

# **JUST LIKE A DREAM; THE ART OF CREATIVE WRITING.**

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# PROTOCOLS

- I consider it a great honour and privilege to have been invited to give this lecture. This is more so, in view of the distinguished audience that we have this afternoon. The Covenant University Ota has carved for itself a good image in the country and above in view of the high standard of the academic and moral performance by its students.**

# INTRODUCTION

- **The art of Creative Writing has been likened to dreaming because as a writer, sometimes the inspiration to write a particular piece of work just comes like a thunder bolt from nowhere in particular.**
- **Even with an outline to guide your work, you cannot boast of how your story will end since some characters in the story may take over and alter the course of the project.**

# DEFINITIONS

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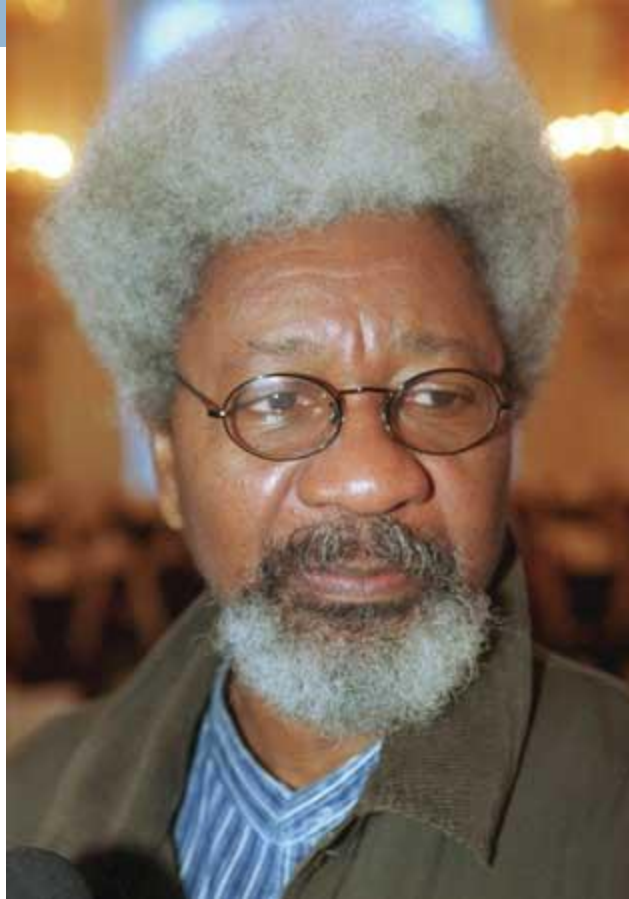
**Creative writing is any writing that goes outside the bounds of normal professional, journalistic, academic or technical forms of literature.**

**Both fictional and non-fictional works fall into this category, including such forms as novels, biographies, short stories, and poems.**

# DEFINITIONS (2)

- **In the academic setting, creative writing is typically separated into fiction and poetry classes, with a focus on writing in an original style, as opposed to imitating any pre-existing form of writing such as Essays or Articles.**
- **Writing for the screen and stage—screenwriting and playwriting—are often taught separately, but fit under the creative writing category as well.**

# ARE WRITERS BORN OR MADE?



# ARE WRITERS BORN OR MADE? (2)

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# ARE WRITERS BORN OR MADE? (3)

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# ARE WRITERS BORN OR MADE? (4)



# ARE WRITERS BORN OR MADE? (5)



# ARE WRITERS BORN OR MADE? (6)

- **Creative writing is usually taught in a workshop format rather than seminar style. In workshops students usually submit original work for peer critique. Students also format a writing method through the process of writing and re-writing.**
- **Despite the large number of academic creative writing programs throughout the world, many people argue that creative writing cannot be taught.**

# ARE WRITERS BORN OR MADE(7)

**Creative Writing Courses are run by many Universities all over the world.**

**University of Iowa Some noted authors, such as Abubakar Gimba, Kazuo Ishiguro, Ian McEwan and reputed screenwriters, such as David Benioff, Darren Star and Peter Farrelly, have graduated from university creative writing programs.**

# The Process; 1. Getting Ideas

- **One of the most important parts of your craft**
- **One of the most difficult and challenging parts of the whole process.**
- **Some people like to wait for inspiration to strike.**
- **Most professional writers, however, don't have that luxury.**

# The Process 1. Getting Ideas (2)

- ❑ **Ideas can come from your every day experience.**
- ❑ **Travels, visits to your village or a new place.**
- ❑ **Professional experience as a Teacher, Doctor, Taxi Driver or Politician.**
- ❑ **From reading other books.**
- ❑ **Family life, painful or humorous experience.**
- ❑ **From watching TV, Cinema or Stage Drama.**

# The Process. 1. Getting Ideas (3)

- **CORRUPTION;** i. The problem of the Ogunpa flood disaster which occurred in Ibadan many years ago, formed the kernel of my novel; **“After The Flood”** (Longman Plc, 2003)
  - ii. Law Enforcement Agents intransigence as well as the problem of drug trafficking were examined respectively in **“Strange Encounters”** (Heinemann 2004) and **“Dreams Die At Twilight”** (Malthouse, 2002).
- **SMUGGLING** and cross border violence featured prominently in **“The Boys At The Border”** (Spectrum Books, 1991).

# The Process 1. Getting Ideas (4)

- **Train Journey; THE RESCUE OF UNCLE BABS**
- **Hospital Patient; THE BOYS AT THE BORDER**
- **Family Event; THE WEAVING LOOMS**
- **Hospital Patient; RAINBOWS ARE FOR LOVERS**
- **Youth Service; STRANGE ENCOUNTERS**
- **National Assembly; TENANTS OF THE HOUSE**



# The Process 1; Getting Ideas (5)



# The Process 1. Getting Ideas (6)



# TENANTS OF THE HOUSE ( CoWinner of The 2010 Wole Soyinka Prize for African Literature)

Wale Okediran



Tenants *of the*  
House

# TENANTS; Themes

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- **POLITICAL VIOLENCE**
- **THE ROLE OF MONEY IN POLITICS**
- **ROMANCE**
- **POLITICAL ARROGANCE**
- **OLD AGE CULTURE**
- **INTENSE PERSONALTY TRAITS**
- **TENURE ELONGATION CRISIS**
- **IMPEACHMENT SAGA**

# TENANTS: Launch In Kano



# The Process; 1. Getting Ideas (7)

- **Gather the information**
- **Sift it**
- **Let it percolate**
- **Let the ideas flow**
- **Shape and mould the ideas**
- **Share them with others**
- **Put the feedback into the loop; and repeat the process to strengthen your ideas.**

# The Process. 1. Getting Ideas (8)

- **That's the good news. The bad news is, despite what I said at the start about the importance of ideas – and don't get me wrong they are important – despite that, the truth is that having ideas is the easy part of writing.**
- **Yes, ideas are easy. It's the execution that is truly difficult, that's where the real genius lies. And you can only master the craft of writing through hard work and long, steady perseverance. (Example of the famous writer who told the audience to go home and write)**

# The Process. 2. The Outline

- ❑ **Some Writers Don't Use This.**
- ❑ **Guides Your Writing Process (Engine Room)**
- ❑ **Your Style (First Or Second Person)**
- ❑ **The Beginning**
- ❑ **Lead and Minor Characters**
- ❑ **Length of Work**
- ❑ **Number Of Chapters**
- ❑ **The Middle**
- ❑ **The End**



# The Process. 3. The Beginning

- **A very important part of your writing. You can lose or hook your reader here. EXAMPLES;**
- **“I handled a gun for the first time I saw one in Hon Elizabeth Bello’s bag”. (TENANTS OF THE HOUSE)**
- **“My father died the day I was born” (LIFE IN MY VILLAGE)**
- **“ The Telegram was short; Father Died, Come Home.” (THE WEAVING LOOMS)**
- **“Hear this, and hear it well. To kill is a crime: but to kill at the right time is politics.” (TENANTS OF THE HOUSE)**

# The Process 4. Dialogue

- ❑ **This is another very important part of the book. It must be very interesting and able to move the story forwards.**
- ❑ **Show, don't tell. Allow the characters to tell their story.**
- ❑ **Weed off unnecessary dialogue.**
- ❑ **Better to have dialogue between more than 2 speakers at the same time.**
- ❑ **EXAMPLE (Tenants Of The House)**

# The Process. 4. Dialogue (2)

- **Also next month, I want every ministry, every parastatal, and every agency, federal, state and local, to book newspaper space for congratulatory messages to my mother on her birthday. With her full photograph. A full page. No quarter-page nonsense, you hear?”**
- **“Yes, Sir.”**
- **“She will be eighty-five but they must use her photograph when she was twenty-five. That was when my beautiful mother gave birth to me, the very, very, very beautiful Madam Veronica Virginia Oneya. “Yes, sue the opposition press. No birthday adverts for my mother must appear in them**

# The Process. 5. Descriptions.

- **One particular girl caught my attention. She could not have been more than nineteen years old. Slender, she had wide eyes and walked as if she did not quite touch the ground. She swung her wide hips gracefully and effortlessly, a milk gourd on her head, her hands by her sides. Her long, silky black hair cascaded down her shoulders in a beautiful Fulani braid generously decorated with beads of many colours. Most delightful of all was her pointed nose and sonorous voice, which pealed out in the bucolic settlement as she played with her friends. I named her “the red girl”, as almost everything she wore was red. (TENANTS OF THE HOUSE)**

# The Process. 6. Keeping Your Reader

- **Apart from the use of eye catching opening sentences and exciting dialogue, also use ‘Cliff Hangers’ at the end of your Chapters. EXAMPLES.**
- **“Doctor, the baby is not breathing again. Please come”. Dr Saheed abandoned all he was doing and rushed out of the theatre. (Strange Encounters)**
- **And for the first time since his Aunt had caned him when he was ten years old for going out with a masquerade, he cried. (Storms of Passion)**

# The Process. 7. The Middle

- **Avoid Cliches. These are worn out expressions.**  
**EXAMPLES.**
- **“All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy”**
- **“There is no smoke without fire”**
- **Avoid too many characters and scenes that may confuse your reader.**
- **Keep your story interesting through the use of interesting dialogues and scenes.**

# The Process .8. The Ending.

- **Make it plausible and realistic. NOT. “And alas, I woke up and I discovered that I have been dreaming”**
- **You can either end the story in an affirmative way or use a psychological ending in expectation of a sequel.**
- **EXAMPLES.. “Gladys had already started packing. ‘Peter, I don’t care what Lati does. All I want now is to be with my husband’ she said over her shoulder. Four hours later, Peter and Gladys arrived in Lagos. (The Boys At The Border)**
- **As the quack doctor twisted the instrument, she let out a loud, long scream which seemed to be heard miles away. Even, on the Lagos-bound plane.(Strange Encounters)**

# The Process. 9. Rewriting and Editing.

- ❑ **After your first draft, it is important for you to rewrite your work as many times as possible until you are sure of that you have got it right.**
- ❑ **Some notable authors can rewrite their entire work more than ten times before being satisfied.**
- ❑ **After rewriting, it is very important for you to show your work to somebody you believe is a better writer than you for a proper editing. Don't give it to a friend who cannot criticise you. It is better to use a professional editor who will charge a fee for the work.**



# The Process. 10. Publishing

- ❑ **Getting a publisher for creative works in Nigeria is very difficult.**
- ❑ **In advanced countries, Literary Agents are used.**
- ❑ **Self Publishing is common but must be used with caution.**
- ❑ **Paying for your works to be published is not the best approach.**
- ❑ **Publishers are still interested in well written books and will pay royalties for them.**

# The Process. 11. Publishing (2)

**Advantages for getting published by a mainstream Publisher versus Self Publishing.**

- ❑ **YOUR BOOK WILL GET A PROFESSIONAL INPUT**
- ❑ **QUALITY PRODUCTION AND PACKAGING**
- ❑ **WIDE MARKET BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL**
- ❑ **EXPOSURE TO LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL LITERARY COMPETITION**
- ❑ **POSSIBILITIES OF ANOTHER BOOK DEAL**

# The Process .12. Book Reviews and Critics

- ❑ **Good for marketing and publicity.**
- ❑ **Radio and Television also good media.**
- ❑ **Reviews and Criticisms can be subjective, so don't take them too seriously.**
- ❑ **It is cowardly to allow bad review to depress you and vain to allow good reviews to go to your head.**
- ❑ **Your best critic is your reader.**

# The Process. 13. Literary Prizes

- Prizes are good for your work.
- Don't write because of prizes since the process of adjudication can be subjective.
- Write to be read.
- If prizes come, enjoy the moments and go back to work as soon as possible.

# HOW TO HANDLE FAME

- Very Important /Most Important part of a creative writing course.
- THE FICKLE FINGER OF FAME.
- WRITING IS A GOOD WALKING STICK BUT A VERY BAD CRUTCH.
- EXAMPLES OF CASUALTIES OF FAME (Alcoholism/Suicide);
- James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, Dambudzo Marachera, Virginia Woolf, Jack London etc.

# THANK YOU FOR LISTENING



# LINKING UP

- WEB SITE; [www.waleokediran.com](http://www.waleokediran.com)
- [www.ebedihills.com](http://www.ebedihills.com)
- E MAIL ADDRESS; [waleokediran@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:waleokediran@yahoo.co.uk)
- TELEPHONE; 08035765553.