

**Name:**

Olutayo C. Adesina, PhD  
Professor of History,  
Department of History,  
Faculty of Arts,  
University of Ibadan, Nigeria

**Topic:**

Afterlives of Slavery: The Contours of Return, Seasons of Labour, and Social Reproduction

**Abstract:**

A major shared preoccupation of many of the freed African slaves and perhaps, those of their former owners in the nineteenth century was the phenomenon of return to the land of their ancestors. This represented a significant episode in black cultural memory and the trans-Atlantic enterprise that facilitated the meeting points of enslaved Africans and their former homeland. 'Return' as one of the legacies of slavery is deeply interwoven and discursively constructed into the 'Back to Africa' narrative.

This work speaks to the moments in the history of the black Atlantic when formerly enslaved Africans began to emerge on the African continent as important mobilizing and penetrating forces in the African landscape. This work is a layered reconstruction of the intermingling of the returnees and the indigenous people and the relationship that coalesced around a negotiated relationship and inheritance. It is suggested here that the return of former slaves to Africa had great implications for society that became interspersed with multiple cultural entanglements, identity, and geographical familial bonds. Despite the development of certain frictions, and sometimes fatal intolerance, the returnees and some of their offspring began to represent stability and continuity, bringing the old and the new together in very dynamic and increasingly significant ways.

**Bio**

Olutayo Charles Adesina is a professor of history and former Head, Department of History, University of Ibadan, Nigeria where he teaches the Economic and Social history of West Africa and, American History. A Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Letters (FNAL), the apex organisation of humanistic scholars in Nigeria, Prof. Adesina was also a recipient of several distinguished visiting Fellowship Awards, including that of the Salzburg Seminar, Austria; Atlantic History Seminar, Charles Warren Center, Harvard University; the African Visiting Fellowship, Rhodes Chair of Race Relations, St. Antony's College, Oxford University, U.K.; and, the fellowship of the Institute of Advanced Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. His publications include: "A Terrain...Angels Would Fear to Tread": Biographies and History in Nigeria, *Southern Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 45 No. 1, June 2020; and *Oyo: History, Tradition and Royalty. Essays in Honour of His Imperial Majesty the Alaafin of Oyo, Oba (Dr.) Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III*. Ibadan, Ibadan University Press, 2021. 201pp (edited with Siyan Oyeweso). Prof. Adesina is the current Editor of *Africa Review*; an interdisciplinary academic journal published by Brill, The Netherlands. Prof Adesina oversees and coordinates the research activities of his team in various regions of Nigeria on the University College London (UCL) research project on *African Abolitionism: The Rise and Transformations of Anti-Slavery in Africa (AFRAB)*.