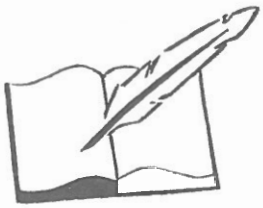

# African Writers meet in Uganda

by Bernard Fonlon

The Conference of African Writers of English Expression which was held in Makerere, Kampala, Uganda, from the 8th to 18th of June, 1962, brought together makers of creative literature from the East, from the West and the South of the continent.

Chinua Achebe, novelist,
John Pepper Clark, poet and dramatist,
Gabriel Okara, poet, and short-story writer,
Christopher Okigbo, poet,
Wole Soyinka, poet and dramatist,
Donatus Nwoga, critic — *came from Nigeria.*
George Awooner-Williams, poet,
Elizabeth Spio-Garbrah, poet,
Cameron Duodu — *were Ghana's representatives.*

To speak for *South Africa,* came the exiles,

Ezekiel Mphahlele,
Bloke Modisane,
Arthur Maimane — all short-story writers.

*East Africa* was represented by,

Grace Ogot, short-story writer,
John Nagenda, poet and short-story writer,
Rebecca Njau, dramatist.

There were envoys from *Africa across the Seas :*

Langston Hughes, famous American Negro poet,
Saunders Redding, writer, critic and Professor of Literature at Hampton Institute, Virginia,
Arthur Drayton of Trinidad, critic, and
Barry Reckord of Jamaica, dramatist.

As observers from *French speaking Africa* came
Amadou Samb of Senegal and
Paulin Joachim of Dahomey, editor of the magazine, *Bingo*.

I was there to represent *the bilingual Republic of Cameroon*.

The need for African programmes in radio and television services is stimulating a good deal of writing in some African countries. To enlighten the conference on writing for these media were :

Yemi Lijadu of Broadcasting House, Lagos,
Frances Ademola of Broadcasting House, Ibadan,
Segun Olusola of Western Nigeria Television, Ibadan,
Lewis Nkosi of South Africa, and
Denis Duerdin of the Transcription Centre, London.

It is to be noted that some of the writers themselves, like Chinua Achebe and Gabriel Okara, are also broadcasters.

Present too were the editors of certain African periodicals dedicated to the promotion of this literature :

Neville Rubin of *the New African*, Cape Town,
Philip Segal of *Contrast*, Cape Town, and
Rajat Neogy of *Transition*, Kampala.

Some publishing houses which have already published works by Negro authors or who are interested in this literary movement also sent representatives for a dialogue with the writers. They were :

The East African Literature Bureau, Nairobi,
Heinemann of London,
Longmans Green,
André Deutsch of London,
The North-Western University Press, Chicago,
The Cambridge University Press and
The Oxford University Press.

The work of the Congress fell into four parts : the reading of prepared papers — on African Literature, on West Indian Writing, on Negro American Literature, on Writing in French-speaking Africa ; then came the criticism of specific novels, short-stories and poems ; then the Conference split up into working parties to discuss the state of the novel, the short-story, drama and poetry ; and finally there were readings by authors from their own works.

A remarkable thing about the Conference was the youth of its participants ; they were themselves a striking image of the rising literature they were gathered to examine.

It is to be borne in mind, firstly, that this was a conference of makers of creative literature — fiction, drama, poetry — and as such the presence there of others besides the writers was justified by some connection with creative writing, as critic, student, promoter, publisher. Consequently, essayists, historians, sociologists and the like were absent from the gathering.

Secondly, this was a conference of writers in English and, therefore, it excluded, not only writers of French expression, but also writers in the various vernaculars. For it should be remembered that, in different parts of Africa — Yoroubaland, Ghana, Swahili-speaking East Africa — vernacular literature flourishes. Anyone who has read a translation of Thomas Mofolo's *Chaka*, for instance, would have an idea of the beauty and the wealth of some of this literature. I talked with Bloke Modisane of Mofolo's works and he recited passages to me from memory, and said that there was a beauty and a melody in the original Sotho which no translation could convey.

Considering then that these were African writers of English expression, it was therefore quite natural that one of the very first questions to crop up should be, whether this literature was really African literature ; if it was, how was its African character to be recognised ? What were the hall-marks of this character ?

Nearly all the writers present, even the Americans and the West Indians, admitted that there was a certain amount of difficulty in expressing Negro material — thought, feeling, behaviour, way of life — in un-negro tongue. What suggestions could the congress profer to help the writers meet this difficulty ? Was it necessary to invent a style out of sheer inner necessity, was it imperative to sound un-English ?

With regard to theme, it was remarked that a good deal of Negro literature, up to this, has been largely a literature of protest, has been largely taken up with that conflict in the modern African between the traditional and the western. Were African writers not getting themselves too much entangled in their obsession with the racial theme and, as a consequence, preventing themselves from attaining the real purpose of literature ?

How did the writers in the conference face up to the problem of an audience ? Had they, after finishing a work, found themselves wishing they had selected their audience otherwise ? had chosen an African audience in their own national context, an African audience in a continental context, or a world-wide English-speaking audience ?

The above questions give an idea of the sort of problems that the conference pondered over. To guide deliberations, papers had been prepared before hand incorporating texts from African authors, and on these the discussions were to be based.

With regard to the question, what African literature is, strong disapproval was expressed, from the very start, at the attitude of some Europeans who, considering themselves as experts in Negro literature, lay down canons on what this literature should be, and dismiss as not African any work by an African that does not conform to their dogma. The writer had the right to approach his work unshackled by any *a priori* notions or attitudes ; all that was required of him in his work was that he be honest and sincere. However, with this freedom guaranteed, it was legitimate to inquire into what made a work African : was it author ; was it theme ? since it wasn't language.

Christopher Okigbo of Nigeria led the discussion and said that, to be such, a work must have its roots deep in African soil, must take its birth from African experience, must pulsate with African feeling ; in brief, what made a work African was Negritude as first felt and expressed by Senghor and Césaire. It was not race, neither was it theme that made a work African : a foreigner could treat African material and an African writer could be devoid of authentic African feeling.

Langston Hughes countered that, while this was true, a work did draw its African-ness from its authorship and theme : who else was normally more calculated to have his roots deep in the African soil, to have been formed by African experience, to pulsate with African feeling than the African ?

Another speaker added that it was not enough that theme and writer be African ; it was imperative also that the work be written from an African point of view.

Joining in, I drew attention to the fact that the experiences and emotions of the African are essentially universal : colonial humiliation, frustration, sorrow, bitterness, hate, revolt, revenge, exaltation, joy, love — these were human experiences. To my mind, what conferred on these an African character was their expression, their manner. I referred to the poetry of Rabearivelo and said that whoever knew something of Malagasy geography and history and customs and mentality and temperament would see that this poetry could have sprung from nowhere else but from the soil of Madagascar. I later reinforced this point by recounting an expe-

rience I had one evening in Paris. I was attending a show at the UNESCO headquarters, when, unto the stage, strode a musical group dressed in West Indian attire and carrying calypso drums, and, among them, a guitarist. When they began to play, something struck me about the music of the guitar. I had never heard the air before but, as I listened, I became increasingly convinced that the player must be a Cameroonian. And sure enough, I found out after the show that my guitarist was no West Indian at all but a man from Douala. African writers have adopted English much as the musicians have adopted the guitar, and if they really spring from African soil if they are kneaded and leavened by African experience, their manner, their expression, will bear an African imprint, whatever their theme may be.

Someone rejoined that, if that was the case, the outcome would be that in the end you would have a Nigerian literature, a Ghana literature, an East African literature but no African literature as such.

But one has only to look round and see how much Africans have in common among themselves to see that, true as this may be, there will be, notwithstanding, enough of common elements in these to weld the ensemble into a genuine African literature.

Now and again, during, the discussions, the term Negritude, as was to be expected, came up for questioning. What did it mean exactly ? Was it not becoming a stock theme, a chauvinist slogan limiting the scope of Negro literature, preventing it from reaching out to new realms and thus hindering it from enriching itself ?

The argument became very heated and tempers were frayed when a paper on French African writing was read. The writer quoting Césaire as saying that blackness was not absence but refusal, went on to comment :

*The trouble with refusal as a permanent literary posture is that it is inclined to produce writing which is concerned with public gesture rather than with private and particular observation. Until recently, the great bulk of French writing by Africans could be fairly labelled as romantic, rhetorical and directed at general rather than individual situations. That is to say, there was a preference for romantically revolutionary statements about " the situation of the negro ", rather than particular, exploratory statements about the situation of the individual writer at a particular moment in space and time.*

*It may be objected that one cannot really distinguish between the individual and the racial situation under regimes which practise any kind of discrimination. I believe however that one can, to a certain extent, make this distinction. The voice in which most French African poetry has addressed us has been a public voice, whether phrased in the angry shout of Damas and David Diop, the sonorous accents of Senghor, or the dreamy incantations of Birago Diop.*

Quoting a poem that Senghor addressed to Negro-American soldiers in the Second World War he continued :

*No one, I think, would deny that this poetry is both romantic and rhetorical. The poet does not strike us as anxious to record a moment of real experience, so much as to distinguish the Negro American soldiers as a whole from the brutality of their environment. A moment's reflection (which good poetry* ought *to stand) will show how unreasonable it is to distinguish the deeds of black bomb-aimers from those of their white companions ; and how outrageous it is to describe bomb-aimers of any colour as the possible instruments of God's justice. In other words, I do not believe that M. Senghor was really* thinking *when he wrote this poem. He was romanticising in such a way as to distract the attention of the reader away from the actual situation before him.*

About a poem by David Diop in which the sufferings of the African under colonial oppression are portrayed, the speaker said :

*The agonies described here were real enough under primitive colonialism (sad to reflect that forced labour is reported to have begun again in some of these territories, even while the old order is still a reality in Angola and southwards). But they were not experienced by David Diop himself. His passion is genuine enough, but is a vicarious passion. He is not leading us into the heart of an immediate situation, but lecturing us from the public platform...*

*Meanwhile the great swell of negritudinous poetry which began in the late thirties with Damas, Césaire and Senghor, and continued through the forties and fifties with the two Diops, seems to be subsiding. Can it be that even now young poets in French-speaking Africa are struggling to find a new attitude, a new voice ?*

There were irritated protests from the floor. Granted that some of the remarks could be justified, it was hard to admit that such adjectives as romantic and vicarious should be applied to this literature. The anguish experienced by an African student in Europe, himself the victim of so many humiliations inflicted on

him by reasons of his race, the anguish that such a student felt on hearing that black men were massacred by their oppressors anywhere in the world was so intimate and intense that it could not be described as romantic and vicarious. A representative testified how sometimes he had been pained even to tears on hearing it announced over the radio that atrocities had been perpetrated on black men in South Africa, for instance, and said that some of his best work took direct birth from such anguish. Another asked how the work of a Rabemananjara, written in jail, with a sentence of death on his head, after a revolution in which 90,000 of his people had perished could lightly be dismissed as void of content ?

The general point that seemed to emerge from all that the objectors said during that noisy session was that the white man, (for the reader of the paper was English) is a stranger to the experience, a stranger to the sorrows of the black to such an extent that he cannot be a competent judge of the expression of such experience.

This idea came up more explicitly in the dialogue between the Conference and the panel of the publishers' representatives. A West Indian insisted heatedly that works by Negro authors that came before publishers should be submitted to be read and appreciated for the publishers not only by competent English critics but also by equally competent Negro critics, because these latter were best fit to tell what was good African or West Indian literature ; he knew of two occasions where West Indian works of not much value were passed as good by competent English readers for publishing houses.

On this subject of Negritude, Christopher Okigbo speaking some days before, as I said earlier, had made a distinction between the genuine negritude of Senghor and Césaire and what he considered the sloganised version of later days.

The quarrel, if I can call it that, between the French speaking African and the English speaking African, on the subject of Negritude, stems from the difference in the colonial regimes to which they were subjected. While the French went all out to empty their African of his negroness and to make a Frenchman of him, the English, not being such ardent crusaders for the Britannic way of life, spared their black this brain-washing indoctrination ordeal, and left him rooted in his traditions. The French-educated African's assertion of his Negritude is the angry reaction of someone struggling to rebuild a part of himself that has been destroyed ; the

attitude of his English speaking brother is that of one who takes his blackness for granted.

I would have classified the South African with the uprooted. But Mr. Mphahlele rejects my view categorically. He says that, although their culture was broken down, they were not educated abroad ; they have remained rooted in African soil, and are creating a new culture in South Africa ; for, after all, culture is not a stactic thing ; it is something endowed with life and dynamism.

Mr. Mphahlele holds that no South African would deny the historical fact of Negritude as a protest, nor would he undermine the importance of this role. But he maintains that, in South Africa, they are fighting, not for their negroness, but for their human dignity.

With regard to the role of Negritude as a literary expression, he rejects the view that because a man is black he will write like other black men ; all Africans are not the same and, therefore, Negritude cannot be held up as the ideal prescription for all cultural ills in Africa.

For Langston Hughes there was nothing mysterious about the notion. Senghor and Césaire had done exactly what the writers of the Harlem Renaissance did before them, back in the nine-teen twenties ; only the Harlemites had not given it a name. For centuries before then, the Negro had been subjected to a campaign of humiliation, and denigration ; and, for this reason, the Renaissance writers had gone all out to restore his confidence in himself and to imbue him with salutary pride. So they sang the Negro's sorrows, Africa, and the beauty of things black. A legitimate and necessary movement. Even today, one of the foremost defenders of Negritude was the American-Negro poet Samuel Allen called Paul Vesey.

I think that the dispute among Africans about Negritude, is more about the name than about the thing. All are agreed, at least, on its importance as a protest. And yet protest in Negro literature is the most virile form of Negritude, for as the late Frantz Fanon, the West Indian doctor turned Algerian nationalist, wrote, the struggle for national freedom is culture's most sacred act. And Negro culture wherever it is found, whatever form it takes, is one expression of Negritude, if not the most authentic.

It is in his search for an audience that the African author's road is most beset with hurdles and pitfalls. If he writes in his native tongue, his audience is limited by the fewness of those who speak

it ; that audience is further and more drastically limited still, because the majority of this handful are unlettered. He would be reduced to a voice in the wilderness, if he wrote in the vernacular.

By writing in English he clears these hurdles as though with one bound ; but no sooner is this done than new ones emerge high before him.

Today, only the incorrigibly naive white would demand or expect, as was the case in the not so distant past, that whenever the blackman appeared on page or stage he should be either a scoundrel or a clown. But there is still a large section of the white reading public, even among those sincerely enthusiastic about Negro writing, that looks to the rising Negro literature to give them noting else but the quaint and the exotic. Chinua Achebe remarked that sometimes he had heard his works praised for what he considered the very wrong reasons.

The danger is that, since it is from this white audience that the buyers come, the African writer would be tempted to pander to their tastes and, as a consequence, prostitute his talent and give the reading public a distorded picture of the African world.

The highly talented Negro Poet, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, has been taken to task for having done just this. It is said that, in frustration and bitterness, notwithstanding his astounding fame, he took to drink and ended his days, at the early age of thirty-four, in shame and degradation. And there are those who believe that it was his consciousness of this betrayal and his consequent self-hatred that wrought his ruin.

The writers of the Conference are dead set against this ; and their resolve goes farther and deeper still.

For there are some very well-intentioned whites who approach African writing with the attitude that the African writer is a child who should be helped to his feet and that, as such, any effort on his part however paltry must be greeted with lavish praise. In talks with them one sensed that they are no dupes, these young men ; while not indifferent to genuine appreciation, they are very wary of inflated adulation and unmerited, extravagant publicity. This they recognise as a great danger to the individual writer and to the cause of African literature as a whole. Let a work stand or fall on its merits alone. Let nothing coming from Africa pass as literature which would not pass as such anywhere else.

The importance of cultivating a thirst for literature among Africans was also stressed. With experience going as far back as the

nineteen thirties to bear him out, Langston Hughes spoke of the effectiveness, for this purpose, of readings from their own works by authors before audiences ; he himself had done this throughout the United States and the results had gone beyond his expectations. But he stressed that, if the writers were to win the public African ear, they must shun that esoteric manner so common, especially among poets, today. Surely, it was the right of every poet to write as his spirit moved him, even if only he alone could understand what he wrote ; but, if literature was to win the affection of the people, one thing was essential : it must be communicable.

With regard to the difficulty of expressing negro life in unnegro tongue, Mr. Gabriel Okara informed the conference of an experiment he himself was making. On account of the writer's English education, he would be naturally more inclined to think in English than in his native language. What he himself was doing when writing was to think in the vernacular and then translate his thought into English with a view to retaining some of the flavour of the language of the theme. The result was a form of English that might jar on English ears but which, to his mind, made the work more authentic.

If English has come to stay in English speaking Africa (and who doubts but that it has ?) the form that will finally take root will inevitably be influenced by the vocabulary and the syntax of the African languages and by African habits of thought. If this is so ; then my view is that, it would be far better for this natural process to be helped along and channelled by the writers' skill than that it should be left completely to the blind gropings of chance.

To do this, it will of course be necessary for the makers of African literature so to possess the English language that it should become in their hands an instrument which they can wield exactly as they please. This consummate mastery is one of Aimé Césaire's supreme achievements as a writer in French.

The method envisaged by Okara has already been employed with uncommon skill by such writers as Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart*, and earlier still, by James Weldon Johnson in *God's Trombones*.

The use of pidgin English, especially in dialogue, was also explored ; and some strongly disapproved of it as found in the works of Cyprain Ekwensi ; they said it was not pidgin English at all, for his version of it was spoken nowhere. On this head, Langston Hughes referred to his long experience in the use of Negro dialect

in his poems and in his famous *Simple* series. He said that if dialect was written exactly as it was spoken it would be very difficult to read ; to reduce it to writing it had to be modified by being brought a bit nearer to English especially in spelling.

With regard to matter, strong disapproval was expressed, by some members of the Conference, of a certain vogue in the treatment of sex in present day novels, where it is exhibited in very brutal forms. The attitude of some Negro writers seemed to be that since this was now the fashion among white novelists, Negro novelists would be out of step if they didn't fall in tune. The critics of this tendency protested that this was no outmoded prudishness on their part. Sex was a fact of human life and no serious treatment of human life could ignore it ; not even the Bible did. But the pointlessness and the sadism of the sex that one saw in some of the novels of today was strongly to be discountenanced.

A look through the list of writers at the beginning of this article brings to light a few facts about creative writing of English expression in Africa today.

It is seen that this literature is still in its early stages in East Africa ; but the prominent participation of women in it is to be noted. In fact, shortly after the conference began, a play by Rebecca Njau was broadcast ; it had won a price a year or two before.

In South Africa, the short story predominates ; there are some novels ; but the output in poetry seems slender. It is also significant that most of the South African writers are exiles. There runs through South African writing the storminess that one would naturally expect to find where racial humiliation has goaded the souls of black folk to rankle with bitterness and rebellion.

In Ghana, poetry flourishes and has flourished perhaps longer than in any other part of Africa ; for poets like Gladys Casely Hayford alias Aquah Laluah and Dei-Anang are among the foremost in this field in Africa. There is the short story, and there is a drive to promote drama ; however, Ghana has still to produce its first novelist.

But a country to watch is Nigeria. For it seems to me that, just as Ghana seized political leadership in Africa, Nigeria bids fair to seize the lead in literature. Its rise in Nigeria has been rapid, and activity, intense : fiction, poetry, and drama flourish, and works of high quality have been produced in all these branches. I lived in Nigeria a long time and from what I know of the energy and the

doggedness with which its people emulate one another where progress is concerned, from what I know of their insatiable thirst for learning, I can see that, in literary output, Nigeria is destined to be rich.

A close examination of the Nigerian delegation at Makerere brings to light some interesting facts.

Of the nine members, five are established writers. Of the five, three are alumni of Ibadan University, one began his studies in Ibadan and completed them in Leeds and one is a product of Umuahia college who, although he later studied in America, had made his mark as a poet before he set foot there. All the five Nigerian writers therefore, were formed at home, and four of the five, at Ibadan University.

When one considers the hundreds, if not the thousands, of Nigerians that have studied in England and in America, one begins to wonder why scarcely any writer of note has been thrown up by that multitude ? Why have Oxford, Cambridge, London been barren in Nigerian writers, in African writers ? Why does Ibadan, on the contrary, promise to be so prolific ?

The same phenomenon is confirmed in South Africa and is likely to appear in East Africa ; for none of the South Africans was educated abroad and all but the whole of the East African delegation were products of Makerere. In this, African literature of English expression shows a striking constrast to that in French ; the latter took birth in the Sorbonne, the former grows at home.

It is also worthy to note that, of the Nigerian delegation of nine, six are radio or television broadcasters. There is no doubt that Nigerian broadcasting and television, by the intensive efforts they are putting forward to make their cultural programmes really Nigerian, are doing a great deal to stimulate creative writing in Nigeria.

A great deal of Negro literature is Negro only in the sense that it has consecrated itself to the fight to right the blackman's wrongs. But one has only to read the works of Chinua Achebe or of J. P. Clark or of Gabriel Okara to see how rich this rising literature is with the substance of Nigerian soil.

In addition, it is more diversified not only in genre, as I have shown above, but also in theme ; for it has gone beyond the protest, the racial, beyond the cultural conflict theme to explore deeper in Nigerian life. Indeed, even where it deals with race or protest, the atmosphere, as one would normally expect, is not as

stormy as that in a South African work, and the note is intimate and personal, like in the following poem by Gabriel Okara :

" The storks are coming now —
White specks in the silent sky.
They had gone north seeking
Fairer climes to build their homes
When here was raining.

They are back with me now —
spirits of the wind,
beyond the gods' confining
hands they go north and west and east,
Instinct guiding.

But willed by the gods
I'm sitting on this rock
watching them come and go
from sunrise to sundown,
with the spirit urging within.

And urging, a red pool stirs,
And each ripple is
the instinct's vital call,
a desire in a million cells
confined.

O God of the gods and me,
shall I not heed
this prayer-bell call, the noon
angelus, because my stork is caged
in Singed Hair and Dark Skin ? "

No gathering could be gayer, more informal, more careless in appearance than the Conference at Makerere : beards, shirt-sleeves, *jumpers, danchikis, agbadas,* sandals : the impression you got at first glance was not that of people who had come from far and wide to talk serious things.

But the moment discussion got under way, earnestness broke through this deceptive insouciance. Debate was keen, sometimes impassioned, sometimes sharp and unsparing, but seldom slack. Sessions were long and full but you hardly felt the tedium. And when we finally rose, there was a spontaneous, unanimous feeling that the gathering had been worthwhile.

When I think of all those dedicated young men and women, I feel that we are entering a new era in Africa. Up to this, all the best brains and all the burning energies have been consummed by the political struggle. But now that crumbling colonialism is being carted to the dust-bin, some of those energies and brains (how refreshing !) are turning to letters.

But because this movement is preoccupied with stories and poems and plays instead of with the reinforcement of African sovereignty or the seizure by blackmen of the commanding heights of the African economy, let no one underrate its role in the process of African liberation.

Colonial rule by dispoiling the African of land and rights, by dispoiling him of that initiative that is the prerogative of the free, reduced him into a passive being in nearly every field ; a receiver of orders in the political domain, a consumer in the economic.

When René Maran, the black literary genius from Guiana, wrote *BATOUALA* and won the *Prix Goncourt,* back in 1921, a storm of indignation broke over his head. It had been taken as a matter of course that, even far more than in the economic sphere, the blackman should be more thoroughly a consumer where culture was concerned. And lo ! he had proved beyond error that, even in this field, he too could become a producer.

That was too rude a shock for the prejudices of reaction. Culture at that time was considered as the whiteman's exclusive monopoly. For though reft of political initiative, the blackman could still take a subordinate part in government especially where indirect rule was in force ; though he must never be allowed to aspire to the dignity of manufacturer, he could participate in economic activity as a producer of raw materials. But in so far as civilization was concerned, his impotence was complete, for he was void, bare and barren of even the simplest elements from which a culture could arise.

It is culture that bears witness to a people's maturity ; culture that gives them the voice to vindicate their liberty, to demand that initiative in things political and economic should be restored to them. So long as you can prove that they are still barbarians, so long can you continue to reject their claims. That is why colonialism took so much pains to din it into the ears of the colonised, to get it inculcated, to get it accepted even by the victims themselves, that they had no history, that they had no culture. No wonder that the early lite-

rary successes of the blackman provoked so much anger, no wonder that those who began to explore African culture and to proclaim its wealth and beauty were frowned upon by the colonial powers : they were striking a death blow at the roots of the established order.

It will not seem therefore strange and far-fetched if I say that cultural development is the first person of that indivisible trinity so indispensable for the achievement and the consolidation of African freedom.

Even if colonialism never existed, culture would keep this primacy notwithstanding. In his theory of education, Aristotle divided it into education for work and education for leisure and said that education for leisure was superior to education for work ; we work to provide for our leisure in order to enjoy it more richly and more fully. And what else is education for leisure than the training of the mind and the emotions to enjoy to the full art, music, literature, to enjoy culture, that is.

The cultural therefore is superior to the political and the economic as the end is superior to the means, as master is superior to servant. Does this belittle economics and politics ? By no means. On the contrary, it shows us all the more why we should redouble our efforts to speed up our economic development and consolidate our sovereignty. For the more abundant the means, the richer will be the end.

It is therefore clear how closely the three things should be linked together. For, even if the blackman completely reinforced his sovereignty and became master of modern skills and producer of abundant wealth, his recovery from colonial emasculation would not be complete, his manhood would not be fully restored, did he continue to receive the whole of his mental nourishment from the hand of the stranger.

These young men and women who are striving to give to Africa a new literature fashioned from her own substance, fashioned in her own image, deserve to be saluted. They are destined to contribute in a singular measure to the restoration of the blackman to himself.

From what they have already achieved in so short a time, from the deliberations at Makerere, one can see, that, in these young men and women, there burns the same faith, the same resolution that burned in the Aggreys, the Ziks, the Nkrumahs, the Kenyattas, the Bandas, namely, that *only the best is good enough — for Africa.*

**AFRICAN WRITERS MEET IN UGANDA. — (From left to right) :** Gabriel OKARA, poet, Nigeria — Christopher OKIGBO, poet, Nigeria — Segun OLUSOLA, television, Nigeria — Professor Saunders REDDING, writer and professor of literature, U. S. A. — Barry RECKORD, writer, Jamaica.