

Points of Cultural Geography

Ibadan . . . Enugu, Onitsha, Nsukka



Despite the rise of a new Abuja out there on the savanna, Lagos remains in many ways *the* center—in commerce, as a media capital, as Nigeria’s megalopolis, as the only place with a claim to being a world city. Yet Lagos is not everything. A number of other Nigerian cities have played their significant parts, in different ways and at different times, in the development of Nigerian writing. What follows will highlight only some of their features, and some people and institutions involved.

Ibadan

In some ways, Ibadan, not so far away, may have been just about equally important as Lagos—not as a topic, but, at least in one period, as a setting for intellectual and aesthetic work. To begin with, of course, it was a classic, very large Yoruba agricultural town—although with a somewhat late start as a nineteenth-century war camp.¹ Then, as the politico-administrative order of modern Nigeria took shape, it became a regional capital: when the country to begin with was divided merely into three regions (Northern, Western, and Eastern), Ibadan became the capital of the West, which covered the Southwest and was Yoruba-dominated. Later, as the states of the Federation kept subdividing (now there are thirty-six), Ibadan would remain the capital of one of them.

That provided some of the infrastructural basis for early intellectual production. But at least as important was the fact that in the late colonial period, the first Nigerian university (starting as, and remaining for some time, a “university college” subordinate to the University of

London) was established here. To begin with, it was for the most part rather ordinarily academic, with a largely expatriate teaching staff. Gradually, however, other things began to happen, more or less off-campus. The paragraphs on Ibadan that follow dwell mostly on this period, around the arrival of Nigerian independence, when it was strikingly central to the growth of Nigerian literature and arts.

The spider in the web for much of this activity was the remarkable, originally German-Jewish intellectual entrepreneur Ulli Beier, for an extended period in the company of his wife Susanne Wenger. Here is a remarkable life story. Beier was born in 1922 in a small German city that after World War II became a Polish city. As Hitler came to power in Germany, the Beier family moved to join the Jewish community in Palestine (the state of Israel, of course, did not yet exist). After the war ended, by which time Ulli was an adult, he went to London as a student, and earned a higher degree in phonetics. But academic jobs were scarce in postwar Britain, so he took off for a position at that new outpost in Nigeria. And he brought his wife, Austrian artist Susanne Wenger, whom he had met on an excursion to Paris.

Soon enough he shifted from teaching phonetics to a job with the Extra-Mural Studies Department, which could serve as a base for varied outreach initiatives. It probably mattered that Beier and Wenger were of German and Austrian background, and therefore not entirely part of a still mostly British expatriate community. So they more or less “went native,” forming strong links to local life and to the emergent late-colonial intellectual and artistic networks.

The several sophisticated periodicals coming out of Ibadan around this time bear evidence of the outcome. The journal *Ibadan* may have been basically an instance of academic in-house publishing: commentary and reviews were by a mixture of expatriate and Nigerian faculty, with advertising by foreign publishers as well as local businesses. Beier did not figure so much in this. But *Odù: Journal of Yoruba and Related Studies*, published by the Western Region Literature Committee, had Beier as one of its editors. And most importantly, there was *Black Orpheus*, steadily edited by Beier, with a varied series of coeditors. It described itself as “a Journal of African and Afro-American Literature,” and in the editorial committee were people such as Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and Ezekiel Mphahlele, as well as Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. *Black Orpheus* reached out into the world of Black literature—for example, Ulli Beier was in touch with the mostly Francophone networks of *Presence Africaine* and *Négritude*—at the same time as it published the coming generation of Nigerian writers,

as well as graphic illustrations by Nigerian artists. Achebe and Soyinka had both been University College of Ibadan students.

To begin with, the journal was sponsored by the Western Nigerian Ministry of Education, but by the 1960s it identified itself as a publication of the Mbari Club, Ibadan. Here was another entity within Beier's field of cultural enterprise. The Mbari Club was located at what had earlier been a Lebanese restaurant. The name came from an Igbo ceremony, with its associated local architecture, and was suggested by Chinua Achebe; being in Ibadan, it suggested a postethnic stance. It offered a library, an art gallery, and performances. In the early post-independence period, then, it was also central to making Ibadan what it was as an intellectual and aesthetic center.²

As Nigeria entered into a period of military coups, civil unrest, and war, Ulli Beier saw that his work there was coming to an end. Perhaps it was also true, as one commentator has suggested, that "his insistence on his own, possibly esoteric, standards brought him into conflict with some of his African co-editors and contributors" (Rea 1976: 102). In any case, he left, with his new wife (a British artist), for Papua New Guinea, where the couple began building up another cluster of cultural activities not so unlike what had been at Ibadan. The University of Ibadan, as it came to be in the troubled period of the late 1960s, was described in detail (ritually pseudonymized as the University of Ilosho) by the sociologist Pierre van den Berghe (1973), who spent a period researching the institution. Van den Berghe had an interesting personal background: while by the time of writing he was a professor at an American university, he was of Belgian family background, born in Lubumbashi at the time when it was Elisabethville, in the Belgian Congo, and had extensive research experience in various parts of Africa before he came to Ibadan. So here was perhaps another variation of Afropolitanism.³

Susanne Wenger, for her part, remained in Nigeria when Ulli Beier left, continuing artistic and educational work, and becoming a Yoruba cult priestess in Osogbo, ninety kilometers or so northeast of Ibadan. Renovating a decrepit old sacred grove at Osun River, she recruited more priests and priestesses, added numerous new sculptures, and attracted pilgrims and tourists. Osogbo also became the capital of a new state. In 2005, a few years before her death at ninety-three, Wenger's efforts were well rewarded, as UNESCO made the shrine Nigeria's first World Heritage site.⁴

As far as Ulli Beier's Africanist entrepreneurship was concerned, however, it was not over yet. Returning once more to Germany, he established an institution named the Iwalewa-Haus in the north

Bavarian city of Bayreuth, otherwise mostly known as the birthplace of the composer Richard Wagner, and for the annual Wagnerian *Festspiele*. The Iwalewa-Haus (*Iwalewa* is Yoruba, meaning “Character is beauty”) organized high-profile cultural events and exhibitions, continuing after Beier retired. Could one see it in a way as the Mbari Club reborn? It certainly played a part as the new university in Bayreuth emerged as a center for African studies in German academic life. As local rumor has it, it probably also helped that the prime minister of Bavaria, Franz Josef Strauss, after he had been on a safari to East Africa, was strongly supportive.

If we return from Ibadan to Lagos by road, we should not miss a stopover in Abeokuta, now capital of Ogun State. Amos Tutuola was born there. We may remember, too, from chapter 1 that this is where the Swedish author-traveler Artur Lundkvist met with the political leader, woman activist, and educator Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, later also known as the Afro-beat musician Fela Kuti’s mother. Their family network in Abeokuta would include Wole Soyinka, who keeps a home there, although he has had to spend periods in exile. We get a view of Fela Kuti’s Abeokuta childhood in Carlos Moore’s *Fela, Fela: This Bitch of a Life* (1982), and of Soyinka’s in one of his autobiographical books, *Aké* (also 1982). And, in chapter 3, we learned that Dilim Okafor-Omali, early Igbo author, had gone to grammar school in Abeokuta.

We may remember as well, from chapter 2, that in Antonio Olinto’s novel *The Water House*, the elderly Brazilian ex-slave Catarina, who returned to West Africa with her family, had grown up in this town. More recently, former president Olusegun Obasanjo has established a presidential library in Abeokuta, also as a research institution in its own right—although he is not always around, as he has maintained varied international activities. (For one thing, he served a period as president of Transparency International, the anti-corruption organization.)

Enugu

Enugu is in a way the southeastern Nigerian counterpart of Ibadan; since the late colonial period, it has always been the capital of something or other. But its origins are different. While Ibadan was a traditional precolonial city, Enugu has later origins. As the British established their domination further inland, theirs became an extractive colonialism. Tin was found on the Jos plateau, coal at Enugu. Thus railways were built from both of them to the new harbor at Port Harcourt to move the minerals overseas. Enugu for its part developed as a modern colonial

mining town, with workers coming in from a wider area, and with its expatriate cluster as well. When in the late colonial period Nigeria was divided into three regions, Enugu was a sufficiently large and well-located urban center to become the capital of the Eastern Region. Then, briefly, it was the capital of Biafra, although Nigerian forces took it back soon, so that the new country had to move elsewhere for a provisional capital. Now it is simply the capital of Enugu State.

Conditions in the mining industry could be volatile. In 1949, the police shot and killed twenty-one striking mine workers, injuring many more. At the time, this was fuel for nationalist politics, especially for the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), the movement started by Nnamdi Azikiwe, the leading Igbo politician. Enugu, of course, was in the Igbo heartland. By the mid-1950s, Azikiwe was in power (such as the colonial administration by then allowed) in Enugu, as premier of the Eastern Region. This was consequently the scene of his regional governing activities and the base for his continued nation-wide campaigning. At Nigeria's independence, he moved on to become the first governor-general, and later the first president of the new republic, by which time he was of course based in Lagos. With the first military coup in 1966, he was among those who lost his job; but although he went back to the East for a brief period, he was of two minds about the Biafra secession and returned to Lagos. His later attempts at a political comeback did not work out.

After the Biafra war, Enugu could return to developing in peace, as an example of self-generating metropolization. In 2006, the census had the Enugu population as 722 thousand. What could it be now—800 thousand? A million? Newer state capitals in other states later created in southeastern Nigeria could not easily compete with Enugu. Although without a major university of its own, it has a number of institutions of higher education. Several regional newspapers are published out of Enugu. In different postwar periods there have also been some ambitious publishing houses. Flora Nwapa, the first Nigerian woman writer to be internationally published, with her *Efuru* (1966), was a minister in the state government for several years in the 1970s, and established her own publishing enterprise in Enugu. Another enterprise was Fourth Dimension Publishing, started by the chief Victor Nwankwo and two of his brothers.⁵ It published Cyprian Ekwensi's *Divided We Stand* and two children's books by Chinua Achebe. But in 2002, Nwankwo was murdered outside his home in Enugu, apparently a political assassination. In the publishing business was also Dillibe Onyeama, another writer, with Delta Publishing. And

yet another enterprise was NOK Publishers International (presumably named after the home of the famous antique Nok terracotta sculptures, found in a Northern Nigerian village), also publishing more academic style works.⁶

As far as literary portrayals of Enugu are concerned, there is at least one, *Coal City*, by Ogali A. Ogali (1977). But the sense of place in this book is not so strong, though there is plenty of action—see the next chapter.

Onitsha

Onitsha—let me start some six hundred kilometers away from there, in my town, Kafanchan. The Igbo, who had been a very strong element in the population of this town, had all left it by the outbreak of the Biafra War (see chapter 14). As they came back in the early 1970s, some were old-timers, hoping to reclaim their abandoned properties; others were younger people who had actually never been there before. While some advantageous niches in the urban economy could not be reclaimed, quite soon they were back running a great many of the stalls in the Kafanchan market place.

One of my good friends and key informants was Shadrack, a young Igbo who ran a stall mostly selling soap and cosmetics to a female clientele. He had been set up in business by an older brother, who had his own stall nearby selling another slightly more expensive line of goods. Moreover, there was already a young teenage relative helping Shadrack with odds and ends. The Igbo, then, were repopulating the Kafanchan market by way of chain migration.

How come they were doing so well again? The answer may be multifaceted: the Igbo tended to be hard-working and privately rather spendthrift. But when I talked to Shadrack about such matters, he would also emphasize the geography of longer-distance wholesale trade. What Hausa traders sold at the Kafanchan market was in large part things like tomatoes, peppers, and onions, grown mostly in Hausaland, and this was a basis for more or less an ethnic monopoly. One might have thought that with regard to electrical items, textiles, or cosmetics, such a factor would matter less, but this is where Onitsha came into the picture. The huge Onitsha market had a uniquely large supply of imported goods, and it had recovered quickly after the war. Igbo traders, wherever they had established themselves in the reborn diaspora, would try to get to Onitsha to pick up supplies if they could

afford the journey. Traders of other ethnic groups were more wary, uncertain whether the Igbo wholesalers would be as well-disposed toward them. As Christmas approached and Shadrack was planning a purchasing trip to Onitsha, I gave him a small loan so he could expand his line of goods to include some ladies' shoes.

Cyprian Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana*, in the end, set herself up in Onitsha, on the River Niger, to become a merchant princess. The Onitsha market, however, has also been the site for a small-scale writing and publishing industry that has drawn international attention. This industry seems to have come into being in the late 1940s, with numerous small printing presses turning out the work of a great many local writers. These early Onitsha writers, making a living from something else and writing in their spare time, were basically pamphleteers: their published work would mostly be thin and ugly, unevenly printed. A fifty-page volume would be substantial, and many would be considerably less. But they were cheap, and the number of copies sold could be quite large. By way of those Igbo traders coming to Onitsha from elsewhere in the country, they could now and then find their way to other Nigerian markets as well. This cultural petty entrepreneurship provided sustenance of many kinds for the imagination of townspeople, as well as practical and moral advice. There were romances, political tracts (about national and other African affairs), biographies, local histories, and advice on proper moral conduct and roads to success in life. The occasional Onitsha author might graduate to a more sophisticated national outreach through other publishing channels, although that did not happen so frequently.

Emmanuel Obiechina, lecturer at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, at the time, devoted a monograph to the Onitsha writing and publishing industry in 1973 (with a foreword by Chinua Achebe, and including reprints of several pamphlets as an appendix).⁷ This may have been around the time when it reached its greatest glory. Some commentators would compare it to London's nineteenth-century Grub Street. A little later, there is a wry comment by another Nigerian scholar: "Possibly none of the Onitsha writers ever thought that their pamphlets would ensure their lasting fame as writers. Probably none ever thought that the locally produced pamphlets intended only to amuse would draw the attention of University dons, literary critics and intellectuals of high order all over the world" (Emenyonu 1978: 84).⁸

But then there is also one very different Onitsha writer. The novel by J. M. G. LeClézio, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2008, is indeed named *Onitsha* (1992, in English translation 1997). LeClézio,

who identifies himself as Franco-Mauritian, has his own local past. His father was for a period a doctor in Nigeria and brought his family to live there for a couple of years in the late 1940s, when his son, already showing a talent for writing, was between eight and ten years old.

So the *Onitsha* story is one about an expatriate family in this city in the late colonial period.⁹ The British husband-father, working for a major trading company, somewhat belatedly gets around to sending for his wife and young son to come out from Europe and join him. But they fit poorly into the local British colonial establishment of administrators and merchants. The wife does not even have quite the right pale hue of skin, as she is southern European. They get together with other Europeans, who are likewise marginal, but in different ways they also make contact with local African society. The husband becomes preoccupied with the early, semi-mythical history of the continent, reading widely. The wife approaches the natives of Onitsha more directly, as does their son. This draws them toward less accessible sides of Igbo ritual life.

As rumors about such conduct reach people at the British club, members are scandalized. These rule-breakers have to go. Arrangements are made to send them back to Europe—although not before the husband has been seriously ill: black-water fever. As the book ends, the son is at an English boarding school, hearing from afar about people dying in Biafra, and remembering their faces.

LeClezio's novel appears to be a blending of fictionalized childhood memory with elements from the intellectual and literary climate of late twentieth-century Europe. It stands as an effective, dramatic critique of a colonial order.

Since the precolonial era, it should also be said, Onitsha Igbo society was a little different from the Igboland further to the east, away from the big river. Onitsha was in touch with the more hierarchical civilization of Benin, seeming to deviate somewhat in a culturally hybrid manner from the egalitarianism of most of Igbo rural society, with certain inclinations toward aristocracy, viewing itself as more sophisticated, contrasting with rustic inland people. It also mattered that, in colonial times, Onitsha had a head start with regard to educational institutions.¹⁰ Nnamdi Azikiwe was of a leading Onitsha kin group, although his father was among those Igbo who went north with British colonization. So Nnamdi (also named Benjamin) was born in Zungeru, another new railway town. But he reconnected with his Onitsha roots regularly, and these had a part in his public identity.

Nsukka

Nsukka is forty-seven kilometers north of Enugu.

A new university was one of Azikiwe's symbolically most central projects as premier of the Eastern Region: indeed the University of Nigeria at Nsukka became the country's first independent university, as Ibadan still formally had the dependent status of a university college. The latter, located in the Western Region, may have been seen as Yoruba-dominated, and there was an Igbo-Yoruba rivalry that could also reach into academia, at least as perceived in its politicized surroundings. (Actually there was a significant Igbo scholarly presence at Ibadan as well.¹¹) But then the University of Nigeria also became a locus of an alternative academic tradition. Azikiwe had returned to Nigeria from the United States, with his own experience of historically Black institutions, such as Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, and, as a powerful politician in emergent Africa, he stood out as an attractive partner for American land-grant universities with their own internationalist ambitions.

In the early years, nonetheless, there was still evidently widespread doubt that legitimate academic knowledge could come from anywhere but the United Kingdom, with its modes of imperial outreach. In an interview as late as 2016, the veteran author and educational administrator Chukwuemeka Ike would reminisce that not everybody took kindly to the introduction of American ideas of higher education—and it was predicted in some circles that the new institution would turn out unemployables with degrees.¹²

Our image of Nsukka may have come to depend a great deal on what Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has had to say about it, here and there in her novels and short stories (fiction, but in these moments shifting into nonfiction?). It was already there as a setting in her first book, *Purple Hibiscus* (2004). Then Nsukka was “a little patch of dust in the middle of the bush, the cheapest land they could get to build the university on”—this is what Adichie (2007: 68) has one of her key figures, a young Igbo woman, say in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. But the utterance was supposedly made some time in the early 1960s, and Adichie was born in 1977. She did grow up in Nsukka, however, and is now certainly an important part of its claim to fame.

At about the same time, in the same novel, a radical Nigerian faculty member at the university is quoted as saying that “Nsukka was full of people from USAID and the Peace Corps and Michigan State University,” so he wanted a forum for the few Nigerian lecturers (Adichie 2007: 76). But again, that would be more than a half century ago now.

During the years of secession and war, the University of Nigeria turned into the University of Biafra. Non-Igbo faculty soon left; Ken Saro-Wiwa, a lecturer whose home was in a non-Igbo Niger Delta area of the Eastern Region, was among those departing. We will come back to him. Yet, as Nsukka was far to the north in the new country, it was quite soon overrun by Nigerian forces.

After the war, it was back to being the University of Nigeria. Here was an academic company town—the rest of Nsukka did not amount to much. Chinua Achebe came for a professorship in the 1970s, in part to edit the cultural journal *Okike*, but has not had much to say about Nsukka, and later spent more of his time in the United States—especially after the Lagos traffic accident that made him an invalid. To his American engagements we come back in chapter 15.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has again had a few more comments. In one story in *The Thing around Your Neck*, she refers to the sort of intra-academic distancing found in university life in many parts of the world—“many of us in the proper sciences thought that the social sciences people were empty vessels who had too much time on their hands and wrote reams of unreadable books” (Adichie 2009: 60). In another she relates how once benign undergraduate fraternities turned into “cults”—the Black Axe, the Buccaneers, the Pirates—at war with each other, going through secret and strange initiations, mastering the swagger of American rap videos (Adichie 2009: 7). This sounds not so different from what we will find another observer lately reporting from Ibadan, in chapter 18.

Nsukka, along with its university, shows up in Adichie’s *Americanah* too. Before the heroine Ifemelu takes off for the United States, she tries the University of Nigeria. She and her boyfriend, son of a professor, go off-campus for a meal, “sit on wooden benches in the dimness of the restaurant, eating, on enamel plates, the tenderest of meats and the tastiest of stews” (Adichie 2013: 90). But under the military government, faculty members are not getting their salaries.¹³

While still in Igboland, we should not altogether ignore Umuahia. It is now the capital of Abia State; after Enugu was lost to Nigerian troops, it was for some time the provisional capital of Biafra. Before that already, it was the site of the Government College Umuahia, a secondary school that counted among its midcentury students Chinua Achebe, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Chukwuemeka Ike, and the poet Christopher Okigbo, killed early in the Biafra war. One of the young, inspiring teachers at the college was Saburi Biobaku—notably a Yoruba sojourning in deepest Igboland. Biobaku would go on to become one of Nigeria’s leading historians, with an academic career that included

the vice-chancellorship at the University of Lagos. Achebe, for his part, notes that he learned to play cricket at Umuahia.¹⁴

In this chapter, we have made some stops in southwestern and southeastern Nigeria. In chapter 13, briefly, we will look in at Zaria, and its Ahmadu Bello University, as part of an excursion to the north.

Notes

1. In an early book I wrote about the anthropology of cities, I could not point to the Yoruba agritown as an exemplar of the primordial kind of human urbanism (Hannerz 1980: 83), drawing on the comparative work of the historical geographer Paul Wheatley (1970).
2. Without mentioning the Mbari Club in this context, Achebe (2009: 108–111) offers a view of the original Igbo *mbari*, “communal enterprise in creativity,” in *The Education of a British-Protected Child*. In *There Was a Country*, Achebe (2012: 115) mentions Beier, but only quite briefly—perhaps not being inclined, in this context at least, to foreground an expatriate? Wole Soyinka (2006: 68–69, 73), on the other hand, has more to say about Beier and Wenger, and describes the Mbari club as “that cultural roosting place that doubled as a venue for artistic manifestations and political intrigue.” Ezekiel Mphahlele, South African writer, spending some time in exile in Ibadan, also comments on the Mbari Club and *Black Orpheus* with some enthusiasm (see Manganyi 1983: 181, 211–212). Particularly on the influence of Beier, *Black Orpheus*, and the Mbari Club on the development of Nigerian art, see Okeke-Agulu 2015: 131–181. Beier himself has a richly illustrated chapter on Mbari houses in Igboland in his book *African Mud Sculpture* (1963).

More recently Juliana Spahr (2018: 93ff.), American literary scholar, has pointed to links between Beier and the Congress for Cultural Freedom, later revealed to have been a front organization for the CIA during the Cold War. After more than a half-century, the concrete information here seems scanty, with little connection to past local Ibadan circumstances; it is not clear that the Congress for Cultural Freedom, to Beier, might have been anything other than a welcome source of cash.

3. Pierre van den Berghe was my colleague for a year at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, California, 1984–85.
4. For a rich historical and ethnographic study of the Osogbo shrine, see Probst 2011. Early in his scholarly career, Probst was at the Iwalewa-Haus in Bayreuth. See also Wole Soyinka 2006: 68–69 and Matory 2018: 318–321 for comments on Susanne Wenger’s background and long-term influence.
5. As I understand it, the rather early Afropolitan writer Nkem Nwankwo was not directly related to them. He came from the Onitsha area, took an Ibadan degree, moved to the United States, and went into academic life,

- remaining there until his death. He reached a certain fame especially with his novel *Danda* (1964).
6. Such as Remi Anifowose's *Violence and Politics in Nigeria: The Tiv and Yoruba Experience* (1982). Fourth Dimension published related kinds of nonfiction as well—for example, the Biafran general Alexander Madiebo's *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War* (1980). Madiebo was also a high-level Nigerian army officer when younger Igbo officers made their January 1966 coup, and traces the events leading up to the Biafra secession, as well as all that followed.
 7. Obiechina later moved up to a professorship at Nsukka, and into university governance; he died in Silver Spring, Maryland, the Washington suburb, in 2010.
 8. Emenyonu was the head of Department of English Language and Literature at Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri. For a further brief comment on the Onitsha literature, see Griswold (2000: 66–68), who suggests that returning soldiers had a part in its post–World War II development.
 9. LeClézio's description of Onitsha colonial life may be largely fictitious; in a later book (LeClézio 2013), a biographical portrait of his father places the latter's service as a doctor in Igboland in more remote Ogoja.
 10. See on this Isichei 1976: 190–191. The American anthropologist Richard Henderson has analyzed the complexities of Onitsha social structure in considerable detail, while committed to applying metropolitan social theory as it was at the time. One may find it puzzling that in a monograph about Igbo society published in 1972, there is no mention whatsoever of the war that ended a couple of years earlier, and one would have liked to learn more about Henderson's field research, meticulous as it obviously was.
 11. This is shown quite clearly in van den Berghe's (1973) study. For one thing, its first Nigerian principal, the historian K. O. Dike, was an Igbo.
 12. The interview with Chukwuemeka Ike appeared in the *Vanguard*, 5 November 2016 (available on its web site). Ike also has a novel, *The Naked Gods* (1970), sited at the fictitious University of Songhai, which seems in part inspired by the institution at Nsukka. There is an American vice-chancellor, and a number of American visiting professors provided through the Save the Underdeveloped Nations Scheme (SUNS). These are in continuous competition, however, with British staff members, such as the registrar, James Toogood, and one of the issues of conflict is who will be the first indigenous vice-chancellor. The two candidates seem to compete over who is most underqualified. All this, of course, is an often hilarious but rather gross parody.
 13. We get a glimpse of Nsukka in more recent times in a portrait of the Ghanaian-Nigerian sculptor El Anatsui by Julian Lucas (2021) in the *New Yorker*. Anatsui has been in Nsukka since 1975.
 14. It also turns out that evidently a little later, when he was a student in London, Biobaku would have a part in “authenticating” the manuscript of Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* on the advice of Professor Daryll Forde to the publisher (cf. Lindfors 2010: 22, and chapter 1, note 1). Achebe (2012: 21–26) discusses his Umuahia period in *There Was a Country*, his “personal history of Biafra.”

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