**Going Local: African Texts and Cultures**

**A Postgraduate-led Conference and Workshop at the University of Birmingham, Monday 27th May 2013**

Theorisations of transnationalism, diaspora, the translocal and globalisation have all broken new ground in studies of African literature and other texts in recent years. But in our excitement to make African texts speak to the world, do we risk ignoring texts which speak to or about the local?

Some of the questions this conference and workshop seeks to address include:

* How do we read texts whose aesthetics, politics or forms can’t necessarily be understood by a global audience?
* Does the notion of the local (and, implicitly, the foreign or the global) have any relevance in the way we read African texts, or is it a tired dichotomy?
* How can texts from different locales speak to each other? How do African texts conceive of the idea of ‘localness’?
* Can we talk about the ‘local’ without it becoming a slippery synonym for ‘authentic’ or ‘exotic’?

This postgraduate conference invites papers from postgraduates and early career scholars interested in any aspect of ‘the local’ in African texts, with ‘texts’ having as broad a meaning as possible, to include:

* Literature
* Historical texts, travel writing and other ‘non-fictional’ texts
* Personal papers and diaries
* Art
* Music
* Film
* Material, media and popular cultures.

We are particularly keen to encourage conversations between scholars working in different African languages (including English, French, Portuguese and Arabic).

Papers which discuss texts from any part of the African continent and its diaspora are welcomed. We would also like to offer shorter slots for papers using innovative presentation formats such as visual art, film or interactive forms; please indicate in your email if you would be interested in such a slot.

The conference will take the format of panels of 20 minute papers, and a participatory workshop focusing on methodological and theoretical issues, led by postgraduate students and senior academics.

This is the second conference in a series of conferences in 2012-13 organised by the Department of African Studies & Anthropology at the University of Birmingham, the first being Sites of Memory, in February 2013. Presenters of outstanding papers from both conferences will be invited to a writing and peer review workshop at the University of Birmingham at a later date.

To submit a paper, please email an abstract (or a statement of how you wish to present your paper, if not in traditional format) of no more than 250 words, and a short biography, to Rebecca Jones [rkj982@bham.ac.uk](mailto:rkj982@bham.ac.uk) and Tom Penfold [twp005@bham.ac.uk](mailto:twp005@bham.ac.uk), by Monday 15th April 2013. For more information, please visit goinglocalconference.wordpress.com.