



# British and African Literature in Transnational Context: Beyond Writing Back

*Simon Lewis*

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"A highly original work, provocatively argued and presented. Not only does it offer fresh insights into African and British literature by reading them against the grain, it also provides new ways for cultural scholars in all geographical specialties to think about the ways in which empire and colony have impacted upon one another, historically, and how they continue to impact in the postimperial and postcolonial age."--  
Laura Chrisman, University of Washington

African identities have been written and rewritten in both British and African literature for decades. These revisions have opened up new formulations of what it really means to be British or African.

By comparing texts by authors from African and British backgrounds across a wide variety of political orientations, Simon Lewis analyzes the deeper relationships between colonizer and colonized. He brings issues of race, gender, class, and sexuality into the analysis, providing new ways for cultural scholars to think about how empire and colony have impacted one another from the late eighteenth century through the decades following World War II.

In his comparisons, Lewis focuses on commonalities rather than differences. By examining the work of writers including Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, T. S. Eliot, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Zoe Wicomb, Yvette Christianse, and Chris van Wyk, he demonstrates how Britain's former African colonies influence British culture just as much as African culture was influenced by British colonization.

Lewis brings a uniquely informed perspective to the topic, having lived in South Africa, Tanzania, and Great Britain, and having taught African literature for over a decade. The book demonstrates his expert knowledge of local cultural history from 1945 to the present, in both Africa and Britain.

**Simon Lewis**, professor of English at the College of Charleston, is author of *White Women Writers and Their African Invention*.

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