

Foreword

This second issue of the *African Yearbook of Rhetoric* deals with the question of the sense of justice in post-societies. What we mean by a post-society is what used to be called a soft concept, yet to moulded by arguments exchanged and debates engaged. As it happens, a team of scholars from Romania and South Africa have tried to unravel, from the perspective of their own post-societies, why it is that in popular perceptions, grandly described as “the public sphere”, justice has been not as well served as anticipated after the violent fall of Ceausescu’s communism and the concerted demise of apartheid. Public debates in Romania and South Africa are traversed by nostalgia of a better past. In terms of rhetoric, as Aristotle warns, it is an unbending evidence that political betterment may adopt unjust means toward a just end, and that just policies may result in tearing the social consensus without which democracy cannot endure. The public is caught in this aporia, unable to and untrained in separating arguments of justice from arguments of expediency, and from arguments of value. Public debate often gets caught in this tangle, and far too often politicians, far from helping the public to make sense of the tangle, abound in confusing issues of policies, values and the law, to serve their own narrow sense of immediate prudence.

This second issue of AYOR brings together distinguished writers, and one junior author, philosophers, political and social scientists, and of course rhetoricians, from polities that are labouring under a sense of injustice after the end of a greater, self-evident injustice. They write on Argentina, Poland, the ex-Yugoslavia, Romania and South Africa. They write on melancholy, reconciliation, frustration, hope and religion. They write also about theory and practice. They write on the risks of democracy bereft of an intelligence of the past and atoning without weighing arguments of the present.

The Editor.