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At a jovial dinner in Gothenburg a few years ago, the idea of having Africa as the theme for a book fair was born. Among those sitting around the table were the Göteborg Book Fair’s Gunilla Sandin and publishers Eva Bonnier and Per Gedin. That same year, I had been appointed head of the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, where the cultural theme was close at hand. For more than a decade, the Institute has conducted a research programme focusing on the role of culture in modern Africa. Several African authors have visited the Institute as part of the programme. This research is, in turn, based on a tradition dating back to Swedish author Per Wästberg’s early contact with African literature. His anthology *Afrika berättar* had been published as early as 1961. More than 50 African authors were presented in the book. This pioneering work, which was later followed by his *The Writer in Modern Africa* in 1969, inspired many other Swedish authors.

An idea is just an idea. It needs to take actual shape in order to become something more. I therefore asked Anita Theorell, the former head of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency’s (Sida) cultural division, to develop the African theme. With her proposal in hand, I contacted the Göteborg Book Fair. Imagine how happy I was when the news came that they wanted to go for Africa 2010. Intensive communications followed with Swedish publishers, periodicals, the Swedish Institute, the Swedish Arts Council, Sida, the Swedish Union of Authors, the Swedish Academy and African representatives in Sweden (ambassadors and the diaspora). By the spring of 2008, we were able to heave a sigh of relief. Yes, it was a tenable project. There was a great deal of interest. There would be African literature available in translation. We could count on funding. The choice of the year 2010 was determined by the fact that interest in Africa would already be aroused by the football World Cup in South Africa. Well, that is how our work began.

The small project team that was formed has had a few intense years. Clara Dery was the project leader. She raised money and acted as the spider in the web. Anita Theorell and I have been part of the team. Anita arranged the seminars and wrote the text of this book. Into the safe hands of my colleague from the Nordic Africa Institute, Susanne Linderos, who has great experience of fairs, was placed the responsibility of working on the programmes for our exhibition stand and organizing the authors’ logistics. Patrik Lindgren was responsible for marketing and media contacts in close coordination with the Book Fair. Global Reporting designed our stand and was responsible for the layout of all the written material.

The Swedish author Henning Mankell provided moral support and wrote an introductory text to this book. Veronique Tadjo, author and academic, contributed an outline of trends in African literature.

We have received funding from Sida, the Swedish Arts Council, the Swedish Academy and the Helge Ax:son Johnson Foundation.

I would like to thank all these and others, particularly Anna Falk and the Göteborg Book Fair, who made the Africa theme possible.

We hope that you will benefit from and enjoy the book.

Africa has the floor!

Carin Norberg
Director/The Nordic Africa Institute
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I am writing this text in connection with the Göteborg Book Fair 2010, which has Africa as its main theme. I have heard it said that some people have objected to the fact that the whole of Africa is having one single book fair while other, significantly smaller, individual countries have had entire book fairs dedicated to them.

This discussion is meaningless. As long as we do not pretend that Africa is a unit and instead use the days of the fair to point out the diversity in Africa, I cannot see anything negative about this. On the contrary, Africa’s turn is long overdue. I am happy about what is now happening here in Gothenburg. Certain things must be said in connection with this, however. Above all, we must speak of the disease that is still ravaging the world, the one known as illiteracy. We should, of course, all be ashamed of the fact that today, in 2010, we allow millions of children to go out into life without access to the fundamental tools for life called reading and writing. What makes this shameful situation even worse is, of course, that we could have solved this problem yesterday if we had really wanted to. We have the resources, we have the logistics. But the politicians with responsibility for this are allowing this solution to happen at a tempo that is unnecessarily and shamefully slow. Millions of children will never get a reasonable chance. Without being able to read and write, they are at a desperate disadvantage. In a world where letters dance before your eyes, you find yourself at the very bottom, stuck in a swamp that you will always struggle to get out of.

A few years ago, I asked some street boys in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, what they dreamed of most of all. I imagined what their answers would be: a mother, a home, a roof over their heads, food, school, clothes. But they had a different answer: “I would like an ID card”, said one of the boys, José, a 12-year old. “I would like a paper to say that I am me and no one else, that I am irreplaceable. I would like an ID card and I would like to be able to read my own name.” He wanted to read his own name. What he summarized for me in these brief words was the link between dignity and the ability to read and write. You can hardly put it more clearly than that.

With these words we can, however, also state that the only really important book on the African continent today is the ABC book. But, in reality, this is, of course, not the case. At the same time as we are fighting to wipe out illiteracy, we must encourage and support the production of African literature and access to translated literature. All of this must happen simultaneously. If we remain totally silent and shut our eyes when we stand somewhere on
African soil, we will hear a weak scratching and clicking. This is not animals running about our feet, but people writing, with a pen, on computers, old typewriters. We are approaching a time when African literature will explode on to the world. Now that the colonial and apartheid eras are finally over, it is African literature that will force us to again redefine what it means to be human and tell us what our world actually looks like.

Of course, many African authors have already reached out across the globe and received the recognition they deserve. But the massive explosion, the breaking down of dams that will allow the great water of literature to flow freely has not quite happened yet.

This year’s Göteborg Book Fair should be a meeting place for exactly this: the fight against illiteracy and a welcome to the great African literature that is now beginning to appear with great force.

**Henning Mankell**

September 2010

PS Would it not be a good idea to put a tax of a few pennies on every book sold in the world and have this money go towards wiping out illiteracy once and for all?
Most of today’s African writers of the francophone world can trace their roots to the Negritude movement that was developed in the 1930s by Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal and Aimé Césaire of Martinique. These great poets were in search of an identity common to all Black people of the continent and of the diaspora in the Americas and in the Caribbean islands. Literature became a cultural expression to fight against French colonial rule and to reverse the alienating influence of oppression. In anglophone Africa, writers like Chinua Achebe and, later, Wole Soyinka sought to articulate their own vision of the continent and of its diversity as it emerged from its traumatic encounter with the West.

But since then, political independence has been achieved all over Africa (in the 1960s) and many changes have taken place. As a consequence, African literature, which is the mirror of the continent, has also evolved tremendously. It now has many more facets and new directions, expressed through the needs and concerns of its contemporary writers. For a start, in the 1980s the emergence of literature written by women redefined the literary landscape. In their writings, women broke the mould of their predecessors, whose masculine norms were institutionalized by critics and the study of canonical texts. Through form and content, women writers like Mariama Bâ, Aminata Sow Fall, Ama Ata Aidoo, Flora Mwapâ, Buchi Emecheta and more recently Yvonne Vera, Calixthe Beyala and Fatou Diome brought a new vision of the patriarchal society inherited from colonization and the various forms of nationalism that came with the fight for independence. Looking at the failure of the state in Africa, women proposed new ways of confronting the crisis.

Since the late 1990s, a fourth generation of writers has come on to the scene. If for them the theme of colonization seems to have receded, the ongoing crisis on the continent has forced them to go back to history. Moreover, because of globalization and the multiplication of links between Africa, Europe and the US as well as the issue of immigration, the preoccupations of African writers have been redefined. Although a fair number of these authors straddle the years and cross borders of time and theme, what the members of this new generation have in common is the desire to create a literature that is more intimate and less obviously politically committed.

This new generation, which occupies an increasingly visible place in the Western publishing scene, speaks of multicultural societies and cohabitation. Their writings have also extended the notions of national boundaries,
culture and identity. As many of these young writers situate themselves in the new locations of modern urban centres such as Paris, London and New York, their voices have become increasingly cosmopolitan and their works have enjoyed commercial success in the West. They have also won prestigious literary prizes in France or in the UK: the *Renaudot*: 2000, Ahmadou Kourouma; 2006, Alain Mabanckou; 2008, Tierno Monénembo and the *Goncourt*: 2009, Marie NDiaye and the *Orange Prize*: 2006, Zadie Smith and 2007, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Their stories are published in influential literary reviews such as *Granta*, the *New Yorker* or *La Nouvelle Revue Française*.

Moreover, in widening the scope of their output, these new writers venture into literary genres previously unknown in African literature, for instance, the detective story and travel writing. Literature for young people also occupies a more prominent place than before. Indeed, this literature is much stronger on the African continent, where it is probably the only genre that is truly meeting the needs of a growing young readership. African publishers have understood that they can tap into a previously unexplored market that can be commercially viable if adaptations are made for the local public in terms of cultural references, originality and affordability.

Unfortunately, publishing on the continent is not meeting the needs of the African readership, making it hard for new voices to emerge. Luckily, despite the many difficulties, writers continue to bring out books in Africa. They work under very trying conditions, but their output is real and could be ten times greater if the context was more favourable and government national book policies were more effective. How many manuscripts never see the light of day? How many young writers give up for lack of publishing opportunities? Yet their stories tell of day-to-day life on the continent, of the hopes and disappointments of the young generation. Writers like Maurice Bandama and Venance Konan, both from Côte d’Ivoire, are published locally and enjoy a good readership. Literary prizes have also been instituted, such as the *Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature* (Lagos) or *Le Prix Ivoire pour la littérature* (Abidjan). In Nigeria, Farafina Books, an independent publisher of literary and popular fiction, is making waves by bringing out exciting texts and reprinting novels by well known African writers. In South Africa, after a post-apartheid lull arising from the fact that politics dominated literature during the years of oppression, new voices are emerging. They tell of a transforming society, of a country in full transition. Here, the expression “new voices” is not so much about the young generation as it is about how the
story of contemporary South Africa is told. Local literary prizes like the Sunday Times Alan Paton Award for non-fiction and the Sunday Times Fiction Prize have helped to influence new trends. Internationally, J.M. Coetzee was the first author to twice win the Booker Prize and he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2003.

The face of African literature south of the Sahara is evolving fast. It is difficult to tell what new directions it will take in the different linguistic spheres. But one thing is for sure: African literature is now well established, multidimensional and innovative. Moreover, it has developed out of its own traditions.

Véronique Tadjo
THE/AUTHORS:
Chris Abani was born in 1966 in Afikpo in southern Nigeria. His first novel, *Masters of the Board*, was published when he was 16. He was already then very critical of the country’s regime. In the 1980s, he was imprisoned several times for his writing. At times he was held in an isolation cell, but in 1991 he managed to escape to England. In the late 1990s he moved to Los Angeles. He is now a professor at the University of California Riverside where he teaches Creative Writing. He also runs a publishing company, Black Goat Press.

Abani has often been defined as the imprisoned author who has endured terrible experiences. But he rejects this and says, “That is not all I am ... it created the questions I ask of life and of myself. And I believe that one of these questions will always remain: Is reconciliation possible?”

He has published four collections of poems (*Hands Washing Water, Kala ku ta Republic, Daphne’s Lot and Dog Woman*) and five novels (*Masters of the Board, Becoming Abigail, The Virgin of Flames, Graceland* and *Song for Night*).


Chris Abani has received many prizes and awards, including *PEN USA Freedom-to-Write Prize 2001, Prince Claus Award 2001, PEN Hemingway Book Prize 2005* and *The PEN Beyond the Margins Award 2008*. ■
Lubna al-Hussein was born in 1973 in a traditional Sudanese social environment. She was a well-known journalist in Sudan until the pressures of censorship forced her to stop writing. In the summer of 2009, al-Hussein and ten other women were arrested by the police at a restaurant in Khartoum. Their “crime” – they were wearing trousers. Sudanese law punishes “crimes against morality” with 40 lashes and fines. In 2008 alone, 43,000 women were accused of having breached clause 152 on morality in the penal code.

Lubna al-Hussein decided to rebel in the name of all these women and pursue her cause in the presence of the entire world. She has written the book *40 coups de fouet pour un pantalon* (40 Lashes for a Pair of Trousers), which is a personal testimony of her “crime” against the background of the history of her native country burdened by both sharia law and tradition. Her brave and public actions have attracted the attention of International PEN and the world’s media. In August 2010, her book was translated into Swedish by Camilla Nilsson and published by Sekwa (*40 piskrapp för ett par byxor*).
Meshack Asare, who was born in 1945, is a popular and well-known author of children’s books, whose reputation has spread beyond Ghana’s borders. He began writing and illustrating children’s books when he was a teacher in Kumasi, Ghana’s second city. He later studied education at the University of Wisconsin. In his books, he combines artistic creativity with knowledge of education and social anthropology.

He has been awarded the Noma Award for his book *The Brassman’s Secret*. Other books that have won awards are *Sosu’s Call*, *The Magic Goat* and *Noma’s Sand*. 
Sefi Atta was born in 1964 in Lagos, Nigeria. She grew up there and then studied economics in England and worked as a chartered accountant. After moving to the US in 1994, she began to write and, after finishing her studies in creative writing in Los Angeles, changed her profession. Her literary output includes essays, short stories, novels and radio plays. Today, she lives in Mississippi, but almost all her stories are set in Nigeria. With a confident feeling for style, she perceptively describes the lives of people, often in humorous and ironic tones.

Edem Awumey is from Togo. He was born in 1975 in the capital Lomé. His first academic degree, in literature, is from his native country. A UNESCO author’s scholarship took him to Marnay-sur-Seine. He remained in France and has a PhD in language, literature and cultural development from Cergy-Pontoise University. In 2006–07, Edem took part in the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative programme, during which time Tahar Ben Jelloun was his mentor. Today, Awumey lives in Québec in Canada.

The theme of exile is central to Edem Awumey’s writing. His first novel, *Port-Mélo* (2006), was his breakthrough and for this he received the prestigious *Le Grand Prix Littéraire de l’Afrique noire*. His second novel, *Les pieds sales*, was published in 2009.
Gabeba Baderoon, who was born in 1969 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, commutes between Cape Town and Pennsylvania State University, where she lectures in Women’s Studies and African and African-American Studies.

Baderoon’s doctoral thesis at the University of Cape Town dealt with the image of Islam in literature and the media. She later lectured on this subject at several universities in South Africa, the US and Europe, including Linnaeus University in Växjö, Sweden.

She has published three collections of poems, *The Dream in the Next Body* (2005), *The Museum of Ordinary Life* (2005) and *A Hundred Silences* (2006), which have been critical acclaimed, won awards and attracted attention beyond South Africa’s borders. She is a frequent guest at poetry festivals in Africa, the US and Europe. In Sweden, she has taken part in the Stockholm Poetry Festival. In 2005, she was guest writer at the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala and attended the Göteborg Book Fair in 2010 at the invitation of Linnaeus University in her capacity as participant in the international Africa Writing Europe research project.
Yaba Badoe is a Ghanaian-British documentary film-maker, journalist, author and trained radio and TV producer. Born in 1955, she is a long-distance commuter, spending half the year as a researcher at the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana and the other half in England making documentaries.

Yaba Badoe is one of the 21 female African authors included in the anthology *African Love Stories*, edited by Ama Ata Aidoo. The anthology has been translated into Swedish and was published by Tranan in 2010 as *Kärlek x 21 – afrikanska noveller*. In her first novel, *True Murder* (2009), Badoe was inspired by both her studies of Ghanaian women accused of witchcraft and a tragedy that occurred during her childhood in Devon. Eleven-year old Ajuba has been put into an English boarding school by her Ghanaian father after her mother has a mental breakdown. Together with her new English friend, Polly, she finds what they believe to be dead kittens up in the attic of an old house. Unpleasant secrets are revealed.
IN THE MIDDLE OF HIS SECOND YEAR IN PRISON, LOMBA GOT ACCESS TO A PENCIL AND PAPER AND HE STARTED A DIARY.

WAITING FOR AN ANGEL

HELON/HABILA
NIGERIA
Doreen Baingana grew up in Entebbe, Uganda. She has a law degree from Makerere University in Kampala and a masters’ degree in creative writing from the University of Maryland. She now lives in Kenya.

Baingana’s short stories have been published in a great number of newspapers, magazines and anthologies, including *African Love Stories*. She works for Voice of America; her poetry has been included in anthologies; she is a columnist for the Ugandan magazine *African Women*; and she is a member of FEMRITE, the Uganda Women Writers’ Association.

She says that she read a great deal throughout her childhood and adolescence, but that it was all about the Western world. So she decided to write about her own people and about the kind of things she herself wanted to read about. She wants to show that Africa is not a country, but a continent of diversity, not just war, famine and misery.

She was awarded *The Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for Best First Book Award* in 2006 for her first novel, *Tropical Fish, Tales from Entebbe*. 

PHOTO: SERGIO SANTIMANO
Biyi Bandele was born in northern Nigeria in 1967 and has written a number of plays and novels. He studied drama in Nigeria, moved to London at the age of 20 and was soon appreciated for his plays by, among others, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal Court Theatre. His plays include Rain, Marching for Fausa, Two Horsemen, Happy Birthday Mister Deka and Brixton Stories, a dramatization of his novel, The Street. He also writes for TV and radio. His first novel, The Man who Came in from the Back of Beyond, was published in 1991.

Bandele’s latest novel, Burma Boy, was translated into Swedish by Boel Unnerstad and published by Leopard förlag (2010). It is partly based on Bandele’s father’s life story as an African soldier in the British army. The scene is Burma 1944. Ali, aged 14, has fled from Nigeria and lies about his age so that he can enlist as a soldier and is put into the front line. With this novel, Bandele wants to honour the 500,000 African soldiers who fought for the British during the Second World War.
Lesley Beake came to South Africa from Scotland as a 16-year old. She trained as a teacher in Cape Town, but did not want to teach during the apartheid era. She has published books for young people about street children, about a deaf and dumb boy and about South Africa’s first democratic election. Beake is also interested in the San people and in archaeology – her book Hap is about to be published – and her latest books for young people deal with environmental pollution in the form of the novel Remembering Green and its sequels, Clockworks of Stars and Whispering Rain. Song of Be has been translated into Swedish by Kim Dahlén and published as Luktar det regn by Norstedts. The book is about a San girl and her conflict with modern life. Beake’s picture book about AIDS, Home Now (2008), has attracted much attention. She also contributes to a number of important projects to promote reading skills, for which she has personally written 50 or so books.
Sihem Bensedrine, who was born in 1950, is a well-known Tunisian author, journalist and human rights activist. She studied philosophy at the University of Toulouse and, since the 1980s, has been involved in the fight for freedom of speech in her native country. Bensedrine has been a central figure among the founders of important magazines and daily newspapers in Tunisia and has also contributed to them. Now, she is editor-in-chief of the Internet magazines *Kalima* and *Radio Kalima* (web and satellite radio).

Sihem Bensedrine has been censored and has suffered persecution. In 2010, she was guest writer in Barcelona, which is a member of the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN).
Maïssa Bey was born 1950 in a small village in the Algerian countryside and grew up in Algiers. At the time she started school, Algeria was still a French colony and all teaching was in French. Her written language is, therefore, French while Arabic is what she uses in her everyday life in Algeria. She sees herself as belonging to two cultures – French and Muslim. In 1996, she made her debut under a pseudonym because of the unrest in her country and has kept it as her pen name. She fights in her writing against taboos, violence and injustice. Maïssa Bey has also started an association for women, Parole et écriture, which provides reading and writing courses.

In her novel *Cette fille-là* (*De utsatta* in Swedish), she depicts a number of women, silenced and locked up in a mental hospital, whether sick or not. Maïssa Bey’s sixth novel, *Bleu, blanc, vert*, reflects her own generation’s struggles with tradition and modernity at the time of Algeria’s independence in 1962 and the hopes for the future that arose then, hopes that were in tragic contrast to the acts of terrorism during the dark years of the 1990s. The novel was published by Tranan in a Swedish translation by Monica Malmström in 2010 under the title *Blått, vitt, grönt*. ■
VIRGINAL INSPECTION WAS THE NORM THOSE DAYS, A LONG TIME AGO.

MODI’S BRIDE

SINDIWE/ MAGONA
SOUTH AFRICA
Paulina Chiziane was born in 1955 in the province of Gaza in southern Mozambique, but grew up in the capital, Maputo. When she made her debut in 1990, she was the country’s first female novelist. Now she has published five novels. For her, writing is a must, particularly as a way to study the difficulties women encounter in a society that is changing, but where patriarchal traditions live on.

The novel, *Niketcha* (the name of an erotic dance), depicts the collision between the patrilineal traditions of the south and the more matrilineal traditions of the north and raises questions about polygamy. Does it exist on grounds of tradition, hypocrisy or as a result of a person’s nature? In 2003 she received the prestigious Mozambique award, the José Craveirina Prize, for this book. Her books deal with wide and urgent social problems, such as women’s rights and political values. She sees herself primarily as a storyteller.
Mia Couto was born in 1955 in Mozambique’s second biggest city, Beira, of Portuguese immigrants. He began studying medicine but then chose journalism. Once the country had gained independence, he became the manager of a news agency and editor-in-chief of two newspapers, posts he left in 1985 to study biology. Today, in addition to being a writer, he works as a biologist and ecologist, investigating ecological and environmental issues in Mozambique.


Mia Couto has a poetic style that intertwines oral narratives and modern literary idioms, popular legends and contemporary political events. He feels strongly about the author’s moral role against greed, violence and lies.

His latest novel, Sjöjungfruns andra fot (O Outro Pé da Sereia) was translated into Swedish by Irene Anderberg and published in 2010 by Leopard. Two stories run in parallel: the Portuguese Jesuit who came to Christianize the country in 1560 and the Afro-American couple who come to Mozambique in present times with development funds.
Bernadette Sanou Dao is Burkina Faso’s leading poet. She was born in Bamako, Mali, in 1952. The family moved back to Burkina Faso when Bernadette was 11. Studies in Ougadougou were followed by literature and linguistics studies in Dakar, Ohio and Paris. She has been working on developing Burkina Faso’s schoolbooks in both the native language Jula and in French. She is an active politician and in 1986–87 was the country’s Minister of Culture and later the Minister of Regional Integration. Today, she is director-general of the national tourist industry. She is heavily involved in women’s issues in Burkina Faso and other African countries and also in human rights.

Bernadette Sanou Dao’s literary works include four collections of poems, one of which, *Quote-Part*, received the *Prix Jean Cocteau*. Her latest collection of short stories, *Le femme de diable et autres histoires*, was published in 2003. As a children’s author, she writes under the name of Mah Dao. *La crèche du petit Mohammed* was published in Burkina Faso in 2002.
Lassana Igo Diarra is a publisher and cultural events organizer from Mali, who constantly emphasizes the importance of culture and the arts in Africa and the world. His publishing house, Balani’s Editions, specializes in literature for young people and cartoons. As a cultural events organizer, he is involved in many projects such as the Musical Thursdays at the National Museum in Mali, the Summer University of Culture in Bamako and the Biennale Africaine de la Photographie in Mali.

Lasana Igo Diarra is also a culture consultant to the city of Bamako, an advisor on the implementation of the country’s cultural policy and the developer of a multimedia library in Bamako.
OUSMANE/DIARRA
MALI
PROSE, POETRY, LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Ousmane Diarra was born in Mali. It was, perhaps, growing up in the countryside that formed the basis for his choices later in life. As a little boy, he devoured the books supplied by the Red Cross. Later he was accepted at École Normale Supérieur de Bamako, where he studied modern literature. Today, he is active as a novelist, poet, short-story writer and author of literature for children and young people. In addition, he is a librarian at the Centre Culturel Français in Bamako, where he is also a storyteller.

His first novel, *Vieux lèzard* appeared in 2006 and was followed by *Pagne de femme* (2007). A year later he contributed to the anthology *Nouvelles du Mali*. 

PHOTO: IGO DIARRAS
Boubacar Boris Diop was born in 1946 in Senegal, went to a French school and studied literature and philosophy at the University of Dakar. He then worked as an upper secondary school teacher in these subjects for ten years. In 1981, he published Le temps de Tamango, for which he was awarded the Prix du Bureau Sénégalais du Droit d'Auteur. In addition to novels, he writes essays, journalistic articles, drama and film manuscripts. He was politically active from an early age and started an anti-colonial club. In independent Senegal, he has been advisor to the Ministry of Culture.

Four years after the genocide in Rwanda in 1998, he and other authors and artists took part in the project, Rwanda, writing lest we forget. In 2000, the novel Murambi, les livre des ossements (Murambi, the Book of Bones), was published. The main characters are Jessica, who is in the country during the genocide, and her childhood friend, Cornelius, who returns from exile four years after the genocide and, to his surprise, realizes his own guilt.

Diop states that, when it comes to genocide, the problem is not finding the words to describe it, but the fact that people believe that the survivors are exaggerating. His writing illustrates how man manipulates history through myths. In 2003, he published Doon Golo, the first novel in Wolof.
Unity Dow was born in 1959. She grew up in a traditional village in rural Botswana. She is a lawyer, activist and author. She received her academic education at universities in Botswana, Swaziland and Edinburgh. On her return to her hometown, many people came to ask her for advice, so she decided to become a lawyer. As both a lawyer and an activist, she fights for children’s rights, against rape and for ownership rights for married women. Her work has led to a number of changes and additions to Botswana’s laws. From 1998 to 2008 she was the first female judge on Botswana’s Supreme Court and then established her own legal practice. In the court case between the San people and Botswana’s government in 2006, which attracted great attention, she was one of the three presiding judges. The case resulted in new legislation and the San people were given back the entitlement to their lands. In 2010 she was called to be a judge on the Interim Independent Constitutional Dispute Resolution Court of Kenya.

Her novels revolve around subjects such as the complicated relationships between cultures, practices and customs, equality, women’s issues and poverty. Among her earlier titles are Far and Beyond, The Screaming of the Innocent, The Heavens May Fall and Juggling Truth. Her fifth novel, Saturday is for Funerals, was published in 2010.
AT THE AGE OF THIRTEEN, I REFUSED TO CONTINUE GROWING.

CETTE FILLE-LÀ

MAÏSSA/BÉY

ALGERIA
Nawal El Saadawi, who was born in 1930, is an unusually brave human rights and women’s activist. Through her deeds and writings, she has tirelessly defied attempts by several Egyptian regimes to silence her. They have seized magazines she started, closed down organizations she founded, threatened to take away her Egyptian citizenship on account of her controversial ideas and thinking and imprisoned her. For more than 50 years, she has fought for a ban on female circumcision.

Saadawi is a doctor, psychiatrist and author of 40 or so books – novels, short stories, dramas, memoirs (including memoirs, written in prison on toilet paper), non-fiction books such as Women and Sex and Men and Sex written in the 1960s and 1970s. Her work has been translated into about 30 languages.

Several of Nawal El Saadawi’s books are available in Swedish. The latest is Den försvunna romanen (The Missing Novel) published by Ordfront 2010 and translated by Marie Anell.
Christian Epanya was born and grew up in Cameroon. He studied in France and graduated in biology from Lyon, where he now lives. It was not until he was about 30 that he had the chance to study art and develop his artistic talents. He made his debut at the beginning of the 1990s, at that time mostly as an illustrator of the texts of others and received UNICEF’s prize for illustrators in Bologna in 1993. Together with Kid Bebey, he has contributed several titles to the New African Stories series for children, including *Why Aren’t I in the Photographs* (2001).

So far, Epanya has published three children’s books written and illustrated by himself, one of which, *Papa Diops Taxi*, was a hit when it was published by Trasten in 2006. This colourful picture book is about everyday life in the city of Saint-Louis in Senegal, while his next book, *Le petit photographe de Bamba* (2007) is about Amadou, a young boy living along the Djoliba River in Mali. His latest book, *Mes images du Sénégal* (2009), is again set in Senegal.
Nuruddin Farah was born in 1945 in the city of Baidoa in what was then Italian Somaliland, and grew up in Kallafo under Ethiopian rule. He is a cosmopolitan, a polyglot, an author between different worlds. Since 1979, he has been forced into a nomadic life in Africa, Europe and the US and regards himself as a citizen of the world. Today, his home is in Cape Town but, every year, he spends long periods in the US and Europe teaching at different universities and making literary appearances. His interest in literature came with his mother’s milk and was stimulated by the ethnic and linguistic diversity he encountered as he grew up. Somali is his mother tongue and, at school, he learned Amharic, Italian, Arabic and English. His academic path began at university in Chandigar in India. There he wrote his debut novel, From a Crooked Rib, which was published in 1970. It is the story of a young orphan girl struggling to create a life of her own. The book gained cult status because of its outspokenness against traditions such as circumcision and forced marriages and because it was written by a male feminist. The trilogy, Sweet and Sour Milk, Sardines and Close Sesame depicts tyrannical regimes in Africa. His next trilogy had the collective name of Blood in the Sun and consists of Maps, Gifts and Secrets. He plans to finish the current trilogy, Links and Knots in 2011 with Crossbones. Throughout his enforced exile and his many relocations, his lifelong literary projects continually speak of Somalia, “to keep my country alive by writing about it”. Farah has also written drama and documentary works. He has been awarded various literary prizes, of which the Neustadt Prize is the most prestigious. Several of his works have been translated into Swedish: Kartor (1987), Gåvor (1990) and Hemligheter (2000), Adams revben (2008).
Petina Gappah was born in Zimbabwe. She has a law degree from universities in Cambridge, Graz and Harare. For many years, she has worked in Geneva providing legal advice to developing countries on matters of international trade.

She entered the literary scene with her collection of short stories, An Elegy for Easterly, translated into Swedish by Helena Hansson and published by Albert Bonnier’s Publishers in 2010 (Sorgesång för Easterly). With her sure sense of style, Gappah takes her readers through various human lives in today’s Zimbabwe and provides the experience of real and close encounters. Every main character is chiselled with precision, penetrating irony, inner warmth or humour. At the same time as the Zimbabwean character comes across clear and strong, the human qualities depicted are universal: conceit, avarice, yearning, pride.

In December 2009, she received The Guardian’s First Book Prize and has been nominated for several other prizes in 2010. The Book of Memory is the working title of her first novel.
Nadine Gordimer was born in 1923 in South Africa. “Read, read, read!” she constantly repeats and tells of the worlds that were opened up to her as a child in the library in Springs, a small mining town east of Johannesburg. As a 14-year old, she published her first collection of short stories.

When she received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1991, she was the first South African, the second African and the seventh female writer to be so honoured. By that time, she had published ten novels, 13 collections of short stories and a great number of essays and articles.

Most of her writing has been characterized by the fight against apartheid. Epic works like The Conservationist, Burger’s Daughter and July’s People weave together the official aspect of life with the personal in bravely revealing descriptions of aggression and oppression. But it was not just what she wrote, but also her political activity that played an important role on the long journey to freedom from the country’s repressive past. Her home was the venue of many secret political meetings and discussions.

When the apartheid regime ended, a new life began for Gordimer as a writer. In her latest novel, her fourteenth, Get a Life, which was published in Sweden in 2006, she tells on several symbolic levels of people who reconsider their lives after revolutionary change and how they choose different paths to deal with the situation. Intertwined with this is severe criticism of civilization.
Miguel Gullander is a Swedish-Portuguese author. He has translated tales of the Vikings from Swedish into Portuguese and Zen poetry from English. Since he left Sweden in 2001, he has been working in Africa. He has been a teacher in Ilha do Fogo, Cape Verde and in Mozambique’s capital, Maputo. At the moment, he is living in Benguela, Angola, where he teaches at Agostinho Neto University.

Gullander made his debut in 2005 with the novel, *Balada do Marinheiro-de-Estrada*, and in 2009, *Perdido de Volta* was published. There have been many changes in his life but the dream of becoming an author is something he has held on to since he was five. He has been described as a seafarer of the word. *Balada do Marinheiro-de-Estrada* describes a journey between Lisbon and Stockholm, with a number of geographical detours, an inner journey on which Zen and Hinduism exert a great influence. *Perdido de Volta* is a Viking ballad with African voices, which depicts a mad world.

Anachronistic and raw, the novel breaks with the boundaries of time and space as well as other narrative rules. His writing is characterized by the rhythm of Kuduro and death metal against a background of baroque music and a melancholy from the endless Cape Verde mornas.
Piet Grobler was born on a farm in Limpopo province in northern South Africa during the apartheid era. He studied divinity until 1989, when he moved to Stellenbosch and studied journalism and design at Cape Technicon Art School. He became a successful newspaper illustrator.

Piet Grobler has illustrated 50 or so children’s books by well-known authors from different parts of the world. Until 2010, he lived with his family in Stellenbosch, where he had his studio and gallery and where he gave workshops on illustration for both children and professional adults. He now lives in Ely in Great Britain and offers courses at the local university.

His first book in Swedish is *Makwelane and the Crocodile*, for which he received the *Peter Pan Award*.
YEARS LATER WHEN I READ T.S. ELIOT’S LINE THAT APRIL WAS THE CRUELEST MONTH, I WOULD RECALL WHAT HAPPENED TO ME ONE APRIL DAY IN 1954.

DREAMS IN A TIME OF WAR: A CHILDHOOD MEMOIR.

NGUGI WA THIONG’O
KENYA
Helon Habila was born in 1967 in eastern Nigeria, a sometimes violent area inhabited by Christians and Muslims. His family lived in a block of flats where the mothers gathered all the children for storytelling. He himself told stories to his classmates, encouraged by a teacher. He wanted to be an author from an early age and began devouring Western classics when he was 12 years old.

He began his academic studies at the University of Jos. After graduating in 1995, he taught English literature until 1999, when he moved to Lagos. There, he was a columnist and magazine editor and participant in the activities of the Lagos division of the Nigerian Writers’ Association.

From 2000, his writing gathered momentum. He was awarded The Caine Prize for African Writing and a book contract for his short story Love Poems in 2001. In 2002, Waiting for an Angel was published, for which he received the Commonwealth Literary Prize for best debut novel. In 2007, Measuring Time followed.

Habila held a scholarship at the University of East Anglia, where he wrote his doctoral thesis on the Zimbabwean author Dambudzo Marechera. After a period at the University of Iowa, he became the first holder of the Chinua Achebe scholarship at Bard College, New York. Now he teaches at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia.

His novel Waiting for an Angel has been available in Swedish since 2006, translated by Åsa Larsson and published by Tranan. In 2010, Measuring Time was published by the same publishing house in a translation by Jan Ristarp.
Jay Heale came to Cape Town as a young teacher and stayed there. He is a teacher, collector of stories and literary critic and is passionate about African children’s literature. For many years, he was a member and then the chairperson of the International Board on Books for Young People’s (IBBY) H.C. Andersen jury and was responsible for IBBY’s international congress in Cape Town in 2004 with the theme Books for Africa/Books from Africa.

He is the author of From the Bushveld to Biko. The Growth of South African Children’s Literature in English from 1907 to 1992, Traced through 110 Notable Books (1996). He has been given the nickname Mr Book and is now the publisher of the website magazine Bookchat.
Ayaan Hirsi Ali was born in Mogadishu in Somalia in 1969. When she was six, she followed her family into exile in Saudi Arabia. As an adult, Hirsi Ali has mainly lived in Holland, but is now based in Washington DC. She left the Muslim faith after the attacks of 11 September. At that time, she was in Holland, having escaped from an arranged marriage in the mid-1990s. In Holland, she became a member of parliament and an important international voice for a more liberal view of women within Islam. Two of her books have been translated into Swedish, *The Caged Virgin: An Emancipation Proclamation for Women and Islam* (*Kräv er rätt!* ) and *Infidel* (*En fri röst*), published by Albert Bonnier’s Publishers. In her latest book, *Nomad*, which was published in the autumn of 2010, Ayaan Hirsi Ali tells of the difficulties encountered by Muslims in the Western world. Her self-revealing narrative is based on her own story.
Chenjerai Hove was born in 1956 in southern Zimbabwe. He is a poet, essayist and poetic essayist. As a journalist, he is a keen critic of social injustice and an outspoken commentator on political treachery in Zimbabwe after independence. His articles in The Standard between 2000 and 2002 resulted in threats that led him to leave the country voluntarily. He had asylum in Norway up to 2010. He is currently teaching at Miami Dade College in Florida.

Hove has published five collections of poems, of which Red Hills of Home is full of observations of how people in rural villages have been affected by the horrors of the war of liberation. His latest collection of poems, Blind Moon, was published in 2003.

His three novels form a trilogy, Bones (1988), Shadows (1994) and Ancestors (1999). Hove received the Noma Award for his debut novel, Bones, which, with a great deal of tenderness and insight, depicts the people of the countryside, particularly women. Ben and Skuggor were published in Swedish in 1990 and 1995 respectively by Tranan, which is also planning to publish a selection of his poetry.
Philo Ikonya writes poetry, novels and is a human-rights activist from Kenya. She received her academic education at the University of Nairobi, from which she holds a Master’s degree in literature.

In Kenya, she is a well-known journalist working for daily newspapers, Internet-based magazines, radio and TV. Ikonya has written poems and published several novels, including *Kenya, Will You Marry Me?* Over the last few years Philo Ikonya has been subjected to increasing threats and harassment on account of her writing and political activism. In 2009, she was forced to leave the country and was granted a place of refuge for a year in Oslo, City of Refuge.
Brian James was born in 1983 in Sierra Leone, where he still resides. He writes both short stories and film scripts and describes Sierra Leone from unexpected angles. The civil war of the 1990s is a recurring theme in his texts, but he has also written about other matters, such as a young man’s struggle to find work in Freetown. Using locally based, everyday images, he reflects the globalized age in which we live. Brian James was the guest writer in 2010 at the Uppsala-based Nordic Africa Institute.
Tahar Ben Jelloun was born in 1944 in Fès, Morocco. Since 1971 he has lived in Paris. Drawing on his own experiences and his studies in philosophy in Rabat and social psychiatry at the Sorbonne in Paris, he is one of the most hard-working and widely read of writers. Since 1972, new poetry collections, short stories or novels have been available at bookshop counters more or less every year. Many, or to be more exact, 15 of his novels have found their way to Sweden, including Sandbarnet (L’Enfant de Sable), Stilla dagar i Tanger (Jour de Silence à Tanger) and Den blinda ängeln (L’Ange Avugle).

His latest novel, Sûr Ma Mère, was translated into Swedish (Min mamma) in 2010 by Ragna Essén and published by Alfbeta. The novel is composed in a very refined way. Interspersed between the present-day chapters about his demented mother, who lives in her house in Tangiers and is taken care of by two servants, there is a description of her entire life from childhood to old age. Tahar Ben Jelloun writes sensitively and in a soft, tender and sensual manner, with a touch of humour and with his eyes open to life’s hilarious small mishaps. Above all, he shows his mother the greatest tenderness, understanding and respect.
TWO DAYS AFTER I TURNED 14
THE SON OF OUR NEIGHBOUR SET HIS STEPMOTHER ALIGHT.

THE BOY NEXT DOOR

IRENE/SABATINI
ZIMBABWE
Billy Kahora is managing editor of Kwani?, the young, committed and provocative culture magazine that has become a literary meeting-point for the whole of East Africa. The magazine is working to rebuild Africa’s identity and future. Previously, Kahora worked for allAfrica.com in Washington DC. Billy Kahora trained as a journalist at Rhodes University in South Africa and has also studied creative writing at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. His short story, Treadmill Love, which was published in the Swedish literary magazine 10TAL’s Kenya edition, was nominated by the jury for the 2007 Caine Prize. In 2009, Kahora was the editor of the book, Kenya Burning, a narrative of the violent post-election crisis in Kenya in 2007–08.
Fatou Keïta from Côte d’Ivoire is a writer of books for children and young people, but has also written novels for adults. She was born in 1960, went to school in her native country and in France, further educated herself in London, took two academic degrees at the University of Abidjan and topped this off with a PhD in Anglo-Saxon studies from Caen, France. Since 2006, she has been a lecturer and head of the English faculty at Cocody University in Abidjan.

Keïta fights for women’s rights and her novel, *Rebelle* (1998), which deals with forced marriages and abuse, has become a bestseller. She has also written a book for children about HIV/AIDS, *Un arbre pour Lollie* (2005), which comes to grips with prejudices and fears about this taboo subject.

Among the 15 or so other books for children and young people that Keïta has published so far are, *La voleuse de sourires*, from 1996 and the sequel, *Le retour de voleuse de sourires* (1999). They are about a little village where the children have forgotten how to laugh.
John Kilaka is one of East Africa’s most exciting writers of children’s books, as well as being an illustrator, artist and storyteller. He is passionate about his collection of old traditions and stories. He was born in 1966 in a village in south eastern Tanzania. Since he was always drawing, he soon realized that he would need to leave for Dar es Salaam for his education. He came into contact with the Tingatinga Arts Cooperative Society and today is one of its foremost representatives.

He made his debut as a picture book illustrator in 2001 with *Fresh Fish*, published in Swedish as *Färsk fisk* in 2003 by Hjulet. It enjoyed great international success, as did *True Friends*, published in Swedish as *Vilken vän* in 2005, which received the *New Horizon Award* in Bologna in 2004.

His latest book, *The Amazing Tree* (2009), has been translated into Swedish by Britt Isaksson under the title, *Förtrollad frukt* and was published just in time for the Göteborg Book Fair 2010 by Hjulet.

All three are fables that sing the praises of friendship.
Elieshi Lema is an untiring cultural personality in Tanzania. She was born in 1949 and grew up in the village of Nronga on the slopes of Kilimanjaro. She did not encounter life in the big city until she began her university studies to train as a librarian. Then she began to write, first poetry followed by children’s books. At the same time, she was working at one of Tanzania’s indigenous publishers. She has had her own publishing house, E&D Vision Publishing Limited, for many years. It is hard being a publisher in Tanzania and being a female publisher is even harder. E&D publishes textbooks, children’s books and fiction and has recently opened a book cafe next to the publishing house.

Elieshi Lema’s children’s books are written in Kiswahili, but she wrote her first novel for adults, Parched Earth (2001), in English. It was translated into Swedish by Roy Isaksson and published by Tranan in 2004 (Bränd jord). It is a story of love between mother and daughter, sister and brother and between man and woman. The infatuation of love is described with a sensuality that has never before appeared in Tanzanian literature and this description provoked a certain amount of controversy in the country. The book depicts life between traditional and modern norms, the patriarchal oppression of women – but also the men who do not fit in with current expectations – and a young woman’s growing realization that she needs to take control of her own life.
Alain Mabanckou was born in 1966 in Pointe Noire, Congo-Brazzaville. He began his law studies in Brazzaville but graduated from the Université de Paris-Dauphine. While he was working as a lawyer in Paris, he wrote poetry. In 2001, he was awarded a writer’s scholarship to the US. When he was offered the post of professor in French literature at the University of Michigan in 2002, he resigned from his position as lawyer. Since 2006, he has been a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

His nine novels include Bleu, blanc, rouge (1998), African Psycho (2003) and Un africain à Paris (2009). The first to be translated into Swedish was Verre cassé (Slut på kritan, 2008) published by Weyler Förlag and translated by Karin Lidén. Mabanckou does a sweep through the universal literature in his description of the regulars at the shabby bar, using intensive flow of words and delivering keen criticisms of those in power in the country as well as other pompous people and pseudo-intellectuals. In the autumn of 2010, the Swedish version of Memoires de porc-épic appeared under the title Ett piggsvins memoarer. It was published by the same publisher and translated by the same translator as its precursor.
Magona began her journey through life in 1943 in Cape Flats, a Cape Town suburb. She supported herself by working as a domestic worker for a white family. She studied by correspondence courses in the evenings and at night and graduated from the University of South Africa and later from Columbia University in the US. For many years, she worked at the United Nations in New York, but returned home after she retired. Her social and political commitment has made her a strong voice for the many women whose life stories have been similar to hers: black, woman and single mother in the patriarchal society of apartheid-era South Africa.

She has written novels, poetry, drama, essays and is a captivating storyteller. She organizes writing courses for women and is involved in a literacy project for children and young people. Among other things, she has worked with the Dear Friends project, a long-standing cooperation between children in Langa, Cape Town, and children in Rinkeby, a Stockholm suburb. She also writes books for children and young people, including *The Best Meal Ever*.

Some of her novels that have attracted attention are *To My Children’s Children, Living, Loving and Lying Awake at Night* and *Mother to Mother*, published in Swedish in 2002 by Natur & Kultur and translated by Ulla Danielsson. Magona is one of the 21 authors included in the *African Love Stories* anthology published by Tranan in 2010.
Kopano Matlwa is a medical doctor. Educated at the University of Cape Town and she is a founder of a voluntary organization that provides patients with information on health issues in the waiting rooms of mobile clinics.

At the same time, she is a fresh face on the South African literary scene. Her debut novel, *Coconut* (2006), was given a very positive reception and in 2007 she received the *European Union Literary Award* for the book. At the time, she was 21 and the youngest person ever to receive the award. The Swedish version of the book, in a translation by Anna Gustafsson Chen, was published by Tranan just in time for the Göteborg Book Fair in 2010. The narrator is a black teenage girl growing up in a white world. Here, complex questions are posed about the identity of today’s South Africa. The coconut is black on the outside and white on the inside.

In the spring of 2010, Matlwa was also awarded the *Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa*. Her second novel, *Spilt Milk*, was published in South Africa in 2010.

Kopano Matlwa has also been named by the *Mail and Guardian* as one of the “100 young South Africans you have to take to lunch”.

PHOTO: SERGIO SANTIMANO
Desbele Mehari is from Eritrea. He has written a number of books for children at primary and secondary school, mostly fables and stories about animals. He writes in Tigrinya. He is involved in the children’s literature in African languages project run by the International Library in Stockholm.
Maaza Mengiste was born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. When she was four years old, her family was forced to flee and she grew up in Nigeria, Kenya and the US. She has a degree in literary composition from the University of New York and now lives in New York. She is regarded as one of the many gifted young voices depicting the African continent and has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and designated a New Literary Idol by New York magazine.

In her debut novel, Beneath the Lion’s Gaze, the action begins on the night the brutal Ethiopian revolution broke out in 1974. It is a description of how far people are prepared to go to achieve freedom and the great human tragedies that follow a civil war. It is a touching family history about how human feelings are distorted under a brutal regime. The novel was published in 2010 in Swedish as Under lejonets blick by Forum publishers and translated by Ylva Spångberg.
THE NIGHT MRS MENSAH DREAMED OF FRUIT BATS, SHE KNEW THAT SHE WAS IN FOR TROUBLE.

THE RIVAL

YABA/ BADOE
GHANA
Deon Meyer was born in 1958 in Paarl, in the wine district of the Cape Province. After his education, he started as a reporter for a daily newspaper in Bloemfontein. He has also worked in advertising and web strategies.

He began by writing short stories in Afrikaans for newspapers and magazines. In 1999, his first detective story, *Dead Before Dying*, was published. So far, he has published six detective stories, which have been translated into a total of 20 languages. In 2008 the first book by Meyer to be translated into Swedish, *Dead at Daybreak*, appeared as *Död i gryningen*, followed by *Heart of the Hunter* (*Jägarens hjärta*, 2009), both translated by Jesper Högström. *Devils Peak* (2010) was translated by Mia Gahne. Weyler Förlag is his Swedish publisher.
Bienvenu Sena Mongabe is a publisher and author who, among other things, is engaged in strengthening the position of the Lingala language. He has written a number of books for children, particularly the series about Mutos, a ten-year old rascal from Kinshasa, who is involved in a number of adventures. His books are bilingual, in Lingala and French. Mongabe runs the Mabiki cultural society, which every year arranges a festival for African literature for children and adults. He is also editor-in-chief of a magazine of illustrated comic strips for adults.
Geoffrey Musonda was born in 1965 in the Kawambwa district in Zambia. He was only 13 when he wrote his first manuscript, but did not get it published. He trained as an engineer in both Zambia and Germany. While studying in Zambia, he wrote for the university’s student magazine and the Zambian Financial Mail newspaper, which is no longer in business. In the 1990s he often appeared on TV and radio. He works as an engineer for the UN organization UNIDO in Lusaka, Zambia.

Geoffrey Musonda’s first work of fiction, Stolen Heart, is aimed at young adults. It is used as supplementary reading resource in English classes in schools in Zambia and, as such, has been approved by the Ministry of Education. Dangerous Power Games was published in 2009 by Trafford Publishing. The book is a thriller that unfolds in Lusaka among criminal leagues and top political figures. The main character, Ngosa, suddenly finds himself in the middle of a dangerous game that he had never wanted to be part of.
Wambui Mwangi was born in Nairobi, Kenya, and lives today in both Nairobi and Toronto, Canada, where she teaches at the University of Toronto. The literary blog, *Diary of a Mad Kenyan Woman*, has made her famous across both geographical and cultural borders. Wambui Mwangi also writes fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Her latest prose work, *Internally Misplaced*, has been published in a somewhat abridged version in the Swedish literary magazine 10TAL’s Kenya edition, which was published in time for the Göteborg Book Fair 2010. It deals with the violence that broke out after the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2007.
Dominique Mwankumi was born in 1965 in a small village in the Bandundu province in the southern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. From an early age, he showed artistic skills and first trained at L’Académie des beaux arts de Kinshasa and later graduated in graphic design and illustration in Brussels. A contact at a publishing house in Paris gave him the opportunity to publish his first picture book. He published La Pêche à la marmite in Paris in 1998 and, since then, has continued to illustrate his own books and those of others as well as designing posters in many countries. Today, he lives in London.

Dominique Mwankumi is founder and president of Illus Africa, a network for artists, authors and cartoonists, particularly in West Africa, which has been very important in training young illustrators and developing African children’s books.

He has published and contributed to ten or so children’s books, both his own and as an illustrator for the texts of others. His books include Mon premier voyage (2001), Les fruit du solei (2002) and La peur de l’eau (2006).
Eyoum N’gangue is a journalist, originally from Cameroon, but he left the country in 1997 after being imprisoned for his writing. He then lived for awhile in Paris where he led the JAFE organization (Journalistes Africains en exil). He works for a number of newspapers and radio stations.

Currently, N’gangue lives in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, where he is editor of Planète Jeunes, the magazine for young people. In Sweden, he is known first and foremost for the comic strip album Une éternité à Tanger (En evighet i Tanger), which was a cooperative undertaking with the illustrator Faustin Titi. They had worked together previously and were awarded prizes for their joint work Snuten i Gnasville. Both books have been published by Trasten, and were translated by Anna Gustafsson Chen.
Cletus Nelson Nwadike was born in 1966 in Nigeria in Igboland during the Biafran war. When he came to Nässjö in Sweden in 1990 as a 24-year old, he spoke three languages, Igbo, Hausa and school English. He encountered Swedish at a folk high school and in the library. The Swedish authors Pär Lagerkvist and Harry Martinsson were his inspiration. Swedish was a new, untainted language, constantly being born again to him.

When he was growing up, his father used to say, “Write, Cletus, write”, and took him to listen to the stories, poems and proverbs of old white-haired poets. Thus, poetry became his form of expression. In 1998, he made his debut with En kort svart dikt (A Short Black Poem), which was followed by Med ord kan jag inte längre be (2000), En sida av regnet som faller (2003), and Jag vill inte sörja dig (2007). His latest book Tankar ur ett lejons gap (2010) is a book of poems and photographs. His publisher is Heidruns.
MY STORY IS NOT JUST ABOUT ME.

40 COUPS DE FOUET POUR UN PANTALON

LUBNA/AL-HUSSEIN
SUDAN
Monica Arac de Nyeko was born in 1979 and comes from Kitgum in the troubled northern part of Uganda. After studies at Makerere University, she worked as a teacher of literature and English at an upper secondary school in Kisubu. She has a Master’s degree from the University of Groningen in Holland.

Monica Arac de Nyeko is an active member of Uganda Women Writers’ Association, FEMRITE, and her short stories and poems have been published online, in magazines and in anthologies such as African Love Stories, published in Swedish in 2010 under the title, Kärlek x 21. In 2007, she received The Caine Prize for African Literature for her contribution to the anthology, Jambula Tree, and was the first Ugandan author to receive this prize.
olu Ogunlesi is a Nigerian author and journalist and was born in 1982. He was the holder of the Nordic Africa Institute’s guest writer scholarship in 2008 and the following year was invited to the University of Birmingham. He made his debut in 2004 with the collection of poems, *Listen to the geckos singing from a balcony*, and in 2008 he published his novel for young people, *Conquest and Conviviality*. It is in newspapers, magazines, Nigerian and British anthologies that he publishes his poetry and short stories, and online, in magazines like 3 Quarks Daily, The Vocabula Review, Crossing Borders, Underground Voices and others. He is an energetic blogger.

He has a number of distinctions and prizes to his name and has taken part in many festivals and fairs in Africa and Europe. He has participated in the Göteborg Book Fair once before, in 2008. ❧
Ondjaki has many strings to his bow. He writes poetry, books for children and young people, short stories, novels, drama and film scripts. He is also a captivating storyteller. And he paints. He has also made a film about Luanda, the capital of Angola and Ondjaki’s hometown, where he was born in 1977. At university in Lisbon he studied sociology and for his thesis wrote on the Angolan author, Luandino Vieira.

So far, Ondjaki has written four novels, three collections of short stories, two collections of poems and three children’s books. His novel O Assobiador (The Wissler) was published in Swedish in 2009. It is an enchantingly poetic and beautiful description of the mystical stranger who sneaks into the action, changes people’s lives and disappears equally unnoticed.

His debut novel, Bom dia camaradas, from 2001 is a childhood memoir of the Luanda of the 1990s, a humorous description of everyday adventures in a city marked by a civil war that had been going on for decades. In 2010, Tranan published the Swedish translation under the title God morgon, kamrater. Both these novels were translated by Yvonne Blank. A collection of poetry was published in Portuguese in 2006.

Ondjaki has been translated into French, Spanish, Italian, German, English, Chinese and Swedish.
Shailja Patel grew up in Nairobi and lives there for half the year and the other half in San Francisco. She is a poet and actress. In 2006, she appeared in *Migritude I: When Sari Speaks*, a one-woman show in which she speaks of the lives of women in India and East Africa. Among her collections of poetry are *Dreaming in Gujarati* and *Eater of Death*, which, with their social commitment, address the imperialism, racism and fascism of the past and the present. Shailja Patel is politically engaged and has formed the Direct Action Training Program in Kenya, an organization that makes it possible for grassroots movements to become involved politically. She was highly praised for her vivid stage appearance at the Stockholm Poetry Festival in 2009, the year in which she was the guest writer at the Nordic Africa Institute. Patel has received awards for both her poetry and her appearances as a performance artist.
Wumi Raji from Nigeria is an author, researcher and teacher of English literature at the University of Ilorin. He writes poems, short stories, essays and drama.


In his research, Raji occupies himself with African postcolonial literature. In this capacity, he has taken part in a research project at Linnaeus University in Växjö, together with participants from the US, Australia, Africa and Europe. The collection of essays, *Africa Writing Europe*, published in 2009, was a result of this cooperation.

In addition to his doctoral thesis about the writings of the West Indian George Lamming, Raji was one of the editors of the book, *Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Crisis of the Nigerian State*. He was visiting scholar at the Nordic Africa Institute in 2003 and has also held scholarships that have taken him to Germany and England.
Lesego Rampolokeng was born in 1965 in Soweto. He began studying law at university, discontinued his studies, had a family and worked at the stock exchange in Johannesburg, but left after a short time. Instead, he began to live his life as a South African rapper and oral poet, and was deeply involved in the political movement, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), in the fight against apartheid.

Asked if he regarded poetry as a free zone, Rampolokeng at once responded: “Freedom? For me, poetry is a meaningless Sisyphean labour. I know that everything I am trying to deal with is much bigger than I could ever be. But it is, perhaps, just the impossibility of the task that drives me on and attracts me”.

From an early age, he began to observe everything, gather impressions from the streets of Soweto, listen to music from the Caribbean, read Apollinaire, Pasolini, Artaud, and interpret words and form them into his own poetic expression. He lashes out at abuse of power and conceit and believes in the power of the word to shake the foundations of society. Or, as the cultural journalist Carita Backström puts it: “To read him is to enter into a WORDSCAPE, like going into a landscape. You do not come out of it unscathed”.

PHOTO: PAFRICA-JRAJGOPAULVV
Irene Sabatini was born in Zimbabwe just over 40 years ago and grew up in the country’s second biggest city, Bulawayo, a city with a large library where Sabatini spent as much time as she could. A literary omnivore, it was not until she had completed her university studies in Harare and was spending four years as a teacher in Colombia that she began to write herself.

After Bogota, it was the Caribbean, then back to Harare, where she worked as an editor. Now she lives in Geneva and devotes herself full time to her writing.

Her debut novel, *The Boy Next Door*, was published in 2009 and received with enthusiasm. It tells of love across racial boundaries and describes Bulawayo in the 1980s during the violent, troubled times immediately following independence. For her debut novel, Sabatini was awarded the British Orange Award for New Writers, and rights to the book were promptly sold to Germany, Holland, Norway and Sweden. In the autumn of 2010, the Swedish translation by Inger Johansson was published by Norstedts (*Pojken på andra sidan*).
I HAVE JUST BURIED A STAR.

O OUTRO PÉ DA SEREIA

MIA/COUTO

MOZAMBIQUE
Ismail Serageldin was born in 1944 in Giza, Egypt. He is the director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the present day successor of the library inaugurated by Alexander the Great in 288 BC. Today’s library is an intellectual centre for research, teaching and dialogue between cultures and peoples.

Serageldin is a scientist, economist, environmental expert, lawyer, humanist and a strong promoter of culture and human rights. He has degrees from Cairo University and Harvard and more than 26 honorary doctorates. For more than two decades, he worked at the World Bank and, in the 1990s, he took the initiative for the bank to support cooperation and projects in the cultural field.

He has worded his credo as follows: The world is my home/Humanity is my family/Non-violence is my creed/Peace, justice, equality and dignity for all is my purpose/Engagement, rationality, tolerance, dialogue, learning and understanding are my means.
Steeves Sassene, alias Evindi, which means “black” in the Ewondo language of Cameroon, is a rapper who, along with the group Negrissim, has played in Yaoundé, Cameroon’s capital. With Sadrak and Sundjah from Negrissim, Evindi began a journey through West Africa in December 2001 to tell of his hikes and experiences in the manner of a rapper.
Jonathan Shapiro – alias Zapiro – is South Africa’s foremost cartoonist. With his deft pen and sharp tongue, he comments on and discloses irregularities and abuses of power in South African daily newspapers and magazines. He usually gets away with it without legal action being taken.

He was born in 1958 in Cape Town and moved from being a student of architecture to graphic design. His political interest and commitment began early and, during the period of apartheid, he began to draw satirical cartoons for progressive groups in the magazine South. He was arrested in 1988 but succeeded in getting away on a Fulbright scholarship to the School of Visual Arts in New York. By 1991, he was back in South Africa and, since 1994, has been illustrating for a great number of the major newspapers in that country.

During the Göteborg Book Fair in 2010, a number of his drawings were exhibited at Göteborgs konsthall.
Patricia Schonstein was born in 1952 in what was then Rhodesia. Her Italian mother and Czechoslovakian father had fled from the Europe of the Second World War. Schonstein studied creative writing at the University of Cape Town under J.M. Coetzee. In the 1980s, during the apartheid era, she founded a school for marginalized children in Grahamstown.

Schonstein has written books for both children and adults, including the collection of poems, *Saturday in Africa* (translated into Swedish by Yvonne Blank as *Okänt barn*, 2006), which was dedicated to Nelson Mandela on his 77th birthday in 1995. Among her novels for adults, *The Master’s Ruse* (2009) was published in 2010 in Swedish in a translation by Aslög Pontara. The novel for young people, *Skyline*, which was translated by Roy Isaksson in 2002, is dedicated to the thousands of children who were abducted from their homes and had to play a cruel and brutal part in Mozambique’s civil war between 1976 and 1992.
Véronique Tadjo was born in 1955 in Abidjan, the capital of Côte d’Ivoire, and now lives in Johannesburg, where, as well as being a prolific writer and artist, she is head of the French department at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Tadjo’s versatility is impressive. She writes poetry for children and adults. *Queen Pokou* is a novel for adults – translated into Swedish as *Drottning Pokou* (2005) – and *The Shadow of Imana. Travels in the heart of Rwanda* is a literary report on the genocide in Rwanda. She also publishes poetry and prose anthologies for young people, such as *Talking Drums* and *Chasing the Sun* and creates imaginative picture-books, such as *Grand-mère Nanan, The Lord of the Dance* and *Mamy Wata and the Monster*. The latter was published in Sweden by Trasten in 2008.

She writes in French and translates her books herself into English. Two new books were published in 2010: a book for young people about Nelson Mandela and a novel with the title of *Loin de mon père*. 
Mpho Tutu has together with her father, Desmond Tutu, written the book *Made for Goodness* on the basis of the firm conviction that all people are good by nature and that it is by spreading the message of peace and goodwill that we can bring about change. In 2010, the book was published in Swedish by Libris publishers under the title, *Om godhet*.

Mpho is a pastor in the Episcopalian Church. She was educated in the US and is a devoted human rights activist operating in both that country and in South Africa. In Worcester, US, she works with children exposed to violence; in Grahamstown, South Africa, with the rehabilitation of rape victims; and in New York, with refugees. She is also the director of The Tutu Institute for Prayer and Pilgrimage.
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o was born in 1938 in Kamiriithu in Central Province, one of Kenya’s eight provinces. He is a link between the pioneers and the new generation of African authors. When *Weep not, Child* was published in 1964, it was the first novel in English by an East African author. After a period as a lecturer in English literature at different universities, he returned to his village to protest against the independent Kenya’s regime and particularly against the use of the language of the colonisers. He founded a travelling theatre group and began writing in Kikuyu. He was imprisoned in 1978 without trial as a result of activities that were critical of the regime. In 1982, he went into self-exile.

The importance of restoring the status of the African languages has been a recurring theme in wa Thiong’o’s writing and work ever since. This is the case of both *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986) and *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance* (2009), in which he asserts the importance of language in order for Africa to be able to totally free itself from colonialism. He has continued to write in Kikuyu and claims that African authors need to write in their own language before their literature can be called African. When *Wizard of the Crow*, his first English-language novel in almost 20 years, appeared in 2006, it was Thiong’o’s own translation of the Kikuyu original. In 2010, *Dreams in a Time of War: A Childhood Memoir*, was published.
Binyavanga Wainaina founded *Kwani?* in 2003, the first literary magazine in East Africa since 1976. In addition to his involvement as a cultural entrepreneur, visionary and motivator with a wide range, Wainaina is a writer of novels and essays. In 2002, he was awarded the *Caine Prize for African Writing* for the short story, *Discovering Home*, recently translated for 10TAL’s Kenyan edition, which was published for the Göteborg Book Fair in 2010. Wainaina also writes for *The East African* and *The Guardian* and for the *National Geographic* and *New York Times*. 


Senayit Worku is a young artist, illustrator and graphic designer, who was educated at Addis Ababa School of Fine Arts. She has illustrated a number of children’s books. She also works on films and animations and has taken part in art exhibitions. She lives and works in Addis Ababa.
African Books Collective (ABC) distributes African literature – science, poetry, short stories, novels and children’s books all over the world. It was founded by a group of African publishers who own and run it and has a membership of 122 independent and autonomous African publishers from 19 countries. Its mission is to increase the visibility and accessibility of the wealth of African scholarship and culture. ABC has its base in Oxford and distributes online.

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FEMRITE, the Uganda Women Writers’ Association, was founded in 1995 and launched on 3 March 1996. FEMRITE is an indigenous non-governmental organization that promotes women’s writing in Uganda. Since its inception, several award-winning writers and poets have emerged from among FEMRITE’s membership. FEMRITE’s main strategy for bringing together women writers from across the continent is by creating a sense of belonging among African women writers’ groups – a sense of belonging that will inspire women to write and to support one another.

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Sub-Saharan Publishers is an indigenous Ghanaian publishing house based in Accra. It is an independent publishing house specializing in good quality African children’s picture books. Some of the titles have been translated into Czech, Italian, French, German, Danish, Spanish, Portuguese and Kiswahili. Another speciality is the history of the transatlantic slave trade, African literature and scholarly books. Sub-Saharan Publishers is a member of African Books Collective.

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