

African writers series: celebrating over 40 years of African literature

Part II

NEVILLE ADONIS

Assistant Director: General Services

Part two in our series on African writers in which we highlight the impact of African literature on political systems in Africa in the struggle to democracy.

Ousmane Sembène

Senegal

Born on 1 January 1923 in Ziguinchor, Senegal, Ousmane Sembène is assuredly one of the most prominent figures in African film and literature. At the age of 15 he started earning his living as a fisherman. He also served as bricklayer, plumber, apprentice mechanic, dock worker and trade unionist before embarking on a career as film director, producer and writer.



Selected works

- #The black docker (1956)
- #God's bits of wood (1960)
- #Tribal scars and other stories (1962)
- #The money order with white genesis (1966)
- #Xala (1973)
- #The last of the empire (1981)
- #Niiwam and Taaw (1987).

Mariama Bâ

Senegal

Mariama Bâ was born in 1929 in Senegal. She was brought up by her grandparents in a traditional Moslem environment. Her father

was the minister of health at the time of the blueprint law. She obtained her teaching diploma in 1947. Married to a member of parliament, Obeye Diop, she became a divorced mother with nine children. In 1980 she obtained the Noma Prize for her first novel. She died the following year, just before the publication of her second novel.



Selected works

- #So long a letter (1979)
- #Scarlet song (1981).

Alexander Kanengoni

Zimbabwe

Alexander Kanengoni was born in 1951 and is a graduate of Kutama College, after which he briefly worked as a teacher before he joined the liberation struggle. He is a writer of war; almost everything he has written may be directly related to the Zimbabwean war of liberation and its causes, direct consequences, or lateral outcomes.



Selected works

- #Vicious circle (1983)
- #When the rainbird cries (1987)
- #Echoing silences (1997).

Doris Lessing

Zimbabwe

Doris Lessing, (Doris May Tayler) was born on 22 October 1919 in Persia (now Iran).

During the post-war years, Lessing became increasingly disillusioned with the Communist movement, which she left in 1954.

Lessing has written about the clash of cultures, the gross injustices of racial inequality, the struggle among opposing elements within an individual's own personality, and the conflict between the individual conscience and the collective good. Her stories and novellas set in Africa, published during the fifties and early sixties, decry the dispossession of black Africans by white colonials, and expose the sterility of the white culture in southern Africa.



Selected works

- #The grass is singing (1949)
- #Children of violence series (1951-1959)
- #The golden notebook (1962)
- #Briefing for a descent into hell (1971)
- Memoirs of a survivor (1974)
- #The good terrorist (1985)
- #The fifth child (1988)
- #The diary of a good neighbour (1983 written under the pseudonym Jane Somers)
- #If the old could ... (1984, written under

the pseudonym Jane Somers)

#Under my skin: volume one of my autobiography, to 1949 (1995).

Nelson Mandela

South Africa

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was born in the Transkei on 18 July 1918.



His father was Chief Henry Mandela of the Tembu tribe. Mandela himself was educated at the University College of Fort Hare and the University of the Witwatersrand and qualified in law in 1942. After spending 36 years in prison on Robben Island, he was released on 18 February 1990 and on 2 May 1994 became the first Black President in 'post Apartheid South Africa'.

Selected works

- #The struggle is my life (1986).
- #Forging a democratic, non-racial South Africa (1993)
- #Long walk to freedom (1994).

Véronique Tadjo

Côte d'Ivoire

Véronique Tadjo was born in 1955 in Paris but brought up in Abidjan. She has a doctorate in African American Studies. She spent a few years in Kenya and England, and now lives in South Africa.

Selected works

- #As the crow flies (2001)
- #The blind kingdom (1991)
- Champs de bataille et d'amour (Battlefields and love) (1999)
- #Talking drums (2000)
- #The shadow of Imana: travels in the heart of Rwanda (2002)
- #The betrayal, a short story in *Opening spaces: an anthology of contemporary African women's writing* (1999)
- The song of life (1989)
- Mamy Wata and the monster (1993)
- Lord of the dance (1993).



Africa 100 Best Books of the 20th Century

Various best lists of the 20th century were compiled a decade ago and one of these is the Africa's best books of the 20th century, a project organised by the Zimbabwean International Book Fair. This list was announced in Cape Town in 2002 and below is a reprint of the list that appeared in the CL in May/June 2002.

In the table below, ** indicates a top twelve title # depicts titles in stock.

Literature for children

Asare, Meshack	Ghana	#Sosu's call**	Sub-Saharan Publishers
Al-Homi, Hayam Abbas	Egypt	Adventures of a breath	Atfalna
Mungoshi, Charles	Zimbabwe	#Stories from a Shona childhood	Baobab Books
Tadjo, Véronique	Côte d'Ivoire	Mamy Wata et le monstre	Nouvelles éditions ivoiriennes

Creative writing

Abnudi, 'Abd al-Rahman	Egypt	al-Mawt 'ala al-asfalt	Atlas
Achebe, Chinua	Nigeria	Arrow of God	Heinemann
Achebe, Chinua	Nigeria	#Things fall apart**	Heinemann
Aidoo, 'Ama Ata	Ghana	Anowa	Longman
Almeida, Germano	Cape Verde	O testamento do Sr. Napumoceno da Silva Araújo	Ed. Caminho
Armah, Ayi Kwei	Ghana	The beautiful ones are not yet born	Heinemann
Bâ, Amadou Hampâté	Mali	L'étrange destin de Wangrin	Union générale d'éditions
Bâ, Mariama	Senegal	Une si longue lettre **	Nouvelles éditions africaines
Ben Jelloun, Tahar	Morocco	La nuit sacrée	Seuil

Beti, Mongo	Cameroon	Le pauvre Christ de Bomba	Présence africaine	Kane, Cheikh Hamidou	Senegal	#L'aventure ambiguë	Editions Juillard
Brink, André P	South Africa	#A dry white season	Penguin	Khosa, Ungulani Ba Ka	Mozambique	#Ujalalapi	AEMO
Bugul, Ken	Senegal	Riwan, ou le chemin de sable	Présence africaine	Kourouma, Ahmadou	Côte d'Ivoire	Les soleils des indépendances	Le Seuil
Cheney-Choker, Syl	Sierra Leone	The last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar	Heinemann	Laye, Camara	Guinea	#L'enfant noir	Plon
Chraïbi, Driss	Morocco	Le passé simple	Gallimard	Magona, Sindiwe	South Africa	#Living, loving and lying awake at night	David Philip Publishers
Coetzee, JM	South Africa	#Life and times of Michael K	Secker & Warburg	Mahfouz, Naguib	Egypt	#The Cairo trilogy**	Maktabet Misr
Couto, Mia	Mozambique	#Terra sonâmbula**	Ed Caminho	Marechera, Dambudzo	Zimbabwe	#House of hunger	Heinemann
Craveirinha, José	Mozambique	Karingana ua Karingana	Academica	Mofolo, Thomas	Lesotho	#Chaka**	Morija Sesuto Book Depot
Dadié, Bernard	Côte d'Ivoire	Climbié	Editions Segiers	Monenembo, Tierno	Guinea	Un attieké pour Elgass	Le Seuil
Dangarembga, Tsitsi	Zimbabwe	#Nervous conditions**	Women's Press	Mutwa, Vusamazulu Credo	South Africa	#Indaba, my children	Blue Crane Books
Dib, Mohammed	Algeria	Algérie, La grande maison, L'incendie, Le métier à tisser	Le Seuil	Ngugi wa Thiong'o	Kenya	Caitani Mutharaba-ini	Heinemann
Diop, Birago	Senegal	Les contes d'Amadou Koumba	Présence africaine	Ngugi wa Thiong'o	Kenya	#A grain of wheat**	Heinemann
Diop, Boubacar Boris	Senegal	Murambi ou le livre des ossements	Stock	Niane, Djibril Tamsir	Senegal	Soundjata ou l'épopée mandingue	Présence africaine
Djebbar, Assia	Algeria	L'amour, la fantasia**	JC Lattes	Nyembezi, Sibusiso	South Africa	#Inkinnsela yaseMgungundlovu	Shuter and Shooter
Emecheta, Buchi	Nigeria	#The joys of motherhood	Alison and Busby	Okigbo, Christopher	Nigeria	Labyrinths	Heinemann
Fagunwa, Daniel O	Nigeria	Ogboju ode ninu igbo irunmale	Nelson	Okri, Ben	Nigeria	#The famished road	Spectrum Books
Farah, Nuruddin	Somalia	Maps	Pan Books	Oyono, Ferdinand	Cameroon	Le vieux nègre et la médaille	Editions Juillard
Fugard, Athol	South Africa	#The blood knot	Simondium Publishers	P'Bitek, Okot	Uganda	Song of Lawino	Heinemann
Ghitani, Jamal al-	Egypt	Zayni Barakat	GEBO	Pepetela	Angola	#A geração da utopia	Dom Quixote
Gordimer, Nadine	South Africa	#Burger's daughter	Jonathan Cape	Saadawi, Nawal El	Egypt	Woman at point zero	Zed Books
Head, Bessie	South Africa	#A question of power	Heinemann	Salih El Tayyib	Sudan	Season of migration to the north	Heinemann
Honwana, Bernardo	Mozambique	Nos matamos o cão tinhoso	Academica	Sassine, Williams	Guinea	Le jeune homme de sable	Présence africaine
Hove, Chenjerai	Zimbabwe	#Bones	Baobab Books	Sembène, Ousmane	Senegal	Les bouts de bois de Dieu	Le livre contemporain
Isegawa, Moses	Uganda	#Abessijnse kronieken	Uitgeverij De Bezige Bij	Senghor, Léopold Sédar	Senegal	Oeuvre poétique**	Le Seuil
Jordan, Archibald Campbell	South Africa	#Ingqumbo yeminyanya	Lovedale Press	Serote, Mongane	South Africa	#Third world express	David Philip Publishers
Joubert, Elsa	South Africa	#Die swerfjare van Poppie Nongena	Tafelberg				

Shabaan, Robert Bin	Tanzania	Utenzi wa vita vya uhuru	East African Literature Bureau
Sony Labou Tansi	Congo	La vie et demie	Seuil
Sow Fall, Aminata	Senegal	La grève des battus	Nouvelles éditions africaines
Soyinka, Wole	Nigeria	#Death and the king's horsemen	Spectrum
Tchicaya U Tam'si	Congo	Le mauvais sang - feu de brousse - à trisse-coeur	PJ Swald
Tutuola, Amos	Nigeria	#The palm-wine drinkard	Faber
Vera, Yvonne	Zimbabwe	#Butterfly burning	Baobab Books
Vieira, José Luandino	Angola	Nós os do Makulusu	União dos Escritores Angolanos
Vilakazi, BW	South Africa	#Amal'eZulu	Witwatersrand University Press
Yacine, Kateb	Algeria	Nedjma	Le Seuil

Scholarship/non-fiction

Amin, Samir	Egypt	Accumulation on a world scale	Monthly Review Press
Amadiume, Ifi	Nigeria	Male daughters, female husbands	Zed Books
Andrade, Mario de	Angola	Os nacionalismos africanos	Sa da Costa
Appiah, Anthony	Ghana	#In my father's house	Oxford University Press
Cabral, Amilcar	Guinea-Bissau	#Unity and struggle	Monthly Review Press
Chimera, Rocha	Kenya	Kiswahili, past, present and future horizons	Nairobi University Press
Diop, Cheikh Anta	Senegal	Antériorité des civilisations nègres**	Présence africaine
Doorkenoo, Efu	Ghana	Cutting the rose	Minority Rights Group
Hayford, JE Casely	Ghana	Ethiopia unbound	Cass
Hountondji, Paulin	Benin	Sur la philosophie africaine	François Maspero
Johnson, Samuel	Nigeria	The history of the Yorubas	G Routledge & Sons
Kenyatta, Jomo	Kenya	#Facing Mount Kenya	Secker & Warburg

Ki-Zerbo, Joseph	Burkina Faso	Histoire de l'Afrique noire	Hatier
Krog, Antjie	South Africa	#Country of my skull	Jonathan Cape
Mama, Amina	Nigeria	Beyond the mask, race, gender and identity	Routledge
Mamdani, Mahmood	Uganda	Citizen and subject	James Currey Publishers
Mandela, Nelson	South Africa	#Long walk to freedom	Little, Brown
Marais, Eugene	South Africa	#Die siel van die mier	JL van Schaik
Memmi, Albert	Tunisia	Portrait du colonisé suivi de portrait du colonisateur	L'Etincelle
Mondlane, Eduardo	Mozambique	The struggle for Mozambique	Penguin
Mphahlele, Ezekiel	South Africa	#Down Second Avenue	Faber & Faber
Mudimbe, VY	Dem. Rep. of Congo	#The invention of Africa	Indiana University Press
Nkrumah, Kwame	Ghana	Ghana: the autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah	Nelson
Plaatje, Sol	South Africa	#Native life in South Africa	PS King
Soyinka, Wole	Nigeria	#Ake: the years of childhood**	Rex Collings
Van Onselen, Charles	South Africa	#The seed is mine	David Philip Publishers