

DAUGHTERS OF EVE
AND OTHER NEW SHORT STORIES
FROM NIGERIA

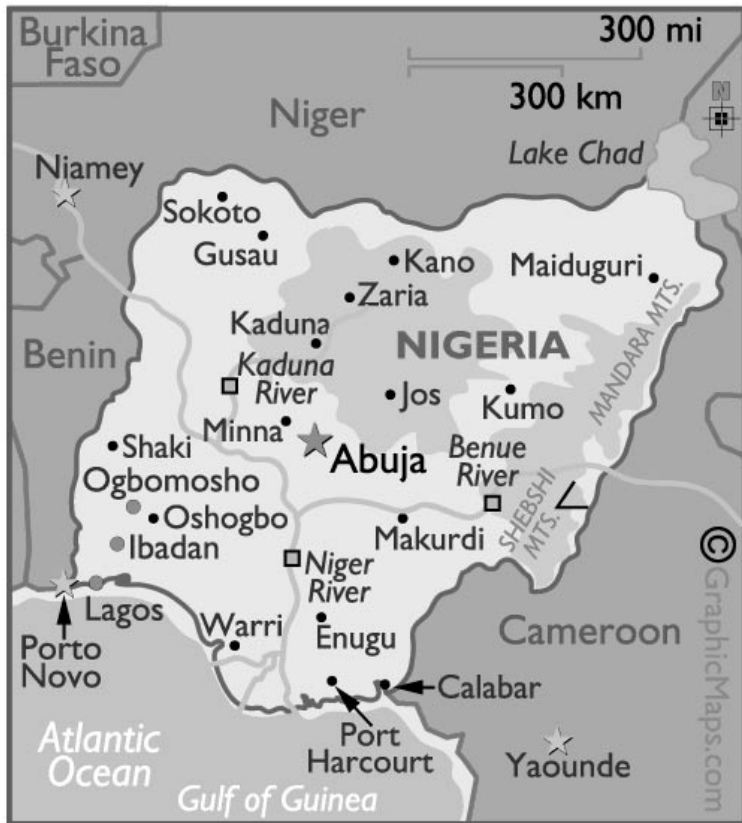
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Critical, Cultural and Communications Press
Nottingham
2010

CONTENTS

Map of Nigeria	4
General Editor's Preface	5
Acknowledgments	7
Introduction <i>Emma Dawson</i>	9
Night Calls <i>Abubaker Adam Ibrahim</i>	23
The Discovery <i>Ikeogu Oke</i>	30
Daughters of Eve <i>Peter Ike Amadi</i>	40
Lightless Room <i>Jumoke Verissimo</i>	58
Pay Day <i>Ifeanyi Ogboh</i>	67
Road Rage <i>Rotimi Ogunjobi</i>	88
Fragile Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike	98
No Woman Left Behind <i>Tolu Ogunlesi</i>	121
My Little Stream <i>Soji Cole</i>	131
Haunted House <i>Alpha Emeka</i>	141
Guitar Boy <i>Emmanuel Iduma</i>	152
Notes on the Contributors	167

MAP OF NIGERIA



GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

This volume belongs to the Fiction series of CCCP's World Englishes Literature imprint. This series focuses on the production of new writing in English, specifically new World Englishes fiction – a term which is defined in the introduction of each publication in the series. Country anthologies of new writing in English feature here, writing which is newly sourced, edited and presented with a critical introduction.

Each country anthology of new writing goes through a sequence of processes. Firstly, a call for short stories is launched electronically through email lists of writers, writing groups, universities and other relevant organisations. Once submissions have been received and read, a journey to the respective country is arranged by the editor in order to meet with the writers who have submitted their work as well as to offer an opportunity for others who have not yet heard of the project to come along and learn about it.

Making the journey to the country in question is paramount and this is what makes the CCCP's country anthologies different from other anthologies of new writing in English. The journey to meet the writers is one that is made in order 'to listen' and not 'to tell'. The World Englishes Literature imprint as a whole explores being beyond the postcolonial, by 'listening' to those who know, who are writing the literature *now*. This stance diverges markedly from anthologies compiled using already published (and recognised) literature, as well as anthologies which are compiled from 'the Western armchair'.

The critical introduction to the country anthologies benefits from this act of 'listening' and, in doing so, aims to present an accurate portrait of the writing emerging from the country in question. The

General Editor's Preface

visit to the country also affords the editor an opportunity to research the history of the place and culture, emerging criticism and contemporary literary events, all of which concern themselves with writing in English. All discussions with writers, readers, teachers and other interested parties who contribute to the debate on writing in English are audio-recorded in order for the material to be reproduced in a sensitive and accurate manner.

The final process is a re-opening of the call for submission within a limited timescale. This is conducted because very often, after the editor's visit to the country, writers continue to hear of the project and wish to submit their work. On the editor's return to the UK, the selection of entries is made in consultation with a second editor and reader. Selected writers are paid for their submissions.

The World Englishes Literature Fiction volumes are compilations of short stories which range from 3,000 to 10,000 words in length. The idea motivating such an anthology of short stories is to offer the reader an accessible and manageable 'taste' of a country's contemporary fiction writing in English. The short story also allows a country's writers to explore a variety of contemporary themes and concerns as well as exhibiting the linguistic diversity of the land in question.

Most of the writers presented in the country anthologies will not be 'known' to the Western reader and also possibly not even to many readers in their own countries. This is a basic aim of the series: to promote new, emerging writers, often unknown to the West, writers who have not been 'endorsed' by Western publishing houses, but whose writing tells wonderful new stories in wonderful new ways.

Emma Dawson

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

How many modes of transport can you take to get to Lagos airport, Afam? Dump the pick-up, grab two (suspension-suspicious) *okadas* and then hail a taxi at the airport limits – that’s how to get to the airport on time – just! Thank you, Afam, not only for getting me to my flight but also for your kindness during my time in Lagos. Thanks to your brother Chuma also, who suggested it in the first place!

Ladi and Dupe – thank you for your warmth and hospitality that came out of the sale of a piece of West African fabric! Wishing you all the best for your future plans.

To all those at ‘The Cottage’ in Lekki, I have warm memories of whiling away a rain-drenched afternoon in the lobby interviewing people about writing in English in Nigeria.

Thank you to all the writers who submitted in order to be considered for this anthology: keep writing, keep being who you are. A special thank you to the writers who feature here for working with me on editorial changes and considerations. I am honoured to have worked with you and to have produced *your* anthology.

E.D.

INTRODUCTION

This introduction will begin by defining the term ‘World Englishes’ and explain how this relates to ‘World Englishes Literature’. It will go on to address the situation in Nigeria, offering a brief history of writing in English in the country and the specific context of Anglophone writing, as it is often called. It will cite the major contributors to this movement. The introduction will conclude by outlining the nature of the contributions to this anthology, the writers and the themes that are present in this contemporary collection of new writing.

1. Defining ‘World Englishes Literature’

The term ‘World Englishes Literature’ is inextricably linked to a field of linguistic interest, ‘World Englishes’. The term ‘World Englishes’ is used to encompass the notions of ‘new Englishes’ and ‘New Englishes’ (Jenkins 2006: 22-23). According to Jenkins (2006: 22) ‘new Englishes’ resulted from the first diaspora, and are to be found in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. By contrast, ‘New Englishes’ (note the upper case ‘New’) resulted from the second diaspora, and is understood as being the product of situations in which English has been learned as a second language or is spoken as a language within a wider multilingual selection of languages: such scenarios would include, for example, Indian Englishes, Nigerian Englishes, Singaporean or Philippine Englishes. In short, not only is the linguistic production different of ‘an English’ and ‘English as a Lingua Franca’ (ELF), but the cultural, functional and ideological aspects are also at variance

Introduction

between the two.¹

Jenkins' definition of 'New Englishes' and 'the second diaspora' (2006: 22-23) may have been influenced by the earlier work of Platt *et al.* (1984) who referred to the phenomenon as a 'New English' (note the singular). According to Platt *et al.* the four defining criteria for a 'New English' are as follows:

1. It has developed through an education system. This means that it has been taught as a subject and, in many cases, also used as a medium of instruction in regions where languages other than English were the main languages.
2. It has developed in an area where a native variety of English was *not* the language spoken by most of the population.
3. It is used for a range of functions *among* those who speak or write it in the region where it is used.
4. It has become 'localised' or 'nativised' by adopting some language features of its own, such as sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words and expressions.

(Platt *et al.* 1984: 2-3; original emphasis)

Thus Jenkins' notion of 'new Englishes' and 'New Englishes' (which supersedes the work of Platt and colleagues) are included in the understanding of 'World Englishes' for the purposes of this introduction and the imprint of which it is part.

Kachru's (1982) model helps to highlight the extent of the meaning of 'World Englishes', as his model of the Englishes of the world demonstrates that the 'Inner circle' (although it does include the UK) constitutes the 'new Englishes' (that is, the result of the first diaspora, according to Jenkins) while the 'Outer circle' constitutes the 'New Englishes' (that of the second diaspora). Kachru's model also offers a third dimension to the global production of Englishes, namely that of the 'Expanding circle'. In summary, Kachru's model (of Inner, Outer and Expanding circles) can be taken as wholly representational of what is meant here as 'World Englishes' language production.

¹ See Tan *et al.* for further discussion on the difference between EFL and the Englishes of the 'Expanding circle' (specifically 2006: 84-94), as well as Kachru and Nelson for discussion on EFL *versus* ESL in an Asian context (2006: 25).

Daughters of Eve and Other New Short Stories from Nigeria

Kachru's (1982) model of the spread of English around the world remains one of several base models from which we understand the tripartite *linguistic* phenomenon that is 'World Englishes': the Inner, Outer and Expanding circles roughly correspond to the concepts of English as a native language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) respectively. The Inner circle includes the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, Australia and New Zealand; the Outer circle includes nations such as India, Kenya, Malaysia and Singapore; and the Expanding circle includes nations such as China, Egypt, Israel and Japan (see Melchers and Shaw 2003, which devotes a detailed chapter to each of the three varieties).

Even in the Inner circle – that is, countries in which English is the native language – other languages may be spoken. In order to demonstrate how these languages are different from the dominant language, I will identify them as 'diaspora community languages' (see Kalra *et al.* 2005 for diverse discussion on notions of 'diaspora and hybridity'). In the United States, Spanish, Italian and Hebrew are spoken (and written) as diaspora community languages. In the United Kingdom, languages such as Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu and Jamaican patois are spoken (and often also written). Numerous other languages of diaspora communities settled from first generation to third or fourth generation in Canada, Australia and New Zealand can also be similarly categorised. Moreover, any amalgamation of either a 'diaspora community language' or a language *per se* with the 'English' of an ENL country will therefore produce yet another 'English'. For example, in the UK, British Asian English is categorized by its own lexemes, phonology and grammar, but British Asian English shifts and changes, depending on whether the variety of British Asian English is spoken by people of Pakistani origin or, say, of Indian origin. Equally it differs (in regional accent, grammar and/or lexemes) depending on where in the country the variety is spoken.

In addition, within the 'Inner circle' there are languages which do not fit into the category of being one of Kachru's Inner circle's Englishes (American English, British English, etc.), or one of the 'diaspora community languages' (Hebrew, Punjabi etc.). The languages that do not fit into either of these two categories can be defined as being Indigenous languages, although this term can hold its own semantic problems. For the USA these languages are

Introduction

(American) Indian languages, for the UK they are Scots, Welsh or Gaelic, and in the cases of Australia and New Zealand there are languages of Aboriginal origins. There are many Indigenous languages that I have not mentioned here and this is because I hope that this brief overview of the language situation(s) in the 'Inner circle' has illustrated sufficiently the complexities of Kachru's notion of 'Inner circle'.

In summary, we can see that Kachru's model is helpful in conceiving of the Englishes of the world and accommodates, to an extent, the complex situation of the multi-Englishes of the Inner circle. Can, therefore, this notion simply be transferred to the formation of 'literary' uses of World Englishes? My own answer to this question, perhaps curiously, is no. Indeed, I would wish to dismiss the 'Inner circle' notion, which is undeniably applicable to language use, as unhelpful in explicating World Englishes *literature*. When the *linguistic* voices (of World Englishes speakers) become *literary* voices (of World Englishes writers), it is my own view that, while Kachru's 'Outer' and 'Expanding' circles remain useful concepts for an explanation of what World Englishes literature is, this is not so of the 'Inner' circle: in my definition, that is, World Englishes literature is *never* produced from the Inner circle.

The issues at stake in this argument are not simple questions of geography, spatial proximity to the English 'Standard', or characteristic linguistic properties: it is more how these matters, in a certain combination, produce varied kinds of writing, some of which I would call World Englishes literature, and some of which I would not (although they are all in play). The lines of this debate have long been drawn up in historic theoretical arguments around colonialism and postcolonialism and the conceptual role played in these debates by the voice of the 'subaltern' (Spivak 1988).² Likewise, there is often an assumption that writing from the Outer or Expanding circles is always to be explained by the nature of the

² 'Postcolonialism' or 'postcolonial studies' is understood to span many disciplines (history, cultural studies, ethnography), but for our purposes the term refers to its deployment within literary studies. The term will also be used without the (often deployed) hyphen. Boehmer (2005: 3) distinguishes between 'postcolonial' as being pre-Second World War and 'post-colonial' as being post-war. I shall not deal with 'post(-)colonial' notions of literature to the extent that differentiations of such nicety will be required.

Daughters of Eve and Other New Short Stories from Nigeria

‘gravitational pull’ of the language of the Inner circle. But in my view the multiple features which determine the voice of a World Englishes writer are not defined by the notion of the voice being that of the ‘subaltern’ – whether geographic, linguistic, cultural, ideological, or all of the foregoing. World Englishes writers are less and less interested in their putative subalternity to a former colonial power and more and more interested in what constitutes, positively, the identity of the culture from within which they write. Similarly, they are less and less likely to worry as to the relation of the English they use to the notionally ‘original’ English of the Inner circle. I might therefore best encapsulate my definition as follows: *most (but not all) World Englishes literature explores the culture(s) of the country and people from which it is written (these countries belong to Kachru’s Outer and Expanding circles); usually the literature employs the English of that place (to a lesser or greater degree); and, moreover, the writer chooses to write in that English over other languages in which she could alternatively write.*

It follows that World Englishes literature is not a synonym for postcolonial literature, although many countries with a history of (for example) British colonialism produce World Englishes literature. The voice of World Englishes literature is not one that necessarily laments postcoloniality or one that wishes for the ‘subaltern to speak’ (Spivak: 1988). Rather, World Englishes is (as it were) post- postcolonial, and although its writers may remember and even celebrate a defining moment of political independence from a colonising power (as in India in 1947, Nigeria in 1960, Kenya in 1963, or the Philippines in 1946), it also includes a generation of writers who do not.

In short, this anthology, and the imprint of which it is a part, invites readers to move beyond the appreciation of Anglophone writers in relation to their colonial past (which is, predominantly, the inflection which has been given to discussion of their work). It does so in the belief that there are many other avenues for discussion and appreciation of this enormous body of writing. I shall suggest some of these alternatives in the further discussion which follows.

2. World Englishes Literature in Nigeria

World Englishes literature production in Nigeria has been well founded, explored and canonised over the past 50 years. It is framed with the names of Achebe and Soyinka and Nigeria remains one of the most prolific and ever-growing World Englishes literature nations globally. And yet, Nigeria has struggled and continues to struggle with a sense of a 'national literature'. In a polyglot society and one moreover divided geographically into distinct groups – in particular the 'Hausa' Muslim North and the 'Christian' Igbo/Yoruba South - Nigeria is not an easy place to talk of in terms of a neatly defined sense of national literature. Achebe himself recognises the difficulties of the Nigerian language situation in *Things Fall Apart*:

When they had all gathered, the white man began to speak to them. He spoke through an interpreter who was an Ibo man, though his dialect was different and harsh to the ears of Mbanta. Many people laughed at his dialect and the way he used words strangely. Instead of saying 'myself' he always said 'my buttocks'. But he was a man of commanding presence and the clansmen listened to him. He said he was one of them, as they could see from his colour and his language. The other four black men were also his brothers, although one of them did not speak Ibo. 'Your buttocks understand our language,' said someone light-heartedly and the crowd laughed. (1986: 104)

The history of Nigeria explains to a large degree why a sense of 'nation' is problematic. Originally, 'Nigeria' was three colonial territories. 'Nigeria' *per se* was comprised of 'The North', 'The South' and 'Lagos'. Each territory was administered independently and by 1945 the north (The Hausa), the southeast (Igbo) and the southwest (Yoruba) had their own capitals as well as budgetary and council infrastructures in place. Soyinka (1996) dedicates much discussion to a sense of nation in his book *The Open Sore of A Continent*, in particular in relation to 'ethnicity' or 'tribe' and a sense of 'location' or 'geography' (19-30). Soyinka suggests that if a 'nation' is not indeed the physical, the geographical or the tribal, but rather the 'will' of the people, then Nigeria should be considered as a 'non-nation'. In an elegy to Chinua Achebe at the age of seventy,

Daughters of Eve and Other New Short Stories from Nigeria

Soyinka (2002) writes of 'their nation':

Ah, Chinua, are you grapevine wired?
It sings: our nation is not dead, not clinically,
Yet. Now this may come as a surprise to you,
It was to me. I thought the form I spied
Beneath the frosted glass of a fifty-carat catafalque
Was the face of our own dear land – 'own', 'dear',
Voluntary patriotese, you'll note – we try to please.
An anthem's sentiment upholds the myth. (68)

But how much of this notion of 'nationhood' is necessary for a sense of a national literature? Surely what Nigeria does possess is a vehicle that is ostensibly not Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba. Rather it is 'Nigerian' in that it is heard nationwide across all the 'ethnic' labels: Nigerian English. It is of course not that simple, not that uncomplicated or easy. Nigerian English has occupied a difficult position and continues to challenge a sense of 'literary' status in a society that is prolifically publishing Anglophone writing year after year. Fifty years ago, however, Achebe would write a 'Nigerian' novel in which we witness him code-switch between English, Igbo and Nigerian English (or 'pidgin', as it has often been described). In the late 1980s Achebe wrote: 'As long as Nigeria wishes to exist as a nation it has no choice in the foreseeable future but to hold its more than two hundred component nationalities together through an alien language, English' (Ashcroft *et al.* 2006: 268). The content of this anthology will focus somewhat on Achebe's choice of the adjective 'alien' and suggest that what we read *today* is not an 'alien' English but rather a Nigerian English, a familiar and rooted English which gives a sense of 'Nigerianness' today.

It is essential to look at the evolution of Anglophone writing over the past fifty years in Nigeria in order fully to appreciate what today's emerging writers are actually engaging with. In Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) there are many incidences of the use of Igbo, which is always italicised. Such uses are demonstrated through terms of address, greetings and interjections:

'*Nna ayi,*' he said.
Aru oyim de de dei! flew around the dark, closed hut [...]. 1986: 64)

Introduction

All these instances of Igbo are made accessible to the English reader by paraphrase or by their inclusion in the glossary:

In fact, the medicine itself was called *agadi-nwayi*, or old woman. (1986: 9)

[...] because their dreaded *agadi-nwayi* would never fight what the Ibo call *a fight of blame*. (1986:9)

The elders, or *ndichie*, met to hear a report on Okonkwo's mission. (1986: 9)

And in the nine villages of Umuofia a town-crier with his *ogene* asked every man to be present tomorrow morning. (1986: 7)

ogene: a musical instrument; a type of gong. (1986: 152)

By contrast there are fewer examples of Nigerian English (or pidgin) in the novel:

'Yes, sah,' the messenger said, saluting. (1986: 149)

Today, as this anthology should prove, the balance in terms of code-switching is otherwise. More occurrences of Nigerian English appear, interspersed with other Nigerian languages at times. Whether this manifestation of Nigerian English is symbolic in any way of a shift in the notion of the Nigerian nation is impossible to say, and is indeed outside the scope of this anthology, but what remains central is that the identity of writers in Nigeria, writing in English, has shifted and continues to shift to what this anthology claims to showcase, writing which is beyond the post-colonial.

In 1966, Povey wrote, 'the last decade has seen the beginning of a literature in West Africa' (258). He quotes the founders of this new literature as being Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi and Onuora Nzekwu, measured, he says, 'if only by the professionalism of their productivity' (259). He goes on also to venerate Soyinka and his first novel, *The Interpreters* a book which, for Povey, 'may stand as a goal for other novelists' (260). This celebratory view of emerging writing was not, however, shared by all. Nkosi also writing in 1966, argued:

Daughters of Eve and Other New Short Stories from Nigeria

[...] the reader who declines to delude himself must admit that he is bored by the endless parade of heroes caught between the old order and the new, of young lovers divided by tribal barriers which they are unable to breach however large their nobility and fierce their passion, by the Utopian novels of the independence struggle, and the equally simplistic tales of a post-independence world gone sour. One longs not so much for new themes as for fresh treatment – for a wider breadth of vision and an originality of language to match it. (7)

Nkosi was writing over forty years ago, and we are left wondering if Nigerian writing today is doing what Nkosi asks for, if we can say today that Nigeria writes ‘beyond’, employs ‘fresh treatment’, with a ‘wider breadth of vision and an originality of language to match it’. Nkosi’s 1966 paper closes with this: ‘Soon, I hope, enough younger writers will emerge to shake even more profoundly the present Establishment. The talented among the Establishment will not worry’ (11). Ken Saro-Wiwa was certainly one of those writers who emerged to shake the ‘Establishment’. His *Sozaboy* (1985), a political satire on the Nigerian Civil War, is a seminal text in the evolution of Nigerian writing in English. This text marks a move towards what Nkosi (1966) talked of as ‘a wider breadth of vision and an originality of language to match it’ (7). The language employed in *Sozaboy* was described by Saro-Wiwa himself as being ‘rotten English’ – a mixture of Nigerian Pidgin English, broken English and occasional flashes of good, even idiomatic English (1996: Author’s Note). The story explores life on the Ogoni during the Civil War, in particular the experiences of ‘Sozaboy’, the traumas and suffering he endures.

The period between Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Saro-Wiwa’s *Sozaboy* is roughly equivalent in length to the period from *Sozaboy* to the present, and once again we see a corresponding change in Nigerian writing in English. There are factors, I would like to suggest, that have impacted Nigeria’s writing in English very recently, in the last five to ten years, which make way for Nigerian writers *comfortably* to express themselves linguistically (and indeed thematically) in ways that previously have not been so easy or so prevalent. Nigeria is one of a few World Englishes literature producers enjoying this special position. It has certainly helped to nurture new writing that it could occur in a garden of Achebe,

Introduction

Soyinka and Saro-Wiwa. From the works and prizes of the author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie writing in English in Nigeria has gained greater confidence to be what it is currently. It is regrettable, however, that it was the West which endorsed the excellence of Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* before her own nation got the chance to celebrate it. Adichie certainly upholds the Nigerian tradition of excellence in Anglophone writing, but as she spends more and more time away from Nigeria, what comes into question is how 'Nigerian' her writing will remain. Her recently published collection of short stories, *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009), has all the already well-visited Adichie motifs of university life, riots, imprisonment - but it is the powerful motif of migration and diaspora that frame this particular collection of stories. The stories 'Imitation', 'The Thing Around Your Neck', 'On Monday Of Last Week', 'The Shivering' and 'The Arrangers of Marriage' all deal with migration or diasporic living, and this is a clear shift away from her two novels that deal so much with 'Nigeria'. Questions of diasporic Nigeria and Nigeria *per se* continue to present themselves, but are far from always being similar. Western publishing houses have, of course, influenced this development as they have, predictably, looked to publish Nigerian writing which is largely diasporic, such as that of Ben Okri.

Povey wrote in 1967, 'Although publication of most fiction continues to be undertaken in London, there is some evidence of the beginnings of local publication, largely of the ephemeral writing' (417). Povey does not clarify his use of 'ephemeral' but his review does offer us for consideration a point in history at which Nigerian publishing of Anglophone works started to take shape. There is and always has been a key factor in publishing in Nigeria - commercial viability. Unfortunately Nigeria still suffers from making Nigeria's emerging writers' works affordable. In an interview with *Wasafiri*, 'New writing and Nigeria', Adichie (2006: 56) comments: 'before you can afford to buy books to read for pleasure you need to have disposable income, which is something in decline in Nigeria'. Omole (1991), also argues that, despite the availability of texts increasing on account of affordable prices, the 'art' of Anglophone writing is not accessible to everyone, and suggests:

Indeed, only people who are very competent in the English language or initiated into their verbal artistry can understand their private metaphors, imagery, symbolism, idioms, and strange

Daughters of Eve and Other New Short Stories from Nigeria

diction. As a corollary, they seem not to be too concerned with the significance and impact of their art on the masses of their society. Such works are invariably inscrutable to the generality of their potential readership, that is in a second language situation. [...] Their works still largely address problems in their society, but apparently not for the appreciation of the entire community, save those who can decode their texts. (598-599)

Notwithstanding Omole's scepticism, publishing in Nigeria is growing and affordable books are definitely more numerous with the emergence of publishing houses such as Cassava Republic (see <http://cassavarepublic.biz>) and Kachifo Limited (see <http://www.kachifo.com>). These publishing houses are committed to the dissemination of emerging World Englishes literature from Nigeria and have recently published Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come To You By Chance* and *To Saint Patrick* by Eghosa Imasuen. Further emerging writers also feature on these publishers' websites through interviews, blogs and discussions. Such writers include Tolu Ogunlesi (who is featured in this anthology), Jude Dibia and Lola Shoneyin, to name a few. The future for Nigerian World Englishes literature is very bright, but it remains important that Nigeria fosters its own 'home-grown' writing talent, endorsing it *in* Nigeria, and venerating it in being *from* Nigeria.

3. Write There, Write Now

This collection of short stories explores universal as well as local issues – stories of love, of profound hurt and damage as well the haunting, the scary, the serious and the profound all feature here.

From simply accepting a 'caller unknown' call on his mobile phone, Santi finds himself on death row. This scenario in Abubaker Adam Ibrahim's 'Night Calls' starts a chilling account of one man facing the death penalty, having been cruelly set up by a gang of criminals. But there is hope. Aided by one of the prison warders, Santi discovers a chance to save his life.

'The Discovery' is an eerie tale. Having lost their close friend a matter of days before in a nasty accident in a car workshop, Emeka finds his friend Amaechi on the side of the highway with his mini-van, broken down. The rain pours and they jump into Emeka's car

Introduction

to let it pass, and they fall asleep, only to be woken by strange noises and the sound of a creaking tree. They run from their car to watch wide-eyed from the other side of the road. They return to find that the tree has fallen exactly where they were sitting and that Amaechi's mini-van is on blocks. What then happens changes lives forever.

Peter Ike Amadi takes the reader to the 'other' side of Lagos in his short story of crime, gangs and underworld. In 'Daughters of Eve', Caesar works for *Scoop* magazine, and the rooting-around for his next story takes him to places he's never been, to encounters with the Buchos brothers he would rather not have, and deep into the murky world of human trafficking.

Her visits to a troubled academic are always conducted in the dark. Out of curiosity and personal desire, she goes to visit him to see if the rumours are true. Has he gone mad since his return from prison? Why doesn't he leave the house? Will he ever turn on the lights? Moreover, will *she* ever ask *him* if the lights can be turned on? 'Lightless Room' by Jumoke Verissimo explores the unspoken and the unseen.

Mr Ignatius Imodibo is no ordinary man. *Payday* is no ordinary CD. Today is no ordinary day. It starts when Mr Imodibo goes for his bath in his *face-me-I-face-you* accommodation. He takes *Payday* to the firm as promised, has his mobile stolen, passes a few hours locked up in prison only to find himself back at the firm happier and richer than first thing in the morning. Ifeanyi Ogboh's clever tale of entrepreneurship is rightly entitled 'Payday'.

Rotimi Ogunjobi's story 'Road Rage' tells of Musa and his ageing red Mercedes making the morning journey to work through Lagos traffic. Between them they put the world to rights and chat with, argue and speculate about many of the passing vehicles and their drivers.

'Fragile', a haunting tale of the reunion of two childhood classmates in unexpected circumstances by Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike, tells a difficult narrative about the injustices of time and the many things we are unable to forget.

Saying 'No' to her husband is not an option. In Tolu Ogunlesi's 'No Woman Left Behind', Modinat struggles to convince her husband to use a condom. Modinat meets Mama Titi at the doctor's and she is only too happy to help Modinat with her 'issue'. But does Modiant succeed in convincing her husband or does she push him

Daughters of Eve and Other New Short Stories from Nigeria

so far that their marriage is put into jeopardy?

Nostalgia is at the heart of Soji Cole's 'My Little Stream'. The protagonist journeys back home to Nigeria after some years in the USA. Although he is able to recognise the primary school he went to, amongst other things, the eponymous stream is less easy to locate.

Alpha Emeka's story, 'Haunted House', is true to its title, a family saga that sees a daughter travel home on her father's request to celebrate his sixtieth birthday, only to find that her father has taken Kate, one of her former classmates, as his wife. Kate has a dubious past and the daughter's memories of Kate's time at college are all bad. But the time back in Nigeria reveals links between people that turn things far worse than anyone could have ever imagined.

In 'Guitar Boy', by Emmanuel Iduma, the protagonist Higo finds Mofe the most beautiful of the waitresses in a restaurant, but it is Candida he thinks about all the time, not Mofe. He goes to visit Candida at her house, imagining that he will finally have the opportunity to tell her how he feels, but he discovers something terrible on his arrival and his life changes forever.

What this brief overview of contemporary Anglophone literature from Nigeria offers is the opportunity to see that we are at a crucial juncture in its evolution. The new writing presented here demonstrates in various ways the changing voices, styles, genres and positions available to the Anglophone Nigerian writer today. This anthology is intended as a marker in its history.

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NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS



Abubakar Adam Ibrahim holds a degree in Mass Communication from the University of Jos, Jos, Nigeria. He has written for *Vanguard* newspaper, one of Nigeria's foremost newspapers, and his short fictions have been published locally and internationally. In 2007, he won the BBC African Performance Playwriting Competition and his first novel, *The Quest for Nina*, was released by Raider Publishing International, New York, United States. He has recently finished work on his second novel.



Ikeogu Oke was born at Akanu Ohafia, in south-eastern Nigeria, in 1967, and educated at the University of Calabar and at the University of Nigeria, where he earned a BA in English and Literary Studies and an MA in Literature, respectively. Since 1988, his poems have been published in various magazines, journals and other forms of periodicals in his country, Nigeria, and in the United States, including *Unity Magazine* (published by the Unity School of Christianity, Kansas City, Missouri), *DISCOVERY* (published in Braille by the John Milton Society for the Blind, New York), and *FARAFINA* (published by Kachifo Limited, Lagos). He has also published a collection of poems, *Where I Was Born* (2002, revised 2003), and his articles have appeared widely in reputed Nigerian newspapers, including *The Guardian*, *This Day*, *Vanguard*, *Champion*, *The Sun*, the *Nigerian Tribune*, and in the London-based *News Africa* magazine. He recently started trying his hand at writing prose fiction, having just completed a book-length, epic poem, *The Heresiad* (in rhymed 'lyrical pentameters' and with great potentials for orchestration), which is currently seeking a publisher. He is currently a Standards Editor at Timbuktu Media, Lagos, publishers of NEXT newspaper.

Notes on the Contributors



Peter Ike Amadi was born in Enugu town, Nigeria to Igbo parents Chief Dr A.O Amadi, formally a lecturer of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Cecilia Amadi, a business woman. He grew up with three other siblings Uchenna, Ngozi and Chinyere whilst living at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka after spending four years in Swansea, Wales. He studied at the same university graduating with a

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Jumoke Verissimo writes poetry and short stories. She works as a copywriter, and also as a freelance journalist for newspapers and several magazines. Many of her poems and short stories have appeared in several anthologies and magazines. She is the author of *I Am Memory*, a collection of poems, which she has read/performed in different venues in Nigeria. Jumoke was born in Lagos, Nigeria and

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Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike, popularly known as 'Uche Peter Umez', is the author of the award-winning *Sam and the Wallet* [children's novella], *Dark through the Delta* (poems), *Aridity of Feelings* (poems), and *Tears in Her Eyes* (short stories). His collection of children's stories, *Tim the Monkey and Other Stories*, is forthcoming from African First Publishers. His awards include: winner, 2008 BSU Creative Writing competition; Highly Commended winner, Commonwealth Short Story Competition, 2006 and 2008 respectively; winner, ANA/Funtime Prize for Children's Fiction, 2006 and 2008 respectively; finalist/runner-up both for the 2007 Nigerian LNG Prize for Literature, and the 2007 ANA/Lantern Prize for Children's Literature. An Alumnus of the International Writing Program (IWP), USA, Caine Prize for African Writing Workshop, his short fiction, poems, reviews and non-fiction have been published on-line and in print. He is one of the selected participants for the 2009 UNESCO-Aschberg Bursary.

Notes on the Contributors



Tolu Ogunlesi was born in 1982. He is the author of a collection of poetry, *Listen to the geckos singing from a balcony* (Bewrite Books, 2004), and of a novella, *Conquest and Conviviality* (Hodder Murray, 2008). His fiction and poetry have appeared in *Wasafiri*, *Farafina*, *Sable*, *The London Magazine*, *Nano2ales*, *Orbis*, *Magma* and the *PEN Anthology of New Nigerian Writing*, and in translation in *Verdensmagasinet X*, *Karogs* and *Buran*. In 2007, he won a Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg poetry prize, and in 2009 was shortlisted for the inaugural PEN/Studzinski Literary Prize. He has been a guest writer at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden (2008) and the Center of West African Studies, University of Birmingham, England (2009). He currently works as a freelance writer and editor in Lagos, Nigeria.



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Body of Sin and Other New Short Stories from Nigeria



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About the Editor

Emma Dawson currently lectures at Keele University. She works at the intersection of postcolonial writing, pedagogy and the emergent field of World Englishes literature. She has published a number of academic articles in the field, and her Ph.D addressed the teaching of World Englishes literature in schools in England. As a result of her studies, she published *Read Around*, a ground-breaking series for secondary schools (CCC Press, 2008). She is the general Editor of CCCP's World Englishes Literature imprint, and in its fiction series is currently editing anthologies of short stories from Uganda, Kenya, Singapore and Malaysia (forthcoming, 2010/11). *'The Spirit Machine' and other new short stories from Cameroon* was published in June 2009 and is the first in the collection of anthologies of the World Englishes Fiction series.