

CALL FOR PAPERS

Invitation to submit paper proposals to a collection of essays on the works of Damon Galgut

In her 2001 essay “The Dwelling Place of Words” Nadine Gordimer argued that colonialism and apartheid are part of the collective consciousness in African writers, irrespective of their race and social background. Gordimer and her late works are a convincing testimony to this truth, and the same can be said of her compatriot Damon Galgut, who, since his literary debut forty years ago, has explored the legacy of apartheid while remaining alert to the challenges faced by contemporary South Africans. As a writer whose works map the continuities and disruptions between his country’s past and present, Galgut has made it clear that his role as a writer is to draw inspiration from earlier authors while searching for new ways of literary expression: in a 2010 interview for *The Paris Review* he spoke about his need – shared by other South African writers, as he believes – to “break free from the past” by departing from what has become derivative and uninspiring. In Galgut’s view, rejecting repetitions and clichés in literary narratives is a gesture of reaching out into the future: “In this sense, imaginative freedom is a way of finding the future, though it isn't so easy to do.”¹ The fact that Galgut’s impulse towards artistic innovation has political resonances is reflected in all his works, including his 2021 novel *The Promise*, in which he sought to overcome some of the confines of third-person narration by using narrative modes originating from theatrical and cinematic conventions. Drawing inspiration from his career in the theatre and his experience as a screenwriter, Galgut is also outspoken about the impact of other authors on his works, both South African, including Nadine Gordimer, J.M. Coetzee, Dan Jacobson, Zakes Mda, Zoë Wicomb, and international, like Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, Samuel Beckett, Raymond Carver, Cormac McCarthy, Patrick White, Albert Camus, W.G. Sebald, and others.

While the critical interest in Galgut has been growing steadily over the past ten years, so far no study has been published that is devoted entirely to his works. Recognising this critical lacuna, the editors of this volume invite scholars to contribute to a book that would reflect the richness and diversity of Galgut’s literary inspirations, and capture the political and artistic dimension of his drive towards artistic innovation. This invitation is extended not only to scholars specializing in South African and postcolonial studies, but also to researchers

¹ Interview with Damon Galgut, by Anderson Tepper, *The Paris Review*, 11 October 2010, <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2010/10/11/damon-galgut-2/>.

interested in reading Galgut's works from other critical perspectives, including, but not limited to, gender, queer, ecocriticism and travel studies. The authors are invited to submit 300 word proposals and short biographical notes (of up to 150 words) to dgalgut.monograph2022@gmail.com.

Proposals may address the following themes:

- Colonial inheritance
- Racial tensions in Galgut's novels and plays
- Travel; travelling bodies; thresholds and borders
- Queer bodies/spaces/places
- Inter- and metatextuality
- Galgut's novels as examples of post-liberal fiction
- Ecocritical approaches to Galgut's fiction
- The trope of locality in Galgut's works
- Galgut as a chronicler of "the past that has only just happened"
- Galgut's use of language

The deadline for abstract submissions is **May 1st, 2022**; all authors will be contacted individually within the following 3 weeks; full-length papers will be required by January 2023 (more details will follow in due course). We expect a late 2023/early 2024 publication in one of the top-tier academic publishers.

With kind regards,

Zbigniew Białas, Julia Szoltysek, Marek Pawlicki (University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland)