

# PALAVR XIV

## Call for Papers

Centre for Studies in African Literatures and Cultures  
Jadavpur University  
Kolkata, India  
International Conference on African Literatures and Cultures  
23-24 March, 2017

### AFRICA TODAY

This Palaver marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People*. The aftermath of decolonization – one could say the after myth – Achebe shows, as the destruction of a dream. Is this dream – of freedom, equality, justice, regardless of the shackles upon them by beings claiming to be human, is this, as Langston Hughes also asked, many years ago, a dream deferred - forever deferred ? For the world continues to exoticise Africa, whether in academia or through the image that is projected of the continent, in essentialist representations trapped in reduction. ..

The study of African literatures and cultures is an ongoing attempt to understand the process through which changing perceptions of Africa as a category (social, political, historical etc.) has been created and recreated, invented and reinvented. Our investigations implicate individuals in society, situatedness being the crux of the study of culture and its products. In keeping with this focus, the conversation we try to open with this palaver will be about how today people of African origin on the continent and elsewhere formulate their identities and negotiate the contemporary neo-colonial/globalized order. In this negotiation, their past and their present, their memories and experiences, the myths and the counter-myths, emerge as irreducible and irreconcilable realities that characterise Africa today.

Our aim in this palaver is to travel through the art of words. While we welcome discussion on literature's role in revealing and reiterating the plurality of African cultures, we must also keep in view that literature overflows categorizations and exceeds reduction. We invite participants to join in the discussion of the role played by signification, intermedial and literary, in the creation and representation of Africa today.

Our conversations will begin from, but not limited to, the following topics:

- Literature/Performance in development
- Afropolitanism and Cultural Neocolonialism
- Dispossession, Degradation, Despoliation :Recolonising Land
- Cultural Contact and Plurality
- "Tribal" identity and National Boundaries
- Conflicts of faith and 'pan' Africanism
- Global and local languages/ Mother and other tongues

The title and a brief abstract (200-300 words) of the proposed paper may be sent by 15.01.2017 to [palaver.csalc@gmail.com](mailto:palaver.csalc@gmail.com)