



GOETHE MEDAL 2020 PRESS PACK

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Susanne Meierhenrich
Goethe Medal Press Officer, Goethe-Institut
Tel.: +49 171 742 1717
smeierhenrich@t-online.de

Viola Noll
Deputy Press Officer
Goethe-Institut Head Office
Tel.: +49 30 25906 471
noll@goethe.de

www.goethe.de
www.goethe.de/goethe-medaille

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GOETHE MEDAL: 2020 RECIPIENTS HONOURED

The celebration for the recipients of the 2020 Goethe Medal took place today, on Goethe's 271st birthday. The official honour of the Federal Republic of Germany was awarded to Bolivian artist and her country's first indigenous museum director Elvira Espejo Ayca, British writer and passionate pro-European Ian McEwan and South African writer, publisher and curator Zukiswa Wanner. Their outstanding cultural work and commitment to the struggle against political restrictions and the narrowing of perspectives in civil society was honoured in a digital ceremony organised by the Goethe-Institut in collaboration with the broadcaster Deutsch Welle. "Accepting contradiction - the fruits of contradiction", the theme of this year's awards, is bizarrely apposite against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic.

At a time when society seems to have come to a standstill, international cultural dialogue is more important than ever, said **Klaus-Dieter Lehmann**, President of the Goethe-Institut: "This year we are honouring three outstanding recipients from Africa, Latin America and Europe who are all a byword for the freedom of discourse. Their art, geography and personal experiences are as different as their insights and ability to break down prejudice and stereotypes are similar. They use open debate to counteract social divisions and defend cultures' multiplicity of voices against homogeneity and censorship. We are currently seeing far-reaching restrictions being imposed on the free exchange of ideas and information, and new mental walls being erected. Critical and imaginative cultural voices can free us from this, because they are not subject to any hierarchies or external constraints. Art must be free!" This year's recipients are examples of just such spirited, liberal, international exchange, as the ceremony so effectively demonstrated:

Elvira Espejo Ayca brings Bolivia's rich indigenous traditions and art into the present like no other, and thus makes herself accessible to a new generation of young Latin Americans and Europeans. Paying tribute, **Barbara Göbel** emphasised, "Elvira Espejo Ayca's artistic work combines multilingual poetry, music, the visual arts, weaving and performance. Her aim is to overcome historical barriers and segregations, emphasizing openness and imperfection. Just as the weavers of the Ayllu Qaqachaka do, she focuses not only on the meaning of objects and artefacts but also on their usefulness to the individuals interacting with them. She thus promotes a more extended concept of art, one which establishes more symmetrical connections between so-called traditional indigenous art and contemporary art." **Elvira Espejo Ayca** responded in her uniquely poetic manner: "I left the house in which I was born, I left the village that I knew, to see a world that I had never seen before. Thoughts come and go like clouds in the sky, I am anchored by the sensations of life. I listen to these sensations and am full of joy and happiness, because I am so grateful to the Goethe-Institut for this award, which is a mark of human esteem."

Ian McEwan is one of Europe's greatest writers. His literary work is imbued with the essence of contradiction and critical, profoundly psychological reflection on phenomena that impact the whole of society. He continues to raise his voice in opposition to Brexit. As **Franziska Augstein's** tribute

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underlined, “McEwan’s novels provide his readers with a glimpse of the abyss that is human thought and emotion. If they don’t have a happy ending, they are, philosophically speaking, tremendously funny. He once told a journalist: As a writer, you cannot avoid coming into contact with real life. In real life Ian McEwan is a committed European, with knobs on.” **Ian McEwan** replied: “I am delighted to have been awarded the Goethe Medal. As you know, our government has decided to take us out of the EU, and cultural ties are therefore all the more important. I will not stop travelling to Germany to meet my readers, and I will not stop being a European citizen. The Goethe Medal will make the ties that bind us even stronger. The other important point is that I have always had enormous admiration for Goethe himself. He was not only a remarkable poet and a wonderful novelist, he was also a man of insatiable curiosity. He is one of history’s greatest intellectuals. I am especially honoured to have received a medal that carries the name of Goethe, because it gives me a kind of connection with such a genius.”

Zukiswa Wanner is an advocate of women writers in Africa and her valuable cultural networking between Africa and Europe is turning her into a role model for an entire generation in her own country. Paying tribute, **Zoë Beck** said, “Zukiswa Wanner helps the stories of an entire continent to be heard. She carries them out into the world, across borders. She ensures that the literary canon of Western schools and universities is no longer predominantly white and male. And she strengthens our awareness that language is also a privilege. Over a thousand of the continent’s languages have too little literary significance. Stories cannot be heard if they are not translated, both from and into these languages.” **Zukiswa Wanner** responded, “In a world that sometimes chooses to ignore the labour of women in the arts, and the labour of black women in particular, I am immensely honoured to have received this recognition from the Goethe Medal committee. This award is not just for me, but for every one of us across the seven continents - those before me and those in my life who have built bridges for me to cross, and those to come. Your work. Your narrative. You matter. Enkosi, tatenda, asante, oshe, danke.”

The 2020 Goethe Medal ceremony was enhanced by special musical performances in the Neue Weimarhalle exhibition centre by students and teachers from the University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar. The performers, who came from Mozambique, Brazil, Australia and Bolivia, were led by Tiago de Oliveira Pinto and presented compositions they had chosen and created especially for the medal recipients.

The Goethe Medal 2020 ceremony is still available for viewing on the Goethe-Institut website at www.goethe.de/goethe-medaille and at [youtube/goetheinstitut](https://youtube.com/goetheinstitut). An English language stream is available at [youtube/DWBooks](https://youtube.com/DWBooks). The 3sat show Kulturzeit will introduce the recipients today at 7.20 pm (CET) and on its website at www.3sat.de/kulturzeit. The Deutsche Welle TV magazine show Kultur.21 is also introducing the recipients in a special programme on 29th August, and in its English, Spanish and Arabic editions.

The Goethe Medal 2020 press pack with further information on the recipients is available from: www.goethe.de/pressemappe

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Press photos of the 2020 recipients are available from: www.goethe.de/bilderservice

Information on the Goethe Medal and an overview of previous recipients is available from: www.goethe.de/goethe-medaille

The Goethe Medal Committee

Dr. Franziska Augstein (journalist, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*), Prof. Dr. Christina von Braun (Chair and committee spokesperson, Cultural Studies expert, Humboldt-Universität in Berlin), Dr. Meret Forster (Music Editor, BR-Klassik), Dr. Anselm Franke (Curator, Director of Fine Art and Film Department, Haus der Kulturen der Welt), Dr. Ina Hartwig (Head of the Frankfurt am Main Culture Department, literary critic), Prof. Dr. Ursula von Keitz (Professor of Film Research and Film Education, Filmuniversität Babelsberg Konrad Wolf), Ulrich Khuon (Artistic Director, Deutsches Theater), Eva Menasse (author), Moritz Müller-Wirth (journalist, *Die Zeit*), Elisabeth Ruge (author, publisher and literary agent); representing the German Foreign Office: Assistant State Secretary Dr. Andreas Görgen (Director of the Culture and Communications Department); representing the Goethe-Institut: Prof. Dr. h.c. Klaus-Dieter Lehmann (President), Johannes Ebert (Secretary General)



PRESS RELEASE JULY, 09, 2020: 2020 GOETHE MEDALS: DIGITAL AND TELEVISION CEREMONY PLANNED

The Goethe Medal, an official honour of the Federal Republic of Germany, is being awarded in 2020 to Bolivian multidisciplinary artist Elvira Espejo Ayca, British writer Ian McEwan and South African writer, publisher and curator Zukiswa Wanner. The Goethe-Institut is recognising their outstanding contribution to international cultural exchange. The recipients are outstanding examples of the power of critical, reflective art and the theme of the 2020 awards, “Accepting Contradiction – the fruits of contradiction.”

This year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the recipients are not able to travel to the official ceremony in Weimar, which traditionally takes place on 28th August, the birthday of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The Goethe-Institut is therefore working with Deutsche Welle to organise a digital ceremony for a global audience – with interviews, talks, appreciations, film portraits and music.

Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, President of the Goethe-Institut: “The coronavirus crisis is more than a virological phenomenon. The isolation, disinformation and contradiction it has led to is changing society. We intend to defy this situation and so we are not cancelling the Goethe Medal presentation ceremony. We are strengthening our connections with a cross-border digital cultural network and thus developing new alternatives and processes out of the contradictions we face. “

Deutsch Welle Director General Peter Limbourg: “The Goethe-Institut and DW have been promoting international cultural exchange for decades, and the Goethe Medal honours outstanding artists and visionaries in this area. It is an honour and a great joy for DW to be able to provide multimedia and multilingual coverage to ensure that these three impressive individuals are given the recognition they deserve, and to enable culture enthusiasts around the world to take part.”

The ceremony centres on three short films presenting Elvira Espejo Ayca, Ian McEwan and Zukiswa Wanner and their places of work in Bolivia, England and South Africa. A discussion between Klaus-Dieter Lehmann and the three recipients is also planned. Three renowned individuals will pay tribute to the recipients: Barbara Göbel, an ethnologist at the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin (Elvira Espejo Ayca), journalist and author Franziska Augstein (Ian McEwan) and writer Zoë Beck (Zukiswa Wanner). Students and teachers from the University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar, led by Tiago de Oliveira Pinto, will present musical compositions that they have chosen and created especially for the medal recipients.

The Goethe-Institut will stream the digital Goethe Medal ceremony on 28 August at 11 am CET on its website at www.goethe.de/goethe-medaille, Deutsche Welle will stream it on its channel [youtube/DWBooks](https://www.youtube.com/DWBooks) and will also introduce the recipients in its multilingual television programme.

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In addition, 3sat Kulturzeit will present the recipients on 28 August in its Kulturzeit programme, also available on its website at www.3sat.de/kulturzeit.

The press pack with information on recipients, presenters and the Goethe Medal is available at: www.goethe.de/pressemappe

Press photos of the recipients are available from: www.goethe.de/bilderservice

Information on the Goethe Medal and an overview of previous recipients can be found at: www.goethe.de/goethe-medaille



PRESS RELEASE APRIL 28, 2020: GOETHE MEDALS GO TO ELVIRA ESPEJO AYCA, IAN MCEWAN AND ZUKISWA WANNER

The 2020 Goethe Medals are being awarded to Bolivian multidisciplinary artist Elvira Espejo Ayca, British writer Ian McEwan and South African writer, publisher and curator Zukiswa Wanner. The Federal Republic of Germany's official honour is conferred by the Goethe-Institut every year on individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to international cultural exchange. The prize will be awarded by the President of the Goethe-Institute, Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, on 28 August, the birthday of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The theme of this year's awards is "Accepting Contradiction – the fruits of contradiction."

Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, President of the Goethe-Institut, emphasised: "The theme, "Accepting Contradiction – the fruits of contradiction" is a plea for engagement with ambivalence, even in difficult circumstances. It is precisely out of contradiction that productive vitality grows, vitality that promotes diversity and provokes reflection and new insights. Faced with the populist movements that are gaining in strength throughout the world, functioning democracy must assert critical discourse. The recipients of the 2020 Goethe Medal are outstanding examples of the power of critical, reflective art and open, international, cultural exchange that does not shun contradiction but rather recognises it as an opportunity."

Awards Rationale

Elvira Espejo Ayca, born in 1981 in Bolivia, is the Director of the National Museum of Ethnography and Folklore (MUSEF) in La Paz as well as being an artist - a poet, essayist, musician and weaver. The Goethe Medal Committee honours Elvira Espejo Ayca as a "true builder of bridges, whose work constitutes invaluable cultural mediation: between Latin America and Europe, between Bolivia and its colonial past, between countries' own indigenous traditions and other cultures, between artistic disciplines and generations. It is in her engagement with ambivalence that she develops her unique creative energy."

Ian McEwan, born in 1948 in England, is one of the most important and most internationally respected contemporary authors. "His literary work is imbued with the essence of contradiction and with critical, deeply psychological reflection on phenomena that affect society as a whole, such as climate change, artificial intelligence and morality in science. Despite the harsh attacks he is often subjected to in his own country, he campaigns against narrow-minded nationalism and is a passionate pro-European," says the jury. **Zukiswa Wanner**, born in 1976 in Zambia, is an author, journalist and publisher. "Her conception of herself as an African writer leads her to range far beyond national frontiers in her writing, whilst at the same time bringing the diversity of African culture into her artistic work. Her detailed knowledge of South African literature and her nuanced understanding of regional discourses and female identity in Africa mean her expertise is internationally sought after; she is also a role model for an entire generation of African writers," the jury says.

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About the 2020 recipients

Elvira Espejo Ayca, born in 1981 in the province of Avaroa in the department of Oruro in Bolivia, grew up in an indigenous village community. From an early age, she rebelled against the tradition and convention that excluded her from higher education and precluded her from obtaining a professional qualification. Her decision to pursue her education and career led her to break with her family and her village. In 2004 she studied art at the Academia de Bellas Artes Hernando Siles in La Paz. She has never forgotten her indigenous roots, and weaves them continually through her work and her projects. In 2005 she co-lectured on unwritten Andean languages for the *Duke en los Andes* programme, working with musician Álvaro Montenegro to record traditional songs and dialogues on indigenous and urban musical instruments. From 2010 to 2011 she was a contributor to the *Das Potosí Prinzip* exhibition at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt cultural centre in Berlin, which subsequently toured in Spain and Bolivia. She then joined the Board of Directors for the Institute of Aymaran Languages and Culture (ILCA) and became Director of the National Museum of Ethnography and Folklore (MUSEF) in La Paz, turning it into one of the most important cultural centres in Bolivia.

Ian McEwan, born in 1948 in Aldershot in England, was the son of a Scottish army major and grew up amongst other places in Singapore, Libya and Germany. He studied English Literature at the University of Sussex in Brighton and the University of East Anglia in Norwich. Today, Ian McEwan is a highly renowned contemporary author and has won numerous literary prizes, including the Man Booker Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. Twelve of his stories have been turned into films, including *Atonement* (2007), which was nominated for seven Oscars. Ian McEwan was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2000. In 2011 he was awarded the Jerusalem Prize for the Freedom of the Individual in Society. He has also been the recipient of prestigious awards in the German-speaking world, such as the Alfred Toepfer Foundation Shakespeare Prize for his life's work (1999) and the German Book Prize (2003). Over 20 of his works have been published in German by Diogenes Verlag.

Zukiswa Wanner was born in 1976 in Lusaka, Zambia and is a writer, journalist, publisher and curator. After attending school in Zimbabwe, she studied journalism at Hawaii Pacific University in Honolulu. Since 2006 she has been an author and a promoter of African literature. In addition to fiction for children and adults, she has published reportage, essays and travelogues, which have appeared in international newspapers and magazines (The Guardian, The Observer, Juice, Elle and many more). She co-authored the Nelson Mandela biography, *A Prisoner's Home* (Penguin, 2000). Together with the Goethe-Institut in Nairobi, Kenya, she developed the transnational series Artistic Encounters, which brings African writers into discussion with other artists. She is also curator of the Afro Young Adult project and has established short story writing workshops. The renowned Hay Festival selected Zukiswa Wanner as one of its preeminent African authors in 2014. In 2018 she founded her own publishing house, Paivapo, together with Nomavuso Vokwana. Since the coronavirus lockdown she has been curating the virtual literary festival AfrolitSansFrontières, organised by 16 writers from 10 African countries.



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LAUDATORY SPEECHES

BARBARA GÖBEL, LAUDATORY SPEECH FOR ELVIRA ESPEJO AYCA

Dear Zukiswa Wanner, dear Ian McEwan,
dear Elvira Espejo Ayca, querida Elvira,
dear Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, honorable jury,
ladies and gentlemen,

In her work and through her public commitment, Elvira Espejo Ayca addresses one of the central challenges of social life: living together in diverse and unequal societies. She shows us ways of dealing with knowledge asymmetries and introduces a perspective that allows us to grasp an increasingly interconnected, globalized world in a more decentralized and multipolar manner. Elvira grew up in an quechua and aymara speaking indigenous community in Bolivia, the ayllu Qaqachaka (Provincia Eduardo de Avaroa, Departamento de Oruro). She had to leave her rural place of origin, she had to break cultural norms, immerse herself in other cultural contexts, suffer unequal encounters, in order to be able to return to the ayllu and reconnect with her people there. As she pointed out in our conversations, you can simultaneously belong and not belong to a world. Therefore, living together also involves negotiating the tensions between intimacy and distance. But conviviality also encourages us, in particular in unequal encounters, to recognize our own incompleteness and keep us away from claiming completeness, privileging in this way conversation over conversion (as Francis B. Nyamnjoh 2017 puts it). Conviviality challenges us to be open-minded and open-ended in our articulation of identities, giving life more a character of flux and interdependence than permanence.

On the basis of these experiences, Elvira has become a bridge builder, linking diverse Lebenswelten (life worlds) and creating innovative spaces for cultural exchange despite all differences and asymmetries. However, it is not only important what she does, but how. Elvira's deep involvement with Andine textiles allows to elucidate her approach and way of proceeding. From the perspective of quechua and aymara - and other indigenous people -, textiles are never finished products. Rather, they are work in progress, in a constant process of becoming and transforming. Furthermore, woven goods are not detached from the concrete practices, specific techniques and social networks between humans and non-humans that allow them to be manufactured and brought to life. Amongst others, this includes the care and shearing of the llamas, the spinning, dyeing and weaving of their fibres, the design planning and the handling of the loom.

As the weavers of the ayllu Qaqachaka say, inside the textile are their "spirit" and their "hearts". From the beginning of their manufacture, the fabrics are already part of their body and the body is part of the fabrics. The making of textiles is the weaving of life. Women in Qaqachaka are co-



constructing their world through their textiles. The fabric - as well as many other objects with which they interact closely - constitutes a microcosm of social relations; it has its own social life. Elvira Espejo Ayca emphasizes the need to assume the point of view of the weavers and take their local, native categories into account in order to comprehensively capture Andean textiles. This approach allows not only to highlight the performative and processual character of cultures, but also to put into value indigenous epistemologies in their complexity and equivalence to Western knowledge. She subjects European based concepts and knowledge practices to a critical reflection and underlines the persistent knowledge asymmetries which become apparent in many convivial contexts.

Classical epistemological subject-object differentiations have recently been supplemented by an ontological perspective. In other words, scientific analysis and artistic reflections attempt not only to determine how other people think about the world, but also to include how we as scientists or artists must think in order to grasp how the world is understood by others. Only in this way will intercultural translations become possible that take into account different ways of constituting the world.

Following this multiperspective approach Elvira connects in her artistic work multilingual poetry, music, visual arts, waving art and performance. She wants to overcome historically grown borders and decouplings, emphasizing openness and incompleteness. In the same way as the weavers of the ayllu Qaqachaka she does not focus hereby only on the meaning of objects and artifacts but on their effectiveness for the actions of the persons interacting with them. In this sense, she contributes with an extended concept of art, which allows to relate in more symmetrical ways so-called traditional indigenous art with contemporary art.

I congratulate you, Elvira, on being awarded the Goethe Medal, which honours your outstanding work and your artistic contributions, but also your great social engagement.

I want to close my brief laudatory speech with a poem sung by Elvira Ayca Espejo. I apologize for my bad language skills in Quechua, acknowledging my incompleteness.

*Arbolituy mayuymanta
yakituypis mayuymanta
sunquyypis mayuymanta
amañas qunqay atinkichu*

*No podrás olvidar
mi árbol de río
mi agua de río
mi corazón de río
nunca podrás olvidar*

I thank you all for your attention.



FRANZISKA AUGSTEIN, LAUDATORY SPEECH FOR IAN MCEWAN

Dear Ian McEwan, dear ladies and gentlemen who are virtually (or otherwise) with us,

it is a great honour for me that the Goethe Institute has invited me to shower heaps of praise upon you, Mr. McEwan. Having been an avid reader of your books since the 1990's I am truly delighted. Moreover, I know you although you do not know me. Some such asymmetrical (non-synchronised) arrangement – always unfair towards the person in focus – relates to the old game „I can see you, but you cannot see me“. Small children have to go through the motion of covering their eyes with their hands to achieve this goal; for others it suffices to hide amongst the crowd of an audience.

The event I am referring to took place in 2013 or 2014 (I am not quite sure about the exact date) at a literary festival near Lewes in East Sussex. Being a very English event, in line with what we consider to be characteristically English, the festival was staged in the countryside: in the middle of lush pastures, or say yellowing meadows, there bloomed a rainproof construction that housed readings and discussions of spectacular variety. The eminent historian Asa Briggs, who lived in Lewes, was among the guests of honour. During the Second World War, Asa Briggs, who by now has left this world, was employed at the „Intelligence Corps Bletchley Park“ – that is: in one way or the other he was involved in deciphering the code of the famous German Enigma machine. The delicate question posed was whom to invite for a tête-à-tête with this illustrious personality? The choice was easy: It was Ian McEwan. He had studied at Sussex University (where, by the way, I too studied, although several years later). And he had a reputation for being knowledgeable about espionage, McEwan has written more than one novel plumbing the depths of that subject. Ian McEwan was therefore, of course, the perfect person to invite to converse with Asa Briggs.

Now, one should know that Ian McEwan prefers being on his own while working on his next book. While writing a book he eschews public appearances and public utterances. And as he seems constantly to be working on his next book, it would have been natural for him to have gone out of his way to avoid coming to Lewes to chat with Asa Briggs. But, quite the contrary.

McEwan's reputation which began to flourish in the 1970's was in full bloom by the 1980's. His novels were dubbed as being sarcastic, cynical, full of black humour. Well, I can tell you that this proponent of darkness was tremendously charming in his conversation with Asa Briggs: he was honestly interested in what the old historian had to say and was genuinely warm, curious and reverential during the entire dialogue. So much for being a harbinger of darkness.

The jury of the Goethe Institute thought Ian McEwan worthy of the Goethe medal not least because he has oddly close ties to Germany. Hailing from Scotland, his father was an officer in the British army, stationed in Germany, dispatched from one town to the other. McEwan, according to the



custom in those days, shortly after the Second World War, was sent to a boarding school. He saw his father only on holidays in Germany. During those holidays he got to know villages with funny sounding names such as Fallingbommel and Paderborn. In hindsight he said: those places were rather dreary. Luckily, British soldiers knew how to get their kicks wherever they were stationed. It was in Germany, for example, that Ian McEwan learned how to play Snooker.

He came to see the East-Western Wall in Berlin before it fell. It struck him that there were next to no German authors trying to climb the Wall in their novels. This applies, by the way, to a chunk of German history: hardly any German at that time seemed to be interested in particular aspects of German history. OK, British historians thought, we are struggling with our former Empire, we can take care of matters German too. With something like this in mind, Ian McEwan set out and wrote the spy novel „The Innocent“, located in Berlin, that was published in 1990. While Orson Welles in the 1940s had discovered Vienna as a venue for a fine movie, „The Third Man“, Ian McEwan found the Wall between East- and West-Germany intriguing, he called it „weird“. He considered it as a phenomenon – this was how the former West-German chancellor Kurt Kiesinger labelled the Eastern German Democratic Republic. He called it a „phenomenon“ because in the 1960’s the country was not officially recognized as a state. It was a „thing“ in limbo. The same was true for the Wall, at least in McEwan’s eyes. It was something too weird to last.

The novels of Ian McEwan turn around questions of personal freedom and personal choice. They usually start off in a peaceful surrounding, say: a little trip on a beautiful summer’s day in a captive balloon. Then something goes wrong, and the protagonists find themselves dangling, left to their own moral devices. Most of them are not quite able to live up to their own standards. Confronted with the task of acting in line with their own moral compasses, they tend to fail. This gap between how someone wants to be and how the person actually acts in reality leaves plenty of space for Ian McEwan’s humour.

McEwan’s novels offer his readers a look into the abyss of the human mind. He delves into what others consider to be pathological. Provided you can stand it, his books are tremendously funny, in a philosophical manner. Once he told a journalist: As a writer you cannot avoid coming in contact with real life.

In real life Ian McEwan is a convinced European, with knobs on. He abhors the Brexit. He abhors racism of any kind. Neoliberal capitalism is not his governmental system of choice. Climate change stands at the centre of his novel „Solar“, that was inspired in part by his visit to the Potsdam Institut für Klimafolgenforschung, the name stands for research into what will happen to the world when it gets hotter.

The then director of the Potsdam Institute had invited McEwan to come along, just for a get-together and an informed chat. Hans Joachim Schellnhuber, this is his name, is worried about the climate change because there will come a tipping point from which humanity will not be able to prevent – by any means whatever – the climate from changing large parts of the earth becoming uninhabitable for humans. He says: „In order to prevent the median temperature on earth rising



more than two degrees celsius, we have no more than thirty years time left.“ This is no joke, it is real.

It, of course, won't be enough to leave the solving of this threat to humanity just to the „Fridays for Future“-movement, plus a few responsibly thinking economists and politicians, as well as to authors like Ian McEwan, while the rest of society carries on as usual, making money and short-time decisions.

But if the world were to listen to the messages which writers like Ian McEwan imbed in their novels, the world might stand a slightly better chance for survival.

It is with pride that I say: Dear Mr. McEwan: congratulations. The Goethe medal is a fine prize. You have deserved it hands down. May you flourish in all you are doing now and in the future.

ZOË BECK, LAUDATORY SPEECH FOR ZUKISWA WANNER

The term “Weltliteratur”, “world literature,” as Goethe coined it nearly two hundred years ago, has been through plenty of reinterpretations and changes in meaning. Today, the idea of global literature strikes a much more complex chord in us.

Zukiswa Wanner embodies this chord in her work. Using WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, she gathers Africa's most important voices, despite and because of the coronavirus lockdowns and restrictions, to organise the virtual Afrolit Sans Frontières festival that she launched several times since March. There, stories are told from different countries and cultures, in different languages, stories that have already been written and stories that arise from conversations about them. In this way, she counters a virus that knows no boundaries with forms of communication that can overcome boundaries: borders, language barriers, cultural differences. The solution emerges in collaborative effort, in the willingness to be open and to listen, but also in access to the Internet and the needed technology.

The way that Zukiswa Wanner wrote her first novel is a good example of how vital this access is to things that, to most of us, seem routine. She wrote *The Madams at Work* because it was the only place where she had access to a computer. She went to the office a few hours early so that she could work on her manuscript without interruption. She always had two windows open on her desktop, one with her actual work, one with her manuscript, so she could discreetly move back and forth between them. Only writers from a certain income bracket use the two-window trick, she says in an interview, and those writers are invariably Black. They have to work, often more than just one job, to support themselves and their families. They can't take a few weeks off to write, they often can't even afford a computer. For them, writing is a luxury. Or an immense effort.



Zukiswa Wanner has the strength to exert this effort. *The Madams* was published in 2006, and she has had her own computer ever since.

Her early novels already demonstrate the subject matters that are important to her: the role that origin plays, origin and skin colour, every nuance of skin colour. The influence that the politics of a country has on the present and future of every family. How expected roles burden women, but also men. What homosexuality and queerness mean, how they can be lived. Why the colonisation of Africa by European powers is by no means a closed chapter, and why its discussion must not be allowed to end. She is skilled in the art of keeping her tone of voice seemingly light and humorous for all its political relevance. Western influences are an enduring part of reality and they will remain so because today, thanks to social media, the world has become smaller, more accessible and, as a result, perhaps larger in its opportunities. But increasingly, Black voices have a stage. They are conquering – and reconquering – thematic spaces. Their former colonial rulers can no longer silence them.

Zukiswa Wanner helps ensure that stories from an entire continent are heard. She carries them into the world, across borders. She contributes to the literary canon of Western schools and universities no longer being predominantly white and male. And she strengthens our awareness that language is also a privilege. Over a thousand languages on the continent have too little literary significance. Stories aren't heard if they're not translated, both from and into these languages. She therefore founded her own publishing house, Paivapo, and started translating children's stories from English into their native languages.

Her retelling of Grimm's fairy tale "Rapunzel," for example, is wonderful. In Zukiswa Wanner's version, the protagonist is named Refilwe, she is Black and was born in Lesotho. These are cultural translations that make world-famous stories – or stories that are relevant in Western culture – accessible. But they also demonstrate how essentially universal many stories are and that there is no reason to tell them only "in white."

Zukiswa Wanner works as a writer, publisher, journalist and curator, and what she does is outstanding. There is no time to commend all that is commendable about her here today. She has already received numerous awards for her work, and yet she's right when she says that someone like her would have to work four times as hard to receive even a quarter of the recognition they deserve. People first see her as a Black African woman before they call her a writer, and she quickly comes to represent these many categories instead of being perceived as an artist. In a 2011 blog post, we read, "Zukiswa is a writer, a mother, an African, and a woman – in that order," and I think that order is revealing and extremely important. I am all the more pleased that today this special writer is receiving another award, the Goethe Medal, in recognition of her outstanding work. Congratulations, Zukiswa!



PRESENTATION OF THE 2020 GOETHE MEDALS

- **Official ceremony**

The official ceremony will take place on Tuesday 28 August 2020 at 11 am CET at: www.goethe.de/goethe-medaille. With the kind support of Deutsche Welle.

- **Presentation of awards**

The awards will be presented to Espejo Ayca in La Paz/Bolivia by Prof. Dr. Barbara Göbel, to Ian McEwan in London/Great Britain by Dr. Franziska Augstein, and to Zukiswa Wanner in Nairobi/Kenya by Zoë Beck.

Presentation dates will be announced locally in advance.

- **Accompanying programme**

Programmes of music for the official ceremony and the awards presentations are being developed in collaboration with the University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar.



ABOUT THE 2020 RECIPIENTS

ELVIRA ESPEJO AYCA

Museum director, artist, poet, essayist, musician, weaver,
born 1981

Nationalities: Bolivian, Aymara and Quechua

Monographs and Publications

- Teijendo la vida - weaving life. National Museum of Ethnography and Folklore textile collection, as per the production chain
- A Comparison of War Iconography in the Archaeological Textiles of Paracas-Topara (Südperu) and in the Weavings of Ayllu Qaqachaka, Bolivia
- On Drinking Cups and Constellations. Some Relations between Aymara Astronomical and Textual Practices in Qaqachaka ayllu, Bolivia
- 2007 Hilos sueltos: los Andes desde el textil (with Juan de Dias Yaoita and Denise Arnold)
- 2010 Ciencia de las mujeres
- 2012 Ciencia de Tejer en los Andes: Estructuras y tecnicas de faz de urdimbre
- 2013 El Textil Tridimensional: El Tejido como Objeto y como Sujeto

Discography

- 2007 La senda - canciones a los animals, with Alvaro Montenegro and others.
- 2011 Cantos a las casas - Utachk kirki

Exhibitions outside of MUSEF

- 2011 Das Potosf Prinzip, Haus der Kulturen der Welt cultural centre, Berlin
- 2013: Pintisa II, Cochabamba

Poetry

- 2005 Sawutug parla - Acerca de los textiles
- 2006 Phaqa kirki-Tikha takiy- Canto a las flores: Poems in aymara, quechua and Spanish, Venezuela International Poetry Festival Prize, 2007
- 2018 Kaypi Jaqhaypi, Par aquf, por alla, presentation to the Cusco International Book Fair / Peru



Short stories

- 1994 Ahora les voy a narrar (Now I will tell stories); Casa de las Americas indigenous literature competition, Cuba

Citations

Ethnography, ethnology, folklore: for me, these are academic inventions that generate clichés – like the difference between arts and crafts. They stem from the egocentric language of colonisers, who know only what they call us, how they see us, how they treat us. So I always speak of communities. We are concerned with how different communities develop different cultures. With cultural multidisciplinary.

(...)

The eleven million inhabitants (note: of Bolivia) speak 36 languages. Each one of these represents a nationality with its own cultural identity. Aymara, Quechua, Guaraní and Uru are only the biggest and best known of these communities. It is in this diversity that our plurinationality consists. But it will be generations before this is a reality that is lived by all. And we also want to honour the diversity of all ways of life – such as the transsexual communities. Our museum must reflect the diversity and the reality of our country.

(...)

I came to the museum from another world. As a countrywoman it is important to me that we work the land in harmony with nature. The concept of sustainability is also important here in the museum: for every item, we must consider the contexts out of which it emerged. We are currently studying and preserving oral traditions. As we do so, we aim to treat communities that have never written down their narratives with the utmost respect. How many scholars have listened to these stories, published them – without ever mentioning with whom they actually originated?

(Elvira Espejo Ayca, *das goethe* magazine, Issue 1/ 2019)

Elvira Espejo Ayca is in particular concerned with highlighting the knowledge and communication technologies developed by the Andean culture through art, colour and iconography such as can be found in textile art. This 20-year plus study of traditional indigenous cultural techniques leads to interaction and dialogue with European theories of textiles.

(...)

Elvira Espejo is a woman who always speaks, in her community and in the western world, as a representative of her country. In the city of La Paz, she moves between worlds. The women of the Andes and of the indigenous world in general have made a great effort to communicate their ideas, their arguments and their words. Elvira has been a strong advocate for them and has broken with conventional perceptions, which are characterised by oppressive structures. In spite of the colonial wounds of the “woman in billowing skirts”, she stands without violence as a creator and overseer of the revival in women’s studies. She advances towards the western world as someone who is



recognised and valued by indigenous culture and she brings the Aymara and Quechua worlds to the west by breaking through the barriers of the colonial past in order to reinvent textile weaving.

(...)

Elvira and the weavers are women with roots, which means they understand the roots of their own personal story, their territory; they do not disown their lives in order to talk with the western world, and they acknowledge the teaching of their grandfathers and grandmothers.

(Aura Isabel Mora, *Nómadas*, No. 49, 2018, Translation: Sabine Hentzsch/Sarah Rimmington)



IAN MCEWAN

Novelist and screenwriter,
born 21.6.1948

Nationality: British

International awards (selection)

- 1989: Honorary doctorate from the University of Sussex
- 1993: Honorary doctorate from the University of East Anglia
- 1998: Booker Prize for Amsterdam
- 1999: Alfred Toepfer Foundation Shakespeare Prize for lifetime achievement
- 2000: Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)
- 2001: People's Booker for Atonement
- 2003: German Book Prize for Atonement
- 2003: Los Angeles Times Prize for Fiction for Atonement
- 2008: Galaxy Book of the Year for On Chesil Beach
- 2011: Jerusalem Prize for the Freedom of the Individual in Society

Monographs and publications

- 1978: The Cement Garden; Ger. Der Zementgarten, Diogenes 1982
- 1981: The Comfort of Strangers; Ger. Der Trost von Fremden. Diogenes 1981
- 1987: The Child in Time; Ger. Ein Kind zur Zeit. Diogenes 1988
- 1990: The Innocent, Ger. Unschuldige. Eine Berliner Liebesgeschichte, Diogenes 1990
- 1992: Black Dogs; Ger. Schwarze Hunde, Diogenes 1994
- 1997: Enduring Love; Ger. Liebeswahn, Diogenes 1998
- 1998: Amsterdam, Ger. Amsterdam, Diogenes 2000
- 2001: Atonement, Ger. Abbitte, Diogenes 2002
- 2005: Saturday, Ger. Saturday, Diogenes 2005
- 2007: On Chesil Beach; Ger. Am Strand, Diogenes 2007
- 2010: Solar; Ger. Solar, Diogenes 2010
- 2012: Sweet Tooth, Ger. Honig, Diogenes 2013
- 2014: The Children Act; Ger. Kindeswohl, Diogenes 2015
- 2016: Nutshell, Ger. Nusschale, Diogenes 2016
- 2019: Machines Like Me; Ger. Maschinen wie ich, Diogenes 2019
- 2020: Erkenntnis und Schönheit. Über Wissenschaft, Literatur und Religion. Diogenes, Sept. 2020



Screenplays

- 1983: The Ploughman's Lunch
- 1988: Soursweet
- 1993: The Good Son; Ger. Das zweite Gesicht
- 2017: On Chesil Beach; Ger. Am Strand
- 2017: The Children Act; Ger. Kindeswohl

Short stories

- 1975: First Love, Last Rites; Ger. Erste Liebe, letzte Riten, Diogenes 1982
- 1978: In Between the Sheets; Ger. Zwischen den Laken, Diogenes 1983
- 1995: The Short Stories (Collection of short stories)
- 2016: My Purple Scented Novel, The New Yorker

TV plays

- 1976: Jack Flea's Birthday Celebration
- 1980: The Imitation Game

Children's books

- 1985: Rose Blanche
- 1995: The Daydreamer, Ger. Der Tagträumer, Diogenes 1996

Citations

Ian McEwan – he is the engineer of these breathtaking novels, planned step by step, like a game of chess, but where one person plays both sides. In the end, it is always the elegant McEwan who wins. You stand amazed before his brilliant and clear-eyed insight into human nature and bow down: so much delight, at such a high level!

(Ulrich Kühn, NDR Kultur, 26.11.2019)

At the very latest since Atonement, Ian McEwan has been regarded as a master of psychological realism. The perfection with which the author assimilates even the styles of his protagonists makes his novels both exciting and profound. And so it is no accident that the author, now 59, has become a bestseller.

(Christine Pries, Frankfurter Rundschau, 24.7.2007)



British author Ian McEwan has always brought diligence and craftsmanship to his engagement with the big moral issues of the age, depicting them through his educated, middle-class British heroes. His novels are not prowled by idiosyncratic outsiders, searching for the right word to express their exalted emotions; rather, senior people with strong linguistic and emotional skills go about their unglamorous duties in a plausibly sober and adept manner. You could not read any of Ian McEwan's many novels in recent years without encountering an expert introduction, delivered with a lightness of touch, to the latest research on a complicated substantive issue relating to modern life – climatology, neurobiology, jurisprudence, the wellbeing of children, to name but a few of the bestselling British author's areas of expertise.

Having written some twenty novels, Ian McEwan has attained an uncanny perfection in his chosen genre.

(Iris Radisch, Die Zeit, 22.5.2019)

Ian McEwan's latest book imagines a world in which a cockroach wakes up one day to find that he is human - and the prime minister. McEwan, one of Britain's most celebrated novelists and the author of *On Chesil Beach*, *Atonement* and *Enduring Love*, cites Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* as an influence, but the novella, *The Cockroach*, draws on events very much of our own time, namely Brexit. In an interview with Euronews in Athens, McEwan makes no secret of his obsession with Britain's exit from the European Union. "Even as I hate it, I can't leave it alone", he says. "I'm a passionate remainer, but I don't pretend to give a balanced view. I think we're making a huge mistake."

(euronews.com, 1.10.2019)

It's done. A triumph of dogged negotiation by Theresa May and then, briefly, Johnson, has fulfilled the most pointless, masochistic ambition ever dreamed of in the history of these islands. The rest of the world, Presidents Putin and Trump excepted, have watched on in astonishment and dismay. A majority voted in December for parties which supported a second referendum. But those parties failed lamentably to make common cause. We must pack up our tents, perhaps to the sound of church bells, and hope to begin the 15-year trudge, back towards some semblance of where we were yesterday with our multiple trade deals, security, health and scientific co-operation and a thousand other useful arrangements.

(Ian McEwan, Die Zeit, 2.2.2020)



ZUKISWA WANNER

Writer, journalist, curator,
born 30.7.1976

Nationality: South Africa, currently resident in Kenya

International awards

- 1985: South African Literary Awards (SALA) - K Sello Duiker Prize 2015
- Hay Festival's Africa39 2014 - Authors with a lasting impact on African literature
- Shortlist Commonwealth Prize Africa Region for Best Book, 2011

Monographs and publications (selection)

- The Madams, Oshun Books, 2006
- Behind Every Successful Man, Kwela Books, 2008
- Men of the South, Kwela Books, 2008
- 8115: A Prisoner's Horne with Alf Kumalo, Penguin, 2010
- Maid in SA: 30 Ways to Leave your Madam, Jacana, 2010
- Jama Loves Banas, Jacana, 2013
- Refilwe, Jacana, 2014
- Hardly Working: A Travel Memoir of Sorts, Black Letter Media, 2018

Citations

There is no doubt that Zukiswa Wanner is one of South Africa's most talented authors and storytellers. Her debut novel, *The Madam*, was published in 2006 and since then Zukiswa has remained relevant and one of the most important voices of our time.

(nalibali.org)

With four novels published on the continent, there is no better person to speak to about the production and consumption of African Literature on the continent than Zukiswa Wanner.

(thisisafrica.me)

Zukiswa is a writer, a mother, an African, and a woman – in that order.



(Zukiswa Wanner, Blog wealth of ideas, 2.1.2011)

For women who look like you and me (black), sometimes it's four times the work for a quarter of the recognition. And the writer comes last. So you are likely to be referred to as a black African woman before you can be a writer.

(...)

If however, you do manage to impress and you become a writer, there is the added burden of being representative of all blacks, all women, all Africans that one has to bear instead of just being an individual artist.

(Zukiswa Wanner, theinternational-woman.com, 2019)

As a writer published in South Africa, for a very long time I felt that we ignored the rest of the continent despite our own stories at our own peril. Word for word, South Africans are out-writing everyone. Unfortunately, not enough people on the rest of the continent know us unless and until we have been acknowledged by the West. I wanted then to find the stories in South Africa that the rest of the continent could relate to and in the continent that South Africa could enjoy. And I wanted to ensure that I distribute widely beyond SA borders because I know, Africa Reads.

(...)

A big remedy would be for South Africa to first understand that it's an African country. NOT America-lite. NOT Little Britain. In Africa. Once we understand this then maybe we will understand the importance of loving ourselves. It's utterly absurd that I can find Damon Galgut in a bookstore in Jaipur or Angela Makholwa in Lahore or Masande Ntshanga in Lagos but cannot find them, alongside their fellow South African writers, taking pride of place and more shelf space in libraries and bookstores in South Africa. I can't even imagine the opposite happening in US or UK libraries and bookstores and yet we do it without a second thought.

(Zukidwa wanner, pensouthafrica.co.za, 6. August 2019)

(...) one of the other constant comments I have been told about my work from people all over the world is that although the characters are South African and mostly black, the readers can identify with the characters in my books. It is a revelation of the similarity of the human condition.

(Zukiswa Wanner, conservation with writers, 19.2.2011)



ABOUT THE PRESENTERS OF THE 2020 MEDALS

This year, the Goethe Medal is being presented to recipients by Prof. Dr. Barbara Göbel (citation for Elvira Espejo Ayca), Dr. Franziska Augstein (citation for Ian McEwan) and Zoë Beck (citation for Zukiswa Wanner).

BARBARA GÖBEL

Prof. Dr. Barbara Göbel is the Director of the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation), a non-university research institute that houses one of the largest Latin American libraries in the world. Since 2017 she has been an Honorary Professor at the Free University of Berlin. Barbara Göbel studied Social Anthropology, History, and Economic and Social History at the Universities of Munich and Göttingen. She has been a Lecturer and Senior Researcher at the Universities of Göttingen, Tübingen, Stuttgart-Hohenheim, Cologne and Bonn, and a visiting professor at universities in Argentina (Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Jujuy, San Martín, La Pampa), Bolivia (University of La Paz), Chile (Universities of Antofagasta and Arica) and Peru (PUCP, Lima). From 2002 to 2005 she was Executive Director of the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP) run by ICSU and ISSC, now the International Science Council. Her research focuses on socio-ecological inequality, resource-related conflicts in Latin America and the geopolitics of knowledge.

FRANZISKA AUGSTEIN

Dr. Franziska Augstein comes from Hamburg. She studied History, Philosophy and Politics in Berlin, Bielefeld, Paris and the University of Sussex. She was awarded a doctorate in 1996 by University College London for her thesis on the precursors of racial theory (*James Cowles Prichard's Anthropology: Remaking the Science of Man in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Editions Rodopi 1999). From 1997 to 2001 she was Editor of the culture section of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper. Since 2001 she has written for the Süddeutsche Zeitung newspaper. Between 2010 and 2015 she was responsible for the Das Politische Buch page. Since 2016 she has written a column, Augstein's World, for the business pages. In 2000 she won the Theodor Wolff Prize essay category. In 2008 she published *Von Treue und Verrat. Jorge und Semprún und sein Jahrhundert* (Of Loyalty and Betrayal. Jorge and Semprún and his Century) (C.H. Beck).

ZOË BECK

Zoë Beck, born 1975, studied English and German literature in Gießen, Bonn and Durham amongst other places. She worked as Creative Producer on international television productions and as a Dubbing Editor, and then as a scriptwriter and script supervisor, activities she still pursues today.

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She has been a freelance author and literary translator since 2004 and since 2013 has run the CulturBooks publishing house together with Jan Karsten. Her many award-winning novels and short stories have so far been translated into ten languages. Her most recent was the thriller Paradise City (Suhrkamp 2020).



PRESS PHOTOS OF RECIPIENTS

Free, downloadable press photos of the 2020 Goethe Medal recipients – Elvira Espejo Ayca, Ian McEwan und Zukiswa Wanner – are available from: www.goethe.de/bilderservice.

Please note all copyright information.

Images and biographies of the President and Management Board of the Goethe Institut – Klaus-Dieter Lehmann, Johannes Ebert and Rainer Pollack – are available at goethe.de/leitung.

About the Goethe Medal

The Goethe Medal was established by the Executive Committee of the Goethe-Institut in 1954 and recognised as an official honour by the Federal Republic of Germany in 1975. The awards ceremony takes place in Weimar on Goethe's birthday, 28 August. The Goethe-Institut also organises an accompanying programme in collaboration with the Kunstfest Weimar festival. Since the medal was introduced in 1955, it has been awarded to a total of 354 individuals from 67 countries, including Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Bourdieu, David Cornwell aka John le Carré, Sir Ernst Gombrich, Lars Gustafsson, Ágnes Heller, Petros Markaris, Sir Karl Raimund Popper, Jorge Semprún, Robert Wilson, Neil MacGregor, Helen Wolff, Juri Andruchowytch and Irina Scherbakowa.

The Goethe Instituts makes nominations in coordination with German representations abroad. The Committee for the Award of the Goethe Medal makes a selection which must then be confirmed by the Goethe Institut Committee. Committee members are Dr. Franziska Augstein (journalist, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*), Prof. Dr. Christina von Braun (Chair and committee spokesperson, Cultural Studies expert, Humboldt-Universität in Berlin), Dr. Meret Forster (Music Editor, BR-Klassik), Dr. Anselm Franke (Curator, Director of Fine Art and Film Department, Haus der Kulturen der Welt), Dr. Ina Hartwig (Head of the Frankfurt am Main Culture Department, literary critic), Prof. Dr. Ursula von Keitz (Professor of Film Research and Film Education, Filmuniversität Babelsberg Konrad Wolf), Ulrich Khuon (Artistic Director, Deutsches Theater), Eva Menasse (author), Moritz Müller-Wirth (journalist, *Die Zeit*), Elisabeth Ruge (author, publisher and literary agent); representing the German Foreign Office: Assistant State Secretary Dr. Andreas Görden (Director of the Culture and Communications Department); representing the Goethe-Institut: Prof. Dr. h.c. Klaus-Dieter Lehmann (President), Johannes Ebert (Secretary General)