



The Columbia Guide to East African Literature in English Since 1945 (The Columbia Guides to Literature Since 1945)

By *Simon Gikandi, Evan Mwangi*

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The Columbia Guide to East African Literature in English Since 1945 challenges the conventional belief that the English-language literary traditions of East Africa are restricted to the former British colonies of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Instead, these traditions stretch far into such neighboring countries as Somalia and Ethiopia.

Simon Gikandi and Evan Mwangi assemble a truly inclusive list of major writers and trends. They begin with a chronology of key historical events and an overview of the emergence and transformation of literary culture in the region. Then they provide an alphabetical list of major writers and brief descriptions of their concerns and achievements.

Some of the writers discussed include the Kenyan novelists Grace Ogot and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Ugandan poet and essayist Taban Lo Liyong, Ethiopian playwright and poet Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin, Tanzanian novelist and diplomat Peter Palangyo, Ethiopian novelist Berhane Mariam Sahle-Selassie, and the novelist M. G. Vassanji, who portrays the Indian diaspora in Africa, Europe, and North America.

Separate entries within this list describe thematic concerns, such as colonialism, decolonization, the black aesthetic, and the language question; the growth of genres like autobiography and popular literature; important movements like cultural nationalism and feminism; and the impact of major forces such as AIDS/HIV, Christian missions, and urbanization.

Comprehensive and richly detailed, this guide offers a fresh perspective on the role of East Africa in the development of African and world literature in English and a new understanding of the historical, cultural, and geopolitical boundaries of the region.

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Editorial Review

Review

An invaluable resource for literary research and scholarship on East Africa.

(James Ogude *African Studies Review*)

This guide offers valuable information... Recommended.

(*Choice*)

A welcome addition to the study of anglophone African literature and should not be missing from African Studies and Literature Libraries.

(Christine Matzke, Humboldt-Universitat Zu Berlin *Research in African Literatures*)

Should be included in the reference collection of all institutes of higher education... A must for serious researchers.

(Valentine K. Muyumba *American Reference Books Annual*)

Review

For students, scholars, researchers and general readers, this excellent guide presents a most comprehensive material for a deeper engagement with East African literature in all its facets and contexts. The dialectic it unearths between colonialism and nationalism is one that may also be revealed in literatures from other regions of Africa. What is new, exciting, and valuable in this particular study is the sense we get of the region's distinctive impact on the character and direction of its literature. In extending and redefining the East African region itself the authors demonstrate how literary traditions can actually extend geographic areas. For the first time a book on East African writing probes the impact of regional institutions like Makerere University, the University of East Africa, and the East African Literature Bureau on the development of a regional literature. East African literature may appear to occupy a minor place in African Literature yet in this guide its literary history complicates and challenges some of our general assumptions about the making of African literature.

(Nana Wilson-Tagoe, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London)

This is a work that nobody interested in the emerging corpus of world literature can afford to be without.

(Abiola Irele, Harvard University)

About the Author

Simon Gikandi is professor of English at Princeton University. His major fields of research and teaching are the Anglophone literatures and cultures of Africa, India, the Caribbean, and postcolonial Britain, the "Black" Atlantic, and the African diaspora. He is the author of numerous books, including *Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature*, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism*, and *Ngugi wa Thiong'o*, which was chosen as a *Choice Outstanding Academic Publication*. He is also the coeditor of *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature* and the editor of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of African Literature*. Evan Mwangi is assistant professor of English specializing in twentieth-century Anglophone African literature at Northwestern University. Previously, he has taught at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, and Ohio University, and his published works cover different areas of African oral narrative, theater, poetry, and fiction.

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