“The Pan African Practice”  
A Chapter Workshop for Olabode Ibironke’s book manuscript,  
Remapping African Literature

Monday, January 25, 2016, 3pm-4:30pm  
Plangere Writing Center, Murray Hall Room 303 (College Avenue Campus)

ABSTRACT
“The Pan African Practice”
This workshop will feature a chapter in Ibironke’s forthcoming book Remapping African Literature, which explores the centrality of the Heine-mann “African Writers Series” in shaping contemporary African literature. The chapter entitled “The Pan African Practice” asks us to reexamine African literary history in the 1970s from the perspective of publisher’s readers and editors for AWS as they adapted their portfolios to what they imagined was the unfolding shift within field of African literature. The chapter proceeds from the observation that the publication of the paperback edition of Wole Soyinka’s The Interpreters in 1970 constituted a landmark in the African Writers Series that parallels the publication of Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart in 1962. It posits a shift in editors’ preference for Soyinka’s The Interpreters as the new African masterpiece and point of reference for the works they published in the 70s. This eclipse of Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart within the internal deliberations of editors and publisher’s readers for AWS, which ended with the publication of Chinweizu’s Toward The Decolonization of African Literature in 1980, paradoxically did not acquire wider resonance in the literary criticism, as such. Using Alain Badiou’s concept of the age of the poets, among other theories of literary production, the chapter redefines the 70s as the golden age of Pan African literature marked by an insistence on contemporary realism, in contrast to dominant historical and aesthetic realism; a sense of an arising globality, worldliness, or expatriation, and a consciousness of style, all of which are shown by the analysis of the chapter to be embodied in Soyinka’s The Interpreters.

BIO
Dr. Ibironke is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English. His interests range from the intersections of history and literature in Africa, to postcolonial book history, and Marxism and theories of literary production. For more information please visit http://english.rutgers.edu/department/faculty/1919-ibironke-olabode.html.