

Voices Off:
Models of Orality in African Literature
and Literary Criticism

CRAIG TAPPING

IN THEIR NOW famous manifesto, *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature*, the troika — as Chinweizu, Onwucheka Jemie, and Ihechukwu Madubuike are known popularly in Nigeria and in African literary circles — defend African culture against what they perceive as the imperialist thrust of contemporary literary theory and critical methodologies. They assert what should be obvious about the “Africanness” of African literatures. African literature, they write, “has its own traditions, models and norms . . . And its historical and cultural imperatives impose upon it concerns and constraints quite different, sometimes altogether antithetical to the European” (4). As my argument concerns the structures and attendant ideologies of oral traditions in African culture — as evidenced through the manner in which orality informs what is written by Africans — Chinweizu, Jemie, and Madubuike again are important to the initial moves which this paper attempts. This is part of a critical enterprise which seeks to silence the growing theoretical sophistication of Euro-American theories of representation and alterity, a clamour which once again would overwhelm the non-metropolitan production of literary meaning.

Aware of a growing Western-centred analysis of the place of orality in critiques of anthropology and ethnography, I have chosen to focus instead on those analyses and representations of oral culture which derive from Africa. In a telling example of Western theoretical analysis of oral cultures, Michel de Certeau argues that “ethnology” — the analysis through narrative description of non-literate societies — articulates various “rules in writing” which then define for literate societies what that other culture

is doing, thinking, and imagining. These “rules” further determine how that other culture achieves contemporary social organization. Unfortunately, de Certeau lapses into a logical binarism which causes him to describe the oral as “primitive” (209). Whatever strengths his deconstruction of such ethnographic inscriptions may carry are thus irreparably damaged by the unconscious imperialisms of his discourse.

Moreover, we do not have to read Western theorists to learn about African orality in the first place. African writers have been narrating their self-representations in European languages for at least two hundred years now: one thinks of Equiano, for example. More recently, post-colonial African literatures present us with a plethora of such self-representations in various genres.

In my own research and teaching of Commonwealth literature, however, I am ever more conscious of a dilemma confronting those who would wrestle with contemporary theory and yet remain committed to the cultural practices and literatures being produced on the decentred margins of former Empire.¹ Contemporary theory, first generated from within academies of the “developed” world, is then exported for use in explaining, debasing, and re-inscribing subordinate positions for the subjects and creators of literature from the so-called “underdeveloped” world.² Theorists either re-inscribe the canonicity of the very texts they claim to “decenter,” or use Euro-American ideologies of language and textuality to re-colonize writing from newly independent, formerly silenced regions of the world.³ Once again, the “underdeveloped” world provides the raw materials for the careers and profits of more technologically advanced master-consumers who import the raw material (literature) and convert it to their own ends (theory).⁴ This unfortunate condition underwrites whatever it is I do — for example, in an essay such as this — with African literature. What signifies for my purpose, then, is the foregrounding by Chinweizu, Jemie, and Madubuike of as yet unspecified historical and cultural imperatives which constitute both African literature and the consequently normative prescriptions for what they now singularize as African literature.

The distinctive parent of African literature, orality, is both reservoir and repertoire of traditions, models, and norms to which

the critics allude and which define the literature as African. So, too, the manner in which an African writer employs various literary strategies to suggest this alterior tradition — the way in which orality is embodied in writing — makes explicit the historical and cultural imperatives of which the fictions are an effect.

Most critics of African literature also employ some implicit model of orality in order to repudiate or praise their subject-writer's abilities as poet, dramatist, or novelist. The experience of local oral traditions frequently heightens a critic's awareness of these forms and their influences. Even when such signals operate in a critical text, however, the language of the more widely circulated and therefore dominating discourse of non-African critical practice dominates.

Thus, in *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature*, "orature" is paradigmatically opposed to "literature," and defines the unwritten and age-old. My figuring it as temporal is suggested by the pre-contact historicity and still unsullied nature/essence/authenticity invoked by their coinage which is contemporary with Ngugi wa Thiong'o's use of the seemingly oxymoronic neologism, "oral literature" (12).

Here then are two similar models of African oral traditions, one generic and one slightly more specific in its regard of an organic, pre-contact pastoral of village life. Both define traditional African cultures in counter-distinction to that which their unfortunately evolutionary model suggests will succeed orality. Ngugi is surprisingly explicit in his narrative of this transformation from Edenic play in a mother tongue and oral culture into the servitude demanded by a monolithically dull language and its literary forms. "The Language of African Literature," a polemical essay, begins by invoking a communal childhood with diurnal rounds of magic, happy labour in the fields, and folktales around the fire after sundown:

We spoke Gikuyu in and outside home. I can vividly recall those evenings of story-telling around the fireside. It was mostly the grown-ups telling the children but everybody was interested and involved. We children would re-tell the stories the following day to other children who worked in the fields picking the pyrethrum flowers, tea-leaves or coffee beans of our European and African landlords.

... There were two types of characters in human-centred narratives: the species of truly human beings with qualities of courage, kindness, mercy, hatred of evil, concern for others; and a man-eat-man two-mouthed species with qualities of greed, selfishness, individualism and hatred of what was good for the larger co-operative community. Co-operation as the ultimate good in a community was a constant theme. . . .

There were good and bad story-tellers. A good one could tell the same story over and over again, and it would always be fresh to us, the listeners. He or she could tell a story told by someone else and make it more alive and dramatic. The differences were really in the use of words and the inflexion of voices to effect different tones.

... Our appreciation of the suggestive magical power of language was reinforced by the games we played with words through riddles, proverbs, transpositions of syllables, or through nonsensical but musically arranged words. . . . The language . . . gave us a view of the world, but it had a beauty of its own. . . . The language of our evening teach-ins, and the language of our immediate and wider community, and the language of our work in the fields were one.

And then I went to school . . . and this harmony was broken. The language of my education was no longer the language of my culture. (10-11)

This organic representation of his own Gikuyu orally-based traditions ends when childhood does, with his being sent to school — an image here of a fall from grace and consequent loss of comfort, nurture, and spontaneity. This autobiographical grounding of his critical discourse against the imperialism of English as language and literary system merely recirculates the usual tropes to describe orality and its supposed cultural strengths.

Ngugi inscribes the oral as indicative of a former golden age: it is pastoral and relatively innocent. This portrait of an holistic community, its shared pastimes and innocent cultural pursuits, is surprisingly close to the imperial vision of child-like Africans perpetrated by non-African writers like Isaak Dinesen and Elspeth Huxley on a not always suspecting outside world. His equally belated image of the “fireside” and its storytellers recurs in criticism of other African literature, descriptions of oral performances, and in more ambitious studies of orality which seek to suggest a universalized, pre-literate culture for now-silenced groups and societies. This archaizing of orality and oral traditions is frequently doctrinaire, suggesting a pre-Industrialized agrarian purity from

which vantage the critic can castigate contemporary capitalism and its consequent anomies or, conversely, a pre-patriarchal feminist Utopia: "a once-upon-a-time wholeness before language, before writing, before Man" (Harraway 93).

These constructions, moreover, re-inscribe positions of subordination through imagery of primitivism, psychological and intellectual underdevelopment, and a simplistic notion of animism. This neo-imperialism carried by contemporary criticism is seen in the figuration of the oral as non- or pre-literate in Walter Ong's model of the literate as post-oral, and Fredric Jameson's recent descriptions of African and Third World cultural traditions and consequent habits of mind as "archaic or tribal" (82).

It is not surprising, then, to note that critics of Amos Tutuola's fictions condescend to the richness of Africa's oral cultures, the signifying mark of African otherness, in their enthusiasms for novels that "might be crude and unkempt" but reveal "an elemental vitality which the polished-writings of more sophisticated authors too often lack" (Lindfors xiv). Thirty years of writing about Tutuola's writing has not revealed to his critics an awareness of the imperialist espousals in their critical analyses. His work is "naive," "untutored," "unschooled," "un-willed," "trance-like," "natural," "uncorrupted," "intuitive," and "pristine": it has not yet "fallen into that stilted English which so many educated African writers use" (Lindfors 1-43). An American critic writes that one "catches a glimpse of the very beginning of literature, that moment when writing at last seizes and pins down the myths and legends of an alphabetic culture" (Lindfors 17). A British critic unselfconsciously extends this figure of the natural custodian of pre-literate and hence primitive traditions: "One has the immediate intuition of a creative artist working by spell and incantation. . . . The barbarous fantasy is not free, but is ruled by the dreadful conspiracy of primitive belief and sensibility" (Lindfors 22).

By contrast, the African scholar, Emmanuel Obiechina clarifies much that was explained in Tutuola's fictions — and grounds that discussion for non-African readers in terms recognizably drawn from Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*, thus implicitly banishing notions of savagery and primitivism which haunt West-

ern critics. Obiechina then falls into the evolutionary figure of schooling and advanced literacy, however, when he explains the presence of contemporary artefacts in Tutuola's otherwise atemporal fables by appealing to an authenticating reality: "Even an illiterate person in the streets of Lagos has seen a clock, a petrol drum and a torch, and may have heard of bombers, telephones and technicolour" (143).

There are other versions and models of orality which structure the literatures of Africa, and it is revealing to read various literary constructions for the versions and models of orality operating within them. Ngugi, for example, rarely employs the nostalgic dream of a communal past which is so prominent in his criticism to structure his novels — such as *Petals of Blood* — or the plays on which he has collaborated, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* and *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)*. Instead, his oral model is the communal, verbal networks of the present through which his characters and communities exchange political and immediately contemporary information about the comings and goings of various "villains," all of whom are so defined and positioned by their having been bought into complicity with the economic neo-imperialisms of superpowers and multinationals.

Here, the model of orality is like that suggested by Canadian writing: the inscription of voices as they discuss, argue, and debate the past and the futures of a community give form to Ngugi's fictions and dramas. Unlike his literary criticism which foreground the project of retrieval and which lament the erasure of indigenous languages and cultural arrangements, his fictions and plays predicate a future based on mutuality and communally shared wealth.

This thematic, adapted as it is from Ngugi's readings in and practise of Marxist theory, is further determined by the forms of conversations, adapted Brechtian questioning and alienation, communal rumours, and collective agreements which his novels and drama share. New networks of community and new understandings of collectivity, both of which transcend an imposed moral code, suggest a redeemed future in Ngugi's writings. For example, Ngugi's protagonist is frequently a prostitute who, by virtue of her work, is able to carry messages from one stratum of society to an-

other and has a uniquely ubiquitous entry at all levels of that society. Traditional society, however, condemns such trade.

The ensuing dialogue that new forms of colonial servitude demand with a backward-looking uprighteousness initiates the transformations which Ngugi posits as necessary to social change and self-determination. His model of orality — dialogic conversation — positions the reader within this self-transforming network of community. The technique, theme, his sense of African “historical and cultural imperatives,” and his deployment of the traditions and norms of his community merge in Ngugi’s writing: here, a European-based dream of Marxist revolution is appropriated and redefined as an always already existing communal organization that is vital and constructive of a future rather than locked in a child-like dream of the past.

Sembene Ousmane’s *God’s Bits Of Wood*, a reconstruction of the Senegalese Dakar-Niger railway strike of 1947, employs a similar oral structuring to convey the growing communal consciousness of racism and colonial exploitation. His recent film, *Camp de Thiaroye*, extends this vocal model to retrieve a silenced history and to revise the image of pre-contact, otherwise helpless and misdirected Africa. In the film, African soldiers returned after the Second World War to base camp outside of Dakar are literally isolated and silenced. Their reconstructions of events through conversations and illicit forays outside the camp provide a thematic of hope and vitality for the future of other Senegalese, despite the historic demands of the narrative catastrophe. The call for a cinematics of community and orality, voiced so despairingly in Ayi Kwei Armah’s *Fragments*, is fulfilled. Ousmane’s cinematic techniques reflect a double perspective: the experience of an orally-based community and the methodologies of an Eisenstein-based cinema which he has appropriated and revised.

Elechi Amadi inscribes a more obviously nostalgic model of orality in his acclaimed trilogy about minority cultures in the Niger Delta region: *The Concubine*, *The Great Ponds*, and *The Slave*. Writing with what has been acclaimed a “classic simplicity,” Amadi reconstructs the traditional village life of the Erekwu, a present-day minority culture in eastern Nigeria. The elegiacal first novel, *The Concubine*, details the passions and frustrations of a

woman whose spiritual allegiances are due the gods but who, being mortal, is unaware of this obstacle to her happiness. There is a sparseness and concomitant beauty in the way Amadi describes the diurnal round of duty, pleasures, social life, work, and private meditations of his heroine, Ihuoma, who is, archetypally, one of the most beautiful, respected, and virtuous women of her day.

The confusion of European values and the clash of cultures are almost absent from these novels; some readers, however, profess difficulties in accepting contemporary English language usages when Amadi purports to represent indigenous social practices and linguistic range. Amadi's concern is pastoral, his achievement is to reconstruct village traditions and customs, to preserve and restore the link with a past obliterated by the colonizer's institutionalized contempt. It is not coincidental that Amadi's critics continue to praise his "unfaltering authenticity" (Laurence 177). He employs a debased and sentimental model of orality in a narrative of heroic resistance to inevitable tragic loss. Amadi's model resurrects the past only to chronicle its continued destruction. The strategies by which Amadi engages syntax and lexicon extend this sense, offering the fictive illusion of an oral culture speaking a language other than English, replete with spiritual axiom and broad humour. But it is an oral culture which again exists only in nostalgic fictions of an Edenic past.

Bessie Head's *Serowe: Village of the Rain Wind*, though a non-fiction work, reveals an alternative, future-directed oral model. As Caren Kaplan explains, Head is a person of mixed blood raised in a country ruled by concepts of racial purity and hierarchy who discovered that when she came, "by chance," to live in the Botswana village which names her book, "somehow, here, the shattered bits began to grow together" (x). The image of fragments and the thematics of destruction through a history of familial, communal, and racial displacement signal the mobilization of an oral model that is recuperative and constructive. Head describes her adoptive village — both artifact and community — as continually rebuilding itself:

... the construction of Serowe intimately involved its population. They always seem to be building Serowe with their bare hands and

little tools — a hoe, an axe and mud — that's all. This intimate knowledge of construction covers every aspect of village life.

(xii)

Narrating the life of the village by transcribing the voices and experiences of its inhabitants, Head links the organic vision of an oral model to both daily round and future transformation. The mark of her commitment to the adopted village is her own contribution to its ongoing construction: she uses "the technology that she knows best, writing," to emplot its present vitalities and future potentialities.⁵ In so doing, Head — not incidentally — transforms the backward-looking model of orality.

Similar descriptions and analyses can be made of a host of other African writings. Each appeals to some extra-textual experience of a community integratedly oral and — at least initially — reciprocal in its dealings with members of the community and the outside world. The model of the oral inscribed in the individual text is frequently a key marker of that text's political or historical theme, and the writer's various technical strategies. This paper, for example, can easily digress into discussions of texts as disparate as Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*, Ayi Kwei Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons*, or Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*. What interests me in their stead, however, are those kinds of African texts which do not immediately suggest the oral and which have been contrasted — usually negatively — with writing that is avowedly tied to the oral.

For example, Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy, or Reflections from a Black-eyed Squint* would seem — by its naming — to valorize the eye, and hence textuality, over the ear and mouth of oral cultures. Critics are confronted with a narrative that invokes *Gulliver's Travels* and various mid-twentieth-century feminist writings. The discussion of this novel which ensues conjoins Euro-American intertextuality and Aidoo's inscriptions of Ghanaian independence, African women's emancipation struggles, and the post-colonial diaspora of Africa's professional élite, none of which appear overtly tied to the oral communities of coastal Ghana. Typographically, *Our Sister Killjoy* resembles the Canadian Sheila Watson's *A Double Hook* more than anything else. However, to hear Aidoo read from this novel, her short stories, plays, or poetry

is to recognize that what she has done is different from the experimental modernisms of Canadian writing. Aidoo graphs the voice of an excited storyteller, marking intonations and emphases through the learned technical conventions of open or free verse and its denoted terminals. That she has tied this typographical analysis of orality — a new departure in African writing — to the narrative of woman's search for an identity within an ailing and disparate community suggests the adaptive politics and transformative radicalism of Aidoo's "historical and cultural imperatives."

Finally, I want to read two pieces by Wole Soyinka in light of my proposed model. Before doing so, however, I must return to the critics of Tutuola with which I began this paper. I began by arguing that Western criticism and African critics are often caught within the dialectic of oral/written in ways that privilege the written and silence the oral. It is further clear that this dialectic more than deafens us: it also blinds us to what is being written in Africa. For example, Tutuola is the embodiment for most of what a Nigerian oral culture may be. In contrast, Soyinka inscribes modernist aesthetics and a critical self-awareness that leads to his acceptance as the Nobel Laureate of Africa, the translator into sophisticated literary forms of much that otherwise falls outside the parameters of Western literary discourse.

What most interests me, however, is what those critics overlook who seek to determine that modernist and post-modernist texts from Africa are no longer valid or authenticated by reference to an external idyll of community and orality. Again, the faculty of sight (text) is occluded by a misapprehension of those of sound (ear and larynx). Soyinka's work — once freed of the falsely constructed opposition between Tutuola (real, conventional, and oral-domestic) and Soyinka (unreal, sophisticated, and textual-alien) — must be read again.

As, indeed, must Tutuola's which begins to appear less and less orally-based than critics would have him remain. Obiechina, for example, again lauds Tutuola's proximity to the oral traditions of Abeokuta (a township which Tutuola shares with Soyinka as birthplace); but Obiechina cites instances within *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* and *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* which reveal not so much an orality as they do Tutuola's obsession with the scripts,

signs, technologies, and discourses of imperial English. Obiechina quotes what I will call the "financial" pages of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* to prove Tutuola's "orality" (Lindfors 127).

Tutuola's manuscript is catalyzed by his renditions of amper-sands, monetary symbols (American and British, dollar and pound signs proliferate), Latinate legal and mathematical terms, and the bureaucratic jargons of a colonial administration for which he worked through his adult life. The pages of his novels extend this fascination by employing many more symbols, available in the typesetting phase of book production. My point is that critical configurations of orality as primitive and regressive in the evolutionary sense have blinded those same critics of Tutuola to the very literate, textual, and technological bases of his writing. His work is enamoured of books and their manufacture: reading Tutuola, in a figure appropriated from Hugh Kenner, invokes a hitherto unseen "mechanical muse."

In contrast, Soyinka is often depicted by African critics as the corrupted writer who has strayed from his cultural and political roots. This departure from the traditions, models, and norms of African society is variously castigated:

Soyinka appears as the prime representative in Nigeria of the intellectual wing of the undeveloped bourgeoisie. While the cruder members of his class are indulging themselves in Western cars, stereo-systems and televisions, he indulges himself in Western decadent aestheticism or even those Western political ideologies in fashion with the middle-class intelligentsia. And like the European modernist he often resorts to a deliberate obscurity, designed to make his art the exclusive preserve of initiates. . . . Soyinka has been seduced by the intricacies of Western art, philosophy and political thought and ignores the urgent and simple needs of his own people. (Booth 119)

And we have come full circle: the troika are Soyinka's chief accusers. That they uphold and valorize a nostalgic, child-like, pure, and therefore "authentic" image of Africa's cultural traditions is the problem here.

Ignoring the anthropological insight that it is "part of the art of an accomplished orator to adorn his rhetoric" (Finnegan 415), the attack by these literary critics on Soyinka demeans African literature. Bound to a trope which diminishes Africa and orality,

even the most zealous critics of that continent's literatures betray their consequent limitations in condemnations and *ad hominem* attacks. What they attack are the structures and mannerisms of "Euromodernism," characterized by them as

a suicidal, eurocentric, individualistic, pseudo-universalist consciousness . . . [which is responsible for] promoting a cult of syntactic obfuscation, for cluttering the surface of our writing with assorted linguistic impedimenta whose only end is to make our scholars write tedious books of gossip and explication to help us understand what our poets are said to be saying.

(Chinweizu 238)

Soyinka's works are read as a collaboration with imperialism: he is denounced as "quisling" (208). Ironically, they find no African synonym or proverb to describe this treason and thus maintain their pastoral ideal of an uncorrupted Africa.

At this point, it would be refreshing to remind readers of African literature how Soyinka's drama, most notably *Death and the King's Horseman*, employs several coinciding stages to represent various levels of theatre: European, private, social, Yoruban, communal, ritual, and spiritual. In that play, Soyinka does not *represent* orality — it happens offstage, off the page, outside his text. Instead, his African characters, despondent at their inability to open the ears and minds of their European masters, *evoke* the radical otherness of an oral tradition which is urgent in its practical and mystical demands.

Soyinka's armoury of rhetoric and stage technique are in service of this evocation of an oral tradition that is radically other. By the end of the play, Yoruban oral culture is more complex, and absolutely strange because unexplained, inexplicable. Its readers and audience are struck dumb, in all their textuality, by Soyinka's as yet most radical departure towards the literary evocation of orality.

This contextualization of his drama is incomplete, however, without that explanatory text of African literature in which Soyinka, like his most vehement critics, attempts to define the cultural and historical imperatives of African literature. In *Myth, Literature and the African World*, Soyinka navigates a plethora of non-African critical theories, commenting on some methodologies in passing and perhaps accounting for the

vehemence with which he is denounced. Earlier criticism by individual members of the troika is described as "... an interesting example of what results when scholars subvert their intelligent deductions to imperatives of alien and jealous gods, in this case, Marxism" (32).

And as we begin once again to re-read that richly textured and suggestive critical treatise, *Myth, Literature and the African World*, we cannot help notice that — even here — Soyinka operates within the realm of the oral. To begin his literary examination of tragedy across the European and African worlds, Soyinka translates directly from the oral, invoking inspiration and extra-textual guidance before commencing on his examinations of the written. "I shall begin," he announces, "by commemorating the gods for their self-sacrifice on the altar of literature, and in so doing press them into further service on behalf of human society, and its quest for the explication of being" (1). In other words, grounded in the oratory of his traditional culture, Soyinka ritually invokes the gods before commencing on that most un-oral of pursuits, comparative literary criticism!

NOTES

- 1 See Stephen Slemon and Helen Tiffin. "Introduction to Special Issue on Post-Colonial Criticism." *Kunapipi* 11.1 (1989): ix-xxiii.
- 2 See Barbara Christian's essay "The Race for Theory," in *Cultural Critique* 6 (Spring 1987): 51-63.
- 3 This problematic is treated throughout the special issue of *Kunapipi* 11.1 (1989). See also Wole Soyinka, "The Critic and Society: Barthes, Leftocracy and other Mythologies." *Black Literature and Literary Theory*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York and London: Methuen, 1984) 27-57.
- 4 For this production-consumption image I am indebted to Julianne Burton, "Marginal Cinemas and Mainstream Critical Theory."
- 5 This insight is found in Caren Kaplan's paper, "Remapping or Retelling History? The Politics of Location and the Poetics of Displacement," to which my reading of Head's book is indebted.

WORKS CITED

- Aidoo, Ama Ata. *Our Sister Killjoy, or Reflections from a Black-eyed Squint*. London: Longman, 1977.
- Amadi, Elechi. *The Concubine*. 1966. London: Heinemann, 1981.
- . *The Great Ponds*. 1969. London: Heinemann, 1981.
- . *The Slave*. London: Heinemann, 1978.
- Armah, Ayi Kwei. *Fragments*. London: Heinemann, 1978.

- . *Two Thousand Seasons*. London: Heinemann, 1979.
- Booth, James. *Writers and Politics in Nigeria*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981.
- Burton, Julianne. "Marginal Cinemas and Mainstream Critical Theory." *Screen* 26.3-4 (1985): 2-21.
- Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie, and Ihechukwu Madubuike. *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature*. Washington: Howard UP, 1983.
- de Certeau, Michel. *The Writings of History*. Trans. Tom Conley. New York: Columbia UP, 1988.
- Emecheta, Buchi. *The Joys of Motherhood*. London: Heinemann, 1978.
- Finnegan, Ruth. *Oral Literature in Africa*. 1970. London: Oxford UP, 1976.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957.
- Harraway, Donna. "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's." *Socialist Review* 80 (1985): 93-94.
- Head, Bessie. *Serowe: Village of the Rain Wind*. London: Heinemann, 1981.
- Jameson, Fredric. "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65-88.
- Kaplan, Caren. "Remapping or Retelling History? The Politics of Location and the Poetics of Displacement." Paper presented at the MLA Convention, Washington, D.C., December 1989.
- Kenner, Hugh. "Type's Cast: Joyce and his Mechanical Muse" in *Harper's* June 1986: 58-63.
- Laurence, Margaret. *Long Drums and Cannons: Nigerian Dramatists and Novelists, 1952-1966*. London and Toronto: Macmillan, 1968.
- Lindfors, Bernth, ed. *Critical Perspectives on Amos Tutuola*. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1975.
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Petals of Blood*. 1977. London: Heinemann, 1987.
- . "The Language of African Literature." *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: Heinemann, 1986. 4-33.
- and Micere Mugi. *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*. London: Heinemann, 1982.
- and Ngugi wa Mirii. *I Will Marry When I Want (Ngaahika Ndeenda)*. London: Heinemann, 1980.
- Obiechina, E. N. "Amos Tutuola and the Oral Tradition." *Critical Perspectives on Amos Tutuola*. Ed. Bernth Lindfors. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1975. 123-53.
- Okara, Gabriel. *The Voice*. 1964. London: Heinemann, 1979.
- Ousmane, Sembene. *Camp de Thiaroye*. Orion Films, 1989.
- . *God's Bits of Wood*. London: Heinemann, 1980.
- Ong, Walter. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London and New York: Methuen, 1982.
- Soyinka, Wole. *Death and the King's Horseman*. 1975. London: Methuen, 1982.
- . *Myth, Literature and the African World*. London: Cambridge UP, 1976.
- Tutuola, Amos. *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*. 1954. London: Faber, 1986.
- . *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*. 1952. London: Faber, 1988.
- Watson, Sheila. *The Double Hook*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1959.