

Annotation of Obi Nwakanma's "Metonymic Eruptions: Igbo Novelists, the Narrative of the Nation, and New Developments in the Contemporary Nigerian Novel", *Research in African Literatures* 39.2 (2008), pp. 1-14.

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The point of departure of Obi Nwakanma's article is the idea that Anglophone Nigerian novels repeatedly explore the theme of nationhood. The critic notices that this body of works features a large proportion of narratives written by authors of Igbo descent, and offers to examine the multiple reasons and implications behind this trend.

The first part of the essay focuses on the factors that have spurred the recurrent concern for the nation in Igbo novels and contributed to the genre's development. Among these elements, Nwakanma cites the Igbo's status as the most dispersed and urbanised group within multi-ethnic Nigeria: geographical dislocation may have stimulated novelists' need to circumscribe their sense of national belonging, while urbanisation has encouraged literacy and favoured the fashioning of a novelistic aesthetic. In the next section, probably the most thought-provoking of the article, the scholar adopts a more explicitly diachronic perspective and retraces the evolution of the Igbo novel in English. This investigation ranges from Chinua Achebe's seminal *Things Fall Apart* (1958) – which followed the decisive humanist impulse of the nationalist poet Nnamdi Azikiwe after the Second World War – to the emergence of a new generation of authors who, since the mid-1980s, have displayed an ambiguous stance towards the Nigerian nation. Nwakanma pursues his evaluation of the new writers in the final part of the essay, in which he assesses the allegorical and metonymic potential of several novels by Igbo authors, such as Uzo Maxim Uzoatu, Emeka Aniagolu, Maik Nwosu, Okey Ndibe and Ike Oguine.

While the interpretations derived from these close readings would have deserved to be submitted to a more thorough comparative analysis, Nwakanma's piece nevertheless deserves to be commended for its impressive scope. The article constitutes a valuable contribution to the examination of national identity in the Anglophone Igbo novel and, as such, it should engage both researchers interested in Nigerian literature and those wishing to undertake a study of nationhood across African or postcolonial writing traditions.