

Translation Caucus of the African Literature Association (TRACALA)
Report to the Executive Committee October 2009

I. REPORTS

A. PRESIDENT (Wangui wa Goro , Also Deputy Vice President ALA)

The TRACALA executive was proud of our achievements in Vermont. Our membership grew and our luncheon with Professor Antony Kwame Appiah and poet Shailja Patel was hailed as a success. We owe our gratitude to Professor Lokangaka Losambe and his committee for his exemplary patience and the way in which he supported TRACALA initiatives. The TRACALA Executive felt that this was a very well organized conference.

Our membership grew and the quality of the papers was high. We received good feedback and had large audiences at the round tables and the panels (see below). We have started to work in close collaboration with Professor Irene d'Almeida towards Arizona.

The President's tasks this year have included:

- Developing TRACALA including the development of our framing document and directions proposals. We had an extensive discussion on the direction of TRACALA and adopted the Asmara Declaration as the framework of our work whilst encouraging translations, scholarship and research into and out of global languages. A large number of directional issues are emerging and may form the basis of exciting collaborations and developments of our organization in general and for our members in particular.
- Working closely with the Secretary and Treasurer to create a secure administrative and communication base for the organization to enable it to function smoothly as we grow.
- Continue to develop post launch organizational development and planning based on a range of proposals which have emerged.
- Working towards ALA 2010 by planning panels, the luncheon and readings:
 - 1) Proposed papers for two (1) roundtables and two (2) panels and 3) *Soundings in African Languages*
- Strengthening our collaborations with other caucuses and developing our membership base.
- Organizing the elections 2010.

- This year we have secured a round table as part of the Presidential Sessions at the MLA on the theme ***Translating Africa in Global contexts*** with three ALA/TRACALA members presenting. We are very proud of this achievement.
- Two TRACALA members have been elected to the ALA Executive including to the role of Deputy Vice President.

B. VICE PRESIDENT (Pam Smith)

- Worked with President, Secretary and Treasurer on organization's Administrative and communication base
- Worked specifically on amendment to the Constitution & Bylaws
- Worked with President and Secretary on details of Executive Committee Reports and Agenda preparation
- Worked with Treasurer on oversight of the TRACALA Account
- Worked with Treasurer to plan the details of the TRACALA panel on "Soundings in African Languages."
- Working in close collaboration with Professor Almeida for the 2010 conference in Arizona

C. SECRETARY/THE SECRETARIAT (Tomi Adeaga – also ALA Executive Committee Member)

- Liaised with the President and the Executive to ensure and maintain smooth communication and functioning of the TRACALA executive
- Stepped up the membership drive again for this year.
- With President, continued to set up administrative/management systems including the:

□□□□□□□□ Website, now in development in conjunction with that of the ALA, and working with Vice President and web master, Mark Lilleleht, to progress this in hopes of a link by the end of November, mid December 2009.

□□□□□□□□ Letterhead -- We will be working out details of our headquarters which will determine our letterhead details and how we manage our archives.

D. TREASURER/THE TREASURY: (Phanuel Egejuru)

- The TRACALA (interest-bearing checking) account at the METRO HEALTH FEDERAL CREDIT UNION in Omaha, Nebraska.

\$	Opening balance (3/2008)	= \$670.25
\$	Deposits	= 0.00
\$	Interest to date	= .86+
\$	expenditures to date –	
\$	Checkbooks	= 13.25-
	ENDING BALANCE	= 657.00* as

of the Executive meeting in Vermont.

*We will be reporting fully ALA Executive meeting in Arizona. These figures reflect our last TRACALA Executive Meeting in Vermont

E. TRACALA-SPONSORED PANELS: Reports

ROUNDTABLE 1: Kenya: “*Uandisage*” in Post-Election Violence, Writing and Print Culture

Chair: Keguro Macharia, University of Maryland, College Park

Presenters:

Shailja Patel, 2009 African Guest Writer, Nordic Africa Institute
Wangui wa Goro, Visiting Scholar, University of Kwazulu Natal
Binyavanga Wainaina, Director, The Chinua Achebe Center for African Literature and Languages, Bard College

* ***Uandisage***: critical global African self literary writing/rapportage in conflict contexts

**term coined by Wangui wa Goro from *uandisagi* (Kiswahili) and *rapportage* (French)

During Kenya’s post-election violence from January to February 2008, creative and critical writers, activists, artists and intellectuals, wrote and published a significant body of multi-genre work. Writers produced work both singly and in collectives, such as the Concerned Kenyan Writers collective.

While the post-election violence took place in Kenya, writing on it has been published across continental Africa and in the broader African Diaspora. Writing appeared, or is forthcoming, in collections dedicated to the post-election violence, including Nigerian literary magazine *Farafina*, Kenya’s literary journal, *Kwani!*, and the pan-African online journal *Pambazuka*. Moreover,

Articles by Kenyan writers and political activists appeared in print journalism across the continent, US-Africa media such as *Mshale*, the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, the *East African*, and *Africa Report*.

This panel addresses the theme of the conference by exploring how creative writers and artists drew on and re-formulated African cultural traditions within the context of globalized reporting. It focuses, especially, on the role of literature and literary practitioners in this diasporic “*uandisage*.”

PANEL 1 -- --“Readings/Recital in Mother Tongue African languages: ” – Phaniel Egejuru, Chair.

Participants: Akintunde Akinyemi, Kassahun Checole, Pam Smith, Phaniel Egejuru, Abdul Rasheed Na'Allah, Mbulelo Mzamane, Ghirmai Negash

Like most things that happened for Tracala at this ALA, the time slot for our panel was fortuitous -- on opening day, immediately following the Opening Ceremony and Soyinka Lecture! Readings were given in Yoruba, Igbo, Krio, Hausa IsiZulu, Tigrinya, and Amharic to a large, enthusiastic and participatory crowd. Two performers- a Yoruba speaker and an Arabic speaker performed after the panel was opened to the audience. Wangui (joined by the audience) performed a song in Gikuyu. The greatest exciting innovation for the panel this year was having Papa Susso punctuate the performances with music performances. It worked so well, that the panel plans to "draft/ incorporate" his musical presentation as a staple of the panel.

PANEL 2 -- “The Task of Translating Linguistic Innovation in Postcolonial African Literatures”-- Peter Vakunta, Chair

This panel makes two claims, namely that postcolonial fictional writing in Africa is characterized by experimentation with language. It further maintains that in their attempt to transpose the worldview and imagination of indigenous peoples into European languages, African writers produce texts that demand of readers to be both bilingual and bicultural. Creative writing in multilingual contexts harbors wide-ranging ramifications for creative writers who tend to negotiate linguistic and cultural spaces in an attempt to infuse their works with the imagination and sensibilities of indigenous cultures. Indigenization is an effective cross-cultural communication tool that enables the writer to express the worldviews characteristic of native cultures. African writers often resort to code-switching to indigenize their works by interpolating not only the worldview but also the speech patterns of their people into European languages. In an attempt to transpose local speech mannerisms into European languages, these writers employ a variety of codes alternately. Postcolonial African novelists employ this device for a variety of purposes—linguistic appropriation, literary decolonization and representation of cultural memories. Recourse to linguistic innovation may pose translatability problems to a translator unfamiliar with the cultural specificities of the source text. This panel discusses the innovative usage of language in African literatures and the problems it may pose for the literary translator. Rather than interrogate the theories of translation, the panel seeks to bring new insights to the pragmatics of translation—ways in which the literary translator grapples with meaning discernment and rendition when faced with texts couched in indigenized and hybridized linguistic forms.

**PANEL 3 – Panel: Blackness, Gender, Feminism:
Continuities and discontinuities in African, African Diaspora
and New African Diaspora Aesthetics – Panel Chair: Wangui
wa Goro (University of Kwazulu Natal, Visiting Scholar)**

PANELISTS

Dr. Patricia Jabbeh Wesley, Assistant Professor of English, Penn State University- Altoona

Title of Paper: “When Women Write Africa: An Examination of Gender Roles in Ama Atta Aidoo’s *Dilemma of a Ghost* and Buchi Emecheta’s *The Joys of Motherhood*”

Dr. Sandra Staton-Taiwo, Assistant Professor of English, Penn State University- York

Title of Paper: “The Old African Diaspora in Recent African American Literature: Afrocentric Motherhood as a Site of Power in Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*”

Dr. Carol Blessing, Chair and Professor of English, Point Loma Nazarene University Title of Paper: “Exile and Maternal Loss in the Poems of Patricia Jabbeh Wesley”

Dr. Shailja Patel, Guest Writer, The Nordic Africa Institute

Title of Paper: “A Feminist Reframing Of Contemporary African Poetry”

Dr. Wangui wa Goro- (Chair of Panel)-Visiting Scholar University of Kwazulu Natal

Title of Paper: “Translating through the minefield: difference, indifference and Difference: aesthetics in Shailja Patel’s *Migritude* and Zubeida Jaffer’s *Love in the time for Treason*”

ABSTRACT:

African Diaspora writers by the very nature of their transplantation from their homelands have been plagued by the question of their blackness or not so blackness, by the issues of gender and gender equality or inequality, Feminism and/ or Womanism, and have through their aesthetics sought to find newer ways of exploring these new realities of their new humanness. These recent and old Diaspora African writers are very much in the center of a new, global Africa, an Africa without borders, bordered between the New and the old, the traditional Africa and the Diaspora Africa. Many of these writers must write within the framework of a new culture even while seeking to reconcile the old, disappearing homeland to their new worlds. Many must depend on memory to find that balance between the old reliable oral tradition and the new world. Whether they are of the earlier generation of African Diaspora writers, forced into Diaspora by slavery or of the new Diaspora, new-comer African or exiled African, the questions of womanhood, motherhood, Feminism and Womanism, Africaness and blackness against the backdrop of remembered oral tradition are at the heart of this group of African

writers. They have not only survived exile or the Diaspora life, but have also found new ways of representing the new African in their new world as they know it. Theirs is a difficult balance that often results in the new and subtle tensions between how they see the world and how their fellow writers on the continent see the world.

.