

Newsletter

Winter 2014

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EACLALS is beginning the New Year looking forward to its 15th Triennial Conference in Innsbruck, Austria, from 14th until 18th April, 2014.



Interest in the event has been tremendous and the programme for it is developing very well. The

organisers have received over 250 proposals for papers from more than 40 countries and are confident that there will be groundbreaking discussions of the conference theme

UNCOMMON WEALTHS: RICHES AND REALITIES

Keynote speakers will be Neil Lazarus, John McLeod, Stephen Slemon, Terry Eagleton and Helen Tiffin. Shirley Chew has agreed to give the Anna Rutherford Memorial Lecture. The writers Priya Sarukkai Chabria, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Hiromi Goto, Abir Hamdar, Dennis Haskell, Gail Jones, Tabish Khair, Kei Miller, Kim Scott, Stephanos Stephanides and Tom Wharton will read from and speak about their work.

The convenor Helga Ramsey-Kurz is especially pleased about the keenness of younger colleagues to come to Innsbruck. As many as 55 PhD candidates have submitted paper proposals and the majority of them also applied for the EACLALS Triennial Travel Grant advertised last autumn. The jury's decision was difficult in light of the excellent quality of their applications and the EACLALS board eventually decided to award not two, but five grants. The recipients are Treasa De Loughry (University College Dublin), Lyn Dickens (University of Sydney), Edward Powell (University of Leeds), Amy Rushton (University of Manchester) and Justine Seran (University of Edinburgh).

To register or find more information about the

conference, please go to the EACLALS triennial website at <http://uncommonwealthseaclals2014.wordpress.com/>

Helga Ramsey-Kurz and her team have been watching this event take shape over the past two years and are now looking forward to meeting the people who will actually make it happen.

INNSBRUCK will provide a most suitable setting for the proposed stock-taking of the many uncommon wealths at humankind's disposal. Benefitting from its position on what already the Romans deemed one of the most important trading routes across the Alps and a wealth of natural resources in the area, the capital of the Tyrol has seen times of extreme affluence, still conspicuous in its medieval Old Town. Less visible to tourists but equally prominent in local collective memory are the times of occupation and resultant impoverishment Innsbruck has seen as well. 2014 happens to mark the bicentennial of the Tyrol's emergence from one such phase and the centennial of its entry into another: In 1814 the province, which had been ceded to Bavaria after Napoleon's defeat of Germany, was liberated from foreign rule and returned into the fold of the Habsburg Empire. In 1914 the assassination of the presumed successor to the throne of that same empire in Sarajevo led to the outbreak of World War I, the most scarring outcome of which, for the Tyrol, was the annexation of all its lands south of the Brenner to Italy. Thus diminished, the Tyrol has since been reinventing itself, observant

of the ever-changing demands of a meanwhile globalised tourist industry but also heeding warnings to protect the wealths on which Innsbruck has learnt to capitalise.

NOTICE OF ELECTIONS - EACLALS 2014

In accordance with Section 15 of the constitution we are hereby issuing a call for nominations for the board of EACLALS for the period 2014-2017 to all current members of the Association.

Nominations may now be submitted for the positions of Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. They should include the written consent of the nominee and the supporting signatures of two paid-up members of the Association.

Nominations should be sent to the secretary, Stella Borg Barthet, not later than February 14th 2014. Her email address is:

stella.borg-barthet@um.edu.mt

For your information the members of the board for the period 2011-2014 have been:

Chair: Geoffrey Davis, Aachen University, Germany

Secretary: Stella Borg Barthet, University of Malta

Treasurer: Ulla Ratheiser, University of Innsbruck, Austria

Conference Convenor: Helga Ramsey-Kurz, University of Innsbruck, Austria

Past-chair (ex-officio): Janet Wilson, University of Northampton, UK

EACLALS Elections

At the forthcoming triennial conference in Innsbruck the Association will hold an election for the members of the board for the period 2014-2017. This has to be done in accordance with the rather complicated regulations stipulated in our constitution.

For those members who are not familiar with EACLALS electoral procedures or do not have a copy of our constitution to hand, here is the text of the relevant section in the version revised and approved at the last Triennial conference in Istanbul in 2011.

15. NOTICE OF ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Notice of Elections shall be sent out by postal or electronic mail to all current members three months before the Triennial General Meeting of the Association at which the elections are to take place. Nominations for all positions on the Executive Committee shall be conducted in the following manner:

a. The call for nominations to all Executive positions in the Association, the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, should be included in the Notice of Elections.

b. Written nominations, including the written consent of the nominee, and the supporting signatures of two paid-up members of the Association, shall be submitted to the Secretary two months before the Triennial General Meeting of the Association. The above documents may be sent by electronic mail.

c. A full list of candidates for a prospective Executive

Committee, together with the site(s) of a proposed Headquarters, shall be prepared by the outgoing Executive Committee for presentation at the Triennial General Meeting of the Association.

d. The list of candidates and the submitted nominations shall be included in a mail or email ballot to be sent out to all members one month before the Triennial General Meeting of the Association.

e. Mail ballots shall not be tabulated until the day of the election, and email ballots shall remain strictly confidential. Neither type of ballot shall be counted until the completion of the vote from the floor.

f. Email ballots may be sent in the body of an electronic message addressed to the Secretary, who shall ensure that the name of the voter is not disclosed at any stage in the election process. Postal mail ballots should be submitted in a plain, sealed envelope. This envelope should then be placed inside another envelope, sealed, with the member's signature written across the sealing strip. All ballots shall be verified by the Secretary against the current membership list. The signed envelopes shall be opened by the Secretary at the appropriate point in the agenda of the Triennial General Meeting. A member of the Association approved of by the general membership present shall then record all ballots.

g. Each member shall have one vote.

h. Members who have voted by postal or electronic mail, but who are present at the Triennial General Meeting of the Association, shall be considered to have already cast their vote.

- i. Voting at all elections of the Association shall be by secret ballot.
- j. No member of the Executive Committee may stand for more than two consecutive terms.
- k. The new Executive Committee shall assume office at the conclusion of the Triennial General Meeting of the Association at which the elections have taken place.

THE FUNDING SITUATION

As most members will know, ACLALS has been generously funded by the Commonwealth Foundation for many years. In some years we were fortunate enough to receive a higher grant than any other civil society organization accredited to the Commonwealth. Each year the individual branches submitted funding applications to the Commonwealth Foundation via the chair of ACLALS, who shouldered the unenviable task of collating them all, which usually had to be done over the Xmas period to meet end-of-December deadlines. The funds received were paid in two “tranches” and were then disbursed to the nine branches of the Association. They were variously used to fund the Journal of West Indian Literature, literacy projects in Kenya, the magazine of the Sri Lankan branch, the conferences of the South Pacific, Indian and Canadian branches, literary evenings in Malaysia and many other activities. A final so-called transition grant was paid to some of the accredited associations

including ACLALS in the second half of 2013. This was disbursed to the branches in the usual way. It was intended to cover the period up to June 2014 when this type of funding will be terminated.

The system is being radically changed as part of the Commonwealth’s wider effort to increase its relevance, which in many quarters has been seen as declining. A wide-ranging process was undertaken to investigate how the Commonwealth could best re-establish its reputation and improve the impact of its social and political programmes. There has obviously been much debate, not least among civil society organisations, as to how effective these changes are likely to be and what their impact on associations which have long been accredited to the Commonwealth will turn out to be.

The old funding system which combined core funding towards the running of branches of the association and activity funding designed to support specific activities such as those mentioned above has now been replaced by a new system aimed at subsidizing projects which in the first round should fall under the rubric of what the Commonwealth Foundation calls “participatory governance”. To give you an idea of the new system I quote the CF’s own description of its purpose:

Grants Programme Purpose

The Commonwealth Foundation’s mission is to develop the capacity of Civil Society to act together and learn from each other to engage

with the institutions that shape people’s lives, as we work towards a more effective, responsive and accountable governance with Civil Society participation.

The Commonwealth Foundation grants programme will contribute to this mission by awarding grants under the two intermediate outcome areas of the Commonwealth Foundation’s logic model:

Outcome 1: Enhanced capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to collaborate with each other and engage in participatory governance

Outcome 2: Increased collaboration and learning between CSOs and institutions in governance.

In addition to awarding grants to CSOs, the grants programme will broker knowledge and ideas. It will support innovation, share replicable and sustainable models, and promote good practices across the participatory governance sector.

Grants Programme Objectives

The grants programme has three objectives:

a. To deliver an efficient and effective programme which is responsive to the development needs of CSOs across the Commonwealth.

b. To complement the effectiveness of the Foundation’s projects by providing grants to CSOs beyond those supported through the projects.

c. To generate knowledge and understanding of participatory governance and its benefits in promoting effective, responsive and accountable governance within the Commonwealth by supporting models of good practice.

Grant applications appear to be open to a very much wider range of non-governmental organisations than previously. The first batch of new grants has already been awarded. All the projects supported so far were a long way from the kind of activities ACLALS has hitherto been involved in. The next set of grants will be awarded in 2014 for projects which fall within the areas of environmental sustainability, gender equality, and cultural respect and understanding. The details of this programme can be found on the website of the Commonwealth Foundation.

The new funding system places ACLALS and its branches in a difficult position, since our major source of external funding will no longer be available. This means that there will be no further funding which can be used to support conferences such as our own Triennial, for example.

Although the finances of the European branch are currently in a fairly healthy state, this development will inevitably mean that our subscription rates, which are very low when compared with comparable organisations, will have to be increased. This is a matter which we shall have to discuss at the forthcoming Triennial. It is also likely to influence the thinking of those wishing to take on the running of the Association over the next three year period. In this connection it is worth pointing out that in spite of the changes, the new South African ACLALS board has taken on the task of running the Association and of hosting the next Triennial in 2016 without Commonwealth Foundation funding.

In the light of this situation ACLALS and we as the European branch are going to have to give some serious thought to alternative sources of funding. And we shall have to do so at a time when funding for Arts and Humanities is being cut in many countries. Our own experience in seeking funding for this Triennial speaks volumes on this issue.

In this connection it is worth reporting that Susan Gingell of the Canadian branch has suggested that senior members of ACLALS be asked to make a donation which could be used to help fund the next ACLALS triennial in South Africa. We might well put this suggestion to members of the European branch in Innsbruck.

Any ideas members may have on future sources of funding will be extremely welcome.

ZIMBABWE PROJECT UPDATE

As members will recall, EACLALS is represented on the Commonwealth Organisations Committee on Zimbabwe (COCZ) and is part of its so-called “culture cluster”. Last year we were involved jointly with the Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM) in the preparation of a report on the situation of arts and culture in the country which was submitted to the Commonwealth Foundation under the title “Re-engaging with Zimbabwe through Arts and Culture – A Needs Audit for Commonwealth Countries”.

One of the recommendations in that report was that a Commonwealth Professional Fellowship be awarded to a Zimbabwean working in the field of arts and culture. Accordingly we submitted an application for a cultural policy activist, Mr Joshua Nyapimbi of Nhimbe Trust based in Bulawayo, to come to the UK for a six-week period of training and consultation. This application was successful and Josh has now completed his stint in Britain as the first person in the arts and culture sector from Zimbabwe to be afforded such a fully funded fellowship. During his stay he had internships with Amnesty International, Equity, the One Campaign, the Young Vic, and consulted with numerous arts organisations.

A second outcome of the Zimbabwe report has been the appointment of the novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga, author of the novel *Nervous Conditions*, as writer in residence at the University of Innsbruck. Tsitsi will hold this position, which is wholly funded by the University, for five weeks and will also be present for the first part of the EACLALS Triennial.

Further events have been three meetings with members of the diaspora in the UK on how they can re-engage with the arts scene at home. The first of these took place in June and was hosted by the Zimbabwe Alliance, which works on behalf of asylum seekers and members of the diaspora. It was attended by a range of artists, including the novelist Brian Chikwava, author of *Harare North*. The second was

a meeting with the diaspora in Birmingham which was addressed by the well-known Zimbabwean writer Chenjerai Hove, who is currently in exile in Norway. The third meeting took place in November, where members of the diaspora again came together in London to formulate recommendations for the cultural sector. This meeting was addressed by Josh Nyapimbi.

Another welcome initiative was the Britain Zimbabwe Society's Annual Research day at St Antony's College, Oxford, which the society devoted this year to the topic of culture and to which it invited cultural practitioners from across the sector, including the novelist Petina Gappah, author of *An Elegy for Easterley*.

The chair also gave a talk at the ACLALS triennial in St Lucia summarizing the culture cluster's visit to Zimbabwe and the resulting report. He will give a similar account at the EACLALS triennial.

It is hoped that the Zimbabwe project can be carried forward, especially now that members of the diaspora are themselves actively involved.

ACLALS NEWS

The new ACLALS committee consists for the present of the following members:

Chair: Dr Michael Wessels (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Vice-Chairs: Dr Irikidzayi Manase (University of Venda); Mr Vincent Mtyende (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Secretary/Treasurer: Jean Rossmann (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

Conference Convenors: Professor Shaun Viljoen (University of Stellenbosch); Professor Meg Samuelson (University of Cape Town)

Ex-officio, as immediate past chair: Dr Michael A. Bucknor (Jamaica)

POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES IN ITALY



From the European South: postcolonial studies in Italy

Postcolonialitalia is a project based at the University of Padua and intends to be a platform for research on postcolonial studies in Italy. It brings together scholars in the humanities and the social sciences

to investigate the impact of postcolonial critical theories and practices on Italian academic disciplines and contemporary culture. Its aim is to set up a series of conversations and scientific initiatives that, while taking the globe and the future as necessary horizons, may promote a genealogical re-reading of our archives, of the location of our culture.

Detailed information about the research project's aims, participants, activities, contacts can be found at www.postcolonialitalia.it (in Italian and English). The website also offers an open-access searchable catalogue, containing an expanding list of references to creative and scholarly contributions addressing the (post)colonial condition in the Italian context, which is conceived as a free research tool for anyone interested in the postcolonial in/about Italy.

Annalisa Oboe

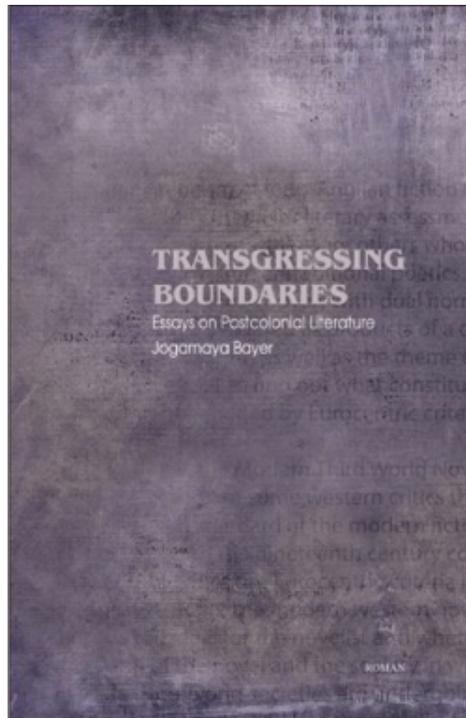
scientific coordinator of postcolonialitalia

University of Padua

BOOKS PUBLISHED

**Transgressing Boundaries
 Essays on Postcolonial Literature**
 JOGAMAYA BAYER

Roman Books (26 Feb 2013)



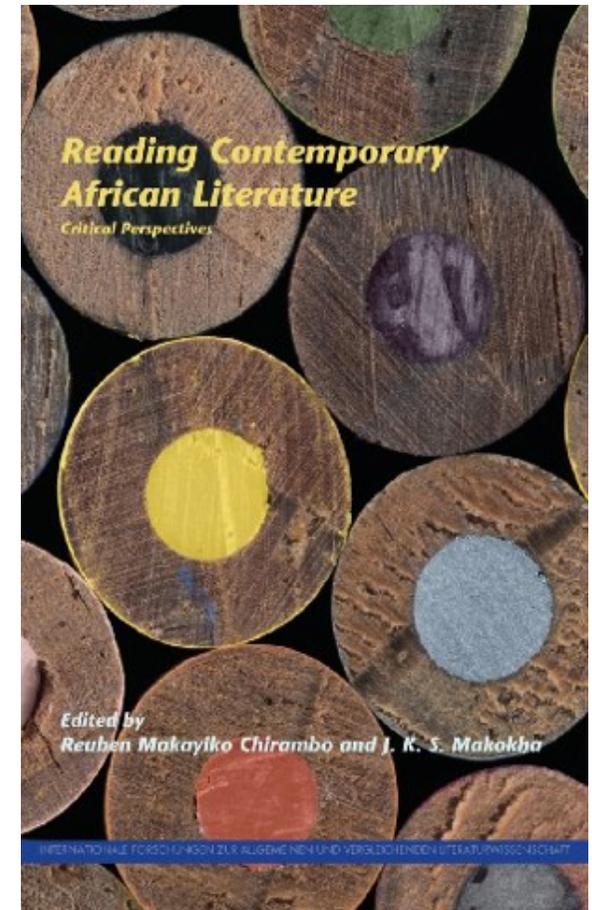
The essays in this collection were presented at different international conferences on postcolonial literature. They have been revised and reworked. Boundaries here signify not only national and territorial borders but also racial, juridical and

cultural boundaries – between high and low, between madness and reason, between what is appropriate and what is inappropriate, between authenticity and mimicry. In today’s world, an increase in mass migration has led to enormous anxiety about losing cultural identity and material wellbeing. As a result, surveillance of trespassers has taken rigorous forms. At the same time hospitality, justice and solidarity have become a focus of political discourse. This book analyses the limitations of postcolonial cultural criticism in the class position and explores how the literary works engage in this discourse as well as in the feminist debates that map the trajectory of third world women in their resistance to structures of domination in the spheres of race, class and gender.

**Reading Contemporary African Literature:
 Critical Perspectives**

Reuben Makayiko Chirambo (Editor), J. K. S. Makokha (Editor)

Editions Rodopi B.V. (1 Jun 2013)



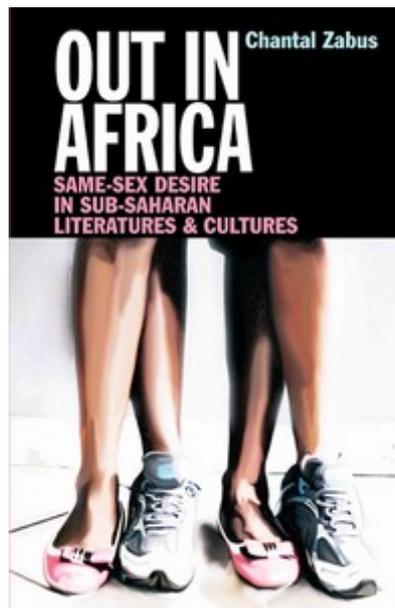
Reading Contemporary African Literature brings together scholarship on, critical debates about, and examples of reading African literature in all genres – poetry, fiction, and drama including popular culture. The anthology offers studies of African literature from interdisciplinary perspectives that employ sociological, historical, and ethnographic besides literary analysis of the literatures. It has assembled critical and researched essays on a range of topics, theoretical and empirical, by renowned critics and theorists of African literature that evaluate and provide examples of reading African literature that should be of interest to academics, researchers, and students of African literature, culture, and history amongst other subjects. Some of the essays examine authors that have received little or no attention to date in books on recent African literature. These essays provide new insights and scholarship that should broaden and deepen our understanding and appreciation of African literature.

Out in Africa
Same-Sex Desire in Sub-Saharan Literatures & Cultures

Chantal Zabus

James Currey: 21 November 2013

Homosexuality was and still is thought to be quintessentially ‘un-African’. Yet in this book Chantal Zabus examines the anthropological, cultural and literary representations of male and female same-sex desire in a pan-African context from the nineteenth century to the present. Reaching back to early colonial contacts between Europe and Africa, and covering a broad geographical spectrum,



along a north-south axis from Mali to South Africa and an east-west axis from Senegal to Kenya, here is a comparative approach encompassing two colonial languages (English and French) and some African languages.

Out of Africa charts developments in Sub-Saharan African texts and contexts through the work of 7 colonial writers and some 25 postcolonial writers. These texts grow in complexity from roughly the 1860s, through the 1990s with the advent of queer theory, up to 2010. The author identifies those texts that present, in a subterranean way at first and then with increased confidence, homosexuality-as-an-identity rather than an occasional or ritualized practice, as was the case in the early ethnographic imagination. The work sketches out an evolutionary pattern in representing male and female same-sex desire in the novel and other texts, as well as in the cultural and political contexts that oppose such desires.