

S. GEHRMANN · O. MUSUMBA  
O. OBURA · J. OGONE

Emerging Trends in Eastern African  
Literatures and Cultures

GALDA VERLAG



**EMERGING TRENDS IN EASTERN  
AFRICAN LITERATURES AND  
CULTURES**



# EMERGING TRENDS IN EASTERN AFRICAN LITERATURES AND CULTURES

*Editors*

Susanne Gehrmann · Obala Musumba · Oduor Obura ·

James Ogone

GALDA VERLAG 2020

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek  
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen  
Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über  
<http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

© 2020 Galda Verlag, Glienicke  
Neither this book nor any part may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or  
by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, micro-filming,  
and recording, or by any information  
storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the  
publisher. Direct all inquiries  
to Galda Verlag, Franz-Schubert-Str. 61, 16548 Glienicke, Germany

**ISBN 978-3-96203-140-4 (Print)**  
**ISBN 978-3-96203-141-1 (E-Book)**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: An Overview of Trends in Eastern African Literatures and Cultures <i>Oduor Obura</i> .....	01
---	----

## **Part One: The Evolving Literary Canon**

Literary Disruptions of the Ugandan Canon in Selected Ugandan Short Stories <i>Edgar Nabutanyi</i> .....	29
A Discipline under Siege: Interrogating the Place of Literature in English in the Secondary School Curriculum in Tanzania <i>Obala Musumba</i> .....	47
Cartographies of Killing: Transnational Drones in <i>Eye in the Sky</i> <i>Jana Fedtke</i> .....	71
Performing in the Cyber Space: The Online Mchongoano Battles <i>Kimingichi Wabende</i> .....	89
Mobile Phones in the Public Space: Communication as Contextual Cultural Practice in Kenya <i>James Ogone</i> .....	113

## **Part Two: Conflict, Politics, and War**

Narrating Violence in Burundian Genocide and Civil War Literature: Pacifique Irankunda's "Playing at Violence" <i>Jodi Mikalachki</i> .....	137
Violence and the Multivocality of Silence in Roland Rugero's Novels <i>Giuseppe Sofo</i> .....	161
Conflicts in Memories, History and National Identity in Burundian Literature <i>Pierre Boizette</i> .....	185

The Aporia in Eastern African War Narratives as Reflected in Uwem Akpan’s “My Parents’ Bedroom” and Misago Aloys’ *La Descente aux enfers*  
*Marie-Thérèse Toyi* ..... 203

Ethiopian Dissident Fiction: Countering Despotism in Hama Tuma’s Short Stories  
*George Otieno Odhiambo* ..... 223

Agony on Stage: The Intrigues of Building Houses in *The Rubble Rouser*, performed at the 58<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Kenya Schools and Colleges Drama Festival (KSCDF)  
*Pepetual Mforbe Chiangong* ..... 247

**Part Three: Recent Interventions in Swahili Writing**

UWARIDI Initiative: The Innovative Transformation of a Self-help Project by Tanzanian Novelists into a Powerful Literary Space  
*Uta Reuster-Jahn* ..... 267

Swahili Poetry in the New Millennium: Established and Emerging Trends  
*Flavia Aiello, Roberto Gaudio and Emiliano Minerba* ..... 289

Linking the Centuries: The ‘Big Four’ of Kenyan Swahili Writing  
*Mikhail D. Gromov* ..... 315

Notes on Contributors ..... 341

# Introduction: An Overview of Trends in Eastern African Literatures and Cultures

*Oduor Obura*

Universität Potsdam

Eastern Africa has a long tradition of written cultures which predates by centuries, the arrival of colonial writings. The early written works include philosophies and literary engagements in Amharic, Swahili, Arabic, and Somali, even long before the emergence of literature in English. In spite of this, when speaking about eastern African literature, there has been a disproportionate lack of attention to the interconnectedness of its development. This lack of attention has led to privileging of the English language writers. In consequence, and as an illustration, Ngũgĩ is more often than not, accorded global attention than, say Shaaban bin Robert. There is, therefore, a need to understand the different periods of literary history in eastern Africa and the consequences in the reimaginings of the same. This implies that a broader picture of the current trends in the local cultures of eastern Africa cannot be made by looking exclusively at canonised English language writers. In this book, we aim to bring into discussion the multiplicities and emergent trends in diverse cultures and literatures from eastern Africa. Thus, we hope to discourage an inclination to anachronistic and insular discourse in the process of making sense of cultures in eastern Africa.

In this introduction, I aim to give an overview that leads to the recent eastern African development of literary and cultural forms of expression. This is meant to locate the book's central concern with emerging trends in eastern African literatures and cultures. In his preface of *The Columbia Guide to East African Literature in English Since 1945*, Gikandi opines that there is a distinct sense of eastern African literatures characterized by three features: connection to older forms of literary expressions, an initial powerful sense of regionality, and late arrival in comparison to the western and southern African regions. Gikandi and Mwangi position their book on the post-Second World War era. I find their sense of chronological order useful but also inadequate. It is useful to the extent that it aids an expansion of literary studies in the eastern African region. It foregrounds the second-world war, which was largely a European affair, in delimiting

East African cultures. Gikandi and Mwangi risk using colonial grammars to describe the temporal configuration of the cultures in eastern Africa. We seek frames of reference that capture not only the colonial insinuations, but also bring the often-undocumented non-colonial and local emergent usages, contents, and techniques closer. We seek further advances, even as we pay close attention to and acknowledge previous scholarly and creative productions.

To do this, I recourse to a nuanced outline of time and generation. In speaking of the third generation, we take up from gaps observed in Gikandi and Mwangi's comprehensive overview of eastern African literatures published in 2007. They observe at the end of their introduction:

What was African literature? What was its language? Who were its readers? At the end of the 1990s, these questions were perhaps not as pressing as they had been forty years earlier, but they had become more complicated, because in an age of globalization and multiculturalism, one was as likely to find an East African writer in London, New York, Johannesburg, or Toronto as in Nairobi, Kampala, Dar es Salaam, Addis Ababa, or Mogadishu. (19)

There is a paucity in the analysis of these questions that the two authors pose. What are the transformations in eastern African cultures at and after the millennial turn? How were the changes made to happen? Another hiatus is also evident in Ogude et al's important book *Rethinking Eastern African Literary and Intellectual Landscapes*, published in 2012 that leaves out the case of Burundi and Rwanda as part of eastern Africa. Gikandi and Mwangi equally do not include Rwanda and Burundi. Yet there are connections, whether historical or cultural interlinking in response to inter-nation pasts, conflicts, and mobilities in the region. Their important work also analyses, in details, the changing intellectual landscape in literary studies. A lot has since happened in the cultural sphere and furthermore, some aspects of current cultures were not analysed. We intend to fill in some gaps in order to advance the discipline of eastern African cultures. Indeed, at the time of publishing this book, the Democratic Republic of Congo has also applied to join the East African Community.

Gikandi and Mwangi speak of East Africa. In this book, we seek ideas not of the East but join Ogude et al in thinking about *eastern* Africa. I further qualify our use of 'eastern' as a difference and/or link in general accounts of the cultural and political connections in the human geography in this region.

The struggle for how to locate this part of Africa was perhaps heightened during imperial exploration with the Congo sometimes referred to as part of Eastern Africa before the demarcation of Africa into colonial dominions. Since then, East Africa has traditionally been used to refer to Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. This usage is rather restrictive and more divisive than cohesive since it excludes the cultural, political, and economic ties that transcend the three countries. In this book, we include Rwanda, and Burundi which are not present in the two aforementioned accounts of 'East' and 'eastern' Africa. In addition, the fluid cultural mobility in the region, which supersedes territorial sovereignty, makes the Horn of Africa to be part of the cultural cosmopolitanism in eastern Africa. The Horn of Africa is, therefore, an integral part of eastern Africa.

Moving away from a purely geographical metric, I envision the use of time and generations as critical descriptors for the literary and cultural productions in eastern Africa. Simultaneously, I am cognisant of Macharia's hesitance on the use of generations because, as he rightly points out (in an online conversation with Sofia Samatar and Aaron Bady):

Part of what I've been trying to imagine over the past many years is how periodization might complicate the "traditional," "pre-colonial," "colonial," "post-colonial" paradigms, which slice time in strange ways (traditional being atemporal; pre-colonial being an entry into legible temporality; colonial being the disciplining/regulating of time; and a cleverer mind than mine needs to figure out how time works in the postcolonial). (Samatar et al. n.pn.)

Time and generation pre-emptively sidestep the nationalism, atemporality, and colonialism that often straightjackets cultural and literary productions into narrow and conflicting categories. An analysis of the new generation (understood herein within a post-2000 temporal dimension) opens space for specialisation on literary and cultural discourses in eastern Africa based on parameters that do not foreground national identity and belonging alone. These coincide with trends that have arisen in the region, which are increasingly disavowing nationalist reference models. Mukoma Wa Ngũgĩ uses the label Post-Makerere writers whom he distinguishes from the Makerere and pre-Makerere generations (106). This is useful in indicating the efforts that writers and critics have in African cultural and intellectual engagements. However, Mukoma's post-Makerere categorisation casts a wide temporal and thematic net. It insinuates viewing African literature as a monolithic transnational category, especially when physical mobility between

the different regions is predominantly low and usually an elitist undertaking. This is not to underestimate the cultural mobility and connections within the regions of western, southern, and eastern Africa. Certainly, we do not aim at a regionalised essentialism.

It is difficult to clearly demarcate the eastern African region's cultural connections, therefore, my approach aims at showing fluid connections of some discernible patterns. 'Eastern' opens a methodological door into an important expanse of human and geographical interconnectedness. 'Eastern' invites a methodological nuance that considers a deessentialising of the region. It also signals the cultural, political, and historical boundaries that supersede the Westphalia state system imposed in the region at the onset of the euro-colonial epoch. We engage trends that reflect the 'regionality' but as it will be shown, this regionality is not parochial but increasingly employs global and multiple sensibilities. We engage new modes of expression and examination of the self and society. Where possible, we examine representative prophetic voices and writings on the worldliness of Eastern Africans.

### **Demarcation and Overlaps**

This book is primarily concerned with cultural productions of what might be termed the third generation or post-2000 generation. If we are to speak of emergent trends then it would be vital to understand the context (first and second generation) in order to foreground the fresh imperatives in current cultural and literary productions. However, we will not foreground some of the common debates that have accompanied the continued expansion of the concerned cultures. For example, we do not wish to magnify those well-known questions of the Makerere Conference in 1962 that had largely to do with language and an attempt to canonise the African literature through definition. When we do so, it is only to situate the breadth of development and expansions and legacies in the field. The language debate risks being an overbearing, or an undifferentiated narrative in the discussion of eastern African literary and cultural scapes. Other debates also dealt with the pedagogy of literature in university departments such as the perspectives of Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, Henry Owuor Anyumba, and Taban Lo Liyong in their now famous 1968 memo *On the Abolition of the English Department*. The field has grown beyond the use of only the aforementioned parameters, especially from the symbolic timeframe of the millennial turn onwards.

The 'first generation' is a rather ambiguous terminology. It encompasses literature produced in the eastern African region prior to colonialism, mostly in the indigenous languages. During the imperial period, these literatures usually existed side by side with colonial literary and cultural productions in English (or French in the case of Ruanda-Burundi and Italian in the Horn of Africa). The Ugandan prince, Akiki K. Nyabongo, authored a fictional and largely counternarrative account of the sociology of the Buganda kingdom during the colonial encounter: *The Story of an African Chief* in 1935 (reprinted as *Africa Answers Back* in 1936). Aniceti Kitereza who was born in 1896 wrote the novel, *Myombere na Bugonoka na Ntulanalwo na Bulihwali* in the Kikerewe language in 1945. The novel would be first published in 1981, but in Kiswahili. The English translation would eventually come out in 2002 as *Mr. Myombekere and His Daughter Bugonoka, Their Son Ntulanalwo and Daughter Bulihwali: The Story of An Ancient African Community*; this is long after a translation into German was already published in 1990. The novel *Otieno Achach* (1966) written in dhoLuo by the Tanganyika-born Christian Alloo Konjra is another example. First generation presupposes a ground zero in literature from eastern Africa. The first generation could also refer, through a *longue durée*, to the Ethiopian and Arabic writings that predated euro-colonialism. The literature in this region has been in existence in many forms and a prototypical point of origin is not of central concern in this book. This also echoes an avoidance of the "Achebe to Adichie beeline" way of literary criticism (Mukoma Wa Ngũgĩ 155). Rather I propose to use time as a mode to situate the eastern African literary cultures.

The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a politically heady time in eastern Africa. There was a cultural contention with the politics of post-independence disillusionments, assassinations, coups, and counter-coups. In addition, the cold war period meant that eastern Africa was divided by an ideological curtain. The consequence has been that the ideas of being in the world have changed. The quotidian social and political precarity of Eastern Africans based on these different, and many times competing histories, would find avenues in cultural and literary expressions.

There are similarities in the various eastern African nations' experiences of the independence era's political upheavals. Sicherman, on the assassination of Ugandan thespians and in an analysis of Serumaga's novel *Return to the Shadows*, observes the following:

The first myth had begun weakening much earlier, thanks to the 'creeping spirit of disillusion' that overcame so many African

intellectuals in the 1960s (Serumaga 1969:4). The phrase comes from Robert Serumaga's novel *Return to the Shadows*, one of a spate of African 'novels of disillusionment' that appeared in the 1960s. The hero, Joe, an idealistic economist like the author, flees one of the many coups to afflict his country, expecting refuge in his mother's rural home. (17)

The coups that Serumaga prophesied eventually caught up with Uganda and this held true even for many of Uganda's neighbouring nations (including attempted and failed coups). The 1970s and 1980s would be one of the most difficult political periods for critical thinking and creative production in eastern Africa. There followed a series of political uncertainties in the region. These affected the creative arts, as well as its contribution up to the closure of cinema halls in Uganda in 1972. Attendant to these was the elimination of dissenting voices including assassinations of writers and cultural practitioners. A famous case was the murder of the celebrated Ugandan playwright Byron Kawadwa in 1977: he was dragged from theatre during a rehearsal session. Serumaga himself died under controversial circumstances, while still in exile, on the Busia border in 1980. Besides this, as Rose Mbowa testifies, among those killed under this "wave of state-inspired murders" and climate of repression were Benedicto Kiwanuka, while he was the Chief Justice of Uganda; and Janani Jakaliya Luwum, Anglican church Archbishop (90).

In the countries south of Uganda, the little-mentioned 1972 genocide in Burundi saw the murder of Michel Kayoya, who is considered the doyen figure of modern Burundian literature. Kayoya's two volumes of poetic and philosophical meditation on Burundian humanism were originally published in Bujumbura in 1968 and 1970 as *Sur les traces de mon père (In My Father's Footsteps)* and *Entre deux mondes: sur la route du développement (Between Two Worlds: On the Road to Development)*. Kayoya was a critical Hutu priest, a fact that eventually contributed to his murder during the 1972 genocide. Joseph Cimpaye, was a political prisoner between 1969 and 1971 when he authored Burundi's first novel, *L'homme de ma colline (The Man from My Hill)*. The 21<sup>st</sup> century Burundian and Rwandan fiction is written in both English and French languages. The language debate is still present in the 21<sup>st</sup> century eastern Africa. Rwanda has changed their lingua franca from French to English. However, language and anti-colonial struggles are not the only debates that occupy front row seats in these two countries, as is evident in some of the chapters in this book. Therefore, we do not delve into it as a key question and strategy in this book.

Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o too could not escape the repression of writers during this era in eastern Africa. He ended up going to exile after his 1977 detention without trial in Kenya. His contemporaries include the pioneering Kenyan female writer Grace Ogot, Mwangi Ruheni, the Ugandan playwright John Ruganda and many others. Around this time, the Tanzanian author Peter K. Palangyo wrote his 1969 novel *Dying in the Sun*. It is important to note that Ngũgĩ and some writers of his generation are still alive and continue to ply their trade, having survived the political repression and/or uncertainties evident in the second half of the twentieth century in eastern Africa.

The forms and contents witnessed in the second generation also echo the themes of the first generation. The writings from the second generation often speak to neocolonial realities, in addition to colonial legacies. The second generation signal a shift to the third-generation writings even as they frequently echo the themes of the first-generation writers. Thus, they are closely linked to struggles for what is popularly referred to as 'the second liberation' (roughly during the 80s to the early 90s) in Kenyan politics that coincided with the clamour for freedom from a de jure one-party state dictatorship and the subsequent abolishment of the one-party state in 1992. The frequent coups and counter coups in Uganda also came to an end with the ascension of Yoweri Museveni to power. Therefore, it is little surprise that the second generation is also marked by the harassment and assassinations that felled emerging voices of writers of the 1960s through to the 1980s. The 1990s witnessed the rise of democratic governance in the region, even if only at a rhetorical level, and a decrease in the overt persecution of artists and philosophers.

Moreover, the writings of this period begin to show a diversification of themes beyond an overarching anti-colonial refrain. The urban fiction became a turning point around the 1970s. As an illustration, Meja Mwangi's novel *Carcase for Hounds* (1974) engages with the politics of the Mau Mau liberation war in colonial Kenya. However, his writing is also concerned with urban space politics, increasingly dysfunctional families, and present social inequalities, for example in his postcolonial urban novel *Going Down River Road*, published in 1973. These concerns capture the conditions that surround the idea of second-generation writings in eastern Africa. In addition to the diverse range of themes at this time (70s to 80s) there was a rise in literary genres. For example, popular fiction such as Charles Mangua's *Son of Woman* and John Kiriamiti's *My Life in*

*Crime* were widely read, especially in Kenya. Meja Mwangi's texts have also been argued to be popular fiction, however, this is a debatable notion (cf. Kopf).

Nuruddin Farah is another writer, among others, whose corpus signals the second generation of writers from eastern Africa. This is evident in his oeuvre ranging from his first novel, *From a Crooked Rib* published in 1970 to the latest novel *North of Dawn* published in 2018. As an illustration, Shanta, the mother to the female miracle child character in *Links* (2003) accentuates that her daughter Raasta, "felt she figured out for herself what marriage is like, when she was only four" (203). Farah recalibrates not only childhood but the girl child in assigning her the ability to understand the society, even when Raasta would ordinarily not be expected to work out the idea of marriage at the age of four. In general, in the 1990s and especially after 2000 gender and childhood themes start to emerge. They gain importance alongside the nationalist cultural and political concerns that were dominant in the 1960s through to the 1970s.

In addition, the increasingly broad literary production in eastern Africa has significantly drawn from the Afro-Asian connection. Considered to be a demographic minority, the eastern Africans of Asian descent have gained a significant presence in the literary sphere in this region. For instance, Moyez Vassanji and Yusuf Dawood are two well-known Kenyan writers of Asian descent. The contribution by "East African Asians" is a product of

a variety of sources, among them, the imperial library, canons of knowledge from the Indian sub-continent, the writings of the global Indian diaspora, knowledge accumulated in the epoch of Persian and Omani interaction with the East African coast, and finally from the hotchpotch of all the above that partly informs contemporary cultures in the region. (Ojwang 91)

Ojwang reflects on analysing the Afro-Asian writings in eastern Africa and the tendency for the East African Asians to Other the African populations based on colour (91). These racial tensions are transformed for they emerge in an eastern Africa that is not only independent but also engages with multiple racial realities. To exemplify this, the Ugandan President Idi Amin Dada expelled all Asians from Uganda in 1972. This major political event, as well as others, contributed to a rise in new ideas and techniques of literary response.

Subsequently, it is apparent that many factors conglomerated together to outline what I term as the second-generation writing. I now turn my attention to the conception of the writing of the third generation.

### **Ruptures and Continuities: Toward the Third Generation?**

Eastern Africa has witnessed major shifts, since the end of imperial occupation. The gradual liberalisation of the cultural economies in the 1990s brought about a significant increase in cultural productions. For example, in the year 2001 there were only ten FM radio stations in Tanzania, however, by 2009 there were over 52 private radio stations (Kerr 68). Prior to 1993, there was only one radio station in Tanzania and it was state-owned. The connectivity of the internet has quickened the pace at which the world comes to eastern Africa and Eastern Africa connects with the world. The literary and critical thoughts and expression coming out of the region are embedded in the transformations in a manner that highlights the social and political requirements in and about this region. The region is no longer embroiled in anti-colonial struggles alone. It is firmly embedded in wider global conversations such as climate change, transnational quests, the politics of inclusion of minority groups and so on. My intention is to give a general outlook of these trends and locate consistent moments and insurgent points in the evolving Eastern African literatures and cultures.

By doing so, it must also be considered that the shift in the lingua franca in some nations of eastern Africa has accompanied a change in the linguistics and literary practices in the region. Burundi joined the East Africa Community in 2007. It is in this context that Roland Rugero established an English language literary prize for Burundi, the Akinda Prize, in 2013. This was besides an already existing French prize, the Prix Michel Kayoya. This edited volume explores, in an innovative form, productions from francophone, anglophone and Kiswahili backgrounds that illustrate the intensifying feelings, experiences, and desires through linguistic practices of solidarity. For example, there is an increasing production of Ethiopian literature written not only in Amharic and other indigenous languages but in English. *Abyssinian Nomad* (2018) by Maskarm Haile, *Beneath the Lion's Gaze* (2011) and *The Shadow King* (2020) by Maaza Mengiste are just some of the contemporary examples of the shifting terrain in Ethiopian literature.

It is this transformation in language policy that has added another impetus to have an analysis of Kiswahili texts in this book volume. Eastern

Africa has always been a multilingual zone and there is a unique fluidity in the use of language(s) while Kiswahili is the undisputed *lingua franca* and itself open to innovative transformation. To exemplify this in Kenya, Kariuki et al observe that “Prominent businesses in the country are today shifting to Sheng to market their products a deviation from societal expected norms where normally they would have used English or Kiswahili” (230). Elements of Sheng are also visible in Tanzania, where one frequently hears of “niko freshi” within some sociolects such as in the Bongo music industry or among the urbane youth.

These transformations in cultures of eastern Africa indicate a significant connection to transnational attachments. For example, Wanuri Kahiu, the Kenyan film writer and director of the films *Pumzi* and *Rafiki*, was funded by European and American organisations. The films were produced by South Africans, Simon Hansen and Steven Makrovitz. Transnationalism is a common feature in African literary and cultural scenes. However, there are certain occurrences that mark out eastern Africa from these similarities. For example, to speak of a post-2000 transformation is to depart ways from Tanure Ojaide’s definition of the ‘contemporary’ African literature belonging to the 1980s onwards (22). It is to acknowledge that the year 2000 symbolically and, with other factors, heralded a new generation of writers who are increasingly connected more to global literary spaces and audiences than their predecessors. To the extent that there are specific political occurrences that are unique to the cultures of eastern Africa such as the genocide in Rwanda (more about this later on in this introduction) and the end of the Moi era in Kenya.

As a loose term, but all the same a characterisation of a phenomenon, the above sums up in the concept of what I term the 2000-renaissance. This term captures the revolution that occurred in eastern Africa from a not-so arbitrary period of the year 2000 onwards. The millennial turn in time saw a significant real and symbolic shift in literary traditions and cultural trends. It is symbolic to the extent that the millennial turn coincides with changes in creative ecologies of eastern Africa. It is a real shift to the extent that the millennial turn corresponded with the transformation in themes of cultural and literary representations and engagements. Binyavanga Wainaina typifies this shift in literary and cultural configurations through the creation of *Kwani?* in conjunction with other literary enthusiasts in Nairobi in the year 2000. Thus, I propose the 21<sup>st</sup> century turn as a temporal attendant to new fictional texts, creative nonfiction, testimonial literature (especially in Rwanda), and cultural transactions for eastern Africans.

This renaissance, driven by Binyavanga and like-minded writers, echoes the (post-2000) usage of time in mapping the trends of cultures in eastern Africa. There has been a rise of new voices and plural centres of nurturing cultural productions as a result of the *Kwani?* project. The most visible of them are Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor and Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi. Among others, poets and short story writers such as Shailja Patel and Billy Kahora respectively have also emerged.

Other important spaces of literary production and activism in eastern Africa include the Uganda Women Writers Association FEMRITE which was founded in 1995 in Kampala, not long before the millennial turn. FEMRITE, “is a membership organisation committed to consolidating women’s writing in Uganda and Africa. It aims to promote women writers and create space for the women to write” (“FEMRITE”). FEMRITE is sponsored by many organisations including the German cultural organisation *Goethe-Institut*. In Somaliland, the Hargeysa International Book Festival was founded in 2007. The book festival aims “to promote a “*connected, open, creative and tolerant society led by wisdom*”, and not by emotions; a society that has survived within its own mechanism, culture, heritage and knowledge production” (“Hargeysa International”). The Book Festival is a testament to the increased awareness and establishment of cultural organisations in eastern Africa.

In many of the new literary and cultural organisations and festivals of this period, there is a different sense of transnational linkages. Even Kwani Trust (the parent organisation of *Kwani?*) benefitted from grants by the Ford Foundation, an American organisation. This led Tom Odhiambo to wonder if this is beneficial for an independent editorial voice in the productions that benefit from such organisations (33). This kind of transnational connection creates an uneasy alliance between the donor organisations and the autonomy of the local cultural organisations. The famous 1962 Makerere conference that was funded by the CIA (through the Congress for Cultural Freedom) and the subsequent 1967 near-collapse of the conference’s journal publisher, *Transition*, is an earlier historical example. It is possible to draw parallels between the *Kwani Trust*’s funding model, given the fact that the funding of *Transition* in the 1960s implicated the Ford Foundation and the CIA. Rajat Neogy, the founder of *Transition* says, “It is a fact of life in Africa today that there isn’t the money available for such things as subsidies for independent magazines and cultural projects. All such projects have to look for money from abroad. We spent many tortuous months trying to interest one foundation after another” (Neogy and Hall 313). These questions of funding have not

been solved. The pressures in obtaining sustainable revenue for publication often lead the journals to seek exogenous interventions.

To name a recent example: *The Journal of Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies* has also benefitted from these transnational connections, which sometimes might in-fringe on local autonomies. The journal is co-published by the South African publisher National Inquiry Services Centre and the for-profit firm Taylor and Francis, whose parent company (Informa) is based in London, England. Informa “commissions, curates, produces and publishes” research across many countries (‘Informa’). In the editorial of the first issue, the founding editors Tom Odhiambo and Godwin Siundu discuss the need for this journal. Among other reasons, they state that many of the existing journals are “encumbered mainly by the inability to call on a wider and experienced editorial support and lack of financial support from the universities” (1). The idea of unsustainable local financing options for these organisations amplifies the recourse to foreign donors who many times have their own commercial interests. Thus, Hargeysa Book Festival, FEMRITE, the *Journal of Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies*, and *Kwani?* have had to seek foreign partners or even sponsors. This has augmented the expansion of these organisations and consequently the expansion of literary and cultural studies spaces. Whilst the transnational connections can arguably also be considered as a form of cosmopolitanism, there is still the lingering question of editorial autonomy and hierarchies involved in knowledge production, curation, and dissemination that moves from the so-called global North to the South.

The political commitment present in the new writings of the 21<sup>st</sup> millennium is not necessarily limited to anti-colonial struggles. There is an increasing plurality in cultural existence and political entanglements. These two factors indicate that it is no longer tenable to only look at eastern Africa in binary terms as opposed to the global North. Eastern Africa is now a participant in South-South dialogues, in addition to North-South decolonial conversations. An exemplar of this is Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor’s *The Dragonfly Sea* which engages with questions of being in an aquatic world that lies beyond the traditional hydrocolonialism<sup>1</sup> that has characterised the Indian Ocean. It looks at a world that is neither Indocentric nor Sinocentric or Afrocentric, but where all these worlds meet and intermingle.

---

<sup>1</sup>This term was coined by Isabel Hofmeyr in her article “Provisional Notes on Hydrocolonialism” to capture the materiality and depth of hierarchical flow of power within oceanic engagements. She is concerned with the potential and colonial uses of the oceans (especially the Indian ocean) in her coinage.

Furthermore, it appears that the arrival of internet technology has greatly connected the region to diverse publics within the continent, and beyond. This increased connectivity and mobility within Africa implies that it is now much easier for artists to engage the continent's multiple publics in broader transnational writings and commitments. Senegalese writer Boubacar Boris Diop's *Murambi. Le Livre des ossements* [*The Book of Bones*] (2000) and Uwem Akpan's short story "Say You Are One of Them" (first published in 2008) are two examples. Despite their authors coming from other regions of sub-Saharan Africa, the two texts have thematic concerns in the eastern African nation of Rwanda. Another example would be the online pan-African writers' collective Jalada Africa (based in Nairobi) whose Africa-wide ambition and footprint is observable in social media such as Facebook and Twitter. These examples signify how transnationalism has become an increasingly common fixture in the post-2000 era. The Kenyan writer Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor's short story "Weight of Whispers" (winner of the Caine prize for African writing in 2003) captures a represented mobility and a newer characterisation of the interconnections of different cultures beyond a rigidity in nation and state boundaries. In Owuor's short story, characters move through the breadth of eastern Africa. Thereby Owuor's text is a literary recalibration of geographic distance in the region and simultaneously an enhancement of cosmopolitan cultural connectivity. Certainly, this mobility is not limited to fictionalised beings. There is increased mobility among the citizens of the different states. For example, Binyavanga Wainaina, whose contribution enhanced the post-2000 cultural and literary re-awakening, had ancestry that is traceable to Rwanda, Kenya, and Uganda, and he studied in South Africa.

It is interesting that the multiple author gravitation towards Rwanda in the above paragraph attests to the 1994 Rwandan genocide's energisation of a new wave of transnational literary and cultural commitments. That is not to undermine the tragic events during the genocide. The literary community's solidarity with Rwanda contributes to a pluralist and convivial reckoning of Rwanda's history. At the same time, 'Rwanda'94' becomes one of the transformational components that invigorates fresh modes of conceptualising and applying eastern African literatures and cultures. The tragedy of the genocide becomes, consequently, a watershed moment in the wider eastern African literary and cultural scene. Coming at around the millennial turn, the genocide in Rwanda is closely related to the themes of transformation not only in the political arena but also in the cultural spheres. If one of the consequences for the genocide in Rwanda was a search for new perspectives of being, at the close of the millennium, then it also left a new range of writings which features a pan-African concern with the events in Rwanda

and how they interconnect with other nations around Rwanda in its wake. In comparison to the first-generation writings which were many times based on a single nation, with writers concerned primarily about their unique colonial struggles, the Rwandan genocide invites writers to go beyond their nation not only for inspiration but also to show how one nation's tragedy affects others and crosses into the neighbouring nations and beyond.

In addition to the increased mobility and connections, the turn of the millennium appears to have been accompanied with relative political stability, at least in comparison to the last half of the twentieth century. Consequently, writers have focused on other issues besides purely political themes as confirmed by Frank Schulze-Engler's observation on "new modes of rethinking the global south and a new "African" attentiveness to African-Asian contact zones in East African Literature that has largely replaced the spectral appeal to anti-colonial literary, cultural, and political identities in contemporary East African literary practice" (117). In addition, gendered identities now appear much more frequently in many cultural productions in eastern Africa. For instance, Monica Arac de Nyeko's short story "Jambula Tree" (winner of the Caine prize in 2007) highlights the ambivalences of queer experiences in eastern Africa. The protagonist has a character whose queered identity is a source of tension in her life and society. Anyango, the protagonist, laments, after their accidental coming out, "Our names became forever associated with the forbidden. Shame" (Arac de Nyeko). The short story would later be adapted into a film, *Rafiki* by Wanuri Kahiu in 2019. Though censored in Kenya, the film advanced the gendered discourses in eastern Africa further.

The term third generation is a guiding temporal principle. It is not a complete hard and fast rule on the nature of writings and multimedia expressive arts coming out of Eastern Africa. Thus, in this book we include analysis of some earlier texts, usually to help us gain a better understanding and approach to the current trends in this region. That is not to say that pre-2000 and post-2000 cultural productions, circulations and reception in eastern Africa are essentially unique and exhibit clear demarcations. Rather this introduction is a space-clearing gesture to indicate that the region creates its own path, even as its ways often interconnect with other pathways in the increasingly continentalised and globalised online and offline spaces.

### **Evolving Genres and the Canon**

This book is divided into three parts. The first part is titled "The Evolving Literary Canon". It is made up of articles on diverse and rich source materials

for close readings. This part broaches new questions on the places of pedagogy, literary texts, mobile telephony, and online spheres as part of genre and canon expansion and evolution. It also raises important issues by questioning epistemic traditions that insinuate domination over local eastern African spaces.

Edgar Nabutanyi's chapter is the first in this part. It examines the question of the changing canon in Uganda's literary sphere. Linking up with my general introduction above, he identifies three generations in Uganda's literary scene. He builds the case for an expansion of Ugandan literatures which goes beyond literary staples such as the first generation's song texts by Okot p'Bitek and the second generation's novel such as *Abyssinian Chronicles* by Moses Isegawa. Nabutanyi observes that there is an aesthetic linkage between the well-known texts and current emergent writings from Uganda. This occurs within the gambit of a trigenerational arrangement. To the three generations of Ugandan literary excellence delineated above, he contends, it is plausible to add Bwa Mwesigire's "Susu" and Dilman's "The Taking of Oleng," two seminal short stories, because they espouse the key ingredients of the Ugandan canon, namely, contemporaneity of theme and innovativeness of style.

The author signals the innovative form in the above mentioned two short stories that were published in *The New Orleans Review* as a moment in the expansion of the literary space in Uganda. From these two texts, Nabutanyi argues that the idea of a canon is not a stable and fixed category. This flexibility opens a window into new productions that have not been widely circulated but simultaneously (or potentially) expand the Ugandan literary canon. If there is dystopic representation of the Ugandan body, then these two new texts also engage questions of dystopia in Uganda. However, the two texts experiment with new forms: the use of ecofiction, Sci-Fi writing (in "The Taking of Oleng"). This new kind of writing forms testify to the changes on the nature of eastern African cultures.

The second chapter in this part is Obala Musumba's take on the pedagogy of literature in East Africa, with a special focus on the Tanzanian case. The chapter is unique in its content because pedagogy is seldom analysed in cultural and literary terms in eastern Africa. However, Musumba demonstrates that the pedagogy of literature is a cultural and politicised affair. This chapter illuminates the intricacies that follow the teaching of literature in English in Tanzania. It also examines the politics of language that have seen the development of a differentiated approach to the literature curriculum in the three countries of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, despite a long history of interlinked cultural and literary education programs. If the

choice of language has peripheralized Kiswahili literature in the entire eastern Africa, then the development of the literature curriculum in Tanzania has marginalised literature within Tanzania. Musumba argues that the various curricula led to the assumption of literature as a secondary discipline. Literature is perceived to be not utilitarian, unlike other subjects offered in Tanzanian high schools.

This chapter also delves into the effects of Tanzanian language policy, by means of a survey and other methods. The analysed policy has led to the ‘invisibility’ of Tanzanian writers of fiction in the English language. There are numerous Kiswahili texts which have not been translated into other languages, including English. Usually, this limits the visibility of the many Kiswahili texts that are published in eastern Africa. Musumba gives the illustration of the Swahili writer Shaaban bin Robert who is a landmark name in the literatures of Eastern Africa. However, his works have a rather limited accessibility. This is attributable to many of his works not being translated into other languages, especially the dominant one, English.

Musumba conducts interviews and a cross-sectional survey in Tanzania to examine the literature curriculum’s implementation, its shortfalls and achieved goals. He observes inadequacies in the system. He observes that “‘O’ and ‘A’ levels were most likely handled by teachers who were themselves untrained in pedagogical skills in literature. This vicious cycle of incompetence thus results in mediocrity that permeates the whole national community of teachers and students as regards the teaching of literature”. He concludes that through a combination of factors in policies on literature, there is a stifling of literature development in Tanzania.

Jana Fedtke’s chapter on “Cartographies of Killing” is a novel navigation of transnational connections between eastern Africa and a globalised and militarised world, through a film representation of drone warfare. The chapter focuses on drone representation in the 2015 film, *Eye in the Sky*. Fedtke argues that drones are recent warfare developments and there are ethical, legal, political, military, and transnational conflicts that a deployment of drones entails in the context of East Africa. The militarization of drones engages a negotiated acceptance of casualties of drone warfare, for the sake of the ‘common good.’

The war on terror, which the chapter partly examines, is one of the ways in which eastern Africa is connected to the rest of the world. According to

Fedtke, this new form of transnationalism is a fresh reformulation of old colonial power paradigms. The relationship between the world and eastern Africa is complicated by the ease with which targeted killings are carried out. Concomitant to this are the innocent and powerless bystanders who are caught in the digitized conflict, in Somalia and in Nairobi's Eastleigh estate. The chapter analytically engages modes of marginalization of East Africa in the film in depth. The marginal use of East African settings in comparison to other locales in the film reifies notions of white superiority. Drones are seen as means "to project power without projecting vulnerability."

Kimingichi Wabende's chapter is concerned with *Mchongoano* performance in the Cyber space. *Mchongoano* is an emergent genre in oral performance and it is increasingly playing out in online spaces. This chapter is a reflection on the on-growing interface of digital and oral spaces in eastern Africa. The dynamics of *Mchongoano*, in terms of its online circulation, audience reception, and participation within urban areas are placed in the centre stage. Through *Mchongoano*, the chapter seeks uses of technology to redefine the notions of 'space' and to reconfigure understandings of 'life' in an eastern African context.

Wabende posits that *Mchongoano* is an emergent oral literature genre that is increasingly adapting to novel models of transmission through the internet. As it does so, it also de-stabilises our conventional understandings and approaches to oral arts. Wabende argues that *Mchongoano* subverts the gerontocracy that is often present in traditional oral sayings such as proverbs. Therefore, online *Mchongoano* is both a form of a mediatised insurgency and an innovative performance genre illustrative of a transformational trend in the oral arts in eastern Africa.

James Ogone's chapter analyses mobile phones in the public space in eastern Africa. This chapter brings to conversation discourses of globalised modernity and localised responses. The adaptation or adoption of mobile phones into unique local contexts is a major concern. Ogone outlines the contextual processes and results observable in the use of mobile telephony in both physical and mediated public spaces. The chapter situates mobile phones in the congested African spaces, especially the urban spaces, and how mobile telephones are used in navigating such terrains. He convincingly argues that his reading of the mobile phone is a way to examine productive functions of this technology within a context of global epistemological politics.

Critical ethnography, for Ogone, allows him to postulate a significant dimension of mobile phones. That is, mobile phones have the ability to pluralise (and thus construct) publics as conduits of communication and knowledge exchange. These multiple publics unearth significant, but sometimes peripheralized voices in a globalised epistemic arena. Thus, the politics of mobile phone use advance from mere communication to unsettling hierarchised epistemic voices. The application of mobile phones to an epistemic regime opens new ways to engage mobile phones in order to rethink epistemic configurations in eastern Africa.

### Politics, Conflict, and War

The second part of this book volume is concerned with the representations and constructions of conflicts and rebellions in eastern African. Whilst so doing, this part also obtains cultural connections within eastern Africa, sidestepping historical geographic borders. Three chapters in this part are dedicated to the emerging Burundian literature. These deal with texts that draw from diverse linguistic backgrounds: Kirundi, Kiswahili, French, and English. These linguistic heritages offer a rich connection to the rest of eastern Africa. In addition, they address matters that are local to Burundi such as silence, violence, memory, and genocide among others, but also significant for the wider region.

Jodi Mikalachki's chapter focuses on strategies of narrating violence. No doubt, this is an important aspect to a country whose history is marked by protracted civil warfare, competing socio-political loyalties, and censorship of the creative economy. This literature is marked by a recourse to both anglophone and francophone linguistic choices. Mikalachki argues that this comprises the third-generation writings from Burundi. At the same time, this new-generation fiction is marked by its close relationship to the intermittent civil conflicts that have occurred in Burundi from 1961 to 2005. It is also closely linked to other countries in the region. Mikalachki gives the example of Toyi's *Weep Not, Refugee* as a trauma text whose title is an allusion to Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not, Child*, the first major novel by an East African to be published in English. Likewise, Toyi's fiction is the first English-language novel by a Burundian.

Mikalachki's particular concern is "narrative strategies that assert and develop the humanity of youthful victims and perpetrators, even as they recount the assaults on humanity that genocide and war effect". The militarised

youth become a lens for engaging Burundi's frequently marginalized genocide violence. The themes of violence in this region are often analysed in the contexts of Burundi's western neighbour, The Democratic Republic of Congo, and the northern neighbour, Rwanda. Locating her analysis of violence in the Burundian literary production, Mikalacki's contribution dialogues with the consequence of violence in eastern Africa in general.

In the second chapter of this part, Giuseppe Sofu draws out the uses of violence and silence in Roland Rugero's novels. Rugero is an emerging writer whose fiction has not been widely studied, especially in the English-speaking parts of eastern Africa. Through this chapter, Sofu examines differentiated ideas of violence, both personal and collective. He points to the nuanced engagement of a fluid sense of violence in contemporary Burundian society, and how it is closely linked to silence. The author says, "Through an analysis of Rugero's language, we will read some of the difficult challenges posed by silent forms of violence, as well as violent forms of silence, that contemporary Burundian culture – and indeed, many contemporary societies, even beyond the Eastern African borders – are currently facing."

Therefore, this chapter deals primarily with the themes and rhetoric of violence and silence in the content of Rugero's fictional production. Besides, it also dwells into Rugero's biography that is heavily invested in the renaissance of Burundi literary spaces. Rugero does to Burundian literature what Binyavanga did to Kenyan literature by re-engineering the literary ecology of Burundi through a variety of activities such as creation of literary prizes to further "new possibilities of artistic expression in Burundi and in the region for several years, despite his young age."

Pierre Boizette's chapter is invigorated by concepts of memory, nation, and identity studies. Boizette recognises those categories as having been modelled by particular western parameters. For example, he observes that "Colonisation froze identities through a reinvention of tradition and the modification of previously existing hierarchies." He seeks not to decouple eastern Africa from these discourses but rather how they have been mixed and transformed by a Burundian sensibility through literature. He argues that the conflicts in Burundi cast new ways to understand memory and identity. This is occasioned by the presence of competing identities which need to be remembered within a single national framework. This chapter involves a close reading of *Ikiza (Le Fléau)*, *Bujumbura 1972* by Patrice Ndeta and *Les Années Avalanche* by Juvénal Ngorwanubusa and how the texts "contrast both by the prism of the narration

and by an ideological rereading operating its own selection. As such, the two novels relay and illustrate the memory tensions underlying the Burundian society.” These two novels are an illustration of what the author refers to as the “impossibility of memory and history.” Boizette looks at the fictional representation of specified conflicts in Burundi: 1972, 1988, and 1993. From these events, he looks at the conventional postcolonial characterisation of history and how a literary representation of these events departs from the convention. There is a lack of consensus on how to memorialise the conflicts. This inspires the fictional rise of new nodes of memory that seek unity in spite of a divisive past and present.

Marie-Thérèse Toyi’s chapter closely reflects the politics and aesthetics of the two previous chapters. Toyi analyses the ambivalence of pain in both Rwanda and Burundi. The two countries have a close cultural connection and a history of conflicts that entangle both of them. She analyses aporia in Uwem Akpan’s “My Parents’ Bedroom” (published in 2008), and Aloys Misago’s *La Descente aux enfers* published in 2012. The chapter explores how the binaries of speech—silence, understanding—not understanding, as well as going—staying are productively employed to deconstruct aporia. This aporia rises out of these two emergent fictional texts on Burundi and Rwanda. Toyi gives the example of Ndayi (the protagonist in *La Descente aux enfers*) who is torn between search for understanding and failure to understand. Given the history of genocide within and between the two countries, it is indubitable that questions of psychological nature would eventually be echoed in the cultural productions.

George Odhiambo Otieno analyses the old trope of the intervention of fiction in political conflicts. The chapter begins with biographic details focusing on the politics that led to Hama Tuma’s use of a pseudonym. The linguistic choice of the Ethiopian writer, Hama Tuma, acknowledges the increasing literary productions in the English language in the country that largely uses Amharic as well as other national languages such as Oromo and Tigrinya in writing.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the writing reflects the changing face of conflicts in Ethiopia. The country is undergoing a transition in governance after many decades of rule under politically repressive regimes. According to Otieno, there is a continuous confrontation of the despotic regimes in Africa. The writer observes in Tuma’s texts that “Whether it is through witty subversion, outright submission, timely escapism, or through cunning smiles,

<sup>2</sup>While compiling this book volume, we actively sought out more contributions from writings on Ethiopia and by Ethiopian authors using the national languages. Regretfully, however, we did not get any contribution.

the responses of the subjects suggest a consistent and steady chipping off of the block of despotism in African literary discourse.” The negotiation of the repressive regimes is an on-going process in many eastern African nations, even five decades after the achievement of independence. For Odhiambo, Tuma uses literature to “tilt the balance of power from the dominant and overbearing despots to the masses.”

Pepetual Mforbe Chiangong examines a theatrical documentation of conflict in the Kenya Schools and Colleges Drama Festival, 2017 edition. The functions of traditional kinship values are transformational in character. This is evident, for example in the ebbing functions of Ubuntu in South African politics of xenophobia. They are also evident in the play *The Rubble Rousers* which Chiangong critically engages. She argues that whereas the traditional support structures are rooted in many everyday acts of solidarity, they are challenged by practices that prey on the local citizenry, bodies, and emotions. She posits that the inability to distinguish reason and irrationality leads to a precarity that is itself a reflection of the necropolitics that the postcolonial African state frequently engages in. This is particularly evident in the inability of the government to enforce adherence to safety standards in the built environment, and the resultant deaths from the collapse of many sub-standard buildings in Kenya.

Chiangong locates emotions of agony as related to the disappearance of cosmopolitan aspirations of Ubuntu. Eugene Andayi, the lead character in *The Rubble Rousers*, “articulates the necessity for young people, particularly through their participation in the drama festivals, to convey the values of Ubuntu that, hopefully will serve as a springboard to counter unscrupulous perpetrators of acts of cruelty like Barabbas in the play.” For Andayi, theatre is a social space latent with emancipatory powers that the youth can exploit to move out of the frequent social conflicts in Africa.

### **Recent Interventions in Swahili Writing**

The appearance of this part as the last section does not by any means signify that it is an after-thought. It has been a random decision with no consequence on the effect of its embedded influence in the expansive cultures and histories in eastern Africa. The chapters in this section give an overview of the recent developments on the cultural scene in Kiswahili language writing. It is interesting that there are chapters which echo a pronounced sense of dystopia, which has as well been observed in some of the chapters on English and French language literatures in the first part.

Uta Reuster-Jahn outlines the contributions of a prose fiction collective and online platform in Tanzania called WARIDI. Her chapter seeks to analyse the contribution of WARIDI to the development of Kiswahili literature, through online avenues in particular. Reuster-Jahn explains that “UWARIDI employs creative and innovative strategies with regard to marketing books, increasing public visibility of writers and their works, managing public relations, and enabling writers to publish.” This analysis certainly exploits a literary environment which is currently revitalizing the development of Kiswahili writings in Tanzania.

The chapter locates the Tanzanian situation in a broader historiography of the publishing industry in eastern Africa. The WARIDI collective operates in a tough book market environment that is quite similar to the rest of eastern Africa. That is, eastern African publishers are generally more interested in school text books because they guarantee better returns as opposed to literary publications. The book industry is dogged by the writers’ mistrust and suspicion of publishers. Some writers fear that their manuscripts might be plagiarized by the very publishers, or the manuscripts might be published under different names. In this stifling publishing environment, WARIDI is innovative in its approach. For example, they host festive book auction fairs, as part of their sales activities. The recent emergent trends in Kiswahili literatures have greatly benefitted from the WARIDI forum.

The concern with poetry is often underrepresented not only in production but also in analysis of the eastern African cultures, despite the ubiquity of oral lyrical arts in eastern Africa. The long Somali oral tradition is an example that comes to mind at this point. The case of the classical Kiswahili poetry from the 18<sup>th</sup> century writings of Sayyid Abdallah bin Nasir is a testament to the long and plural traditions of poetry in eastern Africa. It is, therefore, refreshing that Flavia Aiello, Roberto Gaudio, and Emiliano Minerba’s chapter focuses on an overview of the post-2000 written Swahili poetry. They delineate the development of Kiswahili poetry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By doing so, they acknowledge the difficulties associated with the definition of poetry not only in the Kiswahili language but also in the larger eastern African region.

The crux of their analysis of Swahilophone poetry is hinged on a close reading of new inventions such as Kezilahabi’s introduction of free verse in the Kiswahili poetry that has been traditionally metric and rhythmic. They include new writings from Gora Haji Gora and Kithaka wa Mberia

who experiment with different and innovative forms. Underlying this new tradition is a reminiscence of the [post]modernist mantra of ‘make it new’. In the spirit of innovation, Gora Haji Gora has written an anthology that is bilingually published in both Kiswahili and English languages. This shows the close connection between Kiswahili and English languages for Eastern Africans. It is perhaps regrettable that many English cultural texts have not been translated into Kiswahili and vice-versa. Besides, the chapter also focuses on other trends such as the rise of multi-authored anthologies in Kiswahili and the presence of new prizes for writing in Kiswahili.

Mikhail Gromov’s chapter centralises the emergence of the Kiswahili novel, especially in Kenya. Kiswahili novels seem to grapple with questions of how to navigate the anglophone modernity in which it finds itself surrounded. Gromov gives the example of the protagonist Kongowea, in Ken Walibora’s seminal prose *Siku Njema (Good Day)* whose construction “combines two character types intrinsic for the classical Enlightenment— *le héros d’aventure* (the adventurous hero) and *le raisonneur* (the humane and reasonable one).” Besides the choice of analytical methodology that is usually associated with European intellectual traditions, this chapter unearths the relevance of these tools to examine the present-day Kiswahili novel. Furthermore, this chapter proposes that dystopia is a mark of what the author terms the ‘new novel’. Gromov argues that the dystopian Kiswahili novel is closely related to the techniques of [neo]realism and postmodern movements. He gives illustrations of the ‘new novel’ which “has found its development in Kenyan Swahili writing initially (and primarily) in the works of Kyallo Wadi Wamitila, who marked its nascence in Kenyan literature with his novel *Bina-Adamu*.”

We invite all the readers of this book to critically consider our attempt to contribute to the expansion of the field of literary and cultural studies in eastern Africa. The selected chapters aim to give an overview of the trends in literatures and cultures in eastern Africa. However, we cannot make a claim to be complete given the demands of a book publication with editorial requirements, author and time limitations that restrict the number of contributions we could receive and publish. In particular, we hope that in the future, more studies will be done on the literatures and other cultural expressions in local languages in eastern Africa. Finally, as the Swahili saying goes, *hamna marefu yasiyo na ncha*, (nothing is too long to have an end).

## Works Cited

- Akpan, Uwen. "My Parents' Bedroom". *Jambula Tree and Other Stories. The Caine Prize for African Writing. 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Collection*. Cassava Republic, 2008, 21-40.
- Alloo, Christian K. *Otieno Achach*. East African Publishing House, 1966.
- Arac de Nyeko, Monica. "Jambula Tree". University of Groningen. [www.rug.nl/alumni/about-alumni/alumnus-of-the-year/monica-arac-de-nyeko-jambula-tree.pdf](http://www.rug.nl/alumni/about-alumni/alumnus-of-the-year/monica-arac-de-nyeko-jambula-tree.pdf). Accessed 20 August 2020.
- Diop, Boubacar Boris. *Murambi. Le livre des ossements*. Stock, 2000.
- Gikandi, Simon, and Evan Mwangi. *The Columbia Guide to East African Literature in English since 1945*. Columbia U P, 2007.
- Farah, Nuruddin. *From a Crooked Rib*. 1970. Heinemann, 1979.
- . *Links*. Penguin Publishing Group, 2003.
- . *North of Dawn: A Novel*. Penguin Publishing Group, 2018.
- Haile, Maskarm. *Abyssinian Nomad: An African Woman's Journey of Love, Loss, and Adventure from Cape to Cairo*. Abyssinian Nomad Publishing House, 2018.
- Hofmeyr, Isabel. "Provisional Notes on Hydrocolonialism." *English Language Notes*, vol. 57, no. 1, 2019, pp. 11-20.
- Kariuki, Annah, Fridah Erastus Kanana, and Hildah Kebeya. "The Growth and Use of Sheng in Advertisements in Selected Businesses in Kenya." *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2015, pp. 11-20.
- Kerr, David. "From the Margins to the Mainstream: Making and Remaking an Alternative Music Economy in Dar Es Salaam." *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, vol. 30, no. 1, 2018, pp. 65-80.
- Kiriamiti, John. *My Life in Crime*. 1984. East African Educational Publishers, 1989.
- Kitereza, Aniceti. *Mr. Myombekere and His Daughter Bugonoka, Their Son Ntulanalwo and Daughter Bulihwali: The Story of An Ancient African Community*. Translated by Gabriel Ruhumbika, Dar es Salaam: Mkuki Na Nyota, 2002.
- Kopf, Martina. "Encountering Development in East African Fiction." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, vol. 54, no. 3, 2017, pp. 334-351.

- Makumbi, Jennifer Nansubuga. [2014]. *Kintu*. Transit Books, 2017.
- Mbowa, Rose. "Theater and Political Repression in Uganda." *Research in African Literatures* vol. 27, no. 3, 1996, pp. 87-97.
- Mangua, Charles. [1971]. *Son of Woman*. East African Educational Publishers, 1990.
- Mengiste, Maaza. *Beneath the Lion's Gaze*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2010.
- . *The Shadow King*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2020.
- Mūkoma Wa Ngūgĩ. *The Rise of the African Novel: Politics of Language, Identity, and Ownership*. U of Michigan P, 2018.
- Mwangi, Meja. *Carcase for Hounds*. Heinemann, 1974.
- . *Kill Me Quick*. Heinemann, 1976.
- Neogy, Rajat, and Tony Hall. "Rajat Neogy on the CIA." *Transition*, no. 75/76, 1997, pp. 312-316.
- Nyabongo, Akiki K. *Africa Answers Back*. George Routledge and Sons Ltd., 1936.
- Odhiambo, Tom, and Godwin Siundu. "Journeying into the Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies." *Eastern African Literary and Cultural Studies*, vol 1, no. 1/2, 2014, pp. 1-6.
- Ogude, James, Grace A. Musila, and Dina Ligaga, eds. *Rethinking Eastern African Literary and Intellectual Landscapes*. Africa World Press, 2012.
- Ojwang, Dan. *Reading Migration and Culture: The World of East African Indian Literature*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Owuor, Yvonne Adhiambo. *Weight of Whispers*. 2003. Kwani Trust, 2006.
- . *Dust*. Vintage, 2014.
- . *The Dragonfly Sea*. Knopf, 2019.
- Palangyo, Peter K. *Dying in the Sun*. Heinemann, 1968.
- Samatar Sofia, Keguro Macharia, and Aaron Bady. "What Even Is African Literature Anyway?" *The New Inquiry*, 9 February 2015, <https://thenewinquiry.com/what-even-is-african-literature-anyway/>. Accessed 28 September 2020.
- Schulze-Engler, Frank. *Reconfiguring Transregionalism in the Global South African-Asian Encounters*. Springer Nature, 2019.

Serumaga, Robert. [1969]. *Return to the Shadows*. Heinemann Educational Books, 1970.

Sicherman, Carol. "Makerere's Myths, Makerere's History: A Retrospect." *Journal of Higher Education in Africa / Revue de l'enseignement Supérieur En Afrique*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2008, pp. 11-39.

## Consulted Webpages

[www.femrite.org/about-us-2/](http://www.femrite.org/about-us-2/). Accessed 4 August 2020.

[www.hargeysaculturalcenter.org/hargeysa-international-book-fair/](http://www.hargeysaculturalcenter.org/hargeysa-international-book-fair/). Accessed 18 September 2020.

[www.informa.com](http://www.informa.com). Accessed 17 September 2020.

**Part One:**

**The Evolving Literary Canon**

