

Society of Young Nigerian Writers

Chris Abani

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Chris Abani

The poem "Ode to Joy" on a wall in the Dutch city of [Leiden](#)

Christopher Abani (or **Chris Abani**) (born 27 December 1966) is a [Nigerian](#) author. He is part of a new generation of Nigerian writers working to convey to an English-speaking audience the experience of those born and raised in "sthat troubled African nation".

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Biography

Chris Abani was born in Afikpo, Nigeria. His father was Igbo, while his mother was English-born.^[1]

He published his first novel, *Masters of the Board* (1985) at the age of sixteen. The plot was a political thriller and it was an allegory for a coup that was carried out in Nigeria just before it was written. He was imprisoned for 6 months on suspicion of an attempt to overthrow the government. He continued to write after his release from jail, but was imprisoned for one year after the publication of his novel, *Sirocco*. (1987). After he was released from jail this time, he composed several anti-government plays that were performed on the street near government offices for two years. He was imprisoned a third time and was placed on death row. Luckily, his friends had bribed government officials for his release in 1991, and immediately Abani moved to the United Kingdom, living there until 1999. He then moved to the United States, where he now lives.^[2]

Material parts of his biography as it relates to his alleged political activism, imprisonments and death sentence in Nigeria have been disputed as fiction by some Nigerian literary activists of the period in question. To date there has been no publicly available independent corroboration of Abani's version of this part of his biography nor of the claims against it.

Education and career

He holds a BA in English (Nigeria), an MA in Gender and Culture (Birkbeck College, University of London), an MA in English and a PhD in Literature and Creative Writing (University of Southern California).

He is a Professor at the University of California, Riverside and the recipient of the PEN USA Freedom-to-Write Award, the 2001 Prince Claus Awards, a Lannan Literary Fellowship, a California Book Award, a Hurston-Wright Legacy Award and the Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award. Selections of his poetry appear in the online journal *Blackbird*.

A self-described “zealot of optimism”, poet and novelist Chris Abani bravely travels into the charged intersections of atrocity and love, politics and religion, loss and renewal. In poems of devastating beauty, he investigates complex personal history, family, and romantic love.

His most recent book of poetry, *Sanctificum* (Copper Canyon Press, 2010), is a sequence of linked poems, bringing together religious ritual, the Igbo language of his Nigerian homeland, and reggae rhythms in a postracial, liturgical love song.^[3]

Chris Abani's foray into publishing has led to the formation of the Black Goat poetry series, which is an imprint of New York-based Akashic Books. Poets Kwame Dawes, Christina Garcia, Kate Durbin, Karen Harryman, Uche Nduka, Percival Everett, Khadijah Queen and Gabriela Jauregui have all been published by Black Goat..

Published works

Novels

- *The Virgin of Flames* (Penguin, 2007)⁴
- *GraceLand* (FSG, 2004/Picador 2005)
- *Masters of the Board* (Delta, 1985)

Novellas

- *Becoming Abigail* (Akashic Books, 2006)
- *Song For Night* (Akashic Books, 2007)

Poetry

- *Sanctificum* (Copper Canyon Press, 2010)
- *Hands Washing Water* (Copper Canyon Press, 2006)
- *Dog Woman* (Red Hen Press, 2004)
- *Daphne's Lot* (Red Hen Press, 2003)
- *Kalakuta Republic* (Saqi, 2001).

Honors and awards

2009

- Guggenheim Fellow in Fiction

2008

- Winner, PEN Beyond the Margins Award (now renamed PEN Open Book Award) for *Song For Night*.
- Nominated for Lamada Award (*The Virgin of Flames*)
- Recipient, Distinguished Humanist Award (UC, Riverside)
- 2007 Pushcart Nomination for *Sanctificum* (poetry)

2007

- New York Times Editor's Choice (*Song for Night*)
- Finalist, PEN Beyond the Margins Award (*Becoming Abigail*)
- A Barnes and Noble Discovery Selection (*The Virgin of Flames*)
- A New York Times Editor's Choice (*The Virgin of Flames*)
- A New York Libraries Books For Teens Selection (*Becoming Abigail*)

2006

- A New York Times Editor's Choice (*Becoming Abigail*)
- A Chicago Reader Critic's Choice (*Becoming Abigail*)
- A selection of the Essence Magazine Book Club (*Becoming Abigail*)
- A selection of the Black Expressions Book Club (*Becoming Abigail*)
- Pushcart Nomination (poetry) (*A Way To Turn This To Light*)
- Shortlisted for International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award (*GraceLand*).

2005

- Winner, Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award. (*GraceLand*)
- Winner, Hurston-Wright Legacy Award (*GraceLand*)
- Silver Medal, California Book Award for Fiction (*GraceLand*)
- Finalist, Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction (*GraceLand*)
- Finalist, Commonwealth Writers Prize, Best Books (Africa Region)(*GraceLand*)

- Pushcart Nomination for *Blooding*. StoryQuarterly.

2003

- Lannan Foundation Literary Fellowship, USA
- Hellman/Hammet Grant from Human Rights Watch, USA.

2002

- Imbongi Yesizwe Poetry International Award, South Africa.

2001

- PEN USA West Freedom-to-Write Award, USA.
- Prince Claus Awards.
- Middleton Fellowship, University of Southern California, USA

References

1. [^] Timberg, Scott (February 18, 2007). "Living in the `perfect metaphor'". Los Angeles Times. Retrieved 2009-01-25. "But amu even before he became one of the rare Africans in the Phoenix Inn and one of the few blacks living in East L.A., Abani was what he calls "an outsider's outsider". He grew up in small Nigerian cities, the son of an Igbo educator father and a white English-born mother who had met at Oxford, where she was a secretary and he was a post-doc student. Raised Roman Catholic, Abani studied in the seminary as a teenager."
2. [^] <http://www.bcnny.org/ws-2005/writers-series2005-abani.htm>
3. [^] <http://www.coppercanyonpress.org/catalog/index.cfm?action=displ>



Chinua Achebe

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"Achebe" redirects here. For the fictional character, see [Achebe \(comics\)](#).

"Chinua" redirects here. It is not to be confused with [Chin-hua](#).

Chinua Achebe

Chinua Achebe (2008)

	Albert Chinualumogu Achebe
Born	16 November 1930 <u>Ogidi, Nigeria Protectorate</u>
Died	21 March 2013 (aged 82) <u>Boston, Massachusetts, United States</u>
Occupation	David and Marianna Fisher University Professor and Professor of Africana Studies <u>Brown University</u>
Nationality	<u>Nigerian</u>
Ethnicity	<u>Igbo</u>
Period	1958–2013
Notable work(s)	The African Trilogy: – <u><i>Things Fall Apart</i></u> , – <u><i>No Longer at Ease</i></u> , – <u><i>Arrow of God</i></u> ; Also, <u><i>A Man of the People</i></u> , and <u><i>Anthills of the Savannah</i></u> .

Chinua Achebe (pron.: /ˈtʃɪnwɑː əˈtʃɛbeɪ/^[1] born **Albert Chinualumogu Achebe**, 16 November 1930 – 21 March 2013)^[2] was a Nigerian^[3] **novelist**, **poet**, **professor**, and **critic**. He was best known for his first novel and magnum opus,^[4] *Things Fall Apart* (1958), which is the most widely read book in modern African literature.^[5]

Raised by his parents in the Igbo town of Ogidi in southeastern Nigeria, Achebe excelled at school and won a scholarship for undergraduate studies. He became fascinated with world religions and traditional African cultures, and began writing stories as a university student. After

graduation, he worked for the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) and soon moved to the metropolis of Lagos. He gained worldwide attention for *Things Fall Apart* in the late 1950s; his later novels include *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964), *A Man of the People* (1966), and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987). Achebe wrote his novels in English and defended the use of English, a "language of colonisers", in African literature. In 1975, his lecture *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness"* featured a famous criticism of Joseph Conrad as "a bloody racist"; it was later published amid some controversy.

When the region of Biafra broke away from Nigeria in 1967, Achebe became a supporter of Biafran independence and acted as ambassador for the people of the new nation. The war ravaged the populace, and as starvation and violence took its toll, he appealed to the people of Europe and the Americas for aid. When the Nigerian government retook the region in 1970, he involved himself in political parties but soon resigned due to frustration over the corruption and elitism he witnessed. He lived in the United States for several years in the 1970s, and returned to the U.S. in 1990 after a car accident left him partially disabled.

Achebe's novels focus on the traditions of Igbo society, the effect of Christian influences, and the clash of Western and traditional African values during and after the colonial era. His style relies heavily on the Igbo oral tradition, and combines straightforward narration with representations of folk stories, proverbs, and oratory. He also published a number of short stories, children's books, and essay collections. From 2009 until his death, he served as a professor at Brown University in the United States.

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Biography

Achebe's parents, Isaiah Okafo Achebe and Janet Anaenechi Iloegbunam, were converts to the [Protestant Church Mission Society \(CMS\)](#) in Nigeria.^[6] The elder Achebe stopped practising the religion of his ancestors, but he respected its traditions. Achebe's unabbreviated name, Chinualumogu ("May God fight on my behalf"^[7]), was a prayer for divine protection and stability.^[7] The Achebe family had five other surviving children, named in a similar fusion of traditional words relating to their new religion: Frank Okwuofu, John Chukwuemeka Ifeanyichukwu, Zinobia Uzoma, Augustine Nduka, and Grace Nwanneka.^[7]

Early life

Chinua was born Albert Chinualumogu Achebe in the Igbo village of Ogidi on November 16, 1930.^[7] Isaiah Okafo Achebe and Janet Anaenechi Iloegbunam Achebe stood at a crossroads of traditional culture and Christian influence; this made a significant impact on the children, especially Chinualumogu. After the youngest daughter was born, the family moved to Isaiah Achebe's ancestral town of Ogidi, in what is now the state of Anambra.^[3]

Map of Nigeria's linguistic groups. Achebe's homeland, the Igbo region (sometimes called Ibo), lies in the central south.

Storytelling was a mainstay of the Igbo tradition and an integral part of the community. Chinua's mother and sister Zinobia Uzoma told him many stories as a child, which he repeatedly requested. His education was furthered by the collages his father hung on the walls of their home, as well as almanacs and numerous books – including a prose adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c. 1590) and an Igbo version of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678).^{[8][9]} Chinua also eagerly anticipated traditional village events, like the frequent masquerade ceremonies, which he recreated later in his novels and stories.^[10]

Education

In 1936, Achebe entered St Philips' Central School. Despite his protests, he spent a week in the religious class for young children, but was quickly moved to a higher class when the school's chaplain took note of his intelligence.^[11] One teacher described him as the student with the best handwriting in class, and the best reading skills.^[12] He also attended Sunday school every week and the special evangelical services held monthly, often carrying his father's bag. A controversy erupted at one such session, when apostates from the new church challenged the catechist about the tenets of Christianity. Achebe later included a scene from this incident in *Things Fall Apart*.^{[13][14]}

At the age of twelve, Achebe moved away from his family to the village of Nekede, four kilometres from Owerri. He enrolled as a student at the Central School, where his older brother John taught.^[15] In Nekede, Achebe gained an appreciation for Mbari, a traditional art form which seeks to invoke the gods' protection through symbolic sacrifices in the form of sculpture and collage.^[16] When the time came to change to secondary school, in 1944, Achebe sat entrance examinations for and was accepted at both the prestigious Dennis Memorial Grammar School in Onitsha and the even more prestigious Government College in Umuahia.^[17]

Modelled on the British public school, and funded by the colonial administration, Government College had been established in 1929 to educate Nigeria's future elite.^[17] It had rigorous academic standards and was vigorously elitist, accepting boys purely on the basis of ability.^[17] The language of the school was English, not only to develop proficiency but also to provide a common tongue for pupils from different Nigerian language groups.^[18] Achebe described this later as being ordered to "put away their different mother tongues and communicate in the language of their colonisers".^[19] The rule was strictly enforced and Achebe recalls that his first punishment was for asking another boy to pass the soap in Igbo.^[18]

Once there, Achebe was double-promoted in his first year, completing the first two years' studies in one, and spending only four years in secondary school, instead of the standard five.^[20] Achebe was unsuited to the school's sports regimen and belonged instead to a group of six exceedingly studious pupils. So intense were their study habits that the headmaster banned the reading of

textbooks from five to six o'clock in the afternoon (though other activities and other books were allowed).^[21]

Achebe started to explore the school's "wonderful library".^[22] There he discovered Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery* (1901), the autobiography of an American former slave; Achebe "found it sad, but it showed him another dimension of reality".^[21] He also read classic novels, such as *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), *David Copperfield* (1850), and *Treasure Island* (1883) together with tales of colonial derring-do such as H. Rider Haggard's *Allan Quatermain* (1887) and John Buchan's *Prester John* (1910). Achebe later recalled that, as a reader, he "took sides with the white characters against the savages"^[22] and even developed a dislike for Africans. "The white man was good and reasonable and intelligent and courageous. The savages arrayed against him were sinister and stupid or, at the most, cunning. I hated their guts."^[22]

University

Street in Ibadan, 2007

In 1948, in preparation for independence, Nigeria's first university opened.^[23] Known as University College, (now the University of Ibadan), it was an associate college of the University of London. Achebe obtained such high marks in the entrance examination that he was admitted as a Major Scholar in the university's first intake and given a bursary to study medicine.^[23] After a year of grueling work, he changed to English, history, and theology.^[24] Because he switched his field, however, he lost his scholarship and had to pay tuition fees. He received a government bursary, and his family also donated money – his older brother Augustine gave up money for a trip home from his job as a civil servant so Chinua could continue his studies.^[25] From its inception, the university had a strong English faculty; it includes many famous writers amongst

its alumni. These include Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka, novelist Elechi Amadi, poet and playwright John Pepper Clark, and poet Christopher Okigbo.^[26]

In 1950 Achebe wrote a piece for the *University Herald* entitled "Polar Undergraduate", his debut as an author. It used irony and humour to celebrate the intellectual vigour of his classmates.^[27] He followed this with other essays and letters about philosophy and freedom in academia, some of which were published in another campus magazine, *The Bug*.^[28] He served as the *Herald's* editor during the 1951–52 school year.^[29]

While at the university, Achebe wrote his first short story, "In a Village Church", which combines details of life in rural Nigeria with Christian institutions and icons, a style which appears in many of his later works.^[30] Other short stories he wrote during his time at Ibadan (including "The Old Order in Conflict with the New" and "Dead Men's Path") examine conflicts between tradition and modernity, with an eye toward dialogue and understanding on both sides.^[31] When a professor named Geoffrey Parrinder arrived at the university to teach comparative religion, Achebe began to explore the fields of Christian history and African traditional religions.^[32]

It was during his studies at Ibadan that Achebe began to become critical of European literature about Africa. He read Irish novelist Joyce Cary's 1939 book *Mister Johnson*, about a cheerful Nigerian man who (among other things) works for an abusive British storeowner. Achebe recognised his dislike for the African protagonist as a sign of the author's cultural ignorance. One of his classmates announced to the professor that the only enjoyable moment in the book is when Johnson is shot.^[33]

After the final examinations at Ibadan in 1953, Achebe was awarded a second-class degree. Rattled by not receiving the highest level, he was uncertain how to proceed after graduation. He returned to his hometown of Ogidi to sort through his options.^[34]

Teaching and producing

While he meditated on his possible career paths, Achebe was visited by a friend from the university, who convinced him to apply for an English teaching position at the Merchants of

Light school at Oba. It was a ramshackle institution with a crumbling infrastructure and a meagre library; the school was built on what the residents called "bad bush" – a section of land thought to be tainted by unfriendly spirits.^[35] Later, in *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe describes a similar area called the "evil forest", where the Christian missionaries are given a place to build their church.^[36]

As a teacher he urged his students to read extensively and be original in their work.^[37] The students did not have access to the newspapers he had read as a student, so Achebe made his own available in the classroom. He taught in Oba for four months, but when an opportunity arose in 1954 to work for the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS), he left the school and moved to Lagos.^[38]

Lagos in 2007

The NBS, a radio network started in 1933 by the colonial government,^[39] assigned Achebe to the Talks Department, preparing scripts for oral delivery. This helped him master the subtle nuances between written and spoken language, a skill that helped him later to write realistic dialogue.^[40]

The city of Lagos also made a significant impression on him. A huge conurbation, the city teemed with recent migrants from the rural villages. Achebe revelled in the social and political activity around him and later drew upon his experiences when describing the city in his 1960 novel *No Longer at Ease*.^[41]

While in Lagos, Achebe started work on a novel. This was challenging, since very little African fiction had been written in English, although Amos Tutuola's *Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1952) and Cyprian Ekwensi's *People of the City* (1954) were notable exceptions. While appreciating

Ekwensi's work, Achebe worked hard to develop his own style, even as he pioneered the creation of the Nigerian novel itself.^[42] A visit to Nigeria by Queen Elizabeth II in 1956 brought issues of colonialism and politics to the surface, and was a significant moment for Achebe.^[43]

Also in 1956 he was selected at the Staff School run by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). His first trip outside Nigeria was an opportunity to advance his technical production skills, and to solicit feedback on his novel (which was later split into two books). In London, he met a novelist named Gilbert Phelps, to whom he offered the manuscript. Phelps responded with great enthusiasm, asking Achebe if he could show it to his editor and publishers. Achebe declined, insisting that it needed more work.^[42]

Things Fall Apart

Main article: [Things Fall Apart](#)

Back in Nigeria, Achebe set to work revising and editing his novel (now titled *Things Fall Apart*, after a line in the poem "The Second Coming" by William Butler Yeats). He cut away the second and third sections of the book, leaving only the story of a yam farmer named Okonkwo who lives during the colonization of Nigeria. He added sections, improved various chapters, and restructured the prose. By 1957, he had sculpted it to his liking, and took advantage of an advertisement offering a typing service. He sent his only copy of his handwritten manuscript (along with the £22 fee) to the London company. After he waited several months without receiving any communication from the typing service, Achebe began to worry. His boss at the NBS, Angela Beattie, was going to London for her annual leave; he asked her to visit the company. She did, and angrily demanded to know why it was lying ignored in the corner of the office. The company quickly sent a typed copy to Achebe. Beattie's intervention was crucial for his ability to continue as a writer. Had the novel been lost, he later said, "I would have been so discouraged that I would probably have given up altogether."^[44]

A spiral stack of the 1994 Anchor Books edition of *Things Fall Apart*

In 1958, Achebe sent his novel to the agent recommended by Gilbert Phelps in London. It was sent to several publishing houses; some rejected it immediately, claiming that fiction from African writers had no market potential.^[45] Finally it reached the office of Heinemann, where executives hesitated until an educational adviser, Donald MacRae – just back in England after a trip through west Africa read the book and forced the company's hand with his succinct report: "This is the best novel I have read since the war".^[46]

Heinemann published 2,000 hardcover copies of *Things Fall Apart* on 17 June 1958. According to Alan Hill, employed by the publisher at the time, the company did not "touch a word of it" in preparation for release.^[47] The book was received well by the British press, and received positive reviews from critic Walter Allen and novelist Angus Wilson. Three days after publication, the *Times Literary Supplement* wrote that the book "genuinely succeeds in presenting tribal life from the inside". *The Observer* called it "an excellent novel", and the literary magazine *Time and Tide* said that "Mr. Achebe's style is a model for aspirants".^[48]

Initial reception in Nigeria was mixed. When Hill tried to promote the book in West Africa, he was met with scepticism and ridicule. The faculty at the University of Ibadan was amused at the thought of a worthwhile novel being written by an alumnus.^[49] Others were more supportive; one review in the magazine *Black Orpheus* said: "The book as a whole creates for the reader such a vivid picture of Ibo life that the plot and characters are little more than symbols representing a way of life lost irrevocably within living memory."^[50]

In the book Okonkwo struggles with the legacy of his father – a shiftless debtor fond of playing the flute – as well as the complications and contradictions that arise when white missionaries arrive in his village of Umuofia.^[51] Exploring the terrain of cultural conflict, particularly the encounter between Igbo tradition and Christian doctrine, Achebe returns to the themes of his earlier stories, which grew from his own background.

Things Fall Apart went on to become one of the most important books in African literature.^[52] Selling over 8 million copies around the world, it was translated into 50 languages, making Achebe the most translated African writer of all time.^{[53][54]}

Marriage and family

In the same year *Things Fall Apart* was published, Achebe was promoted at the NBS and put in charge of the network's eastern region coverage. He moved to Enugu and began to work on his administrative duties. There he met a woman named Christie Okoli, who had grown up in the area and joined the NBS staff when he arrived. They first conversed when she brought to his attention a pay discrepancy; a friend of hers found that, although they had been hired simultaneously, Christie had been rated lower and offered a lower wage. Sent to the hospital for an appendectomy soon after, she was pleasantly surprised when Achebe visited her with gifts and magazines.^[55]

Achebe and Okoli grew closer in the following years, and on 10 September 1961 they were married in the Chapel of Resurrection on the campus of the University of Ibadan.^[56] Christie Achebe has described their marriage as one of trust and mutual understanding; some tension arose early in their union, due to conflicts about attention and communication. However, as their relationship matured, husband and wife made efforts to adapt to one another.^[57]

Their first child, a daughter named Chinelo, was born on 11 July 1962. They had a son, Ikechukwu, on 3 December 1964, and another boy named Chidi, on 24 May 1967. When the children began attending school in Lagos, their parents became worried about the world view – especially with regard to race – expressed at the school, especially through the mostly white teachers and books that presented a prejudiced view of African life.^[58] In 1966, Achebe published his first children's book, *Chike and the River*, to address some of these concerns.^[59]

After the Biafran War, the Achebes had another daughter on 7 March 1970, named Nwando. Achebe when asked about his family stated "There are few things more important than my family." ^{[60][61][62][63]} They have six grandchildren, Chochi, Chino, Chidera, C.J. (Chinua Jr.), Nnamdi and Zeal.

***No Longer at Ease* and fellowship travels**

In 1960, while they were still dating, Achebe dedicated to Christie Okoli his second novel, *No Longer at Ease*, about a civil servant who is embroiled in the corruption of Lagos. The protagonist is Obi, grandson of *Things Fall Apart's* main character, Okonkwo. ^[64] Drawing on his time in the city, Achebe writes about Obi's experiences in Lagos to reflect the challenges facing a new generation on the threshold of Nigerian independence. Obi is trapped between the expectations of his family, its clan, his home village, and larger society. He is crushed by these forces (like his grandfather before him) and finds himself imprisoned for bribery. Having shown his acumen for portraying traditional Igbo culture, Achebe demonstrated in his second novel an ability to depict modern Nigerian life. ^[65]

A map of the distribution of people using the Swahili language

Later that year, Achebe was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship for six months of travel, which he called "the first important perk of my writing career";^[66] Achebe set out for a tour of East Africa. One month after Nigeria achieved its independence, he travelled to Kenya, where he was required to complete an immigration form by checking a box indicating his ethnicity: European, Asiatic, Arab, or Other. Shocked and dismayed at being forced into an "Other" identity, he found the situation "almost funny" and took an extra form as a souvenir.^[67] Continuing to Tanganyika and Zanzibar (now united in Tanzania), he was frustrated by the paternalistic attitude he observed among non-African hotel clerks and social elites.^[68]

Achebe also found in his travels that Swahili was gaining prominence as a major African language. Radio programs were broadcast in Swahili, and its use was widespread in the countries he visited. Nevertheless, he also found an "apathy" among the people toward literature written in Swahili.^[69] He met the poet Sheikh Shaaban Robert, who complained of the difficulty he had faced in trying to publish his Swahili-language work.^[70]

In Northern Rhodesia (now called Zambia), Achebe found himself sitting in a whites-only section of a bus to Victoria Falls. Interrogated by the ticket taker as to why he was sitting in the front, he replied, "if you must know I come from Nigeria, and there we sit where we like in the bus."^[71] Upon reaching the waterfall, he was cheered by the black travellers from the bus, but he was saddened by their being unable to resist the policy of segregation at the time.^[72]

Two years later, Achebe again left Nigeria, this time as part of a Fellowship for Creative Artists awarded by UNESCO. He travelled to the United States and Brazil. He met with a number of writers from the US, including novelists Ralph Ellison and Arthur Miller.^[73] In Brazil, he met with several other authors, with whom he discussed the complications of writing in Portuguese. Achebe worried that the vibrant literature of the nation would be lost if left untranslated into a more widely spoken language.^[74]

Voice of Nigeria and African Writers Series

Once he returned to Nigeria, Achebe was promoted at the NBS to the position of Director of External Broadcasting. One of his first duties was to help create the Voice of Nigeria network. The station broadcast its first transmission on New Year's Day 1962, and worked to maintain an

objective perspective during the turbulent era immediately following independence.^[75] This objectivity was put to the test when Nigerian Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa declared a state of emergency in the Western Region, responding to a series of conflicts between officials of varying parties. Achebe became saddened by the evidence of corruption and silencing of political opposition.^[76]

In 1962 he attended an executive conference of African writers in English at the Makerere University College in Kampala, Uganda. He met with important literary figures from around the continent and the world, including Ghanaian poet Kofi Awoonor, Nigerian playwright and poet Wole Soyinka, and US poet-author Langston Hughes. Among the topics of discussion was an attempt to determine whether the term African literature ought to include work from the diaspora, or solely that writing composed by people living within the continent itself. Achebe indicated that it was not "a very significant question",^[77] and that scholars would do well to wait until a body of work were large enough to judge. Writing about the conference in several journals, Achebe hailed it as a milestone for the literature of Africa, and highlighted the importance of community among isolated voices on the continent and beyond.^[78]

Achebe selected the novel *Weep Not, Child* by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o as one of the first titles of Heinemann's African Writers Series.

While at Makerere, Achebe was asked to read a novel written by a student (James Ngugi, later known as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o) called *Weep Not, Child*. Impressed, he sent it to Alan Hill at Heinemann, which published it two years later to coincide with its paperback line of books from

African writers. Hill indicated this was to remedy a situation where British publishers "regarded West Africa only as a place where you sold books." Achebe was chosen to be General Editor of the African Writers Series, which became a significant force in bringing postcolonial literature from Africa to the rest of the world.^[79]

As these works became more widely available, reviews and essays about African literature – especially from Europe – began to flourish. Bristling against the commentary flooding his home country, Achebe published an essay titled "Where Angels Fear to Tread" in the December 1962 issue of *Nigeria Magazine*. In it, he distinguished between the hostile critic (entirely negative), the amazed critic (entirely positive), and the conscious critic (who seeks a balance). He lashed out at those who critiqued African writers from the outside, saying: "no man can understand another whose language he does not speak (and 'language' here does not mean simply words, but a man's entire world view)."^[80]

Arrow of God

Achebe's third book, *Arrow of God*, was published in 1964. Like its predecessors, it explores the intersections of Igbo tradition and European Christianity. Set in the village of Umuaro at the start of the twentieth century, the novel tells the story of Ezeulu, a Chief Priest of Ulu. Shocked by the power of British intervention in the area, he orders his son to learn the foreigners' secret. As with Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* and Obi in *No Longer at Ease*, Ezeulu is consumed by the resulting tragedy.

The idea for the novel came in 1959, when Achebe heard the story of a Chief Priest being imprisoned by a District Officer.^[81] He drew further inspiration a year later when he viewed a collection of Igbo objects excavated from the area by archaeologist Thurstan Shaw; Achebe was startled by the cultural sophistication of the artefacts. When an acquaintance showed him a series of papers from colonial officers (not unlike the fictional *Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger* referenced at the end of *Things Fall Apart*), Achebe combined these strands of history and began work on *Arrow of God* in earnest.^[82] Like Achebe's previous works, *Arrow* was roundly praised by critics.^[83] A revised edition was published in 1974 to correct what Achebe called "certain structural weaknesses".^[84]

In a letter to Achebe, the US writer John Updike expressed his surprised admiration for the sudden downfall of *Arrow of God's* protagonist. He praised the author's courage to write "an ending few Western novelists would have contrived".^[85] Achebe responded by suggesting that the individualistic hero was rare in African literature, given its roots in communal living and the degree to which characters are "subject to non-human forces in the universe".^[86]

A Man of the People

A Man of the People was published in 1966. A bleak satire set in an unnamed African state which has just attained independence, the novel follows a teacher named Odili Samalu from the village of Anata who opposes a corrupt Minister of Culture named Nanga for his Parliament seat. Upon reading an advance copy of the novel, Achebe's friend John Pepper Clark declared: "Chinua, I *know* you are a prophet. Everything in this book has happened except a military coup!"^[87]

Soon afterward, Nigerian Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu seized control of the northern region of the country as part of a larger coup attempt. Commanders in other areas failed, and the plot was answered by a military crackdown. A massacre of three thousand people from the eastern region living in the north occurred soon afterwards, and stories of other attacks on Igbo Nigerians began to filter into Lagos.^[88]

The ending of his novel had brought Achebe to the attention of military personnel, who suspected him of having foreknowledge of the coup. When he received word of the pursuit, he sent his wife (who was pregnant) and children on a squalid boat through a series of unseen creeks to the Igbo stronghold of Port Harcourt. They arrived safely, but Christie suffered a miscarriage at the journey's end. Chinua rejoined them soon afterwards in Ogidi. These cities were safe from military incursion because they were in the southeast, part of the region which would later secede.^[89]

Once the family had resettled in Enugu, Achebe and his friend Christopher Okigbo started a publishing house called Citadel Press, to improve the quality and increase the quantity of literature available to younger readers. One of its first submissions was a story called *How the Dog was Domesticated*, which Achebe revised and rewrote, turning it into a complex allegory for

the country's political tumult. Its final title was *How the Leopard Got His Claws*.^[90] Years later a Nigerian intelligence officer told Achebe, "of all the things that came out of Biafra, that book was the most important."^[91]

Map of the Biafra secession

Civil War

In May 1967, the southeastern region of Nigeria broke away to form the Republic of Biafra; in July the Nigerian military attacked to suppress what it considered an unlawful rebellion. Achebe's partner, Christopher Okigbo, who had become a close friend of the family (especially of Achebe's son, young Ikechukwu), volunteered to join the secessionist army while simultaneously working at the press. Achebe's house was bombed one afternoon; Christie had taken the children to visit her sick mother, so the only victims were his books and papers. The Achebe family narrowly escaped disaster several times during the war. Five days later, Christopher Okigbo was killed on the war's front line.^[92] Achebe was shaken considerably by the loss; in 1971 he wrote "Dirge for Okigbo", originally in the Igbo language but later translated to English.^[93]

As the war intensified, the Achebe family was forced to leave Enugu for the Biafran capital of Aba. As the turmoil closed in, he continued to write, but most of his creative work during the war took the form of poetry. The shorter format was a consequence of living in a war zone. "I can write poetry," he said, "something short, intense more in keeping with my mood ... All this is creating in the context of our struggle."^[94] Many of these poems were collected in his 1971 book

Beware, Soul Brother. One of his most famous, "Refugee Mother and Child", spoke to the suffering and loss that surrounded him. Dedicated to the promise of Biafra, he accepted a request to serve as foreign ambassador, refusing an invitation from the Program of African Studies at Northwestern University in the US. Achebe traveled to many cities in Europe, including London, where he continued his work with the African Writers Series project at Heinemann.^[95]

During the war, relations between writers in Nigeria and Biafra were strained. Achebe and John Pepper Clark had a tense confrontation in London over their respective support for opposing sides of the conflict. Achebe demanded that the publisher withdraw the dedication of *A Man of the People* he had given to Clark. Years later, their friendship healed and the dedication was restored.^[96] Meanwhile, their contemporary Wole Soyinka was imprisoned for meeting with Biafran officials, and spent many years in jail. Speaking in 1968, Achebe said: "I find the Nigerian situation untenable. If I had been a Nigerian, I think I would have been in the same situation as Wole Soyinka is – in prison."^[97]

The Nigerian government, under the leadership of General Yakubu Gowon, was backed by the British government; the two nations enjoyed a vigorous trade partnership.^[98] Addressing the causes of the war in 1968, Achebe lashed out at the Nigerian political and military forces that had forced Biafra to secede. He framed the conflict in terms of the country's colonial past. The writer in Nigeria, he said, "found that the independence his country was supposed to have won was totally without content ... The old white master was still in power. He had got himself a bunch of black stooges to do his dirty work for a commission."^[97]

Flag of the Republic of Biafra

Conditions in Biafra worsened as the war continued. In September 1968, the city of Aba fell to the Nigerian military and Achebe once again moved his family, this time to Umuahia, where the Biafran government had also relocated. He was chosen to chair the newly formed National Guidance Committee, charged with the task of drafting principles and ideas for the post-war era.^[99] In 1969, the group completed a document entitled *The Principles of the Biafran Revolution*, later released as *The Ahiara Declaration*.^[100]

In October of the same year, Achebe joined writers Cyprian Ekwensi and Gabriel Okara for a tour of the United States to raise awareness about the dire situation in Biafra. They visited thirty college campuses and conducted countless interviews. While in the southern US, Achebe learned for the first time of the Igbo Landing, a true story of a group of Igbo captives who drowned themselves in 1803 – rather than endure the brutality of slavery – after surviving through the Middle Passage.^{[101][102]} Although the group was well received by students and faculty, Achebe was "shocked" by the harsh racist attitude toward Africa he saw in the US. At the end of the tour, he said that "world policy is absolutely ruthless and unfeeling".^[103]

The beginning of 1970 saw the end of the state of Biafra. On 12 January, the military surrendered to Nigeria, and Achebe returned with his family to Ogidi, where their home had been destroyed. He took a job at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka and immersed himself once again in academia. He was unable to accept invitations to other countries, however, because the Nigerian government revoked his passport due to his support for Biafra.^[104]

Postwar academia

After the war, Achebe helped start two magazines: the literary journal *Okike*, a forum for African art, fiction, and poetry; and *Nsukkascopes*, an internal publication of the University (motto: "Devastating, Fearless, Brutal and True").^[105] Achebe and the *Okike* committee later established another cultural magazine, *Uwa Ndi Igbo*, to showcase the indigenous stories and oral traditions of the Igbo community.^[106] In February 1972 he released *Girls at War*, a collection of short stories ranging in time from his undergraduate days to the recent bloodshed. It was the 100th book in Heinemann's African Writers Series.^[107]

The University of Massachusetts Amherst at night

The University of Massachusetts Amherst offered Achebe a professorship later that year, and the family moved to the United States. Their youngest daughter was displeased with her nursery school, and the family soon learned that her frustration involved language. Achebe helped her face the "alien experience" (as he called it) by telling her stories during the car trips to and from school.^[108]

As he presented his lessons to a wide variety of students (he taught only one class, to a large audience), he began to study the perceptions of Africa in Western scholarship: "Africa is not like anywhere else they know ... there are no real people in the Dark Continent, only *forces* operating; and people don't speak any language you can understand, they just grunt, too busy jumping up and down in a frenzy".^[109]

Criticism of Conrad

Achebe expanded this criticism when he presented a Chancellor's Lecture at Amherst on 18 February 1975, *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness"*. Decrying Joseph Conrad as "a bloody racist",^[110] Achebe asserted that Conrad's famous novel dehumanises Africans, rendering Africa as "a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognisable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril."^[111]

Achebe also discussed a quotation from Albert Schweitzer, a 1952 Nobel Peace Prize laureate: "That extraordinary missionary, Albert Schweitzer, who sacrificed brilliant careers in music and theology in Europe for a life of service to Africans in much the same area as Conrad writes

about, epitomizes the ambivalence. In a comment which has often been quoted Schweitzer says: 'The African is indeed my brother but my junior brother.' And so he proceeded to build a hospital appropriate to the needs of junior brothers with standards of hygiene reminiscent of medical practice in the days before the germ theory of disease came into being."^[112] Some were surprised that Achebe would challenge a man honoured in the West for his "reverence for life", and recognised as a paragon of Western liberalism.

The lecture caused a storm of controversy, even at the reception immediately following his talk. Many English professors in attendance were upset by his remarks; one elderly professor reportedly approached him, said: "How dare you!",^[113] and stormed away. Another suggested that Achebe had "no sense of humour",^[113] but several days later Achebe was approached by a third professor, who told him: "I now realize that I had never really read *Heart of Darkness* although I have taught it for years."^[114] Although the lecture angered many of his colleagues, he was nevertheless presented later in 1975 with an honorary doctorate from the University of Stirling and the Lotus Prize for Afro-Asian Writers.^[115]

The first comprehensive rebuttal of Achebe's critique was published in 1983 by British critic Cedric Watts. His essay "A Bloody Racist: About Achebe's View of Conrad" defends *Heart of Darkness* as an anti-imperialist novel, suggesting that "part of its greatness lies in the power of its criticisms of racial prejudice."^[116] Palestinian–American theorist Edward Said agreed in his book *Culture and Imperialism* that Conrad criticised imperialism, but added: "As a creature of his time, Conrad could not grant the natives their freedom, despite his severe critique of the imperialism that enslaved them".^[117]

Achebe's criticism has become a mainstream perspective on Conrad's work. The essay was included in the 1988 Norton critical edition of Conrad's novel. Editor Robert Kimbrough called it one of "the three most important events in *Heart of Darkness* criticism since the second edition of his book...."^[118] Critic Nicolas Tredell divides Conrad criticism "into two epochal phases: before and after Achebe."^[119] Asked frequently about his essay, Achebe once explained that he never meant for the work to be abandoned: "It's not in my nature to talk about banning books. I am saying, read it – with the kind of understanding and with the knowledge I talk about. And read it beside African works."^[118] Interviewed on National Public Radio with Robert Siegel, in

October 2009, Achebe remains consistent, although tempering this criticism in a discussion titled 'Heart of Darkness is inappropriate': "Conrad was a seductive writer. He could pull his reader into the fray. And if it were not for what he said about me and my people, I would probably be thinking only of that seduction."^[120]

Retirement and politics

When he returned to the University of Kenya in 1976, he hoped to accomplish three goals: finish the novel he had been writing, renew the native publication of *Okike*, and further his study of Igbo culture. He also showed that he would not restrict his criticism to European targets. In an August 1976 interview, he lashed out at the archetypal Nigerian intellectual, who is divorced from the intellect "but for two things: status and stomach. And if there's any danger that he might suffer official displeasure or lose his job, he would prefer to turn a blind eye to what is happening around him."^[121] In October 1979, Achebe was awarded the first-ever Nigerian National Merit Award.^[122]

In 1980 he met James Baldwin at a conference held by the African Literature Association in Gainesville, Florida USA. The writers – with similar political perspectives, beliefs about language, and faith in the liberating potential of literature – were eager to meet one another. Baldwin said: "It's very important that we should meet each other, finally, if I must say so, after something like 400 years."^[123]

In 1982, Achebe retired from the University of Nigeria. He devoted more time to editing *Okike* and became active with the left-leaning People's Redemption Party (PRP). In 1983, he became the party's deputy national vice-president. He published a book called *The Trouble with Nigeria* to coincide with the upcoming elections. On the first page, Achebe says bluntly: "the Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility and to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership."^[124]

The elections that followed were marked by violence and charges of fraud. Asked whether he thought Nigerian politics had changed since *A Man of the People*, Achebe replied: "I think, if anything, the Nigerian politician has deteriorated."^[125] After the elections, he engaged in a heated argument – which almost became a fistfight – with Bakin Zuwo, the newly elected governor of Kano State. He left the PRP and afterwards kept his distance from political parties, expressing his sadness at the dishonesty and weakness of the people involved.^[126]

He spent most of the 1980s delivering speeches, attending conferences, and working on his sixth novel. He also continued winning awards and collecting honorary degrees.^[127] In 1986 he was elected president-general of the Ogidi Town Union; he reluctantly accepted and began a three-year term. In the same year, he stepped down as editor of *Okike*.^[128]

Anthills and paralysis

In 1987 Achebe released his fifth novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*, about a military coup in the fictional West African nation of Kangan. A finalist for the Booker Prize, the novel was hailed in the *Financial Times*: "in a powerful fusion of myth, legend and modern styles, Achebe has written a book which is wise, exciting and essential, a powerful antidote to the cynical commentators from 'overseas' who see nothing ever new out of Africa."^[129] An opinion piece in the magazine *West Africa* said the book deserved to win the Booker Prize, and that Achebe was

"a writer who has long deserved the recognition that has already been accorded him by his sales figures."^[129] The prize went instead to Penelope Lively's novel *Moon Tiger*.

Stone Row at the centre of the Bard College campus

On 22 March 1990, Achebe was riding in a car to Lagos when an axle collapsed and the car flipped. His son Ikechukwu and the driver suffered minor injuries, but the weight of the vehicle fell on Achebe and his spine was severely damaged. He was flown to the Paddocks Hospital in Buckinghamshire, England, and treated for his injuries. In July doctors announced that although he was recuperating well, he was paralyzed from the waist down and would require the use of a wheelchair for the rest of his life.^[130]

Soon afterwards, Achebe became the Charles P. Stevenson Professor of Languages and Literature at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; he held the position for more than fifteen years.^[131] In the autumn of 2009 he joined the Brown University faculty as the David and Marianna Fisher University Professor of Africana Studies.^[132]

Later life and death

In October 2005, the London *Financial Times* reported that Achebe was planning to write a novella for the *Canongate Myth Series*, a series of short novels in which ancient myths from myriad cultures are reimagined and rewritten by contemporary authors.^[133] Achebe's novella has not yet been scheduled for publication.

In June 2007, Achebe was awarded the Man Booker International Prize.^[134] The judging panel included US critic Elaine Showalter, who said he "illuminated the path for writers around the

world seeking new words and forms for new realities and societies";^[135] and South African writer Nadine Gordimer, who said Achebe has achieved "what one of his characters brilliantly defines as the writer's purpose: 'a new-found utterance' for the capture of life's complexity".^[135] In 2010, Achebe was awarded The Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize for \$300,000, one of the richest prizes for the arts.^[136]

In October 2012, Achebe's publishers, Penguin Books, released *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*. Publication immediately caused a stir and re-opened the discussion about the Nigerian Civil War. It would prove to be the last publication during his lifetime.^[137]

Fondly called the "grandfather of Nigerian literature",^[138] Achebe died after a short illness on 21 March 2013 in Boston, United States. An unidentified source close to the family said that he was ill for a while and had been hospitalised in the city.^{[139][140]} Penguin publishing director Simon Winder said "we are all desolate to hear of his death."^[141] *The New York Times* described him in his obituary as "one of Africa's most widely read novelists and one of the continent's towering men of letters".^[142] The BBC wrote that he was "revered throughout the world for his depiction of life in Africa".^[143]

Style

Oral tradition

The style of Achebe's fiction draws heavily on the oral tradition of the Igbo people.^[144] He weaves folk tales into the fabric of his stories, illuminating community values in both the content and the form of the storytelling. The tale about the Earth and Sky in *Things Fall Apart*, for example, emphasises the interdependency of the masculine and the feminine. Although Nwoye enjoys hearing his mother tell the tale, Okonkwo's dislike for it is evidence of his imbalance.^[145] Later, Nwoye avoids beatings from his father by pretending to dislike such "women's stories".^[146]

A digital representation of the Igbo udu instrument

Another hallmark of Achebe's style is the use of proverbs, which often illustrate the values of the rural Igbo tradition. He sprinkles them throughout the narratives, repeating points made in conversation. Critic Anjali Gera notes that the use of proverbs in *Arrow of God* "serves to create through an echo effect the judgement of a community upon an individual violation."^[147] The use of such repetition in Achebe's urban novels, *No Longer at Ease* and *A Man of the People*, is less pronounced.^[147]

For Achebe, however, proverbs and folk stories are not the sum total of the oral Igbo tradition. In combining philosophical thought and public performance into the use of oratory ("Okwu Oka" – "speech artistry" – in the Igbo phrase), his characters exhibit what he called "a matter of individual excellence ... part of Igbo culture."^[148] In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo's friend Obierika voices the most impassioned oratory, crystallising the events and their significance for the village. Nwaka in *Arrow of God* also exhibits a mastery of oratory, albeit for malicious ends.^[149]

Achebe frequently includes folk songs and descriptions of dancing in his work. Obi, the protagonist of *No Longer at Ease*, is at one point met by women singing a "Song of the Heart",

which Achebe gives in both Igbo and English: "Is everyone here? / (Hele ee he ee he)"^[150] In *Things Fall Apart*, ceremonial dancing and the singing of folk songs reflect the realities of Igbo tradition. The elderly Uchendu, attempting to shake Okonkwo out of his self-pity, refers to a song sung after the death of a woman: "For whom is it well, for whom is it well? There is no one for whom it is well."^[151] This song contrasts with the "gay and rollicking tunes of evangelism" sung later by the white missionaries.^[152]

Achebe's short stories are not as widely studied as his novels, and Achebe himself did not consider them a major part of his work. In the preface for *Girls at War and Other Stories*, he writes: "A dozen pieces in twenty years must be accounted a pretty lean harvest by any reckoning."^[153] Like his novels, the short stories are heavily influenced by the oral tradition. And like the folktales they follow, the stories often have morals emphasising the importance of cultural traditions.^[154]

Use of English

As the decolonisation process unfolded in the 1950s, a debate about choice of language erupted and pursued authors around the world; Achebe was no exception. Indeed, because of his subject matter and insistence on a non-colonial narrative, he found his novels and decisions interrogated with extreme scrutiny – particularly with regard to his use of English. One school of thought, championed by Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, urged the use of indigenous African languages. English and other European languages, he said in 1986, were "part of the neo-colonial structures that repress progressive ideas".^[155]

Achebe chose to write in English. In his essay "The African Writer and the English Language", he discusses how the process of colonialism – for all its ills – provided colonised people from varying linguistic backgrounds "a language with which to talk to one another". As his purpose is to communicate with readers across Nigeria, he uses "the one central language enjoying nationwide currency".^[156] Using English also allowed his books to be read in the colonial ruling nations.^[157]

Still, Achebe recognises the shortcomings of what Audre Lorde called "the master's tools". In another essay he notes:

For an African writing in English is not without its serious setbacks. He often finds himself describing situations or modes of thought which have no direct equivalent in the English way of life. Caught in that situation he can do one of two things. He can try and contain what he wants to say within the limits of conventional English or he can try to push back those limits to accommodate his ideas ... I submit that those who can do the work of extending the frontiers of English so as to accommodate African thought-patterns must do it through their mastery of English and not out of innocence.^[158]

In another essay, he refers to James Baldwin's struggle to use the English language to accurately represent his experience, and his realisation that he needed to take control of the language and expand it.^[159] The Nigerian poet and novelist Gabriel Okara likens the process of language-expansion to the evolution of jazz music in the United States.^[160]

Achebe's novels laid a formidable groundwork for this process. By altering syntax, usage, and idiom, he transforms the language into a distinctly African style.^[161] In some spots this takes the form of repetition of an Igbo idea in standard English parlance; elsewhere it appears as narrative asides integrated into descriptive sentences.^[162]

Themes

Achebe's novels approach a variety of themes. In his early writing, a depiction of the Igbo culture itself is paramount. Critic Nahem Yousaf highlights the importance of these depictions: "Around the tragic stories of Okonkwo and Ezeulu, Achebe sets about textualising Igbo cultural identity".^[163] The portrayal of indigenous life is not simply a matter of literary background, he adds: "Achebe seeks to produce the effect of a precolonial reality as an Igbo-centric response to a Eurocentrically constructed imperial 'reality' ".^[164] Certain elements of Achebe's depiction of Igbo life in *Things Fall Apart* match those in Oludah Equiano's autobiographical *Narrative*. Responding to charges that Equiano was not actually born in Africa, Achebe wrote in 1975: "Equiano was an Ibo, I believe, from the village of Iseke in the Orlu division of Nigeria".^[165]

A 1901 stamp from southern colonial Nigeria

Culture and colonialism

A prevalent theme in Achebe's novels is the intersection of African tradition (particularly Igbo varieties) and modernity, especially as embodied by European colonialism. The village of Umuofia in *Things Fall Apart*, for example, is violently shaken with internal divisions when the white Christian missionaries arrive. Nigerian English professor Ernest N. Emenyonu describes the colonial experience in the novel as "the systematic emasculation of the entire culture".^[166] Achebe later embodied this tension between African tradition and Western influence in the figure of Sam Okoli, the president of Kangan in *Anthills of the Savannah*. Distanced from the myths and tales of the community by his Westernised education, he does not have the capacity for reconnection shown by the character Beatrice.^[167]

The colonial impact on the Igbo in Achebe's novels is often effected by individuals from Europe, but institutions and urban offices frequently serve a similar purpose. The character of Obi in *No Longer at Ease* succumbs to colonial-era corruption in the city; the temptations of his position overwhelm his identity and fortitude.^[168] The courts and the position of District Commissioner in *Things Fall Apart* likewise clash with the traditions of the Igbo, and remove their ability to participate in structures of decision-making.^[169]

The standard Achebean ending results in the destruction of an individual and, by synecdoche, the downfall of the community. Odili's descent into the luxury of corruption and hedonism in *A Man of the People*, for example, is symbolic of the post-colonial crisis in Nigeria and elsewhere.^[170] Even with the emphasis on colonialism, however, Achebe's tragic endings embody the traditional confluence of fate, individual and society, as represented by Sophocles and Shakespeare.^[171]

Still, Achebe seeks to portray neither moral absolutes nor a fatalistic inevitability. In 1972, he said: "I never will take the stand that the Old must win or that the New must win. The point is that no single truth satisfied me—and this is well founded in the Ibo world view. No single man can be correct all the time, no single idea can be totally correct."^[172] His perspective is reflected in the words of Ikem, a character in *Anthills of the Savannah*: "whatever you are is never enough; you must find a way to accept something, however small, from the other to make you whole and to save you from the mortal sin of righteousness and extremism."^[173] And in a 1996 interview, Achebe said: "Belief in either radicalism or orthodoxy is too simplified a way of viewing things ... Evil is never all evil; goodness on the other hand is often tainted with selfishness."^[174]

Masculinity and femininity

The gender roles of men and women, as well as societies' conceptions of the associated concepts, are frequent themes in Achebe's writing. He has been criticised as a sexist author, in response to what many call the uncritical depiction of traditionally patriarchal Igbo society, where the most masculine men take numerous wives, and women are beaten regularly.^[175] Others suggest that Achebe is merely representing the limited gendered vision of the characters, and they note that in his later works, he tries to demonstrate the inherent dangers of excluding women from society.^[176]

In *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo's furious manhood overpowers everything "feminine" in his life, including his own conscience. For example, when he feels bad after being forced to kill his adopted son, he asks himself: "When did you become a shivering old woman?"^[177] He views all things feminine as distasteful, in part because they remind him of his father's laziness and cowardice.^[178] The women in the novel, meanwhile, are obedient, quiet, and absent from positions of authority – despite the fact that Igbo women were traditionally involved in village leadership.^[179] Nevertheless, the need for feminine balance is highlighted by Ani, the earth

goddess, and the extended discussion of "Nneka" ("Mother is supreme") in chapter fourteen.^[180] Okonkwo's defeat is seen by some as a vindication of the need for a balancing feminine ethos.^{[178][181]} Achebe has expressed frustration at frequently being misunderstood on this point, saying that "I want to sort of scream that *Things Fall Apart* is on the side of women...And that Okonkwo is paying the penalty for his treatment of women; that all his problems, all the things he did wrong, can be seen as offenses against the feminine."^[182]

Achebe's first central female character in a novel is Beatrice Nwanyibuife in *Anthills of the Savannah*. As an independent woman in the city, Beatrice strives for the balance that Okonkwo lacked so severely. She refutes the notion that she needs a man, and slowly learns about Idemili, a goddess balancing the aggression of male power.^[183] Although the final stages of the novel show her functioning in a nurturing mother-type role, Beatrice remains firm in her conviction that women should not be limited to such capacities.^[184]

Legacy

Achebe has been called "the father of modern African writing",^[135] and many books and essays have been written about his work over the past fifty years. In 1992 he became the first living writer to be represented in the Everyman's Library collection published by Alfred A. Knopf.^[185] His 60th birthday was celebrated at the University of Nigeria by "an international Who's Who in African Literature". One observer noted: "Nothing like it had ever happened before in African literature anywhere on the continent."^[186]

Many writers of succeeding generations^[who?] view his work as having paved the way for their efforts.^[5] In 1982 Achebe was awarded an honorary degree from the University of Kent. At the ceremony, professor Robert Gibson said that the Nigerian writer "is now revered as Master by the younger generation of African writers and it is to him they regularly turn for counsel and inspiration."^[187] Even outside of Africa, his impact resonates strongly in literary circles. Novelist Margaret Atwood called him "a magical writer – one of the greatest of the twentieth century". Poet Maya Angelou lauded *Things Fall Apart* as a book wherein "all readers meet their brothers, sisters, parents and friends and themselves along Nigerian roads".^[188] Nelson Mandela, recalling

his time as a political prisoner, once referred to Achebe as a writer "in whose company the prison walls fell down."^[189]

Achebe is the recipient of over 30 honorary degrees from universities in England, Scotland, Canada, South Africa, Nigeria and the United States, including Dartmouth College, Harvard, and Brown University.^[185] He has been awarded the Commonwealth Poetry Prize, an Honorary Fellowship of the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1982),^[190] a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2002),^[191] the Nigerian National Order of Merit (Nigeria's highest honour for academic work), the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade.^[192] The Man Booker International Prize 2007^[193] and the 2010 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize.^[194] are two of the more recent accolades Achebe has received.

He twice refused the Nigerian honour *Commander of the Federal Republic*, in 2004 and 2011, saying:^[195]

"I have watched particularly the chaos in my own state of Anambra where a small clique of renegades, openly boasting its connections in high places, seems determined to turn my homeland into a bankrupt and lawless fiefdom. I am appalled by the brazenness of this clique and the silence, if not connivance, of the Presidency."

Some scholars^[who?] have suggested that Achebe was shunned by intellectual society for criticising Conrad and traditions of racism in the West.^[196] Despite his scholarly achievements and the global importance of his work, Achebe never received a Nobel Prize, which some observers viewed as unjust.^[197] When Wole Soyinka was awarded the 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature, Achebe joined the rest of Nigeria in celebrating the first African ever to win the prize. He lauded Soyinka's "stupendous display of energy and vitality", and said he was "most eminently deserving of any prize".^[198] In 1988 Achebe was asked by a reporter for *Quality Weekly* how he felt about never winning a Nobel Prize; he replied: "My position is that the Nobel Prize is important. But it is a European prize. It's not an African prize.... Literature is not a heavyweight championship. Nigerians may think, you know, this man has been knocked out. It's nothing to do with that."^[199]

List of works

Year	Work	Literary Genre
1958	<i><u>Things Fall Apart</u></i>	Novel
1960	<i><u>No Longer at Ease</u></i>	Novel
1964	<i><u>Arrow of God</u></i>	Novel
1966	<i><u>A Man of the People</u></i>	Novel
1987	<i><u>Anthills of the Savannah</u></i>	Novel

Short stories

- *Marriage Is A Private Affair* (1952)
- *Dead Men's Path* (1953)
- *The Sacrificial Egg and Other Stories* (1953)
- *Civil Peace* (1971)
- *Girls at War and Other Stories* (including "Vengeful Creditor") (1973)
- *African Short Stories* (editor, with C.L. Innes) (1985)
- *Heinemann Book of Contemporary African Short Stories* (editor, with C.L. Innes) (1992)
- *The Voter*

Poetry

- *Beware, Soul-Brother, and Other Poems* (1971) (published in the US as *Christmas at Biafra, and Other Poems*, 1973)
- *Don't let him die: An anthology of memorial poems for Christopher Okigbo* (editor, with Dubem Okafor) (1978)
- *Another Africa* (1998)
- *Collected Poems* Carcanet Press (2005)
- *Refugee Mother And Child*

- Vultures

Essays, criticism, non-fiction and political commentary

- *The Novelist as Teacher* (1965) - also in *Hopes and Impediments*
- *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness"* (1975) - also in *Hopes and Impediments*
- *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (1975)
- *The Trouble With Nigeria* (1984)
- *Hopes and Impediments* (1988)
- *Home and Exile* (2000)
- *Education of a British protected Child* (6 October 2009)
- *There Was A Country: A Personal History of Biafra*, (11 October 2012)

Children's books

- *Chike and the River* (1966)
- *How the Leopard Got His Claws* (with John Iroaganachi) (1972)
- *The Flute* (1975)
- *The Drum* (1978)

References

1. [^] [Achebe pronouncing his own name](#) SwissEduc.ch. Accessed 9 October 2008
2. [^] March 22,2013 (2013-03-22). "[BREAKING: Chinua Achebe: Writer, critic, social historian](#)". Retrieved 2013-03-22.
3. [^] ^a ^b Ezenwa-Ohaeto, p. 6.
4. [^] Franklin, Ruth. "[After Empire: Chinua Achebe and the Great African Novel](#)". *The New Yorker*, 26 May 2008. Retrieved on 7 December 2010.
5. [^] ^a ^b Ogbaa, p. xv.



Catherine Obianuju Acholonu

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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Prof. (Mrs) Catherine Obianuju Acholonu (born 26 Oct 1951, [Orlu, Nigeria](#)) is a Nigerian writer, researcher and former lecturer on [African](#) Cultural and Gender Studies. She is the former Senior Special Adviser (SSA) to President [Olusegun Obasanjo](#) on Arts and Culture, and foundation member of the *[Association of Nigerian Authors](#)* (ANA).

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Biography

Catherine Acholonu was born in Orlu to the family of Chief Lazarus Olumba. She attended secondary schools in Orlu before becoming the first African woman to gain a master's degree (1977) and a Ph.D. (1987) from the University of Düsseldorf, Germany.^[1] She taught at Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri, commencing 1978.

Acholonu is the author of over 16 books, many of which are used in secondary schools and universities in Nigeria, and in African Studies Departments in USA and Europe. Her works and projects have enjoyed the collaboration and the support of United States Information Service (USIS), the British Council, the Rockefeller Foundation and in 1989 she was invited to tour educational institutions in USA, lecturing on her works under the United States International Visitor's Program. In 1990 Catherine Acholonu was honored with the Fulbright Scholar in Residency award by the US government, during which she lectured at four colleges of the Westchester Consortium for International studies, NY, USA.

Part of her work has taken her into the wider sphere of sustainable development. In 1986 she was the only Nigerian, and one of only two Africans, to participate in the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on "Women, Population and Sustainable Development: the Road to Rio, Cairo and Beijing", which was organized jointly by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Division for the Advancement of Women, and the Division for Sustainable Development. This took place in the Dominican Republic, and focused on the mainstreaming of gender into the Plans of Action of the UN world conferences of Rio, Beijing and Cairo. Prof Acholonu holds several awards from home and abroad.

From 1999 to 2002, she was the Special Adviser on Arts and Culture to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, a post she resigned from to seek election, along with a number of other writers who felt their inclusion in Nigerian politics would for the good. However, she lost the contest for the Orlu senatorial district seat of Imo State, and drew attention to irregularities and rigging.

She was recently appointed African Renaissance Ambassador by the African Renaissance Conference with head quarters in the Republic of Benin, and Nigeria's sole representative at the global *Forum of Arts and Culture for the Implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification* (UNFAC). She is listed in the *International Who's Who of World Leadership, USA*; the *African Women Writers' Who's Who*; the *Top 500 Women in Nigeria*; *Who's Who in Nigeria*; and the *International Authors and Writers Who's Who*, published in Cambridge, UK.

Acholonu is the Director of the Catherine Acholonu Research Center, Abuja (CARC). The center, based in Abuja, is pioneering research into Africa's pre-history, stone inscriptions, cave art, and linguistic analyses of ancient symbols and communication mediums from the continent. She argues that Nigerian rock-art inscriptions known as Ikom Monoliths prove that "Sub-Saharan African Blacks possessed an organized system of writing before 2000 B.C." and that she and her assistants are able to translate these.^[21] In her book *They Lived Before Adam: Prehistoric Origins of the Igbo The Never-Been-Ruled* she argues that Igbo oral tradition is consistent with scientific research into the origins of humanity. Speaking at the Harlem Book Fair, Acholonu summarised the content of her argument in the book as follows:

Our research includes the origin and meanings of symbols used in every religion and sacred literature all over the world. In these, we found that the Hebrew Bible, the Kabbalahs of the Hebrews and the Chinese, the Hindu Vedas and Ramayana, and the recently discovered Egyptian Christian Bible called the Nag Hammadi are of immense importance in revealing lost knowledge. Wherever we looked we found evidence confirming the claims by geneticists who have been conducting mitochondrial DNA research in four leading universities here in the USA that all mankind came from sub-Saharan Africa, that Eve and Adam were black Africans...Igbo oral traditions confirm the findings of geneticists, that by 208000BC – 208000 BC – human evolution was interrupted and Adam, a hybrid, was created through the process of genetic engineering. However, our findings reveal that the creation of Adam was a downward climb on the evolutionary ladder, because he lost his divine essence, he became divided, no longer whole, or wholesome. All over Africa and in ancient Egyptian reports, oral and written traditions maintain that homo erectus people were heavenly beings, and possessed mystical powers such as telepathy, levitation, bi-location, that their words could move rocks and mountains and change

the course of rivers. Adam lost all that when his right brain was shut down by those who made him.^[3]

Works

Poems

- "Going Home"
- "Spring's Last Drop"
- "Dissidents"
- "Harvest of War"
- "Other Forms of Slaughter"

Collections

- *The Spring's Last Drop*, 1985
- *Nigeria in the Year 1999*, 1985
- *Recite and Learn - Poems for Junior Primary Schools*, 1986
- *Recite and Learn - Poems for Senior Primary Schools*, 1986

Drama/Plays

- *Trial of the Beautiful Ones: a play in one act*, Owerri, Nigeria: Totan, 1985
- *The Deal and Who is the Head of State*, Owerri, Nigeria: Totan, 1986
- *Into the Heart of Biafra: a play in three acts*, Owerri, Nigeria: C. Acholonu, 1970

Essays and non-fiction

- *Western and indigenous traditions in modern Igbo literature*, 1985.
- *Motherism, The Afrocentric Alternative to Feminism*, 1995.
- *The Igbo Roots of Olaudah Equiano*, 1995, revised 2007.
- *The Earth Unchained: a quantum leap in consciousness: a reply to Al Gore*, 1995
- *Africa the New Frontier - Towards a Truly Global Literary Theory for the 21st Century*. Lecture Delivered to the Association of Nigerian Authors annual Convention, 2002.

- *The Gram Code of African Adam: Stone Books and Cave Libraries, Reconstructing 450,000 Years of Africa's Lost Civilizations*, 2005
- *They Lived Before Adam: pre-historic origins of the Igbo - the never-been-ruled (Ndi Igbo since 1.6 million B.C.)*, 2009. Winner of the USA-based International Book Awards (2009) in the Multi-cultural non-fiction category.
- *The Lost Testament of the Ancestors of Adam: Unearthing Heliopolis/Igbo Ukwu - The celestial City of the Gods of Egypt and India*, 2010

Articles and chapters

- (with Joyce Ann Penfield), "Linguistic Processes of Lexical Innovation in Igbo." *Anthropological Linguistics*. 22 (1980). 118-130.
- "The Role of Nigerian Dancers in Drama." *Nigeria Magazine*. 53.1 (1985). 33-39.
- "The Home of Olaudah Equiano -- A Linguistic and Anthropological Search", *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 22.1 (1987). 5-16.
- "L'Igbo Langue Litteraire: Le Cas du Nigeria." [Literary Igbo Language: The Case of Nigeria.] *Notre Librairie: Revue du Livre: Afrique, Caraibes, Ocean Indien*. 98 (Jul-Sept 1989). 26-30.
- "Mother was a Great Man." In *The Heinemann Book of African Women's Writing*. Ed. Charlotte H. Bruner. London: Heinemann, 1993. 7-14.
- "Motherism: The Afrocentric Alternative to Feminism." *Ishmael Reed's Konch Magazine*. Online: <http://www.ishmaelreedpub.com/CatherineAcholonu.html>. (March–April 2002).

• Toyin Adewale-Gabriel

- From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
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- **Toyin Adewale-Gabriel** (born in 1969) is a Nigerian writer.
- Born in Ibadan, Nigeria, she received her MA Lit degree from Obafemi Awolowo University. She has worked as a literary critic for many Nigerian newspapers, among them *The Guardian*, *Post Express* and *The Daily Times*. She was co-founder and co-ordinator for several years of the Association of Writers of Nigeria. Her works include: *Naked Testimonies*, 1995; *Breaking The Silence*, 1996; *Inkwells*, 1997; *Die Aromaforscherin*, 1998; *Flackernde Kerzen*, 1999; *25 New Nigerian Poets*, 2000; *Aci*

Cikolata, *Gunzi Yayincilik*, 2003; and *Nigerian Women Short Stories*, 2005. She has also won awards for poetry and short fiction.^[1]

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

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Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Adichie, Lagos, 2009

Born	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie September 15, 1977 (age 35) <u>Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria</u>
Nationality	Nigerian
Ethnicity	<u>Igbo</u>
Period	2003-present
Notable work(s)	<u><i>Purple Hibiscus</i></u> <u><i>Half of a Yellow Sun</i></u>

Influences[[show](#)]

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Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about *The Thing Around Your Neck* on Bookbits radio.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (born 15 September 1977) is a [Nigerian](#) writer.

She is [Igbo](#).^[1] She has been called "the most prominent" of a "procession of critically acclaimed young anglophone authors [that] is succeeding in attracting a new generation of readers to African literature".^[2]

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Personal life and education

Born in the town of [Enugu](#), she grew up in the university town of [Nsukka](#) in southeastern Nigeria, where the University of Nigeria is situated. While she was growing up, her father was a professor of statistics at the university, and her mother was the university registrar.

Adichie studied medicine and pharmacy at the University of Nigeria for a year and a half. During this period, she edited *The Compass*, a magazine run by the university's Catholic medical students. At the age of 19, Adichie left Nigeria and moved to the United States for college. After studying communications and political science at Drexel University in Philadelphia, she transferred to Eastern Connecticut State University to live closer to her sister, who had a medical practice in Coventry. She received a bachelor's degree from Eastern, where she graduated *summa cum laude* in 2001.

In 2003, she completed a master's degree in creative writing at Johns Hopkins University. In 2008, she received a Master of Arts in African studies from Yale University.

Adichie was a Hodder fellow at Princeton University during the 2005-2006 academic year. In 2008 she was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship. She has also been awarded a 2011-2012 fellowship by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University.

Adichie, who is married, divides her time between Nigeria, where she teaches writing workshops, and the United States.

Writing career

Adichie published a collection of poems in 1997 (*Decisions*) and a play (*For Love of Biafra*) in 1998. She was shortlisted in 2002 for the Caine Prize^[3] for her short story "You in America".^[4]

In 2003, her story "That Harmattan Morning" was selected as joint winner of the BBC Short Story Awards, and she won the O. Henry prize for "The American Embassy". She also won the David T. Wong International Short Story Prize 2002/2003 (PEN Center Award), for "Half of a Yellow Sun".^[5]

Her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), received wide critical acclaim; it was shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction (2004) and was awarded the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book (2005). Her second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, named after the flag of the short-lived nation of Biafra, is set before and during the Biafran War. It was awarded the 2007 Orange Prize for Fiction.

Her third book, *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009), is a collection of short stories.

In 2010 she was listed among the authors of *The New Yorker's* "20 Under 40" Fiction Issue.^[6]

Adichie's story, "Ceiling", was included in the 2011 edition of *The Best American Short Stories*.

Lectures

Adichie spoke on "The Danger of a Single Story" for TED in 2009.^[7] On 15 March 2012, she delivered the "Connecting Cultures" Commonwealth Lecture 2012 at the Guildhall, London.^[8]

Awards and selected nominations

- 2002: Shortlisted for the Caine Prize for African Writing, for "You in America"
- 2002: Runner-up in the Commonwealth Short Story Competition, for "The Tree in Grandma's Garden"
- 2002: BBC Short Story Competition joint winner, for "That Harmattan Morning"
- 2003: O. Henry Prize for "The American Embassy"
- 2002/2003: David T. Wong International Short Story Prize (PEN Center Award), for "Half of a Yellow Sun"
- 2004: Hurston-Wright Legacy Award (Best Debut Fiction Category), for *Purple Hibiscus*
- 2004: Shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction, for *Purple Hibiscus*
- 2004: Longlisted for the Booker Prize, for *Purple Hibiscus*
- 2005: Commonwealth Writers' Prize, Best First Book (Africa), for *Purple Hibiscus*
- 2005: Commonwealth Writers' Prize, Best First Book (overall), for *Purple Hibiscus*
- 2007: Anisfield-Wolf Book Award (Fiction category), for 'Half of a Yellow Sun' (joint winner)
- 2007: PEN Beyond Margins Award, for *Half of a Yellow Sun* (joint winner)
- 2007: Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction for *Half of a Yellow Sun*
- 2008: Future Award, Nigeria (Young Person of the Year category)^{[9][10]}
- 2008: MacArthur Foundation genius grant (along with 24 other winners)^[11]
- 2009: International Nonino Prize^[12]

- 2009: Longlisted for Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award, for *The Thing Around Your Neck*
- 2009: Shortlisted for John Llewellyn Rhys Prize, for *The Thing Around Your Neck*
- 2010: Shortlisted for Commonwealth Writers' Prize: Best Book (Africa), for *The Thing Around Your Neck*

Bibliography

- 2003: *Purple Hibiscus*
- 2006: *Half of a Yellow Sun*
- 2009: *The Thing Around Your Neck*
- 2013: *Americanah*



Tolu Ajayi

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Toluwalogo Ajayi (born 1946) is a Nigerian poet and writer of fiction.^[1] Born in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Ajayi was educated in Nigeria and the United Kingdom; in the latter country, he qualified in 1970 as a physician at the University of Liverpool Medical School.^[1] He also specialized in psychiatry at Memorial University in Newfoundland, Canada.^[1]

Most of Ajayi's novels and stories draw on his medical experience.

Works by Tolu Ajayi:

- *The Year* (London: Macmillan, 1981) ISBN 0-333-35280-7 ^[2]
- *The Lesson* (Lagos, Nigeria: Granny Fatima, 1985) ^[3]
- *The Ghost of a Millionaire* (Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria, 1990) ISBN 978-129-174-5 ^[4]
- *Eyes of the Night* (Lagos, Nigeria: Granny Fatima, 1991)^[5] (short story collection with his 1990 BBC World Service winning story "Family Planning")^[1]
- *Images of Lives: Poems for Everyone* (Lagos, Nigeria: Granny Fatima, 1991)^[6] poetry collection
- *Motions and Emotions: Fumes of Poetic Feelings* (Lagos, Nigeria: Granny Fatima, 1993) poetry collection ^[7]
- *After A Bad Moon: a Sh-to-vel* (Lagos, Nigeria : Granny Fatima, 1995) ISBN 978-33209-1-2^[8] story collection^[1]

Notes

Uwem Akpan

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Uwem Akpan S.J., at the *University of San Francisco*.

Uwem Akpan, born May 19, 1971, is a Nigerian Jesuit priest and writer. He is the author of *Say You're One of Them* (2008), a collection of five stories (each set in a different African country) published by Little, Brown & Company. It won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, the PEN Open Book Award, and was picked by the Oprah Winfrey Book Club on September 17, 2009.

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Life

He was born in the southern Nigerian village of Ikot Akpan Eda; his parents were teachers. He and his three brothers grew up speaking both English and Annang. He joined the Jesuit order at the age of 19, in 1990 and became a priest on July 19, 2003; he later earned an M.F.A. degree in

creative writing at the University of Michigan in the United States. He has also studied theology at Creighton University.

Entertainment Weekly put the book on its end-of-the-decade, "best-of" list, saying, "Against all odds, the Nigerian priest's searing African stories from 2008 imparted both joy and hope."^[1]

In 2009 Oprah Winfrey recommended a short story collection of U.S.-educated Nigerian Jesuit Fr. Uwem Akpan as her 63rd influential book club selection. Akpan said he was humbled to learn his debut collection of short stories had caught Winfrey's eye. Winfrey said that Akpan's 2008 collection, *Say You're One of Them* (published by Little, Brown, 2008), "left [her] stunned and profoundly moved." The five short stories give voice to an African child growing up in the face of incredible adversity.^[2] Asked if there was a conflict between being a priest and being a writer, he said he liked being both: "Both give me energy. *Gaudium et Spes*, a key Vatican II document, makes it very clear that the joys and anguish of the world are the joys and anguish of the Church. The Jesuits have a rich tradition of writing and involvement in social issues."^[3]

Works

- *Say you're one of them*. Hachette. 2008. ISBN 978-0-316-11378-6.
- *Antes de ir a Gabón*. Intermón Oxfam Editorial. ISBN 978-84-8452-654-4.



Akilu Aliyu

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Aliyu Akilu (1918 – 1998) was a [Nigerian](#) poet and writer and one of the greatest [Hausa](#) poets of the twentieth century. Aliyu was born in [Jega](#), in present day [Kebbi State](#). For his early education, he was trained in a Koranic school in [Kano](#), under the [Tijaniyya](#) brotherhood, and later went to [Borno](#) to study under prominent [Islamic](#) scholars from the northeastern part of the country. He was an erudite poet who wrote in Hausa and [Arabic](#), and his recitals drew great acclaim among many Hausa speakers. He started writing Arabic poems in the 1930s.

References

- Simon Gikandi; Encyclopedia of African Literature, Routledge, 2002.

Authority control |

- [VIAF: 83531135](#)

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Aliyu Akilu (1918 – 1998) was a Nigerian poet and writer and one of the greatest Hausa poets of the twentieth century. Aliyu was born in Jega, in present day Kebbi State. For his early education, he was trained in a Koranic school in Kano, under the Tijaniyya brotherhood, and later went to Borno to study under prominent Islamic scholars from the northeastern part of the country. He was an erudite poet who wrote in Hausa and Arabic, and his recitals drew great

acclaim among many Hausa speakers. He started writing Arabic poems in the 1930s. Alhaji Ak'ilu Aliyu was a prolific poet working in the written tradition. He was a well-trained Koranic scholar, and particularly in the days before and after Nigerian independence, he was highly active in promoting the causes of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), one of the more left-leaning, anti-traditionalist parties. Alhaji Ak'ilu's large body of published work covers many religious, social, and political themes. He combined biting critiques of those whose behavior he disapproved or whose opinions he did not share with poetic virtuosity, playing with sound and meaning. He was an imposing public performer of his own work, with both a powerful voice and a strong rhythmic feel more akin to performers in the oral tradition than to his peers in the written tradition.

An example of Rubutacciyar Wak'a (Written Poetry) The excerpt here is from a poem decrying the weakening of the Hausa language by the modern generation, who have an anemic vocabulary and fill the language with English borrowings.

HAUSA MAI BAN HAUSHI Saba da neman gaskiya duk nisa, Sarari da b'oye kadan ka so bunk'asa. Ga gargad'i ya zuwa gare mu, zumaina, 'Ya'yan Arewa da wanda duk ke Hausa

HAUSA, THE GIVER OF VEXATION Get used to seeking the truth no matter how distant, Out in the open or hidden, if you want to advance. Here's an admonition directed toward us, my clansmen, Children of the north and anyone else who (speaks) Hausa.

Zaynab Alkali

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Zaynab Alkali (born 1950 [Tura-Wazila](#), [Borno State](#)) is a Nigerian [novelist](#), poet, short story writer.^{[1][2][3]} The first woman novelist from Northern Nigeria, she graduated from [Bayero University Kano](#) with a BA in 1973.^[4]

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Works

- *The Stillborn*, Lagos: Longman, 1984, [ISBN 978-0-582-78600-4](#). Dearborn Financial Publishing, 1988; London: Longman, 1989; Addison-Wesley Publishers, 1990; Longman International Education. 1995
- *The Virtuous Woman*, Longman Nigeria, 1987, [ISBN 978-978-139-589-5](#)
- *Cobwebs & Other Stories*, Lagos: Malthouse Press, 1997.
- *The Descendants*, Tamaza, 2005, [ISBN 978-978-2104-73-1](#)

Edited

- Zaynab Alkali, Al Imfeld (eds.), *Vultures in the Air: voices from Northern Nigeria*, Ibadan-Kaduna-Lagos: Spectrum Books, 1995, [ISBN 978-978-2462-60-2](#)

• **T. M. Aluko**

- From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
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- For other people called Aluko, see [Aluko \(disambiguation\)](#).
- **Timothy Mofolorunso "T. M." Aluko** (14 June 1918 – 1 May 2010) was a [Nigerian](#) writer.
- **Biography**
 - A [Yoruba](#), Aluko was born in [Ilesha](#) in Nigeria and studied at Government College, [Ibadan](#), and [Higher College, Yaba](#) in [Lagos](#). He then studied [civil engineering](#) and [town](#)

planning at the University of London. He held a number of administrative posts in his home country, including Director of Public Works in Western Nigeria. He departed from civil service in 1966 and from then until his retirement in 1978 he pursued a career as an academic, earning a doctorate in municipal engineering in 1976. He received several awards and honours including Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1963 and Officer Order of the Niger (OON) in 1964.

- His novels, including *One Man, One Wife* (1959), *One Man, One Matchet* (1964), *Kinsman and Foreman* (1966), *Chief the Honourable Minister* (1970) and *His Worshipful Majesty* (1973), are satirical in tone, and deal with the clash of new and old values in a changing Africa.
- In 1994, he published his autobiography, *My Years of Service*, an account of his activities as an engineer and university teacher. His later autobiographical book, *The Story of My Life*, published in 2007, provides a more in-depth look at Aluko's life, expounding on his childhood and his work as a civil servant.
- T. M. Aluko died on 1 May 2010 in Lagos, aged 91.^[1]

Elechi Amadi

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Elechi Amadi (born 12 May 1934) is a Nigerian author of plays and novels that are generally about African village life, customs, beliefs and religious practices, as they were before contact with the Western world. Amadi is best regarded for his 1966 first novel, *The Concubine*, which has been called "an outstanding work of pure fiction".^[1]

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Biography

Born in 1934, in Aluu in the Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State, Nigeria, Elechi Amadi attended Government College, Umuahia (1948-1952), Survey School, Oyo (1953-1954), and the University of Ibadan (1955-1959), where he obtained a degree in Physics and Mathematics.

He worked for a time as a land surveyor and later was a teacher at several schools, including the Nigerian Military School, Zaria (1963-1966).^[2] Amadi did military service in the Nigerian army and was on the Nigerian side during the Nigeria-Biafra War, retiring in the rank of Captain.^[3] After the war Amadi left the army to work for the Rivers State government. Positions he held include Permanent Secretary (1973-1983), Commissioner for Education (1987-1988) and Commissioner for Lands and Housing (1989-1990).

He has been writer-in-residence and lecturer at Rivers State College of Education, where he has also been Dean of Arts, head of the Literature Department and Director of General Studies.

On 13 May 1989 a symposium was held at the University of Port Harcourt to celebrate Amadi's 55th birthday.

In May 2004, a conference was organized by the Association of Nigerian Authors, Rivers State Branch, to mark Elechi Amadi's 70th birthday.^[4]

2009 kidnapping

On 5 January 2009 Amadi was kidnapped at his home in Aluu town, Port Harcourt, by unknown gunmen. He was released 23 hours later, on the evening of 6 January.^{[5][6]}

Awards

- 1992 - Rivers State Silver Jubilee Merit Award
- 2003 - honorary doctorate, Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) in Education, honoris causa, awarded by Rivers State University of Science and Technology
- 2003 - Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Education
- 2003 - Member of the Order of the Federal Republic (MFR)

Work and critical reception

Elechi Amadi has said that his first publication was in 1957, a poem entitled "Penitence" in a University of Ibadan campus magazine called *The Horn*, edited by John Pepper Clark.^[7]

Amadi's first novel, *The Concubine*, was published in London in 1966 and was hailed as a "most accomplished first performance".^[8] Alastair Niven in his critical study of the novel wrote: "Rooted firmly among the hunting and fishing villages of the Niger delta, *The Concubine* nevertheless possesses the timelessness and universality of a major novel."^[9] *The Concubine* was made into a film, written by Elechi Amadi and directed by accomplished Nollywood film director Andy Amenechi, which premiered in Abuja in March 2007.^[10]

The setting of Amadi's second novel, *The Great Ponds*, published in 1969, is pre-colonial Eastern Nigeria, and is about the battle between two village communities over possession of a pond.

In 1973 Amadi autobiographical non-fiction, *Sunset in Biafra*, was published. It records his personal experiences in the Nigeria-Biafra war, and according to Niven "is written in a compelling narrative form as though it were a novel".^[11]

Bibliography

- *The Concubine* (novel) - 1966 (London: Heinemann African Writers Series); Ibadan: Heinemann Books 1993 [ISBN 0-435-90025-0](#)
- *The Great Ponds* (novel) - 1969, Heinemann
- *Sunset in Biafra* (war diary) - 1973
- *Isiburu* (play) - 1973, Heinemann
- *Peppersoup and The Road* (plays, combined volume) 1977; Ibadan: Onibonoje Publishers
- *Dancer of Johannesburg* (play) - 1978, Ibadan: Onibonoje Publishers
- *The Slave* (novel) - 1978, Heinemann
- *Ethics in Nigerian Culture* (philosophy) - 1982, London: Heinemann
- *Estrangement* (novel) - 1986, Heinemann African Writers Series
- *The Woman of Calabar* (play) - 2002, Port Harcourt: Gitelle Press
- *Speaking and Singing* (essays and poems) - 2003, University of Port Harcourt Press
- *Collected Plays* (ed. Seiyifa Koroye) - 2004, Port Harcourt: Pearl Publishers

Ifi Amadiume

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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Dr. **Ifi Amadiume** (born 23 April 1947) is a [Nigerian](#) poet, anthropologist and essayist. She joined the Religion Department of [Dartmouth College](#), [New Hampshire](#), [U.S.](#) in 1993.

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Biography

Born in [Kaduna](#) to [Igbo](#) parents, Amadiume was educated in Nigeria before moving to Britain in 1971. She studied at the [School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London](#), gaining a BA (1978) and PhD (1983) in social anthropology. Her fieldwork in Africa resulted in two ethnographic monographs relating to the Igbo - *African Matriarchal Foundations* (1987), and the award-winning *Male Daughters Female Husbands* (Zed Press, 1987). A book of theoretical essays, *Reinventing Africa*, appeared in 1998.

She is on the advisory board of the [Centre for Democracy and Development](#), a [non-governmental organisation](#) that aims to promote the values of [democracy](#), [peace](#) and [human rights](#) in Africa, particularly in the [West African](#) sub-region.

Dr Amadiume is widely regarded for her pioneering work in [feminist](#) discourse: "[h]er work has made a tremendous contribution to new ways of thinking about sex and gender, the question of power, and women's place in history and culture".^[1] She has nevertheless attracted criticism for her "assumption that [the] female is necessarily equated with peace and love."^[2]

Works

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Resources in other libraries

Poetry

- *Passion Waves* (Karnak House, 1985)
- *Ecstasy* (Longman Nigeria, 1995), Association of Nigerian Authors 1992 Literary Award for Poetry
- *Returning*

Anthropology

- *African Matriarchal Foundations: The Igbo Case* (Karnak House, 1987) ISBN 978-0-907015-27-7
- *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* (Zed Press, 1987) ISBN 0-86232-595-1. St. Martin's Press. 1990.
- *Re-inventing Africa: Matriarchy, Religion and Culture* (Interlink Publishing Group, 1997) ISBN 1-85649-534-5
- *The Politics of Memory: Truth, Healing, and Social Justice* (with Abdullahi A. An-Na'im), London: Zed Books. 2000.
- *Daughters of the Goddess, Daughters of Imperialism: African Women Struggle for Culture, Power and Democracy*, London: Zed Books, 2000.

Karen King-Aribisala

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Karen Ann King-Aribisala (born [Guyana](#)) is a Nigerian [novelist](#), and short story writer. Her stories, *Our Wife and Other Stories* won the 1991 [Commonwealth Writers' Prize](#), Best First Book Africa,^[1] and her novel *The hangman's game* won 2008 Best Book Africa.^[2]

She is Associate Professor of English at the [University of Lagos](#).^[3] She won grants from the [Ford Foundation](#), [British Council](#), [Goethe Institute](#), and the James Michener Foundation.^[4]

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Works

- *Our Wife and Other Stories*, Malthouse Press, 1990, [ISBN 978-978-2601-59-9](#); Ottawa, Canada: Laurier Books, 2004, [ISBN 978-1-55394-010-4](#)
- *Kicking Tongues*, Heinemann, 1998, [ISBN 978-0-435-91200-0](#)
- *The hangman's game*, Peepal Tree, 2007, [ISBN 978-1-84523-046-3](#)

Anthologies

- Toyin Adewale-Nduka, Omowunmi Segun, ed. (1996). *Breaking the silence: an anthology of short stories*. WRITA, Women Writers of Nigeria. [ISBN 978-978-32456-6-2](#).
- *Kunapipi 17*. Dangaroo Press. 1995.

Sefi Atta

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Sefi Atta (born 1964) is a prize-winning [Nigerian](#) author and playwright.^[1]

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Biography

Sefi Atta was born in [Lagos, Nigeria](#), in 1964, to a family of five children. Her father Abdul-Aziz Atta was the Secretary to Federal Government and Head of the Civil Service until his death in 1972, and she was raised by her mother Iyabo Atta.

She attended [Queen's College, Lagos](#), and [Millfield School](#) in [England](#). In 1985, she graduated from [Birmingham University](#) and trained as a chartered accountant. She moved from England to the [United States](#) in 1994 with her husband, Gboyega Ransome-Kuti, a medical doctor, and son of [Olikoye Ransome-Kuti](#). They have one daughter.

Sefi's Lagos-based production company Atta Girl supports Care to Read, a program she initiated to earn funds for legitimate charities through performance readings.

She currently lives in [Meridian, Mississippi](#).

Writing

Atta began to write while working as a CPA in New York, and in 2001, she graduated from the creative writing program at Antioch University, Los Angeles. Her short stories have appeared in literary journals such as *Los Angeles Review*, *Mississippi Review* and *World Literature Today*. Her books have been translated to several languages.

Novels

- 2012 *A Bit of Difference*, Interlink Books, ISBN 978-1566568920
- 2010 *Swallow*, Interlink Books, ISBN 978-1566568333
- 2005 *Everything Good Will Come*, Interlink Books, ISBN 978-1566565707

Short-story collections

- 2010 *News from Home*, Interlink Books, ISBN 978-1566568036

Stage plays

- 2012 *An Ordinary Legacy*, The MUSON Festival, MUSON Centre, Lagos
- 2012 *The Naming Ceremony*, New World Nigeria, Theatre Royal Stratford East, London
- 2011 *Hagel auf Zamfara*, Theatre Krefeld, Germany
- 2011 *The Cost of Living*, Lagos Heritage Festival, Terra Kulture, Lagos
- 2005 *The Engagement*, MUSON Centre, Lagos

Radio plays

- 2013 *The Wake*, Smooth FM, Lagos
- 2007 *A Free Day*, BBC Radio
- 2004 *Makinwa's Miracle*, BBC Radio
- 2002 *The Engagement*, BBC Radio

Screenplays

- 2009 *Leaving on Your Mind* - quarter-finalist for the American Zoetrope Screenplay Contest

Selected awards and recognition

- 2009 Noma Award for Publishing in Africa
- 2006 Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa
- 2006 Caine Prize for African Literature, shortlist
- 2005 PEN International David TK Wong Prize, 1st Prize
- 2004 BBC African Performance, 2nd Prize
- 2003 Glimmer Train's Very Short Fiction Award, finalist
- 2003 Red Hen Press Short Story Award, 1st prize
- 2002 Zoetrope Short Fiction Contest, 3rd Prize
- 2002 BBC African Performance, 2nd Prize
- 2002 Macmillan Writers Prize For Africa, shortlist

Visiting Writer

- 2010 Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon
- 2008 Northwestern University
- 2006 University of Southern Mississippi

Atta was on the jury for the 2010 Neustadt International Prize for Literature.

Nnorom Azuonye

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Nnorom Azuonye (born 12 July 1967 in Biafra) is a Nigerian publisher, theater director, playwright, poet and advertising professional. He wrote *Letter To God & Other Poems* in 2003. He is the founder and administrator of Sentinel Poetry Movement and the founder and publisher

of the magazines *Nollywood Focus*, *Sentinel Literary Quarterly*, *Sentinel Nigeria* and *Sentinel Champions*.^[1]

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Early life and education

Nnorom Azuonye is a native of Isuikwuato, Abia State of Nigeria, but was born at Enugu, now in Enugu State of Nigeria, on 12 July 1967. He is the youngest son of Stephen Onyemaechi Azuonye MON, MBE, and Hannah Egwuime Azuonye. He attended Government College Umuahia, Capital College, London, and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he studied Dramatic Arts.

Literary activities

In 2002, Azuonye founded the Sentinel Poetry Movement - an international community of writers and artists providing an interaction and publishing resource for poetry, fiction, drama, essays, interviews and review of the Arts. He is the Managing Editor of **Sentinel Literary Quarterly** [1] - a magazine of world literature published by Sentinel Poetry Movement. He is also the publisher of **Sentinel Nigeria** magazine - an online magazine of contemporary Nigerian writing [2] Sentinel's previous two publications, *Sentinel Poetry (Online)* and *Sentinel Poetry Quarterly*, have been merged into the single publication *Sentinel Literary Quarterly*.

In 2008, Azuonye founded the Excel for Charity Writing Competition Series [3] to encourage literary creative excellence while raising money for charities in the UK and elsewhere. Excel for Charity is a service provided by Eastern Light EPM International [4] - an Entertainment, Publishing, Marketing and Web Services company. Azuonye is the Director of Operations and Creative Services at Eastern Light.

Writing

Azuonye has been widely published internationally in journals, newspapers and anthologies. His books include *Letter to God & Other Poems* (2003), *The Bridge Selection: Poems for the Road* (2005), *Blue Hyacinths* (2010; ed. with Geoff Stevens) and *Sentinel Annual Literature Anthology* (2011; ed with Unoma N. Azuah and Amanda Sington-Williams).

Family

Nnorom married Thelma Amaka Azuonye (nee Mbomi) in 2006. They live in London, United Kingdom, with their son, Arinzechukwu, and daughter Nwachiamanda.

Balaraba Ramat Yakubu

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Balaraba Ramat Yakubu is a [Nigerian](#) author who writes in [Hausa](#). She is a leader in the genre of *littattafan soyayya* or "love literature", and one of the very few Hausa writers whose work has been translated into English. She has also worked as a screenwriter, producer, and director of [Kannywood](#) films. Her stories have focused on issues such as forced marriages and women's education.

Early life

Balaraba Ramat Yakubu is the younger sister of General Murtala Ramat Muhammed, who briefly served as the military ruler of Nigeria from 1975 until his assassination in 1976.

At the age of 13, she was taken out of school and forced into an early marriage. She has said that this is the reason she writes in Hausa rather than English.^[1]

Career

Balaraba Ramat started her career as the only woman member of the influential Kano-based writer's club Raina Kama.^[2] Her first novel, *Budurwar Zuciya* ("Young at Heart") was published in 1987. Her second and third novels, *Alhaki Kwikwiyo Ne...* ("Sin Is a Puppy That Follows You Home") and *Wa zai auri jahila?* ("Who Will Marry an Ignorant Woman?") followed in 1990. *Alhaki Kwikwiyo Ne...* was adapted into a film by Abdulkareem Muhammed in 1998.^[3]

An English translation of *Alhaki Kuykuyo Ne...*, *Sin Is a Puppy That Follows You Home*, was published in 2012 by Blaft Publications, an Indian publishing house, to positive reviews.^{[4][5]}

There is a literary prize named after her, the Balaraba Ramat Yakubu Literature Prize for Hausa Drama.^[6]

Balaraba Ramat Yakubu

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Balaraba Ramat Yakubu is a Nigerian author who writes in Hausa. She is a leader in the genre of *littattafan soyayya* or "love literature", and one of the very few Hausa writers whose work has been translated into English. She has also worked as a screenwriter, producer, and director of Kannywood films. Her stories have focused on issues such as forced marriages and women's education.

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Biyi Bandele

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Biyi Bandele

Biyi Bandele-Thomas (born 1967) is a Nigerian novelist and playwright generally known as Biyi Bandele. Bandele is one of the most versatile and prolific of the U.K.-based Nigerian writers, having turned his hand to theater, journalism, television, film, and radio, as well as the fiction with which he made his name. Acclaimed as both a prolific playwright and a versatile novelist, his 1997 adaptation of fellow Nigerian Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* for the British stage confirmed his place as an important voice on the post-colonial stage. He currently resides in London.

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Nigeria to London

Biyi Bandele was born to Yoruba parents in Kafanchan, northern Nigeria, in 1967. His father was a veteran of the Burma Campaign while Nigeria was still part of the British Empire. Bandele spent the first eighteen years of his life in the northern part of the country being most at home in the Hausa cultural tradition. Later on, he moved to Lagos then studied drama at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, and finally left for London in 1990. A precocious and intuitive playwright, his talent was recognised early on and he won the International Student Playscript competition of 1989 with an unpublished play, before claiming the 1990 British Council Lagos Award for an unpublished collection of poems.

Playwright

As a playwright, Bandele has worked with the Royal Court Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, as well as writing radio drama and screenplays for television. His plays are: *Rain; Marching for Fausa* (1993); *Resurrections in the Season of the Longest Drought* (1994); *Two Horsemen* (1994), selected as Best New Play at the 1994 London New Plays Festival; *Death Catches the Hunter and Me and the Boys* (published in one volume, 1995); and *Oroonoko*, an adaptation of Aphra Behn's seventeenth-century novel of the same name. *Brixton Stories*, Bandele's stage adaptation of his own novel *The Street* (1999), premiered in 2001 and was published in one volume with his play, *Happy Birthday Mister Deka*, which premiered in 1999.

He was the Judith E. Wilson Fellow at Churchill College, University of Cambridge, in 2000-2001. He also acted as Royal Literary Fund Resident Playwright at the Bush Theatre from 2002 to 2003.

Bandele has written of the profound impact on him made by the first drama he ever saw, John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, which he saw on a hire-purchase television set in a railway town in northern Nigeria:

And so although I had yet to set foot outside Kafanchan, although I knew nothing about postwar British society, or the Angry Young Men, or anything about Osborne when I met Jimmy Porter

on the screen... there was no need for introductions: I had known Jimmy all my life. I sometimes ask myself these days why that strange play made such a big impression on me that night over 20 years ago. I think it's because *Look Back in Anger* derives its power to startle or to repel, and its universality, not from the literal-realism of its narrative but from the sheer verve of Osborne's pathology of the human, his bloody-minded reverse-humanism. The veracity of the world he has created is poetic, not literal; he deals not in road signs but in symbols. ...Jimmy Porter no longer impresses me in fiction or in life, but the lesson I learned watching *Look Back in Anger* has stayed with me. Great theatre is the telling of a truthful lie, defined by the degree to which facts of the mind are made manifest in a fiction of matter. It derives its universality not from catering to the lowest common denominator but by being specific and local. In the universe of the imagination to which we all belong, we may not always know where we are going, but we require no visas to go there and we need not worry about packing. The name of the place is home.^[1]

Novelist

Biyi Bandele's novels, which include *The Man Who Came in from the Back of Beyond* (1991) and *The Street* (1999), are rewarding reading, capable of wild surrealism and wit as well as political engagement. His 2007 novel, *Burma Boy*, has been described as "a fine achievement"^[2] and is lauded for providing a voice for previously unheard Africans.

Bibliography

- *The Man Who Came In From the Back of Beyond*, Bellew, 1991
- *The Sympathetic Undertaker: and Other Dreams*, Bellew, 1991
- *Marching for Fausa*, Amber Lane Press, 1993
- *Resurrections in the Season of the Longest Drought*, Amber Lane Press, 1994
- *Two Horsemen*, Amber Lane Press, 1994
- *Death Catches the Hunter/Me and the Boys*, Amber Lane Press, 1995
- Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (adaptation), 1999
- Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (adaptation), Amber Lane Press, 1999

- *The Street*, Picador, 1999
- *Brixton Stories/Happy Birthday, Mister Deke*, Methuen, 2001
- *Burma Boy*, Jonathan Cape, 2007

Awards

- 1989 – International Student Playscript Competition - *Rain*
- 1994 – London New Play Festival - *Two Horsemen*
- 1995 – Wingate Scholarship Award
- 1998 – Peggy Ramsay Award
- 2000 – EMMA (BT Ethnic and Multicultural Media Award) for Best Play - *Oroonoko*



A. Igoni Barrett

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Adrian Igonibo Barrett (born 26 March 1979) is a Nigerian writer. He was born in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, to a Nigerian mother and the Jamaican novelist and poet Lindsay Barrett.^[1]

Career

Igoni Barrett was a winner of the BBC World Service short story competition for 2005.^[2] His first book, a collection of short stories entitled *From Caves of Rotten Teeth*, was first published in 2005 and reissued in 2008.

In 2006 he co-founded the online literary journal *Blackbiro*. In 2007 he joined the editorial team of *Farafina Magazine*, where he was managing editor until 2009. In May 2009, he initiated and managed "9 Writers, 4 Cities: The Book Tour", a six-week reading tour by several prominent Nigerian writers (including his father Lindsay Barrett).

Invited as a participant to various literary festivals, Igoni Barrett was a guest writer at the Garden City Literary Festival in September 2009.^[3] He was the founding organizer of the BookJam reading series^[4] in Lagos, Nigeria, which featured the writers Jude Dibia, Michela Wrong, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Binyavanga Wainaina, Helon Habila and Tsitsi Dangarembga, among others.

In 2010 Barrett was awarded a Chinua Achebe Center Fellowship. In July 2011, he travelled to Provincetown, Massachusetts, for a month-long Norman Mailer Center Fellowship, and in September 2011 participated in a residency at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center in Italy.

Barrett's short fiction has been published in many print and online magazines, including *AGNI*, *Guernica* and *Kwani?*. His work also has appeared in the anthologies *Incommunicado: Tales from across the Empire* (2006) and *The New Gong Book of New Nigerian Short Stories* (2008).

His new collection of stories, *Love Is Power, Or Something Like That*, is to be published in the UK, US and Nigeria in 2013.^[5]

Olumbe Bassir

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Olumbe Bassir (1919 - 2001) was a [Nigerian scientist](#), author and academic. His primary contributions to research were in the areas of aflatoxins, nutrition, and peace research.

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Early life and education

Born in [Senegal](#) in 1919, Olumbe Bassir was raised in the older part of the municipality of Freetown, [Fourah Bay](#), by his parents Abdul and Isatu Bassir. He attended the Prince of Wales Secondary School where he passed the Senior Cambridge examination with exemption from London matriculation. In 1946 after a short teaching spell at the prestigious Bo Government Secondary School he went to [Yaba College](#) where he obtained the Higher National Diploma. He went to the United Kingdom, where he earned the Bachelor of Science degree in 1949 and PhD in 1951 from [Liverpool University](#).

Career

He spent most of his professional career at the [University of Ibadan](#), where he founded the [Biochemistry](#) and [Microbiology](#) departments. He laid the foundation of what became the first medical school in West Africa. By 1958, he was already a full professor. His academic specialty

was nutrition and biochemical toxicology. He was at various times Head of those two departments, Dean of faculty and also served as acting Vice Chancellor.

He had written at least 250 professional papers by 1972 when University of London conferred the coveted doctor of science degree (D.Sc.) on him. He had performed very successful lecture tours in the then Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America among others.

Olumbe Bassir was the author of several books. His 1957 book Anthology of West African Verse was seminal in introducing written African poetry to Western audiences. His other popular books include Handbook of Practical Biochemistry (1963) and Metabolism of Aflatoxins and other Mycotoxins (1989).

In 1968, he formed a partnership with Tecwyn Williams through the British Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas. The programme's research division helped developed the Drug Metabolism and Biochemical Toxicology research program at Ibadan and contributed in fostering interest and making interesting findings in animal nutritional habits.

After retiring from the University of Ibadan, he remained active for several years, continuing to act as editor of the West African Journal of Biology and Applied Chemistry. He also served as chairman of the Wellcome Nigeria Fund, which became the Bassir-Thomas Biomedical Foundation in the early 1990s. He also regularly organised the annual Open House Colloquim.

Advocacy and Activism

Olumbe Bassir was a lifelong advocate for peace, and was an active member of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. He also contributed to the Universities and the Quest for Peace. He was also sympathetic to the Fabian Society which he flirted with in his student days in England. He founded the Association of University Teachers in Nigeria which later became the Academic Staff Union of Universities. Despite being non-partisan, he helped develop the manifesto of the Action Group.

Personal life

He married Constance while still resident in the UK. He had 12 children. In 2000, he suffered a blood clot in the brain due to a traumatic injury to the head. Despite successful surgery and recuperation he died at Ibadan on May 23, 2001.

Philip Begho

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Philip Begho, author of over forty books, is an award-winning Nigerian writer (dramatist, children's writer, novelist, short story writer, and poet). Born in Warri, Delta State on January 11, 1956 of an Itsekiri father and a mother of mixed race, he received his secondary school education at King's College, Lagos and obtained an LLB. from the University of Lagos and an LL.M. from the University of London (London School of Economics).^[1] Though he currently works as a full-time writer, he has worked as a journalist, a banker, a businessman, a legal practitioner and a university lecturer. He has also engaged in film and theatrical production.^[2] His dramatic writing cuts across film, television, radio and the stage, and several of his stage plays have won awards. He also writes songs and non-fictional works, and his law book *Company formation: Precedents on Objects of Incorporation* has gone into several editions.

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Biography

Early life

Part of Philip Begho's elementary education was received at Grange School, Ikeja, Lagos, but when his father, who had been a chief magistrate at Ikeja, was transferred to Benin City and subsequently appointed a judge in the newly created Mid-Western Region,^[3] he continued his elementary education there at Emotan Private School. In 1967 he was admitted to King's College, Lagos and began writing at the age of eleven for the two school publications – *The Searchlight* and *The Mermaid*.

He was highly adventurous during his middle-school years, and at the age of thirteen he got lost while exploring a path in the bush and claimed to have seen very strange things, which might have contributed to the cast of mind that spawned his children fantasies in later years. He represented his school and Lagos State in athletic competitions, excelling in the high jump and pole vault events, and was appointed vice-school captain in his final year.

Finishing school, he worked as a reporter for the *Nigerian Observer* before commencing undergraduate studies in law in 1974 at the University of Lagos.^[2] In 1975 he won a scholarship for academic performance and was on the Dean's List in 1976, before graduating with honours in 1977. He was admitted to the Nigerian Law School in Lagos and was called to the bar in 1978.

Early career

A few months after his call to the bar in 1978, Philip Begho was drafted into the National Youth Service Corps and posted to Jos in Plateau State, where his primary assignment was as a researcher in the Police Staff College at Bukuru. During the one-year programme, he started to have serious doubts about pursuing a career in a profession he was beginning to find creatively restrictive. But if not law, what?

His dilemma grew, and he decided to write a poem about it. As he finished and held the poem in his hand, it struck him that he was holding the “what?” Of course you couldn’t make a career of poetry, not unless you were a known master lyricist, but you could make one of creative writing as a novelist, so a novelist he decided to be.

But the imperatives of earning a living meant he first had to take up a job, so when in 1979 he was invited to join the law firm of a former lecturer of his, he readily agreed. While working there, he moonlighted as a businessman in the hope that he would make enough money to obtain the freedom to do what he really desired. But not finding such good fortune, he accepted a place in 1980 to study at the London School of Economics, University of London, for an LL.M.^[2]

He had worked only a year at the law firm in Lagos, but his time there was so successful that he received an offer to return to the firm as a junior partner. But when he received his master’s degree in 1981, he took up a job with Citibank N.A. and was sent to Glyfada, Greece as a trainee manager. The job was very lucrative, but the time to write a novel, which he hadn’t found at LSE, he still couldn’t find at Citibank. Nor did he find it when he returned to Nigeria in 1982 and assumed a lectureship at the University of Benin.^[1]

In 1983 he quit the teaching appointment and, living on saved funds, he began to write. He completed three novels before his money ran out, and two of them – *Alero: of Dreams...* and *The Lecturer’s Dilemma* – were accepted for publication by African Universities Press. But they never got published and the reason given was that the startling berserk trend the economy had taken couldn’t sustain books other than text books.

Out of funds, he thought it prudent to return to law, and so to Lagos he went to set up his own law firm. He practised law^[2] from 1984 until he relocated temporarily in 1987 to the U.K. But before he left he had written and published the first edition of *Company Formation: Precedents on Objects of Incorporation*.^[1] This was in 1986.

Writing career

From the moment he set foot in London in July 1987, the lawyer in Philip Begho disappeared. In its place was a new person, one who saw that if the dream of writing, which had died in many, was not to die in him, he would have to sacrifice his academic and professional qualifications^[2] and sustain himself doing menial jobs that would free him to write. So, engaging in cleaning jobs that lasted only a few hours in the evenings, he toiled away in the afternoons in libraries, training for a writing career.

Late in 1988, not having been able to write a play before, he was moved to begin the play *Esther*. The research and plotting took him two years, and it was not until the beginning of 1991 that he was ready to start the dialogue. The ability to write in verse, long desired, miraculously came upon him he claims, and he was able to write the dialogue in verse that has been described as sure-footed and graceful in tone. *Esther* was completed in December 1991 and by March 15, 1992 Philip Begho had returned to Nigeria.

Riding the tiger-back of the power outages and social unrest that characterized Lagos in 1993, he started and completed *Daniel*, another verse play.^[1] *Esther* and *Daniel* were entered in manuscript form for the coveted Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Drama Prize in 1994, and *Esther* won^[4] while *Daniel* came second. But it was *Daniel*, rather than *Esther*, which was first produced, being replete with themes that gave voice to the people's struggle in the Abacha years. It was staged to critical acclaim at the University of Lagos and at Nigeria's prestigious MUSON Centre in December 1994.^[5]

The cast featured such leading lights of the Nigerian stage as Joke Silva, Ayo Lijadu and Ihria Enakimio,^[6] and since then there have been several re-runs. *Daniel* (aka *Power of Lions*) was published in 2001 and *Esther* followed in 2002. Also published in 2002 was Philip Begho's third

play, *Job's Wife*, another verse play. *Job's Wife* won the 2002 Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Drama Prize.^[7]

But Philip Begho does not only write stage plays. He has written for television, radio and film, and is writing more novels these days. His novel *Songbird* won the 2003 Isidore Okpewho Prose Prize^[2] and was short-listed for the 2004 Nigeria Prize for Literature.^[2] His children's book *Aunty Felicia* won the 2003 ANA/Matatu Prize for Children's Literature, while *Aunty Felicia Returns* won the 2005 ANA/Atiku Abubakar Children's Literature Prize.^[8] With over forty books Philip Begho is perhaps the African writer with the greatest number of books listed on Amazon.com.

Themes and style

Philip Begho's awareness of the profound influence the literary and dramatic arts have in shaping societal values is evident in his work,^[9] and his fiction, whether for adults or for children, is thematically preoccupied with such virtues as truth, righteousness and justice^[5] and their place in combating societal ills.^[6] One critic has in fact gone as far as saying that he uses creative literature to bring people closer to God.^[10]

As for style, Philip Begho, even in his prose, embraces drama with a strong appetite, and his stories and plots do not shy away from the sensational, thus lighting up the face of serious issues. Nor is he averse to mixing prose with poetry^[11] and soaring away on lyrical flights, while keeping a good rein on his story-telling.^[12] His verse, a medium not familiar perhaps to the average person, is verse executed in a simple, lucid and entertaining way.^[6]

Life outside writing

Philip Begho is an Evangelical Christian who claims to have had an encounter with Christ Jesus that turned his life around in 1986.^[2] He is quick to attribute the direction of his work and its volume to divine guidance and help. When not writing he engages in Christian counselling and career coaching and makes time to run play-and-learn groups for children. He enjoys the theatre, movies, music, dancing, walking, tennis, badminton and swimming.

Bibliography

Drama

1. *Daniel* (aka *Power of Lions*; Lagos: Monarch Books, 2001)
2. *Esther* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2002)
3. *Job's Wife* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2002)
4. *Titi Rella* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2004)^[2]
5. *Jephthah's Daughter* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2006)
6. *Leopard Woman* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
7. *Traffic Jam Kids* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
8. *Solomon* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
9. *Joseph* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
10. *Nebuchadnezzar* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
11. *Jael* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
12. *Born King* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
13. *Predator* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
14. *Smallie* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
15. *Smallie 2: When Should I Marry?* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
16. *Smallie 3: The Rubbishians* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
17. *Smallie 4: The Marriage Seminar* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
18. *Smallie 5: The Beggar* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
19. *Smallie 6: The Sandwich* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
20. *Smallie 7: Five Storybooks* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
21. *Smallie 8: Two-Way Street* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
22. *Smallie 9: World Peace Day* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
23. *Smallie 10: School Daze* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
24. *Smallie 11: The NEPA Statue* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
25. *Smallie 12: True Democracy* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)

Prose

1. *Songbird* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2002)^[2]

2. *Strange World* (A collection of short stories; Lagos: Monarch Books, 2004)
3. *Jelly Baby* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2004)
4. *Aunty Felicia* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2003)
5. *Aunty Felicia Returns* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2005)
6. *Aunty Felicia Goes to Yankari* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
7. *Aunty Felicia Goes to School* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
8. *Aunty Felicia in the Evil Forest* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
9. *Aunty Felicia Goes to Church* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
10. *King Omatosan* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
11. *Chuma the Terror* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)
12. *Crab Story* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2010)

Poetry

- *Tulip of the Nile* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2003)^[2]

Non-fiction

1. *Company Formation: Precedents on Objects of Incorporation* (1986; Lagos: Monarch Books, 1993, 2003, 2009)
2. *Tongues Aflame* (Lagos: Monarch Books, 2003)^[2]

Awards and prizes

1. Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Drama Prize 1994
2. Lire en Fête Short Story 1st Prize 2001^[13]
3. ANA/NDDC JP Clark-Bekederemo Prize for Drama 2002
4. ANA/Matatu Prize for Children's Literature 2003
5. Isidore Okpewho Prose Prize 2003^[2]
6. ANA/Atiku Abubakar Prize for Children's Literature 2005

7.Chin Ce

8. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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Chin Ce

Nationality	Nigerian
Occupation	Author

11. **Chin Ce** (born in 1966) is a [Nigerian writer](#).
12. He was educated at the [University of Calabar](#). He write a fictional trilogy, "Children of Koloko", "Gamji College" and "The Visitor".
13. Chin Ce has also authored three volumes of poetry, "An African Eclipse", "Full Moon" and "Millennial".
14. His volume of essays, "Bards and Tyrants: Essays in Contemporary African Writing", evaluates some aspects and visions of African writing and criticism in the works of Achebe, Ngugi, Soyinka, Nwoga, Chinweizu, Emenyonu, Nnolim and other new poetry, prose and critical voices from around the continent.^[1]

15. Chinweizu Ibekwe

16. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

17. (Redirected from [Chinweizu](#))

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19. **Chinweizu** is a [Nigerian critic](#), [poet](#), and [journalist](#). Though he has identified himself and is known simply as Chinweizu, he was born **Chinweizu Ibekwe** at [Eluoma](#) in [Isuikwuato](#) in the part of Eastern Region that is known today as [Abia State](#). He was educated at

Government Secondary School, Afikpo, and later attended college at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). While studying in America, during the civil rights era, Chinweizu became influenced by the philosophy of the Black Arts Movement. He is commonly associated with Black orientalism.

20. Background

21. He enrolled for a Ph.D. at the State University of New York (SUNY), Buffalo, under the supervision of political scientist Claude E. Welch, Jr.^[1] Chinweizu apparently had a disagreement with his dissertation committee and walked away with his manuscript, which he got published as *The West and the Rest of Us: White Predators, Black Slavers, and the African Elite* by Random House in 1975. He took the book to SUNY, Buffalo, where he demanded, and was promptly awarded, his Ph.D. in 1976, one year after he had published the dissertation. Thus, the publication settled his disagreement with his advisers in his favor.

22. Chinweizu started teaching overseas, at MIT and San Jose State University. He had returned to Nigeria by the early 1980s, working over the years as a columnist for various newspapers in the country and also working to promote Black orientalism in Pan-Africanism. In Nigeria, he became a literary critic, attacking what he saw as the elitism of some Nigerian authors, particularly Wole Soyinka. One of Chinweizu's works is *Anatomy of Female Power*,^[2] in which he discusses gender relations.

J. P. Clark

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(Redirected from John Pepper Clark)

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harmful. (March 2009)

John Pepper Clark-Bekederemo (born 6 April 1935) is a Nigerian poet and playwright, who has also published as **J. P. Clark** and **John Pepper Clark**.

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- 1 Life
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Life

Born in Kiagbodo,^[1] Nigeria, to Ijaw parents, Clark received his early education at the Native Administration School and the prestigious Government College in Ughelli, and his BA degree in English at the University of Ibadan,^[2] where he edited various magazines, including the *Beacon* and *The Horn*. Upon graduation from Ibadan in 1960, he worked as an information officer in the Ministry of Information, in the old Western Region of Nigeria, as features editor of the *Daily Express*, and as a research fellow at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. He served for several years as a professor of English at the University of Lagos, a position from which he retired in 1980. While at the University of Lagos he was co-editor of the literary magazine *Black Orpheus*.^[3]

In 1982, along with his wife Ebun Odutola (a professor and former director of the Centre for Cultural Studies at the University of Lagos), he founded the PEC Repertory Theatre in Lagos.

A widely travelled man, Clark has, since his retirement, held visiting professorial appointments at several institutions of higher learning, including Yale and Wesleyan University in the United States.^[1]

Poetry

Clark is most noted for his poetry, including:

- *Poems* (Mbari, 1961), a group of forty lyrics that treat heterogeneous themes;
- *A Reed in the Tide* (Longmans, 1965), occasional poems that focus on the Clark's indigenous African background and his travel experience in America and other places;
- *Casualties: Poems 1966-68* (USA: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1970), which illustrate the horrendous events of the Nigeria-Biafra war;
- *A Decade of Tongues* (Longmans, Drumbeat series, 1981), a collection of seventy-four poems, all of which apart from "Epilogue to Casualties" (dedicated to Michael Echeruo) were previously published in earlier volumes;
- *State of the Union* (1981), which highlights his apprehension concerning the sociopolitical events in Nigeria as a developing nation;
- *Mandela and Other Poems* (1988), which deals with the perennial problem of aging and death.

Critics have noted three main stages in Clark's poetic career: the apprenticeship stage of trial and experimentation, exemplified by such juvenilia as "Darkness and Light" and "Iddo Bridge"; the imitative stage, in which he appropriates such Western poetic conventions as the couplet measure and the sonnet sequence, exemplified in such lyrics as "To a Fallen Soldier" and "Of Faith"; and the individualized stage, in which he attains the maturity and originality of form of such poems as "Night Rain", "Out of the Tower", and "Song".

Throughout his work, certain themes recur:

- Violence and protest, as in *Casualties*;
- Institutional corruption, as in *State of the Union*;
- The beauty of nature and the landscape, as in *A Reed in the Tide*;
- European colonialism as in, for example, "Ivbie" in the *Poems* collection;
- The inhumanity of the human race as in *Mandela and Other Poems*.

Clark frequently dealt with these themes through a complex interweaving of indigenous African imagery and that of the Western literary tradition.

Drama

Clark's dramatic work includes *Song of a Goat* (1961), a tragedy cast in the Greek classical mode in which the impotence of Zifa, the protagonist, causes his wife Ebiere and his brother Tonye to indulge in an illicit love relationship that results in suicide. This was followed by a sequel, *The Masquerade* (1964), in which Dibiri's rage culminates in the death of his suitor Tufa. Other works include:

- *The Raft* (1964), in which four men drift helplessly down the Niger aboard a log raft;
- *Ozidi* (1966), an epic drama rooted in Ijaw saga;
- *The Boat* (1981), a prose drama that documents Ngbilebiri history.

Although his plays have been criticized for leaning too much on the Greek classical mode (especially the early ones), for their thinness of structure and for unrealistic stage devices (such as the disintegration of the raft on the stage in *The Raft*), his defenders argue that they challenge and engage the audience with their poetic quality and their uniting of the foreign and the local through graphic imagery.

Other work

Clark's contribution to other genres includes his translation of the *Ozidi Saga* (1977), an oral literary epic of the Ijaw that in its local setting would normally take seven days to perform,^{[3][4]} his critical study *The Example of Shakespeare* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), in which he articulates his aesthetic views about poetry and drama and his journalistic essays in the *Daily Express*, *Daily Times*, and other newspapers. He is also the author of the controversial *America, Their America* (Deutsch, 1964; Heinemann African Writers Series No. 50, 1969), a travelogue in which he criticizes American society and its values.^[4] While the furor generated by this book arguably catapulted him into the international literary limelight, the damage it and *Casualties* have done to his reputation seems permanent; in both works he infuriated and

alienated a large audience and some influential critics. In his defence, Clark has maintained that he merely portrayed events as he saw them.

As one of Africa's pre-eminent and distinguished authors, he has, since his retirement, continued to play an active role in literary affairs, a role for which he is increasingly gaining international recognition. In 1991, for example, he received the Nigerian National Merit Award for literary excellence and saw publication, by Howard University, of his two definitive volumes, *The Ozidi Saga* and *Collected Plays and Poems 1958-1988*.

On 6 December 2011, to honour the life and career of Professor John Pepper Clark-Bekederemo, a celebration was held at Lagos Motor Boat Club, Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, for the publication of *J. P. Clark: A Voyage, The definitive biography of the main animating force of African poetry*, written by playwright Femi Osofisan. The launch was attended by "what could be described as the who is who in the literary community", including Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka.^{[5][6]}

Samuel Ajayi Crowther

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Samuel Ajayi Crowther, Bishop, Niger Territory, 19 October 1888

Bishop **Samuel Ajayi Crowther** (c. 1809 – 31 December 1891) was a linguist and the first African Anglican bishop in Nigeria. Born in Osogun (in today's Iseyin Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria), Rev. Dr. Samuel Ajayi Crowther was a Yoruba man who also identified with Sierra Leone's ascendant Creole ethnic group.

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Career

Ajayi was 12 years old when he was captured, along with his mother and toddler brother and other family members, along with his entire village, by Muslim Fulani slave raiders in 1821 and sold to Portuguese slave traders. Before leaving port, his ship was boarded by a Royal Navy ship under the command of Captain Henry Leeke, and Crowther was taken to Freetown, Sierra Leone and released.

While there, Crowther was cared for by the Anglican Church Missionary Society, and was taught English. He converted to Christianity, was baptized by Rev. John Raban, and took the name Samuel Crowther in 1825.

While in Freetown, Crowther became interested in languages. In 1826 he was taken to England to attend St Mary's Church in Islington and the church's school. He returned to Freetown in 1827 and attended the newly-opened Fourah Bay College, an Anglican missionary school, where his interest in language found him studying Latin and Greek but also Temne. After completing his studies he began teaching at the school. He also married Asano (i.e. Hassana; she was formerly Muslim), baptised Susan, a schoolmistress, who was also on the Portuguese slave ship that originally brought Crowther to Sierra Leone.

Crowther was selected to accompany the missionary James Frederick Schön on the Niger expedition of 1841. Together with Schön, he was expected to learn Hausa for use on the expedition. The goal of the expedition was to spread commerce, teach agricultural techniques, spread Christianity, and help end the slave trade. Following the expedition, Crowther was recalled to England, where he was trained as a minister and ordained by the bishop of London. He returned to Africa in 1843 and with Henry Townsend, opened a mission in Abeokuta, in today's Ogun State, Nigeria.

Rev. Dr. Crowther began translating the Bible into the Yoruba language and compiling a Yoruba dictionary. In 1843, a grammar book which he started working on during the Niger expedition was published; and a Yoruba version of the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* followed later. He also began codifying other languages. Following the British Niger Expeditions of 1854 and 1857, Crowther produced a primer for the Igbo language in 1857, another for the Nupe language in 1860, and a full grammar and vocabulary of Nupe in 1864.

In 1864, Crowther was ordained as the first African bishop of the Anglican Church. That same year he was also given a Doctorate of Divinity by the University of Oxford. Bishop Crowther was on the island of Madeira in the Atlantic Ocean west of Morocco for a conference. He was accompanied by his son, Dandeson, an archdeacon, on church business in March 1881.

Crowther's attention was directed more and more to languages other than Yoruba, but he continued to supervise the translation of the Yoruba Bible (*Bibeli Mimọ*), which was completed in the mid-1880s, a few years before his death. In 1891, Crowther suffered a stroke and died on the last day of that year.

His grandson Herbert Macaulay became one of the first Nigerian nationalists and played an important role in ending British colonial rule in Nigeria.

Literature

- *Good out of Evil* (London, Islington 1852)

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See also this article, from the Missions Network Ministries International in Lagos, Nigeria...

[Article](#)

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Jude Dibia

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Jude Dibia is a Nigerian-born novelist. He was born in [Lagos, Nigeria](#). He has a B.A in Modern European Languages (German). Jude Dibia is the author of three well received novels; *Walking with Shadows* (2005), *Unbridled* (2007), and *Blackbird* (2011). Jude's novels have been described as daring and controversial by readers and critics in and out of Africa. *Walking with Shadows* is said to be the first Nigerian novel that has a gay man as its central character and that treats his experience with great insight, inviting a positive response to his situation. *Unbridled*, too, stirred some controversy on its publication; a story that tackled the emancipation of its female protagonist who had suffered from incest and various abuse from men. *Unbridled* went on to win the 2007 Ken Saro-Wiwa Prize for Prose (sponsored by NDDC/ANA) and was a finalist in the 2007 Nigeria Prize for Literature (sponsored by NLNG).

Dibia's short stories have appeared on various online literary sites including AfricanWriter.com and Halftribe.com. One of Jude's short stories is included in the anthology *One World: A global anthology of short stories* alongside stories by critically acclaimed writers such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Jhumpa Lahiri.^[L]

Philip Effiong

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Obong Philip Effiong

2nd President of Biafra

In office

8 January 1970 – 12 January 1970

Preceded

by

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu

1st Vice President of Biafra

In office

30 May 1967 – 8 January 1970

President Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu

**Preceded
by** Position created

Personal details

Born 18 November 1925
Akwa-Ibom State, British West Africa

Died 6 November 2003
Aba, Abia State

Nationality British, Nigerian

Spouse(s) Josephine Effiong

Roseline , Mercy Ugot, Valentine

Children Effiong, Charles Effiong, Philip Effiong
II, Francis Effiong, Philippa Umeh,
Elizabeth Edem, Paul Effiong

Philip Effiong (also spelled **Effiong**, 18 November 1925 – 6 November 2003) was the first Vice President and the second President of the now defunct Republic of Biafra during the Nigerian Civil War of 1967 to 1970.

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Early life

Born in Ibiono Ibom in present-day Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, on 18 November 1924, Philip Efiang joined the Nigerian Armed Services on 28 July 1945. He quickly rose through the service ranks until on 11 January 1956 he received the Queen's Commission after his officer cadet training at Eaton Hall in Chester. England later commissioned him for duty in the Rhine in West Germany. He was then transferred to the Nigerian Army Ordnance Corps and then to England for further training after a peace-keeping stint in the Republic of Congo in 1961. He was Nigeria's first Director of Ordnance. He had a son who was named after him.

Biafra

Efiang became Chief of General Staff of Biafra under Head of State, Odumegwu Ojukwu during the Nigeria-Biafra war.

The tactics of the Nigerian military during the war included economic blockade and deliberate destruction of agricultural land. Even before the war, the area was net importer of food, depending on income from its oil fields to feed its populace.

With the blockade cutting off oil revenue and agricultural destruction reducing food production, the result was mass dislocation and starvation of the populace. Two to three million people are thought to have died in the conflict, mostly through starvation and illness.

When Biafra's military resistance collapsed, Ojukwu fled to Côte d'Ivoire.

Efiang assumed leadership in this situation of turmoil, starvation, and collapse. He became Head of State of Biafra on 8 January 1970 and on 12 January announced surrender.^[1]

At the time of the surrender, Efiang believed that the situation was hopeless and that prolonging the conflict would have led only to the further destruction and starvation of the people of Biafra. At that time Efiang said, "I am convinced now that a stop must be put to the bloodshed which is going on as a result of the war. I am also convinced that the suffering of our people must be brought to an immediate end."^[1]

Nnaemeka L. Aneke wrote, "General Efiiong's handling of Biafra's surrender is one of the most tactical and devoted maneuvers ever seen on the Nigerian scene. Those who do not appreciate the depth of it may not have appreciated what was at stake as Biafra capitulated."^[2] Many observers had expected wholesale retribution at war's end.

Later life

In a 1996 interview, Efiiong reflected on those events:

I have no regrets whatsoever of my involvement in Biafra or the role I played. The war deprived me of my property, dignity, my name. Yet, I saved so many souls on both sides and by this, I mean Biafra and Nigeria. . . .

I felt that I played a role which has kept this country united till today. . . .

At the end of it all when I saw they (Biafran soldiers) could no longer continue and Ojukwu had fled, I did what was ideal after wide consultation . . . [2]

Efiiong died 6 November 2003, at the age of 78 less than two weeks before his 79th birthday.

Michael Echeruo

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This article **may contain original research**. Please [improve it](#) by [verifying](#) the claims made and adding [inline citations](#). Statements consisting only of original research may be removed. *(March 2012)*

Michael Joseph Chukwudalu Echeruo (born March 14, 1937) is a Nigerian academic, professor and literary critic from Okigwe, Imo State. He was educated at the University College, Ibadan (now the University of Ibadan) from 1955 to 1960 and was contemporaries with a few notable writers and poets from the college, such as Christopher Okigbo. He earned his Master's and Ph D degrees from Cornell University, Ithaca, New York in 1963 and 1965 respectively. One of the most versatile of African critics, he has published in English Elizabethan and

Jacobean Drama, in the modern English novel. Echeruo was primarily notable as a critic of western writers on Africa, as he viewed himself and his contemporaries as writers fighting for an African viewpoint instead of a western viewpoint on the continent. He is best known in poetry for his collection of poems, *Mortality* (1968); in cultural history for his pioneering^[*citation needed*] study of *Victorian Lagos* and in lexicography for his *Dictionary of the Igbo Language* (Yale 1998). He is currently William Safire Professor of Modern Letters in the English Department of Syracuse University, a university in Syracuse, New York, United States. He serves currently as a member of the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) Committee of the *New variourum Shakespeare*.

Amatoritsero Ede

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Amatoritsero Ede is a Nigerian-Canadian poet. In 1998 he won the *All-Africa Christopher Okigbo Prize for Literature* with his first collection of poems, *Caribbean Blues; A writer's Pains*. He had written under the name "Godwin Ede". He stopped bearing his 'Christian' first name as a way to protest the xenophobia and racism he noted in Germany, a 'Christian' country, and to an extent, to protest Western colonialism in general.^[1] He was a Hindu Monk with the Hare Krishna Movement, and has worked as a Book Editor with a major Nigerian trade publisher, Spectrum Books. In 1993 he won the runner-up prize of the Association of Nigerian Authors' (ANA) Poetry Competition with the manuscript of "A Writer's Pains"; in 1998 the ANA All Africa Christopher Okigbo Prize for Literature (endowed by Wole Soyinka, Nigerian Nobel Laureate for literature) with his first collection of poems, *Collected Poems: A writer's Pains & Caribbean Blues* (Bremen, Germany: Yeti Press, 1998; Lagos: Oracle Books, 2001) and second prize in the first May Ayim Award: International Black German Literary Prize, in 2004. He also appears in the following anthologies: TOK 1: Writing the New Toronto Helen Walsh ed. (Toronto: Zephyr Press, 2006), *Camouflage: Best of Contemporary Nigerian Writing* Nduka Otiono & Diego

Okonyedo eds. (Yenogoa, Nigeria: Treasure Books, 2006), May Ayim Award Anthology Peggy Piesche et al. eds. (Berlin, Germany: Orlanda Verlag, 2004), The Fate of Vultures: BBC Prize-Winning Poetry. Peter Porter et al. eds. (Oxford: Heinemann International, 1989), Und auf den Strassen eine Pest Uche Nduka ed. (Bad Honnef, Germany: Horlemann Verlag, 1996) and Voices from the Fringe: An ANA Anthology of New Nigerian Poetry. Harry Garuba ed. (Lagos: Malthouse Press, 1988). His second Collection, Globetrotter & Hitler's Children (New York: Akaschic Books, 2009), is out. He was the 2005-2006 Writer-in-Residence at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada under the auspices of PEN Canada's Writer-in-Exile network. He edited Sentinel Online poetry journal from 2005 to 2007. He is a SSHRC Fellow and Doctoral Candidate in English literature at Carleton University, Ottawa. He is the Publisher and Managing Editor of Maple Tree Literary Supplement, MTLs at <www.mtls.ca>. Ede has lived in Canada since 2002, sponsored as a writer-in-exile by PEN Canada. Between 2005 and 2007 he edited an international online poetry journal, Sentinel Poetry Online.^{[2][3]}

Cyprian Ekwensi

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Cyprian Odiatu Duaka Ekwensi

Born	26 September 1921 <u>Minna, Niger State</u>
Died	4 November 2007 <u>Enugu, Enugu State</u>
Occupation	Pharmacist, broadcaster, author
Genres	Short stories and children's fiction

Spouse(s) Eunice Anyiwo

Children Five

Cyprian Ekwensi MFR^[1] (26 September 1921 – 4 November 2007) was a Nigerian short story writer and author of children's books.

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Biography

Early life, education and family

Ekwensi, an Igbo, was born in Minna, Niger State. His father was David Anadumaka, a storyteller and elephant hunter.^[2]

Ekwensi attended Government College in Ibadan, Oyo State, Achimota College in Ghana, and the School of Forestry, Ibadan, after which he worked for two years as a forestry officer.^[1] He also studied pharmacy at Yaba Technical Institute, Lagos School of Pharmacy, and the Chelsea School of Pharmacy of the University of London. He taught at Igbobi College.^[1]

Ekwensi married Eunice Anyiwo, and they had five children.^[1]

He has many grandchildren, including his son Cyprian Ikechi Ekwensi, who is named after his grandfather, and his oldest grandchild Adrienne Tobechei Ekwensi.

Governmental career

Ekwensi was employed as Head of Features at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) and by the Ministry of Information during the First Republic;^[3] he eventually became Director of the latter. He resigned his position in 1966, before the Civil War, and moved to Enugu with his family. He later served as chair of the Bureau for External Publicity of Biafra,^[4] prior to its reabsorption by Nigeria.

Literary career

Ekwensi wrote hundreds of short stories, radio and television scripts, and several dozen novels, including children's books.^[1] His 1954 *People of the City* was the first book by a Nigerian to garner international attention.^[2] His novel *Drummer Boy* (1960), based on the life of Benjamin 'Kokoro' Aderounmu was a perceptive and powerful description of the wandering, homeless and poverty-stricken life of a street artist.^[5] His most successful novel was *Jagua Nana* (1961),^[6] about a Pidgin-speaking Nigerian woman who leaves her husband to work as a prostitute in a city and falls in love with a teacher.^[7] He also wrote a sequel to this, *Jagua Nana's Daughter*.^[8]

In 1968, he received the Dag Hammarskjöld International Prize in Literature. In 2006, he became a fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Letters.^[1]

Death

Ekwensi died on 4 November 2007 at the Niger Foundation in Enugu, where he underwent an operation for an undisclosed ailment.^[1] The Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), having intended to present him with an award on 16 November 2007, converted the honor to a posthumous award.^[9]

Selected works

- *When Love Whispers* (1948)

- *An African Night's Entertainment* (1948)
- *The Boa Suitor* (1949)
- *The Leopard's Claw* (1950)
- *People of the City* (London: Andrew Dakers, 1954)
- *The Drummer Boy* (1960)
- *The Passport of Mallam Ilia* (written 1948, published 1960)
- *Jagua Nana* (1961)
- *Burning Grass* (1961)
- *An African Nights Entertainment* (1962)
- *Beautiful Feathers* (novel; London: Hutchinson, 1963)
- *Rainmaker* (collection of short stories; 1965)
- *Iska* (London: Hutchinson, 1966)
- *Lokotown* (collection of short stories; 1966)
- *Restless City and Christmas Gold* (1975)
- *Divided We Stand: a Novel of the Nigerian Civil War* (1980)
- *Motherless Baby* (Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishing Company, 1980)
- *Jagua Nana's Daughter* (1987)
- *Behind the Convent Wall* (1987)
- *The Great Elephant Bird* (Evans Brothers, 1990)
- *Gone to Mecca* (Heinemann Educational Books, 1991)
- *Jagua Nana's Daughter* (1993)
- *Masquerade Time* (children's book; London: Chelsea House Publishing; Jaws Maui, 1994)
- *Cash on Delivery* (2007, collection of short stories)

Buchi Emecheta

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Buchi Emecheta (born 21 July 1944, in Lagos) is a Nigerian novelist who has published over 20 books, including *Second-Class Citizen* (1974), *The Bride Price* (1976), *The Slave Girl* (1977)

and *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979). Her themes of child slavery, motherhood, female independence and freedom through education have won her considerable critical acclaim and honours, including an Order of the British Empire in 2005. Emecheta once described her stories as "stories of the world...[where]... women face the universal problems of poverty and oppression, and the longer they stay, no matter where they have come from originally, the more the problems become identical."

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Early life

(Florence Onye) Buchi Emecheta was born on 21 July 1944, in Lagos to Igbo parents, Alice (Okwuekwuhe) Emecheta and Jeremy Nwabudinke. Her father was a railway worker in the 1940s. Due to the gender bias of the time, the young Buchi Emecheta was initially kept at home while her younger brother was sent to school; but after persuading her parents to consider the benefits of her education, she spent her early childhood at an all-girl's missionary school. Her father died when she was nine years old. A year later, Emecheta received a full scholarship to the

Methodist Girls School, where she remained until the age of sixteen when she married Sylvester Onwordi, a student to whom she had been engaged since she was eleven years old.

Onwordi immediately moved to London to attend university and Emecheta joined him in 1962. She gave birth to five children in six years. It was an unhappy and sometimes violent marriage (as chronicled in her autobiographical writings such as *Second-Class Citizen*).^[1] To keep her sanity, Emecheta wrote in her spare time; however, her husband was deeply suspicious of her writing, and he ultimately burned her first manuscript.^{[2][3]} At the age of 22, Emecheta left her husband. While working to support her five children alone, she earned a BSc degree in Sociology at the University of London.

She began writing about her experiences of Black British life in a regular column in the *New Statesman*, and a collection of these pieces became her first published book in 1972, *In the Ditch*. The semi-autobiographical book chronicled the struggles of a main character named Adah, who is forced to live in a housing estate while working as a librarian to support her five children. Her second novel published two years later, *Second-Class Citizen*, also drew on Emecheta's own experiences, and both books were eventually published in one volume as *Adah's Story*.

Early career

From 1965 to 1969, Emecheta worked as a library officer for the British Museum in London. From 1969 to 1976 she was a youth worker and sociologist for the Inner London Education Authority, and from 1976 to 1978 she was a community worker.

Following her success as an author, Buchi Emecheta has travelled widely as a visiting professor and lecturer. From 1972 to 1979 she visited several American universities, including Pennsylvania State University, Rutgers University, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

From 1980 to 1981, she was senior resident fellow and visiting professor of English, University of Calabar, Nigeria. In 1982 she lectured at Yale University, and the University of London, as well as holding a fellowship at the University of London in 1986.

From 1982 to 1983 Buchi Emecheta, together with her journalist son Sylvester, ran the Ogwugwu Afor Publishing Company.

Awards

- B.Sc. (Honours), University of London, 1972.
- *New Statesman Jock Campbell Award* for *The Slave Girl*, 1979.
- British Home Secretary's Advisory Council on Race, 1979.
- Arts Council of Great Britain - 1982-3.
- One of Granta's "Best of the Young British Novelists", 1983.
- PhD, University of London, 1991.
- Who's Who in Anoma, 2011
- Who's Who in Ibusa, 2011

Works

Novels

- *In the Ditch* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1972).
- *Second-Class Citizen* (London: Allison & Busby, 1974).
- *The Bride Price* (London: Allison & Busby, 1976).
- *The Slave Girl* (London: Allison & Busby, 1977); winner of 1979 Jock Campbell Award.
- *The Joys of Motherhood* (London: Allison & Busby, 1979; Heinemann, African Writers Series No. 65, 1980).
- *The Moonlight Bride* (Oxford University Press, 1976).
- *Our Own Freedom* (photographs by Maggie Murray; London: Sheba, 1981).
- *Destination Biafra* (London: Allison & Busby, 1982).
- *Naira Power* (London: Macmillan, 1982); Pacesetter Novels series.
- *Adah's Story* [*In the Ditch/Second-Class Citizen*] (London: Allison & Busby, 1983).
- *The Rape of Shavi* (London: Ogwugwu Afor, 1984).
- *Double Yoke* (New York: George Braziller, 1983).
- *A Kind of Marriage* (London: Macmillan, 1986); Pacesetter Novels series.

- *Gwendolen* (London: Collins, 1989). Published in the US as *The Family*.
- *Kehinde* (Heinemann, African Writers Series, 1994).
- *The New Tribe* (Heinemann, African Writers Series, 1999).

Autobiography

- *Head Above Water* (London: Fontana, 1986).

Children's/Young Adults

- *Titch the Cat* (London: Allison & Busby, 1979).
- *Nowhere to Play* (London: Allison & Busby, 1980).
- *The Wrestling Match* (Oxford University Press, 1980).

Plays

- *A Kind of Marriage*, BBC television.
- *Family Bargain*, BBC television, 1987.

Articles

- *The Black Scholar*, November–December 1985, p. 51.
- *Criticism and Ideology*, 1988.
- *Essence* magazine, August 1990, p. 50.
- *New York Times Book Review*, April 29, 1990.
- *Publishers Weekly*, February 16, 1990, p. 73; reprinted 7 February 1994, p. 84.
- *World Literature Today*, Autumn 1994, p. 867.

E. Nolue Emenanjo

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Emmanuel Nwanolue Emenanjo, also known as ‘**Nolue Emenanjo** (born 1943) is a Nigerian scholar and writer.^[1]

Born in Katsina State to Igbo parents, he is the executive director of the National Institute of Nigerian Languages, Aba and a Professor of Linguistics. Over the years, he has had a multifarious career in publishing, teaching, writing and criticism particularly dealing with the promotion of the Igbo language.

Works

- *Igbo language and culture*, 1973
- *Elements of modern Igbo grammar: a descriptive approach*, 1978
- *Auxiliaries in Igbo syntax: a comparative study*, 1985
- *Multilingualism, minority languages, and language policy in Nigeria*, 1990

Olaudah Equiano

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This article is about Gustavus Vassa. For the Swedish king, see Gustav I of Sweden.

Olaudah Equiano

Born 1745
Essaka, Benin Empire (claimed)

Died 31 March 1797 (aged 51-52)

Other names Gustavus Vassa, Graves

Ethnicity Igbo (written as *Eboe*)

Occupation Explorer, writer, merchant, slave, abolitionist

Known for Influence over British abolitionists; his autobiography

Spouse(s) Susannah Cullen

Children Joanna Vassa and Anna Maria Vassa

Olaudah Equiano (c. 1745 – 31 March 1797)^[1] also known as **Gustavus Vassa**, was a prominent African involved in the British movement for the abolition of the slave trade. He was enslaved as a child, purchased his freedom, and worked as an author, merchant, and explorer in South America, the Caribbean, the Arctic, the American colonies, and the United Kingdom, where he settled by 1792. His autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, depicts the horrors of slavery and influenced the enactment of the Slave Trade Act of 1807.^[2]

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Early life and enslavement

According to his own account, Olaudah Equiano was born in 1745 to the Igbo people in the region now known as Nigeria. The youngest son, he had five brothers and a younger sister. When he was eleven, he and his sister were kidnapped and sold to native slaveholders. After changing hands several times, Equiano was taken to the coast where he was held by European slave traders.^{[1][3]} He was transported with 244 other enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to Barbados in the West Indies, from where he and a few others were soon transferred to the

British colony of Virginia. Literary scholar Vincent Carretta argued in a 2005 biography that Equiano may have been born in colonial South Carolina, not in Africa.^{[4][5]}

He was bought by Michael Pascal, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy. Pascal renamed the boy as Gustavus Vassa, after the Swedish noble who had become Gustav I of Sweden, king in the 16th century.^[1] Equiano had already been renamed twice: he was called Michael while on the slave ship that brought him to the Americas; and Jacob, by his first owner. This time Equiano refused and told his new owner that he would prefer to be called Jacob. His refusal, he says, "gained me many a cuff" - and eventually he submitted to the new name.^[citation needed]

Equiano wrote in his narrative that domestic slaves in Virginia were treated cruelly, suffering punishments such as an "iron muzzle" (scold's bridle), used around the mouth to keep house slaves quiet, leaving them unable to speak or eat. He thought that the eyes of portraits followed him wherever he went, and that a clock could tell his master about anything Equiano did wrong. Shocked by this culture, Equiano tried washing his face in an attempt to change its colour.^[6]

A disputed portrait of Equiano in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter

As the slave of a naval captain, Equiano was trained in seamanship and traveled extensively with his master. This was during the Seven Years War with France. Although Pascal's personal slave,

Equiano was expected to assist the crew in times of battle; his duty was to haul gunpowder to the gun decks. Pascal favoured Equiano and sent him to his sister-in-law in Great Britain, to attend school and learn to read.

At this time, Equiano converted to Christianity. His master allowed Equiano to be baptized in St Margaret's, Westminster, on February 1759. Despite the special treatment, after the British won the war, Equiano did not receive a share of the prize money, as was awarded to the other sailors. Pascal had promised his freedom, but did not release him.^[citation needed]

Pascal sold Equiano to Captain James Doran of the *Charming Sally* at Gravesend, from where he was transported to Montserrat, in the Caribbean Leeward Islands. He was sold to Robert King, a Quaker merchant from Philadelphia who traded in the Caribbean. Pascal had instructed Doran to ensure that he sold Equiano "to the best master he could, as he told him I was a very deserving boy, which Captain Doran said he found to be true."^[7]

Release

King set Equiano to work on his shipping routes and in his stores. In 1765, when Equiano was about 20 years old, King promised that for his purchase price of forty pounds, the slave could buy his freedom.^[8] King taught him to read and write more fluently, guided him along the path of religion, and allowed Equiano to engage in profitable trading on his own, as well as on his master's behalf. He enabled Equiano to buy his freedom, which he achieved by his early twenties. King urged Equiano to stay on as a business partner, but Equiano found it dangerous and limiting to remain in the British colonies as a freedman. For instance, while loading a ship in Georgia, he was almost kidnapped back into slavery. He was released after proving his education. Equiano returned to Britain where, after the ruling in Somerset's Case of 1772, men believed they were free of the risk of enslavement.

Pioneer of the abolitionist cause

Equiano travelled to London and became involved in the abolitionist movement, which had been particularly strong amongst Quakers, but was by 1787 non-denominational. As early as 1783 he

had been passing information about the slave trade to abolitionists such as Granville Sharp, and the publicisation of the Zong massacre (a *cause célèbre* for the abolitionist movement) can ultimately be attributed to Equiano.^[9] Equiano was a Methodist, having been influenced by George Whitefield's evangelism in the New World.

Front page of Equiano's autobiography

Equiano was befriended and supported by abolitionists, many of whom encouraged him to write and publish his life story. Equiano was supported financially by philanthropic abolitionists and religious benefactors; his lectures and preparation for the book were promoted by, among others, Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon.

His account surprised many with the quality of its imagery, description, and literary style. Some who had not yet joined the abolitionist cause felt shame at learning of his suffering. Entitled *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, it was first published in 1789 and rapidly went through several editions. It is one of the earliest known examples of published writing by an African writer to be widely read in England. It was the first

influential slave autobiography. Equiano's personal account of slavery and of his experiences as a black immigrant caused a sensation on publication. The book fueled a growing anti-slavery movement in Great Britain.

The autobiography goes on to describe how Equiano's adventures brought him to London, where he married into English society and became a leading abolitionist. Equiano's book became his most lasting contribution to the abolitionist movement, as it vividly demonstrated the humanity of Africans as much as the inhumanity of slavery.

Equiano records his and Granville Sharp's central roles in the movement. As a major voice in this movement, Equiano petitioned the King in 1788. He was appointed to an expedition to resettle London's poor Blacks in Sierra Leone, a British colony on the west coast of Africa. He was dismissed after protesting against financial mismanagement.^[10]

The book not only was an exemplary work of English literature by a new, African author, but it also increased Equiano's personal revenue. He traveled extensively throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland promoting the book. The returns gave him independence from benefactors and enabled him to fully chart his own purpose. He worked to improve economic, social and educational conditions in Africa, particularly in Sierra Leone.

Related to the abolitionist cause, Equiano was also a leader of the Poor Black community in London. Because of his connections, he was a prominent figure in the political realm, and he oftentimes served as a voice for his people. Equiano's reactions and remarks were frequently published in newspapers like the *Public Advertiser* and the *Morning Chronicle*. He had more of a voice than most Africans, and he seized various opportunities to utilize it.^[11]

Marriage and family

At some point, after having travelled widely, Equiano decided to settle in Britain and raise a family. On 7 April 1792, he married Susan Cullen, a local girl, in St Andrew's Church in Soham, Cambridgeshire. The original marriage register containing the entry for Equiano and Cullen is held today by the Cambridgeshire Archives and Local Studies at the County Record Office in Cambridge.

He announced his wedding in every edition of his autobiography from 1792 onwards. Critics have suggested he believed that his marriage symbolized an expected commercial union between Africa and Great Britain. The couple settled in the area and had two daughters, Anna Maria (1793 - 1797), and Joanna (1795 - 1857).

Susannah died in February 1796 aged 34, and Equiano died a year after that on 31 March 1797,^[11] aged 52 (some historians will say otherwise). Soon after, the elder daughter died, age four years old, leaving Joanna to inherit Equiano's estate, which was valued at £950: a considerable sum, worth over £80 000 today.^[12] Joanna married the Rev. Henry Bromley, and they ran a Congregational Chapel at Clavering near Saffron Walden in Essex, before moving to London in the middle of the nineteenth century. They are both buried at the Congregationalists' non-denominational Abney Park Cemetery, in Stoke Newington north London.

Last days and will

Although Equiano's death is recorded in London in 1797, the location of his burial is unsubstantiated. One of his last addresses appears to have been Plaisterer's Hall in the City of London, where he drew up his will on 28 May 1796. He then moved to John Street, Tottenham Court Road, close to Whitefield's Methodist chapel. (It was renovated for Congregationalists in the 1950s. Now the American Church in London, the church recently placed a small memorial to Equiano.) Lastly, he lived in Paddington Street, Middlesex, where he died. Equiano's death was reported in newspaper obituaries.

In the 1790s, at the time of the excesses of the French Revolution and close on the heels of the American War for Independence, British society was tense because of fears of open revolution. Reformers were considered more suspect than in other periods. Equiano had been an active member of the London Corresponding Society, which campaigned to extend the vote to working men. His close friend Thomas Hardy, the Society's Secretary, was prosecuted by the government (though without success) on the basis that such political activity amounted to treason. In December 1797, apparently unaware that Equiano had died nine months earlier, a writer for the government-sponsored *Anti-Jacobin, or Weekly Examiner* satirised Equiano as being at a fictional meeting of the "Friends of Freedom".

Equiano's will provided for projects he considered important. Had his longer-surviving daughter Joanna died before reaching the age of majority (twenty-one), half his wealth would have passed to the Sierra Leone Company for continued assistance to West Africans, and half to the London Missionary Society, which promoted education overseas. This organization had formed the previous November at the Countess of Huntingdon's Spa Fields Chapel in north London. By the early nineteenth century, The Missionary Society had become well known worldwide as non-denominational, though it was largely Congregational.

Controversy of origin

Scholars have disagreed about Equiano's origins. Some believe he may have fabricated his African roots and his survival of the Middle Passage not only to sell more copies of his book but also to help advance the movement against the slave trade. According to Vincent Carretta,

Equiano was certainly African by descent. The circumstantial evidence that Equiano was also African American by birth and African British by choice is compelling but not absolutely conclusive. Although the circumstantial evidence is not equivalent to proof, anyone dealing with Equiano's life and art must consider it.^[4]

Baptismal records and a naval muster roll appear to link Equiano to South Carolina. Records of Equiano's first voyage to the Arctic state he was from Carolina, not Africa.^[13] Equiano may have been the source for information linking him to Carolina, but it may also have been a clerk's careless record of origin. Scholars continue to search for evidence to substantiate Equiano's claim of birth in Africa. Currently, no separate documentation supports this story. Carretta holds that Equiano was born in South Carolina, based on the documents mentioned above.^[14]

For some scholars, the fact that many parts of Equiano's account can be proven lends weight to accepting his story of African birth. "In the long and fascinating history of autobiographies that distort or exaggerate the truth. ...Seldom is one crucial portion of a memoir totally fabricated and the remainder scrupulously accurate; among autobiographers... both dissemblers and truth-tellers tend to be consistent."^[15]

Nigerian writer Catherine Obianuju Acholonu argues that Equiano was born in a Nigerian town known as Isseke, where there was local oral history that told of his upbringing.^[16] Prior to this work, however, no town bearing a name of that spelling had been recorded. Other scholars, including Nigerians, have pointed out grave errors in the research.^[who?]

Another point of contention is the detail of his account of the ocean crossing. "Historians have never discredited the accuracy of Equiano's narrative, nor the power it had to support the abolitionist cause [...] particularly in Britain during the 1790s. However, parts of Equiano's account of the Middle Passage may have been based on already published accounts or the experiences of those he knew."^[17]

Commemoration

The Equiano Society was formed in London in November 1996. Its main objective is to publicise and celebrate the life and work of Olaudah Equiano.^[18]

Equiano lived at 13 Tottenham Street, London, in 1788; in 1789 he moved to what was then 10 Union Street and is now 73 Riding House Street, where a commemorative plaque was unveiled on 11 October 2000 in the presence of Paul Boateng MP, Professor Carretta from the University of Maryland and Burt Caesar, as part of Black History Month celebrations. Student musicians from Trinity College of Music played a fanfare specially composed for the unveiling by Professor Ian Hall.^[19]

His life and achievements were made part of the National Curriculum in 2007 but it has been reported (at the end of 2012) that these will be dropped.^[20] In January 2013 Operation Black Vote launched a petition to request Education Secretary Michael Gove not to drop both Equiano and Mary Seacole from the National Curriculum.^[21] Rev. Jesse Jackson and others wrote a letter to The Times protesting against the mooted removal of both figures from the National Curriculum.^{[22][23]}

In horse racing, the champion sprinter and dual winner of the King's Stand Stakes was named after Equiano.

Media portrayal

- A BBC production in 1996 *Son of Africa: The Slave Narrative of Olaudah Equiano*, directed by Alrick Riley) employed dramatic reconstruction, archival material and interviews with scholars such as Stuart Hall and Ian Duffield to provide the social and economic context of the 18th-century slave trade.^[24]
- Equiano was portrayed by the Senegalese singer and musician Yousou N'Dour in the 2006 film *Amazing Grace*.
- *African Snow*, a play by Murray Watts, takes place in John Newton's mind. It was first produced at the York Theatre Royal as a co-production with Riding Lights Theatre Company in April 2007 before transferring to the Trafalgar Studios in London's West End and a National Tour. Newton was played by Roger Alborough and Equiano by Israel Oyelumade.
- Stone Publishing House published a children's book *Equiano: The Slave with the Loud Voice*. Illustrated by Cheryl Ives, it was written by Kent historian Dr. Robert Hume.
- In 2007, David and Jessica Oyelowo appeared as Olaudah and his wife in *Grace Unshackled – The Olaudah Equiano Story*, a radio adaptation of Equiano's autobiography. This was first broadcast on BBC 7, April 2007.^[25]
- The British jazz artist Soweto Kinch's first album contains a track, "Equiano's Tears".
- Equiano is portrayed by Danny Sapani in the BBC series *Garrow's Law* (2010).





Rosemary Esehagu

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Rosemary Esehagu (born November 15, 1981) is a Nigerian writer. She was born and raised in Lagos, Nigeria, to a family of six children. In 1997, she came to the United States to advance her education. She attended Williams College, a prestigious liberal arts school in Williamstown, Massachusetts, where she majored in Psychology. Her first novel, The Looming Fog, was published in 2006. She lives in the District of Columbia and is finishing her second novel.

Femi Euba

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This article includes a [list of references](#), related reading or [external links](#), but **its sources remain unclear because it lacks [inline citations](#)**. Please [improve](#) this article by introducing more precise citations. *(January 2013)*

Femi Euba (born April 1942) is a [Nigerian](#) actor and [dramatist](#). Among the topics of his plays is [Yoruba](#) culture.

Education and career

Euba could be called a man of many parts as a theatre practitioner (acting, playwriting, directing). A [Lagosian](#) by birth, he studied acting at the [Rose Bruford College](#) of Speech and Drama, earning a diploma in 1965, after which he appeared in many shows on the London Stage, including the [Royal Court Theatre](#) production of [Wole Soyinka](#)'s *The Lion and the Jewel*, and [Shakespeare](#)'s *Macbeth*, with the late Sir [Alec Guinness](#) as Macbeth and the late [Simone Signoret](#) as [Lady Macbeth](#).

Euba left London in 1970 to study Playwriting and Dramatic Literature at the [Yale School of Drama](#), where he received an [MFA](#) in 1973. In 1980-82 he went back to Yale to study, receiving an MA in Afro-American Studies. He then returned to Nigeria, where he worked for some years, and earned a PhD in Literature-in-English at the [University of Ife](#), Nigeria (now Obafemi Awolowo University), in 1986.

Over the years, Euba has taught at different colleges and universities, in Nigeria and the US, including the [College of William & Mary in Virginia](#). Currently the Louise and Kenneth Kinney Professor at the Louisiana State University, he has continued to teach playwriting, and dramatic literature, mostly concentrating on the drama and theatre of Africa and of the African diaspora. He is also a consultant in Black Theatre. Among the many plays he has directed variously are Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* and *The Trials of Brother Jero*; [Edouard Glissant](#)'s *Monsieur Toussaint*; [August Wilson](#)'s *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*; [Shakespeare](#)'s *The Tempest*; [Molière](#)'s *The Learned Ladies*; and [Euripides](#)' *Alcestis*. His favorite saying for his students, whether in acting, playwriting or directing is: "You need to get down to brass tacks."

Works

- "Akibu: a play for television in two parts" in *Five African Plays*; ed. Cismo Pierterse. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1972.
- *A Riddle of the Palms and Crocodiles* (plays), Negro Ensemble Company, 1973.
- *Archetypes, Imprecators and Victims of Fate: Origins and Developments of Satire in Black Drama*, Greenwood Press, 1989.
- *The Gulf*, Longman, 1991.
- "The Eye of Gabriel" (play), in *Black Drama*, Alexander Street Press, 2002.
- "Dionysus of the Holocaust" (play), in *Black Drama*, Alexander Street Press, 2002.
- *Poetics of the Creative Process: An Organic Practicum to Playwriting*, University Press of America, 2005.
- *Camwood at Crossroads* (novel), Xlibris, 2007.

• Daniel O. Fagunwa

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Daniel O. Fagunwa

Born	1903 <u>Oke-Igbo</u> , Nigeria
Died	December 9, 1963 (60 years)
Language	<u>Yorùbá</u>

- **Daniel Olorunfemi Fagunwa** MBE (1903 — 9 December 1963), popularly known as **D. O. Fagunwa**, was a Nigerian author who pioneered the Yoruba-language novel. He was born in Oke-Igbo, Ondo State. An Oloye of the Yoruba people, Fagunwa studied at St. Luke's School, Oke-Igbo, and St. Andrew's College, Oyo, before becoming a teacher himself.

- In 1938, entering a literary contest of the Nigerian education ministry, Fagunwa wrote his *Ogboju Ode ninu Igbo Irunmale*, widely considered the first novel written in the Yorùbá language and one of the first to be written in any African language. Wole Soyinka translated the book into English in 1968 as *The Forest of A Thousand Daemons*, first published by Random House and again by City Lights in September 2013 (ISBN 9780872866300). Fagunwa's later works include *Igbo Olodumare* (*The Forest of God*, 1949), *Ireke Onibudo* (1949), *Irinkerindo ninu Igbo Elegbeje* (*Expedition to the Mount of Thought*, 1954), and *Adiitu Olodumare* (1961).^[1]
- Fagunwa's novels draw heavily on folktale traditions and idioms, including many supernatural elements. His heroes are usually Yoruba hunters, who interact with kings, sages, and even gods in their quests. Thematically, his novels also explore the divide between the Christian beliefs of Africa's colonizers and the continent's traditional religions. Fagunwa remains the most widely-read Yorùbá-language author, and a major influence on such contemporary writers as Amos Tutuola.^{[2][3]}
- D. O. Fagunwa was the first Nigerian writer to employ folk philosophy in telling his stories.
- Fagunwa was awarded the Margaret Wong Prize in 1955 and was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 1959. He died in a motor accident in 1963. Fagunwa Memorial High School and Fagunwa Grammar School in Oke-Igbo, Nigeria, are named for Fagunwa. His daughter Yejide Ogundipe serves as a council chairperson for Ile Oluji/Okeigbo.

• **Adebayo Faleti**

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- **Adebayo Faleti** is a Nigerian poet, writer and actor. He has attended the University of Dakar in Dakar, Senegal, the University of Ibadan, in Ibadan, Nigeria, and the Radio Netherlands Training center in Hilversum, Netherlands.^[1] Among the movies he has appeared in are *Saworo-Ide*, *Agogo-Eewo*,^[1] and *Afonja*.^[2]

Toyin Falola

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Toyin Falola

Born	January 1, 1953 Ibadan
Citizenship	Nigeria
Nationality	Nigerian
Fields	African History
Institutions	University of Texas, Obafemi Awolowo University
Known for	Historiography in Africa

Toyin Omoyeni Falola (born 1 January 1953 in [Ibadan](#)) is a [Nigerian historian](#) and [professor of African Studies](#). He is currently the Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Chair in the Humanities at the [University of Texas](#) at Austin.^[1] Falola earned his [B.A.](#) and [Ph.D.](#) (1981) in [History](#) at the [University of Ife, Ile-Ife](#) (now [Obafemi Awolowo University](#)), in Nigeria. He is a Fellow of the

Historical Society of Nigeria and of the Nigerian Academy of Letters. Falola is author and editor of more than one hundred books.

Contents

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Academic works

His research interest is [African History](#) since the 19th century in the tradition of the [Ibadan School](#);^[2] his geographic areas of interest include [Africa](#), [Latin America](#) and the [United States](#); and his thematic fields, [Atlantic history](#), [diaspora](#) and [migration](#), [empire](#) and [globalization](#), [intellectual history](#), [international relations](#), [religion](#) and [culture](#). Recent courses he has taught include Introduction to Traditional Africa, an interdisciplinary course on the peoples and cultures of Africa, designed for students with varied backgrounds in African Studies, and Epistemologies of African/Black Studies, a course on the rise and evolution of African/Black Studies, with a focus on pedagogy, methodology, and the historical development of scholarship in the field.

Falola began his academic career as a schoolteacher in [Pahayi](#) in 1970 and by 1981 he was a lecturer at the University of Ife.^[3] He joined the faculty at the University of Texas at Austin in 1991, and has also held short-term teaching appointments at the [University of Cambridge](#) in England, [York University](#) in Canada, [Smith College](#) of [Massachusetts](#) in the United States, [The Australian National University](#) in [Canberra](#), [Australia](#) and the [Nigerian Institute of International Affairs](#) in [Lagos](#), Nigeria.

Books

- *Africa, Empire and Globalization. Essays in Honor of A. G. Hopkins* with Emily Brownell. Carolina Academic Press, Durham, NC (2011)
- *The Atlantic World, 1450-2000* with Kevin David Roberts (2008) ISBN 0-253-21943-4
- *Yoruba Creativity: Fiction, Language, Life and Songs* with Ann Genova (2005) ISBN 1-59221-336-7
- *A History of Nigeria* with Matthew M. Heaton
- *Britain and Nigeria: Exploitation or Development?*
- *Pawnship, Slavery, and Colonialism in Africa* with Paul E. Lovejoy (2003) ISBN 1-59221-039-2
- *African Urban Spaces in Historical Perspective* with Steven J. Salm (2005) ISBN 0-89089-558-9
- *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria* with Ann Genova
- *Mouth Sweeter than Salt : An African Memoir*
- *Yoruba Warlords of the Nineteenth Century*
- *Yoruba Gurus: Indigenous Production of Knowledge in Africa*
- *The Power of African Cultures*
- *The Foundations of Nigeria* with Adebayo Oyebade (2003) ISBN 1-59221-120-8
- *African Politics in Postimperial Times* with Richard L. Sklar 2001 ISBN 0-86543-985-0

TOFAC

In Nigeria, there is a conference named after Toyin Falola by the Ibadan Cultural Studies Group; a group chaired by Professor Ademola Dasylva.^[41] The conference, called The Toyin Falola International Conference on Africa and the African Diaspora (TOFAC), was first held in the Nigerian Premier University in Ibadan, the second was hosted in Lagos by the Centre for Black African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) under the watch of the director general of the centre Professor Tunde Babawale.



Dan Fulani

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Dan Fulani is a Nigerian fiction writer with 16 published books to his credit since 1981, who has tried to highlight development issues through his popular fiction.^[1]

Dan Fulani was brought up on the Mambilla Plateau, northern Nigeria and educated at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. His first published works told the adventures of a young northern Nigerian boy called Sauna and the Sauna stories spread throughout Africa and were in high demand as readers in Southern and East African schools. He later wrote on more contentious themes in particular, 'The Price of Liberty', which told the story of a pesticide, banned in the USA, being dumped on Africa. Other themes included a campaign against milk powder, 'The Fight for Life', and drugs, 'Sauna and the Drug Pedlars'.

Published works

- Fulani, Dan (1981). *No condition is permanent*. Spectrum Books. [ISBN 978-2265-74-8](#).
- Fulani, Dan (1981). *Sauna, Secret Agent*. Arewa Books. [ISBN 0-340-27051-9](#).
- Fulani, Dan (1981). *God's case: No appeal*. Hodder & Stoughton. [ISBN 0-340-27578-2](#).
- Fulani, Dan (1982). *No telephone to heaven*. Spectrum Books. [ISBN 978-2265-04-7](#).
- Fulani, Dan (1982). *The fight for life*. Academic Books. [ISBN 0-340-28325-4](#).
- Fulani, Dan (1983). *The power of corruption*. Spectrum Books. ISBN Spectrum Books.
- Fulani, Dan (1989). *Sleeping giant open eye*. Macmillan Boleswa. [ISBN 0-333-47936-X](#).
- Fulani, Dan (1990). *Twin trouble*. Macmillan Boleswa. [ISBN 0-333-47919-X](#).
- Fulani, Dan (1993). *JAWS, Level 2: The Angel Who Wore Shoes*. Heinemann International. [ISBN 0-435-89172-3](#).
- Fulani, Dan (1994). *Dead men's bones*. Fountain Press. [ISBN 1-874958-09-2](#).
- Fulani, Dan; D. M. Misra, Patrick Kirby (1995). *Janjo and Shika: The Battle for Mombasa (1696-1698)*. Jacaranda Designs. [ISBN 9966-884-99-8](#).
- Fulani, Dan (1995). *One man, two votes*. Fountain Press. [ISBN 1-874958-43-2](#).
- Fulani, Dan (1996). *Flight 800*. Spectrum Books. [ISBN 0-946480-04-4](#).
- *The Fearless Four Hijack*

Bilkisu Funtuwa

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Hajiya Bilkisu Salisu Ahmed Funtuwa is a [Nigerian](#) author. She writes novels in [Hausa](#) that focus on female [Muslim](#) protagonists.^[1] She is one of the best known writers of what is known as "Kano market literature" or *Littattafan Soyayya* — "books of love".^[2] Her novels combine themes of [feminism](#) and women's rights with issues relating to the [Hausa people](#) and [Islam](#), drawing from her own experiences as a member of these groups.^{[2][3]} Funtuwa lives with her family in [Funtua](#), [Katsina State](#), [Nigeria](#).^[3]

Bibliography

- 1994: *Allura Cikin Ruwa (Needle in a Haystack)*
- 1996: *Wa Ya San Gobe (Who Knows Tomorrow Will Bring?)*
- 1997: *Ki Yarda da Ni (Agree With Me)*

Helon Habila

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Helon Habila

Helon Habila, [Göteborg](#) 2010

Born	1967 Kaltungo , Gombe State
Citizenship	Nigerian
Notable award(s)	2001 Caine Prize

www.helonhabila.com

Helon Habila (born 1967) is a Nigerian novelist and poet. He worked as a lecturer and journalist in Nigeria before moving to England to become the African Writing Fellow at the University of East Anglia. In 2002 he published his first novel, *Waiting for an Angel*. His writing has won many prizes including the Caine Prize in 2001. In 2005/2006 he became the Chinua Achebe Fellow at Bard College, NY.

In 2006 he co-edited the British Council's anthology, *New Writing 14*. His second novel, *Measuring Time*, was published in 2007. His third novel, *Oil on Water*, which deals with environmental pollution in the oil rich Nigerian Delta, was published in the US in 2011. His anthology, *The Granta Book of the African Short Story* came out September, 2011.

Habila studied at the University of Jos and at the University of East Anglia and now teaches creative writing at George Mason University, Washington D.C.^{[1][2]}

Habila is a founding member and currently (as of 2011) serves on the advisory board of African Writers Trust,^[3] "a non-profit entity which seeks to coordinate and bring together African writers in the Diaspora and writers on the continent to promote sharing of skills and other resources, and to foster knowledge and learning between the two groups."^{[4][5]}

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- 2 Books
- 3 Further reading
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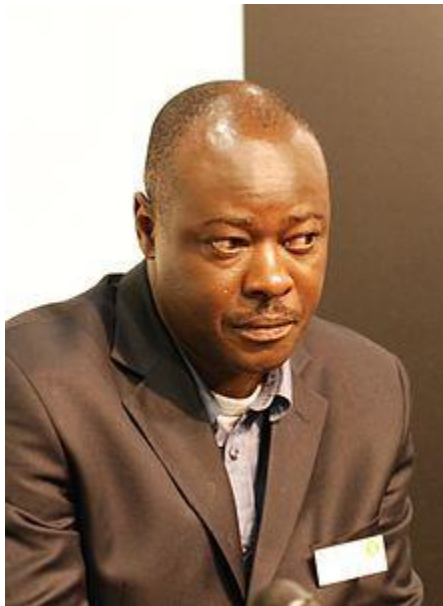
Awards and honors

- 2001 Caine Prize, "Love Poems"
- 2003 Commonwealth Writers Prize, Africa category, *Waiting for an Angel*

- 2007 Emily Clark Balch Prize (short story), from Virginia Quarterly Review, "The Hotel Malogo"
- 2008 Virginia Library Foundation Fiction Award, *Measuring Time*
- 2011 Commonwealth Writers Prize, shortlist, *Oil on Water*
- 2012 Orion Book Award, shortlist, *Oil on Water*

Books

- *Waiting for an Angel: A Novel*, (2004) Penguin Books, ISBN 0-14-101006-1
- *New Writing 14*, (2006) Granta Books. (co-edited with Lavinia Greenlaw).
- *Measuring Time: A Novel*, (2007) W. W. Norton, ISBN 0-393-05251-6 - reviewed at [1]
- *Dreams, Miracles, and Jazz: An Anthology of New Africa Fiction*, (2007), Pan Macmillan. (co-edited with Kadija George)
- *Oil on Water: A Novel* (2010) Hamish Hamilton, ISBN 978-0-241-14486-2
- *The Granta Book of the African Short Story* (2011) Granta, ISBN 1-84708-247-5; ISBN 978-1-84708-247-3



Obo Aba Hisanjani

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Obo Aba Hisanjani (24 November 1949) is a [Nigerian poet](#).

He was born in the small village of [Ajah](#), now a bustling [marketplace](#). He has campaigned against the development and exploitation of the surrounding areas for purely commercial purposes. In a [television interview](#) in 2001 he spoke about the loss of traditional [land rights](#) and values.^[1]

Known in Lagos as the Bushman Poet, he is known for his native [rhythms](#) and complex [Yoruba rhymes](#). His main themes cover traditional practices. He was criticised by many politicians in the 1980s for being against [modernisation](#).^[2]

He is currently the Nigerian [Poet Laureate](#).

List of works

- *Èdè Yorùbá* (1965)
- *ÁLÍFÁBĚĚTÌ YORÙBÁ* (1966)
- *Egbe Isokan Egbe Omo* (1971)
- *Oyibos are a comin* (1982) (translated as 'Whitemen are coming')
- *Ade Oyibos* (1991) (trans. The Royal Banana Man / White Man)

• **Akinwunmi Isola**

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- [Professor Akinwunmi Isola](#) (b. [Ibadan](#)) is a [Nigerian playwright](#), [actor](#), [dramatist](#), culture activist and [scholar](#). He is known for his writing in, and his work in promoting, the [Yoruba language](#).
- Isola wrote his first play, [Efunsetan Aniwura](#), during 1961 and 1962 whilst still a student at the [University of Ibadan](#). This was followed by the novel [O Leku](#). His play proved popular, and one performance in Ibadan was watched by forty thousand people.

- Since then, he has written a number of plays and novels. He also broke into broadcasting, creating a production company that has turned a number of his plays into television dramas and films. Though he claims that 'my target audience are Yorubas', Isola has also written in English
- Akinwunmi Isola is happily married and has four children.

• **Uzodinma Iweala**

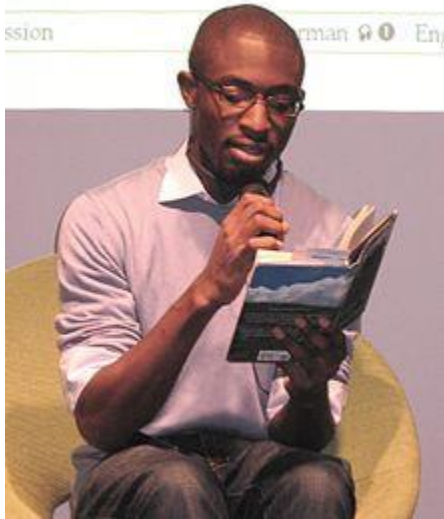
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- Uzodinma Iweala during a public reading at the Frankfurt Book Fair on 10/17/2008
- **Uzodinma Iweala** (born November 5, 1982) is an author and physician who hails from Washington, DC and Nigeria. His debut novel, *Beasts of No Nation*, is a formation of his thesis work at Harvard. It depicts a child soldier in an unnamed African country. The book, published in 2005, has received considerable critical acclaim from sources like *Time Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *The Times*,^[1] and *Rolling Stone*.
- The son of Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Iweala attended St. Albans School in Washington D.C. and also attended Harvard College at Harvard University earning an A.B., *magna cum laude*, in English and American Literature and Language in 2004.^[2] While at Harvard, Iweala earned the Hoopes Prize and Dorothy Hicks Lee Prize for Outstanding

Undergraduate Thesis, 2004; Eager Prize for Best Undergraduate Short Story, 2003; and the Horman Prize for Excellence in Creative Writing, 2003.^[3] He is a graduate of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, class of 2011.^[4] He is currently a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.^[5]

- He won the New York Public Library's 2006 Young Lions Fiction Award. In 2007, he was named as one of Granta magazine's 20 best young American novelists.^[6]



Festus Iyayi

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Festus Iyayi (born 1947, in Ugbegun in Ishan) is a Nigeria writer known for his radical and sometimes tough stance on social and political issues. Iyayi employs a realistic style of writing, depicting the social, political and moral environment and system both the rich and poor live and work in. Iyayi was also a former president of the Association of Senior Staff of Universities (ASSU).

Contents

- [1 Life and Education](#)
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Life and Education

Iyayi was born in Edo state, Nigeria. His family lived on little means but instilled in him strong moral lessons about life. Iyayi started his education at Annuciation Catholic College in the old Bendel state popularly known as ACC finishing in 1966, in 1967 he went to Government College Ughelli graduating in 1968. In that same year he was a zonal winner in a Kenedy Essay Competition organised by the United States Embassy in Nigeria. He left the shores of Nigeria to pursue his higher education, obtaining a M.Sc in Industrial Economics from the Kiev Institute of Economics, in the former USSR and then his Ph.D from the University of Bradford, England. In 1980, he went back to Benin and became a lecturer in the Department of Business Administration at the [University of Benin](#). As a member of staff of the University, he became interested in radical social issues, and a few years after his employment, he became the president of the local branch of the [Academic Staff Union of Universities](#) (ASUU), a radical union known for its upfront style on academic and social welfare. He rose to the position of president of the national organization in 1986, but in 1988, the union was briefly banned and Iyayi was detained, in that same year he won the Commonwealth Prize for Literature for his book Heroes. He was later removed from his faculty position. Today, Iyayi is a member of different [Nigerian](#) literary organizations and works in the private sector as a consultant.

Works

- *Violence*, [Longman](#) (1979) [ISBN 0-582-64247-7](#)
- *The Contract*, [Longman](#) (1982) [ISBN 0-582-78524-3](#)

- *Heroes*, Longman (c1986) [ISBN 0-582-78603-7](#)
- *Awaiting Court Martial*, [Ikeja](#), Lagos : Malthouse Press (1996) [ISBN 978-2601-79-9](#)

• **Abubakar Imam**

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This article **does not cite any references or sources**. Please help [improve this article](#) by [adding citations to reliable sources](#). Unsourced material may be challenged and [removed](#). *(September 2012)*

- **Abubakar Imam** (1911-1981) was a [Nigerian writer](#), [journalist](#) and [politician](#) from [Kagara, Niger](#) in [Nigeria](#). For most of his life, he lived in [Zaria](#), where he was the first [Hausa](#) editor of [Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo](#), the pioneer Newspaper in Northern Nigeria. He attended Katsina College and the [University of London's Institute of Education](#). He first came to repute when he submitted a play for a literary competition in 1933. The judge in the competition was Rupert East, the head of a translation committee, he liked his writing, usually accentuated by the vivid knowledge of native norms and vegetation and mixed with his literary style of wit and imaginative prose. In 1939, together with Robert East and a few others, they started the Gaskiya corporation, a publishing house, which became a successful venture and created a platform for many northern intellectuals to draw forth their voice. The exposure of many premier writers in Northern Nigeria to the political process influenced Imam to join politics. In 1952, with the formation of the [Northern People's Congress](#), together with Umaru Agaie, and [Nuhu Bamalli](#), they formed the major administrative nucleus of the party.

John Jea

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John Jea (born 1773) was an African-American slave, best known for his 1811 autobiography, *The Life, History, and Unparalleled Sufferings of John Jea, the African Preacher*.

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Biography

John Jea was born in [Africa](#) in 1773 near [Calabar](#) in the [Bight of Biafra](#).^[1] He was sold into slavery in [New York](#) with his family, where they worked for a Dutch couple, Oliver and Angelika Trihuen. After learning to read the [Bible](#), he was freed and eventually embarked on a journey to [Boston](#), [New Orleans](#), [South America](#), [Holland](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Ireland](#) and [England](#), where he worked as a preacher.

He later published his autobiography along with poems, thus being one of the first African-American poets to have written an autobiography.^[2]

His autobiography was only rediscovered in 1983.^[2]

Bibliography

- *The Life, History, and Unparalleled Sufferings of John Jea, the African Preacher.*, 1811.

Samuel Johnson (Nigerian historian)

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Samuel Johnson (24 June 1846 - 29 April 1901) was an [Anglican](#) priest and historian of the [Yoruba](#).

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Biography

Born a [recaptive 'Creole'](#) in [Freetown, Sierra Leone](#), Johnson was an [Omoba](#) of the [Oyo](#) clan as a descendant of the [Alaafin Abiodun of Oyo](#). He completed his education at the [Church Missionary Society \(CMS\) Training Institute](#) and subsequently taught during what became known as the Yoruba civil war.

Johnson and [Charles Phillips](#), also of the CMS, arranged a ceasefire in 1886 and then a treaty that guaranteed the independence of the [Ekiti](#) towns. [Ilorin](#) refused to cease fighting however, and the war dragged on.^[1] In 1880, he became a [deacon](#) and in 1888 a [priest](#). He was based in [Oyo](#) from 1881 onward and completed a work on Yoruba history in 1897. This event is said to have been caused by him fearing that his people were losing their history, and that they were beginning to know [European history](#) better. Ironically, this work was *misplaced* by his British publishers.

After his death, his brother Dr. [Obadiah Johnson](#) re-compiled and rewrote the book, using the reverend's copious notes as a guide. In 1921, he released it as *A History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate*. The book has since been likened to *the rise and decline of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon.

Bibliography

- Falola, Toyin: *Pioneer, patriot and patriarch: Samuel Johnson and the Yoruba people*, Madison, WI, African Studies Program, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, 1993.
- Johnson, Samuel: *The History of the Yorubas*, London 1921.

Duro Ladipo

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Duro Ladipo (1931–1978) was one of the best known and critically acclaimed Yoruba dramatists that emerged from postcolonial Africa. Writing solely in the Yoruba language, he captivated the symbolic spirit of Yoruba mythologies in his plays which were later adapted to other medium such as Photography, Television, and Cinema. His most famous play, *Oba kò so* (The king did not hang), a dramatization of the traditional Yoruba story on how Shango became the God of Thunder, received international acclaim at the 1961 Commonwealth Arts Festival and on a European tour, where a Berlin critic, Ulli Beier, compared Ladipo to Von Karajan.^[1] Ladipo usually acted in his own plays.

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Early life

Duro was raised in a Christian family, his father was a minister at an Anglican church in Osogbo. However, Duro may have been influenced by his grandfather, who migrated to Osogbo after the Jalumi war. His grandfather was well versed in Yoruba mythology, especially those emanating from Old Oyo, and was known to have worshipped Shango and Oya.

Career

Ladipo tried hard and succeeded in exposing himself to traditional and Yoruba cultural elements especially when living under the veil of a Christian home. At a young age, he would sneak out of the vicarage to watch Yoruba festivals. This fascination with his culture goaded him into researching and experimenting with theatrical drama and writing. After leaving Osogbo, he went to Ibadan, where he became a teacher. While in Ibadan he became one of the founding members of an artist society or club called Mbari-Mbayo and became influenced by Beier. He later replicated the club in Osogbo and it became the premier group for promoting budding artists and dramatists in Osogbo. Throughout his career, Duro Ladipo wrote ten Yoruba folk operas combining dance, music, mime, proverbs, drumming and praise songs.

He started his theatre group in 1961 but he became fully established with the founding of the Mbari Mbayo Club in Osogbo. His popularity as a folk opera group really rests on his three plays: *Obamoro* In 1962, *Oba ko so* and *Oba Waja* in 1964. (*Oba Waja* - "The King is Dead" - is based on the same historical event which inspired fellow Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*.^[2]) He also promoted *Moremi*. He later transformed the Mbari Mbayo into a cultural center, an arts gallery and a meeting point for young artists seeking to develop their talents. Duro Oladipo wrote quite a number of plays. e.g.; *Suru Baba Iwa*, *Tanimowo*, *Iku*. Some of his plays were also produced for television. In fact he created *Bode Wasinimi* for N.T.A Ibadun.

Abimbola Lagunju

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Abimbola Lagunju (born in 1960 in [Ibadan](#)) is a Nigerian author. He studied Medicine in [St Petersburg, Russia](#) (1979–1987). He returned to Nigeria in the middle of the economic crisis engendered by the World Bank/IMF Structural Adjustment Program imposed on Nigeria. It was a Nigeria quite different from what he had left in 1979. The Middle Class to which he now belonged was destitute. He would later write in *The Children of Signatures* ([ISBN 0-595-76026-0](#)):

My dream,
antithesis,
born on the horizon,
a little ball, that
swells with age,
rolling dark wall,
the ceiling of my world,
dashed on unimportant little rocks
even before I could get my feet wet.

The socio-economic melt-down of his country prompted his interest to shift from ideological idealisms of his student days to questioning the harsh political economy experiments visited on developing countries, particularly fragile sub-Saharan African countries by the Bretton Woods Institutions. He wrote in *Verses from Under the Sands* ([ISBN 978-978-900-481-2](#))

If my hands were tied with the most obstinate roots,
I would struggle to de-fibre the cord,
I would twist and turn the sinews of bloodless hands,
keeping them alive with the power of hope of freedom,
when they shall be free to take clay
from distant streams or nearby rivers
and mould their destiny, my destiny.
But my hands are tied with invisible silk threads,

that cut into my flesh,
drawing strength from the warm current of my blood,
de-nerving my hands with each beat of my heart.

The apparent helplessness of the African States in the face of this assault also reflected in some of his writings. Again, in the *Children of Signatures* ([ISBN 0-595-76026-0](#)), he wrote:

We are the children of signatures,
sons and daughters of important pens,
wielded around independence negotiations,
debt conferences, poverty reduction workshops,
ceasefire agreements, structural readjustment initiatives
We are the orphans of lateral agreements,
bi-fathers with multi-mothers,
cooperations, agencies, international community,
regional associations, sub-regional conventions,
allied with non-allied
We are in exile,
at the edge of their documents,
squeezed between dotted lines,
stamped by those who christened us,
our fathers, who signed away our essence.
Will they ever hear the echo of our silence?

He left Nigeria for Portugal with his family in 1993, and after a brief stint of working and studying in Lisbon, he found a job as a Development Aid worker. This experience exposed him to the arduous and seemingly unending plight of extreme poverty of rural African peoples. In his novel, *Days of Illusions* ([ISBN 0-595-37605-3](#)), he blames the local politicians who are directly responsible for the precarious existence of their citizens, and also the poor people for allowing themselves to be manipulated by the local politicians.

^[1] Lagunju's works include "Cyclones of the Human Heart" ([ISBN 1-85756-478-2](#)), "The Shadow of Rainbow" ([ISBN 1-904181-27-9](#)), "The Children of Signatures" ([ISBN 0-595-76026-0](#)), "The African in the Mirror" ([ISBN 0-595-34819-X](#)), the "Days of Illusions" ([ISBN 0-595-37605-3](#)), "Verses from Under the Sands" ([ISBN 978-978-900-481-2](#)) and "On the African Bus" ([ISBN 978-978-900-400-3](#)).

Abimbola Lagunju lives in [Ibadan](#), [Nigeria](#).

Amina Mama

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Amina Mama

Born September 19, 1958 (age 54)

[Kaduna](#), [Nigeria](#)

Residence [California](#), USA

Nationality Nigerian/British

School [feminism](#), [postcolonialism](#)

Main interests [women](#), [militarism](#), [police](#), [neoliberalism](#), [Africa](#)

Institutions [Mills College](#), [University of California, Davis](#), [Global Fund for Women](#), [Feminist Africa](#)

Influenced by[[show](#)]

Website www.mills.edu/academics/faculty/eths/amama/amama_cv.php

Amina Mama (born 19 September 1958) is a [Nigerian-British](#) writer, feminist and academic. Her main areas of focus have been post-colonial, militarist and gender issues. She has lived in Africa, Europe, and North America, and worked to build relationships between feminist intellectuals across the globe.

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Background

Mama was born in 1958 in a mixed household. Her father is [Nigerian](#) and her mother is [English](#).^[2] According to Mama, her eclectic family background and upbringing has shaped her worldview.^[3] Mama is married to [Nuruddin Farah](#), with whom she has two children.^[4]

She grew up in [Kaduna](#), an ethnically and religiously diverse town in northern Nigeria. Her ancestral roots on her paternal side trace back to [Bida](#).^[3] Several members of Mama's family were involved in the development of the post-colonial local educational system.^[5] In 1966, she left her community in Nigeria due to anti-[Muslim](#) riots.^[6]

Career

Mama moved from Nigeria to the UK and received her doctorate in [organizational psychology](#) from the [University of London](#). Some of her early work involves comparing the situations of British and Nigerian women.^[7] She moved to the Netherlands and then back to Nigeria, only to encounter [more upheaval](#) in 2000.^[8] Then she moved to South Africa, where she began to work at the historically white [University of Cape Town](#) (UCT). At UCT, she became the director of the [African Gender Institute](#) (AGI) and helped to found its journal [Feminist Africa](#).^[8] Mama remains the editor of *Feminist Africa*.^[9]

In 2008, Mama accepted a position at Mills College in Oakland, California, United States. After moving, she commented: "I have learned America isn't just a big, bad source of imperialism."^[10] Professor Mama became Barbara Lee Distinguished Chair in Women's Leadership at Mills—the first person to hold this position.^[9] She co-taught a class called "Real Policy, Real Politics" with Congresswoman Lee on topics concerning African and African-American women, including gender roles, poverty, HIV/AIDS, and militarism.^[11] She is also Chair of the Department of Gender and Women Studies at the University of California, Davis.^[12]

Mama is the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Global Fund for Women, and advises several other international organizations. She has sat on the Board of Directors of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.^[9]

One of her best known works is *Beyond the Masks: Race, Gender and Subjectivity*. She is also involved in film work. In 2010, she co-produced the movie *The Witches of Gambaga* with Yaba Badoe.^{[13][14]}

Thought

Mama describes herself as a feminist and not a womanist, arguing that feminism originates in Africa and that white feminism "has never been strong enough to be 'enemy'—in the way that say, global capitalism can be viewed as an enemy".^[5] She has criticized discourses of women in development for stripping gender studies of politically meaningful feminism.^[15] She has also argued that African universities continue to show entrenched patriarchy, in terms of both interpersonal sexism and institutional gender gaps.^[16]

A primary area of interest for Mama has been gender identity as it relates to global militarism. She is an outspoken critic of AFRICOM, which she describes as part of violent neocolonial resource extraction.^{[17][18]}

Publications

- *The hidden struggle: statutory and voluntary sector responses to violence against black women in the home*. Runnymede, 1989; republished by Whiting and Birch, 1996. ISBN: 9781861770059
- "Black Women and the Police: A Place Where the Law is Not Upheld", in *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain*, ed. Winston James and Clive Harris. London: Verso, 1993. ISBN: 9780860914716.
- *Beyond the Masks: Race, Gender, and Subjectivity*. New York: Routledge, 1995. ISBN: 9780415035446.
- *National machinery for women in Africa: towards an analysis*. Third World Network, 2000. ISBN: 9789988602017.
- "Is it ethical to study Africa? Preliminary Thoughts on Scholarship and Freedom". *African Studies Review* 50 (1), April 2007.

Oliver Mbamara

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This article has multiple issues. Please help [improve it](#) or discuss these issues on the [talk page](#).

This [biographical article](#) **needs additional citations for verification**, as it includes attribution to [IMDb](#). (December 2011)

This article's **use of external links** may not follow Wikipedia's policies or guidelines. (November 2012)

Oliver O. Mbamara is a filmmaker, actor, writer, lawyer and publisher from [Nigeria](#), West Africa.

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Law career

After graduating in Law from the [University of Lagos](#) Nigeria and the [Nigerian Law School](#), he practiced law in Nigeria while simultaneously engaging in writing scripts and poetic pieces in which he also performed and while touring around Nigeria with a theater troupe called *Prime Circle*. He later moved to the United States where he passed the [New York bar examination](#) and was subsequently admitted to practice as an attorney. He is currently an [administrative law judge](#) with the State of New York.

Written works

Aside from his professional training as a lawyer, Oliver is a published writer, poet, publisher, editor, actor, filmmaker, director and more. He continues to simultaneously make impact in these varied fields. Oliver is an international [freelance writer](#) as well as columnist with several national, international and regional newsmagazines, news journals, newspapers, and online magazines. His audience is spread around the world and cuts across tribe, race, gender, and profession. Oliver's articles, poems, and editorials are regularly featured in many diverse newspapers, newsmagazines, online magazines, and websites around the world from the United States, to England, Netherlands, Nigerian and other countries. Currently, he has at least six books to his credit. They include: *Why Are We Here?* 2004, *Flame of Love, The Unrestricted*, 2004, *Flame of Love, The Spark of God*, 2002, *Love Poems and Quotes*, 2003, *Poems of Life, 2nd Edition*, 2002, and *Poems of Life*, 2001.

Theater and film

In 2001, a few years after arriving in the United States, Oliver launched his first book *Poems Of Life* and immediately won and played the lead-actor role in an off-Broadway dance drama – Prof. Chudi’s *Prisoner of The Kalakiri*. In 2003, Oliver directed and played the lead-actor role in the stage recreation of Zulu Sofola’s *Wedlock of The Gods*, in New York. Oliver is currently starring in two feature films: *This America* and *Slave Warrior*. He is the writer of *This America*, in which he also served as Assistant Director and Co-Producer. He is also the writer and director of the feature film *Slave Warrior*, an African historical action thriller. He is currently working on releasing a book version of the story as a novel or historical literature piece at some point.

New films

Currently, Oliver Mbamara has released a number of films and is in the production of many more. Some films written and directed by Oliver Mbamara include: SLAVE WARRIOR, THIS AMERICA, THE RETURN OF SPADE, and more. Others include:

1. SPADE: The Last Assignment - Summer 2008 SEE <http://www.SpadeMovie.com/>
2. ON THE RUN AGAIN (The Sequel to THIS AMERICA) - Fall 2010 SEE <http://www.NollywoodMovies.com/>

Oliver has also starred (and continues to star) in many other films and stage performances.

Television production

Recently, Oliver has delved into Television production and has just concluded a new TV Series titled CULTURES which he created, wrote, and directed. CULTURES aims at tolerance amongst differing cultures using humor. In it, an African Chief sent from Africa by his kinsmen to bring a wife to their son Ozobio who has stayed too long in America without returning home, arrives America to find out that Ozobio is engaged to an American woman. The Chief’s persistence leads to a conflict of cultures with the American woman and ultimately to Ozobio’s dilemma. More about the television drama could be found at: <http://www.CulturesTVSeries.com>

Sebastian Okechukwu Mezu

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Sebastian Okechukwu Mezu

Chairman, Imo State Nigerian Peoples Party

In office

June 1978 – 1979

Chairman, Imo Newspapers

In office

1980–1981

Personal details

Born	April 30, 1941 <u>Emekuku, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria</u>
Political party	Congress for Progressive Change
Spouse(s)	<u>Dr. Rose Mezu</u>

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Background

Dr. Sebastian Okechukwu Mezu was born on April 30, 1941 in Ezeogba, Emekuku, Owerri, Imo State. He received a B.A. in French (1964) with minors in German and Philosophy from Georgetown University. He obtained an LL.B. in 1966 from La Salle Extension University, Chicago, and an M.A. (1966), Ph.D (1967) in Romance Languages from Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore Maryland.

Early political career

In the 1970s, he founded the Imo State branch of the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) and as Secretary of the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) he installed and helped to elect the greatest Governor Imo State has ever had, Governor **Samuel Onunaka Sam Mbakwe** and other notable names to office. Following the success of the NPP at the polls, he became the Chairman of the Golden Breweries Limited (1979–1980) and rehabilitated and revitalized the brewery during a \$50 million expansion of the premier brewery in Nigeria; and as chairman of The Imo State Newspapers Ltd where he raised the daily circulation of the Nigerian Statesman from 50,000 to 150,000.

He is also a renowned writer, scholar, philanthropist, and publisher, establishing Black Academy Press|, Inc, (1969) one of the very first black owned academic publishing Companies that set the tone for Africana studies in the Sixties in America. It remains one of the longest standing historic black publishing companies today.

Campaign Director, Party Secretary and principal architect of Nigerian Peoples Party, that won a landslide victory (over 80%) in the Imo State Legislative, Gubernatorial and Presidential Elections in Nigeria in 1979.

Diplomatic Service

When the Biafran war broke out in 1967, due to the recognition of his valuable contributions and genuine patriotism and vibrant activism as a young scholar in the United States, where he had

voluntarily translated volumes of documents for his country into French and other languages. Dr. S. O Mezu was appointed Biafran| Government Special Representative and Ambassador Abidjan, Ivory Coast at the age of 27 by Colonel C. Odumegwu Ojukwu and was charged with affairs in Francophone and Anglophone West Africa.

He was the co-founder and Deputy Director, Biafra Historical Research Center, Paris, July 1967 – July 1968 then Biafra's semi-official diplomatic mission to France and Europe. Biafran delegate and French expert to various peace delegations to Ivory Coast (President Félix Houphouët-Boigny), Senegal, (President Leopold Sedar Senghor), Gabon (President Albert Bernard Bongo), etc. Biafran delegate and French expert to various peace conferences in Niamey, Niger Republic (President Hamani Diori, 1968) and in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia (Emperor Haile Selassie, 1968).

References

- A Befitting Monument for Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu

The Philosophy of Pan-Africanism, S. Okechukwu Mezu. ed., Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Press, 1965, 142p.

The Tropical Dawn, poems, Baltimore, Maryland, 1966; Buffalo, Black Academy Press, Inc., 1970, 60 p.

Leopold S'edar Senghor et la d'efense et illustration de la civilisation noire, S. Okechukwu Mezu. Paris, Marcel Didier, 1968, 232 p.

Black Leaders of the Centuries, S. Okechukwu Mezu, & Ram Desai, eds. Buffalo, Black Academy Press, Inc., 1970, 302 P.

Behind the Rising Sun, a novel about the Biafran war. S. Okechukwu Mezu. London, William Heinemann, Ltd., 1971, 242p; paper edition (African Writers Series, No. 113) London, Heinemann Educational Books, Ltd., 1972.

Modern Black Literature, S. Okechukwu Mezu. ed. Buffalo, Black Academy Press, Inc., 1971

The Literary Works of Senghor, S. Okechukwu Mezu. London Heinemann Educational Books, Ltd.,- 1972, 121 p.

Igbo Market Literature, S. Okechukwu Mezu. compiler. 5 vols., Buffalo, Black Academy Press, Inc., 1972, 4000 p.

The Meaning of Africa to Afro-Americans: A Comparative Study Of Race & Racism, S. Okechukwu Mezu. ed. Buffalo, Black Academy Press, Inc., 1972, 175 p.

Umu Ejima (The Twins), S. Okechukwu Mezu. An Igbo adaptation of the Latin play, Menaechmi by Plautus. Owerri, Black Academy Press, 1975, 60p.

Leopold Sedar Senghor, by S. Okechukwu Mezu. London: Heinemann, 1973.

Ken Saro-Wiwa: the life and times, S. Okechukwu Mezu. ed. Baltimore, Black Academy Press, Inc. 1996

John Munonye

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John Munonye (April 1929 – May 10 1999)^[1] is an important important Igbo writer and one of the most important Nigerian writers of the twentieth of century. He was born in Akokwa, Nigeria, and was educated at the University of Ibadan and the Institute of Education, London. He retired as the head of the Advanced Teacher Training College, Owerri.

Criticism and style

John Munonye, unlike some of his contemporaries professed a love for optimism in the face of colonial onslaught on traditional values. To him, the dialectical environment of African and western tradition can be seen in both a positive light and outcome for the common Igbo or Nigerian man or woman. An overriding theme in his novels is the focus on the common man.

Munonye sometimes view the common man as being born into a position whereby he is already at a disadvantage, both historically and presently, He sees little difference to the fate of the common man who could be manipulated at the whims of elites and chiefs in both pre- and post-colonial Nigeria and during colonialism.

Works

- *The Only Son*: Heinemann, 1966
- *Obi*, Ibadan: Heinemann, 1969.
- *Oil Man of Obange*: Heinemann, 1971
- *A Wreath for the Maidens*: Heinemann, 1973.
- *A Dancer of Fortune*: Heinemann, 1974.
- *Bridge to a Wedding*: Heinemann, 1978.

Uche Nduka

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Uche Nduka (born 14 October 1963) is a [Nigerian poet](#), [writer](#), [lecturer](#) and [songwriter](#) who was awarded the [Association of Nigerian Authors Prize for Poetry](#) in 1997. He currently lives in [New York](#).

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Life

Uche Nduka was born on 14th of October 1963 in [Umuahia](#), Nigeria. He earned a B.A Combined Honours degree in English from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1985. He has worked as the first Executive Secretary of the Association of Nigerian Authors (1987-1989), National Publicity secretary of ANA (1992-1995), and Lecturer in African Literature at the University of Bremen (1995-2001; 2003-2007). He has lived in the [Netherlands](#), [Germany](#) and the [USA](#).

Career

Nduka's volumes of poetry are *Flower Child* (1988), *Second Act* (1994), *The Bremen Poems* (1995), *Chiaroscuro* (1997) (winner of the Association of Nigerian Authors Poetry Prize), *If Only the Night* (2002), *Heart's Field* (2005), *Eel on Reef* (2007) and *Ijele* (2012). Nduka edited the anthologies, *Poets in Their Youth* (1988), and *Und auf den Straßen eine Pest: Junge Nigerianische Lyrik* (1996). Nduka has also written *Belltime Letters* (2000), a book of commentaries and whimsical meditations in prose.^[1] His work has been translated into German and Dutch.^[2]

Bibliography

Poetry, Main Collections

- *Flower Child*, (Update Communications, 1988)
- *Second Act*, (1994)
- *The Bremen Poems*, (New Leaf Press, 1995)
- *Chiaroscuro*, (Yeti Press, 1997)
- *Belltime Letters*, (New Leaf Press, 2000)
- *Heart's Field*, (Yeti Press, 2005)

- *eel on reef*, (Akashic Books, 2007)
- *Ijele*, (Overpass Books, 2012)

Poetry Anthologies

- edited by Uche Nduka
- *Poets in Their Youth*, (Osiris, Lagos; 1988)
- *Und Auf den Strassen Eine Pest*, (Horleman Verlag, Bad Unkel; 1996)

Nkem Nwankwo

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This article **does not [cite any references or sources](#)**. Please help [improve this article](#) by [adding citations to reliable sources](#). Unsourced material may be challenged and [removed](#). *(December 2008)*

Nkem Nwankwo (12 June 1936 – 12 June 2001) was a [Nigerian](#) novelist and poet.

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Biography

Born in [Nawfia-Awka](#), a village near the [Igbo](#) city of [Onitsha](#) in Nigeria, Nwankwo attended University College in [Ibadan](#), gaining a BA in 1962. After graduating he took a teaching job at Ibadan Grammar School, before going on to write for magazines, including *[Drum](#)* and working

for the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation.^[1] He wrote several stories for children that were published in 1963 as *Tales Out of School*; *More Tales out of School* would follow in 1965. He gained significant attention with his 1964 novel *Danda*, which was made into a widely performed musical that was entered in the 1966 World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal.^[1] During the Nigerian Civil war Nwankwo worked on Biafra's Arts Council and in 1968, in collaboration with Samuel X. Ifekjika, he wrote *Biafra: The Making of a Nation*. After the civil war, he returned to Lagos and worked on the national newspaper, the *Daily Times*.^[1] His subsequent works included the satire *My Mercedes Is Bigger than Yours*. During the 1970s, Nwankwo earned a Master's and Ph.D. at Indiana University. He also wrote about corruption in Nigeria and taught at Michigan State University and Tennessee State University.

He spent the latter part of his life in the US.^[2] He died his sleep in Tennessee, from complications from a heart imbalance that he had been battling for some years.^[3]

Books

- *The Scapegoat* - 1984
- *My Mercedes Is Bigger than Yours* - 1975
- *Danda* - 1963 (Lagos: African Universities Press; London: Deutsch, 1964)
- *Tales Out of School* (short stories; 1963)

Flora Nwapa

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Flora Nwapa

Florence Nwanzuruahu Nkiru Nwapa (13 January 1931 – 16 October 1993) was a Nigerian author best known as **Flora Nwapa**. Her novel *Efuru* (1966) is among the first English-language novels by a woman from Africa.^[1]

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Biography

Nwapa, born in Oguta,^[2] was the forerunner to a generation of African women writers. While never considering herself a feminist, she is best known for recreating life and traditions from a woman's viewpoint. In 1966 her book *Efuru* became Africa's first internationally published female novel in the English language (Heinemann Educational Books). She has been called the

mother of modern African literature. Later she went on to become the first African woman publisher of novels when she founded Tata Press.

She also is known for her governmental work in reconstruction after the Biafran War. In particular she worked with orphans and refugees that were displaced during the war. Further she worked as a publisher of African literature and promoted women in African society.^[3] Flora Nwapa died on 16 October 1993 in Enugu, Nigeria.

Books

Novels

- *Efuru* (1966)
- *Idu* (Heinemann African Writers Series, No.56, ISBN 0-435-90056-0; 1970)
- *Never Again* (1975)
- *One is Enough* (1981)
- *Women are Different* (1986)

Short stories/poems

- *This is Lagos and Other Stories* (1971)
- *Cassava Song and Rice Song* (1986)
- *Wives at War and Other Stories* (1980)

Children's books

- *Emeka, Driver's Guard* (1972)
- *Mammywater* (1979)
- *Journey to Space* (1980)
- *The Miracle Kittens* (1980)
- *The Adventures of Deke* (1980)



Onuora Nzekwu

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Onuora Nzekwu (born February 19, 1928) is a Nigerian professor, writer and editor from the Igbo people.

Works

- *Eze goes to school* (1981)
- *Wand of Noble Wood* (1961)
- *Blade Among the Boys* (1962)
- *Highlife for Lizards* (1965)
- *Troubled Dust* (2012)

Obo Aba Hisanjani

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Obo Aba Hisanjani (24 November 1949) is a [Nigerian poet](#).

He was born in the small village of [Ajah](#), now a bustling [marketplace](#). He has campaigned against the development and exploitation of the surrounding areas for purely commercial purposes. In a [television interview](#) in 2001 he spoke about the loss of traditional [land rights](#) and values.^[1]

Known in Lagos as the Bushman Poet, he is known for his native [rhythms](#) and complex [Yoruba rhymes](#). His main themes cover traditional practices. He was criticised by many politicians in the 1980s for being against [modernisation](#).^[2]

He is currently the Nigerian [Poet Laureate](#).

List of works

- *Èdè Yorùbá* (1965)
- *ÁLÍFÁBĚĚTÌ YORÙBÁ* (1966)
- *Egbe Isokan Egbe Omo* (1971)
- *Oyibos are a comin* (1982) (translated as 'Whitemen are coming')
- *Ade Oyibos* (1991) (trans. The Royal Banana Man / White Man)

Olu Oguibe

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Olu Oguibe

Olu Oguibe is a black American artist and public intellectual.^[1] Professor of Art and African-American Studies at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, Oguibe is a senior fellow of the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at the New School, New York and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.^[citation needed] He is also an art historian, art curator, and leading contributor to postcolonial theory and new information technology studies.^[citation needed]

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Early life and education

Born on October 14, 1964 in Aba, Nigeria,^[citation needed] Oguibe was educated in Nigeria and England. In 1986, he earned a degree in Fine and Applied Arts from the University of Nigeria.^[2]

In 1992, he received a PhD in art history from the School of Oriental and African Studies University of London for his thesis 'Uzo Egonu: An African Artist in the West'.

Art and teaching

Oguibe taught critical theory at Goldsmiths College before moving to the United States.^[*citation needed*] To date his art has been shown in major museums and galleries around the world including the Whitney Museum of American Art; Whitechapel Gallery and the Barbican Center, London; Migros Museum, Zurich; the Irish Museum of Modern Art, and Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, among many others; as well as in the Havana, Busan, and Johannesburg biennials, and most recently at the 2007 Venice Biennial. His public art works may be found in Germany, Japan and Korea. Oguibe has previously taught in several colleges including the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of South Florida where he held the Stuart Golding Endowed Chair in African Art.^[*citation needed*]

International curator

He has also served as curator or co-curator for numerous exhibitions. These include the 2nd Biennale of Ceramics in Contemporary Art in Genoa and Albisola, Italy in 2003; Vidarte 2002: International Video and Media Art Festival at the Palacio Postal, Mexico City in 2002; Century City at the Tate Modern, London, in 2001; Authentic/Ex-centric: Africa in and out of Africa for the 49th Venice Biennale in 2001, and Five Continents and One City: 3rd International Salon of Painting at the Museo de la Ciudad, Mexico City in 2000. He has served as advisor for the Dakar, Johannesburg, and Havana biennials and as critic-in-residence at the Art Omi International artists' residency.^[*citation needed*]

Writer and critic

Oguibe's critical and theoretical writings have appeared in several key volumes including *The Dictionary of Art*, *Art History and its Methods*, *Art in Theory 1900-2000*, *The Visual Culture Reader*, *The Third Text Reader on Art and Culture*, *The Black British Culture and Society Reader*, and *Theory in Contemporary Art: From 1985 to the Present*, as well as numerous serials

such as *Frieze*, *Flash Art International*, *Art Journal*, *Texte zur Kunst*, *Zum Thema*, *Third Text* and *Criteria*. His most recent books include *Reading the Contemporary: African Art from Theory to the Marketplace* (MIT Press, 2000) and *The Culture Game* (University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

He is a naturalized American citizen and makes his home in the historic town of Rockville, Connecticut.^[*citation n*]



Ike Oguine

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Ike Oguine is a writer living in Lagos, Nigeria, and one of the standard-bearers of the current resurgence in Nigerian literature. As a commentator, he has written several opinion pieces for the *New Internationalist*, *West Africa* and *Times Literary Supplement*, and has written several short stories.

His first novel, *A Squatter's Tale*, was published by Heinemann in 2000, and explores the paradoxes of emigration through the aspirations and disappointments of a young Nigerian named Obi in California.

Molara Ogundipe

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Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie (born in Lagos) is a [Nigerian](#) poet, critic, editor, feminist and activist. Considered one of the foremost [writers](#) on [African](#) feminism, gender studies and literary theory, she is a [social critic](#) who has come to be recognized as a viable [authority](#) on African women among [black feminists](#) and feminists in general.^[1]

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Life

Born **Abiodun Omolara Ogundipe** to a family of educators and clergy, she graduated BA English Honours as the first Nigerian with a first class degree from the University of London. She later earned a doctorate in Narratology [the theory of narrative] from the University of Leiden, one of the earliest universities in Europe. She has taught English Studies, Writing, Comparative Literature and Gender from the perspectives of cultural studies and development at universities in several continents. She rose to prominence early in her career in the midst of a male dominated artistic field concerned about the problems afflicting African men and women. Over the years, she has been a critic of the oppression of women and has argued that African women are more oppressed in their status and roles as wives in view of their multiple identities, in some of which identities, they enjoy status, privilege, recognition and agency. She criticizes the plight of African women as due to the impact of imposed colonial and neo-colonial structures that often place African males at the height of social stratification. Their plight is also due to the internalization of patriarchy by African women themselves. She, however, insists on an understanding of the complexity of the statuses of African women in their pre-colonial and indigenous cultures for any useful discussion or study of African women. Molaria Ogundipe has been in the leadership of feminist activism and gender studies in Africa for decades. She now lives and works in West Africa, where she has been setting up writing centres at universities, in addition to her work on literature, gender and film, in contribution to her commitment to intergenerational education and mentoring.

Criticism

Ogundipe is a Nigerian scholar, critic, educator and activist who is recognized as one of the foremost writers on African women and feminism. She argued for an African-centred feminism that she termed "Stiwanism" (Social Transformation In Africa Including Women) in her book *Recreating Ourselves*. A distinguished scholar and literary theorist, she has published numerous works of poetry and literary criticism in addition to her works cited below.

Ogundipe earlier in her career had posited that a true feminist writer had to understand or describe effectively a woman's viewpoint and how to tell the story about a woman. She strongly believes that rediscovering the role of women in Nigeria's social and political institutions may be the best way to improve those institutions. She is known as a writer whose works capture most

vividly the complexities of African life. In *Re-Creating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformations*, she writes brilliantly about the dilemma of writing in her traditional language and men's resistance to gender equality.^[1]

Works

- *Sew the Old Days and Other Poems*, 1985
- *Re-Creating Ourselves: African Women & Critical Transformations*, 1994
- (ed.) *Women as Oral Artists*, 1994
- (ed. with Carole Boyce-Davies) *Moving Beyond Boundaries*. April 1995 (two volume



Wole Oguntokun

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Wole Oguntokun is a Nigerian playwright, stage and film director, as well as a theatre administrator and newspaper columnist.^[1]

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Education

Bachelor of Laws from the Obafemi Awolowo University; Master of Laws (LL.M) and Master's degree in Humanitarian and Refugee Studies, M.H.R.S. from the University of Lagos. He has been called to the Nigerian Bar.

Theatre

Oguntokun emerged as a player on the Nigerian Theatre landscape in September 1998 with his productions of his satirical stage drama *Who's Afraid of Wole Soyinka?*, a lampoon of the Nigerian Military in governance. The first productions were put up at the University of Lagos' Arts Theatre in September that year. In October and December of 1998, he produced the same play at the Muson Centre, Lagos, one of the foremost arts venues in Nigeria.

The Muson Centre thereafter hosted plays he wrote and directed including *Who's Afraid of Wole Soyinka* in May 2002; *Rage of the Pentecost* - August 2002; *Ladugba!* - September 2002; and *The Other Side* - November 2002.^{[2][3]}

At the same venue in March 2003, he produced and directed his adaptation of "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" entitled *Piper, Piper*;^[4] and his play on the dangers of HIV/AIDS, *Gbanja Roulette*, in May and July 2003.

In December 2003, he featured the matriarch of Nigerian drama, Taiwo Ajai-Lycett,^[5] in his stage play *The Inheritors*. Other plays of his produced at the Muson Centre include *Prison Chronicles* in March 2004, *The Other Side* starring Kate Henshaw-Nuttall^[6] in November 2005; *The Sound and The Fury* in April 2006; *The Inheritors* featuring Joke Silva in August 2006, and *Anatomy of a Woman*^[7] featuring Stella Damasus-Aboderin in March 2007.^[8]

Considered a stage activist^[9] by some, he also produced and directed plays by other playwrights at the Muson Centre. They include *The Trials Of Brother Jero* by Wole Soyinka on 2 and 3 July 2005) and Femi Osofisan's *Once upon Four Robbers* in December 2004.

In July 2007, Oguntokun initiated a collaboration with the Arts Centre known as Terra Kulture, on Victoria Island, Lagos, and commenced the "Theatre@Terra",^[10] becoming its founding producer and artistic director and turning it into one of Nigeria's most consistent venues for Theatre, with plays being produced every Sunday at the venue. Oguntokun ceased to be the sole producer of Theatre @ Terra^[11] in January 2011 though he continues to direct plays at the venue^[12] from time to time.

Oguntokun has produced and directed^[13] plays by many of Nigeria's best-known playwrights including Wole Soyinka's (*Kongi's Harvest, Madmen & Specialists, The Lion and the Jewel, The Swamp Dwellers, Death and the King's Horseman, The Strong Breed, Childe Internationale, Camwood on the Leaves, The Jero Plays*); Femi Osofisan's *Morountodun, Once Upon Four Robbers, The Engagement, The Inspector and the Hero*; Professor Ola Rotimi's *The Gods are not to Blame*; Zulu Sofola's *King Emene, Wedlock of the Gods, Wizard of Law*, as well as Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Banzi is Dead*.

Oguntokun was official consultant to the British Council/Lagos and the crew of the National Theatre in London for the purpose of that National Theatre's production of Wole Soyinka's play *Death and the King's Horseman*^[14] in April and May 2009.

Oguntokun was the General Secretary to the Lagos State arm of the Association of Nigerian Authors in 2003/2004 and is the writer of "Iaspapi", a blog on Arts and Society. He has been described as one of 300^[15] people, events, places and things that helped shape 2010 (in Nigeria).

The performances of his plays have been supported by The Society for Family Health (SFH), The Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja, Pathfinder International, The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, and the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA) amongst many others. His play *Gbanja Roulette*^[16] was presented at the Shehu Yar'Adua Musa Centre, Abuja in October 2003 with the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo as Guest of Honour and again at the Presidential Villa, Aso Rock in January 2004. *Gbanja Roulette* and *Audu's Way*, both plays written by Oguntokun with HIV/AIDS as the subject matter, were performed to the Lagos State, Edo State and Anambra State Houses of Legislature in separate productions sponsored by the Society for Family Health (SFH). *Gbanja Roulette* has since become an official part of the syllabus at the University of Lagos.

Oguntokun was commissioned by the Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND) to head the writing team that adapted Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* for the Nigerian populace. The end result was *V Monologues-The Nigerian Story*, a production that he directed in March 2008 in productions at the National Arts Theatre, Terra Kulture, The Muson Centre (all in Lagos) and also at The Women's Development Centre and The Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre in Abuja.

Oguntokun created^[17] the annual "Season^[18] of Soyinka"^[19] now approaching its 7th Season in which plays by the Nobel Laureate are presented and "The Legend Series" in which evergreen plays by first- and second-generation Nigerian dramatists are featured. He is the author of the published poetry collection, *Local Boy and other poems*. He wrote, directed and produced the unprecedented *The Tarzan Monologues* - a dramatic stage-rendering of monologues by men touching on topics that include Religion, Politics, Erectile Dysfunction, Infidelity, Finances, Love and Marriage, Infant Mortality among many others. The performances were all on Sundays in November 2009 and February 2010. This led to the production of *The V. Monologues v. The Tarzan Monologues* in which male and female actors duelled on stage in all the Sundays of

March, September and October 2010 in Lagos, Nigeria, as well as at the National Theatre, Ghana.^[20]

Oguntokun directed Aimé Césaire's "A Season in the Congo" for the Lagos State Government / UNESCO -sponsored "Black Heritage Festival" in April 2010; his own play *The Waiting Room*^[21] in the same festival^[22] for the 2011 Black Heritage Festival and Marco Martinelli's *Moor Harlequin's 22 Misfortunes* for the 2012 edition of the festival.

Early in 2010, Oguntokun was commissioned to write and direct a play on the life and times of Bishop Samuel Ajai Crowther, the first Black African Bishop of the Anglican Church, entitled *Ajai The Boy Slave*^[23] made up of cast members from Britain and Nigeria. The play was performed at the Muson Centre in Lagos on 19 and 21 December 2010.

Oguntokun was one of five Nigerian theatre directors selected by the British Council to be part of a Nigerian Theatre Director's Residency/Workshop in the United Kingdom in May 2011. In August 2011, he was one of two Nigerians chosen to be British Council delegates to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Oguntokun was a facilitator^[24] at the Theatre Directors Workshop^[25] organised as part of the Garden City^[26] Literary Festival^[27] in collaboration with the British Council in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria in September 2011.

His play *The Waiting Room* was performed at the Festival of Nigerian Plays (FESTINA),^[28] the annual celebration of stage plays by the National Association of Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP) from Friday 28 October until Sunday 30 October 2011 and as the festival play for the annual Lagos Book and Arts Festival in November 2011.

He directed the Nigerian premiere of Ntozake Shange's multi-award winning play *For Coloured Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When The Rainbow Is Enuf*^[29] on 29 and 30 December at the Shell Hall, Muson Centre in Lagos, Nigeria.

Oguntokun's theatre company, "Renegade Theatre"^[30] was one of five African theatre companies and the only West African one, selected to be part of the Shakespeare Cultural Olympiad at the

Globe Theatre (Globe to Globe Festival) in London in April-June 2012. 37 international touring theatre companies presented each of Shakespeare's 37 plays in a different language. Oguntokun directed *The Winter's Tale in Yoruba* on 24 and 25 May 2012 at the Globe.

He has directed two Muson Festival Plays - *The Gods are Not to Blame* (2006) and *An Ordinary Legacy* (2012). He was the recipient of the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Practitioners' (NANTAP) Award for excellence at the Association's annual convention in November 2012

Television

Oguntokun independently produced and wrote the TV sit-coms, *Crossworld Blues* on DBN TV (1999) and *Living Free* on MBI television (2002). He also produced the television show on current affairs, *The Cutting Edge*, which ran on MBI in 2002. Oguntokun was a producer and Head Writer on Season II of the Pan-African Talk-Show *Moments with Mo* and produced briefly on Season IV.

Documentary

Oguntokun wrote and produced a documentary on inner-city violence on young females, *The Sounds Of Silence*,^[31] which was commissioned by the Ajegunle Community Project (ACP) (2009).

Since March 2007 he has written a weekly column, "The Girl Whisperer", on gender relations in the *Sunday Guardian*, and he is a member of the Governing Council of the [Committee for Relevant Art] (CORA), a leading Arts and Culture Advocacy Group in Nigeria.

Oguntokun is the Chief Executive Officer of Jason Media and Renegade Theatre.

Tanure Ojaide

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Tanure Ojaide (born 1948) is a prolific [Nigerian poet](#) and writer. He is noted for his unique stylistic vision and for his intense criticism of imperialism, religion, and other issues.

Ojaide, a Ph.D., has won major national and international poetry awards, including the Commonwealth Poetry Prize for the [Africa Region](#) (1987), the BBC Arts and Africa Poetry Award (1988), the All-Africa Okigbo Prize for Poetry (1988 and 1997), and also the [Association of Nigerian Authors'](#) Poetry Prize (1988 and 1994).

Contents

- [1 Poems](#)
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Poems

- Waiting for the Hatching of a Cockerel (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008)
- The Tale of the Harmattan (Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2007)
- In the House of Words (Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd., 2005)
- I Want to Dance and Other Poems (San Francisco: African Heritage Press, 2003)
- In the Kingdom of Songs (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2002).
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- Labyrinths of the Delta (New York: Greenfield Review Press, 1986).
- Children of Iroko & Other Poems (New York: Greenfield Review Press, 1973).

Fiction

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- The Debt-Collector and Other Stories (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2009).
- The Activist (A Novel) (Lagos: Farafina Publications, 2006).
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- God's Medicine Men and Other Stories (Lagos, Nigeria: Malthouse Ltd., 2004)

Non-fiction

- Great Boys: An African Childhood (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1998). (a memoir)

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Gabriel Okara

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This **biographical article** **needs additional citations for verification**. Please help by adding **reliable sources**. Contentious material about living persons that is unsourced or poorly sourced **must be removed immediately**, especially if potentially **libelous** or harmful. *(May 2011)*

Gabriel Okara (born 24 April 1921) is a Nigerian poet^[1] and novelist who was born in Bomoundi in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. In 1979, he was awarded the Commonwealth Poetry Prize.

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Biography

Gabriel Imomtimi Gbaingbain Okara, the son of an Ijo chief,^[2] was born in Bomoundi in the Niger delta in 1921. He was educated at Government College, Umuahia, and later at Yaba Higher College. He studied journalism at Northwestern University in the late 1950s, and before the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War worked as Information Officer for the Eastern Nigerian Government Service.^[2]

Writing

His most famous poem is "Piano and Drums". Another popular poem, "You Laughed and Laughed and Laughed", is a frequent feature of anthologies. Okara is very concerned with what happens when the ancient culture of Africa is faced with modern Western culture, as in his poem "Once Upon a Time". He pursues that theme in his novel *The Voice* (Africana Publishing: ISBN 0-8419-0015-9) Its protagonist Okolo, like countless post-colonial Africans, is hunted by society and haunted by his own ideals.

In addition to his poetry and fiction, Okara has also written plays and features for broadcasting.^[2]

Many of his manuscripts were destroyed during the Nigerian Civil War.

Bibliography

- 1970 *The Voice* - novel
- 1978 *The Fisherman's Invocation* doodoo

Christopher Okigbo

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Chris Okigbo

	Christopher Okigbo
	Christopher Ifekandu Okigbo
Born	16 August 1930 <u>Ojoto, Anambra State, Nigeria</u>
Died	1967 Nsukka, Igboland
Occupation	<u>Author, Poet</u>
Nationality	<u>Nigerian</u>
Ethnicity	<u>Igbo</u>
Genres	<u>Drama, Poetry</u>
Subjects	<u>Comparative literature</u>

Influences[[show](#)]

Christopher Ifekandu Okigbo (1930–1967) was a [Nigerian poet](#), who died fighting for the independence of [Biafra](#). He is today widely acknowledged as the outstanding postcolonial English-language African poet and one of the major modernist writers of the twentieth century.

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Early life

Okigbo was born on August 16, 1930, in the town of [Ojoto](#), about ten miles from the city of [Onitsha](#) in [Anambra State](#). His father was a teacher in [Catholic missionary](#) schools during the heyday of British colonial rule in Nigeria, and Okigbo spent his early years moving from station to station. Despite his father's devout Christianity, Okigbo felt a special affinity to his maternal grandfather, a priest of [Idoto](#), an [Igbo](#) deity personified in the river of the same name that flowed through his village. Later in life, Okigbo came to believe that his grandfather's soul was [reincarnated](#) in him, and the "water goddess" figures prominently in his work. *Heavensgate* (1962) opens with the compelling lines:

*Before you, mother Idoto,
naked I stand,^[1]*

while in "Distances" (1964) he celebrates his final aesthetic and psychic return to his indigenous [religious](#) roots:

I am the sole witness to my homecoming.^[2]

Another influential figure in Okigbo's early years was his older brother Pius Okigbo, who would later become the renowned economist and first Nigerian Ambassador to the European Economic Commission (EU).

Days at Umuahia and Ibadan

Okigbo graduated from Government College Umuahia (in present Abia State, Nigeria) two years after Chinua Achebe, another noted Nigerian writer, having earned himself a reputation as both a voracious reader and a versatile athlete. The following year, he was accepted to University College in Ibadan. Originally intending to study Medicine, he switched to Classics in his second year.^[3] In college, he also earned a reputation as a gifted pianist, accompanying Wole Soyinka in his first public appearance as a singer. It is believed that Okigbo also wrote original music at that time, though none of this has survived.

Work and art

Upon graduating in 1956, he held a succession of jobs in various locations throughout the country, while making his first forays into poetry. He worked at the Nigerian Tobacco Company, United Africa Company, the Fiditi Grammar School (where he taught Latin), and finally as Assistant Librarian at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka, where he helped to found the African Authors Association.

During those years, he began publishing his work in various journals, notably *Black Orpheus*, a literary journal intended to bring together the best works of African and African American writers. While his poetry can be read in part as powerful expression of postcolonial African nationalism, he was adamantly opposed to Negritude, which he denounced as a romantic pursuit of the "mystique of blackness" for its own sake; he similarly rejected the conception of a commonality of experience between Africans and black Americans, a stark philosophical contrast to the editorial policy of *Black Orpheus*. It was on precisely these grounds that he

rejected the first prize in African poetry awarded to him at the 1965 Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, declaring that there is no such thing as a Negro or black poet.

In 1963, he left Nsukka to assume the position of West African Representative of Cambridge University Press at Ibadan, a position affording the opportunity to travel frequently to the United Kingdom, where he attracted further attention. At Ibadan, he became an active member of the Mbari literary club, and completed, composed or published the works of his mature years, including "Limits" (1964), "Silences" (1962–65), "Lament of the Masks" (commemorating the centenary of the birth of W. B. Yeats in the forms of a Yoruba praise poem, 1964), "Dance of the Painted Maidens" (commemorating the 1964 birth of his daughter, Obiageli or Ibrahimat, whom he regarded as a reincarnation of his mother) and his final highly prophetic sequence, "Path of Thunder" (1965–67), which was published posthumously in 1971 with his magnum opus, *Labyrinths*, which incorporates the poems from the earlier collections.

War and legacy

In 1966 the Nigerian crisis came to a head. Okigbo, living in Ibadan at the time, relocated to eastern Nigeria to await the outcome of the turn of events which culminated in the secession of the eastern provinces as independent Biafra on May 30, 1967. Living in Enugu, he worked together with Achebe to establish a new publishing house, Citadel Press.

With the secession of Biafra, Okigbo immediately joined the new state's military as a volunteer, field-commissioned major. An accomplished soldier, he was killed in action during a major push by Nigerian troops against Nsukka, the university town where he found his voice as a poet, and which he vowed to defend with his life. Earlier, in July, his hilltop house at Enugu, where several of his unpublished writings (perhaps including the beginnings of a novel) were, was destroyed in a bombing raid by the Nigerian air force. Also destroyed was *Pointed Arches*, an autobiography in verse which he describes in a letter to his friend and biographer, Sunday Anozie, as an account of the experiences of life and letters which conspired to sharpen his creative imagination.

Several of his unpublished papers are, however, known to have survived the war. Inherited by his daughter, Obiageli, who established the Christopher Okigbo Foundation in 2005 to perpetuate his

legacy, the papers were catalogued in January 2006 by Chukwuma Azuonye, Professor of African Literature at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Boston, who assisted the foundation in nominating them for the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. Azuonye's preliminary studies of the papers indicate that, apart from new poems in English, including drafts of an Anthem for Biafra, Okigbo's unpublished papers include poems written in Igbo. The Igbo poems are fascinating in that they open up new vistas in the study of Okigbo's poetry, countering the views of some critics, especially the troika (Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike) in their 1980 *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature*, that he sacrificed his indigenous African sensibility in pursuit of obscurantist Euro-modernism.

"Elegy for Alto", the final poem in *Path of Thunder*, is today widely read as the poet's "last testament" embodying a prophecy of his own death as a sacrificial lamb for human freedom:

*Earth, unbind me; let me be the prodigal; let this be
the ram's ultimate prayer to the tether...*

AN OLD STAR departs, leaves us here on the shore

Gazing heavenward for a new star approaching;

The new star appears, foreshadows its going

Before a going and coming that goes on forever....^[4]

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The most authoritative published source on Okigbo to date is Obi Nwakanma's *Christopher Okigbo, 1930-67: Thirsting for Sunlight* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2010)

- Brecht's and Okigbo's work represent two different political approaches to modernism essay with approaches to Okigbo's work via intercessions into the work Brecht, Derrida and Foucault



Isidore Okpewho

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Isidore Okpewho (born 1941 [Abraka](#), [Nigeria](#)) is a Nigerian [novelist](#), and critic.^[1] He won the 1976 African Arts Prize for Literature, and 1993 [Commonwealth Writers' Prize](#), Best Book Africa.

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Life

He graduated from the [University of London](#), and from the [University of Denver](#) with a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, and from the [University of London](#) with a D.Lit. in the Humanities. He taught at the [University at Buffalo](#), [The State University of New York](#) from 1974 to 1976,

University of Ibadan from 1976 to 1990, Harvard University from 1990 to 1991, and Binghamton University.^[2]

He was a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in 1982, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in 1982, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in 1988, the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute in 1990, National Humanities Center in 1997, and 2003 Guggenheim Fellowship.^[3]

Works

Novels

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- *The Epic in Africa: Toward a Poetics of the Oral Performance*, Columbia University Press, 1979, [ISBN 978-0-231-04400-4](#)
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Nnedi Okorafor

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Nnedi Okorafor

	Nnedi Okorafor
Born	April 8, 1974 (age 39) <u>Cincinnati, Ohio</u>
Nationality	Nigerian American
Field	<u>writer, professor</u> <u>Octavia E. Butler</u>
Influenced by	<u>Stephen King</u> <u>Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o</u> <u>Ben Okri</u>
	<u>Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa</u>
Awards	<u>The World Fantasy Award</u> <u>Macmillan Writers Prize for Africa</u> <u>Carl Brandon Parallax Award</u>

Nnedi Okorafor (full name: **Nnedimma Nkemdili Okorafor** (also previously known as **Nnedi Okorafor-Mbachu**) is a Nigerian-American writer of fantasy, science fiction, and speculative fiction.

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Background and personal life

The American-born daughter of Igbo Nigerian parents, she has regularly visited Nigeria since she was very young. Her novels and stories reflect both her West African heritage and her American life. Okorafor is a 2001 graduate of the Clarion Writers Workshop in Lansing, MI, and holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of Illinois, Chicago. She is a professor of creative writing at Chicago State University and lives with her family in Illinois.

Works and critical reception

Okorafor received a 2001 Hurston-Wright literary award^[1] for her story "Amphibious Green." She is the author of *Who Fears Death* (DAW/Penguin Books), *The Shadow Speaker* (Hyperion/Disney Book Group) and *Zahrah the Windseeker* (Houghton Mifflin). *Zahrah* is the winner of the Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa. It was also shortlisted for the 2005 Carl Brandon Parallax and Kindred Awards and a finalist for the Garden State Teen Book Award and the Golden Duck Award. *The Shadow Speaker* was a winner of the Carl Brandon Parallax Award, a Booksense Pick for Winter 2007/2008, a Tiptree Honor Book,^[2] a finalist for the Essence Magazine Literary Award, the Andre Norton Award and the Golden Duck Award and an NAACP Image Award nominee. *Who Fears Death* won the 2011 World Fantasy Award for Best Novel,^[3] was a 2011 Tiptree Honor Book and was nominated for the 2010 Nebula Award.^[4] Okorafor's children's book *Long Juju Man* is the 2007–08 winner of the Macmillan Writer's Prize for Africa.^[5] Her short stories have been published in anthologies and magazines, including *Dark Matter II*, *Strange Horizons*, *Moondance* magazine, and *Writers of the Future* Volume XVIII.

In 2009, she donated her archive to the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) Collection of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at the Northern Illinois University Library.^[6]

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Young Adult - writing as Nnedi Okorafor

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Adult - writing as Nnedi Okorafor

- *Who Fears Death* (2010, DAW/Penguin)
- *Kabu-Kabu* (2013, upcoming)



Ben Okri

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Ben Okri

Quote from Ben Okri's *Mental Fight* on the [Memorial Gates](#).

Born	15 March 1959 (age 54) Minna, Nigeria
Occupation	Writer
Genres	fiction, essays, poetry
Literary movement	Postmodernism , Postcolonialism
Notable work(s)	<i>The Famished Road</i> , <i>A Way of Being Free</i> , <i>Starbook</i> , <i>A Time for New Dreams</i>

Influences[[show](#)]

Ben Okri [OBE](#) [FRSL](#) (born 15 March 1959) is a [Nigerian poet](#) and [novelist](#).^[1] Okri is considered one of the foremost African authors in the [post-modern](#) and [post-colonial](#)

traditions^{[2][3]} and has been compared favorably with authors such as Salman Rushdie and Gabriel García Márquez.^[4]

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Biography

Ben Okri is a member of the Urhobo people; his father was Urhobo, and his mother has half-Igbo.^[1] He was born in Minna in west central Nigeria to Grace and Silver Okri in 1959.^[5] His father Silver moved his family to London when Okri was less than two years old^[3] so that Silver could study law.^[6] Okri thus spent his earliest years in London, and attended primary school in Peckham.^[2] In 1968 Silver moved his family back to Nigeria where he practiced law in Lagos, providing free or discounted services for those who could not afford it.^[5] His exposure to the Nigerian civil war^[7] and a culture in which his peers saw visions of spirits^[3] at this time later provided inspiration for Okri's fiction.

At the age of 14, after being rejected for admission to a university program in physics because of his youth, Okri claimed to have had a revelation that poetry was his chosen calling.^[8] He began writing articles on social and political issues, but these never found a publisher.^[8] He then wrote short stories based on those articles, and some were published in women's journals and evening papers.^[8] Okri claimed that his criticism of the government in some of this early work led to his

name being placed on a death list, and necessitated his departure from the country.^[3] In the late 1970s, Okri moved back to England to study comparative literature at Essex University with a grant from the Nigerian government.^[8] But when funding for his scholarship fell through, Okri found himself homeless, sometimes living in parks and sometimes with friends. He describes this period as "very, very important" to his work: "I wrote and wrote in that period... If anything [the desire to write] actually intensified."^[8]

Okri's success as a writer began when he published his first novel *Flowers and Shadows*, at the age of 21.^[1] Okri then served *West Africa* magazine as poetry editor from 1983 to 1986, and was a regular contributor to the BBC World Service between 1983 and 1985, continuing to publish throughout this period.^[1] His reputation as an author was secured when he won the Booker Prize for Fiction for his novel *The Famished Road* in 1991.^[1]

Literary career

Since he published his first novel, *Flowers and Shadows* (1980), Okri has risen to an international acclaim, and he is often described as one of Africa's leading writers.^{[2][3]} His best known work, *The Famished Road*, which was awarded the 1991 Booker Prize, along with *Songs of Enchantment* and *Infinite Riches* make up a trilogy that follows the life of Azaro, a spirit-child narrator, through the social and political turmoil of an African nation reminiscent of Okri's remembrance of war-torn Nigeria.^[1]

Okri's work is particularly difficult to categorize. Although it has been widely categorized as post-modern,^[9] some scholars have noted that the seeming realism with which he depicts the spirit-world challenges this categorization. If Okri does attribute reality to a spiritual world, it is claimed, then his "allegiances are not postmodern [because] he still believes that there is something ahistorical or transcendental conferring legitimacy on some, and not other, truth-claims."^[9] Alternative characterizations of Okri's work suggest an allegiance to Yoruba folklore,^[10] New Ageism,^{[9][11]} spiritual realism,^[11] magical realism,^[12] visionary materialism,^[12] and existentialism.^[13]

Against these analyses, Okri has always rejected the categorization of his work as magical realism, claiming that this categorization is the result of laziness on the part of critics and likening this categorization to the observation that "a horse ... has four legs and a tail. That doesn't describe it."^[3] He has instead described his fiction as obeying a kind of "dream logic,"^[7] and stated that his fiction is often preoccupied with the "philosophical conundrum ... what is reality?"^[8] insisting that:

"I grew up in a tradition where there are simply more dimensions to reality: legends and myths and ancestors and spirits and death ... Which brings the question: what is reality? Everyone's reality is different. For different perceptions of reality we need a different language. We like to think that the world is rational and precise and exactly how we see it, but something erupts in our reality which makes us sense that there's more to the fabric of life. I'm fascinated by the mysterious element that runs through our lives. Everyone is looking out of the world through their emotion and history. Nobody has an absolute reality."^[2]

Okri's short fiction has been described as more realistic and less fantastic than his novels, but these stories also depict Africans in communion with spirits,^[1] while his poetry and nonfiction have a more overt political tone, focusing on the potential of Africa and the world to overcome the problems of modernity.^{[1][14]}

Okri was made an honorary Vice-President of the English Centre for the International PEN and a member of the board of the Royal National Theatre.^[1] On 26 April 2012 Okri was appointed the new vice-president of the Caine Prize for African Writing, having been on the advisory committee and associated with the prize since it was established 13 years previously.^[15]

Influences

Okri has described his work as influenced as much by the philosophical texts in his father's bookshelves as it was by literature,^[8] and Okri cites the influence of both Francis Bacon and Michel de Montaigne on his *A Time for New Dreams*.^[16] His literary influences include Aesop's Fables, Arabian Nights, Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream,^[7] and Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."^[8] Okri's 1999 epic poem, *Mental Fight*, is also named for a quote from the

poet William Blake's "And did those feet ...,"^[17] and critics have noted the close relationship between Blake and Okri's poetry.^[12]

Okri was also influenced by the oral tradition of his people, and particularly his mother's storytelling: "If my mother wanted to make a point, she wouldn't correct me, she'd tell me a story."^[7] His first-hand experiences of civil war in Nigeria are said to have inspired many of his works.^[7]

Awards and honours

- 1987 Commonwealth Writers Prize (Africa Region, Best Book) - *Incidents at the Shrine*
- 1987 Aga Khan Prize for Fiction - *Incidents at the Shrine*
- 1988 Guardian Fiction Prize - *Stars of the New Curfew* (shortlisted)
- 1991 to 1993 Fellow Commoner in Creative Arts Trinity College, Cambridge
- 1991 Booker Prize - *The Famished Road*
- 1993 Chianti Ruffino-Antico Fattore International Literary Prize - *The Famished Road*
- 1994 Premio Grinzane Cavour (Italy) - *The Famished Road*
- 1995 Crystal Award (World Economic Forum)
- 1997 Honorary Doctorate of Literature, awarded by University of Westminster
- 2000 Premio Palmi (Italy) - *Dangerous Love*
- 2001 Order of the British Empire (OBE)
- 2002 Honorary Doctorate of Literature, awarded by University of Essex
- 2004 Honorary Doctor of Literature, awarded by University of Exeter
- 2008 International Literary Award Novi Sad (International Novi Sad Literature Festival, Serbia).
- 2009 Honorary Doctorate of Utopia, awarded by University voor het Algemeen Belang, Belgium
- 2010 Honorary Doctorate, awarded by School of Oriental and African Studies
- 2010 Honorary Doctorate of Arts, awarded by the University of Bedfordshire

Bibliography

Novels

- *Flowers and Shadows* (1980)

- *The Landscapes Within* (1981)
- *The Famished Road* (1991)
- *Songs of Enchantment* (1993)
- *Astonishing the Gods* (1995)
- *Birds of Heaven* (1995)
- *Dangerous Love* (1996)
- *Infinite Riches* (1998)
- *In Arcadia* (2002)
- *Starbook* (2007)

Poetry, essays and short stories

- *Incidents at the Shrine* (1986)
- *Stars of the New Curfew* (1988)
- *An African Elegy* (1992)
- *A Way of Being Free* (1997)
- *Mental Fight* (1999)
- *Tales of Freedom* (2009)
- *A Time for New Dreams* (2011)
- *Wild* (2012)
- *The Awakening Age'*
- "In the Shadow of War"

Obinna Charles Okwelume

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Dr. Obinna Charles Okwelume Jnr. (born September 20, 1981 in [Port Harcourt](#), [Rivers State](#), [Nigeria](#)) is an [African](#) scholar, writer and playwright.

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Biography

He studied at St. Anns Nursery and Primary School and De World International Secondary School all in Port Harcourt. Obinna (meaning "*Father's heart*"),^[1] as he is fondly called, studied Mass Communication in [Madonna University \(Ihiala\)](#), Nigeria, graduating with a First Class honours degree in 2003. He has a Masters degree in International Relations from [London Metropolitan University](#) where he received a full Postgraduate Scholarship; and a [Doctor of Philosophy \(PhD\)](#) in African Studies (Media and Anthropology) from the [Centre of West African Studies, University of Birmingham](#). He received the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations award in 2001 for his contributions to literary writing and the RE Bradbury Memorial Prize in 2010 for the best thesis in the School of History and Cultures at the University of Birmingham. He worked briefly with [Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation](#) in the Group Public Affairs Division, Abuja and the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation, Abuja, Nigeria in the Public Relations Unit. He founded the Dynamics Choir and Dynamites Theatre in 1997. Through his works, he founded and is Coordinator, Save Africa Project, a project that aims to immortalise African culture via literature. Okwelum is a member of the [Association of Nigerian Authors](#), Nigerian Institute of Public Relations and The [Chartered Institute of Journalists](#), UK; an Associate Member of the [Nigerian Institute of Management](#). He also, is a member of the Royal African Society, UK and was president of the International Students Association of the [University of Birmingham](#), 2006-2007. He was Editor-in-Chief of the NYSC FCT Editorial Board and also member of several Editorial Boards. He is currently at the [National Universities Commission](#).

Works

His published works include *Ogurigwe* (2001), *Arrow of Vengeance* (2002), *Three Plays* (2002), *Babel of Voices* (2002), *Drumbeats of Black Africa* (2004), and *Dictionary of Mass Communication* (2006). Okwelumbe is a play director; at his leisure he directs music performances and cultural displays.

Afolabi Olabimtan

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Afolabi Olabimtan

Senator for Ogun West

In office

29 May 1999 – 29 May 2003

Succeeded by [Iyabo Anisulowo](#)

Personal details

Born June 11, 1932
[Ogun State](#), [Nigeria](#)

Died August 27, 2003

Afolabi Olabimtan (June 11, 1932 - August 27, 2003) was a [Nigerian politician](#), [writer](#), and [academic](#).^[1] He was born in [Ogun State](#) and was later the [senator](#) for Ogun West from 1999 to 2003. He died in a motor accident in August 2003.^[2]

Olabimtan achieved a [PhD](#) at the [University of Lagos](#) in African Languages.^[1] He became an expert in the [Yoruba language](#), and wrote a number of [novels](#) in the tongue, such as [Kekere Ekun](#) in 1967 and [Ayanmo](#) in 1973.

In 1999, Olabimatan was elected as a senator for the Alliance for Democracy party for Ogun West. He served just one term, standing down in 2003 in order to allow a younger successor to take his place.^[3] Later in the same year he was killed in a motor accident.

His death preceded the release of his autobiography, *The Graces, the Grass and the Gains*. This contained the claim that, in a 1994 meeting, a number of Yoruba leaders had supported the continued imprisonment of Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola, in return for bribes in the form of money and political positions.^{[2][4]} Those accused of attending the meeting, such as Ebenezer Babatope, have denied knowledge of it.^[2]

Olatubosun Oladapo

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This biographical article **needs additional citations for verification**. Please help by adding reliable sources. Contentious material about living persons that is unsourced or poorly sourced **must be removed immediately**, especially if potentially libelous or harmful. *(April 2011)*

Olatubosun Oladapo, aka **Tubosun Oladapo**, and Odidere Aiyekooto (the loquacious parrot) b. September 1943, is a folk poet^[1] who writes, and chants on record plates^[clarification needed] in the Yoruba language, for audiences chiefly in South-West Nigeria.

Oladapo was educated in Ibadan and Lagos, and worked as a producer in the country's Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service until 1977, when he formed a record company, *Olatubosun Records*, to promote indigenous artists and folk poets Odolaye Aremu, Ogundare Foyanmu, Ayanyemi Ayinla, and Lakin Ladeebo.^[citation needed]

He lives in Ibadan, and is the author of print collections of poetry, *Aroye Akewi*(1 and 2) and *Arofo Awon Omode*, and Yoruba poetry (ewi) albums. His plays *Ogun Lakaaye* and *Egbade Falade*, were joint prize winners of the Oxford University Press drama competition in 1970.^[citation needed]

Simbo Olorunfemi

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Simbo Olorunfemi is a [Nigerian](#) poet, journalist, and business person with a background in TV production and [brand management](#).^[1] His first poetry collection, *Rhythm of the Coins*, attracted praise from critics and was shortlisted for the 1993 Association of Nigerian Authors Poetry Prize. His follow-up, *Eko Ree*, won first prize at the 2004 contest. As a journalist, he has written columns for several Nigerian newspapers on a regular basis.

Olorunfemi works professionally as a television producer. He has been credited on several popular local shows, and was nominated as TV producer of the year in 1991.

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Background

Simbo Olorunfemi received his general education at [Federal Government College, Idoani](#) and a [political science](#) degree from [Ondo State University](#).^[2] He then studied to become a journalist at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism,^[2] and later earned a [master's degree](#) in [international Law](#) and diplomacy from the [University of Lagos](#).^[3]

At the age of 15, Olorunfemi wrote his first novel, *The Cardinal Mafia*.^[3]

Career

Poet

Olorunfemi first published work, *Rhythm of the Coins*, was described by Nigerian journalist May Ellen Ezekiel Mofe-Damijo as "an endearing work" with "clear, simple, and easy to understand" language.^[4] *The Punch* described the book as "a simple, lucid, and reflective work of art," while the *Daily Champion* called it "a promise that the Nigerian literary scene is not entirely off-course."^{[3][5]} *Rhythm of the Coins* was shortlisted for the 1993 Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) Poetry Prize, earning an honorable mention.^[6]

Rhythm of the Coins was followed by the highly anticipated^[5] poetry collection *Eko Ree (This is Lagos)* in 2004. Those expected in attendance at the book's launch included the Executive Governor of Lagos state, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Dr. Bode Olajumoke, and Chief Segun Olusola, among others.^[5] The collection uses simple language to portray Lagos State as a place where inhabitants eke out livings in highly unusual ways.^[7] In his introduction to the book, cultural affairs officer Ambrocio Lopez writes "I believe Simbo has magnificently captured the pulse of life of the city... [he presents] urban conversations that challenge us to examine our very being."^[8]

Excerpt from *Eko Ree*

Ahead, she's gone
Ahead, the dream still
Ahead, we trudge on

Behind us,
Around us,
Ahead of us,
The dream is with us.

We'll pass it on.

Eko Ree: The Many Faces of Lagos took first place in the 2004 ANA/Cadbury Poetry Prize competition.^{[7][9]} The accompanying \$1000 prize was the largest awarded by the competition.^[7] The judging panel described it as "a candid but graphic reflection on the many faces of Lagos" adding "*Eko Ree* is distinctly impressive... The collection is engaging, the title is apt and captures the metaphor of Lagos life."^[10] Writing for *Vanguard*, Uzor Uzoatu strongly disagreed with the judges, writing "no so-called poem in the collection is anywhere near successful... *Eko Ree* contains the lightest verses you ever read anywhere since kindergarten, words that are neither sublime nor solid."^[10] Uzoatu's criticism drew a response from Ayodeji Fashikun of *THISDAY*.^[11] Olorunfemi himself poked fun at the critique during his official acceptance speech.^[6]

In 2007, Olorunfemi released his third book, *Singing in the Rain*, through Raider Publishing International.^[12] His work was selected for inclusion in the 2009 anthology of Nigerian Poetry *Lagos of the Poets*.^[13]

Olorunfemi's works have been translated to Hindi and German.^[3]

Journalist

In addition to poetry, Olorunfemi has written columns for newspapers and magazines including *TheNEWS*, *The PM News*, and *The Independent on Sunday*.^[3]

Television

Olorunfemi works professionally as a television producer. As a producer, he has numerous credits including the TV talk show *MEE & YOU* and the news program *The Globe This Week*, which ran for three years on Nigerian TV station Lagos Television (LTV 8), Ikeja.^[3]

In 1991, he was nominated as TV producer of the year at the Nigerian Media Merit Awards (NMMAs).^[3] Olorunfemi's most recent involvement with television was the production of a programme on information technology called *CYBERDRIVE*.^[3]

Bibliography

- *The Cardinal Mafia*. (unpublished).^[2]
- *Voice of the Commonman*. (unpublished).^[2]
- *The Way We Are*. (unpublished).^[2]
- *Rhythm of the Coins*. Lagos: Dreams Communications. 1993. ISBN 978-32222-0-1.^[14]
- *Eko Ree: The Many Faces of Lagos*. Ikeja-Lagos: HOOFBEATS.com. 2003. ISBN 978-32222-1-X.^[15]
- *Singing in the Rain*. New York: Raider Publishing International. 2007. ISBN 1-934360-40-6.^[12]

Kole Omotosho

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Bankole Ajibabi Omotosho (born 21 April 1943), also known as **Kole Omotoso**, is a [Nigerian](#) writer and intellectual known for his dedication and commitment to fusing a socio-political reappraisal of [Africa](#) and respect for human dignity into most of his works.

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Early life and education

Kole Omotosho was born into a Yoruba family in Akure, Ondo state, Nigeria. He was raised by his mother and maternal grandparents after the death of his father.^[1] Though the lack of a father figure could crush a young Nigerian boy, the events of his early childhood contributed a great deal to his development as a man and also as a writer.^[1] Omotosho was educated at King's College, Lagos, and the University of Ibadan and then undertook a doctoral thesis on the modern Arabic writer Ahmad Ba Kathir at the University of Edinburgh.^[2]

Later life

Omotosho returned to Ibadan to lecture on Arabic studies (1972–76), then moved to the University of Ife to work in drama (1976–88). He became a writer for various magazines (including West Africa) in the 1970s and was well known among Nigeria's literate elites. His major themes include interracial marriage, comic aspects of the Biafran-Nigerian conflict, and the human condition—as exemplified in friendship between the Yoruba and the Igbo and in relationships between children and parents.

His 1988 historical novel about Nigeria, *Just Before Dawn* (ISBN 9789782460073), was controversial and led Omotosho to leave his native country. After visiting professorships in English at the University of Stirling and the National University of Lesotho and a spell at the Talawa Theatre Company, London, he became a professor of English at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa (1991–2000).^[3] From 2001 he has been a professor in the Drama Department at Stellenbosch University. He has also appeared as the “Yebo Gogo man” in television advertisements for Vodacom mobile phones.^[4] Omotosho is married with three children.

Themes

Omotosho grew up during the rising tide of radical nationalism and was enamored by the potential that lay in the future of his country. His fiction ranges widely over the human condition, and themes include intergenerational and interracial relationships. *Fela's Choice* is an early example of Nigerian detective fiction. However, with the ascent of social and political decay, a few years after independence, he became deeply interested in writing *about* fiction. Fiction was

an avenue that exists apart from the decay of real life and where deep reconstructions about life and ideas come true. It was also an avenue to experiment on social and political ideas for societal change and advancement. Omotosho's non-fiction is wide-ranging in subject matter.

Works

Fiction

- *The Edifice* (1971)
- *The Combat* (1972)
- *Miracles* (short stories) (1973)
- *Fela's Choice* (1974)
- *Sacrifice* (1974, 1978)
- *The Scales* (1976)
- *To Borrow a Wandering Leaf* (1978)
- *Memories of Our Recent Boom* (1982)
- *Just Before Dawn* (1988)

Drama

- *The Curse* (1976)
- *Shadows in the Horizon* (1977)

Non-fiction

- *The Form of the African Novel* (1979 etc.)
- *The Theatrical Into Theatre: a study of the drama and theatre of the English-speaking Caribbean* (1982)
- *Season of Migration to the South: Africa's crises reconsidered* (1994)
- *Achebe or Soyinka? A study in contrasts* (1995)
- *Woza Africa* (1997)

Kola Onadipe

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Kola Onadipe

Nathaniel Kolawole Onadipe

Born	14 July 1922
	Ijebu-Ode, Ogun state, Nigeria
Died	4 December 1988 (aged 66)
Occupation	Author
Nationality	Nigerian
Genres	<u>Children's literature</u>

Nathaniel Kolawole Onadipe (14 July 1922 – 4 December 1988), most commonly known as **Kola Onadipe**, was a Nigerian author best known for his children's books.

Biography

Kola Onadipe was born in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun state, Nigeria. He was born into a polygamous family and was the second son of his mother. Onadipe studied Law at the University of London in 1949 and later opened a law firm with his close friend Abraham Adesanya. He had fifteen children, seven boys and eight girls, to whom he dedicated his life and ensured they excelled in achieving acceptable academic status. He died at the age of sixty-six after he suffered a stroke on 4 December 1988. He is buried at his residential home in Ogbogbo, Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria.

He was the Principal of Olu-Iwa College (one of the four major High Schools in Ijebu-Ode in the late 40's, the 50's and early 60's). He was a staunch disciplinarian and kept the school in top level academic and moral flavor. His popular expression was "You go" which meant that if he caught you being a truant, you will be expelled regardless of who your parents might be. He was well respected by the proprietor of the school, Chief Timothy Adeola Odutola.

Boys from all over Nigeria who were admitted to the college became great men under him and went to higher institutions of learning both at home and abroad to become greater leaders and

professionals in life. They are too many to mention or list. (This section inserted by Dr. Adebola T. Odukoya, one of his students in 1959 - 1960) ^[1]

Publications

He dedicated most of his lifetime to education and writing books for children. He wrote a number of children's books which include:

- *The adventures of Souza*. Ibadan: African Universities Press, 1963. ISBN 0-410-80038-4
- *The boy slave*. Lagos: African Universities Press, 1966. OCLC number 623440282
- *Koku Baboni*. Ibadan: African Universities Press, 1965. OCLC number 26910639
- *Sugar girl*. Nairobi: East African Pub, 1964. OCLC number 731260
- *The magic land of the shadows*. Lagos: African University Press, 1970. OCLC number 32497510
- *The forest is our playground*. Lagos, Nigeria: Africa Universities Press, 1972. OCLC number 1736920
- *The return of Shettima*. Lagos: University Press, 1972. OCLC number 1747640
- *Builders of Africa*. Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria: Natona Press, 1980. ISBN 978-178-004-5
- *Footprints on the Niger*. Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria: Natona Press, 1980. ISBN 978-178-006-1
- *Sunny boy*. Ijebu-Ode: Natona Press, 1980. OCLC number 9633828
- *Sweet mother*. Ijebu-Ode [Nigeria]: Natona Press, 1980. ISBN 978-178-001-0
- *Around Nigeria in thirty days*. Nigeria: Natona, 1981. ISBN 978-178-027-4
- *Call me Michael*. Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria: Natona Press, 1981. ISBN 978-178-017-7
- *Halima must not die : and other plays for schools*. Ijebu-Ode: Natona Press, 1981. ISBN 978-178-026-6
- *Happy birthday : queen for a day*. Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria: Natona Press, 1982. ISBN 978-178-005-3
- *Mothers-In-Law*. 1982
- *The Other Woman*. 1982
- *A pot of gold*. Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria: Natona Press Publishers, 1984. ISBN 978-178-008-8
- *Beloved daughters*. Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria: Natona Press, 1985. ISBN 978-178-022-3

- *The king is naked : and other stories*. Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria: Natona Press, 1985. ISBN 978-178-025-8
- *The mysterious twins*. Ijebu-Ode: Natona, 1986. OCLC number 633642923
- *Binta : beautiful bride*. Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria: Natona Press, 1988. ISBN 978-978-178-041-7

Nduka Onwuegbute

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Nduka Onwuegbute (born 1969^[1]) is a Nigerian British playwright, currently living in the United Kingdom.

He was educated at the University of Ibadan and the University of Jos, both in Nigeria.^[1]

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Writing Credits

Television

- *Riddles & Hopes* (Nigerian Television Authority)

Plays

- *Family Circle*
- *Dancing the Fool*^[2]
- *Drums that Dance in the Dark* (2007)^[1]

Ifeoma Onyefulu

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Ifeoma Onyefulu (born 1959) is a [Nigerian](#) children's author and novelist. She is a member of the [Igbo](#) ethnic group of Nigeria, and a professional [photographer](#). Most of her books are geared towards young children, and feature her own colorful photographs of life in Africa.^[1]

Her works include:

- *Emeka's Gift* - a counting book for young children
- *Chidi Only Likes Blue: an African Book of Colors*
- *Ebele's Favorite: a Book of African Games*
- *A Is for Africa*- an alphabet book

Osonye Tess Onwueme

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Osonye Tess Onwueme (born September 8, 1955) is a [Nigerian](#) playwright, scholar and poet, who rose to prominence writing plays with themes of social justice, culture, and the environment. In 2010, she became the University Professor of Global Letters, following her exceptional service as Distinguished Professor of Cultural Diversity and English at the [University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire](#). She has won several international awards, including: the

prestigious Fonlon-Nichols award (2009), the Phyllis Wheatley/Nwapa award for outstanding black writers (2008), the Martin Luther King, Jr./Caesar Chavez Distinguished Writers Award (1989/90), the Distinguished Authors Award (1988), and the Association of Nigerian Authors Drama Prize which she has won several times with plays like *The Desert Encroaches* (1985), *Tell It To Women* (1995), *Shakara: Dance-Hall Queen* (2001), *Then She Said it* (2003), among numerous honors and international productions of her drama.^[1] Through her plays, she is able to use the theater as a medium to showcase historically silenced views such as African Women, and shedding more light on African life. She sustains her advocacy for the global poor and youth, along with the experiences and concerns of the (African) Diaspora in her creative work. In 2007, the US State Department appointed her to the Public Diplomacy Speaker Program for North, East, and West India. The *2009 Tess International Conference: Staging Women, Youth, Globalization, and Eco-Literature*, which was exclusively devoted to the author's work was successfully held by international scholars in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, following the Fonlon-Nichols award to the dramatist. She is regarded as one of the band of more important African authors.^[2]

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Early life and education

She was born **Osonye Tess Akeake** in *Ogwashi-Uku*, present-day Delta state, to the family of barrister Chief Akaeke and Maria Eziashr. Osonye was educated at the *Mary Mount Secondary School*: it was while at the school that she first dabbled in writing. After secondary education, she married an agronomist, I. C. Onwueme, and bore five children, during the time she attended the University of Ife, for her bachelor's degree in education (1979) and master's in literature

(1982). She obtained her PhD at the University of Benin, studying African Drama. In 1998 she married Obika Gray, a Jamaican political scientist.^[3]

Works

- *A Hen Too Soon*. 1983.
- *Broken Calabash*. 1984.
- *The Desert Encroaches* (1985)
- *The Reign of Wazobia* (1988)
- *Ban Empty Barn and other plays* (1986)
- *Legacies* (1989)
- *Three Plays: an anthology of plays by Tess Onwueme* (1993)
- *Tell It To Women: an epic drama* (1995).
- *Riot In Heaven: drama for the voices of color* (1996; 2006).
- *The Missing Face, a play* (1997; 2000).
- *Shakara: Dance-Hall Queen: a play* (2000; 2006).
- *Then She Said It: a play* (2003)
- *What Mama Said, an epic drama* (2004).
- *No Vacancy* (2005)

Dennis Osadebay

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Dennis Chukude Osadebay

Premier of Mid-Western Region

In office

1964–1966

**Succeeded
by** David Ejoor

Personal details

Born June 29, 1911
Asaba

Died December 26, 1994 (aged 83)
Asaba

**Political
party** National Council of Nigeria and the
Cameroons

Profession Lawyer

Dennis Chukude Osadebay (June 29, 1911—December 26, 1994) was a Nigerian politician, poet, journalist and former premier of the now defunct Mid-Western Region of Nigeria, which now comprises Edo and Delta State. He was one of the pioneering Nigerian poets who wrote in English.

As a politician, he detested party politics and tried to form unbiased opinions on important matters of the period. He was also a leader of the movement to create a Mid-Western region during the Nigerian First Republic.

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Biography

Early life and poems

He was born in Asaba, Delta State to parents of mixed cultural backgrounds. He attended Asaba Government School at Asaba, the Sacred Heart School in Calabar and Hope Waddell Training Institute. He joined the labor force in 1930 as a custom officer working in Lagos, Port Harcourt and Calabar. He subsequently went to England to study Law during the 1940s.^[1] It was while studying that he started publishing poetic verses.^[2] He was then known as a newspaper poet, as most of his writings were published in the West African Pilot and a few other newspapers. In his writings, Osadebay used both his personal life and public events as inspiration. In Africa Sings, a collection of poems, he delved with themes from a personal point of view, such as a sullen poem written about his twenty fifth birthday and the coming of middle age. However, his best work in the volume, were poems written from an impersonal view point.^[3] In his adventurous poem, black man troubles, he used pidgin English to lament the status of black Africans in colonial Africa and injustice in the society.^[4] His poems were also notable for faithfully representing modern poetic rhythm.

Political career

Osadebay was one of the founding members of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons in 1944. He left the country to read law a few years later. After, completing his studies, he returned to Nigeria and established a law practice in Aba and was also made the legal adviser of the N.C.N.C. In 1951, he contested and won a seat on the Western Region House of Assembly which was dominated by the rival Action Group (AG). He soon became the leader of opposition in the region from 1954-1956 but gave the mantle to Adegoke Adelabu in 1956. After the death of Adegoke Adelabu, he took on his familiar oppositional role in 1958. In 1960, he became the president of the Nigerian Senate and upon the creation of the Mid-Western Region in 1963, became the pioneer premier of the newly created region.



Femi Osofisan

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Babafemi Adeyemi Osofisan (born June 1946 in Erunwon, Ogun State) is a Nigerian writer known for his critique of societal problems and his use of African traditional performances and surrealism in some of his novels. A frequent theme his novels explore is the conflict between good and evil. He is in fact a didactic writer whose works seek to correct his decadent society.

Education

Osofisan attended primary school at Ife and secondary school at Government College, Ibadan. After secondary school, he attended the University of Senegal in Dakar and later the University

of Ibadan. He continued post-graduate studies at the University of Ibadan and went on to hold faculty positions at the University.

Works

- Kolera Kolej. New Horn, 1975.
- The Chattering and the Song. Ibadan: Ibadan UP, 1977.
- Morountodun and Other Plays. Lagos: Longman, 1982.
- Minted Coins (poetry), Heinemann, 1987.
- Another Raft. Lagos: Malthouse, 1988. [End Page 153]
- Once upon Four Robbers. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1991
- Twingle-Twangle A-Twynning Tayle. Longman, 1992.
- Yungba-Yungba and the Dance Contest: A Parable for Our Times, Heinemann Educational, Nigeria, 1993.
- The Album of the Midnight Blackout, University Press, Nigeria, 1994.
- Tegonni: An African Antigone. Tegonni, an African Antigone. Ibadan: Opon Ifa, 1999.
- Theater and the Rites of 'Post-Negritude' Remembering. Research in African Literatures 30.1 (1999): 1–11.

• E. C. Osondu

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- **E. C. Osondu** is a [Nigerian writer](#) known for his [short stories](#). His story "Waiting" won the 2009 [Caine Prize for African Writing](#), for which he had been a finalist in 2007 with his story "Jimmy Carter's Eyes".^[1] He had previously won the Allen and Nirelle Galso Prize for Fiction and his story "A Letter from Home" was judged one of "The Top Ten Stories on the Internet" in 2006.
- Osondu's writing has been published in *Agni*, *Guernica*, *Vice*, *Fiction*, and *The Atlantic*. His debut collection of short stories, *Voice of America*, was published in 2010.

• Biography

- Epaphras Chukwuenweniwe Osondu was born in Nigeria, where he worked as an advertising copywriter for many years. In 2008, he was a fellow at Syracuse University in creative writing. In 2010, he is an assistant professor of English at Providence College, teaching courses in creative writing, Introduction to Literature, and the Development of Western Civilization.
- "Waiting", published in October 2008 by Guernica magazine, describes life in a refugee camp from a child's point of view. Meakin Armstrong, the magazine's fiction editor, noted that "it isn't pretentious nor rife with literary trickery. It's simply a well-told story about a kind of life most of us couldn't even begin to imagine."^[2] In addition to the £10,000 cash award, the Caine Prize also brought Osondu a month's residency at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Osondu's "Voice of America" is included in *Gods and Soldiers: The Penguin Anthology of Contemporary African Writing (2009).*

Niyi Osundare

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Niyi Osundare (born in 1947 in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria) is a prolific poet, dramatist and literary critic. He gained degrees at the University of Ibadan (BA), the University of Leeds (MA) and York University, Canada (PhD, 1979). Previously professor (from 1989) and Head of English (1993–97) at the University of Ibadan, he became professor of English at the University of New Orleans in 1997. Niyi has a wife, Kimi, and three children, two girls and a son who still lives in Nigeria. His deaf daughter is the real reason Niyi settled in the United States. She could not go to school in Nigeria so they found a school in the U.S. for her. They moved with her so Niyi and Kimi could be closer to her.

He has always been a vehement champion of the right to free speech and is a strong believer in the power of words, saying, "to utter is to alter". Osundare is renowned for his commitment to socially relevant art and artistic activism and has written several open letters to the former President of Nigeria (Olusegun Obasanjo), whom Osundare has often publicly criticised.

Osundare believes that there is no choice for the African poet but to be political:

"You cannot keep quiet about the situation in the kind of countries we find ourselves in, in Africa. When you wake up and there is no running water, when you have a massive power outage for days and nights, no food on the table, no hospital for the sick, no peace of mind; when the image of the ruler you see everywhere is that of a dictator with a gun in his hand; and, on the international level, when you live in a world in which your continent is consigned to the margin, a world in which the colour of your skin is a constant disadvantage, everywhere you go – then there is no other way than to write about this, in an attempt to change the situation for the better."

Under the rule of the dictator General Sani Abacha (1993–1998), Osundare regularly contributed poems to a Nigerian national newspaper (now part of the collection *Songs of the Season*) that criticised the regime and commented upon the lives of people in Nigeria. As a result he was frequently visited by Security Agents and asked to explain his poems and to whom they referred:

"By that time I realized that the Nigerian security apparatus had become quite 'sophisticated', quite 'literate' indeed!"

"A couple of my students at the University of Ibadan had become informers; a few even came to my classes wired. And when I was reading abroad, someone trailed me from city to city. At home, my letters were frequently intercepted."

In 1997, he accepted a teaching and research post at the University of New Orleans. In 2005 Osundare was caught in Hurricane Katrina, and he and his wife were stuck in their attic for 26 hours. Their neighbor, who at the time was driving by in his boat, heard their shouts for help. They were rescued and bounced around from rescue shelters till they ended up in Ringe, New Hampshire, where Osundare could get a teaching job as a professor at Franklin Pierce Collage till things settled down.

He is a holder of numerous awards for his poetry, as well as the Fonlon/Nichols award for "excellence in literary creativity combined with significant contributions to Human Rights in Africa".

His 60th Birthday Literary Fete took place at venues in Ikere-Ekiti, Ibadan and Lagos state of Nigeria in March 2007.^[1]

His poem "Not My Business" is compulsory study in the AQA A syllabus for GCSE English Language.

Publications

- *Songs from the Marketplace* (1983)
- *Village Voices* (1984)
- *The Eye of the Earth* (1986, winner of a Commonwealth Poetry Prize and the poetry prize of the Association of Nigerian Authors)
- *Moonsongs* (1988)
- *Songs of the Season* (1999)
- *Waiting Laughters* (1990, winner of the Noma Award)
- *Selected Poems* (1992)
- *Midlife* (1993)
- *Thread in the Loom: Essays on African Literature and Culture* (2002)
- *The Word is an Egg* (2002)
- *The State Visit* (2002, play)
- *Pages from the Book of the Sun: New and Selected Poems* (2002)
- *Early Birds* (2004)
- *Two Plays* (2005)
- *The Emerging Perspectives on Niyi Osundare* (2003)
- ***Not My Business AQA Anthology 2005 Onwards*(2005)**
- *Tender Moments: Love Poems* (2006)

Helen Ovbiagele

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This biographical article **needs additional citations for verification**. Please help by adding reliable sources. Contentious material about living persons that is unsourced or poorly sourced **must be removed immediately**, especially if potentially libelous or harmful. *(December 2008)*

Helen Aiyehusa Ovbiagele^[1] (born 1944) is a Nigerian novelist. She was born in Benin City, and after attending C.M.S. Girls' School, Benin City and St. Peter's College, Kaduna, she studied English and French at the University of Lagos and studied at the Institut Francais du Royaume Uni in London.^[1] Her work is associated with the romance genre, but her heroines are said to be a bit older and more independent than normal for that form. She is the Woman Editor of Vanguard newspaper.^[2]

Novels

Helen Ovbiagele wrote three novels in the hugely popular Pacesetter Novel series.

- *Evbu My Love*
- *Forever Yours*
- *A Fresh Start*

Remi Raji

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Aderemi Raji-Oyelade is a Nigerian poet, writing in English. He is popularly known by his pen name, **Remi Raji**.^[1]

A Salzburg Fellow and visiting professor and writer to a number of institutions, among them Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, the Universities of California at Riverside and Irvine, University of Cape Town, South Africa, and Cambridge University, UK, Raji has had scholarly essays published in journals including *Research in African Literatures* and *African*

Literature Today. He has read his poems widely in Africa, Europe and America. In 2005, he served as the Guest Writer to the City of Stockholm, Sweden.

His volumes of poetry include *Webs of Remembrance* (2001), *Shuttlesongs America: A poetic guided tour* (2003), *Lovesong for My Wasteland* (2005), *Gather My Blood Rivers of Song* (2009) and "Sea of My Mind" (2013). Raji's works have been translated into French, German, Catalan, Swedish, Ukrainian, Latvian, Croatian and Hungarian. He has been an Alexander von Humboldt Scholar to Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany.

Remi Raji was elected as the Publicity Secretary of the Oyo State chapter of the Association of Nigerian Authors in 1989. His second elective position was as Vice Chair of the Association in 1997. He became the substantive Chairman of the Association from 1998 to 2000, at the election of Dr. Wale Okediran to the national executive committee of ANA. Raji served as the Year 2000 Editor of the ANA REVIEW, the official journal of the association. On December 3, 2011, during the thirtieth anniversary celebration of the founding of the Association of Nigerian Authors, Remi Raji was elected as the eleventh President of ANA.

Raji was the National Coordinator of the resuscitated Nigerian PEN Centre in 1999 before he was elected as the Secretary of the Centre, a position he held till February, 2010. During this period, Raji facilitated international workshops and strategic meetings of African PEN Centres within Africa and in Europe. He was unanimously elected as the first Coordinating Secretary of PAN, the Congress of PEN African Centres, at a special meeting of the group on November 22, 2003 in Mexico City.

At his university, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, the Professor of English and African Literatures and Creative Writing has served in many administrative capacities which culminated in his appointment as the Head of the Department of English in 2011. Over a year after that substantive position, he was elected as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts.

Bibliography

- *A Harvest of Laughters*, 1997, joint-winner of the Association of Nigerian Authors/Cadbury Poetry Prize and winner of the Association of West African Young Writers' VOCA Award for Best First Published Book
- *Webs of Remembrance*, 2001
- *Shuttlesongs America: A Poetic Guided Tour*, 2001–2003
- *Lovesong for My Wasteland*, 2005
- *Gather My Blood Rivers of Song*, 2009.
- "Sea of My Mind", 2013.

Ola Rotimi

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Ola Rotimi

Olawale Rotimi

Born Olawale Gladstone Emmanuel Rotimi
13 April 1938

Ilesha, Osun State, Nigeria

Playwright, director. Head of Department of Creative Arts at the University of Port Harcourt, Lecturer at Obafemi Awolowo

Occupation University, Nigeria; has also served as visiting professor, playwright, and director in Germany and Italy, as well as at DePauw University and Wabash College.

Nationality Nigerian

Ethnicity Yoruba

Period 1938-2000

Notable work(s) *The Gods Are Not To Blame*, ***Ovonramwen Nogbaisi***, and ***The Epilogue***

Olawale Gladstone Emmanuel Rotimi, best known as **Ola Rotimi** (13 April 1938—18 August 2000),^[1] was one of Nigeria's leading playwrights and theatre directors. He has been called "a complete man of the theatre - an actor, director, choreographer and designer - who created performance spaces, influenced by traditional architectural forms."^[2]

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Biography

Early life

Ola Rotimi was the son of Samuel Gladstone Enitan Rotimi a Yoruba steam-launch engineer (a successful director and producer of amateur theatricals)^[3] and Dorcas Adolae Oruene Addo an Ijaw drama enthusiast. He was born in Sapele, Nigeria.^[4] cultural diversity was a recurring theme in his work. He attended St. Cyprian's School in Port Harcourt from 1945 to 1949, St Jude's School, Lagos, from 1951 to 1952 and the Methodist Boys High School in Lagos, before traveling to the United States in 1959 to study at Boston University, where he obtained a B.A in fine arts. In 1965, he married Hazel Mae Guadreau, originally from Gloucester; Hazel also studied at Boston University, where she majored in opera, voice and music education. In 1966 he obtained an M.A. from Yale School of Drama,^[nb 1] where he earned the distinction of being a Rockefeller Foundation scholar in Playwriting and Dramatic Literature.^[nb 2]

Theatrical career

Ola Rotimi often examined Nigeria's history and local traditions in his works. His first plays, *To Stir the God of Iron* (produced 1963) and *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* (produced 1966; published 1977), were staged at the drama schools of Boston University and Yale, respectively.

Later years

Upon returning to Nigeria in the 1960s, Rotimi taught at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), where he founded the Ori Olokun Acting Company,^[5] and Port Harcourt. Owing, in part, to political conditions in Nigeria, Rotimi spent much of the 1990s living in the Caribbean and the United States, where he taught at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. In 2000 he returned to Ile-Ife, joining the faculty of Obafemi Awolowo University where he lectured till his demise. Sadly, Hazel (his wife) died in May 2000, only a couple of months before his own death.

His later dramas include *The Gods Are Not to Blame* (produced 1968; published 1971), a retelling of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*^[5] in imaginative verse; *Kurunmi and the Prodigal* (produced 1969; published as *Kurunmi*, 1971), written for the second Ife Festival of Arts; *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* (produced 1971; published 1974), about the last ruler of the Benin empire; and *Holding Talks* (1979).

Later plays, such as *If: A Tragedy of the Ruled* (1983) and *Hopes of the Living Dead* (1988), premiered at the University of Port Harcourt and was a common play in OAU Drama department. The radio play *Everyone His/Her Own Problem*, was broadcast in 1987. His book *African Dramatic Literature: To Be or to Become?* was published in 1991.

Rotimi, a patriot who shunned the attraction of the West and Europe and returned home to contribute his own quota to nation building, was a rare breed. Diminutive in size but a giant in drama in Africa, he was one of the best things that could have happened to the literary community.

His dream of directing a play of 5000 cast members materialized at the Amphi Africa Theater when he was being put to rest as the crowd was drawn to a manuscript of the day's program outline. People made dramatic entry and exit to the stage around his casket, with the man turning his casket.

Rotimi spent the second half of his last creative decade reworking two of his plays - *Man Talk*, *Woman Talk* and also *Tororo, Tororo, Roro* - and the result, unpublished at the time of his death

in 2002, have now been published under the title *The Epilogue*. The two plays were probably meant as an epilogue to both Rotimi's theatrical and comic careers, which span the entire spectrum of his career.

It is comical and the language used is a version of "Nigerian English" (for example: "Se you get?" "I called God on him").

The works are also a social satire and this publication will spur renewed interest in his satires. Rotimi is sure to be remembered as a model in the literary genre whose views have shaped the conduct of the theater and whose plays have demonstrated the power of drama to shape the thinking of the society and attempted to solve some of the problems encountered in everyday living.

Plays

- (1963) *To Stir the God of Iron*
- (1966) *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*—depicts the cocoa farmer and businessman Lejoka-Brown as a self-seeking, opportunistic leader who could make better contributions to his country outside of the political arena.
- (1968) *The Gods Are Not To Blame*—an adaptation of the Greek classic *Oedipus Rex*; the main character gets trapped by pride, ignorance and the caprices of the divinities.
- (1969) *Kurunmi*
- (1970) *Holding Talks*
- (1971) *Ovonramven Nogbaisi*—the title character simply luxuriates in the grandeur of his office. Although he is a custodian of culture who inspires people, he does not actively participate in their struggles.
- (1973) *Grip Am*
- (1973) *Invitation Into Madness*
- (1977) *Akassa Youmi**
- (1979) *If: A Tragedy of the Ruled*—in *If*, the young firebrand Hamidu is nowhere to be found when a real commitment is required.

- (1985) *Hopes of The Living Dead*—Rotimi here depicts a different kind of leader: a selfless, result-oriented, committed leadership complemented by a followership that believes in the good of the generality of its members through the application of itself to the cause that is beneficial.
- *When the Criminals Become Judges*

The Epilogue: Two unpublished plays of Ola Rotimi

- *Man Talk, Woman Talk*

Man Talk, Woman Talk is humorous, as quintessential comedies from the author can be. He makes use of wry humour to seek a level playing ground for resolution of the biases men and women nurse about one another and which affect mutual co-existence of the two. The scene is a court though devoid of the usual technicalities of court rooms. Instead of legal jargon, there is humour, arguments and counter arguments. What the author arrives at is not to prove which gender is superior but to show the complementary roles of men and women. There is a great deal of wit in the work and the setting here is the university environment where the youthful contenders are idealistic.

- *Tororo, Tororo, Roro*

Tororo, Tororo, Roro is a coincidental meeting of two fellows from *Man Talk, Woman Talk*, Tunji Oginni and Philomena James. Both run Hotel Kilimanjaro with different motives and a chance meeting between them elicits lessons as both share each other's problems.

Performances

First performed in Nigeria in 1968, *The Gods Are Not To Blame* was produced at the Arcola Theatre in Hackney, London, in 2005. Femi Elufowoju (Jr) had his first theatre experience in 1975, at the age of 11, when he saw a revival of this very play, performed in a reconstructed Greek amphitheatre at a university campus in Ife; and brought it to the UK shores as a British leading theatre director under the company name Tiata Fahodzi^[6]

His last production was a staging of *Man Talk, Woman Talk* at the French Institute in Lagos, Nigeria. He also produced *Tororo Tororo roro*, a play of the Absurd, as a convocation play.

Textual sources

Style

For *Man Talk, Woman Talk*, directorial approach must have fluidity which will allow for creativity of the actors. The technicalities of the stage should be carefully applied in such a way that they will kill expected boredom associated with court scenes for if not done, the whole dramatic in the act will be flattened out. It might do the play a favor if it is given the kind of approach Ola Rotimi himself used in the directing of the premiere of the play. It is the technique that allows a kind of participatory interaction; the one that accommodates the audience contribution.

Awards

Rotimi was awarded two Fullbright Scholarships.

List of works

Books that contain his significant contributions (see notes for more information) are marked with a percentage(%); Conference publications are marked with an asterisk (*); thesis or disectations are marked with a dagger (†) below.

Plays and Literature

- *Kurunmi*^[nb 3]
- *The Gods Are Not To Blame*^[nb 4]
- *Ovɔnramwɛn Nɔgbaisi*^[nb 5]
- *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*^[nb 6]
- *Holding Talks*^[nb 7]
- *If: A Tragedy of the ruled*^[nb 8]

- *Understanding "The Gods Are Not to Blame"*^[nb 9]
- *Hopes of the Living Dead*^[nb 10]
- *Viandanti della storia*^[nb 11]o%
- *African Dramatic Literature*
- *Playwriting and Directing in Nigeria*
- *The Epilogue*^[nb 12]

Books, Essays & Political Commentary

Books

- *A Dictionary of Nigerian Pidgin English: with an introductory survey of the history, linguistics and socio-literary functions*
- *Introduction to Nigerian literature*^[nb 13]o%
- *The Living Culture of Nigeria*^[nb 14]o%
- *A translation of the play "The Gods Are Not to Blame" into Setswana*^[nb 15]†
- *Statement towards August '83*-^[nb 16]
- *The Masquerade in Nigerian history and culture*^[nb 17]*o%
- *An interview (1975) with Ola Rotimi, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ife, Ile Ife*^[nb 18]
- *Diversity of Creativity in Nigeria**
- *African Theatre in Performance*%
- *Akassa you mi*
- *Issues in African Theatre*

Articles

- "Conversation with Ola Rotimi"
- "How the kingfisher learned fear"
- "Review of: Kiabàrà: Journal of the Humanities 1" (June 1978)
- "Through whom the spirits breathe"
- "The trials of African literature"
- "Everyone his/her own problem"

- "No direction home"

Archival material and ebooks

Archival material

- *Papers*^[nb 19]*
- *African Papers, 1963, 1968-1989*
- *Gbe'ku De:pièce en 1 acte*

ebooks

- *Initiation into Madness*
- *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*
- *If*
- *Holding Talks*
- *Hopes of the Living Dead*
- *Grip Am*
- *Akassa you mi*
- *Kurunmi*
- *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi*



Ken Saro-Wiwa

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Ken Saro-Wiwa

Born	October 10, 1941 Bori, Nigeria
Died	November 10, 1995 (aged 54)
Cause of death	Executed
Ethnicity	Ogoni
Occupation	Writer, activist
Political movement	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
Awards	Right Livelihood Award

Goldman Environmental Prize

Kenule "Ken" Beeson Saro Wiwa (10 October 1941 – 10 November 1995) was a Nigerian writer, television producer, environmental activist, and winner of the Right Livelihood Award and the Goldman Environmental Prize. Saro-Wiwa was a member of the Ogoni people, an ethnic minority in Nigeria whose homeland, Ogoniland, in the Niger Delta has been targeted for crude oil extraction since the 1950s and which has suffered extreme environmental damage from decades of indiscriminate petroleum waste dumping. Initially as spokesperson, and then as President, of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Saro-Wiwa led a nonviolent campaign against environmental degradation of the land and waters of Ogoniland by the operations of the multinational petroleum industry, especially the Royal Dutch Shell company. He was also an outspoken critic of the Nigerian government, which he viewed as reluctant to enforce environmental regulations on the foreign petroleum companies operating in the area.

At the peak of his non-violent campaign, Saro-Wiwa was arrested, hastily tried by a special military tribunal, and hanged in 1995 by the military government of General Sani Abacha, all on charges widely viewed as entirely politically motivated and completely unfounded. His execution provoked international outrage and resulted in Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth of Nations for over three years.

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Biography

Early life

A son of Ogoni chieftain Jim Wiwa, Ken was born in Bori, in the Niger Delta.^[1] He spent his childhood in an Anglican home and eventually proved himself to be an excellent student; he attended secondary school at Government College Umuahia and on completion obtained a scholarship to study English at the University of Ibadan and briefly became a teaching assistant at the University of Lagos.^{[2][3]}

However, he soon took up a government post as the Civilian Administrator for the port city of Bonny in the Niger Delta, and during the Nigerian Civil War was a strong supporter of the federal cause against the Biafrans. His best known novel, *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English*, tells the story of a naive village boy recruited to the army during the Nigerian Civil War of 1967 to 1970, and intimates the political corruption and patronage in Nigeria's military regime of the time. Saro-Wiwa's war diaries, *On a Darkling Plain*, document his experience during the war. He was also a successful businessman and television producer. His satirical television series, *Basi & Company*, was wildly popular, with an estimated audience of 30 million Nigerians.^[4]

In the early 1970s Saro-Wiwa served as the Regional Commissioner for Education in the Rivers State Cabinet, but was dismissed in 1973 because of his support for Ogoni autonomy. In the late 1970s, he established a number of successful business ventures in retail and real-estate, and during the 1980s concentrated primarily on his writing, journalism and television production. His intellectual work was interrupted in 1987 when he re-entered the political scene, appointed by the newly installed dictator Ibrahim Babangida to aid the country's transition to democracy. But Saro-Wiwa soon resigned because he felt Babangida's supposed plans for a return to democracy were disingenuous. Saro-Wiwa's sentiments were proven correct in the coming years, as Babangida failed to relinquish power. In 1993, Babangida annulled Nigeria's general elections

that would have transferred power to a civilian government, sparking mass civil unrest and eventually forcing him to step down, at least officially, that same year.^[citation needed]

Activism

In 1990, Saro-Wiwa began devoting most of his time to human rights and environmental causes, particularly in Ogoniland. He was one of the earliest members of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), which advocated for the rights of the Ogoni people. The Ogoni Bill of Rights, written by MOSOP, set out the movement's demands, including increased autonomy for the Ogoni people, a fair share of the proceeds of oil extraction, and remediation of environmental damage to Ogoni lands. In particular, MOSOP struggled against the degradation of Ogoni lands by Shell oil company.^[5]

In 1992, Saro-Wiwa was imprisoned for several months, without trial, by the Nigerian military government.

Saro-Wiwa was Vice Chair of Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) General Assembly from 1993 to 1995.^[6] UNPO is an international, nonviolent, and democratic organization (of which MOSOP is a member). Its members are indigenous peoples, minorities, and unrecognised or occupied territories who have joined together to protect and promote their human and cultural rights, to preserve their environments and to find nonviolent solutions to conflicts which affect them.

In January 1993, MOSOP organized peaceful marches of around 300,000 Ogoni people – more than half of the Ogoni population – through four Ogoni centres, drawing international attention to his people's plight. The same year the Nigerian government occupied the region militarily.

Arrest and execution

Saro-Wiwa was arrested again and detained by Nigerian authorities in June 1993, but was released after a month.^[7] On 21 May 1994 four Ogoni chiefs (all on the conservative side of a schism within MOSOP over strategy) were brutally murdered. Saro-Wiwa had been denied entry to Ogoniland on the day of the murders, but he was arrested and accused of incitement to them. He denied the charges, but was imprisoned for over a year before being found guilty and

sentenced to death by a specially convened tribunal. The same happened to other MOSOP leaders: (Saturday Dobe, Nordu Eawo, Daniel Gbooko, Paul Levera, Felix Nuate, Baribor Bera, Barinem Kiobel, and John Kpuine).^[8]

Nearly all of the defendants' lawyers resigned in protest against the trial's cynical rigging by the Abacha regime. The resignations left the defendants to their own means against the tribunal, which continued to bring witnesses to testify against Saro-Wiwa and his peers. Many of these supposed witnesses later admitted that they had been bribed by the Nigerian government to support the criminal allegations. At least two witnesses who testified that Saro-Wiwa was involved in the murders of the Ogoni elders later recanted, stating that they had been bribed with money and offers of jobs with Shell to give false testimony – in the presence of Shell's lawyer.^[9]

The trial was widely criticised by human rights organizations and, half a year later, Ken Saro-Wiwa received the Right Livelihood Award^[10] for his courage as well as the Goldman Environmental Prize.^[11]

Very few observers were surprised when the tribunal declared a "guilty" verdict, but most were shocked that the penalty would be death by hanging for all nine defendants. Many were sceptical that the punishments would actually occur, as the Nigerian government would face international outrage and possible sanctions and other legal action should the penalties be carried out. But on 10 November 1995, Saro-Wiwa and eight other MOSOP leaders (the "Ogoni Nine") were killed by hanging at the hands of military personnel. According to most accounts, Saro-Wiwa was the last to be hanged and so was forced to watch the death of his colleagues. Information on the circumstances of Saro-Wiwa's own death are unclear, but it is generally agreed that multiple attempts were required before he died.^[citation needed]

In his satirical piece *Africa Kills Her Sun* first published in 1989, Saro-Wiwa in a resigned, melancholic mood foreshadowed his own execution:^{[12][13]} this came to pass few years later on 10 November 1995 when he was hanged by the then military regime.

His death provoked international outrage and the immediate suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth of Nations, as well as the calling back of many foreign diplomats for

consultation. The United States and other countries considered imposing economic sanctions on Nigeria.

A memorial to Saro-Wiwa was unveiled in London on 10 November 2006.^[14] It consists of a sculpture in the form of a bus, and was created by Nigerian-born artist Sokari Douglas Camp. It toured the UK the following year.

Family lawsuits against Royal Dutch Shell

Main article: Wiwa family lawsuits against Royal Dutch Shell

Beginning in 1996, the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), EarthRights International (ERI), Paul Hoffman of Schonbrun, DeSimone, Seplow, Harris & Hoffman and other human rights attorneys have brought a series of cases to hold Shell accountable for alleged human rights violations in Nigeria, including summary execution, crimes against humanity, torture, inhumane treatment and arbitrary arrest and detention. The lawsuits are brought against Royal Dutch Shell and Brian Anderson, the head of its Nigerian operation.^[15]

The cases were brought under the Alien Tort Statute, a 1789 statute giving non-U.S. citizens the right to file suits in U.S. courts for international human rights violations, and the Torture Victim Protection Act, which allows individuals to seek damages in the U.S. for torture or extrajudicial killing, regardless of where the violations take place.

The United States District Court for the Southern District of New York set a trial date of June 2009. On 9 June 2009 Shell agreed to an out-of-court settlement of \$15.5 million USD to victims' families. However, the company denied any liability for the deaths, stating that the payment was part of a reconciliation process.^[16] In a statement given after the settlement, Shell suggested that the money was being provided to the relatives of Saro-Wiwa and the eight other victims, in order to cover the legal costs of the case and also in recognition of the events that took place in the region.^[17] Some of the funding is also expected to be used to set up a development trust for the Ogoni people, who inhabit the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.^[18] The settlement was made just days before the trial, which had been brought by Ken Saro-Wiwa's son, was due to begin in New York.^[17]

Biographies

A biography, *In the Shadow of a Saint: A Son's Journey to Understanding His Father's Legacy*, was written by his son, journalist Ken Wiwa. Published in September 2005, shortly before the tenth anniversary of Saro-Wiwa's execution, Canadian author J. Timothy Hunt's *The Politics of Bones* documented the flight of Saro-Wiwa's brother Owens Wiwa, after his brother's execution and his own imminent arrest, to London and then on to Canada, where he is now a citizen and continues his brother's fight on behalf of the Ogoni people. Moreover, it is also the story of Owens' personal battle against the Nigerian government to locate his brother's remains after they were buried in an unmarked mass-grave. Ken Saro-Wiwa's own diary, *A Month and a Day: A Detention Diary*, was published in January 1995, two months after his execution. A book of essays about him entitled *Before I Am Hanged: Ken Saro-Wiwa, Literature, Politics, and Dissent* was published by Africa World Press in December 1999. More information on the struggles of the Ogoni people can be found in the book *Ogoni's Agonies: Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Crisis in Nigeria* (ISBN 0-86543-647-9).

Bibliography

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Mabel Segun

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Mabel Segun (born 1930) is a [Nigerian](#) poet and writer.

Born in Ondo, Nigeria, she attended the [University of Ibadan](#), graduating in 1953 with a BA in English, Latin and History. She taught these subjects in Nigerian schools, and later became Head

of the Department of English and Social Studies and Vice-Principal at the National Technical Teachers' College, Yaba. As a broadcaster, she won the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation 1977 Artiste of the Year award.^[1]

Segun has championed children's literature in Nigeria through the Children's Literature Association of Nigeria, which she founded in 1978, and the Children's Documentation and Research Centre, which she set up in 1990 in Ibadan. She is also a fellow of the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany.^[2]

In 2010 Mabel Segun received the Nigerian National Merit Award for her lifetime achievements.

Works

- *Conflict and Other Poems* (1986)
- *My Father's Daughter* (1965)
- *Under the Mango Tree* (1979)
- *Olu and the Broken Statue* (1985)
- *The Twins and the Tree Spirits* (1990)
- *Sorry, No Vacancy* (1985)

Lola Shoneyin

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Lola Shoneyin

Titilola Atinuke Alexandrah Shoneyin

Born 26 February 1974

Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

Nationality Nigerian / British

Occupation Author

Website

www.lolashoneyin.com

Lola Shoneyin (born Titilola Atinuke Alexandrah Shoneyin, 26 February 1974, Ibadan, Nigeria) is a Nigerian poet and author^[1] who launched her debut novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, in the UK in May 2009. Shoneyin has already forged a reputation as an adventurous, humorous and outspoken poet, (often classed in the feminist mould) having published three volumes of poetry. She lives in Abuja, Nigeria.

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Biography

Early life

Titilola Atinuke Alexandrah Shoneyin was born in Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State, southwestern Nigeria, in 1974. She is the youngest of six children and the only girl. Her parents Chief Tinuoye Shoneyin and Mrs Yetunde Shoneyin (nee Okupe) are Remo indigenes from Ogun State.

Shoneyin's work is significantly influenced by her life, notably providing material on polygamy for her debut novel; her maternal grandfather, HRH Abraham Olayinka Okupe (1896-1976) was the traditional ruler of Iperu-Remo and had five wives. He ascended the throne in 1938.^[2]

Education and career

At six years old, her parents sent her to boarding school in the UK where she attended, Cargilfield School, Edinburgh;^[3] The Collegiate, Winterbourne, Bristol; Fettes Junior School, Edinburgh. Shoneyin returned to Nigeria to complete her secondary education at Abadina College, Ibadan and got her BA (hons) from Ogun State University.

Shoneyin early writing consists mainly of poetry and short stories. Early examples of her work appeared in Post Express in 1995 which features a short story about a Nigerian woman who leaves her husband for an Austrian woman. This story initiated dialogue into lesbianism within a Nigerian context.

Her first volume of poetry, *So All the Time I was Sitting on an Egg*, was published by Ovalonion House, Nigeria in 1998. Shoneyin attended the renowned Iowa International Writers Programme, Iowa, USA, in August 1999 and was also in that year a Distinguished Scholar at the University of St Thomas, Minnesota.

Shoneyin moved to the UK in 2000. Her second volume of poetry, *Song of a Riverbird* was published in Nigeria (Ovalonion House) in 2002. While living in England, she obtained a teaching degree from London Metropolitan University in 2005.

Shoneyin completed her first novel in 2000. Her second novel, *Harlot*, was received some interest, but the story of a young girl growing up in colonial Nigeria to make a fortune as a

'Madame', remains unpublished. Shoneyin moved onto her third novel, *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* which was published in 2010.

Cassava Republic also published Shoneyin's third poetry collection *For the Love of Flight* in February 2010. *Mayowa and the Masquerades*, a children's book was published by Cassava Republic Press, Nigeria in July 2010.

She has also written for newspapers, including The Scotsman^[3] and The Guardian,^[2] speaking out against Nigeria's tradition of polygamous marriage.^[2]

Private life

Lola is married to Olaokun Soyinka, a medical doctor and the son of Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka.^[2] They have four children.

Works

Novels

- *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives' Serpent's Tail*, UK; May 2010
 - Longlisted for the 2011 Orange Prize, won the 2011 PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Literary Award and won two Association of Nigerian Authors Awards.
 - translated into five languages, published in Italian as *Prudenti Come Serpenti*.

Short stories

- 'Woman in Her Season', Post Express Newspapers 1996

Poetry

- *So all the time I was sitting on an Egg* (1998)
- *Song of a river bird*, Ovalonion House (Nigeria, 2002)
- *For the Love of Flight* (2010)

Children's books

- *Mayowa and the Masquerade*, July 2010

Zulu Sofola

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'**Zulu Sofola** (22 June 1935 - 5 September 1995)^[1] was the first published female Nigerian playwright and dramatist.^[2] Sofola was also a university teacher and became the first female Professor of Theater Arts in Africa.

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Biography

Nwazuluwa Onuekwuke Sofola^[3] was born in Bendel State to parents who were Igbo from Issele-Uku in Delta State. Spending her adolescence and early womanhood in the USA, she studied at Southern Baptist Seminary, earned a BA in English at Virginia Union University and an MA in drama (1965) from The Catholic University of America. She returned to Nigeria in 1966, and was a lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Ibadan, Oyo State, where she obtained a PhD.

She also taught Drama at the University of Ilorin, Kwara state, Nigeria where she was appointed, Head of Department for the Performing Arts. Sofola was a singer, dancer, as well as a prolific playwright. She wrote and directed many plays for stage and television, including her own work, such as *King Emene*. Her plays "range from historical tragedy to domestic comedy and use both traditional and modern African setting".^[4] She uses "elements of magic, myth and ritual to examine conflicts between traditionalism and modernism in which male supremacy persists."^[5] She was considered one of the most distinguished women in Nigerian literature.^[6][\[dead link\]](#)

Sofola's most frequently performed plays are *Wedlock of the Gods* (1972) and *The Sweet Trap* (1977),^[5] She died in 1995 at the age of 60.

Selected works

- *The Deer Hunter and The Hunter's Pearl* (1969), London: Evans Brothers
- *The Disturbed Peace of Christmas* (1971), Ibadan: Daystar Press
- *Wedlock of the Gods* (1972), Ibadan: Evans
- *The Operators*, Ibadan: Ibadan University, 1973
- *King Emene: Tragedy of a Rebellion* (1974), Heinemann Educational Books. [ISBN 0-435-92860-0](#)
- *The Wizard of Law* (1975), Evans Bros. [ISBN 0-237-49951-7](#)
- *The Sweet Trap* (1977); Ibadan: Oxford University Press. [ISBN 0-19-575386-X](#)
- *Old Wines Are Tasty* (1981), Ibadan: Oxford University Press. [ISBN 978-154-499-6](#)
- *Memories in the Moonlight* (1986), Ibadan: Evans Brothers.
- *Queen Omu-ako of Oligbo*, Buffalo: Paul Robeson Theatre, 1989
- *Eclipso and the Fantasia*, Illorin, Nigeria: 1990
- *The Showers*, Illorin, Nigeria: 1991
- *Song of a Maiden: A Play*, Illorin, Nigeria: Heinemann, 1992.
- *Lost Dreams and Other Plays*, Ibadan: Heinemann, 1992.

Wole Soyinka

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Wole Soyinka

Born	Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka 13 July 1934 (age 78) Abeokuta, Nigeria Protectorate (now Ogun State , Nigeria)
Occupation	Author, poet, playwright
Nationality	Nigerian
Genres	Drama, poetry
Subjects	Comparative literature

Notable	<u>Nobel Prize in Literature</u>
award(s)	1986

Influences^[show]

Akinwande Oluwole "Wole" Soyinka (born 13 July 1934) is a Nigerian writer, notable especially as a playwright and poet; he was awarded the 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature, the first person in Africa and the diaspora to be so honoured.

Soyinka was born into a Yoruba family in Abeokuta. After study in Nigeria and the UK, he worked with the Royal Court Theatre in London. He went on to write plays that were produced in both countries, in theatres and on radio. He took an active role in Nigeria's political history and its struggle for independence from Great Britain. In 1965, he seized the Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service studio and broadcast a demand for the cancellation of the Western Nigeria Regional Elections. In 1967 during the Nigerian Civil War, he was arrested by the federal government of General Yakubu Gowon and put in solitary confinement for two years.^[1]

Soyinka has strongly criticised many Nigerian military dictators, especially late General Sanni Abacha, as well as other political tyrannies, including the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe. Much of his writing has been concerned with "the oppressive boot and the irrelevance of the colour of the foot that wears it".^[citation needed] During the regime of General Sani Abacha (1993–98), Soyinka escaped from Nigeria via the "Nadeco Route" on a motorcycle. Living abroad, mainly in the United States, he was a professor first at Cornell University and then at Emory University in Atlanta, where in 1996 he was appointed Robert W. Woodruff Professor of the Arts. Abacha proclaimed a death sentence against him "in absentia". With civilian rule restored to Nigeria in 1999, Soyinka returned to his nation. He has also taught at the universities of Oxford, Harvard and Yale.

From 1975 to 1999, he was a Professor of Comparative Literature at the Obafemi Awolowo University, then called the University of Ife. With civilian rule restored in 1999, he was made professor emeritus.^[1] Soyinka has been a Professor of Creative Writing at the University of

Nevada, Las Vegas. In the fall of 2007 he was appointed Professor in Residence at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California, US.^[1]

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Life and work

Early life and education

A Remo family of Isara-Remo, Soyinka was born the second of six children, in the city of Abeokuta, Ogun State in Nigeria, at that time a British dominion. His father, Samuel Ayodele

Soyinka (whom he called S.A. or "Essay"), was an Anglican minister and the headmaster of St. Peters School in Abeokuta. Soyinka's mother, Grace Eniola Soyinka (whom he dubbed the "Wild Christian"), owned a shop in the nearby market. She was a political activist within the women's movement in the local community. She was also Anglican. As much of the community followed indigenous Yorùbá religious tradition, Soyinka grew up in an atmosphere of religious syncretism, with influences from both cultures. His father's position enabled him to get electricity and radio at home.

Mother was one of the most prominent members of the influential Ransome-Kuti family: she was the daughter of Rev. Canon JJ Ransome-Kuti, and sister to Olusegun Azariah Ransome-Kuti and Oludotun Ransome-Kuti. Among Soyinka's cousins were the musician Fela Kuti, the human rights activist Beko Ransome-Kuti, politician Olikoye Ransome-Kuti and activist Yemisi Ransome-Kuti.^[21]

In 1940, after attending St. Peters Primary School in Abeokuta, Soyinka went to Abeokuta Grammar School, where he won several prizes for literary composition. In 1946 he was accepted by Government College in Ibadan, at that time one of Nigeria's elite secondary schools.

After finishing his course at Government College in 1952, he began studies at University College in Ibadan (1952–54), affiliated with the University of London. He studied English literature, Greek, and Western history. In the year 1953–54, his second and last at University College, Ibadan, Soyinka began work on "Keffi's Birthday Threat," a short radio play for Nigerian Broadcasting Service. It was broadcast in July 1954. While at university, Soyinka and six others founded the Pyrates Confraternity, an anti-corruption and justice-seeking student organisation, the first confraternity in Nigeria. Soyinka gives a detailed account of his early life in his memoir *Aké: The Years of Childhood*.

Later in 1954, Soyinka relocated to England, where he continued his studies in English literature, under the supervision of his mentor Wilson Knight at the University of Leeds (1954–57). He met numerous young, gifted British writers. Before defending his B.A., Soyinka began publishing and worked as an editor for the satirical magazine *The Eagle*. He wrote a column on academic life, often criticising his university peers.

Early career

After graduating, he remained in Leeds with the intention of earning an M.A. Soyinka intended to write new work combining European theatrical traditions with those of his Yorùbá cultural heritage. His first major play, *The Swamp Dwellers* (1958), was followed a year later by *The Lion and the Jewel*, a comedy that attracted interest from several members of London's Royal Court Theatre. Encouraged, Soyinka moved to London, where he worked as a play reader for the Royal Court Theatre. During the same period, both of his plays were performed in Ibadan. They dealt with the uneasy relationship between progress and tradition in Nigeria.^[3]

In 1957 his play *The Invention* was the first of his works to be produced at the Royal Court Theatre. At that time his only published works were poems such as "The Immigrant" and "My Next Door Neighbour", which were published in the Nigerian magazine *Black Orpheus*.^[4] This was founded in 1957 by the German scholar Ulli Beier, who had been teaching at the University of Ibadan since 1950.^[5]

Soyinka received a Rockefeller Research Fellowship from University College in Ibadan, his alma mater, for research on African theatre, and he returned to Nigeria. He produced his new satire, *The Trials of Brother Jero*. His work *A Dance of The Forest* (1960), a biting criticism of Nigeria's political elites, won a contest that year as the official play for Nigerian Independence Day. On 1 October 1960, it premiered in Lagos as Nigeria celebrated its sovereignty. The play satirizes the fledgling nation by showing that the present is no more a golden age than was the past. Also in 1960, Soyinka established the "Nineteen-Sixty Masks", an amateur acting ensemble to which he devoted considerable time over the next few years.

Soyinka published works satirising the "Emergency" in the Western Region of Nigeria, as his Yorùbá homeland was increasingly occupied and controlled by the federal government. The political tensions arising from recent post-colonial independence eventually led to a military coup and civil war (1967–70).

With the Rockefeller grant, Soyinka bought a Land Rover. He began travelling throughout the country as a researcher with the Department of English Language of the University College in Ibadan. In an essay of the time, he criticised Leopold Senghor's Négritude movement as a

nostalgic and indiscriminate glorification of the black African past that ignores the potential benefits of modernisation. "A tiger does not shout its tigritude," he declared, "it acts." In *In Death and the King Horsemen* he states: "The elephant trails no tethering-rope; that king is not yet crowned who will peg an elephant."

In December 1962, his essay "Towards a True Theater" was published. He began teaching with the Department of English Language at Obafemi Awolowo University in Ife. Soyinka discussed current affairs with "négrophiles," and on several occasions openly condemned government censorship. At the end of 1963, his first feature-length movie, *Culture in Transition*, was released. In April 1964 *The Interpreters*, "a complex but also vividly documentary novel",^[6] was published in London.

That December, together with scientists and men of theatre, Soyinka founded the Drama Association of Nigeria. In 1964 he also resigned his university post, as a protest against imposed pro-government behaviour by authorities. A few months later, he was arrested for the first time, accused of underlying tapes during reproduction of recorded speech of the winner of Nigerian elections.^[clarification needed] He was released after a few months of confinement, as a result of protests by the international community of writers. This same year he wrote two more dramatic pieces: *Before the Blackout* and the comedy *Kongi's Harvest*. He also wrote *The Detainee*, a radio play for the BBC in London. At the end of the year, he was promoted to headmaster and senior lecturer in the Department of English Language at University of Lagos.

Soyinka's political speeches at that time criticised the cult of personality and government corruption in African dictatorships. In April 1965 his play *Kongi's Harvest* was produced in revival at the International Festival of Negro Art in Dakar, Senegal. His play *The Road* was awarded the Grand Prix. In June 1965, Soyinka produced his play *The Lion and The Jewel* for Hampstead Theatre Club in London.

Civil war and imprisonment

After becoming chief of the Cathedral of Drama at the University of Ibadan, Soyinka became more politically active. Following the military coup of January 1966, he secretly and unofficially

met with the military governor Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu in the Southeastern town of Enugu (August 1967), to try to avert civil war. As a result, he had to go into hiding.

He was imprisoned for 22 months^[7] as civil war ensued between the federal government and the Biafrans. Though refused materials such as books, pens, and paper, he still wrote a significant body of poems and notes criticising the Nigerian government.^[8]

Despite his imprisonment, in September 1967, his play *The Lion and The Jewel* was produced in Accra. In November *The Trials of Brother Jero* and *The Strong Breed* were produced in the Greenwich Mews Theatre in New York. He also published a collection of his poetry, *Idanre and Other Poems*. It was inspired by Soyinka's visit to the sanctuary of the Yorùbá deity Ogun, whom he regards as his "companion" deity, kindred spirit, and protector.^[8]

In 1968, the Negro Ensemble Company in New York produced *Kongi's Harvest*. While still imprisoned, Soyinka translated from Yoruba a fantastical novel by his compatriot D. O. Fagunwa, called *The Forest of a Thousand Demons: A Hunter's Saga*.

Release and literary production

In October 1969, when the civil war came to an end, amnesty was proclaimed, and Soyinka and other political prisoners were freed. For the first few months after his release, Soyinka stayed at a friend's farm in southern France, where he sought solitude. He wrote *The Bacchae of Euripides* (1969), a reworking of the Pentheus myth.^[9] He soon published in London a book of poetry, *Poems from Prison*. At the end of the year, he returned to his office as Headmaster of Cathedral of Drama in Ibadan, and cooperated in the founding of the literary periodical *Black Orpheus* (likely named after the 1959 film directed by Marcel Camus and set in the favela of Rio de Janeiro.)

In 1970 he produced the play *Kongi's Harvest*, while simultaneously adapting it as a film by the same title. In June 1970, he finished another play, called *Madman and Specialists*. Together with the group of fifteen actors of Ibadan University Theatre Art Company, he went on a trip to the United States, to the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theatre Center in Waterford, Connecticut, where

his latest play premiered. It gave them all experience with theatrical production in another English-speaking country.

In 1971, his poetry collection *A Shuttle in the Crypt* was published. *Madmen and Specialists* was produced in Ibadan that year. Soyinka travelled to Paris to take the lead role as Kinshasa, the murdered first Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo, in the production of his *Murderous Angels*. His powerful autobiographical work *The Man Died* (1971), a collection of notes from prison, was also published.

In April 1971, concerned about the political situation in Nigeria, Soyinka resigned from his duties at the University in Ibadan, and began years of voluntary exile. In July in Paris, excerpts from his well-known play *The Dance of The Forests* were performed.

In 1972, he was awarded an Honoris Causa doctorate by the University of Leeds. Soon thereafter, his novel *Season of Anomy* (1972) and his *Collected Plays* (1972) were both published by Oxford University Press. In 1973 the National Theatre, London, commissioned and premiered the play *The Bacchae of Euripides*.^[9] In 1973 his plays *Camwood on the Leaves* and *Jero's Metamorphosis* were first published. From 1973 to 1975, Soyinka spent time on scientific studies.^[clarification needed] He underwent one year's probation at Churchill College, Cambridge University,^[clarification needed] and gave a series of lectures at a number of European universities.

In 1974 his *Collected Plays, Volume II* was issued by Oxford University Press. In 1975 Soyinka was promoted to the position of editor for *Transition*, a magazine based in the Ghanaian capital of Accra, where he moved for some time. Soyinka used his columns in *Transition* to criticise the "negrophiles" (for instance, his article "Neo-Tarzanism: The Poetics of Pseudo-Transition") and military regimes. He protested against the military junta of Idi Amin in Uganda. After the political turnover in Nigeria and the subversion of Gowon's military regime in 1975, he returned to his homeland and resumed his position at the Cathedral of Comparative Literature at the University of Ife.

In 1976 he published his poetry collection *Ogun Abibiman*, as well as a collection of essays entitled *Myth, Literature and the African World*. In these, Soyinka explores the genesis of mysticism in African theatre and, using examples from both European and African literature,

compares and contrasts the cultures. He delivered a series of guest lectures at the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana in Legon. In October, the French version of *The Dance of The Forests* was performed in Dakar, while in Ife, his *Death and The King's Horseman* premiered.

In 1977 *Opera Wonyosi*, his adaptation of Bertold Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*, was staged in Ibadan. In 1979 he both directed and acted in Jon Blair and Norman Fenton's drama, *The Biko Inquest*, a work based on the life of Steve Biko, a South African student and human rights activist who was beaten to death by apartheid police forces. In 1981 Soyinka published his autobiographical work *Ake: The Years of Childhood*, which won a 1983 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award.

Soyinka founded another theatrical group called the Guerrilla Unit. Its goal was to work with local communities in analyzing their problems and to express some of their grievances in dramatic sketches. In 1983 his play, *Requiem for a Futurologist*, had its first performance at the University of Ife. In July, one of Soyinka's musical projects, the Unlimited Liability Company, issued a long-playing record entitled *I Love My Country*, in which several prominent Nigerian musicians played songs composed by Soyinka. In 1984, he directed the film *Blues for a Prodigal*; his new play *A Play of Giants* was produced the same year.

During the years from 1975–84, Soyinka was also more politically active. At the University of Ife, his administrative duties included the security of public roads. He criticized the corruption in the government of the democratically elected President Shehu Shagari. When he was replaced by the general Muhammadu Buhari, Soyinka was often at odds with the military. In 1984, a Nigerian court banned his 1971 book *The Man Died*. In 1985, his play *Requiem for a Futurologist* was published in London.

Since 1986

Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986,^[10] becoming the first African laureate. He was described as one "who in a wide cultural perspective and with poetic overtones fashions the drama of existence". Reed Way Dasenbrock writes that the award of the Nobel Prize in Literature to Soyinka is "likely to prove quite controversial and thoroughly deserved." He also

notes that "it is the first Nobel Prize awarded to an African writer or to any writer from the 'new literatures' in English that have emerged in the former colonies of the British Empire."^[11] His Nobel acceptance speech, "This Past Must Address Its Present", was devoted to South African freedom-fighter Nelson Mandela. Soyinka's speech was an outspoken criticism of apartheid and the politics of racial segregation imposed on the majority by the Nationalist South African government. In 1986, he received the Agip Prize for Literature.

In 1988, his collection of poems *Mandela's Earth, and Other Poems* was published, while in Nigeria another collection of essays entitled *Art, Dialogue and Outrage: Essays on Literature and Culture* appeared. In the same year, Soyinka accepted the position of Professor of African Studies and Theatre at Cornell University.^[12] In 1990, the second portion of his memoir *Isara: A Voyage Around Essay* appeared. In July 1991 the BBC African Service transmitted his radio play *A Scourge of Hyacinths*, and the next year (1992) in Sienna (Italy), his play *From Zia with Love* had its premiere. Both works are very bitter political parodies, based on events that took place in Nigeria in the 1980s. In 1993 Soyinka was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Harvard University. The next year another part of his autobiography appeared: *Ibadan: The Penkelemes Years (A Memoir: 1946–1965)*. The following year his play *The Beatification of Area Boy* was published. In October 1994 Soyinka was appointed UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for the Promotion of African culture, human rights, freedom of expression, media and communication.

In November 1994, Soyinka fled from Nigeria through the border with Benin and then to the United States. In 1996 his book *The Open Sore of a Continent: A Personal Narrative of the Nigerian Crisis* was first published. In 1997 Soyinka was charged with treason by the government of General Sani Abacha. In 1999 a new volume of poems entitled *Outsiders* was released. His play *King Baabu*, premiered in Lagos in 2001,^[13] a political satire on the theme of African dictatorship.^[13] In 2002 a collection of his poems, *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known*, was published by Methuen. In April 2006, his memoir *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* was published by Random House. In 2006 he cancelled his keynote speech for the annual S.E.A. Write Awards Ceremony in Bangkok to protest the Thai military's successful coup against the government.^[14]

In April 2007 Soyinka called for the cancellation of the Nigerian presidential elections held two weeks earlier, beset by widespread fraud and violence. In the wake of the Christmas Day (2009) attempted bombing^[where?] he questioned the United Kingdom's social logic that allows every religion to openly proselytise their faith, asserting that it is being abused by religious fundamentalists thereby turning England into a cesspit for the breeding of extremism. He supported the freedom of worship but warned against the consequence of the illogic of allowing religions to preach apocalyptic violence.^[15]

Legacy and honours

- In 2011, the African Heritage Research Library and Cultural Centre built a writers' enclave in his honour. It is located in Adeyipo Village, Lagelu Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The enclave includes a Writer-in-Residence Programme that enables writers to stay for a period of two, three or six months, engaging in serious creative writing.
- 1973: Honorary PhD, University of Leeds
- 1973–74: Overseas Fellow, Churchill College, Cambridge
- 1983: Elected an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature^[16]
- 1983: Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, United States.
- 1986: Nobel Prize for Literature
- 1986 Agip Prize for Literature
- 1986 Commander of the Federal Republic, CFR.
- 1990: Benson Medal from Royal Society of Literature
- 1993: Honorary doctorate, Harvard University
- 2005: Honorary doctorate degree, Princeton University.^[17]
- 2005: Conferred with the chieftaincy title of Akinlatun of Egbaland by the Alake, Oba of his Egba clan of Yorubaland. He was made a tribal aristocrat with the right to use the Yoruba title Oloye.^[18]
- 2009: Academy of Achievement Golden Plate Award

Works

Plays

- *The Swamp Dwellers*
- *The Lion and the Jewel*
- *The Trials of Brother Jero*
- *A Dance of the Forests*
- *The Strong Breed*
- *Before the Blackout*
- *Kongi's Harvest*
- *The Road*
- *The Bacchae of Euripides*
- *Madmen and Specialists*
- *Camwood on the Leaves*
- *Jero's Metamorphosis*
- *Death and the King's Horseman*
- *Opera Wonyosi*
- *Requiem for a Futurologist*
- *A Play of Giants*
- *A Scourge of Hyacinths (radio play)*
- *The Beatification of Area Boy*
- *King Baabu*
- *Etiki Revu Wetin*
- *Sixty Six (short piece)^[19]*

Novels

- *The Interpreters*
- *Season of Anomie*

Memoirs

- *The Man Died: Prison Notes* (1971)
- *Aké: The Years of Childhood* (1981)
- *Isara: A Voyage around Essay* (1990)



Bode Sowande

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Bode Sowande (born May 1948) is a Nigerian writer and dramatist, known for the theatric aesthetic of his plays about humanism and social change. He comes from a breed of writers in Nigeria that favors a post-traditional social and political landscape where the individual is the creator and maker of his own history not just the subject of norms and tradition. Sowande is a member of the so-called second generation of Nigerian playwrights, who favor a much more political tone in their writing and seek to promote an alliance or acquiescence to a change in the status quo and fate of the common man and farmers who constitute the majority of the Nigerian society.^[1] Some members of this groups includes: Zulu Sofola, Femi Osofisan and Festus Iyayi.

Works

- The Night Before Babylon, 1972
- A Farewell to Babylon and Other Plays, 1978
- Flamingo and other plays, 1980

- [TarotWithPrayers](#)

Amos Tutuola

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(September 2012)

Amos Tutuola

	Amos Tutuola
Born	June 20, 1920 Abeokuta, Nigeria
Died	June 8, 1997 (aged 76) Ibadan, Nigeria
Nationality	Nigerian
Ethnicity	Yoruba

Known for Author

Amos Tutuola (20 June 1920 - 8 June 1997) was a Nigerian writer famous for his books based in part on Yoruba folk-tales.

Contents

- 1 Early history
- 2 Writing
 - 2.1 *The Palm Wine Drinkard*
- 3 Selected bibliography
- 4 Tributes
- 5 For further information
- 6 References
- 7 External links

Early history

Tutuola was born in Abeokuta, Nigeria, in 1920, where his parents Charles and Esther were Yoruba Christian cocoa farmers. When about seven years old, he became a servant for F. O. Monu, an Igbo man, who sent Tutuola to the Salvation Army primary school in lieu of wages. At age 12 he attended the Anglican Central School in Abeokuta. His brief education was limited to six years (from 1934 to 1939). When his father died in 1939, Tutuola left school to train as a blacksmith, which trade he practised from 1942 to 1945 for the Royal Air Force in Nigeria. He subsequently tried a number of other vocations, including selling bread and acting as messenger for the Nigerian Department of Labor. In 1946, Tutuola completed his first full-length book, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, within a few days. In 1947 he married Victoria Alake, with whom he had four sons and four daughters.

Writing

Despite his short formal education, Tutuola wrote his novels in English. After he had written his first three books and become internationally famous, he joined the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in 1956 as a storekeeper in Ibadan, Western Nigeria. Tutuola became also one of the founders of Mbari Club, the writers' and publishers' organization. In 1979, he held a visiting research fellowship at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) at Ile-Ife, Nigeria, and in 1983 he was an associate of the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa. In retirement he divided his time between residences at Ibadan and Ago-Odo.

Tutuola died at the age of 77 on 8 June 1997 from hypertension and diabetes.

Many of his papers, letters, and holographic manuscripts have been collected at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, Austin.

The Palm Wine Drinkard

Tutuola's most famous novel, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard and his Dead Palm-Wine Tapster in the Deads' Town*, was written in 1946, first published in 1952 in London by Faber and Faber, then translated and published in Paris as *L'Ivrogne dans la brousse* by Raymond Queneau in 1953. The noted poet Dylan Thomas brought it to wide attention, calling it "brief, thronged, grisly and bewitching". Although the book was praised in England and the United States, it faced severe criticism in Tutuola's native Nigeria. Part of this criticism was due to his use of "broken English" and primitive style, which supposedly promoted the Western stereotype of "African backwardness". This line of criticism has, however, lost steam. In the opinion of Taban Lo Liyong:

Now, in all that he has done, Amos Tutuola is not sui generis. Is he ungrammatical? Yes. But James Joyce is more ungrammatical than Tutuola. Ezekiel Mphahlele has often said and written that African writers are doing violence to English. Violence? Has Joyce not done more violence to the English Language? Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* is written in seven dialects, he tells us. It is acknowledged a classic. We accept it, forget that it has no "grammar", and go ahead to learn his "grammar" and what he has to tell us. Let Tutuola write "no grammar" and the hyenas and jackals whine and growl. Let Gabriel Okara write a "no grammar" Okolo. They are mum. Why? Education drives out of the mind superstition, daydreaming, building of castles in the air,

cultivation of yarns, and replaces them with a rational practical mind, almost devoid of imagination. Some of these minds having failed to write imaginative stories, turn to that aristocratic type of criticism which magnifies trivialities beyond their real size. They fail to touch other virtues in a work because they do not have the imagination to perceive these mysteries. Art is arbitrary. Anybody can begin his own style. Having begun it arbitrarily, if he persists to produce in that particular mode, he can enlarge and elevate it to something permanent, to something other artists will come to learn and copy, to something the critics will catch up with and appreciate.^[1]

Professor Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie in her own reassessment wrote in *The Journal of Commonwealth Studies*:

What commands acclaim is Tutuola's use of his materials, chosen from all and sundry, and minted to make something beautiful, new and undeniably his own. He has handled his material with all of the skill of the good story teller and he has been able to endow it with the qualities of a "well-told-tale". His denigrators who think it devastating to name him a mere folktale-teller must realize that not all folktale-tellers are necessarily good. In *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, Tutuola has infused the life of his hybrid with the energies of a well-wrought tale. There is the urgency in the telling, the rapidity, indispensable to the Quest-motif, with which life unrolls itself; the fertility of incidents; the successful maintenance of our interest through the varying scenes. And the good-story teller is ever present in *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, speaking to us in warm human tones, genial, good-natured and unpretentious.^[2]

O. R. Dathorne additionally said:

Tutuola deserves to be considered seriously because his work represents an intentional attempt to fuse folklore with modern life. In this way he is unique, not only in Africa, where the sophisticated African writer is incapable of this tenuous and yet controlled connection, but in Europe as well, where this kind of writing is impossible.^[3]

J. P. Sartre, contrasting poetry in French by Frenchmen and Africans, had this to say:

It is almost impossible for our poets to realign themselves with popular tradition. Ten centuries of erudite poetry separate them from it. And, further, the folkloric inspiration is dried up: at most we could merely contrive a sterile facsimile. The more Westernized African is placed in the same position. When he does introduce folklore into his writing it is more in the nature of a gloss; in Tutuola it is intrinsic.

Professor Wole Soyinka wrote in 1963:

Of all his novels, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* remains his best and the least impeachable. This book, apart from the work of D. O. Fagunwa, who writes in Yoruba, is the earliest instance of the new Nigerian writer gathering multifarious experience under, if you like, the two cultures, and exploiting them in one extravagant, confident whole.^[4]

The Palm-Wine Drinkard was followed up by *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* in 1954 and then several other books in which Tutuola continued to explore Yoruba traditions and folklore. Strangely, the narrative of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* refers back to *The Bush of Ghosts* several times, even though the latter was written and published later. However, none of the subsequent works managed to match the success of *The Palm Wine Drinkard*.

Selected bibliography

- *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (1946, published 1952)
- *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1954)
- *Simbi and the Satyr of the Dark Jungle* (1955)
- *The Brave African Huntress* (1958)
- *Feather Woman of the Jungle* (1962)
- *Ajaiyi and his Inherited Poverty* (1967)
- *The Witch-Herbalist of the Remote Town* (1981)
- *The Wild Hunter in the Bush of the Ghosts* (1982)
- *Yoruba Folktales* (1986)
- *Pauper, Brawler and Slanderer* (1987)
- *The Village Witch Doctor and Other Stories* (1990)

Tributes

The name of a detective on the television show *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* is Odafin Tutuola. In the first pages of the introduction of *The Palm Wine Drinkard*, Michael Thelwell writes that the author's grandfather was an odafin, a spiritual leader, and Tutuola was the given name of Amos Tutuola's father.

Brian Eno and David Byrne took the title of the novel *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* for their 1981 album.

One of the characters of the gamebook *The Race Forever*, from the *Choose Your Own Adventure* collection, is named after Amos Tutuola.



Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike

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Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike (or Uche Peter Umez) (born January 1, 1975) is a Nigerian author. Umez's first published work of poetry, *Dark through the Delta*, deals with the recurring despoliation of Nigeria using the Niger Delta as its motif. The poems in the collection earned Umez a highly commended review as a "poet distinguished not only by the easily demonstrable honesty of the compassion and social commitment he expresses, but also by the highly evocative powers of his language, his inventiveness and the compelling lyricism of his poetry."^[1]

A graduate of Government & Public Administration from Abia State University, Umez is also the author of *Tears in her Eyes* (short stories) and *Aridity of Feelings* (poems). His children's novella, *Sam and the Wallet*, was the winner of the ANA/Funtime Prize for Children's Literature and the runner-up for the 2007 Nigeria LNG Prize for Literature. His unpublished children's novel, *The Christmas Gift*, won the 2008 ANA/Funtime Prize for Children's Literature. His collection of children's short stories, *Tim the Monkey and Other Stories*, has been accepted for publication by African First Publishers. He is currently working on his first full-length novel.

Contents

- 1 Works
 - 1.1 Novella
 - 1.2 Short fiction
 - 1.3 Poetry
- 2 Awards and grants
- 3 References

Works

Novella

- *Sam and the Wallet* (Funtime TV Enterprises, 2007)

Short fiction

- *Tears in Her Eyes* (Edu-Edy Publications, 2005)

Poetry

- *Aridity of Feelings* (Edu-Edy Publications, 2006)
- *Dark through the Delta* (Edu-Edy Publications, 2004)

Awards and grants

- Laureate, UNESCO-Aschberg, Sanskriti Kendra, India, 2009
- Alumnus, Caine Prize for African Writing Workshop, Accra, Ghana, 2009
- Alumnus, International Writing Program, Iowa City, USA, 2008^[2]
- Highly Commended, Commonwealth Short Story Competition^[3]
- Winner, Bath Spa Creative Writing Competition, UK
- Highly Commended, Commonwealth Short Story Competition^[4]

Obiora Udechukwu

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Obiora Udechukwu (born 1946) is a Nigerian painter and poet.

Born in Onitsha in 1946 to parents from Agulu in Anambra State, Nigeria. He studied for one year at Ahmadu Bello University before serving in the Biafran War. He completed his bachelor's degree in fine arts in 1972, receiving his master's in 1977; both were from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He is recognised as a member of the Nsukka group of artists.

Udechukwu frequently incorporates *uli* into his work, and in the 1970s he began to incorporate *nsibidi* into his work as well. Many of his paintings and prints depict ordinary people; his

wartime service also inspired pieces which depicted the great suffering that he saw. Udechukwu's later works have gradually become more abstract.

Udechukwu is also active as a teacher; among his pupils at Nsukka were Tayo Adenaike and Olu Oguike.

Obiora is the head of the Fine Arts Department at St. Lawrence University.

Poetry

- *What the Madman Said*, (1990)

Adaora Lily Ulasi

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Adaora Lily Ulasi (born 1932) is a Nigerian journalist and novelist. As a journalist she has worked for the BBC and Voice of America. As a novelist she may be the first Nigerian to write detective fiction in English, "adapting the genre of the crime thriller to a Igbo or Yoruba context".^[1]

Biography

Born in Aba, Eastern Nigeria, daughter of an Igbo chief, she was locally schooled, and then studied in Los Angeles, CA, at Pepperdine University and at the University of Southern California, earning a BA in journalism in 1954. In the 1960s she was women's page editor of the Daily Times of Nigeria. She subsequently married Deryk James and had three children Heather, Angela and Martin. After her divorce in 1972 she went to Nigeria as editor of *Woman's World* magazine, and in 1976 returned to England. Her first novel, *Many Thing You No Understand* (1970), "controversially (for the first time) used pidgin English to dramatize the interaction between colonial officers and local people in the pre-independence era, as did her subsequent

works, *Many Thing Begin For Change* (1971), *Who Is Jonah?* (1978) and *The Man from Sagamu* (1978). By contrast, *The Night Harry Died* (1974) is set in souther USA."^[2]

She currently lives in Kent, England.

Novels

- *Many Thing You No Understand* - London: Michael Joseph, 1970; Fontana, 1973
- *Many Thing Begin For Change* - London: Michael Joseph, 1971; Fontana, 1975
- *The Night Harry Died* - Lagos: Research Institute Nigeria, 1974
- *Who Is Jonah?* - Ibadan: Onibonoje Press, 1978
- *The Man From Sagamu* - London: Collins/Fontana, 1978; New York: Collier Macmillan, 1978

Chika Unigwe

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Chika Unigwe ([Enugu](#), 1974) is a [Nigerian](#)-born author^[1] and she writes in [English](#) and [Dutch](#).

Chika Unigwe

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Biography

Chika Unigwe was born in [Enugu](#), Nigeria. She has a Ph.D in Literature from the [University of Leiden](#) in the [Netherlands](#). Her [debut novel](#), *De Feniks*, was published in 2005 by Meulenhoff and Manteau (of [Amsterdam](#) and [Antwerp](#)) and was shortlisted for the *Vrouw en Kultuur debuutprijs* for the best first novel by a female writer. She is also the author of two children's books published by Macmillan, [London](#).

She has published short fiction in several anthologies, journals and magazines including *Wasafiri* ([University of London](#)), *Moving Worlds* ([University of Leeds](#)), *Per Contra*, *Voices of the University of Wisconsin* and *Okike* of the [University of Nigeria](#).

In 2003, she was shortlisted for the *Caine Prize for African Writing*. In 2004, she won the [BBC Short story Competition](#) and a [Commonwealth Short Story Competition](#) award. In the same year, her short story made the top 10 of the [Million Writers Award](#) for best online fiction. In 2005, she won the 3rd prize in the Equiano Fiction Contest. Her second novel, *Fata Morgana*, was published in Dutch in 2008 and will soon be released in English. Her first novel, *De Feniks*, was published in Dutch in September 2005 and it is the first book of fiction, written by a Flemish author of African origin. In 2009, Chika Unigwe's novel *On Black Sisters' Street*, about African prostitutes living and working in [Belgium](#), was published in London by Jonathan Cape. *On Black Sisters' Street* won the 2012 [Nigeria Prize for Literature](#).^{[2][3]}

She lives in [Turnhout](#), [Belgium](#), with her husband and four children.^[4]

Bibliography

- *Tear Drops*, Enugu: Richardson Publishers, 1993.

- *Born in Nigeria*, Enugu: Onyx Publishers, 1995.
- *A Rainbow for Dinner*. Oxford: Macmillan, 2002. ISBN 978-0-333-95588-8
- *In the Shadow of Ala; Igbo women's writing as an act of righting*. Dissertation, Leiden University, 2004.
- *Thinking of Angel*, 2005.
- *Dreams*, 2004.
- *The Phoenix*. Lagos: Farafina Publishers, 2007. ISBN 978-978-48013-6-2
- *On Black Sisters' Street* (translation of *Fata Morgana*). London: Jonathan Cape, 2009. ISBN 978-0-224-08530-4



Mamman Jiya Vatsa

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Mamman Jiya Vatsa

Minister of Abuja FCT

In office

1984 – December 1985

Preceded by Haliru Dantoro

Succeeded by Hamza Abdullahi

Personal details

Born 3 December 1940

Died 5 March 1986

Mamman Jiya Vatsa (3 December 1940 - 5 March 1986) was a Nigerian soldier and writer. He was a Major-General in the Nigerian army, Minister of the Federal Capital Abuja, and a member of the Supreme Military Council. He was executed by the Nigerian Government of Major General Ibrahim Babangida on 5 March 1986 following accusations of his involvement in an abortive coup.

Vatsa was also an accomplished poet and writer, publishing eight poetry collections for adults and eleven for children, with titles such as *Back Again at Wargate* (1982), *Reach for the Skies* (1984) and *Verses for Nigerian State Capitals* (1973). His books are about ordinary people's lives and simple creatures, including the pidgin collection *Tori for Geti Bow Leg* (1981), his cultural picture book in Hausa, *Bikin Suna*, and a charming picture storybook entitled *Stinger the Scorpion* (1979).

Vatsa was a facilitator and patron of the arts in Nigeria, where he organized writing workshops for his fellow soldiers and their children and got their works published. He helped the Children's Literature Association of Nigeria with funds, built a Writers' Village for the Association of Nigerian Authors, and hosted their annual conferences.

The Writers' Village finally became a reality on the 24th of January, 2012, when the National Executive of the Association, led by the President, Prof. Remi Raji, performed a groundbreaking ceremony at the site. The Village has been named in Gen. Vatsa's honour.^[1]

Selected bibliography

- *Verses for Nigerian State Capitals* (poetry), 1973.

- *Stinger the Scorpion* - 1979.
- *Tori for Geti Bow Leg and Other Pidgin Poems* (1981), Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria: Cross Continent Press, 1985; illus. Ade J. Adeyanju.
- *Bikin Suna*
- *Back Again at Wargate* (poetry) 1982.
- *Reach for the Skies* (poetry) 1984.

Jumoke Verissimo

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- **Jumoke Verissimo** (born 26 December 1979, [Lagos](#)) is a [Nigerian poet and writer](#). She won First Prize, Carlos Idize Ahmad Prize for a first book of Poetry 2009, Second Prize, Anthony Agbo Prize for Poetry 2009 and Honourable Mention Association of Nigeria (Poetry) 2009. [The Punch](#) describes her as, 'one of those who will change the face of literature in Nigeria.'

Ken Wiwa

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Ken Wiwa (born 1968, [Lagos](#)), also known as Ken Saro-Wiwa Jr., is a Nigerian journalist and author. Currently serving as an aide to President Goodluck Jonathan, he is the Senior Special Assistant on Civil Society and International Media.

Biography

Wiwa was educated in Nigeria(Farah dagane Bellamy) and at Stancliffe Hall School[1] and Tonbridge School in England and then at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, which is now part of University College London. He was editor of the UK Guardian's New Media Lab where he developed content for the paper's online edition before moving to Canada in 1999, where he was a writer in residence at Massey College in the University of Toronto, Saul Rae Fellow at the Munk Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto, a mentor at the Trudeau Foundation in Canada and a columnist for The Globe and Mail where he was twice nominated for the National Newspaper Awards for Feature writing. An accomplished public speaker, Ken Saro-Wiwa Jr. has addressed the European Union, Oxford Union and spoken at a number of colleges and Universities including Harvard, Cambridge, McGill and also served as a Conference rapporteur at a UN meeting on Cultural Diversity. A regular commentator on major news channels including CNN, BBC, Al-Jazeera, he has appeared as a guest on Hard Talk and Newsnight. In 2005 he was selected by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader. He was the Founding Curator of the Abuja Hub for the Globalshapers Programme of the World Economic Forum and has also served on the Africa Advisory Council of the Prince of Wales Rainforest Project. He written for a number of publications, including The Guardian in the UK, The Washington Post, New York Times and National Geographic. He currently serves as an Editor-at-Large for Arise Magazine and continues to contribute occasional columns for magazines, newspapers and blogs. Wiwa has also produced and narrated television and radio documentaries for the BBC and CBC, he has written commentaries for National Public Radio. His memoir of his father, In the Shadow of a Saint, won the 2001 Hurston-Wright Non Fiction Award. In 2005 he returned to Nigeria and the following year former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo appointed Wiwa as his Special Assistant on peace, conflict resolution and reconciliation. [2] He also served President Umaru Yar'Adua as the Special Assistant on International Affairs. He is the eldest son of Nigerian human rights activist and author Ken Saro-Wiwa.

