Tuesday 21 May 2013
4.00 pm - 5.30 pm

Postcolonialism and the Diasporic Imaginary
Professor Ato Quayson, Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies, University of Toronto

Theatrette, Sir Roland Wilson Building, Bld #120, McCoy Circuit, Canberra

While the two fields of Postcolonial and Diaspora Studies overlap in interests and even methods, it is very rare that they are actually brought into serious conversation. I shall demonstrate, first, that this impasse is due to the fact that while Postcolonial Studies is dominated by the epochal relation of the nation-state (its colonial formation, its post-colonial anxieties, and the manner of its uneven insertion into transnational and global realities), Diaspora Studies has been concerned primarily with the experience of spatial discontinuities in various guises (multiple and simultaneous identification with the homeland and host nation, the unheimlich of home, post-memories of exile, etc.) I shall then proceed to illustrate the differences between the two field with reference to methodological nationalism and the diasporic imaginary, elaborating its three essential components of place, nostalgia, and geneological accounting.

Ato Quayson is Professor of English and Director of the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies at the University of Toronto, where he has been since August 2005. He did his BA at the University of Ghana and took his PhD from Cambridge University in 1995. He then went on to the University of Oxford as a Research Fellow, returning to Cambridge in Sept 1995 to become a Fellow at Pembroke College and a member of the Faculty of English where he eventually became a Reader in Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies at the University of Cambridge.

Professor Quayson has published widely on African literature, postcolonial studies and in literary theory. His publications include:

General Editor, Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry

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Convenors: Alastair MacLachlan & Ken Taylor
All welcome
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