



# African Literature Association NEWSLETTER

NKYIN KYIN — CHANGING ONESELF: PLAYING MANY ROLES

SINCE 1975



## Director of Headquarter's Report

**James McCorkle**  
**Geneva, New York**



HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES



With the 2015 ALA Conference held in Bayreuth in June 2015, the Newsletter was delayed so as to include addresses by Moradewun Adejunmobi, President of the ALA, and Susan Arndt, one of the conveners (with Nadja Ofuatey-Alazard and Ute Fendler) of the Conference. Bayreuth, the city and university, were exceptionally welcoming and provided a wonderful setting for a week of engaging conversations, panel discussions, readings, film viewings, lectures, and yes, dining!

Hobart and William Smith Colleges, where the ALA Headquarters is located, will host the annual Executive Council retreat on the first weekend in November. The Headquarters would like to again acknowledge the support of Hobart and William Smith Colleges, the Office of the Provost, and Provost Titi Ufomata who have provided the support that sustains many of the Association's activities. The Headquarters has the very good fortune to have Dot Vogt as our administrative support.

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The Headquarters continues to actively solicit books—new or old—published by our members to be part of the ALA archive. Materials from past ALA conferences and related documents and correspondence are also welcome—the intention is to build a substantial body of archived work representing the ALA and the literature of the continent and the diaspora.

Headquarters also continues to convey announcements—including calls for papers, conferences, literary and artistic events, and obituaries as well as news specific to the Association—relevant to the Association. As the announcements are time-sensitive, they are not reproduced in the newsletter. Perhaps the most important task Headquarters undertook, in tandem with the Treasurer Mohamed Kamara and President Moradewun Adejunmobi, was the updating of the membership rolls. Creating a synchronicity between the Treasurer, *JALA*, and conference conveners has been a longstanding goal; we seem to be close to achieving this. Especial thanks, again, should be extended to Dot Vogt for her work on this endeavor.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone in April in Atlanta for the 2016 ALA



Conference!



BAYREUTH, ALA 2015

Photo Credit: James McCorkle



## ALA President's Address June 6, 2015, Bayreuth

### *The Labors of the ALA Critic: Worldly, Writerly, Activist*

#### **Moradewun Adejunmobi**

Distinguished guests, members and friends of the ALA, good evening. What a wonderful time of intellectual conversation we have had in Bayreuth over the past four days! Permit me therefore to start this evening by thanking our hosts in Bayreuth, Professors Susan Arndt, Ute Fendler, and Nadja Ofuatey-Alazard. We cannot also forget the contribution of all members of the Academic Program Committee and especially Professor Anne Adams, and Peggy Piesche to the success of this conference. The African Literature Association extends its gratitude to the sponsors for the conference: the University of Bayreuth, the German Foreign Office, the Oberfrankenstiftung, the City of Bayreuth, and the Bavarian State Ministry for Education, Science and Arts. I wish to say in my imperfect German: *Wir wollen heute Abend Ihnen danken für Ihre außergewöhnliche Gastfreundschaft. Wir haben uns in Bayreuth sehr genossen.* "We want to thank you today for your exceptional hospitality. We have enjoyed ourselves tremendously in Bayreuth." Let us all rise to give a round of applause to our conveners.

To our outgoing president, Teju Olaniyan, and outgoing EC members, our sincere thanks for your incredible contributions to our associational life. To our newly elected Vice-President, Juliana Nfah-Abbenyi, congratulations. Our new EC members too deserve congratulations. A number of individuals have worked tirelessly in the background to keep the ALA operational. I would like to recognize in particular, Abioseh Porter, editor of JALA, and custodian of our institutional memory, Mohamed Kamara our treasurer, James McCorkle, the Headquarters director, Dot Vogt at the Headquarters, and Ted Fristrom, our outgoing webmaster. Thank you all.

The title of my presentation tonight is "the labors of the ALA Critic: worldly, writerly, activist."

I think of labor, not only as work, but also as referring to a task requiring continuing effort, vigilance, and attention. To speak of labor is to speak of that which is distinctive, and identified with unique exertions. To speak of labor is to reflect on that which is often taken for granted, even in associations such as ours with a certain attentiveness to unequal relations of power in the contemporary world.



What does the critic do, and why is it important to safeguard the labors of the critic at the ALA? In the interests of avoiding indigestion on a happy occasion when we are surrounded by much good food and equally good company, I will avoid convoluted definitions of the activity of the critic. In deliberately simplified terms therefore: the critic of art and literature interprets, the critic evaluates, the critic questions, the critic engages in sifting and sorting of works of art into different groups, and in so doing the critic provides us with an always incomplete schema for judging and evaluating. And because the schema in use is always incomplete, it will and should be the subject of constantly renewed and vigorous debate.

What does the labor of such a person have to do with our association? As a professional association of critics of the African arts, with an emphasis on the textual as manifested in literature, film, and performance, the ALA is distinctive in a number of ways.

#### WORLDLY

In the first place, the ALA is a worldly association, in the sense that it contributes to expanding a common sense understanding of the world and its inhabitants.

In addition to African literature, and sometimes in place of African literature, many of us also do our work under the rubric of postcolonial literature, francophone literature, world literature, comparative literature and most recently global Anglophone literature. Some may inquire: why would we still need a grouping called African literature when we have these larger and all-encompassing categories? The answer is simple. We need African

literature because we cannot count on adequate representation of the range of works produced by authors and film makers of African descent under any of these other rubrics.

Nor can we count on writers themselves to fight for the visibility of work produced by African authors and film makers. A subset of writers of African descent has regularly protested against being designated as 'African' writers. The most recent statement along these lines that I have read was written by Aminatta Forna from Sierra

Leone, and published in a British newspaper in February 2015. I understand where the writers are coming from in seeking admission into a sphere of global artistic production where no one's work is reduced in stature by any markers of identity.

And yet as critics at the ALA, there are reasons for our association to ensure the continuing visibility of a category called African literature, even as some writers insist that they are just writers, and not 'African' writers. Our professional experience teaches us that this global sphere of artistic production where all are welcome exists only at the level of the imagination. In practice, many works of art by African artists and artists of African descent are excluded, occasionally for justifiable reasons, but much more frequently for unjustifiable reasons.

When we at the ALA do not undertake the labor of the critic on behalf of African literature, the world of world literature is considerably impoverished. When we do not carry out the labor of the critic on behalf of African cinema, the world of world cinema is considerably

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impoverished. Somehow and repeatedly, the authors from Africa are left out, the filmmakers from Africa are overlooked in the supposedly global accounting of world literature and world cinema. For the world of world literature and world cinema to be truly representative, we as critics at the ALA must undertake the labor of the critic on behalf of the often overlooked category of African literature and African cinema.

But we must aim even higher: it will not suffice to ensure the representation of African arts in the category of world art. We must also question the representativeness of our own Africa at the ALA. What is it that we have excluded and what justifies those exclusions? Perhaps Africa-based writers, perhaps African-language writers, perhaps writers of inconvenient ideologies, perhaps writers on the internet, perhaps writers who offer pedestrian answers to complex questions? The qualifier, 'African,' too should not be entombed in what Ugwu, the character in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* called "a cold barn." By this I mean that we should always be ready to question the terms in use. Our calling as critics at the ALA is the defense of true representativeness within and beyond the sphere of African literature and African arts. To this end, debates about the terms used to characterize the world at large, and the world with which we engage should occupy a more prominent position in our associational life.

Furthermore, and although many professional associations profess internationalism, only few of such associations are able to make space for foot soldiers from around the world to speak to each other as equals. Writing about taxi drivers occupying subaltern positions in global cities and the adjustments they have to make to the schedules of their globe-trotting customers,

Sarah Sharma observed: "There is an expectation that certain bodies recalibrate to the time of others as a significant condition of their labor." (Sharma 2014 20). Similarly, the internationalism of many professional associations accommodates the schedules of our globe-trotting peers, but rarely imposes on us a mutual recalibration of time and our disparate understandings of literary texts.

As critics, we live in different worlds, and operate under different "ecologies of scholarly production" (Olaniyan 2015 102). That formulation is not mine, but belongs to our outgoing president. Bringing these ecologies of scholarly production into conversation with each other is labor, manifested in the willingness to participate in a conference where one regularly encounters some level of incongruence between individual panels and presentations. We do not celebrate this incongruence as an end in itself, nor do we seek some fabled common ground. Instead, those of us who claim commitment to the principle of worldliness engage in this labor, the more so to challenge each other on the implications of the positions we take for the locations we inhabit.

#### WRITERLY

In the second place, the ALA is a writerly organization, giving more prominence to creative writers than many other associations comprising academic critics. Those other associations sometimes make writers honorary members, but do not often position them in the foreground. And for good reason: creative writers were already present at the very founding of the ALA. Accordingly, the ALA is much more likely to invite creative writers as keynote speakers than it is to invite literary and professional critics as keynote speakers. Our conference this year is no exception.

Let me be clear. There is no necessary opposition between the labors of the critic and our writerly orientation in the ALA since the creative writer as critic is a longstanding fixture of the African literary landscape. One need only mention instances such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's recently published *Globalectics, Theory and Politics of Knowing*, Njabulo Ndebele's *Rediscovery of the Ordinary*, or Chinua Achebe's *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, among many others. A substantial minority of our members in the ALA are not only scholars, and critics, but also creative writers. Anthonia Kalu, Juliana Nfah-Abbenyi, Kofi Anyidoho, and Arthur Onipede Hollist come to mind here among many others.

But it is also true that we live in an age when authorship and the opportunity to compose texts and images is undergoing significant multiplication around the world and in Africa itself. Depending on where we live in the world today, and the resources available to us in those locations, we may have become increasingly adept at composing and manipulating texts and images. One needs neither artistry nor advanced training in order to photoshop images and to rearrange texts to suit any individual purpose. But we also find alongside this explosion of authorship and composition intensified disagreements over the status of texts and images whether they are designated as imaginative texts or not. In the contested areas of public life, in matters pertaining to history, identity, citizenship, religion, and sexuality among others, concerned citizens assail their opponents with 'facts,' drawn from diverse master texts, taken as inerrant truth. Protagonists and antagonists are locked in bitter combat over the truthfulness and factuality of each other's master texts and images. And when all else fails, texts and images are manufactured out of whole cloth and authorship is attributed

to presumed opponents in order to discredit the opponent and win the argument.

In the contemporary context of dueling images and texts, it will not suffice for the critic at the ALA to revere the artist. More than ever before, we need the labor of the critic, alongside the labor of the artist whose creativity moves and troubles us.

As academic critics, our remit pertains in the first place to imaginative texts, and artistic images. At the same time, I am hoping that we will be bold enough to survey the field of textuality emanating from Africa writ large, the field of images composed by Africans writ large and to wade into the debate about how to sort the different texts and images into groups and how to judge between them.

On the whole, we as academic critics operate in a largely reactive mode, either approving or disapproving of the selections made by prize awarding committees around the world. Why should we not also as members of an association deliberate on the range of standards that can be deployed and the significance of judging works of art in one way rather than another? Why should we not also be active and visible at an associational level in determining which works pose questions that we should pay attention to, and which ones speak in ways that move us, and expand our understanding of the challenges of the current age? If we as critics at the ALA do not engage in this labor of sifting and sorting, on what basis then do we complain that the 'wrong' works have been elevated, and the 'right' works have been overlooked?

#### ACTIVIST

Because we are a writerly association focused on Africa, we are also a relatively activist association. The ALA takes a stand on some of

the more flagrant human rights violations that occur from time to time across the African continent; we issue statements on the violations that affect African populations around the world, and that pertain to the representation of Africans around the world. In my understanding, we make these statements not only as individuals concerned for the humanity of other individuals, but also because the violations of rights that deprive individuals of freedom, safety, and security or that pertain to representation, are such as to curtail the composition and unrestricted circulation of works of art.

Given the writerly and activist orientation of the ALA, the kind of criticism that substantial members of the association engage in is not the kind that Edward Said described as “an academic thing, located... far away from the questions that trouble the reader of a daily newspaper” (25). Indeed, the academic critic who would completely detach their work from “questions that trouble the reader of a daily newspaper” is probably best advised to choose an area of specialization other than African literature and African cinema seeing as the political is so often a major subject in these works.

Thus, no one will be particularly impressed or surprised if we as critics state that the African authored text or image is political, or if we as critics take the same political stances as the writers and filmmakers that we study. But here too, we need the labor of the critic, not only to adopt the politics of the artist, but to assess and to question the politics of the artist in general, and in particular the implications of that politics for the space of artistic production. To take only one example, a contentious debate erupted recently among writers around the world over the point at which freedom of speech becomes a

cover for hate speech. Some of the writers we study at the ALA joined this debate when PEN International decided to present an award for courage to the cartoonists working at the Charlie Hebdo magazine in France. As some of you know, Teju Cole and Taiye Selasi among several other writers took a position against the decision to honor the Charlie Hebdo cartoonists in this way, stating that the magazine was frequently selective in its satirical edge, while Salman Rushdie wrote in favor of the award to the cartoonists, seeing the award as an opportunity to protect freedom of speech. Wole Soyinka too appeared to side with Rushdie at the opening ceremony of our conference this year. As a citizen and concerned individual, the critic has the right to be partisan in a debate such as this, and to prefer one side of this debate to another. But the labor of the critic entails more than this.

As African discursive publics and social networks become increasingly polarized and polarizing, there will be a growing need for a space for the critic to practice his or her craft. There will be need for a space that is not already contaminated by hyper-partisanship, a space for thinking about both the integrity and fluidity of the text and image, the powers of signification of the text and image, the different orders of representation presented by different types of texts and images, and most importantly the politics of the text and the image. The solution to hyper-partisanship is not a retreat from the public, but fierce protection of a process, and I underline process, for position-taking which allows us to reveal our commitment to deliberation, and the options that imaginative works offer in addressing the same or related questions. We may or may not arrive at the same positions as those who are not critics. What we bring to the table is that process of evaluating, assessing, a sifting and sorting of relevant texts,

images, and performances as we consider the decisions we make as a body of professionals.

History tells us that destructive ideas often make an initial appearance in culture and art long before they make an appearance in policy and actions. For this reason, among others, society will always be in need of critics to take the political pulse of works of art and the culture at large. The politics of the work, the politics of the artist, and the cultural dimensions of contemporary politics are subjects requiring critical attention. If, as we contend, the matters at stake are important, then we must attend to both the labor of the critic and the labor of the activist. Who better than the critic at the ALA to uncover the entanglements between culture and the political, and between art and the political?

Who better than us to scour works of art for what Bruce Robbins described as “topical urgencies”? If writers and filmmakers are interrogators of their world, and of the world, they are interrogators whose work is made complete by the labor of the critic.

As we come to the end of the 2015 conference, I invite as many members and friends of the ALA as are invested in these principles to come together to take on the labors of the engaged critic.

Till we meet again at the 2016 conference in Atlanta, Georgia, long live the writer in the ALA, long live the activist in the ALA, and may the critic at the ALA live long.

Aminata Forna. “Don’t Judge A Book By Its Author.” *The Guardian*, February 3, 2015. See: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/feb/13/aminatta-forna-dont-judge-book-by-cover>

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. *Half of a Yellow Sun*. New York: Anchor Books, 2007, page 6.

Sarah Sharma. In the Meantime: Temporality and Cultural Politics. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014, page 20.

Tejumola Olaniyan. “African Cultural Studies: Of Travels, Accents, and Epistemologies.” In *Rethinking African Cultural Production*, Eds. Frieda Ekotto and Kenneth W. Harrow. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015, page 102.

Edward Said. *The World, The Text, and The Critic*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983, page 25.

Bruce Robbins. “Cosmopolitanism, New and Newer.” *Boundary 2*, 34.3 (2007), page 58.



### Mission Statement

The African Literature Association is an independent non-profit professional society open to scholars, teachers and writers from every country. It exists primarily to facilitate the attempts of a world-wide audience to appreciate the efforts of African writers and artists. The organization welcomes the participation of all who produce the object of our study and hopes for a constructive interaction between scholars and artists. The ALA as an organization affirms the primacy of the African peoples in shaping the future of African literature and actively supports the African peoples in their struggle for liberation.



# 2015 ALA Award Recipients

## **Fonlon-Nichols Award:** Pepetela

Awarded to an African writer for "excellence in creative writing and contributions to the struggle for human rights and freedom of expression." The award comes with a \$1,000.00 cash prize.

## **ALA Distinguished Member:** Professor Abiola Irele

Awarded for "outstanding record of service to the ALA and commitment to teaching and scholarship in African literature."

## **First Book Award—Scholarship:** Carmela Garritano for *African Video Movies and Global Desires: A Ghanaian History* (Ohio UP, 2013).

Awarded "for an outstanding book in African literary studies, which is the first book by the author, and published in the preceding calendar year." The award comes with a \$250.00 cash prize.

The ALA First Book Award Committee judged that Garritano's book, *African Video Movies and Global Desires: A Ghanaian History* (Ohio UP, 2013) "is very well researched and well-grounded in the material, theoretical yet very accessible. The book does the job of giving the Ghanaian trash movies their full due; much of the scholarly discussion is still predominantly focused on the Nigerian industry. Garritano's book breaks significant new ground, plumbing a diverse archive, and employing really well-articulated and culturally-informed methods for reading Ghanaian video movies. Her ethnographic work is compelling and original. The project is theoretically sophisticated and provides us a language for reading "trash" movies. She builds successfully on previous work but consistently gives us a clear sense of the stakes of her own intervention. The book is grounded in the specificities of Ghanaian video production, contextualized within Nigeria's hyper-visibility, but insistent on reading Ghana's industry on its own

terms. It is a study in both film criticism and film history, and it will be useful in scholarship and classrooms alike. Garritano provides a seemingly definitive history from the colonial period to the present day, with excellent, clear readings of individual films to illustrate that history. The book is theoretically sophisticated especially in relation to issues of gender and of globalization/international "development." Garritano's narrative does a particularly good job of demonstrating how and how far we have gone from the national/nationalist period of cultural production in African cultural expression."

## **Executive Council Service Award:** Tejumola Olaniyan, President; Moradewun Adejunmobi, Vice President; Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi, Executive Councilor; Ato Quayson, Executive Councilor.

For outstanding service as officer of the African Literature Association.

## **Conference Convener Award:** Susan Arndt, Ute Fendler, Nadja Ofuatey-Alazard.

For outstanding service as convener of the year's annual meeting.

## **Travel Awards:** Julian Udofia (Nigeria), H. Oby Ukolocha (Nigeria), Sr. Carol I. Njoku (Nigeria).

A \$1,000.00 ALA conference attendance funding award for excellent proposals submitted by scholars based in Africa. Julia Udofia presented "Alienation and Disorientation in Ayi Kwei Armah's Fragments," H. Oby Ukolocha presented "Place, Polygamy and Pan African Return: Negotiating Race, Identity and Homecoming in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and Pedro Hollist's *So the Path Does not Die*," and Sr. Carol Ijeoma Njoku presented "Epistemic Violence, Subalternization and Counter Narrative in Nigerian-Biafra War Narratives."



## Pepetela's Speech to the ALA for the 2015 Fonlon-Nichols Award

Minhas senhoras, meus senhores.

Agradeço, em primeiro lugar, a honra que o Comité do Prémio Fonlon-Nichols me concede e lamento não estar presente neste momento para o fazer pessoalmente, mas nem sempre o corpo consegue obedecer ao espírito e infelizmente o meu esqueleto já suporta muito dificilmente viagens longas.

A atribuição deste Prémio coloca-me numa lista venerável, de autores de mais alta qualidade, não só pela sua extraordinária obra, mas também como exemplo de pessoas que sempre sobressaíram na sua luta contra opressões de todo o tipo, colocando a literatura acima de interesses de qualquer ordem, de modo a que ela reflecta a verdade do nosso continente, suas culturas, suas memórias, seus ideais e suas lutas emancipadoras. Sinto-me demasiado pequeno ao pé de tais gigantes, sinceramente o digo, mas a culpa dessa heresia não é minha, é vossa, do Comité que, com a sua benevolência e amabilidade, me escolheu para este ano.

Notei, na lista que recebi com o nome de todos aqueles que me antecederam neste Prémio, não haver nenhum escrevente de língua portuguesa. O que mostra como esta língua ainda precisa de ser valorizada, para que os autores dos países africanos que a herdaram do regime colonial possam ser conhecidos de mais vastos públicos e também mais estudados. Vários factores contribuem para isso, um dos quais sendo a instabilidade política e militar que tem devastado os nossos países, com a excepção honrosa de Cabo Verde, um verde de esperança e exemplo de ponderação, humildade e sábia governação. Mas nós, os outros, temos desperdiçado os frutos que uma luta pela libertação com muitos mártires e heróis nos deu. E andámos tempo demasiado depois das independências a imolar os povos em guerras ou conflitos políticos do interesse de elites mais ou menos iluminadas, apenas para satisfazer o inefável prazer de potências estrangeiras que se intrometiam no meio do caos gerado para poderem se aproveitar dos mesmos frutos. Nada que seja novo afinal no continente mais sacrificado do nosso tempo, perante a indiferença generalizada, muitas vezes a começar pelos próprios africanos, agarrados ao seu umbigo e ambições próprias.

Entendo também este Prémio como um reconhecimento do papel que a Literatura no meu país proporcionou (e continua a fazê-lo) para que um escol de pensadores pudesse apresentar aos leitores as suas ideias de rebelião contra a ordem colonial, de defesa dos valores ancestrais espezinhados pelos invasores estrangeiros, mostrando o caminho da libertação. Começou esse processo em meados do século XIX, quando jornalistas, poetas, romancistas, gramáticos, começaram a publicar as suas obras em boletins oficiais, ou criando os seus próprios periódicos que eram fatalmente fechados pela polícia poucos números depois da abertura. E outros periódicos apareciam, defendendo as mesmas ideias, combatendo o racismo colonial, o estado de atraso e analfabetismo das populações, o trabalho escravo primeiro, depois o chamado contratado que mais não era que uma velada forma de trabalho forçado, o esbulho das melhores terras, enfim, aquilo que por toda África aconteceu. Foram anos e anos de escrita de dezenas de pessoas, muita da qual se perdeu e ainda vai perdendo, mas de que temos testemunhos suficientes para aí situar, não só os primeiros gritos de uma Nação nascendo, mas também as ideias que iríamos encontrar nos programas políticos do século seguinte.

Essa tradição manteve-se mesmo quando ao colonialismo de sempre se juntou, já no século XX, o fascismo encapotado de Salazar, discípulo fervoroso de Mussolini e Hitler, embora abençoado pelo catolicismo da época. Só que, dada a feroz repressão, os escritos ficaram no respaldo dos baús, sendo um ou outro publicado para alimentar a chama. Até ao Movimento cultural que foi ganhando força durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial, até desembocar na formação dos partidos políticos, alguns dos quais levando Angola para a Independência. Os escritores estiveram sempre na linha da frente, criando nacionalidade, e disso nos orgulhamos.

Maiores são portanto as responsabilidades presentes. Outras formas de luta, mas os mesmos objectivos. Neste momento ainda na afirmação e consolidação das entidades nacionais, onde a cultura tem papel de primeiro plano, talvez tendendo para movimentos mais amplos, ultrapassando fronteiras, se integrando em regiões, visando o universal. Com as armas que sempre utilizámos, a escrita, o exemplo, a coragem de enfrentar a opressão, o sonho de liberdade.

Uma questão delicada sem dúvida é o correcto equilíbrio entre uma identidade construída na opressão e na sua constante recusa, que merece consolidação e orgulho e, ao mesmo tempo, a tendência à internacionalização que o mundo moderno proporciona e até mesmo exige. Dilema que os escritores muitas vezes encontram no seu trabalho e que se resume numa frase: como conciliar o prazer do particular com a necessidade do universal? Questão posta sobretudo para os estudiosos e críticos, nos seus aspectos teóricos, mas que nós temos de ir resolvendo na prática da nossa actividade. Remetendo, entre outros aspectos correlatos, ao da própria tradução: deve o escritor envolver a sua obra cada vez mais na linguagem popular, onde as línguas africanas se casam com a língua da escrita, ou deve cingir-se a esta para ser menos traído na tradução? Não deve haver uma resposta fácil para tal dilema.

Temos, pois, muito trabalho pela frente.

Minhas senhoras, meus senhores,

Mais um vez manifesto a honra que me conferiram e espero que continuemos a trabalhar em conjunto para dar a conhecer a literatura africana em todas as suas facetas e que esta não pare de dar ao mundo o seu exemplo de coragem, determinação, defesa dos direitos do ser humano, sem exclusões nem arbitrariedades, para um Mundo mais justo.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me begin by thanking the Committee of the Fonlon-Nichols Award for the honor that has been bestowed upon me and apologize for not being able to do so in person. The body does not always obey the spirit and unfortunately my bones are now hardly able to bear long trips.

To be given such an award places me in a venerable list of authors of the greatest quality, not only due to their extraordinary works, but also as examples of people who have stood out in their struggle against all kinds of oppression, placing literature above all other interests, as for it to reflect the truth of our continent, its cultures, its memories, its ideals and its fights for emancipation. I feel terribly small standing next to such giants, and I say so sincerely. However, such heresy isn't my fault, but that of the committee, which has chosen me this year with such benevolence and kindness.

I noticed, from the list that I received with the names of all my predecessors, that no Portuguese-speaking writer had ever been previously recognized. This demonstrates that this language still needs to be valued, so that the African authors who inherited it from the colonial regime may be known to larger audiences and thus further studied. Many factors have contributed to this: the political and military instability that has devastated our countries is certainly among them. The Cape Verde Islands are the honorable exception, a green of hope and example of pondering, humility and wise governing. But us, the others, have wasted the fruits given to us by a struggle for liberation with numerous martyrs and heroes. Moreover, we have spent too long, after independence, immolating our people in wars and in the political conflicts of the more or less enlightened elites, only to satisfy the ineffable pleasure of foreign powers that intervened in the generated chaos with the sole purpose of taking advantage of its fruits. This is, after all, nothing new in the history of the most sacrificed continent of our times, against general indifference, often beginning with Africans themselves, staring at their own reflection and holding on to their own ambitions.

I understand this award as a recognition of the role literature played (and continues to play) in my country so that an elite of thinkers could present to its readers rebellious ideas against the colonial order. Ideas that carved the way to liberation, in defense of ancestral values stepped upon by the foreign invaders. The process started mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when journalists, poets, novelists, grammar specialists began to publish their works in official bulletins, or created their own periodicals which would be fatally shut down by the police, only a few editions after the first. Other periodicals would emerge, defending the same ideas, combatting the colonial racism, the backwards state and the population's illiteracy. First it was slavery, afterwards what was then called contract work (which was no less than a disguised form of forced labor) and the expropriation of our best lands – in sum, what was witnessed throughout all of Africa. We have years and years of writings by dozens of people. Much was lost and is still being lost. Nonetheless, in these testimonials we not only find the first cries of an emerging Nation, but also the ideas that we came to encounter in the political agendas of the following century.

The tradition remained the same even when the hardly hidden fascism of Salazar– the ardent disciple of Mussolini and Hitler, although blessed by Catholicism – was added to the colonial structure. But due to the ferocious repression, the writings remained locked away, though a few were published to feed the anti-colonial flame. This continued until the creation of the cultural movement, which slowly gained strength during World War II, and until the formation of the political parties, many of which led Angola to its independence. The writers were always on the front line, creating nationality, and of that we are proud.

Greater are, therefore, our current responsibilities. We now have different forms of fighting for the same goals we had before. Today we're still struggling to affirm and consolidate our national entities, in which culture proceeds playing a foremost role, perhaps tending toward broader movements, overcoming borders, integrating ourselves in regions, while focusing on the universal. We do so with the same weapons we have always used: the pen, the example, the courage to face oppression and the dream of freedom.

A sensitive matter is undoubtedly the ability to find the correct balance between an identity built under the constant fight against oppression – hence an identity that deserves to be consolidated and to be a motive of pride – and the tendency to internationalization, which the modern world not only affords but even demands. This is a dilemma that writers often find in their work and that can be summarized in one sentence: how do you reconcile the pleasure of the particular with the need for the universal? This is a theoretical question of significant importance to critics and scholars, but that we, the

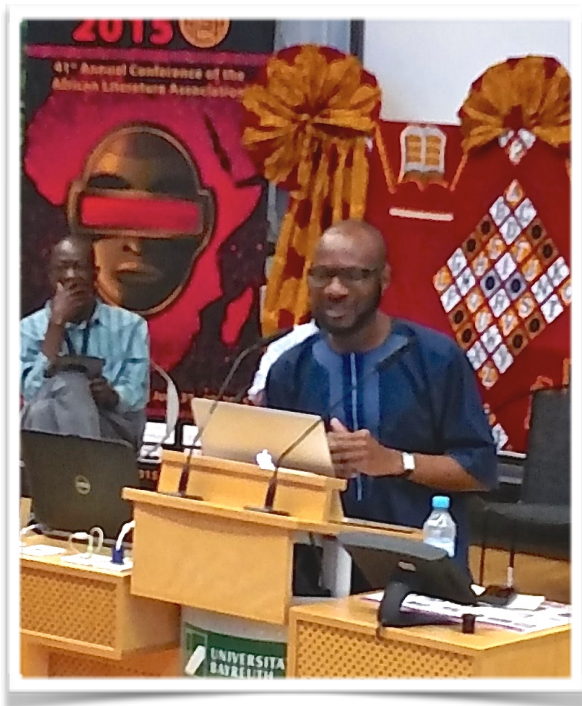
writers, have to resolve in our writing practice. This leads us, among other related questions, to the topic of translation: should the writer resort, more and more, to popular speech, in which the African languages marry the written one, or should he or she limit him or herself to the written language as to be less betrayed in translation? There isn't an easy answer to this dilemma.

We have, therefore, a lot of work ahead of us.

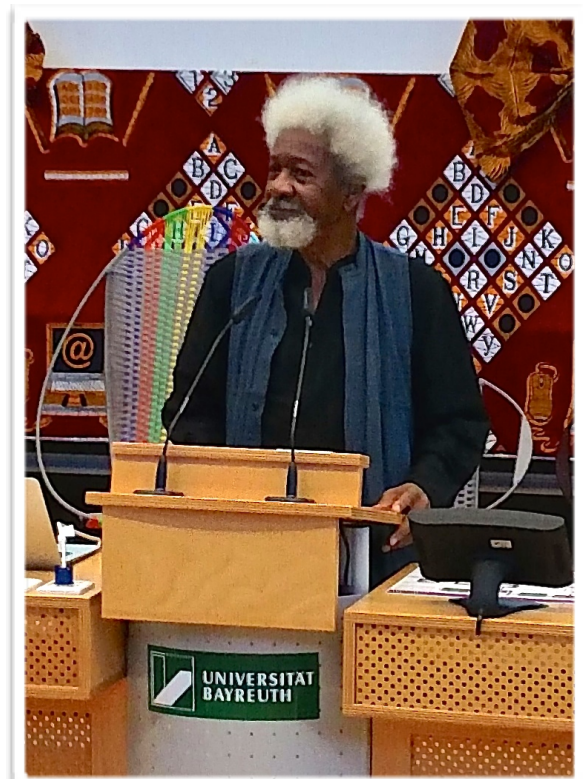
Dear ladies and gentlemen:

Once again I thank you for the honor that you have given me and I trust we will continue to work together to make African literature known in all of its facets. I also hope that our literatures keep offering the world an example of courage and determination, in defense of human rights, without any exclusions or the use of arbitrary powers, in other words, in defense of a more just World.

Translated from Portuguese into English by Ana Catarina Texeira, Lecturer, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Emory University. Pepetela couldn't travel to Bayreuth to accept the award in person for health reasons. Dr. Texeira introduced Pepetela, read his speech to the ALA, and accepted the award on his behalf.



Teju Cole, Keynote Address



Wole Soyinka, Keynote Address

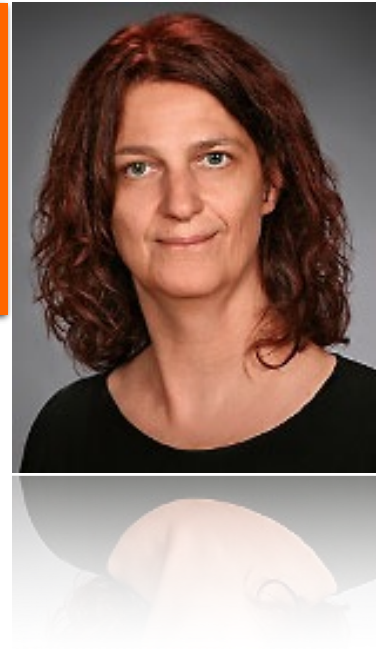
Photo credit: James McCorkle

# Introductory Speech to the Annual Conference of the ALA

Susan Arndt, Co-Convener

June 3, 2015, Bayreuth

“Future Africa and Beyond. Visions in Transition”



**Welcome, indeed.**

The future has arrived.

It has arrived, indeed.

Because YOU have arrived, in Bayreuth.

Arrived, to speak and discuss.

And to Envision:

Visions in Transition.

As related to:

African Futures and Beyond.

*I.*

*I.1.*

*Future?*

*Why Future?*

*Why talk about Future? Why care?*

Future is not simply time to come.

Future as time to come is what all of our daily endeavours are all about.

Because future matters. With respect to everything.

To own future, means to own everything life is striving for.

To own one's own future is what living is all about.

Future does not yet exist,  
and yet it creates and kills,

spoils and harms,

and privileges and discriminates against.



Future matters.

Future matters to everyone everywhere, criss-crossing time and space. Spacetime.

*That is why we talk to care about Future. Here. In the future of our now. The next four days, and, hopefully, beyond.*

*About Africa and beyond.*

*Africa and beyond?*

1.2.1.

Future does not exist in singular or in a vacuum.

Future is entangled, intersecting and polyphonous. With a capital S at the end that matters.

Because *FutureS* chat and fight, complementary and competitive.

After all, one future may support or empower another future.

Or the other way around: one future may erase another future.

1.2.2.

*a) Remember? Christopher Columbus? 1492?*

The new route to India, Europe was looking for, ended in ending wanted futures of people in India just as much as in other parts of Asia and in the Americas and Africas.

Genocide. Maafa. Colonialism. Genocide. Imperialism.

„Yet those who were never meant to survive“, to use Audre Lorde’s famous phrasing, happened to do so. Reshaping new futures to come. In Africa and beyond, in African diasporas and its homes in Europe, the Americas, all over the Asian continent. Yes, globally, indeed.

*b) Remember? Immanuel Kant? 1775.* He wanted the future all to himself, that is to the very “race” he and some of his brothers-in-mind had invented to be superior. The „white race“. Kant held that he did not meet any Black person who would have ever been able to produce knowledge, let alone future. Really? What about Anton Wilhelm Amo, then? Did Kant, for instance, never hear about this Afro German philosopher and scholar of law? Between 1727-1747 he mused and wrote in Halle and Jena about many things Kant was, decades later, concerned about. Did Kant, who supported the European enslavement of Africans, read Amo’s history of rights of Black people in Europe ever since Antiquity? Did Kant know Amo’s texts without mentioning them, thus un-writing Amo’s future? Nowadays, though, Amo’s future is rewritten. And Kant’s, too. “Provincialising Europe,” as Dipesh Chakrabarty puts it.

*c) Remember? Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. 1830/31.* His famous lectures about the “Philosophy of History”? There were no societal dynamics to be found on the African continent, he argued. No past? No future? No sense of freedom? Slavery was needed? To teach Black people what freedom is all about?

Really? What about Haiti , then? A revolution for freedom from enslavement that had happened in Hegel’s very own past.

c) *Remember?* Otto von Bismarck. 1884. His infamous “Berlin conference” that was dividing up the African continent, as if it was a cake, amongst European colonial powers, eating up vibrant futures of an, in fact, vibrant continent. Our dear guest of honour, Wole Soyinka, stresses in *The Burden of Memory* (in 1996) that the so-induced distortion of functioning political and cultural systems on the African continent has to be called to account today, at least (and I quote now) “partially, [...] for the intractable economic problems of” the African continent. Memory strikes back. So did Bayreuth. With its BIGSAS literature Festival last year, thinking 1884 and 1904 together with the popular commemoration of 1914.

d) *Remember?* Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Bayreuth’s infamous son-in-law of Richard Wagner, Bayreuth’s fame. **1899**. Germany was in love with the Aryan myth. Offering whiteness privileges, power, future. Eugenics was just around the corner. Genocide, too. Hitler followed Chamberlain’s ideology and instrumentalised Wagner’s love for German myths. Shame. Responsibility. Our dear guest of honour, Ama Ata Aidoo, claims in *Our Sister Kiljoy* (in 1977) that National Socialism and colonialism are a historical continuum. With a future. Remember colonialism was still on when National Socialism was defeated. And with a past.

e) *Remember* Eugen Fischer? Germany’s professor of eugenics? What led to the Shoah, started in **1904** with the Herero and Nama in today’s Namibia. Germany regrets, full of remorse, even shame. Responsibility. Developmental Aid for Namibia and a pleading for reconciliation by Germany’s ministry for economic Cooperation and Development. Appropriate? Still no apologies. No reparations. Thousands of mortal remains. Painful moments in German politics. But now, both the German Foreign Office and the German Research Foundation stay eager to bury them on the African continent. Germany’s pending apology and reparation for colonial atrocities is seemingly on its way. Hope: Apologies, reparations, just around the corner in Germany’s nearby future? Ways to “muse into of forgiveness”, to use Soyinka’s famous title. Ways into Chances Aidoo’s novels talk about.

f) *Remember* decolonization? Liberian declaration of independence in 1847; Ghana in 1957 or: the end of Apartheid in 1990, as celebrated by last year’s ALA in Jo’burg? New futures ahead, closely entangled with centuries of histories that have written African histories even earlier than G’ez, the Hawulti obelisk in [Matara, Eritrea](#), or the [Garima Gospels](#).

2.

*So much about the why: Why talk about the future?*

*Yet how?*

*How to talk about the Future? Future Africa and beyond?*

2.1.

Obviously, the past matters when talking about future. We care about history, yet do not need to get stuck with European histories that negated futures that have moulded the African continent.

2.2.

Rather, *African FutureS and Beyond* is about FutureS that have been generated on the African continent and in its diasporas throughout time, mattering here as much as beyond, all around the globe, entangled and entangling, becoming a world to come.

*How to get hold of them? The FutureS?*

*How do we encounter the FutureS? Whether blossoming or fragmented, as flinders or as heydays.*

Via language.

Future does not exist beyond language nor in language only.

Via visions.

Visions are about being able to see. Not so much about foreseeing. Rather, about daring to see, watch, gaze, gaze back, about keeping visions in motion.

*Visions in Transition.*

*Yet how can we envision FutureS ?*

The same way in which we see, feel, taste, smell, touch, thus, sense the future.

We do so mentally, empowered by our imagination as intersecting with and performing in language(s).

3.

3.1. And this is where literature comes in. Of course.

Is there any better time machine than the literary imagination, the realm of fiction for that matter? It pleases and entertains just as much as it unsettles, shocks and startles. In doing so, the imaginary future intervenes into the present and its past.

3.2.

And this is where memory comes in. Indeed. Akan epistemology as feeding into Sankofa tells us just as much as Walter Benjamin's „Angel of History“: We will be what we have been. And we are what we remember. And what we don't.

Silence and Silencing.

Thus, by changing the narrated past, we change narrating the future.

Future is about change. And the changing of futures will change our memories, thus changing the narrative of our past.

So, thanks again.

For coming to Bayreuth.

To think, discuss and delve into visions in transition.

For *FutureS* that will be redistributed anew, starting all the way from Antiquity, and before.

Rewriting pasts and also German, Bavarian, Bayreuth history.

Inscribing *Future Africa*, and beyond, for a world to come.

The future has arrived.

It has arrived, indeed.

Because YOU have arrived in Bayreuth, eager to discuss and envision  
visions in transition.

Thank you and once again:

Welcome! Stay! Return!

4.

And please allow me to conclude with a personal note.

In honour of my dear teacher and friend Eckhard Breitingner, who worked at the University of Bayreuth as professor of African Literatures since 1986 and who sadly passed away 2 years ago.

You know what he said when we first met in 1994?

“You have to go to Accra, to meet the ALA. This is the future.”

And I did, though I had missed the deadline for the submission of abstracts. And the second one, too. ALA generosity was everywhere.

In Accra, I was overwhelmed by stirring approaches within African Studies I had never met before.

And nervous I was. Because my paper was what? *Too long*. 23 minutes instead of 20.

In that pre-electronic age, that meant scribbling in my manuscript, cutting out bits and pieces of my paper here and there, only to glue it together elsewhere.

Finally I ended up in a panel with one additional panelist and was stopped by my chair after 15 minutes. After all that I felt like crying. I had not shared „my most important argument“ with the audience yet. *Please, don't ask me what it was all about. I don't remember this most important thing anymore. Just that it was most important for me.* Yet, there was a wonderful person in the room who felt my need and urge. He asked me: “Oh, there was an argument you did not manage to complete. Please, I am very curious. Go on.”

This is what the ALA has ever since then been to me. A lovely family.

And this is what Eckhard Breitingner said to me after my talk: “Dear Susan, the ALA is much more than these 15 minutes, it's not only about giving papers. It is also very much about becoming a new person while meeting beautiful minds and souls. “

Thank you, dear Eckhard, for inviting me into this family.

Thank you for sharing the dream of inviting the ALA community to Bayreuth.

The ALA is here, because you have been here.

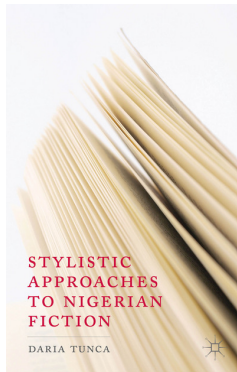
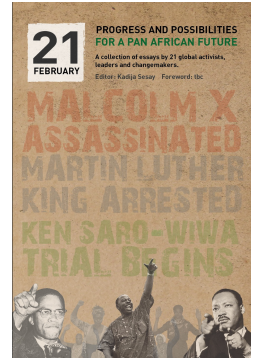
And I know you are, right now, too.

THANK YOU!



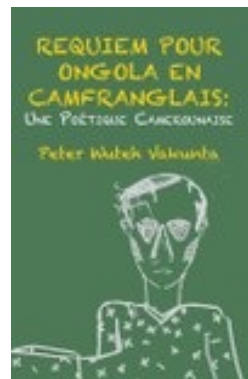
# Members' Book Publications

Kadija George, Ed., *21 February: Progress and Possibilities for a Pan African Future* (Writing our World Press, 2015). This collection of 21 essays commemorates three occurrences of the 20th century that have influenced a Pan Africanism perspective for the 21st century: the arrest of Martin Luther King (and others) for their leadership during the Montgomery Bus Boycott. (1956); the assassination of Malcolm X (1965); the start of the trial of the Ogoni 9, including writer Ken Saro-Wiwa (1995). Contributors include: Hakim Adi, Amadou Mahtar Ba, Nnimmo Bassey, Ama Biney, Sylvie Aboa-Bradwell, Hassoum Ceesay, Carole Boyce-Davies, Gibril Faal, Raimi Gbadamosi, Wangui wa Goro, ChenziRa Davis Kahina, Shannon Marquez, Tariq Mehmood, Sai Murray, E. Ethelbert Miller, Mukoma wa Ngugi, Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo, Oghenetoja Okoh, Paul Okojie, Ewuare X. Osayande, Deborah A. Sanders, Amrit Wilson.



Daria Tunca, *Stylistic Approaches to Nigerian Fiction* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2014). Drawing on the discipline of stylistics, the volume introduces a series of methodological tools to demonstrate how sustained attention to form can foster understanding of content in selected works by contemporary Nigerian writers – Chris Abani, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Uzodinma Iweala and Ben Okri. Among the key issues addressed are the link between style and characterization, the interplay between aesthetics and ideology, and the relationship between language and representation.

Peter Wuteh Vakunta, *Requiem pour Ongola: Une poetique camerounaise* (Langaa Research & Publishing CIG, 2015). Using linguistic stylings as subversive as the messages nestled between the lines, Vakunta's *Requiem for Ongola* presents a scathing critique of the corruption of democracy. Written in camfranglais, this is resistance poetry at its best: 'tokking' through the mouth of the voiceless", the author pulls no punches in condemning the country's king lazy, the perverted acceptance of feymania, the reduction of the national Constitution into toilet paper, and the general climate of impunity that HAS created an atmosphere of frustration and hopelessness, and thereby Vakunta calls upon the redeeming power of the Word to "Speak truth!"





## Works Received for the ALA Archives

The African Literature Association is grateful to the individuals and university presses that have donated books to the African Literature Association's archives. Please consider donating your publications, or requesting your publisher to do so on your behalf, to the Association's archives. Works here are arranged by publication date.

Phoebe Ottenberg-Miller. *The Umbrella Tree* (Lagos: Mbeyi, 2013): donated by Professor Simon Ottenberg, University of Washington.

Mustafa Kemal Mirzeler. *Remembering Nayeche and the Gray Bull Engiro: African Storytellers of the Karamoja Plateau and the Plains of Turkana* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014): donated by University of Toronto Press.

Irène Assiba d'Almeida, Lucie Viakinnou-Brinson, and Thelma Pinto, Editors. *Eco-Imagination: African and Diasporan Literatures and Sustainability* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2014): donated by James McCorkle

Maik Nwosu and Obiwu, Editors. *The Critical Imagination in African Literature: Essays in Honor of Michael J. C. Echeru* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015): donated by Syracuse University Press.



### *Those Remembered at the ALA in Bayreuth and Those Who Have Passed On*

Moustapha Alassane

Angela Fubara

Malek Alloula

Marjorie Jones

Maya Angelou

Ali Mazrui

Daniel Biyaola

Asenath Bole Odaga

Eckhard Breitinger

Grace Ogot

Andre Brink

Jean Pliya

Assia Djebar



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**John Nemis**, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Patrice Nganang**, SUNY-Stoney Brook

**Ann Willey**, University of Louisville

**Samuel Zadi**, University of Connecticut

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## HOST THE ALA ANNUAL CONFERENCE!

The African Literature Association invites bids to host the annual conference of the association in the following years: **2017, 2018, and 2019.**

Bids can be submitted by members in a single university or in a group of universities working together.

For additional information on having the great privilege of hosting the annual conference, please contact the ALA President ([madejunmobi@ucdavis.edu](mailto:madejunmobi@ucdavis.edu)) and Past President ([tolaniyan@wisc.edu](mailto:tolaniyan@wisc.edu)) for the detailed guidelines for conveners.

## ALA AWARD NOMINATIONS

Please consider submitting a nomination for the Fonlon-Nichols and the ALA Distinguished Member Awards. The deadline for both is October 31, 2015.

### **Fonlon-Nichols Award (Deadline: October 31, 2015)**

For excellence in creative writing and contributions to the struggle for human rights and freedom of expression. It is given every year to an African writer. The Award was established in 1992 to honor Bernard Fonlon and Lee Nichols for their contributions to both African literature and the freedom of expression. Authors cannot nominate themselves, and neither can their publishers nominate them.

Send nominations as email document attachments to: [jmpht@ncsu.edu](mailto:jmphd@ncsu.edu)

Please note: The nomination statement should contain:

- (1) a biographical profile of the nominee
- (2) a detailed justification for the nomination. This should not be more than 2 single-spaced or 4 double-spaced pages

### **ALA Distinguished Member Award (Deadline: October 31, 2015)**

For outstanding record of service to the ALA and commitment to teaching and scholarship in African literature. By nomination only. Nominees must have distinguished themselves over the years in service to the ALA, and commitment to teaching and scholarship in, and promotion of, African literature. Self-nominations are not accepted.

Send nominations as email document attachments to: [jmpht@ncsu.edu](mailto:jmphd@ncsu.edu)

Please note: The nomination statement should contain:

- (1) a biographical profile of the nominee
- (2) a detailed justification for the nomination. This should not be more than 2 single spaced or 4 double-spaced pages.

Please direct queries to Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi, ALA Vice-President, at [jmpht@ncsu.edu](mailto:jmphd@ncsu.edu).

## CALL FOR PAPERS FOR SPECIAL ISSUE OF JALA

### **“African Futures and Beyond. Visions in Transition”**

As editors of the annual volume of essays arising from the 41st annual African Literature Association conference held in Bayreuth, Germany in June 2015 we invite conference participants to send us article-length essays (on the broad conference theme of “African Futures and Beyond. Visions in Transition”). The volume will appear as a Special Issue of the *Journal of the African Literature Association* and will be edited by Susan Arndt and Nadja Ofuatey-Alazard (conference conveners and lead guest editors) and Abioseh Porter, JALA editor).

We invite papers and panels that contribute to the reflection on the conference theme, even though other explorations of other aspects related to African and Diaspora literatures are also welcome.

Essays should be between 5,000 and 8,000 words; using 2013 MLA format, please, for layout and citation. Please send your essays electronically to [ala2015@uni-bayreuth.de](mailto:ala2015@uni-bayreuth.de) as Word documents and ensure that all files are free of viruses and any other bugs. If you submit your essay for consideration in this volume, we kindly ask that you not submit it elsewhere at the same time. Essays should reach us before the end of business on December 31st, 2015.



Nadja Ofuatey-Alazard, Co-Convener, Welcome Address

Photo credit: James McCorkle

# 2016 ALA CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT AND CALL FOR PAPERS

Emory University and Kennesaw State University  
cordially invite you to submit your proposals for seminars, roundtables, and panels

## AFRICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION 2016 CONFERENCE **JUSTICE AND HUMAN DIGNITY IN AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA**

Marriott Marquis and National Center for Civil and Human Rights  
Atlanta, Georgia USA  
April 6-9, 2016

**Conference website: <http://ala2016.com>**

"Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals." -- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in *Stride Toward Freedom the Montgomery Story* – Chapter XI Where Do We Go From Here?

Inspired by the words of Atlanta's most famous contributor to the civil rights movement and the pursuit of justice, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., this year's theme is *Justice and Human Dignity in Africa and the African Diaspora*. Historically, the pursuit of justice and dignity connects Atlanta to the varied experiences of African peoples, as the US Civil Rights Movement drew inspiration from struggles for decolonization and in turn inspired these struggles. Justice and human dignity have long remained central tenets of cultural production from Africa and the African diaspora in the quest for freedom and recognition.

Artists, filmmakers, writers, and intellectuals from Africa and its diaspora often explore the possibilities for justice and the challenges to human dignity in the face of various forms of oppression. Whether they work as creators of fictional worlds or as critics of the worlds they inhabit, these artists and scholars launch a call for critical rethinking and socio-political action. The just treatment of human beings and the preservation of their dignity on the African continent and beyond recur as images, motifs, and concepts for urgent consideration, critical re-imagination, and scholarly enquiry. These literary and cultural texts offer visions that counter the often myopic and prejudicial media portrayals of Africa and its people.

Recognizing the many challenges to justice that remain—and the complicated, mediated avenues by which the arts and scholarship engage with these challenges—the 2016 conference theme of justice and human dignity is an opening to critically reflect on, as well as celebrate, the current state of creative and scholarly work from Africa and the diaspora.



We encourage you to share your scholarship on topics including, but not limited to:

- African and African diaspora arts, literature, and intellectual work as practices of social justice and dignity
- Re-imagining rights, law, justice, and/or dignity in Africa and the diaspora
- African & diaspora women writers, social justice, and human dignity
- The aesthetics, forms, and/or genres of justice
- African human rights systems and precursors to human rights in Africa and the diaspora
- Colonization, neo-colonization, trauma, and human rights violations.
- War, peace, conflict management, and human dignity in Africa
- Ecological threats and environmental justice in Africa and beyond
- Education and human rights advocacy in Africa and the diaspora
- Civil and human rights movements in Africa and the diaspora
- Labor, migrant/immigrant experience, and human dignity
- Identity formation and inequality (gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, age, ability, socioeconomic status)
- Globalization, the digital age, justice, and human dignity
- Health systems, access, and justice
- Language politics and multilingualism in Africa and the diaspora
- Progress and human rights in Africa and the diaspora

This conference will feature three modalities for presenters to share their work: panels, roundtables, and seminars. In order to enrich the diversity of scholarship and accommodate the largest possible number of presenters, individuals will be limited to presenting in a maximum two sessions. You must be a member of the African Literature Association in order to participate in any capacity. To become a member, go to <http://africanlit.org/>

### **Paper**

Individual paper proposals are welcome. We strongly encourage submissions in panels (see below). If accepted, an individual proposal will be assigned by the conveners to a panel of three-four presenters. When submitting an individual paper proposal, please include your own name, institutional affiliation, and email address, as well as an abstract of up to 250 words and an indication of any requests for A/V equipment. All individual paper proposals must be submitted by **November 15th, 2015** to [atlanta@ala2016.com](mailto:atlanta@ala2016.com).

### **Panel**

We strongly encourage full panel submissions. We recommend that panels bring together scholars from multiple institutions. A full panel proposal should include a title, a description of the panel topic, the names of up to four panel participants, including their institutional affiliations and email addresses, abstracts of up to 250 words for each paper, and an indication of any requests for A/V equipment. All panel proposals must be submitted by **November 15th, 2015** to [atlanta@ala2016.com](mailto:atlanta@ala2016.com).

### **Roundtable**

A roundtable will consist of a chair, who organizes the roundtable, and no less than four and no more than six presenters. To submit a proposal for a roundtable, please submit a title, a

description of the roundtable topic, a brief summary of the main questions to be explored, the names of the proposed roundtable participants, including their institutional affiliations and email addresses, and an indication of any requests for A/V equipment by **November 15th, 2015** to [atlanta@ala2016.com](mailto:atlanta@ala2016.com).

### **Seminar**

The ALA seminar consists of 2-3 panels on a theme or cluster of related themes. The panels will be held once a day over 2-3 days. Seminar leaders must define the seminar issue, recruit participants, and propose panels, including abstracts of all papers, by November 15th. Each seminar proposal should be submitted by two organizers and each panel should have no more than four presenters. To enhance the intellectual diversity of presentations, we strongly encourage proposals that bring together scholars from multiple institutions. While seminar leaders normally serve as panel chairs, a seminar leader who is presenting a paper cannot chair more than one panel of the seminar. Pre-circulation of papers among seminar participants is strongly encouraged; full written-up presentations are required. All seminar participants are expected to attend all panels in the seminar.

To submit a proposal for a seminar, please submit a title, a brief description of the seminar as a whole and of each panel, the names of all participants, including their institutional affiliations and email addresses, abstracts of up to 250 words for each paper, and an indication of any requests for A/V equipment by **November 15th, 2015** to [atlanta@ala2016.com](mailto:atlanta@ala2016.com).

### **Information for ALA-Approved Caucuses:**

ALA-Approved Caucuses are advised to write to their members a call for papers for the 2016 conference that concerns the central theme of *Justice and Human Dignity in Africa and the African Diaspora*. Chairs of the ALA-approved caucuses must submit full panels bringing together scholars from multiple institutions. A full panel proposal should include a title, a description of the panel topic, the names of up to four panel participants, including their institutional affiliations and email addresses, abstracts of up to 250 words for each paper, and an indication of any requests for A/V equipment by **November 15th, 2015** to [atlanta@ala2016.com](mailto:atlanta@ala2016.com).

### **Conveners' Statement on Deadlines**

Due to the popularity of the ALA 2016 location and in order to provide adequate time for participants to plan to attend the conference in early April, the conveners will be unable to consider submissions received after the **November 15th, 2015** deadline. Only proposals received by the deadline will be considered for acceptance.

You will be notified of the status of your submission by **January 15th, 2016**.

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It publishes matters of record of and for the Association for the sole use of its members.

All inquiries should be addressed to the Headquarters Director, James McCorkle.

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