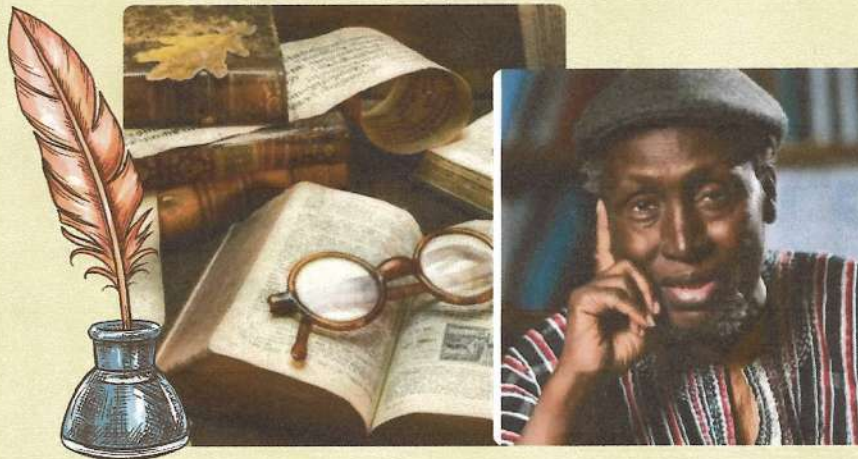


ENSB-Algiers



**«A Room of One's Own: On Writing
and Intellectualizing in a
'Multi-crisis' Era»**



**A National Conference in Memoriam of
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o**



Conference Chair: Dr. Chergui Khedidja



December 10, 2026

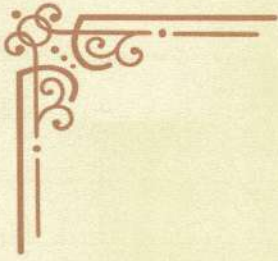


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Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria
The Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
L'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Bouzaréah-Algiers
Department of English



The Department of English at ENSB

Organizes

«A Room of One's Own: On Writing and Intellectualizing in a 'Multi-crisis Era'»

A National Conference in Memoriam of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o

-December 10, 2026-

Conference Chair and Convenor: Dr. Chergui Khedidja (Department of English, ENSB)

-Call for Papers-

❖ **Concept Note**

"A writer responds, with his total personality, to a social environment which changes all the time. Being a kind of sensitive needle, he registers, with varying degrees of accuracy and success, the conflicts and tensions in his changing society" (Ngũgĩ).¹

"A novel, to me, is freedom with responsibility. Real, unfettered azadi_freedom" (Roy).²

"Witnessing a sorry state of affairs when one is not in power is by no means a monotonous, monochromatic activity. It involves what Foucault once called "a relentless erudition," scouring alternative sources, exhuming buried documents, reviving forgotten (or abandoned) histories" (Said).³

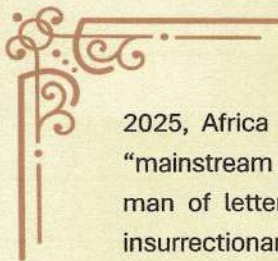
«A Room of One's Own: On Writing and Intellectualizing in a 'Multi-crisis' Era» conference is organized in memoriam of one of Africa's most prolific literary voices, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. On May 28,

¹ Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics* (Heinemann, 1972), p. 47.

² Arundhati Roy, *Azadi: Freedom, Fascism, Fiction* (Penguin Books, 2022), p. 1.

³ Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (Vintage Books, 1994), p. xviii.





2025, Africa and the world lost a writer who chose to swim, struggle and define himself in the “mainstream of his people's historical drama.”⁴ Imprisoned, censored, and exiled, Ngũgĩ, the Kenyan man of letters, bequeathed to African and world literature a corpus of writing that is versatile, insurrectionary, and one that hovers in its own borderland between text and historical context. Ngũgĩ opted for the power of the word to challenge “our notions of national identities, uses of history, and ways in which they are deployed in power contestation.”⁵ Writing, and particularly the novel, provided Ngũgĩ with the space to lay claim not just to the “terrain of culture,” but also to “radically revised visions of the past tending towards a postcolonial future,”⁶ a space to “sensitively register his encounter with history, his people's history.”⁷

As a ‘sensitive needle’, Ngũgĩ wrote about colonialism, and its tropes, cultural hybridity, social injustices, post-independence disillusionment, neocolonialism, the emancipatory role of language, tradition and modernity, and the uses and misuses of power. In his major works, and prison notes, like *Weep Not, Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1980), *Wizard of the Crow* (2006), to recent ones like *The Perfect Nine* (2020), we encounter a ‘dream weaver’, a ‘wrestler with the devil’, and a spirit that ceaselessly sought to move the center beyond the parapets of religion, race, class, nation, and gender.

Writing, then, for Ngũgĩ as it is for writers at large, regardless of region, time period, or literary culture, is indeed ‘freedom with responsibility,’ an ‘unfettered azadi,’ and a ‘relentless erudition.’ Writers carve out their own spaces, rooms of their own, in conversing with and intellectualizing about a multi-crisis era; an era of systemic violence, genocides, racism and xenophobia, cultural imperialism, massive displacements, neo-imperialism, epistemicide, and censorship.

That being so, this conference seeks to honor Ngugi’s everlasting legacy, as it also aspires to meditate on how contemporary writers use their literary abodes to weave the cultural tapestry and question the status quo in their respective societies. The conference welcomes original contributions from scholars affiliated with Algerian higher education institutions, representing a wide range of areas in literature and literary studies (African and postcolonial literature, Global Anglophone literature, comparative literature, indigenous literature, migrant and refugee literature, feminist literature, etc.). This call for papers invites proposals for 15-minute presentations which respond to (as potential starting points):

Track 1: Contributions on Ngugi, Ngugianism, and Ngugi Studies

- Ngugi: writer, intellectual, teacher, storyteller, and activist
- Ngugi’s narratives as ‘agents of history’ (Ogude)
- Ngugi, writing and censorship
- Ngugi on globalectics
- Ngugi on cultural ambivalence
- Ngugi and feminism/Ngugi’s female characters
- Ngugi and other/universal literary canons and traditions
- Ngugi’s novels and African orature
- Ngugi’s novels and the human quest for justice



⁴ Ngũgĩ, *Homecoming*, p. 39.

⁵ James Ogude, *Ngugi’s Novels and African History: Narrating the Nation* (Pluto Press, 1999), p.2.

⁶ Ogude, *Ngugi’s Novels*, p. 2.

⁷ Ngũgĩ, *Homecoming*, p. 39.



- Ngugi on the politics of language in literature/African languages for an African renaissance

Track 2: Contributions on Writing and Intellectualizing in a 'Multi-crisis' Era

- Literature and society
- Writing as intellectual activism
- Writers and intellectuals as 'thorns in the city's shell' (Euripides)
- Navigating interwoven hegemonies in writing
- Writing and epistemic freedom
- Literature and systemic violence
- Subversive narratives and counter-storytelling
- Insurgent traditions and knowledge systems in literature
- The politics of literature/Literature and politics
- Writing as an 'an act of atonement' (Achebe)
- 'Reviving forgotten (or abandoned) histories' in literature (Said)
- Literature as counter-discourse
- Exile literature and prison notebooks



❖ Submission Guidelines

- In your submission (as one single WORD file), please include the following: paper title, institutional affiliation, research area, and an abstract of no longer than 300 words.
- Language of the submission/presentation is **English**.
- By submitting, authors must indicate that they have not used generative AI in their proposals.
- Submitted papers must represent original work that has not been previously published or presented at any other conference or academic venue.
- Email your submissions to the conference chair at dr.kh.chergui@gmail.com.

❖ Remarks

- This call is strictly limited to proposals focused on literature and literary studies (generally conceived).
- Only proposals that comply with **all** submission guidelines will be reviewed.
- Language of the conference is **English**.
- Participation in the conference is **free of charge**.
- Mode of participation is **hybrid**.

❖ Timeline

- **Deadline of Proposal Submission:** September 30, 2026.
- **Acceptance Notification:** October 20, 2026. (Applicants should kindly note that only contributors whose proposals have been positively reviewed will be contacted).
- **Conference Agenda Announcement:** November 15, 2026.
- **Conference Date:** December 10, 2026.



❖ **Keynote Speaker:** Prof. Gada Naar Nadia (Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou)

❖ **Scientific Committee Chair:** Dr. Chergui Khedidja (ENSB, Algiers)

❖ **Conference Scientific Committee**

- Prof. Sahel Malika (ENSB, Algiers)
- Prof. Messakher Hayat (ENSB, Algiers)
- Prof. Gada Nadia (Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou)
- Prof. Babker Abdelkader (Tamanghasset University)
- Dr. Boubaaya Naciera (Mohamed Lamine Debaghine University of Setif)
- Dr. Gouffi Mohammed (Mohamed Boudiaf University of M'sila)
- Dr. Mahboub Oussama (ENSB, Algiers)
- Dr. Sail Amina (Algiers 2 University)
- Dr. Nezzar Kenza (ENSB, Algiers)
- Dr. Boukhalfa Ali (ENSB, Algiers)
- Dr. Bouaita Hiba (ENSB, Algiers)
- Dr. Terki Nassima (M'hamed Bouguerra University of Boumerdes)
- Dr. Belghoul Chahra (Laarbi Ben M'hidi University of Oum El Bouaghi)

❖ **Organization & Logistics Committee**

- **Committee Chair :** Dr. Atamena Norelhouda (ENSB, Algiers)
- **Members:**
- Dr. Chergui Khedidja (ENSB, Algiers)
- Mrs. Benamer Ibtissem (ENSB, Algiers)
- Dr. Mahboub Oussama (ENSB, Algiers)
- Dr. Boukhalfa Ali (ENSB, Algiers)
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