
LITERATURE IN POSTCOLONIAL AFRICA

Repression, Resistance, and Reconfigurations

Underdevelopment, as we now know, is the presence of absence in the present, the mythical character in a debased drama named neo-colonization which fills the stage of today's events with both actors and scenery. . . . It is a mysterious force whence issue the Delphic emanations of external exploitation, the matrix from which fetishes are endlessly turned out. Every African brought into its service like Caliban by Prospero's wand is working only to accomplish its desires. Therefore, since in Africa there is no reality except through this savage fiction, the extraordinary resilience of which [Aimé] Césaire spoke and which all of us wish for can only come about through the projection over Africa—the whole of Africa—of unbridled entities which, spreading to infinity, liberate new energy.

—Stanislas Adotevi, "Negritude Is Dead: the Burial"

Historical co-ordinates don't fit any longer, new ones, where they exist, have couplings not to the rulers, but to the ruled. It is not for nothing that I chose as an epigraph for my novel July's People a quotation from Gramsci: "The old is dying, and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum there arises a great diversity of morbid symptoms."

—Nadine Gordimer, "Living in the Interregnum"

Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious.

—Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History"

Literature has been an extraordinarily influential institution in postcolonial Africa, and African writers have been prominent in the struggles to build modern democratic societies on the ruins of the colonial state and against the brutalities of the many dictatorial post-independence regimes of the continent. (I shall be talking of literature from sub-Saharan Africa in this piece, with only passing references to writers from North Africa. This is less a matter of ideological persuasion than, alas, of professional ignorance.) A great number of African writers have had their works banned by these regimes, many have been jailed for long terms, and not a few have been killed or hounded into involuntary exile. (Among the prominent African writers who have suffered detention or been forced into exile are Mongo Beti, Breyten Breytenbach, Dennis Brutus, Nurrudin Farah, Bessie Head, Festus Iyayi, Abdelatif Laabi, Jack Mapanje, Micere Mugo, Keorapetse Kgositsile, Maina wa Kinyati, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Nawal El Saadawi, and Wole Soyinka.) The South African apartheid state, Idi Amin's Uganda, Kamuzu Banda's Malawi, and Daniel arap Moi's Kenya have been the most repressive for the arts and the life of the imagination, but literature has also been embattled in the most "benevolent" or paternalistic regimes, like those of Houphet-Boigny's Côte d'Ivoire, Kenneth Kaunda's Zambia, and Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe.

Literature in postcolonial Africa is thus deeply political, just as it had been in colonial Africa. This calls for a careful explanation, one

that transcends the narrow conception of the relationship of politics and literature represented in its extreme form by Stendhal's famous remark that politics in a novel is like a pistol shot in a concert hall. Certainly, the politics of literary expression in Africa includes forms like protest, agitprop, satirical sketches in street theater performances, prison notes and journals (often smuggled out while the writer is still incarcerated), pamphlets and manifestoes, all of which have been used to defy postindependence African dictatorial regimes. However, beyond these "instant" forms of political literature—which, we must never forget, often require great courage—some of the finest writings of postcolonial African literature involve a sophisticated *testamentary* tradition that taps the deepest democratic aspirations of the continent and its peoples. Surely, this connects African writing with some of this century's great literature from around the world.¹ In the most powerful of these works, the voices of postcolonial African literature mingle with those of other writers of this century who have made of literature the nemesis of state terrorism and a light in dark times, from Bertolt Brecht to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, from Primo Levi to Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

The finest of these writings belong to the great body of political literature of this century whose provenance lies in the confrontation of gifted imaginations with the most monstrous political systems of the century: European fascism, the Stalinist gulag, the mythical world of the ferocity and corruption of the Latin American military strongman, the *caudillo*. This gives us a simultaneously depressing and exhilarating dialectic: great political writing, it seems, always requires unspeakable crimes and barbarities; but at the same time, let evil be so awesome that it seems to spring from the very depths of nature and history, it will always meet, through great writing, a resistance that calls forth the spirit of all the victims of present and past crimes and injustices against humanity. Thus, to the surpassing evil of the Voerwoods and Bothas, the Idi Amins and the Mobutus, the Nguemas and the Bandas, the most powerful literary imaginations of the continent have responded with momentous

works imbued with the spirit of the human will to freedom. And only an appreciation of this explains the otherwise baffling point that although so much of the greatest works of postcolonial African writing is so profoundly pessimistic, even melancholic, much of it is also, to borrow the title of one of Neruda's volumes of poetry, "fully empowered," full of verbal vigor, innovative narrative, brilliantly original forms and techniques.

A few examples might serve to illustrate this point. In Wole Soyinka's *Madmen and Specialists*, evil and genocide are on the loose, creeds, families, and nations are broken up, and even the individual psyche is penetrated and colonized by this omnipresent evil. But the play derives its *texture* from the brilliant deconstructive wit of its protagonist, the Old Man, a Sade-like genius, and his acolytes, four beggar-vagrants who have been trained to perform like vengeful itinerant circus artists out to confront humanity. Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross* is a literary primer on the cruelties of neocolonialism. The text, however, comprises a stunning melange of Aesopian fables, poetic songs and chants, dramatic inserts, Kikuyu proverbs and legends, savage Swiftian satirical cartoons, and incorporations of biblical materials. Bessie Head's acclaimed novel *A Question of Power* is suffused by the gloom of the writer's discovery, upon her arrival as an exile in Botswana from South Africa, that black Africans inflict on one another the kind of cruelties and degradation that whites inflict on blacks in her apartheid homeland. However, the writing moves back and forth between expressionist refraction of the protagonist's descent into schizophrenia and madness, philosophical disquisitions on gender and the institutional determinations of the moral and spiritual guidance of humanity and society, and a diary-like detailing of work on the collective self-help projects in the village in which the novel is set. In these works, and others like Marechera's *Black Sunlight*, Fugard's *The Island*, Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, and Armah's *Fragments*, thematic pessimism is leavened by the force and originality of the rendering, and this becomes in itself a metaphor of indomitable will against apartheid and the neocolonial nightmares to the north.

I have stressed a continuity between the literature of colonial Africa, especially in its declining phase, and that of postindependence Africa, but to this I would add three qualifying observations.

First: in this essay I shall be engaging only the most significant postcolonial African writing. I shall not be concerned with some of the problems that affect the production and circulation of literary work in Africa, problems deriving from economic backwardness and the failures of autonomous development. Although these effects will not be explored here, some can be succinctly stated: it is much easier to obtain the works of African writers in Europe and North America than in Africa itself; and the most insightful criticism of this literature is mostly published in foreign journals and magazines.

Second: much of Africa's important writings have sprung from wars, political turmoil, and the tyranny of many of the postindependence regimes of the continent. Thus, those who might wonder at how quickly postcolonial African writing attained political and moral maturity would do well to remember that the lessons were learned in the womb of colonialism, against the negations and tyranny of colonial rule. Colonialism, in virtually all parts of Africa, did not enter its "liberal" phase until after the Second World War. And even then the battles had to be fought to expand the civic and human rights of Africans, to regain independence, and to exorcise dependency and inferiorization by challenging racially determined Eurocentric constructions of truth, rationality, and moral agency. Nationalist and radical social thought and literature in colonial Africa were invaluable intellectual and cultural "fronts" of these battles.

Thus the social thought of Pan-Africanists like Blyden, Casely-Hayford, Sekyi, and Diop, and revolutionary nationalists like Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, and Eduardo Mondlane had literary counterparts in works like Casely-Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound*, Sekyi's *The Blinkards*, David Diop's *Hammer Blows*, Neto's *Stubborn Hope*, and Oyono's *Houseboy* and *The Old Man and the Medal*. A volume like *When Bullets Begin to Flower*, Margaret Dickinson's collection of

patriotic and revolutionary Angolan anticolonial poetry, is a vivid illustration of this point, since "patriotism" in this volume is defined as much in reinventing the nation as in ending the foreign usurpation of sovereignty that colonialism represented; it is defined as much by exorcising racist, denigrating images of Africa and Africans as by drawing upon the varied poetic, rhetorical, and expressive traditions of the Angolan peoples. Hence the slogan that runs throughout the poetry in this volume as an underlying motif: *Vanos Descobir Angola!* (Let us Discover Angola!)

The third point derives logically from this complex interplay between colonialism and the postcolonial condition. Between the extremes of those who deny any relationship between the colonial past and the postcolonial present and those who absolutize the connection between them, there is a great variety of views. This point is crucial to perceptions of tradition and identity in African literature. Thus, those who insist that colonialism was *entirely* and unambiguously evil and injurious to African cultural traditions and creativity also take the view that postcolonial African literature should abandon Western literary influences. Among major proponents of this view are the late Ugandan poet, cultural anthropologist, and theorist Okot p'Bitek and the Nigerian critic and cultural journalist Chinweizu. The opposite view is expressed by people like the Zairean philosopher and novelist V.Y. Mudimbe and the Ghanaian philosopher and cultural critic Kwame Anthony Appiah, who hold that reassertions of literary tradition, even when they are based on precolonial sources, cannot be pure products unaffected by colonialism, but are indeed *re-inventions* overwhelmingly shaped by colonialism; correspondingly, they speak of syntheses between African forms and sources and Western influences.

In between these two positions, other commentators take more flexible, perhaps theoretically and ideologically weaker positions. Ali Mazrui, for instance, talks of a "triple heritage," which unproblematically includes precolonial African, Arab-Islamic, and Western traditions. Another view, very widely held, involves simple empiricist accounts of the chronological supersession of

colonial Africa by postcolonial Africa, with the attendant and inevitable pains of modernization and Westernization. In African literary criticism, this view is best exemplified by the editorial texts of the important journal *African Literature Today*.

In the opinion of this writer, the most useful accounts of this relationship come from a composite group of social theorists, philosophers, writers, and cultural critics, mostly of the revolutionary or democratic left, a group that includes names like Amilcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, Samir Amin, Paulin Hountondji, Marcien Towa, Stanislas Adotevi, Chinua Achebe, Omafume Onoge, Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie, Ayi Kwei Armah, Wole Soyinka, Abiola Irele, Ousmane Sembene, Agostinho Neto, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Mahmoud Mamdani, Ama Ata Aidoo, and Bessie Head. There is within this group a great diversity of ideas about postcolonial African critical thought and literature, but I extrapolate some common themes: that colonialism profoundly affected Africa, but in complex ways that simultaneously involved both exploitation, inferiorization and condescension, and mostly, but not entirely unintended transformative, positive processes; that the aftereffects of colonialism continue to plague Africa; that modernization in Africa is part of the alienating, global modernity of the capitalist epoch; that while much of postcolonial African literature and critical thought involves the exploration of Africa's place in the world, the most important issue in African cultural politics is the relationship of Africa to itself, the encounter of African nations, societies, and peoples with one another.

All of this points to the fact that the idea of a *colonial* line of descent for postcolonial African literature is not a mere given fact of political and cultural history; it is a construct of great consequence for both the production and the reception of the literature. The postcolonial does not come merely adventitiously *after* colonialism. Complex and ambiguous historical dynamics link the two and link both to precolonial Africa. For the rest of the essay I wish to explore the most important literary

manifestations of this postcolonial cultural space. For this, it is important for us to bear in mind Achebe's characteristically lucid admonition:

It is the very nature of creativity, in its prodigious complexity and richness, that it accommodates paradoxes and ambiguities. But this, it seems, will always elude and pose a problem for the uncreative literal mind. The literal mind is the one-track mind, the simplistic mind, the mind that cannot understand that where one thing stands another will stand by it.

Consider the first epigraph at the head of this essay. There the ethnologist and philosopher Stanislas Adotevi, the author of *Negritude et Negrologues*, perhaps the most brilliant and radical critique of Senghorian Negritude, calls for the projection over all of Africa of "unbridled entities" that would "liberate new energy" by exceeding the scope set by Prospero for Caliban. Moreover, Adotevi deliberately portrays both colonialism and neo-colonial dependence as witches' cauldrons from which phantasms and fictions about Africa and Africans are brewed, thus necessitating the need for counter fictions and "entities."

In Prospero and Caliban, Adotevi is alluding to perhaps the most widely deployed tropes of postcolonial literature. No pair of symbolic figures from the European literature of empire and colonization has had the same suggestiveness. The central factor in the resonance of *The Tempest* seems to have been the way that the play sees both colonial conquest and resistance to it as predicated on language—its power of establishing definitions of truth, reason, and reality and its corresponding power to disestablish and delegitimize. Prospero absorbs Caliban into the universe of his totalizing order of language, knowledge, and power; but Caliban revolts.

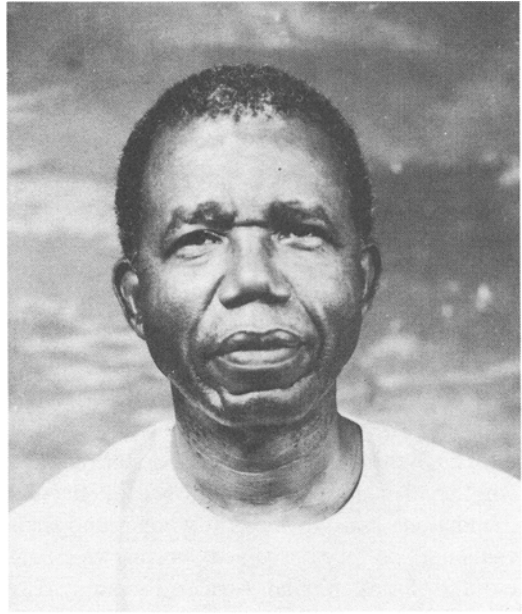
In contemporary African literature and criticism, much has been made of the Prospero-Caliban complex, mostly in terms of expanding Shakespeare's text and making of Caliban the "native" artist, intellectual, or critic who uses Prospero's language to revolt against Prospero and to wrest political control over the island or the colonized territory. By this reckoning,

Caliban's revolt is successful to the extent that in appropriating Prospero's language he defamiliarizes it, makes it undergo an estrangement such that Prospero can no longer recognize himself, his world, his projects, his supercilious racial and cultural pretensions in the "de-formed" language. This indeed was one of the main ideas in Jean-Paul Sartre's famous 1948 essay "Orphée Noire" in its celebration of the poetry of Negritude in the French language. This view implies that postcolonial literary expression *within* a European-based linguistic medium, within *Francophone*, *Anglophone*, or *Lusophone* literatures, are not so much local variants of metropolitan European literatures as new counterhegemonic *national* literatures in their own right.

This view rests on premises radically opposed to positivist accounts of language as human social practice, accounts incapable of grasping the complex alchemies that shape languages when they meet and collide. We need a comparative critical discourse that will astutely deploy Achebe's warning against literal-mindedness: "Where one thing stands, another will stand by it."

The most significant postcolonial African writing comes from this conceptual universe. And for this, the metaphor of Caliban's linguistic revolt, for all its resonance, clearly falls short of grasping the issues involved, since its implication of inversions of Prospero's language to estrange Prospero cannot admit of one thing standing where another one stands. For there are vast differences between European and African languages, and in yoking together their accumulated resources, postcolonial African writers are able to achieve transmutations impossible outside a postcolonial context. And it bears repeating that *this* context, this *space* involves the uneven coexistence of cultural forms from the precolonial, the colonial, and the postcolonial social formations.

The most accomplished postcolonial writers draw upon structures of feeling perhaps once treasured in pre-industrial European culture but long vanished from either the present-day living stock of ordinary speech or its incorporations into literary language. The examples are legion: the Ghanaian poet and novelist Kofi



Chinua Achebe

Rocon/Enugu, Nigeria

Awoonor draws extensively on the funeral dirges, the songs of ritual abuse and contests of the Ewe-speaking peoples, and achieves cadences otherwise unimaginable in English; Amos Tutuola's characters and narratives come from an exuberant Yoruba metaphysical universe worked over by colonial and postcolonial influences, and this gives his writings their celebrated haunting, enigmatic quality; the black South African poet Mazizi Kunene reinvents a new heroic, epic poetry in English by drawing on ancient Zulu poetic, chanted modes.

Perhaps the greatest practitioners of this quintessentially postcolonial literary practice are Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. In Soyinka's plays like *A Dance of the Forests*, *The Road*, *Madmen and Specialists*, and *Death and the King's Horseman*, autochthonous rites jostle with sensibilities produced by the contradictions of colonial capitalism or postcolonial alienation; the presiding spirit, the muse here, is not Caliban but Ogun, the ancient Yoruba god of creativity and destruction. Achebe draws on the brooding myths of the Igbo within novelistic frames that are utterly realistic and an ideational universe that is relentlessly rationalist and skeptical. Indeed, one of the most illuminating observations on postcolonial writing is provided by Achebe himself.

In one sense then [there] is a travelling away from its old self towards a cosmopolitan, modern identity while in another sense [there] is a journeying back to regain a threatened past and selfhood. To comprehend the dimensions of this gigantic paradox and coax from it such unparalleled inventiveness requires . . . the archaic energy, the perspective and temperament of creation myths and symbolism.

This notion of paradox and ambiguity as fundamental to the situation of postcolonial African literature finds noteworthy instantiations in two particular strands of postcolonial African writing: white South African authors who challenge apartheid and its intellectual foundations and writings by women and their challenge to the assumed normative *male* ground of postcolonial African literature. Let us turn first to the former.

If, as we have seen, the metaphor of Caliban's revolt has only limited application to postcolonial writing by *black* African writers, surely it has an even lesser application to *white* African authors, who may metaphorically be called Prospero's "African" progeny, for it is Prospero himself who is Africanized, who must now invent a new cultural identity for himself free of superciliously ethnocentric Enlightenment universalism. The limits etched here go back to Shakespeare's play: at the end of *The Tempest*, Prospero goes back to his beloved kingdom, his idealized Europe. This of course obscures the historic and cultural dynamics of *settler colonialism*, which, in a different scenario, would have Prospero stay on in the island, in the colonized African, South American, or Caribbean country. This indeed is the central plot element in Aimé Césaire's adaptation of Shakespeare's play in his *A Tempest*, a play that finds a historic limit in the founding moment of settler colonialism. Meanwhile, however, *this* form of colonization, represented in its most evil expression in the apartheid system, has run its full course and has been unraveling in the last two decades at least, undone by its indefatigable internal opponents and by the pressure of external forces.

The sense of this unraveling pervades the works of South African white authors and establishes a line of demarcation from their

black compatriots within the community of apartheid's literary naysayers. This unraveling of apartheid in works by white authors is overwhelmingly marked by the sense of apocalypse but also of redemption. It is this double articulation that is conveyed in the otherwise bleak vision of Gordimer's notion of "morbid symptoms" in the second epigraph to this essay. Thus, it seems that the discourse of civilization, empire, and colonization, which had an ambiguous provenance in classic European texts like Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and Gide's *The Immoralist* has run its full course in postcolonial African literature of white South African extraction. This point is given a great variety of thematic, representational, and moral inscriptions in works like André Brink's *A Dry White Season* and *Writings in a State of Siege*; Breyten Breytenbach's *A Season in Paradise*, *Confessions of an Albino Terrorist*, and *In Africa, Even the Flies are Happy*; J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *The Life and Times of Michael K*, and *Foe*; Athol Fugard's *Statements After an Arrest for the Immorality Act* and *A Lesson for Aloes*; and Nadine Gordimer's *The Late Bourgeois World*, *July's People*, and *The Essential Gesture*. Listen to the accents of one particular expression of this historical unraveling, in Breyten Breytenbach's *A Season in Paradise*:

And in this night we now enter, the fires of nationalism will be fanned, will flare up even brighter and more destructive. It will be said that it is "us" or "them"—without our knowing who "us" is, without our knowing "them." That side which we are going to have to choose, is it going to be a knowing choice, or a desperate tribal choice? Will we even have a choice? The expectation will be that something will be defended. What? A Western civilization? What Western civilization, and whose? The white man's sole right to decision-making? The white skin? Only death's skin is an unblemished white. Afrikaans? Whose Afrikaans? . . . One would like to believe that it could be possible to write in this country for and about people as people. But the poison of racism flows so deeply in our veins. Even in our language, our beautiful language, our wonderful vehicle. We speak of man and woman, of boy and girl. And when these are not pale


enough? Kaffir, nigger, coolie, blockhead, "uncle," ayah, kwedin, maid, wog, munt. . . . Some of these terms were dropped under the pressure of growing consciousness, but will we accept the full and equal, self-evident humanness of the "others"? . . . Do we later want it said then—in this land of sunshine, there were two species of homo sapiens—man, and white man?

"Man, and white man"—even in uncovering and undermining the racist, Eurocentric roots of apartheid, patriarchal tropes contaminate Breytenbach's attempt to imagine a humanist, universalist discourse purged of its inherited ethnocentrism and bigotry. It is for this reason that many African women writers and critics—and some men—speak of a *double*, and not a single, colonization. One colonization engenders the resistance of nationalism; the other engenders a resistance that questions both colonialism and nationalism, since both are predicated on "man" as the ground and sign of all reality, imagination and creativity and "woman" as the passive complement of this male power to name and control all things and relationships.

The range of perspectives in this strand of postcolonial African literature is considerable and often follows regional and generational differences. Thus the vision of a female supersession of the double colonization of classical colonialism and nationalism seems to be simultaneously deeper *and* less separatist in the works of South African writers like Nadine Gordimer and Bessie Head than in the works of their counterparts in the north. Furthermore, older writers like Flora Nwapa of Nigeria, Grace Ogot of Kenya, and Efua Sutherland of Ghana espouse a more conservative, "traditionalist" view of women and gender relationships than writers of a second wave of postcolonial African women's writings represented by authors like Buchi Emecheta, Werewere Liking, and Tsitsi Dangarembga. However, transcending these demarcations of region, generation and ideology are the works of writers like Ama Ata Aidoo, Nawal El Saadawi, Bessie Head, and Nadine Gordimer in their all-encompassing evocative power and moral authority. To give only one illustration of this, Ama Ata Aidoo's brilliant play *Anowa* uncovers the genealogies of African women's

oppression in precolonial institutions, the internal slave trade, and colonial capitalism, and at the same time engages the great subjects of nationalist postcolonial African literature: foreign domination, the reinvention of tradition, the oppression of the laboring classes, the struggle for personal autonomy. The implication of works like *Anowa* is that women will no longer be marginalized by an agenda of national liberation set by unexamined patriarchal values, nor will they be ghettoized into a tolerated "women's writing" enclave.

Some aspects of contemporary Western critical thought and literary theory, stemming from Lyotard and others, makes a distinction between two forms of knowledge: on the one hand, "stories" and "narratives," and on the other hand, scientific abstraction. This follows a putative global division of knowledge production: the non-Western, peripherally capitalist nations and societies have "story" and "narrative"; the Western, developed societies have "science." This seems to be supported by trends in world literature whereby the most



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exciting and vigorous forms of writing are emerging from the developing world. For instance, of the last six Nobel laureates in literature, three have come from Africa: Wole Soyinka (1986), Naguib Mahfouz (1988), and Nadine Gordimer (1991). And this year's winner of the Booker prize, Britain's most prestigious literary award, is the young Nigerian novelist Ben Okri. This view of contemporary world literature and intellectual relations, however, has a twist that has been brilliantly articulated by, among others, Fredric Jameson:

What this formulation does very sharply achieve . . . is the radical differentiation between the consumption of the past in narrative and its storage, hoarding and capitalization in "science" and scientific thought: a mode of understanding that, like the first surplus on the economic level, will little by little determine a whole range of ever more complex and extensive institutional objectifications—first in writing; then libraries, universities, museums; with the breakthrough in our own period to microstorage, computerized data, and data banks of unimaginable proportions, whose control or even ownership is . . . one of the crucial *political* issues of our own time.

The vitality of the literary arts in postcolonial Africa seems pertinent here. The narrative arts, the cultural value of telling a good story and of reclaiming a threatened past through fictions all remain relatively unchallenged in Africa and the developing world by the technological and social revolutions of knowledge production and consumption that are decisive phenomena of the cultural scene in the developed world. This is an enormous cultural asset, and it does underscore the vitality and growth of African writing against so much that is dismal in the continent at the present time. But as the third epigraph to this essay from Walter Benjamin warns us, we must beware "an enemy who has never ceased to be victorious." Against this grim but realistic pessimism, the long, historic, and optimistic view is that the world will never lose the desire for "story" and "narrative"; and the present systemic and institutional divisions of knowledge production that consign "story" to the South and "science" to the North are not immutable. □

NOTE

¹ From a long list of works that, although they share a common vision of human possibilities stunted but ultimately unquenchable, exhibit a great diversity of styles and technical resources, the following texts stand out: Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and the book of essays *Hopes and Impediments*; Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and *Fragments*; Ama Ata Aidoo's *Anowa*; Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* and *Scarlet Song*; Breyten Breytenbach's *A Season in Paradise*; J.M. Coetzee's *The Life and Times of Michael K* and *Waiting for the Barbarians*; Athol Fugard's *Boesman and Lena*, *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*, and *The Island*; Nadine Gordimer's *July*

People, *The Late Bourgeois World*, and the book of essays *The Essential Gesture*; Bessie Head's *A Question of Power and Maru*; Ahmadou Kourouma's *The Suns of Independence*; Dambudzo Marechera's *House of Hunger* and *Black Sunlight*; Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood*, *The Barrel of a Pen*, and *Matigari*; Niyi Osundare's *The Eye of the Earth*; Femi Osofisan's *Another Raft* and *Esu and the Vagabond Minstrels*; Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* and *God Dies by the Nile*; Ousmane Sembene's *Xala* and *The Last of the Empire*; Wole Soyinka's *The Man Died*, *A Play of Giants*, *A Shuttle in the Crypt*, and *Madmen and Specialists*.

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