

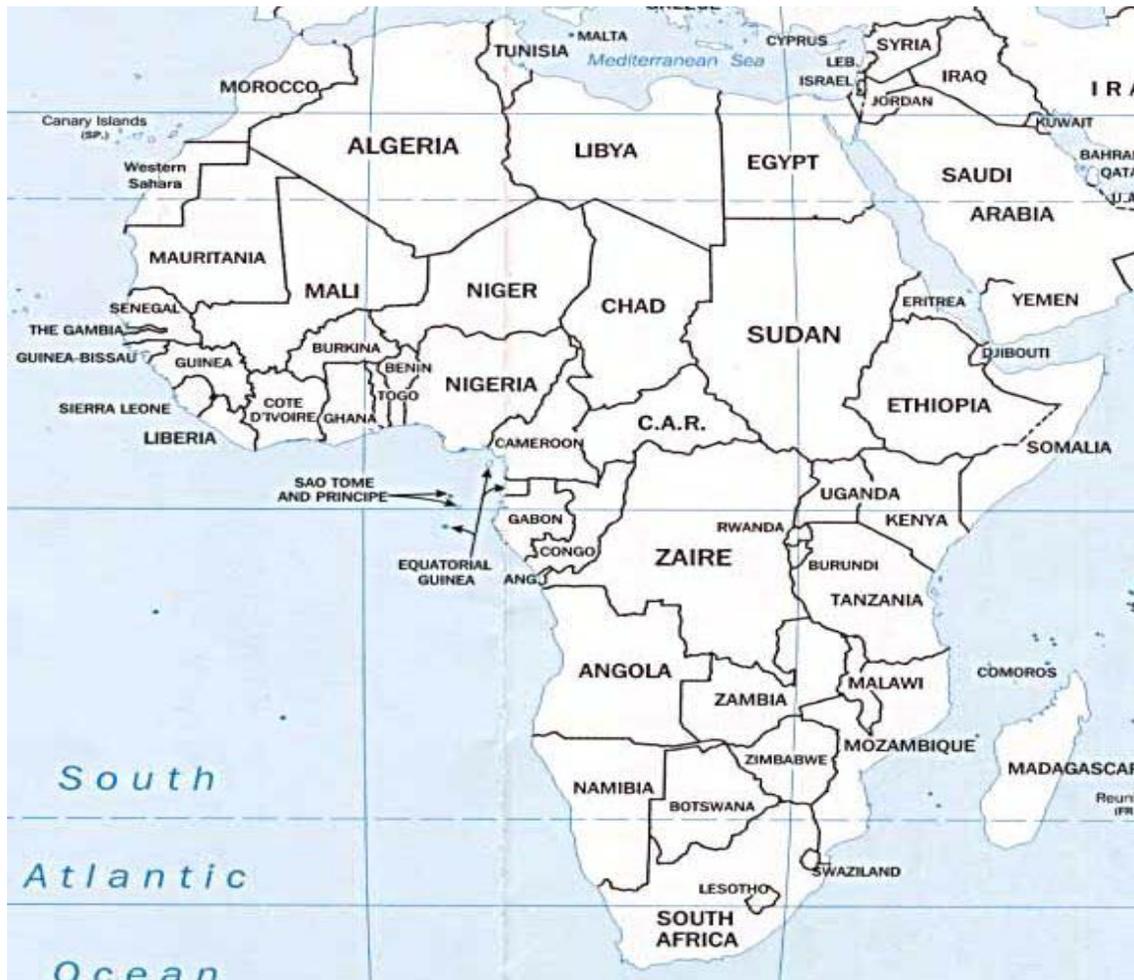
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
ENGLISH 516: Topics in 20th-Century Literature in English, Lec. 8:
AFRICAN LITERATURE – A SURVEY

Teju Olaniyan
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TR 1:00 -2:15 P.M.
FALL 2009
4281 HCWHITE

OFFICE HOURS

6181 H. C. White: Tuesday 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon } &
1470 Van Hise: Thursday 2:30 – 3:00 } *by appointment*



Map: contemporary Africa

The course is a detailed introduction to the major writers and diverse literary traditions of the continent. We will select texts from different genres—prose fiction, poetry, drama—and regions. We will study the historical and cultural contexts of the writing, publication, and reception or consumption of the literature. We will pay particular attention to the different forms and techniques with which the writers convey their ideas, and explore in detail some of the most interesting of those composite ideas and themes: colonialism and cultural imperialism; the possibility of an “African” literature in non-African but Europhone languages; cultural nationalism and the independent nation-state; and gender, sexuality and African cultural traditions. Some of writers we would read include Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Assia Djebar, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Nadine Gordimer, Ngugi wa Thiong’O, and Buchi Emecheta.

Required texts

Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Soyinka, *Death and the King’s Horseman*

Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross*

Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood*

Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Gordimer, *The House Gun*

Djebar, *Fantasia*

Texts and where to find them:

All the “required” texts are available at the University Bookstore. All secondary readings are available either as electronic reserve pdf files online—sign on to your *MyUW* for access, or as chapters in books, and those books are on hard copy reserve in College Library for 3-hour loan periods. At the beginning of the class on each text, I will walk you through the secondary readings

COURSE RULES (*I reserve the right to change these, including the weekly schedule, at any time in the semester; students will be duly informed of such a change*):

1. ~Regular attendance. Flu-related absences will not be penalized; please email me promptly on infection. Other unreported and unpermitted absences are subject to penalty. 4 such absences automatically earns a student F course grade.

2. ~20% for:

---(A). Active participation in class discussions

---(B). Class presentation. Those presenting on a particular day need not do #C below. *Since there will likely be more than one presenter per day, all class presentations must be done as group work.*

There are two kinds of class presentation:

- i. **Performance/Reading** of a short scene from the novel or play you are presenting on, followed by brief commentary on why you choose the scene its overall significance to understanding the play or novel. If you are presenting on poetry, read all the selections and then chose one or two for performed reading in class, followed by brief commentary on the overall significance of your selected poem/s to the poetry selection generally. To all: your “brief commentary” must be typed up and read in class and handed to me afterward.

OR

- ii. **Written short critical reflection** on the required text for the day. This consists of two main parts: (1) a brief summary of the novel or play or the poetry selection, and (2) Critical discussion of whatever themes, ideas, and style elements you think are important in the text. You obviously can't say everything, so use your judgment in deciding what to say or leave out. In addition, you may suggest issues for class discussion, e.g., those issues that you find difficult or intriguing in the text and you want to recommend them for class discussion.

For either i or ii:

::Multiple presenters should do group work, integrate their ideas and perform their selected scene and write their brief commentary, or write up one presentation only for one person to read.

::Presentations should last **no more than 20 minutes**, no matter the number of presenters. Write up the presentation, read, and hand a copy to me afterward.

::Presentations will be followed by questions from the rest of the class.

3. ~25% for: Exam Paper 1 of 5-7 pages double-spaced

4. ~25% for: 1-page typed Response Paper (see description below) on each of the required texts, **due at the end of our class discussion of the particular text (8 responses, total)**. *The first response paper must be submitted in a folder*, which will serve as a holder in my office for the remaining responses. Write your name, author's name and text title on each response. **The responses are not graded individually, but collectively at the end of the semester.** However, please come to me during my office hours if you want some feedback. **Presenters on a text do not need to submit a response paper on that text.**

5. ~30% for Exam Paper 2 of 8-9 pages double-spaced

On deadlines: As a sign of exemplary responsibility and class citizenship, I expect all students to firmly observe course deadlines. Plan ahead and seek permission if you think you will be late in submitting a paper, whether "response paper" or "exam paper." The instructor has *absolutely no obligation* to accept ANY unpermitted late paper. Except with prior permission or in cases of medical emergency appropriately documented, all unexcused lateness will be penalized. The appropriate penalty will be determined in each case by the instructor.

What is a "Response paper"?

A Response Paper is a brief commentary on a text. It is composed of two parts (1) identification of author and text and a few lines on what the text is about; and (2) a well-considered, judicious discussion of any part of the text. This could be what you like or dislike about the text and why; an assessment of a character or relationship between or among characters; or an exposition on some notable elements of the text's style, etc.

What is an "Exam Paper"?

An Exam Paper is a timed take-home research paper. You will be given questions by email or in hardcopy and then a specified number of hours, e.g. 12, 24, 36, 48, etc, to write a research-caliber paper from home. You can consult all sources but you must properly document all of them. You will be given a separate set of instructions for the exam papers.

Class email listserv: the class email list is english516-1-f09@lists.wisc.edu. Use it to post issues and questions about our class work only. Anything you send to the list will go to the whole class, so please do not mistake it for my personal email if you have a personal matter you want to email me about. My personal email is tolaniyan@wisc.edu.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: Thursday September 3: Introduction I

WEEK 2: Tuesday September 8: Introduction II: History, Themes & Forms

- Gerard, A. S. "Sub-Saharan Africa's Literary History in a Nutshell," 21-42 IN *Comparative Literature and African Literatures*, ed. Swanepoel, C. F. Pretoria: Via Afrika, 1993.
- Tejumola Olaniyan, "Africa: Varied Colonial Legacies," 269-281 in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Ed. Sangeeta Ray & Henry Schwarz. Malden, MA: Basil Blackwell, 2000.
- Lewis Nkosi, "History as the 'Hero' of the African Novel," 30-53 in Nkosi, *Tasks and Masks: Themes and Styles in African Literature*. Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1981.

: Thursday September 10: Introduction III: History, Themes & Forms

- Juliana M. Nfah-Abbenyi, "Introduction," 1-15 in Nfah-Abbenyi, *Gender in African Women's Writing: Identity, Sexuality, and Difference*," Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997. (Notes: 153-156).
- Florence Stratton, "Introduction: Exclusionary Practices," 1-19 in Stratton, *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*. New York: Routledge, 1994. (Notes: 177-179)
- Soyinka, Wole. "Arms and the Arts: A Continent's Unequal Dialogue," *Pretexts: Studies in Writing & Culture*. 8.2 (Nov. 1999): 187-200.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'O, "The Language of African Literature," 4-33 in *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: J. Currey, 1986.

WEEK 3: Tuesday September 15: Achebe, Things Fall Apart (I)

- Adeleke Adeeko, "Great Books Make Their Own History: A Commemorative Review of Things Fall Apart at Fifty," *Transition* 100 (2009): 34-43.
- Biodun Jeyifo, "Okonkwo and His Mother: Things Fall Apart and Issues of Gender in the Constitution of African Postcolonial Discourse" *Callaloo* 16.4 (1993): 847-58.
- Alison Searle, "The Role of Missions in Things Fall Apart and Nervous Condition," *Literature & Theology* 21.1 (2007): 49-65.
- Achebe, "The Novelist as Teacher," *Hopes & Impediments* 40-46

- Achebe, "The Truth of Fiction," *Hopes & Impediments* 138-153
- Reference: Simon Gikandi, *Reading Chinua Achebe*

Thursday September 17: Achebe, Things Fall Apart (II)
--continuing discussion

WEEK 4: Tuesday September 22: Achebe, Things Fall Apart (III)
--conclusion

- : Thursday September 24: Soyinka, Death and the King's Horseman (I)**
- Eileen Julien, "When a Man Loves a Woman: Gender and National Identity in Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* and Mariama Bâ's *Scarlet Song*." 205-22) in *Africa after Gender?* Ed. Catherine Cole, Manuh, Takyiwaa Manuh, & Stephan F. Miescher. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2007.
 - Olakunle George, "Cultural Criticism in Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*," *Representations* 67 (1999):
 - Lokangaka Losambe, "Death, Power and Cultural Translation in Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 42.1 (March 2007): 21-30.
 - Adebayo Williams, "Ritual & the Political Unconsciousness: The Case of *DKH*," *Research in African Literatures* 24.1 (1993): 67-79.
 - Wole Ogundele, "*Death & the King's Horseman*: A Poet's Quarrel with his Culture," *Research in African Literatures* 25.1 (Spring 1994): 47-60.
 - Ojaide, Tanure. "Teaching Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* to American College Students," *College Literature* 19-20.3-1 (Double issue) (1992 Oct-1993 Feb): 210-14.

WEEK 5: Tuesday September 29: Soyinka, Death and the King's Horseman (II)
--conclusion

- : Thursday October 1: Ngugi, Devil on the Cross (I)**
- Brendon Nicholls, "The Landscape of Insurgency: Mau Mau, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Gender," 177-94 in *Landscape and Empire, 1770-2000*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2005.
 - Jennifer Evans, "Women and Resistance in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*," *African Literature Today* 15 (1987): 131-139.
 - Ndigirigi, Gichingiri. "Character Names and Types in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*," *Ufahamu: Journal of the African Activist Association*. 19.2-3 (1991): 96-111.
 - Uskalis, Eriks. "Exchange and Language in Public Spheres: Constructions of Democracy and Citizenship in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*," *Critical Survey*. 8.3 (1996): 286-95
 - Kasanga, Luanga A. Kalume, Mambo. "The Use of Indigenized Forms of English in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross*: A Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Analysis," *African Languages & Cultures* 9.1 (1996): 43-69.

--Anthony D. Baker, "Bathing Involves Removing All One's Clothes': Proverbs and Language Theory in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross*," *Kentucky Philological Review* 15 (2001): 9-14.

WEEK 6: Tuesday October 6: Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross* (II)

--continuing discussion

: Thursday October 8: Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross* (III)

--conclusion

WEEK 7: Tuesday October 13: Emecheta, *Joys of Motherhood* (I)

- Stephane Robolin, "Gendered Hauntings: The Joys of Motherhood, Interpretive Acts, and Postcolonial Theory," *Research in African Literatures* 35.3, (Fall 2004): 76-92.
- Teresa Derrickson, "Class, Culture, and the Colonial Context: The Status of Women in Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*," *The International Fiction Review*, 29.1-2 (2002): 40-51.
- Ward, C. "What They Told Buchi Emecheta: Oral Subjectivity and *The Joys of Motherhood*." *PMLA* 105.1 (1990): 83-97.
- Salome C. Nnoromele, "Representing the African Woman: Subjectivity and Self in *The Joys of Motherhood*," *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 43.2 (Winter 2002): 178-90.
- Sarr, Ndiawar. "The Female Protagonist as Part of A Transitional Generation in *The Joys of Motherhood*," *Bridges: an African Journal of English Studies/Revue Africaine D'Etudes Anglaises*. 5.2 (1993): 25-33.

: Thursday October 15: Emecheta, *Joys of Motherhood* (II)

--conclusion

--Collect Exam Paper 1 questions. Take-home, 2 days.****

Thursday October 18: No Class.

--Submit Exam Paper 1 answers, in both email and hardcopy****

WEEK 8: Tuesday October 20: No Class. Read the poetry selections

Thursday October 22: Poetry Selections: "High" & "Low" (I)

- from *Penguin Book of Modern African Verse*
- from *Malibongwe*
- from Rampolokeng, *Horns for Hondo*
- Ngara, Emmanuel. **Ideology and Form** excerpts
- McClintock, Anne. "'Azikwelwa' (We Will Not Ride): Politics and Value in Black South

- African Poetry." *Critical Inquiry* 13 (Spring 1987): 597-623.
- Oyeniya Okunoye, Oyeniya: "The Critical Reception of Modern African Poetry," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 44.4 [176] (2004): 769-91.
 - Evan Mwangi, Evan: "Hybridity in Emergent East African Poetry: A Reading of Susan N. Kiguli and Her Contemporaries," *Africa Today* 53.3 (Spring 2007): 41-62.
 - Laura Chrisman, "Black Modernity, Nationalism and Transnationalism: The Challenge of Black South African Poetry." 29-46 in Walter Goebel & Saskia Schabio, ed. , *Beyond the Black Atlantic: Relocating Modernization and Technology*. London, England: Routledge, 2006.

WEEK 9: Tuesday October 27: Poetry Selections: "High" & "Low" (II)

--conclusion

: Thursday October 29: Dangarembga, Nervous Conditions (I)

- Lisa Eck, "Thinking Globally, Teaching Locally: The 'Nervous Conditions' of Cross-Cultural Literacy," *College English* 70.6 (July 2008): 578-598.
- Katrina Daly Thompson, "The Mother Tongue and Bilingual Hysteria: Translation Metaphors in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 43.2 (June 2008): 49-63.
- Clare Counihan, "Reading the Figure of Woman in African Literature: Psychoanalysis, Difference, and Desire," *Research in African Literatures* 38.2 (Summer 2007): 161-80.
- Pauline Ada Uwakweh, "Debunking Patriarchy: The Liberational Quality of Voicing in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions," *Research in African Literatures* 26.1 (Spring 1995): 75-84.
- Paul H. Lorenz, "Anorexia and the Experience of Colonization in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions," *Publications of the Arkansas Philological Association* 23.2 (Fall 1997): 41-51.
- Gilian Gorle, "Fighting the Good Fight: What Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions Says about Language and Power," *Yearbook of English Studies* 27: (1997): 179-92.
- Bhana, Hershini. "The Political Economy of Food: Hunger in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions," *Proteus* 17.1 (Spring 2000): 18-24.
- Wright, Derek. "More Than Just a Plateful of Food!: Regurgitating Colonialism in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions," *Commonwealth Essays & Studies* 17.2 (Spring 1995): 8-18. 1995.

WEEK 10: Tuesday November 3: Dangarembga, Nervous Conditions (II)

--continuing discussion

: Thursday November 5: Dangarembga, Nervous Conditions (III)

--conclusion

WEEK 11: Tuesday November 10: Djebbar, Fantasia (I)

- Rita Faulkner, "Psychoanalysis and Anamnesis in the National Allegory of Nawal El Saadawi and Assia Djebbar," *Esprit Créateur* 48.4 (Winter 2008): 69-80.
- Guilan Siassi, "Itineraries of Desire and the Excesses of Home: Assia Djebbar's Cohabitation with 'la langue adverse,'" *Esprit Créateur* 48.4 (Winter 2008): 56-68.
- Adlai H. Murdoch, "Woman, Postcoloniality, Otherness: Djebbar's Discourses of Histoire and Algérianité," *Esprit Créateur* 48.4 (Winter 2008): 15-33.
- Assia Djebbar, "'Silence on Silk,' or Writing in Flight" (trans. Farida Abu-Haidar), *Esprit Créateur* 48.4 (Winter 2008): 129-132.
- David Waterman, "Body/Text/History: Violation of Borders in Assia Djebbar's *Fantasia*," *Studies in Twentieth-Century Literature* 22.2 (Summer 1998): 319-33.
- Patricia Geesey, "Collective Autobiography: Algerian Women and History in Assia Djebbar's *L'amour, la fantasia*," *Dalhousie French Studies* 35 (Sum. 1996): 153-67.
- Kathryn M. Lauten, "Discontinuous Continuities in Assia Djebbar's *L'Amour la fantasia*," *Cincinnati Romance Review* 16 (1997): 101-08.

: Thursday November 12: Djebbar, Fantasia (II)

--continuing discussion

WEEK 12: Tuesday November 17: Djebbar, Fantasia (III)

--conclusion

: Thursday November 19: tba

WEEK 13: Tuesday November 24: Gordimer, The House Gun (I)

- Ilene Durst, "The Lawyer's Image, the Writer's Imagination: Professionalism and the Storyteller's Art in Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*," *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature* 13.2 (Fall 2001): 299-322.
- Clingman, Stephen. "Surviving Murder: Oscillation and Triangulation in Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 46.1 (Spring 2000): 139-58.
- Medalie, David. "The Context of the Awful Event': Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25.4 (1999): 633-44.
- Neil Lazarus, "The South African Ideology: The Myth of Exceptionalism, the Idea of Renaissance," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 103.4 (Fall 2004): 607-28.

: Thursday November 26: THANKSGIVING RECESS

WEEK 14: Tuesday December 1: Gordimer, The House Gun (II)

--continuing discussion

: Thursday December 3: Gordimer, The House Gun (III)

--conclusion

WEEK 15: Tuesday December 8: Exam paper tidbits/hints.

--Collect Exam Paper 2 questions****

: Thursday December 10: TBA

--Submit Exam Paper 2 answers, in both email and hardcopy****

ABBREVIATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Achebe, Chinua. *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays*. London: Heinemann, 1975.
- Achebe, Chinua. *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays*. London: Heinemann, 1988.
- Amadume, Ifi. *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. London: Zed Press, 1987.
- Balogun, F. Odun. *Ngugi and African Postcolonial Narrative: The Novel as Oral Narrative in Multigenre Performance*. Quebec, QC: World Heritage, 1997.
- Cantalupo, Charles. Ed. *The World of Ngugi wa Thiong'O*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1995.
- de Kok, Ingrid, & Karen Press, eds. *Spring is Rebellious: Arguments about Cultural Freedom by Albie Sachs and respondents*. Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1990.
- Gikandi, Simon. *Reading Chinua Achebe: Language and Ideology in Fiction*. London: Currey, 1991.
- Jeyifo, Biodun. *The Truthful Lie: Essays in a Sociology of African Drama*. London: New Bacon Books, 1985.
- Lindfors, Bernth (ed. and introd.). *Conversations with Chinua Achebe*. Jackson, MS: UP of Mississippi, 1997.
- Meyer, Herta. "Justice for the Oppressed": *The Political Dimension on the Language Use of Ngugi wa Thiong'O*. Essen: Verlag Die Blume Eule, 1991.
- Nfah-Abbenyi, Juliana. *Gender in African Women's Writing: Identity, Sexuality, & Difference*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997.
- Ngara, Emmanuel. *Ideology and Form in African Poetry: Implications for Communication*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1990.
- Ngate, Jonathan. *Francophone African Fiction: Reading a Literary Tradition*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1988.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'O. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: James Currey, 1986.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'O. *Writers in Politics*. Oxford: James Currey, 1997.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'O. *Penpoints, Gunpoints, and Dreams: Towards a Critical Theory of the Arts*

- and the State in Africa*. New York: Oxford UP, 1998.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'O. *Resistance to Repression in Neo-Colonial Kenya*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1983.
- Ogude, James. *Ngugi's Novels and African History: Narrating the Nation*. London: Pluto, 1999.
- Olaniyan, Tejumola. *Scars of Conquest/Masks of Resistance: The Invention of Cultural Identities in African, African American and Caribbean Drama*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995.
- Olaniyan, Tejumola & Ato Quayson, ed. *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007.
- Rutherford, Anna, & K. H. Petersen, eds. *Chinua Achebe: A Celebration*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1991.
- Soyinka, Wole. *Art, Dialogue, and Outrage: Essays on Literature and Culture*. Ibadan: New Horn Press, 1988.
- Soyinka, Wole. *Myth, Literature and the African World*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976.
- Stratton, Florence. *Contemporary African Literature & the Politics of Gender*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Thomas, Dominic. *Nation-Building, Propaganda, and Literature in Francophone Africa*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.
- Wilkinson, Jane. *Talking with African Writers*. London: James Currey, 1992.
- Jones, Eldred D. *Women in African Literature Today*. *African Literature Today* 15 (1987).
- Quayson, Ato. *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.