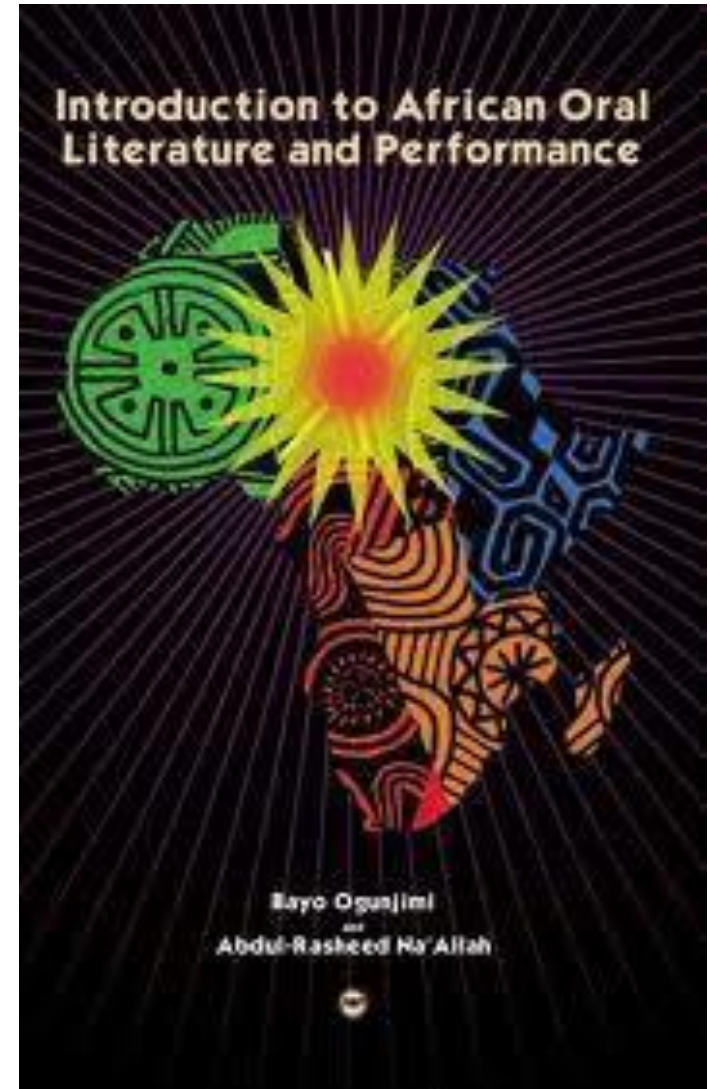


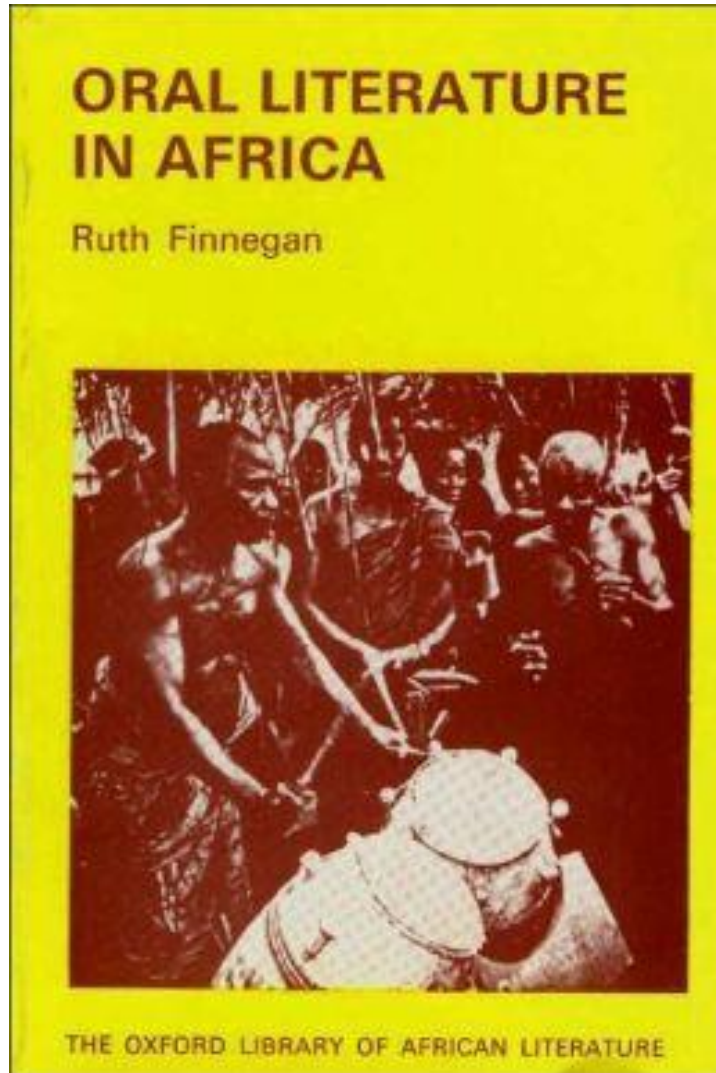


# African Literature Defined

- **African** literature is literature of and from Africa and includes oral literature (or "orature", in the term coined by Ugandan scholar Pio Zirimu)



# Oral Tradition

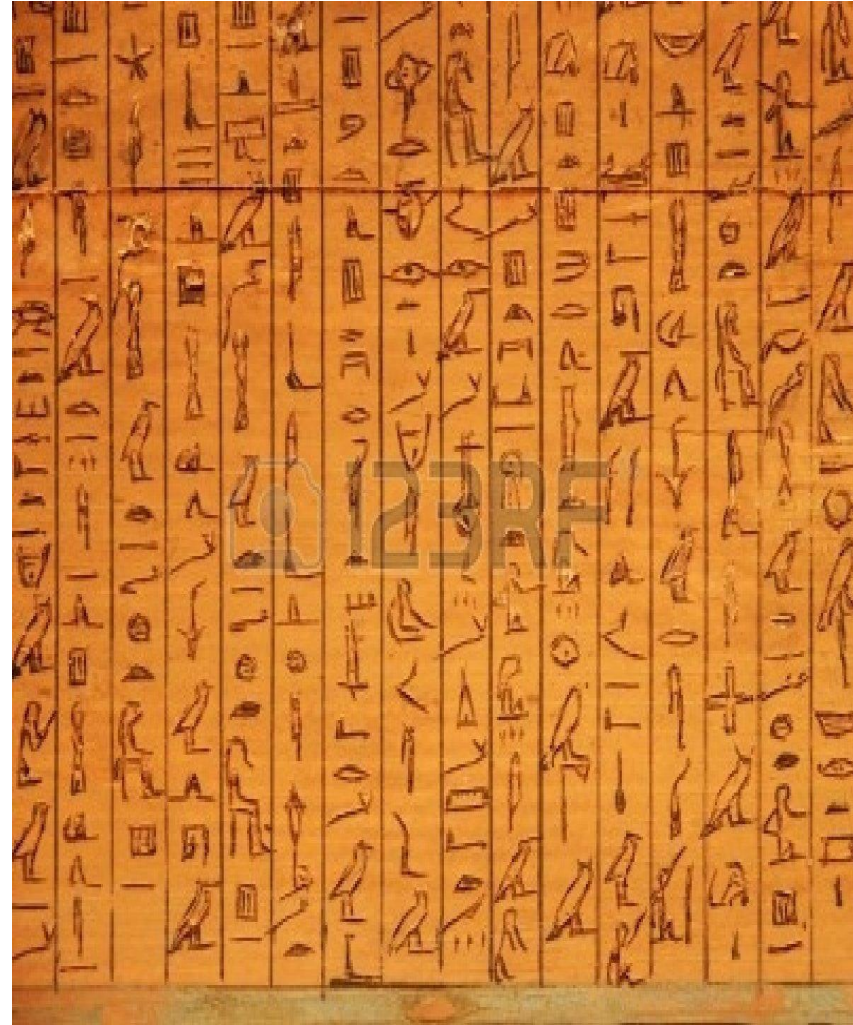


- Not always respected by European scholars
  - Only recognize written literature
- Celebrated by Africans
- Usually in prose or blank verse

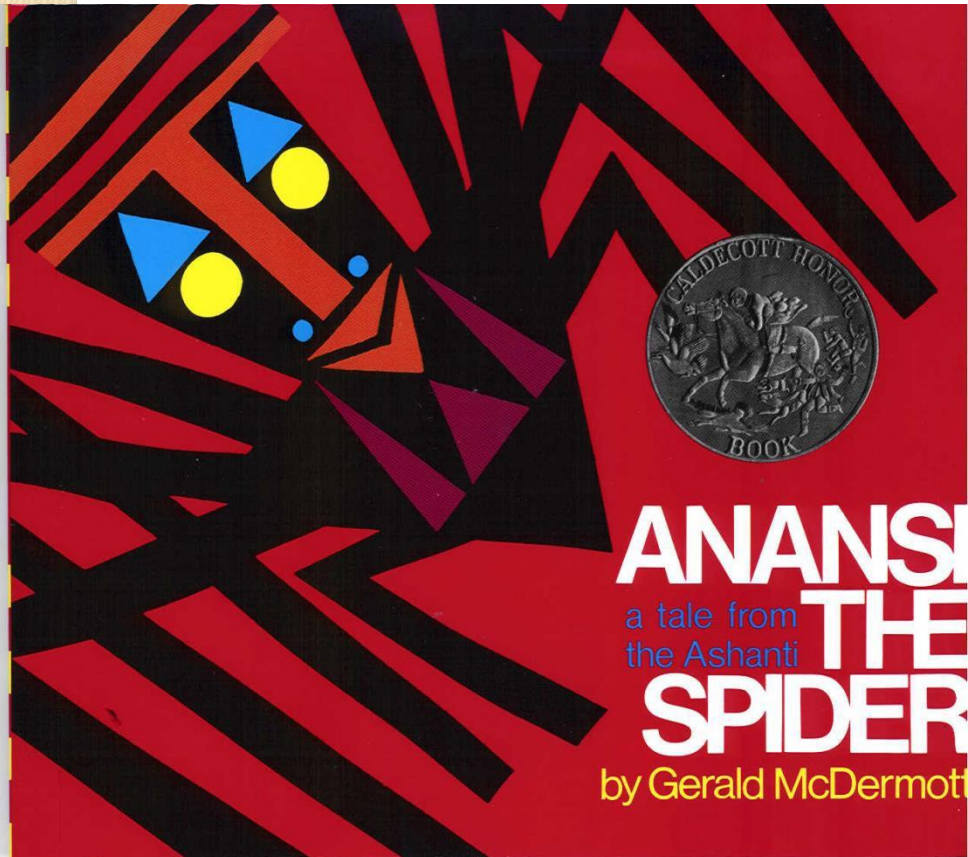


# Early Written Literature

- North Africa had literate civilization
  - (Ancient Egypt)
  - Hieroglyphics
- Some date back to 4,000 BCE
  - So evidence of African Literature dates back 6,000 years!



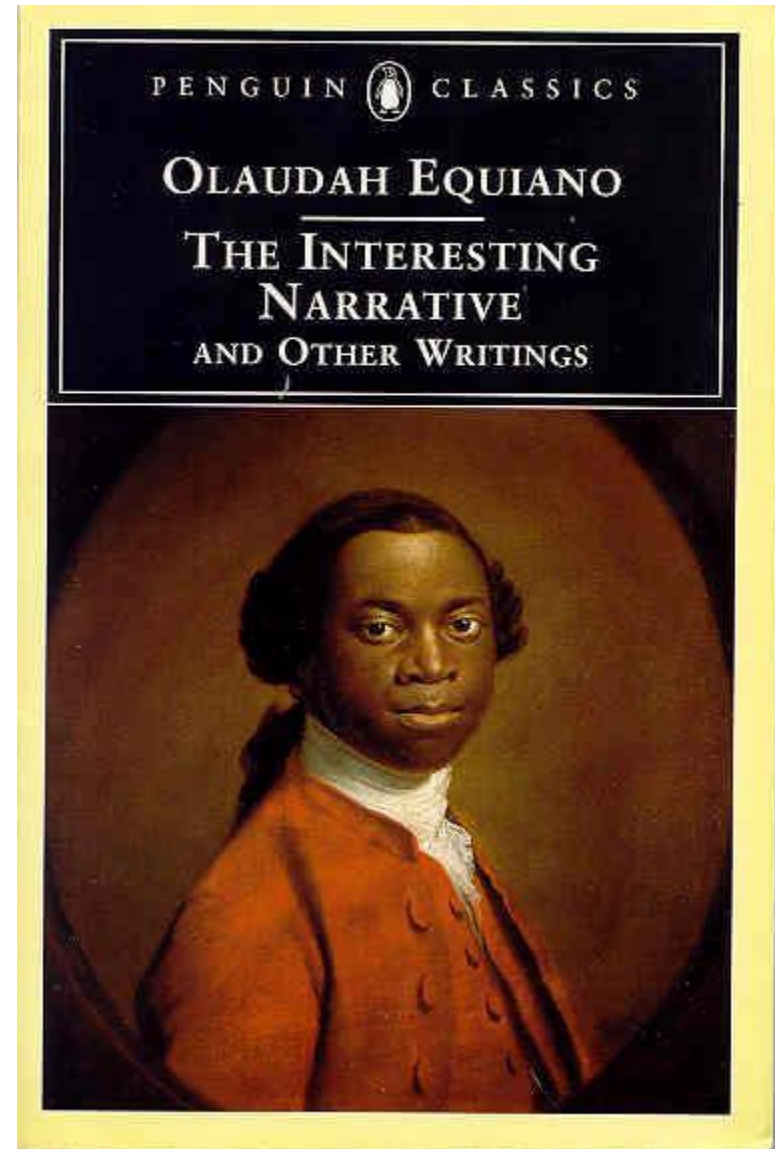
# Pre-Colonial Literature



- Mostly written in Arabic
  - But some are in other indigenous languages
- Several Types
  - Epics
  - “Trickster” story
    - Small animal outwits a large animal
  - Myths
  - Folk Tales

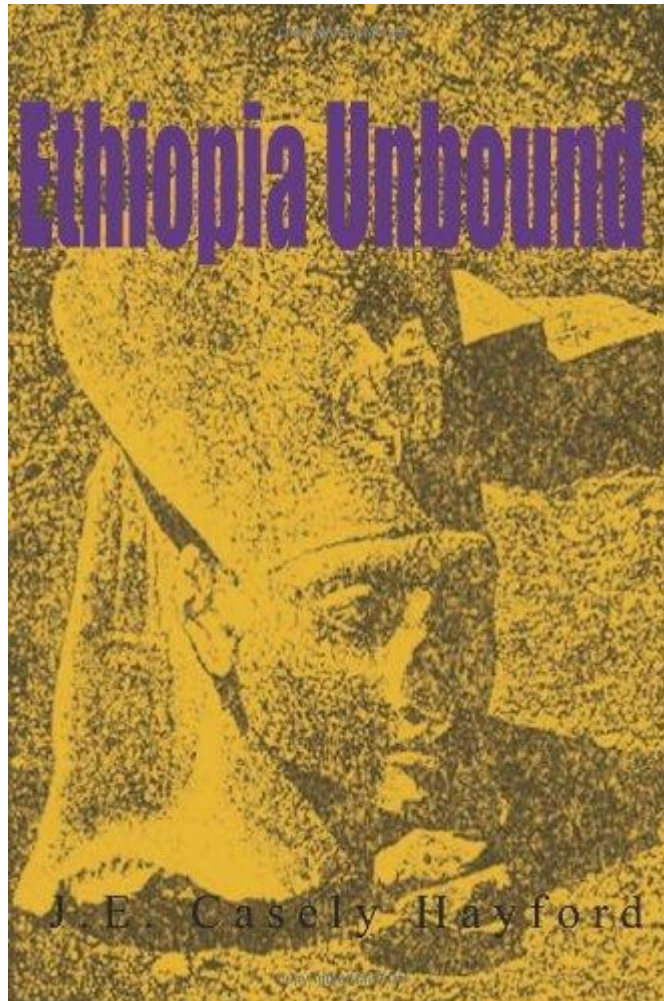
# Colonial Literature

- Slave Narratives are the first to be recognized outside of Africa
  - *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*
- Many African writers start to write in colonial languages





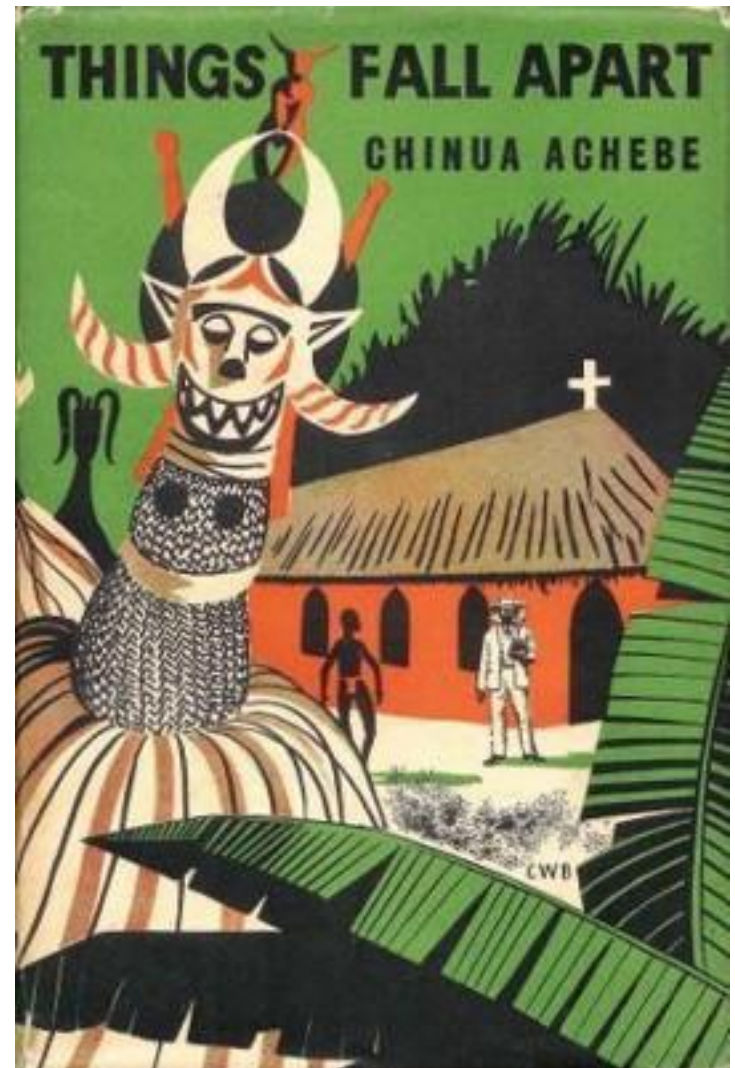
# Colonial Literature



- First African novel written in English was *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911)
- African plays start to emerge as well

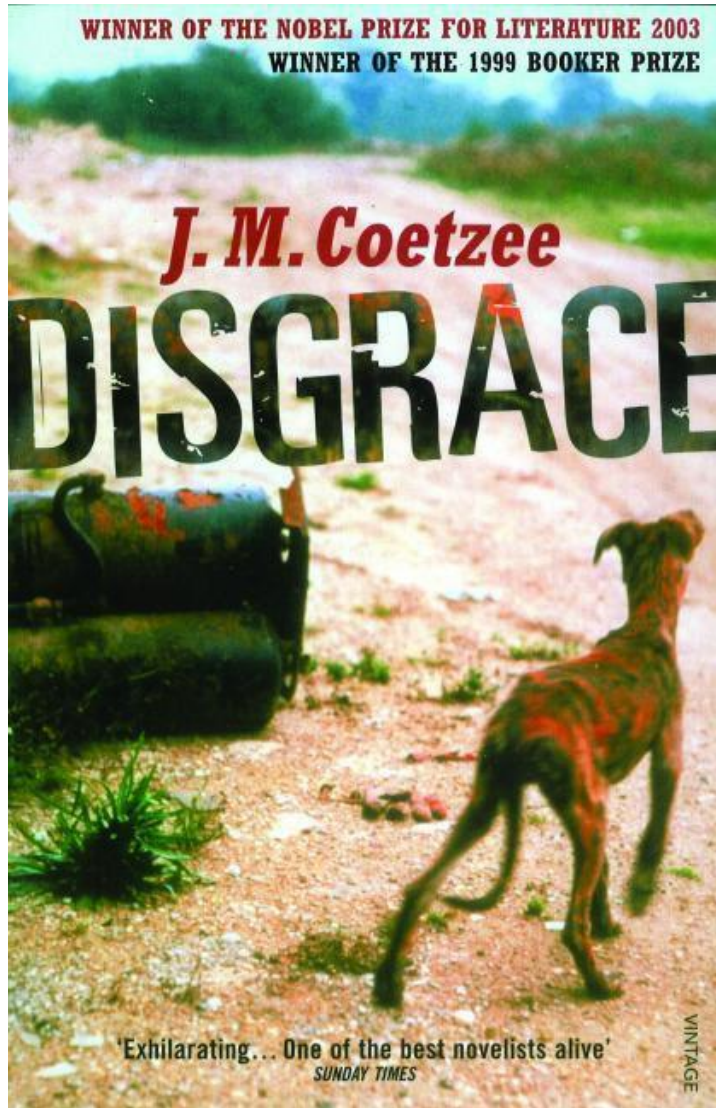
# Late Colonial Literature (1918-1950's and 60's)

- Increasingly showed themes of liberation and independence
- Celebration of traditional African Culture
- *Things Fall Apart* (1958)





# Postcolonial Literature



- Liberation and Increased literacy led to more works being published
- African Literature being recognized and incorporated into school curriculum world-wide
- 4 of 5 Nobel Prizes from this period



# African Literature Themes

- Clash between
  - Africa's past and present
  - Tradition and modernity
  - Indigenous and foreign
  - Individualism and community
  - Socialism and capitalism
  - Development and self-reliance
  - Africanness and humanity



# Lack of Respect for African Literature

- Reasons:
  - Most texts about Africa have been written by whites
  - Europeans destroyed many African documents during colonization
  - Whites sought to “caucasize” African accomplishments
  - Slavery
  - Supremacist Mentality