

Texts, Modes and Repertoires of Living In and Beyond the Shadows of Apartheid

40th Annual Conference of the African Literature Association (ALA), April 9-13, 2014,
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

FINAL Call for Papers, Panels and Roundtables

FINAL DEADLINE: FRIDAY JANUARY 10, 2014

Confirmed Keynote Speakers

Simon Gikandi (Robert Schirmer Professor of English, Princeton University)

Njabulo Ndebele (Novelist and Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, Archive and Public Culture,
University of Cape Town)

April 2014 marks an auspicious moment in African history and experience: twenty years after the demise of official apartheid. Elsewhere, the seemingly intractable challenges of poverty, social inequality, discrimination and tyranny continue to bedevil the continent. The conference presents a fitting occasion to embark on the kinds of retrospection, introspection and predictions that look both at the past and the future in more fluid and dynamic ways - particularly in relation to the shadows and unfinished business of apartheid and the possibilities for imagining and creating a more just, egalitarian and humane world.

As a political system and concept, apartheid occupied a complicated status in local and global imaginaries. It signified one of the most totalising attempts at racial social engineering, encompassing economic, socio-political and cultural policies as well as interventions into the most fundamental elements of everyday life. Today, apartheid has become shorthand for contesting different kinds of discrimination, segregation and exploitation across the world. The term can be usefully deployed as a catalyst for also speaking to other experiences and case-studies. Such an inflection, when used pointedly and imaginatively, can be productive, whether in localised or global comparative frameworks.

One central aesthetic response to the demands of life and 'apartheids' is an abiding reliance on the complexities and politics of the quotidian; the everyday. The everyday longings for basic necessities and also for joy, love, beauty, community and democracy present some of the most politically affective and effective occasions that call into question the dominant ideas and networks of the state and other powerful national and international forces. Artists and citizens - through recourse to texts, modes and repertoires

of living - have proffered alternative narratives, senses of self, memories and hopes for the future.

We invite papers and panels that use the conference theme as a catalyst but other explorations of any aspects related to African and Diaspora literatures are also welcome.

Possible areas of focus include:

Self, time, space and the poetics and politics of the everyday

‘Apartheids’ and ‘partitions’

The saliences and antimonies of the quotidian

The ordinary and fantasy as sites of alternative epistemologies

Bodies and power

Consumption cultures and performance

Sexualities and subjectivities

The dis(contents) of affective states

The worlds and lives of things

History, violence, trauma and memory

Myth, movements and auto/biography

Adaptation and translation of identities, languages and texts

Media, communicative ecologies and cartographies of alienation and/or belonging

Popular forms, spaces and sub-cultures of personhood and social renewal

Ruins, remainders, residues

Please send abstracts of up to 500 words for individual papers and / or panels by 10, January, 2014 to the convener, Bhekizizwe Peterson, at ala2014.sllm@wits.ac.za or by mail to Bhekizizwe Peterson, School of Literature, Language and Media, Private Bag 3, Wits, South Africa, 2050.

Information on pre-registration, registration and ALA membership dues will be available at: <http://www.ala2014.co.za>

Convener: Bhekizizwe Peterson **Conference Committee** (members are from Departments in the **School of Literature, Language and Media**): Sarah Chuimbu (Media), Pumla Gqola (African Literature), Isabel Hofmeyr (African Literature), Innocentia Mhlambi (African Languages), Litheko Modisane (African Literature), Dan Ojwang (African Literature), Veronique Tadjo (Modern Languages), Michael Titlestad (English), James Ogude (University of Pretoria).