

- **Which writers or speculative genres would you recommend that fans based in Britain should look out for?**

Every day presents other talents. It's a vibrant time for African speculative fiction writing. I can keep an endless list. I think the most remarkable are writers like
'Pemi Aguda
Eloghosa Osunde
Somto Ihezue
Tlotlto Tsamaase
Keletso Mopai

This is just of the top of my head because every day we see writers in African Speculative Fiction even those you can't really categorise as African speculative fiction what we think of as speculative fiction is broadening every day. It's a gold mine for African speculative fiction especially contemporary writers. They are here, they have put their foot at the door and they're not going away any time soon.

- **You are thought of as someone who takes a stand on LGBTI and gender issues. Can you talk a little bit about being a writer who is outspoken on those issues?**

I think the most magical thing about writing from a different perspective through a different lens is that it gives me the space to ask a lot of questions and I guess when people read my work they see me as an authority when it comes to issues about gender and sexuality. I usually don't want to see myself as an authority because my writing fiction is a way I use to pose questions, not answer questions. But if I don't know the answer to these question, it's a way of posing those questions.

Yes, of course it's hard to have these views and to write from this lens in a country or a space where these views are criminalised or not socially acceptable. But I think that ways of storytelling like this has opened room for conversation. For example I can remember in 2015 or 2016 Romeo Oriogun won the Brunel prize for poetry, and the topic explored by the poems was that of queer identity and I could remember the onslaught of online bullying and death threats and all of that. But fast forward to when I started writing about queer representation and queer identity in 2018 2019 I think the atmosphere and political climate has changed and that's because of people who came before me and who are here with me are writing the stories and sort of opening this conversation. So I think, yeah. It's a good thing.

- **What's the earliest science fiction you remember reading and/or being read? When and how did you start writing science fiction?**

As I mentioned earlier, I feel writing is a journey, writing for me, building up to being a writer, I always wanted to be a writer. I was writing stories and I didn't even know there was such a thing as speculative fiction. I was just writing stories where my characters started between reality and what is not real. It wasn't common or popular at that time, based on what I was reading. But I think the work that made me feel seen, I

was not alone was 'Who will Greet You at Home' and 'What it Means When a Man Falls from the Sky' by Lesley Nneka Arimah and it sort of gave me the audacity to write more and not hold back and let my imaginations run wild because fiction can be anything, can be about anything and there are no rules. Fast forward to discovering Lesley, I also discovered a wealth of other speculative fiction writers from Chesya Burke, Erin Roberts and G.V. Andersen. It's just been a wonderful—all of that. The journey never stops. Because I am always try to discover my art, what it means to be a writer, a speculative fiction writer, what stories you tell.

So it's been a wild journey and an interesting journey, just been a lot of perks. What I struggled with initially was that people didn't take me seriously for a very long time as a speculative fiction writer especially in the Nigerian and African literary space.

'Oh you write about robots or you write about juju.' All of a sudden people tend to look down on your work. When people started paying close attention to my work was when I won the Commonwealth Short Story Prize which of course is a mainstream short story competition being won predominantly by so-called literary fiction. That was when people started paying attention to my work. So it's still a bias of what we think is good literature or what we think is bad literature. I think it's a conversation that's happening and the paradigm is really shifting in the way we perceive what is good fiction and what is not-so-good fiction. So I think it's better now for younger writers or writers who coming to the scene because all eyes are on speculative fiction or sci-fic and new work regardless of the genre you write so it's a lot better now.

- **If your book was a movie, what would the trailer be like?**

First of <all>, I think would pick a very visual story that I have written and that would be ...ooh, it's a difficult choice to make. Let me take for example FLIGHT which was commissioned in 2021 by Fantasy Magazine. It just talked about endangered birds and how they are hunted down by poachers. I think if it's going to be made into a movie I picture it like real, the animation is real featuring Anne Hathaway. I can't remember the rest of the cast, and it's going to have the colours. I think that is what I imagine if any of my stories were made into a movie... yes.

I also..... one of the things I love about this is the fact movie developers or film makers especially the big giants like Netflix and Hulu and Amazon, they are all casting their nets to diversify their content and all eyes are on African writers, especially African speculative fiction writers, so it's going to be wonderful to have an experience of literature in movies. Of course there are two different ways of storytelling and it will be wonderful to see the contrast and the differences and how fiction can be made into a movie.

- **Please describe one of your current writing projects.**

First off, I'm very giddy, I made my F&SF debut this year 2022 January stroke February issue and then I am finally working on a novel. It's very exciting, it explores our memory and the gap between what actually happens and what we remember. It's a very lovely experience for me because it delves into the personal, I think probably one of the most personal things I've written and obviously there is no stone set in genre about it, So I'm very excited about it and I can't wait to complete it.

