

Editorial

Repositioning CODESRIA – Contributing to Africa's Future

Members of CODESRIA and the African social science community will assemble in Dakar, Senegal, 8-12 June 2015 for the 14th General Assembly of the Council; an event which is usually the largest assembly of African scholars in the social sciences and humanities on the continent. This year, about 400 participants from across Africa and beyond will be at the General Assembly to share ideas and collectively reflect on issues vital for the development of the continent.

The theme of the General Assembly, 'Creating African futures in an era of global transformations', underlines the increasing focus of the CODESRIA on the future as a project to be actively constructed. This commitment is partly reflected in the broad objective of seeking to contribute to the various efforts that seek to mold a better future for the African continent. The African Union Agenda 2063 is a leading project in this important endeavour, and one that CODESRIA seeks to contribute to.

The Council realizes that, as an organization dedicated to basic research, the fundamental contribution it can bring to this exercise of creating our future is to continue to produce cutting edge knowledge on Africa in the world. The range of themes covered in the twelve peer reviewed journals that the Council publishes or supports, and the books published over the years show that CODESRIA has been doing just that. This, however, is no reason for CODESRIA to rest on its laurels.

After over 40 years of existence, the Council's determination to continue approaching the future from a position of strength as the leading producer of social scientific knowledge in Africa is again manifesting itself in an ongoing review of its governance, intellectual agenda, and management processes. The reports of these reviews will be discussed at the GA and should help CODESRIA reposition itself for greater relevance as the leading pan-African research organization on the continent.

Beyond the discussion of the internal review committee reports, the business sessions of the GA, which will be held on 8 and 12 June 2015, will also involved the consideration of suggestions for charter amendments and the election of a new Executive Committee and President.

The academic conference of the Assembly will last for three days and will witness four keynote addresses, seven plenary roundtable discussions and around 26 parallel panel sessions. The variety of themes that will be addressed during the

conference are all deliberate in their focus and projection towards an Africa of the future.

The diverse and cosmopolitan form that CODESRIA's General Assemblies always take is a testament to the Council's belief and commitment to an Africa in which national, linguistic, gender and geographical boundaries are of little consequence in interpersonal and intercommunal relations. It is a commitment to the old Pan-African dream of an Africa that is united in its diversity and that can interact with the rest of the world from a position of equality.

Unfortunately, the recent xenophobic outbreaks in South Africa demonstrate the fact that the ideal of diversity and cosmopolitanism are not always sacrosanct in many minds and communities on the continent. While South Africa has, rightly received much bad press on account of the attacks, incidences of xenophobia and xenophobic attacks are becoming all too common on the continent. In the worst cases they have led to open violence that has taken countries like Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire and the Central African Republic to the brink. But much less visible outbreaks in the Forest Region of Guinea, for example, often leave scores dead and go largely unreported.

Among the pieces in this volume are short but thought-provoking reflections by two prominent African scholars – Francis Nyamnjoh, and Achille Mbembe – on the South African xenophobic incidents.

The work of the late Professor Ali A. Mazrui was defined by the message of openness and the critical engagement of the intricacies of the richly variegated, complex and hybridized identities in Africa. While we could describe him as a Kenyan, it is more proper to describe him simply as a ground-breaking African intellectual who led the way in the challenging but important task of re-imagining the African past and fashioning an African future after decades of colonial intellectual and physical violence. The bulletin contains a tribute to him.

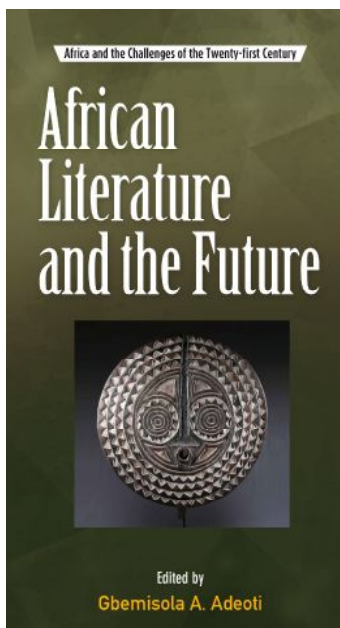
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African Literature and the Future

Edited by Gbemisola Adeoti

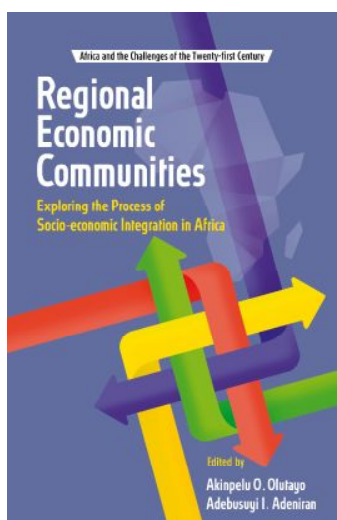


Many African countries got independence from their colonisers over five decades ago, but the people and the continent remain largely, mere spectators in the arena of their own dance. The post-independence states are supposed to be sovereign, but the levers of economic and political powers still reside in the donor states. Not in many fora is the complex reality that defines Africa more trenchantly articulated than in imaginative literature produced about and on the continent. This is the crux of the essays collected in *African Literature and the Future*. The book reflects on Africa's past and present, addressing anxieties about the future through the epistemological lens of literature. The contributors peep ahead from a backward glance. They dissect the trend and tenor of politics and their impact on the socio-cultural and economic development of the continent as portrayed in imaginative writings over the years.

One salient feature of African literature is the close affinity between art and politics in its polemics. This is well established in all the six essays in the book as the authors stress the interconnections between literature and society in their textual analyses. On the whole, there is an overwhelming feeling of angst and pessimism, but the authors perceive a flicker of hope in spite of daunting odds, under different conditions. Thus, they depict the plausible fate of Africa in the Twenty-first century, as informed by its ancient and recent past, gleaned from primary texts.

Regional Economic Communities

Edited by Akinpelu O. Olutayo & Adebunsi I. Adeniran



This book examines how the existence of overlapping regional institutions has presented a daunting challenge to the workings of various Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on the African continent. Majority of the African countries are members of overlapping and, sometimes, contradictory RECs. For instance, in East Africa, while Kenya and Uganda are both members of EAC and COMESA, Tanzania, which is also a member of the EAC, left COMESA in 2001 to join SADC. In West Africa, while all former French colonies belong to ECOWAS, they simultaneously keep membership of UEMOA, an organization which is not recognized by the African Union (AU). Such multiple and confusing memberships create unnecessary duplication and dims the light on what ought to be priority. Various chapters in this book have therefore sought to identify and proffer solutions to related challenges confronting the workings of the RECs in different sub-regions of the African continent. The discourses range from security to the stock exchange, identity integration, development framework, labour movement and cross-border relations. The pattern

adopted in the book involves devolution of related discussions from the general to the specific; that is, from the continental level to sub-regional case studies.