

LAURA S. GRILLO

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1995	Ph.D.	THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO History of Religions – with Distinction Dissertation: <i>Divination in the Religious Systems of West Africa</i>
1986	M.Div.	UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY Hebrew Bible & Ecumenical Theology – with Distinction Thesis: <i>The Festival of Yams: An Exegesis of a West African Ritual</i>
1978	A. B.	BROWN UNIVERSITY Religious Studies & Psychology

HONORS & AWARDS

2019	SOCIETY FOR HUMANISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY AWARD Ethnographic Creative Nonfiction Writing
2019 -	ALBERT RABOTEAU BOOK PRIZE FINALIST – <i>An Intimate Rebuke</i>
2013	HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL – Research Fellow
2019, '07, '06	THE VIRGINIA CENTER FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS Writers' Residency Fellowships for Creative Non-fiction
2007, '05	THE RAGDALE FOUNDATION Writers' Residency Fellowships for Creative Non-fiction
1999 - 2000	JAMES S. COLEMAN CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES, UCLA Post-Doctoral Research Associate
1997 - 1998	INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCED STUDY OF RELIGION, The University of Chicago - Senior Fellow
1997	NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES – Travel & Research Grant
1997	WEST AFRICAN RESEARCH ASSOCIATION – Travel & Research Grant
1996	AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION – Travel & Research Grant
1993	CHARLOTTE NEWCOMBE DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP – Finalist
1993	AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP – Alternate
1992 - 1993	INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCED STUDY OF RELIGION, The University of Chicago – Junior Fellow
1989 - 1990	CHARLES M. ROSS TRUST – Grant awarded for promise in Religious Studies
1987 - 1988	JOSEPH M. KITAGAWA SCHOLAR, The University of Chicago
1980 - 1984	CHARLES M. ROSS TRUST – Three-time recipient of award for promise of international contribution to Ecumenical Theology

EMPLOYMENT

- 2016 – Pres. AFFILIATED FACULTY
Georgetown University, Dept. of Theology and Religious Studies
- Consultant to Director of the Graduate Studies Program
 - Graduate Tutorial teaching
- 2003 – 2016 PROFESSOR & DISSERTATION RESEARCH COORDINATOR
Pacifica Graduate Institute - Mythological Studies Program
- Master’s and Doctoral teaching and Dissertation supervision
 - Oversight of Dissertation Policy
 - *Institutional Assessment and Accreditation* Steering Committee
 - Lead Author of 4 successful Accreditation Reports:
 - *Capacity and Preparatory Review Report* (2008)
 - *Educational Effectiveness Review Report* (2009)
 - *Interim Report* (2012)
 - *Substantive Change Application* to WASC for Clinical PsyD Program
 - Administrative Service:
 - Projects Associate for the Chancellor (2013-15)
 - Consultant to the Provost (2012-13)
 - Senate Secretary (2007-2009)
 - Chair, Faculty Senate Faculty Well-Being Committee (2011-13; 2016)
- 2000 - 2003 SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
The University of Chicago
- Speech Writing, Correspondence, and Special Projects Management
 - President’s Cabinet – strategic planning & problem solving
 - Supervision of Student Ombudsman
- 1998 - 1999 VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
The College of Wooster (Wooster, Ohio)
- 1995 - 1997 ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF RELIGION
Millsaps College (Jackson, MS)

Employment during PhD work

- 1993 – 1995 EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
 American Journal of Education (The University of Chicago)
- 1990 - 1991 ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY OF RELIGIONS
 Boston University School of Theology
- 1988 - 1989 RESEARCH ASSISTANT, The Fundamentalism Project (Martin Marty)
 American Academy of Arts and Sciences (The University of Chicago)
- *Contributing editor to Fundamentalism Observed* (1991)

Employment in Africa

- 1987 TEACHER OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
 International School of Abidjan (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire)
- 1983 - 1984 COORDINATOR & INSTRUCTOR OF COMPUTER EDUCATION

- International School of Kenya (Nairobi, Kenya)
- Designed curriculum and taught K-8; Adult and In-Service Faculty courses
 - Earned Classroom Teacher Supervisor Certificate -U South Carolina
- 1982 - 1983 CONSULTANT FOR PROGRAM AND DEVELOPMENT
All Africa Conference of Churches (Nairobi, Kenya)
- Developed objectives and strategies for *Youth, Women & Development*
 - Represented AACC to member churches and funding agencies
 - Organized international conferences
- 1978 - 1980 TEACHER OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
College Chateaubriand (Dabou, Côte d'Ivoire)

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP

- 2019 – ADVISORY COMMITTEE – *Religious Studies Review*
- 2019 – EDITORIAL BOARD – *Religion Compass Journal*
- 2019 – EDITORIAL BOARD – Bloomsbury Series in Religion, Gender, and Sexuality
- 2018 – STEERING COMMITTEE – ASA Women's Caucus
African Studies Association
- 2015 – 2017 EDITORIAL BOARD – *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
- 2012 – 2016 STEERING COMMITTEE – AAR African Diaspora Group
- 2010 – 2011 PROGRAM SUBCOMMITTEE – American Academy of Religion (AAR)
- Advises Executive Director on program structure and policies
- 2006 – 2010 EDITORIAL BOARD – *Religion Compass Journal*
- 2005 – 2012 CO-CHAIR – AAR African Religions Group
- Leadership and planning for annual meeting
 - Author of yearly reports and two 5-Year Self-Evaluation Reports
- 1998 - 2000 NEH EVALUATION PANELIST – National Endowment for the Humanities
Fellowships and Summer Stipends Program

PUBLICATIONS

Books

- Religions in Contemporary Africa: An Introduction*, a textbook co-authored with Adriaan van Klinken and Hassan J. Ndzovu. NY: Routledge Press, 2019.
- An Intimate Rebuke: Female Genital Power in Ritual and Politics in West Africa*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.

Book Chapters

- "Divination in Afro-Caribbean Religions" in *Oxford Handbook of Caribbean Religions*. Ed. Michelle Gonzalez Maldonado. NY: Oxford University Press. (In Press).
- "Total Impact: Being Changed by Divination in West Africa" in *Religion: Super Religion*. Ed. Jeffrey J. Kripal. 205-219. Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks: Religion series. Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan, 2017.

- "Signs, Doors and Games: Divination's Dynamic Visual Canon." In *Ifá Divination, Knowledge, Power, and Performance*. Eds. Jacob K. Olupona and Rowland Abiodun. 308-324. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016.
- "African Rituals." In *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to African Religions*. Ed. Elias Kifon Bongmba. 112-126. Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishers, 2012:
- "'When you make sacrifice, no one is a stranger': Divination, sacrifice and identity among translocals in the West African urban diaspora," In *Religion Crossing Boundaries: Transnational Dynamics in African and the New African Diasporic Religions*. Ed. A. Adogame and J. Spickard. 143-64. Religion and Social Order series, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2010.
- "Memoir as Method: Exploring Divination as Reflexivity." In *Divination: Perspectives for a New Millennium*, ed. Patrick Curry. 39-46. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2010.
- "Rambu Solo': The Toraja Cult of the Dead and Embodied Imagination." In *Varieties of Mythic Experience: Essays on Religion, Psyche and Culture*, eds. Dennis Patrick Slattery and Glen Slater, 101-133. Einsiedeln: Daimon Verlag. 2008
- [NB: Due to publisher errors, please see <https://laurasgrillo.com> for the complete work including notes and bibliography.]
- "Research on Divination: The Innovation and Adaptation of Traditional Religions in Response to the Contingencies of Contemporary Urban West Africa." In *The Histories, Languages and Cultures of West Africa: Interdisciplinary Essays*, eds. Akua Sarr, Edris Makward, Amadou T. Fofana, and C. Frederick Lampeter. 377-386. UK: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006.
- "Trajectories in African Ethics." In *The Blackwell Companion to Religious Ethics*, ed. William Schweiker. 438-447. Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishers, 2005.
- "The Diversity and Vitality of Primal Religions." In *Religions of the World* Third Edition, Ed. Niels C. Nielsen, Jr. 21-45. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1993.

Peer Reviewed Articles and Essays

- "Mbembe's Matrix and the Matri-archive: 'the little secret' to conjuring away the postcolonial spell," *Journal of Religion in Africa* – special issue on Achille Mbembe (in Press).
- "The Boiling Cauldron," an excerpt from memoir *Ask for the Road. Anthropology and Humanism*. Special issue of prize-winning creative non-fiction essays (In Press).
- "African women's anti-witchcraft: what kind of faith-based activism is this?" Faith and Action Series in Religion in Public (blog, University of Leeds). February 18, 2020. <https://religioninpublic.com/2020/02/18/fa-series-african-womens-anti-witchcraft-what-kind-of-faith-based-activism-is-this/>
- "Evading Masculinized Modernity in Mozambique," *Contending Modernities* (blog, University of Notre Dame). January 31, 2020. <https://contendingmodernities.nd.edu/theorizing-modernities/evading-masculinized-modernity/>
- "Excavating the Matri-archive: Author Response to Round Table on *An Intimate Rebuke*," *Journal of Africana Religions* 7, 2 (2019): 316-22.
- "The Disenchantment of Civil Society in the New Global Postcolony." *Global-e* 12, no. 10 (March 14, 2019). <https://www.21global.ucsb.edu/global-e/march-2019/disenchantment-civil-society-new-global-postcolony>.

- "Les Mères au rond-point: retrouver l'identité et son fondement dans la morale" ("Mothers at the round-about: Recollecting Identity on Moral Grounds") Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference on Mandé studies, August 2-6, 2017, Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire (2017).
- "At the Mythological center of the World, a Unique Pedagogical Initiative Launches in Nigeria" co-authored with Samantha Lakin. The Huffington Post (August 3, 2017).
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/at-the-mythological-center-of-the-world-a-unique-pedagogical_us_5982df82e4b0396a95c874e4
- "Papa at the Window," an excerpt from memoir *Ask for the Road*. In *Luna Review*, April 2016.
<http://lunareview.com/wordpress/2016/03/30/papa-at-the-window/>
- "Ironic Reversals: Gender, Power and Sacrality in Ile-Ife," *Journal of Africana Religions* 2, 4 (2014): 465-477.
- "Catachresis in Côte d'Ivoire: Female Genital Power in Religious Ritual and Political Resistance" *Religion And Gender* 3, 2 (May 7, 2013): 188-206.
<http://www.religionandgender.org/index.php/rg/article/view/8329>.
- "Female Genital Power in Ritual & Politics: Violation & Deployment" *Cultural Anthropology*, Hot Spot Forum. May 14, 2012. <http://culanth.org/fieldsights/196-female-genital-power-in-ritual-and-politics-violation-and-deployment-in-southern-cote-d-ivoire>
- "The Urgency of Widening the Discourse of Philosophy of Religion: A Discussion of A *Primal Perspective on the Philosophy of Religion* by Arvind Sharma" *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79, 4 (2012): 803-813.
- "Divination: Epistemology, Agency and the Construction of Identity in Contemporary West Africa," *Religion Compass*, Blackwell Press 3, 6 (2009): 921-934.
- "African Religions." In *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of World Religions*. Editor, Wendy Doniger, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc, 2006.
- "Dieterlen, Germaine." In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd Edition, ed. Lindsay Jones. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. 2349-2351.
- "Griaule, Marcel." In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd Edition, ed. Lindsay Jones. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. 3700-3701.
- "Dogon: religionsgeschichtlich." In *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, vierte Auflage* Tübingen, Germany: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 2000.
- "Fulbe." In *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, vierte Auflage* Tübingen, Germany: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 2000.
- "African Religions." In *Encyclopedia Britannica online*. Chicago, IL: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1999.
- "Religion and Art in Africa." In *Encyclopedia Britannica online* Chicago, IL: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1999
- "Divination in Contemporary Urban West Africa," *Religious Studies News AAR* 13, 3 (1998).
- "African Religions." In *Encyclopedia of Women and World Religion*. ed. Serinity Young, New York: Macmillan Press, 1999. 6-12.
- "The Body in Microhistorical Societies." In *Encyclopedia of Women and World Religion*. ed. Serinity Young, New York: Macmillan Press, 1999. 95-97.
- "Circle." In *Encyclopedia of Women and World Religion*, ed. Serinity Young, New York: Macmillan Press, 1999. 179-180.

"Purification." In *Encyclopedia of Women and World Religion*, ed. Serinity Young. New York: Macmillan Press, 1999. 117-119.

"African Traditional Religions." In Microsoft's CD ROM *Encarta Encyclopedia*. 1997.

"Dogon Divination as an Ethic of Nature," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 20 (1992): 309-330.

Reviews

"The Fetish Revisited: Marx, Freud, and the Gods Black People Make. By J. Lorand Matory." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 87, 3 (2019) 911-915.

"Faith in the Time of AIDS: Religion, Biopolitics and Modernity in South Africa by Marian Bucharadt." *Religious Studies Review*. 45, 3 (Fall 2019).

"City of 201 Gods: Ilé-Ifé in Time, Space, and the Imagination by Jacob K. Olúpòṅà." *Nova Religio: the Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 17, 1 (August 2013): 109-111.

"Along an African Border: Angolan Refugees and Their Divination Baskets by Sónia Silva." *History of Religions* The University of Chicago Press 52, 4 (May 2013): 414-417.

"Time and Sacrifice in the Aztec Cosmos by Kay A. Read" *Journal of Ritual Studies* 13, 2 (1999): 75-76.

"Seven Theories of Religion by Daniel L. Pals," *History of Religions* 37, 1 (1997): 90-93.

"Weaving the Threads of Life: The Khita Gyn-Eco-Logical Healing Cult among the Yaka by René Devisch," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 10, 1 (1996): 146-148.

"Yoruba Ritual: Performers, Play, Agency by Margaret T. Drewal," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 8, 2 (1994): 151-153.

"Shamanic Healing and Ritual Drama: Health and Medicine in Native North American Religious Traditions by Åke Hultkrantz," *Journal of Religion* 74, 2 (1994): 286-288.

"Nkpititi: La Rancune et le Prophète by Marc Augé and J-P Colleyn," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 22, 2 (1992): 181-183.

"Religion in Calabar: The Religious Life of a Nigerian Town by Rosalind Hackett," *Journal of Religion* 71, 2 (1991): 313-314.

Book Translations

Translator, with Robert E. Smith. *Encyclopedia of Ritual Symbolics*. Vol. 1&2 ed., Hermann Hohegger. Bandundu: R.D. Congo, Institute of Anthropological Research (Ceeba). 2000, 2001.

Translator, *Ritual Masks: Deceptions and Revelations* by Henry Pernet. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1992.

PRESENTATIONS

"The 'Little Secret' to Conjuring away the Postcolonial Spell: Mbembe's Matrix and the Matriarchive" – *American Academy of Religion*, San Diego, CA, November 2019 (forthcoming).

"The Incivility of 'Civil Society' in Africa: untimely tropes and spiritual weapons" – Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion, E. Carolina University, Greenville, NC, March 8, 2019

"Religion in the African Public Sphere – Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Dec 7-8, 2018

"Engendering morality in Africa: Subversive recollection of the subjugated matriarchive" Conference of the International Association for the study of Religion and Gender

- (IARG), Ghent, Belgium, November 2018.
- "Energizing the Matriarchive: The Rite of FGP as Infrapolitical Rage and Moral Force"
Africa Studies Association annual meeting, Atlanta, GA, November 2018.
- "Response to Roundtable discussion of *An Intimate Rebuke*"
American Academy of Religions annual meeting, Denver, CO, November 2018.
- "Spectacular Recollections: Women's naked protest in West Africa"
Colloquium Speaker, African, African American and Diaspora Studies, UNC-Chapel Hill, December 5, 2018.
- "Spectacular Recollections: Women's naked protest against African State Amnesia"
University of North Florida, Jacksonville, October 30, 2017.
- "Academic Research in the Digital Age: Shaping questions through research design" – Invited full-day presentation, Institute for Advanced Studies in Ife Summer Institute, Obafemi Awolawo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, July 31, 2017.
- "Les Mères au rond-point: retrouver l'identité et son fondement dans la morale" ("Mothers at the round-about: Recollecting Identity on Moral Grounds") – Invited presentation, Mande Studies Association (MANSA) annual meeting, Université de Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, August 4, 2017.
- "Decolonizing the Study of Religion in Africa: a Response"
Invited presentation, *American Academy of Religion*, Boston, MA, November 2017.
- "Memory, Memorialization, Morality: Female Genital Power in Ritual & Politics in Côte d'Ivoire" – Invited presentation, *American Academy of Religion* annual meeting, Atlanta, GA, November 22, 2015.
- "Christianity, Sexuality and Gender in African History" – Invited Lecture for Course entitled "Christianity, Identity and Civil Society in Africa," Harvard Divinity School, April 9, 2013.
- "Hallowed Howls & Sacred Sounds" Presider and Respondent - *African and Diasporic Religious Studies Association (ADRSA) Conference on Spiritual Soundscapes*, Harvard University, April 3-4, 2015.
- "Gender and Change in Ile-Ife: A Response to Jacob Olupona's *City of 201 Gods*" Public Lecture, *Center for the Study of World Religions*, Harvard University, April 11, 2013.
- "A Study of Female Genital Power in West Africa – Visual Argument, Methodological Considerations." *Center for the Study of World Religions*, Harvard University, March 13, 2013.
- "Catachresis in Côte d'Ivoire." Invited paper, *Conference and Workshop on "Religion, Gender and Postcoloniality"* – SOAS University of London, UK, December 18, 2012.
- "Response to *African Traditions in The Study of Religion in Africa – Part II*," Invited paper, American Academy of Religion annual meeting, Chicago, IL, November 16, 2012.
- "Mircea Eliade and the study of History of Religions in the USA." *International seminar, Romanian Academy in Cluj-Napoca*, Romania, April 2, 2012.
- "The Deployment of Female Genital Power as an Act of Civil Society in Côte d'Ivoire." *Workshop of the Luce Project on Religion in Global Civil Society at UCSB, A Focus on The Middle East and Africa* – Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies, January 22, 2012.
- "Female Genital Power in Côte d'Ivoire: Violation & Deployment." *Salon*, a private forum for public lectures and discussion - Santa Barbara, January 8, 2012.

- "Contested Powers and Power Contests: Sex and Power in Ritual and Politics in Post-Civil War Côte d'Ivoire." *American Academy of Religion* annual meeting, Montréal, Canada, November 2009
- "Divination as a Dynamic Visual Canon." *Sacred Knowledge, Sacred Power and Performance: Ifa Divination in West Africa and the African Diaspora*, an International Conference Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, March, 2008.
- "A Thought Experiment Reconsidered: 'A Primal Perspective on the Philosophy of Religion' by Arvind Sharma." *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting*, San Diego, CA, November 2007
- "Memoir as Method: A Reading from 'Ask for the Road,'" and "Response to Phillip Peek." *Divination and Dialogue* – University of Kent, Canterbury, England, October 2007
- "The Creative Process: Memoir as Literary and Academic Pursuit." Sweet Briar College, Amherst, VA, November 25, 2006
- "Divination, Destiny & Soul-Making." The Jung Institute, Los Angeles, CA, February 3, 2006
- "Ethics in the Cast of Divination." University of California, Davis, CA, May 2005
- "Walking with Spirits: Divination in Contemporary Urban West Africa." Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, CA, March 2000.
- African Traditional Religions, Respondent. *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting*, Boston, MA, 1999
- "Casting for Meaning: Divination in Contemporary Urban West Africa." *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting*, Orlando, FL, 1998.
- "Intentionality and Self-Understanding in Ritual," Presider. *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting* Orlando, FL, 1998.
- "Innovation and adaptation of 'traditional' religions." *First International Symposium: West Africa and the Global Challenge*, Dakar, Senegal, 1997.
- "Yoruba religion in 'Death & the King's Horseman.'" DePaul University, Chicago, IL, May, 1996
- "West African Divination as Play of a Visual Canon." Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, February, 1996
- "Dynamics of Divination." *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting*, Chicago, IL, 1994.
- "Divination, Identity, and the Transmission of Culture." *Midwest American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting*, Valparaiso, IN, 1994.
- "Dogon Divination as an Ethic of Nature." *XVIth Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions*, Rome, Italy, 1991.
- "Rethinking Resistance in African Religions." *American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting*, New Orleans, LA, 1990.

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION – Extra-editorial assignments

Funding Proposal for *the Institute for Advanced Studies* (IAS), Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 2017
 Book manuscript evaluations for: Routledge Press; University of Alabama Press.
 Journal article evaluations for: *The Journal of Religion*, *African Studies Review*, *The Journal of Religion*.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Academy of Religion (AAR)
American Anthropological Association (AAA)
Association for Africanist Anthropology (AFAA)
Association for Feminist Anthropology (AFA)
Society for the Anthropology of Religion (SAR)
African Studies Association (ASA)
International Association of Religion and Gender (IARG)
National Women's Studies Association (NWSA)
Mende Studies Association (MANSA)

COURSES DESIGNED AND TAUGHT

Graduate

African and African Diaspora Traditions
Methodological Approaches and Contemporary Issues in Religious Studies
Ritual and the Embodied Imagination
Research Strategies
Dissertation Formulation
Divination, Synchronicity & the Uncanny
Myth, Gender and Power

Undergraduate

Comparative Religious Ethics: East, West and South
Religions East and West: The Body
Introduction to Religious Studies: Theory and Method
The Construction of Religion and the Encounter of Cultures
African Religions
Vodou, Santería, Candomblé: Three Religions of the African Diaspora
Ritual Masks of the World: Religious Meaning and Social Function
Myth and the Ritual Process
Saints & Sinners: The religious journey in film and literature
Religious Autobiography & Biography
Introduction to Global Studies

LANGUAGES

French (Fluent)
Italian (Competent)
Adioukrou (Working knowledge)
German (Formal Study)
Biblical Hebrew (Formal Study)