

African Studies Association
45th Annual Meeting
December 5-8, 2002
Washington, DC

CALL FOR PAPERS

DEADLINE: MARCH 15, 2002

The 45th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association is December 5-8, 2002, at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, DC. *Africa in the Information and Technology Age* is the theme of the conference. Cheryl Johnson-Odim of Columbia College Chicago is the National Program Chair. Proposals and accompanying membership and pre-registration fees are due in the ASA Executive Office by Friday, March 15, 2002. Incomplete proposals will not be forwarded for review.

Guidelines For Submission

Proposing a Poster Session, Paper, Panel, or Roundtable

Requirements for Participation

Persons who propose presentations or organize panels and roundtables for the program must be 2002 members of the African Studies Association with dues and annual meeting pre-registration **or** non-members with pre-registration fees paid by the time of submission. Scholars not residing in the US should indicate in their correspondence with ASA if they are unable to submit funds from overseas because of currency exchange problems, keeping in mind that the imposition of a fee for a US money order does not constitute a currency exchange problem.

Individuals will be accepted to make only one presentation; as a paper presenter, a roundtable participant, a poster session presenter, or a discussant. Individuals may chair one panel in addition to making one presentation. Participants are reminded to settle on their preferred mode of participation before submitting materials.

Registration

All participants must pre-register at the time of proposal submission. Proposals submitted without proper membership and pre-registration fees will not be considered.

ASA members are required to be current 2002 members and to submit the discounted pre-registration fee at the time of submission.

Non-members are required to submit the non-member pre-registration fee.

Refund Policy

Refunds of pre-registration fees will be made only if the presenter's proposal is rejected. Other refunds of pre-registration fees will be made only in extraordinary circumstances, *will incur \$25 service charge*, and will in no case be made prior to the Annual Meeting. Refunds must be requested in writing by **December 31, 2002**. Refunds of ASA memberships will not be made because of proposal rejection. Fees are not transferable.

ASA Policy on Proposal Acceptances

The National Program Chair, working with her committee, bears final responsibility for acceptance or rejection of all paper, panel, and roundtable proposals for the Annual Meeting. The National Program Chair is responsible for assuring that panels conform to standards set by the Board and

the Program Committee. The National Program Chair has full authority to add or delete presentations on panels in order to accommodate proposals for individual papers and to enhance the overall quality of the program. Efforts will be made to contact proposers of panels affected by these changes when they are made; however, publication deadlines may take precedence over such notification. All paper and panel proposals must be submitted through the ASA Executive Office on the appropriate forms. All papers, whether submitted individually or as part of complete panels, will be reviewed separately.

Coordinate Organizations' Panels

ASA Sponsored Organizations may propose up to two panels annually that will be accepted *without review* by the Program Committee. These two unreviewed panels proposed by ASA Sponsored Organizations must be identified as such in writing at the time of submission by the organization's coordinator. Merely identifying them as sponsored panels will not grant them unreviewed status. Such unreviewed proposals must meet all administrative requirements, including papers and panel abstracts, and membership and pre-registration status for participants.

In addition to the two panels from each of the ASA Sponsored Organizations, the National Program Chair may but is not required to accept panels which will be listed in the program as "organized under the auspices of..." provided that the organizing groups are ASA Associate Organizations, Affiliate Organizations, or Allied Groups.

Proposals

Use only the standard forms, and make sure that the copies are legible. The authors of all proposed papers should sign the paper proposal form. Proposals sent via e-mail or fax will not be processed. Proposals lacking abstracts will not be processed. Three (3) copies of all proposals and abstracts must be sent to the ASA Executive Office in New Brunswick for entry into the central database. Mail proposals to Annual Meeting Coordinator, African Studies Association, Rutgers University, Douglass Campus, 132 George St., New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1400 USA.

Panel Proposals

An organized panel usually has a chair, four paper presenters, and a discussant. A proposal for an organized panel consists of the "Panel/Roundtable Proposal" form, panel abstract, "Paper Proposal" forms for each presenter, and individual paper abstracts for each paper. The abstracts should consist of a statement topic, the nature and extent of the research on which the paper is based and a brief summary of the argument (one paragraph, 8-10 sentences). The quality of the paper abstract is the main criterion for acceptance, so panels with weak abstracts are unlikely to be given high priority. Two or more weak abstracts may eliminate the panel altogether. The National Program Committee may add individual papers or discussants to proposed panels.

Individual Paper Proposals and Poster Session Proposals

Individual paper proposals and poster session proposals must be submitted on the "Paper Proposal" form and be accompanied by an abstract. The paper abstract should consist of a statement topic, the nature and extent of the research on which the paper is based and a brief summary of the (one paragraph, 8-10 sentences). The quality of the paper abstract is the main criterion for acceptance.

The National Program Committee will create panels from individual submissions with common themes. The National Program Committee will identify an individual to chair the session. Individual proposals may also be added to proposed panels at the discretion of the National Program Committee. In no case will a co-author be added after the National Program Committee has accepted a paper.

Roundtable Proposals

A roundtable consists of a chair and four or sometimes more speakers. Proposals for roundtables must include an abstract. Use the "Panel/Roundtable Proposal" form to propose a roundtable.

Indicating Sections/Sub-themes

All individuals proposing panel or papers should designate the section for which the proposal is most appropriate. *Africa in the Information and Technology Age*, the conference theme, is divided into 19 thematic sections are labeled A through S. Please review the theme statement below for a listing of sections/sub-themes. If the proposal can be included in two or more sections, indicate first and second choice sections. If none of the sections is appropriate for the proposed paper or panel, or if you are unclear as to correct section, designate Section Z. All proposals will be reviewed by a section chair who will make recommendations to the National Program Committee.

Young Scholars Initiative

There will be a special set of *Young Scholars Panels* designed to highlight both research in progress and reports from the field. Graduate students will be scheduled to make 15-minute presentations on panels chaired by senior scholars. Proposals submitted for participation in the young scholars panels must be identified as such in writing at the time of submission. Please submit your paper proposal to the ASA on the regular ASA form and indicate that you would like to participate in a "Young Scholars Panel."

The Board of Directors established the *Graduate Student Paper Prize* for the best graduate student paper presented at the previous year's Annual Meeting. All papers

presented by graduate students at the 2002 Annual Meeting are eligible for next year's prize, which will be awarded at the 46th Annual Meeting in 2003. The winning paper will be published in the *African Studies Review*. Following the conference, graduate students may submit their papers with a letter of recommendation from their advisor by January 15, 2003, to the ASA Executive Office. Submissions may be mailed to African Studies Association, Graduate Student Prize Competition, Rutgers University, Douglass Campus, 132 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1400, or emailed as an attachment to callasa@rci.rutgers.edu.

There will be a set of special *Graduate Student Workshops* designed to support the efforts of young scholars to secure funding for their research and to publish the results of their research, both with respect to placing articles in Africanist journals and in turning the dissertation into a book. Details of these workshops will be announced in the Preliminary Program and Final Program.

Audio Visual Equipment

The ASA provides to conference participants--at absolutely no charge to them--three different items of A/V equipment (slide projectors, overhead projectors, and VCRs), provided this equipment is requested on the proposal form. The ASA provides the same items of A/V equipment for poster session presenters. They are also provided with chalkboard and corkboard.

A/V equipment requests must be made at the time proposals are submitted. Failure to request A/V equipment will result in the individual having to rent the equipment himself or herself. Persons requesting A/V equipment after March 15, 2002 will be referred to the on-site A/V vendor where that person or persons will make arrangements to secure their equipment request.

Deadline

The deadline for submissions is **March 15, 2002**.

Notification

The ASA Executive Office will make every attempt to notify individuals of their acceptance; however, publication deadline may take precedence over this individual notification. Accepted panels and presentations will be listed in the Preliminary Program, which will appear in the September/December 2002 issue of the *ASA News* and on the website.

Funding Participation

The Association does not provide financial support for attending the conference to persons whose proposals are included on the program. Participants are advised to seek funding for travel and local expenses from their own institutions. Proposals from persons who have not paid their pre-registration and membership fees will not be processed.

While the ASA understands the correlation for some presenters between presenting and receiving funding from their institution to attend the meeting, proposals from individuals with unpaid fees will not be processed. The ASA can prepare invitation letters to help participants secure funding. Please contact the ASA Executive Office at callasa@rci.rutgers.edu for letters of invitation.

THEME STATEMENT

Africa in the Information and Technology Age

Cheryl Johnson-Odim
Columbia College Chicago
National Program Chair

The dawn of the 21st century finds us at a point in human history when the cliché of the “global village” is upon us. Particularly in urban areas (which exist, even if only in pockets, all over the world) we are bombarded with information conveyed through various technologies almost instantaneously. Developments in information technology (IT) have proceeded so fast, and consideration of the implications of the technology so slowly, that educational and legal bodies all over the world are convening to establish “acceptable” norms, standards, rules and *controls*. Confusion often exists between when technology is the goal, and when it is merely the medium. The role(s) of technology in disseminating information have often made it more difficult to separate perspective from fact, analysis from opinion, interpretation from fiction. Not surprisingly those areas of the world with the greatest access to new IT forms have been privileged in their power to *represent*, to *interpret*, and to *influence*.

New information technologies create profound challenges and opportunities for Africa, both intra and extra continentally. They also create profound challenges and opportunities for those of us for whom Africa is at the center of our work, our concerns, and our lives. Despite the fact that Africa and Africans are among the most dogmatically represented subjects, the share of the world’s information devoted to Africa and Africans is small. Moreover, what is represented *about* and *for* Africa is often not the choice of Africans themselves. Of equal (or perhaps even greater) importance is the circumscribed abilities of Africans to communicate with each other in a widespread way and immediately upon a turn of events.

The use of new IT forms in development is another critically important consideration. For our current purposes let us simply define development as “an improvement in the quality of people’s lives.” With such a definition we can make the broadest of connections. In health care, for instance, the role of IT in directing mobile medical equipment, educating health care professionals in new techniques and medicines, disseminating health care advisories and connecting those working in research on indigenous diseases, is obvious. The recent debate over the provision of drugs to combat AIDS to patients in South Africa at reduced (read non-inflated) prices was integrally tied to both information and technology. It was necessary to win the political as well as the legal battle to get these drugs, and much of that battle was being fought in the court of international public opinion. The representation of South Africans as unable to benefit from the drugs because they could not be

trusted to take them as prescribed (“such differences in conceptions of time and in showing responsible behavior,” I was enraged to hear one commentator say), and/or their representation as sexually promiscuous, both worked to make it seem they were somehow undeserving of any special dispensation in this regard or that it would be useless in any case.

The role of IT in education is a critical area. Much has been made of the “digital divide” and its ties to class, race, and even gender divisions within the United States. As well in the international arena the same divide exists between rich and poor nations. Just as with the advent of industrialization, the technological age threatens to create two camps: those who generate ideas and set agendas, who define and control discourse -- and the worker bees who carry out their directions. All those who do work in and on Africa are familiar with the differential in access to information generated outside the continent about Africa, in Africa and in the West. As well, there is much knowledge produced in Africa that is barely accessible to those outside of the continent, a situation that contributes to African voices being heard less in the discourse on world affairs. Our ability to connect with our colleagues in Africa, and for students there and here to connect, to jointly define research agendas and share information is greatly enhanced by the availability of some of the new information technologies. The role of IT in educating those in the United States (K-12, higher education, and the general public) about Africa has barely begun to be investigated and marshaled. Moreover, the digitization of libraries in the industrialized world is proceeding apace such that an incredible amount of information is available without spending one dime on a book or travel. Imagine wiring libraries on the continent of Africa and the difference this could make in the flow of information both within the continent and between the continent and the rest of the world. Some months ago a colleague e-mailed me to report how excited she was to have watched the Ghanaian presidential debates (moderated by the African American journalist Charlene Hunter Gault) on her computer in Minneapolis. She wrote: “While I was zapping messages to friends in Accra you can’t even get a phone line from Accra to Bolga.” We must also discuss how the “digital divide” has, in ironic ways, put certain classes of people in touch with one another around the world, and totally marginalized others.

IT has profound implications for artists as public intellectuals. The arts are often considered an international lingua franca. As I sat with my family in Abiriba (Eastern Nigeria) this past January (2001) and

watched, via satellite and the aid of a generator, some versions of musical videos originating somewhere in the world, I observed my thirteen year old daughter's reaction and those of her Nigerian cousins. They were the same as they all had been exposed to the globalization of a particular musical culture. National Public Radio recently did a report from the African Film Festival being hosted by Burkina Faso in which the theme was technology. Digital imaging and other technologies have made it cheaper to produce films thus, where they are available, easier for African filmmakers to play on a level field with those from richer, more industrialized areas of the world. As I now teach at a college that specializes in the arts and communication I have become even more attuned to the roles of the fine, visual and performing arts in representation, the conveyance of information, and political activism. The role of IT in the dissemination of knowledge about historical and contemporary African arts is an under-considered question.

Last but not least in this abbreviated list of examples is the role of IT in political organizing, resistance to tyrannical rule and to neo-colonialism, democratization, conflict resolution and peacekeeping, and the management of refugees. Activists from around the world can be in touch with one another, in real time, and in large numbers. News about political events can be communicated, and responded to, in short periods of time.

We must also discuss the downside of the new technologies, and there are several. Some have been mentioned in the first paragraph of this statement. Over dependence on these technologies can leave us vulnerable and paralyzed when they are unavailable to us, and they are so fragile they can often be unavailable. The ethical (and non-ethical) uses of the new technologies is also an important discussion.

Not every panel or session will be focused on information and technology. This theme statement simply seeks to point out some of the disparate issues that can be considered under such a rubric, and the timeliness of

devoting the attention of our annual meeting to this subject.

Sub-Themes

The panels and roundtables for this year's program will be grouped into 17 thematic sections are labeled A through Q.

- A. The Impact of New Information Technologies on Political Activism in and/or about Africa
- B. Presentation and Representation: African Fine, Performance, and Visual Arts in the New Information Age
- C. Governance, Democratization, Conflict, and Peacekeeping in Africa
- D. Imperialism, Colonialism, and Neo-Colonialism: New Perspectives and Analyses
- E. Historical Narratives: New Paradigms and Use of the New Technologies
- F. Development and New Information Technologies
- G. The African Diaspora in the Information Age
- H. Education: The Impact of Information Technologies on Research and Learning
- I. Environmental Issues in the 21st Century
- J. Women and Gender: Historical and Contemporary Examinations
- K. Health and Science
- L. Libraries: Closing the Digital Divide and New Research Methodologies
- M. African Literatures
- N. Mass Media and Popular Culture: Representation, Interpretation, and Influence of the New Information Technologies
- O. Publishing and Information Technology: New Directions
- P. Information and Communication Technology in Africa and in African Studies
- Q. Teaching about Africa in the 21st Century and the Use of New Information Technologies

Checklist for Proposals

Individual Paper Proposals

- 3 Copies Paper Proposal Form
- 3 Copies of Paper Abstract
- Membership Dues and Pre-registration Fees
- A/V Request, if applicable
- Indicate if poster session

Panel or Roundtable Proposals

- 3 Copies Panel/Roundtable Proposal Form
- 3 Copies Panel or Roundtable Abstract
- 3 Copies Paper Proposal Form for Each Presenter
- 3 Copies Abstracts for Each Paper (panel proposals only)
- Membership Dues and Pre-registration Fees for Each Presenter
- A/V Request, if applicable
- Confirm that no one is appearing on another panel before submitting proposal.
- Ensure you have permission of the individuals you place on panel or roundtable.