

## The Interpreters Wole Soyinka

Distinguished scholars analyze the plays, poetry, and prose of Wole Soyinka, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1986. Essays trace his career and place his work in the general context of African literature.

Nobel Laureate in Literature Wole Soyinka considers all of Africa--indeed, all the world--as he poses this question: once repression stops, is reconciliation between oppressor and victim possible? In the face of centuries-long devastation wrought on the African continent and her Diaspora by slavery, colonialism, Apartheid, and the manifold faces of racism, what form of recompense could possibly suffice? In a voice as eloquent and humane as it is forceful, Soyinka boldly challenges in these pages the notions of simple forgiveness, confession, and absolution as strategies for social healing. Ultimately, he turns to art--poetry, music, painting, etc.--as the one source that can nourish the seed of reconciliation: art is the generous vessel that can hold together the burden of memory and the hope of forgiveness. Based on Soyinka's Stewart-McMillan lectures delivered at the DuBois Institute at Harvard, *The Burden of Memory* speaks not only to those concerned specifically with African politics, but also to anyone seeking the path to social justice through some of history's most inhospitable terrain.

"J.M. Coetzee's vision goes to the nerve center of being."—Nadine Gordimer  
J.M. Coetzee's latest novel, *The Schooldays of Jesus*, is now available from Viking. *Late Essays: 2006-2017* will be available January 2018. A shattering pair of novellas in the tradition of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, *Dusklands* probes the links between the powerful and the powerless. "Vietnam Project" is narrated by a researcher investigating the effectiveness of United States propaganda and psychological warfare in Vietnam. The question of power is also explored in "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee," the story of an eighteenth-century Boer frontiersman who vows revenge on the Hottentot natives because they have failed to treat him with the respect that he thinks a white man deserves. With striking intensity, J. M. Coetzee penetrates the twilight land of obsession, charting the nature of colonization as it seeks, in 1970 as in 1760, to absorb the wilds into the Western dusklands.

The first Black winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature gives us a tour de force, his first novel in nearly half a century: a savagely satiric, gleefully irreverent, rollicking fictional meditation on how power and greed can corrupt the soul of a nation. In an imaginary Nigeria, a cunning entrepreneur is selling body parts stolen from Dr. Menka's hospital for use in ritualistic practices. Dr. Menka shares the grisly news with his oldest college friend, bon viveur, star engineer, and Yoruba royal, Duyole Pitan-Payne. The life of every party, Duyole is about to assume a prestigious post at the United Nations in New York, but it now seems that someone is determined that he not make it there. And neither Dr. Menka nor Duyole knows why, or how close the enemy is, or how powerful. *Chronicles from the Land of the Happiest People on Earth* is at once a literary hoot, a crafty whodunit, and a scathing indictment of political and social corruption. It is a stirring call to arms against the abuse of power from one of our fiercest political activists, who also happens to be a global literary giant.

Most accounts of Britain's rule over Nigeria were written by British officials who presented colonialism as a civilizing mission to rid Africans of barbaric superstition and corrupt tribal leadership; to educate them and convert them to Christianity. Yet--strangely for a colonized people openly described this way by their oppressors--many Nigerians today still view their country's time in the Empire through rose-tinted glasses. Max Siollun offers a bold rethink: a clear-eyed, unromanticized history of colonial Nigeria. He argues compellingly that colonialism was not a system with benevolent intentions. It may have ended practices such as slavery and human sacrifice, but those who resisted were violently repressed; Britain's disruption and forceful remolding of longstanding customs permanently altered the belief systems, culture and internal politics of indigenous Nigerian communities. The aftershocks of this British interference

have been felt for decades since independence, as the country continues to suffer from economic and political turmoil that Britain has laid at the doorstep of Nigeria's own leaders. This book is a definitive, head-on confrontation with Nigeria's experience under British rule, deftly showing how the country was forever changed by colonialism--perhaps cataclysmically. "Drawn together by their hopes, loves, dissatisfactions, and the daily lives and deaths around them, five young Nigerian intellectuals attempt to define their identity in a world where their cultural past and Western-influenced present are brought into conflict"--

A striking first novel about the dark side of the American Dream Suzy Park is a twenty-nine-year-old Korean American interpreter for the New York City court system. Young, attractive, and achingly alone, she makes a startling and ominous discovery during one court case that forever alters her family's history. Five years prior, her parents--hardworking greengrocers who forfeited personal happiness for their children's gain--were brutally murdered in an apparent robbery of their fruit and vegetable stand. Or so Suzy believed. But the glint of a new lead entices Suzy into the dangerous Korean underworld, and ultimately reveals the mystery of her parents' homicide. An auspicious debut about the myth of the model Asian citizen, *The Interpreter* traverses the distance between old worlds and new, poverty and privilege, language and understanding.

Scientific Essay from the year 2016 in the subject Literature - Africa, University of Botswana, language: English, abstract: The aim of this article is two-fold. It will analyse how Ogun principles in *The Interpreters* have been compromised and discarded by individuals transformed by an alien culture. The article will also describe and evaluate the ways in which the Ogun presence manifests itself in a society that is reluctant to look at the past in order to forge a path of self-discovery. In the postmodern age, the concept of identity and purpose calls for a psychological weaning from imported cultures with their hegemonic footprints. The absorption of an alien culture is at times not selectively done by members of these African societies. In effect, they find themselves technologically propelled into an environment that transforms them from the inside and spreads like a cancer.

The Nigerian author discusses African literature and the writer's role in African society as the modern equivalent of the tribal historian

A brilliant scholar imparts the lessons bequeathed by the Black community and its remarkable artists and thinkers. Farah Jasmine Griffin has taken to her heart the phrase "read until you understand," a line her father, who died when she was nine, wrote in a note to her. She has made it central to this book about love of the majestic power of words and love of the magnificence of Black life. Griffin has spent years rooted in the culture of Black genius and the legacy of books that her father left her. A beloved professor, she has devoted herself to passing these works and their wisdom on to generations of students. Here, she shares a lifetime of discoveries: the ideas that inspired the stunning oratory of Frederick Douglass and Malcolm X, the soulful music of Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder, the daring literature of Phillis Wheatley and Toni Morrison, the inventive artistry of Romare Bearden, and many more. Exploring these works through such themes

as justice, rage, self-determination, beauty, joy, and mercy allows her to move from her aunt's love of yellow roses to Gil Scott-Heron's "Winter in America." Griffin entwines memoir, history, and art while she keeps her finger on the pulse of the present, asking us to grapple with the continuing struggle for Black freedom and the ongoing project that is American democracy. She challenges us to reckon with our commitment to all the nation's inhabitants and our responsibilities to all humanity.

A concern for social regeneration stands as the factor that animates Soyinka's life-long involvement in social and political activism, leading to his incarceration for two years during the civil war, and his having to flee into exile during the period of Sani Abacha's dictatorship. Soyinka expresses this same concern for social regeneration in his writings, using different metaphors. The focus of this work lies in the exploration of the articulations of social regeneration in the works of Wole Soyinka. The first part focuses on the dramatic works, and the argument of the author is that the metaphor adopted by Africa's foremost playwright in articulating his vision of social regeneration is that of ritual. Attention shifts in part two to Soyinka's two novels; and here, Bello goes to the roots of Yoruba metaphysics to fetch a metaphor which describes a creature with contradictory personality; which at once is committed to the regeneration of the social order while at the same time retaining a vindictive, vengeful nature.

The first African to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature, as well as a political activist of prodigious energies, Wole Soyinka now follows his modern classic *Ake: The Years of Childhood* with an equally important chronicle of his turbulent life as an adult in (and in exile from) his beloved, beleaguered homeland. In the tough, humane, and lyrical language that has typified his plays and novels, Soyinka captures the indomitable spirit of Nigeria itself by bringing to life the friends and family who bolstered and inspired him, and by describing the pioneering theater works that defied censure and tradition. Soyinka not only recounts his exile and the terrible reign of General Sani Abacha, but shares vivid memories and playful anecdotes—including his improbable friendship with a prominent Nigerian businessman and the time he smuggled a frozen wildcat into America so that his students could experience a proper Nigerian barbecue. More than a major figure in the world of literature, Wole Soyinka is a courageous voice for human rights, democracy, and freedom. *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* is an intimate chronicle of his thrilling public life, a meditation on justice and tyranny, and a mesmerizing testament to a ravaged yet hopeful land.

Traces Nigeria's recent history and politics, chronicling its decline from post-colonial success to its current military dictatorship, and speculates on its future as a nation.

Biodun Jeyifo examines the connections between the innovative and influential writings of Wole Soyinka and his radical political activism. Jeyifo carries out detailed analyses of Soyinka's most ambitious works, relating them to the controversies generated by Soyinka's use of literature and theatre for radical political purposes. He gives a fascinating account of the profound but paradoxical affinities and misgivings Soyinka has felt about the significance of the avant-garde movements of the twentieth century. Jeyifo also explores Soyinka's works with

regard to the impact on his artistic sensibilities of the pervasiveness of representational ambiguity and linguistic exuberance in Yoruba culture. The analyses and evaluations of this study are presented in the context of Soyinka's sustained engagement with the violence of collective experience in post-independence, postcolonial Africa and the developing world. No existing study of Soyinka's works and career has attempted such a systematic investigation of their complex relationship to politics.

There have been few book-length engagements with the question of sexuality in Africa, let alone African homosexuality. *African Intimacies* simultaneously responds to the public debate on the "Africanness" of homosexuality and interrogates the meaningfulness of the terms "sexuality" and "homosexuality" outside Euro-American discourse. Speculating on cultural practices interpreted by missionaries as sodomy and resistance to colonialism, Neville Hoad begins by analyzing the 1886 Bugandan martyrs incident—the execution of thirty men in the royal court. Then, in a series of close readings, he addresses questions of race, sex, and globalization in the 1965 Wole Soyinka novel *The Interpreters*, examines the emblematic 1998 Lambeth conference of Anglican bishops, considers the imperial legacy in depictions of the HIV/AIDS crisis, and reveals how South African writer Phaswane Mpe's contemporary novel *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* problematizes notions of African identity and cosmopolitanism. Hoad's assessment of the historical valence of homosexuality in Africa shows how the category has served a key role in a larger story, one in which sexuality has been made in line with a vision of white Western truth, limiting an understanding of intimacy that could imagine an African universalism. Neville Hoad is assistant professor of English at the University of Texas, Austin.

Engaging questions of language, identity, and reception to restore South African and diaspora writing to the African literary tradition

Up-to-date biographies with a list of works for each of the writers, detailed annotations to the original text and a glossary complete this edition."--BOOK JACKET.

Nigerian novelist Omotoso delineates the contrast between the country's two most widely read writers, describing Wole Soyinka as a playful imagist steeped in the myth and magic of his Yoruba culture, and Chinua Achebe as expressing internalized Igbo cultural traditions. He discusses their differences in style, background, and vision within the context and contradictions of pan-African, Nigerian nation-state, and ethnic national agendas. Annotation copyright by Book News, Inc., Portland, OR

This is the first volume of Wole Soyinka's acclaimed series of autobiographical works. *Ake* is Soyinka's record of his childhood in colonial Nigeria. He tells the tales of his schooldays and adventures, recollecting fears and dangers."

In this new book developed from the prestigious Reith Lectures, Nobel Prize—winning author Wole Soyinka, a courageous advocate for human rights around the world, considers fear as the dominant theme in world politics. Decades ago, the idea of collective fear had a tangible face: the atom bomb. Today our shared anxiety has become far more complex and insidious, arising from tyranny, terrorism, and the invisible power of the "quasi state." As Wole Soyinka suggests, the climate of fear that has enveloped the world was sparked long before September 11, 2001. Rather, it can be traced to 1989, when a passenger plane was brought down by terrorists over the Republic of Niger. From Niger to lower Manhattan to Madrid, this invisible threat has erased distinctions between citizens and soldiers; we're all potential targets now. In this seminal work, Soyinka explores the implications of this climate of fear: the conflict between power and freedom, the motives behind unthinkable acts of violence, and the meaning of human dignity. Fascinating and disturbing, *Climate of Fear* is a brilliant and defining work for our age.

From the first Black winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature and one of our fiercest political activists—this political novel about the dangers of corruption, greed, and the desire for power is the follow-up to his acclaimed debut novel *The Interpreters*. An African nation's struggle for independence is interwoven with a tragic love story in this compelling novel. When Ofeyi, who writes advertising jingles for the Cocoa Corporation, is sent on a promotional tour of his unnamed country, he arrives at a coastal village whose remote location has long kept it insulated from the corrupt national government. Here Ofeyi discovers a traditional way of life that is still flourishing and he is inspired to spread its life-affirming values to his suffering country. But challenging the forces of greed and exploitation provokes a horrific response, and when Ofeyi's beloved wife goes missing, he must travel across a war-scarred landscape in search of her. Infusing the myth of Orpheus with his signature lyricism and moral profundity, Soyinka creates a dazzling story about the clash between idealism and reality.

With black-and-white illustrations throughout World-renowned Kenyan novelist, poet, playwright, and literary critic Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o gives us the second volume of his memoirs in the wake of his critically acclaimed *Dreams in a Time of War*. *In the House of the Interpreter* richly and poignantly evokes the author's life and times at boarding school—the first secondary educational institution in British-ruled Kenya—in the 1950s, against the backdrop of the tumultuous Mau Mau Uprising for independence and Kenyan sovereignty. While Ngũgĩ has been enjoying scouting trips, chess tournaments, and reading about the fictional RAF pilot adventurer Biggles at the prestigious Alliance High School near Nairobi, things have been changing rapidly at home. Poised as he is between two worlds, Ngũgĩ returns home for his first visit since starting school to find his house razed and the entire village moved up the road, closer to a guard checkpoint. Later, his brother Good Wallace, a member of the insurgency, is captured by the British and taken to a concentration camp. As for Ngũgĩ himself, he falls victim to the forces of colonialism in the person of a police officer encountered on a bus journey, and he is thrown into jail for six days. In his second year at Alliance High School, the boarding school that was his haven in a heartless world is shattered by investigations, charges of disloyalty, and the politics of civil unrest. *In the House of the Interpreter* hauntingly describes the formative experiences of a young man who would become a world-class writer and, as a political dissident, a moral compass to us all. It is a winning celebration of the implacable determination of youth and the power of hope.

This tribute collection reflects the wide range and diversity of James Gibbs's academic interests. The focus is on Africa, but comparative studies of other literatures also receive attention. Fiction, drama, and poetry by writers from Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Eritrea, Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Ireland, England, Germany, India, and the Caribbean are surveyed alongside significant missionaries, scientists, performers, and scholars. The writers discussed include Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Kobina Sekyi, Raphael Armattoo, J.E. Casely Hayford, Michael Dei-Anang, Kofi Awoonor, Ayi Kwei Armah, John Kolosa Kargbo, Dele Charley, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Okot p'Bitek, Jonathan Sajiwandani, Samuel E. Krune Mqhayi, A.S. Mopeli–Paulus, Kelwyn Sole, Anna Seghers, Raja Rao, and Arundhati Roy. Other essays treat the black presence in Ireland, anonymous rap artists in Chicago, the Jamaican missionary Joseph Jackson Fuller in the Cameroons, the African-American actor Ira Aldridge in Sweden, the

Swedish naturalist Anders Sparrman in South Africa, and the literary scholar and editor Eldred Durosimi Jones in Sierra Leone. Interviews with the Afro-German Africanist Theodor Wonja Michael and the Irish-Nigerian dramatist Gabriel Gbadamosi are also included. Also offered are poems by Jack Mapanje and Kofi Anyidoho, short stories by Charles R. Larson and Robert Fraser, plays by Femi Osofisan and Martin Banham, and an account of a dramatic reading of a script written and co-performed by James Gibbs. Contributors: Anne Adams, Sola Adeyemi, Kofi Anyidoho, Awo Mana Asiedu, Martin Banham, Eckhard Breitingner, Gordon Collier, James Currey, Geoffrey V. Davis, Chris Dunton, Robert Fraser, Raoul J. Granqvist, Gareth Griffiths, C.L. Innes, Charles R. Larson, Bernth Lindfors, Leif Lorentzon, Jack Mapanje, Christine Matzke, Mpalive–Hangson Msiska, Femi Osofisan, Eustace Palmer, Jane Plastow, Lynn Taylor, and Pia Thielmann. Geoffrey V. Davis co-edits the series Cross/Cultures and the African studies journal *Matatu*. Recent publications include *Narrating Nomadism and African Literatures: Post-colonial Literatures in English: Sources and Resources* (both co-ed. 2013). Bernth Lindfors, founding editor of the journal *Research in African Literatures*, is writing a bio-ography of Ira Aldridge (two volumes have so far appeared: *The Early Years, 1807–1833* and *The Vagabond Years, 1833–1852*, both 2011). *The Interpreters* Vintage

The Nigerian playwright, poet, and novelist recounts his first eleven years growing up under the influence of his parents, traditional Yoruba customs, and Christian missionaries

A member of the unique generation of African writers and intellectuals who came of age in the last days of colonialism, Wole Soyinka has witnessed the promise of independence and lived through postcolonial failure. He deeply comprehends the pressing problems of Africa, and, an irrepressible essayist and a staunch critic of the oppressive boot, he unhesitatingly speaks out. In this magnificent new work, Soyinka offers a wide-ranging inquiry into Africa's culture, religion, history, imagination, and identity. He seeks to understand how the continent's history is entwined with the histories of others, while exploring Africa's truest assets: "its humanity, the quality and valuation of its own existence, and modes of managing its environment—both physical and intangible (which includes the spiritual)." Fully grasping the extent of Africa's most challenging issues, Soyinka nevertheless refuses defeatism. With eloquence he analyzes problems ranging from the meaning of the past to the threat of theocracy. He asks hard questions about racial attitudes, inter-ethnic and religious violence, the viability of nations whose boundaries were laid out by outsiders, African identity on the continent and among displaced Africans, and more. Soyinka's exploration of Africa relocates the continent in the reader's imagination and maps a course toward an African future of peace and affirmation.

*Welcome to Our Hillbrow* is an exhilarating and disturbing ride through the chaotic and hyper-real zone of Hillbrow—microcosm of all that is contradictory, alluring, and painful in the postapartheid South African psyche. Everything is there: the shattered dreams of youth, sexuality and its unpredictable costs, AIDS, xenophobia, suicide, the omnipotent violence that often cuts short the promise of

young people's lives, and the Africanist understanding of the life continuum that does not end with death but flows on into an ancestral realm. Infused with the rhythms of the inner-city pulsebeat, this courageous novel is compelling in its honesty and its broad vision, which links Hillbrow, rural Tiragalong, and Oxford. It spills out the guts of Hillbrow—living with the same energy and intimate knowledge with which the Drum writers wrote Sophiatown into being.

From the first Black winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature—his debut novel about a group of young Nigerian intellectuals trying to come to grips with themselves and their changing country. First published in 1965. Friends since high school, the five young men at the heart of *The Interpreters* have returned to Lagos after studying abroad to embark on careers as a physician, a journalist, an engineer, a teacher, and an artist. As they navigate wild parties, affairs of the heart, philosophical debates, and professional dilemmas, they struggle to reconcile the cultural traditions and Western influences that have shaped them—and that still divide their country. Soyinka deftly weaves memories of the past through scenes of the present as the five friends move toward an uncertain future. The result is a vividly realized fictional world rendered in prose that pivots easily from satire to tragedy and manages to be both wildly funny and soaringly poetic.

The five plays in the first volume are linked by their concern with the spiritual and the social, with belief and ritual as integrating forces for social cohesion; the plays in the second volume trace the ironic development and consequences of 'progress.' All plays are based around themes in Nigeria.

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