



# Black Mind: A History of African Literature

*O.R. Dathorne*

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The comprehensive account of the development of African literature from its beginnings in oral tradition to its contemporary expression in the writings of Africans in various African and European languages provides insight, both broad and deep, into the Black intellect. Professor Dathorne examines the literature of Africans as spoken or written in their local languages and in Latin, French, Portuguese, and English. This extensive survey and interpretation gives the reader a remarkable pathway to an understanding of the Black imagination and its relevance to thought and creativity throughout the world.

The author himself lived in Africa for ten years, and his view is not that of an outsider, since it is as a Black man that he speaks about Black people. Throughout the book, a major theme is the demonstration that, despite slavery and colonialism, Africans remained very close to their own cultures. Professor Dathorne shows that African writers may be, like some Afro-American writers, "marginal men," but that they are Black men and it is as Black men that they feel the nostalgia of their past and the corrosive influences of their present.

The chapters are divided into sections: Tradition; Heritage; The Presence of Europe; and Crosscurrents. In the final chapters the author extends the thread of continuity to the New World—Africa as present in the work of Black writers in the United States and in the Caribbean.

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