

Christopher Okigbo:

A Preliminary Inventory of His Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Okigbo, Christopher, 1932-1967
Title:	Christopher Okigbo Papers
Dates:	1955-1967
Extent:	4 document boxes (1.68 linear feet), 1 galley folder (gf)
Abstract:	The Christopher Okigbo Papers contain poetry, correspondence and other related materials of the Nigerian poet, including works by other Nigerian poets, authors, and scholars.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-54144
Language:	English and Igbo
Access:	Open for research. Some materials restricted due to fragile condition; digital facsimiles are available. Researchers must create an online Research Account and agree to the Materials Use Policy before using archival materials.
Use Policies:	Ransom Center collections may contain material with sensitive or confidential information that is protected under federal or state right to privacy laws and regulations. Researchers are advised that the disclosure of certain information pertaining to identifiable living individuals represented in the collections without the consent of those individuals may have legal ramifications (e.g., a cause of action under common law for invasion of privacy may arise if facts concerning an individual's private life are published that would be deemed highly offensive to a reasonable person) for which the Ransom Center and The University of Texas at Austin assume no responsibility.
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Administrative Information

Preferred Citation Christopher Okigbo Papers (Manuscript Collection MS-54144).
Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

Acquisition: Purchase, 2019 (2019-01-003-P)

Processed by: Christine Bethke, 2019

Repository: [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)

Scope and Contents

Poet Christopher Okigbo was born in the Anambra State in Nigeria in 1932. He graduated from the University of Idadan in 1956 and worked as a librarian, teacher, editor and publisher. He published three volumes of poetry before his death in 1967 fighting for Biafra in the Nigerian Civil War: *Heavensgate* (1962), *Limits* (1964), and *Silences* (1965).

The Christopher Okigbo Papers contain poetry, correspondence, and other related materials of the Nigerian poet, including works by other Nigerian poets, authors, and scholars. The papers are arranged in three series: I. Works, 1959-1966; II. Correspondence, 1957-1966; and III. Other Related Materials, 1955-1967. Series I is further divided into two subseries: A. Poetry and B. Acknowledgements, Introductions, and Other Book Elements. Additionally, Series III is divided into three subseries: A. Reference Materials, B. Personal and Professional Activities, and C. Works by Others. Many of the papers are in fragile condition and show signs of insect or other damage. Special handling may be required.

Related Material

Related Materials at the Harry Ransom Center are located in the Amos Tutuola Collection, the Robert M. Wren Collection, the Charles R. Larson Papers, the Transcription Centre Collection, and the Commonwealth Arts Festival Records.

Okigbo materials are present at Harvard University's Houghton Library. Additional information on Okigbo is available from the [Christopher Okigbo Foundation](#)

Series I. Works 1959-1966

Subseries A. Poetry

Dance of the Painted Maidens, typed drafts, undated	Container 1.1
Dance of the Painted Maidens / Distances, handwritten fragments and doodles, undated	Container 1.2
Distances, handwritten and typed drafts, undated	Container 1.3
Elegy of the Waters, typed fragments, undated	Container 1.4
Elegy of Twilight, New Society Perspectives Journal of African Literature, typed draft, undated	Container 1.5
Four Canzones, handwritten and typed fragments, undated	Container 1.6
Heavensgate, handwritten fragments, undated	Container 1.7
Labyrinths, typed draft preliminary pages, undated	Container 1.8
Limits	
Typed verse draft, undated	Container 1.9
Handwritten and typed draft fragments, undated	Container 1.10
Path of Thunder	
Typed verse drafts, 1964-1966	Container 1.11
Handwritten and typed draft fragments, undated	Container 1.12
Typed table of contents, 1965-1966	Container 1.13
Three typed drafts, 1965	Container 1.14
Silences, handwritten and typed drafts, 1962, undated	Container 1.15
Silences / Lament of the Mariner, early typed drafts, 1964-1965	Container 1.16
Violences, typed drafts, 1966	Container 1.17
Unpublished poetry in English, handwritten and typed drafts, 1959-1961, undated	Container 1.18

Experimental poetry in Igbo, handwritten draft, undated

Container
1.19

Subseries B. Acknowledgements, Introductions, and Other Book Elements

Acknowledgements for a poetry collection, typed draft, May 1966

Container
1.20

Heavensgate, printed page proof with drawing by Demas Nwoko, 1962

Container
1.21

Ibo Oral Traditions, typed abstract, 1965

Container 1.22

Labyrinths

Introduction, typed draft, undated

Container 1.23

Prefaces, typed draft, undated

Container 1.24

Lists

Poetry, handwritten drafts, undated

Container 1.25

Sequences for Elegies of Thunder, handwritten notes, 1965-1966

Container
1.26

Sequences for a poetry collection, handwritten notes, undated

Container
1.27

Introduction to a poetry collection, handwritten notes, undated

Container
1.28

Path of Thunder, handwritten table of contents, 1964-1966

Container
1.29

Studies in African Literature, undated

Container 1.30

Series II. Correspondence 1957-1966

To Okigbo's attention, 1961-1965, undated	Container 3.1
To Okigbo, 1959-1966	Container 3.2
University applications, 1957-1959	Container 3.3
General correspondence	
1957-1962	Container 3.4-3.7
1962-1966	Container 3.8
Invitations and responses, 1962-1966	Container 4.1

Series III. Other Related Materials 1955-1967

Subseries A. Reference Materials

- Echeruo, M. J. C. The African Writer: Journal of African Authors Association of Nigeria, No. 1, August 1962. **Container** 4.2
- Ferguson. The Living Past, 21 November 1960 **Container** 4.3
- Graves, Robert. The Integrity of the Poet, 31 March 1955 **Container** 4.4
- Jennings. Africa and African Culture, 6 June 1961 **Container** 4.5
- Lewis, W. Arthur. Beyond African Dictatorship: The Crisis of the One-Party State, August 1965 **Container** 4.6
- Shokefun, Remi. Ekwensi's 'Ol man Forest', National T.V. newspaper clipping, 1964 **Container** 4.7
- Siertsema, B. Problems of Phonemic Interpretation, October 1964 **Container** 4.8

Subseries B. Personal and Professional Activities

- Bank of West Africa Limited, 1962-1964 **Container** 4.9
- Doodles, undated **Container** 4.10
- Letterhead: Cambridge University Press and Citadel Press, Ltd., undated **Container** 4.11
- Lists
- Future topics, undated **Container** 4.12
- Poets, including Okigbo, undated **Container** 4.13
- Pocket notebook, undated **Container** 4.14
- The African Writers and Artists Club, meeting announcement, 1964 **Container** 4.15
- Citadel Press, meeting minutes, 2 April 1967 **Container** 4.16
- Travel paperwork, 1963-1966 **Container** 4.17
- Unidentified scrap, undated **Container** 4.18

University brochures, University of London and the Association of Incorporated Statisticians Ltd., 1959-1960 **Container**
4.19

Subseries C. Works by Others

Anonymous

Typed fragments, undated **Container** 1.31-33

Egba National Charter, typed draft fragment, undated **Container**
1.34

The Fulanis, typed draft fragment, undated **Container** 1.35

Germany's Model Colony, Chapter 2, typed draft with edits, undated **Container**
2.1

Counting Colours in the Rainbow, typed verse, undated **Container** 2.2

Land and Climate, Chapter 1, typed draft with edits, undated **Container**
2.3

Youth, handwritten verse fragment, undated **Container** 2.4

Anozie, Sunday O.

Tone, Image, and Structure in Okigbo's Limits I and II, typed draft with handwritten note, [1962-1964] **Container**
2.5

A Decade of Nigerian Poetry, 1951-1961, Vol. 1, typed draft, 30 April 1961 **Container**
2.6

Beier, Ulli. Contemporary African Poetry in English, typed draft, June 1962 **Container**
2.7

Clark, J. P.

Night Rain, typed verse fragment, undated **Container** 2.8

Ozidi, typed draft, undated **Container** 2.9

Song of a Goat, incomplete typed draft, undated **Container** 2.10

Echeruo, Michael. The Sophistication of Chinua Achebe, handwritten and typed draft, 1963 **Container**
2.11

Ezera. Index, galley proofs, undated **Container** gf

- Obi, Chike. An Abandoned Plan?, typed draft, undated **Container**
2.12
- Okara, Gabriel. The Mystic Drum Beat in My Inside, typed verse, undated **Container**
2.13
- Okeke, Uche. Exercise book, undated [original RESTRICTED - printout
facsimiles available] **Container**
2.14
- Oko, Akomaye. Tell Us What God Said, typed draft, 1965-1966 **Container**
2.15
- Rukeyser, Muriel. Two African Poets, Forum: A Quarterly Journal of
Contemporary Affairs, 1965 **Container**
2.16
- [Soyinka, Wole]. Invocation Dance, typed verse, undated **Container**
2.17
- The Times Literary Supplement. Under Ben Bulben, typed draft, 21 January 1965 **Container**
2.18
- Van Sertima, [Ivan]. Typed transcript of interview with Christopher Okigbo, 24
September 1964 **Container**
2.19
- Worlu, S. O. Poems, typed verse, undated **Container** 2.20