

DAWORD

The Vienna African Writers (VAW)

Quarterly Newsletter



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University of Vienna
Department of African Studies
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Vienna African Writers (VAW) Club Monthly Meeting

16 June 2016



This last meeting before the summer semester break was attended by 15 participants and chaired by Tomi Adeaga. It took place at the African Studies Institute of the University of Vienna. As is now our usual practice, the meeting was kicked off with introductions by all participants after which the forum was opened for discussions. We welcomed our graphic designer, Yayra Sumah back into our midst. Eunice Wangui Stuhlhofer gave us snippets from her upcoming novel. Eric Mwathi made a new call for his Anthology of Poems. We intended to have a poetry slam competition but the third participant was unable to attend the meeting.

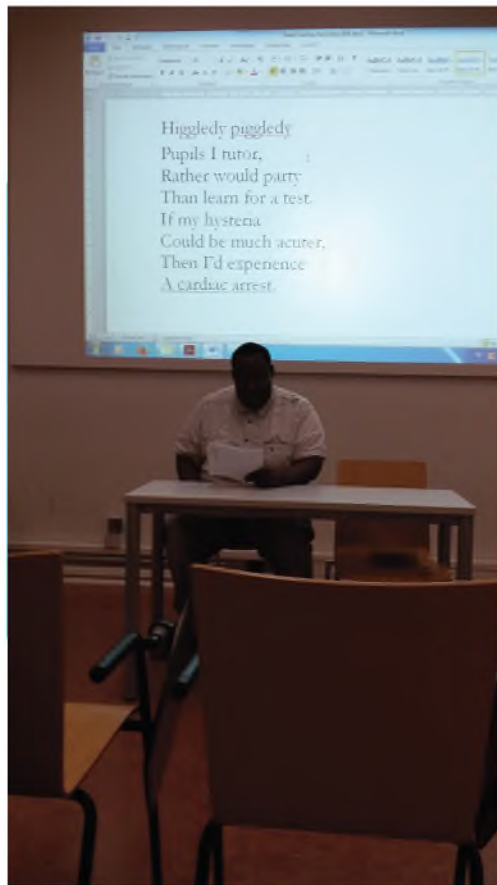




So, the other two participants, Eric Mwathi and Solomon Ogbodo read their poems and there was a lively discussion based on the poems. Mary Bodomo suggested that we should think of having taking up some of the poems and critiquing them. This will enable the poets to see them from a different perspective. We all agreed upon this and hope to work on it as from the winter semester. The next meeting will take place on October 20, 2016.

20 October 2016

It was a rich and fruitful meeting because we welcomed new members into our midst and several decisions were taken. Eric Mwathi presented a new project that he is working on. Victor Okundaye read from the autobiography, *The Strides of a Giant – Mission of the Sword Bearer 2016* that he wrote on his father. Afterwards, Mary Bodomo showed us video clips of literary events that she attended in Ghana during the summer. She also made suggestions as to how we can incorporate some of the ideas into our VAW events. Afterwards, a lively discussion took place.



The meeting that was attended by 10 participants was chaired by Tomi Adeaga



Higgledy piggledy
Pupils I tutor, I
Rather would party
Than learn for a test.
If my hysteria
Could be much acuter,
Then I'd experience
A cardiac arrest.

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17 November 2016

It was a rich and fruitful meeting because we welcomed new members into our midst and several decisions were taken. Tomi Adeaga did a presentation on the “Some old, Something New, Something Borrowed” and “What has love got to do with it?” symposia on Africa in translation that she had taken part in during the Africa Festival conferences at the Royal British Library, London, England. She showed clips from the Valentine Day Loves Stories that was also part of the later event and also suggested ways as to how to work with African languages in literature in VAW. All the VAW members made contributions to the discussion. It was agreed upon for us to organize an annual workshop in summer in which all the suggestions we made both during the October and November events will be incorporated. Rita Ogunfojuri suggested that we send out a short questionnaire to our membership to assess how far we have come. Eric Mwathi read three of his poem and he was asked to do a short presentation on rhymes during the next VAW event. Solomon Ogbodo also presented two of his poems. Afterwards, as always a lively discussion took place.

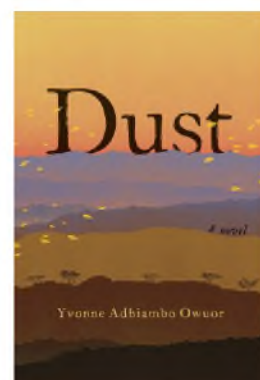
Nairobi, 2007. Odidi Oganda, ein junger Bauingenieur, wird bei einem versuchten Raub in einer von der Polizei gestellten Falle erschossen. Seine Schwester, Arabel Ajany, kehrt aus Brasilien zurück, um mit ihrem Vater seinen Leichnam auf das Familienanwesen im Norden Kenias zu bringen. Der Name des Anwesens ist „Wuoth Ogik“, übersetzt „der Ort, an dem die Reise endet“. Von dort aus machen sich Ajany und Isaiah, ein junger Engländer, der aus der Wüste auftaucht, von unterschiedlichen Enden her auf die Suche nach einer Geschichte, die die Rätsel, das Schweigen und den Schmerz der Gegenwart erklären soll.

Als „Autopsie“ bezeichnete Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, faszinierende Autorin aus Kenia, ihr Schreiben auf einem in Südafrika gehaltenen Vortrag: eine Arbeit an Leichen. Die sprichwörtliche Leiche im Keller – im Roman ist es eine Leiche in einer Höhle, auf die das Geschwisterpaar Ajany und Odidi als Kinder stießen. Ajany und Isaiahs Suche folgt einer Spur unaufgearbeiteter Verbrechen von der Kolonialzeit bis in die Gegenwart. Individuelle Schicksale – ein Viehdieb und Waffenhändler, früher Mitglied der kenianischen Armee, ein Polizist und ehemaliger Folterer des Regimes, ein heilender Händler, eine rauhe, unerschrockene Nomadin – mosaikartig zusammengefügt ergeben sie ein Porträt der bewegten Geschichte Kenias.

Owuors erster Roman, perfekt komponiert, mixt Elemente aus verschiedenen Genres – Krimi, Melodram, Comic, Politdrama, Familienepos, Film. Ein Roman großer Bilder und Charaktere, wie für die Leinwand geschrieben, der die Handschrift einer Cineastin und Drehbuchautorin erkennen lässt. Momente poetischer Eindringlichkeit, Owuor malt, modelliert mit Worten, wie ihre Protagonistin mit Modelliermasse, Farbe und Papier Bilder und Skulpturen formt. Opernhafte ist der Ausdruck von Emotionen, es wird exzessiv gelitten, in die Knie gegangen, aufgestöhnt und gekeucht. Exzessiv ist aber auch die Freude an Sprache, die wunderbare Sätze und Bilder hervorbringt, Kunstwerke für sich, die wieder und wieder gelesen, genossen werden wollen.

Rezension von
Martina Kopf

Der Ort, an dem die Reise endet. Roman. Aus dem Engl. von Simone Jakob. Dumont, 2016.



A song for Kenya

Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor (2014) Dust

Nairobi, 2007. Odidi Oganda, a young construction engineer, is shot at a police trap during an attempted robbery. His sister, Arabel Ajany, returns from Brazil to bring his body to the family estate in the north of Kenya with their father. The name of the estate, “Wuoth Ogik” translates to “the place where the journey ends.” From there, Ajany and Isaiah, a young Englishman appearing out of the desert, start their search for a story which should explain the puzzles, the silence and the pain of the present from different angles.

Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, a fascinating author from Kenya, labeled her writing “autopsy” at a talk in South Africa: Working with corpses. The proverbial “skeleton in the closet” is a corpse in a cave in the novel, found by the siblings Ajany and Odidi when they were children. Ajany’s and Isaiah’s search follows a track of unprocessed crimes from colonial times all the way to present day. Individual fates – a rustler and an arms dealer, former member of the Kenyan army, a policeman and former torturer from the regime, a healer merchant, a rough and undaunted female nomad – are jointed in a mosaic-like way to result in a portray of Kenya’s complex past.

Owuor’s first novel, perfectly composed, mixes elements from various genres – thriller, melodrama, comic, political drama, family epic and film. It is a novel of great images and characters, as if written for a screen, showing the handwriting of a cineaste and screenwriter. In moments of poetic intensity, Owuor paints and shapes with words, as her protagonist forms sculptures with modelling material, paint and paper. The expression of emotions is operatic, there is excessive suffering, going down on one’s knees, loud groaning and panting. Also excessive is the love for language that brings wonderful sentences and images. They create works of art on their own which can be re-read again and again.

Review by Martina Kopf,
translated by Caroline Pajancic

Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor: Dust.
Novel. Granta 2014



Ogbodo Solomon: *Learning like a Child*

I have moved back
Leaving behind all the fame
not because am anyway in lack
but simply to find a new flame.

Things I have always said and done
I must admit has lost its fun
I must relearn how to say
simplest of things like a child astray.

For every single word, the teacher speaks in tongues
tongues of strange words stretching our lungs
tongues I must now learn to speak
and teach my unborn with a freak.

Someday I stalk and talk
at other times we only manage a squawk
it worries me most often
that the homework's are never soften.

Now I learn and learned
and think and think
of all unspoken thoughts my mind yearned
to put in words without rethink.

And constantly like a child
must I this lingua beguiled
and talk and talk
until my mind and lip calk.

Eric Mwathi:
Still Not Liking Christmas Day

I'm still not liking Christmas day,
That's filled with boredom and dismay,
The shops and libraries still close
Their heavy doors lest someone goes,
To try and have a lovely time,
When winter lies within her prime,
Borrow a book or have a meal,
On Christmas. Tell me what's the deal,
Insisting all spend time in gloom,
Sing carols in their living room,
With all, but those whom they can stand.
Cancel next Christmas, I demand!
Next year no one shall close the stores,
Spending their holidays in doors.
Instead we all must have a ball,
Not hang them up before their fall.

How To Submit Your Work!

Daworo Guidelines

Daworo is a quarterly newsletter distributed in print at the Grand Poetry Slam event organized by the Vienna African Writers Club.

Deadlines: We take submissions up to 10 days after each literary event. Please take note of our event schedules by liking our Facebook page or by signing up to the mailing list.

Submissions: Submissions should be emailed to:

Hasiyatu Abubakari
hasiyatu.abubakari@univie.ac.at
University of Vienna Department of African Studies

Format: Please label your email in the subject line as “Daworo Submission” with your name and type of item.

[e.g. Daworo Submission – Item Type – First Name, Last Name]

Physical Submission: If you attend an event and have an announcement, it will be noted down along with your contact information. If you submit a hard copy of your writing, you will also need to submit an electronic copy before the deadline.

Number of Submissions: You may submit as many items as you wish.

Types of Work Accepted: Poetry, Prose, VAW-member announcements, event announcements, literary contributions (e.g. book reviews, book launches and book readings), and photographs of our events.

Types of Work Not Accepted: Commercial Advertisement, announcements unrelated to African literary arts, organizational announcements not in partnership with VAW.

Content Standards: All submissions must be your original work and should relate to African literary arts. African writing is conceptualized as any form of writing that addresses and expresses African themes and conditions in African languages or in any other languages. Work by Africans and non-Africans alike are welcome. We also appreciate photographs in HD.

Editing: Edits made by Daworo will be published only with the author’s permission.

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<http://vaw.univie.ac.at/>

Mailing List: For event reminders and calls for submissions, please sign up to our mailing list by contacting: Ms. Caroline Pajancic
caroline.pajancic@univie.ac.at
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Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Vienna-African-Writers-Club-The-VAW-Club/804750209580687>

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