

Meja Mwangi

The most comprehensive reference work on African literature to date, this book covers all the key historical and cultural issues in the field. The Encyclopedia contains over 600 entries covering criticism and theory, African literature's development as a field of scholarship, and studies of established and lesser-known writers and their texts. While the greatest proportion of literary work in Africa has been a product of the twentieth century, the Encyclopedia also covers the literature back to the earliest eras of story-telling and oral transmission, making this a unique and valuable resource for those studying social sciences as well as humanities. This work includes cross-references, suggestions for further reading, and a comprehensive index.

Dan Chiponda earns a scholarship to study in China and reluctantly leaves his native Zimbabwe for an uncertain future. Learning to take racial abuse in his stride, he dates a fellow student, Lai Ying, who is attracted to his easy-going manner. He remains haunted by the weight of his mother's expectations, encapsulated by the image of the African fish eagle. Things take a dramatic turn when Chinese students pour into the streets in an orgy of violence to drive Africans out of town. The situation in Nanjing only stabilises when attention turns to the mayhem that is unraveling in Tiananmen Square, Beijing. But that is only the beginning of Dan's troubles with the 'Campus Gestapo', loan sharks in Hong Kong, and the shock of his family getting caught up in the violence by Mugabe's war vets. *Black Ghosts* was inspired by stories of Africans living in China in the 1980s and, in particular, by the little known incident in Nanjing, where African and Chinese students engaged each other in a violent battle just months before the Tiananmen Square massacre.

Art, Culture and Society Vol 1 is the first in a series of books to be published by Twaweza Communications on the relationship between art and society, with special reference to Kenya. It is part of a cultural leadership initiative being undertaken by the organization through a reexamination of the arts as they are produced and studied. This volume brings together important reflections on the arts and is a major step in encouraging dialogue on the relationship between creativity and the human condition in the region. Significantly, it creates a space for university-based academics to engage in dialogue with artists and writers based outside institutions of higher learning. The conversations will bridge the gap between the two domains for knowledge production and enrich creative enterprise in Kenya, in theory and practice. As the essays in this collection show, the present global situation demands a way to conceptualise and theorise an ever growing cultural interconnectedness, sometimes manifested in art; and interconnectedness that draws from a myriad of cultures and experiences. Through the bridges of contact and cultural exchange distant images are mediated and brought closer to us. They are reinterpreted and modified. In the final analysis, culture is shown to be an important aspect of human creativity but separateness and boundedness is contested. Instead, culture is shown to be malleable and fluid. The essays bring in a new freshness to our reading of the creative arts coming out of Kenya.

David Livingstone: The Wayward Vagabond in Africa is an expression of doubt about the *raison d'être* concerning the 19th Century explorers and missionaries in Africa. Led by David Livingstone, the Scottish explorer and missionary, they are said to have come to civilise "backward" Africans, which the author creatively re-imagines, arguing that it is far from the truth. Instead, their actions gave impetus to colonialism proper. In this book the omniscient narrator, Everywhere, is God's special envoy mandated to witness history with far-reaching consequences for humanity. His investigation is to help nail David Livingstone on Judgment Day, much the same way St Peter chronicles events in the Book of Life. Read about how, Everywhere, the spirit rides on wind, walks on water, enters into his characters' stream of consciousness and even discerns how they interpret the world around them. The novel retraces Livingstone's early life, from his deprived childhood in Blantyre, Scotland; his

ideological evolution and training in London and his dramatic sojourn in Monomotapa kingdom, which he half-believes is his destiny. The satirical tone in the novel aptly captures that delusional aspect of Livingstone's "God-ordained" mission to the world.

Toma Tomei had nine daughters, but wants a son so that he can become Chief Councillor and leader of his peoples. His political rival Old Jonah opposes his ambition, and consults a witchdoctor to try and ensure Toma will never beget a son. When Toma's wife gives birth to a baby boy however, it seems his plotting has failed. But then, the boys' looks suggest Toma may not be the father after all...

Arrakan is the mother of calamity and great aunt to human suffering; a land that spawns wars, genocides, plagues and famines, human disasters of biblical proportions, and spews them onto the world with the wantonness of mad volcano. It is a persevering and generous land; a land that welcomes adventurers and mad men with open arms, promises bounteous treasures and boundless pleasures, but delivers, instead, a feast of unimaginable woes and unremitting cruelty. She is the visionary, the liberator, the sword of justice; sworn foe to anyone who would oppress her people. Her sole reason for living is to deliver her people from the shackles of neocolonial bondage, from the pseudo-socialist generals who have hijacked the revolution and slaughtered her dream and the aspirations of her people. He is a man of war, a merchant of death, a vile and despicable creature, or so she tells him; a selfish man who can't believe in any cause other than his own; a man incapable of love. When they first meet, she promises to shoot him dead herself, if it becomes necessary. Everyone wants to shoot Jack Adams, for reasons that have a lot to do with the fact that he is after his own and considers everything else, especially the tragic war, an extravagant waste of time. They spare Jack, each for their own reasons, and he eventually gives everyone enough good reasons to seriously want him dead. But he is not the only one who knows the might of the gun.

For Kariuki, life in his small Kenyan village is one great adventure. It gets even more interesting when he meets Nigel, an English boy who is visiting his grandfather. Kariuki befriends Nigel even though the rest of the villagers fear him and call him "mzungu boy."

CHRISTMAS WITHOUT TUSKER When their women close the bars and force them to spend Christmas at home, Kambi men realise they have made a big mistake allowing women to run the traditionally male-controlled bar business. There is anxiety and disaffection, as the townsmen men prepare to confront the unthinkable, a tusker-free Christmas. In this novel Meja Mwangi revives Kambi market's hard men, and their harder women, and the characters that made "Baba Pesa" such a fun read. Mwangi's keen eye for the drama and humor in everyday life shines through his work.

Kurtz's analysis the development of the Kenyan novel in English emphasizes the historical contingencies affecting the production of literature in Kenya, and how succeeding generations have drawn from and expanded the thematic repertoire established by the 'first generation' of works in the 1960s. He explores the relationship between the novel and the city, and how obsessions and fears about the urbanization have been expressed and represented through different generations of Kenyan writers. Kurtz has also put together the first annotated bibliography of all the anglophone Kenyan novels that have appeared since Ngugi wa Thiong'o wrote *Weep Not, Child*. Ngugi's *Weep Not, Child* made an immediate impact on its publication in 1964.

Since then hundreds of novels by Kenyans have been published. This is a comprehensive introduction to the postcolonial novel in English. Three broad areas are identified: -- the first generation of the sixties -- the 'golden age' of the seventies -- and the years after Kenyatta in the 80s and 90s. A unifying feature is an uneasy but marked emphasis on the city-particularly Nairobi. The city is used by novelists as both the site and the symbol for a range of obsessions and fears about postcolonial society. There is particular emphasis on the changing ways in which the city has been portrayed since Ngugi's first novel, the relation of popular literature to the city, the portrayal of women in the city and the special status of Meja Mwangi's urban novels.

"This book is composed of transcriptions of radio interviews conducted by the Voice of America with African authors from 1974-1978. A total of 78 interviews were broadcast in the series from 1975-1979."--Page v.

Dusman Gonzaga lives in a squalid apartment block overrun by poverty and cockroaches. The crumbling building is owned by Tumbo Kubwa, a mindless slum lord with a heart of stone, and occupied by a strange mix of characters; from garbage collectors to hawkers, from conmen to witch doctors, from wise men to mad men. In this crazy world of wild adventures and appalling poverty, Dusman tries to organize the tenants to boycott paying rent in a desperate move to force the landlord to heed their cries. Dusman, however, finds himself alone against the landlord. Afraid that the landlord will summon the police to evict them as promised, his neighbours beg out of the confrontation, pleading special, personal circumstances. But Dusman hatches a plot so diabolical they cannot chicken out of the fight. *The Cockroach Dance* is the story of one man's resistance to intimidation and exploitation by the 'haves' in a world of 'have-nots' and 'faceless ones'. 'Meja Mwangi spins a fascinating tale of one man's revolt against exploitation'. *The Daily Nation*

The first collection of short stories from Kenya's foremost woman novelist. Twelve stories bring alive the author's feeling for the macabre and fantastic - reminiscent of the tragedy in *The Promised Land*.

A young farmer and his wife who have migrated to Tanzania from Kenya become embroiled in issues of personal jealousy and materialism, and a melodramatic tale of tribal hatreds ensues. The novel explores Ogot's concept of the ideal African wife: obedient and submissive to her husband; family and community orientated; and committed to non-materialist goals. The style is distinctively ironic giving the story power and relevance. Grace Ogot has been employed in diverse occupations as a novelist, short story writer, scriptwriter, politician, and representative to the UN. Some of her other works include *The Island of Tears* (1980), the short story collection *Land Without Thunder* (1988), *The Strange Bride* (1989) and *The Other Woman* (1992). *The Promised Land* was originally published in 1966, and has since been reprinted five times.

This is the story of Muriuki, a young man from a Kenyan village who leaves his home and back-breaking job on a coffee plantation for the city, to pursue wealth, and happiness with his childhood sweetheart Mumbi. But life is not straightforward for the young lovers who become steeped in the quagmire of Kenyan politics, and are confronted with the sophistication of a new world, its economic hardships and brutality, and the racism and persistent inequities of the

post-colonial and global society. Then Mumbi is murdered on account of her activism and race, in lineage with so many of her country's historical and fictional female activists. Muriuki avenges her death in a controversial act which reverberates historically and throughout the society in which he lives. But then he experiences betrayal by his own people, which changes him irrevocably. Celebrated urban theorist Davis provides a global overview of the diverse religious, ethnic, and political movements competing for the souls of the new urban poor.

Housing matters, no matter when or where. This volume of collected essays on housing in colonial and postcolonial Africa seeks to elaborate the how and the why. Housing is much more than a living everyday practice. It unfolds in its disparate dimensions of time, space and agency. Context dependent, it acquires diverse, often ambivalent, meanings. Housing can be a promise, an unfulfilled dream, a tool of self- and class-assertion, a negotiation process, or a means to achieve other ends. Our focus lies in analyzing housing in its multifacetedness, be it a lens to offer insights into complex processes that shape societies; be it a tool of empire to exercise control over private relations of inhabitants; or be it a means to create good, obedient and productive citizens. Contributions to this volume range from the field of history, to architecture and urban planning, African Studies, linguistics, and literature. The individual case studies home in on specific aspects and dimensions of housing and seek to bring them into dialogue with each other. By doing so, the volume aims to add to the vibrant academic debate on studying urban practices and their significance for current social change.

Dieudonne's life is spun from the threads of one of Africa's grand moral dilemmas, in which personal responsibility is intertwined with the social catharsis occasioned by ambitions of dominance and ever diminishing circles. We encounter Dieudonne at the tail end of his service as 'houseboy' to the Toubaabys, a patronising expatriate couple. In the company of a lively assortment of characters and luring music at the Grand Canari Bar, Dieudonne recounts his life. As he peels layer after layer of his vicissitudes, he depicts the everyday resilience of the African on a continent caught in the web of predatory forces. Yet, this enchanting failure also celebrates the infinite capacity of the African to find happiness and challenge victimhood.

Grace Ogot is a well-known Kenyan novelist. In this collection of nine stories, she explores themes of social, cultural and spiritual importance. Her imagery is designed to unveil evils which bedevil modern society, such as violence, lust for power and wealth, and family turmoil. Her stories are imbued with the culture of Kenya.

This is one of the most stirring tales from the folklore of East and Central Africa. Mugasha is a deity-king who harness natural elements and uses them to recapture the usurped kingdom of his father. He is in many ways a symbol of the indefatigable human zeal in the search for liberty and justice.

Kariuki, a twelve-year-old Kenyan boy, is befriended by Nigel, the white

landowner's son, and they are both caught up in powerful forces as a rebellion arises in the area. Reprint.

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