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Program Theme

(Re)Thinking Africa and the World: Internal Reflections, External Responses

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The 2006 African Studies Association Annual Meeting theme returns our attention to the terms of Africa's engagement with the world: its power structures; cultural and religious currents; artistic trends; economic patterns; international organizations; arrays of public and private bilateral agencies that have focused on Africa; investment patterns and great transnational corporations; as well as international regimes which are supposed to represent policy commitments and interests shared by strong and weak nations alike. The theme draws attention to all the many dimensions of international influence upon Africa that its nations and peoples have had only limited opportunity and capacity to shape or change. The theme embraces the complexities and the full scope of that international influence, including their beneficial and deleterious effects, unintended consequences for good and for ill, and imponderable long term effects that can only begin to be gauged at this time.

The primary focus of this year's theme, however, is African reflections upon, and responses to the myriad facets of this influence. At a time when African peoples were in the process of securing the formal termination of colonial political rule and helping to dissolve European empires of global reach, optimism underlay African quests for non-alignment, self-reliance, and political, economic, and cultural identity. There were great expectations concerning what these quests would yield in contributions to, and enrichment of world civilizations. In the new millennium, with such singularly important events as the formation of the Africa Union and the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Wangari Maathai, it is time to inquire anew and in focused ways into what Africa has learned from its own post independence experiences. It is time to explore what intimations of political, economic, cultural, and artistic renewal may yield in terms of new forms and approaches for African engagement with what is increasingly a global village in almost every facet of human existence. In these

respects, the theme embraces all the worlds of African endeavor: artists, musicians, scholars, literary figures, political leaders, grassroots activists, business and labor leaders, theologians, and others. The theme centers upon how these communities have reflected on the decades since the formal transfers of political power to African governments, how those reflections have already been translated into new ideas and actions across the range of human experience, and what those ideas and actions might portend in terms of broader strategies addressing the human condition in Africa. Finally, the theme focuses upon how nations and peoples may be collaborating across territorial or cultural divides to fashion new strategies and approaches for addressing common problems.

Program Sub-Themes

- A. African Urban Spaces: Portals on the World
- B. Rethinking Democracy and the State in Africa
- C. Inter-African Peacekeeping and Conflict Mitigation Initiatives
- D. Mosque, Church, and Shrine
- E. African Philosophy Revisited
- F. Rethinking the African Diaspora
- G. Rethinking African Economic Reform
- H. International Environmental Regimes and African Initiatives
- I. Rethinking the Past, Toward the Future
- J. Rural Producers, Food Security, Local Organizations, and World Markets
- K. African International Relations: Toward Continental Self-reliance
- L. African Aesthetics
- M. African Music and the Black Atlantic
- N. Toward Healthy African Societies
- O. Gender
- P. Local Memories and Modernity
- Q. Education in Africa: International Dynamics, External Interventions, and their Intersections
- R. Transnational, National, and Local Interactions of Civil Society and Social Movements in Africa
- S. Culture, Politics and the Politics of Culture
- T. Rethinking Africa's Past: Distant Connections, Contemporary Meanings
- U. Popular Culture

A. African Urban Spaces: Portals on the World: Heidi Frontani (Elon University) and Robert Roundy (University of California-Berkeley)

Urban areas have been important features of Africa's landscape for more than two thousand years. Societies have organized themselves such that cities and towns have served as centers of trade, wealth accumulation, political action and

authority, as sites of military authority, places of refuge, and of ritual power and contact with the sacred. Africa experienced dramatic urban growth throughout the twentieth century and the continent is anticipated to become more urban than rural by the year 2030. Whereas historically there have been a range of settlement patterns and ways in which cities are structured, currently two-thirds of Africa's urban population lives in informal settlements without adequate water, sanitation, health, or transportation services. Youths, including AIDS orphans, are especially present in urban informal sectors. The United Nations blames unfavorable terms of trade for Africa's urban poverty and slums. Positive economic development and sustainable urbanization will require integrated planning, consensus and capacity building, and gender mainstreaming locally as well as international cooperation.

Themes for which proposals are invited, with examples of topics that illustrate these themes: Urban areas as conduits: creators, recipients, and distributors of commodities, technologies, ideas, and biota

Sub-theme: Barriers to diffusion to and from the urban area, such as

- o non-acceptance or restrictions on genetically modified crops in the fields and in the marketplace
- o restricted access to mass communications
- o economics, social welfare, and the inability to provide reliable public health programs

Sub-theme: Conduits to diffusion to and from the urban area, such as

- o primary, secondary, and tertiary road systems – diffusers of ideas and risks to populations in the urban areas and beyond
- o literacy and the content of what is available to the underclass
- o festivals for cause of population movement, interaction, and exchange

Urban areas as contested places and spaces:

among user groups due to age, gender,

- o religion, ethnicity, class, or other factors
- o disconnect among local, regional, national, and/or international interests
- o differing priorities of resident, transient, and non-resident populations

*varied initiatives and responses to security and insecurity (of food, water supply, tenure, from violence, etc.) within the formal and informal sectors

B. Rethinking Democracy and the State in Africa: E. Gyimah Boadi (Center for

Democracy and Development Ghana), Stephen Ndegwa (The World Bank and Northwestern University), and Eghosa Osaghae (University of Ibadan)

This section invites proposals that seek to advance our thinking, methods, and assessments of democracy and the state in Africa, especially in the context of increasingly mixed assessments of the health of nascent democracies and import for the perennial problems of state effectiveness.

Africa has been faced with questions of state legitimacy and state effectiveness since independence. Democratization and liberalization heralded an era of legitimation with the kind of enthusiasm and hope never seen since independence in the 1960s. Yet, for most countries democratization has been a more variegated experience than expected. Similarly, African state capacity appears not to have been enhanced either by economic adjustment or by democratization. The state's effectiveness has appeared to decline and indeed state collapse or near collapse has occurred in democratizing African countries as under civilian and military authoritarian regimes.

This section invites proposals to examine issues of African state effectiveness and democratization, separately or together. Theoretical and empirical explorations of the emerging debate between those who view democratization as a prerequisite for state effectiveness and those who view state effectiveness as a pre-requisite for robust democratization would be particularly useful. Resolving, or at least shedding, better light on this debate has both theoretical and practical importance for improving our understanding of (a) democracy building and consolidation, (b) state performance, especially in the area of economic and social development, and (c) the purposes of prioritization and sequencing of assistance and support for democratization and state capacity building.

This section also invites proposals that examine other aspects of the state and of democratization in Africa. Papers based on empirical work, including recent fieldwork, done in collaboration with Africa-based colleagues are especially welcome.

C. Inter-African Peacekeeping and Conflict Mitigation Initiatives: Terrence Lyons (George Mason University) and Carrie Manning (Georgia State University)

The last ten years have seen some dramatic shifts in the principles and practice of inter-African relations. With the collapse of Mobutu's Zaire came the unraveling of constraints on inter-state war. Internal conflicts brought, for the first time, the intervention of regional actors like ECOWAS and the African Union.

The past decade has also been marked by ambitious efforts to change the dynamics of African states' relationships with external actors, as shown most clearly by the creation of the African Union with its ambition to place agenda-setting power for economic development and security on the continent more squarely in the hands of African leaders.

In keeping with the program theme, the section invites proposals that address African reflections on and responses to the challenges posed by conflict in the region. We welcome proposals that conceptualize conflict and peace broadly and examine not only state actors and regional organizations but sub-state and non-state actors engaged in these processes. In particular, we welcome proposals that address (a) the actions of the AU, ECOWAS, and other regional actors in peace operations as well as in diplomatic interventions to end or prevent conflict; (b) emerging African norms for dealing with inter- and intra-state conflict; (c) the responses of international actors to regional peacekeeping efforts; (d) the roles of non-state actors such as black market networks or diasporas in shaping conflicts; and (e) other aspects of inter- or intra-state conflict on the continent.

D. Mosque, Church, and Shrine: Sean Hanretta (Stanford University)

From the earliest written accounts of African religions up to the most recent anthropological and theological explorations, scholars have noted the ways spiritual beliefs and practices in Africa often mediate between the notionally external and the internal. The most sensitive investigations have often revealed two apparently contradictory truths: the phenomenological and cultural salience of distinctions between autochthony and foreignness, and the inability to definitively distinguish between the two in structural or semiotic terms. The heterogeneity of the local and the endless recontextualization of the global call into question the utility of distinctions like those between "world" and "local" religions (to say nothing of the "traditional"). At the same time, it still seems to matter where it is that religion "takes place," and

it is not only Islam that "points" its believers towards distant locales.

Proposals are invited to explore these and associated themes, and are encouraged to investigate the relations among the meanings, networks, forces, economies and resources that exercise causal influence at different scales of society (the body, house, community, culture, region, globe, et cetera) and that become visible at different scales of analysis (in space and time). Proposals from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including religious history, anthropology, the sociology of religion, experimental and descriptive theology, political culture, rhetoric studies, psychology, art history, aesthetics, and economics are encouraged, as are rigorous interdisciplinary approaches.

E. African Philosophy Revisited: Sam Imbo (Hamline University)

African philosophy is long past the self-definition stage. The twin challenges to the field emerging from the shadows continue to be how to remain relevant and how to cash out the grand narrative of liberation that is the ultimate framework for the quest itself. Unavoidably, the quest for authenticity and relevance raises profoundly political questions. This conference is an occasion to pause and reflect on how far African philosophy has come and also to envision the future.

The sub-theme of will explore the state of the discipline (African philosophy at the start of the millennium); case studies of African nationalists and historical lessons for a new world; tensions between a-historical epistemological pursuits and the political implications of any philosophical project; tension between the self-image of our field as Africa-centered and the projection of Eurocentric enlightenment notions; issues of who the contemporary African philosopher is criticizing and conversely who the allies are; feminist contributions to African philosophy; insider and outsider perspectives (challenges of identity and diversity); the usefulness of representing indigenous African wisdom and excavating lost bodies of authentic African thought; and finally prescribing strategies and sharing hopes for the future.

F. Rethinking the African Diaspora: Gaurav Desai (Tulane University)

The set of proposals assembled in this section will address issues of the relationship between contemporary Africa and its multiple diasporas.

What are the ethics and obligations involved in this relationship? How has this relationship historically manifested itself in mutual acts of recognition and misrecognition? What is the status of transnational activism and dialogue today, and what, if any, is the special positioning of subjects who identify themselves as diasporic? In addressing this larger ethical issue, proposals might usefully focus on some of the particularly vexing aspects of contemporary theorizations of diaspora. What is the relationship between diasporic identities and the politics of citizenship? Do diasporas serve to disrupt the form of the nation or do they instead help solidify it? How does the rhetoric of diaspora negotiate the claims of authenticity and/or autochthony? What are the political and epistemic stakes involved in distinguishing between diasporas that have been forced and those that have been relatively voluntary? Do such distinctions threaten to disintegrate a collective politics, or do they instead help appropriately distinguish between victims and the upwardly mobile? Can one conceive of diasporas in post-ethnic or post-racial ways or do they instead always risk ethnic or racial absolutisms? What is the relationship of religion to diasporic identities, and how might such identification map itself onto an alternative geo-political space? Are diasporas sites of contesting neoliberalism and the logic of global capital or do they serve instead as enablers of capital flows? Do diasporas liberate or further regulate cultural forms and practices as these practices move across time and space? How do gendered ideologies and the strictures of heteronormativity get re-negotiated in diasporic spaces? What, finally, is the work of diaspora in the age of the cybernetic circulation?

G. Rethinking African Economic Reform: Nicolas van de Walle (Cornell University)

Many Sub Saharan African countries have been engaged in economic policy reform for three decades. There have been some successes, and the region's economies are less homogeneous than they once were. Yet, it remains the case that many policy reform programs have largely failed to restore economic growth, and in that sense a 'rethinking' is timely. I am interested in proposals that analyze and differentiate economic policy-making and outcomes in the region. I welcome proposals that examine the role of external actors, such as the IFIs in African economies. Both case study work and comparative research will be welcome. Proposals that do not preach to the choir and incorporate different view points and ideologies will be encouraged.

H. International Environmental Regimes and African Initiatives: Valentine James (Fayetteville State University)

The threat to the African environment is multifaceted. The consumption of natural resources due to domestic and international demands is changing the African environment. Growth due to development compounds the problem of the environment for the land use activities lead to the conversion of the natural environment. Without careful planning, conservation, preservation and environmental protection strategies and policies, the continent faces an exacerbated environmental problem in the future. Consumption demands and development limit the environment from functioning properly in providing humans with natural resources and also limit the environment from acting as "sink" for the waste generated by all the human activities. Exceeding the regenerative and assimilative capacities of the environment threatens the survival of African people.

Tackling the problems of environmental degradation requires domestic and international perspectives since the problems are caused by endogenous as well as exogenous factors. African and international policies, programs, strategies and plans will be required to safeguard, protect, conserve and preserve the environmental quality in order to fulfill the promise of intergenerational equity.

Hence, in this section which deals with "International Environmental Regimes and African Initiatives," we are calling for papers, panels and roundtables, which address the following issues/topics/ideas.

- The Impacts of Development on the African Environment
- The Population Question and the Environment
- The African Ecosystems and Their Demise – The Forests, Wetlands, Rivers, etc.
- Urbanization Issues such as Pollution, Soil Erosion
- Exogenous and Endogenous Factors Impacting Natural Resources
- International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Multinational Influences on the African Environment
- National Parks of Africa
- Nature Reserve (Man and Biosphere Programs in Africa)
- National and International Conservation Policies and the African Environment

- The Changing African Landscape and Government Policies Guiding Growth and Development—Theoretical and Applied Perspectives
- Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Africa's Natural Resources
- Issues Surrounding Biodiversity Conservation in Africa

Case studies and theoretical approaches are welcome. Panels, roundtable and papers should stress: policy debates, programs, strategies and plans.

I. Rethinking the Past, Toward the Future: Mamadou Diouf (University of Michigan)

Africa's past has always haunted the continent's future. History in Africa is understood as a discipline and also as a linear narrative of progress and development. The end of history proposes a unique possible future of rationality and productivity with the triumphant free market economy. Landscapes of disease, poverty, violence, and unfulfilled consumption are blended with unprecedented cultural and aesthetic creativity, religious revivals and entrepreneurial experimentations imprinting African heritages and alternative modernities on the world stage.

The politics of memory, belonging, inheritance and generations lead to a contesting and negotiation of the challenges, possibilities and limitations of pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial moments. The African "historical inventory" has gone from Conrad's Africa, history-less and devoid of a future, to the recognition of African agency in narrating and reorienting their pre-European pasts and imagining of the present and future. Histories have been invented, nationalist futures closed, meanings of past verities rearticulated, and resources recycled.

In the new world order, the impact of the present and the imagining of the future on reconstructions of the past are debated. Various discursive economies are prominent. Who is active in the production and dissemination of future's/(s) past(s), where, and for whom? What are the idioms of expressions and representations? What model(s) for the past are available? How is this affecting the way intellectuals, scholars, artists, activists, politicians, religious leaders, donors... are reframing their intellectual projects, identifications and interventions?

This sub-theme focuses on how the contemporary is expressed in a time of African Renaissance, crises, expectations, and hopes flourishing in pluralistic identities and manifestations.

J. Rural Producers, Food Security, Local Organizations and World Markets: Raymond Hopkins (Swarthmore College) and Norman Uphoff (Cornell University)

What options and outcomes are likely in African countries as trade barriers and world markets evolve? Will the historical political and economic disadvantages of African producers be altered, either thanks to integration into world markets, or by greater political strength arising from their overcoming barriers to collective action, or by larger allocations from national and international government bodies?

During the last decades of the 20th century, as various studies have suggested, implicit taxes on agriculture (through overvalued exchange rates, perverse impacts from marketing boards, and decline in public goods for rural areas such as research and infrastructure) have led to a decline in rural producers relative share of income in countries. This also accounts in part for the decline in Africa's share in world trade. Changes in the 1990s in African states's policies, new promises of greater openness by developed states, and reduced shipping costs make some analysts optimistic about prospective improvements in the income, food security and role in national policy for rural producers.

This sub-theme seeks proposals that analyze these trends and options for producers with a particular attention to impacts on food security and other social safety net goals meant to reduce poverty. While most measures of per capita food availability for African countries point to declines or little gain in the last 20 years, analyses of a potential upswing in these offer optimism for the future. Some forecast that linking producers to international markets will have powerful positive effects on income, reducing poverty and creating incentives for large gains in food production and national food security. However, other studies, done within an integrated framework and tied to PRSP's, have significant barriers to such gains. These include the power of informal markets to distort trade and on negative impacts of bureaucratic sluggishness and corruption. Political skepticism regarding positive opportunities, or even their availability, suggest sharp limits on what farmers can do and what external market conditions will actually offer. So

what responses are likely by producers seeking to market crops even locally under these changed global and national conditions? We especially welcome proposals that reflect insights about producers and their situation in this dynamic current situation, drawing on any of several social science traditions.

K. African International Relations: Toward Continental Self-Reliance: Donald Rothchild (University of California-Davis)

African interactions with Western Europe and North America have a long history. Colonial influences on the economic, political, social and cultural life of the African territories in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries were profound. Not only did the colonial powers carve out the boundary lines of the future states but they enacted the rules of relations that linked Africa closely with Europe. As a result, an economic and cultural dependency relationship developed that has been difficult for the post-independent African states to shake off.

With the advent of decolonization in the 1960s and after, the new African leaders and their parties responded forcefully in some cases but not in others to what they perceived as a neo-colonial relationship. They sought genuine independence from European and North American governments and multinational companies, not just the formal trappings of a voice at international forums, a flag, and a national anthem. In some cases this resistance to European domination went beyond denunciation and involved alliances with the Soviet Union and the nonaligned countries, programs of self-reliance, and cultural transformations. This process of transforming relations has proved more difficult than originally envisaged and is moving forward at different speeds in the various African countries. The commitment of leaders and parties to this change has proved critical in the different state environments.

As the different African states seek to readjust their relationships with the former metropolises and as they seek to establish new and firm relationships with other African countries, they are fashioning a complex pattern of associations with states in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and North America. In addition, new contacts with non-governmental organizations and international interest groups are developing. Globalization is uniting Africa with the international community and complicating the efforts of African leaders to preserve their independence in the sphere of decision making. The question that emerges

from this process is: How can a balance be struck between Africa's new and complex ties with the international community and at the same time maintain its separate identities?

L. African Aesthetics: Allen Roberts (University of California-Los Angeles)

The buzzword of the moment remains "globalization," as it has for quite some years now. Few agree to its meaning or even its utility; many relativize it through attention to "discrepant modernities," "vernacular cosmopolitanisms," and "coeval" sophistications; and yet nearly everyone positions academic arguments and artistic outcomes according to what globalization *might* mean. A closely related set of semantic signposts—and these written in many neon scripts—is the jousting of prefixes: will *trans-* win the day, relegating *post-* to the same oblivion it has so gleefully (and some would contend, in such withering haste) assigned competing theories in recent decades? It looks so. *Trans-* implies bridging in time, space, and identity. It has the great advantage of accommodating the realities of *trans-*ition: *trans-*colonial tactics were perfected in opposition to or to take full advantage of the metropole, and they still work today. *Trans-*local identities are on the move between and among places, with "*migritude*" a way of life and "borderization" both its consequence and its glory.

The visual, performance, musical, and other arts of contemporary Africa surely thrive on just such *trans-*creative energies—but is there anything new about this? Donald Cosentino once quipped that Haiti has been postmodern since the 18th century, and the argument can be extended to the Africa and undoubtedly to the rest of the world as well. This is a call, then, for proposals that will address globalization and the arts of Africa, especially as *trans-*insights may prove illuminating—or not.

M. African Music and the Black Atlantic: Carol Muller (University of Pennsylvania)

We have come to think of African music and its relationship to the Black Atlantic as one shaped out of the experiences and consequences of the Slave trade from West and Central Africa to the Americas, and the story of the music of the African Diaspora defined as African American music history and style. In this narrative, "Africa" exists largely as "cultural memory"—its music known only as a dim reflection of past practices. Subsequent to the first African Diaspora, colonialism and post-colonialism have

produced a different series of narratives about African music in the contemporary world. New technologies—sound recording, improved vessels for sea travel, airplanes, and computer hardware and capacity—invented from the late nineteenth century through to the present have fundamentally reshaped the sounds of African music and the capacity for human and musical travel to and from the African continent. It is time to put the narratives of the music of the old, and what are clearly new forms of the African Diaspora in dialogue with each other.

We invite proposals that examine music of the old African Diaspora in new ways: which uncover unknown dimensions of that history, or foster new connections between Africa and the Atlantic. We are also interested in proposals that explore the complexity of the new African Diaspora—music that traveled along sea routes in the early to mid-twentieth century; the circulation of musical styles through new technologies; transformations of those styles in multiple sites; the commercial, class, religious, political, or gendered outcomes of these new forms of travel on African music history and practice. Finally, we invite proposals that imagine what a newly conceived history of Music of the African Diaspora—both old and new—might begin to look, or sound, like. This could, for example, be examined through focus on a single style—African American and Senegalese hip hop, or the continuing conversation between jazz in the United States and South Africa; or it could compare religious musical practices between the AME church in the United States, which sent missionaries to various parts of Africa, and the outcomes of that mission activity on local repertoires and belief systems. It might be that we have to devise a new idea about the "black Atlantic" because musical travel in the new Diaspora rarely happens by means of the ocean.

N. Toward Healthy African Societies: Kristin Peterson (Michigan State University)

AIDS and other health crises continue to pose many challenges to African communities and nation-states. As we rethink Africa in the world, this section welcomes submissions that especially address shifting or emergent economic, socio-cultural, and policy aspects of health, illness, and treatment.

In reflecting upon this 'post-independent' era, how important are global markets, migration, labor, free trade agreements, privatization, extractive/speculative capital, conflict, and structural violence in shaping public health? How

have development interventions, ideas of risk, and increased health funding and projects produced particular social relations between the state, international donors, NGOs and the people they represent? Proposals addressing these questions are welcomed.

Other possible topics include studies that address: human rights discourses, "health rights" paradigms, and/or market-driven humanitarianism; the production of social inequalities; questions of citizenship, therapeutic entitlements, and African health care systems; local and global access-to-treatment and other grass roots health movements; health governance, national sovereignty, and development ethos and interventions; analyses of global drug capital, intellectual property regimes, and/or local drug manufacturing; African scientific research and/or public-private infectious disease research; clinical trials, ethics, and scientific and financial institutions; health policies and health ideals such as those found in PEPFAR, NEPAD, WHO 3 x 5, UN Millennium Development Goals, as well as national and historical policies; relationships between therapeutic and/or debt, military and extraction economies; therapeutic ideas and practices, including affliction cults, witchcraft, religious movements, faith healing, cure claims, traditional healing, and household health as they are shaped by changing political, economic, and social contexts; environmental health and political economies; women and health, analyses of gender, and social and economic forces. Proposals that explore these and other disciplinary topics in African studies are also welcomed.

O. Gender: Gretchen Bauer (U of Delaware)

The proposals in this section will focus on gender as it relates to rethinking Africa and the world. The overall theme provides a broad frame within which an array of gender related topics can be accommodated. A vast array occurs: the gendered aspects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa and the muted international response, the gendered roles that accompany migratory patterns within Africa and without, the changing gender dynamics within education across the African continent and comparisons worldwide, the differential impact of economic development strategies and responses of the international financial institutions, the influence of donor agencies' normative gender agendas, gender and humanitarian crises, refugee streams, and the nature of global responses. Art and literature reflect internal gender dynamics and invite external responses. African women's movements

and social movements engage in collaboration and cross fertilization across national and international boundaries. African women politicians catapult to the forefront at the local and national level but with what implications for women and men's everyday lives? What lessons are to be learned globally from these and many other gender mediated phenomena in Africa today?

Proposals from diverse disciplines and interdisciplines – including anthropology, art and literature, economics, history, philosophy, politics, religious studies, sociology, women's studies – are invited, as are those that draw insights across regions. Since we encourage a broad range of submissions, 'gender' proposals need not necessarily focus only on the larger theme of rethinking Africa and the world.

**P. Local Memories and Modernity:
Ngwarsungu Jennifer Chiwengo (Creighton University)**

Guntram H. Herb contends that globalization has created "feeble macro-regional identities," such as the European Union, the African Union, and the Caribbean States, but has failed to create a global identity. Instead, it has increased peoples' awareness of group differences, incited the formation of new national identities, and encouraged divisions among national groups.

In this subsection we are foremost interested in examining the nature of local memories and the political relationships that undergird its construction. At a time of globalization, transnationalism, diasporic, and transatlantic discourses, positing the disintegration of boundaries and shared common cultures, how is, then, the local represented in African literary works and other cultural productions, and what role does it play in its relationship to modernity? Whose memory do local literary and other cultural products represent? How are local memory narratives constructed to manipulate, reinforce, or subvert modernity ideals of democracy and inclusion? Do local memories of dislocated and fragmented communities where genocide or trauma has taken place, unify the nation and to what extent are these narratives political strategies? Who constructs local memories and for which purposes? How are African local memories shaped and manipulated by Western discourses and instrumental in the (re) construction of metropolitan identities? Do diasporic discourses narrate the local, do they also expose local nationalism within the very spaces construed as spatial metaphors of

globalization, and which factors give rise to local memories in diasporic cultural productions, ignoring the history of diversity resulting from modernity?

Q. Education in Africa: Internal Dynamics, External Interventions, and their Intersections: Joel Samoff (Stanford University)

Education in Africa has been extraordinarily imaginative and innovative. With sorely strained resources enrollments have doubled and then doubled again. Communities build and maintain schools. Teachers with limited formal education and few instructional materials learn how to draw on local resources and community expertise to teach science. University students undertake field research during their long break, in the process both developing their own skills and involving their communities in efforts to re-think major events and to reflect on important national issues.

But this progress has proved difficult to maintain. In much of Africa children remain out of school and adults have few opportunities to improve their literacy and numeracy. Schools have leaky roofs, fewer books and desks than learners, and overburdened teachers. Promising innovations do not survive. University libraries cannot keep up with journal, books, and technology. The problems go beyond funding. Especially as African countries have reiterated their commitment to providing education for all, this is a time of critical reflection. One task is to document the experiences, systematically and thoroughly. What have been the trajectories of the important innovations? What have been the results of system-wide reform? A second task is to use those experiences to review constructs and categories. Why are learning and education so often equated with schooling, and what are the consequences of doing so? What are the links and tensions between education and local culture, both processes that themselves change, often rapidly? A third task is to address education as the most contested of public policies. How do research findings, community preferences, special interests, and political coalition-building combine to determine language of instruction or length of primary schooling or allocation of resources among schools? Fourth, what are the impacts of foreign intervention in these settings, from aid to advice to expatriate teachers to comparative international assessments?

Reflection about education and training in Africa is thus a powerful opportunity to explore reforms

and reformers, connections and disconnections, cultural convergence and divergence, and the interplay of individual initiatives, organizational imperatives, and structural forces.

R. Transnational, National and Local Interactions of Civil Society and Social Movements in Africa: Aili Mari Tripp (University of Wisconsin)

We invite proposals that might examine the flow of resources, ideas, norms, skills and strategies between societal actors at the local, national, continental and transnational levels. They might explore new forms of networking and coalition building domestically as well as regionally and transnationally around land rights, human rights, freedom of the press, poverty, debt relief and fair trade, peace and conflict resolution, women's rights, and many other such concerns. In the same vein they could evaluate the difficulties of advocacy, especially in states where such initiatives are often treated as "anti-governmental." Proposals could evaluate the impact of societal efforts to resist state efforts to limit their autonomy through legislation to supervise media, NGO, and other movements, or to ban activities that are deemed too "political" or at odds with state agendas. Proposals might evaluate the capacity of societal organizations to create alternative institutions that supplement state efforts and whether the outcomes of such initiatives are useful in the long run. They might examine the role of international NGOs and foreign donors in building up sustainable institutions. Proposals might alternately explore the role of indigenous forms of mobilization as they relate to newer forms of organization in the context of the larger mosaic of associational life.

S. Culture, Politics, and the Politics of Culture: Justin Biswanswa (Université Laval)

The section "Culture" invites scholars to examine, using fictional texts and essays (in anthropology, sociology, philosophy) the relationship between African culture and globalization. Binary categories, (Center vs. Periphery; Local vs. Global, Empire vs. Colonies; North versus South) used to analyze intercultural relationships result in two approaches. The first privileges assimilationist aspects of the *global*, attesting that the world is becoming a "vast village." In the confrontation of Africa with the rest of the world, the second approach attests to the resistance of the *local* whose culture affirms its consistency and specificity. Therefore, it is, currently, necessary, if not urgent, to revalorize local

culture and to, positively, re-evaluate the notion of an African identity.

Panelists are invited to reflect about paradigms through which African people ought to rethink their culture and traditions in their quest for selfhood in relationship to the Other. Aimé Césaire eloquently stated that "there are two ways to lose oneself: through segregation walled in the particular or deletion into the universal". How can the African reformulate his/her utopian views and his/her expectations in the presence of the current crises and failure of the continent? How can he/she impose his/her own cultural capital towards actuality or modernity? This question implicitly raises themes of marginalization and integration of African culture in the Western myths. In other words, considering its colonial and slavery heritage, can Africa affirm her identity and, at the same time, successfully make "cultural contact" without being crushed by Westernization and homogenization? All these questions show that it is imperative to critically reread, comprehend African history and cultures, and to re-evaluate the very concept of Culture.

T. Rethinking Africa's Past: Distant Connections, Contemporary Meanings: Peter Mitchell (Oxford University)

During the colonial era the twin myths were widely propagated that Africa had either long remained isolated from the rest of the world and/or that significant changes in the lives of African communities had only been brought about as the result of migration or diffusion from beyond the continent's margins. An additional pernicious consequence of these ideas was the amputation of Egypt and North Africa in general from the remainder of the continent, that 'sub-Saharan Africa' where both myths were thought to be most relevant. Contesting these misconceptions lay at the heart of much historical and archaeological research in and about Africa in the immediate post-independence period and continues to be important today, although for most academic archaeologists and historians this does not require adherence to alternative Afrocentric models of the kind associated with Senegalese writer Cheikh Anta Diop or popular in some quarters in North America. Instead, one focus of archaeological research in particular has been on demonstrating the antiquity within Africa of such major innovations as pottery manufacture, food-production, metallurgy, social hierarchies and urbanism. Differences in the social, economic and political pathways taken by African societies compared to those elsewhere in

the world have also been explored; Susan McIntosh's edited volume *Beyond Chiefdoms*, which brings together contributions from Africanist archaeologists, historians and linguists to challenge Near Eastern-derived, unilinear evolutionary models of the development of political complexity, is a good illustration of this approach.

Recently, archaeologists have located exciting new possibilities for the antiquity and scale of Africa's interactions with the rest of the world: the identification of banana phytoliths in mid-first millennium BC contexts in Cameroon and of broadly contemporary Indian pottery on Mafia island, Tanzania, and the yet older presence of sorghum, pearl millet and other crops of African origin in the Indian sub-continent, are just three examples of this. Others could be adduced from other parts of the continent and from more recent periods, including the growing evidence for the wide variety of ways in which distinctively African identities were transmitted, maintained and recreated in the diaspora brought about by the trans-Atlantic slave trade and simultaneously among communities within Africa itself. However, the archaeological evidence that is helping to reshape knowledge of the distant connections African societies maintained with other continents remains widely underappreciated. The consequences of those connections and of that knowledge for how African societies may themselves think about the past and the ways in which archaeologists work also merit increased attention. This session therefore seeks contributions that:

- reassess earlier models of Africa's connections with the rest of the world in the light of new field research;
- question the persistence of the Saharan divide in African history and prehistory;
- explore hitherto overlooked connections between Africa and the rest of the world;
- consider why Africa has been (and continues to be?) neglected in many broader syntheses or syllabi examining Old World history;

- investigate the persistence of African identities outside Africa and how those identities have, in turn, impacted within the continent itself;
- examine how archaeological or historical evidence for Africa's distant connections is receiving new meanings in Africa today.

Archaeologists, historians, anthropologists and others interested in the study or critique of Africa's past are encouraged to offer proposals on these or related topics.

- disconnect among local, regional, national, and/or international interests
- differing priorities of resident, transient, and non-resident populations
- varied initiatives and responses to security and insecurity (of food, water supply, tenure, from violence, etc.) within the formal and informal sectors

U. Popular Culture: Benetta Jules-Rosette (University of California-San Diego) and Peter Bloom (University of California-Santa Barbara)

The section will address popular culture in Africa and the African diaspora with a special emphasis on the diasporic links of popular cultural forms and expressions in the areas of film, visual and performing arts, music, and youth culture.

Of particular interest are proposals that open up new data sources and introduce new theoretical paradigms for the study of popular culture. A significant area of interest is the formation of intra-African networks of cultural production both within and outside of Africa as a decisive factor in the gendering of popular cultural forms. While the question of gender identity, such as the changing role of women as powerful economic actors has been an important element in social science and humanities research, the issue of how both male and female roles have shifted informs the reception and production of meaning is worthy of further exploration.

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