

# LAURA T. MURPHY

Loyola University  
Department of English  
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## EDUCATION

**Harvard University** Doctor of Philosophy  
African and African American Studies, June 2008  
Committee: F. Abiola Irele, Henry Louis Gates Jr., Glenda Rosanna Carpio  
**Harvard University** Master of Arts  
English and American Literatures, June 2008  
**Syracuse University** Master of Arts  
English and Textual Studies, May 1998  
**Louisiana State University** Bachelor of Arts  
English, with honors, May 1996

## BOOKS

*Metaphor and the Slave Trade in West African Literature*  
**Ohio University Press, June 2012**

*Metaphor and Slave Trade* investigates representations of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the literature produced in Anglophone West Africa since 1950. My reading of canonical works of West African literature (including Tutuola's *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, Okri's *The Famished Road*, Achebe's *Arrow of God*, Armah's *Fragments*, and Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy*) provides insight into the way African authors explore the legacy of the slave trade in West African memory. My central argument is that even when texts ostensibly depict another historical period or political concern, West African writers repeatedly, but metaphorically, return to images and tropes that reveal the pervasive presence of the slave trade in the imaginary of the region. Critics have not only overlooked these representations of the slave trade, but many, such as Achille Mbembe, have outright denied their existence in the literary culture of the region. My work seeks to identify the modes of memory particular to the African communities affected by the traumatic trade in human lives. In doing so, it expands the largely African American and Afro-British-centered discourse of black Atlantic studies.

*Documenting Modern Slavery: A Collection of Contemporary Slave Narratives*  
**Columbia University Press, forthcoming 2013**

*Documenting Modern Slavery* is a collection of first-person accounts of modern day slavery from the voices of slaves and traffickers, stories that testify to the fact that slavery still exists in every part of the world. This collection puts into conversation a wide variety of forms of testimony, including written narratives and transcripts of interviews, but also visa application answers, deposition narratives, courtroom transcripts, speeches before congress, and award reception speeches. Throughout the book, "case studies" present a particular aspect of slavery in more detail, allowing the reader to develop a more complete picture of modern slavery, through the voices of not only those victims who are trafficked but also those of the traffickers themselves. Utilizing scholarly literary approaches in extensive introductions, each of the chapters highlights not only the content of the stories, but also the themes, metaphors, tropes, and silences that emerge in narrating slavery, complicating our understanding of the slave narrative tradition.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

“White Slavery!': Unionized Labor, Organized Crime, and Commodified Women in *The Wire*.”  
*24/7 Believe: Watching The Wire*. (forthcoming 2013).

“Childless Mothers and Impotent Husbands: The Failure of Intimacy in Ama Ata Aidoo.” *Research in African Literatures* 40:4 (Winter 2009). Special Issue on the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

“*District 9*: Just Another Hollywood Movie, Except for the Response.” Zeleza Post. Online. October 2009.

“The Curse of Constant Remembrance: The Belated Trauma of the Slave Trade in Armah’s *Fragments*.”  
*Studies in the Novel* 40:1 & 2 (Spring/Summer 2008). Special Issue on Postcolonial Literature and Trauma.

“Into the Bush of Ghosts: Spectres of the Slave Trade in West African Fiction.” *Research in African Literatures* 38:4 (November 2007).

“A Death in the Family: Coping with Student Death at School.” *Teaching with Joy: Educational Practices for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

## REVIEWS AND ENCYCLOPEDIA ENTRIES

“Broadview Middle School.” *Encyclopedia of Modern Slavery*. Ed. Junius P. Rodriguez. ABC-CLIO, 2011.

“The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Women and Children (1949).” *Encyclopedia of Modern Slavery*. Ed. Junius P. Rodriguez. ABC-CLIO, 2011.

“The Convention Against the Worst Forms of Child Labor (1999).” *Encyclopedia of Modern Slavery*. Ed. Junius P. Rodriguez. ABC-CLIO, 2011.

“African Literatures at the Millenium.” Review. *Journal of the African Literature Association (JALA)* 3:1 (Winter 2008/Spring 2009).

“Oludah Equiano.” *Encyclopedia of Blacks in European History*. Greenwood Press, 2008.

Contributor, 17 entries. *African American National Biography*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr, and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

“Generations in Creative Dialogue.” *African Literature Association Bulletin* 11:2 (Winter 2006).

“African Dispatches.” *Africana.com*. Online. May 2004.

“Monuments to Slavery: Renovating Memory at the Fort of the Metal Cross.” *Queen: A Journal of Rhetoric and Power*. <http://www.ars-rhetorica.net>. January 2002.

## SELECTED LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

“The New Frederick Douglass”  
Interdisciplinary Conference on Human Trafficking. Lincoln, NE. October 2012.

“Crusade Politics and the Appropriation of Human Rights Discourse”  
African Literature Association. Dallas, TX. April 2012.

“Slavery in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”  
Invited Keynote Lecture and Workshop. Chandler-Gilbert Community College. Phoenix, AZ. April 2012.

“First Do No Harm: Good Intentions and Bad Results in Activism”

Roundtable Panel. Annual Peace Conference. Loyola University New Orleans. April 2012.

“Captive Commodities: The Fiction and Reality of Modern Day Slavery in West Africa”  
African Studies Association. Washington, DC. November 2011.

“Metaphor and the Slave Trade in West African Fiction.”

“New Directions in African and African Diaspora Literature and Film” Symposium. Invited Lecture. Hobart and William Smith Colleges, October 14, 2011.

“Narrating Slavery in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

African Literature Association. Athens, OH. April 2011.

“The ‘Freedom Narrative’ and the Rise of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Slave Narrative.”

African Literature Association. Tucson, AZ. April 2010.

“The Unfortunate Birth of the Modern Day Slave Narrative and the Responsibility of the Archive.”

African Studies Association. New Orleans, LA. November 2009.

“Slaves in the Family: African Domestic Slavery, Labour, and Kinship Past and Present.”

Slavery, Migration, and Contemporary Bondage in Africa. WISE, Hull, England. September 2009.

“Childless Mothers and Impotent Husbands: The Failure of Intimacy in Representations of the Slave Trade.”

Tales of Slavery. University of Toronto. May 2009.

“The Future of the Past: The Slave Trade and the West African Historical Novel.”

African Literature Association. Burlington, VT. April 2009.

“Can the Slave Trade Be Forgotten? West African Literature and the Suffering of Survival.”

African Studies Association. Chicago, IL. November 2008.

“In Fear of Albinos With Sacks: Metaphors of the Slave Trade in African Literature.”

Unknown Slavery Workshop. University of Warwick. Invited Presenter. May 2008.

“Remembering the Slave Trade in West African Fiction.”

Boston College. Invited Lecture. Chestnut Hill, MA. November 2007.

“On Amnesia in West African Literature.”

American Comparative Literature Association. Puebla, Mexico. April 2007.

“Remembering the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Calabar, Nigeria and Elmina, Ghana.”

Boston University. Guest Lecture. Invited by Linda Heywood. April 2007.

“Who is the Author of this Book: Representation or Exploitation of Sudanese Lost Boys in *What is the What*.”

African Literature Association. Morgantown, WV. March 2007.

“Geographies of Memory: Mapping Slavery’s Recurrence in Okri’s *The Famished Road*.”

African Literature Association. Accra, Ghana. May 2006.

“‘I Am But A Griot’: The Filmic Language of Storytelling in *Guimba the Tyrant*.”

Northeast Modern Language Association Conference. Pittsburgh, PA. February 2004.

“Human Resources: Reconstructing the Life of the African Slave Trader in the Diary of Antera Duke.”

American Comparative Literature Association. University of Michigan. March 2004.

“All Of It Is Now’: Morrison’s *Beloved* and the Middle Passage.”

National Council for Teachers of English Convention. Baltimore, MD. November 2001.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **Loyola University New Orleans, Assistant Professor**

#### **Department of English, Fall 2010 - present**

Magical Realities, Global Fictions (honors literature seminar)  
Bought and Sold: Slavery and Abolition in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (freshman seminar)  
Images of Africa (freshman seminar)  
Writing About Literature

### **Ithaca College, Assistant Professor**

#### **Department of English, Fall 2008 – Spring 2010**

Seminar in World Literature: African Literature and the Burdens of Memory  
Introduction to Literature: Traveling Fictions  
Black Women Writers  
African American Literature Survey  
Studies in African American Literature: Slave Narratives, Past and Present  
Approaches to Literary Study

### **Boston College, Lecturer**

#### **Department of African and African Diaspora Studies, Fall 2007-Spring 2008**

Images of Africa  
Africans in America, Americans in Africa  
African Literature and Memory

#### **Department of English, Spring 2007**

African American Literature

### **Harvard University, Teaching Fellow**

#### **Core Program/Foreign Cultures, Spring 2006, 2007**

The African Experience (with Professor Abiola Irele)

#### **Department of English, Spring 2006**

Cold War Literature and Culture (with Professor Louis Menand)

#### **Department of African and African American Studies, Fall 2003-2006**

Autobiography and the Literary Imagination (with Professor Jamaica Kincaid)  
Independent Studies/Tutorials

Representations of Women of African Descent in Television and Film, Fall 2005

African American Autobiography, Fall 2005

Contemporary African and African American Fiction, Spring 2003

### **Syracuse University Writing Instructor/Teaching Assistant**

#### **The Writing Program, Fall 1996-Spring 1998**

Advanced Composition: Writing and Service Learning  
Introduction to Composition

## **GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND HONORS**

NEH Summer Stipend (application submitted)

Bobet Fellowship, Loyola University, Summer 2012

Faculty Research Grant, Loyola University, Spring 2011

Center for Faculty Research and Development Award, Ithaca College, Spring 2010

Travel Grant to NEH grantwriting workshop for Modern Slavery Digital Archive Project, Fall 2009

Educational Grant Initiative, Ithaca College, Fall 2009

Center for Faculty Research and Development Award, Ithaca College, Fall 2009

Summer Grant for Faculty Research, Ithaca College, Summer 2009

Educational Grant Initiative, Ithaca College, Fall 2008  
DuBois-Mandela-Rodney Postdoctoral Fellowship, University of Michigan, 2008-2009 (declined)  
Aluka Innovative Teaching Award for African Digital Archive Project, Boston College, Fall 2007  
Graduate Society Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Harvard University, 2007-2008  
Derek Bok Award For Teaching Excellence, Harvard University, 2006  
Jennifer Oppenheimer African Studies Research Grant, Harvard University/Nigeria 2006  
Northeast Modern Language Association Travel Grant, 2006  
Harvard Fellowship, 2002-2007  
National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar Fellow, 2002  
Gilder-Lehrman Institute for American History Fellow, 2001

*National Endowment for the Humanities, Humanities Leadership Award, 2001*

National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute Fellow, 2000

**ACADEMIC SERVICE & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Travel Awards Committee Chair, African Literature Association, Fall 2012-present  
Personnel Committee, Loyola University, Spring 2012-present  
Hiring Committee, Loyola University, Spring 2012  
National Fellowships Advisor, Fall 2011 - present  
African and African American Studies Program Committee, Loyola University, Fall 2010-present  
Faculty Advisor, Free the Slaves Chapter, Loyola University, Fall 2010-present  
Executive Council Elected Member, African Literature Association, Fall 2009-Spring 2012  
Chair of the Travel Awards Committee, African Literature Association, Spring 2011-present  
Faculty Advisor, Free the Slaves Chapter, Ithaca College, Fall 2008-Spring 2010  
Curriculum Committee, English Department, Ithaca College, Fall 2009-Spring 2010  
Diversity Awareness Committee, Ithaca College, Fall 2009-Spring 2010  
Speakers Series Committee, CSCRE, Ithaca College, Spring 2009-Spring 2010  
Reviewer, Africa Today, Spring 2009  
Chair, Graduate Student Caucus, African Literature Association, Spring 2007-Spring 2009  
Lead Teaching Fellow, Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University, 2006-2007  
Teaching Fellow, African Language Program, Harvard University, Fall 2006-Spring 2007  
Conference Organizer, "Senghor: The Ancestor" Symposium, Harvard University, Fall 2006  
Reviewer, African Studies Association, Children's Africana Book Award, Spring 2006  
Grant Writer, Title VI Grant Proposal for African Studies Center, Fall 2005  
Department Representative, Graduate Student Council, Fall 2002-Spring 2004  
Research Assistant for Abiola Irele, Fall 2002-Spring 2008

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH/NON-PROFIT EXPERIENCE**

Founder and Organizer, New Orleans Human Trafficking Working Group, Summer 2012-present  
Founder and Director, Survivors of Slavery Speakers Network, Summer 2011-present  
National College Chapter Coordinator, Free the Slaves, Washington DC, Spring 2011-present  
Consultant, Challenging Heights, Accra, Ghana, Spring 2011-present  
Board of Directors, Metro Center for Women and Children, Jefferson LA, Fall 2011-present  
Organizer, New Orleans Afrikan Film Festival, New Orleans LA, Fall 2010-present  
Regional Point Person, Free the Slaves, Washington, DC, 2008-2010  
Board Member and Intern Coordinator, Nivasa Foundation, Boston MA, 2006-2007  
Intern, American Anti-Slavery Group, Boston MA, 2005-2006

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

African Literature Association  
African Studies Association  
American Comparative Literature Association  
Modern Language Association