Knowledge (Denbo, 2015) <https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/april-2015/data-storytelling-and-historical-knowledge> Retrieved June 22, 2023

Use Historical Empathy to Help Students Process the World Today (Mai, 2018) <https://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/use-historical-empathy-to-help-students-process-the-world-today> Retrieved June 22, 2023

Historical Empathy and Pedagogical Reasoning, Endacott & Sturtz, 2015 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0885985X14000394>, Retrieved June 22, 2023

Triangular Slave Trade, <https://historyforkids.org/triangular-slave-trade/> Retrieved June 22, 2023

Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-life-of-olaudah-equiano>, Retrieved June 22, 2023

Equiano Stories, <https://youtu.be/GesTE59woFY>

Slave Voyages Database, <https://www.slavevoyages.org/>

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/highlights/geography/2018/>

Creating a Learning Environment that Honors African Cultures, Dr. Carrie Wells

Adichie, C. N. (2009, July). The Danger of a Single Story. Ted.com; TED Talks. https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

Blankenship, C. (2021). 6 Tips for Building a Diverse Classroom Library. Www.hmhco.com. <https://www.hmhco.com/blog/culturally-diverse-classroom-library>

Books by and/or about Black, Indigenous and People of Color (All Years). (n.d.). Cooperative Children's Book Center. <https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/literature-resources/ccbc-diversity-statistics/books-by-about-poc-fnn/> Braga, A. (2022, March 22). The importance of children's representation in literature and media. Humanium. <https://www.humanium.org/en/the-importance-of-childrens-representation-in-literature-and-media/>

Dee, T. S., & Penner, E. K. (2016). The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance. *American Educational Research Journal*, 54(1), 127–166. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216677002>

Oniang'o, M. (2019, November 28). 10 Common Misconceptions And Stereotypes About Africa - Africa.com. <https://www.africa.com/10-common-misconceptions-and-stereotypes-about-africa/>

The Inclusion Imperative: Why Media Representation Matters for Kids' ethnic Racial Development. (2021). https://www.commonssensemedia.org/sites/default/files/research/report/2021-inclusion-imperative-report_final-release_for-web.pdf

African Countries Lead the Way with Women in Positions of Power, Angie Perchalla

Armstrong, Martin. "Children Completing School in Sub-Saharan Africa by Gender" <https://www.statista.com/chart/27737>

Diplomatic Magazine. "Rwanda Has the Highest Representation of Women in Parliament in the World" <https://diplomatmagazine.eu/2022/06/05/rwanda-has-the-highest-representation-of-women-in-parliament-in-the-world>

Kuwonu, Frank. "Millions of Girls Remain Out of School" <https://www.un.org/magazine/april-2015>

OpenAI (2023). Gamma (June 22nd) gamma.app/docs/Joyce-Banda-3fz36wjK66zdq8o? gamma.app/docs/Ellen-Johnson-Sirleaf-9gspx4rxvk37t2s? gamma.app/docs/Girls-and-Education-Across-Africa-ilgn02m7xc9hvmn? gamma.app/docs/Exploring-Matriarchal-Societies-in-Africa-oeyss6pqb8c278s? gamma.app/docs/Female-Leadership-in-African-Countries-f1yxp8c1m5v288c?

Tripp, Aili Mari. "The Global Impact of Quotas: on the Fast Track to Increased Female Legislative Representation" <https://www.digitalcommons.unl.edu>

Tripp, Aili Mari. "Women and Politics in Africa Today" <https://www.democracyinafrica.org>

Tripp, Aili Mari. "Women in Movement: Transformations in African Political Landscapes" *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 5:2 July 2003 <https://www.tandf.co.uk/journals>

Economic Impact of Women Entrepreneurs in Botswana, DeAndréa Johnson

"Africa claims top three spots in Mastercard Index for highest concentration of women businesses owners in the world | Middle East/Africa Hub." MasterCard, 11 January 2021, <https://newsroom.mastercard.com/mea/press-releases/africa-claims-top-three-spots-in-mastercard-index-for-highest-concentration-of-women-businesses-owners-in-the-world/>. Accessed 18 June 2022.

"Botswana's Rising Stars | BITC Blazing Trails." BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/storyworks/bitc-blazing-trails/botswana-blazing-trails-youth-in-business>. Accessed 18 June 2022.

"Botswana's Rising Stars | BITC Blazing Trails." BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/storyworks/bitc-blazing-trails/botswana-blazing-trails-youth-in-business>. Accessed 18 June 2022.

"Melissa Tafila; Botswana's Leading Entrepreneur and Role Model." *Urban Woman Magazine*, 15 October 2019, <https://urbanwomanmag.com/melissa-tafila-botswanas-leading-entrepreneur/>. Accessed 18 June 2022.

Africa claims top three spots in MasterCard index for highest concentration of women businesses owners in the world. MasterCard Social Newsroom. (n.d.). Retrieved June 18, 2022, from <https://newsroom.mastercard.com/mea/press-releases/africa-claims-top-three-spots-in-mastercard-index-for-highest-concentration-of-women-businesses-owners-in-the-world/>

Botswana. Countries and Their Cultures. (n.d.). Retrieved June 17, 2022, from <https://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/Botswana.html>

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Southern African Development Community". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1 Nov. 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Southern-African-Development-Community>. Accessed 16 June 2022.

Britannica, The Information Architects of Encyclopaedia. "Botswana". Encyclopedia Britannica, 17 Jun. 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/facts/Botswana>. Accessed 17 June 2022.

Doing business in botswana - home | brand botswana. (n.d.). Retrieved June 18, 2022, from <https://brandbotswana.co.bw/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Doing-Business-in-Botswana.pdf>

Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (n.d.). Botswana. Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved June 17, 2022, from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Botswana>

From Thermo Fisher Scientific – Solutions for Industrial and Safety Applications, GmbH, F. C. Z. M., From Thermo Fisher Scientific - Software, Corporation, F. R., Corporation, F. L. E. C. O., & Limited, F. I. (2013, June 11). Botswana: Mining, minerals and fuel resources. AZoMining.com. Retrieved June 17, 2022, from <https://www.azomining.com/Article.aspx?ArticleID=83#:~:text=Botswana%20is%20abundant%20in%20natural,dominant%20role%20in%20its%20economy.>

Google. (n.d.). Google search. Retrieved June 16, 2022, from <https://www.google.com/>

African Youth: The Voices That Matter!, Charlotte Henry

"COP26: What was agreed at the Glasgow climate conference." BBC News. 15 November 2021. { <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-56901261> }

Global Poverty Project. Global Citizen. (2012 – 2033)

Jacob, Daniela and Jaroslav Mysiak. (2023). Fostering Africa-Europe knowledge sharing and co-development of climate services on adaptation. Retrieved from <https://www.africaeuropefoundation.org/areas-of-action/fostering-africa-europe-knowledge-sharing-and-co-development-of-climate-services-on-adaptation/>

Maathai, W. The story of the hummingbird. [Video file] Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mM11v-16-0>

Nakate, V. (February 2023). Vanessa Nakate: The global opportunity to accelerate Africa's sustainability. [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/speakers/vanessa_nakate

Nyathi, N. (February 18, 2022). Nkosilathi Nyathi: A next-generation solution to the climate crisis. [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.ted.com/speakers/>

Feminine Beauty: Soweï Mask, a Mask Made by Men for Women, Jillian Blazas

Anglès, J., & Riera, J. (n.d.). Africa: 101 last tribes - Mende people. AFRICA | 101 Last Tribes - Mende people. Retrieved June 9, 2022, from <http://www.101lasttribes.com/tribes/mende.html>

Art: Mask (soweï). Annenberg Learner. (2019, September 24). Retrieved June 14, 2022, from <https://www.learner.org/series/art-through-time-a-global-view/ceremony-and-society/mask-soweï/>

Cameron, E. L. (1998). Men portraying women: Representations in African masks. *African Arts*, 31(2), 72. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3337523>

Clarke, C. (2006). Helmet mask (Mende or Sherbro Peoples) (article). Khan Academy. Retrieved June 15, 2022, from <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-africa/west-africa/sierra-leone/a/helmet-mask-mende-or-sherbro-peoples>

Phillips, R. B. (1978). Masking in Mende Sande Society Initiation Rituals. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 48(3), 265–277. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1158468>

Snyder, C. (2017). Learn more: Mende Soweï 1: African art collection. Pacific Lutheran University. Retrieved June 9, 2022, from <https://www.plu.edu/africanartcollection/masks/soweï-mask-1/learn-more-soweï-mask-1/>

Richards, J. V. Olufemi. (1974). The Sande Mask. *African Arts*, 7(2), 48–51. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3334724>

The Importance of African Proverbs, Hattie Petty

Clinton, Melanie (August 21, 2017) "9 Fascinating Proverbs to Help You Understand an African World View" Retrieved from <https://www.imb.org/2017/08/21/9-fascinating-proverbs-to-help-you-understand-an-african-worldview/>

Liles, Maryn (May 4, 2021) "150 of the Best African Proverbs About Life, Love and Family That Are Full of Poetic Wisdom" Retrieved from <https://parade.com/1100530/marynliles/african-proverbs/>

Mbaga, Israel (January 17, 2017) "Significance of Proverbs in Africa and Beyond" Retrieved from <https://medium.com/@engtuto1/significance-of-proverbs-in-africa-and-beyond-e783151ddaaa>

NGOZI ONMOHA OZI (2013) "Proverbs and Their Cultural Significance" Retrieved from <https://afrostylemag.com/ASM8/proverbs.php>

Babalola Olluwatoyin Aldeyemi James, Caleb, Alu (February, 2019) "African Proverbs: A Tool in Teaching

Biblical Truth in the 21st Century" Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332802701_African_Proverbs_A_Tool_in_Teaching_Biblical_Truth_in_the_21ST_Century

Social Engtuto (November 16, 2016) "Importance of Proverbs with Meaning and Usage" Retrieved from <https://medium.com/@socialengtuto/importance-of-proverbs-with-meaning-and-usage-c29517a9d888>

Steven, Kesi (2022) A Guide to Life African Proverbs Made Relevant

Obiakor, Festus E. (November, 2017) Life Lessons of African Proverbs

Ehondor, Beryl (January 2017) Theoretical Category in Communication in Africa. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321698840_THE_CONCEPT_OF_PROVERBS_AS_A_THEORETICAL_CATEGORY_IN_COMMUNICATION_IN_AFRICA

Gold Restaurant (July 10, 2017) The Concept of Proverbs As a Theoretical Category of Communication in Africa <https://goldrestaurant.co.za/african-culture-and-tradition/12-african-proverbs-and-sayings-to-live-by/>

UDOIDEM INIOBONG Sylvanus (1984) Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24350877>

Musical Instruments of Africa, Carolyn Turner

Music of Africa by Wayne Visser

Wikipedia

Encyclopedia Britannica

Membranophone

Aerophones

Chordophones

Idiophones

Contemporary African Music, James DeRemer

<https://www.musicinafrica.net/magazine/top-african-songs-2022>

<https://www.contemporary-african-art.com/african-musical-instruments.html>

<https://teds-list.com/newsroom/african-music-acquired/>

<https://uark.pressbooks.pub/musicinworldcultures/chapter/classifying-instruments/>

https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tsis/hd_tsis.htm

<https://www.newarab.com/news/dj-snake-pays-homage-algeria-disco-maghreb>

<https://www.rollingstone.com/music/usic-features/amapiano-genre-house-south-africa-1191523/>

<https://www.irishpost.com/entertainment/what-is-the-jerusalem-challenge-how-did-the-challenge-start-and-how-can-i-take-part-203542>

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/jul/13/i-havent-been-paid-a-cent-jerusalem-singers-claim-stirs-row-in-south-africa#:~:text=The%20upbeat%20song%20is%20a,Do%20not%20leave%20me%20here.%E2%80%9D>

<https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2023/2/23/so-you-want-to-listen-to-afrobeats-playlist/>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/6/27/qa-afrobeats-is-one-of-africas-biggest-cultural-exports>

<https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/rema-calm-down-sets-record-235614675.html>

<https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100/>

<https://www.themusicstudio.ca/the-music-of-east-africa/>

<https://kelxfy.com/kuna-kuna-lyrics/>

<https://pianity.com/tag/congo>

<https://www.npr.org/2022/12/18/1143929938/congolese-rumba-maestro-fally-ipupa-on-his-new-album-formule-7>

Experiencing And Explaining Life Through The Lens Of Yoruba's Orisha, Chad Holloway

Adeleye, Joseph Olusola (2020). "A Philosophical reflection on Aje (witches) in Yourba traditional society and education". *Igwebuike: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 6(6)

Bádéjò, D. L. (1998). African Feminism: Mythical and Social Power of Women of African Descent. *Research in African Literatures*, 29(2), 94–111. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3820724>

Butler, Stuart (2006), Benin, Guilford, Connecticut: Bradt Travel Guides, The Globe Pequot Press

Gantt, II, Larry O. Natt Teaching Agape to Law Students (May 12, 2017). SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3034249>

Garces-Foley, K. (2006). *Death and religion in a changing world*. Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe.

Gleason, J. (2000). Oya in the Company of Saints. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 68(2), 265–291

King James Bible. (n.d.). King James Bible Online. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/> (Original work published 1769)

Keister, L. A. (2003). Religion and Wealth: The Role of Religious Affiliation and Participation in Early Adult Asset Accumulation. *Social Forces*, 82(1), 175–207. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3598143>

LOWENHARD, P. (1991). IS WAR INEVITABLE? *International Journal on World Peace*, 8(1), 13–33. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20751648>

Raining, C. (2022). 'The Humanity of Blackness' Missing From History Classes: How to Transform Black History Education in Schools – NBC10 Philadelphia. Retrieved 13 June 2022, from <https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/national-international/how-to-transform-black-history-education-in-schools/2450465/>

Robinson, D. (2022). Stop with Racist History: A Global Call to Teach African History. Retrieved 13 June 2022, from <https://medium.com/@dar210/stop-with-racist-history-a-global-call-to-teach-african-history-2caa5f44ffe0>

Soble, Alan (ed.) (1989). *..Eros, Agape and Philia: Readings in the Philosophy of Love..* Paragon House.

Resilience Embodied: The Yoruba & the Yoruba Diaspora, Kevin Kelsey

Adebola, B. (2023, May 20). It's been critical connecting Yorubas in USA to their roots – Taylor.

- Independent Nigeria. Retrieved June 29, 2023, from <https://independent.ng/its-been-critical-connecting-yorubas-in-usa-to-their-roots-taylor/>
- Akinrinade, S. and Ogen, O. (2011). Historicizing the Nigerian Diaspora: Nigerian Migrants and Homeland Relations. *Turkish Journal of Politics*, 2(2), 71-45.
- Associated Press. (2008, February 8). Venezuelans increasingly turn to Santería. NBC News. Retrieved June 29, 2023, from <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna23057224>
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2022, December 20). Yoruba. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Yoruba>
- Brooks, R. and Goldstein, S. (2008). The Mindset of Teachers Capable of Fostering Resilience in Students. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology* 23(1), 114-126.
- Central Intelligence Agency. (2023). Benin. The World Factbook. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/benin>.
- Central Intelligence Agency. (2023). Nigeria. The World Factbook. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/benin>.
- Fandrich, I. J. (2007). Yorùbá Influences on Haitian Vodou and New Orleans Voodoo. *Journal of Black Studies*, 37(5), 775-791.
- Gordon, J. U. (1979). Yoruba Cosmology and Culture in Brazil: A Study of African Survivals in the New World. *Journal of Black Studies*, 10(2), 231-244.
- Ighobor, K. (2019, December 24). Bigger than Africa: Tales of the Yoruba people. United Nations: Africa Renewal. Retrieved June 29, 2023, from <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2019-march-2020/bigger-africa-tales-yoruba-people>
- Johnson, C. (2013, August 25). Ancient African Religion Finds Roots in America. NPR: Weekend Edition Sunday. Retrieved June 29, 2023, from <https://www.npr.org/2013/08/25/215298340/ancient-african-religion-finds-roots-in-america>
- McNaughton, P. and Pelrine, D. (2014). Visual Arts in Africa. In M. Grosz-Ngate, J. Hanson, & P. O'Meara (Eds.), *Africa*, 4th Edition (pp. 161-186). Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Migration Policy Institute. (2015). The Nigerian Diaspora in the United States. RAD Diaspora Profile. Retrieved June 29, 2023, from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/RAD-Nigeria.pdf>
- Ogobodo, I. (2022, March 17). Yoruba Mythology: The Orishas of the Yoruba Religion. Medium. Retrieved June 28, 2023, from <https://medium.com/african-history-collections/yoruba-mythology-the-orishas-of-the-yoruba-religion-f411c3db389d>
- Ogundiran, A. (2021, June 27). A long view sheds fresh light on the history of the Yoruba people in West Africa. The Conversation. Retrieved June 28, 2023, from <https://theconversation.com/a-long-view-sheds-fresh-light-on-the-history-of-the-yoruba-people-in-west-africa-162776>.
- Ojo, O. (2008). The Organization of the Atlantic Slave Trade in Yorubaland, ca.1777 to ca.1856. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 41(1), 77-100. Retrieved June 28, 2023, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40282457>.
- Stark, R. (2015). *The triumph of faith: Why the world is more religious than ever*. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books.
- Trotman, D. V. (1976). The Yoruba and Orisha Worship in Trinidad and British Guinea: 1838- 1870. *African Studies Review*, 19(2), 1-17.
- Udo, E. M. (2020). The Vitality of Yoruba Culture in the Americas. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, 41(2), 27-40.
- Wee, R. Y. (2017). Who are the Yoruba People? WorldAtlas. Retrieved June 27, 2023, from <http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/who-are-the-yoruba-people.html>.

The Significance of the Sycamore Fig Tree and The Voice of the Woman, Katrece Freeman-Boyd

- BBC News. (2020, November 30) Viewpoint: Why Kenya's Giant Fig Tree Won Over a President. BBC. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55094235>
- Biblica. (2011) New International Version: Luke 19:1-10. Biblegateway. Retrieved from <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+19%3A1-10&version=NIV>
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2013, August 1). Fig Wasp. Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/animal/fig-wasp>
- Green Belt Movement. (n.d.). Our History. The Green Belt Movement. Retrieved from <https://www.greenbeltmovement.org/who-we-are/our-history>
- Green Belt Movement. (n.d.). Tree Planting and Water Harvesting. The Green Belt Movement. Retrieved from <http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/what-we-do/tree-planting-for-watersheds>
- Infonet Biovision. (n.d.). Sycamore Fig. Infonet Biovision. Retrieved from <https://infonet-biovision.org/EnvironmentalHealth/Trees/Sycamore-fig>
- Kinsley, I. (n.d.). Wangari Maathai, the Woman of Trees, Dies. African Renewal. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/web-features/wangari-maathai-woman-trees-dies>
- Maathai, W. (2006). *Unbowed: A memoir*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf
- Nobel Prize. Wangari Maathai – Facts. NobelPrize.org. Nobel Prize. Retrieved from <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2004/maathai/facts/>

- Slow Food. (n.d.). Ark of Taste: Mukuyu. Slow Food. Retrieved from [https://www.fondazioneSlowFood.com/en/ark-of-taste-slow-food/mukuyu/#:~:text=The%20sycamore%20fig%20\(Ficus%20sycamorup%20to%2025%20meters%20tall.](https://www.fondazioneSlowFood.com/en/ark-of-taste-slow-food/mukuyu/#:~:text=The%20sycamore%20fig%20(Ficus%20sycamorup%20to%2025%20meters%20tall.)
- TED Talk. (n.d.). 3 Ways to Uproot a Culture of Corruption [Video]. Ted Conferences. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/wanjira_mathai_3_ways_to_uproot_a_culture_of_corruption/transcript?subtitle=en
- Tree Symbolism. (n.d.) #56 Tree Symbolism: Sycamore Tree Meaning and Symbolism. Tree Symbolism. Retrieved from <https://treesymbolism.com/sycamore-tree-meaning.html>
- Wilde, S. "The Greenbelt Movement." (2012, August 16) Queen of Africa's Trees: The Sacred Fig Tree. The Green Belt Movement. Retrieved from <https://www.greenbeltmovement.org/node/374>
- The Art of Storytelling: Contemporary African Women Artists, Dr. Karen Wallace**
- Art 21 (n.d.). Wangechi Mutu. <https://www.art21.org>
- Art 21 (n.d.) Zanele Muholi. <https://www.art21.org>
- Art/Afrique (2018, January 25). Interview of Zanele Muholi. [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/RTvNHtD_iH8
- Bandinella, C. & Chong, D. (2013). Contemporary Afro and two sidedness: Black diaspora Aesthetic practices and the art market. *Culture and Organization*, 21(2), 97-125
- Brainy Quotes (n.d.). Wangechi Mutu. <https://www.brainyquote.com/lists/authors/top-10-wangechi-mutu-quotes>
- Brooklyn Museum of Art (2008). Ghada Amer: Love has no end. https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/ghada_amer
- Ghada Amer (n.d.). Biography. <https://ghadaamer.com/about-ghada-amer/>
- Greenberg, K. (2019). Yes, But why? – Zanele Muholi's impact explained by Tate curator
- Kerryn Greenberg. <https://wepresent.wetransfer.com/stories/yes-but-why-zanele-muholi>
- Guerguiev, W. (2011). Reflection on Wangechi Mutu's Art. <https://esc.edu/media/ocgr/publications-presentations/Metropolitan-Review-6-2-11.pdf#page=46>
- Guggenheim Museum (n.d.). Zanele Muholi. <https://guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/zanele-muholi>
- Leiman, L. (2018). 6 Afrofuturism artists to watch for that explore the modern African diaspora. <https://10and5.com/2018/09/18/6-afrofuturism-artists-watch-explore-modern-african-diaspora/>
- Metropolitan Museum of Art. (2019, September 13). Artist Interview- Wangechi Mutu: The New Ones will Free Us. [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/MQgCX7HZoWo>
- Phaidon (n.d.). Great women artists. <https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2019/october/15/interview-ghada-amer-being-a-woman-artist-makes-me-sell-for-less-money-and-closes-doors-for-solo-museum-shows/>
- Princeton University Art Museum (2017, December 21). Artist Talk- Zanele Muholi. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hl3h4S38Svo&t=529s>
- Quotes by Living Artists (n.d.). Njideka Akunyili Crosby. <https://quotesbylivingartists.com/artists/njideka-akunyili-crosby>
- Relf, N. (2020). Njideka Akunyili Crosby: Cultural Identity. <https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/njideka-akunyili-crosby/>
- Sarpong, J. (2021). June Sarpong on the power of Black art and visual storytelling. <https://www.vanityfair.com/london/2021/05/june-sarpong-on-the-power-of-black-art-and-visual-storytelling>
- Solway, D. (2017). Nigerian artist Njideka Akunyili Crosby is painting the Afropolitan story in America. <https://www.wmagazine.com>
- Tate (n.d). Tate Modern presents the first major UK survey of visual activist Zanele Muholi. <https://www.tate.org>
- Tutton, M. (2012). Young, urban, and culturally savvy, meet the Afropolitans. <https://www.cnn.com/2012/02/17/world/africa/who-are-afropolitans/index.html>
- Van der Vlies (2012). Art as Archive: Queer activism and contemporary South African visual Cultures. <https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1214&context=kunapipi&httpsredir=1&referer=>
- Van Veeran, E. (2019). Layered wanderings: epistemic justice through the art of Wangechi Mutu and Njideka Akunyili Crosby, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 21(3), 488-498. doi: 10.1080/14616742.2019.161948
- Victoria Miro (n.d.). Njideka Akunyili Crosby. <https://www.victoria-miro.com/artists/185-njideka-akunyili-crosby/>
- Whitney Museum of American Art. (2018, February 14). Artist Talk: Njideka Akunyili Crosby [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/HPU8W2xBBf4>



Center for
AFRICAN STUDIES
at the University of Florida

UF | College of Liberal
Arts & Sciences
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES

427 Grinter Hall
PO Box 115560,
Gainesville, FL 32611-5560
(352) 392 - 2187
africa.ufl.edu