



Adinkra Symbol
 "Changing oneself; playing many
 roles"

African Literature Association Newsletter

An independent, non-profit professional society of scholars, teachers and writers
 dedicated to the advancement of African Literacy Studies, Founded in 1974

Focus on JALA—The Journal of the African Literature Association

If you are not already extremely proud to be part of the ALA, you will be once you fully appreciate the milestone our organization has reached with the launching of our new refereed publication, the *Journal of the African Literature Association*. Relevant, scholarly inquiry and activism have long been benchmarks of the ALA and its members. JALA opens up one more forum for the good work of ALA members, and at the same time, appropriately makes the ALA the focal point of important national and international conversations and debates centering around the literatures and cultures of the African world.

The idea for the creation of a scholarly journal within the ALA developed over several years. At the center of this development was our ALA Bulletin Editor, Abioseh Porter. Abioseh was 'nudged' into accepting the editorship of the *Bulletin* by long-time ALA members, Sandra Barkan and Steve Arnold. The idea of taking over that task took a couple of years to settle in, however. The thought of being Bulletin Editor had simply never occurred to him before. Fortunately for the organization he warmed up to the notion, and in Spring of 1999,



"I consider myself quite fortunate to be your editor"

the first *Bulletin* under Abioseh's direction, appeared in print. In a personal note to the membership, he expressed his awareness of the legacy he was charged with carrying forward: "I consider myself quite fortunate to be your new editor but, ... I am also overawed by the reality of following in the footsteps of a mentor and colleague as good – and I reserve this word for the genuinely good – as Steve Arnold. ... However, there is a thing or two I

learned from him and, with your help I intend to combine some of that education with some of my own original ideas as I edit the *Bulletin*. Simply put, at the end of my tenure, I expect to leave the house that Steve built on at least as strong an architectural foundation as I found it."

ALA members began to appreciate a certain evolution of the *Bulletin* under Abioseh's direction during that transitional period. In step with the evolution of the organization itself, it got thicker and more substantial in its content. Articles and book reviews started to appear – the kinds of contributions one comes to expect from a ... well ... scholarly journal!

The fact that the *Bulletin* was morphing into something more did not go unnoticed, but it took several presidencies to urge the organization to a place of full acceptance that we were indeed ready to house a true, refereed scholarly journal. Abioseh credits Kandjioura Drame, Carol Boyce-Davies and Janice Mayes, for continuing to insist that he had in fact, already brought the *Bulletin* to the status of a journal. He also recognizes Eustace Palmer and the original publi-

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cations committee for working to firm everything up.

Have there been doubts? Of course. These have been reasoned doubts and objections, to be sure: What about our relationship to RAL? Given the ALA's resources – financial and human – what of our ability to sustain this project over the long term? “I never felt people doubted my competence,” says Abioseh. “It was just whether or not the organization could pull it off.” In the end, the overwhelming support of colleagues and the membership at large convinced Abioseh and the ALA Executive that the time was indeed right.

JALA is now a reality, the first issue is at hand, and the sense of personal and professional achievement on the part of its first Editor-in-Chief is appropriately grand! “I'm elated on two counts. First, Africa's children can do things in tangible ways to make their own contributions known. Second, just to be involved in some of the exciting scholarship that is going on, and to hear the many voices of Africa, is amazing!”

On a professional level, Abioseh acknowledges that his new position is being duly recognized by his home institution, but more importantly, Africanist scholars everywhere will now be able to benefit professionally from the existence of this newest Journal in the discipline.

TTrue to form, Abioseh puts it all into perspective by taking the spotlight off of himself. He reminds us that this is all “just another step in the progressive movement of the ALA.” Let's all rejoice and congratulate ourselves, while continuing to look forward to the next great and worthwhile task or idea we need to develop and nurture to fruition! ■

What Makes JALA Tick?

(The Editorial Board and the
blind submission process)

JALA has an editorial board made up of ... members: (list)

The role of editorial board members is not primarily that of reviewing articles. This is done not only to maintain the anonymity of article reviewers, but also to ensure the quality and fairness of the evaluations in a broad range of areas. Article review tasks are assigned based on a broad pool of recognized scholars – generally within the ALA – who have the specific expertise required.

In order to ensure consistency among reviewers, Abioseh provides each with a copy of the *Manuscript Readers Guidelines*. With the aid of this document, reviewers can make useful assessments of each article in terms of its content and structure, as well as the grammar and syntax through which its ideas are delivered. An article may be ‘recommended,’ ‘recommended with revisions,’ ‘rejected outright,’ or ‘rejected with the possibility of re-submission.’

Finally, the review document provides an area for “confidential comments to the editor” to ensure that the reviewer has every opportunity to be candid about her/his reactions to the article in question.



What's in a “Deputy Vice-President?”

Let's try ‘concern for institutional continuity’ and ‘dedication to the flow of accurate information’ for openers!

When the ALA instituted the office of Deputy Vice-President several years ago, it was with the hope that this provisional office would never need to be activated. The idea that a sitting President or a Vice-President might (for unforeseeable reasons) be unable to carry out the duties of their office, was an unpleasant idea that the Executive Council nonetheless had to face.

When the unthinkable happened and for health reasons, Vice-President Thelma Pinto, was unable to carry out her duties last Fall, Ngwarsungu Chiwengo was standing by. The Executive Council appreciates the effectiveness of Chwengo's leadership under such a delicate set of circumstances. From an institutional perspective, her transition into office was seamless. For example, her efficiency in working with election candidates and the Headquarters Director ensured that our annual elections stayed on track.

The ALA Executive Council is fortunate that, as it refines the role of Deputy Vice-President in the future, it will benefit from the benchmark set for the organization by Chiwengo. ■

CALLS FOR PAPERS / ARTICLES

• ***Time and History: "Wole Soyinka and the Drama of Existence"*** - Request for articles for a special issue: For its special issue on the philosophical significance of Wole Soyinka's writing, the journal *Philosophia Africana* solicits relevant articles on any aspects of his versatile work. Contributors may examine Soyinka's work in any genre - drama, poetry, fiction, occasional essays, or criticism - but analysis must focus on those themes with special appeal to an audience interested in philosophy. Relevant topics may address issues in one branch or several branches of the discipline, such as: aesthetic theories, philosophy of culture, ethics and morality, epistemology and metaphysics, or philosophy of religion. Other topics may address matters in Soyinka's cultural and social thought from the perspective of existentialism, political theory or activism, theories of tradition and change, or philosophy of history. **Send title and abstract (max. 200 wds) by 3/30.** Completed articles (7,000 words or less) are due by 11/30/07. Submissions and inquiries can be sent by e-mail to: Dr. Peter Gratton, africana@condor.depaul.edu or posted to: The Editors, *Philosophia Africana*, Department of Philosophy, DePaul University, 2352 N. Clifton Ave, Ste. 150, Chicago, IL 60614. For detailed "Notes for Contributors" visit: <http://condor.depaul.edu/~africana/html/notes.html>

Engendering" the Diaspora: Gender, Culture, Race and Identity in the Contemporary African World. Journal of Pan African Studies. This Special Edition invites new approaches to the study of gender dynamics in Africa and the Diaspora that hold paramount the influence of race and culture on the development/maintenance of gendered identities. Thus, "Engendering" the Diaspora: Gender, Culture, Race and Identity in the Contemporary African World" will focus on interdisciplinary issues reflective of the intersections of gender, culture and race in an effort to understand variations of

African identities. Seeking articles that examine social and cultural constructions, deconstructions, and reconstructions of gender, variations in gender roles, gender relations, and responses to non-African structures as they relate to gender, as well as those that seek to challenge the very conceptualizations of gender that have been used to define, describe and/or categorize African-descended women and men. For complete submission guidelines, please contact the guest editors, Yaba Amgborale Blay & Kaila Adia Story, Department of African American Studies, Temple University at engender@temple.edu.

Navigating African and Black Diaspora: Crossing, Belonging and Presence - The Journal of African and Black Diaspora (Routledge) seeks manuscripts that critically examine notions of crossing, belonging and presence in the context of African and Black Diaspora. The journal of African and Black Diaspora is devoted to a critical interrogation of the trans/national movements, locations and intersections of subjectivity within the African Diaspora in the context of globalization as well as in different discourses, practices and political contexts. The journal seeks to broaden and deepen the study of the African and Black Diaspora by providing a critical venue for new historical and theoretical interventions to map out the intersections and multiple narratives of the African and Black Diaspora with other diasporas in all parts of the globe and across time and space. **The deadline for submission is March 30, 2007.** For submission information contact Sandra Jackson, Center for Black Diaspora at DePaul University, sjackson@depaul.edu.

African Film Conference, 2007, Center for African Studies, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. The African film conference in Urbana-Champaign will explore how an appreciation of films as mode of

expression and form can be combined with an understanding of their content. The conference seeks abstracts on thematic and stylistic development in African filmmaking and on the way the films reflect and feed upon urban popular culture. A subset of related themes involve the connections to international film making styles or to the ethnographic and documentary film traditions, including considerations of emerging regional and national styles within Africa. Please send abstracts of 250-300 words to either one of us, by e-mail or by post. **Abstract submission deadline: May 31, 2007. Conference date: November 9-10, 2007.** For more information contact Mahir Saul, Department of Anthropology, University of Illinois m-saul@uiuc.edu, or Ralph Austen, Department of History, University of Chicago wwb3@uchicago.edu.

Seeking one or two additional participants for an ASA panel, tentatively called "What's Wrong with Human Rights Films". Recent films including "Blood Diamond" and "Shooting Dogs" present Africa's humanitarian catastrophes to vast audiences. Educators understandably are tempted to use such films as teaching aids. Often, however, the films promote a bundle of ideas including some to which many educators presumably do not subscribe. Demonizing of the groups and categories alleged to have perpetrated the mass violence is one such questionable idea. Another is the employment of a Western male protagonist, whose own consciousness supposedly is raised during the course of the events. Africa and Africans remain in the background. We propose a panel to discuss the problems of posed by such films. What stance should we as Africanists adopt toward these films? Should we use them in the classroom? If they are to be used, what sorts of contextualizing materials should accompany them? Contact Thomas Turner, Political Science, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1160 Shenandoah St., Harrisonburg, VA 22802, USA. Cell 1-304-650-3999. Email: tommyagain@yahoo.com

Position Announcements

The Department of African American Studies at Temple University

announces openings for two non tenure-track visiting **Lecturer** positions for Academic Year 2007-2008, with a possibility of continuation for a second academic year.

Contact Info:

Dr. Nathaniel Norment, Jr.
Chair, African American Studies
Temple University
Gladfelter Hall - 810
1115 W. Berks Street
Philadelphia, PA 19121
USA

African-American Studies: Postdoctoral Researcher, Black American Studies, University of Delaware.

The Black American Studies (BAMS) Program at the University of Delaware invites applications for a residential postdoctoral research position starting September 1, 2007, with renewal for a 2nd year possible. Postdoctoral Researcher Search Committee

Contact Info:

Black American Studies Program
University of Delaware
417 Ewing Hall
Newark, DE 19716

University of Missouri-Columbia

Assistant/Full Professor

(Joint Position between Black Studies and either Educational, School, or Counseling Psychology)

The University of Missouri seeks applicants for an open rank, nine-month, tenure track position between Black Studies (.49 FTE) and the College of Education's Department of Educational, School, & Counseling Psychology (ESCP: .51 FTE, tenure home) beginning Fall Semester 2007.

Contact Info:

Dr. Richard H. Cox, Search Committee Co-Chair, Department of Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology, 16

Hill Hall, University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia, Missouri, 65211.

Applications will be reviewed beginning March 15, 2007 and thereafter until the position is filled.

Old Dominion University Department of Women's Studies

invites applications for a full-time one year temporary position at the Assistant Professor level, to begin July 25, 2007. Qualifications: Ph.D. in a relevant field with a substantial focus in Women's Studies, or an equivalent terminal degree, such as a MFA. ABD's will be considered. The area of interest is open but preference will be given to those with expertise in African American Studies, African Studies or Asian Studies.

Contact Info:

Dr. Ruth Triplett, Search Committee
Department of Women's Studies
Batten Arts & Letters 6027
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia 23529
rtripler@odu.edu
(757) 683-3823
(757) 683-4895 - Fax

Website: <http://www.odu.edu>

Smuts Research Fellowship in African Studies

Centre of African Studies

Salary: £24,402-£31,840 pa
The Centre of African Studies invites applications for the Smuts Research Fellowship in African Studies, from candidates at the postdoctoral level in all disciplines within the humanities and social sciences. Applicants will have gained a PhD (or equivalent) within the last five years or will have gained a PhD by the time of the appointment. The appointment will be from 1 October 2007 for a period of three years, and is non-renewable.

Contact Info:

The Administrator
University of Cambridge
Centre of African Studies

Free School Lane
Cambridge CB2 3RQ (UK)

Website: <http://www.african.cam.ac.uk/>

The Department of African American and African Studies at Ohio State University

invites applications and nominations for the position of Department Chair. As one of the largest and most dynamic departments of its kind in the country, we offer the undergraduate major and minor and a Master of Arts degree as well as a community extension center that serves as the outreach arm of the department.

we are especially interested in applicants with a specialization in African and/or African American women's studies. Send letter of application, c.v., and three letters of reference to: Prof. Ted McDaniel, Chair, Search Committee, Department of African American and African Studies, 486 University Hall, 230 N. Oval Mall, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210. Although the screening of applications will begin March 30, we will continue until a new chair is named.

Contact Info:

Dr. William T. McDaniel
Chair, Search Committee
Department of African American & African Studies
486 University Hall
230 N. Oval Mall
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Website: <http://aaas.osu.edu>

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Adinkra Symbol

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2007 Fonlon-Nichols Recipient: Dr. Nawal El Saadawi

Egyptian feminist, sociologist, medical doctor and militant spokesperson for Arab women's issues, Nawal El Saadawi is one of the most widely translated Egyptian writers whose works currently appear in dozens of languages.

Born in 1931 in a small village outside of Cairo. El Saadawi was raised in a large, traditional household. Her youth was an interesting mix of traditional and progressive influences. In a household where the father insisted that all of his children be educated, she was nonetheless "circumcised" at the age of six. El Saadawi attributes some of her revolutionary 'fire' to her mother, who's married status prevented her from fully actualizing activist tendencies.

Despite religious and colonial dictates imposed on rural women, El Saadawi graduated from the University of Cairo in 1955 with a degree in psychiatry, and went on to become Egypt's Director of Public Health. Over the years, El Saadawi's writings resulted in an ongoing string of difficulties and dangers in her life. In 1972 she lost her job in the Egyptian government. The magazine, *Health*, which she had founded and edited for more than three years, was closed down. In 1981 President Sadat put her in prison, where she remained until one month after his assassination. From 1988 to 1993 her name appeared on several death lists, and she was forced to live in exile. In 1991, the government decreed that the Arab Women's Solidarity Association (AWSA) be closed down, as well as *Noon*, the magazine published by that organization. In 2004, her novel, The Fall of the Imam, was banned in Cairo, and new novel, Al Riwaya (in Arabic) was banned in Egypt .

In spite of the disruptions and upsets she has had to endure – or per-

haps because of them – El Saadawi has been an extremely prolific writer. To date, she has nearly 30 books to her credit, including fiction novels, short stories, plays and non-fiction works. One of the works for which



she is best known is The Hidden Face of Eve, published in 1977. This work gained her notoriety in part because of its early, bold challenge to then taboo topics such as female genital mutilation, prostitution, sexual relationships, marriage and divorce and Islamic fundamentalism.

El Saadawi has long been a champion for Egyptian women's so-

cial and intellectual freedom. She has been quoted as saying, "Nothing is more perilous than truth in a world that lies." Despite personal cost, she continues to be one of the world's most outspoken champions for human dignity and equality, and in 2004, actually presented herself as a candidate for the presidential elections in Egypt .

Dr. El Sadaawi is often pictured – on her website and elsewhere - with her husband and collaborator, Sherif Youssef Hetata, whom she was nearly forced to divorce (according to Hisba law) in 2001. Dr. Hetata is himself a novelist and medical doctor who, since 1968, has devoted himself to novels, and has translated some of the works of Nawal El Saadawi into English. ■

Sources for this article:

Nawal El Saadawi website:
www.nawalsaadawi.net
 and "Nawal Saadawi"
 by Jennifer McBride

El Saadawi's website includes a complete list of her publications.

Congratulations and Thank You! **to Janice Spleth, Sandra Dixon and all of your assistants from West Virginia University for convening the 33rd African Literature Association Annual Conference!**

Invited writers include:

Josefina Baez. (Dominican Republic/New York). Poet, playwright, actress, theatre director educator

Syl Cheney-Coker Sierra Leonean poet and novelist

Tierno Monénembo. Novelist. Born in Guinea, he has lived much of his life as an exile in France.

Dennis Brutus Poet, born in Zimbabwe of South African parents, currently on faculty at the University of Pittsburg.

Regina Yaou Novelist, born in the Ivory Coast.

ALSO:

From Trinidad: **Ellie Mannette**, the "father of the modern steel drum"

ALA Membership Information

ALA Membership is open to anyone dedicated to the discipline, and to the ALA's mission and professional guidelines

WHAT IS ALA?

The **African Literature Association** is an independent non-profit professional society open to scholars, teachers and writers. Its existence is to facilitate the attempts of a world-wide audience to enjoy the works of African writers and artists. The organization encourages the participation of anyone who creates the subject of our research (review) and wishes for a productive interaction among scholars and artists.

The ALA as an organization asserts the primacy of the African peoples in structuring the future of African Literature, and lively supports the African peoples in their striving for liberation.

ALA dues are for the calendar year. If you are a current member, the deadline for membership renewal is January 1.

New memberships and renewals should be paid by check or postal money order

made out to

“ALA” and sent to:

Anthony Hurley
Africana Studies Department
Stony Brook University
S-235 Social & Behavioral Sciences
Stony Brook, NY 11794-4340
631-632-7470 (office)

Anthony.Hurley@sunysb.edu
hurleys@verizon.net

Please include the address to which you want the ALA Bulletin and other correspondence sent, and include the address, phone number, and e-mail address

that you want listed in the Membership Directory.

Checks should be written in U.S. dollars and drawn on a U.S. bank or a U.S. correspondent bank. Members residing outside the U.S. and wishing to pay in other currencies should contact the Treasurer first regarding options for payment of dues.

Membership rates, in U.S. dollars, are as follows:

- African Students studying in Africa : \$5.00
- Students and others with income under \$ 15,000: \$ 15. 00
- Income from \$15,000 to \$ 35,000: \$40. 00
- Institutional Member: \$50.00
- Income from \$35,000 to \$50,000: \$ 60. 00
- Income over \$50,000: \$ 80. 00
- Sponsor: \$100. 00
- Life Member* - \$1,000.00

**Life membership may be paid in four consecutive payments of \$250.00 each*

All ALA members receive the ALA Bulletin quarterly. This and all other correspondence are sent by air mail at no additional charge to members.



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