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Plenary Speakers

Professor Tope Omoniyi (University of Roehampton, London)

“African Languages and Literatures under the Change Dynasty” / “African Literacies, Confucius Institutes and Dragon Floats”

Chinua Achebe remarks in *Things Fall Apart*, that among the Igbo, ‘proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten’. In this paper, I turn the idiom around to assert that words are the fabric from which proverbs are woven. Since words essentially belong to specific language systems in etymology and linguistic analysis generally, their aggregates result in proverbs that we associate with specific languages and semiotic systems. One of the hallmarks of globalization has been the breaking down of boundaries between cultural systems through integration of or collaboration between economic systems to form what Kenichi Ohmae (1999) describes as the ‘borderless world’. *Things Fall Apart* belongs in the genre of post-colonial literature in English through which the world has accessed many of the (literary) cultures of Africa. But English arguably only renders a certain view of the African world from the standpoint of a Boasian framework. As the world enters a new cycle in the global economic system in which China is predicted to have pre-eminence, it is time to begin to consider Chinese reception and perspectives of and impact on literatures and languages of the world. Researchers in Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics, have been engaging with Teaching Chinese/Mandarin as a Foreign Language (TCFL), Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (TCSOL). Unlike, English though, it is not conventional colonization that is representing other literatures and languages through the prism of Mandarin. In this talk I shall explore possible connections between the cultural phenomenon that is the Confucius Institutes and the character of Chinese presence in Africa (Bodomo 2012). Already, the model role of the British Council in the popularization of British culture, language and literature is well documented. While the CI is not exactly a Chinese replica of BC, I shall suggest that there are explicit and implicit similarities between the modus operandi of both institutions as well as their impact on society. Apart from serving as a conduit for the introduction of Chinese into linguistic landscapes around the world, the population of China at over one billion is the lifeblood of an intriguing economic argument. Equally intriguing is the expansion to the Chinese worldview that these literatures and languages in contact are likely to trigger. Above all, my focus in this paper will be on the impact that growing Chinese presence is likely to bring to bear on the theory and practice of language policy and planning in Africa.

Professor Tope Omoniyi is a published poet. He also a leading sociolinguist and author and editor of many books and articles. For more information on both sides of Tope's work, visit his home page: www.roehampton.ac.uk/staff/Tope-Omoniyi

Professor Julie Sanders (University of Nottingham, UK)

“Shakespeare Beyond English?: Adaptation, Case Study, and Creativity in World Cinema”

This talk will take stock of the role of Shakespearean adaptation in so-called World Cinema contexts, considering the role of the global and the local in economic, cultural, and linguistic terms in the forms of creativity that are both enabled and produced in this process. Recent developments in the growing field of adaptation studies have sought to account for the possibilities and impacts of the new digital creative economies and to move away from the case study approach as the only or dominant mode of approaching the relationship between literature, language and film. But when we seek to account for the culturally specific in reworkings of canonical texts by Shakespeare, Dickens and others, it will be argued, the case study remains a potent and valid means of interrogation. The examples presented here, then, which will include film adaptations of *Othello* from Mexico, Malaysia and India, are deployed to revivify the role of case study approaches but also to examine the journey away from 'Shakespearean' language effected not only by the generic shift into the cinematic medium but by the cultural, geographic and often linguistic shifts simultaneously undertaken and performed by these projects. Building on important recent work in performance studies on Shakespeare in translation produced in response to the Globe to Globe project in London during the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, which commissioned new versions of the plays from theatre companies from around the world, in their own language and idiom, this paper seeks to ask what the relationship is to Shakespeare when the journey from the source is of necessity so complex and extensive. What are the 'traces' of Shakespearean language that remain and how are the politics of the trace to be understood?

Professor Julie Sanders is Professor of English Literature and Drama at the University of Nottingham, UK and currently Vice Provost (Teaching and Learning) at the University of Nottingham, Ningbo China. She is author of *Adaptation and Appropriation* (Routledge, 2005) and of several books on Shakespearean adaptation as well as being on the editorial board of key journals in the field. Working with Susan Bennett, she recently contributed to projects on Shakespeare and the Cultural Olympiad for Cambridge University Press and *Contemporary Theatre Review*.

Professor Hein Willemse (University of Pretoria, South Africa)

“Where is home?’ The alienation and integration of Afrikaans literature and the African continent”

As a point of departure this paper considers the position of Afrikaans literature within South African and more broadly African literature. Historically, Afrikaans literature has developed within a relatively closed literary system, monolingual in terms of language, ethnic in cultural focus and nationalist in character. Although much of its roots were indigenous its nationalist proponents sought to find close connections with Anglo-American and European literatures with limited South African or African networks. The paper will argue for greater linkages between these literary systems and propose ways of integration.

Professor Heinrich Stephen Samuel Willemse is a South African academic, literary critic, activist and author. He currently serves as Professor in the Department of Afrikaans at the University of Pretoria,

South Africa, and as editor-in-chief of the African literary journal *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* (Journal for Literature). He has published widely in academic journals and South African national newspapers. He is a regular contributor to LitNet, an Afrikaans literary e-zine, and he has also authored and edited several works of literature: as editor, *Die Trojaanse perd* (Taurus, 1986), *Swart Afrikaanse skrywers* (University of the Western Cape Press, 1986), *iQabane Labantu* (Taurus, 1989, co-editor), *Die reis na Paternoster* (University of the Western Cape Press, 1997, co-editor), *Die stukke wat ons sny* (Kwela, 1999), *More than brothers: Peter Clarke and James Matthews at 70* (Kwela, 2000); and as author, *Angsland* (1966, Blac Publishers, 1966, volume of poetry) and *Aan die ander kant* (Protea Boekhuis, 2007, on black Afrikaans authors in the Afrikaans literature).

*Please note that, unfortunately, **Professor Zhang Longxi** (City University, Hong Kong) has been obliged to cancel his participation.*