

into the archive:

J.M. COETZEE

and his precursors

*UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS,
UNITED KINGDOM, 28TH JUNE 2011*

SECOND CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

We are happy to invite expressions of interest from the academic community at large to participate in a one-day conference to interrogate anew the dynamics of literary precursorship in the works of J. M. Coetzee.

Context: Our subtitle, “Coetzee and His Precursors”, itself upholds a principle of textual reconsideration, alluding to one of Coetzee’s most prominent creative influences, Franz Kafka. In his essay ‘Kafka and His Precursors’, Borges writes:

In critical vocabulary, the word *precursor* is indispensable, but one should attempt to purify it of all connotation of polemic or rivalry. The fact is that each writer *creates* his precursors. His labour modifies our conception of the past, as it has to modify the future.

The relevance of this to Coetzee’s fiction is profound: because of and through his writing, Coetzee’s sources have come to receive both renewed attention and significant reconsideration. The aim of the symposium is thus to consider the impact Coetzee’s creative reworking of other writers has on our readings of them.

Structure of the sessions: Outstanding scholars and translators of Coetzee’s work have been asked to speak, in ‘countervoice’ with the delegates, about their views on the conference theme and the interesting implications it presents. After a 5-10 minute presentation, abstracts of which will be distributed among the delegates prior to the conference, delegates will be expected to respond to the speakers’ points, drawing on their own work and range of creative and critical sources.

The call: Moving away from the traditional speaker-centred papers approach, we envisage a polyphonic delegate-driven engagement with the specific ideas generated by speaker and peers. To this end, we are asking prospective delegates to **prepare a 250-300 word biography that includes mapping out your interests in Coetzee and his precursors**. Postgraduate students and early career scholars are particularly encouraged to apply. Note that delegates will *not* be required to submit paper abstracts or deliver papers.

Plenary:

Prof. Carrol Clarkson (University of Cape Town, ZA)

Speakers:

Prof. Derek Attridge (University of York, GB)
Dr Lucy Graham (Stellenbosch University, ZA)
Dr Patrick Hayes (St John’s College Oxford, GB)
Dr Andrew van der Vlies (Queen Mary, University of London, GB)
Dr Samuel Durrant (University of Leeds, GB)
Prof. Chull Wang (Chonbuk National University, KR)
Mr Peter Bergsma (Vertalershuis | Translators’ House, NL)

Information: Biographies should be sent to the conference email address: coetzeeandhisprecursors@gmail.com by no later than the **13th May (note the extended deadline)**. Successful applicants will be notified within a fortnight. Further questions are welcomed at this address as well. More information is regularly communicated at coetzeeandhisprecursors.wordpress.com.