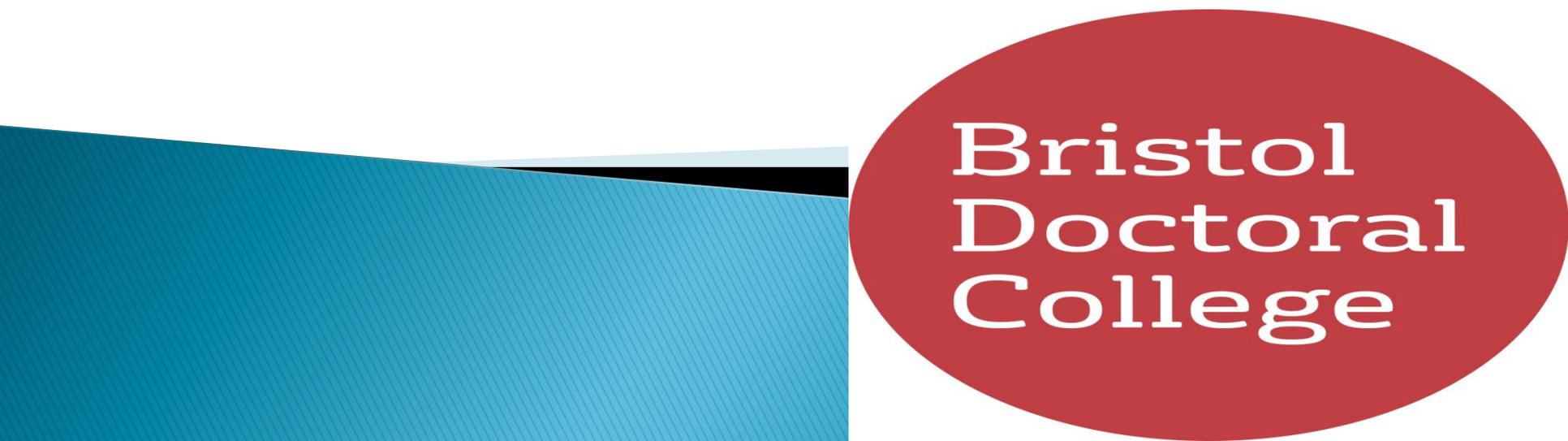


# Nigerian E-fraud Fiction and the Ungoverned Spaces of Neoliberal Discontent

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Sometime ago, Cash Daddy had instructed Protocol Officer to send letters to foreign businessmen who might be interested in investing in Nigeria. Protocol Officer wrote that, as the CEO of Ozu High Seas Construction Company, he had a strong government contact who could guarantee access to juicy contracts. All he needed was a foreign partner with a muscular bank account to act as guarantor.

Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, *I Do Not Come to You by Chance* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2009), p. 195.

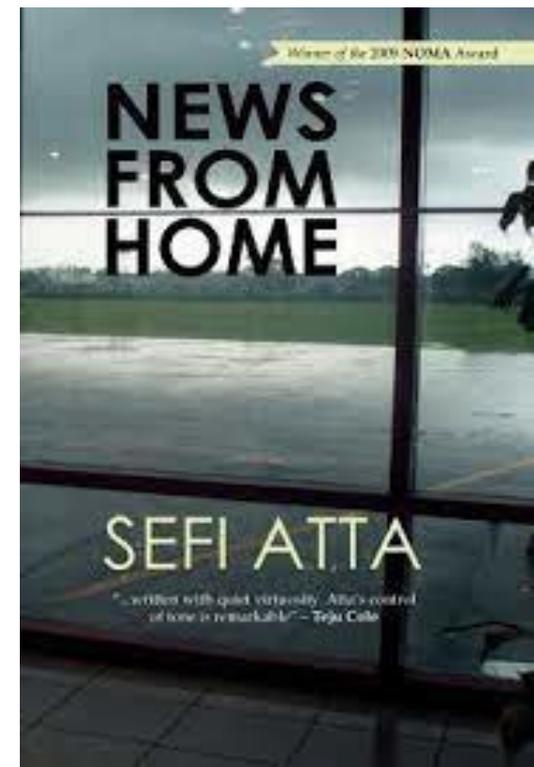
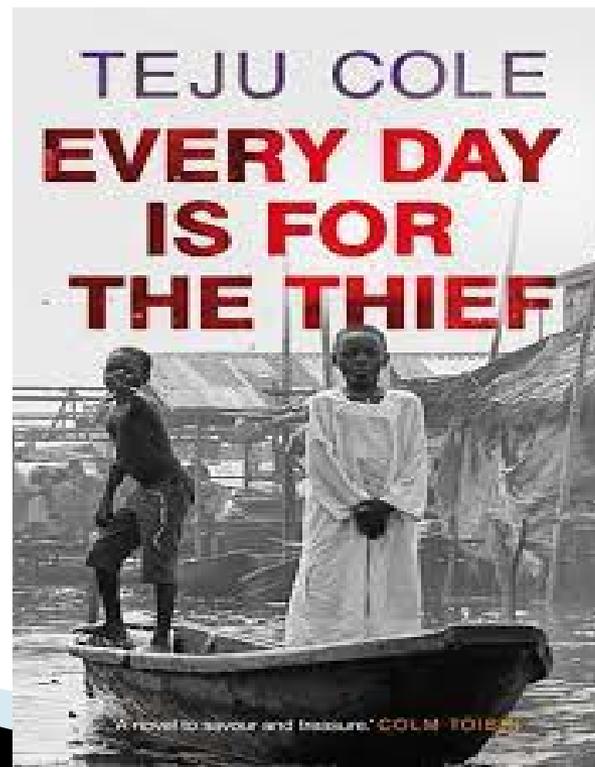
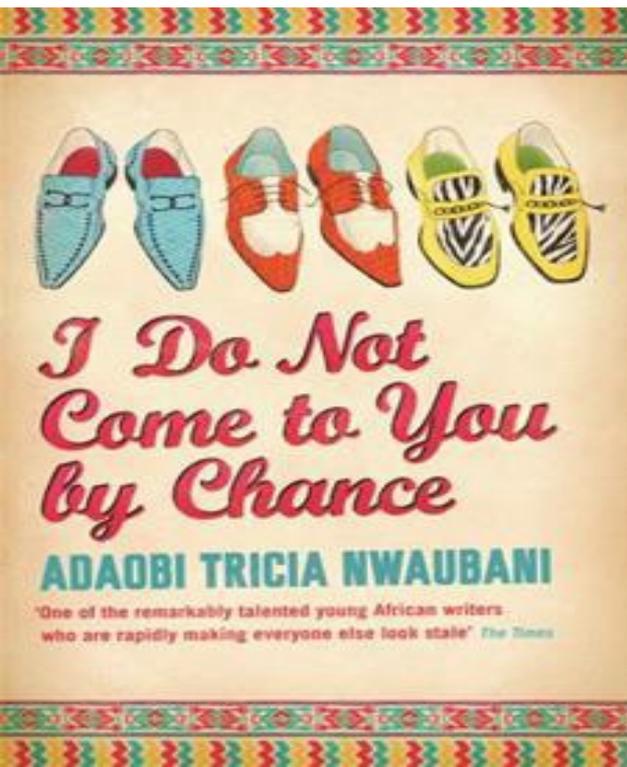
...the e-fraudsters navigate the unstable geographies of a deceptive political economy in which they are made first to starve and then to prosper.

scam letters conform to the formal modalities of hustler narratives in which the subject's engagement in a hustle economy animates a critique of the state's political economy.



The e-fraudsters are the authors' doppelgangers – they both construe e-fraud as an economy of space.

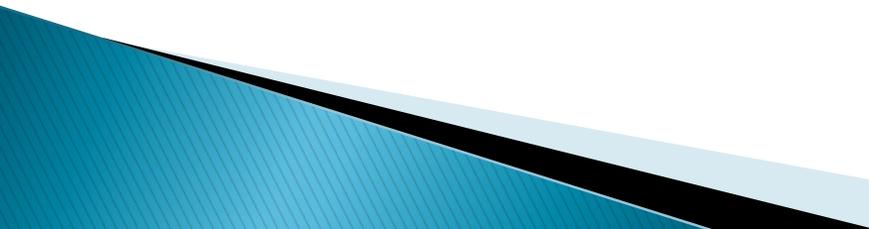
Both scam letters and e-fraud texts function as economic instruments that register, and profit from, the neoliberal commercialisation of the postcolonial space.



# Colonialism as a Spatialising Exercise

- ▶ the physical and geographical conquest of the non-European world
  - ▶ essentially concerned with the control of space and place, territorial rights and economic deprivation of geographical locations
  - ▶ the idea of Africa as a non-space, a signifier for arrested temporality
  - ▶ Africa as a 'primordial chaos', an undeveloped and haphazard space in need of European spatio-civilisational intervention
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# Postcolonial spatiality

- ▶ the postcolonial, neoliberal African experience has continued spatiality as a geography of neoliberal discontent.
  - ▶ E-fraud texts imagine engagement in internet fraud as a structural adjustment to capitalist imperatives of the neoliberal space through the creation of a 'third space'.
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## E-fraudsters position internet fraud as:

- ❖ a digital art of taking up space in an economic climate of relentless displacement
- ❖ a vocational act of commercialising one's victimhood, as a villain with capitalist agency
- ❖ a virtual approach to the neoliberal reduction of all spatial values to those of the market.

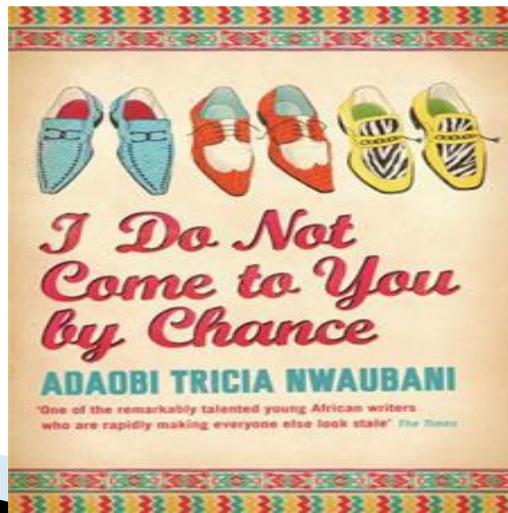
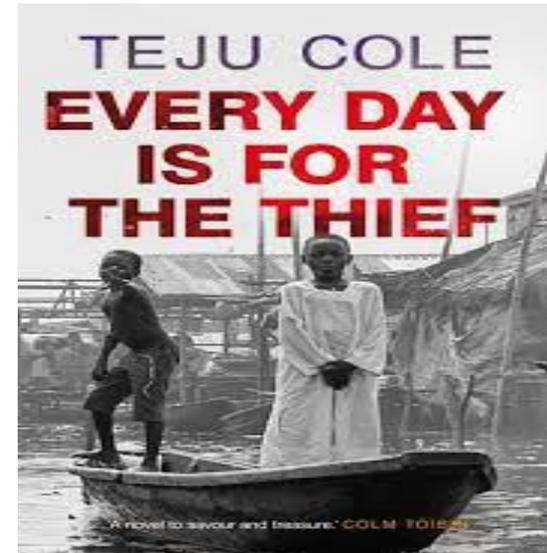
The act of plotting scam e-mails therefore becomes a **'space-finding mission'** – decolonial as well as neo-colonial re-mapping of the extant global stereotype of Africa as a *lootable* space.

# E-fraud literature shows how e-fraud economy connects with neoliberal spatial discontent

Both 'Yahoo Yahoo' in *News from Home & Every Day Is for the Thief*

perform the sights and sound of Lagos—and the cyber cafés where scam letters are composed—as iconographic iterations of the neoliberal imperatives of urban informality

In *I Do Not Come to You by Chance*, scam letters are performed as an econo-spatial project



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# Some secondary texts

Madhu Krishnan, *Writing Spatiality in West Africa: Colonial Legacies in the Anglophone/Francophone Novel* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2018).

Edward W. Soja, 'Foreword', in *Postcolonial Spaces: The Politics of Place in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Andrew Teverson and Sara Upstone (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. ix—xiii.

Sara Upstone, *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2009).

Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE, 2005).

Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', translated by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16.1 (1986), 22—7 (p. 22). Originally published in French as 'Des espaces autres' in 1967.

Angelika Bammer, 'Introduction', in *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*, ed. Angelika Bammer (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994), pp. Xi—xx (p. xi).