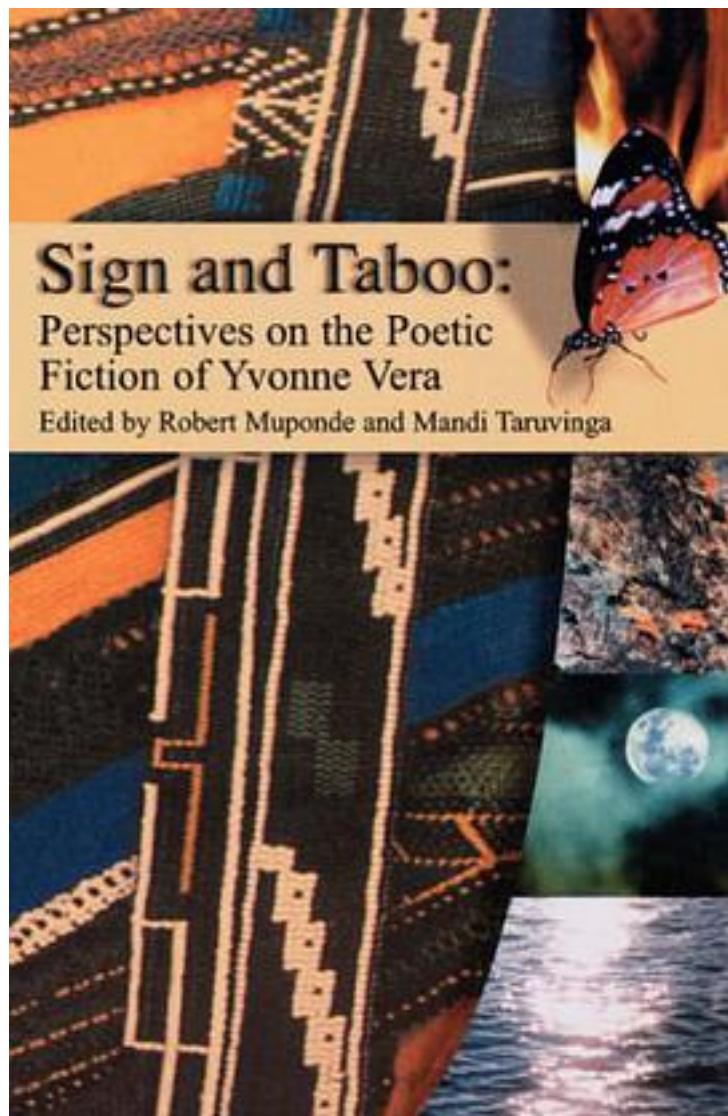


# Sign and Taboo



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Yvonne Vera's *Nehanda* (1993) signaled the presence of new and remarkable writing in Zimbabwe, and her four subsequent novels have confirmed her stature as one of the most important African novelists of the 1990s. Her art is alert to public life; and manifests the decisive moments of Zimbabwe's anticolonial resistance, the growth of the township culture and the competing demands of the city and the rural home. She records public experience through the consciousness of her female characters; but in prose as densely allusive as poetry, does not allow her style to register with a conventional realism, her characters always experiencing more than they understand, and seeing more than they and the reader may recognize. This work brings together critics from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Britain, the Caribbean, and the United States, demonstrating through a diversity of approaches the complex beauty of Vera's work. It shows how Vera expanded the formal possibilities of the African novel by placing the experiences of women at the center of literature, and in so doing, retold and recreated Zimbabwe's history and imaginative life.

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目录:

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