

The Columbia Guide to East African Literature in English Since 1945



The Columbia Guide to East African Literature in English Since 1945 (The Columbia Guides to Literature Since 1945) by Simon Gikandi

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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The Columbia Guide to East African Literature in English Since 1945 is a comprehensive overview of the literary landscape of East Africa. It covers a wide range of topics, from the history of East African literature to the major themes and genres that have emerged over the years.

The guide is divided into three parts. The first part provides a general overview of East African literature, including its history, major themes, and genres. The second part provides detailed essays on individual authors, including Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, and Wole Soyinka. The third part provides a comprehensive bibliography of East African literature.

The Columbia Guide to East African Literature in English Since 1945 is an essential resource for anyone interested in the literature of East Africa. It is

a comprehensive and well-written guide that provides a wealth of information on the history, major themes, and genres of East African literature.

History of East African Literature

The history of East African literature in English can be traced back to the late 19th century, when the British began to colonize the region. The early years of East African literature were dominated by colonial writers, who wrote about the experiences of Europeans living in Africa. However, in the 1950s and 1960s, a new generation of African writers emerged, who began to write about the experiences of Africans living in Africa.

These early African writers were often nationalists, who used their writing to promote the cause of African independence. They wrote about the political, social, and economic problems that Africans faced under colonial rule, and they called for an end to colonialism. Some of the most important early African writers include Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, and Wole Soyinka.

After independence, East African literature continued to develop and grow. Writers began to experiment with new forms and styles, and they explored a wider range of themes. They wrote about the challenges of nation-building, the problems of poverty and inequality, and the impact of globalization on African societies.

Today, East African literature is a vibrant and diverse field. It includes writers from a wide range of backgrounds, who write in a variety of styles and genres. East African literature has made a significant contribution to

world literature, and it continues to be a source of inspiration and enlightenment for readers around the world.

Major Themes in East African Literature

The major themes in East African literature include:

- **The struggle for independence:** Many early East African writers were nationalists, who used their writing to promote the cause of African independence. They wrote about the political, social, and economic problems that Africans faced under colonial rule, and they called for an end to colonialism.
- **The challenges of nation-building:** After independence, East African writers began to explore the challenges of nation-building. They wrote about the problems of poverty and inequality, the ethnic conflicts that plagued many African countries, and the impact of globalization on African societies.
- **The search for identity:** Many East African writers have explored the theme of identity. They have written about the challenges of growing up in a postcolonial world, the search for a sense of belonging, and the struggle to define oneself in a rapidly changing world.
- **The power of storytelling:** Many East African writers have used storytelling to explore the complex social and political issues that face their societies. They have used storytelling to educate, to entertain, and to inspire change.

Major Genres in East African Literature

The major genres in East African literature include:

- **The novel:** The novel is the most popular genre in East African literature. East African novelists have written about a wide range of topics, including the history of East Africa, the challenges of nation-building, and the search for identity.
- **The short story:** The short story is another popular genre in East African literature. East African short story writers have written about a wide range of topics, including the everyday lives of ordinary people, the impact of social and political change, and the search for meaning in a rapidly changing world.
- **The play:** The play is a less common genre in East African literature, but there have been a number of important East African playwrights. East African playwrights have written about a wide range of topics, including the history of East Africa, the challenges of nation-building, and the social and political problems that face African societies.
- **The poem:** The poem is a popular genre in East African literature. East African poets have written about a wide range of topics, including the beauty of the African landscape, the challenges of everyday life, and the search for meaning in a rapidly changing world.

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