

SEMINAR INVITATION

*The Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study (JIAS)
cordially invites you to a seminar*

Bloke Modisane's Century of Diasporic Connections and Transnational Discourse

Bloke Modisane, a South African writer, actor, dramatist, broadcaster and journalist, would have turned 100 in August 2023. This paper looks at his intellectual legacy and the vital transnational connections he established across the world. It pays particular attention to the transatlantic friendship he struck with the legendary African American writer and activist, Langston Hughes of the Harlem Renaissance fame. It was through his friendship with Modisane that Hughes' home at number 20 East, 127th Street, Harlem in New York, became a point of convergence for South African exiles, thus connecting them with the rest of the Diaspora. Conversely, Hughes gained immense cultural and political insight out of his interactions with Modisane, receiving gifts in the form of Zulu cultural garments and even learning the language. By exchanging information about their own lives, they were sharing essential tenets of blackness. The interpolations that befell Modisane, including hunger and homelessness in London so bad he contemplated a return to apartheid South Africa where he was "at least alive", were all vital in Hughes' understanding and appreciation of Africa and its people.

SPEAKER ▪ **Dr Siphiso Mahala**

Dr Siphiso Mahala is a senior research fellow at the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study and senior lecturer in the Department of English at the University of Johannesburg. His research interests include Contemporary African Literature, Colonial and Post-Colonial Literature, Literary History, Short Story Writing as well as Creative Writing. He is a graduate of the University of Fort Hare, holds a Masters degree in African Literature from Wits University, and a PhD. in English Literature from the University of South Africa.

CHAIRPERSON ▪ **Dr Thapelo Mokoatsi** / **DISCUSSANT** ▪ **Dr Katharina Fink**

DATE ▪ **24 February 2023**

TIME ▪ **09:00 – 11:00 (SAST)**

RSVP on <https://forms.gle/HxCfPTAQHcFRZb2W8> to receive the Zoom details.

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