

# **Out of Africa: The Work of Memoirs in Contemporary Africa**

## **September 14-15 2012**

A workshop funded by the Center for Humanities and the Public Sphere, the Center for African Studies, the Florida-France Research Institute, and the Department of History

### **Friday September 14**

#### **404 Grinter Hall**

10:00 Welcome - Alioune Sow and Luise White, University of Florida.

#### **Session One: Constructing Memoirs**

10:30 Leonard Wantchekon, Princeton University. "Dreaming Against the Grain: My Autobiography"

Leonard Wantchekon received his PhD in Economics from Northwestern University in 1995. He is currently professor of Politics at Princeton University. He is the author of numerous articles, including "The Paradox of 'Warlord' Democracy: A Theoretical Investigation," *American Political Science Review* (2004); and "Clientelism and Voting Behavior: A Field Experiment in Benin," *World Politics* (2003).

11:30 Break

11:45 Gary Burgess, US Naval Academy. "Narratives of the Revolution: Memoir and the Making of History in Zanzibar"

Gary Burgess received his PhD from Indiana University. He is associate professor of African history at the US Naval Academy and the author of *Race, Revolution, and the Struggle for Human Rights in Zanzibar: the Memoirs of Ali Sultan Issa and Seif Sharif Hamad* (Ohio University Press, 2009). He is currently working on a history of youth in Africa for Cambridge University Press.

#### **Session Two: Confinement and Exile in South Africa**

2:15 Stephen Davis, University of Kentucky. "The Best Thing Nelson Mandela Never Said or 'Our Deepest Fear' - The Biographies of Nelson Mandela, Struggle History, and the American Self-Help Industry"

Stephen Davis received his Ph D from the University of Florida in 2010. He is currently revising a manuscript on the history of everyday life of rank-and-file soldiers in Umkhonto we Sizwe. This work borrows from microhistory and recent work on public history in South Africa and is part of a broader critique of official histories of the armed struggle written after the transition to democracy. A shorter version of his master's research on the politics of exile and international radio broadcasting during the anti-apartheid struggle was published as "The African National Congress, Its Radio, Its Enemies and Exile," *Journal of Southern African Studies* (2009).

3:15 Break

3:30 Zakes Mda, Ohio University. "Filling the Void: Negotiating Memoir, Autobiography, and Memoirs"

Zanevumvula Mda is a South African playwright, poet and novelist. He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Cape Town in June 2012. He is professor of Creative Writing at Ohio University and is the author of seventeen novels and plays. He is the recipient of many awards, including the Commonwealth Writers Prize and the *Sunday Times* Fiction Prize.

## **Saturday September 15**

### **05 Keene-Flint Hall**

#### **Session Three: War, Violence, and Post-colonies**

9:00 Douglas Rogers, Travel Writer (Virginia, USA). "On Writing *The Last Resort*"

Douglas Rogers is an award-winning author, travel writer and journalist; he has written for *The New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Times of London*, *Travel & Leisure*, and *Condé Nast Traveler*. He is the author of the critically acclaimed Zimbabwe memoir: *The Last Resort: A Memoir of Mischief and Mayhem on a Family Farm in Africa*. (Crown/Random House, 2010), which won the 2010 British Guild of Travel Writers Book of the Year, was a finalist for the 2011 Dolman Travel Book of the Year Award, and named a BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week. It is being made into a film by the BBC.

10:00 Break

10:15 Luise White, University of Florida. "Is the Post- in Post-War the Post- in Post-Modernism? Authority and Authorship in Rhodesian War Memoirs"

Luise White is professor of history at the University of Florida. Currently a fellow of the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, she is completing a history of the Rhodesian state, the working title of which is *Unpopular Sovereignty: Rhodesian Independence and African Decolonization*. Her most recent book is *The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo: Texts and Politics in Zimbabwe* (Indiana, 2003).

11:15 Break

11:30 Leonard V. Smith, Oberlin College. "Ishmael Beah and Oberlin College"

Leonard V. Smith is Frederick B. Artz Professor and chair of the department of history at Oberlin College. He received his Ph D from Columbia University. He is the author of *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division During World War I* (Princeton, 1994), which won the American Historical Association's Paul Birdsall Prize for the best book in European military and strategic history, and *The Embattled Self: French Soldiers' Testimony of the Great War* (Cornell, 2007), and co-author of *France and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, 2003). Smith's current monograph project, *The Laboratory over a Vast Cemetery: Rethinking the Paris Peace Conference of 1919*, is under contract with Oxford University Press.

## Session Four: Memory and History in West Africa

2:00 Greg Mann, Columbia University. "Histories of Others: Madeira Keita and Georges Ballandier in Guinea and Afterwards"

Greg Mann received his PhD from Northwestern University in 2000. His first book, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Duke, 2006), won the David Pinkney Prize for the year's best book in French history, awarded by the Society for French Historical Studies in 2007. He is currently working on a book entitled *The End of the Road: Nongovernmentality in the West African Sahel*.

3:00 Break

3:15 Alioune Sow, University of Florida. "Memoirs and Memory in Democratic Mali"

Alioune Sow is Associate professor of French and African studies at the University of Florida. He earned his doctorate at the Université Paris 4-La Sorbonne. His research includes the childhood experience in African literatures, autobiography and memory, the democratic transition and the cultural transformations in Mali focusing especially on literature, cinema and theatre. His book *Vestiges et Vertiges* was published by Artois Presses Université in 2010.

4:15 Discussion

This event is free and open to the public.

For further information contact Alioune Sow ([sow@ufl.edu](mailto:sow@ufl.edu)) or Luise White ([lswwhite@ufl.edu](mailto:lswwhite@ufl.edu))