

Sites of Production in African Literature Scholarship

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I. Counting Caliban's Curses: A Statistical Inventory

ONCE UPON A time, during a stormy season in human history, a band of seafarers found themselves shipwrecked on the coast of a tropical island inhabited by several peoples they had never before encountered. Accustomed to misadventures in foreign lands, the mariners quickly set up camp, made themselves at home, and sent out small parties to explore the island and establish commerce with the natives. Thus was communication initiated between heterogenous language communities, one globally expansive, the others relatively fixed and stationary. As in other parts of the world, the mobile language community penetrated, occupied and colonized the immobile language communities, extending communicative hegemony over numerous widely scattered peoples by implanting its own tongue in the mouths of all it met. English, already an international lingua franca, proved an expeditious vehicle for this ambitious networking enterprise. The British — for so these seadogs were called — soon were in control of much of the import-export trade, for their voices carried farther than anyone else's. They came, they communicated, and they conquered, forging linguistic links not only directly between themselves and their many hosts but also laterally between all those hosts with whom they had established productive parasitic intercourse. Their empire was a vast, worldwide internet connected by a single operational code. Anglophonia ruled the waves.

This alien code did not always work to the disadvantage of those who adopted it or adapted to it. At first a disgruntled, inarticulate Caliban might complain to Prospero and Miranda

that "You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse," but once he had achieved a fuller fluency and learned how to read and write, Caliban discovered himself in command of an expressive power that went well beyond impotent imprecations. English became for him an instrument of self-assertion, a tool of liberation, a means to desirable counterhegemonic ends. He could now talk back to those who had stolen his island and could make his grievances known to an international tribunal. He was hooked up and plugged into a global information superhighway, a brave new world of intelligible interactive discourse.

But to gain access to this larger universe he had to pay a heavy price. Taking the leap from the past to the future required years of schooling, including faithful adherence to a grueling gymnastic regimen that bent him out of his original shape. By the time he mastered all the necessary moves, he had become a different person — acculturated, assimilated, melded, hybridized. He was now a man of two worlds, no longer at ease in the old dispensation yet not entirely at home in the new. And he was far more conspicuous, far more vulnerable, than before, for whatever he wrote could be read and evaluated not only by others like himself but also by countless strangers abroad who operated in the same metropolitan register. His international idiom had made him an islander no more.

This tempestuous little allegory may serve as a useful cautionary tale for those of us considering problems of scholarly authority and intellectual production in African literature studies today, for it may alert us to some of the lingering geographical, political, racial and linguistic tensions that have produced peculiar distortions in postcolonial literary studies throughout the Third World. The complaint everywhere seems to be that there are still too many Prosperos and Mirandas calling the critical shots, that the little islanders are being crowded out of their own domain by uncouth continentals, that careerist Northerners with easier access to money, machines and magazines are monopolizing discussion of literary works by Southerners, that First Worlders and Third Worlders are not engaged in any sort of dialogue but are speaking only to their own kind,

the first Worlders through electronically amplified megaphones, the Third Worlders through baffles and mufflers. Furthermore, in the West the language of literary criticism has itself changed, moving toward higher and higher levels of abstraction and self-reflexivity, leaving many non-Westerners speaking in a quaint, old-fashioned hermeneutic dialect, if they are allowed to speak at all. In short, Africa, a silent partner in its own intellectual marginalization, may be losing control of its own anglophone literature.

To test these explosive charges, it may be helpful to examine a few statistical charts that reveal in plain, stark numbers where the greatest imbalances in African and non-African production of literary scholarship have existed and continue to exist today. The following data have been gleaned from four consecutive volumes of *Black African Literature in English*, a bibliography listing more than twenty thousand books and articles on anglophone black African literature published between 1936 and 1991. The first of these volumes, covering forty-one years of scholarly activity, ran to 3305 items; the latest five-year update, covering only 1987 to 1991, contains 8772 entries, almost a threefold increase over the original compilation. This sharp upsurge in scholarly productivity reveals that literary criticism has been a major growth industry in African studies in recent years.

To reduce these charts to manageable proportions I have listed the relevant figures for only the top three writers in anglophone Africa: Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o. More has been written about these authors than about any others, so together they provide a sufficiently large sample for statistical analysis. But I have narrowed the data base a bit by concentrating exclusively on literary criticism and eliminating from the count all other forms of scholarship — e.g., bibliographies, biographical books and articles, and published interviews. I have also excluded all works that deal with more than a single author, for they would have complicated the scoring system considerably. So the numbers on these tables represent only those scholarly studies that are devoted to one of the big three: Soyinka, Achebe, or Ngugi. And I have subdivided the data into six categories — books, study guides, book

chapters, articles, doctoral dissertations, master's theses — each of which may tell us something different about the authors and critics concerned.

In order to get a sense of how the chart works, let us start with the smallest category: books published on a single author (chart 1). BALE is an acronym for *Black African Literature in English*, each volume of which is represented by a roman numeral. To bring the record further up to date, a fifth column covering book production in 1992-95 has been added. NI stands for Nigerian, OA for Other African, NA for Non-African, KE (under Ngugi) for Kenyan, IN (under Grand Totals) for Indigene, T for Total, SGT for Super Grand Total, and GTSGT for Grand Total of Super Grand Totals. The horizontal plane represents the place of publication, and the vertical plane indicates the nationality of the scholar. If, for example, we look at the first combinations of figures listed in column I, we see that between 1936 (actually 1965) and 1976 there were a total of four books published on Soyinka, three on Achebe, and none on Ngugi. One of the books on Soyinka was by a Nigerian and was published in Nigeria, one was by a scholar from another part of Africa and was published outside Africa, and two were by non-African scholars and were published outside Africa. Similarly, all three of the books on Achebe were published outside Africa, one by a scholar from another part of Africa, the other two by non-Africans. So from this slice of the chart we may draw the conclusion that most of the earliest book-length scholarship on these two authors was published outside Africa (as it happens, in London, Paris and New York), and nearly all of it was produced by non-Nigerian critics. As can be seen from the figures listed in columns II and III, this pattern in scholarly production continued through the next decade, but began to change between 1987 and 1995, when Nigerian scholars started to assert themselves more vigorously and turn to writing and publishing books at home on Soyinka and Achebe. But if one examines the Grand Totals for each author as well as the Super Grand Total that combines the numbers for all three authors, one cannot fail to notice that the majority of the seventy books on Soyinka, Achebe and Ngugi have been produced by non-Africans and

that an even greater majority, including some books by Nigerians and other Africans, have been published outside Africa.

One may refine these generalizations still further by taking into account the nationalities of the scholars who produced the books, noting the languages in which they wrote. Achebephiles have the widest geographical distribution, hailing from five African countries (Nigeria 7, Cameroon 1, Ghana 1, Kenya 1, Zaïre 1) and eleven non-African countries (US 3.5, UK 2.5, Canada 1, Germany 1, France 1, Sweden 1, Italy 1, Russia 1, India 1, Australia .5, and Denmark .5). Most of them wrote in English, but two published books in French, one in Italian, and one in Russian. The Soyinkaphiles have a similar broad distribution, coming from four African nations (Nigeria 12, Sierra Leone 1, Ivory Coast 1, Swaziland 1) and eight non-African nations (France 4, UK 3.5, India 3, Sweden 2, US 1.5, Germany 1, Russia 1, Australia 1). Most wrote in English, except for five who chose to publish in French, one in German, and one in Russian. Ngugiphiles are from three African countries (Nigeria 1.5, Kenya 1, Senegal 1) and seven non-African counties (Canada 2, Germany 2, UK 1.5, France 1, Sweden 1, Italy 1, India 1). Ten of them expressed themselves in English, one in German, one in French, and one in Swedish. Significantly, no book has been written on Soyinka, Achebe, or Ngugi in an African language. All three authors are well known abroad, even in non-English-speaking parts of the world, but they have not yet been introduced to other language communities in their own countries.

Study guides (chart 2) — booklets prepared as aids to students — reveal which of these authors are being read most regularly in high schools. As might be expected, Achebe is the clear leader in this category, especially in Nigeria, where his books often have been prescribed for School Certificate examinations. But he also scores well in other parts of Africa and overseas. Ngugi is a distant runner-up, yet he too is studied with some frequency in other parts of Africa (particularly Nigeria), and his books were educational staples in Kenya until he fell afoul of the Kenyatta and Moi regimes, at which point they were removed from the high school syllabus. No study guide on any

of Ngugi's works has been published in Kenya since 1985. Many of Soyinka's books are considered too difficult for high school students to deal with, so they seldom are assigned at the secondary level. This may explain why there are so few study guides published in Africa on his work; those published in Europe appear to be aimed at university students.

Book chapters (chart 3) tell a different story. Here the overwhelming majority of studies have been written by non-African scholars for books published outside Africa. This may reflect a significant difference in indigenous and foreign publishing practice: African presses seldom bring out edited collections of essays on literary topics, but Western presses are not reluctant to do so. The sudden increase after 1987 in indigenous collections in which essays on Soyinka and Achebe appeared may be attributed to two extraordinary events, both of them significant milestones: Soyinka's winning of the Nobel Prize in December of 1986, and Achebe's sixtieth birthday celebration in February of 1990. Nearly all the fourscore and more essays recorded in Achebe's Nigerian column were abstracts of papers delivered at an academic symposium held as part of the birthday commemoration festivities, most of which were published in 1996. Discounting these volumes that were brought out in Nigeria to celebrate the achievements of its two greatest writers, the statistics present us with a striking instance of imbalance in scholarly production. Since 1975 (the date of the first contribution of this kind) Nigerians have produced only 14 book chapters on Wole Soyinka, 10 of them for edited volumes published outside Africa. Since 1968 Nigerians have produced only 22 book chapters on Achebe, 14 of them for edited volumes published outside Africa. Since 1973 Kenyans have produced only 6 book chapters on Ngugi, 4 of them for edited volumes published outside Africa. Non-African critics in the meantime have produced 112 book chapters on Soyinka, 97 book chapters on Achebe, and 68 book chapters on Ngugi, publishing all but a handful of them outside Africa. They have produced only two chapters — one on Soyinka and one on Achebe — for books published in Nigeria, and only one chapter on Ngugi for a book published in Kenya. And they have produced only two chapters — one

on Soyinka and one on Ngugi — for books published elsewhere in Africa. So in this form of scholarship we have very clear evidence not only of underproduction in Africa and overproduction in the West but also of a disturbing lack of intellectual reciprocity between African and non-African critics. At this level there is hardly any contact, much less exchange, between the two groups, and there is no evidence that the situation has been improving over time. Since books published in the West are too expensive for most scholars based in Africa to buy, and since their financially strapped university libraries may not be able to afford to acquire many of them either, communication via such vehicles has been moving almost entirely in one direction. Westerners have been talking to Westerners, and a few Africans have been talking to Westerners, but hardly anyone has been talking to Africans.

A similar pattern can be discerned in the statistics on articles that have appeared in serial publications (chart 4), but here there is one noteworthy difference. Non-African critics continue to write largely for non-African media; 88% of their essays on Soyinka, 92% of their essays on Achebe, and 87% of their essays on Ngugi have appeared in journals and magazines published outside Africa. African critics, on the other hand, have shown a marked preference for writing for their own media, especially in recent years. This tendency has been most pronounced in Nigeria, but it also prevails in all other parts of Africa except Kenya, where there has actually been a marked decline in interest in Ngugi since 1987. This of course may be connected with his status as *persona non grata* in his motherland. Elsewhere in Africa, with the understandable exception of Nigeria, Ngugi is a more popular subject among literary critics than Soyinka and Achebe are.

The recent spurt in Nigerian interest in its two favorite literary sons may be attributed in part to the historic events mentioned earlier — the Nobel Prize and the birthday party — but it may also be seen as a natural consequence of the proliferation of indigenous media — particularly newspapers — that carry literary criticism. The cultural columns in the Nigerian press have literally democratized literary debate in that country,

moving it from university ivory towers directly to the streets. Nowhere else in Africa has this happened on the same scale. Unfortunately, however, the energy expended in these palavers does not resonate far abroad, for the papers that have promoted such dialogue — mainly *The Guardian*, *National Concord*, *Daily Times*, and *Vanguard*, the first two of which have on occasion been banned for political reasons — do not circulate widely outside Nigeria. So Nigerians may be talking productively to one another, but what they are saying cannot easily be heard beyond their national borders. Their arguments are internal domestic affairs, not international media events.

If we turn now to doctoral dissertations (chart 5), a similar tendency toward indigenization can be detected, but at this point it is only an incipient tendency. Before 1987 Nigerians and other Africans who wrote doctoral dissertations on Soyinka or Achebe did so at institutions outside Africa, but in recent years about fifty percent of the Nigerians have been writing such dissertations at their own national institutions. Most other Africans, notably those from Francophone territories, have continued to do their PhD's on these Anglophone writers at non-African universities, but since 1987 at least two Algerians and two Nigerians chose to write dissertations on Ngugi at institutions at home rather than abroad. The non-African doctoral students working on African literature on the other hand have overwhelmingly elected to earn their degrees at non-African universities, the sole exception to date being an Indian woman who completed her doctorate on Soyinka in 1985 at the University of Ife (now called Obafemi Awolowo University) where Soyinka himself was then teaching. What is perhaps most encouraging about the figures on this chart is that they show that more African scholars have written doctoral dissertations on Soyinka, Achebe, and Ngugi than non-African scholars have. A majority of the real experts on these writers, in other words, are African-born, though not necessarily African-trained. But this fact contrasts sharply with the data we have already seen on scholarly production of books, book chapters and articles. Western-trained non-Africans, many of whom have not studied Soyinka, Achebe, or Ngugi as deeply as the African dissertation

writers, are nonetheless producing the bulk of the scholarship on them. Is this a case of opportunistic foreigners rushing in where abler Africans fear to tread, or is it an infrastructural problem that gives a real edge and incentive to energetic interlopers who are under disciplinary pressure to publish or perish and who possess the means and media to do so? Why should so much of the discourse be dominated by the untrained and self-taught, many of whom have never set foot in Africa?

The incipient tendency toward indigenization perceptible in the doctoral dissertations chart becomes more pronounced on the chart devoted to master's theses (chart 6). Here we can see a real move on the part of young Nigerian academics to claim Soyinka and Achebe as their own intellectual property. Whereas initially they tended to write their theses abroad, most of them writing on these authors since 1982 have been doing their work at home. They have also claimed Ngugi as one of their own. The great majority of theses done on Ngugi by African students at universities outside Kenya have been produced by Nigerians, mostly at Nigerian institutions. Non-Africans, unsurprisingly, have written most of their master's theses on African literature at non-African universities, although lately a few have ventured as far afield as Nigeria and Kenya to write on Soyinka, and Tanzania to write on Ngugi. Again, the exceptions tend to prove the rule: Africans are now increasingly being educated in Africa, while non-Africans, as before, are being educated almost exclusively outside Africa. Perhaps this is nothing to worry about; indeed, it may be what we should expect to happen at the lower postgraduate level. The Nigerian hijacking of Ngugi may also be normal and natural, given the number of Nigerian universities that are now offering graduate degrees.

If we look now at the final set of figures — the Grand Totals and the Super Grand Totals (chart 7) — there are some interesting patterns that emerge. First, up to 1976, non-Africans had produced approximately 60% of the scholarship on Soyinka, Achebe and Ngugi. Nowadays their share of the total output has dropped to about 51%, so it is clear that African critics, particularly Nigerians, have been making gradual gains in the last twenty years. Non-African critics used to produce 59% of the

commentary on Soyinka, but now they account for no more than 54% of the total. They also used to produce 63% of the scholarship on Achebe, but today their portion of the total critical corpus has dropped to only 46%. With Ngugi the picture is a little different, with non-Africans, formerly producers of 50% of the criticism, now weighing in slightly higher, at 53%. Yet the drift toward Africanization of the critical industry is unmistakable. Far from losing control of their own anglophone literature, African critics are slowly taking it back. If this trend continues, they may be able to claim more than 50% of the critical enterprise before the end of this century. This is real progress.

Yet if one examines the bottom line — the places of publication — one finds that a majority of the studies of Soyinka, Achebe, and Ngugi are still being published outside Africa. In 1976 the figure stood at roughly 61%; today it stands at almost 63%. But even here the news is not all bad, for 66% of all the Nigerians who have written on Soyinka, 70% of all the Nigerians who have written on Achebe, and 67% of all the Kenyans who have written about Ngugi have published their works at home. But offsetting this promising homeward-looking orientation among the Africans is a far more chauvinistic attitude among the Westerners. 90% of the non-African scholars who have written about Soyinka or Ngugi and 92% of the non-African scholars who have written about Achebe have published their works outside Africa. This is where the greatest inequity (not to mention iniquity) lies. Non-African scholars appear to have little desire to exchange ideas with African scholars. They are eager to publish on African literature but not in African media. They are interested in African writers but not in African readers. These modern-day Prosperos and Mirandas would rather sit in armchairs at home making magisterial theoretical pronouncements in antiseptic isolation than risk getting their feet a little muddy on Caliban's island.

Unfortunately, they are not the only ones with this kind of phobia. A good number of African critics betray some of the same pathological symptoms. These reluctant travellers might be prepared to publish occasionally in Prospero and Miranda's

distant kingdom, but they do not appear to be keen to address their own neighbours next door. Of the 321 books, study guides, essays, dissertations and theses that Nigerians have written about Soyinka, only 21 (6.5%) have seen print in other African nations. Of the 339 contributions Nigerians have made to the critical literature on Achebe, only 15 (4.4%) have been placed in non-Nigerian African media. Of the 55 scholarly works Kenyans have published on Ngugi, not one (0%) has been published elsewhere in Africa. And when scholars from other parts of Africa write about Soyinka, only 4.5% of what they write reaches print in Nigeria. When they write about Achebe, fewer than 1% of their books, booklets, articles, dissertations and theses get placed in Nigeria. And when they write about Ngugi, less than 1.8% of their scholarship sees the light of day in Kenya. So the absence of transnational, crosscultural communication is a striking phenomenon within Africa too. Nigerians may talk to Nigerians, Kenyans may talk to Kenyans, and both Nigerians and Kenyans do talk to Westerners with some regularity, but there is hardly any intramural transcontinental dialogue going on among anglophone Africans. The little islanders don't mind mixing and mingling with big islanders far away, but they prefer to avoid having close contact with nearby little islanders like themselves. They appear to be suffering from an interiority complex.

The statistics on these charts suggest that scholars of anglophone African literature, wherever in the world they happen to be placed, need to broaden their cultural horizons by exposing themselves to more give and take with their African colleagues. They need to find ways to communicate more effectively with critics, teachers and readers all over the African continent, reaching out to make contact even with those in remote hinterlands who have been routinely cut off from the stimulation of literary debates. Only by thereby Africanizing their own intellectual production will they be able to achieve any measure of true scholarly authority. For if they continue to sail on, oblivious of indigenous conditions and deaf to local alarms, they will surely be blown off course, experience more calamitous shipwrecks, and suffer greater insularity. And for ignorantly visiting

such avoidable catastrophes upon themselves and others, they will certainly deserve all of Caliban's curses.

II. Brain Drain Pain: Migratory Headaches in African Literature Scholarship

In 1996, the Association of Nigerian Authors, which has more than five hundred members, reported in the July-September issue of their quarterly *ANA Review* that sixty-five Nigerian writers were living and working abroad (Anon. 22). By November of that year the number had grown to seventy-three (Ugo 3). Among those on the list were Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe, who between them had won not only such major international kudos as the Nobel Prize, the Commonwealth Poetry Prize, the Jock Campbell-*New Statesman* Award, the Langston Hughes Award, the Writers' Guild Lifetime Achievement Award (to mention only a few) as well as numerous honorary degrees from universities around the world but also had been honored in Nigeria as Commanders of the Federal Republic and as recipients of the National Merit Award and the Association of Nigerian Authors' Triple Eminence Award, which is given to authors who have achieved significant national, African and international recognition. Also on the list were Ben Okri, winner of the Booker Prize, and Buchi Emecheta, Ola Rotimi, Kole Omotoso, Isidore Okpewho, Eddie Iroh, Nkem Nwankwo, Obi Egbuna, Adaora Lily Ulasi, Tanure Ojaide, Tess Onwueme and T. Obinkaram Echewa, all of whom had earned a good measure of literary fame both at home and abroad. In addition, some of Nigeria's most eminent literary scholars and critics — Abiola Irele, Michael Echeruo, Dan Izevbaye, Emmanuel Obiechina, Biodun Jeyifo, Stella Ogunyemi — were included on this lengthy roster of missing persons. And there were others too, younger writers and academics such as Biyi Bandele-Thomas, Chimalum Nwankwo, Olu Oguibe, Chinelo Achebe, Ify Amadiume, and Funso Aiyejina who had begun to acquire some visibility in literary circles, and these were complemented by yet another sizable cadre of less conspicuous authors with only a book or two in print. As these statistics so starkly revealed, Nigeria had been drained not just of many of its best writers and

literature scholars but also of some of those in a younger generation who might have made a substantial contribution to the development of an indigenous literary culture. More than one out of seven members of the Association of Nigerian Authors had left the country.

Given the parlous state of the Nigerian economy under a succession of kleptocratic military rulers who cared little for the welfare of the nation's universities and regarded writers and intellectuals with deep suspicion and fear, it is not surprising that such an exodus should have taken place. By 1997 Nigerian institutions of higher education had been so starved for funds that senior professors were being paid the equivalent of one hundred dollars a month, and nonacademic staff — such as secretaries, janitors, groundskeepers — were suing for the right to be paid at the same level as academic staff because they could not afford to support their families on the pittance they were earning. In circumstances like these it is only natural for underpaid and overworked teachers to seek greener pastures elsewhere.

Nowadays they look not only to the US and the British Isles but also to universities in southern Africa — particularly South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, where there tends to be better support for higher education than in tropical Africa. Kole Omotoso currently teaches at the University of the Western Cape, Dan Izevbaye at Fort Hare, Harry Garuba at the University of Zululand, Molará Ogundipe-Leslie at the University of the Transkei, Lekan Oyegoke at the University of Swaziland. The list grows year by year. One cannot blame these individuals for expatriating themselves from Nigeria. They are leaving not to get rich but to survive. They want to live and work in a place where their efforts will be adequately rewarded and where they can pursue their intellectual interests in peace and freedom. They want a life of dignity, not degradation. If similar opportunities had been offered them at home, they never would have left.

Of course, some émigrés have left for political rather than economic reasons. Wole Soyinka is a case in point. An outspoken opponent of the Abacha regime, he very likely would have

been imprisoned and perhaps, like Ken Saro-Wiwa, judicially murdered had he remained in Nigeria. Fortunately, it is not difficult for a Nobel laureate to find a job, so he quickly landed a named professorship at Emory University, which a few years ago received as a windfall a huge endowment from Coca-Cola. It could be said that virtually overnight Soyinka was transformed from a *persona non grata* to a pop refugee. After Abacha's death, Soyinka revisited Nigeria at the invitation of the interim Head of State, but he has not yet chosen to return permanently. Perhaps, like his fellow countrymen and countrywomen in self-exile, he finds it easier to work abroad, even when working on Nigerian problems.

Chinua Achebe is another exceptional case. He had taken a number of short-term teaching appointments in the United States at intervals throughout his career, but he does not appear to have left Nigeria for economic or political reasons. Indeed, he remained at home throughout the Biafran war even though it would have been quite easy for him to go elsewhere. What brought about his most recent — and longest — absence from Nigeria, lasting from 1990-2000, was a crippling automobile accident that required him to seek medical treatment overseas. While convalescing, he was offered several distinguished professorships and elected to take one at Bard College, a small campus where he could move about easily in a wheelchair. Like Soyinka, Achebe was an outspoken opponent of the Abacha regime, and this may have delayed his return home, but in August 1999 he went back on what he described as a "visit" for a month or so "to touch base with my country and test the ground" (Anikulapo). He was given a hero's welcome at the airport in Lagos and at his home community in Ogidi, but it remains to be seen whether he will prolong his stay and eventually return for good.

Before examining the effects that the brain drain has had on Nigeria's literary culture, it may be well to glance back a few decades at a similar exodus of writers and teachers that occurred in South Africa. That earlier wave of emigration was prompted largely by repressive political actions taken by the Pretoria regime to suppress dissent and victimize opponents of its apartheid policies. However, even before apartheid was insti-

tutionalized as the law of the land, a writer such as Peter Abrahams felt compelled to leave in order to have the liberty and peace of mind to write; he wanted to "tell freedom," and he couldn't do that in the conditions available to him in South Africa, so he escaped to England as a stoker on a British naval vessel. Alfred Hutchinson also fled the country, seeking a road to Ghana, a newly independent African country. Esk'ia Mphahlele, who was barred from teaching in South Africa because of his political activity on behalf of teachers, went off to practice his profession in Nigeria.

These were the earliest black literary exiles who left in the 1940s and 1950s, but they were followed by a much larger group after the Publications and Entertainments Act of 1963 made it impossible for them to publish protest literature. Blanket bans were placed on activists such as Alex La Guma and Dennis Brutus, who in the mid-1960s opted to take exit permits, the kind of passport that enabled them to leave the country but never return. Lewis Nkosi, Bloke Modisane, A.C. Jordan, Mazisi Kunene, Dan Kunene, Todd Matshikiza, Keorapetse Kgositsile, Nat Nakasa, Arthur Nortje and Bessie Head also left because they found they could not express themselves freely in apartheid South Africa. They became part of a floating exile community who never felt completely at home elsewhere in the world. Many became active anti-apartheid crusaders. All continued to write about South African matters even after decades of living elsewhere, but they had to publish their works overseas and these seldom reached South Africa.

Strict censorship laws enabled the South African government to prohibit the importation of any literature it considered seditious, and books and articles by South African exiles were routinely placed on the list of proscribed literature. Some writers were placed under blanket bans so that no utterance, writing or statement of theirs could appear in print in South Africa. This kind of interference with the free flow of words and ideas resulted in a near-total blackout of writings by and information about the exiled writers. The consequence, as Jane Watts reported a decade ago, was that "a whole generation of writers was effectively obliterated" (3).

The effects linger to the present day. Although many of the censorship laws have been erased from the country's legal code, although nearly all of the writers previously proscribed have now been unbanned, although old and new books by exiled writers are beginning to be published by South African presses, the writers themselves tend not to be widely known to the South African reading public. Their names are absent from all but the most recent literary histories of the country, their works are seldom anthologized or included in textbooks used in schools and universities, and those who have returned to South Africa, usually as old men and women, have found themselves marginalized and forgotten. Several — for instance, Dennis Brutus, Lewis Nkosi, Dan Kunene — after brief visits back home have chosen not to return to their motherland. They apparently see no place for themselves in the new South Africa.

Is the same thing likely to happen in Nigeria or in other parts of Africa in which a brain drain, voluntary or involuntary, has taken place? Are those writers and scholars who left for greener or freer pastures likely to be forgotten or obliterated from the collective consciousness of their homebound countrymen? Does exile produce amnesia among those who are left behind?

The answer to all these questions appears to be both yes and no. The biggest names — the Soyinkas and Achebes — will never be forgotten; they are simply too gigantic to be ignored. Their books, with few exceptions, have been freely available to those able to afford to buy them, and news of their activities abroad often percolates into the Nigerian news media. There has been no statutory apparatus erected to exclude them or their works from contact with the citizens of their country. They will always be welcomed home as heroes.

But the smaller names may suffer some erosion of recognition as time passes. When Biodun Jeyifo and Niyi Osundare (to cite an even more recent example of expatriation) were home, they wrote frequently for local newspapers and news magazines and were interviewed regularly on television and radio and in the press. When they got swallowed up in the American academic world, they lost their high media profile in Nigeria and were far less frequently consulted by local reporters and news

anchors for their views on national issues, literary and otherwise. They may have managed to remain in touch with what was going on back home, but their countrymen could not easily remain in touch with them. Kole Omotoso would be another example, but a somewhat peculiar one. Thanks to his appearance in a popular South African television commercial advertising cellular phones, he is better known as a media personality in South Africa today than he is in Nigeria. The situation is far worse for those who have been abroad for some length of time. By now they may be totally unknown back home, if indeed they still consider Nigeria as home, as something more than just their birthplace.

There is one other problem that African writers and scholars in the academic world face if they are teaching in an American or European institution. Their salaries — sometimes even continuation of their employment — may depend to some extent on what and where they publish. Since such institutions may have little experience in assessing the quality of African journals, an African teacher may feel pressured to submit work to well-established American or European academic media. If published, some of these articles may never be seen by their former colleagues and students because African university libraries cannot afford to subscribe to the journals in which they appear. The expatriated scholar is thus doubly exiled, being both physically and intellectually alienated from his own people. He finds himself writing and teaching for foreigners, not for fellow Africans, and being evaluated by foreign standards. And the more successful he is at what he does, the more likely he is to fail to make any impact on the minds of students in Africa, many of whom will know next to nothing of what he is doing. Worse yet, he may wind up speaking in a fashionable Western hermeneutic dialect that makes what he says baffling to the average African undergraduate or university lecturer. As a Ghanaian scholar recently put it,

Having found a new home, these [academic refugees in the Western hemisphere] become so steeped in Euro-driven theoretical paradigms that their discourse can hardly be comprehended by their colleagues at home. While a few visit home

occasionally to renew faith and data, others stay put, quickly run out of field data, and make an entire living out of abstract formulations that have no earthly frames of reference. (Yankah 15)

Over time these disappearing travellers who speak a foreign academic language will be perceived by new generations of African students as invisible, otherworldly ancestors — remote, inaccessible, ghostly souls who dematerialized long ago. They will have forfeited their membership in an indigenous literary culture in an effort to establish their credentials as full-fledged citizens of another interpretive community far away. In short, they will have navigated a new middle passage, shipping off to distant worlds where their energies enrich others rather than their own kith and kin. And in addition to being forgotten, they themselves may forget their roots. If this happens, their brains will have been not only completely drained but also radically lobotomized.

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Charts

Abbreviation Key

BALE is the bibliography *Black African Literature in English* (each volume is represented by a roman numeral); NI is Nigerian; OA is Other African; NA is Non-African; KE is Kenyan; IN is Indigene; T is Total; SGT is Super Grand Total; GTSGT is Grand Total of Super Grand Totals.

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Chart 1: BOOKS

SOYINKA

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				(1992-1995)				GRAND TOTALS			
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T
NI	1			1									5			5	4			4	10			10
OA		1	1								1	1		1	1							1	1	2
NA		2	2				3	3	1	4	5			6	6		1	1	2	4	2	1	17	20
T	1	3	4				3	3	1	4	5		5	1	6	12	5	1	2	8	12	2	18	32

ACHEBE

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				(1992-1995)				GRAND TOTALS			
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T
NI					1			1			1	1	2		1	3				2	3		7	
OA		1	1										1	1	2				1	1	1		3	4
NA		2	2				2	2		1	1			7	7				2	2			14	14
T		3	3		1	2	3		2	2			3	9	12		5	5			4		21	25

NGUGI

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				(1992-1995)				GRAND TOTALS			
	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T
KE									1			1									1			1
OA																			1	1		1		1
NA						3	3			.5	1.5	2		1	4	5			1	1		1.5	9.5	11
T						3	3		1	.5	1.5	3		1	4	5			1	1	1	2.5	9.5	13

GRAND TOTALS

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				(1992-1995)				SGT			
	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T
IN	1			1	1			1	1		1	2	7		1	8	4			2	14		4	18
OA		2	2										1	1	1	3		1	1	2	1	2	4	7
NA		4	4			8	8		1	.5	6.5	8		1	17	18		1	1	5	2	2.5	40.5	45
SGT	1	6	7		1	8	9		2	.5	7.5	10	8	2	19	29	5	2	8	15	17	4.5	48.5	70

Chart 2: STUDY GUIDES

SOYINKA

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS			
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T
NI	2			2					2			2	2			6				6
OA		1	1	2						1		1		2		4		1		5
NA			1	1			3	3			3	3	1	1	2	1			8	9
T	2	1	2	5			3	3	2	1	3	6	3	2	1	7	4	9		20

ACHEBE

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS			
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T
NI	3			3	5			5	7		1	8	8		8	23			1	24
OA		1	1	2		3	1	4		2		2		5		11		2		13
NA			5	5			4	4			4	4		1	1				14	14
T	3	1	6	10	5	3	5	13	7	2	5	14	8	5	1	23	11	17		51

NGUGI

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS			
	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T
KE	1			1	2			2	1			1				4				4
OA		3		3		1		1		9		9		1		14				14
NA			1	1			1	1			1	1		1	1				4	4
T	1	3	1	5	2	1	1	4	1	9	1	11	1	1	2	4	14	4		22

GRAND TOTALS

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				SGT			
	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T
IN	6			6	7			7	10		1	11	10		10	33			1	34
OA		5	2	7		4	1	5		12		12		8	8	19		3		32
NA			7	7			8	8			8	8	1	3	4	1			26	27
SGT	6	5	9	20	7	4	9	20	10	12	9	31	11	8	3	34	19	30		93

Chart 3: BOOK CHAPTERS

SOYINKA

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS			
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T
NI	1		1	2	2		3	5	1		2	3	18		4	22	22		10	32
OA	1	2	4	7		1	1	2		1		1	1	3	4	2	4		8	14
NA			11	11	1		16	17			21	21	3	1	62	66	4	1	110	115
T	2	2	16	20	3	1	20	24	1	1	23	25	22	1	69	92	28	5	128	161

ACHEBE

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS			
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T
NI	2		1	3	1		1	2	5		1	6	76	1	10	87	84	1	13	98
OA		4	1	5		1	1	2		1	1		3		3			9	2	11
NA	1		17	18			16	16			19	19	10		44	54	11		96	107
T	3	4	19	26	1	1	18	20	5	1	20	26	86	4	54	144	95	10	111	216

NGUGI

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS			
	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T
KE	1			1	1		1	2			2	2		1	1	2	2		4	6
OA	1	1		2						1	3	4	2	1	3		1	4	4	9
NA			5	5	1		7	8		1	17	18			37	37	1	1	66	68
T	2	1	5	8	2		8	10	2	22	24		2	39	41	4	5	74	83	

GRAND TOTALS

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				SGT			
	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T
IN	4		2	6	4		5	9	6		5	11	94	1	15	110	108	1	27	136
OA	2	7	5	14		2	2	4		3	3	6	1	5	4	10	3	17	14	34
NA	1		33	34	2		39	41		1	57	58	13	1	143	157	16	2	272	290
SGT	7	7	40	54	6	2	46	54	6	4	65	75	108	7	162	277	127	20	313	460

Chart 4: ARTICLES

SOYINKA

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS			
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T
NI	17	4	2	23	14	3	10	27	41	5	21	67	72	9	25	106	144	21	58	223
OA	2	10	4	16	4	6	10		15	8	23		1	17	8	26	3	46	26	75
NA	6	13	42	61	5	3	32	40	2	2	71	75	1	6	145	152	14	24	290	328
T	25	27	48	100	19	10	48	77	43	22	100	165	74	32	178	284	161	91	374	626

ACHEBE

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS			
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T
NI	11	6	11	28	9	1	24	34	29	4	7	40	64	2	21	87	113	13	63	189
OA		10	4	14	7	12	19		10	6	16		10	7	17		37	29	66	
NA	5	7	57	69	4		56	60	2		37	39	1		66	67	12	7	216	235
T	16	23	72	111	13	8	92	113	31	14	50	95	65	12	94	171	125	57	308	490

NGUGI

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS			
	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T
KE	3			3	8			10	13			15	2			8	26			36
OA	1	7	1	9		9	8	17		16	17	33	1	19	17	37	2	51	43	96
NA	2	2	8	12	1	4	15	20	1	5	34	40		4	70	74	4	15	127	146
T	6	9	9	24	9	13	25	47	14	21	53	88	3	23	93	119	32	66	180	278

GRAND TOTALS

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				SGT				
	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	
IN	31	10	13	54	31	4	36	71	83	9	30	122	138	11	52	201	283	34	131	448	
OA	3	27	9	39		20	26	46		41	31	72		2	46	32	80	5	134	98	237
NA	13	22	107	142	10	7	103	120	5	7	142	154	2	10	281	293	30	46	633	709	
SGT	47	59	129	235	41	31	165	237	88	57	203	348	142	67	365	574	318	214	862	1394	

Chart 5: DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

SOYINKA

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS			
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T
NI																				
OA					3	3			7	7			4	3	7		4		13	17
NA									3	3				4	4				7	7
T					3	3		1	7	8			4	9	9		1		19	20
					6	6		1	17	18			4	16	20		5		39	44

ACHEBE

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS			
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T
NI																				
OA									3	3			2	2	4		2		6	8
NA					2	2			5	5				8	8				22	22
T					3	3		2	5	5			2	8	8		2		18	18
					5	5		8	8	8			2	18	20		2		46	48

NGUGI

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS			
	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T
KE																				
OA																				
NA					1	1			4	4			1	4	9	14	1	5	13	19
T								1	1	1			1	3	4		1		4	5
					1	1		5	5	5			1	5	15	21	1	6	20	27

GRAND TOTALS

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				SGT				
	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	
IN																					
OA																					
NA																					
SGT					4	4			10	10			6	8	14		6		22	28	
					2	2		1	5	6			1	4	21	26	1	5	42	48	
					3	3		5	5	1		13	14	1	20	21	1	1	41	43	
					5	5		1	14	15	1	37	38	7	5	49	61	8	6	105	119

Chart 6: M.A. THESES

SOYINKA

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS										
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T							
NI			2	2			1	1			1	11				17			2	19			27			6	33
OA		1	2	3			2	2			2	2			1	1			4	4			1	1	19	21	
NA			9	9			4	4			2	2			1	1	4	6					1	5	29	62	
T		1	13	14			7	7		10	2	3	15		18	2	6	26					28	5	29	62	

ACHEBE

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS									
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T						
NI		1	1	2							7		7			4							11	1	1	13
OA						1		1			1	1	2			1		1					3	1	4	
NA			4	4								4	4				2	2							10	10
T		1	5	6		1		1		7	1	5	13		4	1	2	7				11	4	12	27	

NGUGI

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				GRAND TOTALS										
	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T							
KE											1		1			2							3			1	4
OA											7	2	9			13	7	20						20	9	29	
NA			1	1			2	2							1	8	9						1	11	12		
T			1	1		2	2		1	7	2	10		2	14	16	32				3	21	21	45			

GRAND TOTALS

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				SGT									
	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T						
IN		1	3	4			1	1			18		1	19			23		3	26			41	1	8	50
OA		1	2	3		1	2	3			10	3	13			15	7	22					27	14	41	
NA			14	14			6	6				6	6			1	2	14	17			1	2	40	43	
SGT			2	19	21		1	9	10		18	10	38		24	17	24	65				42	30	62	134	

Chart 7: GRAND TOTALS

SOYINKA

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				(1992-1995)				SGT				
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	
NI	21	4	5	30	16	3	17	36	54	5	31	90	118	9	34	161	4			4	213	21	87	321	
OA	3	14	12	29		5	9	14		19	11	30		2	21	15	38					5	59	46	110
NA	6	13	65	84	6	3	61	70	4	2	108	114	6	8	227	241	1	1	2	4	23	28	463	514	
SGT	30	31	82	143	22	11	87	120	58	26	150	234	126	38	276	440	5	1	2	8	241	108	596	945	

ACHEBE

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				(1992-1995)				SGT					
	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T	NI	OA	NA	T		
NI	16	7	13	36	16	1	26	43	48	4	13	65	156	3	34	193				2	2	236	15	88	339	
OA		15	9	24		12	19	31		14	14	28		1	19	16	36				1	1	1	60	59	120
NA	6	7	88	101	4		80	84	2		70	72	11		128	139				2	2	23	7	368	398	
SGT	22	29	110	161	20	13	125	158	50	18	97	165	168	22	178	368				5	5	260	82	515	857	

NGUGI

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				(1992-1995)				SGT								
	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T	KE	OA	NA	T					
KE	5			5	11			3	14	16			4	20	5			11	16						37			18	55
OA	2	11	1	14		11	8	19		33	26	59		1	39	34	74				1	1	3	95	69	167			
NA	2	2	15	19	2	4	28	34	1	6.5	54.5	62			7	123	130				1	1	5	19.5	221.5	245			
SGT	9	13	16	38	13	15	39	67	17	39.5	84.5	141	6	46	168	220				1	1	2	45	114.5	308.5	468			

SUPER GRAND TOTALS

	BALE I (1936-76)				BALE II (1977-81)				BALE III (1982-86)				BALE IV (1987-91)				(1992-1995)				GTSGT						
	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T	IN	OA	NA	T			
IN	41	11	18	71	43	4	46	93	118	9	48	175	279	12	79	370	4			2	6	486	36	193	715		
OA	5	40	22	67		28	36	64		66	51	117		4	79	65	148				1	1	2	9	214	174	397
NA	14	22	168	204	12	7	169	188	7	8.5	232.5	248	17	15	478	510	1	1	5	7	51	54.5	1052.5	1158			
GTSGT	61	73	208	342	55	39	251	345	125	83.5	331.5	540	300	106	622	1028	5	2	8	15	546	304.5	1419.5	2270			