

## “Lilies in the Mires”: Contesting Eurocentric Paradigms and Rhetoric of Civilization in Scholastique Mukasonga’s War Narratives\*

Richard Oko Ajah  
University of Uyo, Nigeria

---

### Abstract

The Rwandan writer, Scholastique Mukasonga chronicles her eye-witness account of Rwandan civil war and genocide; her two novels are part of literary attempts to historicize ethnic collective trauma and memory, but they end up traumatizing national history itself and deconstructing Eurocentric representations. Her works are popularly read as autobiographies and could be mapped under trauma studies. However, this study intends to read these works as autoethnographical texts which this hyphenated writer uses to dismantle conventional boundaries of linguistic morpho-syntax of French, to deconstruct European historical constructions and to contest Eurocentric epistemologies that gave rise to the literary cartography of the *Other* world. This Eurocentrism produces markers of post/colonial idioms such as “civilized/primitive” and “modern/traditional” as means of justifying the essence of empires. Mukasonga’s account opens our eyes to Rwandan indigenous art, science, medicine and society; therefore, it contests the ontology of European civilization. Although her novels are predominantly written in French, Mukasonga uses her native dialect of Kinyarwanda to unveil age-long Rwandan [African] civilization, thus forcing her European readership to see the “lilies in the mires”.

### Keywords

War narratives, African civilization, Authoethnography, Rwandan genocide, Scholastique Mukasonga

---

\* Department of Foreign Languages, PMB 1017, University of Uyo, 5, Ekong Street, Nigeria; richardajah@uniuyo.edu.ng or ajrichard2000@yahoo.com

## Introduction

Factographies have always been raw materials used by realist writers to create fictional works, thereby informing the volume of literature that has been generated on the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. Kate O'Neil's *The Decolonizing Potential of the Local and Metropolitan Literature of the Rwandan Genocide* (2012) appears to be one of the latest publications whose studies are comparatively and cross-culturally characteristic, demonstrating how the Rwandan genocide influenced creative sensitivities of African and Western writers. Her study includes Veronique Tadjo's and Tierno Monénembo's writings which are issues of "Ecrire par Devoir de Mémoire" project of 1998 where 10 Franco-African writers were invited for creative residency in post-Genocide Rwanda. None of the writers' works is an eye-witness account of the Rwandan Genocide; rather they are secondhand products of traumatized memory of victims who, incapacitated in the creative testimony of their experience, confine in the writers the responsibility of representation, unlike Scholastique Mukasonga's writing which results from her firsthand experience of what can be called "the early years" of Rwandan genocide of 1994.

The Rwandan writer, Mukasonga is the author of two novels, *Inyenzi ou les cafards* and *La Femme aux pieds nus*, on Rwandan war, popularly described by critics and scholars as autobiographies (Ajah 371) and an attempt to historicize the Rwandan Genocide (Ajah 80), which can be seen as a structural trauma (van de Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela 11). Her works, if critically examined, could be termed as memory and trauma narratives, having resulted from the "structural trauma" of Rwandan Tutsi; however, the minimalist reading of literary works could be symptoms of intentional fallacy of critics and scholars. It is in the light of diversifying the authorial worldviews that this study intends to look at Mukasonga's works as not only autobiographies of her war accounts, but as autoethnographies attempting to correct Eurocentric stereotypes and representations against Africa. Mukasonga's *Inyenzi ou les cafards* and *La Femme aux pieds nus* can, therefore, be analyzed as autoethnographic texts through Mary Louise Pratt's literary framework of autoethnography.

### **Autoethnography and Why *The Empire Writes Back*?**

Autoethnography is a useful discursive and analytical tool because "it affords the reader a unique window into the lives of those members of society considered to be outside the mainstream." (McAuliffe 2). In her seminal work *Imperial Eyes*, Pratt applies autoethnography in relations to what she calls "contact zone" and to travel writing as a challenge to Eurocentric epistemologies. As a term applied in the field of sociological research, autoethnography undergoes Pratt's transculturation and now refers to "instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's terms" (Pratt 9). Unlike ethnography that is Eurocentric, autoethnography "involves partly collaborating with and appropriating the idioms of the conqueror" (Pratt 9) and "draws upon postmodern sensibilities" (Anderson 373).

With the ideological parentage of postmodern philosophy, autoethnography questions ways of knowledge (Wall 39) or what Besio (266) calls "the idiom of those with more representational power", especially those concepts which Europe constructed through the process of colonization. It is in this consciousness that autoethnography not only aligns with postmodernism but also with Bill Ashcroft *et al's* *The Empire Writes Back* and its postcolonial theory. In its challenge of the Eurocentric control of means of communication, autoethnography becomes a means of what Ashcroft *et al* (77) call "an appropriation of the power invested in writing", so through African writers, Africa now writes back to the metropolitan centers, telling its own tales. In African literature, S. Gehrman underlines the relationship of autoethnography and autobiography in early African works such as *L'Enfant noir* (1953), *Le Fils du pauvre* (1950), *La Terre et le sang* (1954) and *Les Chemins qui montent* (1957). This autoethnographic aspect of a lot of autobiographically inspired texts of first generation francophone authors is explained "comme un collectif de la dévalorisation coloniale des cultures autochtones" (Gehrman 68) [like a collection of colonial disregard for autochthonous cultures].

Identifying the autoethnographic elements of Camara Laye's and Mouloud Feraoun's autobiographic writings, Gehrman (68) affirms that the two writers adopt "une distanciation narrative et un voilement du Moi en créant une voix narrative à la troisième personne" [a narrative

distance and veiling of the "I" in creating a third-person narrative voice]. Such a person becomes Anderson (383)'s "invisible omniscient ethnographer" who blurs the boundaries between facts and feelings. Though Gehrman's affirmation of autoethnographic elements in the works of Laye and Feraoun lacks practical analysis, it is possible to trace African autoethnographic texts whose framework Pratt vaguely developed, to the Negritude writing of Leopold Sedar Senghor in his attempt to valorise African cultures. Scholastique Mukasonga's writing does not pretend to be a cultural apology, but it challenges Eurocentric idioms constructed by colonial powers to undermine Rwanda and its spatiality. Her works as autobiographies permit her to appropriate the aesthetics of autoethnography as we are going to show in her attempt to tell her own version of the Rwandan dilemma. It is against this background that autoethnographic poetics becomes appropriate for analyzing Mukasonga's war narrative.

Mukasonga is qualified to undertake an "evocative autoethnography" (Anderson 373) being a hyphenated writer, firstly Rwandan and married to a French man in France, who has experienced colonialism and still experiences postcolonialism overtly or covertly. Using French as means of expression, Mukasonga's *Inyenzi ou les cafards* and *La Femme aux pieds nus* remain "in dialogue with those metropolitan representations" (Pratt 9) and is a literary "Chiac"<sup>1</sup> that blends European idioms with indigenous concepts, deconstructing the former for the betterment of the later. This text dismantles Eurocentric stereotypes forged against Black Africa including Rwanda, the author's native land, as regards the genocidal dimension of Rwandan civil war and the "tabula rasa" ideology against Africa. Being hyphenated, autoethnography forces Scholastique Mukasonga to "inquire into and to challenge [her] experiences" (Noy 143) during and after the Rwandan Genocide. She becomes like Besio (266) who "looks both landscape as text in which bodies' movements through the village spaces [or through the border spaces] continually 'rewrite' the landscape, asserting and inserting themselves into a dialogue with colonial discourse". *Inyenzi ou les cafards* (2006) and *La Femme aux pieds nus* paint a realistic but brutal and violent picture of the woes suffered by the Tutsi during the Rwandan intertribal hostilities, including the young and innocent protagonist, Scholastique

Mukasonga and her immediate family who are displaced and also suffer the tragedy of untimely deaths of some members. Aside the two works; she has written *L'Iguifou* (2010) and *Notre Dame du Nil* (2012) that continue incessantly the representation of her genocidal experiences.

**The Metaphor of "Voice of Jacob and Hands of Esau"  
and the "myth of the Dark Continent"  
in Mukasonga's Genocide narrative**

Scholastique Mukasonga's autobiographies are subtle indictments on the Rwandan colonial master and her allies, thereby remapping the territory of guilt of Rwandan Genocide, incidentally and unfortunately laid on the major ethnic nationalities of the country: the Hutu and Tutsi and questioning the essence of the empire and its aesthetics of civilization or what Patrick Brantlinger calls "the myth of the dark continent" (168). In the eyes of the West, Africa was a "dark continent" because "Africans, African culture, religions and artifacts were classified according to the grid of Western thought and imagination in which alterity was a negative category of the same" (Pawliková-Vilhanová 164). The Eurocentric conceptualization of the *Other*, reinforced by theories on evolution, race and progress, provided a 'providential' framework on which the "Scramble for Africa" stood, thereby justifying the "myth of the dark continent" and the civilizing missions of the empires. If different African ethnic entities were "married" to political union of nationhood, it unequivocally means that empires had prepared grounds for different intertribal conflicts that, in some cases, culminate into civil wars.

The Rwandan born writer, Mukasonga appears to implicate the West in the Rwandan Genocide as her autobiography, *La Femme aux pieds nus*, which opens with such accusatory fingers pointed to the Belgian empire in Africa and the Church in her first chapter. Her subtle confirmation of European guilt and the metaphorical suggestion of "Esau's hands but Jacob's voice" are captured by these words:

Peut-être les autorités hutu, placées par les Belges et l'Eglise à la tête du Rwanda nouvellement indépendant, espéraient-elles que les Tutsi de Nyamata seraient peu à peu décimées par la maladie du sommeil et la famine. (15)

Mukasonga's allegation is not speculative because historically speaking the Rwandan Genocide could have been circumvented if the African independent nations were not victims of European neocolonial tendencies. In his *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward W. Said (25) affirms correctly that although the Westerners may have physically left their old colonies in Africa and Asia, but they retained them not only as markets but as locales on the ideological map over which they continued to rule morally and intellectually. In her *Inyenzi ou les cafards*, written in 2006, Mukasonga collaborates Said's affirmation through her indictment of the West, except that the narrator precisely invokes the name of "le MDR-Parmehutu" who, with the help of Belgium and the Catholic Church, establishes a government that has been described since 1961 as "la dictature raciale d'un seul parti" (39). Back to *La Femme aux pieds nus*, André teases scornfully his mother, Stefania, who covers a long distance to get some fire instead of using her husband's safety matches, one of his numerous gifts from by the Catholic priests to him who happens to be the leader of "Legion de Marie". Mukasonga's mother replies to her son ironically by saying: "Les Blancs nous ont déjà fait beaucoup de cadeaux et tu vois où nous en sommes!" (43) [The whites have already given us a lot of gifts and you see what has become of us!] In essence, the poor woman's avowal indicts the West and absolves the Rest thereby seeing the Rwandan ethno-political conflict as a byproduct of European "gifts" to Africa, presumably the "gift" of "suns of independence". Although Stefania is raised by the Church, her inclinations appear nationalistic, yet hybrid of traditional and Christian religions. Unlike her, Cosmas takes glory in his role of the leader of the Legion of Mary without knowing or ignoring to know "que l'un des premiers dirigeants du mouvement avait été Grégoire Kayibanda, qui en fit, avec l'appui de Mgr Perraudin, l'embryon du futur parti ethnique" (*Inyenzi* 53) and now the promoter of ethnic cleansing against the Tutsi.

In *Inyenzi ou les cafards*, the writer demonstrates an evidence of metamorphosis from traumatic memory to narrative memory, whose dynamics Kara Elizabeth Jacobi's thesis explicates; Scholastique Mukasonga's Preface (9-10) suggests it. She chronicles the progress and the peak of the Rwandan genocide through the sequential narration of the trauma of internal displacement of Mukasonga's family from Butare

to Nyamata or what can be called a representation of pre-1994 genocidal tendencies of the Hutu. Veronique Bonnet and Emilie Sevrain (108) confirm that Scholastique Mukasonga's *Inyenzi* does not adopt "pratiques scriptuaires" [scriptural approaches] like the autobiographical writings of her compatriots: Yolande Mukasagana, Annick Kayitesi, Esther Mujawayo and others. The young female narrator and protagonist Mukasonga employs simple narrative strategies that enable her to demonize the Belgian character in the Rwandan war; she however, she relies on lucidity of her older siblings. After the arson of their village, the inhabitants' movement to the Mission de Mugombwa is facilitated by those referred to as "des paras belges" (16). Mukasonga validates her claims by citing her elder brother André who is of the opinion that such window-dressing attitude is impressionist and understandable to the Tutsi as the handiwork of the Belgian colonial master who inaugurates his indigenous alter ego.

In her mapping of genocidal culpability, Mukasonga locates its geography in the west, indicting the Belgian imperial government and the Catholic Church as twin collaborators. The writer backs this claim through the evocation of the metaphors of the "portrait du Président Kayibanda et l'image de Marie" (*Inyenzi* 54) that are forcefully used to decorate all homes by the Government and the Catholic Church. The narrator reveals further reveals: "Nous vivions sous les portraits jumeaux du président qui nous avait avoué à l'extermination et de Marie qui nous attendait au ciel" (Ibid. 55). The imageries invoked clear the doubt on the dynamics of forces that control remotely and overtly the lives of the Rwandan citizenry before the genocide. All motherly anecdotes on the coming of the Whites to Rwanda predict doom and depict how Mukasonga's texts engage in post/colonial discourse.

### **Scholastique Mukasonga's Counter-narrative to Colonial Epistemology**

Angela Lamas Rodrigues (1) aligns Achebe's production of counter-narrative to colonial epistemology with the reinvigoration of African cultures and the reeducation of African peoples. Through the western power of representation, colonial epistemology was typically Eurocentric and ethnographic, fuelled by

notions about bringing civilization to primitive or barbaric peoples, the disturbing familiar ideas about flogging or death or extended punishment being required when "they" misbehaved or became rebellious because "they" mainly understood force or violence best, "they" were not like "us," and for that reasons deserved to be ruled (Said xi)

Colonial idioms such as "primitive" versus "modern", "primitive" versus "civilized", "they" against "us", and "center" versus "periphery" are employed to demonstrate the hegemony of European cultures over *Other* cultures. The European consciousness of cultural superiority leverages the Eurocentric construction of the other; literary productions or what Ashcroft *et al* (7) call "canonical assumptions" have been used to maintain cultural hegemony and "language becomes the medium through which hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of "truth", "order" and "reality" become established (Ibid., 7). In *La Femme aux pieds nus*, Scholastique Mukasonga doubts and mocks at the colonial epistemology of the White invaders in these words:

Les Blancs, ils prétendaient savoir mieux que nous qui nous étions, d'où nous venions. Ils nous avaient palpés, pesés, mesurés, Leurs conclusions étaient sans appel: nous crânes étaient caucasiques, nous profils sémitiques, nos statures nilotiques. Ils connaissaient notre ancêtre, c'était dans la Bible, il s'appelait Cham (112)

The Whites, they were pretending to know us better than us, who we were,are? Wwhere we caome from.? They had felt us with their hands, weighed us, measured us. Their conclusions were irrevocable: our skulls were Caucasian, our descriptions Semitic, our statures Nilotic. They knew our ancestor; he wasthey were in the Bible and he wasare called Cham.

European circumnavigation enabled the West to map the *Rest* of the world. Since maps have power and work by serving masked interests of the makers (Wood 4), they created the myth of superiority of race and knowledge which would be later reinforced by Darwinian evolution of



species. Scholastique Mukasonga questions such Eurocentric assumptions, calls such knowledge pretentious and mockingly dramatizes the channels (feeling, weighing and measuring) through which the Western epistemology or what Pawlikova-Vilhanova (165) calls "philosophies of otherness and discourses" on African primitiveness which flourished in Europe during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In *Inyenzi ou les cafards*, the narrator draws from her mother's tales to incriminate the colonialists and to discredit the supposed knowledge of the white race because "les Blancs avaient enfermé le roi [Ruganzu Ndori] dans une maison de pierre; ils avaient violé les secrets de la royauté" (59) [the Whites had imprisoned the king in a stone house; they had stolen the secrets of the kingdom].

Mukasonga's *La Femme aux pieds nus* provides a counter-narrative as a means of describing the Rwandan civilization; the narrator portrays that Rwandan indigenous products as are not inferior to their western counterparts. The text narrates the use of Sorghum in the production of local "la bière de sorgho" [sorghum beer] which plays communal social function as "le fondement même de la convivialité entre tous les Rwandais" (54-55). However, the narrator bemoans the preference of "la Primus" and other "Amstel" to local Sorghum beer. Aside from the brewing of locally-made beer, Sorghum is used to produce a food supplement called "l'agakoma" which Stefania normally prepares for her children, André and Alexia for their good health. As a ridicule of western civilization, the text illustrates in the outbreak of dysentery at Nyamata Refugee camp where the nurse, Bitega works, the hopelessness of Western medicine that cannot provide medical relief to victims of the epidemic. Stefania has no confidence "en l'efficacité des cachets et du sirop de Bitega" (60), but relies on her traditional herbal pharmacy for the wellbeing of her family and neighborhood. The text juxtaposes the inefficacy of the European medicine with the potency of the indigenous system of healthcare provision, despite the "primitiveness" of the inhabitants of Rwandan societies. For example, Stefania, as a symbol of the traditional Rwandan woman with no formal education, knows how to diagnose sicknesses and to constitute traditional alternative health remedies from her "jardin médicinal" [medicinal garden], as confesses her daughter, Scholastique Mukasonga, who says: "maman possédait

toutes sortes de recettes pour faire face aux maladies et aux blessures” (51) [mama possessed all sorts of formulae for sicknesses and wounds]. Below are some of these remedies:

### **Traditional Medicinal Formula in Scholastique Mukasonga’s Rwanda**

<b>Maladies/Sickness</b>	<b>Recettes/Formula</b>
Brûlures/burns	Gummy sap from l’urutegea or the use of l’intofanyi (60)
Blessures/wounds	Use of L’umutumba from banana trees or powder from dry leaves of nkuyimwonga or kalifuma powder from Zanzibar,
Vers/worms	Umubirizi or umuravumba leaves are used as worm powder. Water is added to these extracts to give a bitter sirop.

In this chapter entitled “Médecine”, the narrator presents a panorama of Rwandan traditional medicine, its practice and its potency. Each *inzu* [house] has its pharmaceutical garden where different plants for treatment of different ailments are found. It is in this regard that Rwandan *inzu* cannot be compared to “la case de Tripolo”, representative of the Western type of house considered by Stefania as “vide d’Esprits” (39) because “dans l’inzu, ce ne sont pas les yeux, c’est le coeur qui te guide” (36). Aside from the first two chapters, Scholastique Mukasonga uses each chapter to refute all Eurocentric stereotypes employed to demonize or “primitivize” the African continent and to portray the African lack of civilization. From the “La Maison de Stefania”, “Le Sorgho”, “Médecine”, “Le Pain”, “Beauté et Mariages” to “Pays des contes” and “Des Histoires des femmes”, each chapter stylishly contends with such Eurocentric stereotypes.

In “Beauté et Mariages”, the female narrator chronicles the Rwandan procedures of marriage, from the point of the choice of the bride to the consummation, which is a mockery on the European “tabula rasa” assumption of the African civilization and demonization of the black race. Prior to this period, the early European notion of the black race

was based on the polarity of black and white that had been established in the Western psyche and archetypal symbolism, thereby associating the white with the "good, pure and beautiful" against the black evoked as "evil, corrupt and ugly" (Arowolo 54). With such aesthetics that emanates from the Western physiognomic discourse that makes face an indication of inner qualities (Ajah 15), blackness as a racial category becomes associated with opacity, fear and horror, and features could be read as analogous to moral characteristics (Grewal 27). Scholastique Mukasonga's texts can be described as autoethnographic because they challenge the European representations of the Other by defining the African aesthetics and its paradigms, baptized as "canons de la beauté rwandaise" which prescribe "[les] manières et [l'] attitude" as markers of good education (86). Mukasine, future wife of Antoine, possesses these African physiognomic qualities; her beauty is compared to "une inyambo" [royal cow] (102).

"Le pays des contes" as a chapter subtly continues subtly the deconstruction of the European stereotypes and positions the colonized to *write back* to the colonizer. Stefania's tales, like other African anecdotes, are told in a family audience who sits around a burning fire; she starts with a song, a song she had sang as a young shepherdess. The narrator admits that there are foreign tales that "on ne racontait pas autour du feu" (112) [whereas not told around fire]. Mukasonga metaphorically categorizes these white tales as "mauvaises drogues" [bad drugs], capable of poisoning the black audience. The writer's "mauvaises drogues" are Eurocentric stories told to denigrate the black race; they are centered on the origin of the Rwandan ancestors, as descendants of Ham or "des Hamites" (113). Ironically, the text confines in the Rwandan woman the narrative skills of storytelling as it is Stefania who narrates all stories to her children, stories interwoven with choruses rendered in the Rwandan dialect of Kinyarwanda.

## Conclusion

It is instructive to note that all the constituent elements of Rwandan civilization are unveiled in Kinyarwanda, interlaced and qualified with French determiners such as in *L'inzu* (house), *l'urusyo* (grinding stone), *l'umuganura* (New Year celebration), *l'agacoma* (local energy drink) among

others which are signs of *Amajyambere* (development or progress). The stylistic use of Kinyarwanda in Mukasonga's texts shows the insufficiency of the French language (and of other European colonial languages) to represent certain realities of the former colonies. For example, Mukasonga prefers to use *l'inzu* instead of "house". *L'inzu* in Kinyarwanda means a woven straw house, but it is not a semiotic referential juxtaposition of the word 'obi' (hut) as found in Achebe's translation which, for Ashcroft *et al* (60), shows a general failure of such parenthetical literary translations. The writer enlarges the semantic field of the Rwandan word in order to question the paradigms of Western epistemology and deconstruct Eurocentric linguistic conceptualization. *L'inzu* is not any of the Western derogatory appellations such as "hutte, cahute, paillote" [hut] (Mukasonga 35); Mukasonga's ethnographic details are not just informational and explanatory, but also deconstructive. She underlines the cultural, social and psychological functions of a typical Rwandan *inzu* in a traditional setting. However, the writer uses her ethnographic details as a means of fostering exotic readership and of internationalizing the Rwandan culture through her writing (Ajah 379).

### References

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined communities*. Revised Edition, London & New York: Verso, 1991.
- Anderson, Leon. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 5.4 (2006): 373-395
- Ajah, Richard Oko. "Strategies d'Appropriation textuelles dans *La Femme aux pieds nus* de Scholastique Mukasonga" Eds. Emmanuel N. Kwofie and Babatunde Ayeleru, *Language, Literature & Criticism*. Ibadan: Zenith BookHouse, 2010:367-378.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Writers as Historians of War in African Literature of Francophone Expression." *The Humanities Journal* 1.1 (2010): 73-89.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Migrants Songs for Mothers: Between Motherism and Autoethnography in Leopold Sedar Senghor's "Femme noire" and Prince Nico Mbarga's "Sweet Mother". *Language, Literature and Cultural Studies* 5.1 (2012):7-21.
- Arowolo, B. "Black Literature, White Archetype: A Fresh Reading of Aimé Césaire's Plays", Festus A. Soyeye *et al* (Ed.) *Foreign Languages Studies in West Africa: Nigeria and Benin*, Cotonou: Presses Scolaires et Universitaire du Bénin, 2004. 54-66.

- Ashcroft, Bill *et al.* *The Empire Writes Back*. London and New York: Routledge, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2002.
- Bonnet, Veronique et Sevrain, Emilie. "Temoignages de rescapees rwandaises: Modalites et intentions" *IMPOTESI – REVISTA DE ESTUDOS LITERÁRIOS* 105-113, n.d.
- Besio, K. "Chutes and ladders: negotiating gender and privilege in a village in Northern Parkistan." *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 5.2 (2006): 258-278.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. "Victorians and Africans: The Myth of the Dark Continent" *Critical Inquiry* 12.1 (1985):166-203.
- Gehrmann, S. "La Traversée du moi dans l'écriture autobiographique francophone." *Revue de l'Université de Moncton* 37. 1(2006): 67-92.
- Grewal, Inderpal. *Home and Harem*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996..
- Jacobi, Kara Elizabeth. ""They Will Invent What They Need to Survive": Narrating Trauma Contemporary Ethnic American Women's Fiction" Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Miami, 2009, Open Access Dissertations, Paper 229.
- McAuliffe, Samantha I. "Autoethnography and Gracia's Dreaming in Cuba." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 13.4 (2011)
- Mukasonga, Scholastique. "*Inyenzzi ou les cafards*. Paris: Gallimard, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *La Femme aux pieds nus*. Paris: Gallimard, 2008.
- Noy, C. The poetics of tourist experience: an autoethnography of family trip to Eilat. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 5.3 (2007): 141-157.
- Pawliková-Vilhanová, Viera. "The African Personality or the Dilemma of the Other and the Self in the Philosophy of Edward W. Blyden, 1832-1912" *Asian and African Studies* 7.2 (1998):162-175.
- Pratt, Louise Mary. *Imperial Eyes*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, London: Routledge, 2008
- Rodrigues, Angela Lamas. ""The Trauma of a Diminished Existence": Chinua Achebe Revisited." *Postcolonial Text* 3.4 (2007):1-23.
- Said, W. Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- Van de Merwe, Chris N and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. *Narrating our Healing*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Wall, S. "Easier said than done: writing an autoethnography." *International Journal of Quantitative Methods* 7.1 (2008): 38-53.
- Wood, Denis. *The power of maps*. New York: Guilford Press, 1992

### **Biographical note**

Dr. Richard Oko Ajah teaches literature, criticism and French language in the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Uyo in Nigeria. Dr. Ajah's areas of specialization are comparative, African and Maghrebian literatures, Francophone films, postcolonial studies and travel writing. He is currently researching on African graphic novels and on what he calls *pictographic criticism*. His scientific works have been published in different parts of the world and he is also a poet whose works have appeared in anthologies and journals. He belongs to several professional bodies such as *UFTAN*, *FIPF*, *MLA*, *Digital Humanities Association*, and others.

---

<sup>1</sup> A mix of English and French, Chiac is the vernacular spoken by many Acadians in the south-east region of New Brunswick, especially around Moncton. (See Catherine Leclerc in *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction*, Vol.18, No. 2, 2005, 161-192) The comparison is necessary to underline the dialogic nature of Ben Jelloun's text which oscillates between two idioms, native and exotic.