



Wole Soyinka: Literature, Activism, and African Transformation

Bola Dauda & Toyin Falola

"Wole Soyinka's imprimatur on African literature was before his laureateship. This is an Exhibit A of his secular and scared creations whose cessation should come in his wishes, when *Obatala*, the Yoruba god of creations, calls him home."

Ivor Agyeman- Duah, Associate Director, Wole Soyinka Foundation (2017-2020), University of Johannesburg, South Africa

"This book dares to unearth new truths about Wole Soyinka—and more importantly to ask new questions—and by so doing, unmask the man, his politics, and his art."

E.C. Osondu, Professor of English, Providence College, USA, and Winner of the 2009 CainePrize for African Writing

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This timely and expansive biography of Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian writer, Nobel laureate, and social activist, shows how the author's early years influence his life's work and how his writing, in turn, informs his political engagement. Three sections spanning his life, major texts, and place in history, connect Soyinka's legacy with global issues beyond the borders of his own country, and indeed beyond the African continent.

Covering his encounters with the widespread rise of kleptocratic rule and international corporate corruption, his reflection on the human condition of the North-South divide, and the consequences of postcolonialism, this comprehensive biography locates Wole Soyinka as a global figure whose life and works have made him a subject of conversation in the public sphere, as well as one of Africa's most successful and popular authors. Looking at the different forms of Soyinka's work – plays, novels, and memoirs, among others – this volume argues that Soyinka used writing to inform, mobilize, and sometimes incite civil action, in a decades-long attempt at literary social engineering.

Bola Dauda is a retired scholar based in the UK who currently serves as Executive Director of the Pan-African University Press. He is co-author, with Toyin Falola, of *Representative Bureaucracy, Meritocracy, and Nation-Building in Nigeria* (2015), *Decolonizing Nigeria 1945-1960* (2017), and *Nigerian Bureaucracy in an African Democracy* (2017), among other publications.

Toyin Falola is the Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Chair Professor in the Humanities and a Distinguished Teaching Professor at University of Texas at Austin, USA. His publications include *A Mouth Sweeter Than Salt: An African Memoir* (2004), *Counting the Tiger's Teeth: A Memoir* (2014), and *In Praise of Greatness: The Poetics of African Adulation* (2019).

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