

**INSCRIBING DISPERSAL: THE POLITICS OF EXILE IN
AFRICAN POETRY**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

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2nd October
— day of ————— 2008

ABSTRACT

This study examines the dimensions of exile in Anglophone African poetry of the second generation. Bearing in mind the challenge that arises from such exercise in periodization, the study is clear in stating that the demarcation paradigm employed in identifying the various generations of writers is not absolute. Specifically, the study considers the works of selected poets from sub-Saharan Africa in this generation: Odia Ofeimun, Tanure Ojaide, Olu Oguibe, Kofi Anyidoho, Jack Mapanje and Mongane Wally Serote. Noting that in spite of its commonality, exile is not experienced exactly the same way by its victims or patrons, the study engages the peculiar circumstances that induce the uprooting about which the poets write with respect to their individual nations. Also, because exile can be both internally and externally induced, I examine how the poets reflect upon the combination of internal and external factors in the aggravation of African exile experience. Besides, the study explores the link between exile and other similarly invoked terms such as nationalism, migrancy, multiculturalism, transnationalism, diaspora, globalization, cosmopolitanism, and so on, with a view to discussing how they interconnect and facilitate an understanding of exile in the selected works of the poets. For the purpose of conceptual focus, the study is framed by postcolonial theory, relying on it to ultimately explore the relationship between exile, home and return and its implications for African nation-states and their development.

DEDICATION

To the memories of
Jimoh Awumenu Sanusi
And Sunday Sola Onifade
Friends and soul-mates
Whose sudden disembarkment
From this mortal plane
I still find difficult to accept.

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