



16 February 2011

PRESS RELEASE

For the kind attention of the
ARTS/CULTURE EDITOR
or equivalent, please

For immediate release:

ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS

SOL PLAATJE PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION AND THOMAS PRINGLE AWARD FOR A LITERARY ARTICLE

The English Academy of Southern Africa is pleased to announce the winners of the above listed awards.

SOL PLAATJE PRIZE

The Sol Plaatje Prize is awarded for excellence in translation of a literary text of at least 1 000 words in one of the other official South African languages into English. The purpose of the prize is to encourage effective mutual understanding in our multilingual country.

The 2009 Sol Plaatje Prize for Translation is awarded to **Professor Jeff Opland**. The award is made to Professor Opland, generally, for the extremely impressive body of work which he has produced over the course of his distinguished career, but more specifically for three books of outstanding quality which he has published in the last few years. These books are *The Nation's Bounty: The Xhosa Poetry of Nontsizi Mgqwetho* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2007), *Issac Williams Wauchope: Selected Writings 1874-1916* (Cape Town: van Riebeeck Society, 2008), and S.E.K. Mqhayi's *Abantu Besizwe: Historical and Biographical Writings, 1902-1944* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2009).

The adjudicators of the award noted that 'these books are not only superb translations in their own right; they are also works of very significant literary, historical and cultural scholarship, in which the isiXhosa writings of important but neglected authors are recovered, collected and rendered into English for the first time'.

Jeff Opland was born and brought up in Cape Town, and studied at the University of Cape Town, where he earned a BA in English Language and a BSc in Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics, an MA, and a PhD for a comparison of the Anglo-Saxon and isiXhosa traditions of oral poetry. While holding appointments at UCT, the University of Durban-

Westville and Rhodes University, he undertook fieldwork in the Eastern Cape, amassing a considerable collection of recorded isiXhosa poetry and of Xhosa literature in print. In the course of his career, he has taught at the University of Toronto, Yale University, Vassar College, Charterhouse and the University of Leipzig, and now lives in the United Kingdom, where he holds the position of Visiting Professor of African Language Literatures at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. In 1972, he won the English Academy of Southern Africa's Thomas Pringle Award for a literary article. He has published anthologies of South African and isiXhosa poetry, and studies of Anglo-Saxon and isiXhosa literature. He has recently devoted himself to editing and translating the work of major authors who contributed to the early development of isiXhosa literature.

Judges: Professor Andrew Foley (Convener, Wits), Professor Elsie Cloete (Wits) and Professor Nhlanhla Maake (UL)

THOMAS PRINGLE AWARD (Literary Article)

The Thomas Pringle Awards are intended as encouragement for persons who have demonstrated extraordinary insights in their writing.

The 2010 Thomas Pringle Award for a Literary Article in a South African academic journal goes to **Professor Leon de Kock** for his article in the *Journal of Literary Studies*, 25(3) 2009, entitled "Cracking the Code: Translation as Transgression in *Triomf*". Using a range of criteria, the panel felt this complex piece on a difficult topic was a clear winner. It noted that in this article, Professor De Kock 'provides a lucid analysis of the problems which many translators of mixed registers in South Africa and other post-colonial contexts confront, and from which they may draw inspiration'.

Leon de Kock is a poet, translator and critic. His books include the poetry volumes *Bloodsong* (1997), *gone to the edges* (2006) and *Bodyhood* (2010). Poems from *Bloodsong* won the 1995 Thomas Pringle award for poetry. He has published a monograph, *Civilising Barbarians* (1996), several edited collections of writing, including *Verborge Skatte: Herman Charles Bosman in/oor Afrikaans* (2001) and several other books, including a prize-winning translation of Marlene van Niekerk's novel, *Triomf* (1999). His other works of translation include Etienne van Heerden's *In Stede van die Liefde* (forthcoming at Penguin as *In Love's Place*) and a cycle of poems by Cas Vos, *Intimately Absent* (2010). A second collection of translated poems by Vos, *Before it Darkens/Duskant die Donker*, has just appeared. Until recently, he was Head of the School of Literature and Language Studies at Wits University. Currently he is professor of English and incoming head of department at the University of Stellenbosch.

Judges: Dr Roger Field (Convener, UWC), Dr Peter Anderson (UCT), Dr Lucy Graham (SU) and Dr Peter Merrington (UWC affiliate)

Each award is a cash prize and an illuminated certificate. The Sol Plaatje Prize carries a cash value of R7 000 and the Thomas Pringle Award R2 000. The dates of the award ceremonies will be announced at a later stage.

For more information on English Academy awards, please contact Naomi Nkealah on 011 717 9339 or at englishacademy@societies.wits.ac.za. You can also visit the English Academy Web site www.englishacademy.co.za.

ABOUT THE ENGLISH ACADEMY

The English Academy is a non-profit organisation with over three hundred members from within and outside South Africa. It is concerned with all forms and functions of English. It interests itself in English in education, promotes research and debate, organizes lectures, makes representations about language matters, rewards excellence and fosters the creative, critical and scholarly talents of users (and would-be users) of English in Southern Africa.

Sponsors: The National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund, the Joe Garmeson Estate, the Gwen Knowles-Williams Fund, the Laurence Green Estate, the Norah Taylor Estate, the Donaldson Trust and the Percy Baneshik Trust.

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021 267 NPO