



# African Literature

**Black Consciousness from  
African Literature**

# Learning Targets:

- To identify representative texts and authors from Africa
- To situate the texts in the context of the region, the nation, and the world
- To appreciate the cultural and aesthetic diversity of literature of the world
- To compare and contrast 21st-century literary works with earlier texts by citing their elements, structures, and traditions
- To explain the literary, sociocultural, and biographical contexts and discuss how they enhance the meaning of the text and enrich the reader's understanding
- To explain the relationship between the text and its context



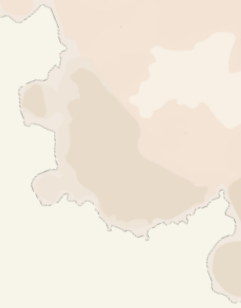
How the Growth  
Occured

African Literature





# African Literature



- The continent of Africa, considered by scientists to be **“The Cradle of Humankind,”** has a captivating oral tradition and body of written literature shaped by colonial and postcolonial experiences.
- African literature has several linguistic flavors, ranging from local languages to tongues brought by colonizers, such as English, Portuguese, and French.

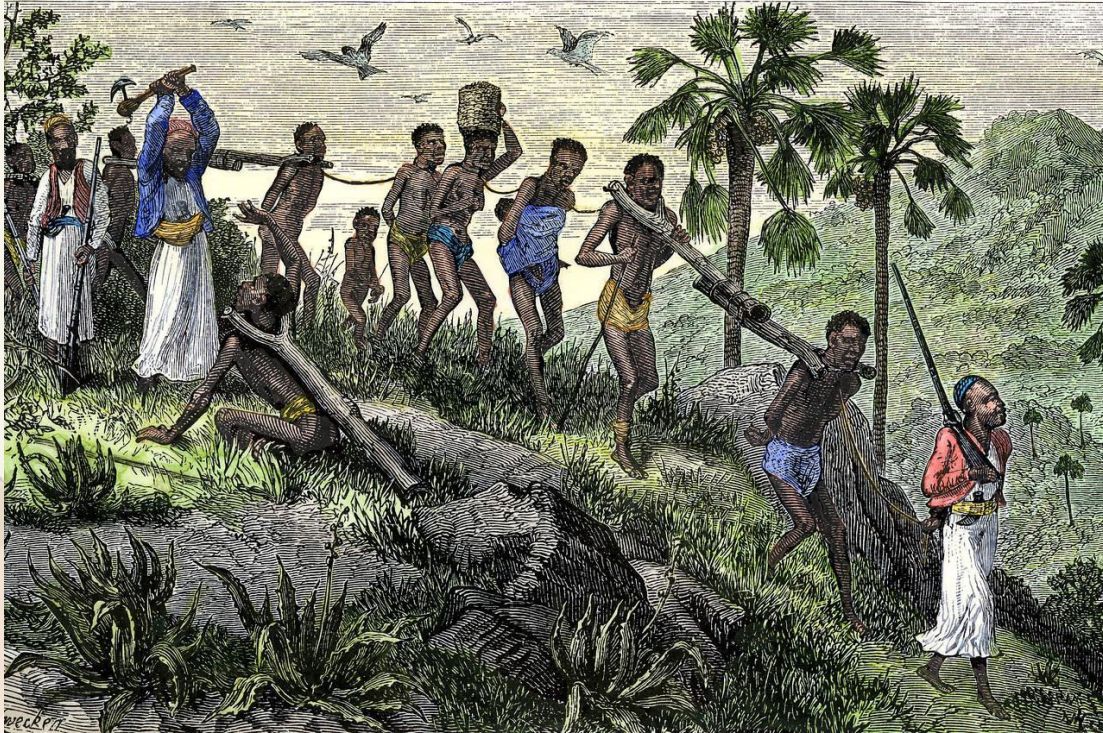


# African Literature

- Three waves of influence
  - *Celtic*
  - *Islam*
  - *Christian*



# African Literature



Slavery

- *tyranny*
- *physical abuse*
- *hypocrisy*

# African Literature

## Colonization

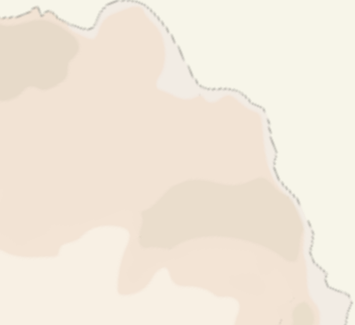
- language
- • Britain
- • Belgium
- • France
- • Germany
- • Italy
- • Portugal
- • Spain





# African Literature



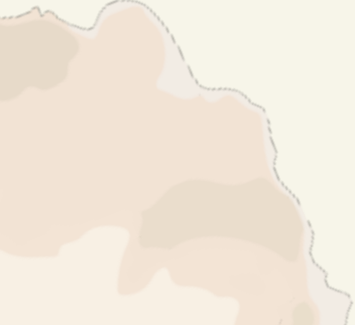
- Harlem Renaissance
    - 1918-1937
    - *Cultural movement spurred by African-Americans (black art, literature, and music experiences)*
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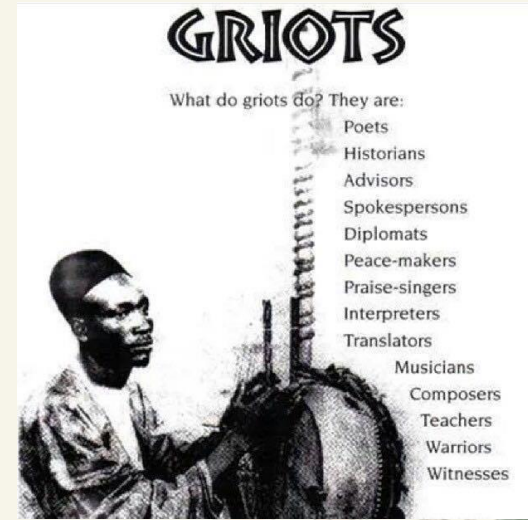


- **“Negritude”**
    - *A movement aimed at rehabilitating and restoring the African values stamped by French colonialism*
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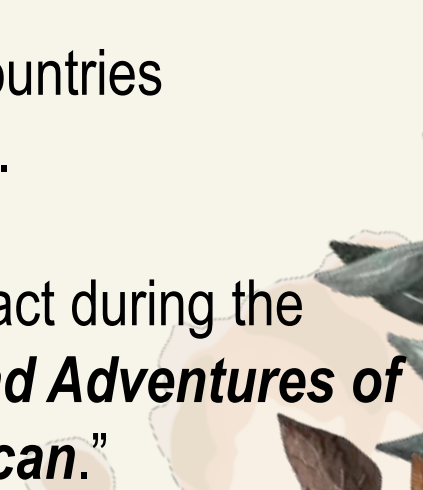
# Let's talk **oral literature in Africa**

- It serves the purpose of documenting the exploits of community folk heroes, reminding community members of their traditions, and entertaining the youth while educating them.
- Genres include **myths, stories, riddles, proverbs, and dramas.**
- Narratives were enhanced by **"griots".**
- Flourished in multiple cultures across the continent from ancient times and 15th century CE.





## In the 1400s

- The emergence of the slave trade shaped the collective ***African psyche*** indelibly.
  - Compounded in the 19th century by European countries competing for the acquisition of colonies in Africa.
  - One example of the psychosocial and social impact during the time is “***The Interesting Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African.***”
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## In the 1400s



- Poetry also conveys the **horrors of slavery**.
- “**On Liberty and Slavery**” was a strong piece by George Moses Horton, a man of Africa who was born into slavery and died in 1883.



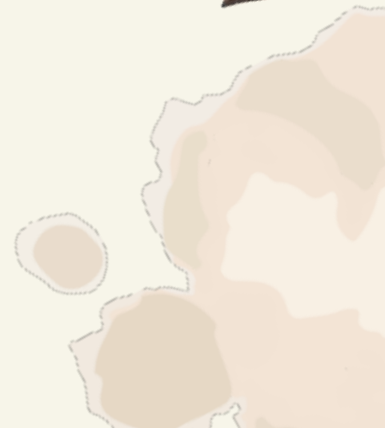
# Resistance Movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

- Literary works expressed in Africa desired to be freed from **oppression**.
- In the early 1800s, newspapers came to be a vehicle of expression for the voices of audacious African writers.
- Poetry continued to be an effective genre for this purpose as well.
- Several narratives, like Thomas Mofolo's "**Chaka**" drew inspiration from local figures to express reactions against colonial repression.



# After the conclusion of **World War II**

- The cry for independence reached a crescendo.
- Many Africans wrote literature in European languages, they nevertheless embodied the ***spirit of nationalism.***
  - ***Writers included***
    - Chinua Achebe
    - Wole Soyinka
    - Kofi Awoonor
    - Ngugi wa Thiong'o
    - Okot p'Bitek
    - Dennis Crutus
    - Es'kia Mphahlele
    - Jacques Rabemananjara



# Contemporary Times: A Snapshot



# In the Aftermath **of the colonial experience**



- African writers have since chronicled new challenges that have emerged in their respective societies.
- Sovereign writers have been installed but their own problems caused writers to react.

# In the Aftermath of the colonial experience



- Evident when **Ngugi wa Thiong'o** was imprisoned for a play considered to have subversive messages against the Kenyan administration.
- **Corruption in society**, a longstanding theme of African writers in post-colonial times, was reflected in V.Y. Mudimbe's "Before the Birth" of the Moon (1989).

# Must-reads of Contemporary **African Literature**

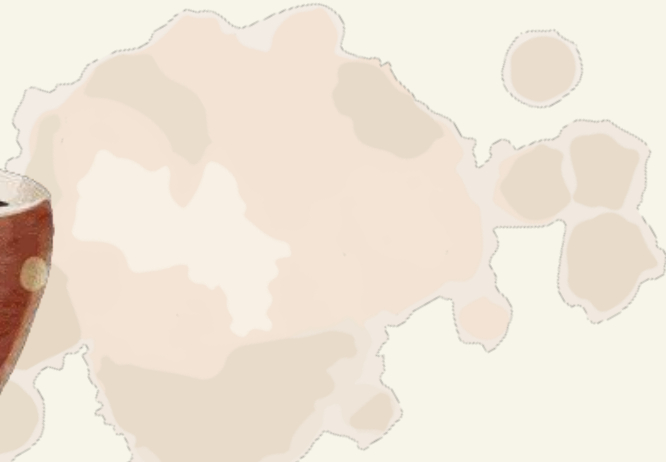
- *The Cardinals* by Bessie Head
- *Striving for the Wind* by Meja Mwangi
- *The Famished Road* by Ben Okri
- *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih
- *To Every Birth its Blood* by Mongane Serote
- *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* by Amos Tutuola
- *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga
- *Mission to Kala* by Mango Beti





# Literary Selections

## *The Clever Young Man and the Monster*





Thank  
you!