



A History of Twentieth-Century African Literatures

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African literatures, says volume editor Oyekan Owomoyela, "testify to the great and continuing impact of the colonizing project on the African universe." African writers must struggle constantly to define for themselves and other just what "Africa" is and who they are in a continent constructed as a geographic and cultural entity largely by Europeans.

This study reflects the legacy of colonialism by devoting nine of its thirteen chapters to literature in "Europhone" languages—English, French, and Portuguese. Foremost among the Anglophone writers discussed are Nigerians Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe, and Wole Soyinka. Writers from East Africa are also represented, as are those from South Africa. Contributors for this section include Jonathan A. Peters, Arlene A. Elder, John F. Povey, Thomas Knipp, and J. Ndukaku Amankulor.

In African Francophone literature, we see both writers inspired by the French assimilationist system and those influenced by Negritude, the African-culture affirmation movement. Contributors here include Servanne Woodward, Edris Makward, and Alain Ricard. African literature in Portuguese, reflecting the nature of one of the most oppressive colonizing projects in Africa, is treated by Russell G. Hamilton. Robert Cancel discusses African-language literatures, while Oyekan Owomoyela treats the question of the language of African literatures.

Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory Fido focus on the special problems of African women writers, while Hans M. Zell deals with the broader issues of publishing—censorship, resources, and organization.

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