

# Baba Badji

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## **EDUCATION & TRAINING:**

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2023-2025 Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ

**Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow (cohort II)**

- Appointment shared between the Department of English and the Department of French
- Under the direction and mentorship of Professor Evie Shockley and Professor James Swenson

2021-2023 Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ

**Inaugural Postdoctoral Fellow:** The Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice <https://globalracialjustice.rutgers.edu> and Comparative Literature

Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice mentors: Professor Erica Armstrong Dunbar, Professor Michelle Stephens, and Professor Gregory Pardlo

Comparative Literature Program mentors: Professor Ousseina Alidou and Professor Nelson Maldonado -Torres

2015-2021 Washington University in St. Louis, MO

- Ph.D. in Comparative Literature
- Chancellor's Graduate Fellow (2015-2021)
- Translation Certificate (granted spring 2018)

### **Dissertation: The Narrative History of Négritude: Black Poetic Imagination in Anglophone and Francophone Cultures**

Unlike the Négritude originators' methods of framing Africa as one unified place, this dissertation pursued a new understanding of Négritude that allows for a recognition of the dissimilarities of peoples, cultures, and systems of colonization within Africa and across its diaspora. Investigating underappreciated archival sources as well as Négritude's highly charged critical history, the dissertation demonstrated how Négritude, from its inception, was multisided and dynamic, thus suggesting that we should not disregard its commitments as a concept of freedom and justice that still holds for the Black diaspora today.

Committee: J. Dillon Brown (chair); Vincent Sherry; Ignacio Infante; Ayo A. Coly, Tabea Alexa Linhard, Rafia Zafar

2013-2015 MFA in Poetry, Translation

Columbia University School of the Arts, New York City  
Degree granted May 15, 2015  
Thesis: *Owls of Senegal* a manuscript of poems  
(Thesis readers: poets, Roger Reeves & Alan Gilbert)

*Translation Thesis*: translated Makenzy Orcel's *AL'Aube des Traversées et autres poèmes*  
in English  
(Thesis readers: poets, Cole Swensen & Richard Howard)

2008-2013

B.A. in French and English, Creative Writing, Francophone Studies

The College of Wooster Wooster, OH  
Degree granted May 13, 2013

Thesis: *Memories of a Senegalese Boy, Souvenirs D'Un Fils Sénégalais* manuscript of poems  
(Thesis readers: Carolyn A. Durham & Daniel Bourne)

2010-2011

Université Paris-Sorbonne IV, Paris, France  
19, 18 and 17 Century French Literature: successfully completed five courses in French literature

### **PROGRESS TOWARD COMPLETION OF SCHOLARLY MONOGRAPH: BOOK PROJECT**

*Négritude Polemics: Revisiting the Black Poetic Imagination in the African Diaspora* refigures the Négritude movement as an unfinished project in the context of a globalized Blackness. In doing so, I rethink Négritude as more than a poetics, but rather, as an epistemology that formulates Blackness in ways that continue to be relevant for the enduring Black struggles of today. As an interdisciplinary analysis, the book mobilizes archival documentation, biographical materials, methods of translation, and poetics as tools that enable the examination of Négritude as an idea and a Black intellectual movement. I focus on the leading thinkers of Négritude, namely Aime Césaire (1913-2008), Leopold Sedar Senghor (1906-2001), and Leon-Gontran Damas (1912-1978), but also, closely read the works of the Nardal sisters: Jane Nardal (1900-1993), Paulette Nardal (1896-1985), and Suzanne Césaire (1915-1966), otherwise known as the “Negritude Women” (Sharpley Whiting, 2002), whose interventions are often eclipsed by the male founders of the movement. More specifically, *Négritude Polemics* establishes an alternative interdisciplinary analysis of the movement that includes the interpersonal dynamics animating the relationship between the Nardal sisters, Suzanne Césaire and Damas. These relationships help us to comprehend the personal dimensions of the Négritude debate. I consider the following questions: Is Negritude still with us? And to what extent are the poetics of Negritude vital to the freedom-making pursuits undergirding racial, sexual, class, gender justice projects in the contemporary moment?

**NB:** Revised draft of proposal and chapter samplers due with DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS

**NB:** A chapter “Women in the Cluster of Black Internationalism: Négritude, Class, and Gender”, for publication with a special issue on GENDER AND SOLIDARITY IN AFRICAN LITERATURES—*Journal of Postcolonial Writing*— (Routledge multinational publisher). It includes an

abstract, deadlines for full articles, date of issue (preliminary 2026), peer review). This chapter traces how the writings of Paulette and Jane Nardal, as well as Suzanne Césaire, contributed to and shaped Négritude discourse at home and abroad.

### **RESEARCH INTERESTS:**

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Postcolonial literature and theory; Négritude; Black France; African agency; Black poetry; Literary criticism; Slavery Afterlives, Translating Blackness in Anglophone, and Francophone cultures.

### **TEACHING INTERESTS:**

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Course taught/to be taught: Négritude and its Discontents; Global Black Poetry & Politics; Sub-Saharan Poetics; Poetics of Bricolage, Slavery Afterlives, Decolonization, African Subjectivities, Migration and Displacement; Creativity & Exile; Globalization, World Literature, and Translation Studies, Literature Across Borders

### **HIGH QUALITY RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:**

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- 2014-2015                      Assistant to Poet and translator Richard Howard on his translation projects  
  
Columbia University, New York City  
  
5 hours a week reading over translated text by Professor Howard  
Compared and questioned his translation and discussed his choices
- 2011-2012                      Project Supervisor, compiling data for Professor Herminio Martinez, Executive  
Director of the Bronx Institute of Lehman College  
  
Lehman College, New York City  
  
Participated in academic writing  
Read final drafts for Dr. Herminio Martinez  
Revised drafts of proposal
- 2009-2010                      Assistant Project Manager, compiling data for Professor Ibra Sène  
Department/Affiliation: History, Global and International Studies, West Africa  
  
The College of Wooster, Ohio  
  
Assistant for Archival research to Prof. Ibra Sène  
I researched books and articles on African Studies, European Colonialism  
and Imperialism and Postcolonial Studies for Prof. Ibra Sène

### **INTERDISCIPLINARY AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY PUBLICATIONS:**

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*Ghost Letters: Volume II* in progress to be published by Parlor Press

*Ghost Letters* volume II deals with network of the unknown Black soldiers who fought for WWI and WWII. In epistolary forms and protest poems, *Ghost Letters II* considers and interrogates the violence colonialism had done to the colonizer who fought for a war that was not his war. *Ghost Letters II* scans (the trenches and the unknown soldier) as critical cosmoeses of Black solidarity and collective death. However, the epistolary form offers a view through a war-torn battlefield and the soldier's daily routine, emotionally, and psychologically.

<https://wordswithoutborders.org/read/article/2023-04/the-city-and-the-writer-in-ziguinchor-senegal-with-baba-badji-nathalie-handal/>

<https://pen.org/meet-the-2023-literary-awards-judges/>

Scholarly publication: "Jesus Died to Guide the Prophet in the Moon's Blue Chunk: *After Mahersbala Ali* by Baba Badji QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking Michigan State University Press Volume 9, Number 1, Spring 2022 <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/862877>

*Ghost Letters*, 2021: full-length poetry manuscript  
<https://www.nationalbook.org/books/ghost-letters>

*Ghost Letters* explores the intimacy of private experience while focusing on the personal awareness of belonging. In ruptured storylines, it investigates networks of people in different registers across mortalities, experiences of violence and hospitality, exile, history, and African myth. The Ghost Mother is a presiding presence throughout.

<https://www.rutgers.edu/news/researchers-join-together-study-systemic-racism-through-rutgers-institute>

<https://complit.wustl.edu/news/doctoral-student's-converging-themes-chaotic-beauty>

<https://graduateschool.wustl.edu/news/congratulations-2021-bouchet-society-inductees>

<https://electricliterature.com/baba-badji-poetry-collection-ghost-letters-poems>

<https://arts.columbia.edu/news/alumnus-baba-badji-15-publishes-ghost-letters>

<https://artsci.wustl.edu/ampersand/poetry-and-exile>

<https://www.europenowjournal.org/2018/02/28/four-poems-by-leopold-sedar-senghor/>

<https://www.europenowjournal.org/2018/02/28/five-poems-by-mohammed-kair-eddine/>

<https://complit.wustl.edu/news/articles/587>

[http://backup.freeversethejournal.org/Archives/2017/poems/B\\_Badji.html](http://backup.freeversethejournal.org/Archives/2017/poems/B_Badji.html)

<https://www.snapdragonjournal.com/2017.html>

<https://frenchandthecitynyu.wordpress.com/tag/baba-badji/>

<https://issuu.com/alltheartstl/docs/summer2016finalupload>

<https://arts.cgu.edu/foothill-journal/foothill-vol-7-no-1/>

<http://www.transversejournal.org/poetry-16/momma-baba-badji/>

<http://www.transversejournal.org/poetry-16/the-meaning-of-restraint-revenge-baba-badji/>

<http://www.transversejournal.org/poetry-16/in-permanent-exile-from-a-clock-inaccessible-neck-baba-badji/>

## **UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE TEACHING AND RELATED EXPERIENCE:**

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### **Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ**

Spring, 2024  
Course Names: Department of French  
Exile in Global French & Francophone Cultures: Sénégal and Algeria

Spring, 2023  
Course Names: Comparative Literature  
Literature Across Borders: Translation

Spring, 2022  
Course Names: Comparative Literature  
Global Black Poetry: The Working and Reworking of Blackness Across the World

### **University of Virginia Department of French**

Spring, 2022  
Workshop names: JAMES BALDWIN SCHOLAR AND ARTIST IN RESIDENCE  
*Workshop:* James Baldwin & The Négritude Architects: A Rich Literary Clash

### **Washington University in St. Louis, MO**

Spring, 2020  
Course Name: Department of International and Area Studies  
Deportation in Black France: Francophone Cultures Across Borders

Spring, 2019  
Course Name: Department of African and African-American Studies  
Négritude, Translation, Culture, Politics, and Society in Francophone Africa

Spring, 2018  
Course Name: Department of Comparative Literature  
Voices: Refugees, Displacement and Asylum in World Literature

Spring, 2017  
Course Name: Department of African and African-American Studies  
Introduction to African Literature: African Women's Poetry

**The Bronx Institute at Lehman College, Bronx, New York City**

Summer, 2015  
Course Name: Advanced Poetry Writing & Translation Theory

Summer, 2013  
Course Name: Advanced Poetry & Prose Writing III

**MAJOR CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS OF SCHOLARSHIPS AND LECTURES:**

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Spring, 2023  
**Georgetown University**  
The African Studies Program (AFSP) in the Walsh School of Foreign Service  
*Lecture:* Senghor's Humanism: Négritude Afterlives: The Africa I am waiting for...

Spring, 2023  
**Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ**  
Department of English Writers House  
*Lecture:* Négritude and the Diasporic Poem: The Importance of Wolof to Ghost Letters

Spring, 2022  
Department of African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures (AMESALL)  
*Lecture:* Wolof Poetics: African Languages in Ghost Letters: Form, History, Solidary, and Translation Within

Spring, 2023  
**The Africa Institute, Sharjah, UAE**  
*Lecture:* Deciphering African History Négritude, Blackness, & More Through Wolof Poetics

Spring, 2023  
**University of California, Irvine**  
The Department of European Languages and Studies and Africana Institute for Creation, Recognition, and Elevation and the School of Humanities Equity Advisor  
*Lecture:* The Afterlives of Négritude and Black Lives Matter (Introduced by Professor Ngugi wa Th'iongo)

Spring, 2022  
**University of Virginia Department of French**  
*Lecture:* Reading Black France Today: Beyond Blackness & Négritude Within

Spring, 2022  
**Sarah Lawrence College**  
*Lecture:* The Afterlives of Négritude and Black Lives Matter

Summer, 2022  
**The MLA International Symposium Took Place 2–4 June 2022 in Glasgow, Scotland**

*Chaired* a session at The 2022 International Symposium on “Migratory World(s): Hospitality and Hostility in Recent Narratives on the Global Crisis of Migration.”

*Lecture:* “Aimé Fernand David Césaire and Frantz Fanon: A Literary Retranslation and Rediscovery

Fall, 2021

**University of Rochester, NY**

The Frederick Douglass Fall Symposium & Inaugural Gala: Frederick Douglass Institute for African and African American Studies & African American Studies (FDI). **Provost Conference Fellow**

Summer, 2020

**Oxford University, UK**

Oxford University Translation Day, 13 June 2020 St Anne’s College, Oxford, UK  
Invited to Oxford University to give a talk and read poems from *Ghost Letters*.

Summer, 2019

**Universidad de Chile, Santiago**

Conference for the CHCI Mellon Global Humanities Institute (GHI) Challenges of Translation (Theoretical Issues, Practical Densities: Violence, Memory, and the Untranslatable)

Paper title: ‘The Rise of Negritude’s Extolled Pioneers: Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire and Fodéba Keita: Transnational Black Cultures

Spring, 2018

**Washington University in St. Louis**

Conference Crossing the Borders of Creation and Critique

Paper I title: On Translating Moroccan Poet Mohammed Khair-Eddine’s *Soleil Arachnide*

Paper II title: Poetic Imagination of Négritude, Creativity, and Exile: Impact in the Black Diaspora

Spring, 2107

**Washington University in St. Louis**

Chancellor Fellows *Arts & Letters Colloquium*.

Paper title: “Creativity and The Francophone African Text and the Art of Exile”

Read poems from *Museum of Exile* (full-length poetry manuscript in progress) and from *Ghost Letters* (2021)

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS, NETWORKING AND ENGAGEMENT:**

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- Postgraduate Member of ICLA Research Development Committee (International Comparative Literature Association) Association Internationale de littérature comparée Comité de recherche et de projets
- Member of American Translation Association
- Member of Wash U. Translator's Collective
- Associate of Maison Auriolles, Bias, France
- Associate of GAEC Africa, Saint Louis, Senegal
- Associate of The Dakar Publishing and Grant Writing Seminar

## **SERVICE EXPERIENCE:**

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Spring, 2023

### **Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ**

- Rutgers Global and The Office of Study Abroad
- Global Justice Undergraduate Fellows, London
- Leadership Workshop, London
- Restorative Justice and Beloved Community Lab meetings at The University of Glasgow
- Graduate Discussion with Senegalese activist and rapper Makhtar Fall
- known as Gunman Xuman sponsored and co/organized by French GSO

Spring, 2018

### **Washington University in St. Louis**

- Mentor and Teacher to The YMCA Scholars
- Helped YMCA Scholars develop:
  - Writing and communication skills
  - Weekly writing assignments
  - Weekly phone calls with participants
  - Weekly comparative essay analysis

Spring, 2017

### **Washington University in St. Louis**

- Target Hope Conference
- Helped study profiles of minority students
- Offered advice for recruitment activities
- Co/coordinated campus visits for minority students

## **AWARDS AND HONORS:**

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National Book Awards (2021)

Edward A. Bouchet Honor Society Fellow, Washington University in St. Louis



Chancellor 's Fellow (2015-2020), Washington University in St. Louis

*Owls of Senegal* (2015) finalist for The Seattle Review Chapbook contest, judged by Claudia Rankine

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### **INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH TRAVEL, GRANTS AND MAJOR COLLABORATIONS:**

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Rutgers Global Grant for research engagement to foster a multidisciplinary international educational initiative between GAEC Africa and Rutgers University. Writing a grant with GAEC Africa based in Saint Louis, Senegal, (through Rutgers Global) with Professor Wendell Marsh, Professor Abdurrahman Seck, and Professor Alba Rodríguez, for an international Lab on Grounding Black Studies in Africa. I have started drafting this grant and will work on it this summer.

Co/founder and Co/organizer of *The humanity workroom symposium* at Rutgers University to study race and its processes of racialization. *The humanity workroom symposium* seeks to reimagine, foster, and pledge for new approaches in ways research organizations and traditions on race have consolidated, theorized, and practiced the studies of Global Blackness. Through two- and half--day roundtable discussions, *The humanity workroom symposium* is scheduled for spring 2024.

Co/Founder of The Center for Translation, Literature and Writing at Asanne Seck University in Ziguinchor, Casamance Senegal (UASZ). The Center fosters transnational dialogues among scholars, writers, and translators around the world.

Co/Founder and Project Manager of The Dakar Translation Symposium <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/520430/the-dakar-translation-symposium-africa-and-her-globalization/>

Co/organizer of The International Symposium for Race, Justice and Translation in Cheikh Anta Diop Dakar (June 12-20, 2022).

Maison Auriolles, Bias, France Summer 2019. Writers Accommodation, writing and research in French poetry and Négritude. Worked on lyric novella *Madame Diawara*. Worked on *Ghost Letters* (2021). Book project research.

Paris, France, Summer 2019 visits at the Library of Archives Nationales. Book project research.

Dakar, Senegal, Summer 2019 daily visits at The Intitut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire in Dakar. Book project research.

Dakar, Senegal, Île de Gorée, Summer 2019  
Book project research.

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### **LANGUAGES:**

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French, English, Wolof, Diolla, Mending (excellent in speaking and writing, I call upon these languages in my writing.)

**REFERENCES:** *(contact information available upon request)*

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Ousseina D. Alidou, Distinguished Professor, Linguistics and African Studies, Department of African, Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Literatures and Graduate Program in Comparative Literature, African Studies Association President (2021-2022), **Rutgers-New Brunswick, NJ** [will submit a recommendation letter on my behalf]

Michelle Stephens, Executive Director, Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice, Professor, English, Latino and Caribbean Studies (School of Arts and Science **Rutgers-New Brunswick, NJ**) [will submit a recommendation letter on my behalf]

J. Dillon Brown, Associate Professor of Anglophone Literatures, Department of English (Dissertation-committee director, **Washington University in St. Louis, MO**) [will submit a recommendation letter on my behalf]

Ignacio Infante, Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Spanish, Acting Director, Center for the Humanities, Comparative Literature Undergraduate Study Abroad Coordinator, (**Washington University in St. Louis, MO**) [will submit a recommendation letter on my behalf]

Rafia Zafar, Professor of English, African and African American Studies, and American Culture Studies, (**Washington University in St. Louis, MO**) [will submit a recommendation letter on my behalf]

Vincent Sherry, Chair of English Department, Howard Nemerov Professor in the Humanities, (**Washington University in St. Louis, MO**) [will submit a recommendation letter on my behalf]

Ayo A. Coly, Professor in African and African American Studies, Comparative Literature and African and African American Studies (**Dartmouth College**) [will submit a recommendation letter on my behalf]