



Perceiving Pain in African Literature

Zoe Norridge

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Why do African writers choose to describe pain in their novels, memoirs and travelogues? What purpose could such descriptions serve? And do they fall into the danger of simply re-confirming negative stereotypes about Africa as an inevitably pained continent?

Perceiving Pain in African Literature argues that the literary text has a particular role to play in contesting and re-working the personal, social and political meanings of pain. Drawing on fiction and life-writing published in English and French over the last forty years, this book explores the complexities of literature's invitation to imagine pain.

Themes such as pain and meaning, literature as testimony, conflict writing, genocide and human rights are explored in relation to primary texts from West Africa, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Southern Africa. Authors including Yvonne Vera, J.M.Coetzee, Ahmadou Kourouma, Véronique Tadjo and Aminatta Forna are discussed alongside theoretical insights from medical anthropology, cultural theory, postcolonial studies and global literature.

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Elizabeth Ramsey:

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