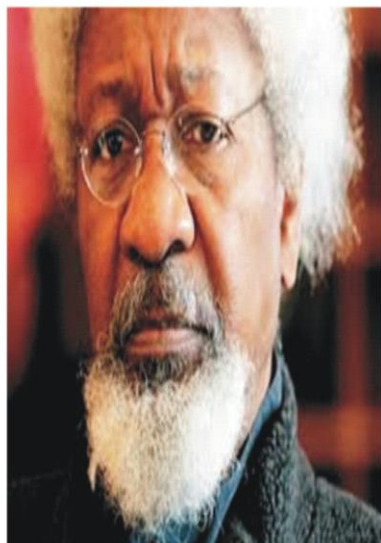


TWENTY OUTSTANDING AFRICAN PLAYWRIGHTS



A Publication of the West Africa Young Writers and Publishers Association

**Compiled and Edited by:
Wole Adedoyin**

Ama Ata Aidoo

Professor **Ama Ata Aidoo**, *née* **Christina Ama Aidoo** (born 23 March 1940, Saltpond) is a Ghanaian author, poet, playwright and academic, who is also a former Minister of Education in the Ghana government.

Life

Born in Saltpond in Ghana's Central Region, she grew up in a Fante royal household, the daughter of Nana Yaw Fama, chief of A beadzi Kyiakor, and Maame Abasema. Aidoo was sent by her father to Wesley Girls' High School in Cape Coast from 1961 to 1964. The headmistress of Wesley Girls' bought her her first typewriter. After leaving high school, she enrolled at the University of Ghana in Legon and received her Bachelor of Arts in English as well as writing her first play, *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, in 1964. The play was published by Longman the following year, making Aidoo the first published African woman dramatist.

She worked in the United States of America where she held a fellowship in creative writing at Stanford University. She also served as a research fellow at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, and as a Lecturer in English at the University of Cape Coast, eventually rising there to the position of Professor.

Aside from her literary career, Aidoo was appointed Minister of Education under the Provisional National Defence Council in 1982. She resigned after 18 months. She has also spent a great deal of time teaching and living abroad for months at a time. She has lived in America, Britain, Germany, and Zimbabwe. Aidoo taught various English courses at Hamilton College in Clinton, NY in the early to mid 1990s. She is currently a Visiting Professor in the Africana Studies Department at Brown University.

Writings

Aidoo's works of fiction particularly deal with the tension between Western and African world views. Her first novel, *Our Sister Killjoy*, was published in 1977 and

remains one of her most popular works. Many of Aidoo's protagonists are women who defy the stereotypical women's roles of their time. Her novel *Changes*, won the 1992 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Book (Africa). She is also an accomplished poet - her collection *Someone Talking to Sometime* won the Nelson Mandela Prize for Poetry in 1987 - and has written several children's books.

Bibliography

- *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (play), Longman, 1965
- *Anowa* (a play based on a Ghanaian legend), 1970
- *No Sweetness Here: A Collection of Short Stories*, Longman, 1970
- *Our Sister Killjoy: or Reflections from a Black-eyed Squint*, Longman, 1977
- *Someone Talking to Sometime* (a poetry collection), 1986
- *The Eagle and the Chicken*, 1986

- *Birds and Other Poems*, College Press, Harare, 1987
- *Changes: a Love Story* (novel), 1991
- *An Angry Letter in January* (poems), 1992
- *The Girl Who Can and Other Stories*, Heinemann African Writers Series, 1997
- *Diplomatic Pounds & Other Stories*, Ayebia Clarke Publishing, 2012
- *African Love Stories – an anthology*, Ayebia Clarke Publishing, 2012.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (Gikuyu pronunciation: born 5 January 1938) is a Kenyan writer, formerly working in English and now working in Gikuyu. His work includes novels, plays, short stories, and essays, ranging from literary and social criticism to children's literature. He is the founder and editor of the Gikuyu-language journal *Mũtĩri*.

In 1977, Ngũgĩ embarked upon a novel form of theatre in his native Kenya that sought to liberate the theatrical process from what he held to be "the general bourgeois education system", by encouraging spontaneity and audience participation in the performances. His project sought to "demystify" the theatrical process, and to avoid the "process of alienation [that] produces a gallery of active stars and an undifferentiated mass of grateful admirers" which, according to Ngũgĩ, encourages passivity in "ordinary people". Although *Ngaahika Ndeenda* was a commercial success, it was shut down by the authoritarian Kenyan regime six weeks after its

opening. Ngũgĩ was subsequently imprisoned for over a year.

Adopted as an Amnesty International prisoner of conscience, the artist was released from prison, and fled Kenya. In the United States, he taught at Yale University for some years, and has since also taught at New York University, with a dual professorship in Comparative Literature and Performance Studies, and the University of California, Irvine. Ngũgĩ has frequently been regarded as a likely candidate for the Nobel Prize in Literature. His son is the author Mũkoma wa Ngũgĩ.

Biography

Ngũgĩ was born in Kamiriithu, near Limuru in Kiambu district, Kenya, of Kikuyu descent, and baptised **James Ngugi**. His family was caught up in the Mau Mau War; his half-brother Mwangi was actively involved in the Kenya Land and Freedom Army, and his mother was tortured at Kamiriithu homeguard post.¹ He received a B.A. in English from Makerere University College in Kampala, Uganda, in 1963; during his education, a play

of his, *The Black Hermit*, was produced in Kampala in 1962.

Ngũgĩ published his first novel, *Weep Not, Child*, in 1964, which he wrote while attending the University of Leeds in England. It was the first novel in English to be published by a writer from East Africa. His second novel, *The River Between* (1965), has as its background the Mau Mau rebellion, and described an unhappy romance between Christians and non-Christians. *The River Between* is currently on Kenya's national secondary school syllabus.

His novel *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) marked his embrace of Fanonist Marxism. He subsequently renounced English, Christianity, and the name James Ngugi as colonialist; he changed his name back to **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o**, and began to write in his native Gikuyu and Swahili.

In 1976 he helped set up The Kamiriithu Community Education and Cultural Centre which, among other things, organised African Theatre in the area. The

uncensored political message of his 1977 play *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)* provoked the then Kenyan Vice-President Daniel arap Moi to order his arrest. While detained in the Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Ngũgĩ wrote the first modern novel in Gikuyu, *Caitani mũtharaba-Inĩ (Devil on the Cross)*, on prison-issued toilet paper.

After his release, he was not reinstated to his job as professor at Nairobi University, and his family was harassed. Due to his writing about the injustices of the dictatorial government at the time, Ngugi and his family were forced to live in exile. Only after Arap Moi was voted out of office, 22 years later, was it safe for them to return.

His later works include *Detained*, his prison diary (1981), *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986), an essay arguing for African writers' expression in their native languages rather than European languages, in order to renounce lingering colonial ties and to build an authentic African

literature, and *Matigari* (1987), one of his most famous works, a satire based on a Gikuyu folktale.

In 1992, Ngũgĩ became a professor of Comparative Literature and Performance Studies at New York University, where he held the Erich Maria Remarque Chair. He is currently a Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature as well as the Director of the International Center for Writing and Translation at the University of California, Irvine.

On 8 August 2004, Ngũgĩ returned to Kenya as part of a month-long tour of East Africa. On 11 August, robbers broke into his high-security apartment: they assaulted Ngũgĩ, sexually assaulted his wife and stole various items of value. Since then, Ngũgĩ has returned to America, and in the summer 2006 the American publishing firm Random House published his first new novel in nearly two decades, *Wizard of the Crow*, translated to English from Gikuyu by the author.

On 10 November 2006, while in San Francisco at Hotel Vitale at the Embarcadero, Ngũgĩ was harassed and

ordered to leave the hotel by an employee. The event led to a public outcry and angered the African-American community and the Africans living in America, prompting an apology by the hotel.

His most recent books are *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*, a collection of essays published in 2009 making the argument the crucial role of African languages in "the resurrection of African memory, and two autobiographical works: *Dreams in a Time of War: a Childhood Memoir* (2010) and *In the House of the Interpreter: A Memoir* (2012).

Awards and honours

- 1973 Lotus Prize for Literature
- Nominated for the Man Booker International Prize
- 2012 National Book Critics Circle Award (finalist Autobiography) for *In the House of the Interpreter*

Honorary degrees

- University of Dar es Salaam, Honorary doctorate in Literature, November 2013

List of works

- *The Black Hermit*, 1963 (play)
- *Weep Not, Child*, 1964, Heinemann, 1987, Macmillan 2005, ISBN 1-4050-7331-4
- *The River Between*, Heinemann 1965, Heinemann 1989, ISBN 0-435-90548-1
- *A Grain of Wheat*, 1967 (1992), ISBN 0-14-118699-2
- *This Time Tomorrow* (three plays, including the title play, "The Reels", and "The Wound in the Heart"), c. 1970
- *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture, and Politics*, Heinemann, 1972, ISBN 0-435-18580-2
- *A Meeting in the Dark* (1974)
- *Secret Lives, and Other Stories*, 1976, Heinemann, 1992, ISBN 0-435-90975-4

- *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* (play), 1976, ISBN 0-435-90191-5, African Publishing Group, ISBN 0-949932-45-0 (with Micere Githae Mugo and Njaka)
- *Ngaahika Ndeenda: Ithaako ria ngerekano (I Will Marry When I Want)*, 1977 (play; with Ngugi wa Mirii), Heinemann Educational Books (1980)
- *Petals of Blood* (1977) Penguin 2002, ISBN 0-14-118702-6
- *Caitaani mutharaba-Ini (Devil on the Cross)*, 1980
- *Writers in Politics: Essays*, 1981, ISBN 978-0-85255-541-5 (UK), ISBN 978-0-435-08985-6 (US)
- *Education for a National Culture*, 1981
- *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*, 1981
- *Devil on the Cross* (English translation of *Caitaani mutharaba-Ini*), Heinemann, 1982, ISBN 0-435-90200-8
- *Barrel of a Pen: Resistance to Repression in Neo-Colonial Kenya*, 1983

- *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, 1986, ISBN 978-0-85255-501-9 (UK), ISBN 978-0-435-08016-7 (US)
- *Mother, Sing For Me*, 1986
- *Writing against Neo-Colonialism*, 1986
- *Njamba Nene and the Flying Bus (Njamba Nene na Mbaathi i Mathagu)*, 1986 (children's book)
- *Matigari ma Njiruungi*, 1986
- *Njamba Nene and the Cruel Chief (Njamba Nene na Chibu King'ang'i)*, 1988 (children's book)
- *Matigari* (translated into English by Wangui wa Goro), Heinemann 1989, Africa World Press 1994, ISBN 0-435-90546-5
- *Njamba Nene's Pistol (Bathitoora ya Njamba Nene)*, (children's book), 1990, Africa World Press, ISBN 0-86543-081-0
- *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedom*, Heinemann, 1993, ISBN 978-0-435-08079-2 (US) ISBN 978-0-85255-530-9 (UK)
- *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams: The Performance of Literature and Power in Post-Colonial Africa* (The Clarendon Lectures in

English Literature 1996), Oxford University Press, 1998. ISBN 0-19-818390-9

- *Mũrogi wa Kagogo* (Wizard of the Crow), 2004, East African Educational Publishers, ISBN 9966-25-162-6
- *Wizard of the Crow*, 2006, Secker, ISBN 1-84655-034-3
- *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*, Basic Civitas Books, 2009, ISBN 978-0-465-00946-6
- *Dreams in a Time of War: a Childhood Memoir*, Harvill Secker, 2010, ISBN 978-1-84655-377-6
- *In the House of the Interpreter: A Memoir*, Pantheon, 2012, ISBN 978-0-30790-769-1

Ngugi wa Mirii

Ngugi wa Mirii (1951 – 3 May 2008) was a Kenyan playwright who lived in exile in Zimbabwe, where he died in Harare. He was known for his play, *I Will Marry When I Want*, which he co-authored with fellow Gikuyu writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o.

Biography

Born in Roromo, Limuru, Kenya, Ngugi wa Mirii was educated at Ngenia Secondary School and from 1972 to 1974 worked with the Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Corporation. He took a diploma in Adult Education at the Institute of Adult Studies, Nairobi University, and then joined the Institute of Development Studies. While working there he became involved with peasants and workers in community development at Kamiriithu, Limuru. In 1982, he went to Zimbabwe where he lived in exile. He was known as a supporter of Robert Mugabe and Zanu-PF.

On 3 May 2008, Ngugi wa Mirii was killed in a car accident in Zimbabwe, at the age of 57. He drove into a stationary lorry nearby the suburb of Eastlea.

Noureddine Aba

Noureddine Aba (1921 – September 19, 1996) was an Algerian poet and playwright. His work mainly focuses on political themes, such as the Algerian revolution, the Arab–Israeli conflict and Nazi Germany. In 1990, he established the Fondation Noureddine Aba, which continues to present the annual Noureddine Aba Prize to Algerian writers.

Early life

Aba was born in 1921 in the Algerian town of Sétif. In his autobiographical work *Le chant perdu au pays retrouvé* (*The Lost Song of a Rediscovered Country*, 1978), he described his childhood as an unhappy period, writing: "I had to envy children in some parts of the world who went through childhood with the frivolity of butterflies". After completing his secondary education in Setif, he spent one year studying law at the University of Algiers. In the 1940s, he began writing some poetry, including his 1941 collection *L'Aube de l'amour* (*The Dawn of Love*). In 1943, he was conscripted into the

Algerian army, where he served for two years until the end of the Second World War.

Writing career

After the war, Aba became a journalist and reported on the Nuremberg Trials. When the magazine *Présence Africaine* was established in 1947, Aba became one of its writers. At this point, Aba was living in France, where he spent much of his adult life.

Wartime experiences, particularly his outrage at the Sétif massacre of May 1945, also inspired Aba to commit to writing more poetry. His work is primarily focused on themes relating to politics and the impact of violence on humans, covering topics such as the Algerian revolution, the Arab–Israeli conflict and Nazi Germany. The themes of his work led the scholar Jean Déjeux to compare him to Mohammed Dib. Aba's more well-known collections include *Gazelle au petit matin* (*Gazelle in the Early Morning*, 1978) and *Gazelle après minuit* (*Gazelle after Midnight*, 1979), which take the form of a series of love

poems inspired by the deaths of a young couple at the point of the country becoming independent from France.

Aba has also written many plays, which are often farces with political themes. They have been performed in French theatres and on Radio France Internationale;^[1] plays are rarely performed in Algeria unless they are in Arabic. His plays include *Tell el Zaatar s'est tu a la tombée du soir* (*Silence at Nightfall in Tell el Zaatar*, 1981), which relates episodes from the history of Palestine, and *L'Annonce faite à Marco, ou a l'aube et sans couronne* (*The Annunciation to Marco, or Uncrowned at Dawn*, 1983), which is set during the Battle of Algiers in 1957.

Awards and honours

Aba's work gained greater critical recognition in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1979 he was presented with the Prix de l'Afrique méditerranéenne for his poetry, and in 1985 he was awarded the Fondation de France's "Prix Charles Oulmont" for his contribution to literature. His

1981 play *Tell el Zaatar...* won the Prix Palestine-Mahmoud Hamchari.^[4]

Other work

Aba has lectured at a number of universities, including a period teaching Algerian literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.^[1] Aba has been a member of the Académie des Sciences d'Outre-mer and the Académie Universelle des Cultures. He was also part of the Haut Conseil de la francophonie, having been appointed to this by François Mitterrand.^[4]

Aba has also been active in politics. He returned briefly to Algeria in the late 1970s and worked in the Ministry of Information and Culture, before becoming disillusioned with Algerian politics and returning to France. Throughout his life, he was particularly sympathetic to Palestinian nationalism. Before his death, he petitioned the French government to persuade them to help bring an end to the Algerian Civil War.

Death and legacy

Aba died in 1996 in Paris, aged 74. The Fondation Nouredine Aba, established by the author in 1990, continues to present the annual Nouredine Aba Prize to Algerian writers writing in French or Arabic. Previous recipients have included Tahar Djaout and Redha Malek.

Peter Nazareth

Peter Nazareth (born 27 April 1940) is a Ugandan-born critic and writer of fiction and drama.^[1]

Life

Peter Nazareth was born in Uganda of Goan and Malaysian ancestry, and was educated at Makerere University (Uganda) and at the universities of London and Leeds in England.

While residing in Africa, he simultaneously served as senior finance officer in Idi Amin's finance ministry until 1973, when he accepted a fellowship at Yale University (United States) and emigrated from Uganda. He is currently professor of English and African-American World Studies at the University of Iowa (United States), where he is also a consultant to the International Writing Program. Nazareth attracted major media attention for teaching that university's popular course "Elvis as Anthology," which explores the deep mythological roots of Elvis Presley's roles in popular culture.

His literary criticisms have been enriched by his trenchant observations of the fate of diverse global economic and academic migrants, spanning the Asian, African and black American cultural histories. This includes specifically, the Goan diaspora settled in Western countries, the post Idi Amin Asian emigration from Eastern Africa and of the cultural superstitions of the pre Obama presidency of American politics.

Works

Books

- *In a Brown Mantle*, East African Literature Bureau, 1972; Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1981.
- *Literature and Society in Modern Africa*, East African Literature Bureau, 1972; Kenya Literature Bureau, 1980; published as *An African View of Literature*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974.
- *Two Radio Plays*, East African Literature Bureau, 1976.

- *The Third World Writer: His Social Responsibility*, Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1978.
- *Literature of the African Peoples*, Study Guide for Independent Study with audiotape/CD, Center for Credit Programs, The University of Iowa, 1983.
- *A Feny Fele*, Budapest: Europa Publishing House, 1984 (selected essays in Hungarian translation)
- *The General is Up*, Toronto: TSAR Books, 1991
- *In the Trickster Tradition: The Novels of Andrew Salkey, Francis Ebejer and Ishmael Reed*, London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Press, 1994.
- *Edwin Thumboo: Creating a Nation Through Poetry*, Singapore: Interlogue Series Vol. 7, Ethos Books, 2008.

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- *African Writing Today*, special issue of *Pacific Quarterly Moana*, Hamilton, New Zealand: Outrigger Publishers, Vol. 6, No. 3/4, 1981.
- *Goan Literature: A Modern Reader*, issue of the *Journal of South Asian Literature*, East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1983.
- *Critical Essays on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*, New York: G.K. Hall, 2000
- *Uganda South Asians Exodus: Kololian Perspectives* (co-edited), University of Toronto, 2002.

Significant Essays

- "Waiting for Amin: Two Decades of Ugandan Literature", *The Writing of East & Central Africa*, ed. G.D. Killam, London Nairobi / Ibadan : Heinemann, 1984 pages 1–35.
- "Bibliyography, or Six Tabans in Search of an Author," *ibid.*, pages 159–172.

- "The Narrator as Artist and the Reader as Critic in Season of Migration to the North," *Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North: A Casebook*, ed. Mona Takieddine Amyuni, Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1985, pages 123–134.
- "Out of Darkness: Conrad and Other Third World Writers", *Joseph Conrad: Third World Perspectives*, ed. Robert Hamner, Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1990, pages 217–231.
- "Elvis as Anthology," *In Search of Elvis: Music, Race, Art, Religion*, ed. Vernon Chadwick, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997, pages 37–72 plus Endnotes 253–258.
- "The True Fantasies of Grace Ogot, Storyteller", *Meditations on African Literature*, ed. Dubem Okafor, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001, pages 101–117.
- "Dark Heart or Trickster?", *The Journal of The Korean Society Nineteenth Century Literature in*

English, Vol. 9-3, 2005, pages 291–321 (on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*).

- "Path of Thunder: Meeting Bessie Head", *Research in African Literatures*, ed. John Conteh-Morgan, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, Vol. 37, No. 4, Winter 2006, pages 211–229.
- "Heading Them Off at the Pass," *The Critical Response to Ishmael Reed*, ed. Bruce Allen Dick, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999, pages 140–148.

Wole Soyinka



Akinwande Oluwole "Wole" Soyinka (Yoruba: *Oluwoḽé Ṣóyinká*, pronounced "Shoyinka") (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 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.^[2]

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". 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. 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.

Life and work

Early life and education

A descendant of a Remo family of Isara-Remo, Soyinka was born the second of six children, in the city of

Abẹokuta, 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 Abẹokuta. 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. While he was raised in a religious family; attending church services and singing in the choir from an early age; Soyinka himself became an atheist. His father's position enabled him to get electricity and radio at home.

His mother was one of the most prominent members of the influential Ransome-Kuti family: she was the daughter of Rev. Canon J. J. Ransome-Kuti, and sister to Olusegun Azariah Ransome-Kuti, Oludotun Ransome-Kuti and Funmilayo 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.^[8]

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.

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*. This was founded in 1957 by the German scholar Ulli Beier, who had been teaching at the University of Ibadan since 1950.

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 wrote the first full-length play produced on Nigerian television. The Play, titled *My Father's Burden*, directed by Segun Olusola was featured on the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) on 6 August 1960. 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", 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.¹ 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. His play *The Road* premiered in London at the Commonwealth Arts Festival, opening on 14 September 1965 at the Theatre Royal. 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 1966 his play *Kongi's Harvest* was produced in revival at the World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal. *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 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.

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.

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. 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 Patrice Lumumba, 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*. 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.¹ He spent a year as a visiting fellow at Churchill College Cambridge University¹1973-74 and wrote *Death and the King's Horseman*, which had its first reading at Churchill College (which Dapo Ladimeji and Skip Gates attended), 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. He 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, Soyinka 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, on 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 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, 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." 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. 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 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, he 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 he was charged with treason by the government of General Sani Abacha. The International Parliament of Writers (IPW) was established in 1993 to provide support for writers victimized by persecution. Soyinka

became the organization's second president from 1997 to 2000. In 1999 a new volume of poems by Soyinka, entitled *Outsiders*, was released. His play *King Baabu*, premiered in Lagos in 2001, a political satire on the theme of African dictatorship. 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.

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) bombing attempt on a flight to the US by a Nigerian student who had become radicalised in Britain, Soyinka 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.

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
- 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.
- 2005: Conferred with the chieftaincy title of the Akinlatun of Egbaland by the Oba Alake of the Egba clan of Yorubaland. He was made a tribal aristocrat with the right to use the Yoruba title **Oloye**.
- 2009: Academy of Achievement Golden Plate Award
- 2013, Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, Lifetime Achievement, United States.

Works

Plays

- *The Invention* (1957)

- *The Swamp Dwellers* (1958)
- *The Lion and the Jewel* (1959)
- *The Trials of Brother Jero*
- *A Dance of the Forests* (1960)
- *My Father's Burden* (1960)
- *The Strong Breed* (1964)
- *Before the Blackout* (1964)
- *Kongi's Harvest* (1964)
- *The Road* (1965)
- *Madmen and Specialists* (1970)
- *The Bacchae of Euripides* (1973)
- *Camwood on the Leaves* (1973)
- *Jero's Metamorphosis* (1973)
- *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975)
- *Opera Wonyosi* (1977)
- *Requiem for a Futurologist* (1983)
- *Sixty Six* (short piece) (1984)
- *A Play of Giants* (1984)
- *From Zia with Love* (1992)
- *The Detainee* (radio play)
- *A Scourge of Hyacinths* (radio play)
- *The Beatification of Area Boy* (1996)

- *King Baabu* (2001)
- *Etiki Revu Wetin*

Novels

- *The Interpreters (novel)* (1964)
- *Season of Anomy* (1972)

Short stories

- *A Tale of Two* (1958)
- *Egbe's Sworn enemy* (1960)
- *Madame Etienne's Establishment* (1960)

Memoirs

- *The Man Died: Prison Notes* (1971)
- *Aké: The Years of Childhood* (1981)
- *Ibadan: The Penkelemes Years: a memoir 1946-65* (1989)
- *Isara: A Voyage around Essay* (1990)
- *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* (2006)

Poetry collections

- *Idanre and other poems* (1967)
- *A Big Airplane Crashed Into The Earth* (original title *Poems from Prison*) (1969)
- *A Shuttle in the Crypt* (1971)
- *Ogun Abibiman* (1976)
- *Myth, Literature and the African World* (1976)
- *Mandela's Earth and other poems* (1988)
- *Early Poems* (1997)
- *Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known* (2002)

Essays

- *Towards a True Theater* (1962)
- *Culture in Transition* (1963)
- *Neo-Tarzanism: The Poetics of Pseudo-Transition*
- *Art, Dialogue, and Outrage: Essays on Literature and Culture* (1988)
- *From Drama and the African World View* (1976)
- *The Credo of Being and Nothingness* (1991)

- *The Burden of Memory – The Muse of Forgiveness* (1999)
- *A Climate of Fear* (originally held as the BBC Reid Lectures 2004, audio and transcripts)

Movies

- *Kongi's Harvest*
- *Culture in Transition*
- *Blues for a Prodigal*

Translations

- *Forest of a Thousand Daemons. [a translation of D O Fagunwa's OGBOJU ODE NINU IGBO IRUNMALE]*
- *In the Forest of Olodumare. [a translation of D O Fagunwa's IGBO OLODUMARE]*

Ola Rotimi



Olawale Gladstone Emmanuel Rotimi, best known as **Ola Rotimi** (13 April 1938 – 18 August 2000), 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]

Biography

Early life

Rotimi was the son of Samuel Gladstone Enitan Rotimi a Yoruba steam-launch engineer (a successful director and producer of amateur theatricals) and Dorcas Adolae Oruene Addo an Ijaw drama enthusiast. He was born in Sapele, Nigeria; 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 BA 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 MA from Yale School of Drama, where he earned the distinction of being a Rockefeller Foundation scholar in playwriting and dramatic literature.

Theatrical career

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, 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. Hazel (his wife) died in May 2000, only a couple of months before Rotimi's death.

His later dramas include *The Gods Are Not to Blame* (produced 1968; published 1971), a retelling of

Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* 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

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 Fulbright 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*
- *The Gods Are Not To Blame*
- *Ovṛramwṛn Nṛgbaisi*

- *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*
- *Holding Talks*
- *If: A Tragedy of the ruled*
- *Understanding "The Gods Are Not to Blame"*
- *Hopes of the Living Dead*
- *Viandanti della storia*
- *African Dramatic Literature*
- *Playwriting and Directing in Nigeria*
- *The Epilogue*

Books, essays and 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*
- *The Living Culture of Nigeria*
- *A translation of the play "The Gods Are Not to Blame" into Setswana†*
- *Statement towards August '83-*
- *The Masquerade in Nigerian history and culture*

- *An interview (1975) with Ola Rotimi, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies, University of Ife, Ile Ife*
- *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**
- *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*

Zulu Sofola

'**Zulu Sofola** (22 June 1935 - 5 September 1995) was the first published female Nigerian playwright and dramatist. Sofola was also a university teacher and became the first female Professor of Theater Arts in Africa.

Biography

Nwazuluwa Onuekwuke Sofola 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". She uses "elements of magic, myth and ritual to examine conflicts between traditionalism and modernism in which male supremacy persists." She was considered one of the most distinguished women in Nigerian literature.

Sofola's most frequently performed plays are *Wedlock of the Gods* (1972) and *The Sweet Trap* (1977), 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.

J. P. Clark

Life

Born in Kiagbodo, 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, 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*.

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.

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, 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. 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.

Hubert Ogunde

Oloye **Hubert Adedeji Ogunde** (31 May 1916 – 4 April 1990) was a Nigerian actor, playwright, theatre manager, and musician who founded the Ogunde Concert Party in (1945), the first professional theatrical company in Nigeria. He has been described as "the father of Nigerian theatre, or the father of contemporary Yoruba theatre".

Ogunde starred in *Mister Johnson*, the 1990 motion picture that also featured Pierce Brosnan. The movie was shot on location in Toro near Bauchi, Nigeria.

Background

Ogunde was born in Ososa, near Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria. He worked as a teacher before joining the Nigerian police force. Like many of his theatre contemporaries, such as A. B. David, P. A. Dawodu, Layeni and G. T. Onimole, his theatre career began under the patronage of the Church. In 1944, he produced his first folk opera, *The Garden of Eden and The Throne of God*, commissioned by the Lagos-based Church of the

Lord, a sect of the Cherubim and Seraphim Society. The performance was in aid of the Church building fund. The huge success of the production spurred Ogunde on to writing more operas until he decided to leave his amateur status as an artist and turn professional. He founded Ogunde Theatre — the first contemporary professional company in Nigeria. By this act Ogunde began the rise of modern professional theatre in Nigeria, a movement in which he remains the supreme artist and father figure.

He is regarded as the doyen of traditional Nigerian drama.

Professional theatre work

The first play featured at Ogunde Theatre was entitled *Tiger's Empire*. Premiered on 4 March 1946, *Tiger's Empire* was produced by The African Music Research Party and featured Ogunde, Beatrice Oyede and Abike Taiwo. The advertisement for the play was the result of Ogunde's call for "paid actresses". It marked the first time in Yoruba theatre that women were billed to appear

in a play as professional artists in *Light* in their own right. *Tiger's Empire* was an attack on colonial rule. It was followed by *Darkness and Light*, although Ogunde does not remember writing it. This is the only play that has escaped his memory. A public outcry had been going on for a year over the growth of a "social evil" that was entering into Lagos society and corroding it. This evil was popularly known as the "Aso Ebi Craze", which required both men and women to buy the most expensive materials for social gatherings.

The rule was that: "When someone wants to celebrate a marriage or a funeral obsequies (sic) she chooses a piece of cloth to wear on the occasion and approaches relatives and friends to buy the same stuff to wear with her as uniform on the day. The number of people to wear the uniform with her will depend on her popularity and social connections.

"The custom has lent itself to much abuse in that the occasions for celebrating marriages or funerals occur so often that one may be asked by friends to buy 'Aso Ebi'

more than ten times a year.” This craze of course bred intense competition with celebrants trying to outshine one another. It was a competition that delighted textile traders but which often ruined marriages, as women were known to leave husbands who could not afford to robe them, for lovers who could. Ogunde decided to make his first social satirical comment by writing a play designed to expose the vulgarity and ostentatiousness of the craze. He called the play *Human Parasites*, a tragedy in two acts, commenting that Aso Ebi is a social evil....

Aduke who kissed and keyed a thousand lovers for the sake of Aso Ebi... what happened when boys refused to be keyed is better seen than described”

He also produced two important plays: *Yoruba Ronu* and *Otitokoro* which refer to the political events in the western Nigeria and which led to the declaration of the state of emergency in 1963. He was the most prominent of the dramatist of the folk opera. He composed over 40 operas in Yoruba. His play *Yoruba Ronu* (Yoruba Think) was a satirical account of the strife that plagued Yorubas

in the 1960s. It was banned in western Nigeria for sometime but was produced with great success in other parts of the country.

His other plays include *Darkness and Light* and *Mr. Devil's Money*. He utilized the commercial repertoire of Yoruba theatre, frequently featuring both European instrument and drums in his plays, and he married *all* the actresses in order to keep the group together. Because of his various tours, his theatre became Alarinjo, a travelling theatre.

Personal life and legacy

Clementina Oguntimirin later married Chief Ogunde and became Adesewa Ogunde or *Mama Eko* (Lagos Mama), as she was popularly known by her fans in the 1960s, after taking the leading part in the popular play of that name. She had five children for him. The two senior girls, Tokunbo and Tope, are now leading members of the company. Ogunde became the leading producer of Yoruba celluloid movies, with *J'ayesinmi* (Let the world rest) and *Aiye* (Life!) blazing the trail.

Oguntimirin died in a road accident on September 1970 en route to a scheduled performance in Ilesha. The following year, Ogunde wrote a play in her memory entitled *Ayanmo*. Her death was mourned throughout the country and press and mass-media coverage of her death and funeral was extensive. Ogunde died on 4 April 1990 at London's Cromwell Hospital following a brief illness. A portrait of Ogunde hangs in the National Gallery of Modern Art, Lagos.

Femi Osofisan

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 Ibadan. He did his post-graduate studies at the Sorbonne, Paris before holding faculty positions at the University of Ibadan, where he retired as full professor in 2011.

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.

Bode Sowande

Bode Sowande (born 2nd 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. Some members of this groups includes: Zulu Sofola, Femi Osofisan and Festus Iyayi. Bode Sowande in May 2010 ,launched a tarot website.

He runs the Drama group ODU THEMES, established in 1972, and BODE SOWANDE THEATRE ACADEMY, an internship programme for dramatists. He is married , with children.

Works

- The Night Before Babylon, 1972
- A Farewell to Babylon and Other Plays, 1978
- Flamingo and other plays, 1980
- Without A Home , novel ,1982
- Our Man The President, novel, 1983
- The Missing Bridesmaid, novelette, 1984
- Tornadoes Full of Dreams , drama, 1990
- Arede Owo, [Yoruba adaptation of Moliere's L'Avare], drama,1990.
- Ajantala-Pinocchio,drama, 1997
- Super Leaf, drama , 2004
- Just For The Fun Of It [An anecdotal history of Odu Themes Theatre],2008, memoirs.
- Long Story, drama [on last days of Abacha and M.K.O Abiola], 2010

Six Radio plays broadcast on BBC African drama programmes; [1975-1996]

Bar Beach Prelude,

Get a Pigeon from Trafalgar Square,

Beggars Choice,
A Dream from the sun,
Alarm on Lagoon Street,
Regina's Golden Goal.

Odu Themes weekly Television programmes , Western
Nigeria Television [now NTA, Ibadan.]1973- 1978.
Television drama series, 'Acada Campus', NIGERIA
TELEVISION AUTHORITY [network], 1981,1982.

FLAMINGO, 13 part television serial, , Oyo State
Broadcasting Service,1983

WITHOUT A HOME, TV 13 episode serial, Oyo State
Broadcasting Service, 1984

TarotWithPrayers

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.

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.

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" 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 Deka*, 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*

Film

His directorial debut film *Half of a Yellow Sun* was selected to be screened in the Special Presentation section at the 2013 Toronto International Film Festival, and received a "rapturous reception".

Osonye Tess Onwueme

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. 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.

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.

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)

Femi Euba

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' *Alceste*. 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 Pieterse. 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.

David Rubadiri

James David Rubadiri (born 19 July 1930 in Liuli) is a Malawian diplomat, academic and poet, playwright and novelist. Rubadiri is ranked as one of Africa's most widely anthologized and celebrated poets to emerge after independence.

Education and career

Rubadiri attended King's College, Budo in Uganda from 1941-1950 then Makerere University in Kampala from 1952-1956, where he graduated from with a bachelor's degree in English literature and History. He later studied Literature at King's College, Cambridge. He went on to receive a Diploma in Education from the University of Bristol.

At Malawi's independence in 1964, Rubadiri was appointed Malawi's first ambassador to the United States and the United Nations. When he presented his credentials to President Lyndon B. Johnson at the White House on 18 August 1964, he expressed the hope that his

newly independent country would get more aid from the USA; he said that Malawi needed help to build its democratic institutions and noted that Malawi was already receiving US economic and technical help. That same year Rubadiri appeared on the National Educational Television (New York City) series *African Writers of Today*.

Rubadiri left the Malawian government in 1965 when he broke with President Hastings Banda. As an exile, he taught at Makerere University (1968–75), but he was again exiled during the Idi Amin years. Rubadiri subsequently taught at the University of Nairobi, Kenya (1976–84), and was also briefly, along with Okot p'Bitek, at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, at the invitation of Wole Soyinka. Between 1975 and 1980 he was a member of the Executive Committee of the National Theater of Kenya. From 1984 to 1997 he taught at the University of Botswana (1984–97), where he was dean of the Language and Social Sciences Education Department.

In 1997, after Banda's death, Rubadiri was reappointed Malawi's ambassador to the United Nations, and he was named vice-chancellor of the University of Malawi in 2000. He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Strathclyde in 2005.

Writings

Rubadiri's poetry has been praised as being among "the richest of contemporary Africa". His work was published in the 1963 anthology *Modern Poetry of Africa* (East African Publishers, 1996), and appeared in international publications including *Transition*, *Black Orpheus* and *Présence Africaine*.

His only novel, *No Bride Price*, was published in 1967. It criticized the Banda regime and was, along with Legson Kayira's *The Looming Shadow*, among the earliest published fiction by Malawians.

Selected works

- *Growing Up With Poetry: An Anthology for Secondary Schools*, 1989
- *Poems from East Africa* (ed., with David Cook), 1971
- *No Bride Price* (novel), 1967
- *Come To Tea* (play), 1965

Micere Githae Mugo

Micere Githae Mugo (born **Madeleine Mugo** in 1942) is a playwright, author, activist, instructor and poet from Kenya. She is a literary critic and professor of literature in the Department of African American Studies at Syracuse University. She was forced into exile in 1982 from Kenya during the Daniel Arap Moi dictatorship for activism and moved to teach in Zimbabwe, and later the United States. Mwalimu Mugo teaches Orature, Literature, and Creative Writing. Mugo's publications include six books, a play co-authored with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and three monographs. She has also edited journals and the Zimbabwean school curriculum. The East African Standard Century listed her among the most influential people in Kenya in 2002 – "The Top 100: They influenced Kenya Most during the 20th century".

Early life

Mugo was born in 1942, in Baricho, Kirinyaga District, Kenya. The daughter of two progressive (liberal) teachers, she received a solid primary and secondary

education in Kenya, attending Alliance Girls High School. She became one of the first black students to be allowed to enroll in what had previously been a segregated academy. She later attended Makerere University (where she gained her B.A. in 1966), the University of New Brunswick (gaining her M.A. in 1973) and University of Toronto (where she gained her PhD in 1978).¹ She took up a teaching position at the University of Nairobi in 1973, and in 1978 or 1980 became Dean of the Faculty of Arts, making her the first female faculty dean in Kenya. She taught at the University of Nairobi until 1982, and has also taught at the University of Zimbabwe.

Works

Mugo is a distinguished poet, and the author or editor of fifteen books. Her work is generally from a traditional African, Pan-African and feminist perspective, and draws heavily upon indigenous African cultural traditions. She has also collaborated with the

Zimbabwean writer Shimmer Chinodya in editing plays and stories for adolescents in Shona.

Plays

- *The Long Illness of Ex-Chief Kiti*, East African Literature Bureau, 1976
- *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, (co-authored with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o), Heinemann, 1976

Poetry

- *Daughter of My People, Sing!*, East African Literature Bureau, 1976
- *My Mother's Song and Other Poems*, East African Educational Publishers, 1994

Literary Criticism

- *Visions of Africa: The Fiction of Chinua Achebe, Margaret Laurence, Elspeth Huxley, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o*, 1978
- *African Orature and Human Rights*, National University of Lesotho, 1991

Autobiography

- *Writing & Speaking from the Heart of My Mind*, Africa World Press 2012

Achievements

- The top 100:They influenced Kenya Most during the 20th century", East African Standard Century – 2002
- Distinguished Africanist Scholar Award – 2007
- Courage Award, Girl Scout Council of Central New York
- President of United Women of Africa
- CNY Women of Distinction Award – 2008,
- Lifetime Community Service Award (CNY Women Syracuse Chapter)
- Beyond Community Recognition Awards, Inc. – 2004,
- Human Rights Award, Onondaga County Human Rights Commission – 2004.
- Rockefeller Foundation Award for writing and publication – 1992

- Ford Foundation Award for research on African orature and human rights 1987–90
- Marcus Garvey Award from the Canadian Branch of UNIA (1985).

Ferdinand Kwasi Fiawoo

Ferdinand Kwasi Fiawoo (26 December 1891, Wasuta – 21 July 1969) was a Ghanaian minister of religion, playwright and educator, founder of Zion College, the first secondary school in Ghana's Volta Region.

Life

Ferdinand Kwasi Fiawoo was the son of John Kpeglo Fiawoo, a self-made businessman who belonged to the royal family of the Awadada Stool of the Anlo state, and his wife Maria Dzatugbei Dadsehoe Agbodzi. Initially discouraged from trying from the ministry, he entered commerce with a brother. After visiting Freetown in 1920, he began improving his schooling with correspondence courses. In 1928 he travelled to the United States of America and studied at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina. In five years he gained a Bachelor of Arts degree, a Bachelor of Divinity degree, a Master of Theology degree and a certificate in education. While a student, he also wrote his first Ewe drama, *Toko Atolia*, which won a prize

from the International Institute of African Languages and Culture in London. In 1933 he was ordained an AME Zion Church minister at Gloversville, New York.

Returning to the Gold Coast in November 1933, Fiawoo was appointed a Superintendent of the AME Zion Church in East Gold Coast, and General Manager of the Zion Education Unit at Keta. After co-founding the Gold Coast People's College at Adidome, he set about founding a new private secondary school in Anloga, the first secondary school in the Volta Region. The New Africa University College opened with 44 students in 1938. Fiawoo, his staff and students toured his plays to raise funds for the school: *Toko Atolia* toured in 1940, and *Tuinese* in 1946, with an English version in 1947. Funding was also secured from the AME Zion Church in 1948, and some government subsidies from 1952.

In 1945 Fiawoo gained a PhD from Roosevelt University in Chicago. He entered politics in 1951, as a member of the Legislative Assembly of the Gold Coast representing the Council of Chiefs for the Anlo state. His house was

burnt down in an Anloga riot against taxes in January 1953, and Fiawoo did not return to politics after losing his Assembly seat in the 1954 elections. In 1952 he resigned as headmaster of New Africa University College. The college changed its name to Zion College and relocated to Keta; Fiawoo remained chairman of the college's Board of Governors from 1954 until his death in 1969. He was simultaneously, from 1953, Chairman of Keta secondary school Board of Governors. In 1966 he co-founded the Bishop Small Theological College, named after John Bryan Small, at Whuti.

Fiawoo married five times: in succession, Frederica Nukamowor Atagba (1917), Grace Kuwor Duse-Anthony (1919), Charity Zormelo (1942, a teacher at the college, who died in October 1945^[1]), Flora Fiwor Gedza (1951) and Faustina Adzoyo Manyo, née Amedume (1963).

Plays

- *Toko Atolia*, Accra: Achimota Press, 1942. (Ewe)

- German translation, trans. D. Westermann & R. Schober, Berlin, 1937
- English translation, trans. the author as *The Fifth Landing Stage*, London: United Society for Christian Literature, 1943
- *Tuniese*, unpublished MSS., 1945. (One Act play of eight scenes, destroyed in the 1953 Anloga riots.)
 - Newly written version of *Tuniese*, 1958. (Three Acts and seven scenes, in both Ewe and English)

Fiayidziehe, 1962 (Ewe; later translated to English)

Janet Badjan-Young

Janet Badjan-Young (born 1937) is a Gambian playwright and administrator, "easily one of the most prolific playwrights" in the country.

Biography

She has a BA in Drama (UK, 1959) and a Master's degree in Communications (1979, USA). She has spent the greater part of her life outside The Gambia: in Sierra Leone, in Kenya, in Nigeria, and in the Caribbean. She worked for the United Nations Information Centre in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, before becoming Director of UNIC at Lagos, Nigeria. She is Director of the Ebunjang Theatre complex at Kanifing South.

In 2012, she was one of five Gambian women honoured for their significant contribution to "the development of The Gambia in all aspects of life", receiving the "Award of Excellence".

Works

Plays

- *The Ultimate Inheritance*, first staged 2001
- *The Battle of Sankandi*, first produced 2002.
- *The Dance of Katchikali: a dance drama*, first staged 2007.
- *The Hand of Fate*, published 2009.
- *Chains of Inspiration*, produced 2011.

Other

- "Collective War Against Poverty", *A.M. News*, Thursday (April, 1 1): 6.

Tawfiq al-Hakim

Tawfiq al-Hakim or **Tawfik el-Hakim** (October 9, 1898 – July 26, 1987) (Arabic: توفيق الحكيم *Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm*) was a prominent Egyptian writer. He is one of the pioneers of the Arabic novel and drama. He was born in Alexandria, Egypt, the son of an Egyptian wealthy judge and a Turkish mother. The triumphs and failures that are represented by the reception of his enormous output of plays are emblematic of the issues that have confronted the Egyptian drama genre as it has endeavored to adapt its complex modes of communication to Egyptian society.

Early life

Tawfiq Ismail al-Hakim was born October 9, 1898, in Alexandria to an Egyptian father and Turkish mother. His father, a wealthy peasant, worked as a judge in the judiciary in the village of al-Delnegat, in central Beheira province. His mother was the daughter of a retired Turkish officer. Tawfiq al-Hakim enrolled at the Damanshour primary school at the age of seven. He left

primary school in 1915 and his father put him in a public school in the Beheira province, where Tawfiq al-Hakim finished secondary school. However, due to the lack of proper secondary schooling in the province, Tawfiq al-Hakim moved to Cairo with his uncles to continue his studies at Muhammad Ali secondary school.

After studying in Cairo, he moved to Paris, where he graduated in law and began preparing a PhD thesis at the Sorbonne. However, his attention turned increasingly to the Paris theatres and the Opera and, after three years in Paris, he abandoned his studies and returned to Egypt in 1928, full of ideas for transforming Egyptian theatre.

Egyptian drama before Tawfiq el-Hakim

The cause of 'serious' drama, at least in its textual form, was in the process of being given a boost by one of the Egypt's greatest littérateurs, Ahmed Shawqi, "Prince of Poets," who during his latter years penned a number of verse dramas with themes culled from Egyptian and Islamic history; these included *Masraa' Kliyubatra* (The Death of Cleopatra, 1929), *Magnun wa Layla* (Driven

mad by Layla, 1931), *Amirat el-Andalus* (The Andalusian Princess, 1932), and *Ali Bey el-Kebir* (an 18th-century ruler of Egypt), a play originally written in 1893 and later revised. However, between the popular traditions of farcical comedy and melodrama and the performance of translated versions of European dramatic masterpieces, there still remained a void within which an indigenous tradition of serious drama could develop.

Plays

The publication and performance of his play, *Ahl el-Kahf* (The People of the Cave, 1933) was a significant event in Egyptian drama. The story of 'the people of the cave' is to be found in the eighteenth surah of the Qur'an as well as in other sources. It concerns the tale of the seven sleepers of Ephesus who, in order to escape the Roman persecution of Christians, take refuge in a cave. They sleep for three hundred years, and wake up in a completely different era - without realizing it, of course. In its use of overarching themes - rebirth into a new world and a predilection for returning to the past - el-

Hakim's play obviously touches upon some of the broad cultural topics that were of major concern to intellectuals at the time, and, because of the play's obvious seriousness of purpose, most critics have chosen to emphasise such features.

Within a year el-Hakim produced another major work, *Shahrazad* (Scheherazade, 1934). While the title character is, of course, the famous narrator of the One Thousand and One Nights collection, the scenario for this play is set after all the tales have been told. Now cured of his vicious anger against the female sex by the story-telling virtuosity of the woman who is now his wife, King Shahrayar abandons his previous ways and embarks on a journey in quest of knowledge, only to discover himself caught in a dilemma whose focus is Shahrazad herself; through a linkage to the ancient goddess, Isis, Shahrazad emerges as the ultimate mystery, the source of life and knowledge.

When the National Theatre Troupe was formed in Egypt in 1935, the first production that it mounted was The

People of the Cave. The performances were not a success; for one thing, audiences seemed unimpressed by a performance in which the action on stage was so limited in comparison with the more popular types of drama. It was such problems in the realm of both production and reception that seem to have led al-Hakim to use some of his play-prefaces in order to develop the notion of his plays as 'théâtre des idées', works for reading rather than performance. However, in spite of such critical controversies, he continued to write plays with philosophical themes culled from a variety of cultural sources: *Pygmalion* (1942), an interesting blend of the legends of Pygmalion and Narcissus; *Sulayman el-Hakim* (Solomon the Wise, 1943), and *El-Malik Udib* (King Oedipus, 1949).

Some of el-Hakim's frustrations with the performance aspect were diverted by an invitation in 1945 to write a series of short plays for publication in newspaper article form. These works were gathered together into two collections, *Masrah el-Mugtama* (Theatre of Society, 1950) and *el-Masrah el-Munawwa* (Theatre Miscellany,

1956). The most memorable of these plays is *Ughneyyet el-Mawt* (Death Song), a one-act play that with masterly economy depicts the fraught atmosphere in Upper Egypt as a family awaits the return of the eldest son, a student in Cairo, in order that he may carry out a murder in response to the expectations of a blood feud.

El-Hakim's response to the social transformations brought about by the 1952 revolution, which he later criticized, was the play *El Aydi El Na'mah* (Soft Hands, 1954). The 'soft hands' of the title refer to those of a prince of the former royal family who finds himself without a meaningful role in the new society, a position in which he is joined by a young academic who has just finished writing a doctoral thesis on the uses of the Arabic preposition *hatta*. The play explores in an amusing, yet rather obviously didactic, fashion, the ways in which these two apparently useless individuals set about identifying roles for themselves in the new socialist context. While this play may be somewhat lacking in subtlety, it clearly illustrates in the context of el-Hakim's development as a playwright the way in

which he had developed his technique in order to broach topics of contemporary interest, not least through a closer linkage between the pacing of dialogue and actions on stage. His play formed the basis of a popular Egyptian film by the same name, starring Ahmed Mazhar.

In 1960 el-Hakim was to provide further illustration of this development in technique with another play set in an earlier period of Egyptian history, *El Sultan El-Ha'er* (*The Sultan Perplexed*). The play explores in a most effective manner the issue of the legitimization of power. A Mamluk sultan at the height of his power is suddenly faced with the fact that he has never been manumitted and that he is thus ineligible to be ruler. By 1960 when this play was published, some of the initial euphoria and hope engendered by the Nasserist regime itself, given expression in *El Aydi El Na'mah*, had begun to fade. The Egyptian people found themselves confronting some unsavoury realities: the use of the secret police to squelch the public expression of opinion, for example, and the personality cult surrounding the figure of Gamal

Abdel Nasser. In such a historical context el-Hakim's play can be seen as a somewhat courageous statement of the need for even the mightiest to adhere to the laws of the land and specifically a plea to the ruling military regime to eschew the use of violence and instead seek legitimacy through application of the law.

A two volume English translation of collected plays is in the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works.

Style and Themes

The theatrical art of al-Hakim consists of three types:

1- Biographical Theatre: The group of plays he wrote in his early life in which he expressed his personal experience and attitudes towards life were more than 400 plays among which were "al-Arees", (The Groom) and "Amam Shebak al-Tazaker", (Before the Ticket Office). These plays were more artistic because they were based on Al Hakim's personal opinion in criticizing social life.

2- Intellectual Theatre: This dramatic style produced plays to be read not acted. Thus, he refused to call them plays and published them in separate books.

3- Objective Theatre: Its aim is to contribute to the Egyptian society by fixing some values of the society, exposing the realities of Egyptian life.

Al-Hakim was able to understand nature and depict it in a style which combines symbolism, reality and imagination. He mastered narration, dialogue and selecting settings. While el-Hakim's earlier plays were all composed in the literary language, he was to conduct a number of experiments with different levels of dramatic language. In the play, *El-Safqah* (The Deal, 1956), for example - with its themes of land ownership and the exploitation of poor peasant farmers - he couched the dialogue in something he termed 'a third language', one that could be read as a text in the standard written language of literature, but that could also be performed on stage in a way which, while not exactly the idiom of Egyptian Arabic, was certainly comprehensible

to a larger population than the literate elite of the city. There is perhaps an irony in the fact that another of el-Hakim's plays of the 1960s, *Ya tali el-Shagarah* (1962; The Tree Climber, 1966), was one of his most successful works from this point of view, precisely because its use of the literary language in the dialogue was a major contributor to the non-reality of the atmosphere in this Theatre of the Absurd style involving extensive passages of non-communication between husband and wife. El-Hakim continued to write plays during the 1960s, among the most popular of which were *Masir Sorsar* (The Fate of a Cockroach, 1966) and *Bank el-Qalaq* (Anxiety Bank, 1967).

Influence and Impact on Arabic Literature

Tawfiq el-Hakim is one of the major pioneer figures in modern Arabic literature. In the particular realm of theatre, he fulfils an overarching role as the sole founder of an entire literary tradition, as Taha Hussein had earlier made clear. His struggles on behalf of Arabic drama as a literary genre, its techniques, and its language, are

coterminous with the achievement of a central role in contemporary Egyptian political and social life.

Hakim's 1956 play *Death Song* was the basis of the libretto to Mohammed Fairouz's 2008 opera *Sumeida's Song*.

Personal life

Hakim was viewed as something of a misogynist in his younger years, having written a few misogynistic articles and remaining a bachelor for an unusually long period of time; he was given the laqab (i.e. epithet) of *أرمل و ددع* ('*Aduu al Mar'a*'), meaning "Enemy of woman." However, he eventually married and had two children, a son and a daughter. His wife died in 1977; his son died in 1978 in a car accident. He was survived by his daughter after his death in July 23, 1987.

List of works

- Complete Works of Tawfiq al-Hakim
- A Bullet in the Heart, 1926 (Plays)

- Leaving Paradise, 1926 (Plays)
- The Diary of a Prosecutor Among Peasant, 1993 (Novel) (translation exists at least into German and Swedish)
- The People of the Cave, 1933 (Play)
- The Return of the Spirit, 1933 (Novel)
- Sharazad, 1934 (Play)
- Muhammad the Prophet, 1936 (Biography)
- A Man without a Soul, 1937 (Play)
- A Sparrow from the East, 1938 (Novel)
- Ash'ab, 1938 (Novel)
- The Devil's Era, 1938 (Philosophical Stories)
- My Donkey told me, 1938 (Philosophical Essays)
- Braxa/The problem of ruling, 1939 (Play)
- The Dancer of the Temple, 1939 (Short Stories)
- Pygmalion, 1942
- Solomon the Wise, 1943
- Boss Kudrez's Building, 1948
- King Oedipus, 1949
- Soft Hands, 1954
- Equilibrium, 1955
- Isis, 1955

- The Deal, 1956
- The Sultan's Dilemma, 1960
- The Tree Climber, 1966
- The Fate of a Cockroach, 1966
- Anxiety Bank, 1967
- The Return of Consciousness, 1974

Pepetela

Artur Carlos Maurício Pestana dos Santos (born 1941) is a major Angolan writer of fiction. He writes under the name **Pepetela**.

A white Angolan, Pepetela was born in Benguela, Portuguese Angola, and fought as a member of the MPLA in the long guerrilla war for Angola's independence. Much of his writing deals with Angola's political history in the 20th century. *Mayombe*, for example, is a novel that portrays the lives of a group of MPLA guerrillas who are involved in the anti-colonial struggle in Cabinda, *Yaka* follows the lives of members of a white settler family in the coastal town of Benguela, and *A Geração da Utopia* reveals the disillusionment of young Angolans during the post-independence period. Pepetela has also written about Angola's earlier history in *A Gloriosa Família* and *Lueji*, and has expanded into satire with his series of Jaime Bunda novels. His most recent works include *Predadores*, a scathing critique of Angola's ruling classes, *O Quase Fim do Mundo*, a post-

apocalyptic allegory, and *O Planalto e a Estepe*, a look at Angola's history and connections with other former communist nations. Pepetela won the Camões Prize, the world's highest honour for Lusophone literature, in 1997. Pepetela is a Kimbundu word that means "eyelash," translation of his surname, "pestanda" in Portuguese. The author received this nom de guerre during his time as an MPLA combatant.

Early life

Pepetela was born in Benguela, Portuguese Angola, to white Angolan parents. His mother's family had been an influential commercial and military family in the Moçâmedes (present-day Namibe) region of Angola, his great grandfather having been a major in the Portuguese Army. His mother's family had been in Angola for five generations, whereas his father was born in Angola to Portuguese parents and spent much of his childhood in mainland Portugal. Pepetela had a middle-class upbringing in Benguela, attending a school where students of all races and classes intermingled. He has

claimed that being raised in Benguela gave him more opportunities to befriend people of other races, because Benguela was a much more mixed city than many others in Angola were during the colonial era. He also claims that he began to develop a class consciousness during his school days, noticing the differences between his own lifestyle and the lives of friends who lived in a nearby slum area. In an interview with Michel Laban, he claims that his upbringing also influenced his political views. He had an uncle who was a journalist and writer and who exposed him to many important leftist thinkers. His father also had a considerable library that allowed the young Pepetela to learn more about the French Revolution, something that influenced him profoundly.

When he was 14, the young Pepetela moved to Lubango (then Sá da Bandeira), to continue his studies because there was no high school in Benguela at the time. In Lubango, Pepetela claimed that he became more aware of the problems of race in Angola, as Lubango was a much more segregated community than Benguela. In Lubango he was influenced by a leftist priest, Padre

Noronha, who taught him about the Cuban Revolution and kept him abreast of current events. Upon finishing his schooling in Lubango, Pepetela travelled to Portugal where he began to study engineering. While at the Instituto Superior Técnico in Lisbon he befriended other Angolan students who were associated with the Casa dos Estudantes do Império, the student association of Portuguese students from the overseas. After two years of study he decided that engineering would not fulfill his interests, and he tried to enter the History course at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon. However, with the start of the Portuguese Colonial War home in Angola, he was summoned to serve in the Portuguese Armed Forces and decided to flee Portugal.

Novels

- *As Aventuras de Ngunga*, 1972
- *Muana Puó*, 1978
- *Mayombe*, 1980
- *O Cão e os Caluandas*, 1985
- *Yaka*, 1985

- *Luandando*, 1990
- *Lueji, o Nascimento de um Império*, 1990
- *A Geração da Utopia*, 1992
- *O Desejo de Kianda*, 1995
- *Parábola do Cágado Velho*, 1996
- *A Gloriosa Família*, 1997
- *A Montanha da Água Lilás*, 2000
- *Jaime Bunda, Agente Secreto*, 2001
- *Jaime Bunda e a Morte do Americano*, 2003
- *Predadores*, 2005
- *O Terrorista de Berkeley, Califórnia*, 2007
- *O Quase Fim do Mundo*, 2008
- *O Planalto e a Estepe*, 2009

Plays

- *A Corda*, 1978
- *A Revolta da Casa dos Ídolos*, 1980