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*Ngugi wa Thion'go: A Documentary Source Book*, by Carol  
**Sicherman**

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seem to be deserving of the credit implied in the preface or the table of contents. Both this section and another, "Undated Material," with its scant two entries, could easily have been integrated within the other three sections.

Unquestionably, however, the bibliography is an ambitious and valuable series that will serve libraries well. Sicherman's work is not only comprehensive but meticulously done. Her efforts will make some readers look forward to the next two volumes in the series featuring Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe. Finally, it is worth noting that a complementary series, "Documentary Research in African Written Literatures" (DRAWLS) "will focus on reproducing documents important to the study of African writers and the literary and cultural traditions out of which they have emerged" (p. iii) and that Sicherman also will write on Ngugi in the first volume of that series.

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**Carol Sicherman. *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: The Making of a Rebel. A Source Book in Kenyan Literature and History.*** Documentary Research in African Literatures, no. 1. Series Editor: Bernth Lindfors. London, Munich, New York: Hans Zell Publishers, 1990 (distributed in U.S. by K.G. Saur). xxii + 486 pp. Bibliography, Glossaries, Index, Maps. \$90.00. Cloth.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o is one of the most widely recognized and widely studied modern African authors. Over the past 30 years, he has published six novels and several plays, as well as volumes of literary, political, and cultural criticism. He has a worldwide reputation, through translation into French, German, Russian, Japanese, and other languages. Yet he remains a very elusive writer, primarily concerned with Kenyan experience. In his more recent work, he has switched his creative medium from English to Gikuyu, and his writing has also become steadily more critical of Kenyan economic and political developments. Even in English translation, such novels as *Devil on the Cross* (1982) and *Matigari* (1986) utilize phrases and passages of Kiswahili and Gikuyu and refer constantly to incidents and names from Kenyan history and politics. As the series editor points out in his preface, much of the most significant source material on African literature is not in ordinary academic libraries, but is preserved, often in single copies, in specific national, institutional, or local collections; relevant information is simply unavailable to many students.

Carol Sicherman's source book on Ngugi is therefore particularly welcome and should be an essential acquisition for undergraduate and research libraries especially outside Kenya. Sicherman has

already published an excellent bibliography of writings by and about Ngugi (Hans Zell, 1989), and this second book, though presented as a reference tool, is as much interpretive as informational. Part one, on Ngugi's biography, gives a chronological summary and selected documents on Ngugi's detention in 1977-78. Part two, the heart of the book, gives a useful chronology of Kenyan history and politics since the late 19th century, followed by three alphabetically arranged glossaries of people, language, and places important for understanding Ngugi's work. Part three prints documents and extracts on Kenyan history and post-colonial administration, to show continuities of repression and torture from the colonial to the post-colonial government; these include sections on the Hola camp inquiry as well as from more recent Kenyan political detainees. Part four gives a selective primary bibliography for Ngugi, and a useful secondary bibliography including more general works on Kenyan history.

Ngugi himself provides a brief introduction, and Sicherman had his cooperation in planning the book. The result is interesting, therefore, as much for the perspective it implies as for its wealth of specific information. Among the most valuable documents included are extracts from a previously unpublished 1979 interview with Ngugi (pp. 18-26); the text of a 1952 pamphlet, *The Prayers of Waiyaki*, that Ngugi translated into English in the late 1960s (pp. 350-55); and a talk on Kenyan education that Ngugi's secondary-school headmaster gave to the Royal African Society in London at the height of the Kenyan emergency (pp. 389-97). Many of the documents are presented in quite brief extracts, and sometimes the editor allots as much space to strongly judgmental editorializing as to the extracts themselves (see, for example, pp. 333-40). I should have welcomed much fuller representation of original Kenyan reviews of Ngugi's novels, and in general I should have liked the choice of documents to have been tied more closely to Ngugi's own career.

Sicherman's volume is the first in a new series that will print documents on important African writers, texts, and literary topics. If this first volume is representative of what is to follow, the editorial guidelines for the series need some refinement and a sharper focus, but it will prove immensely valuable, both to college-level students and more advanced scholars. Certainly the new series meets a need for any academic library that supports teaching and research in African literatures.

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