Africa’s strong tradition of storytelling has long been an expression of an oral narrative culture. African writers such as Amos Tutuola, Naguib Mahfouz, Wole Soyinka, and J.M. Coetzee have adapted these older forms to develop and enhance the genre of the novel, in a shift from the oral mode to print. Comprehensive in scope, these new essays cover the fiction in the European languages from North Africa and Africa South of the Sahara, as well as in Arabic. They highlight the themes and styles of the African novel through an examination of the works that have either attained canonical status – an entire chapter is devoted to the work of Chinua Achebe – or can be expected to do so. Including a guide to further reading and a chronology, this is the ideal starting-point for students of African and world literatures.

F. ABIOLA IRELE is Visiting Professor in the Department of African and African American Studies and the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University. His recent publications include The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature, edited with Simon Gikandi (Cambridge, 2004).

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

APOLLO AMOKO is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Florida. His teaching and research interests are postcolonial theory and literatures (with specific emphasis on African literature), critical theory, cultural studies (race, gender, and sexuality studies), ethnic literatures of Canada and the United States, and modern drama. He has published essays in such journals as Modern Drama, Callaloo, Mosaic, and Research in African Literatures. He is completing a manuscript on citizenship, canonicity and the invention of modern African literature.

BERNARD ARESU teaches French Studies and Humanities at Rice University. His research deals with poets and novelists writing in French. His publications cover a plurality of North African writers and artists. They include Counterhegemonic Discourse From the Maghreb: The Poetics of Kateb’s Fiction, a monograph on Tahar Ben Jelloun, as well as articles on Abdelkebir Khatibi, Rachid Mimouni, Assia Djebar, Mohammed Khadda, Boualem Sansal, and Salim Bachi. He is currently at work on The Self in Dissidence: Mediterranean Fictions as well as on a translation of Kateb Yacine’s theatre.

M. KEITH BOOKER is the James E. and Ellen Wadley Roper Professor of English at the University of Arkansas. He has written or edited more than thirty books on literature, literary theory, and popular culture. His publications include The African Novel in English: An Introduction (1998), The Caribbean Novel in English: An Introduction (2001, co-authored by Dubravka Juraga). He is also the editor of The Chinua Achebe Encyclopedia (2003).

HARRY GARUBA is Associate Professor at the Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town with a joint appointment in the English Department. In 2005–6, he was a Mellon Fellow at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre at the University of Texas in Austin and later a Mandela Fellow at the WEB Dubois Institute, Harvard University. His recent publications include “Mapping the Land/Body/Subject: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies in African Narrative” (Alternation, 2002), “Explorations in Animist Materialism: Notes on Reading/Writing African Literature, Culture, and Society” (Public Culture, Spring 2003),
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS


O LA K U N L E G E O R G E is Associate Professor of English and Africana Studies at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. He is author of Relocating Agency: Modernity and African Letters (2003), and his articles have appeared in Comparative Literature, Diacritics, Novel: A Forum on Fiction, Representations, and Research in African Literatures.

B A R B A R A H A R L O W teaches literature at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the author of Resistance Literature (1986), Barred: Women, Writing, and Political Detention (1992), After Lives: Legacies of Revolutionary Writing (1996), and co-editor with Mia Carter of Imperialism and Orientalism: A Documentary Sourcebook (1999) and Archives of Empire, I, From the East India Company to the Suez Canal and XI, The Scramble for Africa (2003), and co-editor with Ferial Ghazoul of The View from Within: Writers and Critics and Contemporary Arabic Literature (1994), and with Toyin Falola of two volumes of essays in honor of Bernth Lindfors, Palavers of African Literature and African Writers and Readers (2002). She is currently working on an intellectual biography of the South African writer and activist, Ruth First.

F. A B I O L A I R E L E was formerly Professor of French at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria and Professor of African, French and Comparative Literature at the Ohio State University, from which he retired in 2003. Since then, he has been Visiting Professor at Harvard in the Departments of African and African American Studies and Romance Languages and Literatures. Professor Irele’s publications include annotated editions of Selected Poems by Léopold Sédar Senghor (1977) and Aimé Césaire’s Cahier d’un retour au pays natal (1994; second edition 1999), and two collections of critical essays, The African Experience in Literature and Ideology (1981, reprinted 1990) and The African Imagination: Literature in Africa and the Black Diaspora (2001). He is co-editor, with Simon Gikandi, of the Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature and a contributing editor to the Norton Anthology of World Literature. From 1992 to 2003, he served as Editor of the journal Research in African Literatures; he is currently Editor (with Tommie Shelby) of Transition Magazine.

D A N I Z E V B A Y E took BA and PhD degrees at the University of Ibadan. He taught at the University of Lagos, and for many years at the University of Ibadan where he retired as Professor in 2004. He has held visiting appointments at universities in the UK, the US and South Africa and was a 1989 Senior Fulbright Fellow. He currently teaches at Bowen University, Iwo, Nigeria, where he is Dean of the Arts Faculty. He is a fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Letters, of which he was President from 2001 to 2006. His publications include essays on the major figures of African literature.
Apart from literature, his research interest includes communication and the entertainment media.


**Ata Quayson** is Professor of English and inaugural director of the Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies at the University of Toronto. His most recent publications are *Calibrations: Reading for the Social* (2003), *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation* (2007), and *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory* (with Tejumola Olaniyan, 2007).

**Shaden M. Tageldin** is Assistant Professor of Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota. She is finishing a book titled *Disarming Words: Empire and the Seductions of Translation in Egypt*. For her doctoral dissertation (University of California, Berkeley), she received the 2005 Charles Bernheimer Prize from the American Comparative Literature Association. Her most recent essay, on nostalgia and the poetics of postcolonial migration in Sakinna Boukhedenna and Agha Shahid Ali, appeared in *Comparative Literature Studies*. Two essays are forthcoming in *The Rise of the Arab Novel in English* and *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Naguib Mahfouz*.

**Phyllis Taoua** teaches literature and cinema at the University of Arizona, where she is an Associate Professor of French and Francophone Studies. She is the author of *Forms of Protest* (2002) and numerous articles on French and African literatures, literary criticism, ethnography, and the politics of empire. She is currently at work on a second book entitled *The Dynamics of Dispossession*, which explores representations of loss in contemporary African literature and film.


**Christopher Warnes** studied in South Africa and the UK, and has been a lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch. He is currently Lecturer in Commonwealth and
International Literature at the University of Cambridge. He has published several articles on South African literature, and his book, *Magical Realism and the Postcolonial Novel*, will be published in 2009.

**Nana Wilson-Tagoe** is a Visiting Professor of African and African Diaspora Literature at the Department of Black Studies, University of Missouri, Kansas City, and a member of staff in the MA program in National and International Literatures at the Institute of English, University of London, UK. She has taught African and Caribbean Literature at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and at universities in Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya. In addition to several journal articles and book chapters, she has published *Historical Thought and Literary Representation in West Indian Literature* (University Press of Florida), edited *National Healths. Gender Sexuality and Health in Cross-cultural Contexts*, co-published *A Reader’s Guide to Westindian and Black British Literature* and has forthcoming books on writers, Ama Ata Aidoo and Yvonne Vera.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Editor would like to express sincere thanks to Mr Josiah Epps, of the Department of African and African American Studies at Harvard University, for his diligent supervision of the technical aspects of this project right from its inception.
## CHRONOLOGY

### HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL EVENTS

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<td>Egypt: Old Kingdom</td>
<td>2500 BC</td>
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<td>Egypt: Middle Kingdom (1900–1500 BC); New Kingdom (1500–1200 BC)</td>
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<td>Kush, Meroe, Nubia Conquest by Alexander the Great (332 BC)</td>
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<td>Greek conquest of Egypt (100 BC)</td>
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<td>Roman conquest of Egypt and North Africa (30 BC)</td>
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<td>Introduction and spread of Christianity in North Africa (200–350)</td>
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<td>Axum (100–700)</td>
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<td>Rise of Ghana (300–1200)</td>
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<td>Arab conquest of North Africa (640–700)</td>
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<td>Spread of Islam in West Africa (600–900)</td>
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<td>Founding of al-Azhar University in Cairo (969)</td>
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### LITERARY AND CULTURAL EVENTS

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<td>Egyptian Book of the Dead</td>
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<td>Hymn of Akhenaten (c.1375 BC)</td>
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<td>Aesop’s Fables</td>
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<td>Herodotus, History (c.450 BC)</td>
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<td>Terence (195–159 BC), The Self Tormentor, Woman of Andros</td>
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<td>Apuleius, The Golden Ass (c.155)</td>
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<td>Heliodorus, Aethiopica</td>
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<td>St Augustine, Confessions (400)</td>
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<td>Development of Geez script</td>
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<td>Poems of Antara</td>
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<td>Composition of the One Thousand and One Nights, partly in Egypt (c.900–1700s)</td>
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<td>Arab Chronicles: Ibn Battuta, al-Ribla (c.1355), Ibn Khaldun, Kitab al-Ibar (c.1375)</td>
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<td>Swahili utendi</td>
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“Berber” Almoravid and Almohad dynasties gain control of North and Northwest Africa (from Egypt to Senegal) and Iberian peninsula (1073–1269)
Rise of Mali (c.1200)
Rise of Songhay (1495)

Rise of Kongo Kingdom (c.1300)
Rise of Benin (c.1400)
Zimbabwe (Monomotapa) (c.1500)
Portuguese explorers on the West and Central African coasts (1450–1600)
Ottoman invasions of Cairo (1517), Algiers (1518), and Tripolitania and Cyrenaica in present-day Libya (mid-1500s); Ottoman Empire annexes most of North Africa
The Atlantic slave trade (late 1500s–mid nineteenth century)
The Dutch in South Africa (late sixteenth century)
The Haitian Revolution (1790–1804)
Rise of Chaka and Zulu (c.1795), Mfecane (1817–47)
French occupation of Egypt (1798–1801)
Rise of the Sokoto Caliphate (1800)
United States attacks Tripoli in present-day Libya (1801), Barbary Wars (1801–5)
Muhammad Ali Pasha becomes Ottoman viceroy of Egypt (1805)
Abolition of the slave trade: Britain (1807), France (1848), USA (1860)

Epic of Son-Jara
Leo Africanus (born Hasan ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan al-Fasi), History and Description of Africa (c.1513)
The Mwindo Epic
The Ozidi Saga

Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative (1789)

Zulu izibongo
Creation of Liberia
Founding of Fourah Bay College
(1827)
French invasion of Algeria (1830)
The emir Abd el-Kader (1808–83) organizes resistance against French colonization (1832–47)

Rifa‘a Ra‘i al-Tahtawi, Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Bariz (1834)
Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi, Aqwam al-Masalik fi Ma‘rifat al-Mamalik (1867–8)
S. W. Koelle, Polyglotta Africana (1854)

Mahdi Rebellion in Sudan (1881)
ʿUrabi Rebellion in Egypt (1881–2)
British invasion of Egypt (1882)
Berlin Conference (Partition of Africa) (1884–5)

Olive Schreiner, The Story of an African Farm (1883)
Edward Wilmot Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race (1887)

Boer War (1889–1902)
Battle of Omdurman in Sudan (1898)
Establishment of Anglo-Egyptian condominium in Sudan (1899)
Southern Mauritania becomes a French protectorate (1903)
Maji-Maji rising in German East Africa (1908–12)
Morocco and Tunisia become French protectorates (1912)
South African Native Land Act (1913)

First World War (1914–18)

Muhammad al-Muwaylihi, Hadith ‘Isa ibn Hisham (1898–1902)
Joseph Casely Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound (1911)
Muhammad Husayn Haykal,
Zaynab (1913)
Sol T. Plaatje, Native Life in South Africa (1916)
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Egypt becomes British protectorate
(1914)

Founding of the African National Congress (1917)

Du Bois and pan-African Conference, Paris (1919)

Egyptian Revolution of 1919, nominal independence of Egypt
(1922)

Mauritania becomes colony in French West Africa (1920)

The Harlem Renaissance, c. 1921–9

René Maran, Prix Goncourt for Batouala (1921)

Muhammad al-Qurrí, al-Yatim al-Muhmal (1923)

Taha Husayn, al-Ayyam (1926–7)

Thomas Mfolo, Chaka (1930)

Sol T. Plaatje, Mhudi (1930)

Ibrahim ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Mazini, Ibrahim al-Katib (1931)

Tawfiq al-Hakim, ‘Awdat al-Ruh (1933)

‘Abd al-Khalíq al-Turays, Intisar al-Haqq bi al-Batil (1933)


End of Ottoman Empire and abolition of caliphate (1924)

Italian invasion of Abyssinia (1936)

Leo Frobenius, History of African Civilizations (1936)

Jomo Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya (1936)

Nnamdi Azikiwe, Renascent Africa (1937)

Daniel O. Fagunwa, Ogboju Ode ninu Igbo Irunmale (1938)

Aimé Césaire, Notebook of a Return to the Native Land (1939)
Mahmud al-Mas'adi, *al-Sudd* (1940)

Albert Camus’s “Misère de Kabylie” and “La famine en Algérie,” in *Actuelles III*, 1939 and 1945

Italian annexation of Libya (1939)

Second World War (1939–45)
Brazzaville Conference (1944)
Popular upheaval and colonial repression, Sétif, Algeria, 8 May 1945
Malagasy Rebellion and French Repression (1946)
Pan-African Conference, Manchester (1946)
Railway workers’ strike in Senegal (Dakar to Bamako line) (1947–8)
Mine workers’ strike in South Africa (1948)

Founding of *Présence africaine* (1947)

Establishment of State of Israel, first Arab–Israeli War (1948)
Independence of Libya (1951)
Free Officers’ Revolution and Independence of Egypt (1952)
“Mau-Mau” Rebellion, Kenya (1952–6)

Mohammed Dib’s trilogy *Algérie*, 1952–4
Amos Tutuola, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952)
Camara Laye, *L’Enfant noir (The African Child)* (1953)

Jamal ‘Abd al-Nasir (Nasser) becomes President of Egypt (1954)
Bandung Conference (1955)
South African Freedom Charter (1955)
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<td>First clandestine Congress of the National Liberation Front, aka the Congress of the Soummam Valley, Algeria</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Kateb Yacine</td>
<td><em>Nedjma</em> (1956)</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>First Congress of Black Writers, Paris</td>
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<td>Ousmane Sembène</td>
<td><em>Le Docker noir</em> (1956)</td>
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<td>Albert Camus, Nobel Prize</td>
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<td>Albert Memmi</td>
<td><em>Portrait du colonisé</em> (1957)</td>
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<td>Chinua Achebe</td>
<td><em>Things Fall Apart</em> (1958)</td>
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<td>Nawal al-Sa’dawi (Nawal El Saadawi), <em>Mudhakkirat Tabiba</em> (1958)</td>
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<td>General de Gaulle and Referendum on “French Community”</td>
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<td>Najib Mahfuz (Naguib Mahfouz), <em>Awlad Haratina</em> (1959)</td>
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<td>Independence of Guinea</td>
<td>1958</td>
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Ballets Africains of Guinea (Fodeba Keita) (1960)
Latifa al-Zayyat, al-Bab al-Maftuh (1960)

1960: Year of African Independence: Nigeria and several African countries
Assassination of Patrice Lumumba (1961)
South Africa: Sharpeville Massacre (1960)

Wole Soyinka, A Dance of the Forest (1960)
Frantz Fanon, Les Damnés de la terre (1961)
Jean Pélégrí, Les oliviers de la justice, Prix des écrivains de cinéma et de télévision, Cannes Festival (1962)
Conference of English-Speaking African Writers, Kampala (1962)

Founding of Organization of African Unity (1963)
Albert Memmi (ed.), Anthologie des écrivains du Maghreb d’expression française (1964)
East African Literary Bureau established (1964)
Waguih Ghali, Beer in the Snooker Club (1964)
Ama Ata Aidoo, Dilemma of a Ghost (1965)
Okot p’Bitek, Song of Lawino (1966)
Dakar Arts Festival (1966)
Gillo Pontecorvo, The Battle of Algiers, Golden Lion (Grand Prize), Venice Film Festival (1966)
Tayeb Salih, Mawsim al-Hijra ila al-Shamal (1966)


**Chronology**

Sun' Allah Ibrahim, *Tilka al-Ra’iba* (1966)


Najib Mahfuz (Naguib Mahfouz), *Miramar* (1967)

Six-Day War between Arab states and Israel (1967)

Nigerian Civil War (1967–70)

Yambo Ouologuem, Prix Renaudot, *Le Devoir de la violence* (*Bound to Violence*) (1968)

Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968)


War of Independence, Portuguese colonies (1961–74)


Mohammed Lakhdar-Hamina, *Chronique des années de braise*, scenario by Rachid Boudjedra, Palme d’or, Cannes Festival (1975)

Death of Nasser (1970)

Arab-Israeli War (1973)

Soweto Uprising (1976)


Sony Labou Tansi, *La Vie et demie* (1979)

Idwar al-Kharrat, *Rama wa al-Tinnin* (1979)

Mariama Bâ, *Une si longue lettre* (So Long a Letter) (1979)

Noma Award for Publishing in Africa established 1980 (won by Mariama Bâ)

Independence of Zimbabwe (1980)

Assassination of Anwar al-Sadat (1981)


Abd el-Kader, *Écrits spirituels* (1982)

Algerian novelist Rashid Bu Jadra (Rachid Boudjedra) announces his turn from French to Arabic (1982); publication of *al-Tafakkuk* (1982)


Senghor elected to the French Academy (1983)

Layla Abu Zaid (Leila Abouzeid), *‘Am al-Fil* (1983–4)

Assia Djebar, *L’Amour, la fantasia* (Fantasia, an Algerian Cavalcade) (1985)

Kateb Yacine, Grand Prix National des Lettres (1986)

Wole Soyinka, Nobel Prize (1986)

Tahar Ben Jelloun, Prix Goncourt (1987) for *La Nuit sacrée*

Festus Iyayi, Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for *Heroes* (1988)

Zine el Abidine Ben Ali newly appointed Prime Minister deposes Habib Bourguiba, the first president and “Father” of Tunisia, and succeeds him as president (1988)

Tsitsi Dangarembga, Commonwealth Writers’ Prize (Africa) for *Nervous Conditions* (1989)

Death of Kateb Yacine (1989)
Chronology

Independence of Namibia (1990)
The Algerian military cancel national elections after first round victory by the Islamic Salvation Front, beginning of a civil war (1992)

Naguib Mahfouz, Nobel Prize (1988)
Ahmad al-Faqih, Ḥadaʾiḥ al-Layl trilogy (1990)
Ibrahim al-Kawni, al-Tibr and Nazif al-Hajar (1990)

Nadine Gordimer, Nobel Prize (1991)
Ben Okri, Booker Prize for The Famished Road (1992)
Ama Ata Aidoo, Commonwealth Writers’ Prize (Africa) for Changes (1992)
Ahdaf Soueif, In the Eye of the Sun (1992)

Algerian journalist, poet, and novelist Tahar Djaout (L’invention du désert, 1987) assassinated (1993)

Derek Walcott, Nobel Prize (1993)
Ahlam Mustaghanami (Ahlam/Ahlem Mosteghanemi), Dhakirat al-Jasad (1993)

Kamau Brathwaite, Neustadt Prize (1994)

Nelson Mandela elected President of South Africa (1994)

Yvonne Vera, Commonwealth Writers’ Prize (Africa) for Under the Tongue (1994)
Noma Award to Marlene van Niekerk for Triompf (1995)

Death of Sony Labou Tansi (1995)

Assia Djebar, Neustadt International Prize for Literature (1996)


Nuruddin Farah, Neustadt International Prize for Literature (1998)
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Algerian Parliament passes the Civil Harmony Act (1999)
Death of King Hassan II of Morocco, Mohammed VI ascends to the throne (1999)

African Union (AU), new supranational organization as a successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and African Economic Community (AEC) established (2001)

Funso Aiyejina. Commonwealth Prize for Literature (Africa) for *The Legend of The Rockhills and Other Stories* (2002)
Caine Prize for African Writing established (2000)
Death of Senghor (2001)
Ahmadou Kourouma, Prix Renaudot, for *Allah n’est pas obligé* (2001)
Death of Jean Pélégri (March) and Mohammed Dib (May) (2003)
Death of Kourouma (2003)
Assia Djebar elected to the French Academy (2005)
Death of Yvonne Vera (2005)
Death of Mahfouz (2006)
Academy Award for South African film *Tsotsi* (2006)
Alain Mabanckou, Prix Renaudot for *Mémoire de Porc-épic* (2006)
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Orange Broadband Prize for *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2007)
Death of Dris Chraibi (2007)
Death of Ousmane Sembène (2007)
Chinua Achebe, Man Booker International Prize (2007)