



**CHEIKH ANTA DIOP UNIVERSITY - DAKAR
FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF ANGLOPHONE STUDIES**

International Conference

Perspectives on Women's Autobiographies from Africa and the Diaspora

29-30 March, 2022

Rationale:

The African continent and the Diaspora replete with a rich production of autobiographies written by women and informed by various socio-cultural realities. These autobiographies are narrated through a wide range of literary genres like life story, diary, novel and poetry, etc. The authors of such writings, coming from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Maghreb, the Americas, and even Europe as emigrants, belong to heterogeneous socio-cultural realities. Over the years, they have defied patriarchal laws, especially those that muzzle and stifle women's voice. As victims of various forms of oppression, self-writing provides women with a space to bear witness to the intricacies of their lives while putting at the limelight, their struggles, disappointments, sacrifices, and expectations inherent to their condition.

African women inhabit geographical spaces with long-standing cultural practices hostile to the development of their full potentials despite independence and economic development of their respective countries. To be both a woman and an African requires a constant struggle for emancipation which dictates a presence in all sectors of life, a commitment that inexorably leads to disastrous consequences such as exile, rejection, divorce and contempt.

Writing is therefore for the women of the continent the only way to speak out and tell others about themselves, to guard against any form of injustice, be it socio-economic or legal. These centuries-old forms of biases are the unswerving consequence of laws enacted by men and for men. Muzzled by traditions that prevent them from expressing themselves overtly through their true identity, women, hidden behind pseudonyms, invest the literary space to relate and bear witness to what they have always endured.

In this regard, publishing one's private life is considered both a therapeutic gesture and an act of solidarity towards their fellow female citizens belonging to different geographical, cultural, linguistic and religious contexts of Africa. From this perspective emerges the notion that the definition and integrity of women only have meaning in relation to their existence in conjunction with men empowered by their statutory eminence as father, brother, husband, etc. In Africa, women's autobiographies exhibit stories of gender inequities where women's cries of distress and discomfort mingle with their dreams, yearnings, ambitions and struggle for identity and emancipation. In addition, these texts bear the hallmark of orality as they are infused with tales, proverbs and legends of age-old traditions. Therefore, they are cultural reservoirs and contribute to the perpetuation of oral culture of the communities.

This international conference aims to examine the autobiographies of women from Africa (during colonial and post-colonial periods) and the Diaspora to shed light on the meaning and significance of the various messages conveyed through those texts. Although there is an abundance of autobiographical texts by these women, many remain unknown to the general public. From that angle, the conference is positioned as a real prospect to further bring those half- veiled writings to public's attention.

As such, the conference intends to bring together scholars, researchers, experts and doctoral students, in human and social sciences, as well as in languages and arts, affiliated to universities, research centers, NGOs and civil societies in Africa and around the world. Their objective is to present and discuss women's autobiographical writings from Africa and the Diaspora from a multidisciplinary perspective.

At the end of the conference, selected papers will be reviewed by the scientific committee for publication.

Objectives of the conference: Through the various oral papers that will be presented around the autobiographical writings by African women, the following objectives are targeted:

- Understand the complexity of the autobiographical genre and women's paths in Africa;
- Understand women's reality in Africa;
- Analyze the dynamics of gender relations in Africa;
- Understand patriarchal societies in Africa and particularly how women negotiate their identity/ integration/ emancipation;
- Learn and inform about the living conditions and the emancipation of African women;
- Appreciate the weight of ancestral and patriarchal laws in the moral and intellectual development of women in Africa;

- Understand how women build and represent themselves in their life stories;
- Learn about women's struggles across time and space;
- Understand the aesthetic and ethical issues of intimate female writing;
- Understand the specificities of female autobiographies in Africa and the Diaspora;
- Understand the interactions between autobiography and questions of identity;
- Delve into the perspectives and evolution of the autobiography of women in Africa and in the Diaspora.

Conference Themes

The conference is seeking submissions related to the following conference topics:

- 1: Autobiographies of women and patriarchal societies;
- 2: Autobiographies of women and historical roles;
- 3: Autobiographies of women, emancipation and leadership: education, paid work, private property, political status;
- 4: Autobiographies of women: aesthetic and ethical issues;
- 5: Autobiographies of women and body image;
- 6: Autobiographies of women and therapy;
- 7: Autobiographies of women and identities;
- 8: Autobiographies of women and new perspectives (Globalization, immigration, hybridity, digitization, mentoring, stardom and celebrity (through sport, music, cinema), civil and political commitment, etc.

Languages of the conference: French and English

Abstracts should be sent simultaneously to the following three email addresses:

autobiographiesfemmesafrique@gmail.com; fatoumatakaitea808@gmail.com,
rachi130@yahoo.fr.

Submitted abstracts will be blind reviewed by the Scientific Committee and should be sent **no later than September 5th, 2021.**

Manuscripts should meet the format set by the Conference committee.

Submission Process

Proposals to be sent **no later than September 5th, 2021**

Notifications of acceptance: 10-15 November, 2021

Conference dates: 29-30 March, 2022

Organizers:

Pr. Mariame WANE LY, Department of Anglophone Studies, Faculty of Arts and Humanities (University of Cheikh Anta Diop - Dakar, Sénégal)

Dr. Rachida SADOUNI, Department of French, Faculty of Arts and Languages (University of Blida 2, Algeria)

Dr. Fatoumata KEITA, Department of English, Faculté des Lettres, des Langues et des Sciences du Langage, (Université des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Bamako, Mali Bamako, Mali)

Scientific Committee:

President of the scientific committee:

Pr. Fatou SOW SARR, Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (IFAN) - Cheikh Anta Diop University - Dakar (Senegal)

Members of the scientific committee:

Pr. Djénéba TRAORE, West Africa Institute, Praia (Cabo Verde)

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Pr. Felicia OLUCHUKWU ASADU, University of Nnamdi Azikwe (Nigeria)

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Dr. Mamadou FAYE, Cheikh Anta Diop University - Dakar (Senegal)

Dr. Selly BA, Cheikh Anta Diop University - Dakar (Sénégal)

Dr. Jędrzej PAWLICKI, University Adam Mickiewicz à Poznań (Poland)

Dr. Constant AGUESSY, University of Parakou (Benin)

Dr. Ousmane NGOM, University Gaston Berger de Saint- Louis (Senegal)

Dr. Khadidiatou DIALLO, University Gaston Berger de Saint- Louis (Senegal)

Important notes:

1. Proposals must be sent according to the participation form inserted at the end of this call for papers, and as a Word attachment. Any proposal sent in any other form **WILL NOT** be accepted and **WILL NOT** be reviewed by the scientific committee.
2. Participation fees: 40. 000 FCFA
3. Travel and accommodation fees are to be covered by the participants.

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Participation Form

Full name and rank of the author	
Affiliation, Country	
Email	
Phone number	
Short bio-bibliography (350 words max.)	
Full name and rank of the co-author	
Affiliation, Country	
Email	
Phone number	
Short bio-bibliography (350 words max.)	
Paper's title	
Abstract (350 words max.)	
Keywords (5 max.)	