

National
Theatre

Watch, Read, Listen

blackplaysarchive.org.uk

Black
Plays
Archive

THREE SISTERS

Three Sisters by Inua Ellams,
after Chekhov.

Schools' Resource
by mezze eade with NT Learning

Contents

Introduction	3
Historical Context	5
Interview With Inua Ellams	9
Characters	10
Themes	14
Structure	24
Interview With Nadia Fall	28
Discussion / Essay Questions	36
Exercises	37
Useful Links	42

Introduction

Chekhov's original story of *Three Sisters* is set in Russia, in the 19th century, during a time of upheaval. Inua Ellams' adaptation is set in Nigeria in the 1960s, a country struggling with the legacy of colonialism. Independence brings the possibility of change but white Europeans are still in the background, pulling strings and reaping the benefits, nothing has changed.

Despite its civil war setting – before and during the Biafran conflict – the play is full of humour, music and celebration. In placing Nigerian history centre stage, Ellams' adaptation is shining a light on the importance of African and global majority stories in understanding the history – and present – of Britain. British culture, society and economics wouldn't be what they are without Africa's vast and varied peoples, countries and resources.

Having watched many incredible shows in the different theatres at NT, watching *Three Sisters* was a remarkable experience – a combination of the play (the writing and its setting), the excellent performances by the cast and the majority black audience. The performance reached into every space in the auditorium, washing the audience with languorous waves, electric ripples and tense stillness – grabbing attention in every moment. The audience responded with joyous laughter, absolute attention and a desire to remain with the sisters; to not leave a space to which, for a few hours, we absolutely belonged.

This resource pack contains themes and details that might be emotionally challenging or triggering. It is not our intention to cause distress or harm but to support your understanding of the play and its creative and historical contexts. If you would like to share any feedback with the NT Learning team, please contact learning@nationaltheatre.org.uk

Global majority includes anyone who has experienced oppression and discrimination due to their ethnicity and colour of their skin through structural, systemic and personal racism. However, we endeavour to be specific about individual identities as it is important not to invalidate individuals and ethnicities by placing people into one category. We also use global majority to challenge the assumptions about individuals and communities in the UK historically labelled minorities, who represent more than 80 per cent of the world's population.

The Black Plays Archive

The Black Plays Archive supported by Sustained Theatre and Arts Council England, is an online catalogue for the first professional production of every African, Caribbean and Black British play produced in Britain.

You can find out about more professional productions of plays by African, Caribbean and Black British playwrights in the Black Plays Archive here: blackplaysarchive.org.uk

Historical context

The Kingdom of Benin

Many kingdoms on the African continent had come and gone by the 15th century when white Europeans began trading with people on the northwest coast. People of different ethnicities fought, thrived and traded goods, including in the geographical area now known as Nigeria.

The Kingdom of Benin stretching from the Niger Delta to Lagos controlled the coastline from east to west and traded with the Portuguese, and eventually with the English.

The Oba – king of Benin – traded pepper, cloth, ivory and people for brass and copper. As the Portuguese and English merchants were unable to travel further inland at that time, due to an inability to endure the climate and poor immunity to infection, the people of Benin would capture people from other African ethnicities who were then taken across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean, South America and America.

Slavery existed in Nigeria before the 15th century, however slaves were required to carry out domestic tasks, become soldiers or serve as eunuchs in a hareem. It is foolish to believe slaves were always treated fairly and were never punished, however, they were not classified as a separate race, equating them to animals to justify degrading and inhumane treatment. On the African continent an enslaved person could buy their own or their children's freedom.

Between the 16th and 19th centuries, Portugal struggled to maintain its trading strongholds and empire. In the 19th century the Kingdom of Benin began to shrink, due in part to disputes between chiefs and to the growth of the British Empire as the British sought to extend their control in the region. In 1897, the British government massacred the people of Benin City and destroyed it. Several justifications were given – a peaceful government envoy was turned away by the king of Benin, a peaceful missionary envoy was attacked – but the motivation was profit from the growing trade of palm oil and rubber.

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/mar/18/story-of-cities-5-benin-city-edo-nigeria-mighty-medieval-capital-lost-without-trace>

**Mawuna Koutonin,
Guardian, March 2016**

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/about-us/british-museum-story/contested-objects-collection/benin-bronzes>

**British Museum and
the Benin Bronzes**

The Scramble for Africa: Empire and Colonialism

The map below illustrates which areas the European countries had invaded and controlled in 1914.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/image/colonial-presence-africa>



The smaller inset map illustrates the presence of these countries before what is known as the ‘Scramble for Africa’. No longer profiting from the enslavement of African people and the effect this had on profits made from plantation crops meant that, in the late 19th century, European nations decided Africa was ‘to be divided and colonised. She was to provide new markets and raw materials. Where her climate was appropriate she was to offer up her soil to white settlers.’ (David Olusoga, *Black and British*, p401, Picador) No African representatives were invited to the 1884 Berlin Conference where white European diplomats agreed the rules of invasion and colonisation of the African continent.

The geographical area of Nigeria was created under British colonial administration in 1914 by Lord Lugard, joining the northern and southern districts into one colonial state. The decision was heavily influenced by the financial benefit of running one instead of two administrations. The political divides between the mostly Muslim Hausa-Fulani people in the north and mostly Christian Yoruba and Igbo peoples in the Southwest and Southeast were not taken into consideration and remained after the new border was created.

The Struggle for Independence

Resistance to the imposed British rule was met with severe and often disproportionate military responses. As well as using force to maintain control, the Royal Niger Company – British colonial administration – bribed chiefs with exclusive rights to trade palm oil. The building of roads and railways shifted the dynamics of relationships and education, first the missionary then state schools, had a big impact on the southern regions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/oct/05/chinua-achebe-there-was-a-country-review>

Noo Saro-Wiwa,
Guardian, October 2012

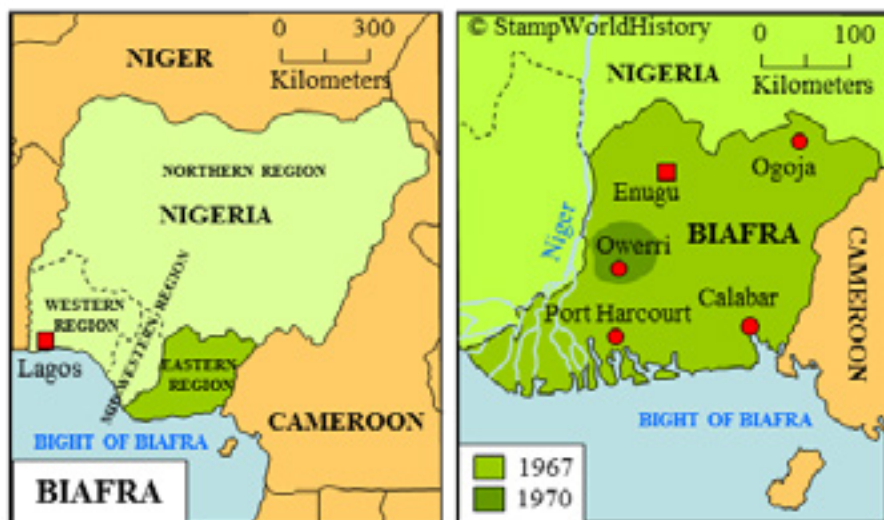
World War One also had a significant impact on the Nigerian people. Nigerian soldiers were sent to attack the neighbouring German colony of Cameroon. Nigerian and French soldiers successfully attacked the neighbouring German colony of Cameroon. Then, in 1916, Nigerian soldiers were sent to defend Kenya. Excluded from the July 1919 Victory Parade and their contribution to WW1 almost erased, along with soldiers from other African countries, the Caribbean and India, soldiers from Nigeria were put on display at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition in Wembley. Nigeria's contribution to WW2 also went unacknowledged by the British army, where Nigerians made up around half of the 90,000 soldiers sent to South East Asia.

A broadening of access to education in the UK and Europe – including the introduction of state schools and increased access to university education – led to the emergence of an educated elite who, after WW1, pushed for a change to legislation allowing Nigerian representatives to make laws and influence financial government matters. Despite this, British officials continued to deny educated Nigerians opportunities in public services and industry. However, in 1946 a new constitution was put into effect dividing the country into three administrative regions – Northern, Eastern and Western – each with its own Chief Commissioner. In the face of much political unrest Nigeria eventually gained independence from Britain in 1960 as a federation of three regions under a Federal Capital territory of Lagos.

Biafra

In 1966, several coups and the killing of Hausa government officials resulted in the massacre of Igbos living in the north and their flight to the South East. In 1967 under Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, Igbos in the South East founded the Republic of Biafra. Nigeria rejected the attempt at secession and a civil war began. By 1968 much of Biafra was in the grip of famine as a result of blockades set up by the Nigerian military. Biafra eventually surrendered in January 1970 after over one million (the exact number is unknown, some estimate three million) people were brutally killed, died from mortal injuries or starved to death.

The map below illustrates the three administrative regions and the Republic of Biafra.



Nigeria's history is complex, and we encourage you to follow the links to articles and to do your own research on the country and its peoples' histories.

From the end of the 19th century, British rule was imposed across a vast area with many different social, cultural and political beliefs and practices and with different religious beliefs at different times. From 1960, Nigeria's external trade and economics were largely bound to the UK. After the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta region in 1965, the country shifted from agriculture and became heavily dependent on its oil production. Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani and the many other ethnicities in the country and around the world are still dealing with the impact of British rule and UK's political and economic influence.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/5/30/remembering-my-fathers-biafra-the-politics-of-erasing-history-2>
Innocent Chizaram Ilo,
Aljazeera, May 2020

'If you stick a knife in my back and pull it out nine inches, that's not progress.'

Nmeri, *Three Sisters*, p73,
Oberon Books 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/21/buried-50-years-britain-shamesful-role-biafran-war-frederick-forsyth>

Frederick Forsyth,
Guardian, January 2020

Watch Inua Ellams' short interview with the BBC introducing the play and political context.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-africa-51153871>
BBC, January 2020

Interview with Inua Ellams

Why did you choose to adapt *Three Sisters*?

Very simply, because I have three sisters, and I wanted to put them in a play. It was suggested that I adapt a Chekhov play, and of all that was put before, I was mostly attracted to this purely because of the title.

How did you work with the original text – what was important to keep or challenging to retain and let go?

I tried to keep as much of the original text as possible. Letting go of its twists and turns and its context would've been the far easier thing to do, but holding onto it, looking for cultural parallels, making sure that Chekhov's characters could be fully realised within a Nigerian Igbo context was the far trickier thing to do, which is why I chose to work that way.

Why the Biafran war and not another point in Nigeria's history or a contemporary adaptation?

Chekhov's play was set in the years before the Russian revolution and I wanted to pick a similar moment of immense upheaval in Nigeria's history, and I wanted to raise the stakes. Setting [the play] during the civil war was the only option, and the war also lasted four years, meaning it could fall perfectly into the play's four-act structure.

How did you balance historical accuracy, honouring real events and adapting a dramatic narrative?

I carried out a lot of research, reading fiction and non-fiction, diary entries and articles by journalists, documentaries and radio bulletins and archival footage from those that lived through the war. I tacked these onto scenes and structures established by Chekhov.

What was enjoyable and challenging being in the rehearsal room?

Working with the brilliant cast and artists was incredible – seeing the magic, life, humour and lived experience they brought to the text was incredible and illuminating. They taught me so much about the characters, and I updated and tweaked the script to match their particular quirks, skills, physicalities and talents.

Characters

UDO (peace)

The youngest of the three sisters. She doesn't have a job and is not in love with either of her two suitors. Udo is struggling to find meaning in her life and like her sisters, longs to return to Lagos. She dreams of a perfect future but doesn't know of what it will consist. Forced to contribute to Biafra's fight for independence, Udo is still unable to find purpose through her job at the telegraph office, because all actions appear senseless during the conflict. This feeling is compounded in her next job at the newspaper. Finally, guided by her sister Lolo, Udo hopes to find purpose in a new life with Nmeri, if not at least she will have made it back to Lagos. Udo has the passion and education to create her own path in life but living in Owerri and the conflict have compromised her self belief. In Owerri, Udo's options are limited, rendering her inactive as she waits to be consumed by love or to find her calling in life.

NNE (mother) CHUKWU (the high God)

The middle sister. Nne Chukwu is married to a man she did not grow to love. The young, aspirational teacher she married has become an ineffective and provincial man and Nne Chukwu is limited by her role as a housewife. Nne Chukwu channels her frustrations into confronting Abosede and trying to make Dimgba, the sisters' brother, see that Abosede will not make him happy. Until the arrival of Ikemba, Nne Chukwu had resigned herself to an unfulfilling life. Her love for Ikemba brings a sense of peace and contentment she hasn't known with her husband.

LOLO (queen)

The eldest sister. Lolo understands that she cannot control the decisions made by other members of her family but struggles to reconcile their actions with her sense of morality. Unlike her sisters, it seems Lolo has been in love but has kept it hidden from them. Onyinyechukwu's decision to marry Nne Chukwu, a marriage arranged by their parents, prevented Lolo from leaving Owerri and exploring love. While teaching and educating children to build a better future for Nigeria is what she wants to do, any sense of fulfilment that could be gained is prevented by having to teach an untruthful history, and watching the education go to waste as the girls she teaches become housewives and mothers. Her attempts to influence Onyinyechukwu to see the truth and help her to bring about change sap her energy and passion. It is implied that Lolo was also in love with Ikemba when they lived in Lagos and again it is Nne Chukwu who takes the possibility of love from Lolo. Yet Lolo stays strong for her family, caring for whoever is hurt or lost, her love is unconditional.

DIMGBA (strong)

The sisters' brother. Commander Onuzo has raised Dimgba to have the life he could not and in doing so has taken Dimgba's sense of identity. Dimgba has many skills but does not know what he wants from life, as every decision was made for him Dimgba is unable to make his own. He is lost and only knows how to lose himself further in books, music or gambling. Dimgba does not know how to navigate relationships and does not realise the foolishness of his decision to marry Abosede. He expects life to continue around him so he can continue to be lost. Nothing provokes him to action.

EZE (king)

Eze has lost many things throughout his life and has chosen to disengage with it: he lost the woman he loved to Commander Onuzo, he lost his dignity when he was not permitted to treat patients during the Second World War, he lost his medical knowledge and his knowledge of traditional medicines. He has lost purpose and meaning to his life which affect his decisions, for example gambling with Dimgba and refereeing the fight between Igwe and Nmeri. Eze understands that he has little control over his life and enjoys the small pleasures he is able to find.

ONYINYECHUKWU (gift of God)

Nne Chukwu's husband. He is a teacher who, as a younger man, had great aspirations to shape Nigeria's future. He has become settled and small minded, enjoying what little power he has. He believes that if he tells himself and other people that his wife loves him everything will be perfect. Nne Chukwu is a prize he owns, allowing him to tolerate her love for an affair with Ikemba, he knows that she will have to return to him. Like Abosede, he plays the situation to his advantage, winning by serving whoever is in control. However, he knows his lack of status allows him to be remain unseen and he is not considered a threat, giving him more power than is perceived.

ABOSEDE (born on Sunday or the first day of the week)

A Yoruba woman who becomes Dimgba's wife. Abosede was born in western Nigeria and it isn't clear why she chooses to stay in Owerri when Colonel Ojukwu ordered all non-Igbo's to leave Igboland. It is clear that she is looking for a husband and although she chooses to marry Dimgba she maintains a relationship with Chief Benedict Uzoma. Abosede represents a different kind of feminism to the sisters and only makes them her enemy when they refuse to accept her. Abosede is viewed as uneducated and simple but it is Abosede who secures the future she wants and ensures that her needs are met, including a house for her two children.

NMERI ORA

A soldier who is in love with Udo. Nmeri comes from a wealthy family and has been given a military education. Like Dimgba, this isn't what he wanted for himself, but he has followed the path chosen for him. He has both Hausa and Igbo heritage and chooses to identify as Igbo. Nmeri tries to believe that the Biafran army can create an ordered state but he comes to believe the opposite. He understands the power of his family's money and decides to use this to follow his heart. Nmeri believes his love for Udo will be enough to help them both find purpose and as he bought his way out of the army believes he can buy Nmeri's love by fulfilling her dream to return to Lagos.

IKEMBA (strength of the nation)

A commander in the army. Ikemba is married with two children. Ikemba didn't go to university, he joined the army and was trained by Commander Onuzo. He has risen through the ranks to become a commander. By accepting the brutal truth of life and finding joy in the beauty of nature, Ikemba manages to acknowledge the reality of the situation while keeping everything at arm's length. His philosophic nature ensures he remains optimistic to the end of the play.

IGWE (sky or machine)

A soldier who is in love with Udo. There is no information to Igwe's background, he is a soldier who has found purpose in his job. He is knowledgeable and skilled yet finds it hard to control his emotions, impulses and opinions in the company of others. Is his frustration at not being loved by Udo because he is used to getting what he wants or because he never gets what he wants? He is constantly at Onuzo's house although, contrary to Abosede, Igwe is unable to get what he wants by standing his ground. He feels cursed and perhaps believes that by marrying Udo he can cleanse himself of the blood on his hands.

NMA (beauty)

A servant in the Onuzo household. Nma has lived with the Onuzo family for 30 years, she is mother, confidant and servant to the Onuzo children and understands them better than they understand themselves. She accepts her position in life and mostly enjoys subverting authority, her loss of hearing is tactical and playful.

OYIRIDIYA (looks like the husband)

Nma's niece and now a servant in the Onuzo household.

Oyiridiya walked to Igboland, from the north of Nigeria, after her husband was killed by Hausas. She was not allowed to join the Biafran army and is working out a way to acquire a gun so she can revenge the killing of her husband.

Choose a character and make a list of the following:

- what the character says about themselves
- what other characters say about them
- questions you have about the character



Themes

Nation and Identity

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is learned and acquired, usually from family members, through language, customs, food, culture and beliefs. Ethnicity creates bonds and the reassurance of belonging to a group. Ethnicity contributes to an individual's sense of identity. Groups of people with different ethnicities have been in conflict and found ways to accommodate or absorb differences throughout the existence of humans on planet earth.

There are between 250 and 400 ethnicities in Nigeria (dependent on your research and source materials), and it is generally accepted that the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo constitute the major ethnicities. These Nigerian ethnicities, along with multitudes of ethnicities which exist on the African continent, were (and are) ignored and people were (and are) pushed into a white, western standardised idea of an 'African' identity.

1. Research the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa ethnicities. Find out about their origins, gods, dress, agriculture and food. Are there any similarities and what are the differences?
2. Read through the play and make a note of the different descriptions of Nigeria's history and the reasons for conflict between the Igbo, the Hausa and the Yoruba.

In *Three Sisters* ethnicity and identity are interrogated along with the idea of what constitutes a nation and national identity.

‘We laugh at some of the traditional beliefs of our parents because the British educated us to think they were barbaric. We know basic science and philosophy but have not united them with our culture. We’ve forgotten those ways. That’s why this political upheaval is happening, why we are hurtling towards chaos and oblivion.’

Ikemba, *Three Sisters*, p14

The Igbo characters support the creation of the Republic of Biafra, yet the sisters long to return to Lagos. Lagos, if the secession succeeded would be in Nigeria, in Yoruba territory. 1960s Lagos was a busy and rapidly growing city of commerce, literature and music. The sisters enjoy Igbo and western music throughout the play.



1. Do the Igbo characters hold, or struggle to hold, these two identities – Igbo heritage and western educated cosmopolitan ideals? How does this compare to Nmeri’s choice to identify as Igbo?
2. How do the sisters behave towards their domestic servants, Nma and Oyiridiya? How is this different to the way they treat Abosedede and why is it different?
3. Why does Ikemba’s lack of education not matter to Nne Chukwu?
4. Abosedede is Yoruba and has grown up in Owerri. How does Abosedede’s education and ethnicity compare to the sisters’ background? and how does this affect Abosedede’s relationship with the other characters?
5. How does Inua Ellams draw parallels between contemporary conflicts and notions around identity, migration and belonging? (If you are unsure, use the conversation between Lolo and Nmeri on p39 as a starting point).

Education and Purpose

Commander Onuzo's (the sisters' and Dimgba's father) position enabled his children to access a good education. Nmeri's family prospered from the oil trade which also gave him access to education. These families would be considered to be part of Nigeria's educated elite, however, several times in the play the characters refer to feeling a lack purpose or to feeling thwarted. What does each character mean when they say the following?

1. **Lolo:** Maybe it is the teaching. The girls, especially those coming of age, suck the life out of me. (p4)
2. **Eze:** I haven't really had purpose if that's your definition. (p7)
3. **Nne Chukwu:** But what's the point in knowing all those languages out here? Lolo is a teacher, for her it is practical. But us? Unnecessary, like a sixth finger. We know too much. (p19)
4. **Udo:** Nothing is perfect. Papa spent so much time trying to build us perfect lives, it didn't work. (p24)
5. **Dimgba:** ...Uncle, we have no control over anything, and to believe otherwise is to embrace downfall... (p70)
6. What similarities and differences are there between **Eze** and **Dimgba**?
 - How does his father's choice for the family to live in Owerri affect Dimgba's identity?
 - How has Eze's identity been affected by his education and serving with white British soldiers in WW2?

Money

Before the 20th century the different territories that became Nigeria had a thriving agricultural economy. As with most countries some areas were easier to farm than others, but local trade maintained economic stability for the different regions. British rule and the influence of European and western trading had a significant impact on the Nigerian economy, bringing instability and corruption and creating huge disparities in wealth. Some characters are aware of these influences, while others are not.

‘Money. The British gave them development aid to build roads, railways, tin mines. The Hausa didn’t understand that development aid was really high interest loans, that Britain would own them. They didn’t know what they were signing. We Igbos saw their wealth and power, and we wanted it. They tried to protect it, jealousy set in.’

Lolo, *Three Sisters*, p59

- How does knowledge of Britain’s and other European nations’ influence on the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo affect each character’s understanding of the conflict between Nigeria and the Republic of Biafra? Or the conflict between Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo?

Family and Duty

Tradition and Roles

The sisters are modern, educated women yet one (Udo) is waiting to be married, another (Nne Chukwu) is married and the eldest (Lolo) is unmarried and a teacher. There is often an expectation that a good education will bring freedom from family obligation and traditional roles.

1. How does Inua Ellams demonstrate the struggle between choice and obligation:
 - in Nne Chukwu and Onyinyechukwu's marriage?
 - in Ikemba's affair with Nne Chukwu?
 - in Lolo assuming the role of 'mother'?
 - through Nmeri leaving the army?
 - in how Nma navigates her way around the family?
2. The sisters have lived in Owerri for 11 years, why have they been unable to accept their rural lives?
3. What is each main character hiding and why?
4. How are the notions of superstition and fate explored in relation to choice and obligation?
5. How do the male characters' choices continually shape the sisters' lives?

All of the female characters in *Three Sisters* are passionate, intelligent and find agency at different points in the play. They have capacity to move forward despite internal doubts and external barriers, the journeys of the female characters are in some ways more profound than that of the male characters by the end of the play.



Legacy

Since the global agricultural revolution, land has become an intrinsic part of the notion of legacy, along with continuing a person's 'bloodline' or genetics through children. Commander Onuzo built a house for his family and arranged the marriage of one child. The sisters laugh about their father's desire to root them in 'Igbo traditions' and protect them from 'cultural erosion'. During the play we watch the disintegration of Commander Onuzo's legacy.

1. How is this represented through the staging of each act?
2. Does the play make any comment about Nigeria's legacy?
3. Does the play affect your understanding and ideas about legacy, obligation and choice? Or how does the play reflect current ideas about legacy, obligation and choice?

Love

Love appears to be at odds with legacy. Marriages are alliances to maintain prosperity and children to inherit the property and wealth. At the beginning of the play, it seems the main characters are removed from knowing completely what it means to love or be loved. Through the play each character navigates their way around their expectations and understanding of what love could or should be. The only person who seems to be unconcerned with love is Abosede, who appears to find happiness in her relationship with Chief Benedict Uzoma. Love is presented as the key to happiness and the destruction of happiness. Yet love isn't powerful enough to overcome indifference and duty.

1. How does what happened to Eze compare with Lolo's situation of losing the person she loves to her sister?
2. How does Nmeri and Igwe's love for Udo represent masculinity and control? Is there symbolic meaning in Igwe's act of killing Nmeri?
3. Do the characters achieve a better understanding of love by the end of the play?

Life and Meaning

Privilege – The Present And Future

In some moments the sisters, Dingba, Eze, Onyinyechukwu and Nmeri seem to understand their privilege and at other times they lack compassion when responding to the other characters. Inua Ellams, the playwright, uses humour, vulnerability and intelligence to make each character appealing but every character is flawed. This makes them believable as people and allows the audience to connect, empathise and judge, and to invest in the truth of the situation.

- Choose a character from *Three Sisters*, why do you like them and how are they flawed?

Privilege binds these characters to be socially responsible and allows them to ignore or escape their duties. Privilege also means they live half in the present and half in the future, chasing ideals that never become a reality. Abosede and Nma live in the present, they survive in the reality of now. The need to survive removes the choice of purpose.





Social Responsibility

A sense of purpose in life can bring a sense of meaning to a person's life. This can be through fulfilling familial duties and/or taking responsibility for the area and community in which you live, and for society in general. The characters discuss their past dreams to contribute to Nigeria and their intention to build a better future for the Republic of Biafra. Yet each character is trapped in the present by their own or others' past actions. The Onuzo family's education has not equipped them to contribute effectively to their community.

Lolo is forced to teach a curriculum with which she doesn't agree, and she is unable to change it under the Nigerian government. One of Britain's many colonial legacies was a white, western education system maintained by the British-educated Nigerian elite.

'I can't teach that syllabus, those British books say Mungo Park discovered the River Niger. How is that possible when our fathers were bathing there before his fathers were born?'

Lolo, *Three Sisters*, p60

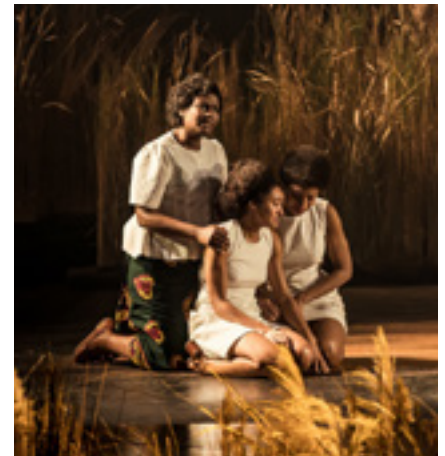
- Research historical facts about Nigeria that have been presented from a white, western viewpoint.

Power, Order and Chaos

A central tenet of Britain's empire was that they were bringing order to the chaos they perceived in the countries they colonised. Yet the methods used by the British were destructive and brought chaos and devastation to the indigenous people. Power was exerted through physical force and financial control.

Order can be a method or pattern to the way things are done but it can also be a command. Either way, if applied to government, society or personal life, there are systems that work. Chaos means there is no order. Both order and chaos can be used to achieve power. *Three Sisters* demonstrates the complexities of power; how it is easily abused, how some who are perceived to hold it often don't really have any power and how those who are perceived as powerless can find ways to great agency.

- How is the shifting power dynamic played out between the Onuzo family and Abosedé?
- Chief Benedict Uzoma is an unseen power that greatly affects the Onuzo family. Are there any parallels between this unseen character and the British and European governments in post-colonial Nigeria?
- How does the character Igwe represent both order and chaos?



Inua Ellams' *Three Sisters* skilfully presents how we are knowingly and unknowingly shaped by history and how we are constantly balancing internal and external forces. All of the characters in *Three Sisters* reflect the complexity, confusion and joy of what it is to be human. Lolo, Nne Chukwu and Udo individually and collectively have a strength that carries them through the chaos; their energy and determination ensures their survival. At the end of the play, they are able to see themselves and know, free from the constraints and burdens of the men, they can rebuild their lives.

Structure

Act 1

Owerri, Nigeria, 30 May 1967. *Three sisters*, Lolo, Nne Chukwu and Udo, sit outside the house built by their father, Commander Onuzo. It is Udo's birthday and the first anniversary of the death of Commander Onuzo.

The sisters aren't fully content with their seemingly ideal lives. Lolo doesn't agree with what she must teach at the local school, Nne Chukwu is married to a man she doesn't love, and Udo is searching for purpose and trying to avoid having to marry one of the two men who want to marry her. They are holding a small party, which their brother, Dimgba, avoids. Family friend Eze seems carefree and determined to ensure the sisters are happy and Chief Benedict Uzoma sends a birthday cake. Upon the arrival of guests, some invited and some unwelcome, Nmeri and Igwe provide information about coups and killings happening in Nigeria. The servants bring relief to the serious conversation but there is an underlying tension of strained relationships and Nne Chukwu announces she is leaving the party. An unexpected guest, Commander Ikemba, changes Nne Chukwu's mind and the gathering begins to embrace a celebratory mood. This is soon interrupted by the arrival of Nne Chukwu's husband, Onyinyechukwu, who brings a thoughtless birthday present. They move indoors to eat as the final guest, Abosedo, arrives and who pretends to leave again immediately. Dimgba prevents Abosedo from leaving with a proposal of marriage. Their news is overshadowed by a radio announcement that the Republic of Biafra has been declared an independent state from Nigeria. (turning point)

Act 2

Owerri, Nigeria, 13 September 1968, inside the Onuzos' house. Dimgba and Abosedede are now married and have a son. Abosedede interrupts Dimgba while he is reading in candlelight; her constant small interruptions continue until she reveals that she wants Dimgba to cancel the choir that has been organised to celebrate that the Republic of Biafra is now recognised by other countries. Abosedede has been keeping Nma waiting – Dimgba now works as a government translator and Nma has a letter for Dimgba. Dimgba leaves before Nne Chukwu and Ikemba discover him as they arrive.

The attraction between Nne Chukwu and Ikemba can no longer be hidden but they are interrupted before they can act on their feelings.

Nmeri has walked Udo home from her job at the telegraph station, they too have become close. Udo lets it slip that she is aware that Abosedede isn't faithful to Dimgba. Eze and Lolo arrive preventing further conversation on this, Lolo is concerned about gossip about her brother's gambling. Nmeri eventually reveals that he is leaving the army, after which Igwe arrives and struggles to control his emotions.

Ikemba is called away to an emergency, then Nne Chukwu and Abosedede argue when the sisters find out that Abosedede has cancelled the choir. Dimgba convinces Eze to go gambling with him. Oyiridiya leaves the house wearing Abosedede's old clothes to entertain the French mercenaries and Abosedede leaves to go driving with Chief Benedict Uzoma. Onyinyechukwu finally arrives to tell Lolo that she has been appointed the new head of the school. Oyiridiya returns with an injured soldiers and news that the Nigerian army is only two days away from Owerri.

Act 3

Owerri, Nigeria, 20 April 1969. At the Onuzo compound, Oyiridiya is tearing the Biafran flag into strips to make bandages and Lolo and Nne Chukwu sort through a pile of clothes, which Nma carries to the house to distribute. The house has become a makeshift hospital for wounded soldiers and a safe haven for refugees. The Nigerians have bombed the local villages and forests. Oyiridiya is still determined to find a gun and fight with the soldiers.

Abosede arrives and argues with Lolo about Nma, who she considers too old and a burden. Abosede's relationship with Chief Benedict Uzoma has ensured that the family still have food and other provisions. Eze, unable to live up to the expectations of providing medical care to the wounded, is drunk on palm wine. Ikemba, Udo and Nmeri have been searching for survivors of the latest bombing; they enter exhausted.

As each character arrives, they bring news of the devastation, including news that Oyiridiya has a gun and has joined the soldiers to fight. Ikemba reveals that he and his soldiers will leave soon. Meanwhile Igwe cannot accept Udo's rejection of him as a potential husband. When the sisters are alone Lolo advises Udo to marry Nmeri and Nne Chukwu confesses her love for Ikemba. Dimgba joins the sisters to confront them about the way they treat Abosede and to admit that he has sold their house to Chief Benedict Uzoma. (turning point) At the end of act three, Lolo finds hope in the plan for Udo to marry Nmeri and move back to Lagos and that when Ikemba leaves Nne Chukwu's marriage will be saved.

Act 4

Owerri, Nigeria, 25 January 1970. It is ten days after Biafra's surrender. At the Onuzo compound, Eze, Udo, Onyinyechukwu and Nmeri wave goodbye to the army choir. The soldiers, including Ikemba and Eze, will leave Owerri on the next day. Udo and Nmeri are preparing to leave for Lagos and Abosede has arranged a goodbye party. Lolo is now living at the school, where she has provided a room for Nma. Oyiridiya has been killed by Nigerian and Biafran soldiers. Absode and Dimgba have a second child and Chief Benedict Uzoma has made it impossible for Dimgba to buy back the house. Igwe has challenged Nmeri to a traditional wrestling match, during which Igwe kills Nmeri and is forced to flee. The sisters resolve to create a new life together.

- Create a timeline of events that happen in the play. Find a way to distinguish between the political events and what happens to the characters. Make a note of any events you are unsure where to place on the timeline and any questions that occur to you while creating the timeline.
- Choose a character. Create a list of personal and political events that happen before the start of the play which have significantly affected their life.
- Create a diagram illustrating who each character loves and if their love is reciprocated.
- Choose a character. What is their objective in each act? They may have more than one objective in each act. What obstacle do they have to overcome to achieve their objective? Do they achieve their objective?
- Choose a character. How do the changes to their costume reflect their journey through the play?



Interview with Nadia Fall

What research did you undertake and did you guide the actors in what research you wanted them to do?

For Inua's adaptation of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, one of the biggest additions or changes to the script was that it was transported to Nigeria – specifically to what is known as the Nigerian civil war or the Biafran war, which took place between 1967 and 1970. It's a war that's quite recent and amongst various Nigerian communities, especially the Igbo community. It's not even spoken of or discussed amongst family members who were children during the war, to this time today.

It's a recent history but quite a hidden and undiscussed history amongst Nigerian communities. So, for this adaptation it was really important to get a sense of the circumstances which led up to the war, the different sides and the different cultures. We did a lot of work, but Inua's script is steeped in information about the war and his own research.

As with all plays and rehearsals, I like to divvy up topics amongst the company and then we do a kind of show and tell. We researched food, fashion, music and of course the war and then we'd present, during our opening weeks of rehearsal, to each other and talk. I also watched old footage held in the archives at BFI, some news footage and some documentary footage of the time, which really showed the trauma of war and the situation. There was even a Blue Peter appeal for the Biafran war for people suffering during that time. So, we had a lot of that in the room, but we don't just swallow data, we discuss it and explore it.

What are your top tips on how to approach and prepare to direct a play?

I like to really get under the bonnet of the script and the text. Read and reread and really forensically think about what the characters want and need from each other. I also look at the things they talk about in their lives; incidents in their lives that might not actually take place in the play itself but might inform who they are and the decisions they make as characters.

I think of the back story a lot and write all of that down. I think of the timeline of a play and what it is that triggers the circumstances of a play. I'm really trying to break down the text and get into the world of the play. I research as much as possible about the culture, the politics and get to grips with both the world that the play is set in and the characters and the circumstances and the subtext of what's going on.

I also like to think about filling in the blanks so I do improvisations early on in the rehearsal process that help to paint a fuller picture for the company. For the actors to have things in their muscle memory to inspire them or to feed from when they're playing a particular scene.

I like to bring in music to the room. I often ask actors to bring in music or an object that pertains to their character to start to trigger the imagination so there is a full and lived in approach to what's going on in each scene. I sometimes have a mood board of music and films and photographs or paintings that I like to put around the rehearsal room. I like to collect these when I'm doing a play to inspire and to have a language because sometimes you can talk about things anecdotally but a photograph or a piece of music can really speak a lot more than words. I think of different stimuli that can help us get deeper into the story of the play.

When preparing how I'm going to approach the play in rehearsals I try to have lots of discussions about my thoughts with the designer, the sound designer, the lighting designer, and assistant director to really talk out my ideas. All plays have themes and I think whether the theme is grief or money or family – whatever the key themes of a play – it's worth thinking about those themes very deeply, both in the world of the play and how you might have experienced some of the themes of the play. I think it's very important to get them all out on a piece of paper with a company and talk into them and explore all of

them so that you're not just playing or working on your affinity. What I mean by that is that there is a section of a play or a theme that will really sing to you and your own life experiences as a director and maybe things you've gone through, and that's brilliant because that gets you to fall in love with that part of the play and tell that part of the story. But it's really important to spend time thinking about all the multi-faceted themes of a play, even the stuff that's beyond your own experience so that you give it a complete 360° exploration. There are always some chords of the play, of any play, that you're going to really be drawn to as an artist and I think it's really important that you tell your version of the play. No two people will make a piece of work the same way and that's what's so brilliant. I might have directed Inua's *Three Sisters* in a very particular way and then in a few years someone else will do a version of it that might be completely different and shed a light on different themes and aspects. That's what's so great about good writing, that there's no one way of doing it.

There seemed to be a great connection between the actors, what rehearsal techniques did you use to create this sense of ensemble?

Especially important in the opening weeks of rehearsal and throughout is to bond a company. We do that through research exercises and sharing the homework, and we do it through warm-ups and physical activity. The movement direction is really important. Polly Bennett started the movement direction, which was then taken on by Jack Murphy, both of whom I've worked with a lot.

Start as often as possible with moving, sometimes to music, and stretching. It's not just limbering up because it's a physical activity putting on a play, it's also a way of playing games, of uniting and team building with a company and is a really great way to start a rehearsal day. We play games and it keeps our minds and bodies sharp because it takes a great amount of concentration to put on a play, especially an epic play which is long and deep and has emotionally tricky themes to tackle.

I think it's really important to break up the day between physical work, text work and games so there is energy throughout the day. This is a way of bonding and as I mentioned I use improvisation – that's a way of connecting

sometimes with very few words and sometimes with more words, I use music a lot in improvisations. And in *Three Sisters* because some of the themes of grief and loneliness were tough things to explore every day, we did have some cooling off with snacks, cakes and putting music on for a good old dance.

Did you use any particular exercise(s) with the actors to develop the relationships between the characters?

One of the key themes of the play is family and the parents; especially the father of the three sisters and one brother in the play is such a huge presence, even though they've passed away, in the dynamic of the siblings and their expectations of life and each other. It was really important that we do improvisations with the father present. We did scenes at the breakfast table, and so on, and how the children might have been treated slightly differently because of their ages or they might have been the favourite child or pushed academically, and how strict was the father with them. We did a lot of family dynamic improvisations and those improvisations not only helped to bring the company closer together but create very detailed muscle memory and thoughts which feed into their scenes. All the actors had similar improvisations to draw from when they worked on building their actual scenes that Inua had written.

It's also very, very difficult if one hasn't lived through the trauma of war to really make it present, in all its darkness and all its challenges for people – for people in the world right now going through terrible situations, living through conflict – and sometimes living in the UK that's at arm's length. We did some very difficult improvisations around war and death and the trauma of that. We had to tread carefully but we did go there, and I think it really paid off, especially in act three when the war comes to our characters in the play. There were tears shed and it was no mean feat. We had some incredible sound design to put us in the world of that time, when the war and famine was there, and it really helped to drive up the stakes of what people were going through in the production.

How do you work on subtext with your actors?

Subtext is all the stuff under the surface, so as human beings we're saying one thing but of course how we say it and what we mean, and what we want from each other is a whole other ball game. We understand subtext because we live it every day and know it well. A way of working on it is that we really read the play well and talk about it for the first couple of weeks in quite minute detail. Sometimes I might use – [though] not strictly – 'actioning' which is thinking about not just what you're saying but what you're trying to get out of the person you're speaking to. Are you trying to tease them or undercut them, or mock them or flirt with them? And that's really important because we can talk about subtext and the nuance of what someone's saying and why they're saying it but with acting it's really important not just to focus on oneself and to focus on your colleague. Listen to them and see what you need or want from that person as a character.

A lot of the brilliant voice work done at the National is not just volume of voice and articulation but persuasion and rhetoric and what we're trying to get from each other. That's important in any play that you're ever making: what is one character trying to get from the other? Whatever it might be in any given circumstance. That helps the connection and listening, being active and dramatic and not too cerebral, intellectual or looking inwards which is no good in drama. We want to get people thinking outwards.

There's lots of different exercises to connect dialogue and actors to each other. One I like doing when people know their lines is to say your speech and collect from your colleague the last word, two words, three words that they've just said before you say your speech and that really helps with listening. What has your colleague, the other character, just said to you? What is the last word, two words, three words that they've just said, that you want to collect, that leads you into your own line? That's a really good one when you feel you could be listening better or connecting better in a scene.

**What influenced the brilliant staging for the production?
And where did the idea for the house to slowly disappear
come from?**

I work very closely with designers. I like from the very beginning that we swap thoughts and images and photographs and sketches. Katrina Lindsay who I've worked with before was the designer for *Three Sisters* and we had very similar feelings about the play and what it meant to us and how we saw the play. We wanted the house to be a very big character because of course this beautiful house that this family has inherited becomes their status symbol and at times their prison, and they lose it in the end. So, the house is a character, and it symbolises the father and the status of the father and the ghost of the father.

We had long discussions about the scenography – and we fought for this – we didn't want it to be just naturalistic. We wanted it to be a little more poetic and less literal. So, we start with the outside of the house, then we go into the living room in act two and then in act three, when the war comes, it was the most expressionistic idea. All those long, hanging reeds gave an eeriness and a dystopian feeling to the play which we wanted because the country was at war. We wanted to evoke the displacement and terror of war, and the bloodiness of it and the haunting [nature] of it. Then, at the end, the house disappears completely and that's what happens, the family lose their hold over their house – it's symbolic and literal at the same time.

I'm so glad that Katrina's vision for the scenography pushed us away from it being just a living room/kitchen sink drama, that the staging being different and the scenography being different from each scene just pushed it into something a lot more lyrical and poetic and artistic. It really plugged into the feelings and psychology of the play that just being in a living room, as with the original, would have been limiting. The staging was really helped by the brave decisions of Katrina who designed both the set and the beautiful costume.

What is key when communicating your ideas and working with the different designers?

The key is communication and discussing as much as possible with all creatives. The more discussion you can have, and they can watch rehearsal and get their toes under the sand and really get into the vibe of the play, the themes of the play and the dynamic of the play, the more it will influence their take on it. Peter Mumford, [is] a wonderful lighting designer and designer, I'd never worked with [him] before but knew his work. Katrina had worked with him before. Katrina and I had a lot of discussions around the feelings and world of the play and how a brilliant design by the set designer can only really be enhanced or really take off with the lights. A lighting designer can make or break a design and I think Peter because he was so involved from early on in Katrina's vision, he really understood what Katrina wanted for the set and how it could be lit. We have this incredible spinning house, so we go from the outside of the house and its veranda, then there's a transition to the interior of the house and those transitions are poetic, they're not literal. So, we had movement and music taking us from one act to another. And the lighting was really important in the dancing of that. I especially loved the kind of dance lighting: less literal and more haunting lighting through the long black chords symbolising reeds and vegetation that looked like weeping willows and trees in act three. Peter's lighting through that was just breath taking and very atmospheric. It was all elements sound, lights, music and set and costume coming together along with the fantastic energy and acting of the company.

Katrina also designed the costumes and she's an award-winning designer. She spent time in Nigeria and designed Rufus Norris' production of Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* and had knowledge of Nigerian costume. We researched very specific fashion at the time and costumes were absolutely historically linked. Also, as with all costume design, we talked to the actors and what they feel their characters would wear and what they like. That was really important too. And it was important to get an authentic sense of Igbo culture, which is quite marginalised in Nigerian culture, even today. We had a great insight into that through Igbo society in Britain and we had a lot of conversations and did a lot of research with them. A lot of our cast members are of Nigerian heritage, from various areas in Nigeria but also we had Igbo members of the company.

We had a brilliant poetess and singer in Amarachi Attamah, whose life's work is about talking, writing and singing about Igbo culture and language. The big leap of faith that the National invested in was inviting Amarachi to be part of the company. Her poetry and music really symbolised, in the production, the spirit of the Igbo people and added a real link to Igbo culture and heritage, completely authentically in a way that none of us could have done in the same way. I know that it meant a lot to everyone that that was done sincerely and properly. Inua is from the north of Nigeria, and we were all really keen to get the cultural history and references absolutely right. I feel from all our Igbo friends and family that came to the production that it meant a lot that we told this untold story and recognised the music and language within the production.



Discussion / Essay Questions

- Read Julian De Medeiros' article from The Theatre Times (Dec 2019) How do Nma and Eze represent Nigeria's colonial and post-colonial history?
- How do Udo, Igwe and Nmeri represent the possible futures for Nigeria?
- How is feminism explored and presented in the play?
- How is masculinity explored and presented in the play?
- How are ideas of time and change explored in the play? Think about the length of each act and what does and doesn't happen.
- If you are familiar with the original version of *Three Sisters* written by Anton Chekhov, what elements has Inua Ellams kept in his adaptation, which are effective? Which characters and events feel relevant / with which do you connect?
- Read the review of *Three Sisters*. Do you agree or disagree with the comments made about how Inua Ellams adapted the play?

<https://thetheatretimes.com/national-theatre-inua-ellams-three-sisters-surges-with-narrative-energy-depicting-sisterhood-and-colonial-injustice-in-the-short-lived-republic-of-biafra/>

Julian De Medeiros
The Theatre Times, Dec 2019

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2019/dec/11/three-sisters-review-inua-ellams-chekhov-lyttelton-theatre-london>

Michael Billington,
The Guardian, Dec 2019

Exercises

Be mindful when studying and reading this play; take time to prepare and discuss accents and stereotyping with your students. It is not necessary to 'put on' an accent when reading any character, unless you or your students share the heritage of the character you are reading, and you or your students feel comfortable to speak with this accent. When working on character use the text to build authentic characterisation that does not involve western stereotypical portrayals of an 'African'. Research the correct translation and pronunciation of Igbo and Yoruba words. Agree ways of working with your students that are respectful to the text and heritages of the characters in the play.

Physical exploration

1. Ask your students to find a space in the room and stand with their feet in parallel with the focus on the floor just in front of their feet. Ask them to check how they are standing. Beginning with their feet, ask them to spread their toes and feel the connection through the soles of their feet with the floor, make sure there is a slight bend in their knees, check the placement of their hips, lift their rib cage and feel an energy running from the base of their spine, through their neck and out through the top of their head, and allow the shoulders, arms and hands to hang by the sides of their body. Ask them to stand in silence and to bring awareness to their breathing and think about how their thoughts, breathe and body are connected.
2. Ask your students to begin walking around the space at an even pace, focusing on the effort it takes to move and how their thought, breathe and body are connected. Ask your students to find a balance between walking effortlessly and remaining energised.

3. Your students will now explore aspects of different qualities of movement. Ask your students to explore what it means to be heavy; how does the quality of heaviness affect the way they walk? How do their feet make contact with the floor, how long or short is their stride, does it affect the way they bend their knees or move their hips? How does it affect their posture and spine and neck? How do they hold their head? Give them a few minutes to explore (sit, lie down, run etc) this quality and then ask them to pause and shake off the quality.
4. Guide your students through an exploration of the following: light, fast, slow, direct and indirect. If you have time, ask your students to explore different combinations of qualities, for example, heavy and fast, indirect and light or slow and direct.
5. Ask your students what was challenging and what was enjoyable exploring the different qualities. Which aspects reflect who they are and how they move? We can embody different aspects of each quality depending on our mood and situation. How do the qualities embody different emotions?
6. Ask each student to choose a character from the play and explore the different qualities that embody that character. How does the character's physicality change throughout the play?

Hot Seat

The purpose of hot seating is to create useful information that helps the actor to understand their character and their relationship to the other characters. The character should be given time to answer each question as fully as possible, it is not an interrogation.

Ask your students to get into groups of five. In turn each student will be allocated a character who will sit in the 'hot seat' to answer questions asked by the rest of the group. Ask the student to make notes about their answers after they leave the 'hot seat', did they discover anything useful or surprising?

Hot seat the following characters: Abosede, Igwe, Ikemba, Nma and one of the three sisters. Depending on the confidence of your students and how you are studying the play, you can use different characters or give each group different characters.

Time of day

Keeping the same character from the hot seating exercise, ask your students to find a space in room. In their spaces they are going to explore what their character might do at different times of the day at different points in the play. They should remain silent through this exercise unless sound is absolutely necessary to what they are doing. This exercise is to understand how they character behaves when they are alone and how they spend their time. Give students two to three minutes to explore each time point. You can choose other dates and times for the characters to explore depending on the confidence of your students and how you are studying the play.

1. In their space ask them to imagine a room or place that their character spends a lot of time. What's in the room and where is it? Do they feel comfortable in the space? Is it their own space or do other people use it?

2. 10am and/or 1pm on a Sunday
3. 4pm, Tuesday 30 May 1967, earlier in the day before Udo's birthday party.
4. 8am, Wednesday 31 May 1967, the morning after the Republic of Biafra was declared.
5. 10am, Sunday 25 January 1970, the morning that Udo and Nmeri are going to leave Owerri.

Improvisation

In pairs or groups of three, ask your students to improvise the following scenarios:

1. The conversation between Eze and Igwe just before they arrive at the Onuzos' house for Udo's birthday.
2. The conversation between Eze and Nne Chukwu in act one when they go into the house, after Nne Chukwu becomes upset at the thought of dinner at the headmaster's house.
3. The conversation between Ikemba and his wife in act two before he returns to the Onuzos' house and says she tried to poison herself.
4. The conversation between Nne Chukwu, Udo and Nmeri after the argument with Abosede in act two.
5. The conversation between Dimgba and Chief Benedict Uzoma when Dimgba sells the house.

Are there any other moments not in the text that you or your students want to improvise? For example, a conversation between Eze and Commander Onuzo, before he died, or Lolo and Onyinyechukwu when they were younger. If you have time, ask your students to create and rehearse short scenes from their improvisations. Watch each group's scene.

Subtext

For this exercise use the dialogue at the beginning of act two between Abosede and Dimgba and your students will work in groups of four.

1. Ask two students in each group to read the dialogue out loud, the other two students should make notes: what is happening in the conversation, what is unsaid, what does each character want etc.
2. Ask each group to repeat the exercise with the pair who made notes reading out loud and the other two students making notes.
3. Give your students three minutes to discuss Abosede and Dimgba's relationship, what they know and what they would like to know.
4. The first two students in each group will be a character and the other two students will be the character's internal thoughts. Ask the characters to read the dialogue out loud pausing after each sentence so that their internal thought can be vocalised by the other student. Encourage the students to work slowly to find truthful responses. Allow plenty of time for the students to repeat the exercise.
5. Discuss what was challenging and what was useful for the students. Did they make any surprising discoveries about the characters. If your students are confident ask them to show their scenes with or without the subtext.

Useful Links

In the Shadow of Biafra

https://youtu.be/3js5qNK_EFY

<http://intheshadowofbiafra.com>

Melan Mag

<https://melanmag.com/2019/12/21/inua-ellams-talks-about-his-play-three-sisters/>

NT Talks

<https://www.mixcloud.com/NTTalks/writer-inua-ellams-and-director-nadia-fall-on-three-sisters/>

Recommended Plays

Mustapha Matura's *Three Sisters*