

# Contents

Acknowledgements	x
Foreword	xii
Publishing and selling the African Writers Series	xiv
The African Writers Series Portfolio and George Hallett's covers	xxviii
Main dates for the African Writers Series	xxx

## INTRODUCTION 1

### *The establishment of African literature*

*The starting line – First-time publication of new fiction – The team comes together – Sex, religion & politics – An international triangle of choice – William Heinemann & Heinemann Educational Books – The excitement about paperbacks – The dual mandate – Were there rivals? – Broadcasting as a patron of writers – Plays for playing – The challenge of politics – A long tradition of writing by Africans – A range of standards? – Conspirators in the launch of African literature*

## PUBLISHING Chinua Achebe 26

*The mythology over Things Fall Apart – The novel which forecast a coup – Divided loyalties – Poetry & other portable publishing – International recognition*

## Part 1 Writers from WEST AFRICA 37

### 1 Nigeria *The country where so much started* 39

*West Africa the major target – Mbari, the pioneers – What is West African English? – Themes & periods in Nigerian writing as reflected in the African Writers Series – **Cyprian Ekwensi** *The question of popular literature* – **Elechi Amadi** *Life before the Europeans* – **John Munonye** *Making the ordinary extraordinary* – **Kole Omotoso & T. Obinkaram Echewa** *Contrasting novels from the 40s generation* – **Christopher Okigbo & Gabriel Okara** *Casualties of the Biafran war* – **S.O. Mezu, I.N.C. Aniebo & Eddie Iroh** *The sun rises after the war* – **Olusegun Obasanjo** *Military command**

vi CONTENTS

2 *Negritude from Senegal to Cameroun* 59  
*The dominating trio – Ferdinand Oyono The boy & the madam – Mongo Beti An affront to the church – Sembene Novelist & film-maker – Negritude & an elegant tradition – Francophone writers after independence*

3 *Magic & realism from Ghana, The Gambia & Sierra Leone* 71  
*A literate tradition – Ayi Kwei Armah Beautiful novels not yet published – Kofi Awoonor Prisoner & ambassador – B. Kojo Laing Magic realism v. marvellous realism v. fantastic realism – A tradition of verse & drama – Lenrie Peters A scalpel probing – Writers from Sierra Leone – African Literature Today*

Part 2 Writers from EAST AFRICA 85

4 *Towards the oral & the popular in Kenya, Uganda & Tanzania*  
*The effort to work with East African Publishing House – Peter Palangyo, Bonnie Lubega, Robert Serumaga & John Nagenda High-flying young men – Ali A. Mazrui The novel as political science – Poetry unknown outside East Africa – The appointment of a publishing editor in East Africa – The potential in oral culture – Okot p'Bitek Songs of charm – Taban lo Liyong Delight in royalties – Mwangi Ruheni & Samuel Kahiga A popular book market develops – Rebeka Njau A woman's madness – Meja Mwangi Mau Mau & tough towns*

PUBLISHING Ngũgĩ 112

Part 3 Writers from THE HORN & NORTH-EASTERN AFRICA 141

5 *Emperors in Ethiopia* 143  
*Sahle Sellassie Emperors of the past & present – Daniachew Worku Pilgrims & the cleansing of a stagnant society – From King Solomon & the Queen of Sheba – Landing in a revolution*

PUBLISHING Nuruddin Farah 154

6 *Arab authors in Egypt & Sudan* 169  
*Avoiding the African label – The art of seamless translation – Yusuf Idris The language of the Cairo streets – Ghassan Kanafani A letter from Gaza – Tayeb Salih 'An Arabian Nights in reverse' – Naguib Mahfouz 'Earthier than Coronation Street' – Attempted assassination – Chattering about revolution – 'Arabic is a controversial language'*

Part 4 Writers from SOUTH AFRICA 183

7 *Resistance in South Africa* 185  
*A South African publishing apprenticeship – The search for black writers – Apartheid*

*sends writers to prison – What is an African writer? – Cultural boycott & censorship –*  
**D.M. Zwelonke** *Robben Island* – **Modikwe Dikobe** *The Marabi yards of Johannesburg* – **R.L. Peteni** *Faction fights in the Ciskei* – *Publishers of resistance within South Africa* – *Johannesburg v. Cape Town*

**PUBLISHING** Alex la Guma 200

**PUBLISHING** Dennis Brutus 206

**PUBLISHING** Bessie Head 220

**PUBLISHING** Mazisi Kunene 236

Part 5 Writers from  
**SOUTHERN AFRICA** 243

8 *Guns & guerrillas in Mozambique & Angola* 245

**Luis Bernardo Honwana** *A sharp eye on a mixed Mozambique – The history of resistance* – **Agostinho Neto** *Angolan poets including a future president* – **J. Luandino Vieira** *Speaking to ordinary Angolans* – **Pepetela** *What will liberation hold?*

9 *Zambia Shall be Free* 252

**Dominic Mulaisho** *'The richest man in the world' – Operation full bar with toasties – A political thriller*

10 *Death & detention in Malawi* 257

*In the footsteps of John Brown – Banda's detainees –* **Jack Mapanje** *'Who will start another fire?'*

11 *The struggle to become Zimbabwe* 262

**Stanlake Samkange** *'African with a cast of European'* – **Lawrence Vambe** *The landless* – **Charles Mungoshi** *Cold comfort* – **Stanley Nyamfukudza** *The struggle for Zimbabwe – Heady years in Zimbabwe*

**PUBLISHING** Dambudzo Marechera 278

## CONCLUSION

*Is there still a role for the African Writers Series?* 296

**AFRICAN WRITERS SERIES BY YEAR OF PUBLICATION** 301

Index 311